

Date: July 8, 2005
To: Bush Faculty Development Committee
From: Martin Dennis
Re: Report on the Augustana Symposium

The following report is a summary and evaluation of the 2005 Augustana Symposium. Thank you to the Bush Foundation and the Bush Committee for Faculty Development for supporting this program. On behalf of the Symposium Committee,

Martin Dennis, Ph.D.

I. Description of the Symposium

The fifth annual Augustana Symposium was held on April 16, 2005.

A. Highlights of the Symposium

The evening before the Symposium, a group of Augustana Government Department faculty and students attended dinner with Dr. Muirhead. Dr. Muirhead also appeared on a local Sioux Falls political talk radio show as part of his Symposium responsibilities.

At the Symposium itself, 47 Augustana College students—sponsored by over 20 Augustana faculty—presented their research and scholarship in the afternoon sessions.* These sessions included a performance of the student-developed play "Wink of a Madman," inspired by the Gospel of Luke, and six sessions of oral presentations: two blocks of three concurrent sessions, each having three presentations. In between blocks of oral presentations, 15 posters were presented by students (many as a requirement of the South Dakota Biomedical Research Infrastructure [BRIN] grant at Augustana College). Approximately 200 people attended the student presentations throughout the afternoon.

A banquet for student presenters, guests of the students, faculty sponsors, and several administrators was attended by close to 35 people. After the banquet, J. Russell Muirhead, Ph.D. (Associate Professor of Government at Harvard University) delivered the keynote address, "A defense of party spirit." Over 100 people from the Augustana and wider Sioux Falls communities (including a Sioux Falls City Council member) attended the keynote. A reception after the keynote drew much of the keynote crowd for extended discussions with Dr. Muirhead.

B. Finances

Funding for the Symposium was provided by:

Bush Foundation Faculty Development Grant	\$2,000
Augustana Mellon Fund	\$1,000
Augustana College Office of Academic Affairs	<u>\$3,000</u> maximum
Total funding available	\$6,000

The following expenses were incurred:

Printing	\$92.44 (posters, feedback forms, and program schedules)
Hospitality	\$1,308.35 (meals with Dr. Muirhead, banquet, and reception)
Supplies	\$16.08
Contracted services	\$3,000.00 (honorarium)
Travel	<u>\$ 690.80</u> (airfare and lodging)
Total expenses	\$5,095.57

* Abstracts for the presentations are available at <http://www.augie.edu/pub/symposium/schedule.html>.

C. Personnel

Many people helped make the event possible. President Halverson provided a welcome to the keynote address. Richard Hanson, Ph.D. (Dean of the College and Vice-President for Academic Affairs), Steven Shum, Ph.D. (Computer Science), and Richard Swanson, Ph.D. (Religion) served as chairs for oral presentation sessions. Planning and organizing the event was the responsibility of the Symposium Committee:

Lisa Brunick, M.S. (Reference Librarian, Mikkelsen Library): Symposium program hospitality, Website updating, oral presentation session chair
Martin Dennis, Ph.D. (Assistant Professor, Psychology): co-chair, CFP, Symposium program planning, oral presentation session chair
Joel Johnson, Ph.D. (Assistant Professor, Government): arrangements for speaker, including travel and lodging, and keynote introduction
Steven Matzner, Ph.D. (Associate Professor, Biology): co-chair, publicity, oral presentation session chair

II. Assessment

Assessment of the Symposium program occurred on multiple levels: Student presenters received individual feedback from the audience, the audience provided feedback about the Symposium as a whole, and student presenters and faculty sponsors were allowed the opportunity to provide feedback about the impact the Symposium had on their own scholarly development.

A. Feedback forms

Two sets of feedback forms were used to assess the impact of the Symposium. First, audience members at the oral presentation sessions were encouraged to fill out comment sheets for individual presenters. These sheets were collected for each presenter, and were distributed to the students' faculty sponsors so that faculty members could help students process audience comments. Second, audience members, student presenters, and faculty sponsors were asked to fill out feedback forms for the overall Symposium program.* On the student presenter and faculty sponsor feedback forms, a statement of impact on learning and scholarship was also requested.

Goal: Fostering the pedagogy of student research

“Did the Symposium raise your awareness of student research at Augustana?”

Presenters	Mean	5.56
Sponsors	Mean	5.75
General audience	Mean	5.94

“How did participating in/attending the Symposium affect your opinion of student research at Augustana?”

Presenters	Mean	5.78
Sponsors	Mean	6.5
General audience	Mean	5.65

(For student presenters) “Share any thoughts you have on the impact that Augustana Symposium has had on your learning.”

“The Symposium was a good place to learn the basics of presenting research, and allowing students to gain experience in doing such. It also helped to extend

* Responses on the feedback forms were given through a seven point Likert scale, with a rating of “1” being the lowest rating and “7” being the highest.

classroom topics from the liberal arts education to an area outside of the typical learning curriculum [*sic.*]

“It is a great opportunity for students: public, academic speaking; outlet for seeing all kinds of research going on here.”

“Thanks for hosting it. Great practice.”

“I was involved in the poster session this year and I think it went much better than last year. I like that the time segment for the poster session was shorter—it seemed like more students were interested and willing to read the posters. It was great to see all the students at the Symposium and I hope that the Symposium will continue so people know what kind of research is being done by students.”

(For faculty sponsors) “Share any thoughts you have on the impact that the Augustana Symposium has had on your scholarly life.”

“This was a great forum to see what sorts of student research is being done at Augustana. It confirmed my ideas about the importance of research in a good undergraduate education.”

Goal: Contributing to the intellectual climate on campus

“Overall, how intellectually stimulating were the Symposium events/research presentations?”

Presenters	Mean	5.5
Sponsors	Mean	6.0
General audience	Mean	5.7

B. Anecdotal evidence

Some anecdotal comments also give an impression of this year’s Symposium. Several faculty commented that the Symposium itself felt even more open and collegial than it had in the past. Several student audience members (largely first- and second-year students) at the student sessions made comments to the effect of “I didn’t know that people could do that here.” The overall impression was that the Symposium not only opened students’ eyes to the fact that one could do scholarly research at Augustana, but that one could do scholarship at all.

Dr. Muirhead’s presence at the Symposium served not only to bring his scholarship into the Augustana and Sioux Falls communities, but also to show off the quality of instruction and scholarship at Augustana. He spoke eloquently in the opening remarks to his keynote address about how the Symposium “served as testimony to the transformative nature of liberal education.” Other comments (for example, to Dr. Joel Johnson) indicated that Dr. Muirhead was very favorably impressed both with the high quality of student scholarship and with the high quality of teaching and faculty involvement that led to that scholarship.

III. Future directions

Although this year’s Symposium can be considered an unqualified success, there are still areas where the Symposium Committee would like to implement changes or improvements.

A. The 2006 Augustana Symposium

It has been a goal of the Symposium Committee to engage keynote speakers more than six or seven

months before the Symposium itself. This year is the first year in which that goal has been met for the 2006 Augustana Symposium. Preliminary arrangements have been made for William Carroll, Jr., Ph.D. (Current President of the American Chemical Society, Vice-President of Occidental Chemical Corporation, Adjunct Industrial Professor of Chemistry at Indiana University, and winner of the Vinyl Institute 2000 Roy T. Gottesman Leadership Award) to give the keynote address at the Symposium on April 22, 2006. Dr. Carroll's participation in the Symposium will depend in part on the ultimate funding sources for the Symposium program: if his visit is funded by the American Chemical Society, the local ACS chapters will put larger demands on his time than if funding is Symposium-related. Given the current lack of regular funding for the Symposium (see B., below), Dr. Carroll's final Symposium Day schedule is still undetermined.

B. Ongoing funding

As per the conditions of the current Bush Faculty Development Grant, funding from the grant has been decreased over the three years of the current cycle, with the college's Office of Academic Affairs increasing its funding to make up the difference. As yet, however, there is no standing source of financial support in place when Faculty Development Grant funding is discontinued next year. One of the major goals of the Symposium Committee next fall—that is, at the beginning of the college's fiscal year—is to try to gain some assurance from the Office of Academic Affairs of continued funding for the next several years' Symposia, or, failing that, to identify several possible sources of ongoing funding.

C. Publicity

Publicity for the Symposium, both extra- and intramural, needs to be improved. For example, Dr. Muirhead's appearance on local Sioux Falls radio was not at all advertised among the Augustana community (or even among the Symposium Committee). The Symposium Committee has also discussed for several years the absence of coverage in the Sioux Falls newspaper, the *Argus Leader*, when similar events held at local universities have received coverage. More importantly, many of the student audience members at the Symposium events were in attendance because of blandishments of extra credit among a few courses, rather than purely from intellectual interest. Several student comments on the feedback forms indicated a lack of publicity among the Augustana student body.

The existence of the Symposium needs to be more noticeable among the general Augustana student (and even faculty) community. More concerted effort may be necessary to encourage faculty to advertise the Symposium (and possibly to offer extra credit for attendance), to reach the editors of the student newspaper, the *Mirror*, and to generate interest in the Symposium among student leaders in the Augustana Student Association. Also, given the high quality of recent Symposium keynote speakers, stronger advertising of the keynote address to the wider Sioux Falls community would not be out of line. The Symposium Committee should meet with the college's Director of News Information to brainstorm ways in which word of the Symposium can be more widely and thoroughly disseminated.

D. Creation of a "handbook"

There is currently no central location of materials to guide the planning and organizing of the Symposium. The Symposium Committee will work this summer and fall on the creation of a "handbook" that will provide such a guide, with suggested timelines, checklists, tips, and standard forms. This handbook will create more continuity between Symposium programs over the years, as well as aid future Symposium Committees in organizing the program.

E. Inclusion of the Symposium Committee into the faculty structure

The Symposium Committee is currently located outside of the Augustana faculty committee structure. That is, work on the Symposium Committee occurs *on top of* regular faculty committee assignments,

rather than as part of those assignments. Inclusion of the Symposium Committee into the regular faculty committee structure will aid in recruiting committee members to organize the Symposium, as well as guaranteeing some continuity in committee composition. The current Symposium Committee plans on meeting next fall with the faculty Committee on Committees to open discussions about how this inclusion might best be accomplished.