

"Addressing the Goals" Statement  
4a project Year 3  
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Overall Goals #1 and 3

1. In what ways have we achieved better understanding of student-teacher relationships and their significance to learning?
3. In what ways have we explored and applied familiar and unfamiliar enhancements of the teacher-student relationship?

Under the auspices of the Bush Grant, Drs. O'Hara and Johnson traveled to Athens, Greece over Interim 2006 in order to prepare for a study abroad course we plan to offer during Spring Break 2007. The trip proved invaluable to our course planning and has, as expected, met the goals of the Bush grant.

We were in Greece from January 17<sup>th</sup> to January 25<sup>th</sup>. Our trip centered on the sites pertinent to classical Athens. During our time in the city we explored the Acropolis and Parthenon, Philopappos Hill, Kerameikos Cemetery, the Ancient Agora, and a number of museums that are home to priceless antiquities, including the National Archeological Museum, the Benaki Museum, and the Acropolis, Kerameikos, and Agora Museums. We also ventured south to the Temple of Poseidon at Sounion and traveled west to the Island of Aegina to view the Sanctuary of Aphaia Athena. Throughout our travels we carefully noted various logistical factors (time at, travel to, and costs of) to help us refine our syllabus and course preparation. The experience and time in Greece have proven very useful.

Regarding the goals of the Bush grant, the monies have afforded a number of new ways to think about teaching and learning. We have discussed, at length, how learning abroad presents both exciting opportunities and challenges for both student and teacher, regarding coursework, cultural experience, and context. While a course in a foreign country can be radically different than a traditional classroom course, we have begun a dialogue on the more numerous chances for applied learning that arise from being on site. The grant, too, certainly has contributed to Augustana's commendable mission to offer its students these priceless inter-cultural learning experiences, and the monies from the grant have laid the foundation for another such study abroad opportunity.

It is difficult to put in strict detail how we have enhanced assessment, since we are still working on the particulars of our assessment strategy for our Spring 2007 course. Instead let us offer some general observations about what we expect. While in Athens we also had the opportunity to meet with a number of other American college faculty who lead study-abroad trips to Athens, and we were able both to discuss assessment with them and observe their assessment in action. One of the most valuable assessment tools these faculty used were travel-journals in which students recorded their impressions and observations concerning sites they visited. Since our course next year will have some very specific content, we will very likely produce a structured set of reflection questions for students, with questions tailored to each day's sites. Our aim

would be to be able to review these journals during our trip in order to be able to assess how well students are learning so that we can tailor our guiding and teaching to the students.

While in Athens, we also discussed a long-term assessment goal, one which we will not be able to implement next year but which we will continue to pursue for future trips. This involves developing software and content for handheld computers which would be distributed to students. The computers would be both guidebooks and assessment tools for the students. Interactive content would include maps, relevant historical, cultural, and linguistic background notes to guide the students individually through sites, allowing them to move at their own pace. At each site we would also provide a series of questions to be answered by each student. The questions would then fulfill the double goal of directing each student to easily-missed but important details and of allowing us to quickly assess (by checking their data at the end of each day) how closely they were paying attention and how well they were learning.

In brief, then, let us highlight just three ways in which this trip furthered **two of the goals—goals one and three—of the grant**

- We have become better teachers already, because we now know so much more about the geography, history, and culture of the land that figures so prominently in our teaching.
- The grant enabled us to begin to set up a study-abroad trip. This has significantly broadened our interactions with students as we talk to them about the importance of travel as a part of their education.
- We had the opportunity while abroad to observe other teachers interacting with their students in a cross-cultural environment. This has helped us to examine the ways in which we are always teaching our students with our lives (i.e. not just in the classroom but in a variety of contexts in which we interact with students) and to prepare for our planned study-abroad trips.