

Conclusion

The purpose of the Quest Training Model is to initiate incoming freshman students to the community. However, a significant outcome of the program is the development of a community of student leaders committed to each other and to the university. The Quest Training Model is able to facilitate the growth of this community due to its unique approach to team building and experiential learning during the training. The strength of this training model lies in its ability to incorporate team building and experiential learning components from the beginning to the end, giving the community time to develop. The core of team building provides a structure and foundation for the effective learning of content and the application of new skills.

Although the Quest-trained team at Radford University disperses at the conclusion of the program, team members who return in the fall, are still invested in the university and demonstrate leadership in other capacities. Four students have pursued administrative appointments in the orientation program for the current year. Other students have assumed student government, residential life, and campus activities board leadership roles. This commitment to the larger community of Radford University is an outgrowth of an intensive, experiential training that maintains its core focus. The team is the place of identity, learning, risk taking, support, and service to the larger community.

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CAMPUS NOTES

Denise L. Rode, *Associate Editor*

Building a Sense of Community Through a Summer Reading Program

Nancy G. Spann, Jimmy R. Smith, & Harriette C. Buchanan

For a number of years discussions have taken place among faculty and administrators at Appalachian State University on implementing a summer reading program for freshmen in order to provide them a common intellectual experience, to enhance their sense of community on campus, and to set an academic tone for them prior to their arrival for their first year. In the fall and spring of 1996-97, the idea took root and was launched in the summer of 1997 with the enthusiastic support of the chancellor, provost, deans, department chairs, faculty, and staff.

A committee of faculty and staff, representing a variety of academic departments and programs on campus, selected Julia Alvarez's *In the Time of the Butterflies* (1994) for the 1997 summer reading. This book was selected because of the powerful message it presents about personal development, freedom, and courage. Based on an actual historical event, it is the story of four sisters (the Mirabals) in the Dominican Republic who were involved in the underground resistance movement against the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo; three of the sisters were murdered in 1960. Alvarez's story shows how each of the three takes her separate path to martyrdom as a result of standing firm in personal belief in the face of a repressive dictatorship. The book not only encourages students to begin to think about important personal issues, but also introduces them to an Hispanic-American female writer who is an important emerging voice in our culture.

When students arrived for summer orientation, they received a copy of the reading selection as well as some study guide materials. They were asked to read the book and think about the study questions and guide materials before returning for fall semester. As part of their campus life orientation in the fall, the students participated in a discussion of the book led by volunteer faculty and staff, simulating the manner in which many university level discussion classes are conducted. The reading also enabled students to be prepared ahead of time for the discussion and assignments that were developed in classes such as the freshman seminar and their first year English classes.

The author of the book, Julia Alvarez, was the speaker for fall convocation and spent two days on campus talking informally with students, faculty, staff, and trustees. She presided at an open forum where she presented background information about the Dominican Republic, the Mirabal sisters, and the factors that influenced her to write the book. She talked about the process of writing and answered questions from the audience. She also read from her poetry and novels and autographed her books. An addi-

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tional highlight of the convocation activities was the presence of Dede Mirabal, the surviving sister, and Jacqueline Guzman, a daughter of one of the martyred sisters.

Following the book discussion in August, students and discussion leaders were asked to evaluate the book and the program. Over two-thirds of the students read all or a portion of the book, and many indicated they planned to finish the book in anticipation of the author's visit to campus. Comments from students and discussion leaders were overwhelmingly positive. Many upperclass students, community persons, and alumni also read the book and participated in convocation activities. The book and its themes have been incorporated into both freshman and upperclass courses.

The program's success has gone far beyond the planning committee's expectations. In addition to providing the communal experience and stimulus for more intellectual discussion among incoming freshmen and their discussion leaders, the ripple effects of the program and sources for analogies in other contexts have just begun to emerge. We plan to continue to track and evaluate the effects of the 1997 summer reading program as we plan and implement future summer reading experiences.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Walter M. Kimbrough, *Associate Editor*

Seniors: Four Years In Retrospect

by Dan Geller and Dayna Goldfine

A Film by California Newsreel, 1997, 57 minutes

Reviewed by

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As an administrator, one often contemplates the future of certain students. What will these students look like by the senior year? What challenges and hurdles will they face? How will they develop as mature adults?

The recently released film, *Seniors: Four Years in Retrospect*, produced by California Newsreel, offers case studies of five freshmen who matriculate through Stanford University. This film is a sequel to the film, *Frosh*, which was the culmination of a nine-month study in an eighty-person residence hall at Stanford.

Each of the students profiled in the new film represent diverse backgrounds and, accordingly, face different challenges throughout their Stanford careers. The film begins with Monique, an Oakland student, who makes it to school despite a tumultuous relationship with her crack-addicted mother. Monique, during her freshman year, suffers from a lack of motivation and enthusiasm. Her priorities include scheduling classes around her soap opera. While Monique attempts to find herself, a residence dean intervenes, and connects her with a strong female mentor. During her senior year, Monique becomes a confident and motivated student. She becomes the only senior at Stanford selected to teach an undergraduate course, "The History of African American Women," which correlates with her major.

Debbie, according to the film, could be a poster child for Chickering's vectors. She divulges her fears of being so far from her home in Connecticut, of being the least bright student in her classes, and of not being accepted socially. Even though she begins dating a classmate, she struggles with her major and reconsiders her plans to attend medical school. Additionally, she participates in sorority rush and pledges, seeking to connect socially. By her senior year, Debbie has changed her major to feminist studies, as well as resigned her membership from the sorority, fearing that she has been focusing on superficial traits.

Cheng comes to Stanford with high expectations of himself and is stressful about his ability to achieve academically. He too is concerned about other students being smarter, more so because they might hinder his goal to attend Harvard Law School. After his first C paper, he openly contemplates transferring. He also discusses growing up in an Asian family and how that experience may have added to his level of stress. Cheng stays at