

The Observer

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THE OBERLIN COLLEGE FACULTY AND STAFF NEWSPAPER

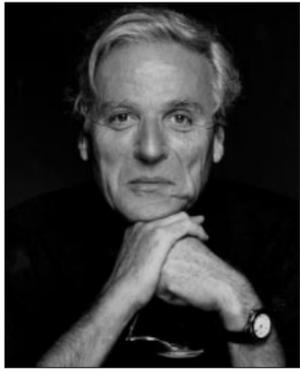
William Goldman to Give Honors Day Talk

Academy Award-winning screenwriter William Goldman '52 will return to Oberlin to speak at the College's annual Honors Day Assembly, where he will be presented with an honorary Doctor of Literature degree.

Goldman will allow time for questions from the audience. The event takes place at 12:15 P.M. Tuesday, May 5, in Finney Chapel.

Goldman won his first Academy Award in 1970 for his original screenplay *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. In 1977 he received an Oscar for his screenplay adaptation of Carl Bernstein and Robert Woodward's *All the President's Men*. Goldman's other screenwriting credits include *Marathon Man*, *The Princess Bride*, *Misery*, *Magic*, *A Bridge Too Far*, and *Maverick*.

His other honors include a British Academy Award, two Edgar awards for mystery movie of the year, and Lifetime Achieve-



William Goldman

ment Awards from the Writers Guild of America and the Writers Guild of Great Britain.

Goldman is the author of more than 15 novels, children's books, and short stories. His novels *Boys and Girls Together* and *The Color of Light* are set partially in Oberlin. *The Sea-*

son is his account of a year in the world of Broadway theater. He has also written books about screenwriting and Hollywood. He is working on a new screenwriting book called "The Current Campfire."

Goldman received a master of arts degree from Columbia University in 1956.

The event marks Oberlin's 58th Honors Assembly. Deans Clayton Koppes and Karen Wolff will award student prizes, and new members of honor societies and fellowship winners will be recognized.

Professor of Organ David Boe will play the prelude and postlude.

Senior Siobhan Wilson Wins Churchill Scholarship

Double-degree senior Siobhan Wilson will study at England's Churchill College, part of Cambridge University, next year. She is one of 10 graduating seniors nationwide who will do so on a Winston Churchill scholarship, which is given for study in engineering, mathematics, or science.

Wilson, from Tucson, Arizona, is an honors student of Yolanda Cruz, professor of biology. She has been working in Cruz's laboratory on the Early Pregnancy Factor, a molecule used by mammalian embryos to signal their presence to the mother's body. At Cambridge she will join a research group working on fetal-maternal biochemical communication and its implications for immunosuppressants. She will leave Cambridge with a Master's in Philosophy degree.

When she returns to the U.S., Wilson will enroll in the M.D./Ph.D. program at the University of Wisconsin, where she expects to continue her line of

research. She anticipates becoming a physician in academic medicine, where she will continue doing biomedical research.

A violin major in the conservatory, Wilson expects to continue playing her instrument, too. "I see [playing] as a joyful thing in my future," she says. Wilson uses music to find balance. "All through college, it's kept me sane. Having something to use a different part of your brain really helps." She says she experiences playing with other musicians as "bonding," and looks forward to joining an orchestra when she gets to Madison.

Before learning that she had received a Churchill scholarship, Wilson was planning to go to Australia next year on a Fulbright Fellowship. She turned down the Fulbright in order to take up the Churchill.

Oberlin's previous Churchill Scholarship winners include Mark Hanish '84, Peter Todd '85, Robin Snyder '92, and Jennifer Hampton '95.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN SEYFRIED

Siobhan Wilson

History Department Outdoes Itself, Contributes 11 Courses to Oberlin's Mix of 63 New Courses for the Year

In 1996-97 the history department offered more new courses—10—than any other department or program in the whole College. In 1997-98 the department is offering 11 new courses; environmental studies is offering 10, and politics seven.

This article concludes a two-part series about the new courses that were offered and are being offered during the 1997-98 school year. The total number of new courses this year—including those of the conservatory and the college courses in the arts and the humanities—is 63. Last year's total was 48.

Both the conservatory and the college will move further into new curriculum territory next year. The conservatory will be placing what Dean Karen Wolff calls "new weight on equipping performance students with pedagogical abilities [that will] provide them with wider career opportunities." And the college will be strengthening international emphases, facilitating more teaching with technology, and offering more colloquia. The moves are

bound to have an impact on the new courses of 1998-99.

New Courses in the Social and Behavioral Sciences

The African-American studies department is offering three new courses this year. The one that **Johnny Coleman**, assistant professor of African-American studies and art, taught last semester—Talking Book—was cross listed in the art department and described in the last issue of the *Observer*.

Rebecca Dixon, visiting instructor in African American studies, is teaching African American Women Novelists this semester. The course explores the experiences of African American women as revealed in selected novels written since the turn of the century. Race, gender, sexuality, and color are the primary foci of analysis, but the class is also examining other social and political issues.

Calvin Hernton, professor of African-American studies, is teaching *Going Away Coming Home: Caribbean Literature* this semester. The seminar

is a survey of writing in English by West Indian poets, novelists, playwrights, and nonfiction writers.

Linda Grimm, associate professor of anthropology, is teaching Seminar in Archeology: Gender and Archeology this semester. "After a decade of research," Grimm says, "feminist scholars have integrated the concept of gender into the central questions that have traditionally preoccupied archeology." The course focuses on new research that challenges assumptions about technology and gender, and the biological bases for divisions of labor between the sexes. Gender relations in societies ranging from foraging and agricultural societies to states are being examined.

Max Kirsh, visiting assistant professor of anthropology and sociology, is teaching Seminar in Work and Labor, exploring the origins and forms of labor and work in capitalist and precapitalist societies. Through case studies special attention is being paid to changes that have occurred since World War II, the internationalization of the division of labor, and current relationships of

organization and production. The course is cross listed in anthropology and sociology.

David Cleeton, professor of economics, taught Political Economy of European Integration last semester. The course analyzed the economic rationale for the European Union (EU), evidence on the development of trade and growth in the EU, details of the Single Market program, convergence and disparities within the EU, and prospects for EU enlargement by integration of Central European economies. Focus was on integration theory and measurement and analysis of EU policy making illustrated with current issues such as the Economic and Monetary Union and employment policies.

This semester **Stephen Sheppard**, associate professor of economics and environmental studies, is teaching Economics of the Urban Environment, which is looking at housing and homelessness, urban sprawl and land-use planning, traffic congestion and mass transit, urban poverty and employ

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PHOTOGRAPH BY LISA LEFKOWITZ '95

One Faculty Reading Group Active; Another Poised for Fall-Semester Take-off

"We're really enjoying ourselves with this," says William Marvin, instructor of aural skills, who organized the Gay Men's Literature faculty reading group (see photo).

"The logistics of start-up" was the most difficult, says Marvin, who called the group together for the first meeting this past November. But, he says, "we had a clearly defined interest that goes across department lines," which expedited organizing. Also helpful was that one of the group's members—William Hood, professor of art—had proposed the idea informally even before the academic deans' offices announced their support in September, so people had time to think about it.

The deans' offices pay for the books and modest refreshments to facilitate faculty "getting to know each other a bit better," and to promote "a greater sense of community," according to a September 16 memo from Clayton Koppes, dean of the College of Arts

and Sciences, and Karen Wolff, dean of the Conservatory of Music. The only rule, say the deans, is that "each group must include faculty from at least three different departments or programs." Marvin's group includes people from the conservatory, the art museum, and the college departments of art, German and Russian, sociology, and history.

The Gay Men's Literature group has met five times, and read and discussed five books. Participants warm up the meetings with a pot-luck dinner. Members read poetry, fiction, nonfiction—"any literature that appeals to the group," Marvin says.

Robert Pierce, professor of English, is organizing another reading group for the fall and says people interested in joining it may call him. Reading Robert Scholes's *The Rise and Fall of English: Reconstructing English As a Discipline*, Pierce's group will consider the teaching of literature and composition as a single area.

Faculty Meetings

Conservatory Re-Opens Faculty Discussion of Discrete Master's Degree Programs; General Faculty Deals with Faculty-Governance Issues

The Conservatory Faculty spent a good part of its April 14 meeting discussing possible ramifications of discrete master's degree programs, and the General Faculty (GF) talked about faculty governance during its April 21 meeting.

Before tackling its major topic the Conservatory Faculty voted unanimously to make minor changes in the curriculum of the conservatory individual major—and allow an individual major to have an interdisciplinary emphasis—and to shorten performance times of orientation recitals. The results of the motion concerning the individual major will be incorporated in the *Individual Majors Handbook*, a new conservatory publication that will be available in the fall.

No motions were entertained during the discussion of the discrete master's degree programs (those not integrated into undergraduate study). Talk focused on general policy proposals—how the conservatory would administer the programs—and did not consider the programs' content. Faculty discussed the importance of the Graduate Record Examination music-test scores and diagnostic testing in admission, and how transfers from a discrete master's degree program into the Performance Diploma program would be handled. Faculty expect to vote on proposals for discrete master's degree programs put forth by two conservatory divisions during the May 12 meeting.

The faculty passed, with a friendly amendment, a motion to legislate choosing students to serve on the Educational Policy Committee. Left on the table, and so passed, was a proposal to modify the theory requirement for string-performance majors.

In a brief report about conservatory facilities Associate Dean Michael Lynn, associate professor of recorder and baroque flute, invited wish-list items from the faculty and said the conservatory-pond area is on schedule for summer renovation that will restore the Japanese garden and put water in the pond. Other plantings and improvements to "the little gardens of Robinson"—and indoor painting—will take place over the summer, he said.

During the announcements that started off the meeting Dean Karen Wolff read some laudatory remarks from the report of the external evaluators from the National Association of Schools of Music (see the *Observer* of March 13 for news of the external evaluators' interim report).

The April General Faculty meeting

opened with presentations about faculty governance from Professor of Philosophy Norman Care and President Nancy Dye. (The texts are available as links from the electronic version of this *Observer* at www.oberlin.edu/~observer/obs_issues.)

Care reiterated a thought he had presented in the April College Faculty meeting, that what he calls "communitarianism" should guide faculty governance at Oberlin, where all members of the faculty should detach somewhat from their own narrow interests in the educational program to consider the effects on the whole College of programs and legislation. Throughout his remarks he championed what he calls "strong faculty governance" as opposed to what he calls "fragmented faculty governance."

The Finney Compact, Dye said, will always be central in defining Oberlin, but the compact is not sufficiently practical to guide Oberlin's faculty governance. The core question, she said, is "Who gets to do what?" Oberlin lacks a guiding theory that could lead to the answer, said Dye. Dye referred frequently to the "three arms" of governance—the trustees, the president, and the faculty—and said collaboration between the three was necessary.

Seven members of the GF offered comments, and the faculty voted by show of hands to continue the discussion at the May meeting.

The faculty also approved the graduation list; returned to subcommittee for clarification proposed legislation on professional conduct and deans; approved the academic calendar for the years 2000 through 2008—with one change: Classes on the last day of each semester do not need to end by 4:30 p.m.; and removed a Student Life Committee report on the formation of a Student Union board from the table to make friendly changes to the wording. The GF also heard a brief Planning Committee report and a promise of a longer written report in early June, and a Benefits Committee report about the College's possible substitution of UNUM for TIAA-CREF life insurance. The change, said committee-chair Jeffrey Witmer, professor of mathematics, would be an improvement for employees and save the College money. Information about the UNUM plan will be mailed out soon by the Office of Human Resources, Witmer said.

Left on the table and thereby approved were the fall athletics schedule and charters for 13 student organizations.

Faculty and Staff Notes

The March/April issue of *Piecework* magazine includes an article by affiliate scholar **Ricarda "Ricky" Clark**: "Bands of Beauty: The Estonian Handwork of Rita Tubalkain." Some of the photographs illustrating the article are by **Rick Sherlock**, assistant director of college relations. • **Chris Howell**,



associate professor of politics, was chair of the program committee of the Eleventh International Conference of Europeanists, held in Baltimore in February. At the conference

he participated in a roundtable panel evaluating the progress of the New Labour government in Britain. He was invited to the European Consortium for Political Research Joint Workshops, held at the University of Warwick in Britain during spring break. There he presented a paper, "The Role of the British State in Constructing Industrial Relations Institutions," which explored the evolution and trajectory of

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College Helps Local Residents Do Research and Make Art

By Mark Graham

William Saxbe, chief of surgery at the Oberlin Clinic, became an Oberlin College affiliate scholar this semester to better study genealogy. A certified genealogist, Saxbe will use his affiliate-scholar status to gain full access to the College libraries, where he will continue his study of genealogy.

Affiliate scholars are area residents who are granted access to College resources to help their academic pursuits. An affiliate-scholar candidate must demonstrate an understanding of his or

her field and be working on an academic project.

Saxbe has written dozens of articles and given many presentations, including "Names in the Melting Pot: What Immigration Did to Surnames" at the recent Federation of Genealogical Societies meeting in Cincinnati. His work has won many awards, including the National Genealogical Society Award for Excellence in 1991.

This semester six more local residents have joined the ranks of Oberlin's affiliate scholars, which now number 24.

The appointments are for three years and are renewable.

Naomi Barnett, professor emerita in reading and development education at Lorain County Community College, is another new affiliate scholar. With help from the College libraries, she will write and edit textbooks. Her editing experience includes past employment as a consulting editor of juvenile books for G.P. Putnam and Sons and editorship of *Scholastic* magazine.

Norbert Wetherington, independent

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The Observer (ISSN 0193-368X), the faculty and staff newspaper of Oberlin College, published 17 times a year, is delivered to employees and made available to students on campus. Copies are mailed to retired employees, certain alumni and friends of the College, and paid subscribers. The editor welcomes off-campus readers but does not always provide background information for them: news that has already been reported in the *Review* (the student newspaper) or announced elsewhere may not be reported fully or prominently in the *Observer*.

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All Oberlin College Office of College Relations publications include a minimum of 10 percent postconsumer waste. Discarded *Observers* may be recycled with office paper.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Observer*, Oberlin College Development Resources, Bosworth Hall 4, 50 W. Lorain St., Oberlin, OH 44074-1089.

New Courses . . .

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institutionalization of "subaltern" studies (ethnic, women's, and queer studies).

New Courses in the Natural and Computer Sciences and Mathematics

Randy Phelps, visiting assistant professor of physics, is teaching Astronomy of the Americas this semester. The course gives a framework for understanding the motions of objects in the night sky and for investigating how that knowledge developed. The class is exploring the modern scientific understanding of the universe and comparing it with the understanding of the sky developed by indigenous peoples of the Americas over a similar time frame. Phelps is emphasizing the use of simple scientific observations to provide a meaningful basis for the comparisons.

Taylor Allen, assistant professor of biology, has renamed and revamped material he introduced in spring 1997 as Physiology of Cell Movement. Now called Cell Physiology, the class no longer has a mandatory associated lab; he is teaching the lab separately as Cell Physiology Research. Cell Physiology deals with the physical activity of cells, from the transport of vesicles down an axon to the swimming of spermatazoa or the migration of tumor cells. The course looks at how the activity arises by considering the design and function of proteins in the cytoskeleton and cell membrane, and by examining the signaling pathways that orchestrate complex cell movements. Cell Physiology Research guides students from the design and inception of a semester-long experiment to the communication of results.

Richard Salter, professor of computer science, is teaching Computer Networks this semester. The students are studying the principles underlying the design of computer networks. They are examining techniques for transmitting information efficiently and reliably over a variety of communication media and looking at the addressing and routing problems that must be solved to ensure that transmitted data reach the desired destination. The class is developing an appreciation for how the distributed nature of network problems relates to their difficulty.

This spring three professors of geology—**Bruce Simonson**, **William Skinner**, and **Steven Wojtal**—are teaching Convergent Plate Margins, a survey of the geology of convergent plate margins focusing on the plate

margin in and around the Indonesian volcanic arc. The class is studying the causes and consequences of andesitic volcanism, sedimentation and deformation along convergent margins, ophiolites and their formation, and the societal impacts of explosive volcanism.

Samuel Goldberg, emeritus professor of mathematics, is teaching The Environment: Modeling and Simulation this semester, introducing two essential tools of environmental science: mathematical modeling and computer simulation. Mathematics needed to understand articles from ecology journals and books is presented in class. Topics include population-growth, host-parasite, and epidemic models; tragedy of the commons; harvesting renewable resources; linear programming (with application to groundwater contamination, herbivore foraging, and optimal fish stocking); and decision analysis (with application to management of endangered species and resolution of environmental disputes).

Albert Borroni, visiting assistant professor of neuroscience, is teaching Sensory Physiology this semester. The course examines the visual, somatosensory, chemosensory, and auditory systems in invertebrates and vertebrates. Topics include principles of neural transmission, mechanisms of sensory transduction, and neural coding. Higher-level processing and perception is also covered, as well as systems not readily used in humans, such as the ability of fish to detect electrical fields. Borroni has added what he calls "a little interesting twist" to his grading scheme for the course. He incorporates student-submitted questions in his quizzes and has the students rate each others' submissions. Questions perceived as "particularly good at asaying the main points of the lectures and readings," he says, gain extra points for their authors.

After reviewing the basics of the behavior and molecular aspects of learning, students in Borroni's Special Topics: Neurobiology of Memory are carrying out independent study that is based either on library research or experimental work. Students report on their study at class meetings.

John Scofield, associate professor of physics, is teaching Principles of Solar Energy this semester. The course lays the scientific foundation for understanding a variety of topics associated with solar energy, particularly as it applies to building design. Scofield has posted on the web (www.oberlin.edu/~physics/Scofield/p055/Lectures.htm) an extensive—and colorful—tutorial paralleling the class sessions.

Richard Miller" in the February 27, 1998, issue of the *Observer*).

Research Associate

A research associate works with a College department and, like an affiliate scholar, has access to College resources. Appointments are for one year and are renewable. Six research associates are currently affiliated with the College.

Julie Lagier is a new research associate in the art department. At Oberlin, she is creating a new series of sculptures made of natural fibers. She says she became a research associate to become a part of the Oberlin art community and would be happy to work with students. Her husband, Christopher Lagier, is a visiting assistant professor of French.

Werner Söllner Is the 30th Annual Max Kade German Writer-in-Residence

By Karen Schaefer

His students are enthralled, as much with the stories of his former homeland as with the opportunity to work with a real-life poet. He is equally fascinated with life in America. All will leave in some way changed by the experience.

Werner Söllner, a poet and freelance writer who lives in Frankfurt, Germany, is the 30th annual Max Kade Writer-in-Residence at Oberlin, a program established in 1968, with continuous funding from the Max Kade Foundation in New York. Söllner joins the ranks of a distinguished group of German authors who have taught here over the years, including Christa Wolf, Jurek Becker, and Max von der Grön. His work—which includes three recent volumes of poetry, *Das Land, das Leben* (1984), *Kopfland. Passagen* (1988), and *Der Schlaf des Trommlers* (1992)—has won him numerous awards, including the 1985 Andreas-Gryphius Prize for Poetry, the Berlin Stipend of the Literary Colloquium (1987), and the 1988 Friedrich Hölderlin Prize for Poetry.

But like many of his predecessors, Söllner's literary credentials are only one aspect of the rich experience he brings to the 10-week program. For along with the skills and sensibilities of a poet, he brings a cultural heritage virtually unknown to most young Americans.

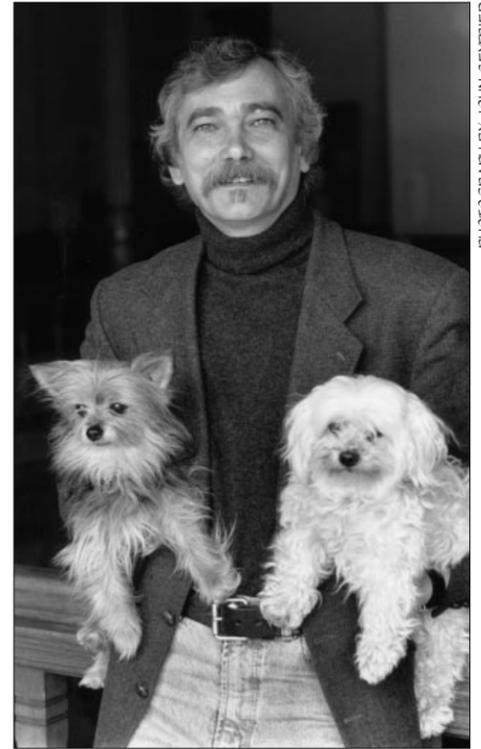
Söllner, an ethnic German, was born in 1951 in western Romania and grew up under a communist regime that culminated in the long, disastrous presidency of Nicolae Ceausescu. He earned his M.A. degree in German literature from Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj, Romania, and worked briefly as a *gymnasium* (high-school) teacher in Bucharest before joining a Romanian children's book press as a German-language editor. In 1981, he recalls, life in Romania began to go from bad to worse.

"The economy was very down," says Söllner of Ceausescu's austerity measures. "There was almost no electricity . . . and that winter, in minus-4-degree-Fahrenheit weather with no heating in our houses, we slept in all our clothes."

"Some people would light the gas in their kitchen stoves for heat, but the pressure was weak, so the flame would often blow out during the night and fill the house with gas. Two of my friends died that way."

Söllner and a group of other writers and artists began to publicly oppose the Ceausescu regime. In October 1981 they were ordered to report to the Central Committee for a personal meeting with Ceausescu himself.

"We tried to prepare ourselves for whatever was to come—arrest, torture, death, whatever," Söllner says. "On that



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN SEYFRIED

Werner Söllner brought two companions with him to Oberlin.

day 24 trembling poets and critics and novelists and artists presented themselves at the Central Committee headquarters; Ceausescu came in and said he wanted two of us to tell him what we wanted—we had one hour."

In all, the meeting lasted eight hours, and 22 dissidents spoke.

"We told him everything. We told him no one believed him. But he said nothing. At the end, he stood up, thanked us for speaking so frankly, and told us there was nothing he could do."

After the 1981 encounter with Ceausescu, Söllner says, he felt increasingly threatened by the Securitate (secret police), even experiencing "some unpleasant encounters of the third degree." He fled to Germany in 1982.

In his weekly classroom colloquia and *stammtische*, coffeehouse gatherings he holds at his home, Söllner shares with his students some of the personal stories that engender his poems, stories that evoke wide-eyed respect for the man as well as the poet. Drawing on his experience as a translator, he gently guides the class through a translation of one of his poems, "Fremde Nacht," weighing each word choice with the impartiality of a judge.

"A good poet has no idea of telling us something precise. My poems are very personal," he says. "I tell my students to find their own relationship to a poem. I believe that one poem has as many lives as readers."

Werner Söllner will give a free public talk and reading tomorrow at 4 P.M. in Kade German House Lounge.

Karen Schaefer is a writer and broadcast journalist who lives in Oberlin.

Locals . . .

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dent consultant for the Humanities in Higher Education, is retired from Terra Community College (in Fremont, Ohio, where he was associate dean of instructional services. He received a Ph.D. degree in June 1997, and now studies medieval philology and the history of English literature and language. He will use the College's libraries to research future articles and presentations.

The Otto B. Schoepfle Vocal Arts Center has the help of four new affiliate scholars: Ronald Scherer, Douglas Hicks, Thomas Abelson, and Paul Oncley (see "Saturday: A Special Day for

Faculty and Staff . . .

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industrial relations in Britain over the past century. Chris is a member of the Cleveland-area Workers' Rights Board (WRB), which seeks to involve the broader community in the defense of workers' rights. An article in the November-December 1997 *Working USA* chronicled some of the cases of the WRB with which Chris has been involved. • *Crossings and Departures:*

Making Art in Miami, the catalog for last spring's Allen Memorial Art Museum exhibition of the same name—written by **Amy Kurlander**, curator of modern art—has won honorable mention in the Ohio Museums Association's annual Visual Communication Competition. • **Marlene Merrill**, affiliate scholar, gave a presentation, "Sarah Margru Kinson: An Amistad Captive Comes to Oberlin," at the annual meeting of the Oberlin Historical and Improvement Organization April 8.

New Courses . . .

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ment centers for the upwardly mobile, and other contrasting phenomena of urban environments. The course explores how decisions of households and firms combine in markets to produce particular types of urban environments. It also considers how the working of the economy produces particular systems of cities, and how the urban structure of a society affects the vitality of the economy.

The Environmental Studies Program is offering 10 new courses this year, seven of which are cross listed in other departments. The three that are not cross listed are last semester's Introduction to the Black River Watershed and Introduction to Watershed Education, and this semester's Practicum in Watershed Education.

Professor of Geology **Bruce Simonson** (with the Environmental Studies Program's resource faculty at Oberlin—see www.oberlin.edu/~envs/1998/honor98.html) taught the first-mentioned watershed course, introducing students to the local watershed through lectures, field trips, and related activities such as nature-journal writing and art sketching. Topics included local geology, ecology, natural and social history, and contemporary political issues.

Associate Professor of Biology **Roger Laushman** (with the Environmental Studies Program's resource faculty and outside speakers) teaches the other watershed courses. The first of the two introduced students to the principles of interdisciplinary watershed education, which favors hands-on projects that help build understanding of the dynamics of the Black River watershed and the environmental challenges it faces. Students generated a lesson plan or activity on a specific aspect of the watershed, conducted classroom observations, and tested their activities on a local classroom.

This semester, in the practicum, Laushman's students are applying what they learned in Introduction to Watershed Education by working with a selected teacher in a local middle- or secondary-school classroom to develop curricula and special projects. Students are continuing to learn about the dynamics of the Black River watershed as they gain first-hand teaching experience.

Other faculty members whose new classes are cross listed in environmental studies are **Sam Goldberg** (mathematics), **Karl Jacoby** (history), **Benjamin Schiff** (politics), and **John Scofield** (physics).

Lynda Payne, visiting assistant professor of history, is teaching five new courses this year. Last semester History of Science I: From Antiquity to Newton surveyed the history of Western science from ancient Egypt to the late Scientific Revolution. It approached the historical analysis of scientific ideas and practices in their larger historical context, and tracked their transformation over time. Topics included the question of why a mechanical view of the universe came to dominate western science.

Payne's History of Science II: From Newton to the Present is this semester's survey of western science from the 18th century. It covers the emergence of geology, biology, chemistry, and physics as distinct scientific disciplines; the feminization of biology; the decline of astrology and alchemy; and the creation of Cold War "big science." A critical analysis of the shifting relationship between science and society since the rise of Newtonianism is part of the course.

Last semester Payne's Women and Medicine: Patients and Practitioners from

Antiquity to the Present explored the role of women in medicine as health-care practitioners and patients. The focus was on diseases or physical conditions that were believed to be limited to women—childbirth, hysteria, reproductive health—as well as the increasing marginalization of women within the profession of health-care providers to those branches concerned primarily with "women's problems."

This semester Payne is teaching Gender and Science. Are women smarter than men? Why are most scientists men? Is science sexist? The course analyzes various answers to these and related questions and surveys the growing literature on gender and science. Topics include the construction and critiques of scientific research on gender differences, such as IQ and math ability; the history of women in science and various barriers keeping women out; and feminist philosophies of science.

Payne's fifth new course is From Darwin to the Genome Project. The spring colloquium analyzes the interplay between biology as an experimental science and its social context from Darwin to the present. The course sheds light on why some claim that everything makes sense only in light of evolution. Topics include the science of eugenics, classical challenges to evolution from creationists, new challenges to evolution from sociobiology, the discovery of DNA, and the ramifications of the Human Genome Project.

Karl Jacoby, visiting assistant professor of history, is also teaching five new courses this year. Recent America: The United States Since World War II, which he's teaching this semester, explores American culture and politics from 1945 to the present. Topics include the Cold War, the rise and fall of liberalism, the Korean and Vietnam wars, the social-protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s, and the era of conservatism.

Jacoby's other four new courses are cross listed in environmental studies. Last semester's American Environmental History was a critical examination of the ecological and social transformations on the North American continent from before European colonization to the present. Topics included the variety of native American uses of the landscape, the development of capitalism, changing ideas about nature, and the rise of the environmental movement.

In this semester's Environmental History in Global Perspective, Jacoby is leading his class in a study of the ecological consequences for the Third World of European colonization in the 17th to the 19th centuries and of decolonization in the 20th century. The course covers indigenous forms of environmental knowledge, conservation, tourism, and development policy.

His Research in American Environmental History, a seminar, explores the differing ways Americans have thought about, interacted with, and been influenced by the natural environment.

Jacoby taught The Suburbanization of the United States, an exploration of the landscape of everyday life in modern America, last semester. Subjects included the shopping mall, the freeway system, the lawn, domestic ideology, and the rise of the middle class.

Heather Hogan, professor of history, is teaching Stalinism this semester. The course explores the Stalinist period of Soviet history, emphasizing the late 1920s and 1930s and focusing on the socioeconomic and political aspects of Stalinist rule. Topics include the

transformation of peasant Russia, life and labor in the factories, the experience of women and an investigation of issues of gender in the construction of the Stalinist state, and historiographical debates surrounding the purges.

The politics department is offering seven new courses this year. **Chris Howell**, associate professor of politics, and **Marc Blecher**, professor of politics and East Asian studies, taught A Marxist Analysis of Society in the fall. The seminar addressed the practical application of Marxist theory to a range of societal phenomena. It examined how Marxist analysis can illuminate an understanding of society. Topics included the crisis of advanced capitalist society; the crisis of state socialism; internationalization of capital; class in relation to gender, nation, and race; the environment; and feasible socialist futures.

Stephen Crowley, assistant professor of politics, taught a new seminar, Globalization versus Nationalism, last semester. The course examined two dominant and conflicting trends of the post-Cold War world: the increasingly global nature of capitalism, and the rise of a variety of nationalist movements, many in reaction to the global market. The class examined the historical development and theoretical explanations of global capitalism and nationalism, investigated cases of each, and considered their growing significance to world politics as well as possible alternatives to them.

Laurie Rhodebeck, visiting assistant professor of politics, is teaching three new classes this year, including this semester's Women and Politics, cross listed with women's studies. The course uses feminist perspectives to examine several aspects of the intersection of gender and politics in the U.S. Topics include social constructions of gender, the relationship between gender and power, the tension between principles of equality and difference, and the political representation of women, and policy issues relevant to American women. The course covers the incorporation of women into public life and the political consequences of their actions as voters, activists, candidates, and policy makers.

In Political Psychology, this semester, Rhodebeck and her class are surveying psychological approaches to understanding political behavior. Topics include socialization to politics, the bases of public opinion, public response to political leadership, the character of political leaders, elite decision making, and social violence. The topics are being tied together by an exploration of the larger issues of the displacement of private motives onto the public sphere, the function of political ideas in satisfying individual needs, the nature of social-influence processes, and the rationality of political behavior.

Rhodebeck's spring seminar, Voting and Public Opinion, has three objectives: to describe Americans' political preferences, explain how the preferences develop and change, and examine the linkage between the preferences and the behavior of elected representatives. The students are considering historical patterns and theoretical frameworks that help them understand trends in opinion and voting that have emerged since World War II. The class is also analyzing data on recent electoral behavior.

Eve Sandberg, associate professor of politics, is teaching a new seminar, Theories and Practices of International Not-for-Profit Organizations, this semester. Her students are writing research papers on an aspect of

international not-for-profits using theoretical frames of political power from political sociology, political economy, and gender-based literatures. The class uses the Alta Vista Forum to post possible research questions and ideas gleaned from class discussions, and students use the World Wide Web to do virtual fieldwork. In their research some students are sending and receiving E-mail from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in foreign countries.

Professor of Politics **Benjamin Schiff's** politics seminar changes focus every few years, Schiff says. Last semester he changed the overall name of the seminar from National and International Developments in the Third World to Seminar in International Politics. The new name "allows me to put in a new topic after the colon from year to year," he says. Last semester what followed the colon was Environmental Issues. The class dealt with topics such as international treaties on environmental protection, the link between international trade negotiations and environmental issues, global warming, ozone depletion, waterway pollution, and the record of international institutions involved in environmental issues.

Ferdinand Jones, visiting professor of psychology, taught Cultural Mistrust in the fall. The course, cross listed in sociology, introduced students to the psychology of contacts between individuals of distinctively different ethnic, racial, national, and religious backgrounds, and also addressed cross-gender interactions. It focused on enterprises that require communication and cooperation between individuals from dissimilar groups. Jones is retired from the faculty of Brown University, where he taught a similar course.

Contemporary Asian Pacific American Experience is one of three courses being taught this year by **Antoinette Charfauros McDaniel**, visiting lecturer in sociology. The fall course answered the question Who are Asian Pacific Americans (APAs), and what are the key social and historical factors that have shaped their collective experience in the U.S.? It examined major theoretical approaches to the study of the contemporary APA community, with special emphasis on issues of community formation and intra-group differences (class, gender, sexualities). Major themes included immigration (especially the increasingly transnational nature of immigrant communities); socioeconomic adaptation, and race and ethnic relations.

In Street Smarts: Ethnographic Explorations of Urban America, a spring-semester course, Charfauros McDaniel and the class are examining how sociologists have studied the demographic transformations, economic restructuring, and political changes that shape social relations in the heart of the city. Students are learning ethnographic research methods by reading studies and by discussing theoretical, ethical, and empirical debates. Students are carrying out observation-participation fieldwork projects.

Are schools and universities the ultimate path to upward mobility, or is their main role to produce and reproduce inequality in society? In Contested Spaces: Schools and Universities in American Society, Charfauros McDaniel's class is examining conservative, liberal, and resistance-based accounts of the apparently contradictory role of schools and universities in American society. Special attention is given to the backlash against affirmative action, critical pedagogy, and the

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Opening Statement --- GF Meeting (April 21, 1998)
(Norman Care, Professor of Philosophy)

1. Anecdote.

When I came to Oberlin in 1965, I came from a teaching position at Yale University. At Yale I was a full-time faculty member with a new Ph.D, but I was decidedly a minor figure. I was even on the edges so far as the business of the Philosophy Department was concerned. There were two or three "department meetings" a year for us "junior faculty members" (as we were called), but these were essentially social hours followed by a cheery and very brief report by the chair. I had no place at all in what passed for meetings of university faculty. I don't even remember if I was informed of them.

At my first meeting at Oberlin – the one in the fall at which new faculty are introduced – I had a formative experience. I was introduced, stood up and sat down, others were introduced, etc. Then some business came before the General Faculty of Oberlin College. It dawned on me that I was now a member of this group now turning to this business, and that that meant there would now be discussion of this business, and that I could participate in this discussion – now.

I was stunned. I remember talking later with academic friends at other schools, trying to articulate the formative experience. Not only did I work at Oberlin, i.e., I had a job there; not only did I have position in a small department such that I was expected at all meetings, and urged (indeed, required) to speak and argue about departmental business; I also was a member of THE FACULTY of Oberlin College. And this in fact, so it turned out, meant something.

The best I could do back then, as a way of articulating the difference, was to say to myself and others that Oberlin invited me to make it MY school. My heart went out to Oberlin on the spot. It was (as the kids say today) awesome, both in opportunity and in responsibility and in privilege. I remember speaking to a senior big-deal faculty member in those early days. I asked her what was supposed to happen at those faculty meetings. She said, "we take care of the educational program there – and that program is Oberlin College. So it's a very large responsibility."

2. The character of Oberlin.

I won't try to carry the personal story further. It's been enough for me that Oberlin means to be a place where Teaching and Research are of major importance, and also a place where Service counts. It makes for a very large job description for faculty members who come to care about the College. I learned in due time to connect the Service part to what we call "faculty governance." There are of course many schools that claim to practice "faculty governance," but that often means only that faculty sit on a committee or two, or perhaps provide an advisory opinion on something if called upon. At Oberlin the faculty has responsibility for the educational program in general, this responsibility is met in collective assembly and through powers explicitly delegated to (typically) elected councils; the faculty's decisions carry authority, and through them an educational program gets presented, and re-worked, and constantly thought about. The result is that Oberlin College has become famous as a place where serious students can receive an education of very high quality, and I have learned to care about that.

In early talks with Nancy, she and I came to agree that Oberlin has a certain character. It is a place that is marked by (a) intellectual seriousness, (b) extensive attention to aesthetic sensibility, and (c) respect for social conscience. It is also marked by (d) its insistence on diversity in its community. I think there is a further feature of the character of Oberlin College: it is (e) that its educational program is in the care of faculty governance. So now the "large responsibility" that senior big-deal faculty member spoke to me about is really very very large, and very very important.

3. Communitarian rationale

Perhaps these remarks are enough to suggest why I think the most important rationale for faculty governance at Oberlin is the one I call "communitarian." There can be different rationales for different forms of faculty governance at different sorts of schools. But the one that impresses me as best for Oberlin is the communitarian one, for it emphasizes a connection of a generalized sort between faculty members and the educational program. It asks faculty members to detach a little from their disciplinary homes, and think more broadly about the educational program and the many services and activities that support it, and not just about the tiny chunk of the whole that involves one's own courses or departmental program. I want to say that if a faculty member could not, or were not willing to, think in general about the educational program, then Oberlin would not be his or her place to be.

I also want to place emphasis on the role in faculty governance of members of the faculty meeting in collective assembly, i.e., in the divisional faculties and the General Faculty. Scattered or fragmented governance, wherein authority is exercised in independent (perhaps elected) councils, or by administrators after consultation with selected faculty members, won't meet the standards of the communitarian rationale. In a place the size of Oberlin, the scattered or fragmented sort of decision-making leaves people uninformed, without voice, and finally either demoralized or uninterested.

4. Deterioration

In my view there has been a steady deterioration in communitarian faculty governance at Oberlin over the last several years. I don't know how to date its beginning, or measure its pace. Many of us have not wanted to face the facts in this matter.

The causes of the decline are a miscellany. My own view – and here I explicitly set aside Nancy – is that we have not, in recent history, been blessed with many senior administrators interested in helping make faculty governance work. Faculty governance can decline when administrators give it little or no attention, and it can really decline when individual faculty members give it little or no attention. Many individual faculty members have found reasons to stay away from meetings. Sometimes the reasons have to do with professional work or the apparent demands of reappointment and salary; sometimes they have to do with family responsibilities; sometimes they have to do with the fact that discussion in faculty meetings is occasionally boring, acrimonious, or silly, and the issues discussed something other than challenging.

At this point I dig in my heels, say the obvious, and hope for the best. The high-quality educational program Oberlin is famous for needs the care and concern of the faculty in collective assembly. Without strong faculty governance, Oberlin will, I believe, become more "ordinary" than we want it to be. So both faculty and administrators have to wake up and give attention to how faculty governance can be helped to flourish.

5. Revitalization

Apart from waking up and giving attention (and coming to meetings), what are we to do to rejuvenate faculty governance. Here is a short list of things to do.

- (a) We need new or better instruments of institutional memory. I find that I cannot carry the institutional history of my division in my head. Committee reports proposing policies to the faculty should include the recent history (if any) on their subject. We have a Faculty Guide, but we don't have helpful guides to existing legislation available to faculty members and elected members of councils. This is a solvable problem.
- (b) We need appropriate socialization for new members of the faculty. My own student-and-teaching history involves four universities. But none of it made me ready for faculty governance at Oberlin, especially the parts of it concerning the educational program as a whole, and the notion that I would have "voice" in matters of policy direction for the College as a whole. This, too, is a solvable problem; it involves talk within departments and programs, meetings organized by the Deans, and informal discussion with colleagues.
- (c) In our collective assemblies, we need to be less clever and bombastic and obtuse, and more trusting and generous, with one another, including the person chairing the meetings. One can make a point without belittling the opposition, and without fine displays of intimidating erudition, and one can seek clarification of something without excessive pretense of non-understanding. In our meetings, I think we should actually think of ourselves as more-or-less on a par with one another, so far as our responsibilities for the educational program are concerned. I don't know if this matter of style and attitude is a solvable problem – but I think we should try to solve it.
- (d) We need more flexibility – and, frankly, more openness to flexibility – in our governance arrangements. In areas involving, say, institutional grants, but also some parts of strategic planning, and even bits and pieces of major campaigns, we should realize that officers of the College must sometimes act such that prior review of actions by the faculty in collective assembly is impractical. I think faculty governance and flexibility are not entirely incompatible. The faculty can in some cases delegate authority, and create limited pockets of discretion; in other cases it can review actions already taken and make objections if necessary. I think this is a solvable problem – or, put more modestly, a more solvable problem than one might initially think. It is, of course, a two-way street. Those entrusted with discretion in a system of strong faculty governance shouldn't run amuck.
- (e) Above all, we should look to our means of communication. Strong faculty governance, if practiced well, has its way of keeping people informed about the College's issues, its troubles, and its progress. We are not practicing faculty governance well. We cancel meetings – often at the times when there are issues people should discuss. We mount Campaigns without systematic faculty input. We make major commitments to buildings and programs, but without anything like the review and approval that would be expected in a strong faculty governance system. We accept an important document concerning broad directions for the future of Oberlin without the opportunity for discussion in detail, with the usual sub-opportunities for motions and clarifications.

Let me say, here at the end, that my conversations with Nancy during this academic year have been wonderfully helpful to me. I do have concerns about governance, and her response to me has been supererogatory, especially when compared to the responsiveness of other senior administrators over the years. My thanks to Nancy. Maybe, with this conversation, and meetings next fall, we can revitalize and update our governance arrangements, and through them determine our future together.

Remarks to General Faculty
on
Oberlin's Governance
April 21, 1998

Nancy S. Dye

I.

Our idea to have this public conversation came to us several weeks ago over lunch in the Rat. Norm and I were talking about Oberlin's governance and, as you would expect, we had--and still have--points of agreement and disagreement. We decided then and there that a collegial public discussion of our ideas might be a good way to begin a larger faculty conversation on academic governance in general and on Oberlin governance in particular. Both of us think that such discourse is essential at this moment in our history--a conviction strengthened by our participation in the last College faculty meeting. We believe that such conversation must be prepared and informed, and envision a series of discussions structured around specific governance issues and questions for which all of us prepare by reading and study.

But this afternoon, Norm and I aren't here to put forth any particular agenda. We have no legislative aims. No motions, benign or otherwise, are up our collective sleeve. We hope, though, that this brief forty-five minute conversation between us and among all of us will serve to

set the stage for a far larger effort to come to terms with the needs of Oberlin's governance today and in the future.

II.

Even before I stepped foot on Oberlin's campus as its president, I heard about Oberlin governance. "Don't go to Oberlin," some friends warned me. "They make mincemeat of presidents there." As you might expect, I hear a fair amount about our governance from trustees and alumni. Much of what they have to say concerns how slowly we do things here. This hasn't surprised me: most people who don't spend their lives in the academy are astounded by the seemingly glacial pace of academic decision making. I tell them, with some seriousness, that our slow and deliberate ways explain why we have been around longer than any other institution in western civilization except the Church.

Rather more surprising and new to me has been the amount of talk among Oberlin faculty about governance. That talk is more complicated, and sometimes contradictory. Over the past four years I have heard many faculty talk with great pride about the strength and uniqueness of Oberlin's traditions of faculty governance, and about the necessity to preserve and strengthen those traditions. I have also heard from many faculty who are frustrated by what they find to be opaque and difficult governance mechanisms. I have heard a lot of concern about declining participation, particularly among younger faculty members--a concern I share. I have heard a lot of complaining that governance at Oberlin too often involves procedure and too seldom involves substance. I have heard the complaint that too few important issues are put before the faculty as a whole. And I

have heard from many faculty members of various ages and genders and disciplines and political persuasions that they do not feel empowered by Oberlin's governance.

I believe that there is a common theme underlying all of these disparate concerns. In a nutshell, I think that Oberlin lacks much in the way of a theory of governance. This deficit in theory manifests itself in many ways. One good example is the recent disagreement within the College faculty about the role and authority of the divisional councils vis a vis the faculty as a whole. Our lack of theory manifests itself in the long committee discussions all of us have been party to about whether or not this particular committee has any authority to be deliberating upon the matter before it. Then, too, we don't have a whole lot of clarity when it comes to articulating the role of the trustees or the president or the deans.

Now I realize that some of you are saying that we have a remarkable theory of governance at Oberlin--that body of ideas, decisions, and actions that we call the Finney Compact. The Finney Compact is a remarkable doctrine. It is a very early (perhaps the earliest) and still important articulation of the fundamental importance of academic freedom as the sine qua non of a great institution of higher learning. As Jeff Blodgett reminded us in his recent letter, the Finney Compact cannot be understood simply by reading Charles Finney's 1835 letter to the board of trustees accepting the Professorship of Theology here on the condition that the faculty had authority to run the internal affairs of the college. It is only through situating Finney's letter in its larger context--the context of the commotion at Lane Seminary in Cincinnati, where President Lyman Beecher and the trustees forbade Finney, Asa Mahan, John Morgan and other faculty and

students to speak and act as abolitionists; the context of the Oberlin trustees' narrow and rancorous decision to admit black students; and the context of nineteenth-century academic life generally, in which the principles of faculty autonomy and academic freedom were not generally recognized or smiled upon--it is only within this larger context that we can appreciate just how powerful and important a statement Finney and the other "Lane Rebels" were making about the role of faculty in governing a college and about the full humanity of African Americans. The Finney Compact always has been and will be central to defining the distinctive ethos of Oberlin College--that Oberlin is an institution that encourages individual autonomy, free expression, and dissent and that it makes central to its mission faculty and student engagement in the issues that animate and define American society can be traced directly to the Finney Compact.

But I must also admit that I don't find the Finney Compact, even in its most developed manifestations, a sufficiently practical guide to governing a complex and multifaceted institution of higher learning. Here is why: it does not illuminate in full or very useful ways the governance question that most persistently vexes Oberlinians. That question is, simply, "who gets to decide what?"

This question is at the heart of the current dispute within the College faculty: what, properly, can the Council decide? What can't it decide? What can the dean decide? It was this question that raised its head throughout the long-range planning process last year: Will the faculty vote on this? Do the focus groups have legitimacy? Do the planning teams have any authority? All of these questions are variations on the theme of "Who decides?" The long discussions in committee meetings about the committee's proper

authority are because we can't decide who decides. These are all entirely legitimate issues, but because we lack good theory on the matter, we often devote a great deal of time and energy to deciding who gets to decide.

I suspect that for vast stretches of our history, this lack of theory was not terribly troublesome. It was not very difficult, really, for the faculty and the president to function as a single decision-making committee of the whole. Certainly this could not have been hard when Professor Finney penned his letter: the faculty in 1835 numbered seven souls. By 1860, the number of teaching faculty had reached fifteen. By 1900? the faculty had become considerably larger--84 members. And by 1920, that number had reached 122--bigger by far, but still a relatively small number compared to today. This is not to say that there were not disagreements. Of course there were, and I am sure that they were every bit as acrimonious, if not more so, than they are today. But the world moved more slowly and intruded less upon the affairs of the College, the number of decision makers was smaller, and the faculty considerably more homogeneous than in recent years. I also suspect that because the world intruded less upon the College, that it was far clearer then than it is now just what were and were not "internal affairs."

There is much evidence that we are far more restive today about governance structures and mechanisms. We see this restiveness in the absence of robust participation in governance, particularly in the meetings of the general and division faculties. I, like Norm, see this as a serious problem that affects the current and future health of the College as a whole.

I do not think that this lack of enthusiasm is due principally to a greater emphasis on research since the passage of the Tenure Report, or the lessening of commitment to collegiality and citizenship in favor of commitment to one's discipline, although I do think that we should do much more to educate new faculty in what it means to be a participating citizen in this academic community, and find ways to encourage and facilitate their participation. And I don't think that changes in life styles, particularly the rise in the numbers of two-career couples, explain declining interest in participation, although I do think we would do well to change our meeting time to a More family-friendly hour.

Instead, I think that our lack of theory about "who decides what" engenders feelings of powerlessness among many members of the faculty, the administration, the student body, and even the trustees. Too many of us think that it just too hard to figure out how to move something through the complicated, cumbersome and often ambiguous or unclear processes that we have built up over the years. Many of us also say that the redundancies built into our governance processes tire us out: consider for example how many eyes in how many places must put the stamp of approval on as simple a matter as authorizing the hiring of a part-time instructor to teach a single course. And I fear that our confusion about authority and decision making also encourages inaction for the same reasons. So our governance processes too often put a damper on change and forward movement. I think that governance should be positive, and that its first purpose is to enable people to make things happen, not keep them from happening.

So what should we do? I agree with Norm that we must revitalize this forum, and the forum of the divisional faculty meetings, to discuss and

act upon real and important and substantive issues. Our ability to do that will depend in part upon our ability to develop some clarity and mutual understanding about the respective roles and responsibilities of each of the three arms of governance: the faculty, the trustees, and the president. Once we have some clarity and understanding about “who decides,” we won’t have to devote so much time to the matter. What’s more, we should look to reforming governance structures so that they will facilitate rather than discourage action and change.

But it also falls to us, including me, to dedicate ourselves to bringing matters of general importance to the floor. Here are some issues that I think we should discuss and make some general institutional resolutions on: diversity, what we mean by diversity at Oberlin, and how best to set and meet our goals for creating a genuinely diverse academic community; affirmative action; the curriculum in general, and how we can improve and enhance its coherence; interdisciplinarity, what it means to us, how we encourage it, or not encourage it, as the case may be; instructional and information technologies, and what they mean for us and our students; athletics; the relationship between the College and the Conservatory; student life--an area for which the faculty has great and overarching responsibility; the relationship between Oberlin, Ohio, and Oberlin College, particularly our relationship with the Oberlin public schools. These are just a few of the general issues facing us that we can and should deliberate upon. Beyond these, there are a myriad of specifically educational and pedagogical issues.

I must say, though, that I am not as great an enthusiast for communitarian governance as Norm, and do not share his faith that this is

invariably the best or most democratic form of decision-making. For one thing, deliberations in groups of this size depend heavily upon oratory rather than conversation, and a lot of people end up feeling left out. I find myself thinking that smaller, less formal opportunities for discussion and deliberation often give better opportunities to the many voices that are consistently silent in these assemblies.

Finally, I believe that we need to think less about governance entities competing with one another, and more in terms of how we can collaborate. Our planning process last year was one model for collaborative governance, in that it brought together all of the campus constituencies, as well as alumni and trustees. The theory behind that process was that every constituency has voice in governance, and that the three major decision-making entities--the faculty, the board, the president (and administration) make better decisions collaboratively rather than competitively. There will always be some aspects of governance that are by law and custom explicitly given over to faculty control--the curriculum and the hiring, rewarding, and promoting of faculty are the two main examples. But we are living in the most difficult and complicated of times as far as the fate and future of higher education are concerned, and faculty, trustees and administration--the three traditional arms of academic governance--need each other's efforts, experience, wisdom, insights, and support if Oberlin is to continue to be in the forefront of American colleges and universities.