

SAGA Report for Spring 2009

Faculty: Approximately 40 classes have SAGA components this semester, including two premier SAGA classes: ENG 220, taught by Professor Paula Buck, a survey of literature that focused on poverty and hunger, with several outside speakers presenting on the topic; ENG 330, taught by Professor Mary Pharr, an advanced film studies class that viewed and critiqued films with the themes of poverty and hunger. During the Spring Faculty Forum, divisional breakout groups committed six courses to include SAGA components per semester for each division during 2009-2010 (increased from four a semester for 2008-2009) and four courses per division to turn in a sample of student SAGA completed assignments from spring semester 2009.

Honduras Study Abroad—Patty Suppes, a modern language professor, along with a Lisa Rinsdale, a nursing professor, organized a nine-day spring break 2009 service learning trip to Honduras in conjunction with Hope for Honduras, a nonprofit organization dedicated to make positive changes in the life of impoverished children in this Latin American country. Eight students prepared for the trip by holding fund raisers, attending a lecture on the historical causes of poverty in Honduras, and preparing lessons to teach at Honduran schools. Their immersion experience, interacting with Honduran children and adults, not only honed their language skills but gave them a first-hand encounter with poverty in this developing country.

SAGA Committee: The committee has meet monthly to share information and make decisions about the implementation of SAGA throughout campus. Faculty members on the committee have collected sample student assessments (in the form of embedded questions and essays) from SAGA component classes and have used a rubric to determine student progress on SAGA knowledge and awareness. After considering dozens of books, the committee approved a common reader for first year students for Fall 2009: *Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario, which chronicles the compelling life-threatening journey of a teenage boy from his home in Honduras on the "Train of Death" through Mexico to find his mother in the U.S. In January, the committee held a reception honoring the Advisory Sub-Committee of community leaders who will provide guidance and information concerning local opportunities for service. A Student Sub-Committee is also being established to include students who want to focus their energy on organizing service opportunities for the campus community. A VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) volunteer will be coming to campus this summer and will be committed through the academic year to identifying options for service learning partnerships, as well as networking with local volunteer agencies, creating a database of resources and opportunities.

Assessment—A SAGA Scan was given to all students at the February 4 convocation asking if they had been involved in an FSC sponsored community service activity and if they had participated in a community service activity not directly related to FSC. Out of 1233 students, 60% had been involved in some community service. Of those reporting involvement, 33% said that it was in the area of providing food or shelter. The Survey of Engagement and Survey of Awareness were given to students in April during the busy MWF 9:05 a.m. class hour to ensure a cross section of students. Focus groups with a cross sampling of students were held in April to assess changes in students' awareness and knowledge of the SAGA theme. Results will be available during the summer.

Students:

Week of Impact—The Student Government Association sponsored and organized the Week of Impact, February 2-6, providing students lots of opportunities to learn about SAGA issues and to act upon their awareness. Representatives from Oxfam spoke at the Wednesday convocation on

“Framing the Global Food Crisis” and conducted afternoon breakout sessions to give students the tools and resources needed to mobilize around specific food crisis issues. The evening program was an Humanitarian Emergency Simulation in which students joined a highly interactive role-playing session based on an imaginary (but very possible) The goal of this simulation was to give students a deeper understanding of Oxfam’s work considering competing interests and solutions that must be administered within a critical timeframe. At the end of the simulation, there was time for students to debrief, reflect, and ask questions of Oxfam staff. During Week of Impact, students and faculty took advantage of lots of opportunities to volunteer in the local community. They helped out at the Farmworkers Ministry, where they organized donated clothes and prepared for a yard sale for migrant workers, and at Lighthouse Ministries, where they tutored and organized office space. Students also made and distributed food for the homeless with Campus Sandwich Ministries. Student and faculty involvement with the Farmworkers Ministry continued when they participated in the Spring Health Fair for migrant workers.

Wellness Retreat—The Wellness Center held an all day Wellness Retreat with a strong emphasis on the SAGA theme on Saturday, February 21. The keynote address included question and answer and discussion about students’ experience with SAGA. Two of the breakout sessions—Haiti Mission Trip and Migrant Worker Program—also focused on poverty and hunger. Though the number of students participating was low, student response on a conducted survey evaluating the retreat was overwhelmingly positive.

Race Across America—Fitness programming conducted a virtual race where participants earned “miles” by exercising. This year’s race had a SAGA theme. Each week had a different with educational information about poverty and hunger pertaining to that particular region or city, along with motivational text to encourage the 41 participants.

Student Organization Service—each student organization on campus adopted at least one philanthropy that focuses on poverty and hunger.

SAGA Film Series and Theatre Opportunity—On April 7, the SAGA film series presented *Coal Miner’s Daughter*, a film about the rise to success of country music legend Loretta Lynn, who was born into a poverty-stricken town in the hills of Kentucky. Mary Pharr introduced the film and helped with the film notes, and Tom Norman was instrumental with the setup and after-film discussion. In November, the Theatre Arts Department presented the SAGA-themed play *Dancing at Lughnasa* about five unmarried sisters eking out their lives in a small village in Ireland in 1936.

Cantilevers: A Journal of the Arts, which annually publishes the poetry, short fiction, and art from FSC students, alumni, faculty, and staff, sponsored a SAGA writing competition this year and presented an award to the best entry that had a poverty and/or hunger theme.

Fall 2009 Plans include a convocation featuring Sonia Nazario, the journalist who wrote *Enrique’s Journey*, and Enrique’s mother, Lourdes. Films being considered for the SAGA Film Series are *Slumdog Millionaire* and *The Soloist*. Also, another Honduran trip is planned for the fall as a one hour course.