

Winter 2012 Newsletter



Greetings!

The New Year and a new newsletter invite us to appreciate a new range of member activities and to reflect on the months since our last issue. There are new programs, publications, and events to share, and reports from a growing number of ACMHE sponsored and co-sponsored gatherings.

But who among us, gathered at any of those recent events, would have guessed that these were the last over which Arthur Zajonc would preside as our host and Master of Ceremonies? The [news of his appointment as President of the Mind & Life Institute](#) arrived just over a month ago.

We are very excited, and wish Arthur all the best with this new adventure, but we will miss the steady hand and warm heart of his guidance as Executive Director. His skillfulness and expansive sense of direction helped us navigate though difficulties with equanimity and experience our successes with joy. His leadership here has created a deep reservoir of good will that will continue to be a source of sustenance for the Contemplative Mind community in the time ahead. Arthur will remain on the Center's Board of Directors.

And we are very fortunate that Daniel Barbezat, our new Executive Director, is his most worthy successor. As a 2009 Contemplative Practice Fellow and Arthur's colleague at Amherst College, Dan became closely and energetically involved with the Center in a relatively brief period of time. He joined the Board and began service as Associate Director, with Mirabai Bush, in 2009, when the Center refined its mission to focus on higher education. His economics courses incorporating

contemplative methods have attracted national attention and he's become a compelling spokesperson for contemplative pedagogy at many conferences and institutions. We look forward to his fresh take on the Center's activities. Please join us in welcoming Dan in his new role. His greetings to the community appear below.

All best wishes to you for the coming year!



Beth Wadham and Carrie Bergman

Quick Links to Our Upcoming Events

"Sentipensante Pedagogy and Contemplative Practice"

A Webinar with Laura Rendón

Thursday, February 23, 2012, 3:00pm EST

International Symposia for Contemplative Studies

April 26-29, 2012, in Denver, CO

We are a co-sponsor of this event, which is being facilitated by Mind & Life.

There will be an "ACMHE track" and a reception for members.

8th Annual Summer Session on Contemplative Pedagogy

July 29-August 3, 2012, at Smith College, Northampton, MA

4th Annual ACMHE Conference

September 21-23, 2012, at Amherst College, Amherst, MA

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Greetings from Executive Director



Daniel Barbezat

Working together with the wonderful community of scholars, educators, practitioners and well-wishers and the vibrant and wonderful staff and Board of Directors of the Center, Mirabai and Arthur have created an incredible foundation on which to build our work to transform higher education and our society. I am so grateful to them for all that they have done and for all that they continue to teach me. As Founding Director, Mirabai established and sustained an incredibly beautiful organization based on connection and integrity. In everything we do, that original energy shows. Thank you so much, Mirabai; I am excited to continue working and learning from you. And Arthur...you have so calmly and clearly guided the Center for the past few years with such grace that I am hard pressed to acknowledge and thank you enough. I have and continue to learn so much from you. Thank you for your quiet herculean efforts, deep and abiding vision and rock-solid integrity. I have a deep trust and faith in your vision and work, and I am so happy for the folks at Mind & Life. We all wish you the very best.

Our work has never been more important. Without a doubt, we cannot hope to have a vibrant and meaningful Republic without a healthy and productive education system. One look at common political discourse should be enough to convince anyone that we need to support and sustain transformation among our citizens! Over the next few months, we at the Center will be looking deeply into our vision for society and the Center that creates and sustains it. Our successes have moved us into a new phase of our work. Already we have over 800 members in the Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education (ACMHE) whose fields span the full gamut of disciplines. We are building relationships with Teaching and Learning Centers and others throughout campus communities and have established a legitimacy that has been so hard won.

I would like to see the Center move into a new phase as a leading institution in fostering the transformation in higher education--a transformation that deepens learning to support and sustain all of our students' inquiries into the integration of their inner and outer lives. We have developed the means to create and support frameworks in which students find themselves at the center of their own education. This awareness and introspection fosters an exploration of their deepest meaning in their learning, lives and relationships to others. We are realizing, though, that this process is not only felt by students. The transformation is also occurring among the faculty, staff and administration. The Center supports faculty in revitalizing their relationships to their students, colleagues and even their disciplines. We are very proud of the community of scholars that each day is changing the face of higher education. For staff and administration, too, the Center can provide new means of interacting and creating the spaces in which scholarship, teaching and transformation can take place. While the Center has always been a vehicle for transformation, I would like us to sharpen our focus on this aspect of our important work. We, at the Center, will be looking closely at our

vision and mission in order to foster a world of increased engagement, joyful discovery and less suffering for all beings.

While focusing on the big picture, we will also be attending to our core programs and planning new initiatives. The Annual Summer Session, ACMHE Conference and Retreat have successfully expanded and deepened our work over the past few years. We are very grateful to all who have participated in them. We will be reviewing these programs and examining their structure, intent, accessibility and appropriateness to the widest spectrum possible. For example, we will be seeking funds and support to expand the number of scholarships available, allowing those to participate who might be otherwise unable to attend. We would also like to expand participation by extending our program activities to include those working outside the classroom, for example, in teaching and learning centers. We will keep you informed as this process unfolds and look forward to your input. In addition, we will be looking at new initiatives designed to expand the scope and range of our programs. More, too, about these as we develop them.

Finally, I am excited to look forward to the events planned for the first part of this year. Our Webinar series will feature Jill Schneiderman, Professor of Earth Science at Vassar (January 25), Laura Rendón, author of *Sentipensante Pedagogy* and Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Texas (February 23) and Catherine Kerr, from Brown University Medical School in March. We are co-sponsors of the International Symposia for Contemplative Studies in Boulder, CO April 26 - 29, facilitated by the Mind & Life Institute, and warmly invite you to attend the four sessions we've designed especially for the higher education community and a special reception for ACMHE members.

This is a dramatic and wonderful time for us at the Center. We hope that we can work with you this year to make our lives and those around us more meaningful and engaging. From all of us, may you have a wonderful 2012.

Student Perspectives on Contemplative Pedagogy

The focus of the Center has long been to support the inclusion of contemplative methods at colleges and universities by offering fellowships and programs for faculty and administrators (higher education professionals). With the growth of the field, greater numbers of students now experience courses that include contemplative dimensions, and we are extremely interested in their perspectives.

The great majority of faculty using practices in their courses and co-curricular work do report that these methods facilitate positive learning and that most students have favorable responses. The recent [Assessment of the Contemplative Practice Fellowship Program, 1997-2009](#) reports that 75% of Fellows thought that "students appeared more present and engaged," and 70% agreed that there is a "greater sense of trust and openness" among students in contemplative courses.

But while these impressions from faculty are useful indicators, we have heard very little directly

from students about their experiences as participants in contemplative courses. In 2011, we formed an intention to cultivate greater connections to students, and allocated modest funding to support their attendance at our regional and annual conferences. As we begin to hear their perspectives, we expect to move forward in ways that serve them better. Below we hear from Karen Cardozo, who organized a panel of students for the Annual ACMHE Conference at Amherst College in November and Kathleen Noble, Professor, Science and Technology at the University of Washington, Bothell, who reports on her students' participation in our Western Regional ACMHE conference at the Whidbey Institute last July.

Highlights from an ACMHE Roundtable: Student Perspectives on Contemplative Practices, Pedagogies, and Studies

Karen M. Cardozo, Five Colleges, Inc.



As those of us in the classroom know, effective teaching doesn't just spring from good intentions like Athena from the forehead of Zeus; it emerges from an ongoing dialectic between practice and theory, intention and effect, as well as a dialogue between students and teachers. Thus, when Arthur Zajonc and Beth Wadham asked me to organize a student panel for the 2011 ACMHE Conference, I was delighted to oblige and eager to hear what students had to say about contemplative practices, pedagogies and studies.

With the help of various faculty members (properly thanked below), I was able to assemble a panel of six students from five different institutions: *Nathaniel House*, Hamilton College; *Elizabeth McKibben*, UMass Amherst; *Alyssa Munsell* and *Licia Spina*, Keene State College; *Mitz Qutab*, Bridgewater State College; and *Carey Walker*, Florida Gulf Coast University. These students--a first year, a sophomore, and four seniors--did not merely rise, but actively soared to the occasion, writing thoughtful responses to my discussion prompts and sharing them cogently and concisely at the conference. (Due to a transportation mishap, Mitz was unable to attend, but gave me permission to read his reflections; thus he was with us in both spirit and voice.)

While it is difficult to summarize such a supple and wide-ranging conversation, three major themes seemed to emerge (elaborated further below). First, students testified that *stress and suffering* prompted their turn to contemplative practice and/or led them to seek out contemplative courses. Second, students appreciated the *integrative orientation* of contemplative courses, which helped them undo the compartmentalization that often structures modern modes of living and learning. Third, students felt that contemplative courses build *community*--they deeply valued the supportive relationships that emerge from engagements undertaken collectively in mutual compassion and respect.



Starting with Suffering

To begin the conversation, Nate, Alyssa and Lizzie spoke movingly of various kinds of physical and emotional suffering that led them to seek out and commit to contemplative practice. Being sidelined by a terribly painful back injury led Nate to explore the "more nuanced and meaningful things in life." His physical limitations forced him "to look elsewhere to find [and] expand" different aspects of himself. Having a Buddhist uncle and a father who is an executive coach encouraged Nate to "follow his heart," and he hasn't looked back: at his own initiative, he was the first student participant at the 2011 Summer Session on Contemplative Curriculum Development. Mitz's essay similarly recounted a dark night of the soul in an experience of incarceration that led him to a meditation teacher and, ultimately, to start a student insight meditation group on his campus.

When a serious bout with brain cancer left her legally blind, Alyssa found herself seeking ways to cope with the devastating loss of her vision, eventually finding her way to Tom Bassarear's contemplative course, *Other Ways of Knowing*. Through tears evoked by remembering this difficult time, Alyssa described how that course awakened her spirituality and provided reassurance that everything would be okay. Reading Parker Palmer's *Let Your Life Speak*, she said, "reinforced a belief that there is order in the universe, and that things happen for a reason...it helped me get out of the depression I was struggling with." Concomitantly, she realized she wants to be a social worker, which now infuses her college experience with an additional sense of direction and purpose.

Lizzie also spoke of experiencing anxiety and depression as a high school student, which her yoga practice alleviated; it also corrected her severe scoliosis of the spine. Now Lizzie is a certified yoga teacher who teaches classes at the UMass recreation center. Her high school experiences inspired her to elect a first-year residential academic community, IMPACT!, "which requires three hours of community service per week in addition to taking Katja Hahn d'Errico's *American Diversity* course, which discusses social justice issues in tandem with contemplative practices of

mediation and service." In the Q and A, Katja reminded us of the gift that a contemplative community offers in acknowledging suffering and promoting healing, and the intimacy which results when we risk opening more fully to ourselves and others in the midst of our deepest difficulties.

From Stress and Division to Transformation

In *The Heart of Higher Education* (2010, henceforth *HHE*), Parker Palmer wrote, "We need to stop releasing our students into the wild without systematically challenging them to take an inner as well as outer journey. Integrative education can help us do just that" (49). Roundtable participants emphasized that the life of a "typical" student is chronically stressful, and thus students really value opportunities to integrate their inner and outer journeys. As Carey observed, student stress partly reflects the apocalyptic discourse of the culture at large--which constantly seems to be on the verge of economic, environmental, or political disaster--but it is also the structural consequence of many competing obligations: academic work, paid employment to meet the rising costs of higher education, and for many, avid "partying" that Licia hypothesized is the *mindless* route to stress relief for students unaware of alternative practices.

In addition, students are "always on" (as David Levy made clear in his conference presentation on undergraduate relationships to technology) but as Carey put it, "we can't tell our stories truthfully" in the limited forms of Facebook or Twitter. Thus, for the student panelists, the meaningful and substantive nature of contemplative courses offered an antidote to stressful and superficial interactions. As Nate said in response to an audience question about dealing with resistant students, faculty should just keep making the contemplative curriculum available; students will avail themselves of it when they are ready. Indeed, he observed, once students are introduced to such practices, they will insist that faculty make class time for contemplation because "it is a blessing; it may be the only time in our day that we can just focus and breathe." In response to a question from the audience about the risks of introducing contemplative practices only partially (in courses whose primary obligation is to "cover" certain content), Licia responded that the risks far outweigh the benefits and Lizzie concurred that the introduction of a 10-minute practice in class might inspire some students to expand the practice on their own. Here, all agreed that meditation is but one among many practices that fall under the larger rubric of contemplative practice, which includes a range of activities that may be more likely to help students to enter unfamiliar interior landscapes.

As Carey summed up: a contemplative course "takes a typical college student (stressed, anxious, caffeinated, self-harming) and facilitates their journey towards a contemplative life (happy, calm, and in love with the Earth, the people around them, and themselves.)" Here, I couldn't help note in the Q and A, contemplative practice and teaching does the same for faculty, who are often every bit as stressed as their students amidst competing personal and professional pressures (particularly given the shrinking of the tenure system and the rise of contingent faculty). As Veta Goler has observed, it takes "whole professors [to] give students permission to be whole individuals in the classroom" (*HHE* 202).

In this regard Arthur Zajonc has written poignantly about the "perennial crisis" of "the divided life of students" and of the despair he experienced as an undergraduate amidst the "soullessness of the university" (*HHE* 55-56). He was fortunate in finding a mentor who revealed the possibility of "an undivided life where meaning and purpose are tightly interwoven with intellect and action, where compassion and care are infused with insight and knowledge." Once primed for such

integration, Arthur "found the old subjects filled with hidden significance and unexpected connections" (56). The roundtable participants testified eloquently to this sense of newfound significance and connection. Whether encouraging students to see commonalities across courses and fields of knowledge, or linking what happens in classrooms to what happens outside them, students conveyed that contemplative courses enabled them to feel like whole people.

As Lizzie so aptly put it, contemplation is "reflection and observation that allows us to have alignment of thoughts, words, and actions through balancing heart and mind." That, in itself, is a huge stress reliever, with spillover effects beyond the classroom for faculty and students alike. In Carey's words, "I have learned to engage my entire self in every moment, not to compartmentalize as much." After three contemplative courses with Maria Roca (with whom she also co-authored and presented a paper at the 2011 conference), Carey said the anxiety she used to feel around assignment deadlines now just "floats away": she knows she will get everything done and if things don't work out perfectly, she will be able to cope with that too. Thus, Carey concludes: "some courses teach you how to make a living, these classes teach you how to live a full life."

In response to audience questions about logistics (how much work, what kinds of assignments, etc.) the roundtable participants insisted that the most important factor is creating a curricular space for students to engage in self-determined and meaningful inquiry: that is the key to boosting motivation and the quality of engagement. There is no mathematical formula for the "right" amount of work; what matters most, Nate argued, is that assignments have *significance*. As Licia testified, *Other Ways of Knowing* was actually *more* work than her other courses, but because she was so engaged and inspired, it never felt burdensome or stressful. In challenging herself for 21 days to a daily walking meditation practice, Licia discovered that "taking time out of the day to ask yourself, 'Am I really awake?' [is] extremely powerful." She concludes that "focusing on truly 'being,' especially in an educational setting, is extremely effective and connects us with our environment and peers."

The student panel contrasted this rich level of engagement with feeling overwhelmed and uninspired by traditional courses that assign "busy work," or evaluation formats that emphasize information over meaning. As Alyssa argued, "more isn't necessarily better." The copious transmission of information in some courses is soon forgotten once the semester has ended; students are more likely to retain lessons that are truly relevant to their lives.

Like Alyssa, Licia also had a vocational epiphany in her contemplative course: she had long expected to be an elementary school teacher, but "the course's readings on health, healing, medicine and meditation [enabled] a greater connection" to her psychology major and sparked an interest in a potential career in health psychology; she is now collaborating with Karen Jennings in the psychology department at Keene State, studying the impact of practicing yoga on the stress levels of first-year students.

Similarly, Mitz wrote that his personal meditation practice has enabled him to consider the relation between "science and spirit" when he is in his Biology courses. This is wonderful indeed, but as Arthur Zajonc has observed, "Integration should be intentional and systemic, not accidental and extracurricular" (*HHE* 56). Significantly, Licia noted that *Other Ways of Knowing* was an integrative studies requirement that, although not directly tied to her major, nonetheless shaped her future goals. This left her, and leaves us, reflecting on how to bridge the hierarchical divide

between "core" or "major" courses and elective ones which are, quite often, sites for contemplative pedagogies.

Contemplating Community

All of the students spoke fervently of connecting to others on the contemplative path, whether through a supportive community of practice (like the meditation group Mitz leads at Bridgewater State or the yoga class Lizzie teaches at UMass), or a classroom community in which all participants are mutually known and valued (as Alyssa and Licia found in *Other Ways of Knowing* at Keene State), or amidst a larger campus culture or environment that lends itself to contemplation (in Nate's hope that available funds at Hamilton will enable a new symposium on contemplative pedagogies, or Carey's transformative experience in multiple courses taught at FGCU, an Earth Charter affiliate located in inspiring natural surroundings). Whatever the context, student participants felt liberated by the discovery that they are not alone and commented on the uplifting power of collective learning and engagement. For, example, Licia noted that the peer bonds formed in the contemplative classroom remain strong long after the course has ended.

This abiding sense of communal connection may be, in part, the result of a pedagogy that intentionally de-centers the teacher. In the keynote address that opened the 2011 ACHME conference, Mirabai Bush suggested that contemplative pedagogies work on three levels: 1) calming the mind and creating readiness for learning; 2) generating deeper insight into, or intimacy with, the objects or questions of study and 3) cultivating the open-heartedness that enables us to live and work more harmoniously with others. But ultimately, she concluded, the sincerity and depth of the teacher's own practice is the single most important factor. One fruit of such practice is the increased capacity to *listen* with greater openness and compassion to others. As Licia explained, Tom Bassarear's course "challenged the idea of the typical college classroom. Instead of sitting in rows with the teacher as 'the sage on the stage,' we [sat in a circle] and were actively engaged in each of our lessons." She also wrote: "I had always been the type of student who tended to be quiet in a classroom, but the way in which we held classroom discussion in this course allowed me to speak freely and openly."

For student participants, this is what distinguished their contemplative courses from many others. They not only felt invited to speak, but also felt *heard*. As Alyssa emphasized, in contrast to dispiriting occasions in other classes where faculty seek student feedback only to disregard it, contemplative courses are student-centered. Mutual respect seems to be at the core of these student-teacher collaborations, and this is also the foundation for a strong sense of community.

Overall, the ACMHE student roundtable affirmed resoundingly that we should "attend to the cultivation of our students' humanity at least as much as we instruct them in the content of our fields. In this way higher education, both in the classroom and beyond, can balance its informative task with transformation" (*HHE*, 102). Clearly, the student participants in this roundtable are already on a transformative path, one well-lit by the ACHME members who taught them, and others who walk with them. Here let me thank the following faculty members for nominating student participants and for the contemplative practice and teaching that has so clearly inspired their students: Katja Hahn d'Errico, UMass Amherst; David O'Malley, Bridgewater State University; Tom Bassarear and Karen Jennings, Keene State College; and Maria Roca, Florida Gulf Coast University.

In conclusion, I learned many valuable things from organizing this roundtable, but was especially

struck by the effortless sense of camaraderie and community among the student participants, who had never met each other before this event. In them, I saw a reflection of the way I have always felt upon meeting familiar and new colleagues at ACHME or at other events related to contemplative studies: *kindred spirits*! Given the emphasis by roundtable participants on the sense of isolation and stress that so many college students experience, perhaps it is time for ACMHE members and the Association at large to consider supporting contemplative community-building initiatives for students, at both intra- and inter-institutional levels.

Information and Transformation in Consciousness Studies

Kathleen Noble

Professor, Science and Technology, University of Washington, Bothell

Last July, at the Western Regional Conference of the ACMHE, six of my students went public for the first time about their passion for Consciousness Studies. Some had been studying this subject with me for a year, some for only two quarters. Yet all felt as though they had gained access to depths of themselves that they had never suspected existed and they were eager to share the experience with faculty who attended the conference.

I've been a professor at the University of Washington for more than 20 years, a clinical and counseling psychologist by training and licensure, a long-time meditator, and an equally long-time explorer of consciousness. Having come of age in the late 1960's--when fascination with the mysteries of consciousness was in the air we breathed--I had longed dreamed about creating an intellectual space where contemporary students could become similarly engaged with these mysteries. I wanted to create a program that would introduce university students to new models of the mind and include them in the emerging conversation between science and spirituality. I wanted to incorporate the practice of meditation in class sessions and teach students to add introspection and self-reflection to their growing repertoire of intellectual skills.

Finding a way to do this wasn't easy. In 2000 I created an "Introduction to Consciousness" course for students in the University of Washington Honors Program and taught it once a year for the next eight years, all the while searching for an academic home that would allow me to go further than was possible in 10 weeks. Then, in 2010, a way opened at the Bothell campus of the University of Washington in a department that was just being formed--the Science and Technology Program. In the past year and a half I've created five permanent courses whose foci range from neuroplasticity and the placebo effect to lucid dreaming and anomalous healing. In the process we delve into the work of scholars such as Rupert Sheldrake, Jeremy Narby, Allan Wallace, Robert Jahn, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We explore the challenges to materialist models of reality presented by quantum physics and near death experiences and we examine the role of intention and belief in the perception and experience of physical reality. We also meditate at the beginning of each class session and end each day with students' reflections on the "Big So Whats" that they gleaned that day.

Preliminary research into the process of studying consciousness from this integral and multifaceted perspective suggests that it can lead to powerful, indeed transformative changes in the ways that students approach their individual and collective lives. Certainly that was true for the six students who participated in the ACHME Western Regional Conference. And it was evident

in the overwhelmingly positive response of the audience to the presence and persuasiveness of these students. It's safe to say that everyone on both sides of the podium left the presentation feeling energized and committed to including students in future conferences, and to infusing their voices throughout the activities of this unique organization.

Advancing Contemplative Pedagogy through Teaching and Learning Centers

Beth Wadham

A growing number of faculty members now use contemplative methods in their classrooms, share research at conferences and practice together at retreats. But typically they work in isolation or in small groups at their home institutions. In the interest of supporting broader development of a contemplative culture on campus, the Center began to explore whether and how teaching and learning centers (TLCs) might serve as loci or homes for contemplative pedagogy.



A planning workshop on September 11, 2011 at Amherst College brought together 12 representatives from TLCs across the United States who were eager to collaborate with such an initiative. From this meeting, the Center learned that many TLCs, which are by definition staffed by people committed to excellence in teaching, are open to providing resources and introductions to this innovative pedagogy. TLC staff and university faculty are attracted to contemplative pedagogy for its benefits for teachers and students as well as its effectiveness as a vehicle for more meaningful interactions, relationships and dialogue about teaching, learning and other issues. TLCs vary greatly in size, structure and mission, but many appear to be well-positioned to advance contemplative practices on campuses, and the Center is enthusiastic about this strategic opportunity.

Each participant in the group shared their experience and challenges with contemplative methods. In small group discussion, they considered actions that would create a sustainable infrastructure for contemplative approaches. Their proposals included:

- Compiling and disseminating relevant research (studies on attention, memory and emotional stability) and developing a research agenda for learning outcomes, to enhance the legitimacy of contemplative practices;
- Enhancing faculty expertise through invited speakers, design workshops, and online and print resources on the principles of contemplative pedagogy;
- Identifying allies in professional organizations and developing opportunities for

communication and collaboration among TLCs and faculty within and across disciplines, departments and programs;

- Publishing opinion and other essays describing the educational benefits, to encourage more widespread adoption.

In the US, TLCs are connected with one another through the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network. At the annual POD conference on October 26 - 30, 2011, in Atlanta, the Center offered two panel presentations.

The first, "Design and Use of Contemplative Pedagogy for Higher Education," featured Daniel Barbezat, Professor of Economics at Amherst College and Allison Pingree, Director of Professional Pedagogy at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. Over 40 people participated. The second, "Contemplative Pedagogy and Diversity: Creating Collaboration and a Research Agenda," had a special designation as a collaboration between POD and the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Faculty Development Network (HBCUFDN) and addressed this year's conference focus on the central role of diversity. Over 25 attended the session which featured Renee Hill, Professor of Philosophy at Virginia State University, Daniel Barbezat, and Richard Sclove, who coordinated the Center's participation.

The initiative engaged warm interest and support from the leadership of POD, and a good foundation was laid for future collaboration. ***If you are interested in being on the contact list for further information and activities of the Teaching and Learning Centers Project, please email beth@contemplativemind.org.***



Participants at the Teaching & Learning Centers Planning Workshop, Amherst College, September 2011



MIND & LIFE
I N S T I T U T E

Mind & Life Institute's New Contemplative Studies Fellowship

DEADLINE EXTENDED TO FEBRUARY 15, 2012

For more information, please visit [the Mind & Life website](#).

(Please also direct any questions about these fellowships to Mind & Life.

The Center/ACMHE is not involved in this initiative and we cannot answer any questions regarding this program--we are simply spreading the news of this opportunity.)

The Mind & Life Institute, with funding from The John Templeton Foundation, invites Contemplative Studies Fellowship grant applications that propose to bring fresh perspectives from the humanities into contemplative neuroscience and contemplative clinical science. One-year grants will be awarded to successful applicants holding Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor (or equivalent) rank at their academic institution. Fellowship grants will be awarded in line with American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) guidelines based on academic rank:

- \$60,000 for Full Professor and equivalent
- \$40,000 for Associate Professor and equivalent
- \$35,000 for Assistant Professor and equivalent

Additionally, successful applicants are expected to document their eligibility for matching funds from their respective institutions (e.g., through support for some percentage of one's salary or benefits not fully covered by the amount of the fellowship).

Mind and Life Contemplative Studies Fellowship (MLCSF) applicants are required to show how their research strategy and subject matter engage with scientific approaches to the study of contemplative practice in fields such as clinical science, neuroscience and so on.

The MLCSF grant program will have two complementary strands:

Strand one will focus on encouraging new kinds of scholarly reviews and critical analyses of recent scientific work, with the goals of raising new questions, improving methods, and drawing out broader implications of the scientific work. Projects in this strand can be formulated in terms of various fields or methodologies, including but not limited to religious studies, philosophy, anthropology, and sociology.

Strand two will focus on facilitating new kinds of active partnerships between humanistic scholars and laboratory scientists, with the goals of developing new interdisciplinary methods and a richer approach to the questions at hand. Funded projects will fall under one of three rubrics: Field-based projects, Laboratory-based projects, or Interdisciplinary team-based projects.

MLCSF recipients will be required to attend the Mind and Life Summer Research Institute (MLSRI), and recipients at more advanced stages of their research may be invited to deliver MLSRI plenary lectures or lead break-out workshops and discussion groups based on their research.

[Click here for the complete RFP](#)
[Click here for Proposal Guidelines](#)
[Click here to submit a proposal](#)

Please direct any questions about these fellowships to the Mind & Life Institute.

New Program Announcements from Members

The Swedish Association for Contemplation in Education and Research

Walter Osika, Stressforskningsinstitutet, Stockholm University

A collaboration with researchers from various faculties using meditation as contemplative inquiry on research questions met monthly during 2011 to practice contemplative exercises and deepen and clarify their research questions. [Read the abstract.](#)

Master of Art Degree in Education; Holistic and Integrative Education Option At California State University, San Bernadino

Bob London, Program Coordinator

The MA in Education: Holistic and Integrative Education Option is an innovative program for creative educators. It is designed for educators interested in entering a dialogue with a cohort of master's students and a team of professors to explore how to develop and implement innovative and meaningful curriculum. Our major objective is to help each educator become clearer about their vision of education and how to implement that vision in their professional setting. The program has been recognized internationally for its transformative approach to the education process. The cohort starting in the summer quarter 2012 is especially designed to allow students not in the geographical region of the university to complete the program. The cohort will spend two weeks on campus for each of three summers, and complete the remainder of their degree online by the summer quarter 2014.



A contemplative art activity outside as part of a weekend retreat at the James Reserve in Idyllwild, California.

The program is designed for educators who do not have a teaching credential and do not work in public schools (e.g., nonprofit organizations; community colleges or universities; educators in the arts).

Further information concerning the program is available at:
http://www.csusb.edu/coe/programs/holistic_integ_ed/index.htm



Certificate in Mindfulness for Educators Program

Claire Stanley, Faculty of the Center for Mindful Inquiry

The first cohort in the Certificate in Mindfulness for Educators program completed the final residential component of the program in early December. Seven teachers from elementary, secondary, and higher education contexts participated and have integrated mindfulness into their teaching practice in subject matters as diverse as music and neuroscience. They are receiving eight graduate credits from Antioch University New England as well as the Certificate.

The program is a collaboration between Antioch, Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, and The Center for Mindful Inquiry. Applications are open for the 2012 cohort until early January. Visit www.mindfulinquiry.org for more information about the Certificate Program and to download the application.



CENTER FOR MINDFUL INQUIRY

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BARRE CENTER FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES

Mindfulness Studies at Lesley University

Nancy Waring

The Mindfulness Studies Program immerses students in the theory, practice and history of mindfulness and its applications in health care, professional practice disciplines, communication, leadership and multiculturalism. The Program's four 3-credit courses are offered on campus and can be completed as a graduate or undergraduate level Certificate in Mindfulness Studies or incorporated as a specialization in the Self-Designed Master's Degree Program. The courses can also be taken individually. For the course list and more information, contact Professor Nancy Waring at nwaring@lesley.edu and [read the flyer](#).



Spiritual Diversity: Contemplative Presence Program

The Spiritual Diversity Program is part of a series of educational opportunities offered through Spiritual Health Services at Winnipeg Health Sciences Centre.

Due to the high level of interest in the course, "Spiritual Diversity: Hope and Healing," a nine week series exploring contemplative presence in the hospital environment is offered. For more information, [read the flyer](#).

Upcoming Events



Webinar: *Sentipensante* Pedagogy and Contemplative Practice

with Laura Rendón

Professor of Leadership and Educational Policy Studies, University of Texas San Antonio

Thursday, February 23, 2012

3:00 - 4:00 pm EST

Free and open to all

[Register Online](#)

Sentipensante pedagogy offers a transformative vision of education that emphasizes the harmonic, complementary relationship between the *sentir* of intuition and the *pensar* of intellect and scholarship; between teaching

and learning; between formal knowledge and wisdom; and between Western and non-Western ways of knowing.

Mindfulness: Foundation for Teaching and Learning ***The Fifth Annual Mindfulness in Education Network Conference***

March 16-18, 2012

Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society/ACMHE is a co-sponsor of this event.

Register online: <http://www.mindfuled.org/conferences/2012-conference-information/>

Mindfulness meditation has been practiced for thousands of years as a way to reduce suffering and cultivate inner peace. Research shows that mindfulness also enhances learning and attention. There is growing interest in the possibility that this ancient meditative practice can support education and learning for both children and adults. Many educational institutions, including UCLA, Stanford, UCSF, and PENN have embraced mindfulness as an educational intervention by introducing it into their curricula and conducting research in the field. This three-day event will explore the uses of mindfulness in education.

Friday, March 16: "Improving Attention and Working Memory with Mindfulness Training,"

Keynote Address by Dr. Amishi Jha, Associate Professor of Psychology, University of Miami

Saturday, March 17: Mindfulness in Education Conference

Sunday, March 18: A Day of Mindfulness: Alive and Awake

Information on plenary speakers, breakout sessions and logistics, plus tickets for the entire 3-day conference or individual events is available at mindfuled.org.



INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIA
for Contemplative Studies

April 26–29, 2012
Denver, Colorado, USA

International Symposia for Contemplative Studies

April 26-29, 2012

Denver, CO

Facilitated by the Mind & Life Institute

The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society/ACMHE is a co-sponsor of this event

For registration and more information: <http://contemplativeresearch.org/>

The inaugural 2012 International Symposia for Contemplative Studies, facilitated by the Mind & Life Institute, is a collaborative effort among Centers and Laboratories around the world to

explore the correlates and consequences of contemplative practice.

The International Symposia for Contemplative Studies will bring together academics and other interested attendees for presentation, discussion, and collaborative networking in the emerging field of contemplative studies, which includes contemplative basic science, contemplative clinical science, contemplative philosophy and humanities, contemplative education, and those domains of contemplative practice that relate to and interact with these fields of research and scholarship. These distinct though overlapping fields each focus on advancing our understanding of the human mind and how training the mind through the use of contemplative practices can lead to a reduction in suffering, enhanced health and cognitive/emotional functioning, and increased social harmony. It is also increasingly clear that a multidisciplinary approach is critical for understanding the mind and its effects on health and society at large.

The International Symposia seeks to encourage and help shape a cohesive interdisciplinary field of contemplative studies in which basic and applied science, scholarship, education, and contemplative traditions collaboratively develop an integrated way of knowing in which first- and third-person perspectives are equally and synergistically included.

For registration and more information, visit <http://contemplativeresearch.org/>.

If you are an ACMHE member, be sure to click "yes" to the question on the registration form. You will receive an invitation to the special Contemplative Mind Reception at 7:00 PM on Saturday, April 28th at the Symposia.

Contemplative Environmental Studies: Pedagogy for Self and Planet

July 1-7, 2012

Lama Foundation, San Cristobal, New Mexico

The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society/ACMHE is a co-sponsor of this event

For registration and more information visit:

<http://www.american.edu/sis/gep/Contemplative-Environmental-Studies-Workshop.cfm>



Environmental challenges call into question not simply our technological, economic, and political capabilities, but also our fundamental understandings of who we are as a species, and how we fit into the more-than-human world.

This Summer Institute aims to develop tools for teaching and researching environmental dilemmas with this broader sensibility in mind. It focuses on the interface between environmental challenges and contemplative practices with the understanding that the latter can provide access to inner resources for understanding and responding meaningfully to environmental issues.

Through discussions with distinguished scholars, focused conversations among colleagues, artistic exercises, and regular contemplative practices (meditation, yoga, journaling, nature walks, etc.), participants will collectively deepen higher education's orientation to Environmental Studies. Part workshop and part retreat, the Institute seeks to widen our own capabilities as university and college teachers committed to education on a fragile and wild planet.

To apply, please submit a short statement (a single paragraph is fine) about how your work relates to Contemplative Environmental Studies, and a brief biographical sketch. Email applications to: gep@american.edu (with subject line: Lama Workshop). Please include contact information (postal address, telephone number, and email address).

American University's Global Environmental Politics department is managing the application process and logistical details. You may reach the department at the email address above.

Event Faculty:

David Abram, director of the Alliance for Wild Ethics and author of *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology* and *The Spell of the Sensuous*.

Nicole Salimbene, visual artist whose work explores themes of sustainability, intimacy, political voice, and devotion, and leader of workshops that use art to deepen political and vocational engagement.

Paul Wapner, professor of Global Environmental Politics in the School of International Service at American University and author of *Living Through the End of Nature* and *Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics*.

Jeff Warren, interspecies consciousness theorist, writer, and author of *Head Trip: Adventures on the Wheel of Consciousness*.

For more information, please visit <http://www.american.edu/sis/gep/Contemplative-Environmental-Studies-Workshop.cfm>.

Eighth Annual Summer Session on Contemplative Pedagogy



July 29 - August 3, 2012
Smith College, Northampton, MA

Applications accepted January 30 - April 30, 2012 at www.acmhe.org

The Summer Session prepares participants to return to their institutions with a deeper understanding of the practice of contemplative pedagogy and methods adapted for classroom

and co-curricular use. Summer Session participants will devote the week to rigorous investigation, reflection, writing, and discussion, guided by distinguished scholars and contemplative teachers.

We invite educators and higher education professionals from all disciplinary and inter-disciplinary perspectives in arts, humanities, sciences, humanities-related sciences, and social sciences.

There will be sessions on the design principles of contemplative pedagogy; the relation between course content and contemplative practice; and the benefits of stabilized attention and other qualities of mind fostered by meditative exercises. We will explore the rationale for contemplative approaches and how to communicate with students and colleagues about their inclusion. Practical issues such as evaluation and grading will also be considered. There will be a presentation of recent research on the effects of meditation and discussions on how contemplative practices affect teaching, learning and campus culture. Each day will also include contemplative practice time, and will introduce participants to a variety of practices that have been adapted successfully for secular educational settings.

Further information on the content of the session can be found in the Academic Program's [lectures, reports, and publications](#).

Summer Session Faculty Include:

Daniel Barbezat, Executive Director of The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society and Professor of Economics, Amherst College. A member of the Amherst faculty since 1988, Barbezat received his BA degree in economics and philosophy from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, and the MS and PhD in economics from the University of Illinois at Champaign.

Loriliai Biernacki, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder (PhD, University of Pennsylvania) teaches and researches the religious traditions of India, especially including Hinduism, Tantra and the 11th century Indian philosopher Abhinavagupta. Her research interests particularly address issues of gender and critical theory. Her research also deals with contemporary representations of Hinduism, including Hindu diaspora movements and Hindu syncretist movements in the U.S. She is the author of *Renowned Goddess of Desire: Women, Sex and Speech in Tantra* (Oxford, 2007). Loriliai Biernacki is a 2009 Contemplative Practice Fellow.

Paul Wapner, Professor, School of International Service at American University. Dr. Paul Wapner is Professor of Global Environmental Politics in SIS, and author of *Living Through the End of Nature: The Future of American Environmentalism*, and *Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics*. His research focuses on Environmental Thought, Transnational Environmental Activism, Environmental Ethics, and Global Environmental Politics. Paul Wapner is a 2008 Contemplative Practice Fellow.

Arthur Zajonc, President of the Mind & Life Institute. He was until 2012 the director of The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society and Professor of Physics at Amherst College, where he taught since 1978. He has written extensively on Goethe's science, and is author of the books *Meditation as Contemplative Inquiry*, *Catching the Light*, co-author of *The Quantum Challenge*, and co-editor of *Goethe's Way of Science*. He is co-author, with Parker Palmer, of *The Heart of Higher Education*. He was General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in America (1994-2002), president of the Lindisfarne Association, and a senior program director at the Fetzer

The Fourth Annual Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education Conference

September 21-23, 2012

Amherst College, Amherst, MA

Registration and presentation proposals will be accepted on acmhe.org starting late February.



The conference will focus on contemplative approaches to teaching, learning and knowing taking place in institutions higher education.

Contributed papers, a poster session, and artistic presentations as well as plenary speakers, panels and practice sessions will explore the ways that contemplative practices serve higher education. As educators and administrators integrate these practices into classrooms, studios, and co-curricular initiatives, they are learning how they develop greater mindfulness, open heartedness, and insight.

Call for Papers

The conference welcomes proposals concerning contemplative pedagogy, methodology and epistemology within and across disciplines and through co-curricular initiatives.

Proposals may be submitted online through acmhe.org beginning February 24, 2012 and will be accepted until May 25, 2012. All proposals will be evaluated by a peer-review process. Details about the types of sessions and guidelines for submission are listed on [the CFP pdf](#).

Retrospectives/Event Reports



Contemplative Mind at "Creating a Mindful Society" September 30 - October 1, 2011, New York City

The "Creating a Mindful Society" conference brought 500 members of the emerging mindfulness community together for a weekend at the New York Society for Ethical Culture. An additional 5000 viewed by live streaming through Google webcasting. Saki Santorelli and Jon Kabat Zinn opened with a talk on Friday evening, and Saturday's program included a session on "Mindfulness and Contemplative Education" with the Center's Daniel Barbezat and Tish Jennings of the Garrison Institute.

Rhonda Magee, Professor of Law at the University of San Francisco and the Center's new Board President, spoke about how mindful lawyers are

making a difference in her talk, "Beyond Stress Reduction."

The weekend's program also featured a talk from US Congressman Tim Ryan, whose upcoming book, *A Mindful Nation*, includes interviews with Arthur Zajonc and Mirabai Bush about the Center.

Videos of the keynotes and field reports are at <http://live.soundstrue.com/event/>. You need to register to view the videos, and Sound True, a conference partnering organization, will add you to their email lists.

Contemporary Perspectives on Buddhist Ethics Conference

October 6 -7, 2011, at Columbia University

This conference further advanced the project of Buddhist ethics through constructive transdisciplinary dialogue. Hosted by The Department of Religion at Columbia University & the Columbia Center for Buddhist Studies, conference participants included members of the Contemplative Mind network.

Buddhist ethics aims to identify and evaluate the ethical (and metaethical) positions advanced in Buddhist texts. Researchers in the mainstream of philosophy and psychology have begun to appreciate the promise of Buddhist ethical discourse on such topics as the nature of the persons, freedom, attention training, and emotional regulation. Moreover, the growth of Buddhist ethics as a discipline has also led Western teachers and practitioners of Buddhism to apply its tenets to contemporary issues and problems.

http://www.cbs.columbia.edu/buddhist_ethics/



Writing and the Contemplative Mind Conference

October 21-22, 2011, at George Mason University

The ACMHE, the Northern Virginia Writing Project, and the Center for Consciousness and Transformation were among the co-sponsors of a two-day conference in Fairfax, Virginia in late October. The program explored the intersection of writing and various forms of meditation and contemplative practice. Among the speakers were poet Jane Hirshfield, NPR book reviewer and Professor of Creative Writing at George Mason Alan Cheuse, Contemplative Practice Fellow Michelle Francl, and ACMHE member and Senior Fellow at George Mason University's Center for Consciousness and Transformation Mark Thurston.

Two informative reviews of the conference are posted on the web site of George Mason University's Northern Virginia Writing project and can be accessed at these links:

<http://nvwp.org/2011/11/05/writing-and-the-contemplative-tc/>

<http://nvwp.org/2011/11/15/zen-and-the-art-of-writing-a-reflection-on-the-writing-and-the-contemplative-mind-conference/>

Mark Thurston, the conference organizer, has created a follow-up wiki so that the conversation about writing and contemplative practices can continue. All ACMHE members and friends are also invited to participate. If you would like to receive an invitation to be involved, send an email request to Dr. Thurston at mthursto@gmu.edu.

The Third Annual ACMHE Conference: The Contemplative Campus

November 11-13, 2011, at Amherst College

Beth Wadham



Over 175 participants, primarily from across the US and Canada, gathered for the Third Annual ACMHE Conference. Each year has brought a rising number of higher education professionals together to share research, questions and practice. From just under 100 at the first, to 130 last year, the group this year grew to fill the Red Room, our lecture hall at Amherst College, to capacity.

The conference theme, "The Contemplative Campus," stimulated a number of panel presentations which featured representatives from faculty networks at a range of institutions. Educators from New Hampshire Technical Institute, Bridgewater State and Lehigh Universities explored how to surface interest, support one another and promote mindfulness and contemplative approaches across their campuses. A panel of undergraduate students who had participated in contemplative courses was organized and moderated by Karen Cardozo, which presented their valuable perspectives. The students

expressed great appreciation and a longing for more courses with this kind of integrative orientation and relevance for their lives.

There were 10 panel presentations in total, on topics from the "Contemplating Theory, Theorizing Contemplation" to "Silence, Wholeness, Mindfulness," which honored the pedagogical influence of Jody Ziegler, art historian and long-time Contemplative Mind contributor who passed away in November 2010. Over 40 presenters shared their research and experience during concurrent sessions, and 9 colleagues contributed to a lively poster session on Saturday afternoon.



Mirabai Bush welcomed the group with her keynote address, "Contemplation Nation," which situated contemplative higher education within a broader contemplative movement that includes health and healing, law, business, and activism.

Catherine Kerr, newly appointed by the Brown Contemplative Studies Initiative and the Warren Alpert School of Medicine, began the program Saturday with "Starting with the

body: The neuroscience of somatosensory attention in contemplative mind-body practices," presenting evidence for somatosensory attention training as a critical entry point for mindfulness, tai chi and other contemplative mind-body practices, and exploring how the neurobiological results of mindfulness are achieved.

Arthur Zajonc led a plenary session on "Contemplation and the Future of Higher Education" that included a contemplative inquiry exercise designed to explore "what this enterprise we're engaged in is really about." Drawing from the teachings of the Buddha, ancient thinkers in Athens, and Aung San Suu Kyi, Zajonc characterized the "high purpose" of education as the cessation of ignorance and the suffering that follows in its wake.

An education equal to this high purpose, he observed, reaches beyond preparing an informed citizenry and a well-trained workforce. An education capable of dispelling ignorance acknowledges a need for deeper, more comprehensive change. It asks educators to pledge themselves to practice contemplative engagement toward the development of new capacities and an integrated form of knowing.

Saturday evening featured, "Compassionate Mind in Music," a musical performance by **Evan Chambers**, composer and professor of composition at the University of Michigan, his wife **Suzanne Camino**, and **Tim Eriksen**, a local friend and balladeer.



Arthur Zajonc and Evan Chambers at the Compassionate Mind in Music performance at Johnson Chapel at Amherst College

The program included his "Lindisfarne Hymn," dedicated William Irwin Thompson, founder of the Lindisfarne fellows (of which both Evan and Arthur Zajonc are members); and songs from "Mapping the River" and selections from "The Old Burying Ground," in which he has set the epitaphs of New England gravestones to a variety of musical languages, including Irish traditional, American folk, and Sacred Harp traditions.

At Sunday morning's plenary session, **David Levy**, Professor at the Information School at the University of Washington convened the discussion, "Always On: Exploring Undergraduate Attitudes toward Information Technology."

Over the past six years, Levy has been opening conversations with students about the use of information technology. With scholars Daryl L. Nardick and Leanne McWatters at the Center for New Designs in Learning & Scholarship, and Jeanine W. Turner from the Communication, Culture and Technology program at Georgetown, he conduct these conversations more widely. In May 2011, their article, "[No Cellphone, No Internet, So Much Less Stress](#)," presented the preliminary results in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

At the conference closing, Arthur Zajonc invited those gathered to reflect on the time together for a few moments, allowing recollected images, impressions, and conversations to arise. Then he asked each person to select one image or picture from their reflected experience and "offer it into the room," to create a kind of bouquet to represent the weekend conference. The images held in array included the shout of "Aikido" from Jonathan Miller Lane's workshop, a hallelujah from Evan Chambers with his arms upraised, the frequent sound of laughter from the classrooms, the full moon overhead, and the red carpet beneath.

As the arrayed images hovered in the room, Poet Christian McEwen read "Learning to Pause," a passage from her recent publication *World Enough & Time: On Creativity and Slowing Down*. Then Arthur Zajonc, on folk guitar, and Ed Sarath, Professor of Music in the Department in Jazz and Contemporary Improvisation at the University of Michigan, on flugelhorn, brought all to completion with a rendition of "Let it Be."



Contemplative Retreat for Educators

November 17-20, 2011, at the Garrison Institute, Garrison, NY

Carrie Bergman

Direct experience with contemplative practices is a prerequisite for the development of a contemplative pedagogy. The Center has hosted annual retreats since 2008 to support educators' direct engagement with contemplative practices. These retreats provide time for deep practice, personal reflection, and inquiry, which distinguishes them from the Center's summer sessions on contemplative curriculum development (which focus on course development and innovating pedagogical methods) and the annual ACMHE member conferences (at which colleagues present their work).

At the 2011 retreat, Arthur Zajonc, Mirabai Bush, and yoga teacher Anna Neiman Passalacqua lead practices on mindfulness meditation, loving-kindness, yoga and eurythmy, mindful eating, listening, and walking (taking advantage of Garrison's new labyrinth), and observation of nature.

Participants remarked that they expected the retreat to offer "time to focus and rejuvenate with others with similar interests" and to "renew and revitalize [their] meditation practice" as well as "new ways to approach contemplation in the context of learning and teaching in the classroom." We were happy to learn from the retreat evaluations that these expectations were met. Participants also emphasized the value of silence and personal sharing during the retreat.

Our next retreat is being planned for October 18-21, 2012, again at the Garrison Institute. More information and registration will be available on acmhe.org in the coming months.

Contemplative Leadership Session with Otto Scharmer

December 16, 2011, at Harvard Business School

Dick Sclove

On Dec. 16th Otto Scharmer, founding chair of the Presencing Institute and Senior Lecturer at

M.I.T., orchestrated a bravura introduction to his use of contemplative methods in helping leaders bring open hearts, receptivity and intuition to bear in addressing fundamental social, economic and environmental challenges.

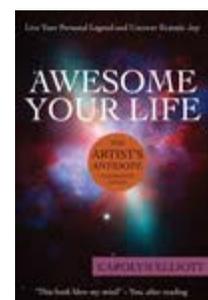
Held at the Harvard Business School, Dr. Scharmer's 3-hour session included a Powerpoint presentation, animated group discussion, and an extended experiential exercise that incorporated a grounding body scan, non-premeditated journaling and guided visioning. This was the fourth session at Harvard University in which the Center for Contemplative Mind invited a small group of Boston-area leadership educators to explore the role that contemplative practice can play in educating effective leaders.

The fourteen participants included, among others, faculty from Harvard's Business School, Graduate School of Education, and John F. Kennedy School of Government and MIT's Sloan School of Management. Harvard Professor of Education Jerry Murphy hosted.



Press Room

Carolyn Elliott, Teaching Fellow at the University of Pittsburgh, recently published a book filled with contemplative practices to stimulate creativity. It's now available electronically via Amazon's Kindle store (readers without Kindle devices can download free Kindle reader apps provided by Amazon and read the book on their computers). The book is titled ***Awesome Your Life: The Artist's Antidote to Suffering Genius*** and is designed to be a kind of *Artist's Way* for a new generation.





Dan Huston, Eric Garland, and Norman Farb's paper "Mechanisms of Mindfulness in Communication Training" appears in a special issue of *The Journal of Applied Communication Research* on religion and spirituality (Volume 38, Number 4, 1 November 2011, pp. 406-421(16)). The paper describes a controlled study done at NHTI, Concord's Community college, which examines the effects of teaching mindfulness in an introductory communication course. In particular, the authors were interested in seeing how the infusion of mindfulness into the curriculum impacts students' adaptive communication abilities during stressful events. The authors predicted students in the mindfulness group would develop an increased ability to positively reappraise stressful events in a way that allowed them to experience those events as "benign, beneficial, and/or meaningful." Furthermore, the authors theorized that this form of positive reappraisal would involve a reduced tendency to place blame on others. In order to test their theory, the authors used the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) and the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ) as pre and post tests.

Results suggest that the more students increased in mindfulness, the more they increased their positive reappraisal abilities. To the best of the authors' knowledge, the study is one of the first to show "a significant correlation between dispositional mindfulness and positive reappraisal" (cf. Garland et al., 2011). As predicted, the mindfulness group increased in trait mindfulness far more than the control group, and, in turn, the relationship between increases in trait mindfulness and decreases in blaming others was mediated by increases in positive reappraisal. Although both the control group and the mindfulness group increased in positive reappraisal, there appeared to be distinct differences between groups in how that positive reappraisal functioned. For instance, "The mindfulness group's ability for increased positive reappraisal was associated with the nonreacting and describing subscales of the FFMQ, suggesting that mindfulness training nurtures positive reappraisal based on increased awareness of emotional impulses which reduces the tendency toward reactivity and an increased ability to describe one's emotions." These correlations were not found in the control group, "suggesting that mindful communication training may be unique in its integration of nonreactivity and emotional awareness skills into reappraisal strategies." Students in the control group, on the other hand, "seemed to judge their thoughts and feelings more harshly," suggesting that they "may have learned to reappraise situations by scrutinizing their own reactions, rather than constructively focusing on the positive features of the interaction in

order to reappraise its meaning." The authors suggest this kind of judgmental reappraisal may indeed "be less productive as a communication strategy, for it appears to illustrate what amounts to a shift in blame from self to others, rather than resulting in increased engagement with others during interactions."

Daniel C. Huston is a Professor in the Department of English, Fine Arts, and Foreign Languages at NHTI, Concord's Community College; **Eric L. Garland** is an Assistant Professor in the College of Social Work at Florida State University and a Research Affiliate for Trinity Institute for the Addictions; **Norman A. S. Farb** is a postdoctoral fellow at the Rotman Research Institute. E-mail: dhuston@ccsnh.edu.

Sonya Huber has a new book out from Equinox. *The Backwards Research Guide for Writers: Using your Life for Reflection, Connection and Inspiration* is a textbook for undergraduate and post-graduate courses in composition, creative non-fiction, literary journalism and feature writing. The guide demystifies the writing process by inviting writers of all levels to focus on their passions, questions and obsessions as the key to generating seeds for further exploration. For more information, [read the flyer](#).



Members interested in learning about Chinese culture may enjoy **Sabina Knight's** *Chinese Literature: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford UP). Sabina Knight is an Associate Professor of Chinese and Comparative Literature at Smith College.

You can preview the book by going to [the page for the paperback edition](#) and clicking "Look inside."

[The Kindle version](#) is also available for download.

Layli Maparyan has a new book, *The Womanist Idea*, which follows on the heels of her previous publication, *The Womanist Reader*, from Routledge. Layli Maparyan is a 2009 Contemplative Practice Fellow and Associate Professor and Graduate Director of Women's Studies and African American Studies at Georgia State University.

The new book discusses the womanist worldview (cosmology,



ontology, epistemology, logic, axiology and methodology) and it's implications for activism. From a womanist perspective, social and ecological change is necessarily undergirded by spirituality--as distinct from religion per se--which invokes a metaphysically informed approach to activism.

Announcements from Members

On March 12, 2012 from 1-2 pm, **Marcos Stafne**, Head of Education, Rubin Museum of Art, and **Rikki Asher**, Director Art Education, City University of New York at Queens College, will present a research lecture entitled, "Mindfulness in Art Museum Education." Their proposal for a session on using mindfulness in museum settings was accepted by the Art Education Association Conference in New York (naea.org).



This session explores Mindfulness and how teachers and art museum educators can use techniques to strengthen arts experiences.



In a world where art is something we live with at home, visit in museums--or download from the Internet--what does it mean to visually engage fully with art objects? How do we truly examine art, and not rely on pre-tour packets and preconceptions? Many museum educators, art teachers and art education students do not know how to do this, and that may result in limiting their audiences' experiences. Mindfulness and Contemplative Studies is a way to develop greater insights into a work of art, the cultural or historical content, and also ourselves. In this session we will review the field of Mindfulness and provide case studies from both the Rubin Museum of Art and the Godwin-Ternbach Museum at Queens College to explore how mindfulness encourages attention, balance, and compassion amongst students through art.

Participants will learn mindful strategies for gallery practice, and leave with useful resource materials.

Daniel Barbezat spoke at Bridgewater State University to Faculty at their 2011 Summer Institute. A video of the talk is posted at the



2011 Summer Institute

following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kiV7RyWLSPA>

Contemplative Composition workshop with Barry Kroll, Keith Kroll, Christy Wenger and Dan Huston

March 21, 2012

Dan Huston, Professor of Communication at NHTI, Concord's Community College; **Barry Kroll**, Robert D. Rodale Professor in Writing at Lehigh University; **Keith Kroll**, Professor of English at Kalamazoo Valley Community College; and **Christy Wenger**, Assistant Professor of English and Director of Rhetoric and Composition at Shepherd University, will conduct a half-day workshop at the annual Conference on College Composition and Communication (the major conference for college teachers of writing and communication) in St Louis, Missouri on Wednesday, March 21, 2012.

Keith Kroll, chair of the workshop and editor of *Contemplative Teaching and Learning*, will open the workshop with a brief history of contemplative teaching and learning and also lead participants in several short meditative practices. Highlights of the workshop will include Barry Kroll, author of "Arguing with Adversaries: Aikido, Rhetoric, and the Art of Peace," engaging participants in activities that foster awareness of the body in motion, both as a contemplative practice and also as a bodily expression of patterns of argument. Workshop participants will explore how certain physical movements (adapted from tai chi and aikido) provide a novel way to learn rhetorical structures--patterns that students can use when writing papers on controversial issues. Barry's session will conclude with examples of student papers that illustrate the connections between mindful movement and argumentative writing. Christy Wenger, author of the forthcoming "Writing Yogis: Breathing Our Way to Mindfulness and Balance in Embodied Writing Pedagogy" in *The Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning*, will lead workshop participants in an investigation of how Eastern understandings of embodiment and mindfulness as articulated by Iyengar yoga can be a generative heuristic for inquiry, pedagogy and practice in the writing classroom. Christy's part of the workshop will also involve participants in interactive yoga practice.

Dan Huston, author of *Communicating Mindfully*, will continue the discussion of mindfulness and how it can be applied to improving one's ability to communicate effectively. Dan will lead participants through mindfulness meditation as a way to begin to experience the connection between mindfulness and communication.

As the above description suggests, the workshop will offer participants both the theory and practice of contemplative teaching and learning for the composition and communication

classrooms.



From **Richard Chess:**

Creating a Mindful Campus: Teaching, Learning, and Working at UNC Asheville and Other Universities and Colleges

March 23 - 25, 2012

Wilma M. Sherrill Center

UNC Asheville

Sponsored by UNC Asheville's Center for Teaching and Learning, the NC Center for Health and Wellness, UNC Asheville's Department of Health and Wellness, The Wilma M. Sherrill Center, UNC Asheville's Department of Religious Studies, UNC Asheville's Honors Program, the Roy Carroll Professor of Honors Arts & Sciences, The Office of the Provost, and the University Teaching Council

As part of the national conversation on the current state and future of higher education in the United States, educators and researchers are using and studying the effects of contemplative pedagogy to help students strengthen their abilities to sustain attention on a subject of inquiry, develop a greater sense of emotional balance and empathy, and learn to use imagination and intuition as legitimate ways of attaining knowledge. Some faculty and staff at UNC Asheville have been meeting for more than 1 ½ years to engage in contemplative practices and discuss ways of incorporating these practices in our own classrooms and other offices right here.

"Creating a Mindful Campus: Teaching, Learning, and Working at UNC Asheville and Other Universities and Colleges" will offer participants an opportunity to be introduced to and experience a variety of mindfulness exercises that can and have been used in class here and elsewhere. It will also offer an opportunity for us to develop, in conversation with each other, exercises and teaching strategies that can be used to improve student learning as well as a student's overall experience in her or his undergraduate education.

In addition to being led in exercises by our own faculty, we will have the benefit of working with Dr. Bobbi Patterson of Emory, a professor with long experience in using contemplative pedagogy in



the classroom.

We invite you to join us for the retreat/conference in its entirety or for any part of it that is of particular interest to you. "Creating a Mindful Campus" is free and open to all. If you know of colleagues from other institutions who might find the program of interest, please feel free to pass the information along to them.

Thanks to Dr. Ameena Batada, assistant professor of Health and Wellness, we have a website where you can find information on the conference. Eventually, you'll also find links there to resources on contemplative pedagogy. Our retreat/conference website can be found at <http://mindfulcampus.wordpress.com/>.

For more information, please contact **Dr. Richard Chess** at rchess@unca.edu.

Women's Creative Writing and Yoga Retreat in Oaxaca with Robin Green

March 2-9, 2012



Author and Professor **Robin Greene**, MFA, and yoga artist Beth Miller invite members and writers to this workshop Oaxaca, Mexico. The course description is at <http://oaxacaculture.com/2011/04/oaxaca-mexico-womens-writing-and-yoga-retreat-2012-lifting-your-creative-voice/>

[View a flyer for this event.](#)

Sean Steel's thesis, "The Pursuit of Wisdom in Education," has been submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy in the Graduate Division of Educational Research at the University of Calgary. **[Read a pdf.](#)**

Seeking Contributions to *World Turning: Race, Class, Gender, and Global Climate Change*

From **Pheobe Godfrey**:

Be part of a new edited volume addressing global climate change, tentatively titled *World Turning: Race, Class, Gender, and Global Climate Change*! For this unique volume (publisher to be confirmed once submissions are) we are seeking contributions from academics and activists with experience and expertise in addressing the social dimensions of global climate change in their work, with a particular focus on intersections of race, class, gender, and other social markers.

World Turning is intended to be a multidisciplinary reader that will introduce undergraduate and graduate students to the major issues and debates surrounding the study of intersectionality and global climate change. The volume will be broadly organized into sections on the social and natural sciences, as well as public health, art and literature.

Specifically, we are seeking essays or articles between 15-25 pages (including notes) that address any aspect of climate change: legal, political, social, educational, agricultural, economic, religious, sexual, ideological, international, local, etc. and that incorporate an intersectional analysis. In addition, we are seeking original essays, poetry, investigative reporting or other creative works (including art) that also address climate change in relation to any form of activism. Contributions may be visual, empirical, theoretical or any other creative form, and may be between 1-20 pages (including notes). Preference will be given to original pieces but we may also consider previously published pieces.

If you are interested in contributing, please submit a 500 word abstract of your piece (or details / examples of your art / activism) with the title, author, and institutional or organizational affiliation (if any) to Dr. Phoebe Godfrey at phoebe.godfrey@uconn.edu, Dr. Rachel Hallum-Montes at rhallum@ufl.edu or Medani Prasad Bhandari mbhandar@maxwell.syr.edu or Dr. Shangrila Joshi joshis@denison.edu by March 1st, 2012.

Phoebe C. Godfrey, Ph.D.
University of Connecticut
Department of Sociology
Manchester Hall
344 Mansfield Ave
Storrs, CT 06269-2068

Interview Request from Rebecca Ossorio

Dear Members: I am writing to ask if you might consider participating in a 30-60 minute

interview for a study I am conducting entitled, "Feeling knowledge: How emotion and identity inform student learning." I am currently a Doctoral Candidate in Curriculum and Instruction at The University at Albany and am conducting this phenomenological study as part of my dissertation research.

The goal of my project is to better understand the relationship between emotion, identity and student learning. In order to do this I am asking people to tell me about times when your learning in school inspired some kind of an emotional response in you. By better understanding these emotional learning experiences I hope to describe how emotion and identity might function in the learning process.



As a member of ACMHE, I am interested in including you in my study for two reasons: first, because of your demonstrated commitment to learning and second, because of your experience as contemplatives or meditators. I have been inspired by Walsh & Shapiro's (2006) suggestion that, "meditators may prove to be uniquely valuable [research] subjects" because "their introspective sensitivity may make them exceptional observers of subjective states and mental processes...[and because] they may provide precise phenomenological accounts" (pp.8-9).

If participating in this study sounds like something you would be interested in then please let me know via email at rebeccaoyoga@gmail.com. I will then send along some more detailed information for you to look over in order for you to make a more informed decision about whether or not you would like to participate.

