

# Notes of Excellence

from the Center for Teaching Excellence



Spring 2009



## >> Our New Website!

We have made improvements to both the content and design of our website since the summer. As we continue to develop the site to better meet your academic needs, your feedback and suggestions are most welcome. Please be sure to check back regularly for the exciting new features we will debut in 2009! Visit us at (<http://www.gmu.edu/cte>).

## >> 2009 Teaching Excellence Awards

The 2009 Teaching Excellence Awards process is well underway. We received forty-six nominations from across the Mason community for the university-wide teaching excellence award; twenty-seven of whom were nominated by students. The nominees were from a range of academic units, including the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD), College of Health and Human Services (CHHS), College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS), College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA), College of Science (COS), School of Public Policy (SPP), School of Management (SOM), and the Volgenau School of Information Technology and Engineering (IT&E). The selection committee has chosen fifteen finalists to submit teaching portfolios for review. Recipients of the award will be honored at the awards ceremony and reception on **Monday, April 13th from 3:30pm-5:00pm - save the date!**

Congratulations to each of the nominees and good luck to the finalists!

## >> 2009 David J. King Awards

We are pleased to announce that ten professors have been nominated for the David J. King Teaching Award. This award is given annually to a faculty member who has made significant, longstanding contributions to the overall educational excellence of George Mason University. The 2009 David J. King Teaching Award winner will be selected and honored at the awards ceremony and reception on April 13th.

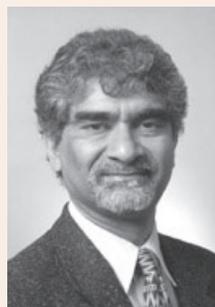
Congratulations to each of the nominees – we thank them for their ongoing commitment to educational excellence at Mason.

## The Center for Teaching Excellence Announces Mason Winners of the 2009 SCHEV Outstanding Faculty Award

It is our great honor to share that Mason has two winners for the statewide 2009 Outstanding Faculty Award. Sponsored by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), these award winners have been chosen from approximately 100 candidates from across the state. Mason's two Outstanding Faculty Award winners are:



>> **Dr. Michael M. Behrmann** is the Helen A. Kellar Professor of Special Education and Director of the Helen A. Kellar Institute for Human Disabilities. Dr. Behrmann is a national leader and innovator in the concepts of designing technology based instruction, applying accessibility standards to those technologies, and finding new ways to deliver information and access to individuals with and without disabilities, most recently in web and distance based instruction.



>> **Dr. Raja Parasuraman** is a Mason University Professor and Professor in the Department of Psychology. An internationally renowned scientist, Dr. Parasuraman's areas of specialization include cognitive neuroscience; human factors; and neuroergonomics, the application of the study of brain physiology to addressing critical problems of human factors and human-system interaction.

## >> An Update from the QEP Planning Committee

As many of you know, the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is a five-year plan that will significantly impact student learning and engage the entire Mason community. This process provides us with the opportunity to identify and address a well-defined topic that contributes to institutional improvement through strengthening student learning.

After requesting proposals from the Mason community during the fall semester, the QEP Planning Committee was excited to receive eight new proposals from students, faculty, and staff, bringing us to a total of twelve different topics to choose from for our final plan. We received constructive feedback from the campus community on many of the proposals through email ([qep@gmu.edu](mailto:qep@gmu.edu)), the QEP Café ([blogs.gmu.edu/qep](https://blogs.gmu.edu/qep)), and conversations with different units at Mason.

The Committee has worked over winter break to review and assess each of the twelve proposals according to our proposal guidelines and evaluation criteria, while keeping in mind the level of support and feedback that various proposals received from students, faculty, and staff. We expect to share the top two or three topics early this semester and will be asking for feedback via surveys on the final topic proposals after spring break. Our QEP topic will be finalized by the end of the semester. Stay tuned to our website ([qep.gmu.edu](https://qep.gmu.edu)) for ongoing updates about Mason's QEP process.

## >> Preparing Future Faculty Event

In late October, the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Office of Equity and Diversity Services co-sponsored a site visit with Howard University as part of our Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) partnership. The PFF program seeks to improve the quality of preparedness of graduate students, particularly minority graduate students, for academic careers. Nineteen doctoral candidates attended the day-long seminar that included workshops on grant writing and teaching portfolios, offered by Ann McGuigan of the Office of Research Development and Kim Eby of the Center for Teaching Excellence.

The students also attended a luncheon where they were able to connect with Mason faculty, as well as President Merten, Provost Stearns, and Mika'il Petin (Associate Director of African American Studies and President of the Association of Black Faculty, Administrators, and Staff [ABFAS]). Many thanks to the academic departments and programs who made this event a success, including Communications, Psychology, the College of Education and Human Development, Management, Art and Visual Technology, Chemistry and Biochemistry, the University Scholars Program, Provost Office, the Office of the President, African American Studies, Diversity Programs and Services, International Programs and Services, and the Office of Institutional Assessment.

## >> Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum

The Critical Thinking across the Curriculum (CTAC) initiative, co-sponsored with the Office of Institutional Assessment, is in its second year. We received a number of dynamic proposals for this academic year and selected five projects for funding. The five projects are:

- *Thinking Critically About Scientific Claims*, Cindy Smith et al. (Project team leader), NCC
- *Thinking Critically about Diversity and Ethics in Today's Organizations*, Paige Wolf et al. (Project team leader), MGMT
- *Critical Thinking on the Web: Assessing the Value of the Internet to the Practice of History*, Nicole Hudgins, HIST/ARTH
- *Critical Thinking Workshops in Introduction to Sociology*, Karen Rosenblum, SOCI
- *Evidence Based Management*, Matthew Cronin, MGMT

CTAC builds upon previous faculty work to support Mason's mission to strengthen critical thinking within students across disciplines. For more information about CTAC, please visit [ctac.gmu.edu](https://ctac.gmu.edu).

### **CTE Staff**

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## >> Mason-Project Kaleidoscope Initiative

In 2008, the Center for Teaching Excellence joined New Century College to submit a proposal to Project Kaleidoscope (PKAL) - Keck Foundation for the development of interdisciplinary programs in the STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). The funded project, submitted by a core group of Mason faculty, is being led by Randy Gabel (NCC) and Giuseppina Kysar Mattietti (CTE). The proposal involves developing interdisciplinary learning projects (courses, modules, internships) around Conservation, Environmental and Sustainability issues. These educational projects will support ongoing efforts to bring these issues to the forefront of Mason's educational mission. The PKAL-Keck grant will provide the group with expert advice, support and venues for developing pilot projects for the next two and a half years. For more information, please contact Giuseppina Kysar Mattietti at [gkysar@gmu.edu](mailto:gkysar@gmu.edu).