



CCE CURRENT

A publication for alumni and friends of the College of Continuing Education

Winter 2007

Simplifying complexity

Confronting AIDS in Africa.
Taking hope and leaving Cuba.
Celebrating our translated culture.

Students, alumni, and faculty find the best way to get their arms around an increasingly intricate world: embrace it.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

From the Dean



Dear alumni and friends:

Throughout time, the world has supported a complex web of cultures. In all but the most isolated incidents, populations interacted with other groups whose customs were foreign to their own. In the best of cases ideas were shared, innovations occurred, lives were improved. Of course we all know that culture clashes also occurred and considerably worse scenarios played out in wars around the world.

Today, we intersect with other cultures not in a once-in-a-lifetime encounter but on a day-to-day basis. Therefore viewing things through a single, perhaps narrow, lens is not going to give us a broad enough view of the global community's landscape. This issue of *CCE Current* provides a window on

some ways the College of Continuing Education's students, alumni, instructors, and programs have embraced the world's rich complexities:

- Jenna Aaland and Callie Schnitker (pages 2-3) are Inter-College Program students who decided to study in Kenya for a term to help others. Jenna helps put life in perspective as she described her then upcoming trip: "I've worked in an ICU before, and I've watched so many people, so full of life, die. [AIDS is] an awful disease, and I'd like to be able to help. If it's possible, I'd like to go to the coast and work in an AIDS clinic or in an orphanage with children living with AIDS. It's called an 'epidemic' here, but over there it's so much worse."
- Pablo Medina (page 10), author and translator, signed on as a new mentor in the College's Online Mentoring for Writers program. "We live in a translated culture," he explains. "The basic texts of our civilization—Hammurabi's code, the Old and New Testaments, Greek tragedy and philosophy, and the Roman poets have come to us for the most part as translated works. You can put down the

importance of translation and translators, but you do so at the risk of falling prey to poverty of thought and narrowness of mind."

- Former ambassador Jose Gomez (pages 6-7) leads us through his hard decision to leave the land he loved, Cuba, and his easy commitment to lifelong education — including the College's Master of Liberal Studies — for himself and his family.
- A new program, *Headliners* (back cover), provides the public with monthly "dates" with U of M experts. Participants examine the intricate issues behind the news.

I hope you enjoy this issue and join us in celebrating the AIDS volunteers, the ambassadors, the ancient and modern translators, and anyone who is passionate enough to reach out or to push boundaries.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mary L. Nichols
Dean, College of Continuing Education
University of Minnesota

Great Conversations launches 2007 season

Examine the fuel that feeds our cells, our spirit, our way of life

Obesity. Immigration. International Human Rights. *The Purposeful Life*. Great Conversations' 2007 season promises more unforgettable evenings of insider insight on some of the most intriguing issues of the day. Since its inception in 2002, Great Conversations, the College's public discussion series pairing outstanding U faculty with world-renowned experts, has connected more than 16,000 Minnesotans with thought leaders, risk takers, and peacemakers for energetic conversations that bring issues into sharp focus.

On February 20, examine **The Obesity Epidemic** with Dr. Allen Levine, U

professor and director of the Minnesota Obesity Center, and his guest Dr. David Kessler, former Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration and author of *A Question of Intent: A Great American Battle with a Deadly Industry*, which chronicles the FDA's investigation of the tobacco industry.

On April 24, discuss **Human Rights** with Regents Professor Kathryn Sikkink and Juan Mendez, special adviser on the Prevention of Genocide to the United Nations, human rights advocate, lawyer, and former political prisoner.

On May 8, join Donna Gabaccia, U professor and director of the Immigration History and Research Center, and award-winning journalist and author Ruben

Martinez to discuss **Immigration Issues in a Historical Perspective**.

Discuss **The Purposeful Life** on June 5 with Richard Leider, senior fellow at the Center for Spirituality and Healing, and Richard Bolles, author of the best-selling career book in history, *What Color is Your Parachute*.

All events will take place at 7:30 p.m. at the Ted Mann Concert Hall on the U of M West Bank. For ticket prices or more information: www.cce.umn.edu/conversations or 612-624-4000 after the first of the year.

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Into Africa

While many University students headed back to familiar surroundings this fall—Walter Library, the classrooms on the West Bank, maybe a football game or two at the Metrodome—the College of Continuing Education’s Inter-College Program (ICP) students Jenna Aaland and Callie Schnitker are carrying out their studies in a bit more remote location: Nairobi, Kenya.

Jenna Aaland: Helping hands

Third-world conditions, rampant health crises, and an unstable political climate are not the hallmarks of a typical college student’s experience studying abroad. Jenna Aaland isn’t necessarily typical. “Kenya can be a dangerous place,” she says, “but it’s also a fascinating culture and a beautiful place. I think I’ll have a real opportunity to make a contribution while I’m there.”

Spending the fall semester in Nairobi might seem like a challenge. For Aaland, however, the real test of her spirit actually happened several years ago. “In 2000, I was diagnosed with Long QT,” she explains. “I was 14, and it was pretty shocking news.”

Long QT syndrome is an inherited electrical disorder of the heart that can cause rapid heartbeats resulting in a loss of consciousness—and in some cases, cardiac arrest and sudden death. Because this can be triggered by any number of seemingly harmless things including excitement, a medication, or a loud noise like an alarm or a door banging, people with untreated Long QT frequently die at an early age.

After her diagnosis, Aaland underwent surgery to receive an automatic implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (AICD), a device implanted under the skin in the chest to monitor for and, if necessary, stop a potentially fatal arrhythmia.

“Having Long QT meant I had to stop doing a lot of things, because excitement or adrenaline rushes could trigger an arrhythmia. So here I was, this active freshman in high school and I had to stop doing sports, everything.”

But instead of becoming mired in what she couldn’t do, Aaland decided to focus on what she could do. “I found other ways to be involved. I managed the girls’ basketball team, played golf, and was an athletic trainer.”

One thing it did not change was Aaland’s desire to go into a health-related field. “Even as a little tiny kid, I wanted to be a doctor or something along those lines,” she says. “And after going through all the Long QT stuff, it only made me even more certain—I wanted to be able to help people the way I was helped.”

As a freshman at the U, Aaland initially planned to major in biomedical engineering, but realized what she really wanted to do was work with people. So she applied for admission into the College of Continuing Education’s Inter-College Program, where she followed the Health and Wellness track, with a core in Public Health. After graduation, she plans to attend graduate school for either public health or to become a physician’s assistant.

“I’m very happy in the ICP. I have an adviser who knows me and knows my goals and aspirations. She’s always looking for opportunities for me, keeping me posted on things that I’d be interested in knowing about or trying.” One thing Aaland heard about was the Minnesota Studies in International Development (MSID) program.

Through this program, Aaland left for Nairobi, Kenya, in September where she is spending 16 weeks. In addition to taking a full load of course work during her stay, she also will do a six-week internship. The exact internship was not assigned at press time, but Aaland has a strong idea of what she would like to do while there. "My main interests are epidemiology and global health in the public health sector, as well as working with AIDS patients, and I'd like to be involved in that in Africa as well," she says.



Jenna Aaland

Photo by Tim Rummelhoff

"I've worked in an ICU [intensive care unit] before, and I've watched so many people, so full of life, die...it's an awful disease, and I'd like to be able to help. If it's possible, I'd like to go to the coast and work in an AIDS clinic or in an orphanage with children living with AIDS. It's called an 'epidemic' here, but over there it's so much worse."

The AICD implantation has given Jenna Aaland the opportunity to have a life much like any other young adult. Her dedication and drive have given her the chance to make it extraordinary. "I want a chance to make an impact on someone's life. I know going over to Africa, I'm not going to save a whole country...but if I can help one person feel better or be more comfortable, then I can make a difference."

Callie Schnitker: Not just another number

"I was the kid who thought medicine would be an interesting path to take... but between sports and extracurricular activities, I didn't think I had the time to devote to the math and science I would need," explains senior Callie Schnitker. "It was hard to juggle all that, so I stuck primarily with English and the arts—which I enjoyed, but probably wasn't the best pre-med choice," she smiles.

"But then I spent a winter working at a camp as a health officer," she says. "And to do it I had to get my emergency medical technician (EMT) certification. Taking that course and working in that capacity

really convinced me I should be heading down a different path."

After trying a few different degree options at the University,

"I've worked in an ICU [intensive care unit] before, and I've watched so many people, so full of life, die...[AIDS is] an awful disease, and I'd like to be able to help. If it's possible, I'd like to go to the coast and work in an AIDS clinic or in an orphanage with children living with AIDS. It's called an 'epidemic' here, but over there it's so much worse."

— Jenna Aaland

Schnitker, decided on the College of Continuing Education's Inter-College Program. "It was exactly what I was looking for. It means all the art history classes, the life sciences classes, and the pre-med classes—they all count towards my degree. What's more, given the College's small size, I don't feel like just another number. Plus, it's allowing me to gain more world experience."



Callie Schnitker

Photo by Tim Rummelhoff

World travel is nothing new to Schnitker, who has visited Italy, Ireland, Mexico, Jamaica, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic. "Exploring other cultures is very important to me—and Kenya is about as far removed from anywhere else I've been

as possible. But what really intrigued me was that by traveling through the U's Minnesota Studies in International Development program, I'll be getting a chance to give something back to the community as well."

In addition to taking a full semester-load of regular courses (including Swahili—

which will make the fourth language Schnitker has studied, including French, Italian, and Spanish), students in the MSID program also spend six weeks doing an internship related to their major. Schnitker hopes to spend her internship working in a hospital or clinic in Nairobi, possibly doing research or working with AIDS patients. "All pre-med students have done the studying

and the course work, and maybe even some volunteering...but to have a hands-on opportunity like this is unique."

Schnitker plans on taking the medical school entrance exams in 2007, after graduation, and hopes to go on to a career as a physician. "I'd really like to do a cardiac specialty or something along those lines. The rising obesity epidemic in the United States is disturbing, and in 10 to 20 years, we will really be seeing the repercussions of that—I'd like to be able to help."

The College of Continuing Education's Inter-College Program provides motivated students with a chance to work with an adviser to tailor an undergraduate degree to their specific needs – drawing course work from throughout the University's Twin Cities colleges. For more information, visit www.cce.umn.edu/icp or call 612-624-4000.

New **online U seminars** build communities of adults re-imagining their professional futures

For nearly 100 years, the University through its non-traditional programs has been helping adults around the world fit education into their schedules at a place and time that works for them.

"In recent years online learning has become such a powerful tool for a real global learning experience. It was only natural we bring it to the Master of Liberal Studies (MLS) program," explains JoEllen Lundblad, the programs associate director.

The MLS, offered by the College of Continuing Education, is an individualized master's degree program that draws on liberal studies seminars as well as graduate-level courses from a variety of disciplines.

Professor Art Harkins' Designing Professional Futures was the first liberal studies seminar to go online. "People need to ask themselves, 'How can I help myself become and remain a success, especially considering an environment where jobs are not secure?' We want to help them answer that question—and I think the class does that," says Harkins.

The seminar uses guided journaling and storytelling, along with extensive peer feedback and discussion, to help students envision—and achieve—a future that meshes with the rapidly growing global innovation economy. "Our goal is to get students to use their imaginations and to write a successful story of themselves in the future," says Harkins. "We want to help them rethink their capacity for making contributions to the global society...rather than just going out every day and doing a 'job.'"

The second online seminar was the Women's Leadership Journey.

"We were blown away by the feedback we've received from students about these courses," says Lundblad. "For some of them, it changed not only their educational experience, but also transformed their lives."

Harkins isn't surprised by the popularity of the online format. "I wanted our class to reflect as closely as possible the actual classroom. As it turns out, participation and discussions were better than in the classroom. The online format allows people to think things through and then to compose and edit an articulate response. The prevailing Midwest culture is one of politeness...nobody wants to 'go first,' to put themselves in the spotlight—so classroom discussions often come to a halt. In this type of forum, barriers are removed, and people tend to be more outspoken."

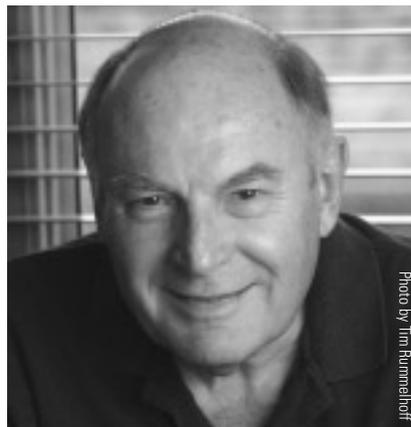
This fall marked the introduction of the third online course, Introduction to Innovation Studies, also taught by Harkins. "Introduction to Innovation

Studies focuses on helping innovative people sell their ideas. We'll use drama, the stage, actors, and similar techniques to help visualize selling an item—a thought, product, concept, even a job change—within a social context," he says.

"Plans for additional courses are in the works," Lundblad says. "In-person classes will always have their place, but this opens a new door to education. The wider audience, having people from all different backgrounds, locations, and cultures

interacting, brings such richness to the program. We are truly excited to provide this opportunity to our students.

For more information about the College of Continuing Education's Master of Liberal Studies program, visit www.cce.umn.edu/mls or call 612-626-8724.



Art Harkins

Photo by Tim Runnelhoff



RIGHT ON TARGET

Master of Liberal Studies student goes the extra mile to complete her degree

Some people returning to school for an advanced degree find life throws them a curve and finishing is more difficult than anticipated. So maybe they wind up taking time off or taking correspondence courses.

Or, maybe they commute back and forth from New York to Minneapolis to finish.

That's what Mary Ellen Muckerman did when she was transferred to New York City before she had finished her Master of Liberal Studies (MLS) degree at the U. "I was lucky that the MLS program and instructors were so flexible. That's what made it possible to get it done," she says.

Muckerman had gone into marketing right out of college in Ohio. In 1993, she moved to the Twin Cities to take a position in an advertising agency. Eventually, she ended up with a company that counted, among others, Target and Marshall Field's as clients. Three years later, she joined Target Corporation as a marketing manager.

While there, Muckerman decided she wanted to continue her education. "I've always loved learning, so I applied to the University of St. Thomas's MBA program." Muckerman quickly found out, however, that an MBA was not where her heart was. "It was just too similar to what I was doing at work. I wanted to study something relevant, but also something different, and something I enjoyed."

Muckerman then investigated the MLS program. "It was exactly what I was looking for. I think the importance of getting a

multidisciplinary view of the world can't be underestimated. So often, especially in the business world, we get our news and information from a single source. [The program] allowed me to create a course of study that comes from multiple sources and from the deepest perspectives."

Muckerman had always been interested in the delicate balance marketing and retail must strike with the consumer, so in the MLS she investigated the changing marketplace; her thesis being "Power to the People: New Practices in Consumerism." "It was related to my work—but not the same thing I was doing every day."

In 2002, when she was more than halfway through the program, a job opened at Target that would require her to move to New York City. "Target's partnership with outside designers like Isaac Mizrahi and Liz Lange was really taking off. The company realized it would be beneficial to have someone in New York to mainstream the designers' production and processes, as well as to represent Target."

In order to continue her studies, Muckerman took a few reciprocal classes at New York University, but she decided to finish her degree at the U. "I was so close to completion and wanted to get it done," she says.

In mid-2003, she received an opportunity that would make it possible. "I launched the Marketing and Guest Insight Center for Target, and my position required me to be in the Twin Cities three to four days

a week. I commuted between New York and Minneapolis, which allowed me to finish my degree here."

The flexibility of the MLS instructors and course load worked to Muckerman's advantage in those busy months. "I took some weekend seminars, did a distance learning project, and took in-classroom courses when I was in town. I had to miss a couple of classes here and there, but in all, the instructors were understanding.

"Aside from the high caliber of students and teachers in the program, by far and away the biggest benefit for me was the flexibility of the program; it allowed me to achieve my degree," she says.

Her studies have already paid off. In April of 2006, Muckerman joined Condé Nast Publishing, where she serves as the director of business and consumer insights for *Condé Nast Portfolio*, a business publication set to launch in May of 2007. It's her job to understand business trends from a variety of cultural and business viewpoints, as well as to understand different consumer segments—and then use that information to design marketing programs for the magazine's advertisers.

"What I'm doing builds on the type of thinking I did in the program," says Muckerman. "The new perspectives it gave me are important—I'm not just able to use a business viewpoint. I can draw on a variety of sources from arts and culture and technology. I can see the big picture."



Photo by Tim Runnelshoff

Jose Gomez

Longtime student discovers

a world of opportunities

“It started because I wanted to gain more marketable skills and expand my business capacity; it grew because I just liked doing it,” says nine-time University of Minnesota alumnus Jose Gomez regarding his education.

That’s not a misprint—Gomez has nine degrees and accreditations from the University of Minnesota, including a bachelor’s degree, seven master’s degrees,

a Ph.D., and his College of Continuing Education Innovation Studies Certificate. And if that weren’t impressive enough, he also has a degree from the University of Havana, Cuba.

In a quiet way, Gomez has lived a life few people can even imagine. He’s traveled the world, worked for the state department, served as an ambassador, and been a business analyst, accountant, controller,

and company president. Oh, and he also speaks five languages and, along with his very supportive wife, has raised two successful children (both U of M alums).

Born in Cuba in 1945, Gomez’s first degree (in economics) opened the door to a new world for him. “When I was younger, I was a strong supporter of [Fidel] Castro,” Gomez explains. “Many of us believed that communism could be Cuba’s way out of

poverty. And because I was a well-educated young person, I was in high demand with the government, and had a meteoric career.”

After graduation, he ended up working in foreign trade for the Cuban government and traveled extensively. In addition, he served as Cuba’s ambassador to Egypt.

It was while living in Cairo in the late 1970s Gomez realized his future may not lie in his home country. “I began to become very disenchanted. I was disturbed by Cuba’s involvement in Africa; I didn’t like how things were being handled.” Worried, Gomez repeatedly took his concerns to the Cuban government—and every time, they refused to listen. “I realized, after awhile, that it just wasn’t going to work. They weren’t listening—or didn’t want to.”

And so, in 1977 Gomez packed up his wife and two children (then ages 7 and 2) and defected to the United States (via Cairo to London to the U.S.). “It wasn’t an easy decision to make,” he recalls. “I had a good life—and I didn’t know what I would be doing in the U.S. if I came here. We didn’t even know where we would go.

“And,” he adds, “I knew the possibility of ever coming back to Cuba, given what the situation with the government was, was very, very small. It was very difficult.”

A difficult decision, but one Gomez has never regretted. “My son was one of only a handful of graduates in his class to earn both his M.D. and his Ph.D. in neurology simultaneously. My daughter has her Ph.D. in sociology and works in Switzerland for a human rights organization. They’ve had so many opportunities they never would’ve if we’d stayed in Cuba.”

Gomez and his family ended up in Minnesota. “It was certainly a change of pace, going from Cuba and Cairo to Minnesota. But we loved it here, and have been here ever since.” Gomez fit in well, and started working as a business analyst, eventually working his way up to manager.

“When I started the job, I decided to enhance my marketable business skills and work towards my MBA. So I took my first class at the U in 1978, and I’ve pretty much been here ever since. My transcript probably looks like a telephone book,” he says with a smile.

Gomez finished his first MBA in 1981, and another (in business taxation) in 1992.

And then, “things got really crazy.” Gomez says. “I was no longer looking for a work-related degree, and I decided to study something that appealed to me.” So he switched gears and received his master’s degree in public health. “I knew if things changed in Cuba, I’d want to go back and try and make a difference, to help the people and the country. So I got a degree in something that would be needed for reconstruction and rebuilding.”

Following that, Gomez went on to obtain master’s degrees in both education and higher education, and then applied to the Ph.D. program in educational policy and administration, which he completed in 1998. “I wanted something administrative, and I had the background in education already, so it was a natural fit.”

Not one to rest on his laurels, Gomez was simultaneously enrolled in the Master of Liberal Studies (MLS) program and Innovation Studies Certificate program in the College of Continuing Education. “I was working away on my Ph.D., and it was some heavy stuff...the MLS program gave me the chance to take a lot of classes I wouldn’t have been able to take as a part of the Ph.D. program. It was purely for fun.”

“People must think I have a compulsion,” he continues. “But it’s just what I like to do. I own my own business; I can set my own hours...some people like to rehab cars or other hobbies. I like to go to school.”

So much so that Gomez went back for another master’s degree in 2004, this time in agriculture. “It was pure intellectual curiosity. I’ve always been interested in agriculture and its role in society—especially in the underdeveloped world. It’s a terribly important topic.”

Gomez and his family have always taken education seriously. “My wife has a degree in accounting; my children have doctorates.

But I think we also appreciate education for its own sake. It helps us live a more enriched life. Sometimes my wife jokes that I actually have two wives—her and the U...but she understands. And she’s just kidding. Mostly,” he says, tongue in cheek.

At age 61, Gomez has no plans to slow down. “I love traveling and learning, and plan on doing both for as long as I can. This year I’ll see Montreal, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia... As far as school...well, I’ve started work on a law degree, which I hope to finish in a couple of years. I’m not planning on practicing, necessarily—but I think as a business owner, it’s a good thing to have a handle on.”

“I was working away on my Ph.D., and it was some heavy stuff...the MLS [Master of Liberal Studies] program gave me the chance to take a lot of classes I wouldn’t have been able to take as a part of the Ph.D. program. It was purely for fun.”

— Jose Gomez, nine-time U of M alumnus

Gomez credits one of his instructors, Professor Art Harkins, as an inspiration. “I’ve no desire to ‘retire.’ Professor Harkins is definitely a role model in that regard—he is always looking ahead and planning. He looks to the future like it’s going to last forever; I think that might be the key to making it happen. Just keep moving forward.”

With the law degree “only” two years away, what else does the future hold for Gomez? “I have probably 20 things running through my head at all times that I want to do. I know I want to spend some time in Latin America working with underprivileged kids—I think I have a lot to offer and would love to be able to give back to the community. And of course I’ll take more classes,” he says.

Jose Gomez is not one to brag about his accomplishments. But even if he is a bit reticent about talking about his achievements, he will readily and enthusiastically share the secret to those successes. “Really, I believe people should do what makes them happy in life. People should be happy...and that’s what I strive for. And when I look back on my life, there is no one more happy than I.”



Once upon a time, writing was left to the “professionals”—authors, composition instructors, journalists, and the like.

But fast-forward to today, and there’s no escaping the fact that in a world as connected as ours, we are *all* writers. We might not be penning the Great American Novel or in the hunt for the Pulitzer, but virtually all adults are faced with a variety

of daily writing tasks, whether for personal or professional reasons.

From e-mails and project proposals to department-wide memos and research papers, and even blogs, e-newsletters, and good, old-fashioned, pen-and-paper correspondence, the need for effective writing skills is no longer confined to a single profession or field.

“We may have great ideas, but if we can’t write well, they may never be recognized or rewarded,” says Andrea Gilats, who is

heading up the development of a new adult-focused writing initiative at the College. “Our successes hinge on writing fluently, clearly, and gracefully. We must be able to effectively express our good thinking. The goal of the initiative, set to launch in early 2007, is to help adults identify their writing needs, find both existing and new College of Continuing Education short courses and programs to meet them, and provide writing-related information and resources.”

Freelancer Jody McNaughton explains how one of those existing courses can

have a big impact on participants' professionalism, and their companies' bottom lines. "I've been working in marketing communications for more than 13 years," she says. "All



Marie Olofsdotter

marketing and communications professionals should strive to be excellent proofreaders and copy editors. Accurate writing, proofreading, and copy editing can save a company from embarrassment and reprinting costs."

To stay abreast of current trends, polish her skills, and develop new ones, McNaughton has taken a number of writing and editing courses throughout her career, including the College of Continuing Education's recent course, *Developing Proofreading and Editing Skills*. "The class helped me not only develop my own writing skills, and be better able to edit my own work, but also made me [as a copy editor] appreciate the writing process and how personal a piece can be to [the author]. Being diplomatic and sensitive is key."

In a time when hiring and promotion decisions can often hinge on effective writing and effective communication, McNaughton is not alone in wanting to develop her skills to make her more marketable in her field.

Others, such as artist Marie Olofsdotter, seek out writing classes at the U to relax, refresh their spirit, or indulge a passion. At the recommendation of a friend, Olofsdotter signed up for the College of Continuing Education's Split Rock Arts Program workshop, *The Secret River: Mentoring and the Practice of Poetry*, to rediscover her creative energies. "I'm a native of Sweden," she says, "so living here in the United States, I am working as an artist in a language that is not my first. It's a beautiful language, but I'm constantly learning...working to overcome my insecurities. Split Rock was wonderful; there really isn't anything else like it."

"I'm a native of Sweden,
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my insecurities."
- Marie Olofsdotter

Of course not all of those charged with writing are as passionate about the prospect as Olofsdotter. Many people are intimidated at the thought of signing up for a writing course. But, as one longtime College of Continuing Education instructor says, they needn't feel this way.

"Everyone—from the most elementary to the most accomplished of writers—can benefit from taking a writing course," maintains Ricardo Medeiros, who has taught writing courses at postsecondary institutions throughout the Twin Cities for more than two decades. "And there's a course for everyone in the writing world."

"Writing is, as James Baldwin aptly put it, a 'political instrument'—and it should be available to everyone," he continues.

"Language is such a fundamental part of what it means to be a human being. We're wired to be 'in' language all the time—even in our dreams, when we sleep! To be able to articulate ourselves on paper is not just a utilitarian skill; rather, it's a creative tool through which we formulate and give substance to our thoughts. To become a better writer...opens up options for understanding ourselves more fully and, crucially, for understanding our relation to the world."

As both a writing instructor and an editor, Medeiros has worked with writers of all abilities and aspirations. "In our increasingly diverse society, we all need the ability to articulate ourselves meaningfully through the written word. I really believe that this is an essential skill for everyone in a multi-cultural world.

"As a writing instructor," he continues, "I see my main task as helping students to develop an awareness of their own thinking processes. I try to help them to understand how factors such as subject, purpose, context, and audience shape the rhetorical situations in which they write—and, hence, how they need to strategize to take account of those factors in their writing.

"I like to view myself not as a taskmaster, but as a coach," Medeiros claims. "Because I view writing as a tool for discovering self and others, I resist the impulse to provide simple, convenient answers for my students. My goal is to help them articulate good questions and find meaningful strategies for expressing coherent thoughts on paper in response to those questions."

And, beginning in 2007, it will be easier than ever to find a course, explore various workshops and seminars, or discover your writing strengths and weaknesses when the College launches its Continuing Education for Professional and Creative Writing interactive Web site, which will be adult learners' one-stop portal for resources and learning opportunities for their writing-related needs.

For a preview of Continuing Education for Professional and Creative Writing, visit www.cce.umn.edu/writing or call 612-624-4000.



Online Mentoring Program Branches Out

New poetry mentor specializes in Spanish-English translations

For many writers, practicing the art of storytelling begins even before they are able to put pen to paper: “My grandmother...once found me as an infant making pictographic [stories] on the wall of my bedroom with an unusual, but nonetheless effective, medium,” recalls Split Rock Arts Program’s Online Mentoring for Writers’ newest mentor, Pablo Medina. “Vocations, unlike professions, pick you; you don’t pick them. And so it was in my case.”

The author of several works of poetry and prose, most recently, *The Cigar Roller*, a novel, and *Points of Balance/Puntos de Apoyo*, a bilingual collection of poetry, Medina is also a noted literary translator.

For any writer—beginner, intermediate, or advanced—constructive criticism from a seasoned critical reader is a valuable tool. Split Rock’s Online Mentoring program is designed to provide that critical feedback, and connects writers with outstanding mentors who provide individually tailored, constructive assistance with literary fiction, poetry, or creative nonfiction.

Since its inception almost three years ago, the program has served more than 200 writers from all over the country and around the English-speaking world. With the addition of Medina to the staff, Online Mentoring for Writers furthers both its reach and its relevance to the global community. Medina welcomes clients in poetry and fiction, as well as those writing in Spanish or translating poetry from or into Spanish or any other Romance language.

Born in Cuba, Medina was 12 when his family moved to the United States in 1960. As a writer, he got his start composing poetry in his native Spanish when he was just a teenager. He then wrote bilingually until he switched to writing in one language only at the urging of a college mentor. “The world that surrounded me at the time was English, so I picked that, writing in [it] primarily until the 1990s, when I decided to defy [my professor’s] dictum. It worked.”

Now, Medina writes in both languages. “My ‘preferred language’ is one that comes at the moment of composition—I use both languages in all my writing. Having said that,” he pauses and quotes a bit from an old Scottish poem, “I was born into Spanish and ‘I fain would lie doon’ to die speaking Spanish...even if I speak to the wall or heart monitor.”

Medina has translation experience in most literary genres, and, like many authors, believes that literary translation is an art form unto itself. “We live in a translated culture. The basic texts of our civilization—Hammurabi’s code, the Old and New Testaments, Greek tragedy and philosophy, and the Roman poets have come to us for the most part as translated works. You can put down the importance of translation and translators, but you do so at the risk of falling prey to poverty of thought and narrowness of mind. How many people in this country have read *Madame Bovary* in the original French or *Anna Karenina* in the original Russian?”

His goal, and a skill he fosters in the writers

he mentors, is to create three key elements in a translated piece: urgency, necessity, and balance. “Urgency involves the reader in the work; necessity keeps him reading; balance makes him forget he is reading.”

But there is also, Medina cautions, another element—an almost intangible force—that must be captured to fully represent the “emotional truth” of a piece. “[The] one element without which the story, poem, essay, is nothing more than a wooden contraption pulled by a wooden donkey; that is more difficult to define because it is particular to every work of art. García Lorca borrowed a term from flamenco music and called it *duende*. So let’s call it that. Without *duende* there is nothing. But there is neither map nor exercise that can reach it, except for the writer’s willingness to abandon him or herself to the work.”

This is Medina’s first tenure as an online mentor—and a new chapter in his life he is eager to begin. “Mentor is the name of Telemachus’s teacher in the *Odyssey*. He stands as the prototype of all teachers—supportive but demanding, nurturing but rigorous. A mentor must function as a supporter and, simultaneously, as a mirror who refuses to answer the question, ‘Who’s the fairest one of all?’ I am intrigued by the online experience and look forward to it.”

For more information on Online Mentoring for Writers, please visit www.cce.umn.edu/mentoring, or call 612-624-4375.

College of Continuing Education Scholarships:

Opening doors to new possibilities

Josiah Titus was immediately intrigued when he heard one of his college instructors, Hamline University professor and critically acclaimed author Sheila O'Connor, was teaching a course through the University of Minnesota College of Continuing Education's Split Rock Arts Program. "I knew taking her workshop could really help me develop as a writer."

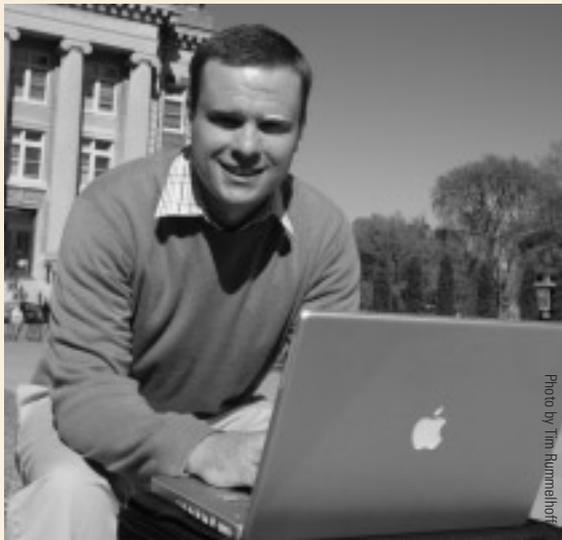
Now in its 23rd year, the Split Rock Arts Program offers intensive summer workshops in creative writing, visual arts and design, and creativity enhancement. The popular program offers participants a chance to work with and be mentored by outstanding artists and writers from around the world.

"I had taken a few writing classes and workshops at places like The Loft," Titus says, "but they were so spread out—we'd meet, then be apart for a week, then reconvene. It was very scattered, disjointed. This workshop at Split Rock would be a chance to get an intense education in a short time, to really dig in—and dig deeper—into the craft, and into what I needed or wanted as a writer."

Unfortunately, Titus was busy working full-time, and with his wife in chiropractic school, he was the sole income provider. The only way he could attend was through financial aid. "When I heard about the scholarship opportunities available, I took a chance and applied for one. Without it, I wouldn't have been able to go."

Thanks to the Nolte-Miller Scholarship, Josiah attended the Fiction Writer's Fingerprint workshop, an experience he calls "the four most influential days of my life as a writer."

"It taught me so much. I learned how to apply my college course work, and I got a real sense of who I am as a writer. I found that it shaped what I wrote, how I wrote it...and I'm continuing to discover new ways to use what I learned in that course, even now."



Josiah Titus

"Although the Split Rock workshop was a single step in his career path, it marked a major transition in his life—one he couldn't have made without the help of the Nolte-Miller scholarship."

"To get a sense of yourself as an artist, to get a taste of who you are and what your 'voice' is like...that's a remarkable thing for a young writer. [Since taking the class,] I'm a stronger, better storyteller—and more confident of my voice on the page."

Since attending Split Rock, Titus has published several pieces and is now working toward a master's degree in writing. "The confidence I gained, and the

experience I had [at Split Rock] really solidified my desire to go to [graduate school]. I knew I could put together a strong portfolio and application."

Although the Split Rock workshop was a single step in his career path, it marked a major transition in his life—one he couldn't have made without the help of the Nolte-Miller scholarship. "As someone with a family and a full-time job, I wasn't a 'traditional student.' The flexibility of the College of Continuing Education truly helped me.

"Some people might say 'oh, it's only a few hundred dollars, what's the big deal?' But to me, the scholarship made a HUGE difference. It opened a door to an experience I never would have had otherwise."

Many College of Continuing Education students are, like Josiah Titus, adult learners who are already trying to balance a family and career. For them, plans of going back to school or taking advantage of personal enrichment opportunities are often put aside because of the financial strain taking classes might impose.

Because the College of Continuing Education is committed to helping adults realize their educational goals—whether it's for career enhancement, personal enrichment, or obtaining a University degree—a number of scholarships are available to help alleviate the financial burden. For more information on helping motivated adults return to school, call Development Director Kathleen Davoli at 612-625-1253 or visit www.cce.umn.edu/giving.

ALUMNI VOICES

In this issue of Alumni Voices, we hear from Mary Jane Plunkett, who parlayed her degree into an amazing career here and abroad before coming back to campus to help students find their “voice.” Mary Jane graduated from University College, which is now part of the College of Continuing Education. We also hear from her daughter, Liz Plunkett, whose story often mirrors Mary Jane’s path, including the rigors of a College of Continuing Education degree.

Mary Jane Plunkett
B.A., Journalism, 1943
M.A., Speech Communication, 1986

In 1941, I enrolled at the University. Everywhere you looked, there were signs of the war. Twelve thousand soldiers and sailors marched to class. To this day, when I close my eyes, I can still hear the tapping of their cleats as they marched in unison down the road.

The war was a fact of life. At graduation, young men walked down the aisle in their robes, got their diplomas, and five hours later were in uniform and on planes off to fight.

With so many men in the service, women with degrees had employment opportunities they otherwise would not have had. Shortly after graduating with honors in public relations, I was offered a job as a merchandising representative for *Life* magazine in New York City.

I went on to interview famous sportspersons as a copywriter for Wheaties’ “Breakfast of Champions” campaign, and then spent a year in London with the American Red Cross. Eventually, I returned to Minnesota to edit

the *Daytonian* (a magazine put out by Dayton’s Department Store).

Following that, I married a war veteran, and raised six children—five of whom are also U of M graduates. In my forties, I returned to working life as an adviser at the U.

But on the other hand, there was so much unrest and strife on campus. And, sometimes, I needed to serve as the “voice of reason” as well. It was a time of upheaval, and the potential for it to turn into a powder keg like Kent State was always there. It took such a long time for the environment to calm back down after Vietnam.

In addition to working as an adviser, I also completed my master’s degree in speech communication and served as an officer and president of the College of Liberal Arts alumni board. Since my retirement, I have dabbled in women’s studies courses and been involved with the College of Continuing Education’s Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

My life from age 19 to 84 has been entwined with the University of Minnesota, and I’ve enjoyed each of those 65 years. It’s always a thrill to look in the papers and see a successful young person—doctor, lawyer, senator, what have you—and think “goodness, I knew them ‘way back when.” It’s remarkable what you can do with an education, and I’m proud to have played some small role in getting all those students through it.



Liz and Mary Jane Plunkett

The 1970s were a very tumultuous time. Vietnam was the second major war I had been through while at the U, but the tone was quite different. On one hand, it was wonderful to see the changes coming about. The administration was finally recognizing that students should have more of a voice in what happens to them in terms of their education. And I served as an intermediary, to help them find that voice.

MEET THE OSHERS

Over the past two years, the Bernard Osher Foundation has become a major supporter of the College of Continuing Education. After receiving an initial grant and later a million-dollar endowment from the Bernard Osher Foundation, the College's ElderLearning Institute became the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). Last December, the College received another grant and established the Osher Reentry Scholarship Program.

The scholarship program assists adult students who are reentering the university to complete undergraduate degrees and still have a significant time in the workforce. Currently, there are a total of 43 Osher Reentry Scholarship Programs across the country.

While both OLLI and the Osher Reentry Program have become well-known to many people served by the College of Continuing Education, the individuals behind the Osher Foundation may not be as well known. *CCE Current* takes a moment to profile and thank Bernard and Barbro Osher of the Bernard G. Osher Foundation.

Bernard Osher, Founder and Treasurer

A native of Biddeford, Maine, and a graduate of Bowdoin College, Bernard Osher began his successful business career by managing his family's hardware and plumbing supplies store in Maine and continuing with work at Oppenheimer & Company in New York. He then moved to California, where he became a founding director of

World Savings (now Wachovia), one of the largest savings institutions in the United States. In the 1970s, Osher purchased the fine art auction house of Butterfield & Butterfield and oversaw its growth to become the fourth largest auction house in the world. In 1999, he sold the company to eBay.

Bernard Osher and his wife Barbro are long-time patrons of the arts and humanities and continuing education. In 1977, Bernard Osher created the foundation that bears his name, with the goal of supporting those causes.



Bernard and Barbro Osher

In addition to funding selected programs in integrative medicine, post-secondary student scholarships, and arts and humanities, one of the Osher Foundation's goals is to create a national network of lifelong learning institutes for older adults. As of press time, there were Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes currently operating on the campuses of 93 colleges and universities across the country.

Barbro Osher, Chairman of the Board

A native of Stockholm, Sweden, and a graduate of Stockholm University with a degree in languages and political science, Barbro Osher is consul general of Sweden in San Francisco, and owner and publisher of *Vestkusten*, a Swedish-American newspaper in the United States.

Barbro is one of the founders of the Swedish Women's Educational Association (SWEA) and is president of Positive Sweden/America, an organization furthering the image of Sweden through educational activities in the United States. She is the recipient of several honorary degrees, including one from Gustavus Adolphus College. Barbro has also received the Eliason Award from the Swedish American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Los Angeles in 1999 and was named "Woman of the Year" by the SWEA last year in Stockholm. In 2002, she was awarded His Majesty the King's Medal.

Barbro Osher is chairman both of the Bernard Osher Foundation and of the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation. The Pro Suecia Foundation supports Swedish-related cultural and educational projects in North America and Sweden.

Both Bernard and Barbro Osher have a remarkable dedication and commitment to the transformative power of education and lifelong learning. The University of Minnesota and the College of Continuing Education, along with the all the Osher Reentry Scholars and OLLI members, share this value and are grateful to the Oshers for their tremendous generosity.

Liz Plunkett

**B.A., Child Psychology, 2001
MLS, (expected) 2007**

When I was younger, I was a typical kid, and didn't really appreciate how remarkable my mother really was. But as I grew older, and I witnessed her in action, I understood what an amazing role model she was. She was an athlete, an adviser, an activist. In a way, she reminded me of Billie Jean King—so strong, so put-together, so ahead of her time.

And even though I never intentionally took the same path as she did, I am now

involved in a similar career at the U. Now, I work as an adviser for undergraduates in the child psychology department, and am also a student again, having returned to the Master of Liberal Studies program at the College of Continuing Education where I'm in the process of writing my thesis.

The U can be a difficult place. In an institution of this size, it can be tricky to make connections—personal connections, academic connections—all those little lifelines that help students develop a strong sense of belonging and responsibility.

Without that, it's difficult to find success. It's my job, as an adviser, to help students make—and maintain—that sense of connectedness.

It wasn't until several years after I started my advising career that someone mentioned I was following in my mom's footsteps—and I realized that they were right. And now, when they asked me how it felt to be doing what she was doing, I realized how proud I am. She really is something else.

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