Social Work Faculty Volunteer, Present Research in Uganda

Dr. Diane Falk, professor of Social Work, and Dr. Robert Barney, assistant professor of Social Work, brought two seniors, Johanna Ryden and Cathrine Petty, to Uganda for a volunteer trip to work with children and teachers at the Mustard Seed Academy this summer.

“In the past, Dr. Falk has gone to Uganda, and she had a desire to take students over to volunteer,” said Dr. Barney.

A highlight of their two-and-a-half week trip was a safari through Lake Mbuuro National Park with 45 sixth graders from the Mustard Seed Academy. “Three hours away, African animals are wandering, but the students have never seen these animals before,” said Falk.

The safari ride through the national park was an opportunity to “expose them to their own country.” Before the adventure, Ryden and Petty, both social work students enrolled in Stockton’s Baccalaureate Child Welfare Education Program, taught a class introducing the students to the wildlife they would see, which included zebras, antelope and some of the more than 1,000 bird species found in Uganda.

“The kids were so excited,” said Falk, who also arranged a boat tour for the students to see crocodiles and hippopotami.

Substance abuse and the HIV virus leave many Ugandan children mistreated or orphaned. “The average woman in Uganda has seven children, and often she is too poor to feed her own children,” said Falk.

The Stockton team volunteered at Rapha’s House, a group home provided by the academy for vulnerable children. “There is so much need,” explained Barney.

To help the teachers and administrators at the academy, Falk and Barney provided training on how to implement service-learning in the classroom. “They needed practical experience and a foundation,” Barney said.

Academic work has been a focus at the school, whose students are top performers. By shifting energies towards service-learning, teachers can provide students with greater opportunities, he explained. Practical, hands-on education can help to prepare students for careers in fields that will help the country pull out of its current state. Service-learning connects classroom learning with the community and helps students develop a sense of vocation, explained Falk.

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Melanie McLeod joins the Philosophy program as a visiting instructor. Ms. McLeod completed coursework and exams for a Ph.D. in Philosophy at Michigan State University, where she received a number of scholarships, fellowships, and awards. She earned her M.A. in Philosophy from Michigan State University and her B.S.N. in Nursing from California State University at Sacramento. She has taught a variety of courses in philosophy and logic at Stockton since coming to South Jersey in 1997. She is also co-author, with Stockton Professor Dr. Rodger Jackson, of a logic text to be published by Broadview Press in 2014.

Dr. Amy Papalexandrou joins the Visual Arts program as an assistant professor of Art History. Dr. Papalexandrou received her Ph.D. in Art and Archaeology from Princeton University and both her B.A. and M.A. in Architecture from The University of Illinois. She has taught architecture, art history, and classics at a wide range of universities, and brings expertise in Ancient, particularly Byzantine, art and architecture to Stockton. Her experience with archeological digs in Greece and Cyprus should offer exciting travel opportunities for Stockton students.

Dr. John Theibault joins the Historical Studies program as a visiting assistant professor. Dr. Theibault earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in History from Johns Hopkins University, his M.B.A. from The University of Delaware, and his B.A. in History from The University of California, Santa Cruz – Stevenson College. A familiar face at Stockton for his teaching and recent stewardship of the Digital Humanities Center, he will offer courses in his specialties in German and European History and in Digital Humanities.

Dr. Minna Wu joins the Historical Studies program as a visiting assistant professor. Dr. Wu recently earned her Ph.D. at Columbia University, where she specialized in Early Chinese History, Pre-modern Chinese Culture and History, and East Asian Civilization. She received both her B.A. and an M.A. in history from Peking University. She has published articles on early Chinese material culture in Chinese archeological publications and has translated a number of books and articles by scholar Feng Li on Chinese antiquity.

Dr. Jongbok Yi joins the Philosophy program as an assistant professor of Asian Philosophy. Dr. Yi earned his Ph.D. at University of Virginia, his M.A.s in Religious Studies from Seoul National and The University of Virginia, and his B.A. in Korean Language and Literature from Sungkyunkwan University in South Korea. He brings to Stockton expertise in Buddhism, Meditation, and Asian Religions, as well as Readings in Modern and Classic Texts in Asian Languages, including Korean, Tibetan, Japanese, Sanskrit, and Classical Chinese.
Dr. Helen Wei, Student Present Paper at IEEE Conference

Dr. Duo (Helen) Wei, assistant professor of Computer Science and Information Systems, School of Business, and Tiara Campbell, Dr. Wei’s former student from Environmental Science, presented a poster at the IEEE conference in Philadelphia, held Sept. 9 - Sept. 11.

Dr. Wei and Campbell presented a paper titled, “Improving Clinical Trial Online Search Efficiency Using Natural Language Processing and Biomedical Ontology Mapping Approach” in the IEEE International Conference on Healthcare Informatics (ICHI2013).

The annual ICHI conference is the premier international forum concerned with the application of computer science principles, information science principles, information technology and communication technology to address problems in healthcare, public health, everyday wellness as well as the related social and ethical issues.

Campbell was excited to be involved in research with Dr. Wei during her undergraduate studies and to attend the conference. She received a Student Travel Funding (STF) from the Provost’s Office.

Dr. Helen Wei and Tiara Campbell stand with their poster presentation at the IEEE International Conference on Healthcare Informatics Sept. 9-11.
Dr. Wharton to be Panelist in Conference on Reproductive Justice

Dr. Linda Wharton, associate professor of Political Science, will be a panelist at a conference on reproductive justice, titled “Beyond Roe: Reproductive Justice in a Changing World,” hosted by the Rutgers Camden School of Law on Friday, Oct. 11.

Dr. Wharton has plenty of experience to add to the conference. In 1992, Dr. Wharton served as lead co-counsel in the landmark abortion rights case, Planned Parenthood v. Casey, decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. Dr. Wharton will tell the story of personally litigating the case, the impact of the Supreme Court’s pivotal decision and its legacy at the conference.

“Casey has positives and negatives,” Dr. Wharton said. “It advanced the link between reproductive autonomy and women’s equality, with the plurality opinion stating that access to abortion was rooted in personal autonomy.” The notion of autonomy has led to a solidifying and expansion of constitutional protection for individuals beyond the scope of reproductive justice, especially in the area of gay and lesbian rights, Dr. Wharton said.

Dr. Wharton serves as a consultant on issues of gender equity in education and constitutional protection for women’s rights, in addition to teaching courses on Constitutional Law, Women and the Law, Civil Liberties, Gender and Political Action and Advanced Constitutional Litigation.

Dr. Eisele Receives School of Health Sciences Leadership Award

Dr. Cheryle Eisele, professor emeritus in Nursing, received the School of Health Sciences Leadership Award at a ceremony at the Board of Trustees meeting on Sept. 18.

Dr. Eisele was cited for her “vision, dedication and commitment to excellence” in the award presentation by Dr. Laurie Shanderson, assistant dean of the School of Health Sciences.

Dr. Shanderson noted that Dr. Eisele helped “alleviate the severe nursing shortages of the 1980s and ‘90s” by helping to develop the college’s Nursing program. She currently serves as an adjunct instructor at the college.

Dr. Eisele said she was “most proud of the development of the BSN to MSN (bachelor’s to master’s of nursing programs) and the pre-licensure program.”

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Contact the editor at (609) 652-4593 or e-mail StocktonTimes@stockton.edu.