

Faculty Development Grant Report

Introduction

I received a Faculty Development Grant in March 2009 to fund travel to and attendance of a symposium at Wake Forest University in Atlanta Georgia. The three-day gathering entitled, “Worlds in the Making: Creativity, A National Symposium” featured scientists, artists, entrepreneurs, and academics. The participants represented a variety of disciplines and cross-disciplines, within and outside of college and university campuses as well as various scientific foundations.

Taking place in both formal and informal settings, the speakers presented methods and insights for ways in which we might best prepare students for the rapidly changing world. While too numerous to discuss here, I will include a synopsis and more complete biography of several of the speakers along in an expanded version of this grant report to be posted on the Otis teaching wiki.

Interdisciplinary Creative Process and Practice

Attending a conference that wasn't “art college-specific” was very interesting. For several years Wake Forest University has been developing a flexible and inclusive cross-discipline program that unites programs across the institution. It was inspiring to see unusual pairings and successful creative entrepreneurship projects that resulted from such diverse groups of disciplines. One beta project had three professors. In their presentation they spoke quite frankly about the success and failure of mixing together expertise and research methods pertinent to each of these academic studies- Business , Engineering, and Japanese Literature departments. These kinds of challenging classroom situations were particularly interesting to me as they most clearly related to my own experience with the Integrated Learning Program at Otis. The distance between students, majors, agencies, and groups can seem impossibly broad. Several of the more experienced presenters shared their own best classroom methods for effective cross-pollination in cross-disciplinary situations.

Creative Entrepreneurship Projects

Creative Engagement as Catalyst for Social Change

The first evening's keynote speaker David Bornstein gave stunning accounts of successful projects conceived of and implemented by creative entrepreneurs from colleges and universities around the world. It was amazing to hear the breadth of the projects and the spectacular results. Many of these projects continue to flourish after students graduate.

The profound change in the world economy was a constant backdrop to the conference. Yet from the first evening's presentations, I saw the creative entrepreneurship projects as more than a fast maneuver to introduce the college student to another way to interface with the market place. The projects show the real power of such curricula. They provide interesting models for inclusive group projects that culminate in real world social change.

Student presenters talked about their experiences and shared their re-formed personal goals, widened workplace opportunities and expectations. While the world looks very challenging to all upcoming graduates, those who have taken part in these programs seem to have gained a new perspective. The challenge has become their opportunity. Not once during the three days did anyone discuss "the problem" of the millennial student.

Creativity Considered as Literacy

It was fascinating to realize that the creative model of problem-solving that academics from other disciplines were struggling to define was the creative model we at Otis are most familiar with—that of the artist's practice. It was gratifying to realize just how valuable an arts education can be, particularly at this time in history. Still, from my vantage point of listening to academics from other fields, it was also obvious that a program like our Integrated Learning is also very necessary if we are to prepare future innovators and leaders.

The key in creative entrepreneurship is the level of investment and curiosity of each participant. In an on-stage dialogue between filmmaker and writer, Abigail Child and astrophysicist and cosmologist, Josh Frieman one could easily spot the many similarities between the artistic practice and the scientific practice. Beyond this need for personal, eccentric methods of creativity, however, the overriding generous spirit of scientists is clearly the next brilliant and necessary piece of the successful group-creative model. Josh Frieman related the now well-known account of how thousands of scientists developed the Internet specifically in order to facilitate the coming together of scientists from all over the world. These kinds of shared goals and projects show the science community particularly well suited for working together to solve problems and accomplish projects far beyond any one's individual abilities.

Attending this symposium was a sober reminder that our students need time to investigate other interests in disciplines beyond their chosen fields. Each member of a team becomes more valuable when able to "hear" and "see" the other's point of view. For the artist or designer that becomes part of a working group it is critical that they bring with them the skills to interface in ways that highlight the unique information they bring as well as the ability to entertain and juggle abstract and differing points of view.

It seems that some very old educational methods were the white elephants in the room at Wake Forest University. In our increasingly a-historical world it may be that the most innovative professionals of coming decades will be students, experts in their chosen fields who have also developed a keen curiosity fed by a rich socio-historical education that gives them the consciousness necessary to interface with the world. The concern to me is how we educators can create methodology that develops students' capacity for depth learning in a surface culture.

Linda Hudson
Foundation, Product Design, and Graduate Studies—Fine Art

**Wake Forest
University:**



Wake Forest University
Program for Creativity and Innovation at Wake Forest University:
<http://www.wfu.edu/creativity/>

Bornstein, David.

David Bornstein specializes in writing about social entrepreneurship. He is the author of *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas* (Oxford University Press) which was described by *The New York Times* as "must reading" for "anyone who cares about building a more equitable and stable world." The book, which has been published in 16 languages, chronicles and analyzes the work of social innovators who are successfully addressing social problems at scale in several countries. Bornstein's first book, *The Price of a Dream: The Story of the Grameen Bank*, traces the history of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Grameen Bank during its first 20 years and describes the global emergence of the now-famous anti-poverty strategy known as "micro-finance." David Bornstein will deliver the opening night keynote address at 7:30pm on Wednesday, March 18.

. How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurship and the Power of New Ideas

<http://blog.guykawasaki.com/2007/09/social-entrepre.html>

Excerpt from an interview with David Bornstein.

Frieman, Josh.

Josh Frieman's primary research is in cosmology – the study of the Universe as a whole and its history since the beginning – especially the formation of large-scale structure and the interplay between cosmology, particle physics, and astrophysics. Current research interests include the analysis of large-scale structure in galaxy surveys such as the Sloan Digital Sky Survey. Frieman is a member of the Theoretical Astrophysics group at Fermilab, which has close connections with the cosmologists and theoretical astrophysicists at the University of Chicago where he is Professor, Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics

>> <http://astro.uchicago.edu/people/joshua-a-frieman.shtml>

>> <http://www.fnal.gov/pub/science/index.html>

Monk, Meredith.

Meredith Monk & Bjork

Catch a webcast interview with
Meredith and Bjork on
www.counterstreamradio.org

[Click here to listen](#)



Meredith Monk is a 21st century “renaissance artist” living in New York, NY. A pioneer in interdisciplinary performance for over 40 years, Monk has been a recipient of a MacArthur Foundation “Genius” grant and was recently inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

>><http://www.meredithmonk.org/>

