

ARC Newsletter

May 2008

Message from the Director

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Another school year has ended. You've put the final touches on another semester of scholastic activity. Now it is time to step back from the whirlwind of your daily academic routine to assess your performance for the year. I assure you that the staff of the Academic Resource Center will do the same, so that we can be a valuable part of the progress and the exciting future of Coppin State University. We know that change is coming, and we are excited to be part of it. Have a good summer. Come back to a new school year ready to be a part of happenings at Coppin State University. – Juanita Gilliam

ARC Spring Fair

Tables draped in green and yellow, bright balloons, and bowls of candy, games, leis, and a raffle helped set a lively tone for the Academic Resource Center's (ARC) first annual Spring Fair on Thursday, April 17, 2008.

Excitement buzzed in the main lobby of Grace Jacobs as ARC staffers distributed handouts, conducted interactive activities, and answered questions about the services offered by each of their individual centers (Math, Writing, Reading, Study Skills, and Athletic Study Center). A fun activity was offered by the staff at the Writing Center's table. Each participant who correctly answered a question related to the writing process received a prize: a writing handbook.

"I was so excited that I was able to attend the Fair with my class," commented Coppin Reading Instructor Yvette Myrick.

"As an instructor, I was able to gather materials and a wealth of information from all the different resource centers in one location. My students also commented that they were able to learn more about the available resources that could help them to excel in their studies. They also realized that they were not alone if they needed help with their classes."

As part of the Fair's activities, ARC staff, students, faculty, and Coppin graduates presented a full slate of academic workshops and motivational workshops.

"Mastering Math," was offered by the Math Center. "Plagiarism: What it is, What it is Not," was presented by Coppin students and Reading Center tutors, Velma Moore and Kendra Jordan, who had developed the plagiarism workshop from a class assignment on this very important topic. "MLA Revisited" was offered by the Writing Center, with Dr. Roger Stritmatter of the Department of Humanities as guest lecturer, and "Improving College Reading Skills: Video Workshop," was offered by the Reading Center. "Clicking with Math and Science: A Tour of the National Science Digital Library," facilitated by the Study Skills Center and presented by Dr. Genevieve Knight, was enthusiastically received by attendees.

Dr. Knight's presentation demonstrated how science journals and science tutorials at every level may be accessed through the digital library.



Reading Center tutor Ms. Carolyn Savage and a happy Coppin student share a special moment at the Spring Fair.

Reading Center tutor Gertrude Afriyie presented the workshop “On Being a Student,” in which she explained how she coped with the challenges and maximized the successes of her student life on her way to becoming a Coppin graduating senior. Glenda Lindsey, a licensed dietician and Study Skills tutor, centered her presentation, “Your Perfect Self: The Importance of Diet and Nutrition for College Students,” on the twin issues of overweight and obesity, emphasizing how college students can maintain a healthy weight.

“From Coppin Student to Lawyer: My Journey to Success” was presented by Coppin graduate and former ARC Study Skills Coordinator Alicia Ritchie. Ritchie shared the story of her progression from Coppin student to being a practicing lawyer.

In her inspiring workshop, “Becoming a Published Writer: One Student’s Story of Achievement,” Coppin student Cheryl Williams, who has published two books, strongly encouraged others who have dreams of writing books to persevere to fulfill their dreams.

Winners of the Writing Center’s poetry contest were also announced during the Fair. First-place winner, Jason Francis; second-place winner, Mary-Ann Dogo-Isonagie; and third-place winner, Wyasetta Thomas read their winning poems to an appreciative audience.

A raffle drawing was held at noon and another drawing was held at 2 p.m. A Scrabble game and a spring bag of goodies were raffled off to the lucky winners.

“Everyone working together is what made the day so exciting because it showed that the ARC is indeed a team aiming to serve Coppin’s students and aiming to aid them in becoming successful in their educational endeavors,” reflected Juanita Gilliam, Director of the Academic Resource Center.

She noted that she is looking forward to another exciting Spring Fair next year when staff members can share information about their centers with Coppin students and the greater Coppin family.

Math Center News

Students in DVMT 109 have a new resource thanks to Sandra Endurance Assan. Ms. Assan is a veteran Math Center tutor who holds a B.S. degree in Biology and is considering a possible career in teaching, although her primary objective is to pursue a Pharmacy degree. Ms. Assan has developed and implemented a workshop for a comprehensive review of DVMT 109. The review sessions began April 22 and will continue daily until May 13. The workshops are designed to review one unit per week to help prepare students for the final exam.

The Math Center also conducted a satellite workshop at the Helene Fuld School of Nursing’s Charles Street site on April 12 for students enrolled in Nursing 208 (Nursing Computations). Fifteen students were in attendance. The workshop was designed to help students better understand the mathematical processes involved in calculating medications. The initial workshop was conducted by Math Center Coordinator Gene Thomas, from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon in the Harriet Tubman Room at the Charles Street site.

The Math Center will continue to work with the Division of Nursing to develop and implement future workshops for Nursing 208 and Nursing Entrance Test (NET) preparation.

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Question: What did one math book say to the other?

“Don’t bother me. I’ve got my own problems.”



*Students pause during the festivities
with ARC staff --
Velma Moore, Shirley Thomas, Ann Cobb.*



*Tutors Steve Delice and Dale Dunn greet
fellow track member Carlinton Morgan at
the Study Skills Center table.*

Writing Center News: ARC Poetry Hour

On April 17, 2008, the Writing Center hosted the ARC Poetry Hour. Organized by Ms. Joellen Lofton, professional tutor, and Ms. Carol Rose, coordinator of the Study Skills Center, this event was held as part of the ARC Spring Fair. After the introductions, the standing room only audience welcomed CSU student Ms. Cheryl Williams, author of *Some Reasons Kids Gone By*, who gave a very informative lecture on “Becoming a Published Writer.” The highlight of this event was the announcement of the 3rd annual ARC Writing Center poetry contest winners. During the academic year 2007-2008, students submitted their poetry to Ms. Lofton to later be reviewed by a committee that then chose a first, second, and third place winner. The first place winner was Jason Francis, a second semester honors student, for “Sometimes in Vieux Fort.” Second place went to Mary Ann Dogo-Isonagie, for “Through the Violent Streets of Trench town,” and third place went to Wyasetta Thomas for “Let’s Lift up Our Sheets.” Congratulations to the winners, and thanks to those who participated by entering poems and those who attended this very inspirational event.

Portrait of the first prize winner – Jason Worren Francis: poet, deep thinker, honor student

Freshman Jason Francis was born on April 12, 1984 in Vieux Fort, St. Lucia, and came to Coppin as an international student with a full honors scholarship. He spends his time completing the required coursework for a math and computer science major, and, of course, writing poetry.

Francis entered the poem “Sometimes in Vieux Fort” in the ARC’s annual poetry contest with high hopes of winning. When asked why he chose to write it, he simply smiled and said, “I wrote that poem during a time in Vieux Fort when there were gun wars, and I longed to go to the sea with my girlfriend . . . I wanted to capture those feelings in my poetry.” Winning the poetry contest was important to Jason not just because he enjoys writing, but because he wanted to meet new people.

As a student, he is enjoying every moment at Coppin. “This is a small school. . . I enjoy the fact that they focus individual attention on me,” he said. “He stays humble regardless of his success,” said his uncle, Dr. Nicholas Eugene, a math professor at Coppin. With the support of his uncle and his new friends, Francis manages not to buckle under the weight of a “killer” schedule, and in spite of the demands of being an honor student he always finds time for poetry. – Steve Delice

Sometimes in Vieux Fort by Jason Worren Francis

Sometimes in Vieux Fort
the smell of the sea does fill the air
like the mood of the people,
roughed up into bellicose waves
by outside influences – not fair,
for I see the foam so clear.

How I long to go to sea
where my love is so free.
It’d be so very grand
To walk with you, hand in hand.
Ah, I glance nervously,
At the spray leaping over Maria, and
my heart jumps instantly,
by a squeeze of your soft hand.

Oh sea grapes! You catch my eye --
crimson, salty outside --
swiftly sweet is your inside
with a kernel of character as strong
as your compassion is so long --
lasting with God-endowed patience.

Your hair, the strong wind ruffles,
is eye-catching and smart.
Though gnarled, it’s still art
to a boy’s sea blasted eyes;
the same way the magnificent beauty
of the grass is exposed as it bends in waves
for the wind that wrestles in futility,
but cannot take us for slaves.

You feel the warmth of ocean spray
whilst your warmth embraces me in a
verdant smile.
How must I not feel that there is more?
Why should I remain on this sandy shore?
I gaze, excruciatingly, at the horizon so far,
to search for what you’d rather bar.
With all this vastness that’s there to see,
I wonder how long it will be kept from me.

The more I learn, the more I see.

Writers often explore questions to spark their creative fire. Here’s one to think about:

*What if you slept?
And what if, in your sleep, you dreamed?
And what if, in your dream, you went to heaven and there plucked a strange
and beautiful flower?
And what if, when you awoke, you had the flower in your hand?
Ah, what then?*
--Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 – 1834)

First Prize Winner Jason Francis



Inspired by the “lyricism and musicality” of poet and Nobel Prize winner Derek Walcott, Francis wants to “write more of my people and represent my culture . . . and the simple life in which I live” -- the people, their struggles, the Kweyol language, the sea, the sun, and the “exquisitely beautiful” land.

Study Skills Center: Dedicated Bunch of ARC-STEM Tutors: Root of Program's Success

The ARC Study Skills STEM collaborative study group program celebrates a fairly successful spring semester run, thanks in large part to a cadre of committed, dedicated tutors.

Dedication cannot be any more clearly defined than it is in the action of Ashley Queen, who decided to tutor by telephone when Coppin was forced to close one Friday back in February due to a snowstorm. Her group had a zoology test scheduled for the following Monday, and she felt it was her only chance to meet with her tutees for some well-needed review (of the course material) before their test. Such dedication is commendable, but even more impressive is its effect on students.

Student Austina Cole certainly appreciates such dedication. In a very rare display of excitement, she describes Gertrude Afriyie's study group sessions as interesting and "so much fun." Gertrude meets with her group in the Coppin Library, and the sessions last, according to Austina, "until we get it." She also expressed great appreciation for the fact that "Gertrude really breaks it down for us ... and goes way past her time limit." *It* refers to Vertebrate Structure course material, and the session which supposedly ends at 7:00 p.m. often lasts until after 9:00 p.m. "She brings us handouts and whatever resources or materials we



need ... even Wite-out." Talk about dedication!

Who says studying can't be fun? Certainly not Gertrude Afriyie (right), seen here with some members of her Vertebrate Structure study group.

Becky Bangurah, Austina Cole, Yetunde Olowabi, and Naomi Moore (l-r)

Lured by the promise of extra points, a sudden influx of students from Dr. Nesbitt's Chemistry 102 class swelled our ranks in mid-April. Tutor Robert Thomas summarily rejected the suggestion that the numbers might be unmanageable, that he might be overwhelmed, that he might need back-up. He waxes philosophical, indeed, a tad poetic, as he expresses the pleasure and fulfillment he derives from helping students get a better understanding of chemistry. "Anything I know is not worth anything unless I can transpose the knowledge." His facial expression betrays his pleasure as he recounts the "truly wonderful experience" of tutoring in the program and the sense of achievement he gets when a grateful student, thanks to his intervention, does well on a test. Well, if that's not dedication ...

Isioma Okonkwo, Sandra Assan, Marcus McCoy, and Damion Lee round out the dedicated band of group-study tutors. Isioma can hardly contain her enthusiasm when a Math131 student signs up for her session in the Study Skills Center, nor can she suppress her disappointment when a student is a no-show. Sandra Assan meets her groups in the Math Center; nothing makes her happier than being able to help her Math 132 or Math 201 students, so she meticulously prepares additional material to supplement the course work, and she brims with pride when their test scores improve.

Marcus McCoy (COSC 220) and Damion Lee (COSC 199) both meet their respective students in the computer lab on the sixth floor. Occasionally, however, there are no available computers in the sixth floor lab, so to accommodate the students, special computer programming software -JGrasp- has been loaded onto specified (yellow-stickered) computers in the Study Skills Center.

Austina Cole's claim of a better understanding of course material is echoed by the other students who take advantage of facilitated group study. A better understanding should translate into better grades and a greater likelihood of students remaining in STEM classes. Building up this academic support program will bridge the gap between a fairly successful semester and a very successful semester. Building up this program with its nurturing and dedicated staff will ensure that average students need not abandon their dreams of going into the field of science. It is therefore appropriate to borrow a line from the movie "Field of Dreams," when alluding to this program: "If you build it, they will come." Even better, they will stay.

Congratulations to the Class of 2008!!

The Academic Resource Center is proud to announce those staff members who are graduating this year. Each of these graduates has played an integral role in providing important support services for the Coppin community. Graduates, as you move forward, we thank you for the excellent jobs you have done, and we wish you well in all your endeavors.



Gertrude Afriyie, Reading Center
B.S. in Biology
Plans to earn a Master's
Degree in Public Health (MPH).



Corey Bell, Writing Center
B.A. in English (writing)
Plans to "pursue life
as an adventure."



Jasmine Countess, Writing Center
B.A. in English (literature)
Accepted into Loyola Marymount
Graduate School, Chicago
4.0 cumulative grade point average



Lorraine LaPrade, Writing Center
B.A. in English (writing)
Accepted into Claremont
Graduate School (Women's
Studies and Cultural Studies)



Arlon Morrison, Study Skills
B.S. in Management Science
Plans to enroll in an MBA program
at the University of Southern
Mississippi in the fall.



Silas Njane, Study Skills
B.S. in Management Science
Plans to earn an MBA in accounting.

OF NOTE

Iris Adams, Assistant Coordinator, Reading Center, awarded the St. Catherine Medal for Graduate Studies Program Achievement, College of Notre Dame.

Gertrude Afriyie, Reading Center, won the Eagle Award for biology.

Dunnell Orlando Brown, ARC Clerical Assistant, graduating senior, English major, inducted into Sigma Tau Delta, the English Honor society.

Kendra Jordan, Reading Center tutor, inducted into Sigma Tau Delta, the English Honor Society.

Shirley T. Thomas, Reading Center Coordinator, M.S., Professional Writing Program, Towson University.

Nurturing Potential . . . Transforming Lives

Congratulations to the 2008 Book Bonanza! Winners

1st place: Nana Atta Poku
\$50.00 Barnes & Noble bookstore gift certificate

2nd place: Sade Hammond
\$30.00 Barnes & Noble bookstore gift certificate

3rd place winner: Poetri Deal
\$20.00 Barnes & Noble bookstore gift certificate

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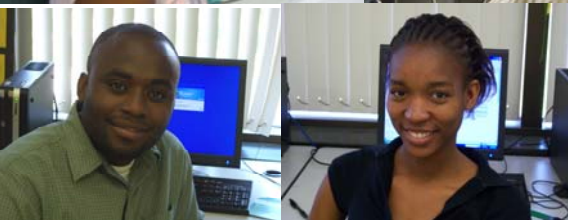
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The Entire Staff of the ARC
wishes everyone a safe,
healthy, happy, and
peaceful summer vacation.

Special Thanks: To all those in the ARC (Director, coordinators, tutors, students), Coppin staff, and faculty who came to my assistance on this and other projects, who met, advised, wrote, took pictures, proofread, provided workshops, made bulletin boards, judged poetry contests, and in other ways gave of their valuable time to make my year as Interim Coordinator of the Writing Center an amazing experience

-- Ann Cobb