

The Flourishing Mind~Call for Proposals

Sustainability and Mindfulness in Teaching and Learning

In Transit, The LaGuardia Journal on Teaching and Learning (V5, 2010) invites proposals for submissions.

Sustainability consciousness, emerging from the environmental movements of the 1960's, is generally expressed as collective and conscientious regard for the vulnerability of the Earth and its limited resources. As a concept, sustainability has application to a broad spectrum of human disciplines and activities; its principles and values are now well integrated into the everyday dimensions of the present needs and future goals of diverse communities from across the continents:

- Community activists, politicians, and artists think in new ways about climate change, renewable energy, carbon footprints, light, and water.
- Philosophers and theologians view sustainability in the context of the politics of abundance and consumption, equity and justice, animal rights, and fair trade.
- Corporate leaders explore sustainable relations of well-being in the workplace.
- Urban designers plan sustainable cities and eco-architecture.
- Faculty and administrators create ecological literacy requirements.
- Teachers and students confront ethical and practical choices demanded by social and environmental crises.

Across CUNY Colleges, students select from an array of majors and minors in environmentalism. At LaGuardia, in response to changing economic and vocational trends, the Division of Adult Continuing Education has created "green" programs, and the Department of Natural and Applied Sciences will soon offer a concentration in Environmental Science. Throughout our college, faculty incorporate sustainability topics into math, philosophy, urban studies, and dietetics. The grant-funded Water Monitoring Project at Newtown Creek currently engages an interdisciplinary group of students and faculty.

But the sustainability movement has a philosophical side as well, rooted in the social criticism of Henry David Thoreau and Lewis Mumford, and derived from Nature-oriented thinkers, artists, and spiritual practices, the poetic mysticism of Gary Snyder, for example, or the Romantic paintings of Casper David Friedrich. Both offer images of stillness asso-



image from <http://www.earthzine.org>

ciated with contemplative practice, the sustained awareness described by Thoreau as *wakefulness*.

Attentiveness to thought, or mindfulness, commonly undertaken in solitude, is now increasingly practiced in courses as diverse as nursing and phenomenology. Among its pedagogical objectives are renewed inner-nature; increased flexibility, clarity, and generosity of thought; deepened listening; contemplative inquiry; and a more open inter-relatedness between self and other. Current research on mindfulness-based practice in higher education confirms its potential to sustain and "enhance performance, character and the depth of the student's experience," writes Tobin Hart, author of "Opening the Contemplative Mind in the Classroom."

The Flourishing Mind (In Transit, V5, 2010) will explore the variety of scholarly perspectives from which faculty and administrators teach and model issues of sustainability and mindfulness. We encourage interested members of the college community to submit proposals addressing any of the following, or similar, themes emerging from class-

room work with students, curricular and co-curricular development, or administrative responses to challenges of sustainability:

- Responding to images of nature in painting, film, and literature
- Developing capacities for attention and awareness in the classroom
- Minding our places; inquiring into natural and cultural environments
- Designing and engineering in response to environmental changes
- Planning sustainable cities; building eco-municipalities
- Rethinking food: cultivation, just distribution, and choice
- Enhancing ecological literacy; identifying causes of climate change
- Increasing awareness of energy consumption and waste
- Engaging new technologies for sustainable economies and communities
- Caring for animals; protecting biodiversity and ecosystems
- Clarifying values in community health
- Greening businesses and economies
- Exploring ties between contemplative practices and eco-awareness
- Sustaining campus and community by helping our college make a mindful transition to a greener future.
- ...And many others!

In Transit, The LaGuardia Journal on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning serves the exchange of knowledge about good practice and research, and supports faculty and administrators in the advancement of the scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education. Our purpose is to expand scholarly writing, build intellectual community, and promote professional advancement across the disciplines.

Proposal form available at:

http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/ctl/journal/InTransit_v5_submissionForm.doc

Deadline: October 15, 2009*

Questions? Contact mpiso@lagcc.cuny.edu.

***Proposals submitted in summer 2009 will receive quick responses!**