

ADP Newsletter

FHSU Music Department Offers a "Salute to America" in First Annual Gala Concert

by Terry Crull, Director of Choral Activities

On February 18, 2006, the Fort Hays State University Music Department presented its first annual GALA Concert. The theme was "A Salute to America," and held in conjunction with the American Democracy Project.

Every performing ensemble, large or small, was represented in the GALA event. Every aspect of the Music Department was showcased, and in keeping with the theme and the support of ADP, every title was either patriotic, a bit of Americana, or by a famous American composer.

The evening was a rousing success, from the perspective of both the musicians and the audience, which was 650 strong, and showed its appreciation with thunderous applause. Highlights of the evening were when the Concert Choir combined with the Wind Ensemble to perform "Armed Forces Salute." Members of the audience who had served in our armed forces were asked to stand during the song representing their branch of service, and the crowd showed their appreciation for our veterans.

Special guests, the Hays High Plains Barbershop Chorus of the Barbershop Harmony Society, sang both the "Star Spangled Banner" to open the show, and the FHSU "Alma Mater" to begin the second half of the show. Many of these men are FHSU alums, and they were thrilled to be asked to be a part of this program.

Another highlight was when Kansas State senator Janis Lee served as narrator for the "Lincoln Portrait;" Aaron Copland's popular composition, played to perfection by the Wind Ensemble. The Grand Finale was special, too, and featured Carmen Dragon's brief but powerful arrangement of "America the Beautiful," performed by all the school's instrumentals, singers, and faculty.

The Music Department intends to host an annual GALA in early February, and the Department is extremely grateful to the American Democracy Project for helping us to get this inaugural concert event off the ground!



What is the American Democracy Project (ADP)?

"The goal of the multi-campus initiative is to develop informed university graduates who are committed to lives of engagement as citizens in our democracy."

"The American Democracy Project helped almost 200 AASCU member colleges and universities and their more than 1.8 million students find ways to create an intellectual and experiential understanding of civic engagement in the United States."

(American Democracy Project:
American Association of State
Colleges and Universities)

Civic Engagement in Political Science

Pre-Law Society Discusses Jury Service with Hays High School Seniors

by **Elisa Weselis, Instructor in Political Science**

One of the principle foundations of the American legal system involves the participation of citizens through jury service. It is this component of American service that is crucial for the successful functioning of the judicial branch of government. Throughout the week of April 24th, Fort Hays State University's Pre-Law Society, with the guidance and assistance of Dr. Shala Mills and Dr. Elisa Weselis, will introduce Hays High seniors in Mr. Casey Seyfort's American Government class to the American jury system. The Pre-Law Society will explore the history of trial by jury in America, the landmark decisions that have affected jury service and contemporary issues concerning jury awareness today. The format of the week-long series will be comprised of lecture, participation and group projects. Additionally, Mr. Seyfort's Hays High seniors will participate in a mock trial where they will role play as active jury participants.



“Too often in our daily lives we hear stories of our friends and family members trying to ‘escape’ jury service,” said Weselis. It is the hope of the American Jury Project, a key component of the American Democracy Project, that this service event will inform Hays High’s graduating seniors about the importance of their role in jury service; transforming the current reluctance of so many to serve as jurors into a positive and rewarding experience. “This is an excellent opportunity to engage the youth of Hays High in the practice of hands-on democracy,” said Jennifer Rodriguez, a senior at Fort Hays State University.



Dr. Shala Mills working with Hays High students

After leaving Hays High, these students will be developing their own perceptions of themselves and the world in which they live. As such, this is the perfect opportunity for the American Jury Project to share with them the significance of their community involvement through jury service. “This is an important way to increase awareness of something that is often absent in high school education. That is the importance of civic engagement through participation in our jury system,” said Mills. This learning opportunity is a wonderful way for the high school students to interact with the college students about something which affects the lives of nearly all members of American society.

Members of the Pre-Law Society who will be participating in this event are Jennifer Rodriguez, Shari Gonzalez, Star Goff, Jessica Jin, Nichole Keough and Matthew Musgrove.

Other Department Highlights



Students participating in High School Mural Project

by Amy Schmierbach, Assistant Professor of Art

Last semester was the first time I included service-learning into my curriculum for any of my classes. I was excited and pleased by the results and impacts it had on my students. For my “Philosophy of Art Seminar” I asked my students to prepare an art workshop for the participants of “Time Out for Life.” Five groups of four students developed and presented an art project ranging from sock puppets to abstract art. The students and I learned a lot from this experience. We learned about how to serve other people’s needs and how others view art in their life. This enabled my students and I to develop our own views on art and art making. Many students wanted to go back and do another workshop.

In the **English** Department this year, Lexey Bartlett’s World Literature students organized and lead a book discussion in the community. Also, Cheryl Duffy’s English Composition II students took the information and research gathered for their research papers and converted that information and research into a public document to share what they’ve uncovered with the community. In the fall, the **Philosophy** Department held a workshop on relevant subjects for high school students in our region. They also sponsored the following forums: “All I Hear is a Whimper: Americans Sheepishly Give up Freedoms” and “The Battle of Jenin: Ethics in Counter-Terror Operations.”



Students working to refurbish landscaping outside Hays Humane Shelter

The **Agriculture** Department participated in a service-learning project when students in Jean Gleischner’s Home Horticulture class planted shrubs, flowers and ornamental grasses at the Humane Society. As well, they mulched the area and installed a drip irrigation system. Also, Block and Bridle developed a presentation about Farm Safety which was given at the Farm Safety Awareness 2006 program on March 1 at the KSU Agricultural Research Center. Block and Bridle also hosted Ag Awareness on April 20th, in which they invited the area grade school and preschool children to teach them about agriculture.

Civic Engagement in Residential Life

McMindes Hall

Over this past year, McMindes Hall has done much in the way of building a strong, self-sufficient, student-focused presence in the building. McMindes Hall Council held an all-hall vote to change the visitation policy for the hall. This included initial polling to get an idea of what the students wanted. Hall council then drafted their proposal which went up for an all hall vote. A total of 311 residents voted.

Furthermore, McMindes Hall residents have engaged in community service by hosting a safe trick-or-treat event for the Hays community. They volunteered several hours with Make a Difference Day Hurricane Help for Schools. McMindes Hall also has an active student judicial board. When the case load slowed down, they were able to plan and execute an evening of passing out alcohol information and the Safe Ride phone number.

Custer Hall

At Custer Hall, we believe that reaching out to the community is a very important part of the college experience. Our residents have been involved in numerous activities. The activities include a new annual tradition called "Helping Others for the Holidayz" that is a clothing, toy, and canned food drive during the Christmas season; visiting a retirement center at least once a month and planning activities for them. While at the retirement center we play bingo, watch movies, make ice cream floats, and engage in good old fashioned conversation. We also have accompanied a few of the retirement center residents to a FHSU basketball game.

Some other activities that we have at Custer are the Halloween Extravaganza, and Spring Cleaning (clothing & food drive). As each year progresses, Custer residents' community service activities are expanding and focusing on providing even greater service to the community.

Times Talk

Times Talk is a weekly luncheon presentation and discussion about current issues and articles featured in The New York Times. This year, there have been excellent presentations from a wide range of academic departments, students, faculty, staff and community members. Also, there have been over 800 audience participants in Times Talk this year.

Times Talk Presenters 2005-2006

- * Students (18)
- * University President
- * University Provost
- * Assistant Provost
- * Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
- * Director of MLS Program
- * Director of Residential Life
- * Director of CCL
- * University Police Chief
- * U.S. Congressional Candidate
- * Director of Multicultural Affairs
- * Ellis County Judge
- * Ellis County Attorney
- * Director of ADP
- * Agriculture
- * Communication Studies
- * Geosciences
- * Health/Human Performance
- * History
- * Leadership Studies
- * Management/Marketing
- * Modern Languages
- * Music
- * Philosophy
- * Physics
- * Political Science
- * Teacher Education
- * Technology Studies



ADP Forums

“(Dis)Honoring Native Americans: Heritage or Heresy”

Issues surrounding Native American sports mascots and imagery in modern U.S. culture was the topic of the second in a series of public forums presented by Fort Hays State University in partnership with the Hays Daily News. “(Dis)Honoring Native Americans: Heritage or Heresy,” was held on October 10 on the FHSU campus. This is part of the University’s participation in the ongoing American Democracy Project, a national initiative to raise the levels of civic engagement on state colleges and universities.

Dr. Chapman Rackaway, FHSU campus director of the ADP, explained why the committee selected this topic. “In light of recent NCAA legislation banning the use of Indian mascots for teams engaged in tournament play, local debate about the use of Civil War figures for building and street names in the Hays community, and many area schools with Indian mascots, we felt that this was a timely and controversial topic that deserved greater discussion throughout the Hays community.”

“Evolution and Intelligent Design: Schools, Politics and Participation”



The so-called “politics of confrontation” that have muddied the waters of governance at the national level now threaten to pollute decisions that affect the education of children in the public schools of Kansas. Battle lines have been drawn by partisans at both ends of the political spectrum over the controversial decision by the Kansas Board of Education to change science standards. To shed light rather than heat on this highly charged topic, FHSU presented a public forum to provide factual information that equipped citizens to make informed decisions. More than 200 people attended the ADP forum “Evolution and Intelligent Design: Schools, Politics and Participation” on January 23 in the Memorial Union.

“Opening Doors While Securing Borders: Important Issues in Democracy”

The Sister Cities International Committee in Hays and ADP worked together to present a summit and civic discussion on immigration issues in the country, state, and region. “Opening Doors While Securing Borders: Important Issues in a Democracy” was held on April 10 at Commerce Bank in Hays. More than 80 people participated.

The event featured Melinda Lewis, director of policy advocacy and research at El Centro, Inc. in Kansas City. Ms. Lewis discussed immigration and its implications and provided insight on various issues. Following her presentation, participants split into smaller groups to discuss questions and issues of immigration.



Melinda Lewis speaking at the Immigration Forum



Alternative Winter Break

New Orleans, LA

On January 2, 12 Tigers in Service volunteers and four Nurses Christian Fellowship members said good-bye to the normalcy of winter break and set off for New Orleans. Three days were spent “cutting and gutting” homes in the heart of one of the cities most drastically affected by Hurricane Katrina. Before homeowners can even dream of rebuilding, their homes must first undergo the “cutting” process, which involves removing all the furniture and personal belongings that have been in the house since Katrina hit. The next step is to completely “gut” the houses by taking out all the walls and ceilings, leaving only the wood structures to frame the houses. After the “cutting and gutting” process is complete, the home owners have hope for rebuilding. One image that comes to mind is of a yard sign standing in the middle of all the destroyed homes, it read: “I AM COMING HOME! I WILL REBUILD. I AM NEW ORLEANS.”



Alternative Spring Breaks

Port Arthur, TX

On March 18, 19 students and one faculty member headed to Port Arthur, TX to begin their alternative spring break sponsored by Tigers in Service. Once in Port Arthur, the volunteers helped with roofing, putting up siding, installing windows, and caulking the siding of three different Habitat for Humanity houses. These houses will benefit those affected by the hurricanes.



Chicago, IL

Seven students left for their Alternative Spring Break to Chicago, IL on Sunday, March 19th. After arriving in Chicago, the volunteers worked with the Franciscan Outreach Association in their soup kitchen and homeless shelter. Each day, half of the group traveled 20 minutes to the homeless shelter while the other half stayed to volunteer at the soup kitchen. The volunteers helped prepare the meals, organize clothes donations, serve the evening meal, and do extra cleaning that the regular volunteers might not otherwise have time to do. “I really got a lot out of the experience of working in the kitchen and shelter. It was nice to be able to help out people who were less fortunate,” Sarah Melia, FHSU senior said.



For more information on the American Democracy Project at FHSU, check out the ADP website at <http://www.fhsu.edu/adp>