



the latest buzz....

WELCOME!

A new year! New classes! New students! And, new faculty! Here is just a little information on each of our new hires. Welcome to each of you.

FULL-TIME UNLIMITED NEW HIRES

Dr. Kristin Buck

Dr. Buck comes to us from Idaho State University where she has just finished a Doctor of Arts degree (Bachelor's from State U. of New York at Stony Brook & Master's from the U. of Delaware). Kristin told the committee she chose Idaho's program specifically because she wanted a terminal degree that focused on college English TEACHING.

Kristin has additional interdisciplinary expertise within group dynamics, as she completed a full third of her doctoral coursework within the Philosophy, Sociology, and Political Science departments.

During her tenure at Idaho, she served as a liaison between regional secondary schools and the university, coordinating a grading and expectation scheme and lesson plans to help students bridge the gap. Kristin also served as a literacy advocate, a cooperative project between Idaho's government, Idaho's academic institutions, and Idaho's communities.

Before her move to Idaho, Kristin worked at five schools within the Central New York region, among them SUNY Morrisville and Syracuse University. While there, she conceived the idea of a coffeehouse, a positive, non-alcoholic alternative for student recreation, and served as the advisor for the program. Additional leadership roles include work with curriculum revision and portfolio project assessment.

One of Kristin's loves is traveling; she has spent time exploring all fifty states as well as Canada, Mexico, Eastern and Western Europe and Northern Africa. She spent a year studying at The University of Copenhagen, Denmark (she is multi-lingual), where she had the fantastic opportunity to participate in a study tour to the former USSR with Denmark's former ambassador to the region. Kristin is excited to move here, and looks forward to beginning her exploration of Rochester and all things Minnesotan very soon!

Jason Meier

We all know Jason a bit (hey, he attended RCC as a high school student), but let's fill in some details about him. His Bachelor's and Master's Degrees are both from the University of Minnesota, Duluth. While there, he was a TA, teaching one composition class per semester and, of course, he has taught as ad-

junct here recently too. To help pay for school, he served 7 1/2 years in the National Guard.

After graduation, he spent a couple of years teaching English in the Peace Corps in Romania, where he met his wife :-). During the interview, Jason told us about his worst teaching experience, occurring his first semester in Romania. The first day of class in a high school, his students all stood up and greeted him in unison as he entered the room. Being a laid-back Midwesterner, he decided that he didn't want his students to be so formal and told them so. The result—the students couldn't handle the freedom he was offering, and chaos reigned. The second semester, he allowed his students to stand and formally greet him every day, and the semester went very well. It was through that experience that Jason learned a bit more about the influence of culture on students' behaviors.

One interesting aspect of Jason's background is that while in college, he was instrumental in coordinating city and college groups so that they could propose, with a unified front, the concept of the "living wage" to the Duluth City Council. The result? Duluth is now one of 60 cities in the US to have living wage laws. Way to go, Jason!

Rashmi Roy (soon to be Dr. Roy!)

We all know Rashmi, also, but few of you probably know of the details of her background. Her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees are from Magadh University in India, and she is working on her Ph.D. from that same institution—with a pending graduation date of summer 2004. Her dissertation focuses on Walt Whitman and how his poetry merges the East with the West. The official title is "Whitman's 'Song of Myself' in the Light Of Aurobindo's Poetics."

Rashmi also has previous collegiate teaching experience, from both RCTC and from India—totaling over six years of experience. Not surprisingly, intercultural experience is important to her. She states that, as a teacher, her "goal is to keep up the certitude of unity in diversity. In a multi-cultural environment a student should be taught understanding and interchanges, mutual adaptation and new formation." But her teaching interests go beyond multiculturalism. While here at RCTC, Rashmi has put herself on the cutting edge of computer technology. Some of her interest in this area came from her work at IBM with computer-based system testing.

She is also a poet, worthy enough to have received multiple awards for her poetry, a few of which are the Editor's Choice Award for Outstanding Poetry given by the Maryland National Library of Poetry; an award of recognition

as a "Famous Poet for 1998" for Outstanding Achievement in Poetry, given by the Famous Poets' Society of Hollywood; and a nomination for the Distinguished Poet Award and Poet of the Year awards by Sparrowgrass Poetry Forum in West Virginia in 1996. She is currently working on a collection of poetry tentatively entitled "Shanti." In this collection, Rashmi makes the search for order and bliss that would restore peace to the exploring mind.

We also know that Rashmi is an excellent cook, and we expect that her genteel demeanor and pleasant smile will be an enhancement to all of us grumpy Midwesterners (just kidding—about the grumpy part).

Dr. Bob Sanborn

Dr. Sanborn comes to us having multiple years of experience at McHenry Community College in Illinois (north of Chicago) where he has served in about every leadership role one could imagine: department chair, leader of North Central Evaluation visits, a leader in assessment, in service learning, in learning communities, in leadership development. You name it—Bob has probably worked on it.

His BA, MA and PhD are all from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. I guess we can assume he liked it there! His specialties were in Brit Lit, Mythology and Composition. He is also certified by two national agencies (one of them is PTK) to teach Leadership Develop

ment—one of his major areas of interest, an area in which he has given presentations at conferences and for which he has done consultancy work.

His application letter spoke of his love for teaching all kinds of students, specifically his love of teaching developmental students, but developmental teaching isn't his only interest. During the interview, when asked about a course he would like to develop, he was one of only a couple of people who mentioned a composition-related course — one which would link a learning community to service learning to leadership development to composition, in other words, pulling together all of his immediate loves. Sounds intriguing.

Bob and his wife and two young children (ages 8 and 11) will be moving here this summer. They have made an offer on a house that is next door to a stable that boards horses (a promise to the girls). The family did a lot of research on Rochester before actually committing to what will be a major move for them. No doubt, Bob will also get involved in community theater here. While in Illinois, he directed 12 plays in the 14 years he was a part of that community.

**WELCOME to
faculty who are
serving as our
one-year
sabbatical
replacements!**

Nikka Harris

Some of us know a bit about Nikka since she taught a couple of courses for us as an adjunct during spring semester. In addition to teaching those courses here, however, she was also teaching a couple of totally online courses from National American University in Rapid City. These courses were basically for business people aspiring to a degree in business. And, because of her experience teaching online, she will be teaching a totally online English 1118 course for RCTC in the fall.

Nikka recently graduated with her Master's from the University of South Dakota with a degree in English (okay, so that is probably obvious). Her primary area of specialization was 19th century American literature, focusing specifically on captivity and slave narratives. Her thesis was entitled " 'Mastering the Master's Discourse': Gender, Race, and Language in the Slave Narratives of Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass". One of her other areas of focus was composition theory and pedagogy. :-)
She took one course in the teaching of college composition, but beyond that, she also did considerable self-study and took a comprehensive exam in the field.

Nikka moved to Rochester in October, when her husband, William, accepted a position as ass

istant city attorney for the City of Rochester. They have no children, but are quite excited that they have kept four fish and five plants alive for an extended period of time. As a proud Canadian, Nikka uses most of her free time to travel back to her native province, Saskatchewan. Other than that, reading, cooking and attempts at being "crafty" take up the rest of her time. She is VERY excited to be joining the English department and looks forward to getting to know everyone.

Todd Travaille

Todd comes to us from Buena Vista University in Iowa, the first college in the country to become totally wireless. The best part for all of us is that Todd worked extensively on that project; no doubt his extensive computer expertise will benefit everyone in our department, as well as in our college.

Todd's Bachelor's in English is from Luther College, and his Master's in Education is from Wayne State College in Nebraska. Todd is ABD from Illinois State University, with a dissertation topic that focuses on the connections between service-learning and composition.

Todd also comes to us with an extensive background in composition theory and pedagogy, two of the focus areas of his Ph.D. study. In the interview, when asked about a course he would like to develop, Todd described a composition course which would link

service learning to composition and one in which the service learning

would actually BECOME the textbook, not one in which the service learning would be an addition to the "real" text. When asked about why he felt he was prepared for this job, he replied philosophically, discussing his move from a first-year "current traditional" teacher to a one who is more based in "social constructionism," a move that meshes with his love of service learning. Todd is currently living with his family on an acreage southwest of the Twin Cities. Beyond education, he has a love of writing, reading, and home improvement.

**New Reading
Instructor, too!**

Rae Gravenish

Rae Gravenish is our new reading instructor. She taught in California schools before coming to RCTC. Rae's M.A. is in reading instruction. She is excited about the new challenges at RCTC.

Chairman Mike's Treatises and Postings:

There is a department-wide assessment initiative for ENGL 1117. Taking part in the initiative will help improve our curriculum for students. We'll hear more about it at our Wednesday English Department meeting!

In the spring semester, our department is up for program review. This means that we need to start planning for it this fall semester. The department-wide assessment will be a great beginning place, and the beginning of discussion for program review

Grant Funding for Classroom Initiative on Diversity

Through a small grant from MnSCU Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL), Mike Mutschelknaus and Kathleen Dahl are pleased to announce a special presentation for Faculty Development Days.

Dr. Puncochar, from the University of Minnesota, will be providing several key elements for this grant.

Her first presentation will be Friday morning, August 22nd, and is titled “The Nature of Prejudice (and something to do about it)”.

In this session, Dr. Puncochar provides a conceptual framework for understanding the nature of prejudice and issues of diversity, and offers some strategies for reducing prejudice and bias. This presentation will provide an understanding for what drives prejudice and provide ideas for basic strategies for reducing prejudice and bias and developing positive, invigorating, productive climates in diverse classrooms and workplaces.

Dr. Puncochar will also lead a break out session following her

presentation. Please also note that as part of the grant, Dr. Puncochar will also be providing a workshop for a small group of faculty on Thursday, August 28th, beginning at 2:00 PM.

This will be an intensive workshop that will provide specific exercises that faculty can use in their classrooms. This workshop will provide an incredible opportunity to gather ideas and material to help you make your classroom even more dynamic! Please contact Mike or Kathleen if you would like to participate in this workshop and the additional grant activities.

For more information on Dr. Judith Puncochar, please check the following link: <http://education.umn.edu/EdPsych/Faculty/puncochar.html>

Winter is coming...will you need a small es- cape?

NCTE has two interesting conferences this year. The 2003 NCTE Annual Convention, focus on “Partners in Learning,” will be in San Francisco, California, November 20-25.

The 2004 CCCC Convention, “Making Composition Matter: Students, Citizens, Institutions, Advocacy”, will be held in San Antonio, Texas, March 24-27, 2004.

Check out the information at: www.ncte.org/college