CSB and SJU Ranked No. 2 Nationally in Study Abroad

CSB and SJU have ranked No. 2 nationally among baccalaureate institutions with students who participate in semester-long study abroad programs, according to Open Doors 2008, the annual report on international education published by the Institute of International Education (IIE). The report was released Nov. 17.

The two schools had 375 students study abroad in what the report called “mid-term duration” programs during the 2006-07 school year, according to data released by the IIE. Colgate University ranked first in the mid-term duration poll, with 405 students who studied abroad.

The IIE defines mid-term duration as study abroad programs that take place during one semester, one quarter or two quarters.

The report also found that CSB and SJU ranked No. 5 nationally among baccalaureate institutions for total number of study abroad students, with 495 students who studied abroad in 2006-07.

Fully 62 percent of CSB students and 55 percent of SJU students from the class of 2008 studied abroad. Over the past 25 years, CSB and SJU have developed 16 semester-long study abroad programs in 13 countries and six continents almost exclusively led by its faculty, very unusual among baccalaureate colleges like CSB and SJU. In addition, the colleges mount dozens of short-term and service learning overseas trips.

CSB and SJU have been among the top five undergraduate liberal arts colleges nationally in the number of students participating in international study programs for each of the past four years, according to IIE.

“Our high rankings in this report reflect that our students see a study abroad experience as an integral part of their liberal arts education,” said Joe Rogers, interim director of Education Abroad at CSB and SJU. “We’re pleased to be able to send so many students abroad each year and then welcome them back as they bring to campus everything they’ve learned and encountered. It becomes a transformational experience for both the students and our campuses.”

Although Minnesota colleges and universities saw a slight decrease in the number of students studying abroad, from 8,614 in 2005-06 to 8,484 in 2006-07, five other Minnesota schools besides CSB and SJU are ranked among the top 20 in total number of study abroad students among baccalaureate institutions.

Open Doors 2008 also found that CSB and SJU ranked No. 16 among baccalaureate institutions, with 216 international students for the 2007-08 school year. This year, CSB and SJU have 223 international students enrolled, the highest figure in the schools’ history.
Gregg Shares Poetry at CSB

Award-winning poet Linda Gregg read from her latest book, All of it Singing: New and Selected Poems, Nov. 19 at CSB.

The book has received the Sister Mariella Gable Award, which is given each year by CSB for an important work of literature published by Graywolf Press, based in St. Paul. The award is named for the English professor who taught at CSB from 1928-73 and played an important role in the early careers of such writers as Flannery O’Connor, Betty Wahl and J.F. Powers.

All of it Singing collects in one book, for the first time, Gregg’s work from six volumes. It also includes more than 20 new poems by Gregg.

Gregg was born in New York but raised in Marin County (Calif.). She received both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from San Francisco State College.

Her first book of poems was Too Bright to See, published in 1981. That was followed by Alma (1985), The Sacraments of Desire (1991), Chosen by the Lion (1994), Things and Flesh (1999), which was a finalist for the Kingsley Tufts Award for poetry) and In the Middle Distance (2006).

Gregg’s honors include a Guggenheim Fellowship (1983); a Whiting Writer’s Award (1985); a National Endowment for the Arts grant (1993); a Lannan Literary Foundation Fellowship (2003); and Pushcart Prizes (1981, 1982, 1985, 1986, 1991-92). She was the 2003 winner of the Sara Teasdale Award, and the 2006 PEN/Voelcker Award in Poetry for achievement across her career.

She is a lecturer in creative writing at the University Center for the Creative and Performing Arts, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.

Her talk was sponsored by the Literary Arts Institute (LAI) at CSB. The LAI brings nationally recognized authors to CSB and SJU, promotes literary events, holds conferences, supports publications, and encourages the artistry of fine letter-press. With its local and national partners, such as Graywolf Press, the LAI is able to bring writers and their work together with readers on campus, in Minnesota and beyond.

‘Book Lovers’ Night’ at CSB Welcomes Landvik

Lorna Landvik, author of ’Tis the Season! was the featured guest at “Book Lovers’ Night” Nov. 18, hosted by the CSB Bookstore.

’Tis the Season! shines in a delightful holiday novel of redemption and forgiveness. Both heartfelt and witty, ’Tis the Season! bears good tidings of great joy about the human condition: that down and out doesn’t mean over and done, that the things we need most are closer than we know, and that the true measure of one’s worth rests in the boundless depths of the soul.

Landvik is an actress and comedian who has written and produced plays in which she also performs. She is the author of the bestselling novels Patty Jane’s House of Curl, Your Oasis on Flame Lake, Welcome to the Great Mysterious, The Tall Pine Polka, Angry Housewives Eating Bon-Bons, Oh My Stars, and The View from Mount Joy.

CSB Hosts “Passport Fair” on Nov. 12

Obtaining a U.S. passport can sometimes be a trip through bureaucratic red tape.

But CSB Residential Life, the Office for Education Abroad at CSB/SJU and the St. Joseph branch of the U.S. Post Office simplified the process of obtaining a passport.

“Passport Fair” was open to students, faculty, staff and the general public who wanted to obtain a passport. Representatives from the Postal Service collected passport applications and took photos Nov. 12 at CSB.

CSB Hosts Annual Festival of Cultures

“Small Town Big World” was the theme for the 11th annual Festival of Cultures Nov. 15, at CSB.

The festival celebrated and recognized the diversity that exists on the CSB and SJU campuses, and included food sampling, student performances, a cultural fashion show and children’s activities.

Approximately 30 different cultures were represented in booths at the festival. Students dressed in clothing native to their culture served samples of their food and spoke about their culture. There are 223 international students attending CSB and SJU this semester, representing 40 countries.

The festival included a visit by Fueled by Rice, a group of five CSB and SJU graduates who rode bicycles from Beijing to Paris from September 2007 to October 2008 to “experience a big cross-section of the world” and to help build bridges of understanding to the people they met along their journey.

Fueled by Rice performed music, and it members spoke about the cultures they encountered on their ride.

Speaker Discusses Political Organizing among Latinos

A reporter for Chicago Public Radio examined the role of Latinos in U.S. politics in a speech at SJU.


He discussed Latino immigrants and the grassroots political organizing that received little media attention. That organizing has included door-to-door drives to educate immigrants about their rights, help them become citizens, register them to vote and get them out to the polls.

Mitchell reports from a WBEZ-FM bureau on Chicago’s heavily Latino west side. He focuses on issues ranging from policing, housing, schools and immigration. Before joining the WBEZ staff in 2006, he reported in radio and print from
a number of Midwestern cities and Latin American countries, most recently from a
base in Bogotá, Colombia.

The CSB/SJU Latino/Latin American Studies Program sponsored the event, which is part of the fall 2008 Reading Circle focusing on Latinos and U.S. politics.

Koch Speaker Addresses Religious Renewal

People tend to redefine or renew themselves at critical stages in their lives, and often turn to religion and theology for guidance.

That was the topic of the Koch Chair in Catholic Thought and Culture fall 2008 lecture by Mary Farrell Bednarowski, Nov. 17, at CSB.

Bednarowski spoke on “Discovering the Obvious: Religion and Theology as Ever-Renewing Areas of Human Creativity.” She explored some distinctive aspects of contemporary Catholic writings, which revealed several kinds of creative responses to challenges that are part of our contemporary lives and our particular moment in history.

Bednarowski, who served on the CSB Board of Trustees from 1999-2008, is a professor emerita of religious studies at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, New Brighton. Her teaching, research and writing interests have focused on encounters between religion and culture in American religious history, with particular interest in theological creativity and innovation in women's religious writings, new religions, literature and religious autobiographies.


The Koch Chair in Catholic Thought and Culture provides opportunities for faculty, staff and students at CSB and SJU and the general public to gain an understanding of the heritage of Catholic thought that has shaped not only the faith tradition of CSB and SJU but also the pursuit of knowledge across disciplines. The Koch Chair sponsors a lecture series and other events aimed at engaging members of the campus community in dialogue on Catholic thought in relationship to a variety of current issues.

Lecturer Discusses Elections and the Myth of the Culture War

A visiting professor who is an expert in elections gave his analysis of the 2008 elections just one week after Americans went to the polls.

Morris Fiorina, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and the Wendt Family Professor of Political Science at Stanford University, spoke on “The 2008 Elections and the Myth of the Culture War” Nov. 11 at SJU.

Fiorina’s current research focuses on elections and public opinion with particular attention to the quality of representation – how well the positions of elected officials reflect the preferences of the public.

The title of his presentation played off the title of a book he wrote in 2004, Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America (with Samuel Abrams and Jeremy Pope). The book combines polling data with a compelling narrative to debunk commonly believed myths about American politics – particularly the claim that Americans are deeply divided in their fundamental political views.

“This is quite simply the most interesting – and the most serious – work out there on contemporary American political culture,” said columnist Niall Ferguson of the Philadelphia Inquirer newspaper.

“Fiorina, Abrams and Pope brilliantly demolish the conventional wisdom that we have become ‘two nations,’ one Red and one Blue.”

Fiorina is working on his next book, Disconnect: The Breakdown of Representation in the United States (with Abrams), which will appear in 2009.

He has been elected to the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences. He has served on the editorial boards of more than a dozen journals on political science, law, political economy and public policy. His 1987 book, The Personal Vote: Constituency Service and Electoral Independence, coauthored with Bruce Cain and John Ferejohn, won the 1988 Richard F. Fenno Prize.

The event was sponsored by The Eugene J. McCarthy Center for Public Policy and Civic Engagement. The center seeks to engage the campuses and wider community in debate and discourse regarding public policy and public affairs.

Photographer Visits CSB as Renaissance Series Speaker

Just call Annie Griffiths Belt the poster child for the Renaissance Series at CSB/SJU.

Belt, a Minnesota native and one of the first female photographers hired by National Geographic magazine, spoke Nov. 12 at CSB.

She discussed her book, A Camera, Two Kids and a Camel: My Journey in Photography, which discloses the secrets of her professional and family life.

The Renaissance Series was established by CSB President MaryAnn Baenninger in 2006 to bring speakers to campus who “demonstrate the diversity of opportunities available for women and men and … to encourage them to broaden their horizons in every respect, particularly in areas that are less traditional for the respective genders.”

It would be hard to find a better choice than Belt, who grew up in Minneapolis and earned her bachelor's degree in photojournalism from the University of Minnesota while working as a staff photographer at the Minneapolis Daily newspaper.

Her book describes how Belt juggled
two children, bulky cases of camera equipment and everything needed for a nurturing family life as she traveled to far-flung destinations around the world working for National Geographic for three decades of international travel and the art she created along the way. The book is a loving compendium of the wisdom she gained.

Besides her work with National Geographic, Belt's award-winning work has appeared in Life, Geo, Smithsonian, Merian, Paris Match and Stern magazines. She also devotes a portion of each year to producing fund-raising images for aid organizations, including Church World Service and Habitat for Humanity. Belt was named an “Alumni of Notable Achievement” by the College of Liberal Arts at Minnesota in March 2008.

With the help of a grant from National Geographic, Belt and author Barbara Kingsolver created Last Stand: America's Virgin Lands). Proceeds from the book have raised more than a quarter of a million dollars for land conservation grants.

While on campus, Belt visited a communication department class, “Gender and Communication,” and met with art department faculty and students who have an interest in the field of photography.

The Renaissance Series has either sponsored or co-sponsored campus visits from Judith Yaphe, a specialist in Middle Eastern political analysis; Sandra Keating, a 1986 CSB graduate who spoke on the current state of Catholic-Muslim relations; and Sylvia Nasar, an author, economist and professor best known for her biography of Nobel Prize winner John Nash, A Beautiful Mind.

**Minneapolis Writer Speaks at Literacy Conference at CSB**

A literacy conference at CSB featured Minnesota writer Will Weaver as keynote speaker Nov. 14.

“Writing Central: A Day for Literacy at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University” is a state-wide event aimed at educators (grades K-12) to reach boys and to get them to read and write.

Weaver spoke on “Right Book, Right Kid, Right Time: Strategies for a 21st Century Literacy.” Weaver, who lives in northern Minnesota, is a former teacher at Bemidji State University who writes award-winning fiction for adults and young adults.

His debut novel, Red Earth, White Earth, was published in 1986 by Simon and Schuster. Weaver followed that with A Gravestone Made of Wheat and Other Stories (Simon and Schuster, 1989). Each novel in his Billy Baggs series (Striking Out, Farm Team and Hard Ball; HarperCollins, 1993/95/98) was honored as a “Best Book for Young Adults” by the American Library Association (ALA). Weaver's novel Memory Boy (2001) is used widely by schools across the United States, and was followed by Claws (2001), Full Service (2005), Defect (2007) and Saturday Night Dirt (2008). Defect received a 2008 Minnesota Book Award in the young adult literature category, and Full Service received starred reviews and was also listed as an ALA “Best Book for Young Adults.”

The event was sponsored by the CSB/SJU education department.

**Faculty/Staff Notes**

**Anna Lisa Ohm**, CSB/SJU professor of German, presented “Teasing Out Gender from Class and Class from Gender in Johanna Heusser Spyri’s Works” at the 50th annual Convention of the Midwest Modern Language Association Nov. 13-16 in Minneapolis. Ohm is writing a monograph of the 19-century Swiss German writer, whose works are little known except for the international best-seller, Heidi, one of the most widely translated books in world literature.


**Charles Bobertz**, CSB/SJU professor of theology, was the featured speaker at the annual ministry conference for the Diocese of Winona, Oct. 24-25, in Blue Earth and Mankato. Bobertz spoke on the topic, “The Apostle Paul: Gospel and Ministry.”

**Karen L. Erickson**, CSB/SJU professor of French, and **Mark Thamert**, OSB, CSB/SJU associate professor of German, presented “Music in the Language and Culture Classroom” at the Minnesota Council on Teaching Languages and Culture (MCTLC) Fall Conference 2008, Oct. 16-17 in Eagan, Minn. Thamert presented recent discoveries in brain research that suggest that using music in class can help students learn, integrate, and retain material, and shared his Web-based archives of poetry and song; Erickson presented her recently released CD recording of French folk songs, and shared classroom materials that support the students’ study of French language and culture while building their confidence, engagement and skill.
K. R. Kasling, CSB/SJU professor of music, played several festive major works at the Dedication of the Restoration of the Cathedral Pipe Organ at the Basilica of St. Mary, Minneapolis Sept. 21. Kasling also served as official consultant for the restoration.

In August and September, he completed plans and specifications for two large pipe organs: the first is for St. Benedict’s parish, Richmond, Va.; the second for the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Springfield, Ill. Kasling, retained as an official consultant, traveled to both locations and provided extensive technical reports after the onsite visits.

Kasling also participated as solo recitalist Oct. 19, at St. Olaf Catholic Church, Minneapolis, for a special program with several area artists on the International Year of the Organ opening program.

CSB/SJU philosophy professors participated en masse in the Nov. 8 meeting of the Minnesota Philosophical Society at Macalester College. Gene Garver, CSB/SJU professor of philosophy, challenged the audience to think about how the imperative to publish affects how philosophers read and engage texts, in his keynote address, “Philosophers, Readers, and Writers.” Jean Keller, CSB/SJU associate professor of philosophy, presented “Re-thinking Ruddick and the Ethnocentrism Critique of Maternal Thinking” to a small but appreciative audience, while Chuck Wright, CSB/SJU associate professor of philosophy, stirred up a large and lively debate with his talk, “Natural Selection and Moral Sentiment: Evolutionary Biology’s Challenge to Moral Philosophy.” Emily Esch, CSB/SJU assistant professor of philosophy, commented on a paper entitled “Phenomenal Concepts and a 3rd Man Problem,” thereby challenging yet another person to engage in more careful and deliberate thinking. With Steve Wagner, CSB/SJU professor of philosophy, and Erica Stonestreet, CSB/SJU assistant professor of philosophy, in attendance, they reached departmental quorum.

If you think the fun is over, stick around until Spring 2010, when the CSB/SJU Philosophy Club hosts the Minnesota Philosophical Society’s annual undergraduate conference.


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Dan Steck, CSB/SJU professor of physics, was featured Nov. 13, on a WCCO-TV segment, “Radon In Granite Countertops?”

Saint John’s Arboretum was featured Nov. 12, in a Long Prairie Leader story, “Special morning at St. John’s Arboretum reveals wild things, tranquility, adventure.”

CSB/SJU Festival of Cultures was featured Nov. 10, in a St. Cloud Times story, “Festival to celebrate cultures at SJU, CSB.”

CSB was highlighted Nov. 9, in a St. Cloud Times story, “Get passport now during slump.”

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Jon Hassler, SJU ’55, and Saint John’s were featured Nov. 3, in an America article, “The Last Catholic Novelist.”

SJU was featured Nov. 3, in a Dubuque Telegraph Herald article, “Overseas fashion becomes big passion.”

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Events Calendar

SPRING 2009

Feb. 9-13, Dave Durenberger, former U.S. senator, second annual McCarthy Residency, Eugene J. McCarthy Center for Public Policy and Civic Engagement (Campus contact: Matt Lindstrom), time and location TBA.

Feb. 12, Liliana Angulo, Columbian visual artist (Campus contact: Bruce Campbell), 7 p.m., location TBA.

Feb. 11-14, Jack Zipes, well known author, presentation and classes (Campus contact: Lisa Ohm), time and location TBA.

Feb. 13-14, The seventh annual Conference on the College Male (Campus contact: Gar Kellom), time TBA, SJU.

Feb. 19-20, Women's Spirituality Conference, Companions on a Journey Conference (Campus contact: Marian Diaz), time TBA, CSB.

Feb. 20, The Harlem Gospel Choir (Campus contact: Gwen Schimek), 8 p.m., CSB/Petters Auditorium, BAC.

March 11, Professor Hasan Jawadi, “Iran and Her Neighbors,” Global Awareness Speaker (Campus contact: Manju Parikh), 7 p.m., Gorecki 204B.

March 18, Dr. R. Stephen Humphreys, King Abdul Aziz Al Saud professor of Islamic studies and professor of history, University of California, Santa Barbara, “Prosperity in Adversity: Adaptations of the Christian Communities of Syria and Mesopotamia to Muslim Rule During the Early Islamic Centuries,” Koch Chair Lecture (Campus contact: S. Ephrem Hollermann), 7:45 p.m., CSB/Gorecki 204 A & B.

March 19, Dr. Nicole von Germeten, “The History of Race in the Americas” (Campus contact: Bruce Campbell), 7 p.m., location TBA.

March 22-27, Dwight Pitcaithley (Campus contact: Annette Atkins), time and location TBA.

April 2, Virgil Elizondo, Changing Faces Conference, Intercultural Ministry and Hospitality Series (Campus contact: Marian Diaz), time TBA, SJU.

April 6, Professor Faegheh Shirazi, University of Texas, “The History of Veiling in Islam,” Global Awareness Speaker (Campus contact: Manju Parikh), 7 p.m., Gorecki 204 A&B.

April 17, Eddie Phillips, Colman Barry Award, Saint John’s Day (Campus contact: Doris Matter), time TBA, SJU.

April 17-18, Professor Joe Gallion, Pi Mu Epsilon Conference (math) (Campus contact: Kris Nairn), time TBA, SJU/Pellergrene Auditorium and surrounding classrooms.

April 18, Dr. Laura King, social psychologist, U of Missouri, Columbia, keynote speaker at Minnesota Undergraduate Psychology Conference (Campus contact: Pam Bacon), 11 a.m., Alumnae Hall, Hehn Campus Center, SJU.