

Evolution Learning Community
Full Committee Meeting
February 24, 2006
12:00 noon – 1:15 p.m.

In attendance: Paulo Almeida, Kate Bruce, Larry Cahoon, Rod Hagley, Tricia Kelley, Dennis Kubasko, Dale McCall, Martin Posey, Kim Sawrey, Tom Schmid, Megan Shepherd, Patty Turrisi

Announcements:

- Travel funds are available from Center for Faculty Leadership to send two people to the Chautauqua conference on evolution education, June 1-3, 2006; inform Tom Schmid if interested

Agenda items:

- Presentation by Larry Cahoon and Dennis Kubasko on last summer's Chautauqua conference (with additional comments by Rod Hagley, who also attended)
 - Conference very valuable
 - Included discussion of nature of science, science and religion, obstacles to acceptance of evolution, history of antievolution movement, Darwin and his views on religion
 - Evolution primer – definition of evolution, how it works, evidence
 - Successful strategies for dealing with evolution and potential conflict in the classroom (many science teachers think avoidance is best option, an idea dispelled by the conference)
 - Problem of false dualism (evolution/creationism) vs. continuum of beliefs
 - Handouts provided by Dennis Kubasko; also copies of conference leader Greg Forbes' PowerPoint presentation are available from Dennis
- Group discussion of issues involved in teaching evolution and extended discussion of the place of evolution in teaching biology
 - How to make evolution accessible
 - How to deal with resistance in minds of students
 - Comparison to other "difficult" topics—spirited discussion of whether teaching evolution raised greater challenge than others
 - Whether a biology major could/should graduate without thinking of evolution as the synthesizing theory of the entire discipline—spirited discussion on this question
- Tom Schmid solicited suggestions for speakers for UNCW Leadership Lecture series
 - Enough money available to invite a "big name" speaker
 - Suggestions included Dennett, Pilbeam, Dawkins, E.O. Wilson, Williams, Diamond
- Preliminary discussion of scholarly conference – need to determine:
 - How focused does topic need to be?
 - Do we want a research meeting? Or should this be focused on outreach?
- Next meeting scheduled for early April to discuss conference in greater detail