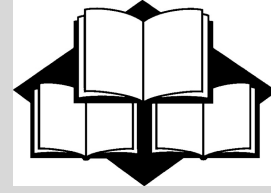


AALE

NEWSLETTER



AALE begins Accreditation of Charter Schools

Charter School Accreditation Pilot Project recognizes exemplary Charter Schools

One of the most promising aspects of charter schools is their ability to renew a vision of American public education spoken many decades ago by reformers as different as W.E.B. Du Bois and Paul Shorey. As early as the 1920s, Du Bois insisted, "The object of a school...is to carry the child as far as possible in its knowledge of the accumulated wisdom of the world." Du Bois emphasized such knowledge for all races, as many charter schools do today. Shorey, an early twentieth century classicist and education reformer from the University of



Chicago, wrote of the need for more demanding educational standards, arguing that "A real

education must be based on a serious, consecutive, progressive study of something definite, teachable, and hard." Like the toughminded Shorey, KIPP Academy's Michael Feinberg constantly declares, "There are no shortcuts."

Our Charter School Accreditation Project, now in pilot phase, intends to offer special recognition of outstanding schools where this promise is being realized.

What makes charter schools special? First, they honor the democratic mission of American

[Charter continued on Page 4]

President's Reflections on 9/11



It seems presumptuous to add my own thoughts on the events of September 11 to those of every college, foundation, and association head in this country. But how can one not comment on such a moment in our lives?

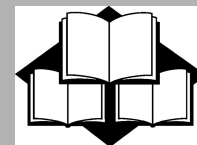
We have heard a great deal in the past few decades about the need to understand other cultures.

This has been enough of a truism to unite even the ever-quarreling political factions of academe. Who could not wish for more understanding? Unfortunately, this much-needed call for learning about "the other" has seen a corresponding diminution of teaching about the west, and therefore of the notions of civil and religious liberty that seemed so offensive to the perpetrators of 9/11.

According to the Declaration of
[President's Desk continued on Page 2]

AALE NATIONAL MEETING

APRIL 19-20, 2002
WASHINGTON, DC



*PLEASE SEE BOX ON
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INFORMATION*

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[From Page 1, President's Desk]

Independence, our heritages of individual and religious freedom are universal: all men and women everywhere have an inherent right to these freedoms by the simple fact that they share in a common humanity. But it is also a “self-evident truth” that rights must be recognized in opinion before they are recognized in law. In that sense one might argue that 9/11 has revealed, as much as anything else, a failure of education. The failure to recognize these rights in much – although happily not all – of the Muslim world is clear enough. But the failure here at home, though less evident, should also be of concern. How many students, either for or against the war effort, could give a coherent, informed account of just why terrorism should be unacceptable to any civilized people? For that matter, how many could give a coherent account of what we mean by civilization?

I have always been amazed by how easy it is to strike an otherwise animated classroom silent by putting this simple question to it: Granted that you all think slavery wrong. But why is it wrong? And if it is wrong, is it so everywhere and in every time, or only in some place and some times? Unable to answer this question, the student is also unable

to understand Martin Luther King’s “Letter from the Birmingham Jail,” or Abraham Lincoln’s highest political teaching, summed up in the words, “As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master.” And if we as a people cannot understand this profound yet simple truth, then certainly it is not too much to say that, in this important respect at least, American education is failing to achieve one of its most important purposes.

The terrible events of September 11 can never be justified except by those for whom every cause or grievance is its own justification. But terrible events can sometimes have unintended consequences that are not themselves terrible. We here at the American Academy for Liberal Education hope that this loss of innocent life will help to reinvigorate the serious study of both western and non-western systems and ideas. And we hope that this terrible consequence of the clash of ideas will point us in the direction of replacing the cant term “judgmental” on our campuses with the honest word, “judgment.” For what else can liberal education be for if not for producing informed judgments about important differences?

AALÉ NEWSLETTER

Winter-Spring 2002 Vol. 8, No. 1

Editor, Francis DuVinage
Associate Editors, Rosemary Horan
and Robin Rietz

The American Academy for Liberal Education is recognized by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education as a national agency for the accreditation and preaccreditation of institutions and programs within institutions of higher education that offer liberal arts degrees at the baccalaureate level. The Academy is a non-profit, non-sectarian and non-partisan organization incorporated in the District of Columbia.

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Charter School Pilot Project reaches Arizona, Colorado, New Jersey, Texas, North Carolina

Nine charter schools have already agreed to apply for AALE accreditation, and we expect this number to increase rapidly as word of this initiative spreads through the charter school networks. We will publish profiles of schools awarded AALE accreditation in future issues of this newsletter as well as on the Academy's website, but we would like to draw attention to some notable characteristics and achievements of the schools now entering the process.

The **Tempe Preparatory Academy** in Arizona placed first in Arizona's state assessment, the AIMS test, bettering even the university magnet school.

The **Basis School** in Tucson offers the AP curriculum—and uses the AP Exams for assessment—for 8th and 9th graders. Fully half its 9th graders are taking calculus.

The **Princeton Charter School** achieved first place in state-wide on the National French Exam. It also requires a chess class taught by an

international Grand Master.

The **Texas Language Charter School** requires study of all subjects in both English and Spanish.

The **Oak Cliff Academy**, serving educationally disadvantaged populations in Dallas, sets the bar high by making college admission for *all* students its goal.

The **Franklin Academy** in Wake Forest, NC, offers its community especially robust instruction in early reading (Direct Instruction) and Saxon Math. It is now expanding to high school.

The **Humanities and Sciences Academy** in Tempe has no classrooms, offers one-on-one instruction to all students, and is open for operation twelve hours per day.

The **Classical Academy** in Colorado Springs curriculum includes both the *Trivium* and the *Core Knowledge* sequences.

The **KIPP Academy** in Houston, which has been featured on CBS' *60 Minutes*, brings all entering students up to grade level in reading and math through a unique one-year "catch-up" program - while claiming no exemptions.

Research Analyst Suh Departs AALE

It is with sadness at his departure, but with the best wishes for his future attainments that we announce the recent departure of Research and Policy Analyst Thomas Suh. He joins the senior staff of the newly created American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE), a role that draws on his expertise in education and accreditation policy as well as on his experience as a high school teacher. ABCTE, a federally-funded organization based in Washington D.C., seeks to further meaningful educational reform in the area of K-12 teacher preparation.

Tom joined AALE in 1995 and played a key role in the development of many of our initiatives, most recently charter school accreditation. He also provided invaluable assistance to John Harris of Samford University in the development of the Academy's innovative Key Performance Indicator, a financial and institutional data

[Suh continued on Page 8]

AALE Recognition Extended for Maximum Term

The Academy is pleased to announce that its petition for continued recognition was endorsed on December 10, 2001 by the U. S. Department of Education's *National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity* (NACIQI). This action

extends the Academy's recognition for five years, the maximum term possible. Founded in 1992, the Academy was first recognized by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education in 1995. Both Accreditation and Preaccreditation (Candidacy for Accreditation) status when granted

by the Academy fully enable institutions to establish eligibility to participate in the Federal student financial assistance programs administered by the Department under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended, as well as in student financial assistance programs established under other Federal legislation.

2002 National Meeting

April 19-20, 2002

Washington, DC

Hilton Washington

Embassy Row

The American Academy for Liberal Education is pleased to announce that its National Meeting will be held April 19 and 20 at the Hilton Embassy Row in Washington, D.C. The theme for this meeting will be ***Liberal Education: Strong Models, Expanding Influence***, with panels addressing the growing prominence of liberal education in the charter school movement, in public universities, in teacher education, and distance learning, as well as its resurgence on many liberal arts college campuses. In addition there will be workshops on AALE procedures for joint accreditation (for liberal arts colleges and programs) as well as for charter school accreditation. The panels and discussions should prove stimulating and informative for all participants. *Please contact Rosemary Horan at 202-452-8611 or rhoran@aale.org for information about registration.*

[From Page 1, Charter]

public education. As publicly funded entities, charters are open to all comers and employ an admissions lottery if there is a surplus of applicants. (Rare exceptions include charters opened for students with certain disabilities.) Second, they are a manifestation of the vital and productive American tradition of free association. They spring from the efforts of parents, teachers, community leaders, and students who band together with a vision that is presented to the public at large. Third, charter schools strike a balance between freedom and accountability. They are released from certain onerous bureaucratic requirements in exchange for high performance on state assessments and adherence to the mission advanced in their charters.

Critics of charter schools worry, sometime

with good cause, about inequities and mismanagement to which charter schools (like public schools) are inevitably liable. Among the claims are that charters are not accountable, that they create a "skimming" effect in removing the best and brightest students from normal public schools, and that they drain funding from these same schools to support what seem like "private" institutions. The evidence so far does not support these claims. For example, charter schools appear to attract more educationally disadvantaged students than normal public schools and appear to drive normal public schools to improve.

Yet given the diversity in charter-granting bodies, state regulations, and financial support, there is a clear need for

[Charter continued on Page 8]

Briefly...

Updates on AALE's Pew and LAAP Learning Assessment projects

• The Academy welcomes St. Bonaventure University to its Pew Trusts supported project in learning assessment. Dr. Anthony Murphy of the Department of Philosophy has been named Pew Fellow, and is currently preparing a study of learning assessment goals and practices for Clare College, the core curriculum program at St. Bonaventure.

• The Academy's pilot project in learning assessment for on-line distance education programs is now underway. This project is supported by the U. S. Department of Education's "Learning Anytime, Anywhere Partnership" (LAAP) program. Invitations to join the pilot project have been extended to more than a dozen institutions and a select group

of these will undergo the Academy's innovative *Liberal Arts Certification* review, which is designed to identify and verify quality programs in general education and the liberal arts offered via the World Wide Web. Please visit the LAAP pages on the Academy's website for more information on this groundbreaking pilot project.

AALE announces Publication of Harris, Sansom Paper

The Academy is pleased to announce the publication of "Discerning is More than Counting," the third in its *Occasional Papers in Liberal Education* series. Co-author John Harris, a member of the Academy's Board of Trustees, is a pioneer in both the educational assessment and quality movements and has published extensively in these fields. Dr. Harris is currently Associate Provost for Quality Assessment and Orlean Bullard Beeson Professor of Education at Samford University.

The present essay is the fruit of Dr. Harris' reflections on the current – and troubling – direction of the assessment movement in higher education.

Questioning the actual contributions of the assessment and quality movements to real improvement in higher education, this timely essay calls for a radical re-thinking of the current reliance on standardized, quantitative instruments of assessment: "Assessment's key role is to increase our understanding of student learning and how colleges and universities facilitate learning. It seems to me that assessment as now practiced does not make its optimal contribution because it is too narrowly constructed on empirical objectivism to yield the depth of understanding needed for improvement."

Together with co-author Dennis Sansom, Professor of Philosophy at Samford University, Dr. Harris argues that many key aspects of learning are simply irreducible to statistical or quantitative analysis. Instead, in order to provide assessments of education that truly address the nature and substance of learning, what is needed is a measured embrace of the wisdom contained in and transmitted through communities of judgment: "The discernment needed to improve student learning does not lie primarily in finding ever more clever ways to measure students as determined organisms. Instead, the more productive approach lies in encouraging faculties to form communities of judgment to use the hard data and intuitive knowledge now available to them." Drs. Harris and Sansom call on colleges and their faculties to renounce a facile reliance on standardized testing or surveys, to make a prominent place for their professional judgment in the assessment of student learning, and to form both internal and intercollegiate communities of judgment responsible for improvement and quality.

Copies of "Discerning is More than Counting" are available by request from the Academy, as well as on the Academy's website, www.aale.org.

AALE Accreditation Review

Charter School Accreditation Update

It is an exciting time for the AALE Charter School Accreditation project. We have recruited an able assistant, Margaret Price, who recently took her B.A. from the University of Virginia, where she studied education reform under Frederick Hess, professor of government and of education. Margaret has, among myriad tasks, prepared the charter school project documentation for our website, now up and running. Included are the Charter School Standards for Accreditation, Characteristics of Exemplary Charter Schools, and Application for Charter School Accreditation among others. We invite you to visit the site at www.aale.org/charters.

Dr. Rice has been busy visiting our pilot schools, attending charter school conferences in Colorado and Michigan, and in March will visit California and Massachusetts. Also in March is the Core Knowledge Foundation Conference in Nashville, which promises to attract as many as 3,000 people, many of them springing from the charter movement. Lastly, spring site visits to several of our pilots schools include Princeton Charter scheduled for February 10-13, and Tempe Preparatory Academy and The Basis School in Tucson, both likely to take place in April.

Editor's Updates: Spring 2002

This spring promises to be one of the Academy's most active yet, as we hold our 2002 National Meeting and move forward with significant reform initiatives in charter school accreditation, joint AALE-regional association reviews of colleges and universities, and our LAAP pilot project in distance learning certification.

Topping the agenda for the spring is our 2002 National Meeting, to be held April 19-20 in Washington D.C. Among our invited speakers are Eugene Hickock, former U. S. Assistant Secretary for Post-secondary Education, and Bruce Cole, newly appointed head of the National Endowment for the Humanities. (Please see the box on page 4 for further information.)

Organized around the theme "*Liberal Education: Strong Models, Expanding Influence,*" our

2002 National Meeting will highlight the growing vitality of liberal education in new or non-traditional places. Among these are innovative liberal arts programs in public universities, growing recognition of the importance of a liberal education for K-12 teacher preparation, and the emergence of charter schools as force for sound training in the liberal arts at the primary and secondary levels. I hope you will join us for this meeting!

Developments in our thriving charter school initiative are featured throughout this newsletter, and we invite you to learn more by visiting the special www.aale.org/charters pages on the Academy's website at www.aale.org. Also included are updates on our "Learning Anytime, Anyplace Partnership" (LAAP) pilot project and our Pew supported project on learning assessment in accreditation.

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AALE

Updates from the Academy's website [aale.org/charters](http://www.aale.org/charters)

Please visit AALE's charter school page to find out more about our charter school accreditation initiative. Charter publications available at this site include PDF versions of the following:

- *Standards for Charter School Accreditation*
- *Application for Charter School Accreditation*
- *Characteristics of Exemplary Charter Schools*
- *Sample Charter School Curriculum*
- *Charter School Self Study Manual*
- *Charter School Site Visit Manual*
- *Overview of the Charter School Accreditation Process*

Board Member Fritschler Joins Brookings Institution

The Academy is pleased to report that Board member Lee Fritschler has rejoined the Brookings Institution as Vice President and Director of the Center for Public Policy Education (CPPE). Dr. Fritschler previously directed the CPPE for Brookings from 1981 to 1987, before serving as president of Dickinson College from 1987 to 1999.

In a press release, Brookings President Michael Armacost said, "I am delighted by the prospect of Lee's return. Under his previous leadership, CPPE achieved exceptional success financially and programmatically. He established especially close working relationships with the research programs at the institution,

and proved to be a very creative designer of courses for both corporate managers and senior public servants."

Dr. Fritschler also recently served as assistant secretary for post-secondary education at the U.S. Department of Education (1999-2001).

Founded in 1916 and located in Washington D.C., the Brookings Institution seeks through its programs and conferences to serve as a bridge between scholarship and public policy, bringing new knowledge to the attention of decision-makers and affording scholars a better insight into public policy issues.

While at Brookings, Dr. Fritschler will continue to serve on AALE's Board.

William Craig Rice: Public Engagements

On October 16, 2001, AALE education assessment director Bill Rice was a guest panelist on "The Founding of Black Mountain College" on *Action Speaks in Providence*, moderated by Marc Joel Levitt and sponsored by the Rhode Island Committee on the Humanities, Rhode Island School of Design, and the Providence *Phoenix*. The panel discussion was later broadcast on WRNI-FM, Rhode Island Public Radio (October 21). Dr. Rice also spoke on accreditation in a morning session at the Colorado League of Charter Schools'

Convention last November in Denver.

In March, Dr. Rice will be addressing the CoreKnowledgeFoundation Convention in Nashville on "Charter Schools, Core Knowledge: Challenges to the Progressive Thoughtworld."

In this lecture he will explore the alliance between many charter schools and the Core Knowledge curriculum. Charter schools, owing to their independence and risk-taking, and Core Knowledge, owing to its rich, sequenced content and respect for subject matter, together pose formidable challenges to the progressivist orthodoxy of American education.

Joint Accreditation Workshop-Panel

During its 2002 National Meeting, Director of Accreditation Francis DuVina will host a session on "Joint Accreditation: A New Model," a workshop/panel presenting the Academy's groundbreaking initiative in joint accreditation reviews with regional associations.

This new initiative in joint accreditation combines all the virtues of the Academy's streamlined accreditation standards and procedures – designed expressly for liberal arts programs – with the benefits

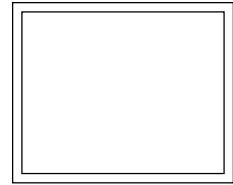
of regional recognition. Four liberal arts institutions in three regions have already elected this new approach to accreditation review.

The workshop/panel will feature representatives from several institutions currently undergoing joint reviews, and will provide practical information concerning procedures for initiating and conducting joint reviews with the various regional accrediting associations.

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*[From Page 4, **Charter**]*

accreditation of charter schools with rigorous curricula and strong performance. Our accreditation standards require strong liberal arts instruction, robust testing and accountability, teacher quality, and administrative/financial health. The benefits of AALE accreditation are many, but one that stands out is that it will give parents a reliable screening mechanism in choosing their child's school. The complete charter documentation is now available for viewing on our website at www.aale.org/charters which we encourage all to visit and to provide feedback.

Applications under Review

The Academy invites public comment on applications under review. A current listing of applications under review may be found on the Academy's website. Comments must be made in writing and in regard to the Academy's Standards and Criteria for Accreditation. Comments should be sent to the following address at least 60 days before the scheduled date of review:

AALE
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Washington, DC 20006
Fax: 202.452.8620

*[From Page 3, **Suh**]*

analysis instrument for institutions of higher education.

We're Moving!

Starting on May 1, 2002, AALE's new address will be:

1710 Rhode Island Ave, NW
4th Floor
Washington, DC 20036

Our phone and fax numbers will remain the same:

202-452-8611 (phone)
202-452-8629 (fax)