UW visiting artist Bently Spang featured at Shepard Symposium

UW's Eminent Artist in Residence, Bently Spang, a Northern Cheyenne from Montana, will be featured as part of the 18th Annual Shepard Symposium on Social Justice, April 2-5. Spang is putting together his third Tekno Powwow. The Tekno Powwow will feature traditional powwow dancers, the Rocky Mountain Dancers and Singers, and a hip hop crew from Colorado Springs, the Soul Mechanics.

When asked to describe himself as an artist, Spang answered that he seeks to express his experiences as a Northern Cheyenne man while simultaneously envisioning the future of his culture.

Spang often creates art that mixes what some would see as traditional art forms with modern ones, such as the upcoming Tekno Powwow. This isn't a new idea.

One example Spang likes to cite is glass beads, often assumed to be a traditional native art form. However, before trade with Europeans, American Indians did not have access to glass beads. Once they did have access, artists had no qualms about incorporating the beads into their work. They used the materials they could get to create the art they wanted. And they used the materials so well that it changed the way the material was viewed. In light of examples like these, Spang explained, "I see myself as continuing a way of creating that's really, really old."

Life Sciences Summit deliberates the role of quantitative reasoning

Led by the charismatic team of Mark Lyford and Brianna Wright, the Life Sciences Lost in Transition Summit has almost a cult following around the state. Many of the participants come every year. On February 21, forty-five science and math faculty from public schools, community colleges, and the university convened to discuss this year's hot topic: quantitative reasoning.

While most educators come to professional development meetings expecting to learn from outside experts, this summit is different. The Lost in Transition initiative is built on the
Mathematics Lost in Transition Institute tries new format

The Mathematics Lost in Transition Institute is trying something new this spring. The institute will more fully combine with the Math/Stats/Physics Articulation meeting among the community colleges and the University of Wyoming on April 4 at Northwest College in Powell.

While the institute normally convenes on a Thursday evening and Friday morning, this year the institute will meet Friday morning, April 4, and offer Lost in Transition sessions as part of the articulation that afternoon.

The morning sessions will include a discussion of Wyoming mathematics standards with Linda Hutchison, UW, and R.J. Kost, Park County School District #1. UW’s David Anton will discuss bridge programs. In addition, UW’s calculus coordinator Nathan Clements, Northwest College’s Martin Stensing, and Paul Street from Albany County School District #1 will facilitate a session about student success in calculus.

Because of the incorporation with the articulation this year, registration for the institute will be combined with the registration for the Math/Stats/Physics Articulation on the Northwest College website.

The registration fee is $50. Be sure to mark that you will be attending the Lost in Transition institute Friday morning!

The registration fee includes breakfast and lunch at NWC, as well as the dinner banquet Friday night. The banquet will be at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West with guest speaker Jeremy Johnston, Curator of Western American History. Registration, travel, and lodging expenses are the responsibility of the registrant or the organization represented. Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB) credit will be available.

Register at http://www.northwestcollege.edu/wyomath/

Sponsors of this year’s Mathematics Lost in Transition Institute are the Wyoming School-University Partnership, the UW Science and Mathematics Teaching Center, and Northwest College.

If you have questions, please contact Beth Wiley, ewiley2@uwyo.edu
Building off of the close reading focus from the fall’s Literature Lost in Transition Summit, this year’s Teaching Writing in Wyoming theme is the relationship between reading and writing. Reading Words and Worlds: Using Texts to Develop Meaningful Writing Tasks will take place Sunday, April 13 - Monday, April 14 at Western Wyoming Community College in Rock Springs.

Within the framework of Common Core State Standards concerning literature and informational text, the colloquium will encourage teachers to infuse writing assignments with more diverse reading elements.

Sunday afternoon, April 13, will feature a panel of high school, community college, and university faculty. The panel will discuss the connections, successes, and challenges concerning the relationship between reading and writing. The panel will be followed by dinner and continuing discussion.

Monday morning, attendees will break into small groups, exchange, and discuss student assignments that they bring with them.

Monday will wrap up by 12:30 p.m. for boxed lunches. Participants have the option to stay and continue conversation.

Registration is free, but required.

Register and find more information at http://www.uwyo.edu/learn/tww/

Meals are provided by the Wyoming School-University Partnership.
Travel and lodging are the responsibility of the registrant or supporting institution.

Sponsors of Teaching Writing in Wyoming are the Wyoming School-University Partnership and the UW LeaRN program.

Questions? Contact Beth Wiley, ewiley2@uwyo.edu

The UW LeaRN program is sponsoring mini grants for those who attend this year’s Teaching Writing in Wyoming.

Grants for $500 per team will be awarded to three teams. Teams must consist of at least two teachers collaborating from different schools. Schools are encouraged to be across levels.

Teams will collaborate to create a new assignment building off of the discussions at the 2014 TWW colloquium.

More information and applications will be available at TWW, April 13-14.

Contact April Heaney with questions, aprilh@uwyo.edu

Participants from 2013 examine student writing.

Teaching Writing in Wyoming builds on fall Literature Summit

Participants from 2012 enjoy ice cream in honor of Shakespeare’s birth.

Participants from 2013 learn about research as it relates to writing.

2014 TWW Mini Grants
Shepard Symposium works with GroundSpark to expand Educators’ Day for Social Justice, April 5

by Angela Jaime, UW Educational Studies

Saturday, April 5, is our Educators’ Day for Social Justice (formerly known as the Teacher Tea).

We will be viewing Straighlaced, Let’s Get Real, and It’s Still Elementary from GroundSpark. Each film will be accompanied by a small group discussion and debriefing.

There will be a lunch time panel of guests working to combat bullying and injustice. A continental breakfast, lunch, and afternoon refreshments will be provided.

There will also be scholarships awarded for one night’s lodging to the first twenty-five teachers who apply from outside of Albany and Laramie Counties. To apply for the scholarship, please email Angela Jaime, jaimea@uwyo.edu

In addition, as always, our famous swag bag of goodies for all educators will be given to the first 100 participants.

We also hope you will join us for the entire 18th annual Shepard Symposium on Social Justice, April 2-5.

Our theme this year is Everyday Oppressions: Taking Courageous Action. Find program details and register at www.shepardsymposium.org
Wyoming House Bill 5 passes requiring video on school buses

Fremont County School District #6 students, parents, and school personnel worked hard to support House Bill 5 this week. The Wyoming Senate gave final approval to this bill on Monday, March 3.

A Wind River Elementary School student was fatally struck by a car after exiting her school bus in December of 2011. This bill will ensure that all school buses have video equipment to catch cars that illegally pass stopped school buses.

The bill passed with a 19-11 vote. It now goes to Governor Matt Mead for his consideration.

Western Wyoming Community College ranked 7th by Washington Monthly

According to a press release, Washington Monthly recently released a list of the top 50 community colleges in the nation. Western Wyoming Community College was ranked number seven.

“We are so pleased that Western has been recognized in this notable annual review of the nation’s top community colleges,” said WWCC President Karla Leach. “This success can be attributed directly to the passion that our faculty and staff have for serving our students and providing them with a quality education and campus experience.”

WWCC is a member of the Partnership.

To read the full press release, visit http://www.wwcc.wy.edu/Onlyatwwcc/washington_monthly_7th_ranked.pdf

To learn more about WWCC, explore their website at http://www.wwcc.wy.edu

NNER Summer Symposium promotes leadership in the Agenda for Education in a Democracy

This year’s National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER) summer symposium on the Agenda for Education in a Democracy (AED) will be July 14-17 in Seattle, Washington.

According to the NNER, during the week participants will study the AED and NNER mission, the conditions necessary for their implementation, and strategies the NNER finds most promising for putting the concepts into action.

Prior to the session, Executive Board member, Dennis Potthoff will be in communication with all participants to engage in online community building and share perspectives from the online resources to build background knowledge for the session.

In addition, readings that will be used in the session will be sent to participants prior to the session to ensure that they have the necessary background knowledge.

Social democracy in the larger surround—public places beyond education institutions will be explored. There will be time for informal interaction with colleagues where participants can raise questions and proffer strategies to advance NNER work in these challenging times.

The Wyoming School-University Partnership will offer scholarships for up to five participants. The Partnership scholarship covers the $600 registration fee, which includes materials and most meals. Participants are responsible for lodging, airfare, and any other expenses.

For more information, please contact Beth Wiley, ewiley2@uwyo.edu or 307-766-3274
Artists in the past would have grabbed the same materials that are available today if they had the chance."

Along those lines, the Tekcno Powwow is a combination of dance, music, and video projection. For Spang, this mixed-media installation highlights a major theme in his art: negotiation. "As a visual artist, I never stepped into a whole different form of art like dance before," Spang commented, "The dancers bring a level of energy and enthusiasm to the table that creates a negotiation with my own goals and visions. I'm not a choreographer or a dancer, so how do I negotiate their energy with what I envision as a visual artist, and what I hope to achieve with the piece? Working with their needs as dancers and my needs as a visual artist brings to the forefront the idea that art is constant negotiation."

The theme of constant negotiation can also be found in Spang's current UW Art Museum exhibit entitled "On Fire." This series of video recording, performance based rubbings are made from the trees involved in the 2012 Ash Creek wildfire. He created these rubbings as a way to tell the trees' story of the wildfire. Or, as he put it, "I negotiated with the trees to facilitate their voices."

While "On Fire" facilitates the voices of the trees, it also served as a cathartic experience for Spang. The fire was an intense experience, devastating much of the Spang family ranch including his parents' house. In giving voice to the trees, Spang also provided himself with an opportunity to try to make sense of the wildfire. He expounded, "In my community, one reason artists created was to heal. The creative process itself is healing." As such, Spang views creativity as a vital part of life and a part of life most of us don't get enough of.

Spang would like to see more value placed on creativity in our world. His experience at UW so far has been positive. He was pleasantly surprised by the abundance of art found around campus. He particularly enjoyed the juried student art show.

Spang believed that creative expression is important not only to artists, but to every profession. Just like reading, writing, and arithmetic, creative expression should be encouraged in education.

Spang has been working with the UW Art Museum in their educational outreach programs. He gives presentations and talks to the students about his art. He emphasized, "One thing I like to remind the students of is that no matter what you do with your life, you have to have a strong imagination. Art, the creative process, exercises your imagination. And imagination is just like a muscle – you need to exercise it. Whether its music, visual art, dance, or writing – whatever kind of creative expression you can do – you need it in your life. Creativity is a missing piece in our lives. It's a piece we need to restore to our lives so we can be productive in the ways we want to be. If you're a doctor or an engineer, you need a good imagination, you need imaginative solutions.”

-- Bently Spang

On Fire: Photo Study #2, 2013, pigment ink digital image, 13” x 19” (Bently Spang)
Artist Bently Spang featured

ways we want to be. If you’re a doctor or an engineer, you need a good imagination, you need imaginative solutions. I think as human beings, we have an inherent ability to express. Kindergarten pictures can be some of the best balanced artwork – they seem to innately fill the page and have great composition – all these things you have to relearn as you get older. I think as artists we are sometimes trying to get back to that innate creativity that’s part of all of us.”

Spang’s semester long visit is made possible by the Wyoming Excellence in Higher Education Endowment, awarded to the American Indian Studies Program at UW. The Tekno Powwow is also partially sponsored by a grant from the Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund.

Spang wanted to extend a special thanks to the American Indian Studies Program, the Art Department, and the Art Museum. He said, “Everyone has made me feel very welcome and really good about what I’m able to do here. This is a little bit of every artist’s dream come true to come to a place as a visiting artist and have a chance to work on my own art while teaching a little. It’s great! I’m very honored to be here.”

Read more at http://www.uwyo.edu/artmuseum/_files/exhibition_archives/2014/bent_spring_onfire.html

Also at http://www.uwyo.edu/aist/

UW’s College of Education Celebrates 100 years

The University of Wyoming’s College of Education was founded in 1914. The college plans to celebrate its centennial with several special events this year.

For updates, please visit http://www.uwyo.edu/education/index.html

A 1916 view of Old Main and the location of the first College of Education Building (light colored building to the left of Old Main).

Grades 6-12 still have time to register for Wyoming History Day

The registration deadline for Wyoming History Day is April 1. There is still time to participate in some of the regional competitions. This year’s theme is Rights and Responsibilities in History.

The state competition will be held April 7 in Laramie at the Hilton Garden Inn.

To register for your region and for the state competition and to see the schedule, please visit ahc.uwyo.edu/historyday

When you visit the website, click on the 2014 logo for information about regional contests and the state contest.

There are two new special awards that will be given at this year’s state contest. The first is the UW College of Engineering and Applied Sciences Award and the second is the UW School of Energy Resources Award.

Anyone with questions or who is interested in judging this year’s state contest on April 7 at UW should contact Richard Kean, Wyoming History Day State Coordinator, at rkean@uwyo.edu or 307-766-2300
Life Sciences Summit deliberates role of QR

Partnership’s foundational principles of promoting democracy within education. One of the big goals of this initiative is to provide a forum where the assumed hierarchy among educational levels is erased – at least for the day.

In between jokes about racing golf carts at the Douglas Community Golf Club and overdosing on coffee, small groups deliberated the role of quantitative reasoning in the life sciences by sharing student work, fears and frustrations, teaching tips, and lots of encouragement.

The faculty around the tables realized that quantitative reasoning is everywhere. The challenge appears to be getting students to understand that the deeper he or she goes into biology, the more necessary quantitative reasoning is. There is a misconception out there that biology is the “easy” science because it doesn’t involve math.

Several participants observed that data is often scary for students. Students want to get the right answer and are afraid to risk getting it wrong. So, how does a teacher help students get over the fear of being wrong?

One suggestion was for teachers to ask their students to generate their own data that have relevance to their lives. Other participants commented that they themselves were afraid of teaching quantitative reasoning the wrong way.

Perhaps another solution is to help biology faculty across levels feel more comfortable with teaching quantitative reasoning. Faculty teaching high school and middle school expressed interest in access to high level exemplars so their students could see the end goal.

One of the big messages of the day was a plea to find ways for continued support on these transition issues throughout the year. The Partnership plans to work with the UW Life Sciences program to find ways to achieve this goal. Keep an eye on the Life Sciences and Partnership websites.

Quick Summary
8th Life Sciences Lost in Transition Summit

Participants
Total = 45
K-12 = 22   University faculty = 15
Community college = 5   Other = 3

Overall rating from feedback forms*
Mean = 8.67   Median = 9   Mode = 9

*1-10, with 10 being the highest quality

A few key comments from evaluations

Would love to see the key ideas from each group compiled and shared, maybe on a discussion board so the collaboration can continue the rest of the year.

There are more ways to think quantitatively than I had considered. Students struggle with similar issues at all levels of learning. These discussions allow us to support each other rather than blame each other. We all have something useful to share.
UW’s Life Sciences pilots certification program aimed at helping students succeed
by Brianna Wright, UW Life Sciences Program

From a field of 70 institutions, UW’s Life Sciences Program was one of eight selected to participate in an initiative called the Partnership for Undergraduate Life Sciences Education (PULSE) Vision & Change Pilot Certification process. The work begins this March and is intended “to stimulate systemic changes within biology departments at all types of post-secondary educational institutions.” Team leaders from UW include program director Mark Lyford, academic professional lecturer Brianna Wright, and College of Arts and Sciences associate dean and botany professor, Greg Brown.

The effects of PULSE are already in place at UW. This past February, Lyford, Wright, and Brown brought together 17 faculty and graduate students from four UW departments which deliver 1000, 2000, and 3000 level life sciences courses. The group’s ultimate goal is better articulation of learning outcomes which, in turn, will help more students succeed.

The overarching discussion at the UW curriculum articulation meeting addressed how to best continue efforts towards development of a rich and cohesive life sciences curriculum. Individuals teaching in the program shared perspectives on ways the 2011 report, Vision and Change in Undergraduate Biology Education: A Call to Action, aligned with the Life Sciences Program’s current learning outcomes for students. Prior to, and during, the articulation, instructors considered how they might use Vision and Change as they continue working together to develop curriculum within and across the program’s courses.

Participants used rubrics modified from Vision and Change to discuss the extent to which they were incorporating specific concepts and core student competencies.

UW’s Life Sciences Program is truly unique, providing a common series of courses for majors in the colleges of Agriculture, Arts & Sciences, and Health Sciences.

Participants at this year’s Life Sciences Lost in Transition Summit discussed quantitative reasoning. Quantitative reasoning in the life sciences is also the focus of the Partnership for Undergraduate Life Sciences Education (PULSE) Vision & Change Pilot Certification process beginning in March, 2014. UW’s Life Sciences Program was one of eight institutions chosen to participate.
Life Sciences piloting PULSE certification program

in assessing whether students are learning those concepts and developing competencies as they move through the curriculum. The Life Sciences team will be meeting again later this semester to focus on what can be learned from student work in the identified areas.

Interestingly, one of the core student competencies chosen to focus on in the coming year was quantitative reasoning, a focus of the 8th Annual Life Sciences Lost in Transition Summit in Douglas, February 21. To read more about the 2014 summit, see page 8 of this newsletter. The Life Sciences Program plans to continue discussion on ways to improve students’ quantitative reasoning skills through follow-up curriculum articulation in the coming year.

UW’s Life Sciences Program is truly unique, providing a common series of courses for majors in the Colleges of Agriculture, Arts & Sciences, and Health Sciences. The current Life Sciences curriculum is designed to improve student learning by creating a reasonably common educational experience for all life science majors. The courses within the curriculum are sequenced to allow continued development of core concepts and critical competencies that can be further expanded upon in upper-division courses offered by individual departments across campus.

For more about UW Life Sciences, visit http://www.uwyo.edu/lifescience/

For complete information about PULSE, visit http://www.pulsecommunity.org
People's Choice Awards were presented on February 26 for this year's Science and Mathematics Teaching Center's visual arts of place exhibit, Wyoming Seen. First place was awarded to Dewayne Tillman for Building Trust. The exhibit celebrates local and regional artists and their interpretation of Wyoming as expressed through a variety of media, images, and styles. More than 25 artists entered pieces. The pieces are still on display at the SMTC, located on the fourth floor of Wyoming Hall.

Second Place: Ginnie Madsen, Fenced Out Original Block Print

Third Place: Amy Lorenz, The Hunt, Grand Teton National Park Photograph

Plan to attend the 15th Wyoming Summer Classics Institute, The Emperor and the Philosopher: Nero, Seneca, and Their World

The fifteenth annual classics institute will help participants gain knowledge of Roman history, culture, and society. From A.D. 54 to 68, Rome was ruled by the capricious and tyrannical Nero, who spent money lavishly, persecuted Christians, and freely put his enemies to death. It was also the time of Seneca, who as a courtier tried to curb the young emperor’s excesses and as a Stoic philosopher wrote essays on the timely subjects of managing one’s passions and living a good life even under difficult conditions. This year’s institute, with an experienced and distinguished team of faculty, will explore the world of both these men, including history-writing under oppression, the dissident literature of the time, early Christianity in the pagan world, and (from a bit after Nero) the buried cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

For program information, contact Sheila Bricher-Wade, sbricher@uwyo.edu, or visit www.wyominghumanitiescouncil.com
The Wyoming Humanities Council is looking for teachers, college instructors, or perhaps education or graduate students, interested in the opportunity to develop guided curriculum based on Heal Up and Hair Over. Modest stipends are available for accepted proposals.

For more information, please contact Leslie Capps, lcapps1@uwyo.edu

Learn more about the Wyoming Humanities Council at http://wyominghumanitiescouncil.com/

Recently published by the Wyoming Humanities Council, Heal Up and Hair Over is part of the council’s initiative to encourage civil discourse.

Contributors include Teena Gabrielson, Pete Simpson, Jenn Koiter, and Gracie Lawson-Borders.

UW hosts 2nd World Languages Day

Just over 200 Colorado and Wyoming students and their teachers met on the UW-Laramie campus February 28 - March 1. The event celebrated language learning and showcased the performances of students in French, German, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, and Spanish. An added feature of this year's event were awards for short videos that students submitted prior to the weekend activities.

Students enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about UW through campus tours and visits with students and faculty representing languages, secondary education, and global and area studies.

Following the Saturday morning performances, students selected break out sessions about languages that are not taught in most Wyoming schools. The languages included Arabic, Arapahoe, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, and Russian.

Participating schools included Buffalo, Casper, Cheyenne, Evanston, Gillette, Laramie, Rock Springs, and, from Colorado, Davis Middle School. World Languages Day was hosted by the UW Modern and Classical Languages Department with support from many other UW offices including the Partnership.

Calendar of upcoming events

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<td>Mathematics Lost in Transition Institute combined with Math/Stats/Physics Articulation</td>
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<td>Wyoming History Day</td>
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<td>April 13-14</td>
<td>Teaching Writing in Wyoming Lost in Transition Colloquium</td>
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<td>July 9</td>
<td>Partnership Governing Board Meeting</td>
<td>University Union Building, UW-Casper</td>
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<td>July 14-17</td>
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