Timing Right, Interest High for May Term in Southern Africa

Nearly four years in the making, a May Term course in southern Africa couldn’t be better timed.

Henry and Margaret Haegg Professor of Biology Paula Sanchini and Assistant Professor of Nursing Anita Nicholson will accompany 14 Coe students to southern Africa on the eve of the World Cup soccer tournament. They will be present for the dedication of a school in Swaziland that Sanchini and three Coe students helped build as part of a 2006 mission trip. The group will also deliver chlorinators and train parish nurses in their use to purify drinking water.

“It’s the perfect time to go,” Sanchini said, noting that travel arrangements were simplified by the concurrent World Cup. “There’s a lot of interest on campus.”

In preparation for the trip, students were assigned to see the movie “Invictus,” the 2009 drama based on Nelson Mandela’s life during the 1995 Rugby World Cup. The Coe group will arrive in South Africa as the 2010 FIFA World Cup kicks off.

“We will witness how South Africa has prepared for a global audience,” Sanchini said. “What do they want to say?”

Coe students will also be present for the dedication of an Anglican school serving AIDS orphans in Mpaka, a lowveld community in a drought-stricken area of Swaziland. Sanchini and Coe students Carla Horsley ’06, Hayley Bright ’08 and Meghan Felton ’09 participated in the school’s construction as participants in a 2006 mission trip that laid the groundwork for this year’s May Term course.

Four years ago, Sanchini and her students took three chlorinator kits to Swaziland, where 77 percent of the population lives in rural homesteads and only 40 percent of the rural population has access to safe drinking water. Water-borne illnesses are a leading cause of death in children throughout Africa.

The May Term participants—which include eight nursing students and six biology majors—will bring more chlorinators, training parish nurses in their use to treating water. Sanchini also hopes to begin documenting how access to clean water is impacting child mortality rates.

Composed of Chlorine Producing Units (CPUs), rechargeable batteries and solar panels, the small, relatively simple devices produce concentrated chlorine by passing an electrical current through salt water. One CPU can provide a village with hundreds of gallons of drinkable water daily. The devices are solar powered, lightweight, durable, easy to maintain and can be used indefinitely to purify water.

While preparing for the May Term course, Sanchini mobilized students to assemble and test kits for shipment to Haiti, where the January earthquake left millions of people without basic human needs, such as clean drinking water.

The CPUs were developed in 2004 by Safe Water International Ministries—based in Washington, Iowa—as a way to give safe water to people around the world. Each CPU, battery and solar recharger kit costs approximately $300.

Henry and Margaret Haegg Professor of Biology Paula Sanchini (left) and Coe students Rachael Van Essen ’11, Danen Pool ’11, Doug Levasseur ’10, Raquel Haro ’11 and Eric Troy ’12 recently spent an evening testing and assembling water chlorinators for shipment to Haitian earthquake victims. Pool, Levasseur and Troy are among 14 students enrolled in a May Term course led by Sanchini that will deliver chlorinators to southern Africa.
In a first at Coe College, Jay Caughren ’10 and Tara Buchheit ’10 were re-elected president and vice president in January’s Student Senate elections.

Caughren, a biology and art major from Albuquerque, N.M., is a member of Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity. He becomes the first Coe student elected to two terms as president.

Buchheit, an art and public relations major from Cedar Rapids, is a member of Delta Delta Delta sorority. She joins Barb Bowie Connolly ’93 as the only two-term vice presidents at Coe.

Tony Alt ’92 served one term as vice president and president during his Coe career. Caughren and Buchheit are the first tandem to hold both offices for two years.

“I think that it almost takes a full year to become acclimated to the position,” Caughren said. “Now that Tara and I are completely ready and understand the nature of the position, we can accomplish more and dig deeper.”

Their platform focused on strengthening communication throughout campus, improving the campus environment and improving Student Senate efficiency.

Cedar Rapids’ newly opened Ceramics Center is not a Coe enterprise, but students and graduates will benefit as a result of its proximity.

“It actually benefits all of the colleges and universities in the area,” said Robert O. Daniel Professor of Art John Beckelman, a member of the center’s board of directors.

Housed in the newly renovated Cherry Building in the heart of Cedar Rapids’ New Bohemia Cultural District, the center is organized and operated by Iowa Artworks, a nonprofit organization supported by earned income, grants, private contributions and memberships. The Ceramics Center offers facilities and a wide variety of programs in both clay and warm glass for all ages and ability levels. It offers classes and workshops for children and adults, open and private studio rentals for amateur and professional artists, outreach programs in the Cedar Rapids schools and an artist residency program for emerging ceramic artists.

Three of the five original artists in residence—April Kalmes Woolsey ’08, Andrea Degneau ’09 and Gary Webb ’09—are Coe graduates. Before the center’s opening last fall, Coe graduates would have had to leave Iowa for such opportunities.

“I think it’s a wonderful opportunity for our graduates,” Beckelman said. “Major metropolitan areas in other states have things like this, but there’s nothing else like this in Iowa at this point in time.”

Internships and volunteer opportunities at the center also help satisfy Coe educational requirements.

The facility occupies over 6,000 square feet of space, including a 3,000 square foot main studio. The center offers separate classrooms for clay and warm glass, various gas and electric kilns for clay and glass, two slab rollers, 26 pottery wheels, clay extruders, large work tables, a separate glaze area and a spray booth. There is also a shop where patrons can purchase clay, tools and glaze, as well as private studio space for rent.

For more information, or to register for classes, visit www.theceramicscenter.org.
Coe Honored For Community Service

Coe College has been named to the 2009 President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. The award represents the highest federal recognition a college or university can receive for its commitment to volunteerism, service-learning and community engagement.

The Corporation for National and Community Service, which administers the annual honor roll award, recognizes colleges and universities for their impact on issues from poverty and homelessness to environmental justice. On campuses across the country, thousands of students joined their faculty and staff to develop innovative programs and projects to meet local needs using the skills gained in their classrooms.

During the 2008-2009 school year at Coe, 859 students participated in community service, and 14 gave more than 20 hours of service each semester. All totaled, Coe students provided more than 5,500 hours of service to the community.

The largest single effort mounted by Coe was the “Flooding the City with Service” program, in which 604 students provided 3,139 hours of volunteerism following the Cedar Rapids flood of 2008. Members of the Coe community, including parents and siblings during Family Weekend, participated in eight different events and projects as part of the effort, encompassing everything from mucking out and gutting houses to building a playground in a flood-affected area. The efforts were organized by Coordinator of Service Learning and Leadership Mandi McReynolds.

“We are pleased that nearly 70 percent of Coe students have chosen to become involved in meaningful community service projects,” said McReynolds. “We are gratified to receive this national award in recognition of the work our students have done in support of a better Cedar Rapids community.”

Coe is one of 700 colleges and universities named to this year’s honor roll. This is the first time Coe has received the award.

District Formed to Enhance Environment Around Coe

Since its formation in 2007, members of the First Avenue Uptown College District (UCD) have been making a positive impact to enhance the business district and neighborhoods adjacent to the Coe campus.

The non-profit alliance includes Coe College and other organizations and businesses with an interest in the First Avenue corridor between 10th and 20th streets NE. The group started meeting informally in February of 2007 to provide input to a neighborhood revitalization study commissioned by Coe. Six members of the group stepped forward to form an initial steering committee and jointly decided to create a formal organization. Today, the group is recognized community-wide with nearly 50 active members who meet regularly.

Early priorities for UCD included formalizing an organizational structure and developing a logo and Web site. Over the past couple of years, the organization has focused its efforts on enhancing safety and security in the district, commissioned a market analysis to determine the future for new business, and promoted an enhanced retail environment.

To benefit Coe students, UCD latched onto a promotional idea first proposed by former Student Body Vice President Alex Michaud ’08. At the start of the past two school years, students at Coe and nearby Mount Mercy College were provided with UCD “Student Savings” cards that can be used to obtain discounts at 19 businesses within walking distance of the campuses.

Scott Crosby ’86 is president of UCD and owner of EnCompass—a computer services company located on First Avenue near the Coe campus. Other businesses and organizations represented on the group’s steering committee include Brewed Awakenings, Hy-Vee, Pioneer Workspace Solutions, Hunter Companies and Coe College. Coe Public Relations Coordinator Kristy Upah ’08 serves as the group’s secretary, while Director of Marketing and Public Relations Rod Pritchard has been on the steering committee since the group’s inception.

In 2009, UCD played a key role in the opening of the Community Connections Resource Center on First Avenue, a block away from the Coe campus. Serving as a satellite city hall, the former retail storefront houses representatives from numerous city offices, including Cedar Rapids police officers.

Looking ahead, the group plans to develop strategies and implement plans for revitalization, recommend needed public improvements, encourage development within the area, and work toward increased beautification along our section of First Avenue. The ultimate vision for the UCD is to become a true college-town district that not only provides essential services to the neighborhood, but is a destination for those seeking shopping, dining and entertainment opportunities—all of which will benefit Coe students.

For more information, view the First Avenue Uptown College District Web site at: www.uptowncollegedistrict.com.
PARENTS’ SCHOLARSHIP FUND MATURES

The Coe Parents’ Scholarship Fund—launched in 2001 as an opportunity for parents of current students and alumni to endorse the college’s mission of providing a premier liberal arts education—will celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2011.

Last year current and past parents donated over $11,000 to the fund, providing financial assistance to eight seniors during academic 2009-10. The Coe Parents’ Council hopes to generate $35,000 in scholarships this year for distribution in 2010-11.

The scholarships are awarded to seniors with a 2.5 or higher grade point average who are involved in co-curricular activities and demonstrate financial need.

To contribute to this important fund, visit www.gifts.coe.edu or call 1-866-263-1266. For more information, contact Coe Fund Director Nate Clapham ’06 at nclapham@coe.edu or (319) 399-8569.

ESSENTIAL CALENDAR

Spring Term
Student Research Symposium (no day classes) ...........April 13
Classes end .................................................................... April 28
Final Exams ............................................................... April 30, May 3–5
Baccalaureate .............................................................. May 8
Commencement ....................................................... May 9

May Term
Classes begin ............................................................... May 10
Memorial Day (no classes) ......................................... May 31
Classes end .................................................................... June 4

Fall Term
Classes begin ............................................................... Aug. 30
Labor Day (no classes) ............................................... Sept. 6
Family Weekend ........................................................ Sept. 24–26
Homecoming .............................................................. Oct. 16
Fall Break ................................................................. Oct. 21–22
Thanksgiving Break (after first class) ...................... Nov. 23
Classes resume ........................................................ Nov. 29
Classes end ............................................................... Dec. 13
Final Exams ............................................................. Dec. 15–18

Note: For the most complete and updated campus calendar, select “View Full Calendar” on Coe’s Web site (www.coe.edu).