Last week I attended the "Chairing and Academic Department" workshop put on by the American Council on Education. Overall it was a great event. I learned a lot. I met some very interesting people, including two faculty in the School of Nursing from JSU (I just happened to sit next to them at the dinner). It is amazing how similar the issues are that face faculty in all sorts of departments and all sorts of universities. Things that I thought were uniquely "JSU" are really quite common (both good and bad).

As a result of being gone, I feel far behind in everything and working desperately to catch up. The end of the semester is approaching at nearly the speed of light. I do take comfort in the words that were on the last slide presented at the workshop. They are the advice from Lily Tomlin: "We're all in this alone."
-- Lou

Department News

Department Meeting
On Friday 12 November at 11:15 in the Joint Conference Room. You can bring your lunch.

Fall Preview Day is November 13
Come join the excitement as Jacksonville State University welcomes fall with our annual JSU Fall Preview Day on November 13! This is a great opportunity for prospective students and their families to learn more about JSU. Fall Preview Day begins at Stephenson Hall with browse sessions and campus tours, which will take place from Noon - 2:30 p.m. CST. Miriam Hill is heading up the Department's exhibit.

University News

International Tellabration at the Canyon Center
You’re invited to International Tellabration, the third annual family-friendly storytelling at the JSU Canyon Center! The International Tellabration is a worldwide event devoted to storytelling. This grass-roots movement is endorsed by the National Storytelling Network. Locally, listen to tellers Finn Bille, Nada Hyde, Seamus Miller, Renee Morrison, Danny Turner and Bruce Walker at the Canyon Center. The event will be Saturday November 20, 2010 from 3 - 5 p.m. Admission is free.
JSU's Red Balloon Initiative

Learning Centered is "Where We're Going" and we need your help to get there. The 2011-2016 Strategic Plan will be developed with a focus that supports JSU becoming a Learning Centered University. Campus-wide discussion groups will help answer these Learning Centered questions:

- What does a Learning Centered University look like?
- What will JSU, as a Learning Centered University, look like in five years?
- What values will influence our decision-making?
- What is our mission?
- How do we have to change to become more Learning Centered?
- How is it different from JSU now?
- What are our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to becoming more Learning Centered?
- What are some strategies that will help us reach our vision?

For more about the JSU Red Balloon Initiative, please visit http://www.jsu.edu/redballoon/

Distance Education

November 8-12 is National Distance Learning Week

Distance education courses and programs are growing. Here at JSU, online courses are up 16.58% from Fall 2009, along with a 12.02% increase in online only enrollments. In the US, over 4.6 million students were taking at least one online course during the fall 2008 term; a 17 percent increase over the number reported the previous year. This far exceeds the 1.2 percent growth of the overall higher education student population.

More than one in four higher education students now take at least one course online.

As part of the NDLW celebration, the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) is offering a series of free webinars covering topics related to online learning, educational technology, and higher education. To learn more or sign up, visit http://www.usdla.org/index.php?cid=115.

Student News

JSU Symposium

The online abstract submission form is available now for the 2011 Symposium on the Arts and Sciences website. Students may submit abstracts at any time up to the January 28, 2011 deadline.

Degenerate States

Sherlock Holmes Camping (contributed and translated from Polish by Jan Gryko)

Sherlock Holmes and Mr. Watson went on a camping trip. After a good meal and a bottle of wine they lay down in their tent for the night and went to sleep. Some hours later, Holmes awoke and nudged his faithful friend awake. "Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see."
Watson replied, "I see millions and millions of stars."

"What does that tell you?" Holmes questioned.

Watson pondered for a minute. "Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe Saturn is in Leo. Logically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Theologically, I can see that God is all-powerful and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow.

"Is that all?", Holmes asked.

"Yes." Watson replied. "Why, am I missing something?"

Holmes was quiet for a moment, then spoke: "Watson, you fool. Someone has stolen the tent."

Contact Details

If you have items of news or interest that you would like included in the Department of Physical and Earth Sciences newsletter, then contact Tracy Casey before noon on Thursdays at: tscasey@jsu.edu or phone (256) 782-5232.