In case you were not at the last Department Meeting, I introduced the idea of creating a portfolio of our degree programs. The portfolio would constitute a document of what we teach our students. Having all the material together would allow us to better realize the strengths and weaknesses in our teaching program and to improve our degrees. Since we segment a degree into a series of courses, I think it is appropriate that some this material be sorted by courses and contain the course syllabus, any materials handed out, quizzes, tests and exams. This material would be collected each semester. That would also help us to document changes and improvements in our teaching program.

There were some questions. The material would not be public. So, you could continue to use a quiz, test or exam after you put it in the file. The material was not being gathered to evaluate anyone’s teaching. Although it would document what material was covered in the course. This way new faculty could see what was covered for continuity in what we are teaching.

Tracy said that she is ready for your material. If you have concerns or questions, please speak to Tracy or me. We will create this portfolio together. What goes into the portfolio might change with time. It is not clear how much information we are going to collect. Let’s work together on this. Your legacy might be how well you taught your students in a particular course. The portfolio will help to preserve that legacy.

-- Lou

**Department News**

**Fall Preview Day is November 13**
Thank you for all who showed up: Miriam Hill, organizer, Jan Gryko (who brought several ACS students and Stephen Fordham - the students really worked well to attract high school students to discuss JSU), Kelly Gregg, Jonathan Herbert, were there and Joe Morgan showed up with his granddaughter—she is interested in music and we pushed hard for at least a minor in geography!

**Fall IDEA Student Course Evaluations Now Open**
Please frequently remind your students that the Fall 2010 IDEA Student Course Evaluations are open now through Sunday, December 5. Research shows that evaluations go down in the two weeks before the final exam (the pressure on the students really builds at that time). It is worth encouraging your students to fill out the evaluations early. It also helps to assure them their responses are anonymous and will not be transmitted to this side of the Mississippi River until after final grades are posted.
**Careers with the US State Department**
The US Department of State Diplomat in Residence, Terrence Williamson, will be visiting campus on Nov. 29th to discuss Career Programs. If you would like to schedule him to speak to your class, organization or student group, contact Career Services. Meeting times will be assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis. Call 256-782-5482 or email troberts@jsu.edu to be a part of the agenda.

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**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 Drama Presents Black Comedy Nov. 18-21**
Light is dark—dark is light. Brindley, who wishing to impress his fiancee’s pompous father, has “borrowed” things from his absentee neighbor who just happens to be a collector of antiques. Complications set in when the neighbor returns home earlier than expected during a power outage. WHERE: Ernest Stone Performing Arts Center, Mainstage, Jacksonville State University, Corner of Church and Eleventh WHEN: November 18, 19, 20 at 7:00 p.m.; November 21 at 2:00 p.m. HOW MUCH: All tickets - $5.00. MasterCard, Visa, and Discover accepted, as well as personal checks and cash. RESERVATIONS: Call 256-782-5648

**Encore! Show Choir, Jazz Ensemble II in Fall Concert Nov. 19**
The Encore! show choir of Jacksonville State University will present its fall concert on Friday, November 19 at 7:30 p.m. in the Performance Center of Mason Hall at Jacksonville State University. Under the direction of Dr. Renée L. Baptiste, the ensemble will showcase diverse genres such as rock, pop and Broadway selections. The concert will also feature the Jazz Ensemble II under the direction of Dr. Kelly Rossum. Come enjoy Encore!’s rendition of contemporary music. There is no admission charge.

**Planetarium to Present Star of Bethlehem Program Dec. 11**
Travel through space and explore planet Earth during the JSU Planetarium’s Second Saturday Space Safari! On December 11, 2010, the program will explore the Star of Bethlehem. The event will be from 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. in the JSU Planetarium on the third floor of Martin Hall. Admission is $5 per person, and groups are encouraged to please call (256) 782-5697 or e-mail fieldschool@jsu.edu to pre-register.
Nov. 30 Academe Features Steel Drums of Trinidad-Tobago
On Tuesday, November 30, Academe will present a real treat--Tony McCutcheon, percussion professor in the Jacksonville State University Department of Music, will provide insight about the steel drums. He will discuss their origin and development as percussion instruments, highlighting his trips to Trinidad and Tobago in 2005 and 2007 to study the historical and cultural perspectives of these drums. Accompanied by Dr. Kelly Gregg, of the Department of Physical and Earth Sciences, Dr. McCutcheon will play the drums as well as discuss them.

The presentation and concert will take place on the eleventh floor of Houston Cole Library, room 1103 A and B, beginning at 3:15 p.m. Faculty, staff, and all lovers of music are invited to attend.

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

The Four Ghosts of the White House
One night, Barack Obama is tossing restlessly in his White House bed. He awakens to see the ghost of George Washington standing by his bed. Obama asks him, "George, what’s the best thing I can do to help the country?" "Set an honest and honorable example, just as I did," Washington advises, and then fades away.
The next night, Obama is astir again, and sees the ghost of Thomas Jefferson moving through the darkened bedroom. Obama calls out, "Tom, please! What is the best thing I can do to help the country?" "Respect the Constitution, as I did" Jefferson advises, and dims from sight.
The third night sleep still does not come for Barack. He awakens to see the ghost of FDR hovering over his bed. Obama whispers, "Franklin, What is the best thing I can do to help the country?" "Help the less fortunate, just as I did," FDR replies and fades into the mist.
Obama isn’t sleeping well the fourth night when he sees another figure moving in the shadows. It’s the ghost of Abraham Lincoln. Obama pleads, "Abe, what is the best thing I can do right now to help the country?" Lincoln replies, "Go see a play."

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.