Well, Thursday and Friday has Nixon Mwebi, Kelly Gregg and me at a critical thinking assessment academy. The two-day teaching program is only half-way finished, so I will hold my thoughts until the program completes. If anyone is interested about the critical thinking assessment, I suggest that you speak directly to Nixon, Kelly or me.

I draw you attention to the request for items to put into the Board of Trustees report and the Faculty Research Grants.

JSU is supposed to unveil a new website today. The new website looks very similar to the old web site; however, the software is a lot easier for us to use and is more flexible. We can now put videos on our web pages. Tracy and I can help with more individual web pages. If you have some ideas for the Departmental web pages, let us know.

Spring is definitely here, and below Jonathan shows an analysis of the past year's warm winter. The dogwoods and red buds are in bloom. Even the wisteria has started to flower. Enjoy the week-end.

-Lou

**Department News**

**Items for the Board of Trustees Report**

Items for the April Board of Trustees Report are due to Lou by noon, Monday, March 19. Please send all your scholarly activities for January, February and March 2012. There has been several conferences in the past couple of months, please send the details to Lou.

**Call for Faculty Research Grants 2012-2013**

Requests for the 2012-13 Faculty Research Grants are to be submitted to the Dean's office no later than Monday, March 19, 2012 (this is before the University deadline to give the Dean a chance to review the requests). Refer to Faculty Research Grants on the Academic Affairs website for guidelines and proposal submission form.
**Faculty Awards Nominations Sought**

The Faculty Senate announces that nominations are sought for the following faculty awards:

- Faculty Scholar Lecturer Award
- Outstanding Teacher Award
- Ringer Faculty Development Award
- Thomas Award for Outstanding Community Education/Service
- Faculty Research Activity

All full-time faculty members are eligible. Nominations by self, students, colleagues or department heads are encouraged. Please refer to Faculty Awards for guidelines. The recipients will be recognized at the Faculty Awards Reception on May 8, 2012. The Senate has not stated the due-date for the nominations for 2012, but I would guess it will be 23 March (just before Spring Break).

**Plant Sale**

Jacksonville State University Earth Club will be having a cupcake and plant sale Friday 16 March from 10:00AM-2:00PM and Saturday 17 March from 8:00AM-12:00PM. The sales will be held in the Martin/McGee breezeway. We will be selling the following plants:

- Oregano
- Parsley
- Cilantro
- Roma VF tomatoes
- Big Boy Hybrid tomatoes
- Marigold
- Rosemary
- Black Beauty Zucchini Squash
- California Wonder Bell
- Yellow Crookneck squash
- Pepper
- Cantaloupe
- Jalapeno pepper
- California Wonder Bell
- Pepper

If you are interested in purchasing plants and cannot attend the plant sale, please contact Kristen Carlisle, President of Earth Club, kcarlisle@jsu.edu

**2012 National Outreach Scholarship Conference**

I’m on the organizing committee for the 2012 National Outreach Scholarship Conference (NOSC) that UA is hosting this fall, and I want to make sure that you are aware of this excellent opportunity for your institution’s faculty and students to participate. UA Graduate School is offering a $100 scholarship to pay the cost of registration for EACH student presenter.

Again, I’m hopeful that you will join us on the UA campus in late September. Please note the April 11 due date for proposals, including poster presentations. Dave Francko dfrancko@ua.edu http://www.outreachscholarship.org/

**Global Warming**

**Temperature Trends from Jonathan Herbert**

I recently got hold of some of the latest temperature data for my climatology class. After our recent warm winter I thought people might like to see some analysis the historic temperature record, to see how 2011 and winter 2012 compare with the historic period. The temperature record extends back to 1896.
At the annual scale, the U.S. has warmed and Alabama has cooled over the period of record. The U.S. warming trend is 0.12 °F per decade and the Alabama cooling trend is 0.08 °F per decade. Both trends are statistically significant. The warmest year in the U.S was 1998 and 2011 ranked 23rd. The warmest year in Alabama was 1927 and 2011 ranked 42nd.

At the seasonal scale, U.S. winters have warmed and Alabama winters have cooled. The trends are 0.17 °F and 0.06 °F per decade respectively. The U.S. trend is statistically significant. The warmest winter in the U.S. was 2000 and this winter, defined as December 2011 to February 2012, ranked 4th. The warmest Alabama winter was 1932 and this winter ranked 13th.

Temperatures in the graphs are anomalies from the long-term average, just the average annual or winter temperature for the whole period of record. The scales both annual and both winter graphs match, so they can be put side by side or compared.

Student News

Student Travel Grants
We have funding from Sam Kinsaul to support student travel to present research work at conferences. Applications are due by 30 April 2012. See Lou or Tracy if you need an application. Requests up to $500 can be made.

Name the Library Catalog and Win a $100 Gift Card
As we prepare to move to a new version of the Library online catalog, all students are invited
and encouraged to submit a name for that catalog. The deadline for submission is March 23, and a panel will then make the final decision on the best name and award the $100 gift card prize to the person who submitted it. JSU Students should go to http://www.jsu.edu/library/name_contest.html to submit their suggestions.

Department Seminars

**ALL Seminars are on Mondays at 12:30 PM in Room 202 Martin Hall**

Everyone is ENCOURAGED to attend. Students are more than welcome. If you want to present, please contact Dr. Jan Gryko.

19 March: Dual Leadership Among the Talamancan Peoples of Central America and its Relevance in Understanding Complex Society Elsewhere in the Americas by Jim Sewastynowicz

University News

**A Cappella Choir, Chamber Singers to Present March 18 Spring Concert**

On Sunday, March 18, 2012 at 3:00 p.m., at First Presbyterian Church in Anniston the JSU A Cappella Choir and Chamber Singers will present their Spring Concert. Both choirs are under the direction of Dr. Patricia Corbin, JSU Director of Choral Activities, and will be accompanied by Meg Griffin. First Presbyterian Church is located at 1701 Henry Road. This concert is free and open to the public. For further information, please contact the JSU Choral Activities office, (256) 782-5544 or Dr. Corbin.

Top Ten List

**Top Ten Critical Thinking Skills**

First, up to bat are the top 10 skills. These are especially important. They are the core of critical thinking! Each item links to a web page. However, the titles somewhat self-explanatory.

1. A curious and open mind
2. Thinking through issues
3. Not taking things at face value
4. Applying the 7 steps of making any decision
5. Applying the scientific method
6. Analyzing issues from multiple viewpoints
7. Awareness of critical thinking land mines

8. Applying the 8 steps to doing any project

9. Using the Pareto principle

10. Using convergent and divergent thinking

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.