

**The Susan B. and William K Wasch Center for Retired Faculty
Wesleyan University
A Report for 2011-2012**

Introduction

The Wasch Center has completed its seventh year of service in 2011-2012.

The Wesleyan Institute for Lifelong Learning (WILL) has completed its second full year of operation under the auspices of the Wasch Center. We presented six courses and a full-day program each semester. Enrollments have increased from last year and the program is prospering. A separate report is to be prepared to describe the details of WILL in its second year of operation.

Our residency at the Center continues to be at capacity. We continue to have 12 residents with offices in the house, not including the Director. Two residents have left and two new residents have entered to take that space. There are currently no active applications for new space, but several faculty members who are about to retire have inquired about openings. The Director and Advisory Board are closely attentive to questions of fairness and equity in the awarding of space at the Center.

The level of activity at the Center continues to be vigorous. Our series of Wednesday programs continues to be popular—the centerpiece of our community activity. We hosted seven programs in the fall semester, including a musical performance. We also hosted a pot-luck holiday party, complete with carol singing. In the spring term, we again hosted seven regular programs. All of our programs were well attended—usually at the capacity of the Butterfield Room—which holds about 35 people. About 2/3 of our afternoon programs consisted of presentations by retired faculty members. The remaining 1/3 were programs given by others in the community or by currently active faculty members at Wesleyan.

We did not hold a reception for newly retiring faculty members this year, because only three faculty members retired in 2012, and one of them could not attend the reception. We expect to restore this function next year, including members of this year's class with those retiring in the spring of 2013.

The level of use of our building at 51 Lawn Avenue continues to increase--by retired faculty members, by departments and programs within Wesleyan, and by outside groups as well.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board has met faithfully for monthly meetings throughout the academic year and has been an invaluable source of new ideas and a resource for the development of existing programs. Susan Berry has resigned from the Board, and in her place Jason Wolfe has been appointed.

The current members of the Advisory Board are: Andrew Szegedy-Maszak, Jason Wolfe, Paula Paige, Peter Frenzel, Herbert Arnold, and *ex officio* members, Susan Wasch, William Wasch, Sean McCann, Gary Shaw and Karl Scheibe.

Administrative Assistant and Student Help

Ann Gertz resigned as our Administrative Assistant after completing four years of service. She resigned in order to take a full-time position with East Asian Studies (the Center and the Department). Ann was an integral and much admired part of the Wasch Center for all of her tenure and will be missed.

We were fortunate in being able to recruit Elizabeth Dagnall to serve as our new Administrative Assistant. She works half-time during the academic year and one day per week during the summers. She has performed her job with constant good will and high competence. She has been a constant and friendly support for all of our residents. She has the responsibility of administering all of the small research funds and travel grants awarded to retired faculty members by the Office of Academic Affairs. She is responsible for maintaining our website. She serves as scribe and liaison with the Advisory Board. She has also taken on the responsibility of helping to organize and coordinate the courses offered in the WILL program, including the updating of its website and the operation of our online payment service.

Liz has recruited and supervised a group of work-study students, who served at the reception desk at times she was not present. They performed countless errands and tasks for residents of the building and others during the course of the academic year.

Informational Meetings

We continued our custom of providing information for faculty members considering retirement, with a meeting in the spring semester with representatives of the Office of Human Resources, TIAA-CREF and the Office of Academic Affairs to present information and answer questions about financial benefits, insurance programs, and ongoing support for research and professional activities for retired faculty members. retirement.

Movie Series

This was the sixth year for our movie series, designed and presented by Joe Reed, Professor Emeritus of English. We presented movies on several Tuesday afternoons throughout the year. While the expense associated with gaining exhibition permission for such a series is nontrivial, the Advisory Board decided to continue the program for the next year, given the evidence of growing enthusiasm and participation. Joe Reed is an excellent host for these occasions.

Mentoring Program

In collaboration with Sean McCann and the Center for Faculty Career Development, we conducted the fifth year of our mentoring program. Late in the summer, new faculty members who indicated an interest in participating in the program were matched with retired faculty members. With the support of the Office of Academic Affairs, lunches were sponsored at the Usdan Center with members of pairs formed in this way. The testimony from all sides is that this program is valuable. We will continue it in the next year.

Newsletter

In order to enrich the information about members of Wesleyan's community of retired faculty members, we established a newsletter in 2009-2010. Issues have been published each semester for the past two years. The same schedule of publication is planned for the coming year.

The newsletter has been edited by Peter Frenzel, who has the support of an Editorial Board consisting of Gene Klaaren, Paula Paige, Jerome Long, Jerry Wensinger, and Karl Scheibe.

Oral History Project

Wesleyan has over 85 living retired faculty members. The idea emerged at one of the discussions of the Wasch Center Advisory Board last year to begin a program of systematic interviews of individuals in this body about their Wesleyan careers. With the collaboration of Anne Greene, Suzy Taraba, and Sean McCann, we established a program in the second semester in which five students conducted extensive interviews with five retired faculty members. These interviews were recorded and transcribed, and will be a permanent part of the Wesleyan Archives, as well as being available online through WesScholar. We expect to continue this program in the future.

Other Activities and Uses of the Center

The Wasch Center was used for many other occasions during the course of the year. The Physics Department used the building for its regular Thursday luncheon meetings. The Quaker Meeting used the building every Sunday morning. (The Quaker Group has made a contribution to the Wasch Center in consideration of its use privilege.) In addition, the Wasch Center was the site of several Friday cocktail hours sponsored by the Office of Academic Affairs and planned by an ad hoc committee of the faculty. The building had a total of 280 bookings for activities outside of our programs or the WILL program during the past academic year

Fund Raising

We have continued to encourage retired faculty members, alumni and others to make contributions to the endowment fund of the Wasch Center, which now stands at about \$100,000 in value. Income realized from our endowment fund can be used support research and travel for retired faculty members, and also to provide support for computer acquisition and repair. A number of such gifts have been received in the past academic year. A notice in the Newsletter reminds people of this gifting opportunity.

Support Issues

Over the past several years, the amount of support for retired faculty members for research and travel to learned society meetings has been reduced. The Vice-President for Academic Affairs is highly aware of this problem and has promised to do what he can to improve the situation. An additional issue has to do with the availability of funds to support computer acquisition and maintenance for retired faculty members, since they are no longer on departmental lists for such eligibility. Even if retired faculty members are willing to use their own funds to purchase computers for professional use, they may not be eligible to qualify for a tax exemption for such purchases. These are issues that are to be addressed with the Office of Academic Affairs in the coming year.

Summary

The Wasch Center continues to increase the range and scope of its activities each year. The major achievements of the past year include the further development of the WILL program. It is clear that WILL fits in well with the overall mission of the retirement center. Most of the instructors for the WILL program are drawn from the ranks of retired faculty members. Also, retired faculty members are conspicuous among the students enrolling in WILL courses. WILL also succeeds in drawing many people from the surrounding community to Wesleyan and has become a conspicuous means of cementing good relations between Wesleyan and the wider community.

The new Oral History project has also had a promising beginning, and we hope will continue to grow in the coming year. The Wasch Center Newsletter has been widely acclaimed, and clearly has a place in our future.

An ongoing concern is that our Administrative Assistant has a growing list of responsibilities—a list that has grown enormously over the past seven years, even as the position has not enjoyed any increase at all in terms of supported time. If the WILL program continues to grow at the levels we envisage, it will certainly be necessary to make arrangements for additional staff support for this operation.

Susan and Bill Wasch have continued to be indispensable for the success of our Center. Both Susan and Bill have continued to attend our monthly Board meetings and to participate fully in our programs. Their vision for service to the community of people who retire at Wesleyan continues to unfold into reality. For this we must all be grateful.

Respectfully submitted,
Karl E. Scheibe
Director

August 16, 2012 .