

**The Susan B. and William K Wasch Center for Retired Faculty
Wesleyan University
A Report for 2014-15**

Introduction

The Wasch Center has completed its ninth year of operation in 2014-15. Planning is underway for a 10th Anniversary celebration to coincide with Homecoming in November of 2015.

Our residency at the Center is at capacity. One shared office space became available in February with the passing of Jason Wolfe in December. We have 11 residents with offices in the house, not including the Director. One retiree is vacating an office. Two recent retirees have requested private office space beginning July 1st. An office will be vacated and some office shifting will occur to accommodate these requests. Several requests for extensions to current stays have been received and accepted. 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 remain popular—the centerpiece of our community activity. We hosted seven programs in the fall semester. We also hosted a catered holiday party, complete with carol singing. In the spring term, we hosted six regular programs, including a wonderful jazz performance in the backyard, featuring one of our retirees. 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.

This year we held a reception in collaboration with University Relations for newly retiring faculty members. Eleven retiring faculty members were invited to participate and seven were able to attend, including a retired member of the administration.

The Wesleyan Institute for Lifelong Learning (WILL) has completed its fifth full year of operation under the auspices of the Wasch Center. In the fall, we presented eight successful short courses and a full-day program entitled “Epidemics: Past and Present.” In the spring we offered eight short courses and a full-day program entitled “All Aboard! The Romance of Trains.” Our Saturday enrollment numbers were 24 and 43 respectively. Enrollments continue to increase with total enrollment of 128 in the fall and 138 in the spring. The program is prospering. A separate report has been prepared to describe the details of WILL. We are pleased to see that WILL continues to have a surplus of income over expenses.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board has met monthly throughout the academic year and has been an invaluable source of new ideas and a resource for the development of existing programs. The current members of the Advisory Board are: Herbert Arnold, Allan Berlind (replacing Paula Paige in December 2014), Sheryl Culotta (replacing Pat Tully in October 2014), Peter Frenzel, Gene Klaaren, Pete Pringle (replacing Jason Wolfe in March 2015), Andrew Szegedy-Maszak, and *ex officio* members, Susan Wasch, William Wasch, Bill Barber, Wis Comfort, and Karl Scheibe.

Administrative Assistant and Student Help

Amy Bello serves as our 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 websites. 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 on-line payment service.

Amy supervises a group of work-study students as well as the summer student, 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 as well as performing routine office duties.

We were fortunate to have an ITS student available mornings twice a week at the Wasch Center to assist residents with computer related issues. We look forward to continuing this service in the fall.

Informational Meetings

We continued our custom of providing information for faculty members considering retirement. The centerpiece of this effort was 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. In addition, the Director has conferred often with senior members of the faculty who are considering retirement or who have recently retired.

Movie Series

This was the ninth year for our movie series, designed and presented by Joe Reed, Professor Emeritus of English. We presented movies once a month on Tuesday

afternoons throughout both the fall and spring semesters. Joe Reed is an excellent host for these occasions.

Newsletter

In order to enrich the availability of 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 four years. The same schedule of publication is planned for the coming year.

The newsletter is edited by Peter Frenzel, who has the support of an Editorial Board consisting of Allan Berlind, Gene Klaaren, Jerome Long, Joyce Lowrie, Paula Paige, Al Turco, Karl Scheibe, and Jerry Wensinger. Both issues of our newsletter for this past year were popular and well received. We expect to continue and even expand this publication.

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 in 2010 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 which five students conducted extensive interviews with five retired faculty members in the 2011-2012 year. These interviews were recorded and transcribed, and will be a permanent part of the Wesleyan Archives, as well as being available online through WesScholar. Interviews were not conducted during the 2012-2013 year due to time limitations of the above-mentioned leaders of this effort. We were fortunate to employ Nancy Smith, former editor of the Wesleyan alumni magazine, to continue with the interviews and transcriptions last year. Nancy has completed five interviews this year. Further, the assistance of Heather Zavod, a free-lance author, has been solicited. Heather has edited the interview of Bill Firshein that was conducted by students and never edited, and is also conducting new interviews. Funding was made possible by a donation from the Library, the Friends of the Library, and a surplus in the WILL budget. We anticipate a continuation of this project in the next year.

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 Butterfield Room 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.) Every other Saturday morning the Butterfield Room houses an ESL class.

The building had numerous 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. Income realized from our endowment fund can be used to 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.

This year, Karl Scheibe sent out a letter of solicitation to all retired faculty members. This letter is being followed-up with meetings scheduled in collaboration with Mark Davis, Director of Planned Giving for University Relations.

We continue to make available to retired faculty members small supplemental grants for their professional activities. The Advisory Board authorized the distribution of ten grants of \$250 each to retired faculty members who apply for them. The funds for these grants are drawn from interest derived from the Lemert portion of our endowment fund.

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. 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.

Also, the Advisory Board recommended to the Academic Affairs that in future retired faculty members be offered some modest compensation for offering tutorials and supervising honors theses for undergraduates. While Academic Affairs did not accept the terms of this proposal at this time, it was agreed that it might be considered in the future.

The Director and the Question of Succession

The Director of the Wasch Center has been reappointed for a three-year term beginning on July 1, 2013. He has announced his intention that this be his last term of service in this office. Accordingly, we have initiated conversations within the Advisory Board and with the Office of Academic Affairs about finding a new person for this role. The Director expresses the hope that a modest level of compensation, on the order of \$25,000 per year, might be found—perhaps from our endowment income, as incentive for the new Director.

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 and success 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.

An ongoing concern is that our Administrative Assistant has a growing list of responsibilities—a list that has grown substantially over the past nine 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 indefatigable and indispensable for the success of our Center. Both Susan and Bill have faithfully attended our monthly Board meetings and have participated fully in our programs. Their vision for service to the community of people who retire at Wesleyan continues to unfold into reality. For this the entire body of retired Wesleyan faculty members must be grateful.

Respectfully submitted,
Karl E. Scheibe
Director