

### *"On ascertaining a basis for our work:"*

#### An Interview with Mark Stanton



In this inaugural edition of the *Research Reporter* for the academic year, we offer an interview with Mark Stanton, Ph.D., Provost and Professor of Psychology, and keen advocate for the cause of research scholarship at APU.

**RR:** Ernest Boyer proposed a paradigm of scholarship that included four essential interlocking functions: discovery, integration, sharing, and application. Does this paradigm continue to be useful to APU?

Boyer's paradigm offered the academy a corrective element by including application as an integral part of scholarship. At APU our challenge is to include the first element—discovery—in a balance with what we already do well. We are a teaching institution, but we want to continue to address the balance.

If I step away from Boyer's categories, I like to think about a reciprocity that exists between teaching and learning. It's appropriate for a faculty member to stretch the mind, and thus to teach better; and it means that our students learn in a different way.

**RR:** You've described APU as a community that comprises both the teacher/scholar and the scholar/teacher. What do those look like?

Each shares a commitment to both scholarship and teaching; neither excludes one or the other. The tilt comes in terms of a person's inclination or strengths: some of us are built toward interaction with students, and others toward scholarship that energizes and advances.

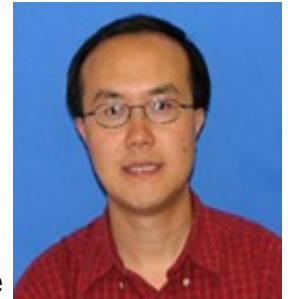
I would like for departments to think how they have been constructed so that the tilt is not departmental—as in some research universities. And I  
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### Grant Award

**Congratulations to Dr. Bin Tang for bringing to APU its first directly funded National Science Foundation (NSF) grant for \$207,717!**

Dr. Bin Tang, Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Science joined the APU faculty last year and was awarded an NSF grant shortly before he arrived. The purpose of the grant is to develop and test the preservation and transmission of data over long distances and in challenging conditions (e.g., transatlantic cables and desert pipelines).

The NSF transfer process took several months to accomplish and required the hard work and dedication of several APU personnel including Sam Sambasivam, David Weeks, Don Isaak, Jennifer Walsh, Diane Guido, Mark Dickerson, Joyce Williams, Judith Benjamin, Deric Gomez, and Lou Hughes. APU is very fortunate and blessed to have Dr. Bin Tang bring his research work to APU. He is a dedicated teacher and is committed to having his students participate in meaningful research work such as disaster warning and climate change monitoring. There is strong competition to obtain NSF funding and being awarded a grant means the NSF reviewers have acknowledged the importance of the research work.



Dr. Bin Tang is working with the Office of Sponsored Research and Grants to prepare another major proposal to NSF which will continue his research interests. In technical terms, his "research focuses on algorithm design in data intensive sensor network based scientific applications....it concerns how to preserve large volumes of data in intermittently connected sensor networks under storage and energy constraints of sensor nodes."

Welcome to APU Dr. Tang!!!

- Lou Hughes, Director of the Office of Sponsored Research and Grants

(Mark Stanton interview continued.)

think that this applies to undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs. We do expect doctoral faculty, for instance, to be excellent in the way they engage students.

*RR: In thinking about your own work, and the work of other scholar-administrators that you know, what characteristics would you say a researcher brings to an administrative position?*

Several things come to mind. One doesn't jump to reductive solutions; solutions are more elusive. One relies more on data-based information in the decision-making process, information that is not to be manipulated. One looks for a way forward more through exploration and review. And one has an empathy for the demands of the role of the faculty, whether in teaching or in researching.

It is important to me that I still see myself as a faculty member. Having done research, and written articles and books, I do understand what a faculty member goes through. I extended the Writers' Retreats an extra night, for example, because I know that sometimes you don't hit the sweet spot until day three! And I understand that to stretch and grow in the areas APU needs to, we need to continue our commitment to the funding and the release of faculty for research.

*RR: Do you have a current research project of your own?*

Well, the difficulty is in justifying it. I'm reading articles for a journal I edit, a journal the APA has newly launched [*Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice*, the official publication of the Society for Family Psychology (APA Division 43)]. I currently have four essays hanging over my head that I need to find time to get to. I would also like to be able to coauthor another book; it would be a textbook for intervention methods in couples and family psychology, written with a colleague, and directed (and here is the need) toward graduate students. So time is the problem.

*RR: What keeps you going as a researcher?*

In my area of psychology, the motivation focuses on ascertaining a strong basis for our work, on developing evidence-based practices. It's the need to determine a strong foundation for what we do. Research broadly defined does that for us. I imagine that you would get a similar answer from researchers across the disciplines.

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## Book Review:

**Marsha Fowler and Maria A. Pacino, eds. *Faith Integration and Schools of Education*. Indianapolis: Precedent Press, 2012.**

Where does the integration of faith with an academic discipline take place, specifically? Does it happen in a course syllabus? Or does it rather occur in classroom ethos and experience? Is the *sine qua non* an event in the heart of the educator? Or can it only be said to happen, if it happens at all, in the apprehension of the student? These are among the questions addressed in the stimulating collection of essays edited by APU professors **Marsha Fowler, Ph.D.**, and **Maria Pacino, Ed.D.**, and authored by a predominance of APU researchers. Although for reasons of space most, but not all, of the chapters are reviewed below, the volume is remarkable for its consistently high quality and the relevance of each contribution to the theme.

The first chapter helpfully reprints William Hasker's 1992 article, "Faith-Learning: An Overview" (*Christian Scholar's Review*, 21[3]), frequently cited as foundational to subsequent discussion. Faith integration is "hard scholarly work" (9) mandated both by the divine lordship over all of creation, and by the need in education to address and shape the most basic human motives and goals. Hasker offers a searching discussion of integration strategies, applying faith-learning integration to the theoretical disciplines, as well as to the applied disciplines. (Continued on page 3)



**Steve Wilkens, Ph.D.** (APU School of Theology), then offers a historical perspective on “Models of Faith and Reason: Marginalization, Coexistence, or Integration.” Drawing on the history of Western Christian philosophic debate, Wilkens sketches six models of integration and probes the strengths and weaknesses of each. He argues that the “fact/value dichotomy” of the Enlightenment, which “made reason the gatekeeper of what one should accept as true within religion” (26), remains the major obstacle to faith integration—not least because it prompts an opposite but unsatisfactory move to anchor faith subjectively. The result may be a faith that is nurtured “primarily by enculturation, not education” (33). Better models of integration are urgent, since “our educational endeavors are directed at heart, soul, mind, and body people—image of God people; . . . we cannot engage this task in a way that fragments our students’ lives” (40).

**Marsha Fowler** writes “Getting to a Comprehensive, Coherent, Academically Rigorous and Theologically Sound Program of Faith-Learning Integration: Experiential and Practical Observations.” The chapter constitutes a strong presentation of important institutional dimensions of faith integration, with however a particular focus on faculty roles. She discusses seven factors in institutional response: administrative support, resources for faculty development and research, agreement on the role of faculty, “uniform, if not universal, faculty commitment,” curricular planning, theological development of faculty, and spiritual development of faculty. Some of her observations: Faculty pursue faith integration “as an intellectual pursuit, that is, as a part of the development of the student” (44). If an institution has commitments to faith-learning integration, academic freedom becomes a question of how, not whether, integration is pursued (45). And the complexity of the disciplines of theology and biblical studies call for thorough preparation and ongoing development, to avoid, for instance, the plateauing of “committed, often life-long, participants in worship” in well-intentioned but pre-critical positions (47-50). But “[a]ny attempt to do this must take account of factors that are largely ignored in the literature, including . . . safety and support for spiritual and academic growth in faith integration” (53).

Ken Badley of George Fox University addresses the question, “Where Does Faith-Learning Integration Happen?” His essay, well worth reading, finds the answer in the overlapping responsibilities of student readiness, curriculum and course planning, administrative policy, the support of the worshiping Church, and (his lengthiest treatment) the “professor as locus” of integration. The professor attends to integration in curriculum planning, course planning, instruction, and in assessment; this entails not least a careful cultivation of Christian qualities and attitudes such as wonder, excellence, accountability, and caring. One quote: “After grading several thousand essays, I have accepted as true my students’ comments that the words I write on their papers move them toward either the integration or the disintegration of faith and learning. They take those words, which I might consider marginal in both senses, very seriously” (64-65).

APU professors **Susan Warren, Ph.D.**, and **Maria Pacino** author “Faith Integration and the Educator’s Responsibility to Equity and Justice.” Addressing the public school venue, they propose faith integration in the simple but powerful form of the educator as child advocate. The urgency for such responsibility arises from the “drastically increased” responsibilities of public school educators in the U.S., as “rapidly changing demographics” increase the likelihood of unjust marginalization of whole segments of the population (91). The situation requires the educator to move beyond satisfaction with mere legal justice and to promote ethical and biblical models of justice. With a strong anchoring in “social justice and the preferential option for the poor, particularly as described in the Roman Catholic tradition” (95), the authors outline initiatives to be taken in personal awareness and response, at the classroom level, at the level of schools and district, and in state and national contexts. The sheer simplicity and power of the vision of the educator as child advocate is surely transferable to any faith tradition, and to any educational setting, *mutatis mutandis*.



**Maria Pacino** and **James Noffle, Ph.D.**, continue the theme of the educator as advocate in their chapter “Weaving Faith and Learning: Creating Meaning for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schooling.” Focusing on K-12 education, they begin by explicating the connection between literacy and public justice, since illiteracy impacts both civic participation and personal social identity. Liberation theology in particular has come to understand the connection between identity and narrative, urging “the promise of literacy as liberation for the marginalized” (116). Lastly, and valuably, the authors describe the redefining of literacy under the impact of “the new literacies:” internet and related technologies require not only new skills but “new social practices,” and are “central to full civic, economic, and personal participation in a global community” (120); this recasts literacy as “the ability to understand and use multiple formats from a wide range of sources” (120, citing Glistner). Since the sociopolitical inequity between the haves and the have-nots of the new technologies mirrors the inequity characteristic of traditional education, the need for awareness and advocacy is urgent.

**Ruth Anna Abigail, Ph.D.**, and **Sarah Visser** collaborate on “Faith Integration in the Adult Classroom: Sustaining Growth and Conversation.” Their work describes students in adult learner completion degrees, such as non-traditional and graduate programs. Fascinatingly, much of their findings turn on the readiness of the adult learner to experience the degree program as personally transformative (partisans of transformational scholarship take note!). If the components of a transformative process include personal experience, critical reflection, reflective discourse, and action, the educator is uniquely positioned to facilitate the middle two of these terms (159). Further, taking cues from the faith development theories of Westerhoff, J. Fowler, and Stokes, the authors propose “vocation”—“the response a person makes with his or her whole self to the address of God and to the calling of partnership” (161, citing Fowler)—as a fruitful framework in which to explore faith integration. They close with lengthy descriptions of two such exploratory exercises.

In a final chapter, **Ruth Givens** addresses a perennial teaching issue in “Walling in or Walling Out? Recognizing the Use of Personal Boundaries for Christian Educators.” Citing Robert Frost’s famous line, “Good fences make good neighbors” (or at least his neighbor’s line), Givens notes that common among educational theorists “is the belief that our greatest gift to one another is our ability to recognize when boundaries are necessary and when they are not” (177). She finds that the shift in academia from patterns of knowledge that foster individualism and isolation, to patterns that recognize community and connection, allow teachers [perhaps somewhat paradoxically] to recognize students as individuals in their own right, different and equally valid in likes and dislikes. She proposes that as the student is esteemed as “the Other,” boundaries are more effectively preserved (183). And the added challenges of increasing diversity may certainly foment an intentionality toward community. As C. S. Lewis wrote, for Christians “[t]here are no ordinary people;” rather “our neighbor is, in the deepest sense, the holiest object presented to our senses” (cited 187).

This stimulating and rewarding book of essays is highly recommended for those who wish to continue to think about and respond to the question of the integration of faith and the academic disciplines. The writers, clearly committed from the heart to the “necessary task” of integration, convey to this reviewer, probably indelibly, both the cogency of that vocation and its passion.



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