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News from CART

(Center for the Advancement of Research and Teaching)

by Garland Kimmer

The Center for Advancement of Research and Teaching (CART) facilitates interactions between teaching and research for Bridgewater State faculty members. CART provides a number of different types of grants to fund both small and large-scale projects. These projects include travel to professional conferences in order to present papers and research travel, such as a trip to Africa undertaken last summer by Martina Arndt of the Physics Department to collect data about a solar eclipse. One of the most appealing programs for faculty members has been the CART Summer Grants. These grants offer faculty members up to \$3,000 for use on projects geared toward either teaching or research.

Two of last year's Summer Grant recipients and their projects are profiled below.

WRITING, READING,
AND FRED NEWTON SCOTT



Lee Torda

Lee Torda of the English Department focused her summer research on the pioneering work of Fred Newton Scott. Newton Scott was a Compositionist at the University of Michigan early in the century, and his work and philosophy have made a profound impact on the field of Composition and Rhetoric. Though originally hired to teach Technical Writing, Torda's focus also includes composing processes, theories of rhetoric, and the history of Composition and Rhetoric as a discipline.

While herself a graduate student working as an administrator in the writing program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Torda undertook the difficult task of training graduate students to teach writing. Through this process, she became interested in the intricate and integral relationship between the histories of literary studies and writing programs at American colleges and universities. Her dissertation worked with one model for early writing programs, that developed at Harvard University. This model contained a very particular paradigm that Torda attributes to two divergent impulses: the drive toward professionalization that emphasized reading literary texts and a need to demonstrate the discipline's practical worth to society through writing courses. In many instances, the work of teaching students how to write was not valued as highly as studying literature, so the new faculty were assigned to teach these courses.

Torda's CART Summer Grant focused on one of the figures who suggested a markedly different approach to teaching writing. So far, only a few large-scale analyses of Newton Scott's work and writing have been published, and nothing has been written about his attitudes toward the role of reading in the writing classroom. Working at a large state university in the midwest, Newton Scott was in a very different environment than his contemporaries on the east coast. He began a department of Rhetoric and Composition at Michigan that was separate from the English department. This was the first graduate program in the field and centered around the development of an entire writing curriculum that emphasized both reading and writing to develop literacy skills.

Torda's research led her to the Bentley Historical and Hatcher Graduate Libraries at the University of Michigan, where she spent several weeks working directly with the original texts that Newton Scott produced as he implemented both an undergraduate curriculum and the graduate program. In addition to compiling and analyzing the results of these texts, Torda found that the experience "focused my project and helped me decide what I want to look at." At the suggestion of the Bentley

Library, she will be applying for a travel grant from the library to continue research on Newton Scott as part of her larger work.

Torda's work also offers unique insight into the history and development of the Writing Program at Bridgewater. She notes that "Bridgewater State College is caught between these two models. We're not Harvard, Yale or Princeton. In terms of our history and students, we're more like a Midwestern state school, yet perhaps because of where we are we labor under the burden of the Ivy League paradigm." In other words, the English Department must continue to re-think the balance between its two missions: the study of literature and the teaching of writing and general literacy skills. Understanding this balance will be especially important as the campus reviews its General Education requirements over the next few years.

BANGING OUT A NEW ANTIGONE



**Suzanne
Ramczyk**

Suzanne Ramczyk, of the Department of Communication Studies and Theatre Arts, spent her summer doing something that most of us would never even attempt: re-writing one of the world's masterpieces of drama. The genesis of her current work began over a year before, when she heard the College's African drumming ensemble under the direction of Salil Sachdev. Since she possesses a degree in music, Ramczyk was excited about

meeting Sachdev and hearing the ensemble when it was still getting off the ground. After hearing the group, she knew that there had to be some way to work the ensemble into one of her productions. Through several discussions with Sachdev, Ramczyk tried to iron out the best genre for such a production. Finally, they decided on Greek Tragedy and chose Sophocles' *Antigone*.

Part of the appeal of *Antigone* is that the Theatre Arts students already feel a strong connection to the play, since every sophomore major studies it in the Play Analysis for Production class. Another appealing aspect of the play, however, was the age of its title character. Unlike many Greek tragedies, *Antigone* features a lead who is college-age. The primary reasons for needing a new adaptation of the play were to better fit the presence of the drumming ensemble and to recreate the theatricality of the original event.

One of the more appealing and intriguing aspects of this impending production has been the addition of several scenes that were not in the original play. Ramczyk has always loved the comic relief provided by the sentry in *Antigone*. She feels that "it's an aspect of the play that can be easily overlooked." She sees him as a common man, an Everyman figure. Even though there is a chorus of elder citizens in the play, the sentry is the only spokesman for the majority of residents who do not qualify as citizens. Ramczyk describes him as "a good hook into the play because he is distinct from Antigone, who's almost a zealot, and from Creon, who is a politician." Accordingly, she inserted a scene in which the corpse of Antigone's brother is being guarded into the play.

Ramczyk's summer is still continuing, at least in terms of this project. She recently had a reading of the play at the Trinity Repertory Theatre in Providence, where she was given "a lot of rewrites." She goes on to add, however, that Craig Watson and Amanda Dehnart of the Trinity Rep have provided high-quality responses that pose real and positive challenges. She is currently rewriting and plans to have another reading featuring Bridgewater State students before the winter break. This, of course, means that her holidays will be white, though not in the traditional sense. One other highlight of the upcoming performance of *Antigone* has been Professor Lee Dunne's agreement to return to Bridgewater State to play Tiresias. Ramczyk is excited about their collaboration and looks forward to Dunne's feedback on the play and the production.

—Garland Kimmer is Assistant Professor of English.