

April 13, 2004

Dear Joanne,

I apologize for being so late in turning in a report on my activities as recipient of the Caterpillar Excellence in Teaching Award during the 2002-2003 academic year.

My goal with the funds made available to me was to use them to widen the circle of people reading and talking about Core texts, an idea that I got from the late Jerry Seeley, who wanted to join a circle of people reading Core texts even if he wouldn't be available to teach it.

To achieve this goal I formed two reading groups, one for staff, one for faculty, and provided them books, arranged meeting times and places, and often met with them or deputized other Core faculty to meet with them. The staff group included clerical staff from the College of Arts and Sciences, staff from EIS, the Director of the Guild, and you yourself. The faculty group included members of the College of Engineering, the College of Business, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the EIS support staff person from the Law School. The staff group lost interest after a semester, though several survivors from that group joined up with the faculty group which to my knowledge still meets. I have talked to Rick AmRhein, a member of the group, about making such a circle a part of the culture of the new library and he seems very positive about the idea. In fact, it has been the librarians who have provided the most leadership for the group.

I believe I spent all the money on books. The groups read Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of an American Slave, Written by Himself*, Arlie Hochschild's *The Time Bind*, Philip Gourevitch's *We Regret to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Die and All of Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*, Willa Cather's *My Antonia*, and also Julia Alvarez' *In The Time of the Butterflies*, which we don't yet teach in the Core but were considering. I know we also read short stories by Doris Lessing and Eudora Welty, and I may have left out certain other texts we read during the year.

All in all, I think the money was well spent and went along way towards achieving the goal I made for myself. Next year I hope to push this project further.

Sincerely,

  
John Ruff