

LOYOLA CHAIR IN ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS

1999-2000

Environmental Communications is a nationally emerging specialty in the field of Communications. There are presently fewer than five such endowed chairs in the United States. Most are held by persons with a Ph.D. in Communications or a related field or people who have served a distinguished career in the journalism private sector. At Loyola University, the holder of the Loyola Chair in Environmental Communications has a Ph.D. in vertebrate Zoology and has spent the majority of his career as an environmental educator as Executive Director of the Louisiana Nature Center. In this role, he has focused his attention on communicating complex environmental issues to the breadth of the Greater New Orleans community - from five year olds through school age to adults. He has developed means of communicating environmental information to those who are highly educated and those with less success.

The field of environmental communications is an increasingly important element in the state of Louisiana. No other state is so dependant on its natural resources and their direct and indirect use as is Louisiana. Much valuable time and effort is spent dealing with poorly understood and/or mis-information. It is, therefore, crucial that our state=s professional communicators (especially print and broadcast journalists) refine their abilities to communicate the often very complex and vitally important information relative to the impact of human use of natural resources on the environment. The co-existence of economic and environmental well-being is vitally important to Louisiana. If the citizens do not understand the implications of the use of natural resources and exposure to the by-products of their use, then the state will never reach its economic and human potential.

An environmentally educated citizenry will make the right choices for our state=s economic and environmental health.

One of the foci of the Loyola program is to improve communications among stakeholders in environmental issues in the State of Louisiana. This is done by LUCEC staff working on environmental intervention programs (such as the EPA=s Common Sense Initiative) and hosting the Institute for Environmental Communications (a program that brings together citizens from business/industry, environmental activism, government, science, and the media to have an open discussion of the issues).

Another is to work with environmental communicators in Latin America (Belize and Trinidad at this time) to solve their problems. The economic linkage between Louisiana and Latin America is obvious and is part of economic plans throughout the state.

The Loyola Chair in Environmental Communications sponsors the only program in this arena in the state. It is one of only eight of its kind in the nation, and the only with the holder of the chair being a scientist and having a background in environmental education.

The endowment funds available to the Loyola Chair in Environmental Communications have served as the cornerstone for the activities of the Center for Environmental Communications (LUCEC), and its subsidiary program - the Institute for Environmental Communications (IEC).

The following are activities directly funded by the endowment proceeds:

- \$ general operation of the office was guaranteed.
- \$ the web site was maintained (www.loyno.edu/lucec).
- \$ the chair holder was able to be active in the International Federation of Environmental Journalism, thus networking with international colleagues.
- \$ LUCEC was able to maintain communications projects in the tropics. This year, the public relations program for the Toledo Ecotourism Association in Belize was finished, a video tape was developed detailing activities in the Loyola Tropical Ecology course, a video program is planned to provide training for biomedical technicians on the detection of Chagas Disease in Guatemala (with Dr. Patricia Dorn), and a meeting is to be held with Carlos Pérez Brito (LU >96) regarding a joint environmental communications venture with the Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala.
- \$ hosted a number of national and international environmental journalists (see section below).
- \$ Funded a survey of broadcast editors (as gatekeepers) regarding how they analyze environmental story opportunities at their stations (survey by Dale Willman, Midwest Editor of National Public Radio).
- \$ the LUCEC traveling exhibit was updated to reflect changes in the program.
- \$ biological teaching supplies were purchased.
- \$ upgrade materials for the Panasonic video equipment were purchased.
- \$ magazines and other publications were made available for students.
- \$ student workers were hired to work on LUCEC projects.
- \$ new software was purchased to maintain efficient communication.
- \$ the IEC was launched with 39 graduating Fellows (for further information, see www.loyno.edu/lucec/fellows.html).

ENHANCEMENT OF CONTINUING/NEW AREAS OF RESEARCH/INQUIRY

The funds allowed the Chair to attend meetings, visit with colleagues, and gather extensive research materials for his communications research program.

The Chair is currently finishing a series of biological studies. The endowment funds allow him to hire student workers and to fund others to work with him researching new communications programs.

PUBLICATIONS: PEER REVIEWED

- Thomas, R.A. 2000. Where might we look for environmental heroes? *Women in Natural Resources* 21(3): 35-36.
- Thomas, R.A., M.A. Di-Bernado, and Heinz Grillitsch. 2001. *Philodryas pallidus* Werner, 1926: A synonym of the colubrid snake *Liopholidophis varius* (Fischer, 1884) from Madagascar. *J. Herpetology* 35(1): 120-122.
- Wickremaratne, Dharman, Darryl D=Monte, and Robert A. Thomas. 1998 (1999). Code of Ethics for World Environmental Journalists. In Wildred Ranasinghe (ed.), *Environmental journalism beyond 2000. To work together for a more sustainable future* (pp. 46-47). Colombo, Sri Lanka: Proc 6th World Congress Environmental Journalists.
- Thomas, R.A. and I. Ineich. 1999. The identity of the syntypes of *Drophylax freminvillei* Duméril, Bibron, and Duméril 1854, with comments on their locality data (Serpentes, Colubridae, Xenodontinae). *J. Herp.* 33(1): 153-156.
- Thomas, R.A., M.B. Harvey, and L. Dirksen. In press (2000). A reconsideration of the systematic status of *Philodryas aestivus levisquamus* Thomas 1998 (Serpentes, Colubridae, Xenodontinae). *Tulane Stud. Bot. Zool.*

PUBLICATIONS: NON-PEER REVIEWED

- Thomas, R. A. Submitted. Did He Mean to Say That? *Child Magazine and BH&G Raising Teens Magazine*
- Thomas, R.A. Submitted. Ecotourism Can Be a Good Thing. *E Magazine*.
- Thomas, R. A. 2000. Shh . . . be vevy vevy quiet . . . we=re shooting nutria. *On the Record, Maroon* 78(18): 9.
- Thomas, R.A. 2000. Initial IEC a Success. *EnviroDecisions* 3(3): 1-2.
- Thomas, R. A. and J. L.. Bast. In press. 14 Tips for Talking to Reporters. *EnviroDecisions* 3(4): 1-2.
- Thomas, R.A. 1999. What Shintech should have done. *EnviroDecisions* 3(2): 1-2.
- Thomas, R.A., and D. M. Baker, and K. Menard. 1999. Improving communications between a company and its neighbors: a logical process and model. *Proceedings of the National Petrochemical & Refiners Association Environmental Conference, 1999, ENV-99-173*, pp. 1-28.
- Thomas, R.A., 1999. Managed hunting protects a species. *Harvesting alligators. PERC (Political Economy Research Center) Reports, September 1999*, pp. 12-14.

PRESENTATIONS

- Shell Oil Offshore Diversity Program, *Environmentalists versus the Oil Industry: Communicating Through the Conflict*, May 6, 1999, New Orleans.

- Cypress Academy, *Reptiles of Coastal Louisiana*, May 6, 1999, Westwego.
- Wetlands Workshop, Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, *Westwego, the River, Geologic History, and our Culture*, June 5, 1999, Bayou Segnette State Park.
- Governor=s Environmental Education Task Force, *Loyola=s Center for Environmental Communications*, June 8, 1999, Baton Rouge.
- Rotary Youth Leadership Awards program, *Corporate Responsibility toward the Environment*, June 9, 1999, Loyola University.
- Fundação Luso-Americana Environmental Communications Workshop, *Communicating about Marine Ecosystems: How do We Tell the Story?* June 18, 1999, Lisboa, Portugal.
- Wetlands Workshop, Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, *The River, Geologic History, Wetlands, and our Culture*, June 26, 1999, Luling Library.
- Cypress Academy, *Coastal Erosion*, July 22, 1999, Westwego.
- Youth Environmental Summit, *Wetlands Environmental Issues in Louisiana*, July 23, 1999, Mandeville.
- Youth Environmental Summit, *Tropical/Temperate Ecosystems: Communicating the Connections*, July 23, 1999, Mandeville.
- Aurora Kiwanis Club, *Why Louisianians Must Focus on Coastal Eroision: The Economic Connection*, July 29, 1999, Algiers.
- Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (Public Relations Division and Science Communications Interest Group), *Nutritious Nutria? Evaluating and Promoting Food Safety. Part 1*, Panelist/speaker, August 5, 1999, New Orleans.
- Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (Science Communication Interest Group and Commission on the Status of Women), *Nutritious Nutria? Evaluating and Promoting Food Safety. Part 2*, Panel Moderator/speaker, August 5, 1999, New Orleans.
- Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (Visual Communication Division and Science Communication Interest Group), *Using Maps to Define Environmental Issues: Louisiana as a Case Study*, Speaker, August 6, 1999, New Orleans.
- Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (Science Communication Interest Group); *Bugs, Gators, and Nutria: A Field Trip to Bayou Sauvage National Refuge*, Session Leader, August 7, 1999, New Orleans.
- Thomas, R. A., K. Menard, and D. M. Baker. 1999. *Improving communications between a company and its neighbors: a logical process and model*. Dallas, TX: Proceedings of the National Petrochemical & Refiners Association Environmental Conference, 1999.
- Board, New Orleans/River Region Chamber of Commerce, *The Emerging Environmental Paradigm in Business*, October 12, 1999.
- Texas Herpetological Society, A symposium honoring Dr. James R. Dixon, *Philodryas Revisited and Paying Tribute to Dr. James R. Dixon*, October 23, 1999.
- National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology meeting, *Improving communications between a company and its neighbors: a logical process and model*. New Orleans, November 4, 1999.

Louisiana Herpetological Research Group Annual Meeting, *Research Overview*, November 12, 1999

Louisiana Economic Development Executive=s Association Annual Meeting, LaPlace, *Coming to Grips with Environmental Justice*, December 2, 1999.

Louisiana Amphibian Monitoring Program, Boutte LaRose, *Overview of the program*, December 11, 1999.

Hosted Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana board meeting, January 22, 2000. Louisiana Academy of Sciences, luncheon keynote, Shreveport, *Communicating about the Environment*, February 4, 2000.

Professor Martin=s Communications class, Loyola, The LUCEC, February 7, 2000.

LUCEC, training regarding the sea turtle monitoring program, February 7, 2000.

National Association of Interpreters, Duluth, MN, *Ethics and Credibility Among Environmental Educators and Interpreters: Improving the Quality of the Profession*, March 20, 2000.

Father James Carter=s class, Loyola, *Organic Evolution*, March 30, 2000.

Leadership Louisiana, Council for a Better Louisiana, Cocodrie (LUMCON), *Louisiana=s Eroding Coast: How Do we Save the Resources?*, April 28, 2000.

Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, Thibodaux, master of ceremonies for annual awards banquet, April 28, 2000.

MENTORING OF STUDENTS

The Chair works with many students in mentoring various aspects of their professional development. They use LUCEC as a source of information and resources, and he mentors students as they pursue their professions, theses in the honors and biology programs, and independent studies projects.

TEACHING ENHANCEMENT

LIST OF COURSES TAUGHT

CMMN A480. Introduction to Environmental Communications. 3 credits. Fall 1999.

CMMN A480. Covering the Environmental Beat. 3 credits. Spring 1999, 2000.

CMMN A499. Special projects. 3 credits (several students.) Fall 1999, Spring 2000.

BIOL A118. Tropical Ecology. 3 credits. Spring 1999.

BIOL A480. Herpetology. 4 credits. Spring 2000.

BIOL A499. Research. 3 credits. Summer and Fall 1999, Spring 2000.

HONORS THESIS ADVISOR:

Elizabeth Moore: The Common Uses of Medicinal Plants in the Maya Village of San Miguel, Belize.

Laura Toups: Geographic Variation in *Manolepis putnami* and its possible Relationship to the Hispaniolan Snake *Hypsirhynchus ferox* (Serpentes, Colubridae, Xenodontinae).

OTHER: See activities listed under AMentoring of Students.@

CURRICULUM INNOVATION/DEVELOPMENT

The following courses (unique to the state) have been formally approved by the Department of Communications and the university:

CMMN A370. Environmental Communications. 3 credits. Taught each Fall.

CMMN A 371. The Environmental Beat. 3 credits. Taught each spring.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

During the past year, the Chair has attended a number of training programs regarding the use of computers, and he has attended professional meetings. Additionally, he visits with colleagues and hosts visitors in his profession.

SEEKING EXTERNAL FUNDING

Koch Industries, \$130,000 to develop and support an Institute of Environmental Communications. Funded.

Koch Industries, \$95,000 to continue support of the Institute of Environmental Communications. Pending.

Greater New Orleans Foundation, \$30,000 to develop and implement two environmental journalism workshops: Coastal Erosion and Related Environmental Issues. Fall 2000. National audience. Oil & Gas and the Environment. Spring 2001. State audience.

ENHANCEMENT OF PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT QUALITY/REPUTATION

As LUCEC develops, its reputation is building. The department and university are becoming widely known as a place where people can discuss environmental issues in a constructive atmosphere.

UNITING UNIVERSITY, COMMUNITY, AND BUSINESS/INDUSTRY

The principal portion of LUCEC that answers this need is the Institute for Environmental Communication (IEC). IEC is held each fall semester. Its purpose is to bring together environmental stakeholders and to stimulate conversations among them. IEC participation has a balance of people from business/industry, the environmental community, government, the media,

and the scientific arena. This activity, taking place at the university, creates opportunities that do not exist elsewhere.

SERVICE TO COMMUNITY

Member, Governor=s Environmental Task Force
Member, Greater New Orleans Foundation Environmental Committee
Board, Council for a Better Louisiana
Member, Archdiocesan Community Appeal, Fund Raising Committee
Member, Shell Oil Bayou Trepagnier Task Force
Member, Rotary Club of Metairie Sunrise
Member, Awards Committee, Louisiana Nature Conservancy
Board, Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
Board, Environmental Research Consortium of Louisiana
Board, Asa Wright Nature Centre, Arima, Trinidad
Member, Lazarus Project, Annual Fund Raising Dinner
Policy Advisory Board, Minerals and Management Services, US Department of Energy
Board, Save Our lake Endowment
Member, Senator Mary Landrieu=s Outer Continental Shelf Technical Task Force
Board, Southern Animal Foundation
Administrative Council (=Board), International Federation of Environmental Journalists,
1997-2000
Member, Men=s Committee, Jefferson Parish Parkway Promenade 2000

ENHANCEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY MISSION

In the Ignatian tradition, Loyola University endeavors to develop students into a new generation of leaders who possess a love for truth, the critical intelligence to pursue it, and the eloquence to articulate it. The goal of a Loyola education is not mere technical competence but wisdom and social responsibility.

The following are elements of the university=s mission and goals which have been addressed by the Chair=s activities discussed in the report:

- \$ the discovery and promulgation of truth (the program=s theme)
- \$ thinking critically
- \$ educate students to meet change with equanimity, good judgement, and constructive leadership
- \$ defining Loyola=s place in the community in the future
- \$ solving the problems of American society today
- \$ providing opportunities for the Black community (IEC and Common Sense Initiative)
- \$ creation of institutes (LUCEC and IEC)
- \$ development of programs that serve high school students and teachers, the educationally

- and economically disadvantaged, etc.
- \$ being part of a community of scholars
- \$ development of programs that cross disciplines (virtually all)
- \$ educate students about the problems of society and make them aware of their ability to solve them
- \$ continue Loyola=s strength in communications (add a new dimension)
- \$ help build a strong student body through recruitment and retention (work closely with admissions)
- \$ maintain close professor-student contact
- \$ active independent study offering for students
- \$ mentoring of students and career counseling (many from on- and off-campus)
- \$ providing ample opportunities for students to continue to learn off-campus (projects)
- \$ offering programs that appeal to older students
- \$ increase the ties between Loyola and other universities (several programs and adjunct positions)
- \$ offer balance among university teaching, research, and community service
- \$ faculty should have avid professional interests that contribute to the vitality of work in the classroom
- \$ contribute to the common curriculum (2 courses)
- \$ strengthen the written and verbal abilities of students (required in all courses and projects)
- \$ use of technical approaches to education and related activities
- \$ the inculcation of scientific literacy
- \$ production of leaders in business administration (now developing a joint program involving sustainable development)
- \$ present ethics, professional responsibility, and humanistic concerns in the discipline (a strong dose in each course and project)
- \$ strong emphasis on social justice

ORGANIZE EVENTS AND LECTURES BY AUTHORITIES IN THE FIELD

Hosted visits by the following environmental journalists, all of whom gave presentations to classes and other groups on the Loyola campus: Inger Marit Kolstadbråten and Aaslaug Undheim, radio and TV environmental journalists for Norsk Rikskringkasting (Norwegian Broadcast Company); Michael Anane, founder of the Center for environmental Journalism and the League of Environmental Journalists of Accra, and environmental journalist for the newspaper The Triumph in Ghana; and Darryl D=Monte, founding President and present vice president of the International Federation of Environmental Journalists, Chairperson of the Forum of Environmental Journalists of India, freelance journalist, columnist in some eight newspapers in India and South & West Asia, and author of a book on the redevelopment of Mumbia=s cotton mill land.

Co-hosted, with the College of Business Administration, Fred Smith, CEO of Competitive Enterprises Institute, who spoke on marketing concepts for environmental advantages within business.

SCHOLARLY/CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

This is clearly shown by the multitude of projects defined herein and planned by LUCEC.

COLLABORATIONS WITH OTHER SCHOLARS/PROGRAMS

Loyola Marketing Committee

Loyola Campus Climate Committee

Developing an environmental communications conference with the Louisiana Environmental Professionals Association

Working with Mark Schleifstein, Times-Picayune, to host the Society of Environmental Journalists annual meeting, 2002.

Serve on the Loyola Environmental Studies Faculty Videoing Jefferson Parish=s Christmas Tree/wetlands project (with Jefferson Parish Environmental Departmental Staff)

Serving on LA Department of Wildlife & Fisheries= Reptile and Amphibian Task Force

Collaborating with National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration monitoring sea turtle strandings along the Louisiana coast.

Meeting with the Chamber of Commerce regarding their interest in opening a dialogue with the local environmental community.

Attending community meetings in Norco, LA, which are resolving environmental justice issues.

Helping the Audubon Institute with their development of a recycling program.

Speaking to Silver Scribe competition, chaired by Drs. Larry Lorenz and Leslie Parr.

Field producer and talent in two Discovery Channel films on venomous snakes.

Field producer and interviewee for a National Geographic Explorer segment on Nutria.

Working with Dr. Patricia Dorn, Department of Biological Sciences, on her Chagas Disease project.

Working with Faculty in the College of Business regarding sustainable planning.

Working with Shell Oil Refinery (Norco) and local environmental interests to reach an equitable decision on the fate of Bayou Trepagnier. I serve as the go-between.

Worked with Koch Pipeline Company in their quest to achieve cutting-edge techniques in placing a pipeline across Lake Pontchartrain.

Leadership role in the formation of the J. Bennett Johnson Science Research Foundation, a concept I developed in 1993 that is coming to fruition. Wrote the early drafts of By-laws and Articles of Incorporations. Worked with the attorneys and CPAs during the submittal of documents

Appointed to the Houston Toad (endangered species) Recovery Team by the Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Consultant, Russell Sage Foundation, New York. Advise them on biological management of their holdings in Louisiana.

Placed Cypress Academy: Natural History Guide, online.

Member of a team (based with Eskew+, and architectural firm) developing a master plan for the Pine Jog Environmental Center, West Palm Beach, FL.

ENHANCE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT OF PROFESSOR

The Chair funds provide a base-line of support for the Chair=s work and allow time and necessary resources for basic programs and the ability to seek additional support.

ENHANCE RESEARCH EFFORTS

As described in several places above, the funds allow the Chair to fund basic research needs and to travel to important meetings and resource locations.

PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CONFERENCES

The Chair participates annually in the meetings and activities of the Society for Environmental Journalism and the International Federation of Environmental Journalists. Other meetings that are relevant are attended when possible.

LEADERSHIP TO COLLEGE AND DIVISION

The Chair makes the resources of LUCEC available to colleagues throughout the university. He is gradually including more departments in LUCEC activities.

FUNDING OF TRAVEL

The Chair fund has allowed the Chair to travel to professional meetings, to continue the development of a tropical communications program, and to visit colleagues around the country. He has also used funds to pay for travel to Loyola University for international environmental journalists.

EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION

LUCEC has up-to-date computers with appropriate software, printers, scanners, and projectors for the present program. LUCEC is linked well with peer centers.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

None this year.

VITA

See attached.