



HYDRA

Civic Engagement At and Beyond Southwestern University



p2 LEEDing by Example:
Interview with Bob Mathis

p6 Respecting the Workforce

p4 Youth Say Y.E.S. to a Better
Future

p7 The Community Speaks:
Thoughts on Georgetown

p8 Local Issues

Hydra is published bimonthly by
the Office of Civic Engagement at
Southwestern University,
1001 E. University Avenue,
Georgetown, TX 78626
512.863.1215

Available online at
<http://southwestern.edu/academic/exp/hydra.html>

NOVEMBER 2008

LEEDing By Example

Interview of Bob Mathis by Jessica Hager

Southwestern University is in the process of constructing a new Admissions Center to better serve prospective students, and the University's admissions needs as a whole. To develop a better understanding of "why now" and to investigate the "LEED" [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design] certification under which this building is being constructed, I sat down with Bob Mathis, Associate Vice President for Facilities and Campus Services at Southwestern.

J: What are your goals surrounding "green" construction at Southwestern?

B: The stated goals would be to build all future buildings to green standards and to LEED certify them where we can. At some point in time [we want to] officially adopt the LEED certification program; there is nothing currently formally approved, but everything we are doing is heading in that direction.

J: Did efforts to build following LEED certification standards come as an effect of the Talloires Declaration (a treaty that formally commits Southwestern to a more sustainable, or "green" way of doing things)?

B: Talloires did not have a direct impact on construction designs. That had already started years ago when we built the Mundy Building. The campus in a way has always been committed to



Future Wilhelmina Cullen Admissions Center

sustainability in an indirect way. The materials that we use are locally quarried; we've always used limestone that's quarried around the area here. We've always designed landscapes that have included (if not all) native plants. We adopted years ago the use of recycled carpet or recyclable carpet. It's just that now we are following a formal process to certify them and to measure it.

J: What does this measurement look like?

B: It is LEED certification. Within that [certification], there are other measuring sticks – how efficient is your goal, the indoor air quality – those are all factors.

J: As far as using building materials are there a lot of local business Southwestern works with?

B: For LEED purposes ["local"] is a 500 mile radius. For us, what we find is that [materials are bought] in Austin and Williamson County; those are the business that we seem to attract.

J: Does Southwestern lose money for trying to follow the LEED standards?

B: We asked the contractors what their piece of the pie would be to LEED certify this. That came back at about \$80K out of an \$11M project. Now, you do have some design pieces, but you're looking at about \$300K above and beyond what we would normally pay to LEED certify the building. Are there other costs in there? Yea, there are, but we've slowly and progressively made LEED the standard, so it is hard to say if this building is costing more than the ones before.

J: Has Southwestern seen any downfalls for following LEED standards?

B: The only downfall if you wanted, there is a lot of paperwork for everybody – for the University, for the architect, for the contractor, for the engineer. But you get certified through the paperwork and documentation.

J: Are other Universities on a similar path as far as certification goes?

B: Within the state of Texas, there are few in

number. Outside of the state of Texas, if you go to the east coast you will probably find more colleges and Universities that embrace this. You could go to the USGBC site [U.S. Green Building Council www.usgbc.org] and they have a list of projects on there by state.

J: Why do you think that there are such small numbers following LEED, particularly among small liberal arts colleges?

B: Well, it depends on what your standards of construction are. If your standards are [low] then there is a cost to it, but we were already [close to standards]. So I guess one [reason] would be the cost. The other would be the paperwork and documentation. I think a lot of it has to come back to the commitment of the administration.

J: Now as far as Southwestern deciding to actually work towards LEED [as opposed to just "green building"] and having that initiative, did that come from students, faculty, staff, and/or administration?

B: I really believe this - a lot of the initiative, the impetus for this came from students, and we have to go back 10 years. They started by saying, 'we want low flow shower heads'. It's slowly built, though we've had a foundation to work off of. A lot of it that turned the tide was student opinion and recognition of the administration that this was not only important to the students of today, but the students of tomorrow. I really do think that they [students] contributed a lot, I really do.

J: If you were to tell someone about the three main components you assess when building for LEED certification, what would they be?

B: The biggest design issue is finding a balance between outdoor light and [indoor] lighting for the best solution. The others which you see may not be as noticeable, like the types of wood you use, the types of finishes you use. One is recycled and recyclable verses something that's not. The wood may look the same, but where it was harvested and how it was harvested [are different]. There is an organization that certifies wood, and the

architect has to check that. Everything that goes into a building is checked by the architect or the engineer. In this case you have another layer to check for LEED.

J: Was the new Admission Center on one of Southwestern's original phases of construction?

B: No, but the Cullen Foundation is funding it as well as the renovation of the Cullen Building. The reason for building it was that [President Schrum] felt that there needed to be a center for admissions. The way that it helps is that with the Cullen Building it gives us a little more latitude for the final design and how much space is available for everyone else. When you renovate Cullen you will lose space to larger mechanical systems, larger bathrooms, and you will also design spaces that are more appropriately sized for people. Our goal at Cullen is to keep it a mixed-use building. It is one of the more unique administrative/classroom buildings in the nation, and what is nice about it is that when visitors do come they see students, they see administration – I think it works.

J: Do you think that since perspective students now won't go through Cullen, that they may lose some of the history of Southwestern?

B: No, I don't think so because basically they'll still go on the tour. One of the possibilities is to take a small section where Admissions was and turn that into a historical museum – not in the classic term, but as an interactive space.

In closing, Bob mentioned all are welcome the third Monday of each month to the Talloires Committee for open dialogue, not only about LEED but also the larger umbrella of environmental issues at Southwestern. You can contact him at bmathis@southwestern.edu. On February 21, 2009, all are invited to the Grand Opening of Wilhelmina Cullen Admission Center. Part of being LEED certified is to include an education component, so stayed tuned to the possibility of a sustainability tour through campus.

Youth Environmental Summit

By Kimberly Griffin '10

On Saturday, November 15, Southwestern University will host the 2nd Annual Youth Environmental Summit on our campus. All high school aged students from Central Texas who are hoping to further their knowledge of environmental issues are invited to attend. At last year's summit in March 2008, about 40 students gave up their Saturday to learn about contemporary environmental issues and how they can affect positive change in their communities and high schools. Participants attended sessions where Southwestern faculty and staff spoke about environmental issues from a variety of perspectives, including history, economics, anthropology, religion, and civic engagement. The students were also visited by Trevor Lovell and Anna Pierce, student organizers from the University of Texas, who spoke about ReEnergize Texas, a state-wide coalition of high school and college students working to fight climate change.

The participants in the first Youth Environmental Summit appreciated the opportunity to learn about something that was not taught in their traditional classes. One student even said that she "learned more in that day than in a week at school." It is evident that those who attend represent the real commitment to environmental activism that many hold in their younger generation. At the inaugural summit, some students even woke up at 6:00 A.M. to travel from as far away as Shertz (near San Antonio). Clearly, concern for the environment is more than just a fad – I have never heard of anyone giving up their entire Saturday for a pair of bell-bottom jeans or a sequined purse!

Furthermore, student's interest in activism did not end after the closing reception that day. Two high school participants continued their involvement in the environmental movement by attending SPROG, eight days of intense activist trainings held by the Sierra Student Coalition, the student branch of the Sierra Club. Other participants were able to take their new knowledge into their lives and schools through other opportunities.

The idea for a conference on environmental issues evolved from discussions between Georgetown High School students and those at Southwestern. It became apparent that a gathering focused around such important issues would be the perfect opportunity to share Southwestern's institutional resources with the community and high school students across Central Texas. Each year the Summit is organized by a team of Southwestern faculty, staff, and students. Participants in the upcoming November summit will receive the knowledge and the skills needed to become activists for change. We are also hoping to dispel the myth that you need to be a scientist to understand environmental issues or contribute to the environmental movement. Solutions to climate change and other environmental problems must come from a variety of perspectives, which is why this year we will continue the tradition of hosting speakers from a diverse range of disciplines including religion, politics, and student involvement.

Another essential component to this one-day event is that all participants have the opportunity to meet other environmental activists in high school and talk about their experiences with fighting for changes on their campuses. One hope is that this dialogue will continue and that a high school environmental network will develop in order to support the activists in their work.

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 4

The Youth Environmental Summit honors the commitment that Southwestern made when President Schrum signed the Talloires Declaration in the spring of 2007. Two points of the Declaration that are specifically addressed are the commitments to “foster environmental literacy for all” and to “enhance the capacity of primary and secondary schools.”

The summit is open to the entire Southwestern campus and high school aged youth. There will be no cost if you register in advance! For more information about the summit, please visit the website at www.southwestern.edu/enviro_summit or contact Kimberly Griffin at griffink@southwestern.edu. For more information on the Talloires Declaration, visit www.ulsf.org/programs_talloires.html.

Kid's - R - SMArT

Does scientific inquiry have a place outside of school? Of course! Science takes place all around us every second of the day, and should be explored well beyond the walls of a lab. SMArT, an afterschool enrichment program for elementary school students, works to fuse mentoring and question-based inquiry to spark and expand the interests of student's imaginations. Yale undergraduate, Rowan Lockwood started SMArTeams in 1991, and it came to Southwestern University through Southwestern Biology professor, Dr. Romi Burks. Dr. Burks served as a co-founder and Volunteer Coordinator for the program at Loyola University Chicago from 1992-1995 and is now coordinating in partnership with the Office of Civic Engagement on the 5 semester of SMArT with Southwestern undergraduates.

Every Monday for 9 weeks in the Fall, 12 Cooper Elementary School students have met with their Southwestern student partners to explore their projects of scientific inquiry with the hope of discovering something new in the world of science. SMArTeams have the flexibility and resources to investigate whatever inspires them about science, which often may not be available to them in a classroom setting. Observation, investigation, experimentation and reflection are all used by students to help them learn and understand the



Two SMArTeams work on their projects prior to preparing their presentations for the public.

complexity of what it means to come to a scientific conclusion. Each pair (SU and elementary student) also works to see that through planning and commitment they can achieve their goals and have a finished product. Learning can not only be fun, but rewarding as well! At the end of the program, the Georgetown and Southwestern community are invited to attend the pair's Achievement Party, where projects will be on display. SMArTeams would love to have your attendance at their party this year!

DATE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14TH

TIME: 5-6PM

LOCATION: BISHOP'S LOUNGE, SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

CONTACT: JESSICA HAGER AT 512.863.1215

SNACKS AND REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED

Respecting Our Workforce

by Anonymous Notre Dame Student (www.campusactivism.org)

Everyday, we walk into stores, restaurants, and even our dining halls, going about our business with our friends. We live life without any realization of the people behind the scenes who serve us. We have been raised and served all of our lives by people: from educators to doctors to cooks; we have been raised in communities, not in isolation. We have a responsibility, whether we acknowledge it or not, to recognize our role in the community, in its development, and in loving our neighbors. Yet, we have been trained not to love our neighbor and not to challenge the status quo, but instead to be individuals in a society where only the strong survive. The people serving us are part of a structure in which it is difficult, if not impossible, to make a comfortable life as a person holding a blue-collar job. Born with advantages or disadvantages (politically, economically, or racially), as humans we are called to recognize people as people, and not as employees, cooks, servants, or means to a profit. We have become part of a vicious system in which individuals neglect those who serve them, creating a stigma such that their value and worth is less than ours.

We are not meant to live life in such a way that we let people suffer because of systematic or structural problems. However, our system is deeply rooted in the idea that people are nothing more than a means to an end, cogs in the profit-making machine. Instead of debating and analyzing our current system, we blow our structural problems away with a simple “such is life” and go on overwhelmed, never pondering the possibility of social change.

Consider our economy. The economic disparity between the rich and the poor is as large as it has been in decades. Research done by the Economic Policy Institute indicates that in 2000, 25 percent of all who worked earn less than poverty wages (this figure takes into account different family sizes). The victims of our system are not alone in their struggles, and they are becoming more numerous as this segment of the workforce grows. Our poor and working class neighbors struggle to make ends meet, while the typical Notre Dame student lives her or his life in comfort. Those that serve us have no voice because our economy and politics are dominated by money—something that the average American generally lacks.

For real, lasting structural change, we must organize and show our support for and solidarity with those that are struggling everywhere, even here on campus. When we act as individuals, we have little impact on the system. When we organize, we have a new power that can challenge the dominating structures that keep the system in place. When organized, we can affect positive change in our communities by creating a new power framework—one that puts value and worth in people, not in private capital.

As impossible or idealistic as this may seem, community and worker organizations have created some of the most powerful changes in our system. The 40-hour workweek, worker compensation and benefits, Civil Rights, the 8-hour work day, rights for disabled people, and more have all come about as a result of organizing. What we often take for granted (or are taught that a good president initiated) came about when people organized and challenged our government and structure.

Students have led the charge for social and structural change for many years. For example, students at Harvard were a crucial element in fighting for a Living Wage for their campus workers. Students all across the country put pressure on New Era Cap Company to recognize a union contract and not move a factory in search of cheaper labor.

Continued on page 8

The Community Speaks on Georgetown

Thoughts By Community Members

"As a career educator I am most impressed with the community support system for children and youth in Georgetown. While the schools are the primary "centerpiece" for serving educational needs, organizations such as Partners in Education and The Georgetown Project are evidence that the business and professional leaders recognize the value of working together to enhance the success for all. Our mutual efforts epitomize the African proverb that it takes a village to raise a child. Georgetown is indeed a place in which 'every kid can be a winner'."

Gene Davenport, Ed.D., Executive Director, The Georgetown Project

"As much as I love Southwestern, there have been several instances when I wished I was a UT or St. Edward's student because I prefer Austin. Most of the Georgetown residents I've met are nice enough, but Georgetown does not have enough outlets for young adults in their spare time, including college students. However, I find the willingness of the community to get together and discuss issues, such as homeless youth or a lack of other services, to be inspiring."

Nicole Powell, SU '09

"Before I was thinking of moving to Georgetown in 1993, I wanted to see what the people were like. I went downtown and talked to shop owners and people on the street, and was so impressed with the warmth everyone showed. Even though Georgetown has grown considerably since then, the people still have that warm, friendly small-town attitude. I now live and work in Georgetown."

Mary Sharon White, Community Member

"Nice Texas town that is growing, but still maintains charm and a sense of community. Quaint village with lovely homes. Excellent public school district and local University. BUT... the houses in my price range are all in Sun City, yet I'm not old enough to live there! Houses in the village are too expensive. Native Texans are a rare find in Georgetown and therefore there's very little Texas culture here. One must drive to Austin for live music or to enjoy Texas culture. Boring town. Friendly to pedestrians in the village of Georgetown; other areas don't have adequate sidewalks or trails. Williams Drive is very unpleasant to drive."

Kelly Lessard, Community Member since '07 from Rochester, NY

"Georgetown is the county seat of Williamson County, a place that seems to be largely populated with racists and homophobes. Its police force at best has only a cursory understanding of law, and at worst willfully ignores it and abuses their power. As long as this community remains a haven for retirees, the political landscape of Georgetown will be characterized by everyone desperately holding on to the status quo to the detriment of everyone else. When I graduate I will never even think about coming back, and raise my glass in hope that this community never leaves, just so for the rest of my life I will know, without a doubt, one place to avoid."

Anonymous SU '09

"Georgetown is an unusual community, with a high proportion of competent and caring citizens. Fortunately their interests are wide-ranging, from education and health care to city planning and recreational development. The next few years will be interesting as continued growth challenges the small town model that has worked well to date. Southwestern has played a large part in making Georgetown what it is today, and the contributions of our students, faculty and staff can be pivotal in meeting the complex political, social, and environmental issues that are right down the road. Our students in particular have a lot to offer as we try to construct a community that can 'think globally and act locally'."

Larkin Tom, SU Staff

Continued from page 6

Students were also a vital element in the struggle for Civil Rights. Recently, here at Notre Dame, students were a fundamental aspect in convincing the administration to join the Workers' Rights Consortium.

When workers and students organize, we are no longer powerless against a system that wants us to believe "life's a bitch." Instead, we force the structure to change so that the economy serves people, and not the other way around. As individuals, it becomes easy to believe that we are the only ones struggling or to believe that struggling is just a part of life. Life is not meant to be a struggle; it is about enjoying the world, life, and the gifts that God has given us. When our economic and political structure causes stress, pain, and depression, it robs people of the gift of life. As long as there are poor among us, we must always be willing to work for social justice. We need to recognize our solidarity with others and realize that we have a responsibility to people everywhere and to the communities to which we belong.

On February 7, 2009, Southwestern will host its 2nd Annual Arts Festival. Delta Omicron, the professional music fraternity on campus, is working with SU Art Association, Mask and Wig, Dr. Michael Cooper's Paideia cohort, Diversity Enrichment Committee, SEAK, and others to celebrate the arts with the SU and Georgetown community. The Festival is FREE and open to people of all ages. Events include an instrument petting zoo, art exhibition, arts and crafts, and jazz band performance. For more information please contact Natalie Moore at mooren@southwestern.edu.

The Perfect Bite Just a Hop Away

LOCAL DINING HOT SPOTS

Nonna's

*Mediterranean fusion made from scratch
at the corner of 8th and Church St. (off Town Square)

Down The Alley Bistro

*great lounge to study and snack
118 W 8th (Town Square)

Cianfrani

*our local coffee dive
715 S Main (Town Square)

Laurie's Too

*open M-Sat 11-3pm; home cooking better than home
612 Main St (off Town Square)

Red Poppy Coffee Co.

*more precious coffee space
connected to Georgetown Library (off Town Square)

The County Seat

*\$0.99 yummy ice cream weekdays from 3-5pm
119 W 7th (Town Square)

The Monument Cafe

*amazing biscuits and local food, with daily specials
500 S. Austin (NOW, just off Town Square)

Visit www.frugalfester.com for the best meal deals around! Site design and creation by Alumnus Mitch Barnett '07.

The Office of Civic Engagement collaborates with students, faculty, and the greater community to move beyond traditional practices of volunteerism, service, activism, and community-based learning. We promote passion and action that strengthens and ameliorates one's community.

Hydra is assembled and published by the Office of Civic Engagement. The views and opinions expressed here are not necessarily held by the office. To voice concerns, please contact Suzy Pukys at pukyss@southwestern.edu or at 863.1987. To submit articles, photographs, art, volunteer opportunities, or other relevant material, please contact Jessica Hager at hagerj@southwestern.edu or at 863.1215. All are welcome!