

Sacred Heart University

From the Selected Works of Kwamie Dunbar

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Faculty Share Views on Importance of Creative Thinking in the Workplace

Kwamie Dunbar



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From left are Professors June-Ann Greeley, Mary Treschitta, Jim Castonguay, Anca Micu and Kwamie Dunbar.

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University Commons was filled Wednesday with students eager to gain insights from “Creativity In The Workplace: Creative & Innovative Thinking from the Classroom to the Boardroom.” The program was presented by SHU faculty who emphasized the importance of creative and innovative thinking abilities that are developed through the university’s liberal arts programs and are key to workplace success. The talk was part of SHU’s Human Journey Colloquia Series and co-sponsored by the Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County. Mary Lou DeRosa, SHU’s vice provost for Special Academic Programs, introduced the panel, which included five faculty members from various disciplines within the university.

June-Ann Greeley, associate professor of theology & religious studies, expressed the idea that liberal arts are fundamental to an individual’s growth, providing such skills as critical inquiry and reflection, challenging assumptions and communal engagement, leading to a broader understanding of the human condition, maturation of communication and argumentation abilities and a personal autonomy balanced by a consciousness of “the other.” She cited Apple’s Steve Jobs who mused, “For technology to be truly brilliant, it must be coupled with artistry.”

Jim Castonguay, professor and director of the master’s in communication program, said, “A liberal arts education prepares students for entry-level jobs and to become lifelong learners and leaders of the future” and noted that a majority of employers endorse a liberal arts education. He added that liberal arts supports media literacy, including the ability to access, analyze and communicate information of all kinds.

Mary Treschitta, associate professor of art & design, teaches problem solving in creative ways and shared that people in the workplace must have the ability and comfort level to make and solve mistakes as a path to innovative solutions. She noted that Google enables its employees to take 20 percent of their time during work hours to percolate ideas, an approach that has become some of the company’s most productive time.

Offering a financial view, Kwamie Dunbar, assistant dean of the John F. Welch College of Business and assistant finance professor, noted that for business school majors, critical thinking is needed to analyze numbers, work with business models and evaluate risks, and that employers today expect employees to attempt to solve problems independently and present thought-out strategies.

Finally, Anca Micu, associate dean of the John F. Welch College of Business and associate professor of marketing & sport management, weighed in. “It’s important for employees to be analytic creatives, to bring both left and right brain together to produce inspired and measurably effective programs,” she said.