

# CARDINAL COURIER

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edition



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Jay takes you on his dream date on the Off the Wall page. Story on page 9



Current and future renovations for the Fisher campus. Story on pages 6-7

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There were smiles and handshakes after the "Show Me the Money" learning community's "Women in Sports" forum on Monday, September 23.

## First year success

MANAGING EDITOR  
ALEXIS SPECK

When students first enter St. John Fisher as freshman a familiar question floating through the halls is, "What learning community are you in?" It's an icebreaker, a commonality and that is the purpose.

Earlier this year, St. John Fisher was a semi-finalist in the "Institutions of Excellence in the First College Year." The Policy Center on the First Year of College, started a national study that looked at various first year programs. The organization asked for nominations early in 2002 and received 130 applicants. St. John Fisher was placed as a semi-finalist in the four-year colleges and universities with 2,000-5,000 students division, where only eleven programs were chosen.

In 1996, the number of entering freshman was at a low, as well as student retention. Dr. David Arnold, former provost, used this time to create the First-Year Learning Communities Program. "I was a teacher in the first-year of the learning community," said

Dr. Doug Howard, Associate Provost and Dean of first-year students, "I did not want to see the program go belly up, so I called each freshman that had not registered. We filled the program."

After a very successful pilot program, the learning communities became a requirement for all incoming freshman in 1997.

"The learning communities help provide a social connection," said Howard, "The students have such a social energy and we try to capture that energy for learning."

Currently, there are 16 different learning communities offered to freshmen. The communities are made up of 24 classes that have a central theme. Included in the cluster of classes is a college writing course or an equivalent course that is designed to improve students' writing ability and critical thinking skills.

Additionally, all first-year students are required to meet once a week with their freshman seminar. In this session discussions are held involving issues and concerns about the transition into college. The freshman seminar instructors also serve as the academic advisors

for the students' first year.

"We try to encourage intellectual development and teach students that knowledge is constructed," said Howard.

A few of the communities offered this year are, 'Show Me the Money!' Sports; Economics and Society; Politics and You; Ya Know What I'm Sayin? Expressing Ourselves; Understanding Others; Lookin' To Get Paid' Work in America and Leadership From Within.

"It is easy for you to get to know people in your learning communities, which makes you feel comfortable in class," said Danielle Brown, freshman.

According to Howard, through a survey given to all freshmen at the completion of their learning communities, between 80 to 90 percent of students feel that the communities have helped them make friends. Also, between 50 and 60 percent said that it helped them fit in on campus. As for a good experience, 70-80 percent of students said it was. The results from this survey were compiled between 1998-2001.

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## Faculty votes to allow schools

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
KARA RACE

Last Tuesday, the faculty assembly voted to allow academic departments of St. John Fisher College to form schools.

In a vote of 66 to 13, with one abstention, the "School of Business," which will combine the management/marketing and accounting/finance departments, received the faculty's approval to move forward with their plans.

"The vote allows for the formation of schools. It does not create them," said Dr. Jason Berman, head of the Management Department.

The business departments are now looking to petition the Board of Trustees asking for permission to go ahead and form a school.

"We hope to sometime during the fall announce the School of Business," said Berman.

By becoming a school as opposed to just a department, the faculty will have greater self-government over their curriculum.

"You have a marvelous opportunity to continually improve your own program and in so doing continually improve the college," said Berman.

Berman said that the departments have been "actively thinking about [the proposal] for two to three years."

The idea wasn't proposed, however, until last May when Berman approached the faculty counsel to discuss a proposal.

After meeting with the counsel twice in May to discuss their problems, questions, and concerns with the proposal, they decided to call a special meeting of the faculty assembly in which to discuss this proposal. That meeting took place on Sept. 10 while the decision wasn't made until two weeks later on Sept. 24.

"I am very gratified that the vote went as it did," said Berman.

"It is my most profound hope that we will be able to look back and say this was a day that wound up benefiting the entire Fisher community."

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## Diversity meets in the Circle of Friends

STAFF WRITER  
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Persevering through the terrible weather, attendees of the Circle of Friends event gathered for a night of reflection, to promote diversity and encourage togetherness now and in the future on Friday.

The Circle of Friends event sponsored by the St. John Fisher College Alumni of Color Committee (AOC), the Offices of Multicultural Affairs/Diversity Programs, Admissions, Alumni Affairs, Student Life and the Higher Education Opportunity Program brought together students, faculty and alumni; about 70 people were in attendance.

The event included a song selection by the Gospel Choir, a special recognition by President Katherine Keough, a certificate presented to William Cruz from TCB Consult-

ing for being a presenter at the Communicating Across Cultures workshop and a raffle. A few alumni also had the opportunity to speak to the audience.

There was also a presentation of student organizations and special programs available at the College. The Girl Scouts of America and the mentoring group CONNECT were among some of the groups with tables at the event.

"This is the fourth year of Circle of Friends and the numbers keep growing," said Courtnee Biscardi, secretary of AOC. "It is wonderful to see students, faculty and alumni together in one place for a common cause."

"This is nice," said Delores Banks, class of 1973. "We weren't always comfortable [on this campus] and they [the men] were not happy about women attending."

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Fisher's Gospel Choir contributes to the Circle of Friends reception on Friday, September 27 at the Golisano Gateway.