

**SEAVER COLLEGE
FACULTY ANNUAL REVIEW/EVALUATION FORM
2015-2016**

Date: 4.29.16

Name of Candidate: Don Thompson

Signature: Don Thompson

The purpose of this form is to promote communication between the faculty member and chairperson related to the faculty member's professional development. The form has been developed to guide you in reflecting on your accomplishments, goals, and areas of future development in teaching, research, and service. While the review form and associated evaluation are used primarily as a means of facilitating faculty development, the chairperson may use content from the evaluation form and his or her associated assessment when preparing evaluations for step increases, rank promotions, tenure, five-year reviews, or other documents requiring supervisor evaluation or commentary.

Please complete the form in as much detail as possible. You are welcome to include any additional documentation which might help the division chairperson evaluate your performance in the areas of teaching, scholarly activity, and service.

I. TEACHING

List all courses taught during the 2015-2016 academic year. Also, list teaching responsibilities, including assessment activities, which are not reflected in the list of courses taught (course revisions, advising, student directed research, development of instructional materials, etc.).

I taught the following Mathematics, Great Books, & Humanities courses in the 2015-16 academic year

Math 140 (Business Calculus, Fall 2015)
Math 350 (Mathematical Probability, Fall 2015)
Math 450 (Mathematical Statistics, Spring 2016)
GSHU 123 (Great Books III, Fall 2015)
GSHU 324 (Great Books IV, Spring 2016)
Asian Great Books (Florence, May 2016)
Humanities 113 (Florence, June 2016)

In the fall of 2015, the Great Books faculty unanimously elected me to be the director of the Great Books Colloquium, succeeding Dr. Rodeheffer, who asked to be relieved of those duties.

I had a one course release for the Spring 2016 term, allowing me to mentor seven research students (See Section II) and manage the many issues involved with the Great Books Program (See Section III).

What were the most notable accomplishments related to your teaching during the 2015-2016 academic year?

I believe the breadth of course offerings I am able to teach is a significant accomplishment. It gives me a true liberal arts perspective, forcing me to be actively engaged in scientific, literary, aesthetic, cultural, and philosophical content and pedagogy. The two most challenging aspects I continuously encounter are teaching students how to a) write clearly and b) think critically.

In addition, I believe I myself model the kind of student I want my own students to become: passionate about learning, in all domains. I want them to view their lives as exemplars of courage and zeal in continuing to learn beyond their major, not allowing themselves to be labeled as specialists in this or that field, but as minds and spirits who are interested in ALL areas of knowledge. In the words of both Confucius & Plato, *you don't know what you don't know*.

Each semester I meet weekly with a few students who, at my invitation, continue reading in the Great Books, even though all of their coursework is over. These include alumni and current students alike. This semester I have four such students and we are reading Kawabata, Nietzsche, Seamus Heaney, and Tennessee Williams. In the fall, I will have three additional students join my cadre. I thereby continue to grow and learn myself, pouring my life into theirs as they do to mine.

Goals:

How do you need to develop or improve in the area of teaching during the upcoming academic year? What goals in the area of teaching have you established for the upcoming academic year?

I need to improve, by practice and self-reflection, in three areas:

Teaching writing in more creative ways - so that students develop a love of writing and not a sense of fear or obligation. Writers write because they HAVE to do so. I want to improve in helping students use writing to organize, think, create, and reflect. There may be no more important form of self-expression that I can mold in these young disciples. As a result, I would welcome workshops by outside experts on this practice.

For the last twenty years I have made it a weekly practice to conduct Christian meditation in each of my Great Books classes. I have used meditations by a number of spiritual writers and I have written several hundred of these 15 minute exercises myself. I want to continue in this work so that I can grow spiritually and help my students do the same. I simply need to find time to organize my work in order to publish what I have done. My [Spring 2018 Sabbatical Application](#) is headed in that direction.

Finally, I need to improve in my ability to lead discussion, especially with timid students as well as in such a way to NOT practice gender bias. I could use help in this from other sources, perhaps even from workshops conducted by the Great Books Foundation, which we used to hold here on campus, decades ago.

II. SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Since the time of your previous review, list published written work, unpublished manuscripts, papers read at meetings of learned societies, lectures to knowledgeable public groups, participation in colloquia or panel discussions at your own or other institutions, other creative work (whether exhibited or performed outside or within the University) or appropriate clinical or consulting practice.

List all courses, seminars, or special study programs attended during the past year. List journals read on a regular basis and significant books, monographs, or professional materials read in the past year.

I read the following publications regularly:

Economist, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Atlantic Monthly, Harper's Magazine, American Mathematical Society Proceedings & Notices.

I have read dozens of significant and challenging books this year, in an effort to incorporate them into my teaching and research. These include seminal works by Dostoevsky, Gogol, Pushkin, Kafka, Buber, Heraclitus, Seneca, Terence Tao, Marx, Tolstoy, Einstein, Darwin, Newton, Archimedes, Euclid, Shannon, Turing, Ptolemy, Csikszentmihalyi, Craddock, Standiford, Kawabata, Walter Benjamin, Ruiz, Knoebel, Mishima, Kipling, Conrad, Freud, Rousseau, Hawkins, David Randall, James Merrill, Tolbin, Steinem, Catapano, Nietzsche, Updike, Eco, & Primo Levi.

What were the most notable accomplishments or professional development experiences related to your scholarly or creative activity during the 2015-2016 academic year?

This has been a year of mentoring seven students in a number of research projects and creative activities as well as continuing to accumulate data sets and conduct analyses for long term projects. Here is a summation:

1. Maria Martinez - Writing her first novel - draft completed and ready to send to some publishers in the fall
2. Lexi Howerton - Alumni Project Transcription
3. Danielle Shilling - Alumni Project - writing up our 2 years of findings for journal publication
4. Mackenzie Jordan - Alumni Project - getting ready for our August event in Denver

5. Meg Johnson - [Analysis and Presentation of Fall & Spring Law School Data](#) as part of Graduate and Professional School project for Provost Marrs
6. Jared Taylor AYURI - Plan to expand Great Books to 8 courses & Teaching Assistant in my Great Books IV Class - Here is the [Poster](#) he presented at the Pepperdine University Research and Scholarly Achievement Symposium on April 1, 2016.
7. Katelyn White - Law School Focus Groups Transcription

Cindy Miller-Perrin and I continue to conduct research for the Center for Faith & Learning, President Benton, Provost Marrs, and Associate Provost Lee Kats - covering faith and life purpose development in undergraduates, international program students, new faculty, mid-career faculty, graduate students, and alumni. We made two presentations on our research to the Board of Regents in the fall of 2015, one to the [Religious Standards Committee](#), the other to the [Academic Affairs Committee](#). The President and Provost, as they have done over the last 15 years, continue to value our work and call on us to showcase our findings to the Board. Each year, we submit a summary of our research to both the Provost and the President. Here is our [fall 2015 submission](#). We also maintain a website for the work of our [Christian Spirituality Research Institute](#).

On March 7, I made a presentation to the University Spiritual Life Committee on research that Cindy Miller-Perrin and I have been conducting on life purpose, ethical development, and faith formation among both School of Law and Seaver College students. [Here is the presentation](#).

Just yesterday (5.4.16), Cindy and I met with GSEP Dean Helen Williams to lay out plans to measure faith formation and leadership development among students and faculty in both the Psychology and Education Divisions of her school over the next several years. We are fortunate to have Helen leading the way, Christ's way, at that school. Thus, our work continues across the professional schools; the next stop will be GSBM.

Goals:

How do you need to develop or improve in the areas of scholarship and professional development during the upcoming academic year?

What goals in the areas of scholarship and professional development have you established for the upcoming academic year?

There are a number of journal articles I must finish - tied to our research with alumni, faculty, undergraduates, and graduate/professional school research. This year has been consumed by other projects that will lead to these publications, but those works are highest priority in the coming year. I need to be able to spend

more time analyzing data and writing up findings for larger dissemination. Realistically, I probably need to say NO more often, since I am frequently called upon by various campus offices to share our research, design new instruments and make meaning of findings that these instruments unearth.

III. SERVICE – PROFESSIONAL, COMMUNITY & UNIVERSITY

What were the most notable accomplishments related to your university, community, or professional service during the 2015-2016 academic year?

Since the time of your previous review, list all university service activities including committees served on, administrative assignments, sponsorship of student organizations, work with faculty organizations, general student advisement, and chapel/convocation involvement.

- Honors Program Committee Member
I am working with five other Seaver College colleagues to build a General Education Honors Program - attempting to attract 50 top students each year to attend Pepperdine University and receive an outstanding liberal arts education, centered in the Great Books. We anticipate that many of these students will be Regents & Seaver Scholars, and I also anticipate becoming the first acting director of the Honors program, largely because of my wide experience in administration and in the liberal arts, particularly the Great Books. Our plan is to launch the program in 2018 or 2019.
- Assist Dr. Charles Hall with his program review of International Programs by building and disseminating a critical survey to some 900 subjects.
- Assist Sara Barton & Gus Peterson - Convocation Office - with analysis of our annual Lilly Survey. We had 1300 subjects respond this spring from the Seaver student body.
- Assist Dr. Jon Barton and Dr. Gary Selby in the Center for Faith and Learning with data gathering and analysis of the New Faculty and Mid-Career Faculty Retreats in Florence and Buenos Aires.
- Assisting Jon Barton with evaluation of the Lilly Endowment Communitas project.
- Supporting the Center for Faith and Learning in an effort to measure the effectiveness of the retreats for new and mid-career faculty in international settings.
- Great Books Leadership
I am now the director of the Great Books Program. I rewrote and redesigned the [Great Books Brochure](#), which is disseminated to all prospective students. I have convened our seven Great Books faculty members several times in order to discuss and come to consensus on two issues: a) writing requirements and pedagogy in all courses, a formidable process, and b) consensus on the reading list for Great Books III, which has not been reviewed for 15 years. Great Books IV is next. In addition, I take care of all of the course scheduling for all five courses (4 Western, 1 Asian).

This coming year represents a great challenge: for the first time in the 31 year history of our First-Year Seminar program, one of our Seaver College majors has been given

permission by the Seaver College Dean to embed one of their major requirements within the First Year Seminar (FYS) Program, thereby preventing those students from taking Great Books or any other FYS course. The First Year Seminar has always been intended to be an interdisciplinary, liberal arts experience, not tied to any particular major. So, this represents an unprecedented political and logistical Gordian Knot.

I continue to work closely with the Regents & Seaver Scholars programs in order to support their participation in the Great Books. One of my research students this spring has helped me construct a [proposal](#) to expand Great Books to eight courses from its current format of five. This requires significant administrative oversight. Finally, I am actively recruiting other faculty to join our ranks and teach Great Books in the coming years, as some of our faculty move toward retirement.

- My wife and I will serve in the Florence Program for May & June 2016.
- I am in my third year as a member of Gideons International. I now serve as the vice-president of my local chapter - representing a group of 45 men and women who distribute scriptures and speak in local churches. My main responsibility is to cultivate relationships and speaking engagements with the 55 local churches in our area in order to seek financial and prayer support to further our international work. This ministry is vital to the growth of the body of Christ. It is very simple - we plant the seeds and God waters and nourishes them among thousands of people each year.
- University Spiritual Life Committee - ex officio member.
- Conduct bi-weekly neighborhood Great Books Reading Group in our home.
- Developed and executed the Ernie Lauer Retirement event last fall.
- Organized and led the [Mathematics Graduation Event](#) - April 29, 2016
- Concert Choir Member - performed in Christmas Concert and spring Masterworks Concert
- Organized and led Christmas Carol singing for Natural Science Christmas Party.
- Referee for the Journal of Knowledge Based Systems, Elsevier-Holland.

Goals:

How do you need to develop or improve in the areas of university, community, and professional service during the upcoming academic year?

What goals in the areas of university, community, and professional service have you established for the upcoming academic year?

My goal is to keep doing what I have been doing, balancing all the demands on my time.