SPECIAL ISSUE:
CONTEMPLATIVE EDUCATION
naropa students
Putting Faculty on the Spot

Two years ago, when Leigh and I were just beginning at Naropa, we knew that the faculty is the key to every college’s success with its students. Because of that, we were determined to get to know Naropa’s faculty individually as soon as possible. So, over the course of the year, we held several dozen small dinners at our home for core faculty. The conversations were wonderfully rich and were often guided by two questions we put to the faculty: How did you come to Naropa? And why do you stay? Answers to the first question were remarkably varied. We learned of newcomers — and of faculty who had been here throughout Naropa’s thirty years, as well as those who had been here, gone away for a while, and returned; faculty members who had worked as rock musicians, counselors, performers, artists and translators, on cod-fishing boats and in mainstream academic institutions, before landing at Naropa. Often I would turn to Leigh at the evening’s end and reflect that, on balance, Naropa faculty are much better role models for students than faculty in conventional colleges are. Those faculty usually discover their intellectual aptitude and passion for a subject in college, go straight into graduate school and then begin to teach. Naropa faculty, on the other hand, have lived marvelously circuitous lives, where intellect, emotion and spirit were intertwined as they individually became filled with rich life experience that sooner or later brought them to Naropa.

Against the backdrop of this variety, the faculty’s answers to the second question were strikingly uniform: What keeps the faculty at Naropa, and what makes daily life here so deeply satisfying, is the students. My own experience in the Naropa classroom last year showed me part of what this means, for our students are unusually discerning in both head and heart. (A faculty member, new to Naropa last year, who had spent the past decade in visiting positions at two of the country’s most competitive and prestigious schools, found herself, within weeks of starting at Naropa, calling her former colleagues and saying, “You think you’ve got good students, but you haven’t seen anything until you teach Naropa students!”)

But I think there’s more going on here than just a balance of inner and outer, of intellect and intuition. You can’t fake it with Naropa students. They don’t want just information and knowledge. They want wisdom, and wisdom comes only from passing what one knows through the crucible of one’s own life. Consequently, there is kind of sadhana or spiritual practice woven into the act of teaching at Naropa. Spiritual practice, of course, is demanding, and so is teaching here. Faculty members everywhere are accustomed to putting students on the spot, and sometimes one might get a really hard question from a student. But Naropa faculty get put on the spot daily by our students, with deep, existential questions. It is exhausting and often scary. It is also deeply satisfying, for, as a part of the process, one grows in self-knowledge as well as of one’s subject matter—which, of course, is just what we wish for our students.

Naropa’s founder, Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, was about the business of creating individuals he called “warriors,” the first principle of which was “not being afraid of yourself.” This fearlessness is today woven into the fabric of our daily lives, a co-creation of our amazing students and faculty.
Richard Brown spreads the word on contemplative education

By Elizabeth Marglin

“My experience in the classroom with multiple ages is rich, which enables me to teach mindfulness with a broader scope,” Brown said. “It’s about being open to the moment and the students, accepting them as they are, and guiding them to their deepest essence.”

Brown is uniquely qualified for his role as chair of the Contemplative Education Department to serve as a seeding ground for a more widespread contemplative education conversation. As part of the plan to increase awareness, Naropa has recently launched the Contemplative Education Initiative. The catalyst for this initiative in-process is President Coburn, who is interested in creating a dialogue about contemplative education both within Naropa and with the world at large.

“Coburn wants to put us where we deserve to be, which is at the forefront, because [contemplative education] is what we have been doing for thirty years,” Brown said.

For Coburn, the importance of promoting contemplative education is that it’s the crucial missing link in higher education. Contemplative education seeks to individualize the learning process rather than codify learning into a particular model. The students and teachers in the program learn from each other as they go, in an ongoing dialogue. They take contemplative education into every imaginable realm: private and public schools; conventional and spiritual arenas; and kindergartens and universities.

Brown recounts how one student began teaching her Spanish classes with a gong to create an atmosphere of heightened awareness, which was met with resounding success. The program encourages teachers to discover what works for them and apply it to their situation.

The goal is ultimately to allow space and stillness to permeate the classroom. With eyes sparking at the memory, Brown told how Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, Buddhist meditation master and founder of Naropa University, once observed a class at the Buddhist-inspired Vidyasagar School.

“Trungpa said the transitions [between classes] were too fast, too speedy,” Brown said. “He suggested that after lunch period, children use their cloth place mat to wipe the table very slowly in a prescribed manner.”

It worked. The transition between lunch and classes was more elegant, the children more settled.

Graduates of contemplative education, even from a preschool level, often stand out. Brown said that when many Alaya (Naropa’s contemplative preschool) graduates continued onto the now defunct Washington Elementary School in Boulder, the principal said that he would split the Alaya children between the two kindergartens. They were so kind and emotionally mature, the principal said, that they would help seed the two classes with that kind of energy.

Similarly, Brown wants the Contemplative Education Department to serve as a seeding ground for a more widespread contemplative education conversation. As part of the plan to increase awareness, Naropa has recently launched the Contemplative Education Initiative. The catalyst for this initiative in-process is President Coburn, who is interested in creating a dialogue about contemplative education both within Naropa and with the world at large.

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Faculty Profile | Richard Brown

"You can in fact trace the origins of the dominant educational culture today back three hundred years to when Western education got interested in the external world via the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment," Coburn said. "Both of these movements tacked away from affective life. What we are seeing around the margins of mainstream higher education is an awareness of what the price was. Students are discovering how dried up and prune-like the educational process is if it ignores the inner world."

One of the initiative’s goals is to make Naropa a prominent nexus for Contemplative Education. One step in that direction is amassing a virtual library of contemplative education papers, articles and lectures, a project that has already started. Plans are also afoot to develop more teacher trainings. Naropa has also received a grant to help support the Faculty Seminar on Contemplative Practice in Higher Education, which starting in 2007, will bring in faculty from around the country for a one-week seminar that teaches them how to apply meditation techniques in a university setting.

The inner journey starts with a basic question. Brown asked it like this: "How do I live a good life that isn’t just rushing around, smushing everything together into a fast-frame commercial?"

The answer, at least for him, is remarkably down to earth.

"It’s about loving our lives, the whole process, even if it’s painful," he said. "Appreciating all the joy and sorrow that we have."

"It changed my life as a teacher when I saw how contemplative education could change the whole atmosphere of a room."

Another venue for raising awareness vis-à-vis the department is the Naropa University Contemplative Education Conference that takes place yearly at Shambhala Mountain Center. It brings in people from all over the country, albeit on a modest scale.

"We are moving slowly and steadily in lots of different directions," Brown said.

It is safe to say that the general direction is forward. Naropa University, the first place in the country to have a Contemplative Education Department, has been a model and inspiration for several other programs. It has spawned a graduate teacher training program at UC San Bernardino; a center for school improvement in Amsterdam; a new K-12 public school in Holland; and a new contemplative elementary school in Boulder, the Eastern Sun Academy.

"Naropa is modeling what an education of inner and outer means," Coburn said. "I’m excited about the Contemplative Education Initiative because it has the potential to provide the missing piece in American higher education and in the process begin to compensate for the overemphasis on the external world and cognitive thought that has characterized Western education over the last several centuries."

Faculty Profile | Karen Kissel Wegela

Karen Kissel Wegela is a woman who knows her mind. A teacher at Naropa University since 1981, Wegela, a former chair of the Contemplative Psychology Department, has put in many hours on her cushion.

"Meditation is an amazing vehicle for learning to love," Wegela said. "You uncover who you are and who you are not."

Wegela has always been just as interested in who other people are as she was in self-discovery. A licensed psychologist in private practice since 1977, Wegela said she discovered her calling as a therapist at a very young age.

"My whole life people have instinctively confided in me—I think because I am genuinely interested," she said.

Wegela has been involved in the Contemplative Psychotherapy Department almost since the beginning. She’s seen it through several milestones, such as Naropa’s accreditation and the Colorado licensure at the MA level for therapists. Although the program has become more mainstream to accommodate licensure requirements, the core has remained intact.

The program, which requires more of a daily meditation practice than almost any other program at Naropa, has an intensity that is not for the faint-hearted. Students entering at the same time go through the entire sequence of classes together, and the average class size is between twenty and thirty people. This readymade "family" gives students a chance to work in-depth with the process of being in community.

"Because they can’t get away from each other, they get a chance to recognize what they bring to relationship and what someone else is bringing," Wegela said. "It’s not easy for anybody, but it helps develop the compassion which makes them very good therapists."

The Maitri Program, a monthlong retreat held in the first and second year and a one-week retreat in the third year, is a cornerstone of the program. Wegela defines maitri as a quality of warmth and friendliness towards oneself. The maitri space awareness practice, done in specially designed rooms during the retreat, enables the student to become friendly with many different states of mind, from the neurotic to the magnanimous.

In contemplative psychotherapy, the Buddha understanding of the mind is intertwined with Western psychology. The combination is a brilliant tango that dances fearlessly in the face of its own paradox: How do you do practice therapy in a way that doesn’t boost the ego?

Again, the answer is found on the cushion.

"We are not training people to find out who they are, but to help people keep letting go of who they think they are," Wegela said.

"The mindfulness practices also do a good job of helping you not blame other people for how you feel."

She has found meditation to be the most effective way of having a direct glimpse of one’s own mind/body, which translates, over time, into the experience of being able to have a direct experience of someone else.

"We want our students to sit long enough to become bored enough to find spaciousness," Wegela said. "If you can sit there with yourself with no distractions to entertain you, then you are able to sit with someone else."

Contemplative psychotherapy teaches that the key to being present in relationship, whether clinical or personal, is a consistent sitting practice. The resulting experience of being fully present softens the ego, making it more receptive to a deeper state of consciousness.

Wegela says she feels most mindful when practicing psychotherapy. For her, the relationship sets up a clarity and emptiness that happen almost of their own accord.

Having a direct exchange with other—in fact, exchanging self for other—is perhaps the biggest gift that contemplative practice gives to a therapist. As Wegela says, "Healing is not the same thing as curing."

One of the hallmarks of the training is the idea of "brilliant sanity"—the acknowledgement that one’s clients are fundamentally sane. The healing comes in letting our essential interconnectedness shine through, revealing our common ground of being.

"It’s recognizing others’ basic goodness, Buddha nature and clarity," Wegela said. "You uncover the tender heart of compassion."
“The point is not to abandon scholarship but to ground it, to personalize it and to balance it with the fundamentals of mind training, especially the practice of sitting meditation so that inner development and outer knowledge go hand in hand. . . . A balanced education cultivates abilities beyond the verbal and conceptual to include matters of heart, character, creativity, self-knowledge, concentration, openness and mental flexibility.”
—Judy Lief, trustee and former Naropa University president

Naropa University has offered mission-based contemplative education to both undergraduate and graduate students for more than thirty years. Informed by ancient Eastern educational philosophies, contemplative education at Naropa experiments with another way of knowing through its joining of rigorous liberal arts training and the disciplined training of the heart. Transcending the belief that knowledge arises in the thinking mind only, this educational philosophy invites students to embrace the immediacy of their interior lives as a means for fully integrating what they learn.

Contemplative education is not solely traditional education with a course in meditation thrown in; it is an approach that offers an entirely new way of understanding what it means to be educated in the modern Western liberal arts tradition. At Naropa University, students wholeheartedly engage in mindfulness awareness practices in order to cultivate being present in the moment and to deepen their academic study. Woven into the fabric of the curriculum are practices that include sitting meditation, T’ai-chi ch’uan, aikido, yoga, Chinese brushstroke and Ikebana. The depth of insight and concentration reached through students’ disciplined engagement with contemplative practices alters the very landscape of learning and teaching at Naropa.

Through such a focused self-exploration, students and faculty acquire the ability to be present in the classroom and in their lives; to engage in active listening with an open mind; to analyze a subject; and to integrate what has been learned with personal experience. Other resulting qualities include the development of openness, self-awareness and insight; enhanced speaking and listening skills; the sharpening of insight; and an appreciation of the world’s diversity and richness. From this self-understanding comes an ability to appreciate the value of another’s experience.

The goal of a Naropa University education is not to nurture the solitary contemplative only; it is also to cultivate those at the other end of the spectrum whose interior work acts as preparation for compassionate and transformative work in the world. More specifically, the value of contemplative education is measured in Naropa students’ ability to put their wisdom and insight into practice through creative, helpful and effective action.

Most academics I have known in the past thirty years, regardless of their own religious or spiritual inclinations, would be profoundly uneasy about drawing spiritual issues into the classroom. This is not surprising, given the debt of the academy to the Enlightenment, with its prizing of the cognitive mind and of objectivity, and its definition of a public sphere that is intentionally free of religious influence. A great deal of intellectual and institutional momentum has been generated over the past three hundred years, creating the attitudes and structures that currently shape academia, and it will not be quickly redirected.

In thinking about the task of bringing about the harmony of secularism and spirituality in the academy, Thomas B. Coburn recognizes two things in history:
Enlightenment, there has been a dialectic within the academy between two alternative ways of engaging with or construing the world.

Since the Enlightenment the secular has overshadowed the spiritual in the Western paradigm. Coburn turns to Wilfred C. Smith in “The Role of Asian Studies in the American University” to further describe this dialectic: “The tradition of liberal education that we inherit developed in two phases, one emphasizing ‘the personal-cultural, knowledge as understanding,’ the other emphasizing ‘the object-objective, knowledge as information’ and these two phases have “never been quite integrated.”

The undertaking, according to Coburn, is nothing short of a “longstanding search for a fully adequate understanding of what it means to be human and therefore what it means to be educated.”

The benefit to such an approach, according to Coburn, is that its two foci, for example, can be seen as representing the dialectic between teaching and research, or between curricular and co-curricular life, between content and skills, between academic affairs and student affairs or between general education and the major. “Thinking of secularism and spirituality as the two foci of the elliptical life of liberal learning can ease us into an exciting new chapter of our dynamic history.

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The spirit of contemplative education is alive and well. This is the reasoning message I received the moment I stepped on Naropa University’s campus. Naropa’s vitality, its unparalleled curriculum and its position at the vanguard of U.S.-based liberal arts learning are among the many reasons I enthusiastically accepted President Coburn’s invitation to become the university’s vice president for advancement.

My appointment at Naropa University brings “home” so many of my personal and professional experiences. I grew up in Fort Collins and received an undergraduate degree from Colorado College in 1991. From 1991 to 1998, my experiences as a graduate student—employee at American University and as a civil servant at the U.S. Information Agency in Washington, D.C. provided tremendous opportunities for me to understand private, higher education within a distinctly international and cross-cultural context. I spent the last nine years as the associate vice president for development at Webster University, a private, comprehensive institution based in St. Louis. During this time, I raised funds for two university campaigns; consulted with university staff, nonprofit managers and entrepreneurs on strategic planning and fundraising matters; and represented the university in various markets. I also married and had a daughter, completed a three-year body psychotherapy certification program and served as a board member for the Institute of American Acupuncture and Life Medicine. I feel that my Colorado roots, private education background, fund-raising experience and personal interests truly converge at Naropa University.

In all my professional dealings, I have never encountered a university with an ethos as distinct and socially redeeming as Naropa. I am delighted to serve the only university that considers contemplative education its mission. President Coburn, other members of the university administration and I eagerly anticipate the university’s vitality, its unparalleled curriculum and classroom pedagogy; and an exploration of how to integrate mindfulness practices; a discussion of how to fully integrate mindfulness practices into curriculum and classroom pedagogy; and an exploration of how to apply these methods in a variety of academic disciplines.

Following the program, participants will implement what they learn in at least one course at their home universities. Each participant will also be paired with an experienced Naropa faculty member who will act as a coach throughout the 2007–08 academic year. In addition, Naropa will use its online education technology to create an ongoing chat space for participants, instructors and coaches to share their experiences and ask questions or seek advice from the rest of their learning community.

A team of eight Naropa faculty members, chaired by Dr. Judith Simmer-Brown, will work through the 2005–06 academic year to design the program. The planning committee members will be among the most experienced and knowledgeable faculty at the university in terms of using contemplative practices as an integral component of their teaching.

The Samovar Tea House in San Francisco was the gathering place for Bay Area alumni on March 9, 2005. It was a beautiful, unusually warm spring evening when almost thirty alumni gathered to catch up on friendships and news from Naropa. President Thomas B. Coburn was on hand to share updates and answer questions. The alumni relations staff hopes to visit the San Francisco area again this coming spring.

Naropa University has alumni spread around the globe. Although alumni relations staff members can only plan a few events each year, they hope to see you at alumni gatherings when they are in your area! If you would like help in reuniting a group of alumni, please contact the Alumni Relations Office at 303-546-5293.

The Los Angeles-based Frederick P. Lenz Foundation for American Buddhism is dedicated to promoting the benefits of Zen Buddhism, meditation, yoga and related Buddhist practices as a pathway to self-realization. So it was only natural that Naropa University would turn to the Lenz Foundation for support to develop a program to extend the use of meditation in college classrooms beyond its own campus.

The Lenz Foundation has quickly become one of Naropa’s most significant supporters. After establishing three scholarship programs for students in Religious Studies in 2004 and 2005, the Lenz Foundation recently made a generous gift of $145,000 to support the Faculty Seminar on Contemplative Practice in Higher Education, as well as several other important components of the university’s Contemplative Education Initiative.

The Lenz Foundation grant will cover a significant portion of the administrative costs of the center, including salary for a full-time administrative assistant and travel assistance for a few events each year. In addition, Naropa will use its online education technology to create an ongoing chat space for participants, instructors and coaches to share their experiences and ask questions or seek advice from the rest of their learning community.

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The program will include an introduction to a variety of meditation practices; an exploration of complementary mindfulness awareness practices; a discussion of how to fully integrate mindfulness practices into curriculum and classroom pedagogy; and an exploration of how to apply these methods in a variety of academic disciplines.

During the summer of 2007, Naropa University will offer a one-week intensive seminar for fifteen college and university faculty members from outside of Naropa University to introduce them to the use of contemplative practice in the classroom.

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balance in all things

By Anna Napp

Natalie Zeleny, BA Religious Studies ‘02, uses her contemplative education every day. It filters into everything she does from her work at the National Lawyer’s Guild (which is comprised of judges, lawyers and legal aide workers) to her relationships with friends and family to her interior life. She uses it “to find [her] own breath, in order to bring a sense of calm and clarity to any situation.”

Natalie didn’t want a typical college experience. She wanted something that she could carry with her, something that would enrich and give depth to her life. She found those qualities at Naropa. “Naropa . . . recognized that education should be a holistic experience. I learned to appreciate and honor my core self, incorporate a meditation practice into my everyday life, practice authentic listening and the list can go on.”

After her time at Naropa, Natalie traveled the world using the tools from her contemplative education in places such as Kazakhstan, Ukraine—during their peaceful revolution—and other countries in Eastern Europe. Natalie is a political activist, and is involved in international community development. She plans to take the LSAT this fall with the intention of pursuing a law degree thereafter. She travels the world and works in the United States to find peaceful resolutions to conflict.

According to Natalie, “Naropa also gave me the skills to bring non-judgment and compassion into situations, which has greatly contributed to my work with conflict resolution and peace building.” Her mission is to bring into focus the humanity of countries that have been ravaged by war. Thus, she hopes to raise the awareness of those who foster change in the system.

Currently, Natalie is a member of the Korean Peace Project (www.nlg.org/korea), an organization founded by a group of lawyers that “aims to use [their] expertise in conflict resolution to assist the peace process and to help replace demonization with dialogue.” The project sent a delegation of lawyers to North Korea in late August 2005. While Natalie did not participate in this trip, she was involved in organizing and facilitating the Conference for Ending the Korean War, held at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., on September 25, 2005. While at Georgetown, she was also part of a congressional briefing, addressed by Congresswoman Dennis Kucinich (D-OH). The conference was designed to explore information about projects to put an end to the conflict between the United States and North Korea. Natalie uses her contemplative training to initiate change from within by “authentically listening to people with other views, finding commonality and working with that to produce change.”

Natalie received her paralegal certificate from the University of New Mexico and when not lobbying for a more peaceful world, Natalie practices yoga, tribal belly dancing, sailing and scuba diving. Natalie is also working toward educating the public on peaceful conflict resolution, in addition to the Korean peace issues.

When asked if she believed her Naropa education was relevant to her work, Natalie answered: “Without Naropa, I would have exploded into one big ulcer a long time ago. It’s so wonderful to see the same skills that I took from Naropa that I use when I am lobbying Congress are the same skills that I use when I am relating to my boyfriend, mother, co-worker or a stranger: honesty, compassion, breath and balance. I am eternally grateful to the entire Naropa community.”

Natalie Zeleny, BA Religious Studies ‘02, is involved in international community development. She is grateful to the entire Naropa community.”

the archivist

Welcome to the first issue of the Naropa University Archive Project newsletter, in this issue we’ve included articles to inform you about the history and accomplishments of the project, and offer a few thoughts for the future.

The project began in 2002 as an effort to preserve and make accessible the audio tape collection from the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics. Significant progress has been made since then, and we’ve included a number of articles in this issue to inform you of the milestones we’ve reached.

We now have an expanded mission to preserve the history and records of the entire university. Our vision for the future is to build a world-class learning and research center—a place that will attract scholars and researchers worldwide to work with the unique Naropa collections we plan to build.

The archive project’s current funding comes primarily from federal grants and the generous support of a few individuals and private foundations. To realize our vision it will be necessary to build a sustainable, diversified funding base. That will be the project’s primary goal for the next few years.

In addition to financial security we hope to continue building the research collections that will make this such an important project.

In the two years as the archivist for Naropa University, I’ve talked with many individuals who personally possess important records documenting the history of Naropa. Many of those individuals have donated their materials to the archive project. In this way we hope to continue gathering and building Naropa’s important historical collections.

When others need help

By Jennifer Quinn

During the summer of 2005, Michael Levell, a recent graduate of the MFA Writing and Poetics program at Naropa University, and Jeremiah Bowen, a current Naropa student, volunteered their services to travel the long distance to Dharamsala, India, to assist in the work of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. Levell and Bowen spent their time transferring VHS cassettes to DVDs from the Recent Mind and Life Institute conference in Dharamsala. They then cataloged the DVDs to make them accessible to researchers and scholars.

“When I was a child, I had a very deep interest in the Dalai Lama. The Buddhist teachings were amazing,” Levell said. “I have been interested in the Dalai Lama’s teachings ever since.”

Levell and Bowen were invited to attend the teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. “The Buddhist teachings were amazing,” Bowen said. “One thing that hit me really hard was seeing the Dalai Lama bowing to the crowd, grinning and making eye contact in a way that seemed very personal. I got a feeling for how much he loves his people and how much they love him.”

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Internet Archive Hosts Naropa Audio

With the generous support of the Internet Archive, over five hundred hours of audio from the Writing and Poetics collection are available online in both streaming and downloadable file formats. To access the audio, go to www.archive.org and click on “Audio” and “Naropa Audio Archives.”

Collaborative Digitization Program

The Collaborative Digitization Program (CDP), a Colorado digital collaborative, awarded a sub-grant of $5,000 to the Naropa University Archive Project. With funding from their Institute of Museum and Library Services Sound Model grant, the CDP awarded Naropa $3,500 for continued work digitizing analog audio tapes and $1,500 for scanning and digitally preserving photographs from the collection of Boulder photographer Steve Miles, a friend and former associate of Allen Ginsberg.

Catalog Records Available on OCLC’s WorldCat

Library of Congress compatible catalog records are now available in libraries worldwide through FirstSearch. and researchers in the popular online database that is widely over five hundred hours of audio tapes are available for scholars available in OCLC’s WorldCat online database. Descriptions of CATALOG RECORDS AVAILABLE ON OCLC WORLDCAT

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Audio Tapes

On a cross-country fundraising tour, the staff of the Radio Pacifica Archive stepped at Naropa University to participate in a joint benefit with Boulder radio station KGtu and to donate copies of their recordings, including the first known recording of Allen Ginsberg reading Howl.

Steven Taylor Appears on WHADYA’ Know?

On April 30, 2005, Steven Taylor, director of the Naropa University Archive Project, appeared on Michael Feldman’s popular NPR comedy and talk program, What’ya Know? To hear Feldman and Taylor discuss the archive project, go to thelil had ya know? archives at www.notmuch.com/Show/Archives/whadya.html.

Grant to Preserve Bobbie Louise Hawkins’s Home Movie Collection

The National Film Preservation Foundation awarded the Naropa University Archive Project a grant of $3,800 to begin preserving the Bobbie Louise Hawkins home movie collection. The 8mm and Super 8 movies document Hawkins’s life during her marriage to Robert Creeley, including scenes with many other prominent postmodern writers, spanning the years 1959 to 1975.

Copyright Pursuits

The Naropa University Archive Project’s quest for signed release forms has been an ongoing process since March 2002. The project holds audio recordings by more than five hundred artists. Releasing forms are legally required, signed by either the executor or the artist’s estate, before the works may be placed online.

“Nothing can be completed without the release,” stressed Erik Anderson, former project office manager. “If fifteen people are on a tape, and fourteen say ‘yes’ and one says ‘no,’ we cannot release that recording.” Anderson said he spends a lot of time doing detective work, much of it tracking down lost contact information.

The release form is very broad, so artists may also be hesitant to sign it for that reason. “I make it clear that they can cross off any section that they do not want to give us access to, including pictures, spoken word, royalties and other various uses,” Anderson said, adding that artists should have that right, and Naropa feels strongly about protecting their material.

Some of the artists who recently signed forms include Philip Glass, Marilyn Braham for Stan Brakhage, John Ashbery and Gary Snyder.

Discovering Unknown Treasures

Discovering unknown treasures is one of the great pleasures of archival work. Two recent finds include Ramblin’ Jack Elliott talking with Allen Ginsberg, and Joe Brainard interviewed by Anne Waldman.

Elliott sings and discusses ballads, including works by Woody Guthrie. He is one of folk music’s most enduring characters, first coming on the scene in the late fifties, influencing a range of musicians from Bob Dylan and Pete Seeger to the Rolling Stones and the Grateful Dead. Elliott used his self-made cowboy image to bring his love of folk music to one generation after another.

Joe Brainard, who died in 1994, is known as the American pop artist who created doll comics and collaborations with writers. His solo shows include a retrospective at the University of California and the Berkeley Art Museum, and his group shows include the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum, Yale University Museum and the Corcoran Gallery of Art.

These recently discovered recordings are currently being processed by archive staff, and their release to the Internet Archive is anticipated in early 2006.

Archival Staff on the Conference Trail

In April 2005, the Naropa Archive staff traveled to Austin, Texas, and Las Vegas, Nevada, to present panels about the archive project.

Tim Hawkins, archivist; Joe Conway, technical director; and Kristen Andersen, a recent graduate of the MFA Writing and Poetics program, attended the national Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC) conference in Austin.

Hawkins, Conway, Anderson and former Collection Development Director Sue Salinger attended the Western Region–up regional archives conference in Las Vegas, with the Conference of Inter-Mountain Archivists, Society of California Archivists, Northwest Archivists and Society of Rocky Mountain Archivists.

“We feel that our project is at the top of the audio profession,” said Hawkins. “We have a responsibility to get that information out to the professional world so that other audio projects do not have to recreate the wheel.”

The panel played clips of various music and poetry pieces from the collection to illustrate their talks. “Many people did not understand that this collection is about the spoken word and not the written word,” Hawkins said. “I played a clip from Ginsberg’s Howl and the audience started to really bop to it, and they realized there is rhythm and music in the spoken word.”

Kristen Andersen talked about her experience as a student audio technician. “There was some concern early on that with student technicians, the archive wouldn’t get the professional level of work that is needed for this project,” Andersen said, “but we’ve found it immensely valuable, both for the archive and for the students.”

The archivist staff attended sessions that were very technical in nature. Conway said the conference especially brought him up to date on current thinking in archival storage of digital files.

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The archivist staff attended sessions that were very technical in nature. Conway said the conference especially brought him up to date on current thinking in archival storage of digital files.
Time continues to pass, but the words of the poets and artists who have traveled the Naropa University path live on in the audio archive.

“When I first got here, Phil Powers, the previous development director, told me that there were two projects that needed our immediate attention: renovations to the Lincoln Building and the audio archive,” said Dana Lobell, corporate and foundation relations manager, and the primary grant writer for the archive project.

The fledgling project received its first grant in 1992 when Jane Dalrymple-Hallo, a conservator and longtime friend of the archives, wrote a grant proposal and received $5,000 from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The money funded a consultant to evaluate the university’s archival collections and make recommendations for preserving them. An urgent need for the preservation of the Writing and Poetics audio collection was a key recommendation.

But significant action was not taken until 1999, when a group of Writing and Poetics students, spearheaded by Mary Kite, began demanding something be done and formed a committee to work with the Development Office. They organized a parking project during University of Colorado football games and raised thousands of dollars in two years.

Further inspired by Anne Waldman, co-founder of the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics with Allen Ginsberg, a small group of passionate faculty and students pooled their efforts to get the project off the ground.

In 2002 the National Endowment for the Arts granted the university $20,000 for a pilot project. With faculty member Steven Taylor as project director, and Sue Salinger, a BA student with years of experience in media production, as the project’s first administrative director, the work of preserving the collection finally got underway. A second NEA grant for $25,000 was awarded in 2003, and an NEH proposal resulted in an award for $180,000 for 2003-05. In 2004 the Save America’s Treasures program also got underway. A second NEA grant for $25,000 followed in December 2005 to fulfill matching cash requirements for its NEH grant, and $81,000 by the spring of 2006 to match its Save America’s Treasures grant.

In July the archive project held a dinner fundraising event at the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art (BMoCA), and last February the project hosted a San Francisco think-tank event focusing on finding funding and fundraising. Anne Waldman has also personally written letters of request to friends that have raised more than $8,000.

All of the federal grants have matching cash requirements. Both NEA grants and a portion of the NEH grant have been matched with generous support from private donors, and with three successive grants totaling $99,000 from the GRAMMY Foundation. But the Naropa University Archive Project still needs $24,000 by December 2005 to fulfill matching cash requirements for its NEH grant, and $81,000 by the spring of 2006 to match its Save America’s Treasures grant.

By Jennifer Quinn

funding history

When I began my relationship with Naropa University, I was unemployed. In a painful stroke of blessed destiny, I had lost my job and suddenly found myself confronting a faceless future. I knew I needed to move forward, but I wasn’t sure in which direction. Life was suddenly and unexpectedly wide open and relatively boundless.

Ultimately, I decided to go back to school. My BA was in music, but I’d long itched to explore psychology from a spiritual perspective. My search for a program that would meet this yearning led me to Naropa University and its new distance-learning master’s program in Transpersonal Psychology.

I had no concept of what I was getting myself into. I approached Naropa expecting the typical student-university relationship: my “tabula rasa” self was ready for an infusion of success-granting knowledge. Teach me, I thought, to become great in the world. What I discovered was that Naropa’s definition of “great” was different from the way I had come to understand it. When I jumped online and into cyber-class, I didn’t know what to expect. It was as though the unwritten rules of how education is “supposed” to work were somehow upended. For example, Naropa didn’t want me to repackage. It didn’t require—nor even desire—that I become like everyone else. Naropa’s intention was that I fearlessly and compassionately explore and discover myself, whatever the result. Indeed, it settled for nothing less. Any attempt at scholastic parroting was met with gentle-but-persuasive urging: “That’s good Ryan, but what does it mean to you?” “What might it mean to others?”

The unexpected (but entirely prized) result was a truer version of myself. After two years of reading, writing, thinking, meditating, serving and endless online discussion postings, I had morphed. Less in need of a quick answer and an easy-to-hold, accessible “truth,” I was far more comfortable living with mystery. It sounds cliché. But it’s the absolute truth: I felt as though I was not just human, but a human being. A human becoming.

And that changed everything.

I didn’t become directionless or content to sit in some faux-meditative void. Rather, I still pursued things that interested me, but found that they no longer held me captive. I became involved, engaged, sometimes engrossed in life, yet somehow free of the kind of confinement that comes when you put all your hopes, dreams and desires into something that exists outside of yourself.

I took a part-time job as a secretary at a church. It wasn’t a career, but it was the right place to be at the time and I felt it. Connections were made during this time that allowed me to lead a meditation group and offer my talents to a wider community. After graduation, I pursued and gained certification as a Holistic Health Practitioner (HHP). That certification led me to another opportunity, and now, to my own surprise and delight, I work from home in two distinct roles. I have a small private practice as an HHP (www.BeWholeBeWell.com), serving others in what I like to call the “business of transformation,” and I am editor-in-chief of a natural health magazine. I also continue to enjoy being active in my community, leading meditation and natural health classes, as well as spiritual cinema discussion groups.

By Ryan N. Harrison, MA Transpersonal Psychology ’03

After two years of the kind of flex-and-flow education that Naropa provides, a speaker at graduation made a statement that I felt was clear-seeing: “Naropa doesn’t just teach you how to succeed in the world. It teaches you how to change it.” I made a private little bow to that thought, for I found it to be true. Naropa was life-changing for me, no doubt. But here’s the interesting thing: Naropa teaches its students how to change the inner landscape, and in that way to affect the outer. Two years after Naropa, I’m still changing, but that’s the beauty of it. As I evolve, so does the world. Nothing stays the same, and I don’t require it. It feels like real freedom.
Upcoming Program Highlights

PSYCHOLOGY AND HEALTH

Buddhism and Psychotherapy Conference
May 19–21, 2006

Naropa University will host the Buddhism and Psychotherapy Conference to commemorate thirty years of its Master of Arts in Psychology: Contemplative Psychotherapy program. “We are excited to present the unique vision that is taught at Naropa, bringing together the non-ego teachings of Buddhism and the discipline of contemporary clinical work, to create the sacred space of psychotherapy,” said Karen Kissel Wegela, longtime faculty member and director of the program. Naropa is the first university to offer a master’s degree combining these two wisdom traditions.

This conference is intended for mental health professionals and Naropa University faculty, alumni and potential students who are interested in learning more about the field of contemplative psychotherapy. The keynote speaker for the conference is Mark Epstein, MD, a psychoanalyst in private practice, the author of Thoughts Without a Thinker and longtime friend of Naropa. Other featured presenters include Karen Kissel Wegela, PhD, author of How To Be a Help Instead of a Nuisance; and Harvey Aronson, PhD, author of Buddhist Practice on Western Ground. For more information about the conference, contact Jennifer Sanchez at jsanchez@naropa.edu.

BUSINESS AND SOCIETY

Authentic Leadership Workshop
November 18–20, 2005

Marpa Center and Extended Studies present Introduction to Authentic Leadership: Bringing Who We Are to How We Lead, an introductory workshop for those interested in understanding the principles presented in Authentic Leadership that is open to the public. Participants will delve deeply into how to become more genuine, intuitive and effective leaders and will begin to explore practices that enhance self-awareness, presence, compassionate communication and effective action. The workshop will be led by Susan Skjei and Mark Wilding.

Rob Bensman, Chicago business owner, participated in the fall 2006 Authentic Leadership Workshop. "An effectively run workshop for people who are interested in the topic and the practice of leadership. The guest lecturers each brought a different perspective and were able to connect with the audience, ensuring a diverse and engaging learning experience. The combination of the teachings and telephone consultations, weekly reading assignments, and formulaic approach to learning diversity perspectives facilitated meaningful discussions. The combination of the teachings and telephone consultations, weekly reading assignments, and formulaic approach to learning diversity perspectives facilitated meaningful discussions. The combination of the teachings and telephone consultations, weekly reading assignments, and formulaic approach to learning diversity perspectives facilitated meaningful discussions. The combination of the teachings and telephone consultations, weekly reading assignments, and formulaic approach to learning diversity perspectives facilitated meaningful discussions." He said.

How One Vacation Turned into Years of Learning

Five years ago, Chicago business owner Rob Bensman planned a ski trip to Colorado with his family. What he didn’t plan on was spending much of his trip recovering from a skiing injury to his hand, or that he would begin years of learning with Naropa University as a result of his accident. Because he couldn’t hit the slopes for the remainder of his vacation, Rob spent his time recuperating in a ski lodge. One day, while he was waiting for his family to return from a day of skiing, Rob discovered a Naropa University Extended Studies catalog and began to examine it.

“I was immediately intrigued,” said Rob. “I looked through the catalog and found a few classes I wanted to sign up for.” He felt that Naropa University’s approach to learning was something he had been seeking. “I was interested in Naropa’s vision of integrating Eastern and Western philosophies in education.”

The first program Rob attended was an Extended Studies workshop that explored archetypes. Rob was drawn to the workshop because of its potential application in his financial services and personal strategic planning company, The Bensman Group. After taking the course, he developed a deeper understanding of his clients’ needs by referring to their archetypes in his work.

Rob continued to attend Extended Studies programs, traveling from his home in Northbrook, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, to take part in weekend workshops. Two years later, he enrolled in the graduate level Authentic Leadership Program offered through the Naropa University Marpa Center for Business and Economics, a program that trains leaders to develop awareness, confidence, conflict resolution skills, and clear and effective methods of communication.

Rob said that the training he received in the Authentic Leadership Program was the “most meaningful course [I had ever] taken at any level.” He considers himself a lifelong learner, having earned a Bachelor of Science in business administration from the University of Illinois, as well as two additional professional degrees from Columbia University, including a Master of Science in Business Administration and a Master of Science in Financial Consulting, from the University of Pennsylvania.

“Naropa University picked up where some universities fall short. You are given instruction not just in statistics and formulas, but also how to think and be introspective,” he said.

Now several of Rob’s family members have been inspired to study at Naropa University as well. Rob’s eighteen-year-old son, Adam, is a visiting student at Naropa University, and his wife, Susan, will be taking the End-of-Life Care certificate program offered through Naropa University Extended Studies this fall. Rob is also considering a master’s degree with Naropa.

Rob’s connection to Naropa University is continually growing. He serves on the advisory board for the Marpa Center, offering his insights, enthusiasm and long-term vision. Currently, the Marpa Center offers Authentic Leadership courses and business workshops—future plans include the possibility of offering academic certificates in business.

Before discovering Naropa, Rob couldn’t have imagined that one skiing accident in the mountains of Colorado would charge his life—and the lives of his family members—in such a profound and ever-present way.

“If you can understand yourself on a very deep level, you can better understand the world. You can tackle anything in a more meaningful and transformational way.”
Seth Brault, BA Music '03, has developed his own business called DreamSeeker Consulting, where he does one-on-one coaching with clients as well as workshops on topics such as resilience, health and wellness, and business in the arts. According to Braun, “a Gateways is a psychological system for making positive choices and being clear about how to get there and continue to be clear about life’s direction.” While he works on writing a book, Braun is also focusing more of his energy toward public speaking.

Carmen Cool, MA Transpersonal Counseling Psychology '05, is working with teens at New Vista High School in Boulder, targeting body image, which can affect girls as young as three years old.

Jeremiah B. Bailey, MA Interdisciplinary Studies: Movement and Poetics '06, recently produced a piece titled Red/Le with his group, Lostwax, which he and dancer/visual artist Aaron Henderson founded. Together they created several complex pieces based on “exploring the dramatic relationship of live performers to the saturated image-world of digital culture and the human imagination.” Currently, Jewett heads the company, and he collaborates most often with poet and author Thalia Field, who teaches creative writing at Brown and is married to Jewett.

Jennifer Carlozzi, MA Transpersonal Counseling Psychology '05, has almost completed his first year in the PhD clinical psychology program at Pacifica Graduate Institute in Carpinteria, CA (near Santa Barbara). After living in the Bay Area for a couple of years, he and his fiancé recently moved to Las Vegas, Nevada, where they have an apartment in Las Vegas and live in a house in Las Vegas. Craig Grundberg. The exhibition was called “Tall Tales & Short Stories,” and the statement that accompanied the show was written by Andy Grundberg. The exhibition was called “Tall Tales & Short Stories,” and the statement that accompanied the show was written by Andy Grundberg.

Carmen Cool, MA Transpersonal Counseling Psychology '05, is working with teens at New Vista High School in Boulder, targeting body image, which can affect girls as young as three years old. She has recently committed to vegan and vegetarian diets to promote compassion within themselves. All are thriving.

Amy Glasser, MA Art Therapy '00, is working with teens at New Vista High School in Boulder, targeting body image, which can affect girls as young as three years old. She has recently committed to vegan and vegetarian diets to promote compassion within themselves. All are thriving.

Jami Jewitt, BA Interdisciplinary Studies: Movement and Poetics '06, is working with teens at New Vista High School in Boulder, targeting body image, which can affect girls as young as three years old. She has recently committed to vegan and vegetarian diets to promote compassion within themselves. All are thriving.

Leslie Helfert, BA Program in Interdisciplinary Studies. Her latest CD, “Cupcakes, And Raddishes,” is receiving critical acclaim from professionals in the industry—which is designed to help them successfully produce and market their own work.

Amy Glazer, MA Art Therapy '00, has married a lovely fellow, Lenny Partanna, from Brooklyn, NY. They are living with her two daughters, Eve and Indra, in Clinton, NJ. As a family project, they have recently committed to vegan and vegetarian diets to promote compassion within themselves. All are thriving.

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Marcia Hendrick, BA Program in Traditional Eastern Arts, recently won the L. Ron Hubbard Illustrators of the Future Contest sponsored by the Gallery of the Future. Hendrick’s award-winning work suggests that Hendrick hopes will open the door to a full-fledged career as an illustrator, the kind of art he continues to favor. Currently residing in New Jersey and attending a wellness school called Tom Brown, J.’s Tracker School, Hendrick will be flown to Hollywood for an awards ceremony as well as a weekend workshop—created by professionals in the industry—which is designed to help them successfully produce and market their own work.

Aljemie Hewett, BA Interdisciplinary Studies: Movement and Poetics '06, is working with teens at New Vista High School in Boulder, targeting body image, which can affect girls as young as three years old. She has recently committed to vegan and vegetarian diets to promote compassion within themselves. All are thriving.

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The support of Naropa University is critical to the furtherance of the mission and vision of contemplative education espoused by our founder, Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche. His teachings were founded on the premise that there is basic human wisdom that can help solve the world’s problems. Through your untiring and generous commitment to our 2004–2005 campaign for the university, you've provided a bridge that ushers us together into a better world. On the following pages, we highlight the people and institutions that make our work possible. Thank you all As a result of your personal commitment to basic goodness, you have made a difference!

$10,000+

Anonymous
Estate of Nancy J. Adams
Albert and Julie Blum
The Community Foundation serving Boulder County
Diana C. Coatney
Brenda D. Covill

$5,000–$9,999

Merritt Brooks
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Marina McCarron
Margot and Colle Mcauliffe
The New York Times Company
Allan Nowell
Marlis L. Petty
Susanne Simon
Albers & Miriam Stilwell Foundation
Karla and Jack Wilson
Paul Zurcher

Honor Roll
In Memoriam: Marvin Naiman

June 21, 1931 - March 28, 2005

Naropa University has never known anyone like Marvin Naiman. Serving as a member of the board of trustees from 2003 until his death following heart surgery in the spring of 2005, Marvin brought to the board unique talents that he shared generously as well as an unyielding love for Naropa’s mission and its students. Marvin was a self-made man who never graduated from college. His early passion was real estate, where his genius was recognized across the country, as he served on numerous task forces, lectured, wrote and taught broadly. He shared these keen analytical skills in his work on Naropa’s board, playing a leading role on the Campus Planning Committee, particularly in the acquisition of Naropa’s Nalanda campus and in the focus on student housing.

Always going straight to the heart of the issue, his voice in trustee deliberations was unfailing thoughtful, straightforward and incisive.

But Marvin’s abiding passion over the past thirty years was the exploration of his inner life, of deepening his intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. It is no surprise that it was during these years that he and Naropa came to know and love each other.

As part of his own never-ending process of growth, Marvin had recently resumed his academic studies at Naropa with the goal of completing his undergraduate degree. He knew and appreciated Naropa’s inner spirit as well as anyone, in part, because it coincided so closely with his own spirit, transparently evident in his warm, broad smile. In appreciation of that spirit, of his extraordinary generosity to so many, for his modeling of the qualities that we wish for in our staff, faculty, students and alumni, Naropa University humbly offered to Marvin Naiman an Honorary Doctorate of Humanities of Bachelor of Arts honoris causa, that was received by his widow, Margery Goldman, at graduation on May 7, 2005.

Marvin is also survived by his brother Bernie Naiman; sisters Cynthia Chapman and Pam Stearman; his children Lauren Alpertman, Hal Naiman and Jill Snyder; and seven grandchildren.

In celebration of Marvin’s magical spirit, family and friends have established the Marvin I. Naiman Scholarship Fund. Contributions to this fund may be made to Naropa University – Marvin I. Naiman Scholarship Fund and sent to the Development Office, Naropa University, 2230 Arapahoe Ave., Boulder, CO 80302.

Honorary and Memorial Gifts

Gifts were received in memory of the following:

Cynthia A. Coburn
Rick Coburn
Laurene Mattey
Narman I. Naiman

Gifts were received in honor of the following:

Legh Barry’s Birthday
Dana and Hocine Broth
Steve and Sarah Borgen
Susan Boyle’s Birthday
Brooke and Gina Coburn
Narman and Sandy Cooper
Jessica Wright
Jessica Yarbro
true

The following individuals and businesses contributed gifts-in-kind to Naropa University:

Boulder: Dashanote Tea House
Susan and Adam Boyle
Anne Burchard
Marlow Brooks
Thomas Cuberis and Leigh Berry
Elizabeth Cole
David A. Cooper
Susan S. Davis
Denny SISKON
Clint Eckstein

Donor of three or more consecutive years:

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Margaret and Colin McNaughton
Pat Moyer
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Maureen O’Connor
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Gerald K. Sheveta
Pam L. Seth
Tud Spencer

Arthur R. Tesdall and Deborah Garrett

University of Colorado School of Law
Department of Electrical Engineering

Karen Wells

Mark and Karen Wilding

Honor Roll

24 naropa! magazine
When I lived in New York City, I was a member of the Community Church of New York, located near the United Nations. The church was the spiritual home of a wide and varied cross-section of the city. It was the first community with whom I shared the deep journey of diversity training.

One Sunday, during the usually festive and busy coffee hour that followed each service, I noticed an old man, still wearing his coat. He was seated alone at a table off to the side. I had never seen him before. He was laboriously writing something on a salmon-colored piece of paper. The congregation whirred around him as he diligently tended to his project.

Once the coffee hour ended and the boisterous crowd had left, I stuck around to help clean the hall. When I got to the table where the man had been seated, I noticed that the salmon-colored paper was still there. Curious, I picked up the paper and saw a roughly drawn Buddha seated on a lotus. Scrawled above that was the phrase “Up from the mud comes the beauty of the lotus.”

That small and earnest song of transformation became incredibly inspiring to me. Within a week this drawing came to life. I never saw the man again. Wherever he is, I thank him for the lesson.

Liz Acosta is the administrative director of the Performing Arts Department at Naropa University. She has an MFA in painting and drawing from Hunter College in New York City.