

**SPECIAL  
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Scholarship of  
Teaching and  
Learning

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# Southern Dialogue

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## Evolution and the Cultivation of Emotional Awareness through Mindfulness Practices

**Chulguen (Charlie) Yang,**  
Management/MIS

Two subspecialties of the discipline of business administration which I focus my teaching on, Organizational Behavior (OB) and Human Resource Management (HRM), rely heavily on the applied behavioral sciences. Given the interdisciplinary nature of understanding human behavior in work organizations, I have applied concepts and theories from different fields of studies; for instance, based on the rapid development of evolutionary-based behavioral sciences in recent years, I emphasize how evolutionary psychology (EP) has enriched our under-

standing of human nature and how our adapted cognitive and emotional tendencies have influenced our behavior in the workplace (Yang, Colarelli, & Holston, 2011).

Evolutionarily speaking, as Charles Darwin once said, “the very essence of instinct is that it’s followed independently of reason.” In fact, most of us often fail to recognize the extent to which our irrational or misguided emotions affect our decision-making processes in our lives. We are often unaware of how “animal spirits” – which John Maynard Keynes refers to “a spontaneous urge to action” – affect our financial decision-making (Akerlof &

Shiller, 2009). During his conversation with the Dalai Lama, Paul Ekman, renowned expert on human emotion and facial expressions, also contends that “Nature did not provide us with that tool [awareness of impulse before action] as a fundamental part of our emotions” (Ekman, 2008, p. 45). In other words, we have to learn to be aware of moment-to-moment emotional experiences, which is the core principle of mindfulness.

Accordingly, one of the learning goals of my OB and HRM courses aims to encourage students to be more sensitive to our inherited psychological tendencies and to be more

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## From the Editor

The Fall 2012 semester is winding down with finals and Winter Break is a perfect time to plan out ways we might enhance our teaching in the semester to come. Thus, the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) seems a fitting theme for this issue. We hope you will agree.

We have some interesting reflections—from Charlie Yang’s integration of mindfulness practices in the classroom to Jess Gregory’s use of discussion boards. We also have Bonnie Farley-Lucas’s top recommendations for further SoTL reading as well as Leon Yacher’s photo essay from Paraguay.

Whichever winter holiday you celebrate, we wish you and yours a relaxing break and a happy, healthy and productive 2013!

With best wishes,  
Jennifer A. Hudson, Editor



## SOUTHERN DIALOGUE GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS AND EDITORIAL POLICIES

*Southern Dialogue* gladly considers:

- Short reports from different disciplines on college classroom practices
- Articles that focus on practical ideas related to teaching and learning in higher education and explorations of issues and challenges facing university faculty today.
- Announcements of work-in-progress and requests for collaborators
- Announcements of conference presentations, publications, community outreach and creative projects
- Scholarship of teaching and learning/pedagogical book and website reviews
- Images in JPEG format with a minimum resolution of 300 dpi.

Submissions must be in electronic format (as a MS Word file). Send to Jennifer A. Hudson, Editor, at [hudsonjl@southernct.edu](mailto:hudsonjl@southernct.edu).

The Editorial Board reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity, and assumes no responsibility for the views expressed in the contributions selected for publication. Submissions accepted for publication may be published in both print and electronic copy. All rights revert to the author(s) upon publication.

# How the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Changed My Discussion Board Use

**Jess L. Gregory**, *Educational Leadership*

Discussion boards, available in both eLearn9 and Vista, give students the opportunity to read and reflect on a topic, compose a thoughtful response, and post it for the whole class to see and to respond asynchronously. Labeled Web 2.0 tools, discussion boards extend classroom learning and offer opportunities for students who are shy or take longer to process the opportunity to engage more fully as a part of the classroom community. How I used discussion boards evolved as a result of looking at my teaching as a research area. Before practicing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) model, I, like many professors, would try something and wait for the mid-course or end-of-course feedback on surveys to determine the effectiveness.

The practices in my research were independent from my classroom activities. That changed when I attended a Faculty Development workshop on SoTL by Deborah Carroll (Psychology) and Steven Corbett (English). I began to apply research methods to any proposed course innovation. With my discussion boards, the problem was low interactivity and low-level posts in my

discussion boards. I noticed that students were writing long posts just for the sake of making them long, retelling the information from class or the readings to “prove” that they had done the work. There was very little analysis, synthesis, or creativity applying the material to new situations. This led to lots of reading for everyone with few insights, or interactions.



I hypothesized that the practice I had been using, requiring a certain number of replies, was insufficient. I modified the requirement to one where students must reply to the last post only, and must relate to the material presented, creating a conversation. They were expected to challenge ideas that they did not agree with, present a new opinion, or refine a presented idea in a meaningful way. Students were to be respectful, but go “beyond the nice” to get to a substantive interaction. My

new hypotheses were: (1) that requiring a substantive reply to only the most recent post would create more interactions that would, in turn, increase a sense of community; and (2) through increasing the sense of community, students would go “beyond the nice” and posts would demonstrate more higher-order thinking skills (HOTS).

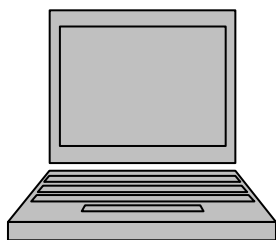
The results in the Summer 2012 semester were mixed. The trend that I had noticed in discussion board use in the past held, that some students posted a lot and some did the minimum required, but I did notice that the quality of the minimum posts had increased with regard to the interactivity and the frequency of more interesting posts, and posts that demonstrated HOTS. There is little observable evidence of the increase in community, which may be in part because of the way I structured it, and no directly observable measure of community. For future use, I need to more explicitly measure this construct. There are more interactions among the moderate and high-frequency posters, and while the posts may be briefer, they demonstrate more application, analysis, and synthesis. I hoped to see more creative posts, as well as posts generating new

*Continued on next page*

## Discussion Board (cont'd)

models or ideas, but this did not happen. So while the highest level of the new Bloom's Taxonomy was not realized ([http://www.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms\\_taxonomy.htm](http://www.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms_taxonomy.htm)), the level of HOTS was increased. Also there were more interactions, but because of the flaw in the design of the project, there is no empirical evidence that students' sense of community increased.

Through the more objective study of my course design I can enhance the learning experiences of my students and derive greater satisfaction in the daily work of providing web enhancements for my classes. SoTL provided a framework for a more empirical review of one aspect of my teaching. I look to employ it in other facets of my work to not only enhance the learning experiences for my students, but also to expand my practice as an educator. It is my expectation that by improving the HOTS of my students they will be better prepared as they advance in their coursework and careers. *SD*



## SoTL Literature: Some Recommendations

**Bonnie Farley-Lucas**, Director, Faculty Development

### **Want to Learn More About Students' Experiences in College?: Three Recommended Readings**

Astin, Alexander A. *What Matters in College: Four Critical Years Revisited*. (Jossey-Bass, 1993). This book addresses the impact college attendance has on students' lives. It's a classic, scientific study of the impact of variables such as environment, personality, attitudes, values and beliefs, patterns of behavior, and career development on students' satisfaction with the educational process. Includes implications for educational theory and practice.

Mullen, Anne L. *Degrees of Inequality: Culture, Class, and Gender in American Higher Education*. (Johns Hopkins, 2010). A comparative study of students at SCSU and Yale University along socioeconomic, class and gender lines. Data gathered from interviews highlights how teaching SCSU students can be very different than teaching Yale students and shows the importance of positive teacher-student connections here at SCSU.

Nathan, Rebekah. *My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student*. (Penguin Books, 2006). Written under a pseudonym this book provides a refreshing ethnographic anthropological study of the social and academic behaviors of college students. Offers some different student perspectives and expectations for academic

effort, class preparation, and the importance of out-of-class learning.



### **Some of My Favorite SoTL Sources**

Ambrose, Susan A., Michael W. Bridges, Michele DiPietro, Marsha C. Lovett, & Marie K. Norman. *How Learning Works: 7 Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching* (Jossey-Bass, 2010).

Association of American Colleges and Universities, <http://www.aacu.org>

Boyer, Ernest L. *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (Jossey-Bass, 1997).

Buskit, William & James E. Groccia, eds. *Evidence-Based Teaching: New Directions for Teaching and Learning* (Jossey-Bass, 2011).

Bransford, John D., Ann L. Brown, & Rodney R. Cocking, eds., *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School, expanded edition* (National Research Council, 2000). [www.nap.edu/html/](http://www.nap.edu/html/)

howpeople1/

Davis, Barbara Gross, *Tools for Teaching, 2nd edition* (Jossey-Bass, 2009).

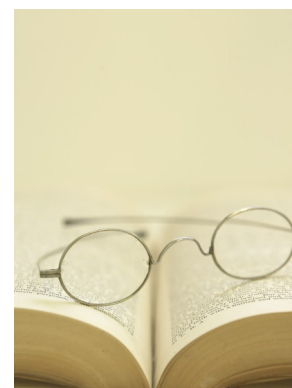
Hutchings, Pat, *Ethics of Inquiry: Issues in the Scholarship of Teaching* (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2002).

Hutchings, Pat, *Opening Lines: Approaches to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2000).

Hutchings, Pat, Mary Taylor Huber, & Anthony Ciccione, *The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Reconsidered: Institutional Integration and Impact* (Jossey-Bass, 2011).

International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, <http://www.issotl.org/>

Weimer, Maryellen. *Enhancing Scholarly Work on Teaching & Learning: Professional Literature That Makes a Difference* (Jossey-Bass, 2006). *SD*



## Mindfulness Practices (cont'd from page 1)

skillful in dealing with afflictive emotions. To achieve this goal, in addition to the traditional topics of OB and HRM, I have adopted the notion of “mindfulness” to facilitate the students’ learning of various “skillful means” to meet the challenge of paying attention to their emotional *reactions* and transforming them into wholesome emotional *responses*. Specifically, I have used three methods in my courses: (1) mindfulness meditation, (2) visual empathetic storytelling, and (3) the mindful appreciation of music and musical metaphors.

### Mindful Meditation

Mindfulness has become an increasingly popular term due to the influence of several prominent authors and meditation teachers, including Thich Naht Hanh, Jon Kabat Zinn, and Jack Kornfield (Cullen cited in Ekman, 2008). Kabat-Zinn (1990), founder of the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program at the University of Massachusetts, defines mindfulness as moment-to-moment awareness, which can be “cultivated by purposefully paying attention to things we ordinarily never give a

moment’s thought to” (p. 2). Mindfulness is a way of cultivating a capacity for deepened meta-attention (monitoring attention), concentration, and insight without being caught up in thoughts or sensations. As Ekman (2008) pointed out, mindfulness is a skill that requires our deliberate practice.

In my HRM class, students typically attend eight sessions of 10 to 20 minute mindfulness meditation during a semester. After a brief conceptual coverage of mindfulness and meditation practices, I have used several CDs produced by Kaba-Zinn (2005) for guided meditation sessions in class. In addition to the eight in-class sessions, students are assigned a few practices of sitting meditation and a short follow-up reflection paper on their meditation experience. Below is an excerpt from a reflection paper submitted by a graduate student:

*Despite the many successes of my at-home mindfulness meditation experience, I also struggled to overcome some frustrations with the practice. Wouldn't it be more pro-*

*ductive and satisfying to actually make progress on my to-do list rather than spending 20 minutes “doing nothing” – and battling feelings of anxiety and fatigue? As I worked through my to-do list following my mindfulness meditation experience, I was reminded of last month's New York Times opinion piece, “The ‘Busy’ Trap” by Time Kreider, in which he asserts, “Idleness is not just a vacation, an indulgence or a vice; it is as indispensable to the brain as vitamin D is to the body, and deprived of it we suffer a mental affliction as disfiguring as rickets. The space and quiet that idleness provides is a necessary condition for standing back from life and seeing it whole, for making unexpected connections and waiting for the wild summer lightning strikes of inspiration – it is, paradoxically, necessary to getting any work done.” In other words, although I did not literally make progress on my to-do list while meditating, I likely primed my mind to engage in these activities with greater clarity. A revelation!*

### Empathetic Visual Storytelling

*Continued on next page*



According to the original conceptualization of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayor, 1990), a capacity for empathy or the capability to know someone else's feelings or moods is one of the key characteristics of emotionally intelligent individuals. Actually, as members of a literary species, we often use emotional stories or even gossip to make sense of our constantly changing social environments. In fact, Adam Smith, well-known for his ideas on the regulation of a free market by the "invisible hand," believed that sympathy or compassion is the glue that holds society together. He even claimed that reading draws on sympathy because we easily become interested

spectators of other lives (Oatley, 2010).

In my OB class, visual arts and storytelling are often used to enhance students' skills for empathetic appreciation of emotions and moods. For example, I have used several photographs by Gregory Crewdson, a visual artist whose work tends to be ambiguous, yet emotionally realistic. Students are often asked to come up with a story after appreciating one of his photographs. Given the uncertain and emotive nature of his visual images, students are actually thrown into a situation, where they need to put themselves into the mind of a fictional character. In a way, I deliberately create a situation where the students are challenged to construct a plot based on their intuitive understanding of the character's emotional states. By thus engaging in the task, they are transported into the inner worlds of the characters depicted in the snapshot and empathetically understand the situation: for instance, upon reflecting on Plate 43 of Gregory Crewdson 1985 – 2005 (Berg & Hentschel, 2007), a graduate student came up with the following story:

*"How has my life gotten to this point? How have I reached this place?" Look at him, sound asleep, he has no idea that thoughts running through my head. So innocent, so honest, so loyal. Look at me. I'm disgusting.*

*I make myself feel sick. How could I have possibly done this to him – the man I love. Why would someone treat another they care about so badly? How can he be so perfect and I'm so messed up? ... Does she tell him what she has done? Should she explain her reasons for cheating? Does she even know herself?*

In addition to this classroom activity, students are asked to visit two art museums as homework, Yale University Art Gallery and Yale Center for British Arts, and to send me two postcards that briefly describe their aesthetic experiences. Interestingly, one empirical study reported that formal art observation training tends to improve medical students' visual diagnostic skills (Naghshineh et al., 2008).

### **Mindful Appreciation of Music and Musical Metaphors**

One of the key functions of a metaphor is to facilitate our creative thinking. In my OB class, I have used two musical metaphors (i.e., counterpoint and Jazz improvisation) to engage students in divergent thinking and help them to appreciate the polyphonic realities of contemporary work organizations. As musical metaphors, counterpoint and jazz improvisation are heuristic devices for making

sense of seemingly chaotic disruptions in our lives. In other words, the two musical metaphors are not concrete recipes for successful implementation or execution; instead, they are adopted as useful tools for generating unconventional ideas.

In particular, I have used Johann Sebastian Bach's original music and its jazz adaptations in my two and a half hour workshop on the creative use of music in business management. By using Bach's Baroque music along with its contemporary jazz adaptations, I have attempted to introduce the evolutionary model of creativity (i.e., blind variation and selective retention, Campbell, 1960) and encourage students to refine their creative impulse (Yang, 2011). During a typical workshop, I show students two documentary films on J.S. Bach: *Great Composers – Bach* by Runcie (2006) and *Swingin' Bach* (2000), a recorded live concert of various Jazz adaptations of Bach's original music (Image Entertainment, 2001). By the end of the workshop, the students are encouraged to connect seemingly unrelated ideas – counterpoint, jazz improvisation and organizational learning. Below is a response from a gradu-

### **Minority Recruitment and Retention Grants**

*Fall 2012*

**Adiel Coca, Chemistry,**  
"Microwave Assisted Synthesis in Water"

**Elizabeth Rodriguez-Keyes, Social Work,**  
"Courses that Sustain: Not Drain. Evaluating hybrid courses across the BSW curriculum"

# Photo Essay: Paraguay

Leon Yacher, *Geography*

One of two landlocked states in South America, Paraguay has become an anomaly in recent years. In 2010, it grew economically 14.5 percent, third most in the world, behind Qatar and Singapore. In 2011, Paraguay grew at a more modest rate (6.4 percent), still at a greater pace than most other world countries. A more varied economy helped the country achieve the economic growth. Leading the growth was the agricultural sector, previously hit by a significant drought which affected every part of the country, including the perennially dry Gran Chaco, a region located to the northwest encompassing sixty percent of the country's area. Most of the agricultural products were exported and is responsible in employing 25 percent of the labor force. Paraguay is the world's fourth largest exporter of soybeans. The agricultural products were sent as far away as several European countries. Paraguay imports goods from the United States and China which are re-exported to neighboring countries, though particularly to Brazil. Most of the income derived from re-export is based on an underground economy that some argue is responsible for more than twice the size of the formal economy. Not well endowed with mineral resources, Paraguay is the world's largest exporter of electricity. Itaipu Dam, the second largest in the world, more than satisfies domestic demand.

The country has two official languages, Spanish and Guarani, and most Paraguayans speak Spanish but have a working knowledge of Guarani. As a result, Paraguay is unusual among the South American countries, in that elsewhere an indigenous language is spoken only by the Amerindian. The Guarani Indians, however, live largely isolated from the main regions of the country, particularly in the larger urban areas. In fact, the country's population is geographically unevenly distributed. Only two percent of the total population lives in the Gran Chaco. Ethnically, however, the country is diverse. Brazilians, Argentines, Germans, Arabs, Koreans, and Chinese have made Paraguay home. Along the border with Brazil, the Braziguays dominate every aspect of local activities. These are Paraguayan born Brazilian ethnics. Though most Paraguayans practice Roman Catholicism, a sizeable Mennonite population, living mostly in the Chaco region, settled in this inhospitable area and developed it, initially as an agricultural zone, and increasingly as a manufacturing area.

***Newly built suburbs are encroaching areas that require protection, yet, little planning is taking place to prevent urban problems prevalent in the region***



***Poverty is common and underemployment is pervasive.***





*The Mennonite population, mostly descendants of Russians escaping dreadful living conditions settled in the Chaco, a forbidding region that most Paraguayans continue to avoid. The Mennonites have developed the region to a productive agricultural area. In recent years manufacturing has been introduced with great success. Peanuts are becoming increasingly more important to the economy, being exported largely to the European Union.*



*Jobs are hard to come by, and locals do what they can to make ends meet. Developing a tourist economy is important but lags behind the country's neighbors.*



*The normally dusty streets of Filadelfia in the dry region of the Chaco experienced heavy rains during the month of June of 2012. The rain that fell during a three day period exceeded the normal annual rainfall rates. Most locals were not prepared nor adept to the water logged soils and flooding.*





*Asuncion is the home of the South American soccer museum. The gigantic compound includes several buildings including a hotel where it welcomes all representatives and fans of the sport. As Brazil prepares to host the world cup in 2014, the entire complex is continuously busy with visitors that play a role in every aspect of the forthcoming tournament*



*Old sites, often neglected, are getting attention as a potential draw of tourists.*

*As a city, Asuncion's downtown area is a decaying city. Most of the activity takes place in the richer and better kept suburbs. Some high rises are being built in an attempt to energize the city.*







*Plazas (comparable to the New England Green) have benefited as these are being refurbished for a forthcoming plan of bringing tourists to the country.*

*Awareness of ways to protect the environment has reached the city of Asuncion. However, in the countryside one still finds resistance to conservation programs.*



*The main Cathedral, modest in size and architectural style when compared to other Latin American countries is a popular destination for visitors.*



## Faculty Development Grants Fall 2012

**Katherine Adams** and **Cindy Schofield**, Library Services, Miss Representation Screening and Discussion

**Patricia De Barbieri** and **Suzanne Carroll** (Marriage & Family Therapy), **Esther Howe** (Social Work) and **Denise Zack** (Counseling Services), Developing the Self of the Therapist through Gestalt Therapy and Family Constellation Advanced Skill Development Training

**Miranda Dunbar**, **Elizabeth Lewis Roberts**, **Rebecca Silady** and **Jonathan Weinbaum**, Biology, Biology Department Seminar Series

**Tricia Lin**, Women's Studies, Feminist Pedagogy through Technology- A One-Day Faculty Development Symposium in October 2012

**Paul Petrie**, English, ENG 217 in the Liberal Education Program: Course Design Workshop

**Elena Schmitt**, World Language & Literatures, Language Across Disciplines: A Visit from Dr. Elena Maria Ortells Monton

**Vivian Shipley**, English, Group conversations, individual consultations and workshops on different genres of writing and publishing

**Lila Wolff-Wilkinson** and **John Sullivan**, Theatre, Development of an Intro to Theatre Curriculum to Fulfill Tier 2 LEP Cultural Expressions Criteria



## Faculty Activity

**C. Michele Thompson**, History, was a visiting scholar June 22nd to August 1st 2012, at Tembusu College of the National University of Singapore. During that time she presented a paper at the symposium "Imperial China and Its Southern Neighbors" at the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, as well as chaired a session and presented a paper at the 4th international conference on History of Medicine in Southeast Asia in Surakarta Indonesia. She also chaired two sessions at Asian Biopoleis II: Crossing Boundaries of the Asia Research Institute Singapore, and conducted research in Singapore on history of vaccination for smallpox in Southeast Asia.



**Steven Judd**, History

**Max Mintz**, History

**Moses Stambler**, Social Work

**Ilene Crawford**, English

## Yale Library Cards 2012

**Elena Schmitt**, World Languages and Literatures

**Troy Paddock**, History

**Corinne Blackmer**, English

**Marie-Dominique Boyce**, World Languages and Literatures

**Erin Larkin**, World Languages and Literatures

**Thomas Farnham**, History

**Miaowei Weng**, World Languages and Literatures

**Patrick McBrine**, English

## Mindfulness Practices (cont'd from page 5)

ate student after attending the workshop:

*All of these terms refer to two or more independent, simultaneous melodies. Simultaneous in this sense means the melodies are happening at the same time. Being independent also, in this sense, means that at any given moment what is happening in one melody is probably not the same thing that is happening in the other melody. A central theme in both organizing and sense-making is that people organize to make sense of ambiguous inputs and enact this sense back into the world to make the world more orderly.*

### Personal Reflection

The three activities briefly described above are primarily designed to facilitate the students' learning of practical skills for being aware of and dealing with their emotions and feelings in a wholesome manner. As such, they are primarily exploratory and developmental in nature. I have also encouraged students to conceive "mindfulness" as an artful skill that requires persistent practice. In addition, I have just begun to collect quantitative data for an empirical study that examines the effects of in-class meditation practices on the students' level of mindfulness, life satisfaction, and important learning outcomes.

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## Office of Faculty Development

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The mission of the Office of Faculty Development is to support teaching and learning at all levels and in all contexts in which instruction occurs at Southern. The OFD supports faculty in their roles as teachers, scholars, and members of the university and wider community.

The Office of Faculty Development is committed to promoting a spirit of innovation, collaboration, and love of learning, as well as enhancing a sense of collegiality among faculty as they expand their intellectual, teaching, and scholarly horizons. In pursuing these goals, the OFD works to enhance the intellectual climate and promote open and ongoing dialogue among all members of the university community. It serves as an advocate for academic initiatives and enterprises that relate to teaching and learning through a variety of programs, activities, and resources in achieving the university's mission. The vision of the OFD is to create an environment at Southern that facilitates and promotes effective teaching, professional development, research, university service, and integration of new instructional technologies.



Join the SCSU LGBTQI Faculty and Staff Alliance

Spring 2013 Schedule:

Tuesday, January 22  
Thursday, February 21  
Tuesday, March 19  
Thursday, April 25

All gatherings are held in Room 309 in the Adanti Student Center, 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Please join us for good conversation and collegiality and please also bring along a snack or beverage to share for pot luck.

For more information please contact Jennifer Hudson at x25357 or [HUDSONJ1@southernct.edu](mailto:HUDSONJ1@southernct.edu).