

# Kepler College President's Annual Report

## October 2008

Enid Newberg, MA  
President

**According to the requirements of the HECB, the President shall present an annual assessment and evaluation of the College to the Board and to the Community covering nine specific areas of college operations as follows:**

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## 1. Curriculum and Instructional Program

In March of 2008, Kepler College once again received full authorization from the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) of Washington to offer AA, BA and MA degrees. The primary changes in our program from previous authorizations consist of changes in the language used to describe our program, changes in the AA degree, and changes in the second year of the AA and BA program related to general education courses.

As evidenced in Kepler's accreditation efforts, the word astrology is broadly misunderstood to mean a small subset of modern astrological practices. Individuals not familiar with the field generally equate astrology with the newspaper horoscope and the vestiges of Stoic philosophy as developed in Greece that became linked with the debate on fate and free will. As used by Kepler College and individuals who have done in-depth study into the field, astrology has a significantly broader definition. In an effort to avoid misunderstandings, the College changed references to astrology in its curriculum and other materials to reflect the College's intent to study how different cultures derive meaning from their cosmological models, how individuals and cultures correlate scientifically observed celestial movements with events on earth, whether meteorological or personal, and how different societies developed techniques and philosophies that link celestial and human events.

As part of this effort, after consultation with the HECB, Kepler applied for and was granted permission to change the name of the degrees offered in the AA and BA program. Initially the AA was an Associate of Arts in the History and Symbolology of

Astrology. This has now changed to simply an Associate of Arts degree. The title of the BA degree program had been Bachelor of Arts in Astrological Studies. The degree is now a Bachelor of Arts and the student's records and diploma will reflect the student's individual major rather than a generalized title, for example, Bachelor of Arts in the Cosmology of Ancient Cultures. There were no changes to the Master of Arts program.

The HECB initially authorized our AA program in 2005. The first design had students taking equivalent courses to the BA program, but the two programs did not have an exact match. Based on our experiences with this structure and feedback from students and faculty, we received permission from the HECB to shift the AA program to mirror the first two years of the BA program. This change was implemented at the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year.

In each of its degree programs, Kepler College continues to incorporate cosmological studies into a strong liberal studies program that emphasizes critical thinking, communication, personal development and cross-cultural awareness. These learning skills ensure that students can adapt to the ever changing conditions brought about by today's rapidly evolving work environment and technological progress.

The nature of the symposium continues to be evaluated. It is a crucial portion of the Kepler experience due to the many benefits of face-to-face interaction. In early September 2007, current and former students were polled as to what they preferred: 1 symposium per year, 3 per year consisting of 6 days each, 3 per year consisting of 4 days each, or 3 per year with the Fall symposium being longer and the other two shorter. Initial responses favored 3 symposium per year with the Fall being longer, but there was some support for only a single symposium. As the school year progressed, another poll in late Spring determined that currently enrolled students were now learning toward a single symposium per year.

After consideration by the faculty review committee, the Chief Academic Officer and the Administration, it was decided that for the 2008-2009 school year, the College would have a single symposium in the Fall, concurrent with graduation. The HECB was notified of this change and Kepler will continue to evaluate the whether our educational objectives can be met with a single symposium.

The third and fourth year of the BA program continues to offer more choices to students. After a review, it was determined that years 3 and 4 should be considered together as most of the material (except for the senior project) can be taken in either year. Beginning in the school year 2007-2008 juniors and seniors need to complete 36 credits of required core courses, 36 credits in their major and 18 additional credits which may be applied to a minor, for a total of 90 quarter credits.

Other changes include a shift in the majors and minors. In 2007-2008, the only major offered was in Eastern and Western Astrological Traditions. Beginning in 2008, students can major in Eastern and Western Cosmo-Cultural Traditions, Cosmology in Ancient Cultures, or create their own Self-Designed Major. Minors include Cross-cultural Views of Patterns of Human Behavior, History of Alchemical and Medical Traditions, Cosmology within World Mythology, Literature Classics, and Classical Languages.

The catalog outlines the current AA, BA and MA programs and is available for download at the Kepler College website, [www.kepler.edu](http://www.kepler.edu).

## **2. College Plant and Equipment**

The offices in Lynnwood, WA include a suite of three rooms all equipped with high-speed internet access for the four desks with computer stations, plus a network server. The entry room includes standard office machines (a multi-function laser printer with fax and scanning capability, and a color printer), plus an adjacent kitchenette and restroom. The President's office is in a separate room toward the front of the office. The Administrative Assistant, President and Registrar all have laptops so that, if necessary, they can work while away from the office.

For use at symposia, Kepler College owns 5 overhead projectors and 4 LCD projectors 3 screens, and easels and dry erase boards with pens. There is also a laptop available for faculty or student use.

In 2005, Kepler College moved to a larger facility for its symposium classes and utilized the meeting rooms at the Best Western Alderwood and the adjacent Lynnwood Convention Center. The Convention Center, however, doubled its prices and is no longer open on Sundays. For the upcoming 2008-2009 school year, the symposium and graduation have been moved to the Embassy Suites in Lynnwood, Washington. One advantage of this location is that students do not have to go to a different facility for classes.

## **3. Student Services**

In 2007, Karen McCauley took primary responsibility for student services. In addition, office administration, the President and Registrar also work closely with students and their questions regarding navigating the Kepler program as well as navigating the course website. The Academic Dean works closely with the registrar to help students evaluate program requirements, with an emphasis on students interested in the Masters program.

After an extensive evaluation process, during the Summer of 2006 the College switched from Blackboard to the open source software Moodle for its online course site. The software has been well received by faculty and students and continues to provide the services needed by our courses. Most faculty have supplemented their course materials with Powerpoint based presentations and many also include audio files of lectures. Toward the end of the year, the administration and Academic Dean began evaluating flash video and video conferencing options, both of which were incorporated into summer courses. It has been determined that Megameeting will be the primary vendor for regular video conferencing in the 2008-2009 school year.

In addition to hosting our courses, the online course site has a student orientation course for working with Moodle and a student forum that gives students access to all academic forms, the student handbook, textbook information, links to purchase textbooks, and a discussion forum for any issues. The course site also offers direct access to the online library databases, JSTOR and EEBO, as well as other useful Internet resources.

## **4. Administration**

Enid Newberg, MA was appointed President of Kepler College beginning July 2006. The president is in charge of overseeing college operations and program development, managing the Kepler websites, fund raising, marketing, student recruitment and other development efforts. Carol Tebbs, MA, the previous President, is Vice President in charge of accreditation issues, assessment and assists with fund raising.

Jolee Woroness, BA is the registrar. In addition to enrolling new students, coordinating all student assessment documents and maintaining student files, the Registrar maintains all personnel records and evaluations for Kepler employees as well.

Janice Porter serves Kepler College as bookkeeper in a part-time capacity. Gary Gomes, MBA, is Vice President, Finances.

The Chief Academic Officer and Academic Dean is Lee Lehman, PhD. She oversees faculty development and works with the Faculty Review Committee to oversee faculty hiring and course development issues. She is also responsible for ensuring that faculty maintain academic standards.

## **5. College Improvement**

Work on accreditation was a key activity throughout 2007-2008. The Accreditation process of intensive institutional self-evaluation required involvement of all college “stakeholders”, the board, the administration and faculty, and the students and community. Accreditation is the backbone for credits and degrees to be transferable among colleges, and it opens the way for student scholarships and institutional grants.

In the Spring of 2007, Kepler College hired Nick Pologeorgis to help the college prepare materials for DETC (Distance Education Training Council). Carol Tebbs took the DETC training course and worked with their offices to ensure that Kepler followed their guidelines. Throughout 2007, Kepler personnel focused on the initial application and self study report.

In December 2008, the College submitted its application and received it back again from DETC based on the fact that DETC believed they had no expertise or reviewers who could evaluate a program in astrological studies. The College then began its review of its programs to ensure that the language used would be properly understood by any accrediting agency, as there are numerous precedents to much of the Kepler College curriculum.

In early summer 2008, the College began working with the American Academy for Liberal Education (AALE) for accreditation. Much of the material already prepared will apply to their standards. It is anticipated that an application will be submitted in the 2008-2009 school year.

In the 2007-2008 school year, Kepler College continued to update its main website and expanded its presence in several social networking sites, including YouTube, Facebook and MySpace. In addition, the College began designing a website and advertised for faculty to offer non-degree community classes. It is anticipated that the Kepler

Community Learning Center will enable the college to interact and provide services to a broader spectrum of learners.

A future goal is to expand Kepler College to a larger facility, which can house the administrative offices, the library and the symposia meeting rooms.

## **6. Board of Trustees**

The Kepler College Board of Trustees includes 8 members, including the Chair, Robert Hand, MA. Their expertise ranges from college administration and accreditation to financial management and most have strong connections in the astrological community.

At the end of fiscal year 2006-2007, the Board of Trustees resigned as part of a changeover to a new direction in shared governance. The new board began work to revise the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws to incorporate a more inclusive tri-party governance system as used by a number of colleges throughout the United States and Washington. The final bylaws modeled primarily after Western Washington State College. Legal advice was obtained to ensure the new provisions met all legal requirements for a college and non-profit corporation.

New members on the Board included Liz Greene, PhD who holds a Doctorate in Psychology, is a qualified Jungian analyst and a patron of the Faculty of Astrological Studies, Christine Arens, a well-known and respected astrologer who has been a long-time member and trustee of the oldest astrological association in America, the AFA, and President of the Friends of Astrology non-profit organization in Chicago, and Terry Walker, PhD, who has over 16 years experience in college administration.

## **7. Development**

Kepler held ceremonies at the Lynnwood Convention Center for its fourth graduating class. Pictures and speeches from the graduation are available on the Kepler website. Kepler also posted online access to video excerpts of the graduation on YouTube.

Community outreach is through Kepler College materials distributed to astrological organizations and high schools, as well as at astrology conference trade shows, where a booth manned with knowledgeable Kepler staff answer questions, recruit students and solicit donations. Many of the Kepler College faculty are prominent at conferences around the world from England, to Europe and Australia. Several Kepler College seniors have appeared at national and international conferences as invited guest lecturers and panelists as well.

This past year, in addition to its usual representation at NORWAC, Kepler College had a table at UAC 2008, a major astrology conference with attendees from all over the globe. Catalogs, brochures, postcards, buttons, bookmarks and other materials were available and distributed both to individual conference attendees and to representatives of astrological organizations for later distribution to their members.

The Kepler College development DVD was updated with new material in 2007-2008 and more updates are anticipated in the 2008 school year. The development DVD is available to mail to any interested individual and can reach many audiences.

Believing that good information builds bridges to understanding, we expect to build additional bridges to the community at large. The easily reproduced CD and DVD formats lend themselves well to presenting a powerful message on a budget. CD's are a cost effective method of providing a significant amount of material to interested parties.

Subscribers to the College's bi-monthly electronic email continue to increase. The newsletter links readers to the website for complete article information and features articles by students, excerpts from faculty lectures and information on academic issues. Kepler College also participated in the opening of an online community site at ShareItLiveIt.com. A Kepler graduate, Norma Jean Ream, currently provides an astrological column to the site.

The College is currently collaborating with other astrological organizations interested in educational issues and accreditation, such as the NCGR and ISAR. The long-range goal is to develop an independent accrediting agency for academic colleges interested in including studies in cultural cosmological philosophies and practices in their curriculum.

## **8. Financial**

Total current liabilities at the end of the 2006-2007 fiscal year were \$175,617, including loans of approximately \$160,583, a drop of approximately \$23,000 from the previous year. The loan debt was approximately the same at the end of the 2007-2008 fiscal year. This debt was incurred a natural result of developing new programs during the 2005-2006 school year, which included the need for faculty and administrative support. By FYE 2008, the debt had dropped to In December 2007, the College sold a portion of the raw land donated by Mark Douglas, at a loss of \$107,000 from its original assessed value because of a drop in fair market value. The proceeds were used to supplement operating costs. The College also has approximately \$25,000 in equipment, 8,000 – 10,000 books in the Kepler library, and a large number of periodicals. With the collapse in real estate prices, the remaining piece of raw land is currently being sold for \$145,000.

The Kepler College tuition for FYE 2008 was \$153,127. We expect to increase that amount in the 2008-2009 school year from increased student body based on the expansion of program offering. Annual donations to Kepler College in 2006-2007 were approximately \$42,311. Annual donations in 2007-2008 were \$88,751, of which \$17,510 was contributions of services and in-kind items. Combined with other income sources, total income for FYE 2008 was \$251,328. Expenses were \$338,522.

## **9. Library Development**

In 2005, as a request of the bequest of the Haloli Q. Richter Estate and Chris Uihlein, Kepler College purchased the initial buy-in to Early English Books Online (EEBO), which provides Kepler students electronic access to every English language book written

prior to the twentieth century and The Scholarly Journal Archive (JSTOR) Arts & Sciences Collections I and II. Both of these are academic databases not available to through public libraries. The initial buy-in fees are split over three years, of which 2008 is the third installment. After this point, there will be a yearly maintenance fee. These libraries are well used by students, particularly those in the MA program, as they greatly facilitate required research. In early 2008, the Board of Trustees named the electronic library to the Marion March Electronic Library in honor of the service she and her family had provided to the College and to the greater astrological community.

Of the used books donated to the college, two copies of each title are shelved in the library, and extras are sold to students at the symposia as well as to the general public. The funds generated from the sale of extra books have gone toward purchase of appropriate library catalogue software and more bookshelves. Students cannot remove items from the “rare books” section of the Kepler College library, but may make photocopies of any rare documents or pages of rare books on-site. Included in the major collections of books donated to Kepler College, are the papers of noted astrologers Marion D. March, Zipporah Dobyns and Lois M. Rodden. It is hoped that they may be cataloged in the upcoming year to provide a wonderful primary resource for student research. Students cannot remove items from the “rare books” section of the Kepler College library, but may make photocopies of any rare documents or pages of rare books on-site.

Many of the materials donated to Kepler College are out of copyright, including a collection of materials that are self-published or from small publishing houses. A future desire of the College is the development of digital versions of these materials so that they may be posted online and used for research by a wider audience.

This concludes the 2007-2008 Annual Report of the President on the status of Kepler College.

Enid Newberg, MA  
Kepler College President