CSM hopes to inspire community dialogue

Posted by TBNDavid On 09/07/2017

The faculty at the College of Southern Maryland is a group of highly educated experts, an intellectual resource. A new program starting this fall, the CSM Faculty Excellence Lecture Series: Provocations, is designed to better share that resource with the community.

As this series launches, two lectures will be presented by CSM faculty each semester, with the first by a history professor on Sept. 15 and the second by a communication adjunct faculty member on Oct. 13. The lectures are free, but tickets are required and can be obtained at the CSM Box Office at bxoffc@csmd.edu.

“The College of Southern Maryland has top-quality academic options, a focused vision, and strong community ties, but it is the talented and dedicated faculty and staff that really make this an exceptional community college,” said CSM Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Eileen Abel. The idea of the lecture series originated with Abel, who said it would be another way for CSM to highlight excellence and innovation in CSM’s faculty.

“We want to make this a forum for people to engage in a variety of issues,” she said.

“The lecture topics are meant to be in-depth. They’re meant to encourage people to think in a different way.”

“The series is a way to highlight faculty who promote challenging, thought-provoking topics,” said Professor Richard Siciliano, who helped design the series, along with Dr. Stephen Johnson, chair of CSM’s Communication, Arts and Humanities Division.

The first lecture in the Provocations inaugural season will be presented Sept. 15 by History Professor Dr. Christine Arnold-Lourie, who has been on the faculty as a full-time instructor since 1991.

Arnold-Lourie’s lecture, “A Madman’s Deed, A Maniac’s Hand: Gender and Justice in Three Maryland Lynchings,” is a discussion of three cases during the time frame of 1886-1896 in which Arnold-Lourie will address the causes of this kind of violence.

“The United States has a long history of extralegal violence, as demonstrated by the number of times communities have resorted to lynching and by our ongoing national debate over the place of firearms in our society. Like many Americans, I have wondered why this is so,” she said.

Arnold-Lourie said she hopes the lecture will challenge listeners to think more deeply, not only about the topic but about the larger issue of community-sanctioned violence.

In addition to United States history classes, Arnold-Lourie teaches a variety of classes at CSM that she developed, including Women in Europe, The American Experience and The History of Race and Racism. She is the co-author, along with Susan Schaeffer and Julia King, of “Pathways to History,” a history of Charles County, published in 2008.

The second lecture in the Provocations series on Oct. 13 will be presented by Dr. Sheri Dean Parmelee, who has been an adjunct faculty member at CSM since 2006. She teaches communication classes, including “Introduction to Interpersonal Communication” and “Introduction to Public Speaking.” She has also taught “Freshman Composition, Business and Technical Writing” and student success courses at the college.

Parmelee’s lecture, “House, M.D., and Indirect Communication: Provocation to Thought,” will reference the television program, “House,” which aired for eight seasons, from 2004 to 2012. Parmelee will discuss how indirect communication devices used in the television show such as sarcasm, metaphor, and deception shape our world views and provoke us to thought. Parmelee’s dissertation, published in 2015, is a close textual analysis of the television series, and her lecture will stem from ideas formed from that analysis.

Parmelee said she hopes that people attending her lecture will gain a deeper understanding of the “message behind the message” in popular culture. Both lectures in the Provocations series will be presented at the college’s La Plata Campus, with future lectures being planned for the Leonardtown, Prince Frederick, and Regional Hughesville campuses.

“The first two lectures are going to be a great kickoff to the series,” Johnson said.

The CSM Faculty Excellence Lecture Series: Provocations is presented for free through funding provided by the CSM Foundation to highlight faculty excellence. Ninety percent of CSM’s full-time faculty members hold a master’s or doctorate degree in their field. In addition to an advanced education, they come to the classroom with a wealth of experience, Abel said. The college employs more than 480 full-time and part-time credit faculty.

“We think it will be extremely interesting. The series will highlight the intellectual endeavor and how it just makes for a richer environment. It’s an opportunity to think about the world in new and different ways,” Abel said. “The series is meant to be thought-provoking.”

Reservations are encouraged and can be made by contacting the CSM Box office at 301-934-7828 or by emailing bxoffc@csmd.edu. For more on the CSM Faculty Excellence Lecture Series: Provocations, call 301-934-7578 or email sjohnson2@csmd.edu.