

Thursday, November 20, 2008

Noted researcher's visit results in new academic relationship



Oakland University students and faculty "are still buzzing" over an early November visit from author Tom Barone, a pioneer in the field of arts-based research.

Author of *Aesthetics, Politics, and Educational Inquiry* and *Touching Eternity: The Enduring Outcomes of Teaching*, Professor Barone teaches courses in curriculum studies and qualitative research methods in the Arizona State University Mary Lou Fulton College of Education. OU Department of Music, Theatre and Dance Chair Jackie Wiggins said he spent two days on campus.

"In addition to two campus-wide presentations, Professor Barone did some truly transformative work with our music education doctoral students and faculty," she said.

Barone's work centers around alternative ways of sharing research findings, seeking ways that might be more meaningful to readers than scientific models, Wiggins explained. Among the alternatives he and his mentor, Elliot Eisner of Stanford, proposed was narrative presentation of qualitative work, rooted in what Eisner and Barone have described as arts-based educational research.

"Arts-based research, including analysis of narrative and narrative construction, strives to portray the meaningfulness of the situation being studied in ways that have the potential to touch the reader in personally meaningful ways and therefore potentially redefine the reader's understanding of aspects of his or her own life," Professor Wiggins said.

She added that Barone's visit was quite a coup for the department and Assistant Professor of Music Education Deb Blair, who conceived the project, invited Barone, and made all the arrangements. "We are honored that he came to OU and are also so pleased to have support from the College of Arts and Sciences for our research center, which makes events like this possible. We are also grateful to the School of Education and Human Services for co-sponsoring the event."

Professor Barone's 6 p.m. presentation on November 11 drew an audience of more than 50, including many doctoral students and research advisers. The evening slot allowed time after the presentation for casual interaction, and many of our students and faculty were able to ask questions particular to their own research and reading.

"The opportunity to have access to a narrative researcher with the experience and credentials of Dr. Tom Barone in the company of scholars from other disciplines truly enriched and opened my thinking about research purposes and practices," said Special Lecturer in Music and doctoral candidate in Music Education Phyllis White. "His epistemological humility was inspiring."

Robert A. Martin, a Ph.D. student in Educational Leadership with a cognate in music education, was equally impressed. "Dr. Tom Barone is an icon in qualitative research circles. What an honor it was for us to meet him, listen to his approach to writing, and witness his thoughtfulness about and care for his topics."

Several attendees traveled quite a distance to hear the presentation, including Professor Marie McCarthy, head of the music education program at the University of Michigan, Professor Jeananne Nichols, head of the music education program at Olivet College, and Dr. Sharon Davis, 2008 alumna of Oakland's music education doctoral program.

Davis said, "As an alumna of Oakland, I traveled from my home state of Virginia, to hear Dr. Tom Barone. His work played an important role in my doctoral studies. However the opportunity to hear him speak and to interact with him personally has opened a new door for me regarding the power and depth of narrative research. I am grateful to the Department of Music, Theatre and Dance for providing the opportunity for us to learn from a scholar of the caliber of Tom Barone."

Professor Wiggins noted this will not be the last opportunity OU students have to engage with Professor Barone.

"Dr. Barone has accepted our invitation to return to OU in the summer of 2010 to teach a one-week research seminar. He was quite impressed with our students, which pleased us no end, and was intrigued by the possibility of working with them further."

SUMMARY

Author of *Aesthetics, Politics, and Educational Inquiry* and *Touching Eternity: The Enduring Outcomes of Teaching*, Professor Tom Barone spent two days on campus in early November. He teaches courses in curriculum studies and qualitative research methods in the Arizona State University Mary Lou Fulton College of Education.

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