

FORESIGHT FOCUS

Renowned Strategic Foresight Expert Peter Bishop Announces Retirement

The future studies program was founded in 1974 and Dr. Bishop has contributed tremendously to the success of the program since 1983. In the Strategic Foresight certificate program students learn about disruptive change and how to work towards the creation of transformational change in order to influence the future of their organizations, companies and communities. In the Futures Studies in Commerce master's program, students emphasize systemic and transformational change focused on achieving long-term goals.

Influenced by Dr. Bishop's academic contributions, several graduates from the program have moved on to pursue careers in non-profit enterprises and future-related research firms. Others have founded organizations across the U.S. and the world such as the Accelerates Studies Foundation in California, New Moon Research in Atlanta and Future Studies Center in Brazil.

In the college's efforts to sustain his passion for

learning, teaching and building futures studies, he will teach a smaller selection of courses part-time, manage the certificate program and represent the University and the program. Hoping that all students will learn how to anticipate and influence the future, Dr. Bishop foresees one or more courses being included in the core curriculum. He is collaborating with other foresight programs around the world to define a common core of what the College of Technology teaches to further improve and guide others would desire to start new programs.

During his retirement party held in September, he shared kind words of encouragement with his colleagues. "Be grateful for the legacy that you are building and I only hope that someday you will feel the warmth and gratitude and the good feelings when people have touched your life." The College congratulates and celebrates the evidence of hard work and welcomes the start of new beginnings and anticipated contributions.

Schlegel and Breaux Win Association of Professional Futurists Student Recognition Awards

Two graduate students from the Foresight program, Heather Schlegel and Jim Breaux, were two of the three winners of the 2013 Association of Professional Futurists (AFP) Student Recognition Program in the category of individual graduate students. Through the efforts of students like these, the program has resumed an excellent track record in winning this category after it finished in third place the previous year. This year there was a great set of entries from students and it was difficult to choose who would represent the program in the



Heather Schlegel

competition. The competition has participants from 26 universities in 21 different countries. Foresight Program Coordinator Dr. Peter Bishop exclaimed at the results of the competition, "Another great year for UH!"

Schlegel's project was titled "The Human Problem." "When I sat down to think about the big questions or problems in the world I could not find a big problem worthy of attention," Schlegel discovered. "So I went on a quick search to find what other people thought were the

big burning questions of our age. Problems like pollution, limited resources, various crises, global warming and rising population. These are truly problems we must face. But why were they problems in the first place. How did they become problems?" She noted that at the time of writing, her "usual optimism was absent," and decided to try "Appreciative Inquiry." From there, the paper emerged and as Schlegel puts it, "she is no hooked on the Appreciative Inquiry method."

The other winner from the program was Jim Breaux.

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A Vision for the Houston Foresight Program and Students

Andy Hines, Program Coordinator

I acknowledge that I feel like the guy who succeeded Steve Jobs – anyone remember who that was? Exactly! The good news is that I've been here for nine years working alongside Dr. Peter Bishop. I intend to build on the foundation Peter and other faculty over the years have constructed.

When I think about what the program is all about and where it could go, the first thing that strikes me is how important the work is that we are doing here. The world needs more foresight, and it's our job to help provide that. We need more trained professionals to help us spread foresight. So, thank you, students (and alums), for joining us in this important work!

In my mind, the big vision is that foresight is a disseminated practice in widespread use.

The program vision is the UH Foresight is the premier training ground for professional futurists. Our graduates are recognized for their unrelenting focus on helping clients solve problems and work toward their preferred futures.

For students, from day one we want you to be thinking about how you are going to use your educational experience in foresight. Be thinking about what works for you. What are you drawn

to? A method? A tool? A particular thinker? An organization? Do you want to be consulting futurist? An insider or organizational futurist?

“In my mind, the big vision is that foresight is a disseminated practice in widespread use.”

Or a “futurizer,” where foresight is secondary to your profession, but you work to spread the foresight message? Learn what works for you. Each of you brings different skills, capabilities, and needs to the table, so it's important to customize what you learn to what suits you going forward.

We want to build an experience for you that extends beyond just the classroom. This fall, for instance, we are participating in an online game. We are having a futures classic book club meeting at my house on an October Saturday morning. We have an annual

spring gathering of students, alumni, and friends and this is a great time for our virtual students to visit. We participate in the Association of Professional Futurists (APF) gathering each spring and the World Future Society (WFS) assembly in the summer and we would like to do more.

We are looking to build up our research capability to provide students an opportunity to get hands-on project experience. There is no better way to prepare for project work in the future than to practice in the present. There are also opportunities to do interesting research on your own. Besides the master's project, there are independent study options, and many students have used their class projects as a foundation for building thought leadership on their topic. We encourage our students to speak and publish. Our students routinely speak at the APF and WFS conferences. Our students have regularly won awards for their written projects for the APF Student Recognition Program.

So, for those of you thinking about it, come join us! For those already here, thanks for your time! Remember, we've got work to do, and it's important!

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Breaux's project was titled “Weather-Related Disaster Recovery.” The topic of strategic recovery from disaster actually inspired him to undertake the Master's in Science in Foresight. Breaux believes foresight



Jim Breaux

can be applied around the time of disruption to set the direction of a community, individual, or organization on the path to a preferred future; preferably before, but certainly after. “This piece was a lot of fun to put together

and came together easily as I populated the framework,” Breaux said. “I really appreciate the opportunity to compete for the APF student recognition award and am honored to be selected.”

Grim Wins APF Most Significant Futures Works Award for Model



Terry Grim

Congratulations are in order to Foresight Adjunct Faculty Terry Grim for winning the 2013 Association of Professional Futurists (APF) Most Significant Futures Works Award for her work in developing the Foresight Maturity Model. Grim has been teaching an introductory class in the program for the last several years. The program appreciates her skill and expertise in launching students on their journey into the program. Grim has also been active as a consultant on the outside working with the Foresight Alliance. The program is always looking to bring students a blend of academic and real-world experience, and Grim has been doing that through her teaching

in the classroom. Grim began her work on the Foresight Maturity Model several years ago. She helped develop a Strategy Maturity Model during her time on staff with IBM's Strategy Group. When she retired from IBM and went to work for the former Social Technologies, she figured it was time to take what she learned in developing the Strategy Maturity Model and applying it to foresight. Another connection to the Houston Foresight program is that Grim based the "activities" involved in doing foresight work on the six activities of the program's framework: Framing, Scanning, Forecasting, Visioning, Planning, Acting (which she re-character-

ized as "Leading"). The idea of the FMM is to measure how well, or at what level of capability, the activities are being carried out. The model identifies five degrees of competence in various practices within each of the six activities. The tool can be used by organizations to assess their degree of foresight "maturity" using a survey tool that Grim developed. For more information visit the FMM page.

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UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON
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