

# THE POLEMIC

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ALPENA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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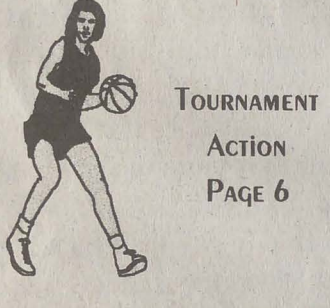


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## Surveys let students speak anonymously

Amy Wallot  
Co-Editor

Do you have a better idea about how to spend class time? Don't like your text book? Was the instructor always late to class?

Student opinion surveys are opportunities for students to voice their opinions anonymously. The surveys help instructors improve their teaching methods.

"There's nothing called perfection, and there's always room for improvement," said Sonya Titus, department chair of humanities and fine arts.

Each semester every instructor is evaluated by one class of their choice. The evaluations have two parts. The front is a set of questions that ask the student to rank the instructor. The back has questions with room for comments.

The surveys are tabulated and given to the department chairs who then pass them on to the instructors.

"I read them all," said Ray Herek, a part-time history instructor. "You should expect

your comments to mean something."

Herek has made changes to his course as a result of comments from the student opinion surveys. If a student felt that a topic wasn't covered enough or wasn't covered and should have been, he takes it into consideration in planning his next course.

"I have never... felt by looking at these that I need to one-on-one with an instructor," Titus said.

She feels that she has a good group of people in her department.

New instructors are also evaluated by the department chairs and administrators while they are on probation. Then after a year or two, they are granted tenure.

Tenured instructors are evaluated by peers from their department and members of the college administration on a rotating basis.

"It's important to get feedback from students. This is one way we can do it, and they know it will be anonymous," Titus said.

## Christmas Capers

A door decorating contest, crafts for children and a visit from Santa Claus were all part of ACC's annual Christmas Capers on Nov. 30. The activities kicked off the college's holiday celebration.

Photos by Amy Wallot



## Chance encounter improves awareness of Nigerian culture

Seon Clarke  
Staff Writer

Wow! It's amusing that most people think they have to go to different countries or read huge books, encyclopaedia or even go on the Internet to find out fascinating details about different cultures,

lifestyles, people or food not grown in their country.

Yes, sometimes you have to, but other times the opportunity already exists. Take for instance, ACC's campus. Look around and you can find people from different countries such as Denmark, China, Pakistan, Nigeria and many more

fascinating places.

You just can't underestimate what you will learn from one individual. Books are fine, but by the time they are published many are outdated. You can find more interesting and educational information from an individual about their lifestyle, culture and much

more if you just ask politely. For example, the Global Awareness series on Sept. 28, 1999, featured a performing group from Africa (Kayaga) which presented their culture through music and dancing.

You never know where you can learn about different cultures, without even leaving

Alpena. In the ACC library, for example, I recently met an interesting woman named Modupe Adewunmi, originally from Nigeria.

Adewunmi, her husband, AdedoKun, their two sons, Adebile and Adebisi, and daughter, Adelola, came from Nigeria in June 1995.

Adebile is 20; Adebisi is 16; and Adelola is seventeen years old. Adebile attends Purdue University in Lafayette, Indiana. Adebisi attends Alpena High School, and Adelola attends the University of Michigan.

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## MacMaster leaves Polemic to focus on workplace training

By Lora Bauer  
Staff Writer

Don MacMaster, assistant dean and director of workforce development, is leaving his position as Polemic advisor because the duties for his full-time position have grown significantly.

MacMaster explained that the business and industry's need for training has grown very quickly. His position requires him to find out businesses' training needs and do the necessary work to meet those particular needs. The growth of this vocation does not allow the proper time for advising and teaching journalism anymore, he said.

MacMaster, originally from Alpena, graduated from high school in 1977. He attended the University of Michigan, earning a BA de-

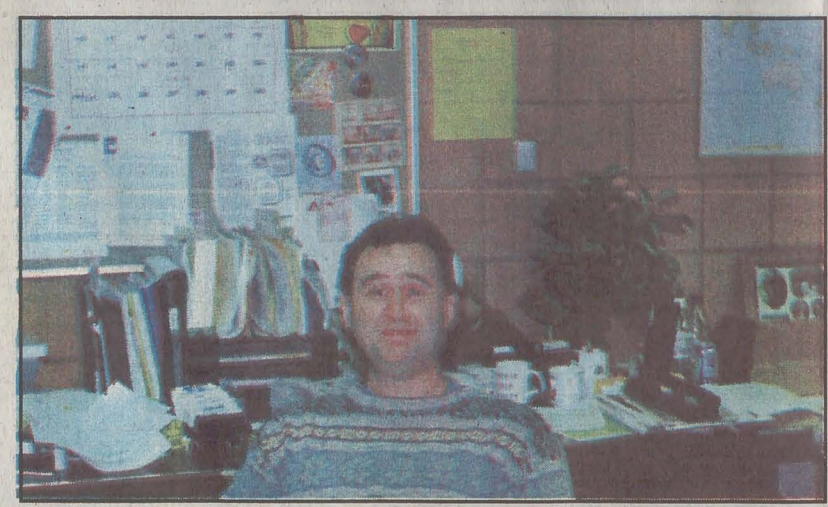


Photo by Lora Bauer  
Don MacMaster, who advised the Polemic for five years, will focus on workplace and industry training.

gree in communications and journalism, then completed a master's degree from CMU in 1996. He has been employed at ACC since 1991 and became Polemic advisor in 1994-95.

MacMaster and his wife, Dr. Tina Rossi, have four chil-

dren: Rachel, 7; Joseph, 5; Rebecca, 4; and Sarah, 15 months.

When MacMaster first began teaching and advising for the Polemic five years ago, he brought with him practical experience as a journalist. He had worked one year as a

sports editor for the Marshall Chronicle, a daily newspaper, near Battle Creek. He was a freelance reporter for the Detroit Free Press, where he published a couple of cover stories for the Sunday magazine. And then for seven years, MacMaster wrote features for the Ann Arbor Observer magazine, a city monthly with a circulation of about 75,000.

After MacMaster's first semester as Polemic advisor, he picked up a sequence of four journalism classes, two one-hundred level courses and two two-hundred level courses.

MacMaster said that his number one enjoyment was working with the students. He was truly delighted when students found a topic that they were interested in and became motivated enough to go out

and investigate. MacMaster believes this is often unpredictable, but the interest is reflected in the quality of the story.

"...This is what it is all about," he said.

He enjoyed facilitating and encouraging students in this environment.

While advisor, the Polemic did extremely well in competitions with other community college newspapers. The staff held their own with bigger community colleges like Lansing and Grand Rapids. MacMaster said he also appreciated the students' desire to put out a good product. MacMaster believes that Alpena students do have something to say and they prove this by being able to compete.

"The paper gives them opportunities to comment,

report, write and to be published," he said. "It's truly applied learning. It is much more public, and it is a great experience."

With the help of ACC and advertisements in the past five years, the Polemic has acquired new computers, printers and a scanner. Internet access was hooked up to the computer lab, which allows the students to go online for information and enables them to see other community college newspapers.

"Five years is a good run," MacMaster said. "It is now time for someone with a different set of experiences to come in. I feel good about the time and effort I put into the Polemic. I definitely enjoyed it and enjoyed the students immensely."