Honors Program Provokes Thinking

With wry amusement, Kristine Larsen talks about her Honors Program “kids” as “survivors” of a grand intellectual adventure.

They have sought connections between philosophy and the art and literature of ancient Greece. They have pondered how science can be twisted into hoaxes and scams in society. Disasters, both natural and human-made, have come under their scientific scrutiny. They have debated the role of education in America. Looking back 50 years, they have used music, film, and the visual arts to understand such phenomena as AIDS, Kent State, the Beats, and violence in art, society, and culture. And, they have concluded their academic odyssey by writing an Honors thesis.

Dr. Larsen, who graduated in the first Honors Program class offered by CCSU in 1982, is now director of the program. As a professor of physics and earth sciences at CCSU, noted for her scholarship in astronomy, she has witnessed how the program has evolved and “knows first-hand the doors its high quality education can open.”

CORE ASPECTS OF THE HONORS PROGRAM
The Honors Program’s hallmark interdisciplinary, team-taught, liberal arts approach to general education endures. Classes are small. Motivated students readily engage their professors and use their classmates as resources to gain multiple perspectives on subjects.

Larsen stresses, “The emphasis on reading in depth, writing, and critical thinking has been a thread that has run throughout the Honors Program since its inception.”

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Preventing Sexual Harassment on Campus

Sexual harassment is a form of gender discrimination. The University believes all members of the campus community have the right to a working and learning environment that is free from harassment and intimidation. The University’s sexual harassment policy works to preserve a respectful academic and employment environment free from all forms of discrimination. Here are some commonly asked questions relating to sexual harassment on campus.

Q. What is sexual harassment?
A. The University’s policy prohibits sexual harassment states that sexual harassment is any repeated, unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or any conduct of a sexual nature when:

1) Submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly the basis, term, or condition of any individual’s employment, or a factor in an individual’s grade, evaluation, promotion or retention; or

2) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, offensive learning, or working environment.

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Christopher Michalski is a CCSU senior majoring in English. His minor is creative writing, with an emphasis in fiction, but that’s not how his academic career started. Michalski entered CCSU in the fall of 2002 as a biology major, aiming for a career in the sciences. One day while walking to class he started absorbing the vivid details of the campus surrounding him and realized his true passion was English. “The beauty of nature was so pristine and glorious that I wanted to put these wonderful images to words and to study the works of others who already have,” said Michalski.

Michalski was no stranger to literature. The roots were planted deeply in the 5th grade, when he started writing poetry and fiction. By the end of middle school, Michalski recalls that he and some classmates were notably different when it came to their knowledge of literature: “When people were still struggling with monthly reading assignments, I had already finished Stephen King’s It, the expanded edition of The Stand, Pet Sematary, and Michael Crichton’s works Sphere and Jurassic Park,” he recalled.

Michalski attributed his continuing interest in creative writing to Joyce Miller, an English teacher at Newington’s John Wallace Middle School, who showcased his fiction in the main entrance of the school, when he was an eighth grader. “I still have all of the works as well as the certificate she made for the showcase. Whenever I look through my portfolio, I see it and smile.”

During his change of major, Michalski recognized his rekindled passion for creative writing, which he immediately chose as his minor. “The best part of the creative writing courses are the peer-evaluations and constructive criticisms of your works,” he said. “We were all there to help each other become better writers. It was fantastic.” The creative writing minor offers a poetry sequence and a fiction sequence, offering two threads of specialization for aspiring writers. Currently, Michalski is working on a piece of fiction titled “The Etched Silver Mirror.”

Anticipating graduation in May, Michalski believes that Central has been a long and rewarding road for him. His prolonged student career at CCSU was due largely to that change of major and a short break from school in order to find his direction in the world. “Looking back on my experience at CCSU makes me appreciate how important and fulfilling returning to the University was.” After his hiatus, Michalski turned to Dr. Candace Barrington, associate professor of English, for guidance. “When it felt like I had too much on my shoulders, I knew someone at CCSU was genuinely concerned for my future. I can never thank Dr. Barrington enough for her constant encouragement.”

Reentering college life enriched Michalski’s experience as a scholar. “Just when I thought I knew Shakespeare like the back of my hand, I enrolled in Dr. Stephen Cohen’s English 220 Shakespeare course. He gave us the opportunity to experience the true Shakespeare by conducting short performances on stage,” he fondly recollects. “Pursuing Dr. Cohen’s other courses, Shakespeare: Major Comedies and Shakespeare & Film, was a very rewarding decision.”

Another life-altering experience provided by the English Department were the courses taught by Dr. John Heitner, associate professor of English. ENG 448, American Mysticism, and ENG 488, World Mysticism, are two of Dr. Heitner’s classes Michalski views as unique. He comments, “Dr. Heinter offers advice important to studies and to life. He says that one must utilize freedom with responsibility and fight the good fight.”

Michalski is applying to enter CCSU’s masters’ program in the English department. “I was looking at a number of out-of-state colleges, but I am choosing to apply to CCSU due to my extremely positive experiences.” Recently acquiring an on-campus student-worker position in the Office of Marketing and Communications, the senior notes that his work experience has allowed for him to appreciate how the institution is run. He looks at his work experience as equipping him with the skills needed to attain an MA in English.

Enjoying all that Central has to offer, Michalski is content with staying in New Britain for another few years, commenting that both his maternal and paternal lineage have strong ties to the city. He feels comfortable here, as he spent much of his childhood participating in the Polish culture. Michalski’s family encourages him to strive for future success, influencing him with life-long familial ideals, “My father instilled deep honor and virtue in me, and, by example, my mother showed that hard work ultimately pays off, no matter what obstacles you face. My older brother showed me that anything in life is possible and the world is always at your finger tips.”

With encouragement on the home front and support from CCSU faculty in the English Department, Michalski is ready to face the challenges of graduate school. “Yes, we are all together in an unmistakable community,” says Michalski as he thinks of the college experience at CCSU. Hoping to resume his education here next fall, Christopher Michalski plans to write the CCSU master’s program in English as another chapter in his life.

— Caroline Dearborn
Cybernetics was the buzzword for computer science at the Moscow Engineering Physics Institute where Stan Kurkovsky earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in applied mathematics in 1995.

Today, Dr. Kurkovsky, who emigrated from Russia to earn a Ph.D. at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, is associate professor of computer science at CCSU. He informs his students that now the buzzwords are pervasive or ubiquitous computing—a field he finds fascinating.

“The concepts of these terms refer to how our everyday world is saturated with computer devices and computing power so our interactions with them blend into our daily activities,” he states. “In the not-so-distant future, very tiny—even invisible—devices, either mobile or embedded in almost any type of object imaginable, including cars, tools, appliances, clothing, and various consumer goods, will communicate through increasingly interconnected networks.”

In his research and classroom teaching, Kurkovsky explores future smart devices. “They will be all around us and maintain current information about their locations, the contexts in which they are being used, and relevant data about the users.” Grinning, Kurkovsky adds, “Technology will unobtrusively fade into the environment. At least that’s the grand vision.”

CLICKING ON THE FUTURE
To click on future marvels in computer science, students must acquire today the tools and approaches examined in such courses as Software Engineering. This capstone course, Kurkovsky maintains, is one of the most important for computer science degree candidates. “The course brings together many areas under a single umbrella. Programming is an integral part of computer science, but just as important are analysis, design, planning, scheduling, project management, and systems administration. This course covers these areas and shows how they are related.”

Graduate student Srilatha Vodnala appreciated the “real life atmosphere” in this course with its tangible outcomes. She describes the class as “very competitive, but everybody gave 100 percent—especially for our group project. We were learning about new technologies and software in order to design an industry-level system.”

TEAMING WITH THE PROFESSOR
Not only do students learn team building, but they have the opportunity to collaborate on projects with Kurkovsky. Recent graduate Adam Sharp teamed with his professor to design and develop a framework for voice-enabled mobile systems capable of delivering personalized services to their users. The project addressed, Kurkovsky explains, “context-aware services that collect information on each individual user and make predictions based on past history to better accommodate users’ needs.”

Their project was published as a book chapter and presented as a conference paper. Sharp describes it as “exhilarating” and an experience made possible by Kurkovsky’s enthusiastic mentoring and dedicated supervision. Sharp is now founder and CEO of a software development company. He maintains, “My computing education at CCSU helped me solidify my understanding of the programming lifecycle and of the whole software product. Careful planning, a skill that I honed at CCSU, allows me and my company to create better, more sound software that has been thoroughly thought-out and described in detail.”

Enlivening his teaching by tackling the latest developments in computer technologies, Kurkovsky has written and published on pervasive computing, contributing book chapters to encyclopedias and handbooks for professional applications. He has spread his knowledge and ideas by presenting papers at national and international conferences. Last December he was invited to present a paper on pervasive computing at an information technology conference in Cairo, Egypt. This April he plans to present another paper at a computer science conference in Las Vegas which is sponsored by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), a premier professional organization in computer science.

NSF SCHOLARSHIPS
Supportive beyond the classroom, Kurkovsky is principal investigator of a $500,000 grant from the National Science Foundation benefiting CCSU students in computer science, mathematics, and physics through scholarships. The five-year grant provides students who are academically talented and demonstrate financial need with renewable scholarships up to $5,200 annually. Plus, it covers enrichment opportunities for research, mentoring, tutoring, internships, social events, and assistance with job placement. Kurkovsky had been principal investigator of a similar NSF grant when he taught six years at Columbus State University in Georgia prior to joining CCSU in 2005.

One of 22 CCSU students currently receiving such scholarships, Mallory Smith, physics major, remarks: “This scholarship has allowed me to focus solely on my academics without having to worry about how I might have to pay for school and school supplies. I feel I have been able to do well as a result. It has also allowed me to take advantage of an unpaid research experience, an opportunity which greatly supplements and furthers my education.”

Smith refers to the research work she is doing at Yale with a theoretical physicist. She’s learning about Lattice QCD or strong force (one of the four fundamental forces of nature) and about theoretical particle physics. “I also learned html and designed a website for a QCD conference last May,” she says. Next year, she’s planning to do research in experimental physics at CCSU and has her sights set on studying physics in graduate school. She exclaims, “I must admit, I was shocked when I got my scholarship letter. For me, it was a great honor and source of inspiration. I felt as though someone recognized and believed in my abilities as a student.”

Kurkovsky, who takes particular satisfaction in the successes of the NSF scholarship recipients, this past January headed to Washington, DC, to serve as a NSF reviewer considering new grant applications.

He sees the NSF grant as another means of furthering excellence in learning. He observes, “I’m a pragmatist. If there’s a good job waiting in the software industry, I want my students to be prepared for a fulfilling professional life. If they want to further their education, I hope to provide a strong theoretical foundation. I want them to dream about what’s coming and be ready for the next step.”

—Geri Radacsi
Alum/Photo Editor Jordan Barnes: A Picture of Success

When did Jordan Barnes, a notable ’04 graduate of Central Connecticut State University with a bachelor’s degree in communication, first know she wanted to go into photography/photo editing—a field where she’d launch a high-profile career?

“While shopping in a supermarket at the age of seven with my father, I caught a glimpse of a hot pink Le Clique camera and I just had to have it and saved all my money to buy it,” she laughs. “I have loved photography ever since.”

Always eager to have a camera at the ready, Jordan, while studying at CCSU, landed a “dream” internship working at O, The Oprah Magazine.

“My eight-month internship at Oprah during college was the smartest thing I ever did. Having hands-on experience in the field I ultimately chose to go into really helped to launch such a successful career for me.”

HOW SHE MET OPRAH

Jordan “rubbed shoulders” with Oprah at the super star’s 50th birthday party at Harpo. She exudes, “That was one of the most unforgettable days of my life. I actually met Oprah for the first time at our staff Christmas party that she threw for us at The Four Seasons. We had our picture taken together. I’m sure I was probably shaking.”

During her college years, Jordan also worked full time for Art Rich Photography, gaining more firsthand experience behind the camera lens. “I was the assistant manager of the studio, wedding consultant, and photographer,” she explains. Art Rich was the place where I really gained my photography skills, as far as portraiture and wedding photography. I ultimately became a Certified Professional Photographer of Connecticut.”

After graduation, she moved back to New York City to follow her dream of a career in the magazine industry. She says she felt confident in the education CCSU had provided. “The communication program at CCSU is fantastic,” she declares. “Each and every one of the professors not only provides the education one would only hope to receive, but they are always there to help advise you one-on-one if you need absolutely anything.”

Who were her mentors at CCSU? She states, “Lois Koteen and William Bumpus. They are both so on point, so smart and definitely know about the real world. They have given me advice that will stay with me forever and taught me to be the absolute best person I can be. Most of all, they have taught me to never, ever give up.”

After freelancing at titles such as Food and Wine, Smart Money, and O at Home, Barnes soon took a staff position as the assistant photo editor of O, The Oprah Magazine. Today, Jordan is the senior photo editor for InStyle Magazine, Special Issues, and works closely with some of the nation’s top photographers, stylists, and celebrities.

GENE WILDER IS A FAV

She describes one of her most memorable experiences as assistant photo editor of O Magazine. “I helped to produce a shoot with Gene Wilder,” she comments. “One morning I got to my desk and had a message from him. Before you knew it, we were conversing back and forth about the shoot. He was so down to earth. In this industry you deal with so many publicists, but I loved that he wanted to handle everything himself. My aunt bought me Willy Wonka that Christmas.”

Today in her position at InStyle Magazine, where she’s been for two and a half years, Barnes works on the weddings, home, and makeover special issues. “So we cover fashion, beauty, home, still life... everything! Our offices are in the Time & Life Building in Manhattan,” she exclaims with typical exuberance.

Jordan has worked both at O Magazine and InStyle with first-rate photographers, including Cliff Watts, Rob Howard, Andrew MacPherson, Andrew Southam, and Matthew Rolston…to name a few.

Not to name drop, but she’s well-acquainted with the stylists Ted Gibson, Kevin Mancusso, Mai Quyn, Charlie Green, Billy B, and Carla Gentry.

WHAT SKILLS (PERHAPS ACQUIRED FROM HER CCSU EDUCATION) DOES SHE STILL USE TODAY?

Thoughtfully she responds: “I am so happy I majored in communication and focused on public relations and mass media. The knowledge that I gained at CCSU and the skills that I have gained throughout my various jobs have really helped me in my photo editing career. I am a photo producer. I need to be organized, pay attention to detail, and know what’s going on in the media at all times. It is my job to talk to people all day long, and I am thrilled that my professors at CCSU taught me the best ways to communicate effectively. I’m happy I took as many public speaking classes as I did.”

What surprises her the most about this job? “How much celebrity gossip I need to read!” she laughs.

— Geri Radacsi
Lead in the creation of organizational knowledge rather than try to manage it to improve business performance, advises Dr. Steven Cavaleri. In his scholarship, the CCSU professor of management and organization in the School of Business is revising the concept of knowledge management.

Leaders inspire employees to change from within; managers design systems to guide employees from outside-in; and administrators carefully execute policies and directives. It is very difficult to create knowledge within organizations without leaders who can demonstrate the value of knowledge through their own example.

“In the past there was a belief you can manage by controlling knowledge,” states Cavaleri. However, in his book Knowledge Leadership (Butterworth-Heinemann, 2006), which he co-authored with Sharon Seivert, president of The Coreporation, Inc., in Cambridge, MA, with CCSU Professor Lee W. Lee, a new powerful business strategy is proposed. He elaborates, “We believe that knowledge can’t be considered as an object, like data or information. We say truly useful knowledge cannot be created by trying to manage it. Effective knowledge-creation processes can only be led. We focus on leading the process of sharing, creating, validating, and codifying knowledge rather than controlling or managing it.”

A Harvard Business School book reviewer wrote of his latest book, Knowledge Leadership: “Knowledge management is a tad passé if all we imagine is managing the brainpower of our colleagues. More important these days, according to this book, is for individuals to actually lead the creation of knowledge in their organizations in a systematic and pragmatic way: That’s how innovation and competitive advantage take hold. This serious book offers a comprehensive framework in that direction, helping you first to evaluate your own ‘knowledge leadership’ style and then see the big picture within the company.”

**FUSING PRAGMATICS AND LIBERAL ARTS**

In 2006, the two management and organization professors collaborated on Inside Knowledge (Quality Press, 2006), a fictional book. It is a detailed exploration of what it would be like if an organization were created based on the ideas of Charles Sanders Peirce, the American philosopher and father of pragmatism. “In this imaginary world founded on the scientific method as proposed by Peirce, organizations would discover how things work reliably so innovations can be made and quality improved,” says Cavaleri.

What is the pragmatic value of his own writings and scholarship? Cavaleri muses. “I try to serve as a bridge between intellectual giants and business managers. I’m satisfied if I can effectively communicate even a small percentage of the complex ideas of people like Peirce and Jay Forrester, a pioneer in early digital computer development and the founder of system dynamics.

What’s unusual about Cavaleri’s scholarship is that from an academic’s viewpoint, he unifies the thinking of great philosophers and scientists as it relates to management. He laughs, “I infuse the body of a pragmatic business professor with a liberal arts mind.”

Aside from the three journal articles he has forthcoming this year, Cavaleri would like to research and write about risk intelligence. “In an organization, it would be advantageous to match a person’s risk managing proclivities with appropriate high- or low-risk job responsibilities,” he notes.

Wherever Cavaleri’s research takes him, he will continue to challenge business to operate in ways that insure a balanced, viable future for generations to come.

— Geri Radaci
Honors Program Provokes Thinking (continued from page 1)

Junior Denise Ripley, a secondary education major, who has been on the Dean’s List the past three years, readily admits she welcomes the scholarships as “a huge relief.” Still, it is the interdisciplinary flavor of her classes, she says, that has been “amazing.” Ripley recalls the course Images of Asian and European Women: A Comparative Approach, taught by Dr. Shizuko Tomoda and Dr. Paloma Lapuerta last spring. “We went to see the opera Madame Butterfly. I’d never been to an opera, and it was so beautiful, breathtaking.” Such excursions, for example to the Metropolitan Museum of Art or the Natural History Museum in New York City, enliven concepts. Tomoda states, “We covered a variety of topics, including “Women and War,” the Vietnam War and war widows (both American and Vietnamese), Comfort Women, and the survivors of the Hiroshima atomic bombing. We discussed and read stories about Vietnam War widows after watching a powerful documentary film Regret to Inform.”

A FEAST OF COURSES
Honors students enjoy a unique learning situation in the Social Science and Society: Education and Change in American Society course. It is taught by the father-daughter duo Dr. Daniel Mulcahy, professor of teacher education, and Dr. Cara Mulcahy, assistant professor of reading and Language arts, who cover such topics as the culture gap, the role of family in education, gender bias in the curriculum, and power relations in school and society. “Perhaps the most striking feature of our experience of teaching together is the manner in which it impacts the class, creating not only a sense of wonder but a degree of camaraderie between students and professors that greatly supports the learning environment of the class,” declares Daniel Mulcahy.

In the Western/World Cultures III: Moments/Movements/Migrations course, team-taught by Dr. Charles Meneche, associate professor of music, and Ron Todd, professor of art, students learn from original source materials, drawing extensively on a meld of music, film, and the visual arts. Last spring, students performed, in class, poems they had written modeled after the Beat poets. “They got to experience the atmosphere of a ’50s coffee house,” says Todd. “This semester, we are helping students record sound to be modified in GarageBand and used to heighten the melodramatic expression of old silent films.”

In Science and Society: Disasters, taught by Dr. Mark Evans, associate professor of physics and earth sciences, and Dr. Patrick Foster, associate professor of technology and engineering education (K–12), the class covers such topics as hazard evaluation, human response, catastrophe theory, and contingency planning. Larsen, who team teaches with Dr. Kenneth Feder, professor of anthropology, the Science and Society: Science and Pseudoscience course, says, “We encourage building critical thinking skills to examine astrology, UFOs, Atlantis, and Intelligent Design.”

WHAT’S DIFFERENT AND NEW
The Honors Program curriculum has broadened. It’s grown from a one- to a three-year track comprising 36 credits.

“I remember when we concentrated on Western culture and a whirlwind tour of reading the Great Books with intense concentration and rapidity,” reminisces Larsen. “We met at 8 a.m. five days a week in the Special Collections Room of the library. Some 25 of us started, but there was a lot of attrition. And there were no perks—like scholarships. We were there, just like our kids today, because we wanted the challenge of stretching our learning.”

In addition to the Western Culture component, there are now three other general areas in the curriculum—Science and Society, World Cultures, and Writing and Research, which includes completion of a thesis. All Honors Program courses satisfy General Education requirements.

“There are some 200 Honors Program students these days, and the successful completion rate is much higher even though the program runs three years,” observes Larsen.

PRIVILEGES OF THE PROGRAM
Honors students enjoy certain benefits, including priority registration, their own Honors Center in the library, and a computer lab handy for the preparation of papers and doing research for class projects.

Scholarships are an added attraction. Students who maintain a 3.20 GPA both overall and in their Honors courses receive a half in-state tuition scholarship. After the end of their first year in the program, they become eligible for a full in-state tuition scholarship if they achieve a 3.50 GPA overall and in their Honors classes.

NOTABLE PROGRAMS
As part of the CCSU Student Union Board of Governors Living Room Lecture Series, Dr. Joe Bertolino and William Leipold recently presented: “When the Gays Move into Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood.” The interactive program addressed the issues that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people face in a world of heterosexual norms. Bertolino, vice president for student life and chair of the department of student personnel at Queens College in New York City, and Leipold, associate dean for academic student services in the school of criminal justice at Rutgers University, Newark, shared their personal experiences as gay fraternity men and student affairs professionals and discussed the reactions of family and friends.

Preventing Sexual Harassment (continued from page 4)

Q. How does the University determine whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment?
A. The University looks at the totality of circumstances, whether the conduct was sexual, whether it was unwanted or unwelcome, whether it was offensive from the perspective of a reasonable person, and whether it was severe and/or pervasive. (A complainant need not expressly reject a sexual advance in order for the advance to be considered unwelcome.)

Q. What protections exist against retaliatory behavior?
A. University policy and federal and state law prohibit retaliation against a person who opposes an allegedly discriminatory act. That includes any acts relative to their jobs or to their education. Persons may file separate retaliation complaints with the Office of Diversity and Equity.

Q. How can sexual harassment be prevented?
A. The best prevention is education and training of all members of the campus community and a speedy response to any and all complaints. Mandatory training is ongoing for all newly hired or promoted managerial and supervisory staff.
Honors Program Provokes Thinking (continued from page 6)

Dr. Don Adams, associate professor of philosophy, and Dr. Faith Hentschel, professor of art, in Western Culture I: Ancient Greek Art and Philosophy guide students through the Golden Age of Greece, looking at what shaped Classical Greek art. Students study the literature, history, and philosophy of the Greeks to understand their reflections on war, political power, law, and justice.

“Nothing brings me greater joy than seeing our graduates succeed in the real world,” says Larsen. One such graduate (in addition to herself, of course) is Robert Zwick ’96, an actuary at CIGNA. Proud to be an alumni donor to the Honors Program, he remarks, “The Honors Program opened my mind to new ideas and different ways of thinking and approaching an issue or situation. The experience I gained through the debates and the thesis helps me to be better able to construct arguments and defend them.”

— Geri Radaci

Interim Chief Diversity Officer Named

Ernie Marquez (right), who most recently worked with the Connecticut Small Business Development Center, has been named CCSU’s Interim Chief Diversity Officer. The search for a permanent CDO is continuing. Marquez, whose appointment was made by President Jack Miller, is very familiar with Central and the Connecticut State University system. In 2004 and 2005 he served as CCSU’s Interim Chief Human Resources Officer. Prior to that he was an Executive Officer for Human Resources at the CSU system office.

Graduating Seniors to Present Their Work to the CCSU Community

The CCSU Samuel S. T. Chen Fine Arts Center will host a capstone exhibition, displaying the work of seniors graduating in studio art. The exhibit runs from April 30–May 9, and the opening reception will take place from 4:00–7:00 p.m., on April 30. Gallery hours are 1:00–4:00 p.m., Monday–Friday. Admission is free; open to the public. For more information, call 860-832-2633.
Inaugural Global Sustainability and Climate Change Symposium

One of the largest and most comprehensive symposiums on climate change and global sustainability in the nation took place on campus recently. The event, themed “Raising Awareness and Promoting Change,” brought together government, academic, and environmental leaders, as well as lay-people, for three days of study and information sharing in what coordinators hope will become an annual event.

Similar gatherings, designed to call attention to environmental issues and foster debate among presidential candidates during the height of the primary season, were held across the nation, but, as CCSU Professor of Geography Charles Button, who put together the local event, said in a Hartford Advocate article written by reporter Adam Bulger, organizers told him the CCSU program was among the largest in the country.

The progenitor of the project was Eban Goodstein, an economics professor from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon. Button was an early supporter who indicated he was upset about the ways in which global warming was being reported in the media.

“I’m a scientist,” he told the Advocate. “I teach about climatology and physical geography. I was flustered. I knew it was a severe issue that needed to be addressed, but it was presented in the news as if it were an opinion, not a scientific fact.”

Although the Central “teach-in” was initially designed as a one-day event, mostly featuring lectures and similar academic presentations, Button said he realized there was sufficient support for a larger, more interactive conference, and the three-day local conclave was born. Button, who is co-chair of the CCSU Climate Action Coalition, and CCSU President Dr. Jack Miller welcomed attendees who then listened to an opening address by Gina McCarthy, commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection. Other presenters offered a wide range of perspectives and represented an array of disciplines and industries. Dan Olson, a Merrill Lynch financial advisor, spoke about the evolving concept of “green investing,” while such issues as “Living a Sustainable Lifestyle: How to Become a Carbon Conscious Consumer” and policy recommendations from the Tree, Culture, and Tourism Task Force were also the subjects of separate lectures or panel discussions, the latter by Assistant Majority Leader of the Connecticut General Assembly George Wilbur.

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A performance of “Circus for a Fragile Planet,” using traditional circus skills—such as juggling and acrobatics—to educate audiences about global warming and other environmental issues, was presented at the symposium.

Mickey Wiernasz (above), director of sales for Equidex Energy, a firm with products aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, demonstrates a point at the CCSU conference.

Dr. Charles Button (above), assistant professor of geography and organizer of the recent inaugural symposium, offers greetings to attendees. There were roughly 1,700 such programs across the United States. The one held at CCSU was one of the largest.

Roger Smith (above), coordinator of the Connecticut Climate Coalition, discussed the role citizens can play in moving the state toward global warming solutions at a CCSU symposium aimed at raising awareness and promoting change on environmental issues.

Connecticut Commissioner of Consumer Protection Gina McCarthy (above) was a keynote speaker at the three-day Global Sustainability and Climate Change Symposium held on the CCSU campus.

A performance of “Circus for a Fragile Planet,” using traditional circus skills—such as juggling and acrobatics—to educate audiences about global warming and other environmental issues, was presented at the symposium.
Alicandro Named Director of Residence Life

Jean Alicandro (left) was recently named Director of Residence Life. A veteran employee at the University, she previously held the position of Associate Director of Residence Life at CCSU.

In making the announcement of Alicandro’s selection, Dr. Margaret Y. Toston, vice president for student affairs, noted her “excellent leadership and organizational skills as demonstrated by her ability to assess and evaluate programs and services, develop a strategic budget, and develop and measure outcomes.” Dr. Toston added, “Ms. Alicandro is also highly skilled in collaborating across reporting lines and using technology to improve service delivery to students.”

A CCSU graduate, Alicandro has been at the University in a professional capacity for nearly twenty-five years and has served as acting associate director, Student Activities/Leadership Development, and assistant director, Student Center, in addition to her work in the department she now heads. She is involved in all phases of campus life, with a primary emphasis on housing.

Residence Life operates nine dorms on campus.

— Bart Fisher

Inaugural Global Sustainability and Climate Change Symposium

(continued from page 8)

Two U.S. congressmen—CCSU graduate John Larson, who has represented the state’s first congressional district since 1998, and Chris Murphy, serving his first term from the fifth district—addressed conference participants and fielded questions via a video hook-up hailed as “carbon neutral.”

An “environmental expo,” featuring information on and from area organizations, governmental agencies, universities, and businesses with environmentally friendly policies, was also part of the CCSU program.

Even nutritional concerns were addressed when Bill Duesing, executive director of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut, spoke at one session. He made the point that “Eating locally, seasonally, and organically is a powerful step to cutting fossil energy use while promoting farming methods that store carbon in soil and support biodiversity.”

— Bart Fisher

Former Chief Public Defender Becomes CCSU Faculty Member

Gerard A. Smyth (left), Connecticut’s former Chief Public Defender, has joined the CCSU faculty as an adjunct professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice. Department chair Dr. Stephen Cox said, “The department is very excited about having Gerry Smyth join our faculty. His wealth of experience as the Chief Public Defender will greatly enhance our students’ understanding of the needs and rights of accused persons.”

Smyth has also joined the staff of the Governor William A. O’Neill Endowed Chair in Public Policy and Practical Politics. Steve Kliger, executive director of CCSU’s Center for Public Policy and Social Research, noted, “Gerry Smyth’s duties will center on contributing to the intellectual life of the entire CCSU community. This will include a combination of teaching classes in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice and linking students and faculty to the outreach activities of the Governor William A. O’Neill Endowed Chair in Public Policy and Practical Politics and the Institute for the Study of Crime and Justice.”

That view was enthusiastically shared by Andrew Clark, director of the Institute. He said that his organization “looks forward to utilizing Smyth’s expertise and extensive network of contacts to assist in its criminal justice outreach efforts.”

Smyth has already begun teaching. His current course, Wrongful Conviction of the Innocent, has introduced a number of important, knowledgeable speakers to CCSU students, including the wrongfully convicted and later acquitted James Tillman and his attorneys, Connecticut Innocence Project Director Karen Goodrow, Deputy Chief Public Defender Brian Carlow, and Connecticut Wrongful Convictions Advisory Commission member Attorney Hope Seeley.

A graduate of Fairfield University and University of Connecticut Law School, Smyth founded the Connecticut Innocence Project. He also served on the state’s Wrongful Convictions Advisory Commission.

— Bart Fisher

Extra Credit (continued from page 7)

CSU Professor of History Norton Mezvinsky was a panelist at the Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies’ December symposium on “Transatlantic Strategies in Combating Terrorism.”

Sara O’Leary, a senior working for her bachelor’s in international business with a concentration in marketing, was awarded the crown in the Miss Polonia Connecticut pageant. The pageant is open to anyone of Polish descent. “You become more involved with the Polish community,” she said, “and you get to learn more about your heritage. I had a wonderful time.” Pageant winners are also awarded $1,000 which O’Leary regarded as a wonderful scholarship opportunity.

Professor of Biomolecular Sciences Cheryl Watson was selected as a finalist for the 2007 “Women of Innovation Award,” organized annually by the Connecticut Technology Council. The award recognizes leading women technology managers, leaders, researchers, and academicians.
Addressing Social Justice through Service Learning

Trinity College Professor Dina Anselmi (above, standing) was among the distinguished panelists on hand at a recent discussion of social learning. Held in Founders Hall, the event was co-sponsored by the CCSU Provost’s Office and the Hartford Consortium of Higher Education. Dr. Anselmi, who also serves as coordinator of community learning at Trinity, teaches classes designed to involve students in a variety of community learning projects. In her senior seminar, Anselmi noted, “students work at community organizations focused on ameliorating risk and promoting resilience.” Other panel members, who have developed successful course-based projects locally, nationally, and internationally, included CCSU Associate Professor of History Briann Greenfield, University of Hartford Professor of Philosophy Bernard denOuden, and Professor Margery Steinberg of the Barney School of Business, University of Hartford.

Lecture on Palestinian and Jewish Filmmaking Perspectives

Amy Kronish (left), a consultant in the field of Jewish and Israeli film, was invited to speak at CCSU by the Hillel Jewish Student Club. Her lecture, “Understanding the Other—Palestinian and Jewish Perspectives,” highlighted the controversial issues and trends in contemporary filmmaking, incorporating both Jewish and Palestinian viewpoints. Her lecture also included selected films of coexistence education.

MEMORIAM

Dr. William F. Donovan, Jr., died suddenly on January 10, 2008. He joined the CCSU staff in 1955, retiring in 1992 after 37 years of service. During his years with CCSU he was an active professor of history and social sciences, organizing seminars, such as the “Russian Winter Festival and Seminar” in which he and Dr. Louis C. Addazio, professor of history, took a group of students to key locations in the Soviet Union in the winter of 1975–76 (during the Cold War). In 1970, Dr. Donovan was one of eight New England educators chosen to take a two-month tour of East Asia, guided by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. In 1967, he served as CCSU’s Faculty Senate president. In addition, he served as a consultant to the New York Stock Exchange and the Joint Council on Economic Education of New York, as well as on the State Small Business Advisory Council.
Blue Chip Access Now Available Online

As of the beginning of the fall semester, CCSU’s Blue Chip service has evolved into a new Online Card Office. CCSU faculty and students can now access the service and retrieve information pertaining to the cards online.

Since 1997, the Blue Chip Card program has allowed students and employees to use their cards as declining balance debit cards. Funds transferred to the card can be used to pay for books, vending machine products and laundry services. Many off-campus merchants in New Britain accept the card for gasoline and food services. The card cannot be used to purchase tobacco, lottery tickets, or alcohol—assuring parents that funds allocated to the card are used for student necessities. Over $2,000,000 is deposited annually.

Blue Chip cards also serve as photo identification and as a key for doors and parking garages on campus, helping to insure the safety of the college community. Prior to the implementation of the Online Card Office, users could only request transaction history on campus. Users can now access balance information and up to 120 days worth of transaction history online.

In the event a card is lost or stolen, it can now be reported online immediately. In the event that vending machines malfunction, refunds can be directed back to the account.

A secure Internet connection is provided by CCSU to access the Online Card Office. The Blue Chip card continues to provide the campus community with increasingly expanding options, functionality, and peace of mind.

— Christopher Michalski

NEW BookS

Robert Emiliani, professor of manufacturing and construction management, recently published Practical Lean Leadership: A Strategic Leadership Guide for Executives, his fifth book since 2003. It offers principles and the means to connect workplace and marketplace realities, tying together leadership, behaviors, and competencies which can be used individually or for leadership teams in self-paced group training.

Jonathon Shea, CCSU adjunct lecturer of modern languages, has written Going Home: A Guide to Polish-American Family History Research, recently published by Language and Lineage Press in Danbury. Shea is an accredited genealogist with three decades of genealogical research experience and knowledge of several foreign languages.

Dr. Shou-San Wang, associate director and coordinator of engineering support, Media Services, recently published two books in the field of electromagnetic compatibility (EMC)—Electromagnetic Compatibility Application Technologies, Techniques and Technological Processes in Print Board Design and Electromagnetic Compatibility Technologies, Techniques and Technological Processes in System Installation (China Machine Press). The latest volumes are part of a five-book collection. The first book, Electromagnetic Compatibility, Principle and Application, was published in Chinese two years ago also by China Machine Press, a major scientific and engineering publisher.

Celebration of Cultures

The 21st Annual International Festival, “Celebration of Cultures,” will be held on April 13 in Alumni Hall, Student Center. Festivities will take place from 12–4 p.m. and will include sharing of music, dance, food, art, and artifacts, with each continent represented. The International Relations Club and the George R. Muirhead Center for International Education will sponsor the event. For additional information, contact Elsa Monsy, festival coordinator, at 860.832.3559 or st_monsyels@ccsu.edu.

CCSU’s Middle East Lecture Series Continues

Dr. Trita Parsi (right), co-founder and current president of the National Iranian American Council, spoke as part of CCSU’s Middle East Lecture Series. He focused on the topic of his recently published book, Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings with Israel, Iran, and the United States (Yale University Press). He is a major authority on Iranian, Israeli, and American relations and has conducted more than 130 interviews with senior officials in all three countries. His articles have been published in numerous prominent publications, and he has served as a frequent commentator on US-Iranian relations and Middle Eastern affairs. He has appeared on PBS News Hour with Jim Lehrer, as well as BBC World, CNN, CNN International, Al Jazeera, C-Span, National Public Radio, NBC, MSNBC, Voice of America, and British Channel 4.
Blue Devil Student: Tristan Blackwood

Tristan Blackwood often makes scoring look easy. The CCSU men’s basketball senior guard finished his career with over 1,600 career points and as the Northeast Conference’s all-time leading three-point shooter. Those aren’t bad numbers for a six-footer who averaged just nine points per game in high school. Blackwood says scoring wasn’t easy, though.

“Growing up I wasn’t a real scorer,” the Toronto, Ontario, native noted. “Scoring is something new to me. I could shoot, but I wanted to look out for the other guys first. I have the confidence to shoot now. The coaching staff, my teammates, even the fans, they gave me the confidence to shoot the ball.”

And so he shot, and he scored. Blackwood averaged just 5.2 points per game as a freshman, hitting 30 three-pointers. Those numbers climbed to 14.3 and 71 in his sophomore season, and then 17.1 and 122 during last season’s run to the NCAA Tournament. With 491 points and 105 three-pointers in 2007–08, Blackwood ended his stay in New Britain at 1,605 career points and 328 career threes. He is sixth on the CCSU all-time scoring list and is seventh among the country’s active players in career three-pointers made. All the while, Blackwood still found time to look out for the other guys. “I’m always trying to get other people involved,” he said.

He has gotten those “other people” involved 506 times. Blackwood’s 506 career assists made him one of six players in Northeast Conference history to reach 1,500 points and 500 assists. He was the first in CCSU history.

And despite his scoring prowess, he was recognized more for his play on the other end of the court. A back-to-back first team all-conference honoree, Blackwood says he takes more pride in defense.

“Defense wins championships,” he notes.

Northeast Conference coaches selected Blackwood as the NEC Defensive Player of the Year as a junior and senior. His 139 career steals rank sixth in the all-time CCSU annals. They are often hidden behind the offensive numbers, but his tenacity and ability to shut down opposing teams’ best players on a nightly basis have never gone unnoticed.

“He sets the bar for us in energy, every practice and game, since he has been here,” Blue Devil head coach Howie Dickenman told Tom Yantz of The Hartford Courant.

And Dickenman rarely, almost never really, had to worry about Blackwood not suiting up. Number 35 appeared in a school record 119 games. He started a school record 119 games, including 78 straight. He missed only two games.

“I really think we are one of the hardest working college programs,” Blackwood said. “Coach (Dickenman) works us hard, but he makes sure we never hit the wall. He really helped me make sure I got through the wall, climbed over the wall.”

If you work hard, you get better. Blackwood preaches those words to the underclassmen. It’s something he learned from those before him, and what he credits for last season’s run to the NCAA Tournament.

“It’s really hard when you first get here,” he said. “You have to work hard and have heart. Last season’s seniors [Ingo Beaudet, Javier Mojica, Obie Nwadike, and Jemimo Sobers] all worked hard, and they all had heart.”

And this year’s crop of newcomers never lost touch with the message. In this season’s media guide the first-year players were asked what teammate they would like to be. Blackwood’s name appears before a one sentence explanation repeatedly. Twenty-nine games later, the freshmen have a little more to add.

“His work ethic is one of the best I’ve seen as long as I’ve been playing,” Ken Horton said.

“He goes 110 percent every day. Playing with him and practicing against him will certainly make me a better player,” Jermaine Washington commented.

And David Simmons added, “He wasn’t the most vocal person, but he led by example. He left it out on the floor every night. We know how good he is, but it probably won’t hit us until we take the court for the first open gym, the first practice next season.”

“I thought I had a good work ethic,” Shemik Thompson added. “His puts mine to shame.”

Blackwood is just as driven off the court. If unable to continue his basketball career, Blackwood, a marketing major, will venture off into the business world upon graduation.

“My goal is to get a job and work hard to keep moving forward,” he said.

Bobbie Koplowitz, the men’s basketball academic coordinator and the woman Blackwood calls his mother away from home, is certain he will continue to shine. She praises his growth from a kid to a man, admiring his leadership, respect, and humor.

“You can see it on the court,” Koplowitz said. “I have the luxury to see it in the rest of his life. I adore him. He’s just a great person.”

— Jason Stronz