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Intensive English Language Program Preps
for Academic Success

Christie Ward had a brainstorm. Could the
men’s Blue Devils soccer team possibly use some
Brazilian flavor?

The associate director of the George R. Muirhead
Center for International Education and coordinator of
the Intensive English Language Program (IELP) last
September was advising Flavio Simao. He was newly
enrolled in the IELP and a bit homesick and strug-
gling with culture shock. Ward decided Simao should
meet Shaun Green, the CCSU men’s soccer coach.
“Flavio is a mature student who has been a high
school physical fitness teacher and worked with a pro
soccer team in Brazil, and I thought Flavio could use
his skills as a soccer team volunteer, practice his
English, and make new friends,” she remembers.

Each day Simao “drilled the guys, getting them in
good physical condition,” and he says, “I bring good
energy. I always think ‘winning.’ In Brazil [which
won the World Cup in soccer five times], we never
think ‘losing.’” He grins brightly, “They say I bring
them luck.” Indeed, the men’s soccer team became
only the second CCSU squad to win an NCAA
Div. I tournament game, and CCSU is just the
second Northeast Conference team to reach the
Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament.

Since Simao hopes to earn a master’s degree in
physical education from CCSU, he enrolled in the
IELP to sharpen his English skills in reading, writing,
and speaking. Once he passes the Test of English as a
Foreign Language (TOEFL), he will be eligible for
admission. He lauds IELP, and in particular Ward and
Green who, he says, “gave me the chance, helped and
supported me. They respected me.”

WHY STUDENTS CHOOSE IELP

Like Flavio many IELP students are seeking matricula-
tion into American universities, and it’s the IELP mis-
sion to provide instruction in American English,
introduce students to American culture, and facilitate
transition of these students into mainstream academic
courses. “Our primary goal is to enable students to
learn English so they will be ready for an environment
where English is the language of instruction. However,
we also teach students who enroll for professional or
personal enrichment and to improve communicative
competence in their world,” explains Ward.

IELP, a self-funding entity which Ward describes as a
“huge asset to the University,” contributes to CCSU’s
distinction as a Center for Excellence in International
Education. “Some CCSU students get to know IELP
continued on page 2

Intermediate-level IELP students host a goodbye party for Father Francisco Ntanda (back row, left), a priest from Angola who
spent a semester studying English before returning to his home parish in December. Korean students flash the peace/victory
signs, having adopted an American tradition.
students, discover commonalities, and learn that differences are not impediments to communication. These CCSU students may be inspired to study abroad.”

Students in IELP are enrolled from nearly every continent. During the fall 2007 session, 38 were in IELP’s full-time intensive day program: 34 percent European (Hungary, Macedonia, Poland, Turkey); 32 percent Asian (Korea, Taiwan, Thailand); 26 percent Latin American (Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Panama) and 8 percent African (Angola, Gabon, Niger). There were 26 students enrolled in IELP’s part-time, non-intensive evening classes last semester: 46 percent Latin American, 42 percent European, and 3 percent Asian.

IELP’S CURRICULUM APPROACH

“Our core curriculum is divided into two major skill areas: listening/speaking/pronunciation and reading/writing/grammar,” explains Ward. The intensive approach helps students acquire language skills quickly, because an immersion technique is used. The curriculum consists of six levels of courses, ranging from beginning, to intermediate, advanced, and transition programs. A full-time student takes 20 hours per week of training in the skill areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

As part of its outreach initiative into the local community, IELP offers the highly successful University Prep Program, a non-credit, advanced-level program for non-native speakers of English. Ward says it appeals to area immigrant students, au pairs, and international students looking for additional support. “People who have finished adult education and want to move to the next level are attracted to the evening classes since many hold day jobs,” observes Ward.

IELP provides professional support for practica and assistantship for students pursuing their master’s in TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages). “We work with the China Business Center and with the English Department’s TESOL program. For example, a TESOL student could be matched with an IELP teacher as a practicum student and could possibly guest teach in one of our classes. In return TESOL students provide tutoring and conversation support for our IELP students. It’s a valuable connection for both.”

CONSERVATION PARTNERS VOLUNTEERS

The Conversation Partners Program is another means of pairing volunteers with international students who are interested in improving their English conversation skills while learning about life in the U.S. “Our Conversation Partners volunteers include CCSU students (who might be going abroad and want to gain cultural knowledge), individuals from such organizations as the United Way, high school students fulfilling a public service requirement, senior citizens, and our own CCSU faculty and staff people,” states Ward. “We want our IELP students to be integrated into American society and have contacts outside our supportive bubble.”

Recreational activities in the form of social outings and field trips bolster the sense of fun and community. “We go to Ellis Island, and, through reading assignments—especially memoirs—we explore a sense of the massive human experiment and history of immigration. IELP students have traveled to the Norman Rockwell Museum to view its “Four Freedoms” paintings, visited Block Island, and, most recently, toured the Mashantucket Museum to learn about the Native Americans of Connecticut.

IELP’s distinction, Ward asserts, is that “our students say we treat them like extended family.” Carmetta Williams, who handles applications and administrative matters, is helpful and supportive. Students get a good feeling even before they arrive here.”

Sometimes the assistance IELP offers extends beyond academics—as when Ward helped an international student who had been victimized by an unscrupulous NYC cab driver to the tune of $300. “The young girl knew almost no English, but by using a dictionary and mime, and thanks to dedicated efforts by a Port Authority officer who was outraged by the crime, we were able to gather enough information to nab and prosecute this culprit,” declares a determined Ward.

She reflects, “In IELP we do diversity very well. We have so many different students from an array of countries, and while they are being immersed in learning English, they surmount the challenges of living in a new country and form new friendships.”

—Geri Radacsi
Leyla Zidani-Eroglu: Exploring the Miraculous Structures of Language

What attracted Leyla Zidani-Eroglu to the study of linguistics? “It’s thrilling,” the associate professor of English remarks simply. “It is stimulating to take language, an integral part of daily interaction, and study it, in and of itself, and be able to figure out how it works as a system. I remember saying to my thesis adviser that I’d stayed up until two a.m. struggling with a linguistic puzzle, and I knew how it felt to be exhilarated. I could feel the blood flowing in my brain which was working at peak capacity.”

The study of linguistics—which, Zidani-Eroglu points out, uses the scientific method to understand the structure of human language by looking at the forms and properties of phrases, sentences, sounds, and meanings—is demanding. Social, cultural, cognitive, and historical facets of human language can also be explored.

Dr. Zidani-Eroglu has excelled in this discipline. She holds the doctorate and master’s in linguistics from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, a master’s in applied linguistics (supported by a Fulbright Scholarship) at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, and a BA from Cukurova University in Adana, Turkey. Her language “report card” reads: Turkish-native; English-excellent; German-fluent; Arabic-fluent; French—good reading comprehension skills.

INTELLECTUALLY EMPOWERING STUDENTS
Having joined the English Department in 1997, Zidani-Eroglu (an Excellence in Teaching award nominee) says one of her teaching objectives is to help students “feel intellectually empowered.” Whether she’s teaching Introduction to Linguistics, Language Acquisition, Syntax, Language Universals and Language Typology, a TESOL practicum or Language Testing in English as a Second Language, she sees herself as a facilitator: “Learning is applying analytical thinking, so we do problem solving, hold discussions, and learn the proper terminology.” She exclaims, “I like feeling the energy that radiates from their eyes.”

Zidani-Eroglu’s enthusiasm overlaps into her role as coordinator of TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages). The program, housed in the English Department, offers undergraduates the Introduction to Linguistics and the Study of Language courses. Both a master’s degree and certification in TESOL are also offered.

As she shepherds TESOL, which is geared to teachers or those interested in careers in testing services at private companies, Zidani-Eroglu advises some 50 students in putting together a program leading to the capstone—either a thesis or a comprehensive examination.

Grant Rogers, a TESOL graduate student, is now working for Educational Testing Services (ETS) as a content Scoring Leader for the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communications). He states, “The curriculum of the TESOL program gave me a solid foundation allowing me to understand the linguistic concepts used and be able to communicate them. I found that the Second Language Testing class was particularly useful in helping to understand and apply holistic scoring which is used in the TOEIC program.”

PRAISE FROM TESOL ALUMS
Scot Anderson, another TESOL graduate, says, “What I admire most about Dr. Zidani-Eroglu is, simply, her depth of knowledge, her ability to expound in significant detail and in directions I never would have considered.”

He has been teaching ESL and EFL for some 11 years in China, Taiwan, and the U.S. and presently works for the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), which promotes language education and does testing. One of the tests measures oral proficiency—the Oral Proficiency Interview computer (OPIC), and Anderson is an OPIC rater. He recalls, “Around the time I was in Dr. Zidani-Eroglu’s Linguistics 400 class in the spring of 2007, I got a new student—a Taiwanese man who wanted to focus strictly on pronunciation. Having a more detailed understanding of the International Phonetic Alphabet and how consonants and vowels are physically formed with articulators (tongue, teeth, alveolar ridge, etc.) in various positions throughout the mouth from front to back, it was easier for me to address this student’s pronunciation issues.”

A GROUND-BREAKING SCHOLAR
Making it seem easy, Zidani-Eroglu combines teaching, her administrative duties, and creative scholarship in complex research areas of linguistics: theory; syntax/semantic interface; syntax of Turkish; and comparative syntax. On her spring 2006 sabbatical leave, she was visiting scholar at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst’s Linguistics Department. Professor Kyle Johnson lauded her contributions: “Professor Zidani-Eroglu is a well-known expert on the syntax and semantics of Turkish complementation. While here she began ground-breaking work on Turkish comparative constructions, a complex construction-type which presents special problems for the syntax/semantics interface. In recent years, a small body of work has emerged that presents an interesting typological image of this construction, and Professor Zidani-Eroglu’s work will be the first time that Turkish enters into the picture.”

Having presented her Turkish language research to professional meetings in the U.S. and abroad, Zidani-Eroglu has also published and presented her ideas on “scrambling” at international conferences. She explains, “It had been thought that scrambling—word order variations—did not contribute to the meaning of a sentence. Now we know, scrambling is not only stylistic, but order variation correlates with certain assumptions made in discourse.”

Another misapprehension she has challenged is the notion that some languages are superior to others. She elaborates, “The building blocks of language are identical in any number of languages. It doesn’t matter if language is spoken in an industrialized country or in a remote, geographic island. The essence of those languages is the same. We may have a bias to think some languages are more sophisticated, but linguistically speaking there is no basis for making such distinctions.”

As if awed by this conclusion, Zidani-Eroglu reminds: “Isn’t it fascinating trying to understand why language is the way it is? To me, seeing how the raw materials in various languages are the same is really miraculous. The more we know about the inner workings of language and the brain, the more we understand the mind and human nature.”

—Geri Radaci
CCSU Alum Donates Emergency Warning Systems

Philip W. Kurze, a 1972 CCSU graduate, is donating a Whelen Mass Notification Warning System to the University. The unit comprises two omni-directional, non-rotating electronic voice warning systems and includes radio controls and cables, as well as shipping and complete installation by trained specialists. Each system meets the criteria for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Guidelines for Outdoor Warning Systems. Kurze is making the contribution to "help assure the safety of students, faculty, employees, and campus visitors."

Kurze serves as Vice President of Whelen Engineering Company, which manufactures the warning systems, and notes they "provide warning and direction for people around the world who are subject to hurricanes, tornadoes, tsunamis, wild-fires, earthquakes, mud-slides, volcanoes, hazardous chemical releases, and other man-made or natural disasters."

Another benefit is that students, faculty, and visitors do not need a personal device to receive the warning. He says the system is "an effective and efficient means to alert and inform large numbers of people."

Since his graduation, Kurze has worked as a police officer, volunteer firefighter, fire marshal, and police commissioner. For the past 14 years, he's been at Whelen Engineering Company in Chester, CT. He states: "I am proud to say that, in addition to my being a Central alumnus, my daughter is a recent graduate of CCSU."

Richard Bachoo, the University's chief administrative officer, whose responsibilities include public safety, says, "Current thinking about emergency notification is for institutions to have a multi-tiered approach, featuring just such outdoor warning devices, plus coordinated web, email, and telephonic systems." He adds, "With a new CCSU system-wide emergency notifier coming online some time in the new year, Philip Kurze's generous gift will provide a critical piece for Central's campus security."

Christopher Gallagan, vice president for institutional advancement, notes, "It is truly gratifying when a CCSU alum reflects on the benefits of the education received here and responds in such a generous manner."

President Jack Miller regards the system as a further measure of public safety to the campus. "In a post-9/11 world, we welcome the arrival of this new state-of-the-art system."

— Christopher Michalski

MEMORIAM

Evelyn M. Karwoski, former secretary for the Mathematical Sciences Department, died January 13, 2008. She began her career at CCSU in 1966 and retired in 1979. She served the department for 12 years.

Dr. Helen R. Abadiano, professor of reading and language arts, is the 2007–2008 recipient of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the Connecticut Reading Association (CRA) Award for exemplary service in the promotion of literacy. The award was presented at the 56th Annual CRA Conference on November 2. Among her notable contributions to promoting literacy regionally and nationally is her strong advocacy for adult literacy education that earned her an Ambassador of Literacy recognition by the Literacy Volunteers of Central Connecticut. She also serves as editor of The Dragon Lode, the IRA's Journal of the Children's Literature and Reading Special Interest Group.

The third annual “Latino De Oro” (Golden Latino) 2007 Award Ceremony was held recently in Torp Theatre. CCSU's Javier Ceja, an international business student, was honored as Student of the Year. In the “sports” category, Javier Mojica, a CCSU alumnus and former basketball player who was named Northeast Conference Player of the Year 2006–07, was honored as well. The event recognizes Latino individuals, and others, who make significant contributions to the Connecticut Hispanic community.

A team of CCSU students who competed in the Travelers IT Business Case Competition on Friday, November 16, 2007, won third place. Team members were Steve Conforti, Justin DiMarco, Steven Edwards, and David Lewis. The University of Syracuse placed first, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute placed second. CCSU surpassed UCONN, which placed fourth, and the University of Wisconsin, which placed fifth, in the all-day event. CCSU's team selected “Travelers Goes Green” as a case topic. Teams had several hours to prepare their cases and presentations. The CCSU students delivered a high-level technical case and presentation, titled “From Red to Green,” which included server virtualization and other energy-saving initiatives. CCSU faculty team sponsors were Dr. Tom Jarmoszko, associate professor of management information systems, and Dr. Olga Petkova, professor of management information systems.

Francis Gagliardi, associate director of library services, was recently honored by the Plainville Public Library Board of Trustees, when, in recognition of his 31 years of service on the Board (16 as chair), it was announced that the trustees meeting room would be named after him. Gagliardi served as co-chair of a committee that raised over $300,000 for the Plainville library.

The Town of Windsor’s Human Relations Commission and Citizens for a United Windsor (CUW) presented a 2007 Windsor Bridge-Builders Award to Patricia Gardner, associate director of graduate recruitment and admissions. Gardner is the
Focus on Scholarship: José Carlos del Ama
Analyzing the Power of PR, from Plato to the Internet

A
n international aura surrounds José Carlos del Ama. He and the members of his family are citizens of the world, each holding a different passport: del Ama from Spain; his wife, Liliana, from Venezuela; daughter, Aimara, from Germany; and son, Gonzalo, from the U.S. Since he grew up in Spain, studied and worked in Germany, and has extensive experience in both the study and practice of public relations worldwide, the associate professor of communication brings a global perspective to his public relations/public opinion classes at CCSU and to his research.

Dr. del Ama’s teaching bears a distinctive European flavor. “In Spain and especially Germany, textbooks are rarely used,” he observes. “Rather, students read first-hand the work of Edward Bernays, who is known as the ‘father of spin.’ So, often in my public relations, public opinion, and mass media classes, I use primary sources and my students read directly Bernays’ Crystallizing Public Opinion.”

They also read The Spiral of Silence, an outstanding social-sciences best seller by Elisabeth Noell-Neumann, whom del Ama proudly cites as his mentor from the days he studied at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany, for his doctoral degree in communication sciences. The book had a life-transforming impact on del Ama, inspiring him to go into public opinion studies. “I was fascinated by the social-psychological aspects of how public opinion contributes to social control and political power,” he states.

A MATTER OF HONOR
A PR scholar since 1996, del Ama received a scholarship from the Demoskopie Allensbach foundation to complete his doctorate at Johannes-Gutenberg Universität, Mainz, Germany, for his doctoral degree in communication sciences. The book had a life-changing impact on del Ama, inspiring him to go into public opinion studies. “I was fascinated by the social-psychological aspects of how public opinion contributes to social control and political power,” he states.

FROM PERSONAL TO PROFESSIONAL PR
His first book shows how public opinion influences the personal experience of honor; the second book demonstrates how public opinion affects the professional practice of PR.

Tracing the practice of PR back to ancient Greece, where Plato despised the sophists, known for their overly subtle/misleading arguments and their moral flexibility, the book employs case studies to illustrate PR’s historical development. “I wanted to avoid an exclusively American orientation and the misconception that PR is a U.S. invention,” states del Ama. While he references American PR pioneers Ivy L. Lee and Edward Bernays, del Ama includes cases of public relations in Spain (the NATO referendum campaign of 1986), China (the bid for the Olympic Games 2008 in Beijing), the Middle East (Al Jazeera’s website to launch an international TV channel in English), and South America (the public relations function of Juan Valdez for 100% Colombian coffee).

Graduate student Alisa Dzananovic, who lived in Germany for eight years and sometimes converses with del Ama in German, comments that in the PR Writing and Strategy course, “We wrote a press release on the Exxon Valdez crisis. We learned how to create a strategic response that would help Exxon take control of the messages circulating and help them maintain a positive image.”

A FLUENT RESEARCHER
Research of case studies spanning the globe entailed two years of intensive work. Fortunately, del Ama possessed the stamina and skill. He speaks fluent English, German, Spanish, and Italian.

Some cases—such as examples drawn from the communication/propaganda strategies of the Nazi regime—extend the ethical reflection on the relationship between power and communication initiated by Plato in his controversy with the sophists. The book’s last chapter dealing with moral legitimacy and war examines U.S. communication endeavors to justify the military intervention in Iraq.

He reflects, “In my teaching I want my students to develop critical thinking to allow them to set moral limits and take responsibility for their own ethical decisions, since PR can be used for good causes or evil ones.”

Del Ama presented his latest explorations into the moral ramifications of PR at two conferences in 2006, one in Hawaii and the other in Lima, Peru.

Combining his love of literature and PR scholarship, del Ama has written an essay in Spanish, published in a Colombian journal, dealing with public opinion in the Spanish picaresque novel. Another of his essays treats public opinion in Philip Roth’s contemporary tragedy The Human Stain.

Del Ama is attuned to how the Internet has impacted the media landscape and society. Webmaster for the Communication Department’s website, he teaches Web Design for PR and notes that the Internet, by allowing a two-way flow of communication, “has the potential to revolutionize mass media communication.”

Senior communication major Kaitlin McCallum says, “Dr. del Ama opened up this new medium for me.” McCallum who has taken several of del Ama’s courses adds: “His vast knowledge of communication theory, as well as anecdotal and historical examples, help students think beyond the mechanics to the concepts. He brings broad perspectives and a keen awareness of culture and public behavior.”

— Geri Radaci
AIDS Activist Speaks at CCSU

International AIDS activist Hydiea Broadbent (above) spoke to students at CCSU recently. Her speech, “Living With AIDS Does Not Define Who I Am,” was sponsored by the Black Student Union and the Ruth Boyea Women’s Center. The lecture focused on avoiding at-risk behaviors. “With all that we know about the virus, it is clear to me that contracting HIV/AIDS today is a choice,” Broadbent told a New Britain Herald reporter. She urged students of all ages to avoid behaviors that could spread the virus.

Dr. Miller’s National Literacy Study Widely Reported, Closely Followed

The latest ranking of America’s Most Literate Cities, created and directed by CCSU President Jack Miller and first reported in USA Today, spawned dozens of additional articles in newspapers all across the nation and provided fodder for editorial writers and bloggers.

Similar to the four previous reports, the 2007 survey ranks and quantifies the reading habits of those living in America’s 69 largest cities. Minneapolis, Seattle, St. Paul, Denver, Washington, DC, St. Louis, San Francisco, Atlanta, Pittsburgh, and Boston comprised the survey’s “Top 10” in that order. In his most recent study, President Miller also comments on published research regarding Americans’ declining reading habits and abilities.

“America’s Most Literate Cities 2007” develops a statistical profile of the nearly 70 American cities with populations of a quarter-million or more. Six key indicators are studied to determine the literacy ranking: newspaper circulation, number of bookstores, library resources, periodical publishing resources, educational attainment, and internet resources.

President Miller also substantiates recent studies—such as the National Endowment for the Arts’ “To Read or Not to Read”—indicating that Americans are reading less and reading less well. His sources include U.S. Census data, audited newspaper circulation rates, and information on magazine publishing, educational attainment levels, library resources, and booksellers. That data is then compared against population rates in each city to develop a per capita profile of the city’s long-term literacy.

In an overview statement, President Miller notes that while Americans have become more educated, they are reading less: newspapers are disappearing and bookstores are decreasing in numbers. On the other hand, there are some encouraging signs of the nation’s “reading health.” More magazines are being published, online reading has shown a marked increase, and libraries are “holding their own” in branches and circulation per capita.

— Bart Fisher

Boston University Director of International Relations Speaks at CCSU

Dr. Husain Haqqani (left), professor and director of international relations at Boston University, recently presented his lecture “Pakistan, Pivotal State In Crisis,” to the CCSU community. The event was sponsored by the Middle East Studies Program and the George R. Muirhead Center for International Education.

Extra Credit (continued from page 4)

chair of Windsor’s Archer Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church Community Relations Ministry; she has worked with ministry members to present educational programs for Windsor students and townspeople.

Joan Hurley, a 6th-year student in Reading & Language Arts, was honored as “Teacher of the Year” for the state of Connecticut. The third-grade teacher at the University of Hartford Magnet School in West Hartford will have an audience with the president at the White House and is now in the running for national teacher of the year honors.

Two CCSU students, Dawn McDonald and Mariko Morita, were awarded scholarships by the American Association of University Women to attend the AAUW Female Student Leadership Conference in Washington, DC, this summer.

Dr. Maria Passaro, professor of modern languages, was recently published in Rivista di Studi Italiani, an international publication released annually by the University of Toronto. Her article, “Leopardi, poeta dell’amore” (Leopardi, poet of love), examines 19th-century poet Giacomo Leopardi, who is generally regarded as a Romantic pessimist about history, politics, and life. After researching Leopardi, Passaro found that he wrote several extraordinary love poems, which showed that he was not such a deep pessimist. Passaro comments on this discovery and her work by saying: “To love is to have hope, to understand that living can be magic. It’s a lesson worth passing on to our young and hopeful students.”

CCSU’s phonathon team, comprised of 21 student callers, recently raised $38,467 in pledges for the University. Organizing the effort were phonathon coordinators Danielle Haskins, Kristina Muttart, and Barbara Walton; processing technician Brenda Albert; University Assistant Judy Ratcliffe; and Associate Director of Development Joseph Gordon, Jr. There was an 11% increase in pledges, a 59% increase in the amount of dollars pledged, a 4.93% increase in rate of enrollment, and a 43% increase in the average pledge. Approximately 85–90% of pledges are directed to the Elihu Burritt Library, general scholarships, cultural enrichment, academic programs, and unrestricted funds dispersed at the discretion of the University. The remainder is directed to programs, departments, and sports specified by the donor. Gordon notes, “The phonathon is extremely important and valuable to the University as an opportunity to reach out to alumni. Nobody can speak to the needs of our students better than those who have attended CCSU.”

Thomas R. Schutschenhelm, adjunct lecturer of music, has been named a 2007–2008 Fulbright Scholar; his research focuses on the creative process of English composer Michael Tippett, and he is studying at the University of Cardiff in Wales.

continued on page 8
Equestrian Club Canters Toward Success

Assistant Professor of Finance Donna Sims recalls quite clearly the day she became the faculty advisor to CCSU’s Equestrian Team. “I was walking by a bulletin board,” says the practicing attorney and self-proclaimed “horse person,” when I saw a flyer inviting students interested in riding to a meeting. She went to that session thinking the group, still in its formative stages, might also be looking for a faculty advisor. It was.

That was April, 2005. Nearly three years later, the CCSU Equestrian Club, while not an “official” varsity sport in the sense that the women’s soccer team or men’s golf team is, competes successfully in regularly scheduled state and regional events and holds membership in the prestigious Intercollegiate Horse Show Association. This 40-year-old organization went through the same kind of growing pains as the CCSU club which is now a member. Founded by a Fairleigh Dickinson University sophomore with just two member institutions, IHSA now operates as a sanctioning body across 29 regions with more than 300 member colleges in 45 states and Canada. In all, it represents more than 6,500 riders of all skill levels, in hunter seat equitation, western horsemanship, and reining. Competition plays a role, but student enthusiasm and team spirit are the major objectives, according to the group’s website. “The emphasis is on learning, sportsmanship and fun.”

Funding from the CCSU Student Government Association helped launch and maintain the campus club, which also supplements its budget with its own fund-raising activities. Group members take weekly lessons, mainly at Folly Farm in Simsbury, using what are known as “school horses.” In intercollegiate competition against such well-established teams as Brown University, Roger Williams College, Connecticut College, the University of Rhode Island, and UConn, the CCSU team has laid a foundation for future success. Sims points out, “Students who participate in the program receive riding lessons from professional instructors at the rental barns and have the opportunity to compete and represent the school as riders from CCSU. Like any other sport, riding is competitive, yet IHSA allows riders to compete at all levels and in a multitude of gait and classes, so beginning riders are as valuable to the team as experienced riders.”

The club also offers students a unique opportunity, particularly in comparison to other club activities, Professor Sims feels. “Owning and riding horses is an expensive pastime, generally out of reach for many of our students. What a terrific prospect for the student who has lived in an urban environment his or her entire life—the simple act of standing beside a 1,200-pound horse who stands over five feet at the shoulder is made totally awesome when you swing into the saddle and sit astride the massive, warm, living animals who trust us enough to do our bidding. ‘The experience is unforgettable and the view is overwhelming’.”

Heather Engle is the Equestrian Club’s president; Kayla Blanchette serves as treasurer; and Laura Nicol, a past treasurer, is liaison to the SGA.

Competition resumes soon with meets planned during the season at the University of Connecticut, Windcrest Farm in Hebron (hosted by Wesleyan University), the Mystic Valley Hunt Club in Gales Ferry (hosted by Connecticut College), and a Rehobeth, MA, venue at which Johnson & Wales College will be the home team.

The club is hoping to raise its visibility on campus and is considering activities such as bringing horses here to provide riding opportunities to school-age children.

— Bart Fisher

Notable Programs (continued from page 2)

A recent discussion, regarding “issues impacting women at CCSU,” was organized by the Ruthe Boyea Women’s Center in collaboration with the American Association of University Women (AAUW). Lauren Kamin, director of the AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund, led an on-campus discussion of topical women’s issues. Students, faculty, and staff were encouraged to suggest topics and invited to take part in the informal, open discussion, which will help to determine what types of programs should be implemented at CCSU to improve the campus environment for women.

Dr. Marisa R. Randazzo, a national expert on threat assessment and targeted violence, was on campus to discuss major findings of the U.S. Secret Service and Department of Education Safe Schools Initiative. Randazzo, who served as the Secret Service’s chief research psychologist and directed the agency’s research on school shootings, inside threats, stalking, and other types of targeted violence, presented common misperceptions about school shootings. She taught participants about warning signals exhibited by school shooters prior to their attacks and proposed preventative strategies, practices, and other options for preventing violent occurrences.

CCSU has identified “writing across the curriculum” (WAC) as an academic priority. WAC calls for integrating writing into courses of all disciplines, not just those considered “writing-intensive,” to help students become better writers, as well as to improve their learning of course content. To that end, the University has implemented several initiatives. In spring 2007, CCSU sponsored a colloquium at which faculty from all four Connecticut State Universities gave presentations about how they use writing in their courses. The following fall, CCSU hosted a daylong faculty development workshop presented by Dr. Chris Anson of North Carolina State University. He shared a number of strategies to assist in designing assignments, evaluating student writing, and using writing to promote learning. CCSU Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Carl Lovitt noted, “In spring 2008, the Department of English will hold a colloquium on ‘Writing in the Workplace,’ which will include business representatives speaking about the role and importance of writing in different professions. CCSU is currently searching for a faculty member to help coordinate and support WAC activities on campus.”

This year’s S.A. Blejwas Endowed Chair in Polish Studies’ annual Milewski Lecture was given by distinguished scholar John E. Haynes (above). Haynes’ lecture, titled “The ‘Fieldlist Conspiry’: The Bizarre Saga of an American Family Imprisoned as CIA Spies by the Communist Government of Poland,” revolved around a little-known, but highly charged, bit of “Cold War” intrigue. Haynes, a researcher for the Library of Congress, is the author of ten books, as well as many essays, focusing mainly on Soviet espionage in the U.S. and the activities of the American Communist Party.
CCSU Awarded $60,000 by National Science Foundation

Dr. Thomas A. Roman, professor of mathematical sciences, has been awarded a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to further his investigation of the restrictions imposed by the laws of physics on negative energy. CCSU’s Director of Sponsored Programs Dawn Granz notes, “NSF grants in the field of general relativity are highly competitive and extremely difficult to obtain.” Roman’s research addresses three important areas of physics: quantum field theory, Einstein’s theory of gravity (general relativity), and thermodynamics.

Roman’s current research establishes closer ties with the field of quantum optics, which might suggest experimental tests of at least the indirect effects of negative energy. His proposed research also focuses on the connections between negative energy, energy conservation, and the evaporation and possible destruction of black holes.

In January 2000, Roman co-authored an article in Scientific American with Professor Larry Ford of Tufts University. Roman explained, “The upshot of the research to date is that nature imposes stringent constraints on the magnitude and duration of negative energy, which—unfortunately, some would say—appears to render the construction of wormholes, warp drives, and time machines very unlikely.”

Roman said that undergraduates are likely to become involved in the research in the coming years, since CCSU’s Mathematical Sciences Department now offers a MATHEMATICA course. This course is an introduction to symbolic computation using MATHEMATICA, one of the leading powerful analytical and graphical symbolic manipulation programs used today.

Dr. Timothy Craine, department chair and professor of mathematical sciences, said, “This development will provide a potential pool of students, already trained in MATHEMATICA, who could become involved in research with Professor Roman and with other faculty in the department.”

— Christopher Michalski
ITBD and the Consolidated School District of New Britain had the pleasure of escorting a group of New Britain High School students to the State Capitol as part of a Youth Employment Showcase. New Britain High School student Islander Rosa, 15, presented his thoughts and ambitions to become a doctor, as a direct result of his experiences with the FHITEC (Finance, Health, Information Technology, & Engineering Careers) year-round program. Rosa spoke from the podium with sincerity and confidence to a standing room-only audience about the firsthand experiences which gave him higher aspirations.

Jan Deveau and Cathy Sylvester of ITBD joined forces to develop and administer the program, with Tom Menditto of the Consolidated School District providing an intense focus on the school to career concept. Much of the program involves local business and industry, along with CCSU faculty, speaking with students about careers and career choices. Site tours to local businesses show students the “real deal” of the working world. The FHITEC Program will continue to run through the remainder of the school year and will later transition into a six-week, paid, summer employment program to further connect students with their career choices.

It was apparent from the support of Senator Don DeFronzo; Mayor Eddie Perez; Dennis Mink of Capitol Workforce Partners; Greg Howey, president of OKAY Industries; and others, that Connecticut business needs local, qualified employees, and the FHITEC program provides the first step in that direction.

GOVERNOR RELL VISITS ITBD CLIENT

Peter Paul Electronics of New Britain, a family-owned company for over 60 years, and a major client of CCSU’s ITBD was recently visited by Governor Jodi Rell.

The Governor’s visit, which was hosted and arranged by ITBD, recognized the process improvements made at Peter Paul over the past three years, with the assistance of a team of experts associated with ITBD. Attending the event were various state agency commissioners, Chamber of Commerce representatives, the Mayor of the City of New Britain, and other leaders of professional in-state groups.

According to ITBD’s Business Development Manager Tom Lorenzetti, “Over the past three years, we have been able to spearhead major improvements at Peter Paul and have been instrumental in changing the culture. The employees there are all for it. They have pitched in and have become a part of the solution.”

ITBD is currently working on a number of similar projects with companies across the state, helping to stimulate the Connecticut economy and fostering partnerships between the state, CCSU, and many manufacturing companies.

CCSU recently hosted the Northeast Business & Economics Association’s 34th Annual Conference. The keynote speaker was Dr. N. Gregory Mankiw (below), professor of economics at Harvard University and former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers. He is also a research associate of the National Bureau of Economics Research and an adviser to the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and the Congressional Budget Office.

Several CCSU faculty members participated in the conference. Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, professor of economics, served as session chair of “Market Orientation and Firm Performance: Cross-Cultural Approach.” Dr. Siamack Shojai, dean of the School of Business, was session chair of “Foreign Direct Investment,” and Ronald Daigle, professor of economics, was session chair of “Economic Policy Issues.” Other session chairs were: Joseph Bonnici, professor of marketing, for “Motion Picture Industry and Relationship Marketing;” Kathy Czynik, associate professor of finance, for “Accounting and Financial Issues;” Marianne D’Onofrio, professor of management and information systems, for “Management Issues;” Jerry Joseph, adjunct lecturer of economics, for “Outsourcing;” Carlos Liard-Muriente, assistant professor of economics, for “International Issues;” and Brian Osoba, assistant professor of economics, for “Northeast Regional Economics.” Others who participated in the conference were: Zakri Bello, associate professor of finance; Lisa Anne Frank, associate professor of finance; Paul H. Mihalek, professor of accounting; and Ki-Tai Pae, professor of economics.
Recycling Makes Campus Greener

Dr. Abigail Adams, associate professor of anthropology and an environmental activist, said the driving force behind CCSU's successful campus-wide “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” initiative was the formation of a Committee on Sustainability, endorsed by CCSU President Jack Miller.

Although the Committee on Sustainability succeeded, it was not the first to try bringing a “greener” attitude to the campus. Students in the past have attempted to implement a campus-wide, environmentally sound program to increase CCSU's levels of recycling. The new initiative, however, was able to go beyond previous expectations by studying, implementing, and modifying the expansion of the recycling program.

“CCSU currently recycles almost half of its trash,” according to Dr. Adams. “This is good, but we hope that this new recycling program will help us to do even better,” she added. “Even prior to the new initiative, Central's efforts exceeded all state mandates.”

CCSU alum Micah Carbonneau was among the first to engage campus leaders in an effort to get the ball rolling on environmental sustainability and recycling during his undergraduate studies at the University, Dr. Adams recalled. Carbonneau wrote to Miller as an alum, welcoming him to the campus and urging recycling and other environmental initiatives. Adams noted, “He was very committed, as were all of the other students who tried to get the program started.” Carbonneau currently serves as an environmental educator in Romania with the Peace Corps.

In an effort to enhance Central's environmental standing, the Sustainability Committee recommended that the University's recycling program be expanded “so that more people can participate.” Those recommendations were endorsed and implemented by President Miller, who spoke about the plan at the August 2007 convocation.

Now, with bins located on every floor of each classroom building, as well as in many individual offices, students and faculty members can participate seamlessly. Bins for the collection of “mixed paper” are, or soon will be, located in each office and also near printers and will be emptied by the custodians. What should be recycled? Paper of all kinds and colors, as well as magazines, catalogs, phone books, newspapers, paperboard, manila file folders, junk mail, and non-carbonless papers. Plastic envelope windows and staples can be recycled, according to Adams, but paper clips and post-it notes are problematic. The bins, or hallway triads, are not intended to be used for hard cover books, bindings, trash, or dirty or contaminated paper such as pizza boxes or lunch bags.

During the “trial phase” of the new program, containers are also being provided for glass, steel, and aluminum disposables.

The various building custodians came in for high praise from Adams. She noted that they are “a vital link in the process” and are doing an excellent job. She praised the efforts of students and members of both the teaching and administrative faculty. She also singled out Purchasing Manager Tom Brodeur. “Tom took it upon himself to ask vendors to send us less packaging, less paper with the products we receive. It has really made a difference.”

Adams added, “We are clearly moving in the right direction. Everyone on the committee is delighted by the campus-wide response to the expanded recycling and with the responsible use of the new bins demonstrated by campus members.”

— Bart Fisher and Christopher Michalski

New Books (continued from page 8)

An updated paperback edition of Stephen Hawking: A Biography, written by Dr. Kristine Larsen, professor of physics and earth sciences, was recently published by Prometheus Press. The hardcover edition was published by Greenwood Press in 2005, and a Portuguese translation was published by A Girafa in 2006. A Chinese annotated edition has been recently published as well. Larsen serves as director of CCSU's Honors Program. She has also published numerous articles in scholarly journals and is the author of Cosmology 101 (Greenwood Press).

Dr. Heather Munro Prescott, professor of history, has written Student Bodies—The Influence of Student Health Services in American Society and Medicine. Published by the University of Michigan Press, Prescott's new work investigates the connections between university health centers and the evolution of American health and medicine and is the first to tie developments in college health to wider trends in American cultural and medical history.
CCSU Production Chosen for National Competition

The CCSU production of 9 Parts of Desire, a play written by Heather Raffo and directed by Associate Professor of Theatre Josh Perlstein, was honored as a national finalist at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF). The production was chosen as the outstanding performance in New England, after competing against 37 productions at the Region 1 KCACTF, in Fitchburg, MA. The team is now being considered for the honor of performing at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, later this spring. This is the highest accomplishment for any theatrical team from CCSU at the KCACTF.

The cast includes the following students: Marissa Ann Grande, Blanca Ayala, Kate Bunce, Mary Jo Calvo, Ashley Carvalho (left), Vanessa Clarke-Bligh, Nicole Eager, Gabbi Mendelsohn, and Sarah Hutchinson Warner.

Two other CCSU students, Danielle See and Peter Waluk, were chosen as finalists in the prestigious Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship competition, out of more than 200 competitors at KCACTF.

Furthermore, the cast of Suicide King and One Eyed Jacks received one of the two Creative Ensemble Awards at the Festival. Suicide King and One Eyed Jacks, a student-collaborated piece, includes the following CCSU students: Kate Bunce, Mary Jo Calvo, Vanessa Clarke-Bligh, Zac Delventhal, Sarah Hutchinson Warner, and Patrick David Wheeler.

Finally, to round out the richest year of accomplishments at KCACTF, Herbert Davis was chosen as the only student from New England to perform a stage reading alongside Broadway actor Austin Pendleton. They read from a new play, Another Vermeer, by Bruce J. Robinson.

— Christopher Michalski

Guerilla Girls to Be Featured in Women’s History Month Celebration at CCSU

In honor of Women’s History Month, Guerilla Girls on Tour will perform “Feminists are Funny” on March 4 in Torp Theatre at 7 p.m. The performance is free and open to the public. Guerilla Girls on Tour performances make use of masks and physical theatre techniques while minimizing technical elements. Flash photography and video taping are prohibited.

The Guerilla Girls will also present a lecture, “Creating Feminist Performance in the 21st Century,” during the Women’s History Month luncheon. The luncheon will be a ticketed event, scheduled at noon, in Alumni Hall, Student Center.

Chamber Music with a Latino Beat

Carlos Boltes (above, left) and Scott Hill, the Alturas Duo, performed recently at CCSU. The duo played a mixture of South American and classical music, featuring pieces that incorporate the viola, guitar, and charango, a small, lute-like instrument typically made with the shell of an armadillo. The event was sponsored by the Center for Caribbean and Latin American Studies.

IN THE NEWS

In a recent Harford Courant article, “More Prisons Wrong Approach,” CCSU’s Department Criminology and Criminal Justice was mentioned regarding a study which concluded that prisoners who re-enter society on parole are about half as likely to return to prison as those who serve their full sentences. This statistic was provided by the Connecticut Statistical Analysis Center (SAC), which was responsible for the report. The primary author was Dr. Stephen Cox, professor of criminology and criminal justice, assisted by Lyndsay Ruffolo, a CCSU alumna and current master’s student, who works as a research specialist for CCSU’s Institute for the Study of Crime and Justice.

Dr. Robert Dowling, associate professor of English, was featured in a recent New Britain Herald article for his discovery of a Eugene O’Neill short story. The story, “The Screenews of War”—originally titled “The Movie Man”—is about Hollywood newsreel makers filming aspects of the Mexican revolution. Dowling came across the manuscript while doing research at the University of Virginia’s Barrett Library. The 90-year-old manuscript, thought to have been lost, had been cataloged at the library for 45 years.

A Channel 8 news broadcast recently recognized CCSU student Juan Rodrigues for his involvement in the EMS Explorers program. The 18-year-old responds to calls with EMS technicians. The work-site based program, Exploring, is part of the Learning for Life’s career education program for young men and women, ages 14 to 20.
Blue Devil Student: Jhanay Harris

Jhanay Harris is soft-spoken and unassuming. These attributes force her to lead by example—on the court and in the classroom. And as the only player on the CCSU women’s basketball roster with two full years of experience as an NCAA Division I student-athlete, Harris is looked upon to lead quite often.

The 5-7 point guard arrived at CCSU after a superb four years at The Ursuline School in New Rochelle, NY. She chose Central over local NCAA Division I counterparts Manhattan and Iona.

“I picked this school for its academics,” Harris noted. “Of course I was very interested in playing basketball at the division one level, but I also wanted to find a good academic fit close to home.”

The adjustment has been gradual. In addition to the changes associated with shifting from an all girls catholic school to a 12,000-student campus, Harris, a business major who hopes to pursue front office work in the WNBA or NBA upon graduation in 2006, has found the lifestyle of a collegiate student-athlete to be much more fast-paced that that of a high school student-athlete.

“It’s very different,” she said. “The change has been good, though. I have learned to be more independent, and my time management skills have improved greatly. It has certainly been a gradual change, but I am very comfortable in this environment.”

On the court, it is still the same game. Harris was not surprised by the increased talent. She was, however, surprised by her immediate production. She came off the bench for the first 15 games of her freshman campaign before earning a start against Mount St. Mary’s on Jan. 21, 2006. Harris played all 40 minutes and scored 15 points to lead the Blue Devils against the Mount and start a stretch of three straight double-figure scoring performances. It helped solidify her presence as one of the top freshmen in the Northeast Conference.

“I didn’t even expect to play a lot,” Harris said. “Once I got into the rotation, I just wanted to do everything I could to help our team make the NEC Tournament.”

The Blue Devils did make the tournament. After earning the seventh seed, CCSU traveled to Quinnipiac, the number two seed, and nearly pulled off an upset, losing 68-64 in overtime. Harris finished the season averaging 5.2 points per game while hitting nearly 33 percent of her three-point tries. She was named to the Northeast Conference All-Rookie Team for her efforts. With all but two players returning for the 2006-07 season, Harris’s sophomore year seemed destined for greater things.

Former CCSU head coach Yvette Harris had five seniors, two juniors, Harris (the lone sophomore), and six freshmen on her opening day roster in the fall of 2006. Of those 14 student-athletes, she and her staff chose two as captains. Harris was one.

“Jhanay continually did everything asked of her,” Harris said. “She had an exemplary attitude on and off the court, and it earned her the respect of all her teammates.”

Harris was again surprised, but she handled the responsibility with the maturity of a senior.

“I never wanted any of my teammates to think I was more important because I was a captain,” Harris said. “Gabby (Guegbelet, the team’s other captain) and I would work together to make sure we fought through all adversity as a team.”

Unfortunately, some of that adversity came when a mid-season illness forced Harris to the sidelines for eight games. She watched her team fall out of the tournament picture before returning to play only 20 total minutes in four of the final five games.

“That was very difficult,” Harris commented. “We really thought the five seniors were going to go out with a bang.”

Much more appreciative of her health, Harris got back to full strength over the summer. She also got ready for a new coaching staff. CCSU Athletics Hall of Famer Beryl Piper was named the program’s new head coach on July 12, 2007.

“It was very hard to see the old staff go,” Harris said. “You never want anyone to lose their job. It has been an easy adjustment, though.”

This season the team voted on captains. Harris once again was chosen.

“This year has been more challenging,” she said. “There are new players and different personalities. The balance between me and P.J. [Wade, a sophomore captain] is great. I like to lead quietly, and she will speak her mind.” Those words echoed Piper’s sentiment at the beginning of the season. “Jhanay is the quiet leader,” Piper said. “She does everything she has to do every day.”

And while it has been a rebuilding year for the Blue Devil women’s basketball program, Harris sees plenty to look forward to in the future.

“We have made big improvements,” she said. “We’ve had a tough year, but not one person on this team has given up. There is definitely potential to be an NEC Tournament team again next season, and, I think, they will be a contender two years from now.” Harris, of course, won’t be on the team in two years, but her mark as a leader will still be sensed.

— Jason Stronz