From Mutant Mice to Costume Design, from Business Plans to Computer Games, and All Places in Between, CCSU Students Have Rich Range of Research Opportunities

Engaged in their own research projects or collaborating with professors, CCSU students have a wealth of opportunities to pursue their intellectual curiosities. Their research engages them in methods of inquiry and improves critical thinking skills while they are learning deeply about subjects they love. And their discoveries give them the confidence to make presentations at academic conferences. “Most students would count their involvement in real, hands-on research among the most meaningful and valuable educational experiences they have had. I believe that for many, these research experiences are no less than life-altering,” according to Professor of Biomolecular Sciences Thomas King.

What kinds of research do CCSU students engage in? Here’s a broad sampling.

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Research Opportunities for CCSU Students

Biomolecular Sciences
Damek Spacek has recently been concerned with the “frizzy” gene, a molecular defect in a mutant mouse. He and fellow student Amarilis Perez worked with and mentored 10 area high school research interns during the past year to carry out numerous studies. Last summer, they produced a high-resolution genetic map, which told them exactly where the frizzy gene lies on chromosome 7. King elaborated: “This allowed them to investigate some of the genes known to lie in that same vicinity. They succeeded in finding a single base-pair change in the DNA that they have now proved is the molecular basis of the mutant’s curly hair. Last fall the two students (and their cadre of high school interns) showed that the famous ‘hairless’ rat also has a defect in Prss8. I expect that they will soon find a similar defect in the fuzzy rat. We are very anxious to publish this work, on which Spacek will be the first author.”

Chemistry
Daniel Baluha, a senior chemistry major, has been conducting research in electroanalytical chemistry with Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry James Arena. Baluha has been studying the oxidation of phenol at platinum and glassy carbon electrodes. Since phenol is an environmental pollutant, methods aimed at safe disposal are needed. One method is to use electricity to oxidize or “electrochemically burn” it to form substances that are considered safe, such as carbon dioxide and water. Baluha said, “I’m trying to get a handle on how quickly phenol oxidizes by the use of electricity.”

Baluha presented his work at the 237th National Meeting of the American Chemical Society at Salt Lake City. This research has been supported by a 2008–2009 University research grant awarded to Arena last year.

Computer Science
Ever wonder about college students’ fascination with computer games? Michael Gibeau, a computer science major, turned his passion into a research project and designed and created a simple and effective two-dimensional, point-based physics system—then he put the system to practical use by creating a computer game.

He explained, “The object of the game is to fly your ship from point A to point B, taking as much damage along the way as possible. Breaking apart your ship increases your score but also makes it increasingly difficult to navigate the maze. All the physics system’s functions are used here.” Gibeau presented his research at the Association for Computing Machinery’s Technical Symposium on Computer Science Education in Chattanooga, Tennessee, this spring, which was attended by some 1,000 computer science educators and students from around the world. This project was supervised by Associate Professor of Computer Science Stanislav Kurkovsky and supported by a CCSU faculty-student research grant, and by a special award from the Association for Computing Machinery.

Education
In her senior thesis Sharon Kenniston, an elementary education and English major, and president of the CCSU Education Club, takes up the issue of why the novels of contemporary author Toni Morrison have often been deemed too provocative for students in secondary education. Through close examination of Beloved and The Bluest Eye and by using case studies, Kenniston asserts the importance of controversial novels in the high school classroom. She is an URCAD 2009 award recipient.

English
During one recent winter session, six English majors enrolled in upper-division literature courses with Assistant Professor of English Aimee Pozorski and Associate Professor of English Jason Jones. Undergraduates Kate Daly, Caroline Dearborn, Tiffany Failla, Jane Natoli, Claire Malavazos, and Jennifer Gonzalez undertook field and archival research in London to complete their final research papers.

English Department Chair Gilbert Gigliotti commented, “After obtaining reading passes at the British Library, these students were able to spend two days in the manuscripts room reading the original (sometimes, still unpublished) drafts and letters by such expatriate poets as Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot, as well as the British writers Alfred Tennyson and Charles Dickens.”

According to student Caroline Dearborn, “We were immersed in the literary culture of England. Then we incorporated this experience with research and our classroom discussions to create our own analytical and creative work to look at ‘the old’ with a new view.”
Entrepreneurship

School of Business students focus on applied research. They process data through existing models and theories with the intention of improving performance through the application of theory. “For those who concentrate in entrepreneurship, their capstone project involves creating a business plan built upon data, as well as projections based on data,” stated Associate Professor of Management and Organization Drew Harris.

Students are invited to participate in an elevator pitch contest. This is a 60-second presentation that condenses perhaps days of research and 10–20 pages of analysis into a high-level executive summary. First-place winner this year was Douglas Parkinson who pitched an idea for a company built around a pre-amplifier/sound processor for electric bass players. The judges were impressed with the clarity of the presentation, that Parkinson was a professional bass player, and that he knew the market and had done research on the cost, price, and market potential for the product.

Other business school students have gone on to win prize money in state-wide competitions. Dean Whipple and Eric Francis, for example, beat out teams from UConn, Quinnipiac, Yale, University of Hartford, Bridgeport University, and Western Connecticut State University to win $10,500 in a Connecticut Innovations business plan competition, based on their research-based business plan for a mobile bike repair shop.

Tourism and Hospitality

Last fall students enrolled in the tourism program conducted a marketing survey for the New Britain Museum of American Art. Rachele Mukai, a senior tourism/hospitality major, surveyed visitors at an art exhibit to study the demographic characteristics of visitors, the economic impact of the exhibit to the city of New Britain, and the media sources the visitors consulted. She said, “By being on site collecting the data and then having Professor of Geography Richard Benfield help us analyze and interpret the findings, we learned valuable skills in doing market research, which is vital to anyone going into the tourism and hospitality industry. I’ve since gone on to work on surveys for the Connecticut Science Center and create my own market survey for our Japanese Karate group in Cromwell.”

History

While students majoring in history conduct significant research for their capstone projects, some history students will have a very exciting opportunity; they will soon be conducting research in support of the upcoming 150th Anniversary Commemoration of Connecticut and the Civil War to be held on April 12, 2011. Associate Professor of History Matthew Warshauer, who is organizing the event, noted, “I have an entire graduate class focusing on the topic and have chosen a number of graduate and undergraduate students to continue research that will culminate in a book, articles for Connecticut History (an academic journal of the Association for the Study of Connecticut History), a documentary film, and a big conference in 2011.” Gregg Cerosky, a senior history major, declared, “I’ve been tasked with researching all of the regiments from Connecticut serving in the Civil War. It’s intensely rewarding to contribute to a historical book and documentary film.”

School of Engineering and Technology

Hands-on research is the essence of the educational approach of the School of Engineering & Technology. According to SE&T Dean Zdzislaw Kremens, 18 student-faculty research projects were conducted during 2008–2009. One example of the practical, application-driven research is the solar water heater project undertaken by Christopher Polkowski, a graduate student in mechanical engineering technology, with Associate Professor of Engineering Nidal Al-Masoud. Polkowski explained, “The solar thermosyphon water heater project will demonstrate a cheap and practical way to heat household water supplies. It will provide ideas on how to decrease dependence on foreign oil and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The entire system will be built from scratch.”

Theatre

Graduating theatre BFA senior Caitlin “Kate” Bunce completed extensive research in collaboration with Associate Professor of Theatre Thomas Delventhal to create the imaginative and colorful costumes for the production of The Birds last semester. “We’re proud that Kate Bunce won first place for the outstanding costume design award at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, which is a regional, nationally recognized and highly competitive contest,” stated Professor and Chair of the Department of Theatre Lani Johnson. For The Birds, Bunce researched ancient Greek theatre and costuming for Old

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By faculty in support of creative activity, can include students who are assisting faculty on a particular activity. The Graduate Student Association provides funds for graduate students to purchase supplies and support travel to present research findings at a conference.

The Biotechnology Institute Scholarship program encourages in-depth undergraduate research in biotechnology at CCSU. Biotech scholars receive a stipend to do directed research with a CCSU faculty member from the Departments of Biomolecular Sciences, Chemistry, or Biology. The scholars program frees up students to be fully dedicated to research projects by helping them to reduce or eliminate their reliance on part-time jobs off campus. The Biotech Institute awards five biotech scholarships annually to research students.

A new community engagement grants fund has been established at CCSU to support the integration of community projects in courses. Students who engage in the local community collaborative efforts to address such problems as poverty, unemployment education, crime, disease, homelessness, health, the technological divide, and many others can enhance their learning and scholarly experiences. Nine Summer Curriculum Community Engagement Grants were funded by the Center for Public Policy and Social Research and the Provost’s Office in 2008.

—Geri Radacsi

English Department Celebrates National Poetry Month

In celebration of National Poetry Month, the Department of English hosted its fourth annual Poetry Marathon in late April. Members of the University community were encouraged to participate, as well as to listen to friends and colleagues read works aloud. Shown above are Professor of English Diane Melton (right) listens to a student during one of the many readings at the marathon.
in memoriam

Professor of Psychology, Emeritus, Earl Walter Bihlmeyer died July 22, 2008. He joined CCSU after a successful US military career, serving on active duty for 20 years through WWII, the Korean War, and the Cold War. During this time he received the Korean Presidential Commendation Award and the Thailand government’s Order of the White Elephant, as well as many US Army recognitions. Bihlmeyer served as chair of the CCSU Department of Psychology. After his retirement in 1981, he became a food columnist and writer, publishing two cookbooks and joining the editorial staff of The New Britain Herald.

Dean of the School of Technology, Emeritus, Joseph William Duffy died July 30, 2008. Duffy served in WWII with the 1st Infantry Division in the European Theater and attained the rank of staff sergeant. In 1965, Duffy began teaching industrial education at CCSU, and he became director of the Division of Technology in 1969. He led a CCSU task force on vocational-industrial education in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Education and, in 1973, was chosen as an “Outstanding Educator of America.” He also received a CCSU Distinguished Service Award. In 1976, Duffy became the first dean for the School of Technology. He retired in 1989, and Copernicus Hall Room 150 was renamed the “Joseph W. Duffy Flexible Manufacturing Cell” in his honor.

Professor of Anthropology, Emeritus, Jack A. Lucas died March 16, 2009. Born in Austria, Lucas emigrated to the US in 1939 with his family. He served in the Seabees in WWII and was a lifelong peace activist. He was a member of the Hartford-Ocotal Sister City Project; the Austrian Singing Society, Donau, in New Britain; and the Farmington Valley Chorale. Lucas’ family hosted a memorial gathering of friends and colleagues on campus on May 9.

Special Associate for Corporate and Foundation Relations, Emeritus, Peter T. Vieira died March 14, 2009. He served CCSU for 28 years. A US Army veteran, Vieira was president of the New England Tennis Foundation and a tennis player for more than 40 years. He ranked #1 in New England 34 times and achieved numerous other titles and awards. In 1996 he was inducted into the New England Tennis Hall of Fame.

Twenty-second International Festival Celebrates CCSU’s Commitment to Cultural Diversity

Organized by the International Relations Club and the Center for International Education, the International Festival has become a much-anticipated annual event that celebrates cultural diversity on campus. The theme this year was “Global Voyage,” and the event brought together students from around the world, including CCSU students, staff, and faculty and many citizens from New Britain and surrounding towns. The festival showcased various cultures through country-specific booths and exhibitions, as well as a plentiful sampling of foods that were enjoyed by participants. The centerpiece of the festival was a continuous cultural performance, with dancing and music that kept the festival “hopping” for more than four hours.

The International Festival is a dynamic example of CCSU’s commitment to community engagement. With the festival, the University annually contributes to cultural awareness in Connecticut and demonstrates its global perspective and outreach. CCSU continues to be home to over 300 international students, visiting exchange scholars, and international faculty. The University’s international student population represents more than 50 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and North and South America.

– Christopher Michalski

Professor Carlos Cortez Informs CCSU Faculty on Diversity Topics

Professor of History, Emeritus, Carlos E. Cortes, of the University of California, Riverside, visited CCSU in March. Right, Cortes lectures students and faculty on the role the media plays in the understanding and acceptance of diversity. He also conducted a faculty workshop on incorporating diversity into the curriculum. His visit concluded with a one-man performance, titled A Conversation with Alanna, about a young man with mixed ancestry growing up in Missouri during World War II.
Focus on Scholarship: Daniel Mulcahy—Presenting a New Paradigm for the “Educated Person”

What does it mean to be an educated person? And is the idea of liberal education still relevant? For some 30 years as an educator, policy maker, administrator, and researcher Daniel G. Mulcahy has been passionate about such questions and written about them—in five books to date. His latest, *The Educated Person* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008) proposes a fresh paradigm of liberal education.

Professor of Teacher Education Mulcahy brings a wealth of experience to this erudite work. He joined CCSU in 1992, having been professor of education at Eastern Illinois University and professor and chair of the Education Department at University College, Cork, in Ireland, his native country. He is a past president of the Educational Studies Association of Ireland and of The New England Philosophy of Education Society and is a two-time recipient of Fulbright awards.

To fashion a new ideal of the educated person and a different theory of liberal education, Mulcahy chooses to analyze the positions of noted educational theorists—John Henry Newman, Mortimer J. Adler, and Jane Roland Martin. “Based on my analysis, I’ve offered new ideals constructed around the notion of education as a preparation for life in which the focus is upon many-sided preparation for the vocational, recreational, practical, and philosophical demands of living,” explains Mulcahy. He also considers the implications for curriculum and teaching.

Traditionally, liberal education has meant the empowerment of individuals through core knowledge that liberates the mind from ignorance and cultivates social responsibility. “Seminal thinkers, such as Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator and influential theorist of critical pedagogy, and Jane Roland Martin, a prominent feminist educator, and others, over time have suggested broadening the idea to include practical knowledge, so-called education for action,” explains Mulcahy. “Practical knowledge and understanding enable the learner to grapple with major social, economic, political, and moral questions encountered in everyday living, that is, how one might deal with environmental problems, war and peace, poverty, economic development, tolerance, race, and gender issues.”

**Three Elements of New Paradigm**

Mulcahy maintains that the new paradigm encompasses three major elements—a carryover from traditional precepts; a heightened understanding and capacity to deal with practical demands of living, which had been downplayed in earlier theories of liberal education; and a recognition that the existing experiences of the learner are crucial to future learning and must be recognized out of respect for the individual to shape his or her educational formation.

Mulcahy brings the voice of Martin into the theoretical conversation by re-iterating her admonition that liberal education has neglected the three Cs of care, concern, and connection, which is her major contribution to the debate on a new paradigm for the educated person.

In his book review of *The Educated Person*, scholar Sean Kelly wrote: “Readers are presented with a paradigm based on the demands of living, rather than on the demands of knowledge. The demands of living are broken down into four categories consisting of vocational/work demands, recreational demands, social/practical demands, and philosophical demands.”
Mulcahy asserts, “There is no universal model of liberal education because each student must shape it for him- or herself. That’s what I believe is new about this book’s argument.” And Kelly applauds this position: “There is no master-map. Perhaps by attempting to combine the best of them (various theories), one can manage to avoid the educational rocks. To any future voyager who is serious about trying to avoid shipwreck, Mulcahy’s map will undoubtedly take its place, among those mentioned, in the grand educational atlas.”

**Other Impressive Publications**

In 2000, while on sabbatical from CCSU, Mulcahy worked on *Knowledge, Gender, and Schooling* (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 2002), a study of the feminist educational thought of Jane Roland Martin, especially her treatment of knowledge and gender as they affect schooling, and the school curriculum in particular. He analyzed Martin’s critique of conventional thinking in curriculum as she challenges traditional assumptions regarding knowledge and the goals of education. Mulcahy considers her gender critique of educational thought and practice in which she examines the extent to which gender bias is reflected in influential educational theories of the past and present. And, he reflects on her alternative vision for schooling founded upon the acceptance of women’s experience, caring, and a widened concept of cultural wealth.

A fascination with the philosophy of education, curriculum development, and educational policy is a pervasive thread in Mulcahy’s scholarship dating back to his master’s and doctoral work at the University of Illinois. Fulbright awards in 1967 and 1983 supported his research. While professor of education at the University College, Cork, for a decade, he focused his scholarship on issues of Irish educational policy and school curriculum. He wrote two books as an outgrowth of this work: *Curriculum and Policy in Irish Post-Primary Education* (Dublin: The Institute of Public Administration, 1981) and *Irish Educational Policy: Process and Substance* (Dublin: The Institute of Public Administration, 1989).

This year, Mulcahy will be making a presentation at the Educational Studies Association of Ireland’s annual conference. “I’ll have an opportunity to respond to a review of *The Educated Person* by Perry Lewis, Institute of Education, University of Stirling, Scotland.” Lewis concludes that Mulcahy’s work in *The Educated Person* is “transitional, inspired, and downright confounding, for if a new paradigm is upon liberal education, an entirely different approach to pedagogy, and an entire reevaluation of purpose must begin.”

Mulcahy eagerly awaits enlightened educators to answer his call to begin.

—Geri Radacsi

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**An Afternoon with Gloria Steinem**

American feminist icon Gloria Steinem (below) visited the campus in March as part of CCSU’s celebration of Women’s History Month. During her lecture and the following question and answer session, Steinem reflected on her involvement in the social movements of the last four decades and discussed the continued advancement of the rights of all citizens. She spoke about the importance of putting an economic value on care giving, as well as on the environment, and about the way in which violence in families normalizes violence in our society and by our government.

She noted the importance of programs in women’s studies, as well as those focused on Native American and African-American history, as well as those focused on the history of other under-represented groups in creating an integrated history of all peoples. “If we can’t see it, we can’t be it,” she repeated several times during her presentation. Steinem is currently writing a book about her more than 30 years as a feminist organizer and is working to end sex trafficking around the globe.

Sponsors of the event included the Ruthe Boyea Women’s Center, Student Affairs, Office of Diversity and Equity, William A. O’Neill Endowed Chair, Committee on the Concerns of Women, CCSU clerical union, and Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies program.
The moment was poignant. Associate Professor of English Beverly Johnson stepped up to deliver closing remarks this past February at CCSU’s sixth annual Amistad Lecture, delivered by Dr. Paul Zeleza on “The African Struggle for Empowerment: From the Amistad to Barack Obama.”

Turning to Dr. Zeleza, president of the US African Studies Association and a distinguished African American Studies professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Johnson said: “Dr. Zeleza, I must admit that I became rather emotional listening to one of the core messages of your speech. The message of how we are all connected through watershed and triumphant moments reminded me of being with my parents in Johannesburg, South Africa, and feeling a strong connection to the people there. My parents and I gained a greater appreciation for the fact that the resistance in the form of the Civil Rights movement in the United States and the resistance to Apartheid in South Africa were interconnected destinies. Now we have reasons to feel good and to feel even empowered without forgetting the struggles and sacrifices that were certainly not in vain.”

Themes of ethnic/historical interconnectedness and of education as an agent of empowerment reverberate through Johnson’s own teaching. In some 11 years at CCSU, Johnson has challenged students (with encouragement) to grow by articulating ideas and becoming critical thinkers. She says she’s felt the satisfaction of seeing students become more mature and reflective and develop clarity about life directions.

Chante Prawl, a senior African-American studies major, says Johnson helped her become confident. “I felt intimidated as a freshman,” she recalls. “I went to see Dr. Johnson about her critique of my writing, and I soon realized she really wanted me to succeed. She encouraged me to voice my ideas and opinions and to stand my ground when it comes to my work.”

Key to her teaching philosophy, says Johnson, is to nurture a sense of self-confidence in students about their abilities. “The ideas of all students matter inside the class and beyond the academic environment, and this message I actively emphasize,” she states. “I incorporate a variety of methods in teaching beyond traditional lectures, such as conference-style presentations, structured group assignments, and collaborative midterms, as well as brief analysis of select films relevant to literary topics. I expect students to work in a professional manner with their classmates and to feel a sense of pride in articulating their views or ideas.”

Scholarship Bolsters Teaching

Through her research and scholarship—a 2004 Fulbright Field Study in African Studies based in Accra, Ghana, and at the University of Ghana-Legon, and a 2005 sabbatical in Mozambique—Johnson has strengthened her teaching of African-American, Caribbean, and African literature. She elaborates, “The merging of my research in Ghana and Mozambique, as well as nonfiction and fictional works that focus on Diaspora literature, have helped me better teach classes in African-American literature, based on clear patterns of African influences in the works of several African-American authors.”

Johnson, who holds a master’s and PhD from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, has focused her scholarship on the concept of collectivism in different areas of the African continent. She’s looking at how to establish a bridge of literary criticism between African-American and African literature.

Revising Original Perspectives

Interestingly, her scholarship has brought her new perspectives, garnered through lectures, formal and informal interviews, and constant reflection. Gaining a greater appreciation for historical context, she realized the need to reassess her initial viewpoints about collectivism. She came to see it in more multi-dimensional ways. Johnson explains: “The original definition of collectivism I used to start my research was ‘the act or process of people of the Black Diaspora being unified by sharing common interests, beliefs, goals, and vision.’ I initially believed that there was an inherent autonomy embedded in this concept. Yet when viewed more critically through literary, social, and
The March 1 issue of The Hartford Courant reported on the increase of applications at state public colleges and universities; CCSU had the largest increase of the CSU System. A similar story mentioning CCSU’s increase in applications appeared the following day in The New York Times under the banner “Well-Regarded Public Colleges Get A Surge in Bargain Hunters.”

In another step toward making CCSU a more diverse, eclectic, and inclusive campus, some 30 students, faculty, and administrators took part in a Diversity & Equity strategic planning meeting. The purpose of this first meeting was to create realistic objectives and proposed actions for diversity activities and opportunities to take place on and around campus. CCSU Blue Ribbon Commission on Diversity member and president of the state chapter of the American Association of University Women Carol Virostek has stated that it takes time to change a university culture, but that CCSU is moving in the right direction.

Christina Garcia, a CCSU junior majoring in social work, was featured in The New Britain Herald article “DCF Success Story.” Garcia was honored at an award ceremony held by the Connecticut DCF during National Professional Social Work Month in March. Garcia was in the DCF system for 14 years and hopes to work for the agency after graduation.

CCSU students Ron Libatique and Mike Minelli were featured in a story in The Hartford Courant (picked up by Newsday and the Orlando Sentinel) for their winning dance-group performance at the Apollo.

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Carl Lovitt’s “Scene@CCSU” column was recently published in The New Britain Herald. His article focused on CCSU’s continuing efforts to stimulate economic growth and the University’s impact on workforce and economic development. He noted that the new four-year nursing degree will help alleviate severe shortages across the state and that the new Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program will prepare teachers for shortage areas, such as math, science, English, technology, and Spanish. The article also mentioned a new series of online noncredit courses, the Connecticut Small Business Development Center, CCSU’s collaboration with Traveler’s to stimulate student interest in the insurance industry, and computer skills training to help ease the transition of homeless citizens into the workplace. Lovitt noted, “Especially in these financially troubled times, we take pride in our role as a resource for the community, region, and state.”

A recent story in The Hartford Courant about Hartford schools’ embrace of communities mentions the School of Education and Professional Studies’ partnership with the Naylor School as “an example of where Hartford’s developing programs might go.”
Social Work Majors Enjoy Experiential Learning Trip to Peru

It was an extraordinary and serendipitous opportunity to bring nine of our social work majors (and one psychology major from Southern Connecticut State University) to participate in an experiential learning program with the people of Villa El Salvador in Lima, Peru, this past January.

In partnership with Cross Cultural Solutions (CCS), the premier international volunteer organization, we spent two weeks in this desert shanty town of approximately 600,000 of the most resilient, hospitable, and gracious people any of us had ever met.

By selecting this program, our students commit themselves to an intense and often uncomfortable experience (this was the first two weeks of summer and it was hot and dirty in the middle of a desert) working with people living in extreme poverty--and each student, in his or her own unique way, was challenged to the core. I am delighted that this course abroad opportunity was able to extend the continuum of social work experiences and knowledge into the global community and, most importantly, into the everyday lives of people.

Anderson Cooper: Full Circle

The 2009 Robert C. Vance Distinguished Lecture, held in early May, featured Anderson Cooper (below), the host of CNN’s newscast Anderson Cooper 360°. After his evening lecture, Cooper took questions from audience members. Earlier in the day, he met with President Jack Miller and held an informal question-and-answer session with CCSU students. Cooper ended the visit by broadcasting his show live from Willard Hall’s TV studio (above).
Professor of Geography Richard Benfield was awarded a Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust research grant for his project “Diversifying Gardens: Attracting New Ethnic Audiences and Hiring More Ethnic Minorities in America’s Public Gardens.” Benfield will investigate two botanical gardens, Kirstenbosch in Cape Town, South Africa, and Van Dusen Botanic Garden in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Director of Office of Student Conduct Chris Dukes recently participated in “A Concert of Spirituals” at the First Church of Christ, Wethersfield.

The CCSU Education Club’s “Literary Night” at Smith Elementary School was featured in a front page story in The New Britain Herald. Sharon Kenniston, a senior at CCSU and president of the Education Club, organized the event. Some two dozen members of the Education Club, most of whom are studying for careers in education, also participated. Over 300 students and their families attended the event, which was sponsored by local businesses, including Target and Wal-Mart. Grants from the National Education Association and CCSU provided most of the funding; additional money was raised by members of the Education Club.

During the spring semester, CCSU hosted an elevator pitch contest in which students created 60-second presentations based on the premise of getting stuck in an elevator with a business executive and having his or her attention for the duration of the ride. Competitors included 16 teams representing seven universities. Winners from CCSU included Dean Whipple and Eric Francis, first place winners in the personal business category, and Jessica Schweitzer, who won the second place technology prize (sponsored by Connecticut Innovations). This is the third time CCSU has hosted the contest and the fourth consecutive semester that CCSU had finalists in the competition.

Professor of Psychology Doug Engwall led a discussion on high-risk drinking and its effects on the individual and the community at “Pass the Word,” an event of alcohol awareness. The event was sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness on Campus Club and the Natural Helpers.

“Words in Action: A Moving Experience,” an exhibit of movables and pop-up books from the collection of Assistant Director of the Elihu Burritt Library Frank Gagliardi were displayed recently on campus. As part of the exhibit, Gagliardi gave a lecture on “Beyond the Moveable Book: Variations on a Theme.”

Professor of English Gilbert Gigliotti was a featured author at the sixth annual Writers Festival held at Tunxis Community College in April. Gigliotti is the author of A Storied Singer: Frank Sinatra as Literary Conceit.

In April, the CCSU Department of Music hosted a performance by the Connecticut Trio, a faculty ensemble including Professor of Music Linda Laurent, Professor of Music Julie Ribchinsky, and Professor of Music, Emeritus, Gerard Rosa. Works by Haydn, Joan Tower, and Saint-Saëns were featured.

Professor of Music Julie Ribchinsky performed a cello concerto by Elgar at Avon Old Farms School in Avon, Connecticut, in February.

Associate Professor of History John D. Tully has been chosen by the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations as its national director of secondary education. He will serve in the position for three years and will be responsible for the organization’s outreach to high school teachers, worldwide, regarding the teaching of American foreign policy.

CCSU Composers Concert

The CCSU Music Department provided student and faculty composers the opportunity to have their works performed by the Alianza String Quartet, an award-winning professional quartet. Student composers sent their pieces—some quite complex—to the quartet, which rehearsed them before coming to Central and then again under the composer’s eye when they arrived. After nearly two days of rehearsal, the Alianza performed the pieces in concert. Pictured (above) are, in the back row from left to right, Associate Professor of Music Brian Kershner, Brenton Costa, Tom Russo, Assistant Professor of Music Jon Northrop, Frank Natter Jr., Frank Natter Sr., and Anna Stewart. The quartet itself: left to right, Sarita Kwok, Lauren Basney, Jacques Lee Wood, and Ah Young Sung. Of note, Frank Natter Sr., joined the quartet for the performance of his son’s composition.
CCSU Host’s Literacy Essentials Conference

The 3rd Annual Literacy Essentials Conference, organized by the Department of Reading and Language Arts, was held on campus on March 21. Dr. David Berliner (above), a Regent’s Professor in the College of Education at Arizona State University, delivered the keynote address. The group’s official in-country host for the tour was Shandong Normal University, one of CCSU’s newest university partners in Asia.

The University Singers gave a performance with the Student Choir of Shandong Normal University. They also performed at the Shandong University of the Arts, as well as observing music education classes for elementary-level students. The University Singers repertoire included three Chinese folk songs—thanks to earlier coaching in pronunciation and dialect by Wu.

During their trip, the University Singers also visited Confucius’s Temple, the Great Wall, and other World Heritage sites.

Alcohol Awareness Day at CCSU

CCSU’s Counseling & Wellness Center and University Police, along with the State Police and the New Britain Fire Department, hosted Alcohol Awareness Day outside of the Student Center on April 7. A number of demonstrations were conducted by state and local emergency units, including a mock car crash rescue by the New Britain Fire Department. Director of the Counseling & Wellness Center Timothy Corbitt, said: “Alcohol Awareness Day is one of several initiatives made possible by the cooperative efforts of campus health and wellness proponents and local and state law enforcement and rescue units to stress the importance of preventing the use and abuse of alcohol, particularly among underage college students.”

CCSU has entered a partnership with Tunxis Community College that will assist potential education majors to obtain a four-year degree. The Pathways to Teaching program is a planned set of classes that meets graduation criteria for both CCSU and Tunxis Community College, giving students a clear path to a four-year college. Student may enroll in the program this fall and will be able to start at CCSU the following spring. For more information on this program, contact Mary Pat Bigley in the School of Education and Professional Studies.

The University Singers ensemble conducted a concert tour in China. The University Singers, directed by Professor of Music Pamela J. Perry, were accompanied by Adjunct Lecturer Tina Wu, who served as the delegation’s cultural expert. The group’s official in-country host for the tour was Shandong Normal University, one of CCSU’s newest university partners in Asia.

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During their trip, the University Singers also visited Confucius’s Temple, the Great Wall, and other World Heritage sites.

University Singers Tour China

President Jack Miller (right) joins Ted Turner, (left), founder of CNN and Turner Classic Movies, who visited CCSU recently to lecture on “The United Nations and Our Common Future.” Distinguished Professor of Political Science and Philosophy Ned Lamont served as host for the event, which also included a question-and-answer session after the lecture. The discussion was sponsored by the Arts and Sciences’ Public Policy Committee, the Office of the Vice President for Institutional Advancement, the Journalism Program, and the Peace Studies Program.

CCSU’s Counseling & Wellness Center and University Police, along with the State Police and the New Britain Fire Department, hosted Alcohol Awareness Day outside of the Student Center on April 7. A number of demonstrations were conducted by state and local emergency units, including a mock car crash rescue by the New Britain Fire Department. Director of the Counseling & Wellness Center Timothy Corbitt, said: “Alcohol Awareness Day is one of several initiatives made possible by the cooperative efforts of campus health and wellness proponents and local and state law enforcement and rescue units to stress the importance of preventing the use and abuse of alcohol, particularly among underage college students.”

CCSU has entered a partnership with Tunxis Community College that will assist potential education majors to obtain a four-year degree. The Pathways to Teaching program is a planned set of classes that meets graduation criteria for both CCSU and Tunxis Community College, giving students a clear path to a four-year college. Student may enroll in the program this fall and will be able to start at CCSU the following spring. For more information on this program, contact Mary Pat Bigley in the School of Education and Professional Studies.

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"A Little Night Music" event, held in Founders Hall in April, featured Adjunct Lecturer of Music Thomas Labador and Associate Professor of Music Brian Kershner who presented a premier performance and works inspired by dramatic themes.

In February, writer Ignacio Carrion delivered a lecture in Spanish on "Una escritura entre el periodismo y la literatura." Carrion is a correspondent for several major Spanish newspapers, including El Pais, ABC and Cambio.

Professor of Anthropology Warren Perry moderated the panel discussion "Does Obama's Presidency Make Black History Month Obsolete? Enter Africa," at the end of March. Participants included Professors Maurice Wade and Okey Ndibe of Trinity College, storyteller Michael J. Wilson, and CCSU Adjunct Lecturer of International and Area Studies Chengiah Ragaven.

The CCSU Department of Theatre recently hosted "Former Soldier, Former Fighter," featuring the stories of Yaniv Reshef, a foot soldier in an Israeli Army sabotage unit, and Bassam Aramin, a Palestinian who planned an attack against Israeli soldiers. Although initially on different sides, Reshef and Aramin have both become part of Combatants for Peace, a group of over 600 former Israeli soldiers and former Palestinian fighters working together to build peace, justice, and playgrounds.

Academic Affairs and the Center for Teaching Excellence & Leadership Development recently brought Associate Professor of Chemistry Ike Shibley, Penn State Berks, Pennsylvania State University, to campus. During his lecture, "Increasing Student Success in Challenging Courses," Shibley enforced the idea of a hybrid-learning model, blending the best aspects of both on-line teaching and face-to-face teaching. The flexibility of a hybrid-learning style gives professors the freedom to be imaginative and redesign coursework to better suit the needs of learners.

CSU Professor of Philosophy and Assistant to the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences Felton O. Best presented a lecture on "The Modern Civil Rights Movement in the US: 1954-1965," in recognition of African-American History Month. Best is the director of the African-American studies program. His talk was sponsored by the Departments of Philosophy and Political Science and the Peace Studies program.

Professors of Anthropology Evelyn Phillips and Warren Perry hosted the program "Remembering African Captivity and Resistance through African Eyes: The Black Public Sphere in White Public Space" in late February. Following a viewing of the documentary Sankofa, Philips and Perry led an open discussion.

Professor of Economics and a Fellow at the Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies at the University of Notre Dame Jaime Ros delivered a lecture on "Poverty Reduction in Latin America." The event was sponsored by CCSU’s Latin American Studies Subcommittee of the International and Area Studies Committee.

Professors of Anthropology Evelyn Philips and Warren Perry hosted the program "Remembering African Captivity and Resistance through African Eyes: The Black Public Sphere in White Public Space" in late February. Following a viewing of the documentary Sankofa, Philips and Perry led an open discussion.

Award-winning poet Jeffrey Thomson recently visited CCSU to read from his new book, Birdwatching in Wartime. He is the author of four collections of poems. In 2005, he was awarded with a Literature Fellowship in Poetry by the National Endowment for the Arts, a 2006 Creative Artists Fellowship in Literature from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and the 2008 Fellowship in the Literary Arts from the Maine Arts Commission, as well as fellowships from the Wesleyan Writers Conference, the Sewanee Writers Conference, and Writers @ Work.

"Triumph Over Adversity," a discussion with author Michelle Pranger, was held in the Center for Africana Studies at the end of March. Pranger is the author of A Child's Voice, One Girl's Journey to Discover Her Voice and Be Heard.

The play VAGÓN (Boxcar) was presented in Spanish by Repertorio Español in Torp Theatre in March. VAGÓN, the winning play at the MetLife Nuestras Voces National Playwriting Competition, is based on a true story reported on CNN in 1987 about several men who crossed the border in a boxcar. Repertorio Español was founded in 1968 to bring the best of Latin American, Spanish, and Hispanic-American theatre to a broad audience in New York City and across the country. The event was sponsored by CCSU's Department of Modern Languages in collaboration with Tunxis Community College.

In March, CCSU’s Ruthе Boyеа Wеmеn’s Center and the Office of Victim Advocate, located in Hartford, hosted Victims’ Voice Day at CCSU. The event offered victims an opportunity to share their personal experiences and to access available services.
CCSU’s Jazz Ensemble: National Honors Testify to Excellence of Talent and Teaching

CCSU’s Jazz Ensemble is continuing to earn national recognition with its outstanding performances at the Villanova Jazz Festival, a collegiate competition, which gives students the opportunity to display their expertise while competing against other universities. Under the direction of Associate Professor of Music Carl Knox, the Jazz Ensemble has been honored with awards nearly every year it has attended the Villanova Jazz Festival.

The ensemble’s rapidly unfolding success began when Knox came to CCSU in 1997. Prior to his appointment as jazz director, the Jazz Ensemble had not participated in such a prestigious competition. In one of its first years attending the Villanova Jazz Festival, the Jazz Ensemble placed third in the competition, out-ranking the University of Connecticut.

The Jazz Ensemble is a very select group of musicians, chosen by audition during the first week of the fall semester. The group comprises five saxophone players, five trombone players, five trumpet players, and four rhythm section players. Knox has played with the Jazz Ensemble on a few occasions but notes, “I’d be thrilled to play with these exceptional musicians during every performance, but it’s all about them and their talents. It’s fun to jump in once in a while.”

The Combo component of the Jazz program is a rhythm section accompanied by three horns. Players focus on solos and improvisational playing and are directed by Tom Melito, a world-renowned jazz drummer who tours regularly and has performed with some of the biggest names in the industry. “I know that the students are in great hands, and it’s strikingly apparent that my assumptions are correct,” Knox said.

Jesse Engle, a drummer for one of the two Jazz Combo sections, said “I’m definitely fortunate to know both Tom and Dr. Knox. They are both spot-on with everything they talk about. I would know nothing about jazz if I hadn’t come to CCSU.” Engle selected CCSU over Berklee College of Music, a very selective college for music majors. “The opportunity to study under such skilled professional musicians was one I could not pass up.” Knox noted with great certainty that Jesse, “will definitely be one of the musicians who leaves this University to become a successful professional musician.”

The Heart and Soul of the Ensemble
Knox enables his students to flourish by communicating what it takes to be a professional musician. “Playing jazz is not just ability, technique, or how much you practice. It’s a mindset that takes extreme focus. One would only be scratching the surface if you judged their merits based on the awards they’ve received at the Villanova Jazz Festival.”

Although the band won no awards at the 2006 festival, all of the members willingly agreed to travel three hours out of their way to Newark, Delaware, to play a short concert for Knox’s father-in-law who was in very ill health. “The real ‘award’ of that year was a showcase of how much heart these students have. Their performance for my father-in-law was absolutely one of the biggest highlights of his final years, and I’m forever thankful for that. This speaks not only for their character and personalities, but the kindness and compassion that all of these students possess.”

The Jazz Ensemble took a hiatus from the Villanova festival in 2008 to perform at the New York City Town Hall, a national historical site in NYC’s theatre district. The Distinguished Concerts International New York group (DCINY) invited the Jazz Ensemble to perform alongside Ralph Lalama, a noted jazz tenor saxophonist, and Jon Faddis, a world-renowned trumpet player. “I was extremely honored that these two professional musicians chose us. It demonstrates that our individual musicians are developing at a higher level and becoming more accomplished as the years go on,” said Knox.

Successes at Villanova
“After placing third in the competition in 2001 — only three years after we began competing — I knew there were very bright things on the horizon for the Jazz Ensemble,” Knox said. “These students are exceptional. Just a few competitions later, they won the Outstanding Rhythm Section Award. Eric Dellavechia, a saxophonist, was honored with the Outstanding Soloist Award that same year.”

In 2005, the Jazz Ensemble won Outstanding Saxophone Section. Dennis Alex, a trombone player, won Outstanding Soloist. Although they did not bring any awards home the following year, Knox noted that, “Aside from being very fun for all of us, the competition in 2006 was
a good reminder of which sections needed to tighten and hone their skills.”

The Jazz Ensemble placed second in the entire competition in 2007, and the Grand Central combo placed second in the combo competition as well. That year, they also won Outstanding Trombone Section, and saxophonist Andrew Lefebvre was honored as the Outstanding Soloist. After performing at The New York City Town Hall in 2008, the Jazz Ensemble returned to the Villanova Jazz Festival this year, where they placed third in the competition. Saxophonist Andrew Lefebvre won Outstanding Soloist again. Knox noted it was, “very special to see one of our students honored as one of the most outstanding players in the nation—twice.” The Jazz Ensemble also won Outstanding Trumpet Section this year.

The Jazz Ensemble has competed against such colleges as Yale University, Pennsylvania State University, John Hopkins University, Temple University, University of Connecticut, Norfolk University, and University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

“Right now, we have a number of people who are simultaneously at the height of their musical ability. This rarely happens. But when it does, it’s universities like CCSU that allow it to happen. Central provides students with the opportunity to flourish,” Knox said. “This is music of the heart and of the soul, and I am extremely proud to say that our students have incredible amounts of both.”

— Christopher Michalski

The Connecticut Outdoor and Environmental Education Association (COEEA) held its annual conference at CCSU recently. The keynote speaker for the event was Dr. Debra Rowe (above), president of the US Partnership for Education for Sustainability Development and senior advisor to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. COEEA’s mission is to support Connecticut’s outdoor and environmental educators as they promote responsible environmental stewardship. The event was cosponsored by CCSU’s School of Education and Professional Studies and the Connecticut Partnership in Sustainability Education.

CCSU Celebrates the International Year of Astronomy

During the month of April, CCSU continued its 14-month celebration of the International Year of Astronomy by hosting a number of events on campus that were free and open to the public. Among these events was a lecture in Founders Hall by UConn Professor of Physics Ronald Mallett (above). Mallett is the author of Time Traveler: A Scientist’s Personal Mission to Make Time Travel a Reality and one of America’s first African American PhDs in theoretical physics. After the lecture, Mallett held a book signing for those in attendance.

Hard Work Pays Off

Dean of the School of Business Siamack Shojai (on right) poses with management information systems major Daniel Cocuzzo, who was named the recipient of the Travelers Scholarship in March.
Students Spring into Action and Break the Stereotypes of a Traditional Spring Break

Each year, many college students travel to Florida to enjoy the infamous “Spring Break.” Visiting the beach and going out with friends are just some of the traditional pastimes on the list of activities for the week.

For spring break 2009, a group of 20 CCSU students belonging to the on-campus Habitat for Humanity Club each paid $450 out-of-pocket to travel to Florida, but for a different reason. Their mission: to assist Habitat for Humanity in building a house for a needy family.

“For an entire week our Habitat group put off our personal lives in order to help the better good,” says student Michael Boucher, who participated in the Habitat for Humanity Alternative Spring Break program last year, in New Orleans.

Boucher got involved in Habitat through a course, “The Psychology of Community Service,” which he took at the University. As part of a group project, Boucher and some of his classmates raised money to help people affected by Hurricane Katrina. “We found out that Habitat was going to New Orleans, and we had the idea to raise money to send two students on this trip. I was one of them!”

After his first experience, he decided to join Habitat on campus and to participate in this year’s Alternate Spring Break program: “After having a blast in New Orleans Spring Break ’08, I decided to attend the Fort Myers trip. The experience is something that I will remember for the rest of my life,” he says.

Student Cristina Oliver was glad to contribute to such a good cause. “Although we all have our struggles, I don’t mind spending time and my own funds to help out a family who needs to have a home. The satisfaction of knowing that I’ve done a good deed puts a smile on my face and in my heart.”

Habitat’s Alternate Spring Break program is part of its Collegiate Challenge. Those who participate in the program work on the construction site from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., for five days. They are responsible for their own food, transportation, and any other expenses. However, the program does provide housing for the participants. Boucher explains that the students lived in low-income apartments for the week.

“Actually being able to help build these houses is what’s really important to me, because I feel like it’s more direct and personal than tossing a few coins in a bucket,” says second-year Alternate Spring Break attendee Jennifer Sellet.

“Before joining Central’s Habitat,” Sellet says, “I never thought that I would be doing something like getting on a roof and helping build the rest of it.”

“For the most part we were hammering in nails to support wood on the roof,” explains Boucher. “We also put in windows, began to add the rooms into the house, and Joe Seymour and I got to use a power tool.”

Student Activities/Leadership Development graduate intern Connie Cabello serves as program advisor for CCSU’s Habitat for Humanity Club and planned different elements of the trip. Cabello was impressed by the students’ decision to participate in this Habitat program: “The students were willing to give up a traditional spring break trip to give back to a community in need. This diverse group of students was able to gain a sense of civic responsibility and integrity through their service work.”

Fellow Student Activities/Leadership Development graduate intern Elizabeth Mulvaney assisted Cabello, and both served as trip advisors.

“Our e-board members and supervisors truly did an outstanding job of planning and helped make this a remarkable experience,” notes Boucher.

CCSU Habitat for Humanity Chapter Vice-President Jaclyn Browning says that Habitat for Humanity is not a “hand-out,” but a “hand-up.”

“Many families apply for a Habitat home, and the most hard-working and qualified recipients are chosen. However, they keys are not just handed over. They are required to work
approximately 250 ‘sweat equity’ hours on their own home or other Habitat homes,” she says.

Sellet also notes: “Another thing I like about Habitat is that it is not a hand-out; the future owners of these homes pay a low mortgage, relative to their income, and put in a certain amount of hours working on their house or other houses.”

Attendee Kayla Hendrickson overcame anxieties of flying to attend the trip: “When I first decided to go on the trip, I immediately began to second-guess my decision. I had never flown, been that far away from home, or even thought of doing something like this before.”

But Hendrickson now feels that “All in all, though I was nervous to go, I am so glad I did because it really made me appreciate everything I have here. It’s comforting to know that there are still organizations like this that exist for the purpose of helping everyday people.”

Vice President of Communications of Habitat for Humanity of Lee County, FL, Trisha Goins notes: “We look forward to the excitement our Spring Breakers bring to this affiliate each year. The students at Central Connecticut State University were full of energy and drive to help build houses for needy families.”

“It’s that kind of energy that rejuvenates our team and keeps us all motivated to continue with our mission here,” she adds.

Students involved in CCSU’s Habitat for Humanity Club encourage others to participate and highly recommend the programs.

“The Office of Student Activities/Leadership Development is proud to support the club’s mission and future endeavors. We are hopeful that CCSU will continue to send students on service learning initiatives so that others may gain valuable life experiences through civic engagement,” states Cabello.

—Caroline Dearborn

Strategies for Peace

Leonard Rubenstein, former head of Physicians for Human Rights, and a wide variety of other speakers participated in the symposium “Strategies for Peace, Global Sustainability & Conflict Transformation: Teaching Peace Across Disciplines.” The series of talks, which brought together CCSU, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), and the Hartford Consortium, took place on CCSU’s campus in April. The event provided faculty and student leaders with contemporary methods of instruction for including peace in curricula across varied disciplines. The discussion-based presentations also worked toward forming links between a plethora of subjects, including peace, environmental and economic conditions and sustainability, global communications, social justice, public health, and gender.

CCSU Professor of Philosophy Parker English noted that the presenters were “remarkably knowledgeable, as well as dialogical,” further remarking that the “presentations were low-key but profound, and obviously excited [attendees].”

The event was sponsored by United States Institute of Peace, Central Connecticut State University, Saint Joseph College, University of Hartford, Pax Education, World Affairs Council, and the CCSU Global Environmental Sustainability Action Coalition.

Support Staff Honored for Dedication

Fiscal Administrative Assistant Deborah Peterson (on left) and Library Technician Heidi Kropf received the Performance Excellence Award for Support Staff from President Jack Miller (on right) in late April during Employee Appreciation Week. The award recognizes support staff for contributions made to the University. In addition to the presentation of the award, a Retiree Recognition Ceremony and reception were also held.

Other Employee Appreciation Week events included a lecture by Dr. Gary Ginsberg, assistant clinical professor at UConn, titled “Living Green and Toxic Free,” and a Donor Appreciation Luncheon, sponsored by Institutional Advancement, for employee donors to the CCSU Annual Fund.

Career Assessments Offered

Starting this semester, the Advising Center is offering a new career assessment for CCSU students. The new vocational assessment, called SkillsOne, combines all of the major career decision-making tools into a single test. With the recommendation of an academic adviser, students who are currently enrolled at CCSU have the opportunity to take this assessment. Results of the test are detailed in a 27-page report, highlighting the student’s interests, abilities, and personality traits. CCSU academic advisers have been trained to administer the test and interpret the results. The availability of SkillOne will lead to more precise advising and will help students make better decisions when choosing majors and careers.
Cayer. Relations Cindy Director of Alumni Fernando Rosa and Miller, Suzana Rosa, Left to right, Jack Rosa Scholarship. Graciette Simao-Rosa establishing the Alumni check Miller accepts President Jack Miller noted, “This is very good news for the University and, in particular, for our students. This is another remarkable act of Mr. Bichum’s extraordinary generosity, and it comes at a time when such funds are especially welcome.” Miller personally thanked Bichum for his exceptional support for the University, adding “I also want to thank Mr. Paul Gianaris, Class of 1970, who served as executor of the Helen G. Bichum Trust. Mr. Gianaris’ efforts on behalf of the Bichums and the University warmly express his passionate commitment to the University’s mission and his great care for his friends, the Bichums.”

Helen G. Bichum Trust Established

Anthony Bichum, who previously made the largest gift ever awarded by an individual donor to CCSU, has generously donated a trust fund in his late wife’s name to the endowment. The funds from the Helen G. Bichum Trust, currently valued at over $600,000, will be used to provide scholarship support to CCSU students from New Britain and surrounding communities and to students with disabilities.

CCSU President Jack Miller noted, “This is a very important day for our University and its future. This is good news for the University and, in particular, for our students. This is another remarkable act of Mr. Bichum’s extraordinary generosity, and it comes at a time when such funds are especially welcome.”

Miller personally thanked Bichum for his exceptional support for the University, adding “I also want to thank Mr. Paul Gianaris, Class of 1970, who served as executor of the Helen G. Bichum Trust. Mr. Gianaris’ efforts on behalf of the Bichums and the University warmly express his passionate commitment to the University’s mission and his great care for his friends, the Bichums.”

Scholarship Established in Memory of Graciette Simao-Rosa

Fernando G. Rosa ’75 has established the Graciette M. Simao-Rosa Scholarship, in memory of his wife, who died in 2008. Their children, Marc Filipe Rosa and Suzana Isabel Rosa (MS ’09), and their extended family and friends joined him in providing for a scholarship that will benefit students preparing for careers in special education, with preference given to students of Portuguese decent.

Born in Santa Maria, Obidos, Portugal, Graciette arrived in the United States in 1986. She attended Hartford Public High School and received a bachelor’s degree from Central Connecticut State College in 1979. She was employed by the Hartford Board of Education for over 20 years; her last position was as a special education paraprofessional at Noah Webster School. She was a member of the American Paraprofessional Association and the Portuguese Club of Hartford, as well as a communicant of the Our Lady of Fatima Church in Hartford, and a member of the Portuguese American Leadership Council of the United States (PALCUS). She also ran a successful travel and document translation business for the Portuguese community in Hartford for over 20 years.

as part of the Industrial Technology Alumni Lecture Series, Michael Kane ’91 of Tiffany & Co. visited CCSU to deliver a lecture on “Manufacturing Operations and Quality Control.”

Vice President for Student Affairs, Emeritus, Peter Rosa ’68, MS’74, current gubernatorial appointee to the CSUS Board of Trustees, recently received an award for Outstanding Support of Hispanic Issues in Higher Education from the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE). Rosa was also selected as the first “Latino Citizen of the Year” by Connecticut’s Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission in 1999, following the establishment of the Connecticut Collegiate Access and Preparation (CONNCAP) Program.

Ken Bringle, a 2001 CCSU business graduate, was featured in The New Britain Herald article “Chipping Away at Schooling.” Bringle met with state legislators to discuss the benefits of a Tunxis Community College education and to recommend they continue to support the community colleges. He graduated from Tunxis in 1989 and transferred to CCSU, where he graduated with honors.

CCSU Annual Fund News

The firm of GCF has been selected to provide consultation and solicitation services for the Annual Fund. Baltimore, Maryland based GCF has been in business for 19 years providing marketing and communications services to educational institutions. Through a combination of research, analysis, planning, and implementation, GCF will work with Institutional Advancement to reach a strategic course of action to re-energize the Annual Fund. Joining forces with GCF is Bentz, Whaley, Flessner (BWF), a fundraising consulting firm, who will provide development counsel throughout the project. Brenda Foster, Partner, GCF and Judith Jobbit, Senior Associate, BWF are the consultants who will be working with CCSU on the project.

During the course of the next few months, consultants from GCF (www.gcfonline.com) and BWF (www.bwf.com) will be doing an evaluation of solicitations and other communications, interviewing key decision makers, alumni, and donors in order to gain a “pulse of the campus.” Once the assessment phase is complete, GCF will recommend a course of action and implement the plan.

This is a significant two-year project for Institutional Advancement and is critical in helping the division increase the number of donors who make an annual gift in support of the University. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support of the project. Please contact Director of Development & Alumni Affairs Cynthia Cayer at (860) 832-1741 if you have any questions.
CCSU Alumni Association Awards and Honors

The CCSU Alumni Association honored its 2009 Alumni Award recipients and Alumni Athletics Hall of Fame inductees at a ceremony held on campus in April.

Hall of Fame Inductees
A standout wrestler for the Blue Devils, Dave Cameron ’81 was a two-time East Regional Champion. Cameron was 13-1 in 1978–79, 14-0 in 1979–80, and 19-1 in 1980–81. He won the East Regional Championship in 1979 and 1981, and finished second in 1980; he also finished fourth in the NCAA Division II Championships in 1981.

Sal Cintorino ’87 was synonymous with CCSU football for more than a decade. A captain of both the football and wrestling teams while CCSU competed at the Division II level, Cintorino became the first Blue Devil to earn Kodak All-America honors. Cintorino was also named a Walter Camp Foundation All-American. He excelled as tri-captain of the wrestling team, helping lead CCSU to the New England wrestling title in 1987. A former head coach of the Blue Devils, Cintorino was also named All-New England and All-ECAC during his career on the gridiron.

Heather Gardiner ’03 capped her career with the highest honor CCSU student-athletes can receive during their playing days, the Gail Rutz Award. Gardiner, a graduate of the CCSU honors program, still holds five school records. During her career, she won four individual Northeast Conference titles. She finished in the top five 15 times during NEC Championship meets.

Rick Mickens ’00 capped a remarkable career for the Blue Devils by helping lead CCSU to its first NCAA Division I men’s basketball tournament in 2000. Mickens, who was the Player of the Year and Defensive Player of the Year in the Northeast Conference that season, is the fifth all-time leading scorer in school history, and first in career steals.

David Szewczul ’76 remains one of the most decorated men’s golfers in CCSU history. Szewczul — and his teammates — won New England Collegiate Championships in 1972 and 1973. The Blue Devils qualified for the NCAA Championships every season during Szewczul’s tenure and were ranked eighth in the country in 1973. Individually, Szewczul won the Dartmouth Invitational in 1972 and the Toski Invitational in 1973.

Young Alumni Service Award
From 1985–1990, Curtis Wiggins ’93 developed as a hip-hop artist, recorded two albums, opened concerts for leading artists, and performed for a wide variety of audiences. After graduating from CCSU, Curtis joined First Investors Corporation in 1997 as a financial services representative. In 2002, Curtis was promoted to regional training coordinator, and he stepped up to Division Manager two years later. Wiggins now works as an assistant vice president for First Investors Corporation.

Distinguished Alumni Service Award
Paul Gianaris ’70 graduated from CCSU after a stint in the armed forces. He earned a degree in accounting and worked at the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services. At CCSU, Gianaris is treasurer of the Alumni Track Club, an athletic season ticket holder, and a member of the new committee charged with creating a Veterans Excellence Scholarship. In addition, he has established the Gianaris Family Scholarship and Endowment at the School of Business to support students pursuing entrepreneurial careers. Active in the community, Gianaris is a member of the New Britain Symphony Board, a volunteer at the New Britain Museum of American Art, a member of the Shriners, and a supporter of Trinity-on-Main Arts Center.

Kaiser Alumni Service Award
Alfonso F. Barbarotta, Jr. ’74 graduated with a degree in industrial technology. He was a member of the Blue Devil football team from 1970 to 1972 and served as a co-captain during the 1972 season. Barbarotta was drafted by the New England Colonials football team of the Atlantic Coast League, a farm club for the AFL and NFL. Today, as Principal-in-Charge of AFB Construction Management, which he founded in 1981, Barbarotta is a leader in the construction and facilities management of school projects.
Matthew Schall Construction Management Scholarship Endowed

This past October, CCSU alumna Melissa Papp ’08 initiated a memorial scholarship in honor of her late friend, Matthew Schall (left), a construction management major. During Homecoming 2008, students in the construction management program worked with Melissa to hold an on-campus fundraising event. Papp’s efforts to endow the scholarship—which stood at $15,000 this past February—have now come to fruition thanks to the warm generosity of the Schall family, construction industry members and CCSU alumni, friends, faculty, staff, and students.

This year’s annual Dr. Stuart Bennett Construction Management Alumni Award Dinner, a fundraising event for the construction management program, reached the goal that both Papp and the Schall family were hoping for—a perpetual gift to students. Matthew’s mother, Stephanie, said of the endowment, “What makes this so special is that Melissa said she would be proud if she was only able to raise $1,000 in memory of her friend. It’s the spirit of the CCSU community that brought forth this endowment, with the help of compassionate individuals with such kind hearts like my son.” Matthew’s father, William, added, “Matthew held the spirit of being generous and helpful to anyone who entered his life. It is truly humbling that Melissa had such a large heart to engage in a venture of this caliber. It is very touching that members of the industry and CCSU alums were able to make Melissa’s dream come true.”

Nearly 200 people attended the Bennett Award Dinner, with all proceeds benefiting the scholarship fund. CCSU President Jack Miller and Vice President for Institutional Advancement Christopher Galligan honored Papp for her dedication and hard work; they also praised the extraordinary generosity of the Schall family and thanked the members of the construction industry in attendance for their exemplary support.

Michael Beaumier, vice president for Suffolk Construction, was honored with the Bennett Award during the dinner, and he prompted his company to make a gift to the Schall scholarship on his behalf. That night the first Construction Industry Award was also presented. Recipient John B. Farnham serves as the director of administrative affairs at the Connecticut Construction Industry Association (CCIA) and is also the executive director of Associated General Contractors (AGC).

Papp noted, “Throughout this entire process, I’ve been overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity of CCSU faculty and alumni, industry leaders, and the Schall family. Without everyone’s help, this never would have been possible.”

Julie Feeney, major gifts associate for CCSU’s School of Engineering and Technology and School of Arts and Sciences reflected, “I think the event was a huge success due to the support from those in the industry, alumni, Don Shubert, and Drs. Ray Perreault, Stuart Bennett, and Jacob Kovel, the chair of the Department of Manufacturing and Construction Management. Melissa’s initial enthusiasm and the continuation of her efforts reflect the culture of kindness and giving at CCSU.”

Although the scholarship has now become endowed, donations to the fund are still being accepted. For more information on donating to this fund, please contact Julie Feeney at 860-832-1749 or feeneyjua@ccsu.edu.

— Christopher Michalski

Italian American Legislative Caucus Donates to CCSU

In a ceremony held on March 25, the Italian American Legislative Caucus made a $10,000 donation to Central Connecticut State University. Pictured here, from left to right, are Senator Don DeFronzo, Representative Joe Serra, Representative Joe Mioli, member of the Italian-American Legislative Caucus, and former Senator Lou DeLuca, and Counsel to the Senate Republicans George Krivda.
Lowell Lukas: Former CCSU Golf Coach Receives National Honor, Continues Winning Ways Even in Retirement

The list of accolades for retired CCSU men’s golf coach Lowell Lukas got longer in dramatic fashion this past January. In a ceremony that also honored golf legend Jack Nicklaus, Lukas won the Golf Coaches Association of America Honor Award. Lukas, who was inducted into the association’s Hall of Fame in 1993, was twice granted National Coach of the Year honors and received a Gold Key, the highest award given by the Connecticut Sports Writers Alliance.

And why not? In his 34-year Blue Devils career, Lukas coached 27 All Americans, led his teams to 15 New England Championships and eight East Coast Athletic Conference (ECAC) Championships, and retired with a .803 winning percentage. CCSU teams and individuals participated in 26 NCAA post-season tournaments during his tenure, including Greg Cate’s NCAA individual championship win in 1984. Thirty-two former CCSU players are now members of the PGA.

Building Respect, Spurring Motivation
To truly appreciate Lukas’s accomplishments, it helps to have a sense of what the college golf scene was like in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when Lukas started coaching. Says Lukas, “Golf in New England had no respect. We were kind of the Rodney Dangerfields of the golf world, being a northern school, and no one cared much.”

But Lukas cared. While other coaches were dropping their teams off at the first tee—going to play nine holes and coming back later to find out who had won—Lukas was the epitome of commitment and dedication. He supervised his players as they hit balls to warm up and stayed with them throughout the match, walking off yardage and strategizing. Wanting them to look and feel the part of great golfers, Lukas also made sure his players had the best golf attire and equipment. He even rigged a hitting net in a closet in the basement of Kaiser Hall so that his players would have a place to practice in winter. Overhead, he put up a sign with the Ralph Waldo Emerson quote “A man is what he thinks about all day long,” with Lukas’s addendum, “When was the last time you thought about being an All-American?” (He thought this message would provide motivation and inspiration, until one of his players observed, “Coach, if that’s true, I think I’m going to turn into that cute girl in my English class.”)

Says Lukas, “I was motivated and I wanted to give them everything they needed to succeed. That was the commitment I made, and I had to pass that commitment on to the players because I don’t think they were very confident when we first got started, and I don’t think they ever realized how good they could be with a little bit of dedication.”

Path to CCSU
Although ready to try any sport, Lukas primarily considered himself a football player and had never coached golf before his arrival at CCSU. He had earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees at the University of Missouri and was teaching physical education at an elementary school in St. Louis when his alma mater’s placement office contacted him. Was he perhaps interested in a job at Central Connecticut State College, a school that looked to be on the rise? He was. In 1965, Lukas started as an equipment room manager and athletic trainer, later becoming assistant and then associate athletic director. And, oh yes, golf coach.

Lukas recalls the day athletic director and golf coach Bill Moore asked him to cover for him when he couldn’t make it to a match. Says Lukas, “I came back, and he said, ‘How did you do?’ I said, ‘We won.’ His statement was ‘Good. Now you’re the golf coach.’”

As CCSU’s teams gained prominence with Lukas at the helm, Lukas also began to make a name for himself in the college golf community. He served as president and as a member of the executive committee of the New England Intercollegiate Golf Association, as chairman of the ECAC golf committee, and, for seven years, as national chair of the NCAA Division II golf committee. “My motivation was to improve New England’s reputation in golf,” says

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Joe Seymore is used to hammering home three-pointers for the Central Connecticut State University men’s basketball team. Over his spring break this year, Seymore decided to pick up an actual hammer and help build a house.

Seymore, along with other CCSU students and two advisors, chose to forego a traditional spring break and take part in the Habitat for Humanity Alternative Spring Break experience in Labelle, Fla. They spent March 21-28 working with the Habitat for Humanity of Lee County on its 1,000th home (see pages 16-17).

“If I had gone home I wouldn’t have been doing anything productive,” Seymore said. “I’d rather help someone out and give back to a community than sit around and do nothing.”

“I’m not surprised Joe did this,” CCSU head coach Howie Dickenman said. “He is really compassionate, so it didn’t shock me that rather than go home for break he took money out of his own pocket to help others.”

Connie Cabello and Elizabeth Mulvane, program advisors and graduate interns in the office of Student Activities/Leadership Development, accompanied the group.

“I have seen Joe’s smiling face a lot this year,” Cabello said. “He has certainly become more involved with things on campus. You can expect to see him at events all over the place.”

Seymore has steadily extended his interests to the campus community since arriving at CCSU. He served as the men’s basketball representative on the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee as a freshman and sophomore while also volunteering at soup kitchens and basketball clinics. More recently, his efforts have reached out across campus in his role as a campus diversity advocate.

The Diversity Advocate Project was piloted by the Department of Student Activities/Leadership Development this spring in an effort to offer students across academic disciplines the opportunity to gain an increasingly multicultural education. Seymore will be among the first class of nine CCSU students to undergo diversity training and share the knowledge gained with peers. Seymore is also an active member of the campus’s Black Student Union and CCSU’s chapter of the NAACP.

Seymore credits his mother and basketball for the desire he has to get involved. “My mother has always told me to give back and help people out,” he said. “I have received the same lesson from Coach Dickenman. It’s not just about working hard on the court. You have to work hard at everything you do.”

The Habitat for Humanity group worked hard from 8 a.m. every day and left the Labelle site with windows, doors, interior walls, and a plywood roof in place for what would become the home for a single mother of three children.

“I had never done any construction work,” Seymore noted. “I didn’t realize hammering nails could be that hard. Your hands hurt from holding the hammer. It’s similar to holding the bricks during running drills in Coach Dickenman’s practices. Imagine running an up-and-back, or a suicide, while gripping two taped-covered bricks.” Imagining it is exactly what Seymore got to do as a freshman. The bricks didn’t come out once. Instead of fretting his first experience with the fabled bricks, Seymore had to worry about his smiling.

“He’s always smiling,” Dickenman said. “His freshman year he was smiling so much I had to tell an assistant to let him know I sort of frowned upon smiling all the time. Joe replied, ‘When I’m smiling, I make shots.’ So I said smile all you want.”

The Blue Devils had little to smile about at the start of the 2006–07 season. They opened with a 0-3 record and were 3-9 on December
28. In their final game before the New Year, Dickenman inserted Seymore into the starting lineup. He matched a then-career best with 15 points in a 66-52 win at UMBC. He made four three-pointers, helping propel the Blue Devils on their start to a third Northeast Conference championship. The victory over UMBC began a stretch of 14 wins in 15 games. CCSU went on to win 19 of 22 to finish the season. CCSU won three home tournament games to earn a berth in the NCAA tournament, where the team met up with Ohio State. Seymore started again, and he made four three-pointers.

“Joe worked very hard to get to this level,” Dickenman said. “I saw his high school and AAU coaches before the game with Ohio State. None of us thought he’d be starting in that kind of game that early in his career, but there he was hitting four three-pointers against the nation’s top team.”

Seymore finished his freshman season with 66 three-pointers. That number ranks tied for 10th in the CCSU single-season annals. He made three or more in a single game 12 times, and two or more 22 times. As a sophomore, his three-point totals went down, but he increased his points-per-game production from 7.5 to 10.5. This past season, Seymore struggled. He made just 22 threes and was shut down from beyond the arc toward the end of the campaign.

“He can be his own worst enemy sometimes,” Dickenman said. “He lost some confidence, so I decided to shut him down like I did with Javier and Justin.”

Javier Mojica and Justin Chiera also had struggles as juniors. Mojica wasn’t allowed to shoot the three at all at one point, and Chiera was limited to two misses per game. Mojica made 20 threes as a freshman, 29 as a sophomore, and just 11 as a junior. He connected on 69 en route to earning Northeast Conference Player of the Year honors as a senior. Chiera, meanwhile, knocked down 61 as a freshman, 66 as a sophomore, and then 50 in his junior season. He made 97, the third most in a season by a CCSU player, as a senior. Chiera has the second highest career three-point total in school history. Seymore currently ranks fifth on that list, and he needs 57 next season to become the fifth Blue Devil to hit 200 in a career.

“Both Javier and Justin turned it around because they worked extremely hard to prepare for senior season,” Dickenman said. “I have no doubt Joe will do the same. I’m expecting the finest season of his career next year. If it happens we will have a very good basketball team.”

It is safe to assume Seymore, an electronics technology major with a 3.47 grade point average, will also continue his growth off the court—both in the classroom and in the CCSU community.

“When I first met Joe, I knew he would become someone this University could be very proud of,” Dickenman said. “He will certainly represent this school well for years to come.”

— Jason Stronz

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Lukas. “I was fortunate to be involved at the national level with some great mentors, and I took a lot away from them in terms of knowledge and how to motivate and coach a team.”

Lukas, who retired in 2000, still maintains connections with his former players, recently meeting up with the team from 25 years ago for a “Backspin Weekend” in Tampa to play golf and renew old friendships. Observes Lukas, “When you’re coaching golf, you’re traveling all those miles with players. You develop some strong relationships with those individuals, and that’s a great reward for a coach.”

In his retirement, Lukas is focused primarily on family and on golf. He spends summers in northern Wisconsin, where he was born and where he is part owner, with some friends, of a golf course. He spends winters in Ft. Myers, Florida, where he is his club’s reigning senior champion. “If you’re an athlete and you’re competitive, the game will drive you crazy,” says Lukas of the sport. “And you continue to strive and strive to conquer it. I’m not sure it can be done, but I’m going to keep trying.”

He adds, “My goal now is to shoot my age, and I’m only a shot away, so next year I figure I’ll be a year older and it’ll be easier.”

— Leslie Virostek
The CCSU Dance Program, under the direction of Professor of Physical Education and Human Performance Catherine Fellows and assisted by faculty members Judie Clark and Julia Frederick, recently put on an evening of contemporary dance titled “It’s All A Dance.” The performance featured diverse works by CCSU dance faculty and student choreographers. Pieces included “Keeping Composition” by Judie Clark, which comically remarks on the importance of balance in these volatile times and “Mirrorrium,” a duet about body image, choreographed by Nicole Cloutier and Erica Gonsalves, as well as “Brother John,” an emotional commentary on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and those left behind, that was performed by theatre/dance major Nicole Carrano. A collaborative ensemble piece (below), featuring guest artist Lynn Agnew of Marketing and Communications and music students Sean Canedy, Jesse Engle, and Andrew Lefevre, closed the show with an energetic tap number that delighted the enthusiastic audience of over 700 people.