Latin American Studies Opens Wide Perspectives

One strength of Latin American Studies (LAS) at CCSU is its interdisciplinary liberal arts emphasis. “The Latin American Studies program draws from professors in the social sciences and humanities to present an integrated view of the social, geographic, cultural, economic, political, and historical forces shaping a major region of the world,” states Dr. Mary Ann Mahony, co-coordinator of the program and associate professor of history. Some 24 core faculty members from nine departments teach courses with Latin American and Caribbean content.

The curriculum leads to a minor or a bachelor’s or master’s degree in International Studies, with a concentration in Latin American Studies. “Many universities with Latin American studies focus on Spanish-speaking nations south of the border. CCSU also integrates the study of Brazil (where Portuguese is spoken) and French- and English-speaking nations of the Caribbean,” explains Dr. Cynthia Pope, program co-coordinator and associate professor of geography.
Housed within the International Studies Program, LAS fosters education, research, and intellectual discussion on Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as on peoples of Latin American and Caribbean descent throughout the Americas.

In addition, members of the Latin American Studies Committee (LASC) and other CCSU faculty have developed a new and recently approved Latino Studies program at Central. LASC member and Chief Diversity Officer Moisés Salinas organized the Latino Studies Advisory Committee in 2008 with the goal of expanding and promoting academic opportunities for students and faculty to study the cultural, economic, and social conditions of US Latinos. The Latino Studies program will offer an undergraduate minor, with new classes beginning in fall 2009, and will be coordinated by Dr. Katherine Sugg, assistant professor of English and a member, and former coordinator, of the LASC.

“The LAS program also benefits from the presence on campus of the Caribbean, Latin American, and Latino Studies Center, which has outreach to the community as its main goal,” states Mahony. “These programs make CCSU the most important location for the study of Latin America and Latino populations in the CSU system.”

Why Latin American Studies?
One reason that LAS is such a vibrant and expanding academic area is that, historically, Latin American countries have been US allies, enemies, and trading partners. The history, politics, and economics of the two are interrelated, and, increasingly, US culture is being shaped by influences from countries south of the border. Latinos are also about to become the largest minority group in the nation.

“Latin America offers a useful comparison with the US,” observes Mahony. “We share the same historic challenges – European conquest of indigenous people and African slavery. Students can study ways in which race and ethnicity have been understood in different contexts over time.”

Furthermore, the program addresses a number of themes important in the 21st Century, including the development of radical and revolutionary movements and terrorism.

Curriculum Strengths
Katherine Golub ’05 acknowledges that an interdisciplinary approach helps students gain critical perspectives on the American continent. She remembers herself as an undergraduate writing her senior thesis: “Researching the role of Congress in the formation of US foreign policy helped me to gain a deeper understanding of how foreign policy is created and helped to clarify for me the role of the US public in influencing such policy.”

Issues of migration, both intra-regional and international, are covered in the curriculum, states Pope. “We consider migration of Bolivians to Brazil, for example, and what factors drive Latin Americans to the US and to other nations.”

Students in LAS must demonstrate competency in the Spanish language and are encouraged to study Portuguese at an introductory level. Language skills and communicating across disciplines can prove valuable in future career paths, whether in government services or business.

Such has been the experience of Miguel Purugatorio, a transfer student from Venezuela who graduated this past December with a major in Spanish and a minor in Latin American Studies. Planning to pursue a master’s in international studies, he says his goal is to be a translator and interpreter for an organization such as the United Nations, Organization of American States (OAS), or the European Union.

“Being enrolled in a bachelor’s degree program with a minor in Latin American Studies has given me the motivation to explore this area in more depth, especially international studies and politics,” he says. “While further developing my language skills, I am sure I will be able to achieve success in my professional future.”

Study Abroad Enrichment
To enrich international understanding, LAS, through the CCSU Study Abroad Program,
requires students to spend one semester of faculty-supervised study abroad or to undertake a local multicultural experience related to each student’s academic tract or regional specialization.

Through the University’s existing partnerships with institutions around the globe, students can elect to study in the Bahamas, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, or West Indies. “Upcoming in late spring 2009, Professor of Anthropology Abigail Adams and I will bring a group to northeast Brazil to study African and indigenous heritage,” says Pope.

Another way LAS has been enhanced at CCSU — and in the region — is through the CCSU Seminar in Latin American Society and Culture. This highly successful monthly lecture series, inaugurated in 2005, is designed to foster conversations, debate, and intellectual exchanges among students, faculty, and Latin American scholars. On the schedule for spring 2009 are lectures on religious innovation in Haitian transnational communities; poverty reduction in Latin America; and race and slavery in Cuba.

Last December the LAS program launched, and hosted on campus, the first Connecticut Latin Americanist Partnership Conference, titled “The Latin American Experience: From National to Transnational.”

“We’re proud of our position as one of the regional leaders in Latin American Studies, thanks to the dedicated efforts of our many selfless professors who infuse their passion for their disciplines into the curriculum,” declares Mahony. “Latin American Studies opens a window on power, society, and life beyond our borders and helps students think in an imaginative way about Latin America.”

— Geri Radacsi

Symposium Offers Insight into the 2008 Mumbai Terror Attacks

A panel discussion, “Inside the Mumbai Terror Attacks,” held on campus in December featured David Kideckel, professor of anthropology; Paul Petterson, associate professor of political science; and Nanjundiah Sadanand (above, standing), professor of physics and earth sciences. The panelists summed up the historical context, the attack itself, and its larger meaning. Kideckel explained, “We spoke of the need to view those events in the precise conditions of Indian-Pakistani relations and not as an issue related to the so-called ‘War on Terror.’” Faculty interested in India organized the event to aid the campus community in understanding the attacks in greater depth.

Reflections on Lincoln’s Bicentennial

As part of the statewide celebration of Abraham Lincoln’s bicentennial hosted by Yale University’s Gilda Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery and Abolition, Peniel E. Joseph (right), associate professor for Africana studies at Brandeis University, visited CCSU to present the lecture “Barack Obama & Reflections of Lincoln.” The event was sponsored by African-American Studies, the departments of Philosophy and Political Science, and the office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Center for Caribbean and Latin American Studies Gets New Director

Professor of Psychology Francisco Donis has recently accepted a three-year appointment as director of the Center for Caribbean and Latin American Studies. According to Donis, the Center is currently undergoing a review of its name and mission in order to reflect the Center’s services to the Latino community. University Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Carl Lovitt notes, “Having served as chair of the Department of Psychology and as director of the Latino ConnCAS program, Donis has brought administration experience to oversee this important center.”
Reaching out to students is as natural as breathing to Kathy Martin-Troy. She is a veteran molecular biologist whose teaching—legendary for its unshakable caring for students—has for 19 years touched the lives of hundreds of students on and off the CCSU campus.

Whether reassuring non-majors who are fearful that science is “hard,” guiding graduate students—some intending to go on to medical school—on the intricacies of cell differentiation, or cajoling middle-school children in an outreach program held off campus into dissecting a pig, Dr. Martin-Troy, professor of biomolecular sciences, says she starts each course fresh every time.

On Biology: “It’s Astounding. It’s a Miracle.”
Martin-Troy connects students with her own original impetus for becoming a biologist. “My graduate work (she holds the PhD from the University of Virginia and a BA from Trinity College) was as a developmental biologist, and the fascination for understanding how an organism is created with the ‘right parts in the right places’ has never waned,” she says. With a sense of awe, she declares, “Think of the number of things that have to happen for an egg to become a person. That it is such a successful process is astounding. It’s a miracle. Understanding each of those steps is the secret to understanding life, in my opinion.”

Her love for the discipline is palpable. Angela Lauretano, biomolecular science ’05 and a science teacher at Holy Cross High School in Waterbury, remarks, “Kathy showed me that there are wonderful professors out there who love their subject matter and can impart that love to their students while caring about their progress and goals.”

Katelynn Ferranti, who graduated last spring with a bachelor’s degree in biomolecular science and mathematics and is now working on a master’s in biomolecular science at CCSU, says, “Everyone calls her Kathy. Kathy’s teaching style is very honest and genuine; she very rarely sugarcoats anything. She teaches students to think like scientists.” Ferranti, a Barnard Scholar, is in the process of applying to medical school and consults Martin-Troy for her honest opinion and advice.

For many years, Martin-Troy researched and studied chromosome behavior and activity. Now, particularly during her upcoming sabbatical in the spring, she will look at questions of cell differentiation, specifically, how a muscle cell develops.

Mentor in the Laboratory
Collaborative research with her students has always been vital in preparing them for careers in biology and other sciences. Over the years scores of CCSU undergraduates and graduate students have worked in Martin-Troy’s research laboratory on projects designed to help them understand the nature of genes and their role in cell processes. She has tirelessly mentored students. They have learned the basic tools of molecular biology in her laboratory, worked on aspects of her larger research projects, and gone on to present work at scientific meetings or completed PhD programs. For Caroline Dearborn, the BMS Human Genetics Lab remains a treasure house of insights: “I will never forget when we covered the topic of cancer. Dr. Martin-Troy presented the subject in a professional, sensitive manner. She is exceptional. You can tell she really wants all of her students to succeed.”

Outreach activities in the public schools extend Martin-Troy’s influence in reaching a broad spectrum of prospective fledgling scientists. And, on campus, she’s not neglected service to the University, working on a host of committees and serving as Faculty Senate President from 1996–1999.

Spurring Success
Partners in Science, the longest-running outreach program at CCSU, has been coordinated by Martin-Troy for the past 15 years. Begun by Dr. Leeds Carluccio in 1988, the program brings more than 100 middle school students
from 10 area school districts to CCSU each semester for a series of five workshops in the sciences and technology.

Health Professions Partnership Initiative (HPPI), also coordinated by Martin-Troy, seeks to establish a pipeline of qualified applicants of color from the Hartford schools who wish to enter the health profession. CCSU collaborates with Wesleyan University and the University of Connecticut in the partnership.

Coordinator and workshop instructor for the College Science Partnership with the Hartford School system, Martin-Troy says, “Each year we offer five biology laboratories and five chemistry laboratories to Bulkeley High School students. These laboratories are taught at CCSU by our chemistry and biomolecular sciences faculty.”

Finally, Martin-Troy, along with CCSU Professor of Biomolecular Sciences Michael Davis, runs the Great Explorations program, which is the middle-school component serving the HPPI pipeline. She explains, “Physiology exercises conceived and designed by CCSU faculty are brought to three Hartford middle schools once a month during the school year as an after-school program to supplement science education.”

Katelynn Ferranti, who has traveled to the middle schools as part of the program, elaborated: “8th grade students learn about the major body systems while completing fun activities like seeing what happens to their heart rates if they run up and down the hallway. The 7th graders learn about polymers and chemical reactions. The favorite activity, without a doubt, occurs in the polymers lab where students make their own blue slime. The experience has been very rewarding to me in that it has allowed me to share my knowledge about a subject I love, in addition to providing some remarkable students with a safe and enjoyable after-school program.”

Dr. Davis comments, “Kathy wants her students to succeed in her class, in college, and in their lives beyond. She will do nearly anything for students, particularly the struggling ones. However, she won’t put up with them lying to themselves about what they want and what they can do. She is the most approachable teacher I know. As great as she is in the classroom, though, I think her greatest strengths lie in helping students get the most from the University. She knows every possible way to make anything happen for students.”

— Geri Radacsi

Addressing Political Obstacles for Women: Pearls, Politics, and Power

Madeleine M. Kunin, former governor of Vermont and former US ambassador to Switzerland, delivered her lecture “Pearls, Politics, and Power: How Women Can Win & Lead” in Torp Theatre in December. Kunin focused on what it takes for women to assume their rightful places in the political corridors of power. She spoke on the obstacles women face in their rise to political power, what inspired them to run, how they prepared themselves for public life, and how they protected their families’ privacy while dealing with criticism and attack ads in a male-dominated landscape.

Kunik, the first female governor of Vermont, served as the Deputy Secretary of Education and Ambassador to Switzerland under President Bill Clinton. She also served on the President’s Intergency Council on Women and was a member of the US delegation to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

The event was sponsored by the Governor William A. O’Neill Endowed Chair, the Center for Public Policy and Practical Politics, the Political Science Department, the Ruthe Boyea Women’s Center, and the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program.

— Christopher Michalski

Art Exhibit on Sustainability

“SUSTAINABLE?,” an exhibition exploring issues of sustainability at the global, regional, and local levels will be on display from March 19–April 24. The exhibit will address stewardship of our Park River watershed, the tensions between fast and slow food in a sculptural installation of New Britain’s Urban Oaks Organic Farm produce (on sale), as well as urban forestry and open space in New Britain’s Walnut Hill Park. An opening reception will be held on March 19 from 4–7pm, with artists’ talks from 2-4pm. The regional Park Water Arts Campaign kicks off at 4:30pm. The Art Galleries are located on the second floor of the Chen Art Center in Maloney Hall. Free admission; open to the public. For more information, call 860-832-2633 or visit www.art.ccsu.edu/Gallery.html
People were running away from tear gas dropped during a street riot in India. But David Kideckel charged toward it. “I wanted to see what was going on, needed to establish my street credibility so I’d be in a prime position to do interviews and collect data,” declares the CCSU professor of anthropology. A seasoned social-cultural anthropologist on Eastern Europe (mainly Romania) for over 30 years, Professor Kideckel launched a new research project last year, in Kerala state (southwest India), examining the connections between political demonstrations and egalitarian social relationships.

Kerala and Romania—to Kideckel these are conducive sites for comparative study of citizenship and political identity in two globalizing societies. He has joined forces with university colleagues in Romania and India in “looking at people’s conception of the state and how their relationship to it is changing and how they are responding politically,” he explains.

To write articles and add another book to his long list of publishing credits, Kideckel, who joined CCSU in 1977 and has been, among other notable achievements, a Fulbright scholar, embarked on sabbatical during January–July 2008, living in Kerala, a hotbed of political agitation. Applying ethnographic methods to his research, Kideckel uses fieldwork, which entails direct, first-hand observation of activities and in-depth interviews.

Drama of Fieldwork
Fieldwork, always key, meant being in the thick of political and union meetings, demonstrations, and petition activities—and even sometimes riots where he was water cannoned and one time hauled off by police. “Yeah,” he admits, “I was plenty anxious and concerned.” When swept into heated social cauldrons, Kideckel tries to maintain objective neutrality, but his mind teems with questions to further his study of human societies. Kideckel elaborates: “There are internal aspects to political street confrontations which serve as a window on society. Protests have a certain logic, meaning, and significance. Who is protesting and who is not? Who organized them? What are the symbols, flags, chants, burnings in effigy? When we compare dozens of demonstrations, patterns emerge that give us insight into the particular culture of a people.”

To date, Kideckel has amassed interviews with left and right political party members in Kerala in an attempt to explain political demonstrations, activism, and even murder. “We’ve organized data for a website, to be hosted at CCSU, and given some presentations, and our research continues,” he states. “Funded by an international collaborative research grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, we’ve trained researchers at Indian universities.”

Postsocialist Romania Book
Kideckel’s latest work is a continuation of themes found throughout his scholarship: labor, power, social change, and how people respond to big sweeps in history, from socialism to capitalism to growth of globalization. Many of these themes come together in his latest book, Getting By in Postsocialist Romania: Labor, the Body, and Working-Class Culture (Indiana University Press). The book is an ethnographic study, based on more than three decades of fieldwork, that presents compelling interviews to describe how two groups of Romanian industrial workers have fared since the end of socialism in Eastern and Central Europe.

The demise of centralized state socialism has transformed the lives of coal miners of the Jiu Valley and chemical workers of the Făgăraș regions—and not for the better. “Capitalism has improved the quality of life for many individuals,” observes Kideckel, “but mass unemployment for those without modern skills has resulted in immense psychological shock.” Kideckel looks at how stress resulted from unemployment, declining health, and loss of a social safety net. He examines the social and cultural frameworks of labor, politics, domestic and community life, gender identities, and health.
In a review of Kideckel’s book, Gerald Creed, Hunter College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York, wrote: “David Kideckel allows the disenfranchised to speak for themselves. In so doing he provides a contribution to the ethnography of Eastern Europe that speaks poignantly to broader discussions of work, class, and gender under neo-liberalism.”

An outgrowth of this book was a related video documentary, produced by Kideckel, about the history, life, and social and political circumstances of Romania’s Jiu Valley coal miners. *Days of the Miners: Life and Death of a Working Class Culture* was produced in collaboration with Alin Rus, a former coal miner now doctoral candidate in anthropology at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

**Extensive Writings on Romania**

Kideckel’s fascination with Romania was kindled during his doctoral days at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst when he began studying socialism and its development in Eastern Europe. In 1993 he authored *The Solitude of Collectivism: Romanian Villagers to the Revolution and Beyond* (Cornell University Press), which spans the period from 1974 to 1990 and provides a portrait of rural Romanian life under socialism. It also serves as an incisive analysis of the socialist system.

Kideckel has published scores of articles and served as editor for a number of collections dealing with Eastern European social-cultural anthropology. In 2000 Penn State University Press published a volume that Kideckel co-edited with Joel M. Halpern, titled *Neighbors at War: Anthropological Perspectives on Yugoslav Ethnicity, Culture, and History*.

“A glamorous” project dealt with the rule and end of the Nicolae Ceaușescu regime in Romania. Kideckel’s essay, “Dead Again? Nicolae Ceaușescu and Patriarchal Politics in Romanian Society and Culture,” was included in a film and book project, *Death of the Father*. Produced in 1999 by Cornell University, the project explored the end of patriarchal regimes. Filming of an international team of anthropologists and artists was done in Bellagio, a beautiful spit of land on Lake Como in northern Italy and the location of the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation Study Center. Kideckel raises an eyebrow: “Kind of cushy compared to some of my other fieldwork research sites.”

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**ITBD-Doing Business with DBEs**

A new contract year with ConnDOT sets the stage for ITBD to reach the milestone of providing business support services to 100 DBE (Disadvantaged Business Enterprise) firms. Started in 2005, the program is targeted exclusively to a special group of firms owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals.

DBE businesses, once certified by ConnDOT, are then introduced to the ITBD’s Community Business Development Specialist. The mentoring starts almost immediately with an informal interview with the individual business owner. The process model is a combination of strong business mentoring/monitoring combined with an extensive business support services program, delivered by a business consultant specialist.

The ITBD Business Support Services Program consists of specific training segments provided one-on-one to the DBE. It was developed exclusively to support and strengthen each firm. The program takes three to six months to complete, and is considered crucial in developing DBE self-sufficiency and enhancing competitiveness in the marketplace. Under the ITBD umbrella, the DBE, guided by the ITBD’s business development specialist, and its personal business consultant specialist, focuses on business assessment, plan development and implementation. This interaction with the consultant provides a behind-the-scenes turnkey business support approach for each DBE in the program.

Upon successful completion of this program, DBEs are eligible for additional, more focused business consultation for continued business improvements in areas such as website design, QuickBooks application training, marketing strategies, and procurement knowledge and systems.

— Jan Deveau

**CCSU Partners with United Arab Emirates University**

With the growing importance of the Middle East in today’s world comes a new opportunity for Central Connecticut State University. Associate Professor of Political Science Ghassan El-Eid has taken a leadership role in creating a bilateral partnership with United Arab Emirates University, located in Al-Ain, UAE.

The partnership offers CCSU students the opportunity to experience the Persian Arabian Gulf area of the Middle East. In addition, students will be less than 100 miles south of Dubai, an important city for business and economics. Students accepted to the program will pay tuition and fees to United Arab Emirates University, where they will live on or off campus. Students also have the option of studying full time for one semester or for the full academic year, starting in Fall 2009.

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**Telling Tales**

Emily Chasse, associate librarian, on-line services, has recently published *Telling Tales*, a guidebook and DVD that instructs storytellers on how to create a vibrant and exciting atmosphere for young listeners. Chasse suggests unique gestures and props and covers a wide spectrum of literary genres and storytelling styles.
Central Focuses on State Veterans

Nearly 22% of Connecticut veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Perhaps even more alarming, the veterans most in need of support are the least likely to seek it out. These and other troubling findings have come to light thanks to research conducted by Professor of Psychology Marc Goldstein and Professor of Counseling and Family Therapy Emeritus Jim Malley. Working through the Center for Public Policy and Social Research (CPPSR) at CCSU, they developed a report, commissioned by the Connecticut Office of Veterans’ Affairs, which was released at the end of January (www.ccsu.edu/cppsr).

This is the latest in a series of initiatives at Central focused on the state’s veterans. Other notable programs include the ongoing CPPSR’s Veterans Oral History Project (in partnership with the Library of Congress), which, to date, has videotaped interviews of more than 144 vets and has archived this oral history and related materials for viewing online at www.ccsu.edu.

In 2007, CPPSR also coordinated the first-ever Veterans Summit. Aimed at learning more about veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan, the Summit provided a forum for veterans to voice their concerns and an opportunity to learn from national and regional experts on veterans’ issues.

Recently, thanks to the support of Joe Arn-tone ’59 and Paul Gianaris ’70, Institutional Advancement launched an expanded fundraising effort to provide scholarship support for the University’s annual Student Veteran Excellence Award.

In addition, a Veterans Drop-In Center was opened at the end of 2008. Forthcoming initiatives include the creation of a Veterans Monument near the Student Center. In fall 2009 Professor of Counseling and Family Therapy Jane Fried will offer a truly exceptional First Year Experience course for returning veterans, specifically designed as a “transition to civilian life” program. The course will draw on Fried’s experience teaching Vietnam-era vets and will focus on the differences between learning in the military and learning in college. Fried aims to offer a comfortable and supportive environment for the veterans to explore a range of issues and develop diagnostic tools that will enable them to negotiate the transition from soldier to civilian student.

The Office of Alumni & Development is reaching out to Central vets and inviting them to participate in these and other activities. Many have responded to the call, and the Office is asking for other vets to get in touch by calling 860-832-1740 or emailing alumnidept@ccsu.edu.

alumni news

Dr. Marie S. Gustin, a psychologist and CCSU alum, made a major gift to endow an annual lecture at the Hospital for Special Care in New Britain. The annual lectures will focus on nursing excellence. Gustin is a former superintendent of schools in New Britain and taught in New Britain public schools while obtaining her master’s degree in psychology and education at CCSU in 1968. The first “Dr. Marie S. Gustin Nursing Excellence Lecture” will be held on May 18, 2009, on CCSU’s campus. The lecture, by Rosalinda Alfaro-LeFevre, will focus on the use of critical thinking skills. “With rapid advancements in medicine and technology, nurses are making decisions at the bedside that impact safety and quality of care. We have a great need in this country to engage nurses in continuous learning wherever we can,” Gustin noted.

Basia E. Pontello, head of Pontello Construction Management LLC and a CCSU ’08 Construction Management graduate and current graduate student, was recognized at an Associated General Contractors of Connecticut recognition event as the 2008 recipient in the construction supervisor category.

Alumna Honored

CCSU alumna Vera Buckley (above, left), who received a master’s degree in educational leadership in 2003 as part of the Jamaican cohort, was recently honored with the Order of Distinction for Service Award by the Governor-General of Jamaica. Buckley is currently the principal of St. Richard’s Primary School, Kingston, Jamaica.
Volatile markets and a deepening recession had a devastating impact on the global economy, and higher education was not immune to its effects. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, a survey from the Commonfund Institute on the investment performance of 235 education endowments found that the funds earned an average return of minus 24.1 percent in the six months ending December 31, 2008.

Garret Ratcliffe, a 1984 CCSU graduate and chairman of the CCSU Foundation Board of Directors, said the CCSU Foundation’s returns were down 21.5 percent for the same period. The Foundation is the repository for donations and gifts to support educational programs, scholarships, and research at CCSU, and the Board of Directors of the Foundation manages the Foundation’s investments.

The Commonfund Institute’s survey reported that the endowments for public colleges and institutions were down 23.6%, so CCSU’s endowment, is performing slightly better than average. “The drop in the Dow Jones and the S&P was the worst we have seen in years, and these declines have affected the Foundation’s endowment but we are managing our way through this economic crisis as well as can be expected,” said Ratcliffe.

Fortunately the Foundation’s portfolio had no exposure to the collapse of some of the major financial institutions, Ratcliffe said. The Foundation was not invested in Bear Stearns or in mortgage-backed collateralized debt obligations.

Meanwhile, the fixed-income side of the portfolio was positive. Ratcliffe said that the Foundation’s bonds and core fixed income investments returned 4.6% since July, as compared to 4.2% for Barclays Aggregate Bond Index.

Ratcliffe noted that in July the Foundation changed investments managers. “Our endowment had been under the management of the same agent ever since the Foundation was created in 1971. The Board felt that as part of its fiduciary responsibility it was necessary to interview other investment managers to be sure that we are getting the best possible portfolio management and strategic investment advice. So last January, the Foundation issued a request for proposals for investment management and consulting.”

Nine firms responded to the RFP, and four finalists were invited to campus for interviews. Ratcliffe said that this process resulted in the selection of SEI Investments Company. SEI is a leading global provider of comprehensive wealth solutions to financial service firms and institutional investors, he added.

Ratcliffe noted that the Foundation was particularly impressed with SEI’s “manager of managers” investment model. This model is based on the assumption that diversification and balance can be achieved more readily by having a group of specialists, instead of one individual, investing the fund’s capital. These firms assemble groups of investment experts, closely monitor their performance, and alter the composition of their teams to adapt to market conditions or fund performance.

The performance of the managers is measured against their respective benchmarks, and managers are replaced as necessary to maintain the fund’s overall performance and risk control measures.

Ratcliffe noted that under SEI’s model, the CCSU Foundation can avail itself of a full array of investment vehicles in a customized portfolio based on its unique investment objectives. “Access to SEI’s wide range of investment vehicles, along with their strategic guidance, is helping us weather this economic storm.”

Even though the Foundation has managed to avoid steep losses, the Board has taken further steps to preserve assets. Edward Young, the Foundation’s treasurer noted the Foundation made a mid-year revision to its 2008-09 budget as a defense against the low return that we are currently experiencing.

Young said that, each year, earnings from endowed funds are distributed as student scholarships and academic program support. “Earnings distributions are calculated by taking a percentage of the average quarterly market value of the portfolio over the past three years,” Young said. “The Board approved an adjustment that calculates distributions based on five years instead of three years.” Young said that this adjustment brings current year distribution to roughly the same level as 2007-08.

The CCSU Foundation is not alone in taking this preemptive action. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, more than a quarter of all higher education institutions responding to a survey by the National Association of College and University Business Officers said they planned to draw less money from their endowment this year than they had expected to spend.

Ratcliffe, who is an insurance broker and principal with the firm Jones Raphael & Oulundsen, Inc., in New Britain, said he has seen many business clients struggle through this tumultuous economic period. Some have even closed. “Rather than wait for economic markets to force our hand, the Foundation board is taking this defensive action to preserve and grow the assets that have been entrustted to our care.”

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**Vance Lecture Series, Featuring Anderson Cooper**

*Host of CNN’s Anderson Cooper 360° • Welte Hall, 7:30 pm, April 29, 2009*

The lecture is free & open to the public; tickets will be necessary for admission. Faculty & staff may request tickets by sending an email to: vancelecture@ccsu.edu. Please enter “Vance Lecture Ticket Request” in the subject line. Due to the heavy demand for tickets, we can honor requests for a maximum of two tickets to the lecture only. The deadline for requesting tickets is April 8, 2009. Tickets to a reception and dinner ($85/person) may also be requested using the faculty reply form which can be found at www.ccsu.edu/Vance09.htm. Proceeds to benefit the Robert C. Vance Endowed Chair in Journalism & Mass Communication.
CCSU Hosts 10th Annual FIRST LEGO League Robotics Competition

The School of Engineering & Technology hosted the 10th annual, statewide FIRST LEGO League Robotics Competition in Kaiser Hall-Detrick Gymnasium on December 14, 2008. The event is designed to inspire middle-school students to learn more about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology), a non-profit organization, partners with the LEGO Company, CCSU’s School of Engineering & Technology, Connecticut Science and Exploration Center, Millstone Nuclear Power Station, and Northeast Utilities Service Company.

Fifty teams of middle-school students from around Connecticut competed during this year’s event, “Climate Connections: Building a Global Game Plan.” Teams participated in a robotic challenge using LEGO robots designed and built by the teams, in addition to conducting research projects.

The event was organized by Drs. James DeLaura, Michele Dischino, and Michael Vincenti of the Technology & Engineering Education Department who worked with numerous faculty members and the dean’s office to coordinate the event. Students of the Technology & Engineering Education program volunteered their time before the event, as well as during the competition.

“This 10-year-long effort shows the outstanding commitment of the Engineering & Technology Education Department to reaching out to middle school students in an effort to attract them to STEM disciplines,” Kreemens noted. “We can observe the impact of this competition as the level of participation increases over the years—over 1,000 middle schools students took part in FIRST LEGO League last year.”

The Nitrobots team from Wolcott (left) won the Champion’s Award, the most prestigious award given at the event. The team, comprising seventh- and eighth-grade students, researched methods used to decrease methane gas emissions from landfills and modeled their solution after methods used by Covanta Energy Corporation of Bristol. Ted Martin, one of Nitrobots’ organizers, noted that the team will represent Connecticut at the national FLL championship in Atlanta, GA.

CCSU Students Praised for Work in Student Services

Central student Ken Barone was presented with the “Campus Life Award” during the annual awards banquet at the regional conference of the Association of College Unions International (ACUI). Barone was recognized for his work as a resident assistant, Inter-residence Council member, Board of Trustee student representative, and member of both the President’s Advisory Board and the Program Board. His work was praised as being instrumental in raising awareness of the Program Board’s role in the union program and in developing community. He also worked to develop a statement of ethics for student leaders on campus.

Kyle Hunt, a CCSU student majoring in computer science, was profiled in the ACUI regional newsletter. Hunt began his career in the student union/student activities field as an Information Desk attendant. After one semester, he was hired as a Center manager, responsible for managing peers and CCSU’s 80,000 square foot facility. He noted that his experience at ACUI encouraged him to pursue a career in the student union/student activities field. Speaking about the CCSU Student Center he noted, “We’re more like a family. You’re not just a number, but a person here.” Hunt was one of eight student leaders selected to attend the ACUI Region 1 Conference at the University of Vermont.

Moesha Step-mom Speaks at CCSU on HIV/AIDS

Sheryl Lee Ralph (above), award-winning actress, singer, and producer, visited CCSU for World AIDS Day. Her speech was titled “Social Justice: Women of Color and the HIV/AIDS Crisis. Ralph, an AIDS activist, founded the DIVA Foundation to create awareness and to help alleviate the stigma associated with the disease.
CCSU and the Local Arts

As part of its community outreach efforts, CCSU is supporting the new, non-profit Stanley Gallery and Community Art Studio, located in downtown New Britain. The gallery aims to promote culture and literature, encourage individuals to express themselves through artistic creations, and raise awareness of local artists, arts education, and cultural diversity in the community. Dr. Aram Ayalon, CCSU professor of teacher education, serves as president of the gallery’s board of directors. The Stanley Gallery is located at 66 West Main Street. For more information, visit www.stanleygallery.org.

CCSU Students Reflect on Visit to Hiroshima & Nagasaki

Professor of Modern Languages Dr. Shizuko Tomoda recently brought five students to visit the historical Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The students, (left to right), Andrew Spargo, Jennifer Sellet, Craig Breitspreecher, Jose Feliciano, and Oake Mese-Munns, are shown here participating on a discussion panel focused on their experience.

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extra credit

The Spanish Embassy awarded four CCSU students with grants to serve as teaching assistants in Spain during the 2008-09 academic school year. Recipients David Boulais, Kristen Beggren, Shirley Rodriguez, and Lisandra Rosario have been working closely with teachers in Spanish high schools to help students improve on their English.

As part of its celebrations for the International Year of Astronomy (IYA), the CCSU Copernican Observatory hosted free observing sessions for the alignment of Venus and Jupiter. Those who participated in the event received a mock certificate for the astronomy portion of the Ordinary Wizardry Level (OWLS) Exam, in reference to the Harry Potter book series. For a complete list of CCSU-sponsored activities for the IYA, please go to: www.ccsu.edu/astronomy/iya.htm.

Professor of Music Linda Laurent and adjunct lecturer Joanne Scattergood performed “A Century of French Song” in late fall, featuring the compositions of twelve composers, ranging from Gounod to Poulenc.

Dr. Moisés Salinas, associate professor of psychology and Chief Diversity Officer at CCSU, presented “Mexican Academics in the US: Diversity, Integration, and Brain Drain” during the second Harvard University Mexican Association Seminar. Salinas focused on their contributions to US culture, as well as the challenges they face, and he explored the question of whether their choice to remain in the US contributes to a “brain drain” impacting Mexican higher education institutions.

In January, CCSU student Catarina Stromberg attended the Presidential Inauguration, as well as an academic seminar, in Washington, DC, through the Golden Key International Honour Society. Stromberg is a member of the CCSU chapter.

new books

Dr. Mike Voight, assistant professor of physical education and human performance, published a new book, Mental Toughness Training for Soccer: Maximizing Technical & Mental Mechanics (Coaches Choice Publishers, 2008). This is the latest book in his Mental Toughness Training series which introduces numerous concepts, including mental mechanics, performance barriers, expanding player capacities, mechanical breakdowns, automaticity of performing, and mental-skills training strategies.

Editor of Iranian Poetry Anthology Visits CCSU

Niloufar Talebi, editor of the Iranian poetry anthology Belonging: New Poetry by Iranians around the World, visited CCSU in December to read some of her works.
in memoriam

Dr. Abner S. Baker III, associate professor of history, emeritus, died on December 30, 2008. His specialization was American history, particularly the Civil War. Baker retired from the University in 2000 and pursued a second career, after earning an MS in marriage and family therapy from CCSU.

Baha G. El-Eid, J.D., a CCSU grad who majored in Political Science and Economics, and son of Dr. Ghassan E. El-Eid, CCSU associate professor of political science, died on October 19, 2008. A CCSU scholarship fund has been established in his name. Those who wish to donate should make checks payable to CCSU Foundation Inc. and write Baha El-Eid’s Fund as the memo.

Marian McKenzie, assistant professor of English and philosophy, emeritus, died on September 25, 2008. She retired from the University in 1983.

Robert Voytek, adjunct lecturer of mathematical sciences and physics and earth sciences, died on October 13, 2008. The first Robert F. Voytek Memorial Lecture, delivered by Associate Professor of Physics and Earth Sciences Mark Evans, was held in December (see notable programs).
Japanese Dignitary Addresses Climate Concerns During 17th Annual Japan, Korea, and China Week

CCSU hosted the seventeenth Annual Japan, Korea, and China Week in October. During the event, Yoichi Suzuki (right), Consul-General of Japan in Boston, spoke on the “Japanese Initiative at and after the G8 Summit, Focusing on Global Climate Change and Developmental Issues.” Suzuki has served as the director in charge of the bilateral economic relationship between Japan and the European Union, as Minister and Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the World Trade Organization; and as Deputy Director General of the Economic Affairs Bureau of the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

The week began with a lecture by Dr. Il Pyung Kim, professor emeritus of political science from the University of Connecticut, who discussed “North Korean Leader Kim Jong Il and US Policy.” Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, professor of economics and director of The Center for East Asian Studies at CCSU, organized the annual conference and concluded the weeklong event with his lecture “The Economic Development of Modern China, Japan, and Korea.” The series was sponsored by CCSU, The Center for East Asian Studies, and Omicron Delta Epsilon.
CSU sophomore Dominick Tomanelli overcame long odds to continue his football career. After overcoming perhaps his biggest obstacle, his first shot at playing collegiately ended before he stepped foot on a campus. His second chance is underway.

Tomanelli, an all-section performer at both tight end and defensive end as a senior at Marlboro (NY) Central, injured his right leg in the fourth quarter of his team's Sectional Championship game on Nov. 4, 2006. He finished the game. Four days later, the first of four surgeries over a 10-day stretch began.

“I didn’t realize I was hurt until after the game on the bus ride home,” Tomanelli said. “I began to feel immense pain in the area around my shin and went to the hospital for x-rays. They came back negative, so I felt the injury must not be that severe.”

Tomanelli was diagnosed with compartment syndrome of the lower leg, more commonly referred to as Drop Foot Syndrome. During the four surgeries, his peroneus longus muscle was removed and the superficial peronial nerve was detached. According to all physicians associated with his case, Tomanelli’s football playing days were over. In fact, they were not certain he would walk normally again.

Despite the diagnosis and a foot brace designed to keep him from walking without tripping over his toes, Tomanelli diligently rehabbed throughout the winter and walked out to the mound for baseball season in the spring. He earned all-county honors as a pitcher while also preparing for football recruiting combines.

Tomanelli left transcripts and films for recruiters and coaches in Central New Jersey after having little success at local events. He received calls, including one from Saint Peter’s College. The school, despite offering no assistance for football student-athletes, put together an affordable financial package and offered him a chance to fulfill his dream of playing college football. Two weeks prior to his high school graduation, all of that was gone.

Saint Peter’s College sent a special delivery package to Tomanelli explaining the school’s decision to discontinue football effective July 1, 2007. His financial aid would still be available, but football would not be. With little time before the start of the 2007 football season, most rosters were full. He could redshirt, but a determined Tomanelli had not worked as hard as he had to be off the field for a year.

“I was completely stunned and disappointed when I opened the letter,” Tomanelli said. “My father and I frantically began searching for colleges that would take a high school player with the beginning of the season quickly approaching.”

CCSU ultimately offered him the opportunity to play.

He showed up in Head Coach Jeff McInerney’s office, and McInerney watched his tape.

“I thought he showed a lot of promise,” McInerney said. “There was little to do but offer him a spot in camp.”

The burden lessened for Tomanelli, but there were still hurdles.

“Relief was my first reaction, but there was also an uncertainty,” Tomanelli said. “I did not know the school or the program in the same way other freshmen did. There was no tour, no orientation.”

Tomanelli missed exactly one practice from the beginning of summer camp through the end of his freshman season. Yes, he made the team. That one missed practice occurred when he went back to Marlboro for the final inspection of his Eagle Scout project, which included a plan—with the handicapped and elderly in mind—for more user-friendly access to his church.

“Scouts has played numerous roles in my life,” Tomanelli said. “It has provided me a greater understanding of leadership skills and respect. It also gives me the courage to excel when obstacles come my way.”

Tomanelli appeared in seven games as a freshman at CCSU, playing mostly on special teams.

“As a true freshman, I was one of a handful of student-athletes who played and did not get redshirted,” Tomanelli noted. “I feel I could have been more prepared, but, regardless, I try to make every opportunity count. I just love to play the game, so I won’t ever complain.”

Tomanelli, who currently holds a 3.56 grade point average as an exercise science major, was presented with the Buddy Amendola Academic Award and the Hank Malingr Scholarship.
in the news

CCSU freshman Don Dinunzio was published in The Hartford Courant recently. His short piece, “The Real Price of Spiraling College Costs,” speaks of the hardships surrounding the current tuition situation at institutions of higher education across the country.

NBC30 tapped Associate Professor of Economics Carlos Liard-Muriente for a discussion of Black Friday and credit card companies in late November. The piece featured Stafford Springs woman, who received an early morning notification that her credit card company had cut her limit by $7,000. Liard-Muriente commented on the requirement for credit card companies to tell customers of any change to their accounts, except in the case of altered credit scores.

CCSU Head Women’s Basketball Coach Beryl Piper was featured in a December Courant article, “Three Questions with CCSU’s Beryl Piper: Central Women Improving.”

Dr. Chris Pudlinski, associate professor of communication, was quoted in the article “New Mental Health ‘Warm Lines’ Goes Five Days a Week Statewide” by Markian Hawryluk. Appearing in Bend Bulletin, a daily newspaper in Oregon, the article discussed Oregon’s new “warm line,” a support system available over the phone to individuals struggling with mental illness.

This winter, two members of the CCSU community participated in the first Russian-language opera production in Connecticut’s history. Alumnus Laurentiu Rotaru ’05, who earned his degree in music, and Jaroslaw Strzemien, former CCSU professor of theatre, took part in a 10-day production of Eugene Onegin performed at New Britain’s Trinity-on-Main. Strzemien served as stage director, and Rotaru sang the part of Gremin.

Ravi Shankar, associate professor of English, was featured in a recent New York Times article titled “Region’s Poets Convey a Sense of Place.” The article highlighted a number of writers and poets from New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut. The article features two of Shankar’s poems and mentions that he is the founding editor of Drunken Boat, an online journal of the arts.

CCSU Student: A Finalist for Women of Innovation Award

Laura Baker, a major in technology and engineering education, was announced as a finalist during the Fifth Annual Women of Innovation Awards program. The program recognizes women across Connecticut who are innovators, role models, and leaders in their fields.

Drs. Michele Dischino and James DeLaura of CCSU’s Department of Technology & Engineering Education K–12 recommended Baker for the Collegian Innovation and Leadership Award. Baker is a member of CCSU’s volleyball team, an award-winning vocalist, and a Dean’s List student who also serves as president of the CCSU Chapter of the Technology Education Collegiate Association. This future educator was the only woman in the CSU system to proceed as a finalist. DeLaura praised Baker’s accomplishments, “She provides an outstanding leadership role for women, as well as a role model for women who wish to become technology and engineering teachers. It is an honor to have a student like Laura Baker at CCSU.”

Women’s History Month Luncheon

On March 10, the Ruthe Boyea Women’s Center hosted its annual Women’s History Month luncheon. The keynote speaker for this year’s luncheon was documentary filmmaker, activist, and educator Judy Helfand, who lectured on “Don’t Shoot the Messenger: Women Taking the Lead to Save Our Planet.”

Dr. Helfand introduced and screened her latest film, “Everything’s Cool.” The film focuses on the growing concern about global warming in the wake of the most dangerous chasm ever to emerge between scientific understanding and political action.

For more information on this event and others planned for Women’s History Month, please contact the Ruthe Boyea Women’s Center. The chair of this year’s Women’s History Month celebration at CCSU is Dr. Heather Prescott, professor of history.
Women & Film Festival

Lilly Rivlin, New York-based film director of Can You Hear Me? Israeli and Palestinian Women Fight for Peace, discussed her work at the opening event of the fourth biennial Doris Honig Guenter Women & Film Festival, titled “Body Politics.” The three-day festival, which took place at both the New Britain Museum of American Art (NBMAA) and CCSU and was held in October, was named in honor of Doris Honig Guenter, director, emeritus, of CCSU’s Ruthe Boyea Women’s Center. This year’s festival was CCSU’s third collaboration with the NBMAA as part of the University-Museum-Community (UMC) New Britain Collaborative. The free screenings, held at both the NBMAA and Torp Theater, of a total of nine films by American and international women directors was attended by 1,000 people. Two additional visiting directors, Beverly Peterson and Anne Makepeace, also introduced screenings of their documentary films. The festival concluded with a panel discussion, moderated by independent filmmaker John Courtmanche, on the state of the Connecticut film industry. The panel speakers were Andrea Haas Hubbell, Harvey Hubbell, and CCSU alumnus Daniel Herzog, as well as Connecticut-based film director Anne Makepeace, who is currently a resident artist at Radcliffe College. The festival was co-chaired by Dr. Burlin Barr, coordinator of the new minor in cinema studies at CCSU, and Dr. Karen A. Ritzenhoff, associate professor of communication. Doris Honig Guenter is the honorary chair of the festival.

UMC Collaborative Event Scheduled for April

The UMC (University Museum Community) Collaborative will host its second CCSU Night at the Museum on April 15 and 16 at the New Britain Museum of American Art (NBMAA). Entries for this year’s “Student Creative Arts Project” on the theme “Nature and Environment” will be exhibited, as well as projects by children from Jefferson Elementary School in New Britain. On April 16, students and community groups will perform music, theater, and poetry, as well as present photography, video, and other visual entries. Events at the NBMAA are free and open to the public.

In addition, internationally renowned jazz musician Paul Winter will give a solo concert on April 16 at 7 p.m. in Welte Auditorium at CCSU. Concert tickets will cost $25 for general audience and $10 for CCSU students.

For more information, visit www.communica- tion.ccsu.edu/UMCcollaborative/default.html or email Karen Ritzenhoff at ritzenhoffk@ccsu.edu.