Que Viva the New Latin American, Latino, and Caribbean Center

“W”e’re undergoing a metamorphosis; it’s quite an exciting time,” declares Francisco Donis. “The Center for Caribbean and Latin American Studies has a new name—the Latin American, Latino and Caribbean Center (LALCC). I’m relatively new in my position, having become Center director in January 2009. However, we already have a reshaped mission, new website, and new logo.”

The Center is still housed on the main floor of the Elihu Burritt Library, and Donis, who is also professor of psychology, is eager to keep an open door policy. “In the Center, we welcome everyone who is interested in the culture of the Latin American and Caribbean regions. Our resources include book and video collections, conference space, and several PCs for student use,” states Donis.

Indeed, visitors are greeted by a colorful mural, stretching 7 feet by 14 feet. Created by Jorge Morales MS ’96 while a student at CCSU, “Roots of the Caribbean” depicts the origins and heritage of the Caribbean peoples, as well as the area’s flora.

Donis is enthusiastic about changes at the Center. In November 2009, the CSU Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee approved both the new name for the Center and a newly recast mission statement.

Discussing the rationale behind the transformation, Donis explains that since the Center for Caribbean and Latin American Studies first opened in 1995 with Professor Ronald Fernandez (now retired) as director, “The emphasis on academic programs has been lessened while services provided to Latino students and community outreach activities have been greatly expanded. Therefore, in spring 2009, the Center’s Advisory Board began a comprehensive review of the Center’s name and mission and decided to develop new ones that more closely reflect what the Center has become.”

The Advisory Board considered terms to describe the peoples served by the Center. It concluded that the inclusion of “Latino” more accurately acknowledges Latinos who are from many different nationalities, cultures, and backgrounds.

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Recast Mission
The mission reaffirms the Center’s commitment to promoting the understanding and appreciation of historical, social, and cultural aspects of Latin American and Caribbean societies and of Latinos in the US—through education, community events, study-abroad programs, international exchange, community outreach, and research.

“The main emphasis of the Center is to provide support services for students and community outreach activities,” Donis asserts. “It is paramount that we foster recruitment and retention of Latinos at CCSU.

Priority Programs
Donis cites two Center programs aimed at achieving recruitment and retention of Latinos at CCSU. The Latino Connecticut College Access and Success Program, or ConnCAS, is now in its seventh year. Supported by a grant from the Connecticut Department of Higher Education, “The primary goal of the Latino ConnCAS program is to support Latino students in a successful transition from high school to college,” according to Donis. It is a rigorous five-week summer program during which students take classes in math, English, physical education, computer technology, and study skills. Students earn four academic credits, receive room and board, and participate in cultural activities on and off campus—all without charge.

Director of Pre-Collegiate and Access Services Awilda Reasco says, “I am committed to urging ConnCAP seniors from New Britain High School to take part in Latino ConnCAS, which allows them to remain in a higher education setting.”

As part of the ConnCAS program, prominent Latino and non-Latino leaders in education, business, politics, and the arts are invited to talk to students about the importance of education in achieving a prosperous and successful life. Guests have included Bill Dyson, formerly a leading representative in the Connecticut Legislature and now the Governor William A. O’Neill Endowed Chair in Public Policy and Practical Politics at CCSU, and Elsa Nuñez, Eastern Connecticut State University president.

Another proactive retention initiative is the Latino Mentorship Program, which aims to help first-year students have a successful academic year at CCSU. “Participants in the Latino ConnCAS program agree to participate in our Latino Mentorship Program during their freshmen year,” says Donis. Groups of four or five students are assigned to a faculty/staff mentor, as well as a peer mentor.

While the Center has evolved, it has always taken pride in its community outreach activities, which have included Center-sponsored lectures and concerts of interest to the Latino communities in the vicinity of CCSU. Events held this past year included Grupo Surcari, a concert of Latin American music; the premier of “Tres Canciones Españolas;” and “Contribuciones,” a short film festival for independent Latino filmmakers.

Study abroad has been another longstanding Center emphasis. “Under the Center’s Strategic Plan, we have a specific goal. By summer 2011, our aim is that the Center would have already supported six study-abroad trips to Latin American and Caribbean countries, and we hope to have at least 60 students participating,” states Donis.

Along with its revamped outlook, the Center retains its welcoming air. Visit its
space and Kelly Caraballo, a biomolecular sciences major who also coordinates the Latino ConnCAS program, will greet you at the reception desk. “We have a vibrant, spacious area where students can come to study, hold a group meeting, or use computers to do their homework. There have been more students using the Center this semester than any other semester that I have worked here. And it is always a good atmosphere of friendly people who come in with smiles, jokes, and plenty of conversation.”

LALCC Associate Director Carlos Liard-Muriente, an associate professor of economics at CCSU, extends an invitation: “A stop by the Center will demonstrate the diversity of the student population visiting the Center and how comfortable they feel. We strive to provide a welcoming space for all students—or, as we say in Spanish: Mi casa es su casa!”

—Geri Radacs

in the news

Professor of Teacher Education Ronnie Casella was recently featured in a USA Today article titled “School’s Zero Tolerance Policies Tested,” as well as in a New York Times article on the same subject. Casella states that there is no evidence that zero-tolerance policies make schools safer.

A recent article in the Hartford Courant chronicled the many renovations and changes that the CCSU campus has undergone over the years. “Central’s Big Makeover” detailed the removal of Wells Street, which used to split the campus in two, and changes made to the core of campus, for which LADA, P.C. Land Planners, of Simsbury, received a design award.

Assistant Professor of English Mary Collins was recently featured in The Hartford Courant in an article on her newly published book American Idle: A Journey Through Our Sedentary Culture. Collins described the book as an urgent call for Americans to look at themselves and to examine our society to see how it contributes to the problem. An article also appeared in The New Britain Herald, and, in addition, Collins was interviewed by WTNH-TV Channel 8.

Associate Professor of Political Science Jerold Duquette was recently quoted in The New Britain Herald, speaking on the controversy surrounding President Barack Obama’s Nobel Prize. Duquette agrees that the award was given in the hope that President Obama “will turn the climate that he has created into something more.”

Student Government Association President Andrew Froning was quoted in a New Britain Herald article on the Student Financial Aid Bill. The bill was later passed by the House of Representatives.

Congressman Chris Murphy’s visit with CCSU Veterans Affairs Coordinator Chris Gutierrez and student veterans on campus was featured in The New Britain Herald in November. William Leveille, Joe O’Keefe, Angel Fernandez, and Alex Silva shared their stores with Murphy, who met with veterans to discuss any problems they were having with the post-9/11 Veteran Affairs bill that helps pay for an education.

Associate Professor of English Jason Jones was mentioned in The Chronicle of Higher Education, as well as many other media outlets, for his role in starting ProfHacker, a blog that provides technology tips for professors.

CCSU student Matt Kiernan, correspondent for The New Britain Herald, recently contributed an article on Central’s degree programs. Kiernan noted that six new degree programs have given over 300 students the opportunity to study in areas in which the state has need for more workers.

CCSU students and Phi Sigma Sigma members Shae Kinney and Kathleen Freeman, who is Kinney’s sister-in-law, were featured in The Bristol Press in an article about how they worked together to honor their mother-in-law and mother by aiding the Greater Bristol Visiting Nurse Association (VNA). With the news of VNA’s recent funding cut, the Kinney family decided to host a day promoting healthy lifestyles, while raising money for the VNA from parking fees and the sale of food and raffle tickets. The day’s events included face painting, a dunk tank, a bounce house, and a variety of games and activities. The Greater Bristol VNA provides care to residents of Bristol, Burlington, and the surrounding area.

Assistant Professor of Teacher Education Kurt Love was recently interviewed on the WWUH 91.3 FM radio show Soap Box, featuring Rob Tyrka. The interview with Love focused on education, social justice, and community-based experiences.

An article by CCSU Professor of History Heather Prescott on “Roman Polanski and the History of ‘Rape-Rape’ in America” appeared on the History News Network in October.

The Veterans History Project at CCSU, directed by Associate Director of the Center for Public Policy and Social Research Eileen Hurst, was featured in several newspapers, including the Chicago Tribune.

An interview with Professor of History Matt Warshauer was recently aired on WDRC AM. Topics included Connecticut and the Civil War. continued on page 5
Carolyn Fallahi: Teaching the Value of Research

Carolyn Fallahi projects an “I am approachable” rather than an “I am superior” teaching style, according to one of her graduate students, Lisa Leishman, who is “wowed” by Fallahi’s enthusiasm and ability to teach psychology. Leishman, who expects to receive her master’s in psychology next year, notes, “I’ve overheard numerous students in her Lifespan Development course, many who are not psych majors, say how hard she is but how glad they are that her teaching makes the subject understandable.”

Enter the Lifespan Development class and hear a spirited exchange on the pros and cons of spanking. Associate Professor of Psychology Fallahi encourages debate but makes it clear that positions must be supported by research findings. One student, a bit exasperated, opines, “I was spanked and I turned out just fine.” Another wonders if spanking is effective discipline. With the class at an impasse, Fallahi introduces research: “Based on current psychology studies and literature, spanking is not recommended. It can become a negative reinforcer for the parents, leading to it being used more often. It doesn’t provide an opportunity for teaching. Alternative ways to discipline should include behavior modification, positive reinforcement, and having a pro-active plan.”

Research as a Vital Tool

Although Fallahi has found that many students in the clinical and counseling areas are reluctant to tackle research methods and statistics, she encourages her students to value research. Certainly Fallahi has used this vital tool to amass significant professional achievements. She earned the master’s and doctorate degrees in counseling psychology at the University of Missouri-Columbia. She worked as a psychologist in private practice and in various hospital settings in New York and in Texas until 2000. Her research activities became more formalized when she joined CCSU in 2002.

Fallahi often involves students in her research. Leishman, for example, has worked on five research projects with Fallahi, including, most recently, the BARCS study. The BARCS (Brain and Alcohol Research with College Students) study is sponsored by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and is designed to probe unanswered questions frequently asked by scientists, legislators, students, and users of alcohol. Fallahi explains, “Two colleagues in the Psychology Department, Carol Shaw Austad and Rebecca Wood, and I are working with the Institute of Living, Yale University, and Trinity College to examine alcohol patterns in college students over a five-year period using a longitudinal study to see how alcohol consumption affects brain development.”

Because the BARCS study is both large-scale, following people over time, and representative of college students from diverse backgrounds, it should be able to address many questions about the effects of alcohol abuse on the developing brain more definitively.

After teaching the Psychology of Diversity course for several years, Fallahi joined forces with Professor of Psychology Carol Shaw Austad in a diversity research project to examine gender differences in aggression. This project was inspired by the infamous Abu Ghraib situation involving a female prison guard and the sexual humiliation of an Iraqi prisoner of war. One of Fallahi’s graduate students appears as the third author on a paper describing this project. The findings were published in the journal Sex Roles (2009).

Report on Gender/Race/Equity

More recently, Fallahi served as the chief investigator for the Report on Gender/Race/Equity at CCSU. The study, conducted during the 2008–2009 academic year, was commissioned by President Jack Miller. Associate Professor of Mathematical Sciences Sally Lesik and Fallahi examined data concerning salary, initial salary, promotion and tenure decisions, hiring, and separation in order to determine whether there is both gender and racial equity at CCSU.

“These are the highlights of our results,” states Fallahi. “We have fewer numbers of women and minority faculty and SUOAF-AFSCME employees. The salary wage gap (initial salary) for faculty by gender at CCSU is estimated to be 2.30% after we controlled for such variables as department and age. There is no consistent patterns of discrimination from 2002–2008 in the Promotion and Tenure Committee decisions.”
A number of recommendations were made. Fallahi says, “We need to improve in the recruitment of qualified women and minority candidates at all ranks, especially associate and full professors and administrators. It is recommended that we improve in the reporting of key information during our searches—for example, minority status, level of experience, research.” The complete report can be accessed online at www.ccsu.edu/equity.

Fallahi adds, “For a future study, we hope to examine longitudinally all of the factors that go into making someone successful here at CCSU, both hard data (like what we examined in this recent study) and perceptions of equity and inequity.” Fallahi is interested in looking at the perceptions of prejudice and discrimination, as well as at factors, such as mentoring and service, that also may impact success.

**A Memorable Week**

The same week that the equity study was presented to the campus, Fallahi and Associate Professor of Sociology Beth Merenstein received Faculty Senate endorsement for their proposal to implement a diversity curricular requirement in CCSU’s General Education program. A leader on the Faculty Senate’s Diversity Committee, Fallahi explains that the goal is to identify courses that explore issues of social equity and justice in the United States. The educational outcomes of those courses will include the ability to recognize the diverse forms and effects of social and economic inequality and to understand bias and discrimination based on individual and group factors, such as race, color, religious creed, age, sex, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, and mental or physical disability. “We’re starting training now to help professors to incorporate diversity into their courses,” explains Fallahi. “Once they are trained and the courses converted, the D-designation courses will become part of the General Education requirements for all students, who will each need to complete at least one D-designated course.”

Merenstein will be training faculty to convert their courses over the next six years. Fallahi is designing a study to evaluate the effectiveness of the diversity curriculum.

It had been an exhausting, and satisfying, week for Fallahi. And throughout the year, she can take pride in knowing that her major contributions to CCSU’s academic community are matched by her daily triumphs in stirring the minds of her students in the classroom.

—Geri Radacsi

**Hillel Celebrates Sukkot**

From October 5–9, CCSU’s chapter of Hillel celebrated Sukkot. This Jewish harvest holiday begins five days after Yom Kippur and is known as the Festival of Booths. Traditions associated with Sukkot include the building of a sukkah (shown above on the edge of Vance Green), eating in the sukkah, and waving the *lulav* (palm fronds) and *etrog* (a citrus fruit related to lemon). Taking part in the celebration, below, were (from right) Cantor Donna Gordon from Temple Sinai, CCSU student Dror Shachar, Hillel coordinator Beth Brenner, and President of the CCSU Chapter of Hillel Pam Majidy.

**in the news**

**continued from page 3**

Assistant Professor of Psychology Rebecca Wood was featured in *The New Britain Herald* for her ongoing work on a national five-year study on the effects of alcohol on college students ages 18–25. “We’re investigating how alcohol intake among college students affects cognitive functioning, brain development, and academic performance,” said Wood.
Mike Voight wants athletes and coaches to use their heads to gain the winning edge. He extols the importance of marshalling mental toughness when playing soccer in his latest book, *Mental Toughness Training for Soccer* (2008), part of a series of sports psychology training books he has written for Coaches Choice Publishers. A premier sport psychology-performance consultant and assistant professor in the Physical Education and Human Performance Department, Voight has written two other books dealing with mental toughness training—one for volleyball and the other for football. In 2010, another one of his books, this time on mental toughness for basketball, will be released.

“The reason I wrote this book on soccer was to give athletes a tool kit of the strategies I’ve picked up from clients during my many years as a sport psychology consultant,” he says. “I’ve had the privilege of working with notable collegiate, Olympic, and professional athletes.” He continues, “A primary objective of this book is to assist players, coaches, and teams in maximizing their performance potential via a greater appreciation of the intangibles—namely the mental, emotional, and inspirational aspects inside every performer.”

**Broad Experience as Soccer Player, Coach, and Educator**

Voight’s advice and counsel springs from his broad experience: as a soccer player (at Springfield College, where he earned his BS in physical education), as an assistant soccer coach at the Div. I University of North Carolina at Charlotte, as an educator in physical education at the University of Southern California (USC), and at CCSU since 2007.

A sports psychology course he took at Springfield College gave Voight new insights into what it takes to be an effective coach. So, after earning a master’s in guidance counseling at Jacksonville University in Florida, he was off to USC to earn a PhD in sports psychology. For 11 years he was a performance consultant for nearly a dozen teams at USC. One of his teams, USC’s women’s volleyball, repeated as National Champion (2002, 2003). He currently consults with teams from the University of Texas, USC, Georgia Tech, Vanderbilt University, and others. Voight is a certified sport psychology consultant and a certified strength and conditioning specialist. He has published his research in sport psychology, sport science, and coaching journals and sits on the editorial board for two international sport science/coaching journals. He has also produced three DVDs to enhance the performance of coaches and athletes.

Lauding Voight’s impressive credentials, Robbie Church, head women’s soccer coach at Duke University, wrote in a review: “I have incorporated his ideas and strategies into my coaching with three different collegiate programs. Not only does he know the game of soccer due to his playing and coaching experience, but he understands mental toughness from all angles and how best to teach and apply it to players.”

**Mental Toughness**

“Mental and emotional toughness is the ability to remain focused, energized, and confident—in good times and in pressure situations. What I’m asking the athlete to do is tough, because to maintain a consistent mind set in order to maintain a consistent level of confidence is difficult. Furthermore, the first skill to build is awareness, that is, being aware of what helps and what hurts in a game. For some who have never practiced such reflection, this skill can be a tall order,” Voight explains.

Awareness leads to maximizing the mind-body connection, Voight contends. While a player may be in good physical shape and have decent technical and tactical knowledge of the game, negativity and preoccupation with mistakes and failure to score often lead
to poor play. To be mentally tough means learning to discipline oneself to immediately refocus after setbacks. Voight explains, “It’s all about using a consistent routine to reframe or restructuring thinking. So, ‘I stink’ is re-focused to ‘I’m good and I’m going to win the next ball that comes near me.’” In general, Voight maintains, a goal-scoring mentality routine is forward-thinking, always being ready for the next attacking opportunities.

Quality of Practice

Voight also stresses quality of practice. “An athlete’s performance starts and ends with quality of practice, which is based on four items: attitude, preparation for practice, consistent execution in practice, and self-evaluation of progress.” A survey is included in the book so coaches and athletes can assess their quality of practice.

The book begins by considering the intricacies behind performance excellence, that is, talent, skill, mechanics, and automatic execution. Voight then addresses many scenarios associated with the mental side of soccer. Among these are players who perform well at practice but cannot apply what they have learned during the game; teams that are inconsistent due to poor fitness or technical programs; players who are not truly committed to team goals; players who lack the necessary inspiration to realize their potential; and teams that can’t seem to “get on the same page.”

The book also addresses coaches who are unsure that mental training is a tool that can be used with their players. Voight explains that in today’s society there is tremendous pressure on coaches to win, and this burden directly transfers to players. “Instead of a process focus—which emphasizes teaching, learning, and improvement—the focus has become winning,” he observes. “Today’s athletes are goal-driven to win but don’t have a profound skill-set to get there. I want coaches and their players to consider the process vs. outcome approaches so they realize they can have it both ways.”

Committed to sports psychology as a valuable educational tool, Voight, on a pro bono basis, works with the coaches, captains, and athletes of five CCSU programs: football, basketball, women’s soccer, volleyball, and lacrosse. By sharing his insights through teaching, writing, and consulting, he hopes to build in athletes the mental muscles that serve well not only in sport, but in life.

—Geri Radacsi

Robots Take Over at CCSU

CCSU recently hosted the 4th Annual BEST Robotics Competition in the Student Center. BEST (“Boosting Engineering, Science and Technology”) brought students from some 14 Connecticut schools to campus. Organized by Assistant Professor of Manufacturing & Construction Management Ravindra Thamma, the event is designed to help build a pipeline of future engineers, one of the state’s critical workforce needs. Each team, and its robot, was assigned tasks to perform in order to acquire points. Shown at right, members of one team operate their robot while a judge (right) keeps score.

in memoriam

Director of Admissions, Emeritus, Johnie M. Floyd died on September 30, 2009. Floyd was one of the University’s first minority advocates for economic and racial equality in higher education. Before joining CCSU, he worked in the Bristol school system as a teacher and track coach. A memorial service for Floyd was held on October 18 in the Student Center.

CCSU student Viviana Rose Cavalli, of Shelton, died on November 20 at the age of 18. A graduate of Shelton High School, Cavalli was a freshman marketing major at Central. She leaves behind her parents and two brothers, among other loving friends and family. A memorial service was held on campus in early December.

Ethics of Aid Explored at Africana Studies Conference

Binyavanga Wainaina (above), author and director of the Chinua Achebe Center for African Literature and Languages, was the keynote speaker at 16th annual Center for Africana Studies “The Ethics of Aid” conference held on campus in early November. Other lectures given during the conference included “The Ethics of Grassroots NGO’s: The Ghana Health and Education Initiative in Humjibre Village,” by CCSU Professor of Geography, Emeritus, Timothy Rickard, and “UNESCO’s Role in Fostering a Culture of International Cooperation,” by UNESCO Human Rights Chair Amii Otuunu.
Thomas Seddon and Kathleen Wall Honored with CCSU 2009–2010 Excellence in Teaching Award

Central Connecticut State University recently honored two of its finest professors with the 2009–2010 Excellence in Teaching Award. Assistant Professor of Music Thomas Seddon, who also serves as the director of bands, was recognized for his stimulating teaching in music education, expansion of the band program, and activity as an artist-musician, guest conductor, and adjudicator. Adjunct Lecturer of Management & Organization Kathleen Wall, who brings years of progressive and challenging teaching in management theory and in organizational behavior/learning into her classroom, was also honored.

At ceremonies held on campus in early November, CCSU President Jack Miller acknowledged the many superb faculty members named as Excellence in Teaching finalists and semi-finalists, as well as others on the Teaching Honor Roll. Finalists included Assistant Professor of Teacher Education Barbara Clark, Associate Professor of Finance Joseph Farhat, and Associate Professor of English Jason Jones. Selection of honorees is based on a comprehensive process, with nominations coming from CCSU students. Full- and part-time faculty members are eligible for the award, which is given for inspired teaching that promotes extraordinary learning.

Thomas Seddon

Seddon’s teaching style brings an upbeat and dynamic quality to his classroom. “No professor has had a more profound impact on me than Dr. Seddon,” stated Richard Manning, a senior music education major. “He’s my role model. He is passionate about music and always works to be more effective, whether it is playing the trumpet, conducting and directing musical ensembles, or passing his knowledge on to students.”

Seddon joined CCSU’s Music Department in 2002, bringing a breadth of experience as a band conductor and as a music teacher at the college and secondary school levels. He has amassed a list of significant accomplishments since then. He spearheaded the growth of the band program from one to two ensembles. The Wind Ensemble now performs some of the most interesting music available for winds and percussion. The Symphonic Band includes students with 28 different majors who are interested in music making at CCSU. The Marching Band has grown from 50 to a 115 members in the three years Seddon has been directing it, and last year it performed for some 105,000 people in Connecticut. The Wind Ensemble was selected to perform at the Connecticut Music Educator conference three times under Seddon’s direction.

Colleague and Professor of Music Linda Laurent commented, “As conductor of the CCSU Wind Symphony, Dr. Seddon instituted a policy of requiring each student to take several individual playing examinations throughout the semester to motivate students to learn their assigned repertoire and to provide him with an evaluative tool. Additionally, he initiated a student competition to reward worthy students with a solo performance with the ensemble. In yet another innovation, this year Dr. Seddon shared the podium with his three graduate students to give them conducting experience.”

In the area of music education, Seddon has forged a strong relationship with the Newington Public Schools to provide field experience for CCSU students.

Last year Seddon made a scholarly presentation at the College Band Directors National Conference in Austin, Texas. He’s maintained an active performance schedule, while pursuing his academic research.

Seddon holds the master’s and doctorate in music education from The Hartt School, University of Hartford, where he taught and guest conducted prior to coming to CCSU.
Kathleen Wall
Adjunct Lecturer of Management and Organization Kathleen Wall has over 30 years of managerial experience to offer her students.

Marta Chodulski, a former student of Wall’s, notes that she was “very impressed” with Wall’s teaching style as well as her “always-open-door policy.” Chodulski further remarks that Wall’s exemplary communication and listening skills allow her “to work well with students of all ages and backgrounds, making the learning experience fresh, captivating, and rewarding.” She adds that Wall is “very creative and energetic, and takes a lot of pride in her work. She is a highly motivated, goal-oriented, and resourceful professor who is dedicated to increasing her students’ productivity and knowledge.”

Wall explains that her classroom is designed to “move students away from dependence on my input as the sole authority or expert and to steadily move them toward becoming self-directed in their learning.” She holds a philosophy of “shared power” in the classroom, encouraging students to use her first name. According to Wall, one of the major goals of her teaching is to create “career-ready students” by modeling “the characteristics, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that I know they will need in order to succeed in a competitive, global marketplace.”

Wall demonstrates a sincere concern for her students by offering not only individual, formal meetings, but also “Panera Sessions,” in which professor and student roles are put aside for more informal conversation over a cup of coffee.

Professor of Management and Organization David Fearon remarks that he teaches many of the same students as Wall: “When they come to me from Kate, I have hungrier learners who show their peers why we have to learn differently.” He notes: “Taking a core course with this professor is not just about earning three more credits and a grade; Wall aims for transformation, because nothing less than transformation will move students to the level of learning proficiency that employers expect in exchange for a good job.”

Wall earned her MBA in management from Western New England College in 1987 and received an MS in organizational behavior from the University of Hartford in 2004. She is currently pursuing a doctoral degree at Columbia University.

—Geri Radacsi and Luke Albertson

For a full listing of honorees, please visit www.ccsu.edu/Courier/2010/Jan/HonorRoll.htm.

CCSU Welcomes Fulbright Scholar
In November, Rev. Dr. Jose Nedumpara, Fulbright Scholar in Residence for the 2009–10 academic year, gave a lecture on “Equality and Inequality in India (and Why It Should Matter to You).” While at CCSU, Nedumpara, professor of political science and principal of Prajyoti Niketan College in Pudakad, Thrissur, Kerala, India, will continue his research on “Preferential Treatment and Social Mobility of the Scheduled Castes (Dalits) in India and African-Americans in the USA: A Comparative Study.” He also will work on the development of a South Asian studies curriculum, in addition to working with Central’s Office of Diversity and Equity to further his competency as a college administrator in India. Nedumpara is hosted by Dr. David Kideckel and the CCSU Anthropology Department.

Promotional Ceremony
CCSU Police Officer Christopher Cervoni (right) was sworn in by Chief of Police Jason Powell (left) at his promotion ceremony held on November 5. Cervoni has attained the rank of lieutenant.

Panel Discusses Health Care Reform
A panel discussion on health care reform was held on campus in early October. Panelists included (left to right) Michael Critelli, retired executive chairman of Pitney Bowes and moderator of the event; Paul Grady of Mercer Consulting, also a board member of SustiNet; Michael Turpin, former CEO of Oxford Healthcare; Tom Swan, executive director of the Connecticut Citizen Action Group; and Sal Luciano, executive director of Council 4 AFSCME. Professor of Psychology Carol Shaw Austad served as chief organizer for the event, which was sponsored by CCSU’s Arts and Sciences Public Policy Committee.
Phil Kurze ’72: Combining His Passions for Safety, NASCAR, and Central

As vice president for mass notification products at Whelen Engineering in Chester, Phil Kurze ’72 leads an interesting life. His company produces voice and siren tone speaker systems, including those that alert a community’s residents of an imminent tornado or a problem at a nuclear power plant. Handling marketing, production, and sales for these systems, Kurze has helped to provide the country of Denmark with a 1,400-speaker national warning system. He has traveled to Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia to meet with top-level government officials about ways to alert the public about tsunamis, and he has provided written testimony to the US Congress on mass notification methods. He has also helped to supply the US military with devices that, among other things, warn of potential security breaches at overseas military bases. The work is very rewarding for Kurze, who says, “Every night when I go to bed, I know that I’m part of saving lives all over the world.”

Kurze frequently travels—via the company’s corporate jet—to various parts of the country for trade shows and client meetings. But often Kurze’s travel destinations include dozens of NASCAR-affiliated racetracks. That’s because Kurze is also Whelen Engineering’s vice president for motorsports. Whelen sponsors three NASCAR series, including NASCAR’s original modified series. Kurze represents his company at NASCAR functions and enjoys presenting awards at the end of races. Passionate about auto racing since childhood, he says, “I went to my very first race at Waterford Speed Bowl in 1954 when I was five years old, and I haven’t been the same since.”

Kurze decided to pursue a partnership with NASCAR because there were so many marketing advantages: NASCAR is the most popular sport in the United States, a large percentage of Whelen’s customers are NASCAR fans, and the fans are very supportive of the sponsors. Whelen now provides the officially licensed warning lights for NASCAR’s racetracks, pace cars, and emergency vehicles. “We’re able to incorporate the product that we make and sell into the sport that we love,” says Kurze. “It’s a perfect fit.”

The NASCAR connection, in turn, led to another venture for the energetic Kurze. He is the president of the board of directors of the non-profit Bo-Dyn Bobsled Project. The project was created in 1992 by NASCAR veteran driver Geoff Bodine, who wanted to revitalize the US bobsled team by providing American-made sleds that capitalize on NASCAR technology and engineering acumen. Kurze notes that at the 2009 World Championships, the American team won a number of medals using Bo-Dyn sleds—including gold in the four-man race. The medals were welcomed by a team that hadn’t won gold in 50 years, but equally satisfying to Kurze is the fact that now the Europeans are acknowledging the superior design of the American-made sleds. Kurze himself has been down the bobsled run three times at Lake Placid and also at Park City, an 80-mile-per-hour experience that he refers to as “the longest minute of my life.”

His professional life might sound exhausting, but the indefatigable Kurze has made a career out of having multiple careers. Graduating from Central in 1972 with a degree in English and secondary education, Kurze was unable to find a teaching position in a saturated job market and began training to become a police officer. Rising to the rank of sergeant, Kurze served for 10 years as a part-time officer in Deep River, while also working as a manager for a business forms company. “I’ve always been a multi-tasker,” he says. “I’ve never been satisfied doing just one thing.” In fact, Kurze’s
second and third jobs have included town selectman and deputy fire marshal in Deep River. He also worked as a private investigator and served for 20 years as the police commissioner in Colchester, where he successfully developed a department of full-time police officers supervised by resident State Troopers.

Kurze, who joined Whelen Engineering in 1993, has always been grateful for his CCSU education, particularly the communication skills he gained. An avid sports fan, he has also enjoyed following the Blue Devils, especially the men’s basketball team. But his relationship with his alma mater took an even more meaningful turn when his daughter, Katharine, enrolled to pursue a teaching degree. (She graduated with honors in 2007.) Since then, Kurze has continued to forge fruitful connections with the University, including supporting the athletic program. (He and wife Jo Ann, an elementary teacher, also have season tickets behind Coach Howie Dickenman’s bench.) Kurze has also worked with the School of Engineering & Technology to create a paid engineering internship—which also comes with a scholarship—at Whelen. A member of the CCSU Foundation board of directors, he also serves on the Industrial Technology and Management Advisory Board, which helps to keep the curriculum anchored in real-world needs and applications.

Most satisfying of all, Kurze found a way to share his expertise in public safety with his University. It was during his daughter’s senior year that the Virginia Tech massacre occurred, and that got Kurze thinking. Text messages don’t work for students who have cell phones turned off for class. Emails don’t work for players at football practice. And what about campus visitors? He set about planning a loudspeaker warning system to serve the CCSU campus. It took about a year and a half of sound surveys, planning, installing, and intense collaborating with everyone from Facilities Management and the Board of Trustees, to President Miller and the University Police Department. Notes Kurze proudly, “Everybody came together as a family.” The system was completed this past summer, and Kurze was extremely gratified to bring his life’s work to bear on public safety at CCSU. “This is something that I am dedicating my life to,” he says. “I wanted a part of me to be a part of the campus, and to give back to the University for what it had done for me.”

— Leslie Virostek

Students Email Addresses to Last a Lifetime

The Live@edu program, one of the features of the new Accounts Management system currently in use at CCSU, now gives the University an opportunity to provide students with a lifetime “@my.ccsu.edu” email address, online data storage, and other Microsoft online tools.

alumni in the news

CCSU alumnus Dario DiBattista, who graduated in 2009 with a major in political science and a minor in creative writing, was featured on WNPR’s Where We Live.

CCSU alumnus Dave Ferry MS ’74 was the focus of an article in The New Britain Herald in October. Ferry, who retired from teaching and professional illustration in 2006, now devotes himself full-time to his passion for cartooning, under the trademark “Ferryland.” Two of his recent projects include “Loose Threads: Observations of Life From the Slow Lane” and “12 Step Program to Health & Nutrition: A 16-Month Calendar for 2010.”

GET CONNECTED

CCSU offers a growing online social network to enable alumni, students, faculty, staff, and prospective students to get connected and stay connected to the CCSU online community. To learn more about CCSU, exchange information, contact friends, search for jobs, enhance a career, or follow the Blue Devils, check out our online gateway to CCSU’s Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter sites at www.ccsu.edu/connect. The Alumni Office also encourages alumni to visit www.ccsu.edu/alumniupdate to update their contact information so they can receive CCSU e-News and other valuable University information.
CCSU pursued its goal of community engagement with a number of outreach events this fall. Through collaboration with neighboring communities, Central’s faculty, students, and staff have used the platforms of the arts, children in need, and homelessness as springboards to altruism, consistently offering aid and support to the surrounding areas.

**Engaging through the Arts**

Through their artistic endeavors, members of the Central community have repeatedly contributed to the local and global communities. The pilot program “Production in the Community,” which was launched last spring, is comprised of ten filmmaking sessions taught by Assistant Professor of Communication Jeffrey Teitler. High school students at risk of violent behavior and dropping out of school are chosen to participate in the program with guidance from the Hartford Peace Builders, a nonprofit organization committed to gang prevention, and Young Studios, an animation center devoted to the education and self-empowerment of youth. Participants attend classes at Central, where they have the opportunity to work with state-of-the-art equipment and the latest software. This past summer, a compilation of participating student films was shown at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford.

In order to directly address challenges faced by inner city youth, Teitler invited three members of Mothers United Against Violence, a support organization for mothers who have lost children to gun violence, to speak to the film students. “Not only did the talk inspire greater, more meticulous work from the students,” said Teitler, “but it also affected CCSU production students—the stories they are capable of producing, the voices they can preserve, and the values they bring to the production process.”

The “Production in the Community” program is currently planning to offer participants more long-term assistance, such as on-campus employment, mentorship, and other programs which may continue to influence students for years after completing the program. Director of CCSU’s Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy Andrew Clark is collaborating with Tietler to further expand the program’s benefits.

“Help CCSU to ensure that every child in need has a happy holiday season by giving an unwrapped new toy or making a donation” — that was the request heard in Welte Hall Auditorium in November as part of the Plainville Wind Ensemble concert. Titled “Sentimental Journey: Songs and Ballads of American History,” this free concert honored veterans and promoted the United States Marine Corps Toys for Tots Foundation. All toys collected were distributed by the foundation to needy children in the local community. This is the fifth concert, featuring the Plainville Wind Ensemble, sponsored by CCSU’s Veterans Affairs. The event was also sponsored by Student Affairs and the Student Government Association.

Another example of engagement through the arts is CCSU’s long-standing relationship with Farmington’s Hill-Stead Museum. This past year, students were given the opportunity to work at the museum in the spring and summer semesters. In CCSU’s Inner Gallery, paintings by faculty, students, and alumni portraying scenes of the museum’s facilities were displayed in an exhibit titled “Inspirations from Hill-Stead Museum,” which was part of a larger exhibit, “A Sense of Place,” featuring sculptor John Brickels and watercolorist Antonio Masi.

Central’s Art Department and Hill-Stead Museum also sponsored a lecture — another event related to the same exhibit — by James Rubin, professor of art history at SUNY, Stony Brook. Rubin discussed his latest book, Impressionism and the Modern Landscape: Productivity, Technology and Urbanization from Manet to Van Gogh, which examines the views of Impressionist painters’ on the progress of civilization through industry. Cynthia Cormier, director of education and curatorial services for Hill-Stead, spoke at the opening reception of “A Sense of Place.”

**Caring for Youth**

CCSU students and faculty are providing numerous resources to local youth. The social work club hosted a Halloween party at New Britain’s Oval Grove Community Center in late October to celebrate both the holiday and a tutoring project in which CCSU students
provide homework assistance to young students. “We’re hoping this is the start of a long collaboration,” remarked Assistant Professor of Social Work Catherine Baratta. “It’s fun,” said Akeem Lawrence, an eighth-grade student at Pulaski Middle School who takes advantage of the tutoring. “You come and do your homework, they help you with it, and when you’re done you can play games, work on the computer, and do arts and crafts.”

The new Barnard International Community Education Program (BICEP) also has been involved in youth education. The BICEP program, which is cosponsored by the School of Education and Professional Studies and the Center for International Education, aims to connect Central’s international students with children in the local community. International students (over 70 have registered for the program) visit classrooms at the James Naylor Middle School to share their heritage using mini-lessons on topics such as language, culture, holidays, customs, and geography. Associate Professor of Teacher Education Karen Riem serves as the University facilitator for the program. “This initiative aligns perfectly with the mission of the School of Education and Professional Studies,” she notes. “The possibilities are as wide-ranging as the countries from which the international students and the members of the diverse Naylor-CCSU community have come. I look forward to sharing new experiences, making new friends, and learning together through the BICEP program.”

The Central chapters of the Sigma Tau Delta and Golden Key international honor societies sponsored a children’s book drive to help students at New Britain’s Gaffney Elementary School build their home libraries. The two societies then hosted a “Book Bash,” featuring J.C. Phillipps, author of Wink! The Ninja Who Wanted to be Noticed. Children from Gaffney Elementary read with Phillipps, made bookmarks, and chose two or more books to add to their home collections.

On a more global level, students in the various athletic programs at Central participated in Operation Christmas Child. “We have some of the most active student-athletes in the country, and their commitment to the community shows every day,” says Director of Intercollegiate Athletics Paul Resetarits. Students filled boxes with age-appropriate gifts, and the boxes were shipped by the international relief organization Samaritan’s Purse to needy children around the world.

**Addressing Homelessness**

Students from the management class Housing, Business, and Society, joined New Britain Mayor Timothy Stewart on a bus tour of local blighted areas. Associate Professor of Management and Organization Sarah Stookey and Instructor Jamie Taylor co-teach the class. “Many of these students have no direct experience with homelessness or distressed areas,” said Taylor. Stookey noted that the aim of the course is to give students “an idea of social responsibility for community.” Stewart discussed his efforts to provide housing to the homeless, pointing out the low-income houses built near Willow Park. “Everybody wins if you help a family stand on its feet,” he remarked. “If we can help the homeless get resettled, there’s a good chance they can get their lives back together and be productive again.” CCSU student Mallory Beddows reflected on the trip: “We have a lot of innovative thinkers here at CCSU, and I think we should get out into the city more and do something to help.” In a press release written by the class after the tour, students noted, “The trip around the city showed us how much local commitment there is to improving New Britain and the catalytic effects one improvement can have on an entire neighborhood.”

—Luke Albertson

**Peace Talks at CCSU**

Activist Cindy Sheehan (right) spoke at CCSU in November as part of a panel discussion held in Torp Theatre. Sheehan, who became a peace activist after her son was killed in action in Baghdad, discussed the anti-war movement and her plans to continue to protest the war. The panel was moderated by Holder of the Governor William A. O’Neill Endowed Chair in Public Policy and Practical Politics William Dyson. Other participants included Associate Professor of Political Science Ghassan E. El-Eid, CCSU student and Youth for Socialist Action member Marissa Janczewska, former Army sergeant in Iraq and CCSU student Jeff Bartos, and journalist Stephen Vincent Kobasa.
CCSU Professors Come Full Circle with New Britain Art Exhibit

“I am always surprised at the connections that do come full circle in life,” says Assistant Professor of Teacher Education Barbara Clark ’79, MA ’86. Clark recently partnered with her previous CCSU instructor and thesis advisor, CSU Professor of Art, Emeritus, Michael Cipriano ’67, MA ’69, in a joint visual arts exhibit, “Closing the Circle.” The abstract-expressionist show was on display in New Britain’s City Hall as part of the Art in the Heart of the City series.

Cipriano notes that the exhibit “represents a symbiotic relationship in that we [Cipriano and Clark] have come together again at this time in our lives.” He remarks that “New Britain is a vital part of our relationship” because the city and the University have played foundational roles in both their lives. Says Clark, “We both have a connection to the City of New Britain; this is where CCSU is located, and I continue to bring students downtown to support initiatives for the city’s revival.”

While a student at Central, Clark studied with Cipriano in various studio courses, such as painting, printmaking, and art theory as she earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in art education. She recalls that Cipriano “pushed us to submit to high-stakes, peer-reviewed exhibitions” and credits him for facilitating her first sale of a large-scale painting at one such exhibit.

“I am a relatively new assistant professor and Dr. Cipriano is a professor of art, emeritus—hence the ‘closing of the circle,’” says Clark. Cipriano also notes that the two have come “full circle,” in that, while they each took different paths, they ultimately reached the same destination: “Over the years our artwork developed separately, through independent inquiry, and yet we made the same discoveries.” The exhibit includes 55 pieces of art, with the display of the first 24 alternating between the work of Clark and Cipriano; the effect creates a blending of each artist’s work into one flowing exhibit.

“We were pleased with the final result. We hope that viewers sense they have just stepped into a significant place and time—the present, but with a feeling of the past and future, too,” says Clark.

Clark recalls her time spent studying under Cipriano with reverence.

“Dr. Cipriano taught us to build critical attitudes in order to analyze, reflect on, and critique our work,” says Clark. “Because of Dr. Cipriano’s guidance and mentorship, in many respects his students at CCSU surpassed art students in more-well-known art programs … largely due to the fact that we were involved off campus with the art scene in New York City.”

In 1997 Cipriano was named a CSU Professor, only the third in Central’s history. Clark remarks that the honor “recognizes a professor who had a critical role in influencing my teaching practices and beliefs.” In addition, Cipriano is named in Who’s Who in American Art and serves as on the New Britain Museum of American Art’s Acquisition and Loan Committee. His work has been showcased throughout the country, as well as internationally.

Clark notes that support from Cipriano, coupled with her own successes, served as “scaffolding for the foundation of my doctoral degree.” She began doctoral research at the Harvard School of Education and completed her studies in the University of Hartford’s educational leadership doctoral program.

Clark and Cipriano donated half of the proceeds from the sale of pieces in this exhibit to efforts seeking to end homelessness in New Britain. “I have been working on the homeless initiative at CCSU this past year with colleagues and students. This exhibition was one more way to publicly address and bring attention to the issue of homelessness in the city,” says Clark.

This latest exhibit is not the first time the two artists have worked in partnership. During her senior year at Central, Clark held her first one-person show at Hartford’s Artworks Inner Gallery at the same time as Cipriano’s work was exhibited. They continued to show together at the Thones Gallery in Northampton, MA, and at the Saltbox Gallery in West Hartford, CT. Clark notes that “These exhibitions with Dr. Cipriano, as well as other students, were learning experiences that helped me to develop a critical eye when preparing an exhibition and deciding how the art pieces were to be juxtaposed.”

Clark credits Cipriano with “laying the foundation for my teaching philosophy” and attributes much of her success to his training. Both professors look to continue giving back to New Britain and to Central, returning “full circle” to future generations of students.

— Luke Albertson
CCSU Student in the Spotlight
Ross Alexander: Learning from Afghanistan

As a senior at CCSU, Ross Alexander knows all about hard work and pressure. As a veteran of the war in Afghanistan, he also knows a good deal about loyalty and determination.

“Whatever was going on in the government, that was out of our hands,” Alexander said. “We aren’t worried about the policies, just keeping each other safe and getting home together.”

After joining the National Guard in 2003, Alexander was stationed in northeastern Afghanistan, near the Pakistani border, in 2005. “I chose to go into the infantry,” Alexander stated. “If I was going to join I kind of wanted to be at the front, so I could always look back and say ‘I was there.’”

Serving as a turret gunner, Alexander took part in peace missions to nearby villages, in order to try to obtain information on the Taliban. The further away from base the troops got, the more hostile the locals became—something that Alexander attributes to people not seeing them a lot and not believing that Americans would be able to help. He explained, “Some groups cheered for us as we drove by, and some people would throw rocks at our vehicles.”

Despite the rough start, Alexander remembers his time in Afghanistan fondly, specifically the scenery. “A lot of people think of the Middle East as just flat desert, but Afghanistan is very mountainous. It’s actually a beautiful country.”

It wasn’t until two people from his base were killed and Alexander saw the poverty in Afghanistan that he realized that life is uncertain and anything can happen. “When I was going to Manchester Community College my grades were horrible,” he said. “I went over there [Afghanistan], and the 12-month tour woke me up and made me appreciate this country.”

While in the Army, Alexander participated in programs designed to help children. Because of that experience, he said, “I want to try to make a difference for them, especially inner-city kids who might not have the types of tools that are available to others.”

Honorably discharged in February 2009, Alexander transferred to CCSU to pursue his goal of teaching high school history. He credits his positive experience at Central to the concern for students shown by faculty members, especially Associate Professor of History Katherine Hermes, who gave him advice on how to be a good educator.

A member of CCSU’s Veterans Appreciation Organization (V.A.O.), Alexander stresses the importance of helping returning soldiers readjust to civilian life. “It’s tough coming back from war,” he said. “A lot of people tell me that they are still worrying about being attacked even though they’re back home sitting in a classroom. And they’re worried about their friends still overseas. It’s natural.”

Readjusting is something Alexander knows about firsthand. “A month and a half after I came home I was in the classroom, and I remember the first semester was tough. It was hard to focus,” he said.

In November, Alexander received the first annual University Student Veterans Excellence Award and Scholarship. “It was a great feeling, especially because of the big turnout,” he said. “It’s nice to see that kind of support.”

—Heather Lusebrink

Ross Alexander (above, right) receives his award from President Jack Miller (left) in early November. Alexander received a standing ovation from the audience after his acceptance speech.
Teacher Workshop Promotes Deeper Understanding of Middle East Issues

CCSU showed its continued commitment to international education with the latest “Teaching About the Middle East” workshop, held on campus in late October. The seminar hosts middle and high school teachers for a daylong series of lectures and discussions on issues pertaining to the Middle East. The annual workshops have taken place, in collaboration with the University of Hartford, for five years. This year was the first time the event was held at CCSU.

Associate Professor of Political Science Ghassan El-Eid has been CCSU’s liaison to the initiative since the program’s beginnings. “This workshop is critically important, because it promotes knowledge and education about a region of the world that affects us all,” he notes. “The Middle East is beset with conflict and violence, and the stakes are very high. We have a right to know about this, and what better approach than to inform through education? The more informed we are, the better equipped we will be to grasp these complex issues and appropriately deal with the situations at hand.” The workshop’s overall goal, according to El-Eid, is to “enhance the knowledge of teachers and help them gain a deeper understanding of the vexing issues pertaining to the Middle East.”

Professors of both universities gave talks on the sources of conflict and problems that impact the region. El-Eid’s presentation, “The Middle East: Underlying Causes of Conflict and Prospects for Peace,” focused on religious extremism and the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict, as well as on the present situation in Iraq and Afghanistan and the confrontation with Iran as it pursues its nuclear weapons program. His discussion sought to find and analyze ways in which all of these Middle East happenings are interconnected.

Other topics covered in the workshop included “Judaism, Christianity and Islam: How Religion Impacts Politics in the Middle East” and “Teaching the Human Element on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.” CCSU’s Chief Diversity Officer and Professor of Psychology Moises Salinas gave the keynote address on the topic of his book, Planting Hatred, Sowing Pain: The Psychology of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. After each lecture, time was allotted for a question-and-answer session to allow the teacher-students to more fully assimilate what they had learned.

In the afternoon, a round-table on pedagogy was held to discuss and evaluate various teaching methods. The group also shared suggestions on how best to enhance teaching effectiveness in order to leave a lasting impression on students. Teachers were provided with an extensive list of materials to facilitate classroom learning. They discussed the effectiveness of using modern technology, as well as primary source material, in the classroom. “The challenge,” El-Eid notes, “is to ensure that students will remember what they’ve been taught down the road. We have to create a memorable experience.”

Regarding pedagogy, El-Eid emphasizes the importance of teaching fairly and equally in the classroom. “Middle East politics are controversial—people have very strong opinions,” he notes. “My approach is to try to expose students to different perspectives and points of view while explaining key events that have shaped a region’s history. My hope is that students, after reading a variety of sources and being exposed to differing opinions, will be in a better position to come up with their own conclusions concerning the region and issues at hand.”

“Historically, we have collaborated with the University of Hartford for these workshops, and we’re looking to expand this relationship,” continues El-Eid. He has hopes of co-sponsoring courses abroad, to be taught by faculty from both schools, and says that such endeavors are “very important because international education is key to enhancing students’ understanding of the increasingly interdependent world in which we live.”

This is not the University’s first effort to provide education on this region—CCSU has a long history of promoting discussion of and visits to the Middle East. The Middle Eastern Studies Committee has sponsored several lecture series, with guest speakers expressing varying points of view. “We’re always endeavoring to bring to campus distinguished speakers and to provide opportunities for our students to travel to different parts of the world,” notes El-Eid. “Our partnership with the United Arab Emirates University is one example of our efforts to send students overseas.” El-Eid remarks that
cultural immersion allows students to gain a much deeper understanding of the politics and culture of the region.

“With all of these efforts, our intent is to promote awareness of global issues in the firm belief that international education is an essential component of the learning process at the college level,” says El-Eid. Central’s George R. Muirhead Center for International Education (CIE) develops and supports numerous internationally focused programs, with a network of over 20 university partnerships. As noted in its mission statement, “The Center fosters a spirit of cross-cultural understanding and provides opportunities for students to respect the customs and values of others, learning more about themselves in the process.” The CIE has been designated a statewide Center of Excellence in International Education by the Board of Governors for Higher Education.

El-Eid notes that the feedback received from the “Teaching About the Middle East” post-workshop questionnaire has been “very positive,” and the overall turnout was “excellent.” The planning for next year’s workshop is already underway, and El-Eid looks forward to continuing discussions, because, in his words, such talks “broaden teachers’ horizons and encourage a more knowledge- and informed society.”

— Luke Albertson

**extra credit**

Professor of Geography Richard Benfield, who serves as coordinator of the tourism program at Central, was a plenary speaker at Botanic Gardens Conservation International’s 7th International Congress on Education in Botanic Gardens, held in Durban, South Africa, in November. Benfield spoke on garden tourism.

The CCSU Theatre Department held a Halloween costume sale at the end of October. Proceeds went to the Torp Scholarship Fund.

Professor of Psychology Francisco Donis was honored at the Identidad Latina Hispanic newspaper’s 5th Annual “Latino de Oro” Awards, held in Hartford on November 7. Donis received the Lifetime Achievement award.

Associate Professor of English Robert Dowling participated in the 10th annual Eugene O’Neill Celebration held at New London’s Eugene O’Neill Theater Center in mid-October. Dowling took part in a panel discussion on “The Irish v Yankees in O’Neill” and also held a book signing.

“Frank, Gil, and Friends,” the weekly radio program presented by Professor of English Gil Gigliotti on CCSU’s WFCS 107.7 FM, celebrated its 700th broadcast in November. The program features the songs of Frank Sinatra and airs on Tuesdays from 8–10 a.m.

The New Britain Parks & Recreation Department and Stanley Works recently presented Timeless Tales of Fairview Cemetery, a tour researched, written, and developed by CCSU’s Amy Kirby, a graduate student in the Department of History. Participants were guided by moonlight, and lamplight, through the cemetery to visit the graves of a Civil War soldier, a WWII POW, a Titanic survivor, and Frederick Trent Stanley, among others.

Professor of Modern Languages Maria Passaro was awarded “The Ambasciatore Award 2009” by the American Association of Teachers of Italian in early November.

The Deepening Groove by Associate Professor of English Ravi Shankar has been awarded the 2009 National Poetry Review Book Prize. The book will be published in 2011, and an excerpt from the manuscript is due out as a chapbook from Rain Taxi Books next summer, with a cover designed by former New Britain resident and preeminent late American artist Sol LeWitt. Poet-in-Residence at CCSU, Shankar is the founding editor of the international online journal of the arts Drunken Boat (www.drunkenboat.com).

CCSU student Magdalena Slysz has been named Miss Polonia USA (Miss Polish American). The award was presented in Greenpoint, NY, in late October and comes on the heels of Slysz’s prior crowning as Miss Polonia Connecticut. She notes that the scholarship pageants have allowed her a networking opportunity, an occasion to represent both her nationality and the Polish community, and a chance to boost her self-confidence.

Student John Vaverchak, an applied art major, had his artwork published on the cover of The Hartford Courant’s iTowns section in October. His watercolor painting was based on a photograph he took last fall in the historical area of Berlin.

**Lamont on Connecticut’s Future**

Distinguished Professor of Political Science and Philosophy Ned Lamont (left), chair of the Arts and Sciences Public Policy Committee, gave a lecture on campus in early November titled “An Entrepreneur’s Approach to Government: Businesses Reinvent Themselves All the Time; Why Am I Still Waiting in Line at the DMV?” The lecture, which focused on Lamont’s views on the current economic and political situation facing Connecticut, was sponsored by the Arts and Sciences Public Policy Committee, the Political Science Department, and the Philosophy Department. Lamont’s speech was featured in news media—broadcast, print, and blogs—throughout the region, including a story in The New York Times. Lamont recently announced the formation of an exploratory committee for a run for governor in 2010.
The School of Business, with the assistance of Professor of Management Information Systems Michael Gendron, is sponsoring David Banks, lecturer in the School of Computer and Information Science at the University of South Australia, as a visiting scholar at CCSU. Banks will conduct collaborative research, with CCSU’s Interdisciplinary Neuropsychology and Biofeedback Lab, involving the stress level of students and the impact that Audience Response System technology has on those levels.

Poetry is alive at CCSU. Maria Gillan, director of the Creative Writing Program and professor of poetry at Binghamton University, visited CCSU in late October as part of the Connecticut Poetry Circuit. At the end of October, American poet Alfred Corn, along with editors James Byrne and Sandeep Parmar of the international literary journal The Wolf, presented an evening of poetry and dialogue as part of a global poetry event.

The documentary Crossing Borders was screened twice at the CCSU Student Center in November. The film follows four Moroccan and four American university students as they travel through Morocco. During frank discussions, the students tackle the complex implications of the differences in their cultures, bringing them closer to each other as they confront prejudices. The event was sponsored by the departments of modern language and political science and the George R. Muirhead Center for International Education.

The CSUS First-Year Assessment Task Force recently brought Dr. Betsy Barefoot to campus to assist CSUS faculty and staff in developing strategies to achieve institutional learning goals. Barefoot, who earned a her master’s and doctoral degrees in higher education from the College of William and Mary, lectured on educational excellence and methods of measuring first-year experiences.

CCSU’s Central Activities Network recently brought “The Great Porn Debate” to campus. Feminist Susan G. Cole and adult film star Ron Jeremy debated topics such as ethics and morality in the pornography business, degradation of women, and the rights of adults in relation to the pornography industry.

Magic was alive at CCSU with the arrival of “Harry Potter’s World: Renaissance Science, Magic, and Medicine.” The traveling exhibit opened at the Elihu Burritt Library on October 6 and ran through mid-November. Professor of History Glenn Sunshine gave two lectures in October—the first on “Magic in the Renaissance Worldview;” the second about “Witches and Wizards in the Renaissance Imagination.” An astronomy show, titled “The Stars of Hogwarts,” and a hands-on activity, “Astronomy Academy: Astronomy of Harry Potter,” took place in November.

CCSU’s Department of Physics and Earth Sciences continues to celebrate the International Year of Astronomy. Recent events have included a public talk on “The Roswell Incident,” given by Professor of Anthropology Ken Feder, and a lecture by Professor of Physics and Earth Sciences Kristine Larsen, titled “2012 Apocalypse: Fact or Fiction,” on the growing Internet hysteria about a supposed “end of the world” scenario linked to the Mayan calendar. A complete list of upcoming events can be found at www.ccsu.edu/astonomy.

The Little Night Music Series recently hosted The Core Ensemble’s performance of Tres Vidas, a new chamber music theatre work celebrating the life, times, and work of three significant Latin and South American women—painter Frida Kahlo of Mexico, peasant activist Rufina Amaya of El Salvador, and poet Alfonsina Storni of Argentina.

Indian novelist Sharmistha Mohanty, founding editor of the on-line international literary journal Almost Island, made an appearance at CCSU in October. Mohanty also created the Almost Island Dialogues, an annual international writers’ gathering held in New Delhi. His most recent publication is a translation of Rabindranath Tagore’s Broken Nest and Other Stories.

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Campaign for Annual Giving

The University has recently launched a campaign for annual giving. You may already have seen one of the promotional banners headlined by “CCSUCCESS/Success Begins with CCSU,” a theme that epitomizes what takes place here, thanks to the efforts—and the generosity—of many. Annual giving supports a wide range of the University’s most important needs, including academic scholarships, the library, and academic programs and research. Your generosity ensures that the University remains a place where students succeed and learning thrives. Donations may be made online at www.ccsu.edu/giving. Thank you.
In October, the CCSU Theatre Department continued “Mr. Toad’s Wild Ride” of 16 shows in 16 weeks with The Seagull by Anton Chekhov, directed by Associate Professor of Theatre Thomas Delventhal, and two performances of A Night at the Cabaret, directed by CCSU student Nicole Carrano. At the end of the month, student director Ben McLaughlin presented Firesign Theater’s Nick Danger: Third Eye. The show was also performed on WFCS 107.7 FM. The wild ride continued in November as Associate Professors of Theatre Josh Perlstein and Ken Mooney joined Delventhal to direct and perform 30 Minutes of Old-Fashioned Russian Laughter, featuring Chekov’s short comedies Swan Song and Drowning. Working together, six CCSU students—Anne Capobianco, Karen Convery, Brandon Fisette, Jessica Hart, Nicole LaPorte, and Lucas Veo—directed Early Stages 2009, a piece for young audiences focusing on the line between dream and nightmare. Cirque de Fantasia combined two separate shows—Commedia dell’Arte Shorts, created and performed as an ensemble entirely in Italian, and Circus, directed and arranged by CCSU student Kimberly Carvalho. For information on upcoming productions, visit www.theatre.ccsu.edu.

An Open Forum on Diversity Issues was held at CCSU for students, faculty, and staff in early November. Chief Diversity Officer and Associate Professor of Psychology Moisés Salinas led the discussion.

CCSU’s Latin American Student Organization (LASO), in partnership with the Mosaic Center, the office of Student Affairs, and the office of Recruitment and Admissions, recently sponsored a performance of Platanos and Collard Greens on campus. In this off-Broadway play, an African American man and a Latino woman confront and overcome cultural and racial prejudices, compelling the audience to evaluate these pervasive stereotypes and question conventional attitudes about themselves and others.

The Second Annual African Women in Film Series 2009 kicked off on November 3 with a screening of the movie Karmen Gei, followed by a discussion on the religious storm created in Senegal by the director’s depiction of strong and determined women. Other movies in the series included Nollywood Lady by Dorothea Wenner, Hot Wax by Uruhart/Spitz, and Iron Women of Liberia by Siatta Scott Johnson and Daniel Junge. The series ran through November 24.

In late September, CCSU hosted the Second New Britain International Mural Slam. Central student Kyle Mencel organized the event, which was started last year by Associate Professor of Art Mike Alewitz. Each artist was given a four-by-twelve-foot section to paint.

A recent screening of the film Sirl, No Sîr concluded with a discussion led by sociologist Jerry Lembeke. The film included footage of Lembeke, who in 1969 was an Army chaplain’s assistant with the 41st Artillery Group in Vietnam. The event was sponsored by Peace Studies Program.

A State Attorney’s Forum on Criminal Prosecutions was held on campus in early November. The panel included Chief State’s Attorney Kevin Kane, State Attorney Scott Murphy, State Victim’s Advocate Michelle Cruz, and CCSU Police Chief Jason Powell. The forum was moderated by Associate Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice Kathleen Bantley and was sponsored by Administrative Affairs, the Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy, and the School of Arts and Sciences.

CCSU’s Office of Diversity & Equity continued the Teaching Diversity Lecture Series this November with a workshop presented by Professor of Sociology Lucy Anne Hurston from Manchester Community College. Hurston discussed how to acknowledge, recognize, and appreciate all that a diverse classroom offers as teaching opportunities.

In early November, CCSU brought the storytelling event Tellebration to campus. A night of storytelling celebrated world-wide on or about the Saturday before Thanksgiving, Tellebration introduces adults and children to the oral art of storytelling. Storytellers at the Central event included Liz Gruber, Aaron Greenberg, and Jeannine Donato.

A screening of the documentary A War for Your Soul was part of a presentation by director Reggie Bullock held recently in Alumni Hall. Created by Bullock to inspire young at-risk African-Americans, the film was released on the internet in early March and has received praise from mayors, city leaders, and youth organizations from around the world. Bullock serves as a board member and partner of Speak the Dream Foundation, Inc, a non-profit mentoring and teaching organization focused on teaching parents and students to pursue their dreams with confidence and passion.

Maya Wind and Netta Mishly, two Israeli youth who signed a Shminisim letter stating their refusal to join the Israeli army after graduation from high school, spoke on campus in early October. Wind and Mishly discussed their opposition to serving “in an occupying army” and their subsequent imprisonment by the Israeli government.
CCSU Honors Veterans Day: A Time to Remember

Veterans Day is a time to remember the sacrifices the men and women of the armed forces make to keep our country safe. CCSU celebrated these sacrifices in early November with a series of events designed to honor the community of veterans at the University and in New Britain.

Commemorations kicked off on November 9 with a Women Veterans Panel Discussion on the treatment of women in the military. Assistant Librarian, Reference, Susan Slaga, who had the idea for the panel discussion, notes, “I have the greatest respect and gratitude for veterans because I don’t think I would ever have the strength to do what they have done. I am very thankful to live in a country where people are willing to give their lives for what they believe in so that others can live a better and safer life.”

During the discussion, Dr. Linda Schwartz, the Connecticut Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, spoke about her time in the military during the Vietnam War, mentioning that at that time women had to obtain permission to get married and pregnancy was labeled as a disability.

Helen Hart-Gai, APRN, of the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, discussed issues that many of the female soldiers she treats must deal with after returning home from war. She said many of the soldiers who suffered sexual abuse or rape at the hands of fellow American soldiers feel as if they were victims of incest since they are part of an extended family of military personnel.

Despina Mavroudis, a New Britain High School English teacher who is enrolled in the EdD program at CCSU, became emotional while speaking of her experience as a driver in Iraq. She said that she had faced discrimination because she was a woman and she didn’t have the same rights as the men. Despite her experience, Mavroudis stated that she was glad she joined the military since it allowed her to go to school and make a better person.

Other panel members included CCSU graduate student Amy Otzel, a readjustment counseling therapist, and Sally Haskell, MD, Women’s Health Care, Veterans Administration. The panel was moderated by Professor of Communication Cindy White and organized by the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program at CCSU.

The dedication of the new CCSU Veterans Monument took place on November 11. The monument is located in the Student Center.
circle and is composed of five white lampposts arranged in a circle. Each post has the seal of one of the US military branches at its base and the flag of that branch hanging near the top of the pole. The American flag flies from a large triple flag pole at the center of the circle, with the Connecticut and POW/MIA flags hanging on each side.

A marker will be placed on the monument bearing this dedication: “This site is dedicated to the Central Connecticut State University students, faculty and alumni, both living and deceased, who have served or are currently serving in the nation’s armed forces. May they be remembered for their service to the United States of America and for their unselfish commitment to preserve and defend our freedom.”

Raymond Carrier, who served with the Marines from 1957 to 1960, was awarded the annual Veterans Service Award for Excellence. In a New Britain Herald article, Carrier was quoted: “To have such high regard from one’s peers is heartwarming … but we need to redirect focus to the real issue at hand. [Veterans Day] is not about individuals, but remembrance.”

CCSU senior Ross Alexander was awarded the first annual University Student Veterans Excellence Award. An article on Alexander is included in this issue of the Courier.

— Heather Lusebrink

New Scholarship Fund to Support Student Veterans

A scholarship fund has been created, as part of the University’s campaign for annual giving, to recognize CCSU student veterans. For the past 10 years, the University has regularly honored a student veteran with the Student Veteran Excellence Award for outstanding academic work and distinguished service to our country. Now, donors can contribute to a fund that will provide scholarship support for future recipients of that award. CCSU’s goal is to build the capacity of that fund in order to bridge the GI Bill-tuition gap. Contributions can be made online at www.ccsu.edu/giving, where donors can indicate their support for the Veterans Scholarship fund. Please contact Laura Marchese at 860-832-2554 or Marcheselav@ccsu.edu for more information.

Middle East Studies Lecture Series Continues

CCSU welcomed Dr. Raymond Baker (above), professor of international politics at Trinity College in Hartford, as a speaker in the continuing Middle East Studies Lecture Series. Baker spoke to students and faculty on “Obama, Islam, and the Muslim World,” as well as about lectures he has given in the Middle East. The author of a series of critically acclaimed studies of Islam and Arab societies, Baker is currently a governing board member of the European-based World Congress of Middle East Studies.
Lauren Salvia: Blending Athletics, Travel, and Business

In her final year of high school, Lauren Salvia was named both Athlete of the Year and Business Student of the Year. Now, as a third-year right fullback for the Blue Devil women’s soccer team, Salvia is setting her sights on combining her love of travel with her passion for athletics and business marketing.

As a senior at Lindenhurst Senior High School in Long Island, NY, Salvia was actively engaged in The Recruit, a scholarship program—modeled after NBC’s television show The Apprentice—in which students compete at various tasks for college scholarship funds. Salvia credits this competition, as well as Nick Lombardo, advisor and founder of the club, with sparking her interest in marketing. Lombardo has observed Salvia in both business and classroom settings, working with her in a college-credit sports marketing class her senior year at Lindenhurst.

“She’s every adjective you’d want to hear,” says Lombardo. “She’s a hard worker and a true leader, and she has an eye for detail. She takes the initiative to be well organized and stays motivated.”

Salvia was a second place finalist in The Recruit, and Lombardo attributes this success to her ability to lead and work with others: “In a setting such as this, you do not always have the most energetic students, but Lauren was able to get her peers motivated and working as a team.” Salvia remarks that “Anywhere you go in business, you’ll have to be part of a team. Being able to cooperate and work with others is vital, as is bringing your element to the team.”

Her element is “persistence,” notes Salvia. “I won’t accept mediocrity in grades or athletics, in the classroom, or on the field. I’ll keep practicing something until I get it right.”

Salvia’s dedication has earned her the position of treasurer for the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) and has facilitated her induction into both the National Scholars Honors Society and Delta Mu Delta, an international business honors society.

“I really want to work,” says Salvia. “I’m ready to have responsibility.” As an international business major with a concentration in marketing, she hopes to work in sports marketing after graduating a semester early: “To have the two aspects (athletics and marketing) come together would be better than anything I could imagine.”

On the international field, Salvia is an experienced veteran, thanks to both her own travels and the opportunities presented by athletics. The summer before her sophomore year, the soccer team spent eight days in Ireland. Next to winning the North East Conference Championships the following year, Salvia thinks that the trip “was my best college experience so far.” The team won all three international games and, afterwards, attended a party thrown by Coach Mick D’Arcy.

“We were truly in the culture. I didn’t feel like a tourist at all,” recalls Salvia. “I was originally a marketing major, but, after Ireland, I changed to international business. The trip made me realize what was out there.”

Previously Salvia participated in soccer excursions to Holland, Belgium, and Germany as part of the Olympic Development Program, and last summer she traveled to Italy thanks to a cousin’s late graduation present. “It was so real. I got to see things you only see in movies, places you only read about in books,” she notes. Salvia, who had taken Italian language courses, says that this allowed for further immersion in the culture. A vivid memory of the trip involves one of Salvia’s passions: “The day before we got there, Barcelona had won the championship premier game. We walked out of the hotel on our first day and were swarmed by people celebrating in the streets. The Barcelona team had been staying at a hotel a few blocks away. They were in the crowd, holding up the trophy. It was really exciting.”

Athletics has offered Salvia numerous opportunities to travel abroad, and her academics have allowed her love of business and marketing to flourish. “Soccer has taught me
CCSU Fall Wrap-Up

Highlighted by three Northeast Conference championships, the fall athletics season at Central Connecticut State University is already one of the most successful on record. Traditionally one of the most successful seasons for the Blue Devils, this fall proved to be among the best, as Central won NEC titles in men’s cross country and football and a garnered a regular season league title in women’s soccer. The success of those three teams, and also a second-place regular season finish for the volleyball squad, has pushed the Blue Devils into the top spot in the Commissioner’s Cup standings at the end of the fall season. It marks the first time since the 1998-99 athletics year that the Blue Devils have led the standings after the finish of fall competition.

“What we have put an emphasis on this season, is winning the Commissioner’s Cup,” Director of Athletics Paul Resetarits said. “We are tremendously pleased with the way we have started the 2009-10 campaign, and look forward to continued success as the winter teams begin competition.”

The NEC Commissioner’s Cup was instituted during the 1986-87 season and was renamed last spring in honor of late NEC Commissioner Brenda Weare. Cup points are awarded in each NEC sponsored sport. For men’s and women’s basketball, men’s and women’s soccer, women’s volleyball, football, women’s bowling, softball, field hockey, women’s lacrosse, and baseball, the final regular season standings are used to determine Cup points. In all other sports, points are awarded based on the finish at NEC Championship events.

The women’s soccer team has been near or at the top of the NEC for the last decade. This season they posted a 9-0-1 league record and won the regular season league championship. They earned the right to host the NEC Championship but eventually lost to Monmouth in overtime in the championship game. Senior Leah Blayney was named the NEC Offensive Player of the Year after leading the league in scoring. Head coach Mick D’Arcy was named the Coach of the Year for the fourth time.

The men’s cross country team won the NEC title for the first time in its history. Under first-year head coach Eric Blake, the Blue Devils captured the title with a dominating performance, placing three runners in the top 10 at the meet. Sophomore Sam Alexander led the way for the Blue Devils, placing fourth overall in a time of 26:23.9 on the five mile course in Hamden, CT. Sophomore Jeremy Schmid and freshman Craig Hunt took sixth and seventh places, crossing the line in 26:38.6 and 26:39.5, respectively. Blake was named the NEC Coach of the Year.

The most visible championship won in the fall was by the football team, whose 7-1 NEC record was good for the school’s first outright NEC title. It was the third title in six seasons for the Blue Devils. With the win came a trip to the Gridiron Classic to face Butler University on Dec. 5. It marked the first post-season game for CCSU since moving to Division I. Head coach Jeff McInerney was named the NEC Coach of the Year for the first time in his four seasons with the Blue Devils. Senior running back James Mallory earned national honors and was named a First Team American Football Coaches Association FCS All-American. He was also named the NEC Offensive Player of the Year. Freshman linebacker Lawton Arnold was named the league’s Defensive Rookie of the Year. In all, 10 Blue Devils were named to the NEC All-Conference teams.

The volleyball team’s second place finish in the NEC regular season standings earned the Blue Devils some key points in the race for the Commissioner’s Cup. The Blue Devils advanced to the NEC semifinals, Emily Cochran was named the league’s Rookie of the Year, and teammate Kaitlin Petrella was named the Libero of the Year.

“We had a great fall in 2009,” Resetarits said. “Our student-athletes, coaches, and administrators all answered the challenge put forth by the University to finish higher in the standings. We look forward to continuing that success. We have not reached our goal yet, but we are on our way to one of our best finishes in recent years.”

— Luke Albertson

Lauren Salvia: Blending Athletics, Travel, and Business

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that nothing is impossible, and to always stick with what you enjoy doing,” she says.

While Salvia is impatient to start a career in international business, she recalls great times at Central. “College has gone by way too fast. I wish I could just freeze it. I’ve had such great experiences here.”

— Tom Pincince

Farmington Bank Sponsors
2009-2010 Basketball Season

Farmington Bank has become the official title sponsor for the Blue Devil men’s and women’s basketball 2009-2010 season. In announcing the news, President Jack Miller said, “We are very grateful to John Patrick, Jr., for Farmington Bank’s exceptional generosity, which helps the University better support its student-athletes.” Patrick, who serves as chairman, president and CEO of Farmington Bank, said “Teamwork is an important attribute of any winning sports team. Teamwork is also a driving force behind everything we do at Farmington Bank, to bring the best products and services to our consumer and business clients throughout central Connecticut. It’s thrilling to see CCSU’s academic and athletics programs thriving under the leadership of President Miller and head basketball coaches Howie Dickenman and Beryl Piper.”
The CCSU Courier is published during the academic year to present a variety of news stories of interest to faculty, staff, friends of the University, leaders of Connecticut higher education, state school districts, and the University’s other diverse constituencies.

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