Close-Up on New Cinema Studies Minor

The movie Bonnie and Clyde opens with a scene that radiates heat and sensuality as a nearly naked Bonnie puts on lipstick. For a certain six-year-old in 1967 that close-up of Faye Dunaway’s scarlet lips imprinted a lasting memory.

Flash forward. Today, Assistant Professor of English Burlin Barr, all grown up, discusses the film in his American Cinema in the ‘60s and ‘70s course at CCSU. It surprises him that most of the students hardly recall that first shot. “Because film is such a visual medium, you must pay close attention to image, sound, and text to do critical analysis and interpretation,” he tells his students.

As coordinator of the new cinema studies minor launched in fall 2008, Barr is ever mindful of the program’s goal—to provide students with the skills to create, understand, and interpret various forms of the moving image.

The minor was created by pooling talent from departments across the University. Barr, Associate Professor of Communication Jose Carlos Del Ama, and Assistant Professor of Communication Jeffrey Teitler created the program. Current faculty include Professor of Psychology Carol Austad and Professor of Philosophy David Blitz who teach film from a Peace Studies perspective. Professor of History Gloria Emeagwali looks at African history through film; Associate Professor of English Stephen Cohen deals with Shakespeare; and Professor of English, Emeritus, Stuart Barnett focuses on Alfred Hitchcock. The Communication Department offers courses in both cinema studies and production. Del Ama and Associate Professor of Communication Karen Ritzenhoff teach Film History, Filmic Narrative, and Women and Film, while Teitler, Adjunct Lecturer of Communication Robert Kagan, and Ritzenhoff offer courses in video production and TV documentary. Additionally, the program sponsors various events, including the Doris Honig Guenter Women and Film Festival, which takes place every two years in conjunction with the New Britain Museum of American Art.

Above: The American counter-culture in the late 1960s was captured by Easy Rider, a road movie with two bike-riding, drug-dealing protagonists, played by Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper, explains Assistant Professor of English Burl Barr to a cinema studies class.
Black History Month at CCSU

CCSU hosted a number of cultural and educational events during Black History Month in March. The MOSAIC Center sponsored the “DeWolf Family Burden” lecture, in which Thomas DeWolf discussed his family’s history trading alcohol and weaponry for African captives from 1769 to 1820 and Belvie Rooks detailed her family’s story of enslavement.

The extended Dewolf Family sailed from Bristol, Rhode Island, to West Africa. Trafficked Africans (over 10,000 in total were brought over) were then sailed back to the United States and put up for auction. James DeWolf, the most prominent figure in the family trade, was reportedly the second wealthiest individual in the country when he died. Today, there exist an estimated half-million living descendants of Africans trafficked by the DeWolfs. Thomas DeWolf, author of Inheriting the Trade: A Northern Family Confronts Its Legacy as the Largest Slave-Trading Dynasty in U.S. History, writes of the odyssey he took with nine relatives during the filming of Katrina Browne’s Emmy-nominated documentary Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North.


DeWolf and Rooks engaged the audience in a conversation about race, healing, and the repercussions of the past, with an “urgent call for honest and opened-hearted dialogue.” DeWolf described his four-part plan for racial reconciliation, saying that, for complete healing to take place, an awareness of the issues must be present, as well as an apology and some sort of reparations—and, ultimately, forgiveness from those harmed.

The African-American Studies program hosted a series of lectures on campus in celebration of Black History Month. Peniel Joseph, distinguished professor of history at Tufts University, discussed the themes of his latest book, Dark Days, Bright Nights: From Black Power to Barack Obama. Joseph focused on black power’s successes and its contributions to the civil rights movement. He connected President Barack Obama to African American activists Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael, noting that all three men began as community organizers and calling Obama’s presidency the culmination of these men’s efforts.

Other lectures included CSU Professor of Philosophy Felton Best’s presentation of “An Analysis of Ava Gardner’s Showboat (1951),” given before a screening of the movie. Stephen Balkaran, adjunct lecturer in the African American Studies program, spoke about “Broken Promises, Broken Dreams! Civil Rights in the 21st Century,” and Assistant Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice Reginald Simmons lectured on “Engaging African-Americans into Outpatient Mental Health Interventions.” The annual Amistad lecture was given by Dr. Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome, professor of political science at Brooklyn College. The speech, titled “The Relevance of the AMISTAD to the Ralph Bunche, Wangari Maathai, and Barack Obama Nobels,” provided the CCSU community with additional insights into black history.

— Luke Albertson
“Hear a Culture Talking to Itself”
Since the minor is interdisciplinary and multicultural in scope, students are taught to look at media in an international and cross-cultural context.

Barr emphasizes, “If you watch a film closely enough, you can hear a culture talking to itself.” He elaborates, “The study of film is to look at the historic, cultural, and social contexts it comes from.” Barr then places Bonnie and Clyde in the context of the 1960s and ‘70s, a period which he says was transformative in cinema, politics, and society. There were upheavals: the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr.; the Vietnam War, the sexual revolution, and the Civil Rights Movement. The film—with its bold mixture of violence, comedy, romance, and tragedy—created a firestorm of debate indicative of the times.

Barr, who brings a broad base of experience in college teaching of both English literature and film (as visiting professor at Ithaca College and Amherst College and as assistant professor at Simmons College before joining CCSU in 2006), likes to push students out of their comfort zone. In helping students build awareness of different international cultures, he seeks to divert them from the Hollywood model of appreciating movies based on simple identification with a character, escapism, and pleasure. He says, “African cinema, for example, is characterized by social engagement and historical inquiry; Italian neo-realism focuses on working conditions and class. By looking at a broad spectrum of films, students are introduced to an array of cultural values.”

Max Kyburz, a junior English major with a cinemas studies minor, states, “Dr. Barr encourages students to look at film as a true art form rather than a means of killing time. He does not doubt that film should be entertaining, but it should also provoke thoughts and emotions. One of the most important things Dr. Barr has taught us is that attention should be paid to technical aspects, as they can be just as beautiful and artistic as words or plot points. I look to the cinema studies program as a terrific influence on how I can make film fun and easily understood for younger generations when I become an English teacher.”

Production Part of Curriculum
The cinema studies minor curriculum—which includes coursework in film history, film theory, national cinemas, genre studies, authorship, visual cultural history, philosophy, and aesthetics—also emphasizes production of moving images. Production courses introduce students to filmmaking technology and engages them in the process of conceiving, developing, and producing short films and documentaries.

For example, in the required basic video production course, “Students are asked to produce their own videos in order to teach them skills to help them recognize specific film techniques, such as framing, editing, and interviewing,” says Ritzenhoff, who teaches the course.

According to Teitler, through hands-on exercises in filmmaking technology and storytelling, “Students investigate and use audio, original imagery, aesthetics, rhythm, and sequence to create effective and meaningful messages.” Montage and editing assignments help students learn how to frame subject matter and impact meaning with the choice of light and by using camera movement. These skills are essential when studying the strategies employed by film directors to construct meaning. “Students look at visual communication with new eyes, becoming aware of technical aspects that they may not have previously paid any attention to,” says Ritzenhoff.

The cinema studies minor can be paired with any major. It is often coupled with English or communication, and students aspiring to be secondary school or history teachers can use their cinema studies backgrounds to bring filmmaking and cultural insights to their classrooms. Students may also be inspired to pursue a career in filmmaking or video production.

The classes for the cinema studies minor are always full. Barr reflects there is something profoundly affecting about moving images, partly because “we have an irrational faith that what we’re seeing is true. It’s an immediacy that is compelling.” He recalls showing Blood of the Beasts, a 1949 short French documentary written and directed by Georges Franju. Shot in black and white and narrated dispassionately, the film documents a slaughterhouse in France. Indirectly, it is about the Holocaust. The bloody and brutal images provoked an outburst of spontaneous, heart-felt response from the class. Burr recalls, “It was a bonding experience for us all and a striking moment for me to see students so completely engaged. They kept talking about that film for weeks.”

— Geri Radacsi

Close Up on New Cinema Studies Minor
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Donna Sims poses a hypothetical case to her Advanced Business Law class: “Let’s say I own a business with a partner and a customer writes a sizable check to the two of us. Being a scoundrel (her brown eyes twinkle), I abscond with the check, cash it at the bank, and flee the country. Was the bank proper in cashing the check without our two signatures?”

A clever senior responds that under the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC), a non-statutory code developed by legal scholars and business experts, the bank could legally cash the check to one individual. “Right!” declares Associate Professor of Finance Sims, who holds an MBA from the University of Saint Thomas and the JD from South Texas College of Law, both in Houston, Texas. She presses for more details, and the student intones in a lawyerly fashion that the UCC provides a framework in most states to facilitate the resolution of problems with business transactions in order to keep the parties out of the protracted and expensive legal system.

This is my favorite class,” says Sims, who readily confesses that all her classes—from Legal Environment of Business, a core course required of business majors, to Managerial Finance, Principles of Investments, and Origins of the Common Law—are her favorites, because she admits, “It’s a joy to teach.’’

Maggie Albert, a senior economics major with a business minor, says of Sims, “She is able to simplify material by taking examples from her real-life experiences as a lawyer. While many of her stories are humorous, they also provide a way to better understand the application and enforcement of contract law. This more personal approach to teaching definitely helped make material easier to understand and interesting.”

Well-rounded and astute, Sims brings to the classroom a thorough grounding in the theory and practice of business law. Prior to joining the School of Business faculty in 2004, she’d had several “other lives” holding impressive professional positions.
A lecture titled "Conflicts of Interest between Mother and Child, Modern Korea" was given on campus in early February by anthropologist Dr. Elise Prebin, a fellow at the Korea Institute, Harvard University. The event was sponsored by the International Studies Program and the Office of the Provost.

A panel discussion on "Election 2010: New England & the Nation" was held in January at CCSU. Associate Professor of Political Science Paul Petterson acted as moderator for department colleagues Assistant Professor Diana Cohen, Associate Professor Jerold Duquette, and Professor Alan Smith. The panel was sponsored by the Political Science Department.

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Focus on Scholarship: Charles Menoche
Transforming Silence and Sounds into Music

Rather than waiting for inspiration to pour great themes into his ear, Charles Menoche trudges, sometimes literally, down the hard road to creativity when he composes contemporary music. Last year slogging along the shoreline of Cape Ann, MA, recorder in hand, he collected inspiration in the form of sounds: crashing ocean waves, screeching seagulls, ambient noise from a plane overhead, and a tugboat’s chug.

Menoche was intent on producing a mixed-media installation, in collaboration with CCSU Professor of Art Ron Todd, a video artist, using the naturally existing sounds and video images from Gloucester, near Cape Ann. The result: “Acoustic Environments,” a year-long project exhibited in Maloney Hall Art Gallery starting in February 2009.

“I enjoy collaborations involving art, dance, and theater productions,” declares Associate Professor of Music Menoche, who joined CCSU in 2002 and currently serves as chair of the department. He has composed a variety of works for voice, acoustic instruments, small and large ensembles, and electro-acoustic media, a genre featuring acoustic sound sources augmented or transformed through electronic technology.

Wide-Ranging Art

“My scholarship is not narrowly focused,” states Menoche. “My interests, frequently related to the courses I teach, encompass music composition, music technology, electro-acoustic music, and music theory.”

In March 2008, two mixed-media works by Menoche, composed in collaboration with Todd, were featured in “Video Contortionists” at the 705 Driggs Avenue #5 Gallery in Brooklyn, NY. In February 2009, he presented “Student-Created Soundscapes: New Technologies Make It Possible, Affordable, and Practical” at the national TI:ME (Technology Institute for Music Educators) conference.

Menoche’s widely acclaimed piece “Soundpiece #1 for Electro-acoustic Music” premiered in September 2005 at the CCSU “Look Back on Me” celebration of poet Walt Whitman’s life and work. Menoche’s text-sound electro-acoustic piece was based on phrases pulled from throughout Whitman’s Leaves of Grass. Using traditional print resources of a concordance, he collected a long list of short phrases to be read by four non-trained male voices and recorded on computer. These snippets were then edited, processed, and transformed into a musical work. The piece won praise and recognition when it was selected for performance by the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music at its spring 2007 conference. One of Menoche’s works for concert band, “In the Machine,” was published by high-profile publisher Boosey and Hawkes.

In addition to his compositional activity, Menoche is very interested in the use of technology in all areas of music learning and teaching. For the past two years, he’s coordinated the Central EARS (Electronic Acoustic Recital Series) event. In 2009 he brought accomplished composer Kyong Mee Choi to campus to showcase her electro-acoustic and video works.

Menoche has frequently presented at national conferences of the Association for Technology in Music Instruction (ATMI) and TI:ME. As a music computer lab manager for some 15 years, he has developed and managed general and specialized music microcomputer labs at Texas Christian University (TCU), The University of Texas at Austin, Rutgers University, and CCSU. He has been a member of the faculty at Rutgers and TCU.

From Tuba to Electro-acoustic

Once a tuba player in his former New Jersey high school band, Menoche now grins, “Music opened up for me in 1979—from the bottom up so to speak. The tuba got me listening to how music fits together in orchestra, band, and brass quintet, and I started to compose for it.”
A pivotal influence on Menoche’s musical development was avant-garde composer John Cage, famously known for his 1952 composition “4’33’”, the three movements of which are performed without a single note being played. Listeners are to hear sounds of the environment rather than silence. “I began to understand that every sound was a possibility for music. Cage was a cornerstone in my thinking of what could be music, how to make music, and how to listen to music,” says Menoche. As he sought to make non-traditional sounds from standard musical instruments, Menoche realized “I could work with any sound and transform it. Electronic technological resources make it possible to create new sounds from scratch. As an electro-acoustic composer you become an instrument designer; you don’t have to rely on a set of keys of an instrument.”

“I’m from the last of a generation that used pen, ink, and vellum to do notation or to transcribe music and then went to a blue print shop to make copies,” laughs Menoche, 44. He earned a bachelor’s in music education at Tennessee Technological University and then did his master’s and doctorate in traditional acoustic composition at the University of Texas at Austin.

Steps in the Creative Process
Some of Menoche’s works are sparked by an image, a word, a gesture, a sound, or perhaps an environment. He then creates new timbres (through synthesis techniques) or records existing sounds in a studio or in the field. Familiarizing himself with the materials and changing and retaining key elements, Menoche develops quite a bit of material, of which only about five percent may actually end up in the piece. Then as composer, conductor, and audio producer, Menoche combines, shapes, and arranges the work, a process full of multiple revisions.

He reflects, “As I tell my students, I want the audience to hear and listen hard to new things in sound. People don’t have to like it or even understand, but I want them to be involved and engaged with the sounds. They may be delighted, surprised, even amazed.”

Menoche’s most recent work appears in an installation titled “Gestures,” in collaboration with Ron Todd, at the Downtown Gallery in New Britain through April 17.

— Geri Radacsi

CCSU Hosts Linguistics Olympiad
CCSU hosted the fourth annual North American Computational Linguistics Olympiad (NACLO) on campus in February. The event was funded by a community-engagement grant awarded to TESOL faculty members Assistant Professor of English Seunghun Lee and Associate Professors of English Leyla Zidani-Eroglu and Matthew Ciscel. Central was one of 30 host universities across the country and was Connecticut’s only university to host this year’s Open Round of NACLO competition. During the three-hour event, middle and high school students competed to solve linguistic problems in two rounds—an Open Round, followed by a more challenging Invitational Round for students selected to advance from the first stage of competition. Problem sets involved translation and phonological questions, as well as analysis of writing or calendar systems. The program’s goal is to expose students to the differences and consistencies found between world languages. The four participating students are shown above with their parents and Lee—from left to right—Peter Kremer, Joyce Kremer, Chris Kremer, William Babbitt, Matthew Babbitt, Matthew Monitto, Lee, Preston Law, and Charles Law.
Student in the Spotlight: Darren Wright
Digging up the Past, Laying Out a Future

“I’ve always liked history, especially learning about other individuals,” says Darren Wright, a senior anthropology major. Wright came to Central with an enthusiasm for uncovering the details of past events and people who lived in an earlier time, and he has actively crafted a solid foundation in both anthropology and archaeology through his work in the classroom, as well as in the field.

Wright obtained an internship last summer with the United States Department of Agriculture’s national office in Washington, DC, where he worked to ensure compliance of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. As part of the Cultural Resources Diversity Internship Program, Wright looked at the effects federally funded programs have on historic properties, seeking to balance concerns of historic preservation with the various needs of federal agencies—as laid out in Section 106. Through this review process, he identified conflicting interests among federal endeavors, historic preservation, and public interest and, equipped with these findings, offered guidance to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

While in DC, Wright also volunteered as a park manager at the National Mall, helping individuals to navigate the national park by providing tours and interpretation of the area. He recalls that he learned much of what he needed to know with regard to the site’s history while on the job. “I love educating people about the history of this country,” he says, “and the good and bad of what happened.”

Professor of Anthropology Warren Perry has worked closely with Wright during his time at CCSU and notes that “Darren is a conscientious student who sets a tone of respect and eagerness to learn. He has much to contribute to the discipline of archaeology as he moves forward with his education and career.” Perry remarks that Wright’s internship has given him “the opportunity to see first-hand the importance of a multicultural, inclusive perspective in archaeology and to demonstrate his knowledge and ability in that realm.”

Wright notes of his internship, “I didn’t know what I was getting into.” He quickly found out that “this was an internship in which I could apply the skills I had learned at CCSU to the real world. My education has been outstanding because it enabled me to pursue my goals.” Wright not only developed an extensive knowledge of environmental laws and regulations, he was also able to hone business skills, such as effectively communicating with others.

Wright’s first taste of archaeology came early, when his father, also interested in the subject, taught an archaeology class to his Boy Scout troop. Facilitated by Connecticut state archaeologist and CCSU alumnus Nick Bellantoni ’76, Wright visited his first excavation site at Manchester’s Cheney Homestead in 2000.

Eight years later, in the summer of 2008, Wright enrolled in an archaeology field school class, led by Perry, in which students were instructed in survey and excavation techniques as well as laboratory skills and analysis. “We learned to read the environment culturally,” says Wright. “The facts and features of artifacts can tell you a lot about the people who lived there.” Perry recalls that Wright “was an essential part” of the class, “and he distinguished himself with his competence and ability. Darren proved to be an excellent surveyor, and, with his knowledge of coin collecting, he was able to identify one of the most intriguing finds made by the class: a counterfeit half-penny from the late 1700s.”

Perry further notes that “the field school site, a long-abandoned African-American community in New Hartford, was the catalyst for Darren’s hypothesis about multicultural outsider communities in his hometown of Bolton.” This hypothesis would become the subject of Wright's undergraduate thesis, which focused on “Negro Hill” in Bolton, CT. “I wanted to see why it was called this,” he says, “not just to provide an answer for myself but for the town as well.”

Wright uncovered the existence of a woman named Sally Erin whom he believes may have lived in the hill’s “Black Sal’s Cave” in the 1830s. With no apparent husband or
male figure, and thus a likely absence of income, Erin may have fled to the woods. Wright found a piece of whiteware by the cave that could date back to 1830, but he notes that more research is needed before a solid conclusion can be reached. “This capstone project highlighted Darren’s thorough, methodical research,” says Perry, “which utilized facilities ranging from the local town hall to the Library of Congress.” Wright notes that he may continue work on the site for his MA thesis by contacting descendants of Erin and looking further into the area’s history.

Wright is continuing his endeavors in archaeology through employment with the Department of Agriculture’s local branch in Windsor, CT. For this job, obtained through connections from his internship, Wright is again working with Section 106. He notes that he has learned much in regards to environmental procedure, wetland preservation, and the Endangered Species Act. He takes pride in the office’s proactive efforts in distributing money, issued through the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, to rural communities. Wright further offers volunteer services to the Manchester Historical Society, where he passes on his knowledge by providing tours to third-graders and teaching about the town’s history. While Wright is crafting his own productive future in archaeology, he takes care to ensure the success of tomorrow’s generation as well.

— Luke Albertson

Students Analyze Housing Market

For their final projects last semester, students in Housing, Business and Society, taught by Associate Professor of Management and Organization Sarah Stookey and Adjunct Lecturer Jamie Taylor, researched Connecticut cities and towns, analyzed housing markets, and presented their results to members of the local business community and their fellow classmates. Pictured, left to right, Uzo Odukwe, Mallory Beddows, and Dora Castro pose with their presentations.

Regionalism Conference Held at CCSU

Office of Policy & Management Secretary Robert Genuario (above) was the keynote speaker at a conference on regionalism held at CCSU in January. Conference sessions focused on topics such as updating local services, regional planning, affordable housing, and emergency management. Sponsors of the event included CCSU’s Center for Public Policy & Social Research and the office of Governor M. Jodi Rell.

Education Club Partners with Local School

The Education Club at CCSU strives to provide future teachers with opportunities to deepen their knowledge of the teaching profession and gain valuable experience. We want to do things that benefit the local community. With that in mind, the club has created a partnership with Northend Elementary School in New Britain.

During the fall of 2009, the club hosted a Family Math Night and a Family Science Night. Northend students participated in exciting games that were created by club members to be both educational and enjoyable. While the students had fun learning, so did the parents. Club members prepared a variety of materials and activities for parents to use at home to encourage their children’s learning. The best part of all is that every child and parent left each evening with something in hand.

CCSU’s Education Club looks not only to aid the upcoming generation of teachers but also to assist the community and to help the population that its members care about the most—the children.

— Kari Dalia
CCSU Professor of English Gilbert Gigliotti believes that people of all ages can learn from older films. “I think it’s important to ensure that students get the opportunity to view older films and recognize that not every film needs to be about vampires or wizards or zombies or Adam Sandler or be enhanced through digital animation,” Gigliotti said.

This spring a film series focusing on Hollywood screen legend Ava Gardner gives students that opportunity. “Fridays With Ava: An Ava Gardner Film Series,” features several of the late actress’ films, as well as lectures preceding each screening. “The ‘lecture’ part is what a university can offer that a regular theatre cannot: experts who can comment on matters of import that make the viewing richer,” Gigliotti explained.

“In some of the films, the actress is a symbol of beauty or tenacity, in others a marker of times past and glories gone, and in others an unattainable dream or a keen reflection of the strong women in the audiences’ own lives,” Gigliotti stated. “In selection after selection, the power of Ava’s work in film rings out—a body of work that resonates still.”

Gardner, who shot to widespread fame after appearing in The Killers, starred in a variety of films and television shows during a career that spanned from 1941 to 1986. The films being shown at CCSU are mostly from the period of the late 1940s to the late 1950s.

For this film series Gigliotti brought together a diverse group of CCSU professors to give lectures before each of the screenings. Professor of English, Emeritus, Barry Leeds lectured before the February 5 screening of The Killers. Leeds, who regularly teaches a class on Ernest Hemingway, was chosen because the plot of the movie is based on one of the author’s stories.

“Can one enjoy The Killers without thinking about Hemingway at all?” Gigliotti asked. “Sure, but with even a little nod to Hemingway the experience of the movie can be even more rewarding.”

Other lecturers include CSU Professor of Philosophy Felton Best, Show Boat; Associate Professor of English Burlin Barr, Mogambo; Professor of Communication Cindy White, The Barefoot Contessa; and Professor of Philosophy David Blitz, On The Beach.

Gigliotti got the idea for the film series thanks to his forthcoming anthology on the actress, Ava Gardner: Touches of Venus, which will be released this April. The series is sponsored by the CCSU Alumni Association.

— Heather Lusebrink

Tweets Abound at CCSU
Several departments and groups on campus now use Twitter accounts to better update faculty, staff, and students about upcoming events. The Center for Advisement and Career Exploration tweets about job and internship opportunities. CCSUToday updates students about the campus events calendar and tweets selected events. The Central Activities Network (CAN) tweets about events, recruiting, and other updates, and CCSU_Astronomy focuses on astronomy events on campus. The CCSU Bookstore, the Alumni and Development Office, Intercollegiate Athletics, and The Recorder also use Twitter accounts to get the word out.

CCSU Claims Second in Travelers IT Business Case Competition
CCSU’s team for the Travelers IT Business Case Competition won second place at the November 2009 event. Group members Jason Sit (at left, second from left), Celia Almeida (third from left), Nathan Cutteridge (center), and Joshua Fischer (third from right) are pictured with Assistant Professor of Management Information Systems Jason Snyder (far left), Dean of the School of Business Siamack Shojai (second from right), and Professor of Management Information Systems Joo Eng Lee-Partridge (far right). Snyder and Lee-Partridge served as advisors for the team.
new book

A new book by Assistant Professor of History Leah Glaser, titled Electrifying the Rural American West: Stories of Power, People, and Place (University of Nebraska Press), focuses on the social and cultural history of rural electrification in the western US.

extra credit

Associate Professor of English David Cappella led a workshop on poetry during the Connecticut Young Writers Triple Knockout Event held at the Hartford Club in January. The event also provided an opportunity for students and teachers to discuss literature in an open forum designed to allow a greater understanding of the work and of each other. Winners of the young writers contest received cash prizes, and their work will appear in Connecticut Review, published by the Connecticut State University System. Assistant Professor of English Ravi Shankar acted as a ring announcer at the event.

Manager of Business Development Tom Lorenzetti, of CCSU’s Institute of Technology and Business Development, has been recognized by the board of directors of the Central Connecticut Chambers of Commerce for his efforts in workforce development in Connecticut. The Central Connecticut Chambers of Commerce balances the diversity and manpower of over 1,800 members from the communities of Bristol, Burlington, Farmington, Plainville, Plymouth, and Wolcott to create a strong business network and community organization in central Connecticut.

Several CCSU theatre students won awards at the regional Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival held in New Hampshire in January. The student-written play Lorca was one of eight chosen to participate from New England. Lorca was written by Gabbi Mendelsohn and Marissa Ann Grande. Mendelsohn also directed the play. Anna Legassie won the regional award for stage management for her work on The Seagull, and Greg Maine won for sound design for the same play. Mendelsohn won the regional award for directing. Legassie and Mendelsohn will compete this April in Washington, DC, for the national titles in their areas of expertise.

CCSU Goes to London

Twenty-seven CCSU students traveled to London over winter break as part of the Passport to Global Citizenship program, offered by Central’s George Muirhead Center for International Education (CIE). The program, a non-credit international experience for first-year students, is designed to help shape students’ career goals, self-confidence, and views on culture. Shown (above) posing outside the gates of Buckingham Palace, students explored the city, including visits to the National Gallery and the reconstruction of Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre and a tour of CCSU’s partner school, the University of Hertfordshire. The program was led by Professor of Theatre, Emeritus, Jarek Strzemien. Also accompanying the students were CIE’s Study Abroad Advisor Erin Beecher and CCSU’s Manager of Internet Services Derek Pierce. For more pictures of the trip, visit www.ccsu.edu/London2010.

Central to Host Gender Conference, NY Times Columnist Gail Collins on May 7–8

CCSU’s Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program plans to celebrate its 20th anniversary this year with an expansion of its annual June Baker Higgins Gender Studies Conference on May 7–8. The conference, titled “Being 20,” will focus on a variety of topics affecting twenty-year-old women. New York Times columnist Gail Collins will give this year’s keynote address at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, followed by a book signing. In 2001, Collins became the first woman to be appointed editor of the Times’ editorial page. In her latest book, When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present, Collins discusses the past 50 years of women’s history.

The second day of the conference will feature a luncheon lecture by Rachel Lloyd at noon. Lloyd is the executive director and founder of Girls Education and Mentoring Service (GEMS), which works to empower young women who have been victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation by providing support and opportunities for positive change. Throughout the day, a plethora of multi-disciplinary panels will further explore the theme of “Being 20.”
Troy Arthur ’93: Shaping National Policy to Assist Student-Athletes

When “March Madness,” also known as the National Collegiate Athletic Association’s Division I Basketball Tournament, besets the country, it seems like everyone in America is crazy for college sports. But for Troy Arthur ’93, having a passion for college athletics—and for the future endeavors of college athletes—is a year-round occupation. Arthur, a former football captain at Central, is the NCAA’s director of academic and membership affairs, based in Indianapolis. In a career of more than 10 years with the NCAA, the nonprofit organization through which colleges and universities govern their athletics programs, Arthur has had the opportunity to delve into many areas and issues, ranging from regulatory policy to championships and diversity programs.

Currently one of his primary responsibilities is overseeing the athletic certification process for the NCAA’s more than 340 Division I member schools—a process that is similar to the accreditation that most educational institutions go through for other disciplines. The idea, says Arthur, is to help schools examine their own objectives related to athletics, in addition to meeting the requirements of NCAA membership.

He notes, “The challenging part about it is we have a vast number of colleges and universities throughout the country that are very diverse in their missions and purposes, as well as in the people they serve.”

Typically schools seek recertification every ten years, which means that 40 to 50 institutions may be going through the process in a given year. It is work that Arthur loves. “The thing that is really rewarding for me is having an opportunity to shape national policy to assist student-athletes in their pursuit of degrees, as well as the ultimate goal of graduation,” he says. “The other piece of it is we’re really trying to help student-athletes have a wonderful intercollegiate athletic experience while they’re on campus. I had a great experience while I was at Central, and I know how much a great intercollegiate athletic experience can mean to an individual—not only with regard to development, but also in how student-athletes view life as they pursue their own aspirations and careers in the future.”

Originally from Boston, Arthur was recruited to play football at Central and was a four-year starter on the varsity team. An outside linebacker who had his share of sacks and interceptions—and who was quick and adept at shedding blocks—Arthur chose a sociology major, with a minor in criminal justice.

“My experience at Central was very, very rewarding academically, athletically, and also socially,” he notes. “I think it helped develop me not only as a person but also as a professional.” He credits his professors with instilling in him a true love of learning. He says, “They took time and took an interest in what I wanted to do, and helped to mentor and guide me. They really got me to value education and the importance of lifelong learning, which I think is essential to continual growth for all of us.”

With athletics, too, personal connections were key: “I was really fortunate to have tremendous coaches, staff, trainers, and administrators when I was at Central because they took an interest—again, similar to the professors—in me as an individual.” Arthur points out that as dedicated as these mentors were about creating terrific athletic experiences, “Graduation was paramount in everybody’s mind.”

It was at Central that Arthur, who had always enjoyed history, developed a passion for public policy. While still an undergraduate, Arthur secured a summer
after a tragedy claimed the life of her eldest sister and disfigured another sister, resulting in Mandel’s birth as a “replacement child.”

Michelle Zeuschner, assistant principal of Andover Elementary School, has been named Elementary School Assistant Principal of the Year by the Connecticut Association of Schools. Zeuschner was selected due to her efforts to improve the learning process for students who need special attention in the classroom. Zeuschner earned the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from Central Connecticut State University in December 2005.

Steve Forbes to Give Vance Lecture

Steve Forbes, chairman and chief executive officer of Forbes, Inc., and editor-in-chief of Forbes magazine, will deliver the 2010 Robert C. Vance Distinguished Lecture on Wednesday, April 28, at 7:30 p.m. in Welte Auditorium on the CCSU campus in New Britain.

The lecture is free and open to the public; tickets are required for admission. To request tickets to the lecture only (free) or to the reception and dinner preceding the lecture ($85/person), visit www.ccsu.edu/Vance2010. Patrons without internet access may request tickets by calling 860-832-1740.

This series is supported by a grant from the Robert C. Vance Charitable Foundation, with proceeds to benefit the Robert C. Vance Endowed Chair in Journalism & Mass Communication.
Kerrianne Dugan
Spreading Talent Across the Court

Heading this season’s stats for the Blue Devil women’s basketball team, Kerrianne Dugan is showing her prowess on the court. A junior, Dugan plays the small forward position, known as the “3.” “The ‘3,’” she says, “allows me to do a lot of things; it plays to my strengths.”

In a 79-61 win over Fairleigh Dickinson University, Dugan showed fans what these strengths can amount to. She ended the game with 19 points, 11 assists, and nine rebounds, coming up one rebound short of what would have been the first triple-double in Blue Devil history. In only her third season, Dugan surpassed the 1,000 career-points mark and became one of only two players in CCSU women’s basketball history to exceed 1,000 points, 500 rebounds, and 250 assists.

Speaking of her well-rounded prowess, Dugan is quick to give credit to her coaching staff for their no-restraints approach: “The coaches gave us the green light to play. They’re encouraging; they don’t hold you back. You’re not going to get pulled for trying something new, and this makes you get better.”

In a Blue Devil exclusive “In the Paint” interview, Head Women’s Basketball Coach Beryl Piper remarked of Dugan that “She comes out and she does it all. It’s not just about scoring—she’s rebounding the ball, she’s passing the ball to her teammates and getting assists...I’m glad I’m not playing against her, because she does compete, and she plays hard—plays tough—all the time.”

Dugan was Piper’s first recruit three years ago, when she became head coach. “I’ve grown a lot as a player over the past three years,” says Dugan. “I’ve gotten better every year because of these coaches.” She also notes that Piper and the assistant coaches have placed a consistent emphasis on academics, and, as a result, the team grade point average has risen: “The coaches have been good at keeping us focused on things that are important. We have a lot of good players and a lot of potential.”

Dugan credits one such player for helping her improve. Speaking of fellow junior Leanne Crockett, Dugan says, “Leanne makes me get better. She takes some of the pressure off the outside so that I can go to work.” The two frequently share both the ball and the headlines.

A finance major with a minor in marketing, Dugan chose a broad business approach at Central, with hopes of a future position in sports management and, more specifically, basketball operations. Working at basketball camps and clinics over the summer has helped her realize that she likes coaching adolescents as well.

Dugan looks to continue her play overseas upon graduation. “It would be a good experience to travel,” she says, “and I want to keep playing for as long as I can.” In commenting on why she values the athletics which play such a large part in her life, Dugan remarks, “I don’t know what I would do if I wasn’t playing. I need to be active, and of course it’s fun.”

Dugan, however, has an extensive list of goals she wants to accomplish before graduation. “I want to keep getting better for as long as I can and to get that triple-double. I have so much I want to accomplish, and I only have a year left to do it.” As for team goals, she looks to a Northeast Conference Championship and a trip to the NCAA Tournament.

Athletics have taught Dugan to “stay positive through anything that happens. Even when bad things come up, you can turn them into good.” She notes that since coming to Central she has greatly improved and has discovered that “If you keep working hard, you can do anything.”

— Luke Albertson
Facilitating Success of Students

Mentors in the Start of Success (SOS) program are continuing their outreach efforts this year. The nationwide SOS program grants students with special needs the opportunity to work in professional settings, with the goal of developing work production and behavioral skills. Students from New Britain High School have worked with staff in various departments on campus as part of this program.

Property Control Assistant Robert Clayton (shown at right working with SOS student Dominic Homar) has been working closely with students in the program since 2004. “We’re mentors to these kids,” remarks Clayton. “We teach them that they’re important, that they have special skills and gifts just like anyone else. We make them feel both confident and competent.” Clayton has hired two of the students as undergraduate assistants. He notes that he sets aside time at the end of each day to speak to the students about work, as well as about any life questions they may have.

In 2006, CNN visited Central’s campus to shoot footage for a documentary on the program. Many of CCSU’s engagement efforts were featured in the broadcast.

Clayton credits the program’s success to its volunteers: “They understand that it may take a little more effort, but those who work with the students love it. We’re helping to prepare these kids for real-life. You have to be a special person to do that, and I’m proud of the job we’re all doing here.”

in memoriam

Associate Professor of Education, Emeritus, Norma Smith died January 14, 2010. Smith joined Central as a faculty member after 20 years of teaching special education children in the Hartford public school system. She was later involved in several charities.

in the news

Associate Professor of History Jay Bergman was featured in The New Britain Herald in an article on his new book Meeting the Demands of Reason: The Life and Thought of Andrei Sakharov. Considered an expert on the subject, Bergman explained how Sakharov came to oppose Soviet society despite being raised within it. Bergman also noted that Sakharov spoke out against Khrushchev and the way in which nuclear weapons were being tested. Bergman, who spent 11 years researching and writing this biography, concluded that Russia was not ready for Sakharov’s ideas and speculated that it will be even longer before it is.

Darlene Dunbar was featured in the Middle-town Press for her successful efforts in coordinating the Bachelor’s of Social Work Weekend Program at CCSU. The program, which caters to those who have previously attended college but stopped due to intervening life issues, is designed for full-time workers in human service fields who have already completed 30 or more college credits. Dunbar says that this program is exactly what many human service workers need: “They have the motivation and the smarts, and all they need is a program to help them do it. They’ve been working for years, but did not know how they could continue their education. Now there’s a way.”

Distinguished Professor of Political Science and Philosophy Ned Lamont, who chairs the CCSU Arts and Sciences Public Policy Committee, appeared on MSNBC in December to discuss health-care reform.

Nursing major Morgan Madore was featured in The New Britain Herald recently for her charitable acts. Madore and her brother enlisted the aid of neighbors to collect toys for those in need. The donated toys were given to the United Way which distributes them to homeless shelters and other city organizations.

Associate Professor of Political Science Paul Petterson was quoted in a January New Britain Herald article concerning Senator Christopher Dodd’s decision not to seek re-election when his term is up. Petterson expressed optimism and excitement over the changes taking place in Connecticut politics.

Assistant Professor of Communication Jeffrey Teitler was cited in The Hartford Courant for his work with Production in the Community, a pilot program targeting high school participants at risk of violent behavior and dropping out of school. Teitler discussed the benefits of using filmmaking as a springboard for community engagement and preventative measures.

In an article on MyRecordJournal.com in January, Associate Professor of History Matthew Warshauer discussed letters from the time of the Civil War that were recently discovered in the Barnes Museum of Southington. Warshauer noted that the letters, written by a Union soldier who possessed great intelligence and writing ability, offer great insight into the trials endured during the war.