Rebekah Wampler ‘11 had all the makings of a great elementary school teacher—a warm and caring personality, a wealth of knowledge, and a passion for working with students.

But as a student teacher, Wampler was, in her own words, “a bit over-exuberant.” She created lesson plans that were too ambitious for a one-hour class.

At Woodside Intermediate School in Cromwell, the veteran teachers knew how to fix that. Mentoring teacher Diane DellaRatta helped Wampler set more realistic goals.

“I learned to make mini lessons that were ‘digestible bites’ for the kids,” Wampler said. “Woodside is such a nurturing school. I never felt berated or put out. Diane was genuinely trying to help me succeed.”

And succeed she did. When a position became available at Woodside for a fourth-grade teacher, Wampler was hired over 160 other applicants.

Woodside is a professional development school, an incubator for student teachers from Central. While many colleges have partnerships with local school districts, a professional development school is a much stronger alliance. Student teachers attend university classes on the Woodside school campus, Central has a professor-in-residence there, and the Woodside instructors have made a commitment to support and nurture future teachers. More than 500 future educators from CCSU have had internships or student-teaching experiences at the school in the last six years.

“Recently I was introducing a writing strategy to some future teachers and then we went into a fourth-grade classroom and they taught...”

continued on page 2
it to the children,” said Assistant Professor of Teacher Education Sally Valentino Drew, professor-in-residence at Woodside. “It is a double lesson. The fourth graders are learning to write better, and the CCSU students are learning new teaching methods.

“Because our classes are on-site, in the middle of a lecture we might say, ‘Let’s go see this in action.’ And we make ‘instructional rounds,’ similar to what a medical resident would do. We talk about it, and then see it in practice,” Drew said. “The field component is critical to the teaching program. It provides the opportunity to make connections between the University classroom and the real world.”

CCSU students also have access to experts in the school district, such as a reading specialist who can analyze test scores or a principal who can discuss the latest curricular initiative. They are also welcome to attend staff professional development seminars.

Not all universities, nor all school districts, are willing to make the commitment to that kind of intense relationship, Drew said. The CCSU students benefit from close supervision by faculty and professional teachers who share the same vision.

“Everybody here is part of a big team. We love to share ideas. If you have good ideas, I will steal them like a pirate.”

“FUTURE TEACHERS ARE EMBRACED AT WOODSIDE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL. THEY FEEL A PART OF THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY, AND VETERAN TEACHERS SEE THEM AS COLLEAGUES.”

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“The relationship between Central and Woodside Intermediate School benefits everyone,” said Woodside Principal Christopher Butwill, a CCSU alumnus who earned his master’s in elementary education in 1994. “CCSU students are gaining great classroom experiences, Woodside teachers are being supported by the ongoing work of Central, and the students of Woodside reap the reward of those relationships.”

Several years ago, when 87 students signed up for an after-school reading program, CCSU student teachers were there to help staff it. They also offered an enrichment program where students created a magazine.

“Everybody here is part of a big team,” Wampler said. “We love to share ideas. If you have good ideas, I will steal them like a pirate.

“CCSU does a really good job preparing us,” she said. “It is a lot of work when you’re in the program. What you learn at Central you see and apply in the classroom.”

Wampler describes Woodside as a nurturing place where everyone is expected to help in preparing future teachers. “The caliber of teachers here is so high, combined with the nurturing attitudes, you just can’t NOT succeed. They develop you into the kind of teacher they want to hire. In this job market, getting hired is gold.”

One of the goals of the teaching staff is to develop future teachers who are excited about working as a team. At Woodside, that’s essential.

“It is really exciting being part of this school,” said Dianna Rafferty ’76, a language arts teacher at Woodside who also facilitates the professional development program. “Initially there was trepidation about this program. Then the teachers who gave it a chance got so fired up. They talked about the results for their students and got tears in their eyes.

“Now future teachers are embraced. They feel a part of the professional community, and we veteran teachers see them as colleagues. We’re still mentoring them, but it is much different from being a student teacher years ago,” Rafferty said. “The other day a student facilitated a meeting. Years ago you weren’t even allowed to speak in a meeting until you were a second-year teacher.”

– Claire LaFleur Hall

Rebekah Wampler ’11, who was a student teacher at Woodside, is now a fourth-grade teacher there.

More than 500 future educators from CCSU have had internships or student-teaching experiences at the school in the last six years.

Faculty Promotions and Tenure Announced for 2013–14 Academic Year

In May, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Carl Lovitt announced 35 faculty promotions and tenure granted to 18 professors, effective with the 2013–14 academic year. For a complete list of those promoted/tenured, log on to www.ccsu.edu/promotion.
Making new friends with a variety of interests and career aspirations was a priority for Daniel Maher of Danbury, as he started his freshman year at Central.

With a major in athletic training, Maher was offered the chance to live in a themed residence hall with others studying physical education/human performance. Initially skeptical of the idea, Maher eventually decided to give it a try. “I made friends fast, and that definitely helped me adjust to college,” Maher said. He never lacked companionship, whether studying, walking to class, or meeting friends for dinner. Maher enjoyed the experience so much that he will return to the same Living-Learning Center (LLC) in Gallaudet Hall this fall as a sophomore.

Research at CCSU and across the nation has shown that students who live in themed housing, or living-learning centers, maintain higher GPAs than their peers. At left, elementary education majors live—and learn—together.

**Something Extra**

CCSU Expands Popular Themed Housing Options; Program May Increase Student Retention and Satisfaction

Research at CCSU and across the nation has shown that students who live in specialized housing tend to maintain higher GPAs and enjoy their college experience more than their peers. That prompted the University to look for opportunities to create more housing choices.

This fall, Central offers an exclusively freshmen residence hall for the first time, Director of Residence Life Jean Alicandro said. First-year students from all academic programs have chosen this option, which complements the University’s three other LLCs, which cater to students majoring in engineering, elementary education, and physical education/human performance.

“We’re hoping to build a stronger sense of community among our freshmen students and give them a great introduction to college life,” said Vice President of Student Affairs Laura Tordenti.

**Seth North Hall to Welcome 114 Freshmen**

Seth North Hall, known for its tight-knit camaraderie, has been selected as the all-freshmen residence hall. The air-conditioned building is in very good condition and can accommodate about 114 residents, mostly in double-occupancy rooms, Alicandro said.

Students who choose to live there will be able to take advantage of extra academic support, programs designed to help them adjust to college, group outings to Blue Devil sports events, and more.

The residence hall will have a unique partnership with The Learning Center (TLC), which offers academic support to all CCSU students.

“Using your time wisely is a big challenge for first-year students,” said Director of TLC Meg Leake. By offering supported study time, academic coach liaisons, and on-site coaching, TLC staff is hoping to get students off to a good start academically.

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Teacher Education Professor Daniel Mulcahy Named CSU Professor

The Connecticut State Colleges and Universities Board of Regents for Higher Education named Professor of Teacher Education Daniel Mulcahy a CSU Professor in May.

Before Mulcahy joined the CCSU faculty in 1992, he held professorial appointments at Eastern Illinois University and the University of New Brunswick. He is a past chair of the Education Department at University College in Cork, Ireland and a past president of the Educational Studies Association of Ireland and of The New England Philosophy of Education Society.

Mulcahy has published some fifty articles and chapters in scholarly journals and books in Europe and North America and has presented at numerous conferences in the United States and Europe. He has twice been awarded Fulbright Grants, once in 1967 and again in 1983.

The CSU Professorship was created in 1987 to recognize outstanding merit in teaching, scholarly achievement, and public service among the teaching faculty in the CSU system. Each university is limited to three such designated scholars at any time.

CCSU Recognized for Its Global Sustainability Mission

For the fourth year in a row, the Princeton Review has named CCSU one of the most environmentally responsible colleges in the US and Canada. The Princeton Review’s Guide to 322 Green Colleges applauds President Jack Miller for making sustainability one of the Central’s top priorities. In the past six years, CCSU has implemented several initiatives to lessen its carbon footprint, including a 1.4 megawatt fuel cell power plant, energy-efficient LED lights, and courses about climate change and global sustainability.

School of Business Honors Outstanding Students, Alumni, and Members of the Business Community

The School of Business held its fourth annual Hall of Honor celebration in May, recognizing alumni and local business leaders for their excellence and collaboration in supporting CCSU business students. David Albrycht ‘86, president and CIO of Newfleet Asset Management, received the Distinguished Graduate Award. Garry Feldman ‘90, founder and president of US Computer Connection, was presented with the Entrepreneurship Excellence Award. Cofounder of Victory Energy Solutions Raquel Kennedy was honored with the Women, Minority, or Disadvantaged Business Excellence award. And Susan Winkler, executive director of Connecticut Insurance and Financial Services received the School of Business Appreciation Award.

There were two recipients of the Dean’s Award for Outstanding Faculty Publications: Professor of Management Information Systems (MIS) Michael Gendron received the MIS Gold Award and Associate Professor of MIS Jason Snyder received the MIS Silver Award.

Proceeds from the event funded five $1,000 scholarships, which were awarded to one student in each of the five departments within the School of Business. Scholarships were awarded to Sara Weller, Guy Guyton, John Mohrlein, Muhammad Iftikhar, and Leah Duglenski.

Above, left to right, David Albrycht ’86, Garry Feldman ’90, Raquel Kennedy, and Susan Winkler. At left, Professor of Management Information Systems (MIS) Michael Gendron (top) and Associate Professor of MIS Jason Snyder (bottom).
Left to right, front row: Eric Bergenn, Elizabeth Braun; back row: Ryan Baldassario, Eric Vargas, Legairre Radden II, President Jack Miller, Christopher Marcelli, Vice President of Student Affairs Laura Tordenti.

President’s Citation Honors Outstanding Graduates

Whether conducting biomedical research or working to persuade Latino teens to go to college, six seniors earned the President’s Citation for their outstanding leadership and service to the University. Ryan Baldassario, Eric J. Bergenn, Elizabeth Braun, Christopher Marcelli, Legairre Radden II, and Eric Vargas held leadership roles on campus and participated in community activities bettering the lives of our New Britain neighbors, all while excelling in their rigorous academic programs. “They have all significantly enriched the University and the community during their years as CCSU students,” said President Jack Miller.

CCSU Graduates First GIS Certificate Class

In May, the Department of Continuing Education, in collaboration with the Department of Geography, graduated the first students from the Geographic Information Science (GIS) Certificate Program.


“The program was designed to take a student who has little or no experience or knowledge of GIS,” said Thad Dymkowski ’00, MS ’08, program instructor and GIS Technician for the Town of Newington, “and by the end of the program they have gained enough knowledge and hands-on experience to obtain an entry-level position and successfully thrive and grow with just about any organization.”

The curriculum is designed in accordance with the new Federal Geospatial Technology Competency Model — students study basic GIS architecture, database design, GIS administration, geospatial and geostatistical analysis, and GIS application design.

This fall, the program will move to the newly opened Social Sciences Hall, where students will benefit from state-of-the-art geography computer labs.

Special Education Master’s Program Named One of Best in Nation

CCSU’s master’s program in Special Education has been named one of the best programs in the nation by MastersDegreeOnline.org, a leading resource for information on graduate education. Congratulations to the School of Education and Professional Studies, the faculty, and students of the program for this prestigious honor.
Counseling Honor Society Established at CCSU

CCSU celebrated its first induction ceremony for the counseling honor society Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) in May. CSI is an international honor society that values academic and professional excellence in counseling. The honor society promotes a strong professional identity through members—professional counselors, counselor educators, and students—who contribute to the realization of a healthy society by fostering wellness and human dignity. Associate Professor of Counseling and Family Therapy Cherie King, the group’s faculty advisor, said that more than 70 CCSU students have met eligibility requirements and have joined the chapter. At right, CCSU’s Chi Sigma Iota chapter, Chi Alpha Mu Board. Front, left to right, Assistant Professor of Counseling and Family Therapy Evadne Ngazimbi and King; middle, Lisa Fox, Devon Pleau, and Allison Tartaglino; back, Megan Nigro, Dan Greenstein, Skip Callahan, and Kelly Brookhart (missing Kaitlyn Wall).

Psychology Graduate Student Jennifer Stanger Wins Prestigious Psi Chi Poster Award

Graduate student Jennifer Stanger and undergrads Ashley Arbo and Sandy Jolon were nationally recognized with the coveted Psi Chi Poster Award at the prestigious Eastern Psychological Association Conference in New York City earlier this year. The annual conference draws hundreds of students—many from the nation’s top universities—as well as some of the most distinguished professional researchers.

Stanger’s presentation, “Age of Drinking Onset and Family History as Predictors of Alcohol Use,” co-authored by Arbo, Jolon, and Associate Professor of Psychological Science Jason Sikorski, was selected for the award from hundreds of research projects.

The three students used data collected through CORE drug and alcohol surveys to study the age of drinking onset and family history as predictors of alcohol abuse. Though Stanger did not collect data, she ran statistical analyses, wrote up a report, and created and presented the poster at the conference. Stanger notes that she, Arbo, and Jolon worked as a team, editing and exchanging papers. As the only graduate student in the group, she mentored Arbo and Jolon as they created their own posters for the conference.

A humble Stanger is honored to have won this award: “I went to the conference simply honored that the Eastern Psychological Association accepted my research to be presented, so to win an award from Psi Chi on top of that was so much more than I was expecting.”

Sikorski speaks of his students with pride: “Both Ashley and Sandy got into prestigious psychology graduate programs as a direct result of their work. Jennifer is applying to PhD level graduate programs in psychology next fall. Further, a person at the conference approached her about submitting her work for a peer reviewed publication in the future.”

Stanger was the coordinator of Brain and Alcohol Research with College Students while at CCSU. She earned her BA and MA in psychology from Central, and plans to pursue her PhD in clinical psychology specializing in addiction, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder. Stanger would then like to work as a psychologist in a drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility.

—Alayna James
Central Students Present Winning Plan During the Connecticut Collegiate Business Plan Competition

CineGames, one of three teams of CCSU students who pitched their business ideas during the final round of the Connecticut Collegiate Business Plan Competition in April, won first prize in the Personal Venture Division, which included $1,000, and professional services.

Created by Rob McGrath with Johnathan Humphrey and Jackie Benjamin, CineGames is a mobile app/competitive social game that allows moviegoers to play games against one another while waiting for a movie to begin.

Two additional teams from Central competed: Castle Weddings in the Park, led by Tabitha Arce and Maria Cuadros, a wedding coordinating service that works with town parks to provide picturesque settings for wedding ceremonies, and Grow It, LLC, a lawn care device company that makes lawn treatments simpler and safer, led by John Filippides and Benn Langlais. The teams were coached by Professor of Management and Organization Drew Harris.

Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement Day Recognizes Outstanding Student Work

The 15th Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement Day (URCAD), a celebration of exceptional work by CCSU students and their faculty mentors, was held in May, and showcased almost 50 outstanding student research and creative projects.

The day began with welcoming remarks by faculty coordinator and Professor of English Aimee Pozorski and Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Carl Lovitt, followed by a poster session and oral presentations. The most exemplary work was recognized with awards presented in each category, in the areas of fine arts and humanities, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), social sciences, and professional studies.

URCAD is sponsored by the Office of Academic Affairs, which funds UR CAD, the awardees’ prizes and trips to the national conference.

Elihu Burritt Library Undergraduate Research Awards
Ashley Arbo: “Predicting College Student Alcohol Use Based on Alcohol Knowledge and Peer Pressure”
William Dunn: “On Luaitreach: Power, Conflict and the Adoption of Martyrs in Ballymurphy”

Undergraduate Research Senior Awards
Kate Callahan: “The Art of the College Essay”
Samantha Hughes: “The Co-Localizing RHG and FRZL Mouse Mutations Identify Distinct Genes, and are not Alleles of PRSS8 or FGFR2”
Christopher Marcelli: “Social Interaction, Collaboration, and College Success: A Case Study of Central Connecticut State University”
Multi-Powered Vehicle Club Takes Home Two Awards

Above, students Charles Hart (back left), Jeff Carpenter (back center), and Justin Hucul (inside vehicle) pose with Associate Professor of Technology and Engineering Education David Sianez (back right) at the 33rd annual International Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) Competition in June. Twenty-eight teams designed and built single-person, fuel-efficient vehicles powered by small, four-cycle engines for the competition, which was held on a 1.6 mile track.

Hart, Carpenter, Hucul, and the rest of the CCSU Multi-Powered Vehicle (MPV) Club built the vehicle in the photo from scratch, except for the engine, which was donated by Briggs & Stratton, over the course of an academic year. CCSU’s MPV Club won both the “Most Visually Appealing” award and the “Best Newcomer” award during their first competition.

Hart is a senior biomolecular sciences major and Hucul, a junior, and Carpenter, a senior, are both technology and engineering education majors. Club members senior Patrick Carbone and junior Dan Napierski, also technology and engineering education majors, were not able to travel to the competition.

Two Academic Schools Welcome New Deans

Michael P. Alfano—School of Education & Professional Studies

Michael P. Alfano formerly served as Professor and Chair of the Department of Special Education and Reading at Southern Connecticut State University. Prior to that, he served, first, as Director of the Graduate Teacher Preparation Program, and then as Executive Director of Teacher Preparation Programs in the Neag School of Education at UConn. Alfano has published widely in the fields of teacher preparation, reading, and special education. He holds a BS from Southern Connecticut State University, an MEd from DePaul University, and a PhD in Educational Psychology and Special Education from UConn.

Faris Malhas—School of Engineering & Technology

Formerly the Professor and Dean in the College of Architecture, Applied Engineering, and Technology at Bowling Green State University, Faris Malhas has also served as Dean of the College of Engineering and Sciences at West Virginia University, as Chair of the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Dayton, and as the Founding Coordinator of the Civil Engineering Program at the University of North Florida, among others. Malhas also has extensive professional experience as a Structural Engineering Consultant. He is the author of seven books on structural engineering, as well as nearly 50 journal articles, proceeding papers, and reports. Malhas holds a BSE and an MSE in Civil Engineering from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and an MSc in Engineering Mechanics and a PhD in Civil Engineering from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.
Karen Johnson
Fulfilling a Life-long Goal and Finding a New Passion

For much of her life, Karen Johnson thought of geography in terms of the Earth and its physical features. She had no idea that taking the Human Geography course during her first year at Central would so dramatically alter her career path. But then, at the age of 50, she’d already experienced momentous change in her life.

When Johnson was a teenager, her mother—a single parent—didn’t have enough money to send both of her children to college. So right out of high school, Johnson had to find a job. For more than 30 years, she worked in manufacturing quality assurance before she was laid off.

“My 50th birthday was approaching and I started thinking about my life and realized that I had only one regret. I never went to college, and that really bothered me,” she said.

She applied to CCSU with the intention of majoring in computer science, and selected the human geography class to fulfill a general education requirement. What she learned in that course gave her a whole new way of looking at the world.

“It’s amazing to see all kinds of patterns show up — behavior, religion, language — all kinds of cultural aspects you just didn’t notice before,” she says. Her newly found passion evolved into a major in geography, with a specialization in geographic information science.

Last year, the department honored Johnson with the Timothy J. Rickard Scholarship, given to a junior who shows “great promise as a professional geographer.” The award supported her trip to and presentation at the Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting in Hilton, New York.

By analyzing geospatial data, Johnson had created a series of maps which detected a troubling pattern between Connecticut’s aging population and the location of nursing homes. During the next 20 years, a growing majority of residents, aged 65 and over, will be living in the state’s rural areas, while the majority of nursing homes will be located miles away, near major highways.

Johnson’s presentation put her in front of geographers from all over the US and exposed her to their work as well. Grateful because the scholarship rewarded her hard work and made possible her presentation at a professional conference, Johnson says it also enhanced her graduate school application. After graduating magna cum laude from CCSU in May, she’ll begin UConn’s PhD program in geography.

She leaves CCSU jubilant about her college experience. “I love CCSU! I have no more regrets in my life. I feel so lucky — just really lucky.”

– Janice Palmer
On Saturday, April 20th, the Music Department presented the University Singers 20th Anniversary Concert, celebrating both the esteemed choir and its director, Professor of Music Pamela Perry. The concert featured the current ensemble of 22 auditioned singers, as well as more than 50 alumni, who returned to sing and to honor their mentor. Perry retired at the end of the spring semester, after more than two decades of service.

Perry founded the University Singers in 1993. Under her guidance, the group has grown in esteem, performing in Germany, Hungary, Puerto Rico, France, China, Spain, and Japan. The group, which includes both music and non-music majors, also performs on campus several times each semester and at various other locations and conferences within the United States.

In addition to teaching graduate and undergraduate courses and directing the University Singers, Perry directed the CCSU Summer Music Institute from 1994 to 2010. Before joining the faculty, she was the Director of Choral Activities at the University of Hartford and, prior to that, a public school choral director. Perry is a frequent guest conductor, adjudicator, and clinician, conducting district, regional, and state festivals throughout the east. She has also been the guest conductor of the International School Honors Choir Festival in Dusseldorf, Germany.

Perry has published articles on choral music education in the Choral Journal and International Journal of Women Composers. During Perry’s time at CCSU, she was on the “Excellence in Teaching” honor roll for four years and in 2006, she received the CCSU Distinguished Service Award. In 1994, she was the recipient of the Connecticut American Choral Directors Association “Conductor of the Year” award. More recently, Perry was selected to receive the New Britain Arts Alliance “Lifetime Contribution to the Arts Award” for 2013.

Current ensemble member Mary Kayan speaks of Perry with great respect: “Dr. Perry has been an asset to the music department over the course of her time here and seeing people that had her 20 years ago come back to sing one final time with her really is a testament to that.”

~ Alayna James, Jackie Ferris
Collaborative Spring Events Spotlight the Issue of Homelessness in New Britain

In April, CCSU and the New Britain Museum of American Art presented “UMC Night at the Museum.” The UMC, or University, Museum, Community Collaborative, is a biennial event that brings together New Britain residents and students and faculty from Central to celebrate art and community.

At each event, participants present pieces of artistic expression relating to a chosen theme. This year’s theme was “A Home of One’s Own: A Project to Support the Mayor’s Workplan to End Homelessness.” Contributions included drawings, paintings, and sculptures, as well as artistic performances—poetry readings, music, dance, and theatre. The event was one of many that raised awareness about homelessness this spring.

As part of the “A Home of One’s Own” exhibit, the Downtown District Gallery featured the work of CCSU art faculty members, while the Community Central Gallery featured artwork from several CCSU students. Both exhibits were made possible with generous support from alum Norman Hausmann ’54.

In addition, a “CCSU Powwow” was held on Vance Lawn. Joseph Firecrow of the Northern Cheyenne tribe performed Native American music, and Trudie Lamb Richmond of the Schaghticoke tribe told Native American stories and discussed the history of her people.

As part of the powwow, students from Professor of History Katherine Hermes’ class, “Native American West, 1500 – Present” built a tipi, which was used on the museum grounds for the UMC event and then donated to a local children’s museum. The powwow was sponsored by the History Department, Office of Diversity, Office of Student Affairs, and the Mosaic Center.

Hoops for Homeless and the Empty Bowl Fundraiser were two more collaborative efforts in April that raised almost $30,000 to support homeless services in the city. Community Central, a connection point between the University, New Britain Schools, and the New Britain community, provided logistical and organizational support for these events.

“The UMC is a good example of what Community Central does,” said Assistant Director of Community Engagement Hannah Hurwitz, “which is to work with students to help them connect to and play a role within the community to make a difference. These events benefit students’ learning experiences regardless of their majors.”

– Nicholas Irving
Something Extra

Seth North will also have a new designated study area with computers, comfortable seating, and good lighting. Alicandro predicts it will be a popular choice among new students.

Living-Learning Centers Help Students Bond

Students who opt to live in an LLC are clustered together in the same residence hall and share at least one course within their major, in addition to their First-Year Experience class.

Professor of Physical Education and Human Performance Sean Walsh has been associated with the LLC that has served his students since its inception four years ago.

One advantage he’s noticed is near-perfect attendance in the Fitness and Wellness class he taught to the LLC students, who often walked together to class. Friendships develop quickly, he notes. Often, the LLC students will go out for ice cream or sushi, or play mini golf or work out together, he said.

“As incoming students, they’ve got something to unite them, and someone to bond with,” Walsh said. But the advantages aren’t just social.

“When they develop that rapport quickly, it helps in the classroom,” he said. Students are more engaged and more willing to share ideas. Walsh said he thinks that overall, LLC students seem happier than most.

Alicandro agrees. Students in LLCs tend to study more effectively, spend more time preparing for class, and are more involved in co-curricular activities. They are also more likely to have a 3.0 GPA after their first semester, and are less likely to be on academic probation, she said. They also have lower levels of disciplinary infractions.

“That first semester is critical for students,” Walsh said, noting that freshmen who earn less than a 2.0 the first semester are less likely to graduate.

Maher, the student from Danbury, said he would recommend themed housing to other students. And, although his first friends were within the same major, he said he was easily able to develop a diverse group of friends in the ensuing months.

– Claire LaFleur Hall

Below, Seth North residence hall, home to the newly established Freshman Living-Learning Center.

IN THE NEWS

Associate Professor of Psychological Science Carrie Andreoletti and Associate Professor of English Mary Collins were featured on WNPR’s Where We Live in July, to discuss “Coming Together Across the Ages: The Power of Intergenerational Relationships.” The show’s host, John Dankosky, is the former Robert C. Vance Endowed Chair in Journalism and Mass Communication at CCSU.

Professor Kristine Larsen and Associate Professor Mark Evans, both of the Physics and Earth Sciences Department, were featured in a New Britain Herald article about meteorites in May. Larsen and Evans gave insight on how to differentiate between rocks and meteorites and spoke about recent meteorite discoveries in Connecticut.

Executive Assistant to the President Rick Mullins was quoted in a New Britain Herald article about the economy and school budgets in early May. Mullins emphasized the importance of education in all fields: “Once we understand that education is a lifelong process, we’ll be more successful at what we do. Education is not something that ends after you leave campus. It’s continually evolving—without skill-based education we’d all be left behind.”

Associate Professor of Social Work Delia Gonzalez-Sanders was quoted in a recent article in the Waterbury Republican-American titled “The Looming Dementia Crisis.” Sanders spoke about her experience with dementia patients and the effects of the disease on patients and their loved ones.
Problem-Based Learning Project Results in Real-World Benefits

Since 2009, when Michele Dischino joined a National Science Foundation project that promoted problem-based learning (PBL) methods in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, the Associate Professor of Technology and Engineering Education has been researching ways to incorporate PBL into her Introduction to Engineering class.

During a 2011 interview, Dischino explained her interest: “PBL is an instructional approach where students learn content by actively and collaboratively solving authentic, real-world problems. Research shows that PBL improves student learning and retention, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, teamwork, and the ability to apply knowledge.”

And after attending a workshop about including a community engagement component into coursework in any discipline, Dischino felt strongly that any project her class took on should have positive, real-world benefits.

During her own college career, Dischino’s coursework included working with an assisted living facility to help solve a care issue for a disabled resident. The resident was unable to press a traditional call button, so Dischino and her fellow students engineered a breath-operated mechanism to activate the button, solving a critical issue for the resident.

This spring, Dischino’s engineering students were able to tackle their first PBL project. Connecting with Apple Rehab in Rocky Hill and the nonprofit Chariots of Hope in Bloomfield, Dischino found a worthy project—repairing used wheelchairs from Apple Rehab, then donating the refurbished chairs to Chariots of Hope to distribute to disadvantaged, disabled people around the world.

“Each wheelchair was different,” explained Dischino. “The students had to figure out what needed to be done to make each chair functional. Some chairs had missing parts, and all of them needed cleaning and general refurbishment. It was a problem-solving project in a socially meaningful and hands-on way.”

Using their engineering skills and parts from additional wheelchairs, four groups of students successfully completed the challenge, and during finals week presented their “projects” to Chariots of Hope board member Paul Bobbitt.

“Our mission is to provide mobility to disadvantaged persons, so they can have a better quality of life and participate in community ac-

ivities and services,” Bobbitt said. “Our thanks to these CCSU students for their support.”

Chariots of Hope estimates that there are 18 million bedridden people worldwide. Wheelchairs are a luxury in many poor countries, yet countless chairs sit idle in the United States.

“I’ve always been one to help out people in need, and this is such a good cause,” said student Michaela Melillo, who participated in the project. “Life is so hard for people without mobility, and it’s satisfying knowing how much of a difference these wheelchairs will make for them.”

Now, with the first PBL project successfully completed, Dischino is confident that future classes will find opportunities to help others while gaining practical engineering skills. Dischino said that students not enrolled in the class also showed interest in the wheelchair project. She is hoping this interest expands to the club level, where students could focus on hands-on projects that help others in the community and around the world.
Assistant Professor of Teacher Education
Jacob Werblow thinks he has the best job in the world — sharing his love of teaching with his students in his educational theory and methodology courses. Last semester, as the instructor for CCSU’s “Introduction to Teaching” course, he met with a group of New Britain High School students twice a week to give them a feel for the education profession.

The three-credit course is designed for high school juniors and seniors who plan on becoming teachers or counselors. According to Werblow, the course does much more than give students an introduction to teaching. “The goal of the course is to provide students with the opportunity to learn about the teaching profession and related fields, to become familiar with a college environment, and to better understand what it takes to successfully transition from high school to college,” he said.

The course focuses predominantly on underrepresented students—most of the students in the course are either bilingual or multilingual; in fact, one of Werblow’s students speaks five languages.

An additional benefit of the program is an increased awareness of Central as a viable option for these students. “When we started the course, only one or two were interested in coming to CCSU,” said Werblow. “Now, many of them are considering applying next year.”

Werblow hopes the course will be offered regularly at CCSU in the near future, and will expand to more local high schools. “Ideally, we would offer similar courses for every high school that serves low-income communities,” said Werblow.

Despite funding issues, Werblow remains optimistic. “There is a shift happening in higher education. More and more colleges are offering courses or college credits to high school students for free or low cost. Hopefully this is the beginning of many more partnerships with high schools in our region.”

Werblow credits New Britain Board of Education president Sharon Beloin-Saavedra for making the course a reality. Working in collaboration with President Jack Miller, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Carl Lovitt, Dean of the School of Education and Professional Studies Mitchell Sakofs, and NBHS Principal Michael Foran, Beloin-Saavedra was able to bring the course to CCSU after several attempts.

Beloin-Saavedra also helped both parties reach an agreement to share the economic costs associated with the course, making it tuition-free for NBHS students.

Werblow explained, “Several students deal with adversity that many teenagers from privileged backgrounds never have to think about—family members being incarcerated, taking care of their younger siblings, working full-time, etc. The tuition-free status is a huge boost to the program, particularly in an urban area like New Britain. It provides this opportunity to many more students, students who would not have been able to consider the program if they had to pay for it.”

It would seem Werblow is getting just as much out of the program as the students are. “The students enrolled in this course are some of the most amazing young people you’ll ever meet. They have so much to offer our institution.” Introducing new students to the field of education, CCSU and NBHS are helping to shape the future of the education system in the community and around the state.

– Nicholas Irving
In the Community

Overwhelming Community Support for Hoops for Homeless Tournament

April’s Hoops for Homeless event, co-chaired by Assistant Professor of Teacher Education Jacob Werblow, raised more than $22,000 to benefit services for the homeless in New Britain. Hundreds of men, women, and children participated in the three-on-three basketball games held downtown, and many more volunteers from New Britain and CCSU worked throughout the day to ensure the event’s success. Next year’s tournament is scheduled for April 26th.

Participation Increases for Second Annual Race to End Violence

CCSU hosted the second annual Enough! Race to End Violence in April. Sponsored by CCSU, New Britain YWCA’s Sexual Assault Crisis Service (SACS), and the Hartford Marathon Foundation, the event included a 5K race, an awards ceremony, and guest speaker Beth Holloway, mother of Natalee Holloway, the high school senior who was abducted during her trip to Aruba in 2005. This year’s race had more than 100 more participants than last year—342 entrants finished the race—with runners as young as six and as old as 93 participating to show their support. Proceeds from the event help to provide comfort and counseling to victims of sexual assault in Hartford and Tolland Counties.

Teacher Education Event Welcomes Future Students to Campus

Kindergarteners and first-graders from Northend Elementary School in New Britain visited CCSU in April for How Do We Get to College Day, organized by Assistant Professor of Teacher Education Lynda George (top photo), as part of the elementary school’s College For Every Student program. At the start of the day, each student received a backpack, a journal, and crayons, and listened to the book, How Do We Get To College: A Guide for Very Young Scholars. The book was written by George and illustrated by third graders from Northend. While on a tour of the campus, led by CCSU teacher education majors, the youngsters stopped periodically to draw in their journals and write a story about their experience (bottom photo).

Tipi Donation Benefits Local Youth Museum

Students from Professor of History Katherine Hermes’ Native American History class donated the tipi they built to the New Britain Youth Museum at Hungerford Park. Students constructed the dwelling from donated materials at the New Britain Museum of American Art (shown above) as part of the University Museum Community Collaborative in April. It was then relocated to Vance Lawn for ten days before it was donated to the children’s museum.
Head men’s and women’s cross country and track and field coach Eric Blake placed first for the third time in the annual Mt. Washington Road Race in June. Blake, who broke his own personal record by 40 seconds, also won the race in 2006 and 2008.

Jennifer Bossi won the 2013 Research Consortium Graduate Student Research Award at the National American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance meeting this spring, for her abstract, “Effects of Menstrual Cycle on Exercise in Collegiate Female Athletes.” Her study was published in one of Research Consortium’s professional journals. Bossi also received the Mark Connolly Memorial Masters Scholarship Award, given annually to an outstanding graduate student in the New England Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine.

Theatre major Chelsea Branigan was one of 16 young actors chosen to apprentice for “Shakespeare on the Sound” in Rhode Island this summer. Branigan and her peers performed in a 25 minute mini-production and served as understudies in Shakespeare’s As You Like It.

In June, senior environmental geography major and Community Central intern John Carey organized a flag football tournament with 100 participants to raise money for the Cavalry Christian Center’s Sunday Breakfast program. Carey has attended the breakfast every Sunday since January and was inspired by the homeless people he met and by Community Central’s Hoops for Homeless event in April. Carey raised just under $900.

Human Resource Administrator Laurie Dunn was voted President-Elect of the Connecticut Chapter of the International Public Management Association for Human Resources in June. Dunn has served on the executive board since 2010. Assistant Professor of Engineering Khaled Hammad co-organized the “Symposium on Transport Phenomena in Energy Conversion from Clean and Sustainable Resources” during the 2013 American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Fluids Engineering Summer Meeting in Incline Village, NV. Hammad was also recently listed in the 2012–13 ASME Leadership Directory, only the second person from Connecticut to be included on the list.

Graduate students George DeVarennes and Philip Hickey were awarded Larose/Fuller Data Mining Scholarships this spring. Junior Terese Lagana won first place and a $3,000 scholarship in the “Pink Power PSA” contest sponsored by the Connecticut Breast Health Initiative. The contest challenged students to create a video public service announcement to promote the CT Race In The Park in New Britain in May.

Associate Professor of History Kate McGrath presented her paper, “Historical Writing as a Form of Communication in Post-Conquest Disputes” at the 48th International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University in May. She was also a member of a round-table on “Teaching Medieval History to Undergraduates.”

Assistant Professor of Economics Nahanchimeg Mijid is the author of the article “Decomposing Racial and Ethnic Differences in Small Business Lending: Evidence of Discrimination” which was recently published in the Review of Social Economy.

The Greater New Britain Arts Alliance honored Professor of Music, Emeritus Pamela Perry with the Lifetime Contribution to the Arts for 2013 award in May. The Alliance also elected several new directors to its board, including CCSU’s Assistant Director of Community Engagement Hannah Hurwitz.

Center for Advising and Career Exploration Specialist Janice Reska received a service recognition award from the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Council 4 at its annual meeting for her work as treasurer of the State University Organization of Administrative Faculty local.

History Professor Matthew Warshauer and CCSU alumnus Nicholas Bellantoni ’76, were involved in the recent Civil War Naval Encampment reenactment at Mystic Seaport. The Connecticut Civil War Commemoration Commission and Mystic Seaport, sponsored the event. Warshauer, who serves as co-chair of the commission, and Bellantoni, who is the state archaeologist at the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History and Archaeology Center at UConn, gave lectures at the event.
Celebrating this year’s Alumni Association Award winners: front, Yvette Ghannam and Shari Lamont Day; middle, Alumni Association President Curtis J. Wiggins and Charles Jones; back, CCSU President Jack Miller, Vice President of Institutional Advancement Chris Galligan, and Ed Young.

2013 Alumni Association Awards Presented in June

Four people were honored during the annual Alumni Association Awards in June. Yvette Ghannam BS ’94, MS ’06 received the Community Service Award for the countless hours she has dedicated to improving the New Britain community through her volunteer efforts with Free to Grow, the New Britain Police Department, and political campaigns. She is a bacteriologist for the Greenwich Health Department. Charles Jones BS ’69, MS ’72 was the recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award. Jones worked at CCSU for 44 years before retiring from his position as Athletic Director in 2009. In his various roles at the University, he helped hundreds of low income and first-generation college students and student-athletes to be successful. Shari Lamont Day ’99 was honored with the Young Alumni Award. Day is the CEO and co-founder of LifExchange, a leader in international exchanges and recruitment. And Ed Young, president of Hitchcock Printing and Distribution, treasurer and board member of the CCSU Foundation, Inc., and ardent Blue Devils fan, received this year’s Friend of the University Award. Young’s family created the Hitchcock-Young Athletic Development fund, providing student-athletes with financial support.

NOTABLE PROGRAMS

The Office of Alcohol and Drug Education held its 5th annual Alcohol Awareness Fair in April, to educate the campus community on the dangers associated with alcohol and drug use.

Barrows Hall’s pet food drive this spring collected more than 171 pounds of dry food, as well as many cans, boxes, and pouches of food and pet treats. All proceeds were donated to the Connecticut Humane Society.

Acclaimed poet Steven Cramer read his recent works in the bookstore in April. Cramer has written five collections of poetry; one of them, Goodbye to the Orchard, won the 2005 Sheila Motton Prize from the New England Poetry Club and was named an Honor Book in Poetry by the Massachusetts Center for the Book.

Four trained therapy dogs visited Burritt Library before spring final exams started. Associate Librarian Sue Slaga started the Final Paws program in December 2012, and as many as 50 students have attended each session to experience the dogs’ soothing presence.

This spring, the CCSU Dance Program presented Heartbeat: an Evening of Contemporary Dance. Professor of Physical Education and Human Performance Catherine Fellows serves as artistic director to the group.

The Fiedorczyk Lecture was presented by Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Neal Pease in April. The lecture, “Polish Americans and Baseball: Becoming American by Playing America’s Game,” was sponsored by The S.A. Blejwas Endowed Chair in Polish Studies.

Scientist, lawyer, and entrepreneur Martine Rothblatt spoke to students and faculty in April about her pharmaceutical company, United Therapeutics, and her role in the invention of GeoStar, PanAmSat, and Sirius Satellite Radio. Rothblatt has authored books on satellite communications technology, gender freedom, genomics, and xenotransplantation. Additionally, she cyberscripted and produced one of the first cybermuseums, The World Against Racism Museum.

April also brought best-selling author Edward A. Iannuccilli to the Burritt Library, where he shared stories from his latest book, What Ever Happened to Sunday Dinner? and Other Stories. The former Rhode Island Hospital board chairman and clinical professor emeritus at Brown University’s medical school, also wrote Growing Up Italian, which was published in 2008. After the lecture, an exhibit of rare publications, focused on Italian history and culture, was on display. The items were borrowed from collections belonging to the program’s sponsors, CCSU’s library and Italian Resource Center.

CCSU celebrated women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) at its annual Women’s History Month Luncheon in March. Keynote speaker, Yvonne A. Kielhorn, founder and CEO of Why Science of New Haven, shared the highlights and challenges of her life and career as a female scientist and engineer.
Some people spend their entire lives looking for that combination of interest, ability, and career opportunity that can make most work days seem like a vacation.

But Michaelknight Zayas ’06, MA ’09, New Britain’s 2013 Teacher of the Year is among the lucky ones.

A challenging high school class, an inspiring teacher, and a love for his hometown set his course. By the end of his senior year at New Britain High, Zayas knew exactly what he wanted to do, and the only place he wanted to work.

Teaching Seemed Like a Cool Thing to Do

Zayas’ career aspirations took root during his senior year at NBHS in Rob Ramsey’s Honors Human Biology course.

“Rob Ramsey’s passion and teaching style, both entertaining and educational, made biology interesting,” Zayas recalled. “And he made teaching seem like a cool thing to do.”

With encouragement from his father, Zayas enrolled at CCSU. After graduating in 2006, Zayas had three job offers pending. There was never any doubt in his mind which one he would accept. He always wanted to return to New Britain High School.

“I never wanted to go anywhere else. I don’t think I would have had the same connection with the students and the community,” he said. “I love being in the classroom. I never wake up and worry about work.”

Zayas, 29, is the lead teacher at the rapidly-growing Academy for Health Professions within New Britain High. This fall, almost 25 percent of the incoming freshmen have enrolled in the program, which has a 12-course curriculum.

The Academy is supported by many, including the city’s two hospitals, which are also its biggest employers. Through the Academy, students can earn a nursing certificate while still in high school. Job-shadowing opportunities take them to local hospitals, where one student, who is interested in prenatal nursing, witnessed four births in one day. Students can even begin earning college credit.

Principal of New Britain High School Michael Foran ’86, MS ’90, SYC ’92 said that under Zayas’ leadership, the Academy has received state-wide recognition for excellence and is a model for how to implement smaller learning communities in a comprehensive high school.

“This is due in large part to Michaelknight’s commitment to the program,” Foran said. “He is an outstanding role model for all New Britain and CCSU students. He has tremendous energy and passion for his work and his students.”

“I think theme programs, like the health academy, give students an incentive to come to school, a reason to stay in school, and a way to find their niche,” Zayas said.

“Most students start out wanting to be doctors or nurses,” Zayas said of the program that has grown from 51 to 350 students in just three years. “They are introduced to 250 different careers and many develop interests as diverse as radiologist, surgical technician, or occupational therapist. They love to interact with patients.”

“I have a vested interest in this city”

“I’m passionate about this program because I have a vested interest in this city. I was born and raised in New Britain. I live here. I have children entering New Britain schools,” Zayas said. He and his wife, alumna Jennifer Rondini Zayas ’05, a social worker, share a common commitment to the well-being of the next generation.

As a teenager, Zayas watched his family struggle financially. To help make ends meet, his mom often worked double shifts, 16 hours a day, cleaning patient rooms at the Hospital of Central Connecticut. Many of his students’ fami-
Michaelknight Zayas is 2013 New Britain Teacher of the Year
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lies face similar situations and he can understand their predicaments.

“We were always broke. I didn’t have the things that others had. I didn’t have transportation, money to go to Six Flags, go swimming, or to go on vacation,” he said.

Yet the city afforded him a chance to go the Boys and Girls Club, after-school programs, and to work summer jobs. Many positive programs go unnoticed in New Britain, he said.

Most importantly, New Britain gave him the education he needed to enroll at CCSU, where he excelled academically and earned a bachelor’s degree in biology in 2006. He returned to earn a master’s in educational leadership in 2009.

CCSU Adjunct Lecturer Ellen Zemetis supervised Zayas during his student teaching assignment at Bristol Eastern High School and remembers him fondly.

“I think very highly of him. To become New Britain’s Teacher of the Year in just six years is incredible,” Zemetis said. “Our motto at CCSU is ‘Start with a Dream, Finish With a Future’ and Mike’s a great example of that.”

“Michaelknight is an outstanding role model for all New Britain and CCSU students.”

Today, Zayas brings a fresh enthusiasm to his job that inspires the teachers around him. Ramsey, his mentor, is now his colleague and friend. They enjoy lively banter — often about the differences in their ages — that the students enjoy.

“For such a young guy, he is very mature,” Ramsey said. “He is a fun teacher, but he also gets the job done. He has high expectations in class. I see him as a great role model.”

– Claire LaFleur Hall

A L U M N I  N E W S

Jason Berger ’99, assistant professor of English at the University of South Dakota (USD), received the Monsignor James Doyle Humanities Teaching Award in March from the USD College of Arts and Sciences.

CCSU alumni who majored in mathematical sciences recently met with graduating seniors to share how their experiences at Central prepared them for their careers. The alums included: Logan Bourke ’11; Steven LeMay BSEd ’06, MA ’12; Michael Martin ’10; Kathleen McClure MSEd ’02, MS ’08; Zachary McGuirk ’10; and Danijela Milward ’02.

Miss Connecticut Erin Brady ’10 was named Miss USA 2013 at the Miss USA Pageant in Las Vegas, NV in June. Brady, who earned her degree in Finance with a minor in Criminal Justice, works for Prudential Financial in Hartford.

Joe Clifford ’05 read from his new novel Junkie Love, and met with interested faculty and students for a Q&A session as part of the Central Authors program this spring.

Colin Halloran ’09 recently published Shortly Thereafter, a book of poetry that explores his experiences as a combat soldier in Afghanistan.

Joe Minutillo ’76 was inducted into Torrington High School’s 17th Athletic Hall of Fame class. Minutillo was a distinguished coach at the school, where he worked for 36 years before retiring.

Scott Pioli ’88, former New England Patriots and Kansas City Chiefs executive, will bring more than two decades of football scouting experience to NBC Sports’ Football Night in America for the upcoming 2013–14 NFL season. Pioli will also be part of the weekday Pro Football Talk studio show, among other programs.

Lindsay Smolka ’09, MA ’10 was honored with the Connecticut River Academy Teacher of the Year Award in June. Since helping to open the magnet school, Smolka, a Spanish teacher, has shown dedication as an educator, a leader, and a mentor.

Athletic Trainers Inducted into the Connecticut Hall of Fame

Athletic Trainer and Associate Professor of Athletics
Thomas McCarthy, BS ’90, MS ’96 and Regional Director of Sports Medicine at Select Medical Corporation John Gilmour ’82 were inducted into the Connecticut Athletic Trainers Hall of Fame in May. The honor recognizes athletic trainers who are dedicated to leadership, service, and scholarship. Pictured at right (from left to right): Professor and Head Athletic Trainer, Emeritus Carl Krein, Gilmour, McCarthy, and Head Athletic Trainer Kathy Pirog.
Unveiling a New Home for the Social Sciences

CCSU’s Social Sciences Hall has been completed on time and in time for the fall semester. The new hall houses the departments of Anthropology, Geography, History, Political Science, and Sociology. The building includes 17 classrooms, two computer labs, five specialized laboratories, a map room, three student lounge/study areas, 71 department and faculty offices, three general conference rooms, and five department conference rooms. The new structure meets the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver certification, an internationally recognized green building certification system, and is part of the CSUS 2020 Capital Improvement initiative.