UMC Collaborative Glitters in Debut

Words like magical, fabulous, stupendous, and brilliant, along with ringing applause, greeted the debut events of a new collaboration between CCSU, the New Britain Museum of American Art and the Community of New Britain (UMC) on November 1.

“The ‘CCSU Night at the Museum’ reminded me of one of those magical happenings from the ’60s, when communities formed spontaneously around an explosion of creative expression,” remarked Dr. Carl Lovitt, CCSU provost and vice president for academic affairs.

“Dispersed throughout the New Britain Museum of American Art, dozens of talented student artists, writers, musicians, and performers—from elementary school through college—entertained, educated, and enthralled an audience of fellow students, teachers, alumni, and members of the New Britain community. By taking education into public spaces, the UMC initiative dramatically illustrates the power of community engagement to further educational goals, to provide enriching experiences, and to foster good will.”

SOME 800 ATTEND CCSU-NBMAA GALA

Maura O’Shea, deputy director of the NBMAA, estimated that about 800 persons attended the festivities. Dr. Karen Ritzenhoff, associate professor of communication, who spear-headed the event, thanked the large “supporting” cast from CCSU and the NBMAA that made it all come together.

“Thanks for all your help, commitment, enthusiasm, and incredible skill to make this happen for and with our students. Thanks for all the setting up scaffolds, singing, drumming, jazzing, theater improvising, playing, reciting.” Then laughing she added, “It is good that the NBMAA is still standing after our ‘arts attack.’”

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More Shared Traditions: New Burritt Mural

“Swords to Plowshares,” unveiled in November, is a mural of Elihu Burritt’s blacksmith shop painted on the loading dock near Vance Academic Center. It is one of over 50 murals, on campus and in New Britain, created by CCSU’s public arts program. Artists (l. to r.) Brielle Dubois; Mike Golschneider; Kenny Valentine; Stephanie Bergeron; Sean Kinne; Mike Alewitz, associate professor of art and teacher of the mural painting class; and Filis Coba collaborated to create the work. Students Moira Fain, Say Kongiant, Nicole LaPorte, Tharon Malay, and Airelle Sumler also contributed to the mural. Burritt, the namesake of the CCSU library and a New Britain native known as “The Learned Blacksmith,” was an abolitionist, peace activist, and internationalist.
COURIER  DEC. 07/JAN. 08

Members of the Newington Children’s Theatre Touring Company work together on a rehearsal of Cinderella. Jaime Morano (above, left), a current CCSU theatre major, volunteers as a choreographer for the performance with assistant choreographer Jessica Sattler (second from left). Andrew Wnuk, a ninth grader at Berlin High School and the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts, is serving as stage manager. Christa Pizzoferrato (right), director of the production, is interning for her theatre major after 10 years of acting and volunteer work at NCTC.

CCSU Theatre Interns Outperform Expectations

For the past few years, theatre majors at CCSU have been excelling during their internships at Newington Children’s Theatre Touring Company. Since 2002, interns have aided in establishing a non-profit organization and providing an environment where students ages 8–18 flourish on and off the stage. The NCTC offers programs that teach, inspire, and explore the full spectrum of theatre.

The first intern at NCTC, CCSU alum Amanda Dumas, assisted in the productions as an acting coach and continued after her internship to volunteer on the Board of Directors. Dumas earned a BFA in Educational Theatre in 2003 and interned from December 2002 until the end of the spring semester in 2003. Dumas assisted in preparing research grants as the organization became independent and gained its non-profit status. During her internship, she toured with Cinderella, which continues to be very popular and generates many requests. She helped with rehearsals, aiding the director and introducing students to warm-up exercises to help them get into performing. In her second year, she stayed as a volunteer to help with acting and was the director the following two years. “Our closing show was the best. The proud moment of my life was when the students got up on stage,” she says. “I’m always surprised at what they can do. It’s a moment I’ll never forget.”

Dr. Richard Roth, associate dean of CCSU’s School of Arts and Sciences and president of NCTC’s Board of Directors, remarked, “Students who have started with us as interns have often stayed as volunteers.”

Michele Miano, a recent CCSU graduate, served as assistant director last year thanks to the internship program. After earning a bachelor’s degree in theatre, with a concentration in education and a minor in music, Miano was deemed the perfect fit for co-directing Metaphisic: A Tale of the Twelve Dancing Princesses. She worked with students on facial expressions, character development, and improvisation. She also strengthened the students’ ability to build connections within the cast and form solid bonds. “I loved every second of what I did,” explains Miano, “I think NCTC is a fantastic organization for all ages of children and teenagers to not only perform but also to learn all aspects of theatre through education and to form everlasting bonds with their classmates.”

Christa Pizzoferrato (far right) and Jaime Morano (far left), currently students in the Theatre Department, are assisting in a production of Cinderella this year. Pizzoferrato, who started acting at Newington Children’s Theatre 10 years ago, is directing the production. Morano, a volunteer, is choreographing the performance.

The group’s touring company is an academic-year program for middle school and high school students. Auditions are held in the early fall and rehearsals run through January, enabling 10- to 18-year-olds to gain experience in theatre. An annual tour begins each February and continues through April, with productions visiting more than 10 communities in the state. Since 2002, the NCTC has come to CCSU’s campus to perform in Torp Theatre, free of charge. The tour ends with final home shows in NCTC’s Black Box Theatre.

The Summer Theatre Arts Program is open to 8- to 14-year-olds and lasts four weeks, from the end of June to the third week of July. The staff consists of high school counselors, college theatre students, and music education majors. In the mornings, dance, acting, and music/voice classes are held. The afternoons are spent rehearsing for a musical, and public performances are held during the final weekend. This past year, the group produced Dear Edwina. Theatre-related crafts, such as props, sets, and costumes, are created by the students and staff for the performance.

The Summer Musical Theatre Program, a six-week course held in the evenings, has been running for the past three years and is open to high school and college students. Participation in the performance is by audition only, but auditions are open to anyone. The cast consists of college and local area high school students. Last August, they performed a fully-staged production of Little Women. Pit musicians were local high school and college students as well.

The newest program, Broadway Kidz, is rapidly maturing and consists of the same staff. Pizzoferrato, CCSU alum Melissa Kollwitz, and University of Connecticut student Matt Tracey are assisting with the two-week program. Jason Sirois, a former Newington resident who travels from New York, is overseeing the production. Students ages 8–14 use Broadway songs in a show in which each student performs. Students also watch musicals, such as The Sound of Music and West Side Story. They then connect the films to performing continued on page 9
Dr. Mark Evans: Reading the History of Rocks

When Hurricane Katrina hit at the start of the 2005 fall semester, Dr. Mark Evans, associate professor of physics and earth sciences, was energized. “It’s terrible to get pumped up by a natural disaster,” he admits, “but it served as a living case-study for teaching basic geologic principles.” In his GeoHazards and Environmental Geology classes, Hurricane Katrina galvanized discussion. “The kids got a kick out of seeing me so animated. We started to track the natural disaster and investigate why New Orleans flooded. They were tuned in much more than they would have by listening to a traditional lecture. We concluded the damage by Katrina was partially caused by human impact on the Mississippi Delta through the building of levees and people living in that area.”

Evans provides students with real-life application of what may seem at times like esoteric data. “Floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, climate change will affect them,” he says. “I teach basic concepts of these phenomena plus give examples, when possible, of relevance close to home or in the news.” Evans’ teaching focus is on how to apply knowledge and data by developing critical thinking and interpretation skills. He observes, “The real test is if, later in life, the student consciously or subconsciously applies the lessons learned in my classes to life questions such as ‘Should we buy that house on the coast’ or ‘How will government policy on air pollution affect my child’s future?’ or ‘Is my drinking water safe.’ ”

A seasoned geologist “grounded” in the practical world of industry where he had worked doing oil/gas exploration in the ’80s before earning a Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh, Evans joined CCSU in 2004. National Science Foundation grants have supported his research on rock strain and deformation mechanisms, ancient fluid evolution and migration, fold and thrust belts, and, most recently, on “Critical Thinking for Civic Thinking,” awarded jointly to Drs. Stephen Adair, Tedone, Earl Manning, and Rebecca Burnham how to “read” rock history by examining composition, grain size, grain shape, rock color and sedimentary structures such as a cross-bedding, ripple marks and mud cracks.

“EVERY ROCK HAS A STORY”

Evans tells his students, “Every rock has a story. If you examine a rock closely, you will be able to ‘read’ the history in that rock.” Evans recalls one physical geology student, a non-major who had gone out with him on a field trip to study rock outcrops. Three months later an envelope, containing photos of outcrops near this student’s home in Litchfield, was slipped under Evans’ office door. A note said simply: “I can’t drive without looking at outcrops. I’ve become a menace on the road!” Evans says, “That was the best compliment. I’d actually changed this person’s behavior, made him aware of the world around him, given him a sense of wonder.”

Memorable for Rebecca Burnham, junior geography major/geology minor, was a four-day field trip to West Virginia taken with Evans and five fellow students in the Structural Geology class. “We studied various areas of the Appalachian Mountain range, where Dr. Evans had done his own research. Every morning with our field books, rock hammers, and Brunton compasses, we headed out to explore the many faults and folds we had only read about in our text books. In addition, we visited Seneca Rocks (a “razor back” ridge of the Tuscara sandstone), Sideling Hill Road Cut (a syncline exposure in Maryland), and the limestone stalactites and stalagmites of Luray Caverns in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. This trip was so memorable for all of us!”

In January, Evans and CCSU’s Dr. Michael Wizevich, CCSU senior Michelle Tedone, Prof. Christoph Geiss of Trinity College, and Burnham will conduct research at Lake Louise in Penwood State Park atop Talcott Mountain in Bloomfield. “We will examine geologic processes and water quality and collect a sample core of sediment from the lake bottom,” says Burnham. “We will then determine the approximate age of the lake and its past environments.”

DIGGING DEEP OPENS DOORS

Similarly, senior Earl Manning, an earth science major with a geology minor, has done collaborative research with Evans. This past March, Manning and Evans presented a poster at the Northeast section of the Geological Society of America conference. “We looked at quartz mineralization along faults associated with the western border fault of the Hartford Basin,” explains Manning. “This kind of project has never been done for this area. The project concluded that faults with similar orientations had similar fluids flowing along them during the fracturing of the rock. It also concluded that as time progressed, the faults seem to have been active deeper in the crust.”

Subsequently Evans helped Manning write a successful grant proposal to get funding to continue the project. Manning says, “I received money from the GSA to gather isotope analysis data from the mineralization I collect as well. We will be presenting again at the next conference in March. This project enabled me to meet some of the greatest minds in geology at the conference, many of whom I have spoken with since. I believe this project helped me get my seasonal position with the Connecticut Geological and Natural History Survey. If it were not for Dr. Evans, many of the doors that have opened may not have.”

— Geri Radacsi
Central Connecticut State University has honored Dr. Olga Petkova, professor of management information systems, School of Business, with the prestigious 2007–08 Excellence in Teaching Award.

An outstanding practitioner and academic in the field of information technology for some 29 years, of which 11 were involved in the development and research of software for industrial applications, Petkova has brought her practical experience to the classroom where students and colleagues agree she is an exemplary educator. “Teaching is a rewarding and joyful experience. It is a deep satisfaction to have the opportunity to open the doors of knowledge to students and to see them successful in their careers,” states Petkova, who joined CCSU in 2001. “My belief is that teaching at the university level should be done as a cooperative activity between the students and the professor. I see my responsibilities as a facilitator of the students’ learning process and as an advisor in their discovery of knowledge.”

At a ceremony in Founders in November, CCSU Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Carl Lovitt announced that Dr. Petkova was top award recipient. For the second year in the award’s history, an adjunct faculty member was also recognized. Ruth Lentini, in the Department of Reading and Language Arts in the School of Education & Professional Studies, was honored with an Excellence in Teaching Award among adjunct faculty.

CCSU President Jack Miller acknowledged the many superb educators on the CCSU faculty named as Excellence in Teaching finalists and semifinalists, along with those listed on a Teaching Honor Roll. Each was individually honored at the ceremony.

Other award finalists were Drs. Candace Barrington, associate professor of English; Philip Halloran, professor of mathematical sciences; and James Mulrooney, associate professor of biomolecular sciences.

Selection of honorees is based on a comprehensive evaluation process with nominations coming from students and alumni; full- and part-time faculty members are eligible. The honorees are widely acknowledged by colleagues and students for dedication to teaching that inspires extraordinary learning. A complete listing of honorees is available at www.ccsu.edu/Courier.

Reading from the recommendations of the Excellence in Teaching Award committee, Dr. Lovitt stated: “Dr. Petkova’s students are expected to work collaboratively on very demanding projects using a wide variety of high tech-tools, admirably preparing them for professional lives of expertise. The demand of her assignments promises that not only can the students who succeed in her classes walk on water, but, should they need a life raft, they will also know just where to find one. As a presenter she wears many hats, continuously switching among teacher, advisor, project manager, team motivator, and customer. Her theoretical and practical knowledge fuels and guides this process. Her compelling sense of mission, the efficiency of her approach in the classroom, her assessment of her own teaching, and the evidence of her students’ intellectual output make her a truly excellent teacher.”

Dr. Marianne D’Onofrio, professor of management information systems and chair of the department, praised Petkova, who in addition to her MIS undergraduate courses also teaches in the Master of Science in Computer Information Technology interdisciplinary program: “Dr. Petkova is an active researcher who is currently engaged in research and scholarly activities that range from theory to practice in the management information systems discipline. Her research streams include software development productivity, systems thinking, community informatics, and information systems education, and this informs her teaching.”

Student Enzo Pistritto remembers vividly, “The first night I listened to a lecture from Dr. Petkova in my MIS class, I knew that the semester would be an excellent learning experience and benefit to my career. Dr. Petkova exhibited a sense of enthusiasm in the subject matter which was easily seen by the class and at the same time this reflection carried...
Focus on Scholarship: Joanne DiPlacido
Exploring Link Between Minority Stressors and Health of Lesbian/Bisexual Women

As an activist, Dr. Joanne DiPlacido has experienced harassment, stigmatization, and disappointment because of biases and discrimination against sexual minorities. The associate professor of psychology has understood first-hand her research subject: the link between minority stressors and health of lesbian/bisexual women.

Prior to coming to CCSU in 1997, DiPlacido did post-doctoral research in health psychology at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Her studies of minority stressors as predictors of well-being among lesbian and bisexual women were supported by two National Institute of Mental Health National Research Services awards.

“When I was in graduate school (earning her master’s in psychology from Boston University), I lived in the closet and as a result had health consequences,” she states. “When I went to CUNY for post-doc work, there were faculty members doing work in gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues, and I was greatly influenced by their studies. It felt safe to go into this area.” When she joined CCSU’s Department of Psychology, she relates, “I was hired knowing that I would be doing non-traditional research at a time when other universities were not.” She would go on to develop three new graduate courses which are now core to the new Health Psychology Specialization. “We’re the only health psychology master’s in the Northeast,” she states proudly.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Another source of satisfaction for DiPlacido is that for the past two years she’s presented her research (based on data collected from 1996–2000) at the annual conference of the Society of Behavioral Medicine in Washington, DC.

The 2006 presentation focused on self-concealment and emotional inhibitions as stressors, raising the question: what was the relationship between minority stress and physical/psychological symptoms among lesbian/bisexual women from the New York City area? Although previous studies had indicated that daily stressors, such as family, work, and school, can effect cardio-vascular disease, compromise the immune system, and lead to negative coping behaviors, such as smoking, drinking alcohol, and poor eating habits, DiPlacido concentrated on a specific population. An anonymous mail questionnaire was completed by 403 lesbian/bisexual women (51% white, 49% women of color).

The findings? Self-concealment (keeping secrets) was associated with greater physical symptoms and depression, and it was negatively related to self-esteem and positive states of mind. “The significance of the sampling is that roughly half of those surveyed were women of color, which had never been studied before,” observes DiPlacido. “Other research has focused on lesbians who are white, middle class, and well-educated.” She concluded that “women of color experience greater internalized homophobia and greater financial stress compared to white women. Women of color reported more emotional inhibition (not expressing emotions), especially fear and unhappiness, compared to white women.”

Extending the study’s scope, DiPlacido collaborated with CCSU graduate student Diane Malenfant, who has elected the health psychology concentration, to examine not only self-concealment and emotional inhibition, but also internalized homophobia. The study, presented before the Society of Behavioral Medicine this past spring, looked at the internalization of negative societal attitudes toward sexual minorities by lesbian and bisexual women. “These negative attitudes act as daily stressors,” explains DiPlacido. Based on the same sample, the results provide evidence for the hypotheses that internalized homophobia is associated with negative psychological and physical health outcomes.

“RESULTS APPLIED IN THE REAL WORLD”

At the root of DiPlacido’s scholarship is her appreciation that there is synchronicity between the theoretical work she’s doing in health psychology and its wider uses in society. “I’ve always felt drawn to studies whose outcomes found far-reaching applications to those suffering health problems,” she states, recalling the late ’90s when she was a research scientist at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York City, and even earlier when she was the director of a project at the Harvard Medical School and Joslin Diabetes Center. “I remember studying how families cope with a diabetic child,” she says of the Harvard project. “I was moved by the fact that the study results were being applied in the real world and had real implications for helping people who are dealing with chronic illness.”

Thus, based on what she’s learned through scholarship, DiPlacido has raised her voice in efforts to heighten consciousness that promotes greater understanding and acceptance of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons. On campus, since 1997, she’s been faculty advisor for PRIDE, the student GLBT group, and she’s shepherded its position as an award-winning, outspoken resource for GLBT issues.

Off campus she’s the principal investigator of the Women Loving Women Health Project in New York City. Her research has been supported by grants from the Lesbian Health Fund of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association and from the Wayne F. Placek Fund of the American Psychological Foundation. She has been on the editorial board for the Journal of Lesbian Studies.

DiPlacido has injected her expertise into her role as vice president of the board of directors at Project 100 Hartford Community Center, as well as president of the board. Currently, she is a commissioner for the Hartford Commission on GLBT Issues.

How does she hope the conclusions of her latest research findings will be brought to bear in society? DiPlacido declares, “Sexual minority women should be encouraged to come out and reveal their sexual orientation. There are always risks in coming out, such serious consequences as job loss, discrimination in housing, family conflicts, and loss of child custody. Each situation needs to be assessed by the individual’s level of risk taking. What I found in the study was that women who didn’t conceal their identity were healthier physically and psychologically. Women pay a price for staying in the closet. At the same time, we need to change societal attitudes. Society needs to embrace people of different sexual orientations, because the onus is not only on the individual. In order for people to be unafraid to reveal their identity, we need a safe environment.”

— Geri Radaci
Educational Leadership Department’s Forward-Looking Programs

Think of CCSU's Department of Educational Leadership as a kind of incubator nurturing a brain trust of thinkers capable of improving the quality of education for Connecticut's children. Everywhere across the state are examples of CCSU graduates who have excelled in the department's programs and distinguished themselves by bringing to bear their knowledge in leadership positions.

The department offers five graduate programs—the Ed.D. in educational leadership; the Sixth-Year Certificate, leading to certification as an intermediate administrator or supervisor; a superintendent certificate program; the master's degree program in educational leadership; and the master's degree program in educational technology.

"The greatest pride of our department comes in the success of our students," declares Dr. Anthony Rigazio-DiGilio, professor and chair of the department.

Patricia Charles, superintendent of the Westbrook Public Schools, is one splendid example. A doctoral candidate, Charles comments: "The Ed.D. program is definitely helping me in my practice. Particularly useful is the information I have been able to share with the leadership team in our district—our focus on distributed leadership, professional learning communities, and looking critically at our instructional practices. Increased understanding about how adults learn is critical to providing meaningful professional development. It's important to know how to use current research to support strategies being implemented or in writing federal grants for research that uses scientifically based practices."

Charles, whose dissertation focuses on principal leadership, has high praise for the department's faculty, beginning with her advisor, Dr. Judith Faryniarz, an assistant professor who also works, outside the classroom, with the State Department of Education to develop assessment modules used for administrators' licensure through the Connecticut Administrators Test (CAT).

Charles also lauds Dr. Karen Beyard, professor and director of the Ed.D. program, as "a great mentor" and states "the variety of issues presented in the program helped us be well-rounded and knowledgeable educators exposed to new learning. There was something for everyone, and Dr. Beyard helped each of us find our niche."

Recently awarded a scholarship by the American Association of School Administrators to continue her work at CCSU, Charles says she was "excited personally and professionally for the national recognition since it validates the work the principals, teachers, and I have been doing to create the conditions for instructional excellence."

SIXTH-YEAR CERTIFICATE FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT

The Sixth-Year Certificate program attracts educators seeking career advancement and professional development, or those who want to hone leadership skills and credentials to enter a school setting under the Intermediate Administrator/Supervisor Certificate. Graduates of the program who pass the CAT and go on to be certified as intermediate administrators or supervisors can enter such positions as elementary or secondary principal/assistant principal, program coordinator, department head, and assistant superintendent. Or they may find positions on the staffs of central offices, regional educational agencies, and the State Department of Education.

According to Rigazio-DiGilio, notable features of the program include rigorous entry standards, a strong curriculum presented by resident faculty and practitioner colleagues, a state-wide qualifying examination for certification and required field experiences.

Ingrid M. Canady, consultant, State Education Resource Center (SERC), is currently enrolled in the Sixth-Year Certificate program. With undergraduate and graduate degrees from CCSU, Canady works for the Initiative on Diversity in Education at SERC. SERC is a nonprofit organization affiliated with the Connecticut State Department of Education. It serves Connecticut's educators, students, and families by providing information, research, and professional development on best practices to better prepare educators to meet the needs of the students they serve.

Canady says, “I aspire to a position of leadership here, because I want to contribute to the agency’s mission by fostering an environment for all children that values and respects diversity, equity, and excellence.”

She continues, “Throughout my years at CCSU, studying in both the Department of Special Education and now in Educational Leadership, I have gained an array of skills such as organizational management, problem-solving, oral and written communication, and critical thinking.”

STRONG TIES TO THE COMMUNITY

One of the department's new programmatic initiatives involves community outreach. "The educational technology master's program has initiated work with the Naylor School in Hartford," explains Rigazio-DiGilio. "Naylor is part of CCSU’s professional development school (PDS) network and will use the services of Professor of Educational Leadership Farough Abed to help infuse the effective use of technology to promote student learning."

In a serendipitous turn, Robert Travaglini, who graduated from CCSU in 1993 with an M.S. in educational leadership, is principal of Naylor. He comments, "The PDS concept is another example of CCSU's forward thinking," he declares with enthusiasm. "At Naylor, we have embedded the relationship into our school and district objectives while at the same time providing an authentic environment for CCSU students to begin applying their knowledge base." As Naylor principal for the past four years, continued on page 7
Travaglini says, “Our PDS relationship through Dr. Karen Riem (associate professor of teacher education) is the driving force that makes our Naylor community a very special place. Community and relationships are the necessary pillars that hold up the foundation of instruction which leads to academic achievement.”

Travaglini says he values the Educational Leadership Department’s philosophy that theory alone does not produce success, but must be integrated into real-life experiences to give meaning to what students need to learn.

He recalls, “When I completed the master’s program, Dr. Rigazio-DiGilio administered an exit exam that he designed based on case studies addressing multiple areas of curriculum and instruction, budget, parental involvement, special education, and other pertinent areas. It put us in authentic situations that we would experience as administrators.”

WHAT’S AHEAD?
Rigazio-DiGilio says the energetic activities of the department will continue full speed ahead. “We’re hoping to launch a new certificate program under the Center for Multicultural Research and Education. Being spearheaded by Dr. Penelope Lisi, professor of educational leadership, this initiative will bring students to different countries to learn about teaching and learning practices abroad. We want our students to visit such countries as Finland, Jamaica (the department already offers a master’s degree for Jamaican educators), Puerto Rico, and China to examine and study leadership practices and learn about other cultures.”

The chair describes the department’s faculty as “outstanding in their scholarly productivity and direct involvement with public schools.” They include, in addition to Rigazio-DiGilio, Drs. Farough Abed, Karen Beyard, Janell Drone, Judith Faryniarz, Ethan Heinen, Penelope Lisi, Timothy Reagan, Ellen Retelle, Olusegun Sogunro, Barry Sponder, Aldrige Vaillant, and Sheldon Watson.

Educational Leadership, through its programs and outstanding graduates and faculty, is forging new pathways for preparing well-educated children and the future workforce of Connecticut.

— Geri Radacsi

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM
Applying “authentic” learning directly into her fourth-grade classroom in Wethersfield is teacher Carrie O’Neil, who holds the master’s of science in educational technology.

Commenting on the challenges presented by new technologies, she says, “My students have been over-stimulated by video and computer games, and I need an exciting way to grab their attention. My studies in Central’s graduate program helped me, along with other educators, to design computer-based instruction that drives learning.”

O’Neil uses grade-appropriate curricula by designing different multimedia programs. “My fourth graders write narrative stories throughout the year, and their ability in this area is tested on the Connecticut State Mastery Test. Through the use of sounds, animations, and written examples, I have designed a program illustrating the four different types of attention-grabbing story starters. The students love using the program and retain the information presented in it.”

Currently she is working on a project, with the assistance of Dr. Abed, which tracks the progress of a long-term journey across America. “For each state we ‘travel’ through, I have my students record observations about that state. Parents will be able to access a website for updates. I have thus been able to integrate my knowledge from the program with my students’ everyday learning and to show them how technology can enhance learning.”

Always forward-looking, the Department of Educational Leadership has begun two direct outreach initiatives. “We have established satellite programs for our Sixth-Year Certificate program in Bristol and Windsor Locks,” explains Rigazio-DiGilio. “These programs will be structured in a similar fashion to the program we operate in Hartford. With these three sites, we now have an urban, a small city, and a suburban site for our students to attend.”

Panel Discusses Jena Six Incident

“Perspectives on the Jena Six,” a panel discussion which was recently held at CCSU, was hosted by the African-American Lecture Series. Participants discussed legal/criminal perspectives and implications, education policy/school law perspectives, and civil disobedience and activism in response to the controversial case focused on six black teenagers who were charged with beating a white teenager at a high school in Jena, Louisiana. Above, from left: Dr. Olusegun Sogunro, associate professor of educational leadership; Attorney Shawn Council, adjunct lecturer of philosophy and African American studies; Stephen Balkaran, adjunct lecturer of African American studies; and CSU Professor of Philosophy Felton O. Best, director of African American Studies and assistant to the dean of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Best was the moderator and final commentator.

Lewitt Exhibition Set

CCSU’s Samuel S. T. Chen Fine Arts Center will host an exhibition featuring selected works by the late Connecticut-born artist Sol Lewitt. The exhibit runs from February 8–29, and the opening reception, “Another Friday,” will take place from 4–7 p.m., on February 8. Gallery hours are 1–4 p.m., Monday–Friday. Admission is free and open to the public. For more information, call (860) 832-2633.
CCSU Shares $250,000 for Artificial Intelligence Research

Dr. Zdravko Markov, associate professor of computer science, has been named co-principal investigator for a multi-institutional project involving Artificial Intelligence (AI). The National Science Foundation (NSF) recently awarded the project $250,000 in one of its most competitive programs—Course, Curriculum and Laboratory Improvement (CCLI). Nationwide, there were approximately 281 proposals in mathematics, science, and engineering. The new project is built upon the success of an earlier one, also funded by the NSF, in 2004–2005 in which CCSU, the University of Hartford, and Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania participated. The earlier project focused on machine learning experiences for introducing undergraduates to AI.

The main focus of the latest program is to enhance students’ learning experience in the Artificial Intelligence course. Markov notes, “This is a very popular approach to curricular studies.” It is based on developing practical AI applications that use machine learning techniques to improve their performance. CCSU and the University of Hartford are collaborating on the project which involves 20 faculty members from a broad range of universities; 26 modules will be developed that can be integrated into the AI course. Student interviews and questionnaires serve as independent evaluations for faculty. The goal of this approach is to provide better feedback on the progression. Markov says, “The most enriching experience was student feedback. Our developments evolved and they were very encouraging to us. We realized we were on the right track and the approach was working for projects in artificial intelligence.” Markov is working with the Principal Investigator, Ingrid Russell, at the University of Hartford.

For this grant Markov will develop two different projects. The first, Probabilistic Reasoning is based upon Bayes Rule, a powerful reasoning technique in statistics, artificial intelligence, and machine learning. This project is aimed at improving web browsing and may be used as a tool to further focus web-searching capabilities. It makes search engines more efficient by finding specific examples and filtering out irrelevant documents. A project developed for the earlier program in 2005, used the same idea for improving searches by web document classification but was based on different methods. Markov explains, “Probabilistic Reasoning is a very big part of artificial intelligence. It’s believed that humans reason in this fashion. Artificial intelligence attempts to model all aspects of human intelligence.” The project focuses on Bayesian Networks (BN) which are a powerful knowledge representation and reasoning mechanism. BN represents events and causal relationships between them as conditional probabilities involving random variables.

The other project, Relational Learning, is also aimed at web document classification but with a different approach. Relational Learning is based upon logic and techniques used in Relational Data Mining. The latter is an advanced data mining process that relates pieces of information from documents to provide a better representation of the knowledge contained in data.

“The grant is important for computer science majors; they can learn more through the newer modules,” Markov explains, “We’re also improving student experiences at CCSU. The first grant helped faculty to create a framework for the new program. Our first project worked so well we applied for a second. We wanted to extend the audience and disseminate results from other universities.” The AI course is available to undergraduates in the computer science program.

—Christopher Michalski

Alina Fernández, Fidel Castro’s Daughter, Speaks at CCSU

Alina Fernández (above), daughter of Cuban President Fidel Castro, appeared on campus recently. Her talk, “An Afternoon with Fidel Castro’s Daughter,” centered on the 51-year-old Cuban exile’s experiences growing up in the shadow of a world-famous father. She also discussed the history of Cuba, before and during Castro’s regime, as well as her thoughts on the future of Cuba. The Ruthe Boyea Women’s Center and CCSU’s Center for Public Policy and Social Research hosted the event. Alina Fernández is both a daughter and a critic of Fidel Castro. She lived under her father’s rule from 1959 when he took power until she fled the country with her daughter in 1993 because of dissenting political views.

Black History Month Celebration

CCSU will hold many events in February to celebrate the rich history of African Americans in America. For a listing of Black History Month events, visit www.ccsu.edu/CCSUnews/BHM.htm.

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Posada: Bringing Immigration Issues to Light

The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Center for Caribbean and Latin American Studies hosted the first event of the 2007–08 Lecture Series on Latin American Immigration. Activist and immigration counselor at Catholic Charities of Fairfield County Alex Arevalo (above) presented the 53-minute documentary Posada. After the film, he conducted a Q&A session.

Posada, directed and produced by Mark McGregor, details the journeys of three children—Densi, Johny, and Wilber—from Central America to the United States. All three were detained by immigration officials for several months between 1999 and 2002. Some 80,000 to 110,000 children have been arrested or turned away by the U.S. every year. The number of children detained by the United States rose to over 7,700 in 2005.

Dr. Moisés Salinas, associate professor of psychology and director of the Center for Caribbean and Latin American Studies, says, “I was really glad that we, with support from the Provost, could have Alex Arevalo speak at CCSU. He brought to light the very human aspects of this issue. Many people fail to see that immigration is the result of a social and humanitarian crisis. Plainly, turning our backs to these people, who have suffered enough because of economic hardship and sometimes political persecution, and treating them like criminals, just because they were pursuing a better life, is both misguided and inhumane.”

CCSU’s Women’s Center Hosts Defending Our Lives

CCSU’s Ruthe Boyea Women’s Center hosted a showing of the film Defending Our Lives by Academy Award-winning film director Margaret Lazarus. The film depicts the impact, magnitude, and severity of domestic violence in the United States. According to CCSU Women’s Center Coordinator Jacqueline Cobbina-Boivin, “Domestic violence is the single greatest cause of injury to women in America—more than muggings, rapes, and car accidents combined. A woman in the U.S. is more likely to be killed by her partner than any other assailant.”

Defending Our Lives depicts four women imprisoned for killing their batterers. They tell of beatings, rape, and torture at the hands of their abusive partners. They also include stories of being stalked, harassed, and threatened with death while attempting to leave their partners. Lazarus explains, “These stories attest to the failure of the criminal justice system to protect victims of domestic violence—from unenforced restraining orders, to reluctant law enforcement officials, to the courts’ refusal to accept the special nature of their defense.” The film aims to educate people about domestic violence and to spur legislative and judicial reform.

The Ruthe Boyea Women’s Center provides resources to men and women of the CCSU community. It also offers a variety of services for and about women, including educational and cultural programs to promote gender equality, knowledge of women’s rights issues, leadership, and independence. It also encourages understanding and cooperation among women of varied cultures, socio-economic groups, ethnic backgrounds, races, and sexual orientations. Information about the Center is available at www.ccsu.edu/womenctr/default.htm.

— Christopher Michalski

SE&T Hosts Reception

A recent reception hosted by the School of Engineering and Technology brought together many members of the CCSU community.

Dr. Z.B. Kremens (above, left), dean of the School of Engineering and Technology, introduced CCSU alumnus Gregory C. Kane ’77. Kane earned a BS in technology and engineering education from CCSU. In addition, he was recognized as the School of Technology’s 2004 Outstanding Alumnus. The School of Technology was renamed the School of Engineering and Technology (SE&T) because the school expanded its engineering technology programs and adapted its technology education program to embrace technology and engineering education. The renamed school currently houses programs ranging from mechanical engineering and engineering technology to computer electronics and graphics technology, biomolecular sciences, manufacturing and construction management, and technology and engineering education.

Theatre Interns

(continued from page 2)

by learning themes, roles, and cinematography. Pizzoferrato explains, “Not only are they getting the chance to perform, but they’re learning musical theatre history through the program. Every year the whole program is expanding.”

The NCTC was established in 1963 by the Newington Parks and Recreation Department. In 2002, volunteers associated with the program decided to become independent. They attained non-profit status the following year. The NCTC renovated a building on North Mountain Road to include an acting classroom, a dance studio, and costume set shops, as well as a “Black Box” Theatre. All the facilities are handicapped accessible.

Dean Roth notes, “Having our own facility and becoming an independent organization has enabled us to reach the level of programming we’ve attained.”

Opportunities exist for CCSU’s theatre students to pursue internship positions with the Newington Children’s Theatre Touring Company. NCTC can be reached at 860-666-6282 or via e-mail at NCTC-on-tour@sbcglobal.net. Information is also available on the web at www.newingtonchildrenstheatre.org.

— Christopher Michalski
Dr. Mong Koo Chung/Hyundai Endowment Scholarships Awarded during Japan/Korea/China Week

The Dr. Mong Koo Chung/Hyundai Endowment scholarships were awarded during the concluding event of the CCSU's 16th Annual Japan/Korea/China Week. Recipients were (above left, from center) Eric C. Stimac, Mrs. Hyo Jung Myung, and Seung Hun Baik. Stimac, who is majoring in biomolecular sciences, studied at Kyung Hee University, CCSU’s sister university in Korea; Myung is a graduate student in early childhood education; and Baik, who completed his military service in Korea, is currently studying accounting. After the scholarship ceremony, there was a performance by the Korean Traditional Music and Dance Program of New York (above, right).

Japan/Korea/China Week was organized by Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, professor of economics and director of the Center for East Asian Studies, and sponsored by CCSU's George R. Muirhead Center for International Education, the Center for East Asian Studies, and Omicron Delta Epsilon international honor society in economics.

Award-winning Palestinian Director Speaks at CCSU

Juliano Mer Khamis (at left), famed Palestinian director of The Freedom Theatre, spoke recently in CCSU's Black Box Theatre. The Freedom Theatre is located in the Jenin Refugee Camp on the West Bank. Mer Khamis's visit was sponsored by the Faculty for Israeli-Palestinian Peace. CCSU Associate Professor of Theatre Joshua Perlstein hopes the visit will help forge deeper ties between the Palestinian theatre and CCSU's theatre department. Perlstein is planning a trip to The Freedom Theatre and hopes to bring a group of CCSU students with him. Perlstein says, “I feel that students will be inspired by the work Mer Khamis is doing and will see the theatre in a completely new light.” Mer Khamis is the director of the award-winning documentary *Arna’s Children*, which was shown on campus during his last visit in 2006.

Office Renamed

The CCSU Office of Judicial Programs has been renamed the Office of Student Conduct. The Office, which is a part of the University’s Student Affairs division, seeks to support a student-centered learning environment that encourages student development and success.

MEMORIAM

Robert Pasqurell, a former employee in Facilities Management, died September 30, 2007. He was employed at CCSU for 18 years. Prior to his time at CCSU, he was in the U.S. Army and served in Germany.
COURIER

EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

Ruth Lentini is a former teacher in the Ellington Public Schools and currently a learning consultant for the South Windsor Public Schools. She holds the undergraduate (elementary education) and master’s (reading) degrees from CCSU and is a graduate of Central’s 6th-year certificate program. She resides in Durham, CT.

Former CCSU student Susan E. Horvath, who took Lentini’s upper-level Literacy in the Elementary Schools class, describes Lentini as energetic, effective, and enthusiastic. Horvath states, “Mrs. Lentini’s teaching style was innovative. She taught our college class using a parallel format as she would have taught a true elementary classroom. We learned about and participated in activities, assignments, games, and teaching techniques and strategies that could all be utilized in actual classrooms, with appropriate modifications to suit our learning.”

According to an Excellence in Teaching Award committee statement: “Professor Lentini is a teacher of teachers, polishing professionals who are already practicing in the infinitely creative world of reading and literacy, skills at the center of our definition of civilization. In the classroom she moves with the precision of a Swiss watch, planning and executing with extraordinary efficiency while responding to a tremendous amount of student work. Yet in that efficient precision there is ample room for each student’s unique contribution. Using various approaches to learning, Professor Lentini has constructed her classroom practices based not only on conventional approaches to teaching reading, but also on detailed analysis of teaching aids and their innovative and disciplined use in the classroom. Students learn not only how to teach reading but also how to improve their own reading and writing skills. Her innovation, dedication to her students’ learning, and efficiency are just some of the many qualities that make her a truly excellent teacher.”

— Geri Radacsi

CCSU Conducts CPR/AED Training for Volunteers

Thanks to the efforts of Lynn Talit, adjunct lecturer of English, the University now has several Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) and nearly 30 American Heart Association-trained technicians, proficient in the use of the life-saving device.

Talit has been an advocate of the availability of AEDs in public places to aid people stricken with Sudden Cardiac Arrest. SCA strikes people of all ages with or without pre-existing heart conditions and kills over 250,000 Americans each year.

The Medtronic Foundation awarded Talit a grant to support the course. Those who attended the four-hour training session are soon to receive their American Heart Association certification cards.

With the approval of all key executive and administrative offices, the task force conducted the first CPR/AED training session recently for 29 members of the campus community. Terry Ferrarotti (above), from New Britain EMS, conducted the course. Those who attended the four-hour training session are soon to receive their American Heart Association certification cards. Certification is good for two years.

IN THE NEWS

CCSU students Jalina Adams, Nicole Heroy, Jean Vanbourgondien, and Daniel Vallerius, a CCSU exchange student from Porto Alegre, Brazil, were all mentioned in The Hartford Courant for attending the annual Brazilian Day parade and festival in Hartford. Adams, who will be studying in Brazil next semester, explained that she, two other CCSU students, and two professors attended the event to help make Vallerius and another Brazilian exchange student feel at home.

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Title IX's Impact on Sports

Mary Jo Kane (above), director of the School of Kinesiology and the Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport at the University of Minnesota’s College of Education and Human Development, spoke recently at CCSU. Her speech, “The Federal Law Known as Title IX: What’s Fact Vs. What’s Fiction Got To Do With It?,” focused on issues pertaining to women’s sports. Dr. Kane also compared statistics on women’s participation in organized sports, at all levels of education, before and after Title IX went into effect.

Diversity, Inclusion, and Campus Environment Discussed

The panel discussion “Diversity, Inclusion, and the Campus Environment,” sponsored by the Center for Africana Studies, brought together faculty and other members of the campus community to look at ways to make the University more open to more people. Panelists included (below, from left) Dr. C. Charles Mate-Kole, professor of psychology and director of the Center for Africana Studies; Dr. Evelyn Phillips, professor of anthropology and director of international studies; Dr. Serafin Mendoza-Mendez, professor and chair of communication; and Dr. Moises Salinas, associate professor of psychology and director of the Center for Caribbean and Latin American Studies. Also on the panel were Dr. David Blitz, professor of philosophy; and Dr. Joanne DiPlacido, associate professor of psychology. According to Dr. Salinas: “The panel concluded that we need to work in three areas—campus climate, student retention, and faculty/staff/administration recruitment.”

Former Servicemen Honored at CCSU Veterans’ Day Ceremony

The University honored two military service members at the annual Veterans’ Day ceremony on campus. Both men are active in veterans’ organizations. New Britain resident Adrian Lavoie (on left), a decorated U.S. Marine Corps and Army Reserve veteran, was awarded the University’s Veterans Public Service Award for Excellence. Michael Bareiss (on right), a U.S. Navy veteran and now a student in the School of Engineering and Technology, received the CCSU Student-Veteran Excellence Award. “Veterans’ Day provides us the opportunity to reflect on the tremendous sacrifices that our nation’s veterans have made while protecting our country and our freedom,” said CCSU President Jack Miller. “It is an honor for the University to have this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to those who have served our country in peace and war.”

In addition, the campus Veterans Appreciation Organization held an awards dinner. Bursar Elizabeth Fangiullo and student Joel Patrick Leger, last year’s CCSU Student-Veteran Excellence Award recipient, received the Porter Award.

CCSU’s Office of Veterans Affairs also presented a free concert, “Red, White, and Blue Forever,” featuring the Plainville Wind Ensemble and John Philip Sousa IV, great grandson of the March King.

In the News (continued from page 11)

Steven Bernstein, assistant librarian, Catalog Department, was quoted in The Hartford Courant in an article titled “Jews, Muslims, and Christians Work Side by Side To Build Homes For Poor.” The article notes that, since July, the Hartford Habitat for Humanity’s House of Abraham has drawn Christian, Jewish, and Muslim volunteers. Bernstein is one of those volunteers.

Edmond Grandahl, an 88-year-old CCSU history graduate student and a WWII veteran, was quoted in The Hartford Courant. The article explained how a group of WWII veterans would be flying to Washington, DC, to visit memorials, compliments of the American Warrior charitable organization.

CCSU student Amy Montalbano, and her mother, Catherine Montalbano, were mentioned in The Herald for organizing a lecture at CCSU by Anne Roland Lee, a nutritionist at Columbia University Medical Center in New York. The lecture provided information about preventing celiac disease, a condition in which the immune system attacks the small intestine, blocking nutrient absorption. Amy Montalbano has the disease.

Braulio Santiago, a 1976 CCSU graduate and the principal of Smalley Academy Magnet School for 15 years, was mentioned in The Herald for organizing a lecture at CCSU by Anne Roland Lee, a nutritionist at Columbia University Medical Center in New York. The lecture provided information about preventing celiac disease, a condition in which the immune system attacks the small intestine, blocking nutrient absorption. Amy Montalbano has the disease.

Homer B. Sprague, CCSU’s fourth president, was featured in The New Britain Herald in an article describing Sprague’s lifelong commitment to patriotism and education. Sprague was a lawyer, scholar, patriot, and soldier. He also served as a state legislator and was principal of the New Britain Normal School—now CCSU.
School of Engineering & Technology Hosts BEST Robotics Competition

Members of the New Britain High School team (above) prepare to launch their robot to help astronauts find signs of life on Mars during the second annual Connecticut BEST Robotics Competition hosted by CCSU’s School of Engineering and Technology. Devoted to the concept of Boosting Engineering, Science, and Technology, the competition has become a campus event as part of SET’s “educational outreach mission, to inspire high school students to learn more about math, science, engineering, and technology,” according to Dr. Z.B. Kremens, dean of the school. “The competition brought together hundreds of 6th to 12th grade students to participate in the ‘2021—A Robot Odyssey’ challenge. Students from nine schools throughout the northeast designed robots for the annual competition.” Dr. Ravindra Thamma, assistant professor of manufacturing and construction management, noted: “Each school was provided with kits of equipment and parts and game rules, and given six weeks to design, build, and test a robot that outperforms others. Winning teams from local competition sites will advance to regional championship at the University of Alabama. Engineers and other technical professionals from local industries serve as team mentors to advise and guide students through the design and construction of their machines.” Thamma, Connecticut BEST director and event coordinator, visited participating schools to boost students’ morale and motivate them for the coming event. He added: “Students did phenomenally well designing and building the robots within the given time frame. Taking part in such competitions increases the logical and ingenious skills of the participants, teaches students team skills, and develops their spirit of sportsmanship.”

Congressman Addresses Graduates

Fifth District Congressman Christopher S. Murphy (left) told more than 1,000 degree recipients at CCSU’s December Commencement ceremonies that as college graduates they have a major edge in the job market. The first term U.S. representative’s message also included a call for the new grads to look beyond themselves and leave a legacy of helping others reach the milestone they had achieved. Held at Harrison J. Kaiser Hall’s William H. Detrick Gymnasium, the mid-year commencement saw a total of 813 students receive undergraduate degrees, while 353 students earned postgraduate diplomas. Participating graduates came from Connecticut and more than a dozen other states, as well as Jamaica and Sweden.

Iraq Scholar Offers Perspectives on His Nation’s Turmoil

Dr. Tareq Ismael (above), professor of political science at the University of Calgary in Canada and one of the world’s top authorities on Iraq, delivered the latest Middle East Insights lecture on campus. “Tareq Ismael provided valuable insights about the present condition of that troubled country and prospects for its future,” according to CSU Professor of History Norton Mezvinsky, the host for the lecture series. “His remarks expanded on themes of his many books and articles about Iraq and about numerous other modern Middle East issues,” Dr. Mezvinsky said. “After listening to him, it became apparent why his recent book, The Iraqi Predicament: People in the Quagmire of Power Politics, has been highly acclaimed.”

Salinas Lectures on Psychology of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Dr. Moisés F. Salinas (right), associate professor of psychology, spoke at the end of October about his new book, Planting Hatred, Sowing Pain: The Psychology of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. The book is based on Salinas’ research of the ongoing discord and aims to explain the psychological factors of hatred, mistrust, and prejudice between these two peoples. Salinas believes that obstacles in the way of a peace agreement are more than just borders, bombings, and politics; they are ideologies imbedded psychologically in the minds of both the Israelis and Palestinians.
CCSU Hosts Storytelling Festival

A performance by internationally renowned street clown Chris Yearling (below), aka Hoopoe, was part of the “Early Stages: Storytelling Festival” hosted by CCSU. During the event, theatre students told all-American tales, including *The Birth of Pecos Bill*, *The Story of Johnny Appleseed*, and *Brer Rabbit Fools Sis Cow*. Hoopoe’s performance included clowning, miming, and audience participation.

CCSU Administrative Faculty Honored for Contributions

Members of the CCSU administrative faculty recently earned State University Organization and Administrative Faculty (SUOAF) Merit Awards. The 23 individuals garnered “excellent” evaluations and were chosen to receive Merit Awards for their significant contributions to the University.

Chad Albert, Maria Alvarez, Matthew Bielawa, Paula Bunce, Gerald Frazier, Mimi Kaplan, Kristin Lake-Piano, Dr. Richard Roth, Peggy Schuberth, and Amanda Tellier were honored for their work in Academic Affairs.

James Bruner, Susan Davis, Thomas Lorenzetti, and Susan Siton of the Institute of Technology and Business Development were joined by Sal Cintorino in Administrative Affairs.

Jean Alicandro, Timothy Corbitt, and Victoria Ginter of Student Affairs; Kim Chagnon and Shiann Rutledge of Fiscal Affairs; David Orschel of Information Technology Services; and Andrew Clark and Eileen Hurst, both of the Center for Public Policy and Social Research, were also award recipients.

CCSU Artwork Takes Off at Bradley International Airport

Since the beginning of this year, Bradley International Airport has become a lot more pleasing to the eye. Vicente Garcia, professor of art, has worked with his students to exhibit 41 of their finest pieces at the increasingly busy facility. CCSU’s Art Department was contacted by Kiran Jain, director of marketing at Bradley International, in the spring of 2007 and was offered various showcase areas. Garcia then worked with students to critique their own pieces in order to decide—based on creativity, design and craftsmanship—which should be displayed. Originally, the pieces were placed in the airport’s administrative offices. Garcia recalls, “It was great of them to offer the space to us. While it was a wonderful opportunity, it wasn’t high exposure.” Since then, the exhibit has evolved into three separate all-glass displays—measuring 12 feet long, four feet wide, and four feet high—and is now clearly visible in the upper-level departure area. Garcia says, “The space now is beautiful. You can’t miss it. All of the pieces on display show good control of the materials, good creativity, and a high level of craftsmanship.” The bulk of the showcase consists of ceramic work by graduate students, seniors, and juniors in the art program. It also includes a number of steel vessels created by Garcia. Currently twelve students have their work on display, and Garcia notes that new pieces will be rotated in, offering even more exposure to CCSU’s artists, at no cost to the University.

Bradley International Airport is providing the funding for the space and maintenance of the exhibit. Garcia explained, “The best part of the showcase is the exposure given to the program here at CCSU. This allows students to get their work exhibited, which is always a difficult thing to do. Being able to show at the airport is another big advantage. Only good can come of this.”

— Christopher Michalski

CCSU contributed more than half-a-billion dollars to Connecticut’s economy over the course of fiscal year 2007. Central’s total estimated economic impact on the state, using an accepted and customary multiplier coefficient, was $554.8 million. The figure is based on the University’s annual operating expenses and capital improvements spending, as well as student spending and student internship and co-op program labors. For more information, please see the full report at www.ccsu.edu/economicimpact.
The Center for Africana Studies Hosts Symposium on Issues of Race

The Center for Africana Studies recently held its 14th annual conference, “Challenges and Opportunities in Education: The Issue of Race.” Professor Michael Thelwell, the event’s keynote speaker, presented “Murder, Relentless and Impassive: American Academic Community and the Education of Blacks.” Thelwell is a professor of literature and writing, as well as the founding chair, W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro American Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

The early morning panel, “Challenges Facing African American and Latino Students in the Health Professions,” featured three distinguished speakers: Dr. Cynthia Hodge, associate dean at the School of Dentistry at the UConn Health Center in Farmington; Laurel Baldwin-Ragaven, M.D., the Henry R. Luce Professor of Health and Human Rights at Trinity College in Hartford; and Sylvia Gutierrez, adjunct lecturer of anthropology at CCSU.

A second session featured “Examination of the Educational Culture in the U.S.,” by Okey Ndibe, Allan K. Smith Visiting Professor of Creative Writing at Trinity College, and “The Perils of the Black Student” and “Cultural Inelasticity of the American Educational System—Redesigning the Curriculum,” by Chengiah Ragaven, adjunct lecturer of International Studies and Africana Studies at CCSU.

The third panel focused on an “Examination of the Educational Culture in Connecticut” by Dr. Doris Kurtz, superintendent, Consolidated School District of New Britain, and Carol Carter-Lowery, Ed.D., retired professor of educational leadership at CCSU.

The afternoon session, which focused on “New Perspectives: Inclusive Curricula,” began with Dr. Tricia Rose, professor of Africana studies at Brown University in Rhode Island, who presented “The Hip-Hop Wars: New Challenges for Progressive Black Educators.” Dr. Noel Cazenave, associate professor of sociology at the University of Connecticut, addressed “Overcoming Racism Evasiveness in ‘Color Blind’ America: Lessons from the Success of UConn’s White Racism Course.” In addition, Dr. Tiffany Ruby Patterson, associate professor of African American studies at Vanderbilt University, in Tennessee, discussed “Teaching the Hard Stuff: Race and Racism in a Diasporic Curriculum.”

The following panel, “Creating an Environment of Inclusion,” included “Two Steps Back: The End of Brown v. Board of Education and the Return of Hostility, Separatism, and Disenfranchisement of Blacks in Education;” “Race and Person Perception: When Heuristics Translate to Biological Imperatives;” and “The Intersections of Race and Opportunities in Education: Minority Students’ Distress and Mental Health.” The presenters were Paula C. Johnson, professor of law at Syracuse University; V. Bede Agocha, assistant professor of psychology & African American studies at the University of Connecticut; and Dr. William Hunter, empowerment author and speaker.

CCSU President Jack Miller hailed the event as “a vital and vibrant examination of complex and important issues confronting society and education.” He added, “The University is proud to host and support this significant and impressive annual event.”

The event was sponsored by the Office of Diversity and Equity, the School of Engineering & Technology, the Africana Student Organization (ASO), the Center for Caribbean & Latin American Studies, the George R. Muirhead Center for International Education, the AAUP Minority Recruitment and Retention Committee, and the Office of the Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs, as well as the School of Arts and Sciences.

The conference was held in memory of Dr. Asa G. Hilliard III, Fuller E. Callaway Professor of Urban Education at Georgia State University. He is quoted as saying, “I am a teacher, a psychologist, and a historian. As such, I am interested in the aims, the methods, and the content of the socialization processes that we ought to have in place to create wholeness among our people.”

— Christopher Michalski

Fashion Show of Native Dress Held during International Education Week

Displays of native dress were a highlight of the International Week’s fashion show, “An Expression of Culture.” Seen here (from left) are Naa Sackey from the Center for Africana Studies, wearing her native Ghanaian dress; international student Elsa Monsy in clothing from her native India; Japanese international student Itsumi Ikani in her county’s native attire; Camilla Nonterah, international student from Ghana, in her native dress; and the Center for Africana Studies’ Gloria Kyem in native Ghanaian attire. November 12–16 was designated International Education Week 2007 by the U.S. Department of State, the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, and the U.S. Department of Education.

Keynoter Professor Michael Thelwell
A THREE-PRONGED APPROACH

First, “CCSU Night at the Museum” celebrated a diversity of cultures and artistic visions. The CCSU Jazz Ensemble welcomed visitors in the NBMAA lobby. The evening radiated with CCSU student and faculty art exhibitions in various media. Dr. Pam Perry, professor of music, and the University Singers showcased acappella selections; the “Hot Stixx” percussion ensemble from Jefferson Elementary School in New Britain drummed galore. Entries from “Student Arts Creative Competition” based on the mural faces/Thomas Hart Benton’s 1932 personas were on display. The night concluded with “Migrant Mother, 1926: A Dramatic Poetry Reading with Dance and Musical Interpretation Performance” by Catherine Fellows, professor of physical education and human performance/theatre; Geri Radacsi, associate director of university relations, emerita; and Julie Ribchinsky, professor of music.

Next, the Mural Bus Tour “showcased the way in which murals on our campus resonate with murals in downtown New Britain and the Thomas Benton murals at the New Britain Museum of American Art,” said Ritzenhoff. The tour began with the historic (1930s era) Bellin murals in the CCSU Student Center and continued on campus and downtown New Britain with the work of the CCSU Student Mural program, directed by Associate Professor of Art Mike Alewitz. Participants saw the result of the First New Britain International Mural Slam, a one-day competition of graffiti writers, muralists, scenic painters, and airbrush artists. The tour concluded in the galleries of the NBMAA with Thomas Hart Benton’s 1932 mural “Arts of Life in America,” one of New Britain’s great artistic treasures.

Third, the Student Arts Creative Competition gave CCSU students the opportunity to exhibit written word and visual arts entries about the Thomas Hart Benton murals. Student video projects about the 9/11 mural in the NBMAA and on CCSU’s campus were created. Ashley and Kimberly Carvalho (theater/communication) performed their award-winning short play Lucy Sparks: The Life of a Fading Star.

“We gladly took on the UMC program, and it blossomed into a creative showcase for our students’ work,” said Ritzenhoff. “Our students have an amazing creative energy, and this event gave them the opportunity to shine.”

— Geri Radacsi

CCSU Hosts Lecture on Women’s Education in the Middle East

CCSU hosted “Women in the Aftermath of Militarism and War,” a lecture by Dr. Shahrzad Mojab (left), a professor in the Department of Adult Education and Counseling Psychology at the University of Toronto. She is also a noted scholar and the director of the Women and Gender Studies Institute. Originally from Iran, Dr. Mojab is an expert on the impact of war and violence on women’s learning. She has also conducted extensive research on female political prisoners in the Middle East. The event was sponsored by the George R. Muirhead Center for International Education, the Middle East Studies Committee of the Intercollegiate Arab Student Conference, CCSU’s History Department, the Ruth Boyea Women’s Center, and the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program.
Early Learning Program and CCSU Benefit From Funding

The Early Learning Program, sponsored by CCSU, has joined with The New Britain Early Childhood School Readiness Council and Community to offer superior curriculums for children aged three to five. Awarded a School Readiness Funding grant in excess of $100,000, the Early Learning Program at 1285 East Street maintains its extensive focus on the family as a whole. “Community involvement is the key,” explains Sherry Pesino, assistant director, Media Services, and president of the ELP’s Board of Directors. The program guides children and families toward educational opportunities and away from “social dependency.”

The additional funding will aid children by providing field trips, school supplies, explorative tools, and educational speakers, as well as professional development for existing faculty. Children enrolled in the program are offered activities that address developmental needs through various forms of play. Children can then grow emotionally, socially, and physically and improve cognitive skills. The Early Learning Program aids parents concerned about their children’s emotional and educational needs.

The Board of Directors includes people from all walks of life. Its multi-lingual and multicultural faculty, non-faculty, and parents have fluency in English, Spanish, Arabic, and Polish. Also available are multi-lingual applications for families. “I’m so pleased we can meet more community needs than ever before. None of this would have been possible without CCSU providing the facility,” Pesino explains. CCSU maintains the building and grounds.

Parents whose children need full-time enrollment can benefit from a sliding pay schedule. Director of the ELP Talhaht Mannan says, “I’m excited the School Readiness Funding will allow families in the community to afford a quality program that they may not necessarily be able to afford otherwise.” Mannan provides the example of a mother who worked full-time at minimum wage. Her son was enrolled part-time in the program for $50.00 a week, attending only two days in the morning. While the mother was at work, her son bounced back and forth between relatives and neighbors during the week. With the School Readiness Funding and the new sliding schedule, the child is now able to attend full-time. Mannan notes that, “This really benefits the community as a whole. Children are offered a safe and consistent environment that helps them develop socially.” Due to the School Readiness Funding, the ELP is already approved for a Quality Enhancement grant which will further aid the facility and its clients.

The CCSU community benefits as well. The ELP is diligently working for accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NYAEC). Typically accreditation takes two to three years, but the ELP is projecting it will win approval by September 2008. Pesino explains, “Once we receive the accreditation, we can aid CCSU students in the School of Education and Professional Studies by providing field observations for credit.” Students without transportation can easily access the facility due to its convenient off-campus location.

—Christopher Michalski

NEW BOOKS

Dr. Kristine Larsen, professor of physics and earth sciences, is the author of the new book Cosmology 101 (Greenwood Press). The book provides readers—from students new to the field to interested members of the general public—with the essential ideas on the evolution of the universe, all with a minimum of jargon and mathematics. Cosmology 101 shows readers why cosmology is such a vibrant and dynamic field. According to SciTech Book News: “In introducing readers to cosmology and the real world of sometimes unscholarly scientists, Larsen examines myths about cosmic bodies, current speculation about the universe, and insights from technology-aided discoveries regarding its nature, mapping, and evolution.”
Celebrating Successful Professional School Development Partnership

For nearly a decade, Central Connecticut State University’s Teacher Education Department has been leaving a positive mark on Hartford’s racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse Dr. James H. Naylor School. The unique partnership was celebrated at a recent gathering at the newly renovated school, located in the city’s South End.

“The October event was a celebration of the 80th anniversary of the Naylor School and its alumni and rich community, including its relationship with CCSU,” said Dr. Karen J. Riem, associate professor of teacher education. Reim serves as Central’s Professional Development School facilitator with the Hartford school. In addition to Naylor faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members, the celebration was also well attended by CCSU students and faculty, including Dr. Mitchell Sakofs, dean of the School of Education and Professional Studies, and CCSU Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Carl Lovitt.

“Being a part of this wonderful learning community makes everything I teach come alive,” said Reim. “I truly believe that the best of CCSU and the best of Naylor School come together in our partnership, and the beauty of the diverse Naylor community is reflected in the energy and warmth of the newly renovated building. I am delighted to celebrate Naylor School’s 80th anniversary, and I am proud of the good work we do together to enhance learning for children, future educators, and all members of the community.”

Central and the Naylor School, which has an enrollment of roughly 600, have been successful partners since 1996. In 1998 the two institutions formalized the Professional Development School relationship which has been in place ever since.

CCSU teacher candidates from every certification program level are involved in virtually all of Naylor’s classrooms. Some University classes meet on site, and CCSU students and faculty from the wider University community regularly participate in joint projects and events.

Members of CCSU’s teacher education faculty are involved in planning, governance, professional development, and all aspects of school and community life at the elementary school on a weekly basis. At the same time, Naylor’s faculty and administrators host and support teacher candidates at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels, in addition to participating at CCSU in advisory roles and as regular contributors to teacher education courses.

CCSU and Naylor School (PDS) facilitators also act on behalf of the partnership in a wider set of state and national PDS networks and professional communities. The symbiotic, and sometimes quite serendipitous, relationship also means that CCSU faculty and Naylor staff members collaborate on projects, grants, teaching, goal-setting, research, presentations, and, of course, professional development.

“We are proud to note,” Riem said, “that many former CCSU/Naylor student teachers currently teach in the city of Hartford (including at Naylor School itself) and in other urban districts.” She added, “Many more report that they have been influenced positively by their pre-professional experience in the CCSU/Naylor PDS. We share a commitment to reciprocal renewal, lifelong learning, the joint preparation of future educators, the development of student and adult leaders, support for excellence in professional growth, celebration of diversity, integration of technology, and collaboration with the local community—all in pursuit of enhanced learning for our children.”

Those children come from a myriad of ethnic backgrounds, mirroring the makeup of the south end neighborhood in which Naylor is located. After English, Spanish is the most prevalent language spoken by students, but Italian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Albanian, and Bosnian, among other languages, are also heard in the Naylor School’s hallways. The elementary school staff is comprised of approximately 40 certified members, described by Dr. Riem as a mix of new and veteran educators, specialists and support personnel, who are committed to the children and the school community.

— Bart Fisher

Dean Mitchell Sakofs (left) of the School of Education and Professional Studies, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Carl Lovitt, and Dr. Karen Riem, associate professor of teacher education, were on hand to help Hartford’s recently renovated James H. Naylor School celebrate 80 years in the city’s racially and culturally diverse South End. CCSU and the school have enjoyed a long, mutually beneficial relationship.
The championship contest accounted for the second goal in the 3-2 win over the Crimson. Facing the potential end to a brilliant four-year career, Cooper picked the best possible time to score in back-to-back games for the first time as a Blue Devil. Junior Yan Klukowski added a goal and an assist in the victory.

“This showed great character by our team,” Klukowski, a three-time all-conference performer and former NEC Rookie of the Year, said following the win. “It was back and forth, and we did a great job of pulling it together in the final minutes to come away with the victory.” Green went back to the start of it all. “We had outstanding defending,” he said. “[Junior captain David] Tyrie was just out of this world. Our shape was very compact. We closed up all the important space. They were content to pass the ball around and every time they tried to make that final pass to get close we won the ball.”

Led by Tyrie, the NEC Defensive Player of the Year and NEC Tournament MVP, the defense had propelled CCSU into the NCAA, allowing just one goal in six games prior to the Harvard match. CCSU moved on to face Tulsa, which was ranked ninth in the nation, in second round action. The Blue Devils collected another 3-2 win, marking the first time since the 2002 season CCSU had scored three or more goals in two straight games. However, it was the defense Green credited afterwards.

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**Extra Credit (continued from page 8)**

Dr. Lawrence Grasso, professor of accounting, presented a session on “Using the Balance Scorecard in a Lean Organization” on September 28 at the third annual Lean Accounting Summit in Orlando, FL. The Lean Accounting Summit is the only national conference devoted to accounting for lean organizations. The summit is attended by hundreds of accountants and executives from lean organizations throughout the country. Grasso has been invited to speak at all three summits.

Several CCSU graduates, faculty members, and former staffers were elected to various municipal offices on November 6 in New Britain and Newington. Eva Magnuszewski, who holds a BS in communication from CCSU, was elected alderwomen-at-large in New Britain. Former adjunct lecturer Louis Salvio, won re-election to the New Britain Common Council from the first ward, and former CCSU police officer and detective Rolando Centeno was elected to serve as a New Britain alderman from the fifth ward. In addition, Dr. Aram Ayalon, CCSU professor of teacher education for more than six years, won election to the New Britain Board of Education. In Newington, Sharon Braverman, who earned an MS degree at Central and serves as assistant dean of the School of Business, won election to the Board of Education.

Rick Mullins, executive assistant to the president for community business programs, Institute of Technology and Business Development, is one of only 63 people in the nation to have been honored this year for their work on behalf of the Association of Small Business Development Centers. The award is presented to those who have made “a significant contribution to the program.”

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**CCSU Hosts Dance Connections Showcase**

CCSU’s Dance Program sponsored “Dance Connections Showcase,” featuring Connecticut-based companies the Albano Ballet, Judie Clark Dance Theatre, and Soma. Professor of Physical Education and Human Performance/Theatre Catherine J. Fellows, director of the Dance Program, coordinated the event, which was attended by some 300 people.

CCSU’s dance company performed No Shade in which Angelica Karlsson and Jason Post (above) performed as demi-soloists. Fellows remarked, “This piece was originally choreographed in 1993 in response to global warming. Unfortunately, this theme is still relevant.” The second piece, Chaconne, was first performed in 1942 at the Humphrey-Weidman Studio Theatre in New York. Fellows said, “The student dancers were extremely excited to be able to perform such a historic composition.” They also performed a modern piece, Piazza Giordano. The program featured student dancers, professional dancers, and choreographers working together to build audiences in Connecticut and support the CCSU Dance Program.

The upcoming CCSU Spring Dance Concert, a public performance to be held on April 25 in Welte at 7:30 p.m., will feature two world premiers by the Albano Ballet: Ishtar and Americana. Dancentral will also perform an excerpt from Jennifer Muller’s Speeds. Muller, an internationally acclaimed choreographer, and her company was in residency at CCSU in January.
Shaun Green's Blue Devils started the season with a meet and greet for fans, supporters, and sponsors and a renewal of an old rivalry between Central Connecticut State University and Hartford. His team ended the year with a trip to the NCAA Sweet 16 and a top-25 national ranking. The three-month journey was rough at times, but Green, his staff, and his players never let anyone tell them they were finished.

Green brought in one of his largest freshman classes, sought out corporate sponsors, and put together a weekly soccer show in anticipation of the 2007 campaign. His optimism beamed throughout the preseason. However, his team started 2-8-2 and the head coach's 23rd season was beginning to look bleak.

"We went 2-8-2," Green told The Hartford Courant's Jeff Jacobs, "and I'm wondering what happened. How could I be so far off the mark?"

The 2-8-2 mark included a Northeast Conference season-opening tie against Fairleigh Dickinson, an overtime game the Blue Devils thought they had won 2-1 when boarding the bus home. The Knights protested an official's call on the first CCSU goal, and the NCAA upheld the protest, with the NEC office ruling it a 1-1 tie. That ruling provided Green and the Blue Devils with more than enough motivation. Despite losing three straight 1-0 decisions—two in double overtime—to drop 0-3-1 in league play, the team stuck close to an early season Green creed. "Never, ever, ever let anybody tell you that you are finished." It became the team motto and helped spark a run of historic proportions.

There were other factors, too. Green attributed watching head coach Howie Dickenman and his team winning the men's basketball NEC Championship game as a part of his own success.

"I was standing with a recruit and his father in the gym," Green told Jacobs. "To see Howie turn his season around was such a motivating factor for me. Being at that game last March, to see the pride he had installed in everyone in the school, I made a personal commitment to win a championship this year."

In addition, two key cogs in Green's plans—senior Jonathan Agbatar and freshman Robert Cavener—had missed the season's first six games. They both returned to the lineup on Sept. 26 at Columbia, one game prior to the Fairleigh Dickenson University contest. It took a little time to get the line-up to jell, but jell it did.

CCSU picked up its first NEC win, defeating Robert Morris, 2-1, on Oct. 21 in New Britain to begin a nine-game unbeaten streak. During the run, the Blue Devils ended Monmouth's 24-game winning streak in Northeast Conference play with a 2-0 road victory; they defeated both the Hawks and second-seeded St. Francis (PA) to win their first ever NEC crown; and they topped two top-25 teams to become the first CCSU men's program to win any NCAA Division I tournament game and the first Blue Devil team to advance past the second round in an NCAA Championship.

After the 2-0 regular season win over Monmouth, CCSU averaged a goal per game through the Northeast Conference Tournament. The Blue Devils beat the host Hawks, 1-0, to set-up the championship tilt versus SFPA. They then topped the Red Flash by the same score to win the title.

"We were 2-8-2 to start the season and really had our backs against the wall," Green said after collecting the trophy. "We had to pretty much play perfect soccer during the second half of the season just to make it into the tournament. Then we played the top two seeds and were able to come away with a pair of 1-0 wins. It is a tremendous feeling for our players. We played hard and it is an overwhelming feeling to win the championship. It is a great accomplishment to bring this title back to CCSU."

It was merely the beginning.

The Blue Devils drew Harvard, the nation's 15th-ranked team, to open the 2007 NCAA Men's Soccer Championship. The trip to Cambridge resulted in the first NCAA Division I tournament win for a CCSU men's program.

Holding true to the team's motto, senior Andrew Cooper, who scored the game winner in the NEC continued on page 19