Internationalization Laboratory Drafts Learning Competencies

The Internationalization Laboratory, a faculty committee with representation from all four Schools that has responsibility for creating a systematic and collaborative approach to CCSU’s international education, completed a draft of international competencies for CCSU students in December.

According to committee co-chairs Professor and Chair of the Modern Languages Department Lilián Uribe and Director of the Center for International Education Nancy Birch Wagner, the list of suggested competencies is an important initial step by the committee and is its collaborative recommendation of learning outcomes for the CCSU student body. Committee members agree that the next step should be the review of the proposed competencies by individual departments and the creation of customized plans for their meaningful implementation.

The Internationalization Laboratory, which consists of 20 faculty from 17 departments, was created with support from the American Council on Education (ACE), a nationally recognized learning consortium of more than 60 institutions that provides a forum for the sharing of ideas and practices to promote global education.

**Charge to the Internationalization Laboratory**

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Carl Lovitt gave the charge to the laboratory when it was formed last fall: “In essence, the committee is to review and assess CCSU’s current internationalization efforts. It is to develop a plan for international

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Engaged in discussion at an Internationalization Laboratory committee meeting are (from left) Professors of Educational Leadership Penelope Lisi and Timothy Reagan and Professor of Reading and Language Arts Helen Abadiano.
Black History Month Celebrations at CCSU

CCSU celebrated Black History Month with a wide range of events in February. The celebration began with a performance by comedian Preacher Moss, titled “End of Racism,” that was sponsored by the Center for Africana Studies. The Ebony Choral Ensemble (above) performed “Praises from the Past.” Rocky Lawrence, an entertainer, blues musician, and educator for the Mississippi Delta Blues, performed in Alumni Hall after a Q&A on “Blues and History.” His performance was sponsored by a grant from the Office of Diversity & Equity and WFCS 107.7, CCSU’s student-run radio station.

The Sixth Annual Amistad Lecture featured Dr. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza (right), who spoke on “The African Struggle for Empowerment: From Amistad to Barack Obama.” Zeleza is the president of the African Studies Association and Distinguished Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The lecture was organized by the Amistad Committee and the Center for Africana Studies. At the end of the month, the CCSU Pep Squad performed “Most Wanted” in Welte Auditorium.

Building Community in a Diverse Environment

Lee Mun Wah, nationally acclaimed lecturer and diversity trainer, delivered a presentation titled “An Unfinished Conversation: How We Can Build Community in a Diverse Environment” on campus recently. He proposed ways in which people can acquire the art of listening from a Buddhist and Eastern perspective, as well as how to resolve cross-cultural conflicts through the Art of Inquiry and how to develop associating content with non-verbal styles of communication. The event was sponsored by Student Activities/Leadership Development and is part of CCSU’s ongoing initiative to promote the personal and social growth of students, faculty, and staff.
education that unifies the somewhat disparate components into a University-wide, all-inclusive, and CCSU-customized program—one which increases study abroad participation, strengthens faculty engagement and oversight, enhances rigor, and is fully integrated into the curriculum. Acting as the leadership group, the committee will also recommend ways to bring global education together with community engagement, and it will investigate funding sources for programming and course development.”

**Competencies Address Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills**

As drafted, the international competencies for students address three areas:

**Knowledge**, so students will be able to explain the complexity and interdependency of global events and issues. Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of world geography and world history; an understanding of diversity of values, beliefs, ideas, and world views; an understanding of one’s own culture and its relationship to the rest of the world; and knowledge of a foreign language.

**Attitudes**, so students will value and respect intercultural and global diversity by exhibiting curiosity and openness toward new opportunities, ideas, and ways of thinking; an awareness of ethnic and cultural differences; the ability to examine issues objectively and without prejudice; an appreciation for multiple perspectives; and an awareness of one’s own identity and culture.

**Skills**, so students will act as global citizens by thinking critically and creatively and integrating knowledge of the world; communicating effectively, including use of a foreign language, and interacting with people from other cultures; coping with unfamiliar and challenging settings with resiliency; and locating information and investigating issues about international topics.

**Survey to Assess International Efforts**

“Core to internationalization is the development of a curriculum at CCSU that will allow students to develop these competencies,” stated Uribe. “During the spring semester, the committee will begin to take stock of what departments currently do—and what they would like to do; we can then establish a plan and a timeline for the steps that we want to take at CCSU,” explained Wagner. Uribe added, “We already recognize that international education is firmly rooted in CCSU’s mission and vision, and we want to ascertain what we’ve already accomplished in that area so we know where best to focus our efforts.”

The University’s distinctive international mission has been demonstrated through programs administered by the George Muirhead Center for International Education, which has been identified by the Board of Trustees for the CSU system as a Center of Excellence. CCSU offers faculty-led courses abroad; promotes long-term study at partner universities around the world; hosts international students and visiting scholars; employs international faculty and staff; requires knowledge of a foreign language and at least two international-designated courses for the graduation of its undergraduate students; supports six cultural centers; and features majors in International and Area Studies at the graduate and undergraduate levels.

Wagner commented, “Although both the assessment and the guiding plan are essential, we also want to know what departments are already doing in terms of courses offered and study abroad opportunities, as well as extracurricular activities, such as lectures, film festivals, and other events. Another, very important phase will be the mapping of the curriculum, looking at elements of the curriculum that help students gain the competencies we want them to have when they graduate from Central.”

It is anticipated that the internationalization effort, guided by ACE, will take about two years, proceeding from the preliminary review and evaluation stage to the creation of a plan and the preparation of a report for the ACE. Key to the process will also be the assessment and support of the Curriculum Committee and the Faculty Senate, as well as the Provost and University President.

“If our goal is to prepare students for engaged careers and lives as true global citizens, it’s important that international education play a role in key University policies and be represented in our curriculum,” said Wagner.

—Geri Radacsi
Take off! Some 30 high school juniors, nominated by their teachers for their interest and ability in math and science, have been launched into Central Connecticut State University’s Go For Aerospace! program. This spring the students from New Britain, Hartford, Waterbury, Bloomfield, and Bridgeport took part in hands-on experiments at CCSU to excite their imaginations—and open new doors to mentoring, support, and opportunities to explore engineering.

And, coming up in August during the program’s Summer Institute, these students will see a piece of the moon and examples of satellites and rockets.

According to the program’s coordinator, Assistant Professor of Technology and Engineering Education Michele Dischino, CCSU received a grant from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for a year-long extracurricular program aimed at students uncertain about their college plans. “This spring the high school students worked with CCSU faculty and undergraduates on projects related to mechanical and aerospace engineering,” she said. “They also visited industrial aerospace facilities. Hamilton Sundstrand, Pratt & Whitney, Sikorsky, and Trumpf opened their research and manufacturing labs to the students who were able to speak with company engineers.”

Exploring Aerospace and Engineering Careers

Dr. Zdzislaw Kremens, dean of CCSU’s School of Engineering and Technology, conceived the idea for the program, which is being implemented by four faculty: Dischino, Associate Professors of Engineering Nidal Al-Masoud, Peter Baumann, and Viatcheslav Naoumov. “These professors hope to inspire the next generation to consider careers in the aerospace field,” Dean Kremens said. “Too few students recognize the opportunities an engineering degree makes available to them.”

A Water Rocket Challenge added fun to learning about aerodynamics. Naoumov explained, “Two-member teams competed to design and build a water-bottle rocket to see which would attain the greatest altitude. We wanted students to develop an understanding of the basics of rocketry and propulsion systems performance. They needed to estimate the thrust and maximum altitude of the rocket using NASA Rocket Modeler II.” CCSU undergraduates Ewelina Malejczyk, Kevin Schindewolf, and Jason Williams assisted on the project.

“Is He Really a Real Astronaut?”

The Go For Aerospace! program kicked-off last fall. Students and their parents, nominating teachers, industry and public education...
representatives, and University officials attended a dinner at which Captain Daniel Burbank, a NASA astronaut and US Coast Guard aviator, delivered the keynote address. He told the students what life is like in space. He outlined possible future missions and their inherent challenges, reminding students that NASA will be counting on the next generation of engineers to make these operations successful.

Right from the start, the young people expressed excitement: “Is he really a real astronaut?” After having the opportunity to speak with Burbank, one student simply said: “Wow! I didn’t think that we were gonna meet somebody famous.” Dr. Sandra Inga, director of science, Hartford Public Schools, stated, “I expect students will come away with a better understanding of what aerospace engineering entails and options for future college major and career choices. Potential establishment of positive mentoring relationships could also result. In a district where many of the students’ parents have never attended college, the Go For Aerospace! program offers Hartford students the support and encouragement they need to help them succeed.”

Surveying students on what they are looking for in program focusing on outer space, Dr. Nicholas Anderson, math, science, and bilingual instructor, Wilby High School, Waterbury Public Schools, discovered how sophisticated the young people were in their scientific outlooks: “Youngsters expressed their interest in wormhole, black hole, and white hole research. They look for time traveling and space traveling into parallel universes and multi-verses. They desire to discover and practice the art of teleportation and communication from great distances by telepathy. One student hoped that, ‘being involved with this might make us famous!’”

Addressing Workforce Needs
The program addresses a need in Connecticut to prepare for new and replacement workers in all areas of the aerospace industry. CCSU alumnus Gregory C. Kane ’76, the state consultant for technology education and engineering, Connecticut Department of Education, observed, “At a time when many industries are struggling with modernization, the aerospace industry as a whole has remained at the forefront of research and development, energy efficiency, and technological advancements.”

He continued, “Occupational opportunities in this field have remained fairly consistent in the face of an economic downturn. From a major role in our nation’s defense to the exploration of space, the aerospace industry is and will remain vital to our state and nation and thus will continue to require the influx of new highly skilled workers at all levels.”

According to Dischino, the highlight of the Go For Aerospace! program could well be the Summer Institute. After spending three days at CCSU becoming familiar with the college application process and campus life, students will travel to NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland for a stay of five days. There they will see an authentic moon rock, walk through a full-size rocket garden, and learn about state-of-the-art engineering directly from Goddard scientists who operate most of NASA’s research satellites. The trip will conclude in Washington, DC, with a tour of the Smithsonian Institution’s National Air and Space Museum—surely a source of wonder and inspiration for aspiring aerospace engineers.

— Geri Radacsi

CCSU Students Place at Travelers Competition
Four CCSU School of Business students placed third in the annual nationwide Information Technology Case Competition sponsored by Travelers. The CCSU team was advised by Professors of Management Information Systems Marianne D’Onofrio (far left) and Olga Petkova. The CCSU team included (from left) Brian Lang, Jamie Doiron, William Keene, and Corey Gibb, all management information systems (MIS) majors in the School of Business. D’Onofrio, chair of MIS, noted, “They have the opportunity to network with Travelers as a potential employer, and Travelers has the opportunity to develop a relationship with potential applicants for internships and leadership development programs.”

Dean of the School of Business Siamack Shojai (right) praised the students. “Year after year our students are honored due to their hard work and expertise. We are proud that they can compete with other teams across the nation.”
Focus on Scholarship: Ravindra Thamma—Expanding the World of Robotics and Automation

With satisfaction Ravindra Thamma surveys the speech recognition wheelchair he designed and created. It affords mobility and independence for a disabled person unable to control a power wheelchair through the movements of a joystick. Instead, the wheelchair is propelled through an electronic circuit that can recognize a voice command.

The wheelchair, which was constructed with the help of CCSU undergraduate Chris Sabolcik, serves as an instructional and research aid for Dr. Thamma. The assistant professor of manufacturing and construction management in the School of Engineering and Technology, who joined CCSU in 2006, teaches such subjects as robotics, fluid power, mechanisms for automation, and programmable logic control.

“Hands-on Kid”
While serving pedagogical and practical purposes, the wheelchair is a tangible validation of Thamma’s dream. Growing up in Mumbai, India, Thamma recalls, “I was a hands-on kid, always curious to see how things worked. I was very stubborn about wanting to be a mechanic and build new gadgets.”

Application of Controls in Manufacturing
Since childhood, Thamma has been interested in control systems engineering, which involves the design and manufacture of instrumentation and ways to control dynamic processes automatically.

“Various control methodologies and robots are used in manufacturing. For example, robots can be used to handle materials or hazardous waste,” he explains. “I wanted to use controls in manufacturing for a medical application, that is, to replace a doctor or a nurse. To fulfill his goal Thamma studied and explored various techniques of telemedicine. During his master’s program Thamma designed and built a system to control a robotic arm and Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) that are made operable through the Internet, with the hope that someday his invention will be used in telemedicine.

From 2003–2006 at the University of North Dakota, Thamma wore two hats: one, as a coordinator of the Electronics and Controls Systems program; and, the other, as faculty director for Xcomm Laboratories. Xcomm’s mission was the integration of telemedicine devices and communications for Government Rural Outreach. Initial funding for investigation and evaluation was available through the GRO initiative, and Thamma built “Nursebot,” a mobile robot that would navigate its way into rooms, go to a patient, and record temperature, blood pressure, and pulse rate.

What’s the Position of a Mobile Robot?
Thamma expanded his research when working on his doctorate in industrial education and technology at Iowa State University. “I was trying to devise a new methodology to find the position and orientation of a mobile robot,” he states. “You see, on a factory floor, an automated guided vehicle (AGV or robot) is a material handling piece of equipment that works in cells without human intervention. It is used on physical tracks, but this restricts its flexibility.” His thesis demonstrated a new experimental trackless navigational aid to enhance the flexibility of AGV with ultrasound and radio frequency sensing.

“People have argued, why not use GPS (Global Positioning System) for AGV tracking? However, due to GPS receivers’ large size, limited accuracy, and satellite visibility requirements, this system is not appropriate to use inside an enclosed area,” Thamma elaborates. Thus, he set out to develop an AGV system that eliminated the need for pre-determined tracks in order to increase the robot’s ability to navigate more fully.

Thamma was presented with a graduate student award from the National Association of Industrial Technology for PhD thesis research in this area. Since then, he has continued to re-
fine his past system by replacing the ultrasound aspect of the navigation with image recognition as a navigational aid for trackless AGVs. Last November, he delivered a paper at the International Journal of Modern Engineering’s international conference on this subject.

**Sharing Knowledge through Publications, Service**

Thamma has extended the reach of his theoretical and applied research in a number of ways. He has published in professional journals and made numerous presentations at conferences on robotics and controls. As director of the Connecticut BEST (Boosting Engineering Science and Technology) Robotics Competition, Thamma hopes to inspire middle and high school students to learn more about math, science, engineering, and technology. CCSU’s School of Engineering and Technology, a state-designated Center of Excellence, is the hub for BEST Robotics Competition sponsors.

Reaching out still further to adept newcomers who seek to succeed in taming design principles of fluid power, Thamma has written a book, *Fluid Power Technology* (University Xerox Publication, India, Sept. 2008). The book covers the basics of hydraulics and pneumatics. Discussions, complete with mathematical calculations, define the function and applications of various devices used in fluid systems, such as pumps and motors, cylinders, valves, electro-hydraulics, filtration, and fluid conduits.

All the diagrams of circuits in the book were created using automation studio software for a better understanding of fluid circuits. In addition, exercises and solutions will be made available to readers online, and Thamma says he expects to refresh these on a timely basis. “The book was economically produced so it would be more accessible to a wider market,” he says.

Currently, Thamma is writing another book dealing with how to perform mathematical calculations based on Vedic mathematics. “The calculation strategies provided by Vedic mathematics are very creative and useful for every student, regardless of his or her major,” says Thamma. “I believe there is value in this approach and that it can reinforce knowledge by helping students to do mathematical calculations using a variety of techniques.”

Thamma’s scholarly endeavors have been creative and useful. His research efforts broaden as he keeps an open, inquisitive, and inventive mind in his approaches to 21st-century technology.

> — Geri Radacsi
Marsha Bednarski: Accentuating Action Research in Science Education

Marsha Bednarski puts into practice what she teaches. As a professor in the Physics and Earth Sciences Department and coordinator of science education, she espouses inquiry-based instruction and assessment. What does inquiry look like in her Science Education course?

Step into Room 501 of Copernicus Hall. An entire wall is lined with teaching materials—including science kits, pendulum devices, and several plastic containers of dirt, sand, and clay for the study of river and land formation. The atmosphere is dynamic; talkative groups of students huddle together using hands-on materials to discover what inquiry is all about.

Working with practicing, certified teachers in the natural sciences master’s program requires Bednarski to model the qualities of a professional educator, impart knowledge, share her experiences, and provide a safe learning environment that encourages risk taking. She declares, “I teach students through the inquiry process just as they will need to teach their students through the inquiry process,” explains Bednarski. “We have a great deal of fun learning together. The environment is friendly and safe. And learning doesn’t take place just in Room 501. It also takes place outside on the University grounds, in the community, and in the elementary, middle, and secondary schools.”

Thinking Outside the Box

Bednarski, who joined CCSU in 1998 with a PhD in science education from the University of Connecticut and holds a master’s in general science and a 6th year certificate in educational leadership from CCSU, challenges her students “to think outside the box.” She is firm. “They cannot put together a traditional canned lab they may have used before. They need to develop more inquiry-based activities in line with the Connecticut science standards (K–10) as set by the state Department of Education for earth science, physical science, biological science, and science, technology, and society.”

Pedagogy and research are not separate endeavors to Bednarski. She believes in action research, which she describes as “a multifaceted combination of research influencing my teaching and teaching influencing my research.” Thus, she integrates new ideas, based upon her own research in developing and working with public and private school teachers and administrators, to bring current research to bear on such topics as inquiry-based learning, performance assessment, rubric development, the use of technology in instruction and curriculum development, and using standards in designing curriculum.

What is Action Research?

Action research in science education is a process of analyzing existing data, identifying areas of need, researching information related to those areas, creating an action plan for improvement, implementing the plan, and collecting more data.

Data gathered from Bednarski’s action research has had a direct influence on her teaching. Paramount is the creation of an Action Research course, the capstone assessment requirement for the master’s in natural sciences program.

Since the action research movement for school improvement has taken hold in Connecticut, many school district administrators have expressed a special interest in hiring CCSU graduates, according to Bednarski. “Many of our graduate students have filled leadership roles in their schools in the action research process.”

Bednarski’s action research has made a major impact on two districts in particular. In Windsor Locks she consulted with teachers and helped to develop the K–12 science curriculum and the 6–12 mathematics curriculum.
In Manchester, since 1998, Bednarski trained all the middle and high school teachers in inquiry-based learning, performance assessment, and rubric development. Templates she developed have become the framework for writing curriculum in Manchester. She states, “I have been able to focus specifically on science inquiry and assessment with the elementary teachers because of the federal Eisenhower Higher Education Grant I was awarded. The grant provided the money for necessary materials and teacher release time for training.”

Bednarski has shared her knowledge on curriculum development through presentations of her research at national conventions. She has published her findings in such journals as Science Teaching, Science Scope and the Education Review, which chose her rubric guidelines as a feature in its Top Six Latest Ideas in Science Education, May 2005.

**Awarded Five Grants**

To improve student learning, Bednarski has tirelessly pursued, and received, grants from the University, as well as state and federal sources. With input from colleagues in the Department of Physics and Earth Sciences and in the School of Education, she spearheaded the writing of professional development grants—and five were awarded to CCSU. For example, Bednarski devised Project S.C.I.E.N.C.E. The professional development consortium program was awarded two highly-competitive Teacher Quality Partnership Project grants by the Connecticut Department of Higher Education in 2004 and 2006 to help area elementary school teachers enhance their professional skills. “Project S.C.I.E.N.C.E. gave me a tremendous opportunity to work with approximately 60 elementary teachers from six school district in the state,” she says.

The $220,000 in grant funds awarded for the project provided summer institutes with school-year sessions to train elementary teachers from New Britain, Bristol, Manchester, Putnam, Plainfield, and Waterbury to meet state curriculum standards in life, earth, and physical science, and to help them integrate language arts and technology with science instruction.

Lee-Ann Flynn, lauding Bednarski, speaks from first-hand experience. Flynn, who took eight classes with Bednarski and went on to earn three master’s degrees at CCSU—in reading and language arts, in educational foundations, and in science education—completed her Action Research capstone on performance-based assessments. She says, “I developed various performance-based assessments to measure student success in the areas of solids, liquids, and gases. Today, I’ve incorporated this model in my own second-grade classroom at West Hill School in Rocky Hill.” Flynn is also a CCSU adjunct lecturer, teaching elementary science methods. She declares, “Marsha allows her students to be ‘their own person.’ She facilitates instruction rather than saying ‘this is the way it needs to be done.’ She brings to the table vast background experience in science.”

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**extra credit**

During the 14th biennial scientific meeting of the International Society for Comparative Psychology, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, CCSU Professor of Psychology Francisco Donis presented “In Categorizing Stimuli: Where Pigeons Focus Their Attention Matters.” Donis was also elected as a member of the Operations Committee of the society for the next three years.

Associate Professor of Mathematical Sciences S. Louise Gould was recognized at a joint meeting of the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) and the American Mathematical Society (AMS) in January. Gould submitted a “mathematical art to wear garment,” which was accepted as part of the Society’s “Mathematical Images” exhibition. An image of her submission can be seen at www.bridgesmathart.org/art-exhibits/jmm09/gould.html.

Associate Professor of Management & Organization Drew L. Harris has been appointed to the board of directors of Connecticut Innovations (CI), the state’s quasi-public authority responsible for technology investing and innovation development. The appointment was made by the speaker of Connecticut’s House of Representatives, Christopher G. Donovan.

The artwork of Professor of Art Cora Marshall appeared in a solo exhibit, “Emancipated Memories: Uncovering the Hidden Faces of Slavery,” at Brown University recently. Her portraits connect to the past in honor of those who lived in the pursuit of freedom. The inspiration for her portraits stems from published advertisements for runaway slaves, such as her piece Hannah which was inspired by an advertisement in the Connecticut Courant and Weekly Intelligencer in 1784. Marshall held a workshop in which she discussed her artistic processes, as well as the work of several well-known African American artists such as Betye Saar and Faith Ringgold.
Senior Studio Art Students to Display Their Works

The Central Connecticut State University Art Galleries at the Samuel S.T. Chen Fine Arts Center will host “Capstone Show 2009,” featuring artwork by seniors majoring in studio art. The exhibit runs from May 1–7, and the opening reception will take place from 4–7 p.m. on May 1. Before the opening, Mark Newgarden, originator of The Garbage Pail Kids, and Megan Montague Cash, with whom he collaborates on the Bow Wow series of books, will both be speaking. Gallery hours are 1–4 p.m., Monday–Friday. Admission is free and open to the public. For more information, call 860-832-2633.

Making the Invisible Visible: The Bass Brook RiverCube

A participatory action in which CCSU students make the Bass Brook RiverCube will take place on April 24 and will serve as the culminating event of the SUSTAINABLE? exhibition being held at the CCSU Art Galleries from March 19–April 24.

What could be more appropriate as a follow-up to CCSU’s April 15–16 Sustainability Symposium, focused this year on renewable energy and carbon neutrality? Given finite resources we must learn to revalue and redesign what we produce and consume in order to achieve sustainable development, “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Sustainable development requires ecological awareness, that is, awareness of the interrelatedness of humans and their natural environment. The making of a RiverCube is an interesting combination of such revaluing and ecological awareness.

Philosopher/artist Bob Johnson, founder of RiverCubes and ATM, describes Artful Trash Management as “practical work combined with symbolic gestures.” A RiverCube is, at one level, a sculpture made from recycled trash: collected from a stream, taken to a local waste management facility plant for sculptural compression, then sited near its source. The recycling is, at another level, metaphorical. Redeeming discarded things, RiverCubes “manifest symbolic, intellectual, and social dimensions of discarded things.” Most importantly the participatory action of making a RiverCube “engages communities in urban watershed stewardship.”

The Bass Brook, the stream that comes out of Stanley Quarter Park and runs by and under CCSU, is part of a larger system, the Park River Watershed. The south branch of the Park River starts in New Britain; the north branch flows through the University of Hartford campus. The two branches join in underground tunnels in Hartford and empty into the Connecticut River. This local water system, the Park River Watershed, has been largely ignored and not infrequently abused.

Mary Rickel Pelletier of the Park River Watershed Revitalization Initiative and Sherry Buckberrough of the University of Hartford, aided by CCSU’s Elizabeth Langhorne, have started Park Water Arts 2009–2015, a campaign of arts and cultural organizations located within the Park River Watershed presenting art actions and events to draw attention to the watershed’s history, present condition, and future design. The inclusion of a pre-existent RiverCube in SUSTAINABLE? is the occasion, at the opening of the exhibition on March 19, for the kickoff of Park Water Arts. The campaign coincides with Phase I of Hartford’s MDC Clean Water Project and the United Nations’ Water for Life decade.

The making of the Bass Brook Rivercube by students from CCSU’s Art Club and the Friends of the Earth Club is the first full-fledged action of Park Water Arts. We do not have to wait for the apocalyptic scenario in WALL-E! Rather CCSU students can take steps in this participatory action that will help us maintain the ecological balance so necessary to sustainable development. For more details, visit www.art.ccsu.edu/Gallery.html.

State Terrorism in the Middle East

Norman Finklestein (left), scholar and noted Middle East authority, delivered his lecture “State Terrorism in the Middle East,” as part of the State Terrorism Lecture Series, sponsored by the CCSU Office of the Provost, the department of Anthropology and the International and Area Studies Program. He focused on Israel’s attack on Gaza that began in December 2008, noting that more diplomatic routes should have been pursued before launching the offensive.

A Mother’s Cry for Justice

Judy Shepard spoke at Central about “The Legacy of Matthew Shepard,” detailing the story of her son’s murder, a crime motivated by anti-gay hatred. Shepard regularly speaks on behalf of the gay community and against anti-gay hate crimes.
Preventing Sexual Harassment on Campus

Sexual harassment is a form of gender discrimination. The University believes all members of the campus community have the right to a working and learning environment that is free from harassment and intimidation. The University’s sexual harassment policy works to preserve a respectful academic and employment environment free from all forms of discrimination. Here are some commonly asked questions relating to sexual harassment on campus.

Q. What is sexual harassment?
A. The University’s policy prohibiting sexual harassment states that sexual harassment is any repeated, unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or conduct of a sexual nature when:
1. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly the basis, term, or condition of any individual’s employment, or a factor in an individual’s grade, evaluation, promotion, or retention; or
2. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning or working environment.

Q. How should one respond initially to being sexually harassed?
A. If you believe that you have been sexually harassed, take action. Firmly tell the harasser you do not like the inappropriate behavior and want it to stop. If the behavior has been severe and/or repeated, or the harasser does not cease after the warning, report the behavior to the Office of Diversity & Equity, the Ruthe Boyea Women’s Center, or the Counseling and Wellness Center.

Q. What is the process to report sexual harassment?
A. A student, faculty member, or staff person may contact the Office of Diversity & Equity to report the incident. The Chief Diversity Officer will meet with the complainant to discuss the alleged sexual harassment and offer assistance to stop the alleged behavior. The Chief Diversity Officer will then conduct an investigation into the reported harassment, ensuring that the complainant is protected and supported. The Chief Diversity Officer will also make recommendations for appropriate remedial action.

Q. How does the University determine whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment?
A. The University looks at the totality of circumstances, whether the conduct was sexual, whether it was unwanted or unwelcome, whether it was offensive from the perspective of a reasonable person, and whether it was severe and/or pervasive. (A complainant need not expressly reject a sexual advance in order for the advance to be considered unwelcome.)

Q. What protections exist against retaliatory behavior?
A. University policy and federal and state law prohibit retaliation against a person who opposes an allegedly discriminatory act. That includes any acts relative to their jobs or to their education. Persons may file separate retaliation complaints with the Office of Diversity & Equity.

Q. How can sexual harassment be prevented?
A. The best prevention is education and training of all members of the campus community and a speedy response to any and all complaints. Mandatory training is ongoing for all newly hired or promoted managerial and supervisory staff.

International Conference Focuses on Values, Diversity and Equity

CCSU’s Chief Diversity Officer Moisés Salinas (left) was one of eight invited speakers at the ORT 2009 Conference in Mexico. He delivered his lecture “The Educator: Facilitator of Values in the Classroom” during the event, which also included workshops, conferences, and lectures on topics related to values, peace education, equity, inclusion, diversity, freedom, respect, and ethics. Keynote speakers included former South African President and 1993 Nobel Peace Prize winner Frederik W. de Klerk, and former Polish President and 1983 Nobel Peace Prize winner Lech Walesa (right).

ORT was formed in Tsarist Russia in 1880 as “Oobshestvo Remeslennofo zemledelcheskogo Truda” or “The Society for Trades and Agricultural Labour.” The globalization of the program over the last 126 years has transformed it into World ORT, while maintaining its original acronym, as well as the motto: “Educating for Life.”
Paul Gianaris ’70: Tireless Advocate for CCSU and New Britain

Paul Gianaris ’70 was born in New Britain and has lived here long enough to have a sense of its history. He can name all of the factories and firms that years ago made the city a hub of manufacturing. He can describe the evolution of local cultural and arts institutions, as well as the development of Central Connecticut State University from the handful of buildings and programs it was when he studied accounting here to the far-reaching institution it is today.

Fortunately for the city and his alma mater, Paul Gianaris thinks more about the future—specifically, what he can do in the here-and-now to have ongoing positive effects on the community. He has made an impact on the city as a three-term board member of the New Britain Symphony Orchestra, a volunteer at the New Britain Museum of American Art, and a supporter of the Trinity-on-Main arts and education center, among other endeavors. At the University, he has been a frequent and generous donor, as well as a supporter and season ticket-holder of CCSU football and basketball games, the treasurer of the Alumni Track Club, and a member of a new committee charged with creating a scholarship fund to support CCSU students who have served in the armed forces, particularly those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. A tireless advocate for the University, Gianaris was instrumental in facilitating the largest gift ever received from an individual donor when he encouraged family friend Tony Bichum to create the Anthony and Helen G. Bichum Scholarship Fund in the CCSU School of Engineering & Technology.

Gianaris had both the economy of his beloved New Britain and the interests of CCSU students in mind last year when he made a major gift to establish the Gianaris Family Scholarship and Endowment in the School of Business, with the purpose of supporting students pursuing entrepreneurial careers. Scholarships, he points out, are one way to address the lack of opportunities for young people. He believes the entrepreneurship curriculum—and other University initiatives such as the Institute of Technology and Business Development—can help draw businesses to the city and help them survive and thrive in this tough economy.

“Paul is really passionate, not only about giving to Central, but also about economics and doing something for the economy of the community,” notes CCSU Vice President for Institutional Advancement Christopher J. Galligan. Galligan has high praise for Gianaris, who is the recipient of the 2009 Distinguished Alumni Service Award. “He’s the epitome of a great alumnus—and it’s not just financial giving. There is his volunteerism, his willingness to give feedback, and his efforts to connect people with the University. He’s always willing to talk about Central and what it has done for him.”

A graduate of New Britain High School, Gianaris is the son of Greek immigrants who were themselves small-business owners. They ran a restaurant on Main Street, where Gianaris also worked before completing a stint in the armed forces from 1961–63. As an army private, he was stationed in Europe with duties relating to finance. He returned home and, thanks to the GI bill, was able to enroll at Central, which was then just initiating a general education program. Earning his degree in accounting, Gianaris worked from 1969 to 1993 as an auditor and then as an assistant manager at the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services. He also worked briefly for the New Britain Herald when it was still a family-owned business.

Gianaris says it was his membership in the Shriners fraternal organization, which engages in fundraising for 22 children’s hospitals, that first exposed him to volunteering and charity work. He gradually found his way to involvement in a wide range of arts, cultural, athletic, and educational endeavors in the city and at the University. Humble to a fault, he doesn’t think there is anything special about his activities as a volunteer, vocal advocate, booster, and unofficial ambassador of his home city. He just shrugs and says, “You have to use what you’ve got to do something positive.”

Gianaris sums up his reasons for staying involved with the University quite succinctly. He says, “I believe in giving back. You go to school, you get your education, you give back.”

— Leslie Virostek
CCSU Theatre Students Shine at KCACTF—From Regional Competition to National Recognition

The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF) annually draws some 18,000 student participants from more than 600 colleges and universities to its regional competitions for a chance to perform at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. This year, CCSU students not only won impressively in the Region I competition, but two students were selected to compete in the national competition in DC. And, for the first time, a CCSU student won an award at this highest level.

Region I Competition
At the regional competition, held on January 27-February 1, attended by competing students from 40 colleges and universities, five CCSU students won in their categories, and two of those students were selected to participate in the national competition at the Kennedy Center. The students and their theatre department faculty mentors are: Douglas Oliphant for directing (Sheila Siragusa mentor), Ashley Carvalho for acting (Thom Delventhal mentor), Caitlin Bunce for costume design for Birds (Lani Johnson mentor), and Kevin Shaw for lighting design for Water (Ken Mooney mentor).

Oliphant and Carvalho are the first CCSU theatre students to be invited to compete at the Kennedy Center nationals in DC. Oliphant’s invitation represents the first time that a student director has been invited to the national competition. And Carvalho is one of only two students (out of this year’s field of 200) to be chosen for the acting competition at the Kennedy Center.

Additionally, at the regional competition, student Zac Delventhal won the Classical Award for his acting competition scene. CCSU’s production of Water, written and directed by CCSU Assistant Professor of Theatre Sheila Siragusa, won an award for “theater for social change.”

Kennedy Center
At the Kennedy Center competition, Oliphant, who will be graduating with high honors in May with a BFA, won the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers’ national Directing Fellowship. He was one of nine regional winners competing. “The festival draws top professionals from all around the country to work with students in hopes that they will become the next-generation leaders of the American theatre scene,” according to Oliphant. “Based on the work we do in our week at the festival, we may be selected to participate in programs at major, regional theaters and advanced training institutions around the country, forming connections with key people who will be offering job opportunities after we graduate.”

Carvalho, at the regional, won the Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship, which provides recognition and financial assistance to performers wishing to pursue further education. The Irene Ryan Foundation awards 19 regional awards and two fellowships annually. “I never anticipated moving to the final round and winning the Irene Ryan Scholarship for acting — and having the opportunity to compete on a national level,” said Carvalho. At the Kennedy Center, Carvalho worked with her partner Kyle Mencel, with Delventhal serving as her mentor. Carvalho said, “Though I mainly worked privately with my partner, my professors were always there whenever we needed them to workshop a scene or my monologue.”

“We are very proud of Doug and his accomplishments,” said Siragusa. “He brings so much joy and devotes so much time to his work. It’s gratifying to see that rewarded. Ashley’s work was also exceptional. She is equally great at both comedy and drama and her energy is unmatchable. And Kyle was a great acting partner for her.”

— Caroline Dearborn

CCSU Students and Professor Report on Economic Impact of Exhibit at New Britain Museum of American Art

A study done by students of Associate Professor of Geography Richard Benfield revealed that a recent exhibition at the New Britain Museum of American Art helped generated an estimated economic impact of $1 million to the region. The exhibit, titled “Contemporary Glass: Chihuly and Beyond,” produced a record attendance of 26,000 visitors during its three month stay at the museum. Benfield supervised exit interviews done by CCSU students as visitors left the museum. From analysis of the data collected during these interviews, it was found that visitors to the exhibit spent about $100,000 at the museum. In addition, according to Benfield, “based on precise revenue figures and conservative estimates of spending in areas such as gasoline, meals, and accommodations, we can estimate a total economic impact of $1 million. It’s a significant sum in any economy, but especially significant in this period of economic downturn.”
The Central Connecticut women’s basketball season ended at Boston University on Thursday, March 19. The Blue Devils lost, 79-60, in the first round of the Women’s National Invitation Tournament. The second half of that last sentence will resonate for quite some time.

Current CCSU head coach Beryl Piper played for the legendary Dr. Brenda Reilly during the mid-to-late 1980s. The Blue Devils were still an NCAA Division II team then, and they were a good one. In Piper’s senior season, Central Connecticut made it to the NCAA Division II quarterfinals. That 1985-86 team went 24-4. It is the best record in program history. Prior to this season, it was also the last team to appear in national postseason play.

At the beginning of this season, the Northeast Conference coaches picked Central Connecticut to finish 11th in the league. The slotting could hardly be considered an insult. The Blue Devils had, in fact, tied for 10th in 2007-08. It did, however, ultimately make the climb from the bottom much more fulfilling.

“To me the coaches’ polls don’t mean much,” Piper said after the poll was released. “What matters is where you finish at the end of the season. We have to prove to people we can beat them before they rank us higher. For this year, there is nowhere to go but up.”

Central Connecticut started its season at the USF Shootout. The Blue Devils lost to host South Florida and Harvard on consecutive days to begin Piper’s second campaign as head coach at 0-2. Two notes from that weekend developed as the season progressed. CCSU would not lose two straight again until mid-January, and three of the four teams at the event would be playing in the WNIT.

After the tournament, Piper was nothing but positive.

“You want to improve on all the things you didn’t do well. You kind of want to forget about it, but also give the kids an understanding of what they have to strive for.

“They have to ask themselves: How good do you want to be?”

Two weeks later, CCSU answered that question.

After a pair of home games, the Blue Devils entered the Rhody Classic with a 1-3 record. They had defeated Maine, 65-57, before falling three points short of rallying from 18 points down against Bryant. It was quite a warm-up for what happened in Kingston.

Central Connecticut faced Cornell, the defending Ivy League champion, in the first game of the Rhody Classic. The Blue Devils trailed 36-17 with 6:29 in the first half. They won 74-66. There are only seven better NCAA Division I comebacks on record.

“We have our ups and downs, but this team is going to battle,” Piper said after the tournament.

The Blue Devils had gone on to defeat Rhode Island, 66-58, to win the tournament championship. Freshman Shontice Simmons was named the tourney’s Most Outstanding Player. Sophomores Kerrianne Dugan and Leanne Crockett joined her on the all-tournament team.

The true test would begin in a Northeast Conference home game with Mount St. Mary’s, picked seventh in the league’s preseason poll. CCSU beat the Mount by 25 points. The Blue Devils then went to Long Island, slotted sixth in the poll, and won by 17 points. They were 2-0 in the NEC for the first time. It was the first of many firsts.

The women’s team lost at Fordham and then beat Colgate and Longwood and started a six-game winning streak, a first since 1997-98.

Monmouth and St. Francis (PA) were unable to defend their home courts against CCSU. The Blue Devils topped Fairleigh Dickinson and Wagner in Detrick Gymnasium. At 6-0 with wins over teams picked fourth through ninth in the preseason poll, the women were in first place in the NEC. And with an 11-5 overall record, the Blue Devils were off to their best start since the 1997-98 season.
It could be said that CCSU was being overlooked by league foes the first time around. Teams had nothing to fall back on when the Blue Devils won twice.

CCSU swept Mount St. Mary’s, Wagner, St. Francis (PA) and Fairleigh Dickinson during the regular season. The Blue Devils also collected wins over LIU and St. Francis (NY) in the teams’ only meetings. However, one of the biggest regular season wins came at home.

The Blue Devils had defeated every team ranked ahead of them in the preseason poll other than the top-three (Robert Morris, Quinnipiac and Sacred Heart) heading into that home date. Robert Morris, the two-time defending NEC champions, was riding a seven-game winning streak when it arrived in New Britain. The Colonials left with a loss.

“Before the season started we had talked about how big it would be to get a win over any those top teams,” Piper said. “It was great for our players. They played so hard in that game.”

Central Connecticut got to 12 conference wins with a victory over SFNY. The 12-win total matched CCSU’s best as an NEC member. They went 12-4 in, yes, 1997-98. A three-game losing streak ended the regular season, but the Blue Devils had locked up the conference’s second seed by then.

“This team accomplished a lot of things throughout the regular season,” Piper said. “But we made the kids aware that you play the whole season for one opportunity, the chance to win the NECs.”

The Blue Devils hadn’t been to the NEC Tournament since 2005-06. A victory had eluded the program since 1997-98. They had been the second seed in 1997-98, too. Fairleigh Dickinson was the seventh seed, and CCSU advanced to the semifinals with a win over the Knights. They did the same thing against the same opponent in 2008-09.

Unfortunately, the first-ever NEC title game berth was thwarted by nine-time conference champion St. Francis (PA). In 1997-98, Wagner ended the Blue Devil run. Unlike in 1997-98, there was still something left to root for, even if that something was intrastate rival Sacred Heart.

Fresh tears were still on the cheeks of lone senior Jhanay Harris and Simmons as they sat down at the dais for what they thought would be the final press conference of the season, but a question from the press corps midway through the session changed the tone of the room.

Piper smiled wryly and let out an awkward laugh when pressed about needing to cheer on Sacred Heart in order for the Blue Devils to earn a Women’s NIT automatic berth as the conference’s regular season second place finisher. Harris beamed and Simmons gleamed in surprise.

“It was kind of like a little weird feeling today because you have a little bit of a hope there that we do have a last game, which a lot of the kids don’t really know about yet,” Piper admitted to the reporters. “We haven’t talked about that.” Well, Sacred Heart won, and Central Connecticut got to talk about it.

The Blue Devils led Boston University, 41-38, at halftime of the WNIT game in Case Gymnasium. It was the perfect up. The second half epitomized the worst of the downs.

continued on page 16
A Turnaround Year: Women Blue Devils Arrive on Division I Stage Triumphant

continued from page 15

Despite the loss, the women finished the year at 18-14. After winning just four games last season, the Blue Devils held on to the nation’s top turnaround. They also put just the fourth NCAA Division I winning season in the CCSU record books.

“It gave us a taste,” Simmons said. “There’s going to be a little bit of pressure to keep this going, but we want this to be just the start of what we do here. We’re trying to build a program so that this is just the beginning.”

Dugan, who played on last season’s 4-25 team, agreed.

“I don’t think the freshmen get what we went through last season, what we had to deal with,” she added. “What we accomplished this season says a lot about us and our heart. This season’s improvement is such a big deal, but we know we can accomplish more next season.”

The top six scorers and rebounders from this season’s team will return for 2009–10, and Jameilia Dillon, the 2009 Rhode Island Division I State Tournament MVP, and Kirsten Daamen, named as one of the top centers in Massachusetts this season, have signed National Letters of Intent.

With all said, it’s safe to say Central Connecticut women’s basketball has arrived on the NCAA Division I stage. And the future looks awfully bright.

—Jason Stronz

Back-to-Back Championships

The CCSU women’s swimming and diving team earned its second straight Northeast Conference Championship crown with a 17-point victory at Yale University in February. Despite losing 11 champions from a season ago, the Blue Devils held off Wagner, St. Francis (PA), and all others to win the 2009 NEC Championship. CCSU claimed four out of five individual awards from the meet. Head Coach Bill Ball was named NEC Coach of the Year, and Dave Malair was awarded NEC Diving Coach of the Year honors. Freshman Mallory Miller collected NEC Diver of Year accolades, while Alex Czaplicki was tabbed NEC Rookie of the Year.