CCSU and New Britain Celebrate Art
Carl R. Lovitt, Provost, CCSU

On March 31, 2011, the New Britain Museum of American Art will host the third “CCSU Night at the Museum,” which will feature presentations, exhibits, and performances by school and college students and teachers, as well as community artists. This event, the culmination of the ongoing University-Museum-Community (UMC) Collaborative, has gained wide acceptance as a symbol of CCSU’s commitment to community engagement, attracting hundreds of visitors to the museum for an electrifying celebration of the arts in our community.

The theme for this year’s UMC Collaborative is “Where Art Meets Water,” through which students learned and reflected about the vital role of water in sustaining life on earth, as well as about the science, economics, and politics of water. As part of this project, students in college classes throughout CCSU completed creative assignments that connected their understanding of water with representations of water in works at NBMAA; many students linked their creations to issues concerning water usage and contamination in our region. A related project, “Izzy the Frog,” involved students from New Britain and Hartford in a study of our region’s watershed. Student art from all of these projects will be on display at the museum.

This year’s museum event will feature a unique display of extravagantly decorated fish. Unfinished wooden fish decoys were distributed to each academic department at CCSU with instructions for the faculty to decorate the fish to reflect the distinctive features of their disciplines. If you’ve ever wondered how an engineering fish differs from a political science fish, this is your chance to find out. Following their display at the museum, the fish will be auctioned off at the CCSU Sustainability Conference on April 7, with proceeds to go to the New Britain Mayor’s Workplan to End Homelessness.

Leading up to the Night at the Museum, art galleries in New Britain will host three exhibits by CCSU artists, each with a common water theme. Professor Jerry Butler’s exhibit, “Water: Art, Science, Sustainability,” explores our fascination with water and considers the unique science of this vital resource. “Waterworks,” an exhibit by Professor Rachel Siporin and three art students at CCSU’s downtown New Britain location, Community Central, explores the four artists’ relationship to water in sociopolitical and personal terms. The third exhibit, “Water Show” by CCSU faculty, will be held in the galleries of the Art League of New Britain. Each gallery will host an opening reception for the water exhibits from 6 to 8 p.m., March 18.

Visitors to the NBMAA on March 31 will be entertained by street performers, singers, dancers, a guitar trio, and a chamber orchestra composed of CCSU and NBHS students. Join us in savoring artistic reflections on the earth’s most precious resource and celebrating the vibrant bond linking our University and the surrounding community of New Britain.