

Academic Affairs Update

YORK COLLEGE

York Undergraduate Research Day



Students and professors during the poster exhibit of the Research Day

April 15th was not just “Tax Day.” It was also Undergraduate Research Day — at York College.

York has joined the Council on Undergraduate Research, the premier organization facilitating, studying and showcasing undergraduate research.

Provost Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith launched the program by establishing the Office of Undergraduate Research. He appointed Dr. Rishi Nath as director, and dozens of students and their fac-

ulty mentors showed off their research in the sciences, literature, the visual arts, and other areas. Even a casual glance at the parade of posters lining the hallways of the Academic Core Building was notification that indeed there is student scholarship at work at York.

Take for example, Benifer Gonzalez and Jody-Ann McLeggon, two seniors majoring in Biology. Gonzalez intends to study genetic counseling after graduating from York, while McLeggon wants to be a pediatrician. They now prepare for those careers by studying at York and by engaging in undergraduate research with their mentor, Dr. Gerard McNeil and other outstanding faculty.

Their project, Characterization of Potential RNA Targets of the Drosophila RNA-Binding Protein LARK, is guided by their mentor, Dr. McNeil; they describe LARK as an RNA binding protein that is maternally expressed during oogenesis. “It has three RNA binding domains that are essential for its function during oogenesis,” says McLeggon. “[It’s] a microarray ribonomics approach to identify thirty-seven potential in vivo RNA targets during oogenesis.”

The duo explains that the aim of their research project is to begin to evaluate the thirty-seven candidate targets identified in order to fully understand how the protein LARK functions during oogenesis.

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York & Construction Giant Sign Partnership

Wanting to enhance its offering to meet the continuing needs of the Queens community, York College has signed an agreement with a giant in the construction industry, to provide cer-

tification to qualified applicants.

Turner Construction Company (TCC), a leader in the industry, has been offering construction business education since 1969 and the agreement with York is

just the latest such endeavor.

According to a course blurb, the Construction Management Academy was designed to provide professional certification that incorporates York

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Special points of interest:

- More funding for York Researchers
- Student to Naval Academy Conference
- York Alumnus George Grasso

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York College is On the Move in Albany

Selena T. Rodgers & Earl Simons

On March 9, 2010, twenty-four York students majoring in Social Work and Sociology, and two York College faculty members joined President Marcia V. Keizs and Earl Simons (Director of Government and Community Relations) in Albany, New York for the annual Legislative Action Day. The York College delegation was engaged in a full day of meetings with NYS Assembly and Senate members and their senior staff.

Dr. Selena Rodgers (York College Social Work Club Faculty Advisor), Andreau Charles (President of York College Social Work Club President), and Jaime Rivas-Williams (Vice President of York College Social Work Club) worked diligently with Earl Simons (Director of Government and Community Relations) to coordinate our meetings with legislators. Our day in Albany started with stu-



L.-r.: Assemblywoman Vivian Cook, Dr. Selena Rodgers, President Marcia V. Keizs, and Prof. Crystal George-Mosses

dents participating in a working brunch meeting hosted by Assemblywoman Vivian Cook. The discussion, which was productive and engaging, addressed the many issues that impact student learning, the Social Work Profession, and the college community.

York College Students were professional and succinct in their expression of sincere appreciation for President Keizs and legislators for their continued leadership and support. "It was validating to see students excited to integrate their knowledge and skills learned in the classroom with themes of public service,

economic empowerment, political activism, and community involvement," acknowledged Dr. Rodgers. Additionally, another legislative aide discussed several internship possibilities for York students in New York State government at the legislative level.

York College students thanked New York State Assemblywoman Vivian Cook for securing \$5 million, with the support of the state legislature, for the building of the *York College Child and Family Center*, which is now officially opened. The students also expressed gratitude to Assemblywoman Cook for securing \$11 million for enhancements and repairs to the Academic Core Building (for example, benches outside, student common space renovations) and as a down payment for the construction of the York College Academic Village (student union building).



Assemblywoman Vivian Cook (center, seated), with President Keizs, Dr. Rodgers, Prof. George-Mosses, and York College students



May 8, 2010 Mary-Jo Kranacher (center) was honored as the recipient of the Distinguished Faculty Award from the York College Alumni Association. Alumnus Dr. Andrew Campbell (l.) received the Distinguished Alumnus award. In the picture both award recipients are joined by President Marcia V. Keizs

A Global Social Work Agenda in the Millennium

On March 29, 2010, Dr. Selena Rodgers and five York students were among 400 social workers, students and educators who participated in the 27th Annual United Nations Social Work Day.

The event was co-chaired by two main representatives to the United Nations in New York, Janice Wood Wetzel (International Association of Schools of Social Work) and Michael Cronin (International Federation of Social Workers). Helen Clark, the adminis-



Social Work Students: Teresa Orr, Andreau Charles, Can (John) Onaler, Serah Aminatabh, Jewel Dey (l. - r.)

trator of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the third highest ranking official in the United Nations was among the presenters; she encouraged social

workers to become more involved in campaigning to challenge inequality and injustice, and to work towards a sustainable environment.

Dr. Rodgers' interest in global social work emerged from her grassroots community-based experience coupled with extensive teaching in the classroom, but it was the mentoring relationship with Dr. Wetzel that sparked her interest to advocate for the voiceless global community.



L.-r.: Dr. Janice Wood Wetzel, Chair of the NGO Committee on Mental Health; Dr. Selena T. Rodgers (York College Social Work Program); Professor Gary Bailey (Simmons College School of Social Work)



Impressions from a choir and band clinic for the students of Northome and Kelliher High Schools, of Kelliher, Minnesota conducted on March 20th, by Professor Tom Zlabinger and Adjunct Instructor Jonathan Quash. About 45 students from the high schools were on a bus tour and had requested the opportunity to study at a college in New York, that had both a choral program and a band. Their first choice was York College.



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Comments from the student panelists and attendees reflect the positive impact of the experience on them. Many said that they truly treasured the opportunity, which not only boosts their self-confidence but also enables them to better understand social research in terms of its purposes, functions and practice. One student said it was

“one of the most nerve-wrecking (yet) exciting days” of her life. Another indicated that “. . . we met students from different schools. I thought students were not interested in research. I was wrong. Attending this conference changed my perception about research . . .”

Some also expressed their gratitude to Dr. Rosenthal and their team-

mates. While all of them were proud of representing York College, one student stated, “I was happy to see that York was there. I do wish that we had more presenters. York is . . . on the move, but we need more representation at functions like these.”