

Academic Affairs Update

YORK COLLEGE

Annual Academic Leadership Retreat

On January 11, 2011, under the threat from an impending snow storm, York College's academic leadership team gathered in the college's Faculty Dining Room for its fourth annual retreat. Provost Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith had charged the group to collectively contemplate and report on various aspects on how to enhance the educational experiences offered at the college. In fact, the official theme of the retreat was "Listening, Learning, Leading ... Towards Enhanced Educational Experiences."

Nearly four dozen leaders from the academic division and a few administrative areas as-

sembled for the day-long session to brainstorm and discuss how to improve numerous aspects in the coming years. Also participating were President Marcia V. Keizs, Senior Vice President for Administration Jerry Posman, CUNY Vice-Chancellor for Labor Relations, Pamela Silverblatt, and Queens College's Dean of General Education Judith Summerfield, formerly CUNY University Dean for Undergraduate Studies.



"Listening & Learning ..."

The Provost reminded the group that – following Charles Dickens – our current moment nationally and institutionally reflects both "the best of times" and "the worst of times," and amounts to both a "spring of hope" and a "winter of despair." He suggested that listening and learning are integral elements of leading. However, listening can sometimes mean that there are uncomfortable things to listen to. The Provost implored the group to own the things we need to improve without becoming defensive about the discomforts we may hear in the process. He then intro-

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Special points of interest:

- Gen. Ed. Reform reflection
- Global Trade Initiative Center
- Mock Research Conference
- York Scholars help New Orleans

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York Alum Appointed President of CUNY College

York College is pleased to share the news that the CUNY Board of Trustees has appointed Dr. Carole Berotte Joseph, a member of the York College Class of 1971, as president of Bronx Community Col-

lege (BCC) effective July 18, 2011.



Dr. Carole Berotte Joseph

Dr. Berotte Joseph, who was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, earned a bachelor's degree in Spanish with minors in French and Education at York, will succeed Dr. Carolyn Williams as president of BCC.

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Dr. Berotte Joseph earned a Master's in Education from Fordham University and a doctorate in Sociolinguistics and Bilingual Education from New York University.

She has served as Vice President of Academic Affairs at Hostos Community College/CUNY; Chief Academic Officer and Dean of Academic Affairs at Dutchess Community College/SUNY; taught at Bank Street College, Graduate School of Education; New York University's School

of Education, Health, Nursing, and Arts Professions; Indiana University's Creole Institute at Bloomington; and in Haiti as a visiting professor. She also served as president of Massbay Community College, in Massachusetts.

In its nearly 45-year history, York has seen many of its graduates serve in administrative positions within higher education across the nation; however this is the first time a member of the alumni community has been appointed

president of a sister CUNY College.

"We congratulate Dr. Berotte Joseph on her appointment to succeed Dr. Williams who has led BCC with distinction for the past 15 years," said Dr. Marcia V. Keizs, president of York. "We are delighted to welcome her as president of an outstanding college in the CUNY family and look forward to her success in this important role."

PROVOST LECTURE

"Can I Grow Old Here?: Aging in New York City"

1) "Urban Renewal and Aging in New York City"

Dr. Alex W. Costley

(Dept. of Health and Physical Education,
School of Health & Behavioral Sciences)

2) "Charting the Future of Workforce Education and Training"

Dr. Beverly P. Horowitz

(Dept. of Occupational Therapy,
School of Health & Behavioral Sciences)



**February 17, 2011
Rm. 1M06, 4:00 – 6:00 pm**

The first presentation of this double-header symposium explores the potential impact of an historic rezoning and urban renewal project in Jamaica, Queens on older adults and their opportunities for growing older and "aging-in-place" in New York City. The second presentation reports on themes and data obtained in 8 NYS Listening Sessions which were part of a study conducted by NYSOFA and the State Society on Aging of NY. Data represents the perspectives of stakeholders across NYS on workforce education and training to meet the needs of older New Yorkers and families.

Book Launch: *The End of French Rule in Cameroon*



The African American Resource Center was filled to capacity on Wednesday, November 10. Students and faculty gathered to celebrate the publication of a new book by Martin Atangana, Associate Professor of History both here at York and at the Graduate Center, *The End of French Rule in Cameroon*. The event was sponsored by the African American Studies Program, the Department of History and Philosophy, and the Office of Academic Affairs.

Dr. Atangana's book explores the multiple dynamics of decolonization and draws on research conducted in Cameroon and France. It analyzes the reforms introduced by

France in Cameroon after World War II, the circumstances surrounding the unsuccessful attempt of the UPC to seize independence by force, and the subsequent eradication of this party by an alliance of Franco-Cameroonian forces. The book shows the length that the French were prepared to go in order to leave Cameroon in the hands of a government that would be sympathetic to their interests. The author, a native of Cameroon, provides insights based on his own cultural experiences.

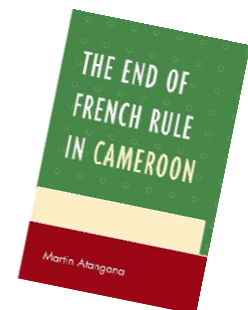
Provost Ivelaw L. Grif-fith provided opening remarks. Commentary on the book was provided by Dr. Conrad Dyer

(Political Science, Department of Behavioral Sciences) and Dr. Hamid Bahri (French, Department of Foreign Languages, ESL and Humanities). Issues raised included the political legacy of European colonial policies in Africa, and the profound psychological impact of colonialism on native populations. Questions of power and identity were raised as the large audience continued a lively discussion.

Unfortunately, the honoree could not be present due to a sudden medical emergency. However, his work inspired faculty and students and stimulated inquiry into the complex nature of colonialism and its aftermath.



Dr. Martin Atangana



President Keizs delivering a dynamic presentation at the Academic Leadership Retreat

“The Brain is Wider Than the Sky:”

Reflections on York’s General Education Reform Process

by Linda Grasso (Dept. of English)

Reading through the archive of York’s General Education Reform documents is a humbling experience. The beautifully written summaries of what occurred at meeting after meeting clearly show how much intellectual labor has been invested in the process, and how every conflict, obstacle, and challenge has been painstakingly identified and addressed. What is there to add?

Let me tell a story rather than hazard an answer: I was on the number two train returning from Brooklyn College where I was teaching as an adjunct while on leave from a tenure-track job as Assistant Professor of English in Georgia. It was 1996, the year before I started at York. The train was still fairly empty because we were only a few stops from the end of the line, headed toward Manhattan. I was deeply absorbed in reading Tim O’Brien’s book, *The Things They Carried*, when a young man sitting across from me noticed the book’s title and started talking to me: “I remember that

story. That’s the story that begins with the description of what the soldiers are carrying. Oh, I remember that story. We read it in my freshman English class.”



Prof. Grasso (r.) delivering her remarks during the Academic Leadership Retreat in January 2011

O’Brien’s book is indeed memorable. A searing account of soldiering in Viet Nam, the collection of interwoven stories probes the anguish of war while meditating on the porous boundaries between reality, truth, and fiction. Most spectacularly, O’Brien employs the metaphor of carrying to convey the gravity of heartbreak, senseless loss, and war’s breach of moral ethics. “First Lieutenant Jimmy Cross carried letters from a girl named Martha, a junior at Mount Sebastian College in New Jersey,” the first story begins. “They were not love

letters, but Lieutenant Cross was hoping, so he kept them folded in plastic at the bottom of his rucksack.”

Within the first two pages, O’Brien develops the metaphor further by listing the literal objects the soldiers wore on their bodies, hauled on their backs, and stashed in their pockets.

The things they carried were largely determined by necessity. Among the necessities or near-necessities were P-38 can openers, pocket knives, heat tabs, wristwatches, dog tags, mosquito repellent, chewing gum, candy, cigarettes, salt tablets, packets of Kool-Aid, lighters, matches, sewing kits, Military Payment Certificates, C rations, and two or three canteens of water. Together, these items weighed between 12 and 18 pounds, depending upon a man’s habits or rate of metabolism.

The young man’s response when he recognized the O’Brien book while riding on the subway exemplifies the very best General Education can achieve. Something in the text,

the reading, the discussion, and the college classroom experience entered into the student and became part of his world. Like the soldiers who carry the material and psychological weight of war, the student carries the book and the experience of reading it with him, and that is what inspired him to initiate connection with a complete stranger on a New York City subway.

The experience in the General Education classroom, I would venture to guess, provided the model for the interaction. The young man wanted to create connection about being moved emotionally, his discovery of the meaning of metaphor, and his memory of that experience. The interaction between the young man and myself sparked by the O’Brien text suggests that the General Education classroom fosters community building—even if it exists only between three subway stops. Unknown to each other, the young man and I are part of a community premised on the idea

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that learning, and communing about learning, are fundamental, unifying values.

Now, how do we assess this student's learning? He could conceivably not have done well in his freshman English class. He could have failed the class, transferred to another college, or dropped out for a year or two. He could be a statistic on a chart. What this student learned, I propose, cannot be explained or quantified using assessment models and criteria that are currently in vogue. What this student learned is ineffable, as difficult to wrap our minds around as Emily Dickinson's claim that the "brain is wider than the sky."

"The Brain—is wider
than the Sky—
For—put them side
by side—
The one the other
will contain
With ease—and You
—beside"

At York, we function in an institutional structure and therefore we abide and comply. That is why we are reforming the General Education curriculum and not revolutionizing it. As we move forward, let's keep Dickinson's dictum about the sanctity

of the human imagination ever present in our minds. Let's cultivate the necessary distance from the corporate model of assessing and measuring and be mindful that our business is not to produce widgets. We are working with people, human beings whose height and weight can be measured yes, but whose brains are wider than the sky, "For—put them side by side—/The one the other will contain/ with ease—and You—beside—."

In its notion of lateral reinforcement of intellectual competencies, and its grounding in complex intellectual inquiry, the proposed York College General Education curriculum honors the idea that brains are wider than the sky and deeper than the sea, "For—hold them—Blue to Blue—/The one the other will absorb—/As sponges—Buckets—do."

The potential for creating intellectual community in a variety of simultaneous domains is, in my view, what is most exciting about the General Education reform process. Change involves what Judith Viorst calls "necessary losses." We give up the familiar, the comfortable, the known. The

fear and discomfort change generates is what all our students, especially in General Education classes, experience. The General Education reform process gives faculty the opportunity to experience once again what it is like to be a student: pushed to confront risk, to leave the familiar, to grapple with the unknown. I see some colleagues expressing fear, suggesting that we are being railroaded, that the proposed new curriculum will cause hardship, diminishment, be detrimental to new faculty, cause the college's downfall. I wonder: How can we harness this energy, this power, and utilize it in the service of learning, our own and that of our students?

In answering this question, we build community. For as faculty, what an amazing opportunity to ponder large philosophical questions and consider how we can convey to successive generations of students the love of inquiry, the pleasure of thinking. What an amazing opportunity to puzzle out how to make change happen collectively, democratically, to learn how to disagree, compromise, and

make something that is larger than ourselves. Creating a new curriculum is akin to creating a work of art, and in the same way stories change with the telling, so, too, will the new General Education curriculum change as it is transformed from theory to practice in our classrooms.



Works Cited

1. Dickinson, Emily. "The Brain is wider than the Sky." *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Ed. Thomas H. Johnson. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1961. 312.
2. General Education Reform. York College, City University of New York. 11 January 2011 <<http://www.york.cuny.edu/academics/academic-affairs/general-education-reform>>
3. O'Brien, Tim. *The Things They Carried*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin/Seymour Lawrence, 1990.
4. Viorst, Judith. *Necessary Losses*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986.

Enhancement through Gen Ed Reform

by Donna Chirico (Dept. of Behavioral Sciences)

"Our ... youth are born under happier stars than you and I were. They acquire all learning in their mother's womb, and bring it into the world ready made. The information of books is no longer necessary; and all knowledge which is not innate, is in contempt or at least neglect." (1)

- Letter from Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, 1814

The "problem" of wanting student erudition has no doubt been discussed since the age of Plato; what changes is the conversation around why this is so with each generation seeking its own explanation related to its own time. Today, one sign of being an educated person is a having a college degree, hence our interest in moving students toward this goal.

I would argue that in order to increase retention and graduation rates there needs to be a cataclysmic shift in the structure of educational programs combined with the delivery of those programs including General Education.

This is difficult when the trend in education (and elsewhere) is to assume a solution to a problem, throw lots of money and energy at it, without having first done the rigorous piloting of the solution using the very methods of critical reflection and analysis that we want our students to learn and use.



Dr. Donna Chirico

In formulating a new General Education program for York, one must first address the matter of graduation rates and how evidence-based planning can be used to help guide the task.

Graduation Rates

What do we know about graduation rates?

Keep in mind that graduation rate does not equal educational attainment. Educational attainment measures the portion of the adult population (25 to 64) who obtain a college degree; graduation

rate measures the percent of students who start college and finish within a prescribed amount of time. Educational attainment hovers around 30% of the adult population in the United States (NB: All data cited come from *Persistence and Attainment of 2003-04 Beginning Postsecondary Students: After 6 Years*, December 2010, a report from the National Center for Educational Statistics.)

Compared to the last survey begun in 1996, the numbers have not changed. The last Beginning Post Secondary Survey found that 62.7% of students who began at a 4-year college in 1996, received a degree by 2001; the current report indicates that 63.2% of students who began at 4-year college in 2003, received a degree by 2009. Note the change though from 5 to 6 years for completing the degree.

The 4-year graduation rate from public colleges is 29%. (It is 50.4% at private colleges). The 6-year graduation rate from public colleges is

59.5%. (It is 64.6% at private colleges).

The most likely student to complete a college degree in 4 years is the same student who has always been the most likely: a white, upper middle class student under the age of 25 who does not work, whose parents have a college degree and who begins at a traditional 4-year institution straight from high school.

Students who were 20 years old or younger when they started college in 2003 were 10 times more likely to earn a degree than students who were over 30.

Regarding retention, less than half, about 40% students receive their degree/certificate from the institution at which they started.

Why so little change from the 1990s to now?

One conclusion being drawn from the current report is that most institutions have not adapted well to the needs of different students going to college at a different time. The increase in the numbers of students attending college is largely due to

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older, first-generation, immigrant, low-income students being added to the mix; yet, the basic structures and cultures of these institutions were established for a different student body and remain essentially unchanged.

What seems to be missing, even when there is recognition of the problem, is having an appropriate plan to address the problem and an implementation strategy for that plan that is well managed.

This last idea is key as various reports indicate that similar institutions enrolling similar students have dramatically different retention and graduation rates; one reason cited for lower rates is managerial incompetence – this managerial incompetence is seen across the categories of administration, staff, and faculty members.

Evidenced-based Planning

The idea of evidence-based planning comes to us from the health care sector; in 2005, for example, Medicare began an incentive reimbursement policy for health care providers (\$6,000 per patient) for administering the drug tPA within three hours of a stroke, because it

has been shown that patient recovery and mortality are significantly improved by this process.

The Obama health plan stresses evidence-based planning and now other sectors of government including education are utilizing this approach. We see it at CUNY in the PMP goals and results and rewards.

What is odd is that it has taken so long for evidence-based planning and contingent rewards to become a central policy factor; this seems especially odd at institutions of higher learning which advocate methods of logic and science that are at the heart of evidence-based models.

I would add that in addition to evidence-based planning, there needs to be ongoing assessment to ensure that outcomes are in line with planning goals. I would call this evidence-based implementation.

General Education Reform

The General Education program of any institution is but one piece of the basic structure and culture of that institution; but, of course, as part of a strategic plan it can change the way a

college engages students, faculty members, and staff.

When one evaluates the core requirements of those institutions that appear to be successful with respect to retention and graduation rates, there seem to be four qualities they share:

1. *They are small to modest in size ... around 35 credits;*
2. *they are sequential ... there is a pathway laid out that students must follow with foundation courses at the start followed by courses that provide breadth ... skills then content knowledge;*
3. *they offer many choices even at the foundation level ... one college (SUNY Cortland) has 20 courses across disciplines that can fulfill the quantitative skills component, most successful colleges offer numerous choices in the content knowledge areas; and,*
4. *they include an orientation toward learning outcomes.* (2)

Two aspects of concern to me that relate to the General Education proposal being evaluated at York are sequencing and evidence-

based implementation.

Sequencing the Liberal Arts

In medieval universities, the liberal arts were seven in number divided into two parts, the *trivium* and the *quadrivium* (“the three roads” and “the four roads”). The model is still valuable to us understanding that it is the content and delivery of that content that will change, NOT the structure of the approach.

(The *quadrivium* includes the subject areas, the breadth areas, those courses that come after the skills or foundation courses. The discussion of what areas might be included in a General Education program is for another day. Most of the subject areas that constitute the modern academy did not exist in Plato’s academy; hence the *quadrivium* was limited to arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy.)

The *trivium* consists of what we would think of today as basic learning skills; in teaching research methods in psychology, for example, this is described to students as the skills needed to produce a research paper.

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Originally these were grammar, logic and rhetoric; or to put it another way, these skills are:

- how we learn information,
- how we evaluate information, and,
- how we communicate information.

The process of how these skills are attained is one akin to the models offered in classical developmental psychology (3); think of it as a staircase where learners must have success at one step before proceeding to the next step. Therefore, being able to read and understand information comes before being able to think critically about that information, which comes before being able to tell someone else your opinion about that information. Failure at one step means that one cannot proceed adequately to the next.

(There is an underlying give and take at work where critical analysis requires taking an idea apart to understand it fully, while ultimately being able to communicate the idea requires synthesis, that is, putting it back together.)

This is a sound model that continues to serve many successful institutions well and this is

why I question the notion of General Education “reform”. There is much evidence to suggest that the failure is not in the General Education requirements, but in the delivery of those requirements and in the support services that are a necessary part of that delivery.



Faculty and staff during the Academic Leadership Retreat

Perhaps it is more fitting to speak about “reclaiming” General Education.

Implementation plan with ongoing assessment

Going back to the notion of evidence-based planning, there also needs to be assessment as you go rather than after the fact.

In the evaluation and creation/recreation of General Education programs, much effort is expended up front. Universities establish Gen Ed Task Forces that often involve many faculty members and staff members to collaborate toward a program that best serves the institution and its students. The task

force must gather information and work towards a plan all of which may take years (as has been the case at York). By the time the task force puts forward its conclusions, the press to enact the resulting plan is usually substantial.

The process itself often gets in the way of critical evaluation. A drawback is a phenomenon that social psychologists call “group think.” This is a concept put forward by Irving Janis in 1972 (as way to explain the Bay of Pigs crisis) where the maintenance of group cohesion and agreement becomes the focus, circumventing sound decision-making. (4) In the corporate world, this might be seen as the eagerness of the seller to get the “buy in” ... and only later do you discover that you bought swampland in Florida.

I must assert that just because many fine people have worked hard together over a lengthy period of time does not mean that the result is without challenge. The piece in the current proposal that seems to need the greatest challenge is the lack of clear implementation program that includes assessment.

If the goal is to increase retention and graduation rates, then this must be evidenced before a substantial number of students are subjected to a revised General Education requirement. General Education reform is not the answer; it is not the magic bullet.

Increasing retention and graduation rates will require much more than reforming Gen Ed; it will require change at the local level at York, at the CUNY-wide level and nationally to reflect the changes in the fundamental characteristics of students pursuing a college education. We need to prepare students locally to meet the challenges that they will face globally.

1. Susan Bauer Wise, *The Well-Educated Mind*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003) 17.
2. Public colleges that have had greater success at retaining and graduating students can be easily found by looking at any of the “best schools” lists that include the rates for these factors. The one used for this presentation was *Kiplinger's Best Values in Public Colleges*.
3. Erik Erikson, for example, called his model of development “epigenetic”, that is, each stage is implicitly present at birth, each stage builds on the previous stage, and each stage sets up development in the subsequent stage.
4. Irving L. Janus, *Victims of Groupthink*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972).

New Global Trade Initiative (GTI) Center

The grant proposal written by Dr. Olajide Oladipo (Department of Business & Economics) of the School of Business and Information Systems to establish a center for **Global Trade Initiative (GTI)** at the York College Small Business Development Center (SBDC) has been awarded a quarter of a million dollars (\$250,000) for FY 2011-2012. The grant money is from the Small Business Jobs Act Funds administered by the United States Small Business Administration (SBA), and is renewable for a second year. Mr. Harry Wells, the Director of the York College SBDC will oversee the activities of GTI.

According to Dr. Oladipo “the main aim of establishing GTI at York College is to foster new small and medium-sized businesses, and promote existing businesses to maximize export opportu-

nities with the rest of the world.” GTI will focus primarily on job creation and investment through skills development of entrepreneurs, small and medium-sized business owners in the borough of Queens as well as the rest of New York City. Dr. Oladipo said that “through seminars, workshops, conferences, technical sessions, and coaching, the center will engage business owners on how to:

- Prepare products for export, conduct market research and assess the competitive landscape;
- Determine organizational and product readiness;
- Develop an export strategy and marketing plan to assess market characteristics;
- Promote products in target markets;
- Factor logistics into strategic planning;
- Finance export transac-

tions;

- Work the deal – limiting risk and ensuring payment;
- Determine shipping costs in preparing quotations;
- Understand Incoterms;
- Appropriately classify, label and package products and commodities;
- Comply with Customs regulations, U.S. export controls and Transportation Security Administration security requirements.”

He envisages that “the initiative will impact positively on the economy of Queens and New York City, save existing and create new jobs”.

Dr. Oladipo, with extensive research and project experience in international trade, is also the staff advisor for the York College Entrepreneurship Club. He will develop workbook and training manual for the GTI projects.



Prof. Olajide Oladipo

“The aim is to foster new small and medium-sized businesses in Queens, and to maximize export opportunities with the rest of the world.”



Impressions from the 4th Annual Academic Leadership Retreat



Josephs Secures Diversity Grant



Dr. Kelly Baker Josephs

English professor, Kelly Baker Josephs has taken her scholarship in Caribbean Literature to a wider audience with a little help from the larger University.

Josephs needed support expanding *sx salon: a small axe literary platform* (www.smallaxe.net/sxsalon), to include special sections of short scholarly articles on topics related to Caribbean literature and culture; she applied for a grant from CUNY's Diversity Projects Development Fund (DPDF), an initiative of the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Human Resource Management, and received the small but meaningful Diversity funding.

The \$2,000 grant Joseph received will help support special sections of short scholarly articles on topics related to Caribbean literature and culture. The salon is published six times annually and is a new initiative from the Small Axe Project, known for the publication of *Small Axe*, an independent journal of Caribbean studies published by Duke University Press.

For sure *Small Axe* seems aimed at big trees in Josephs' arsenal for promulgating Caribbean

literary scholarship. According to Dr. Josephs, it focuses more on the literary and is dedicated to interviews of Caribbean writers, reviews of new publications (creative and scholarly) related to the Caribbean, and short creative pieces by emerging and established Caribbean writers alike.

"Last year, I received a grant from the DPDF to create *sx salon*, via the *Small Axe* website," said Josephs. "This year, the grant will help me to expand the salon to include themed discussions. Already, we have two discussions in the works: In February we will run a discussion on 'Caribbean Arts and Culture Online' and in April we will run a discussion of Edwidge Danticat's new publication, *Creating Dangerously*."

Josephs, whose own Caribbean roots are firmly established in Jamaica (W.I.), began teaching at York in the fall of 2006, quickly establishing her scholarship as an integral part of the English Department's curriculum. The professor is currently working on multiple ventures some of which, she says, are strictly research projects and others that, like *sx salon*, provide a plat-

form for other Caribbean Studies scholars.

This year she is co-organizing a seminar funded by the Center for the Humanities at the CUNY Graduate Center. "The 'Caribbean Epistemologies' seminar has been successful beyond our imaginings," said Josephs, adding that there is a Symposium in the works for this April.

Josephs also runs a website for the seminar on the CUNY Commons, aptly titled, "Caribbean Commons;" and she continues to serve as managing editor for *Small Axe*, now in its 14th year of publication.

Dr. Josephs runs the Africana Studies Colloquium with Dr. George White (Department of History and Philosophy), now in its second year at York; and is finishing up a book manuscript, *Disturbers of the Peace: Representations of Madness in Anglophone Caribbean Literature*. She is also in "the beginning stages" on a project about Diasporic Caribbean Writers. This spring the prolific professor will present a portion of that new work at "What is Caribbean Studies: Prisms, Paradigms and Practices," an international forum to be held at Yale University.

OT Professor earns Ph.D. in Neuropsychology

Occupational Therapy professor Lillian Kaplan closed out 2010 with a bang: she earned a Ph.D. in Neuropsychology from the CUNY Graduate Center.

For all her personal accomplishments, however, Dr. Kaplan seems proudest of her B.S./M.S. students in the Department of Occupational Therapy of the School of Health & Behavioral Sciences and what they have brought to the classroom and lab and will bring to the profession.

"I see the profession needing more clinical research and that's something we're looking to make happen," she said. "One of the benefits of my doctorate (to students) is to be able to integrate academic and get clinical views of different patient populations; I think that gives students perspective on the rationale for intervention."

Dr. Dana Fusco, Dean of York's School of Health and Behavioral Sciences, is also delighted with Kaplan's accomplishments.

"We are extremely for-

tunate to have faculty in the professional programs who, as master practitioners, also see the value in advanced education and scholarship," said Dr. Fusco. "Being able to connect professional skills with scientific inquiry not only contributes to the field of knowledge in Occupational Therapy; but faculty members bring that to the classroom enhancing student learning and outcomes. We are very proud of Dr. Kaplan."

Kaplan, who started her professional life as an OT clinician, also pointed out that York has the only OT program within CUNY and, as such, is providing an important service to the profession and the larger university. She looks forward to its expanded support. "I hope to see it get more recognition," she has said. "I am very committed to this program. It has been a good experience."

Dr. Kaplan has published several important studies and made presentations in her field. This spring she will once again take her scholarship on the road when she pre-

sents "The relationship of daily function to attention and global cognition in Alzheimer disease (AD)" at the International Neuropsychology Society Conference, in Boston.

Additionally, two studies recently completed with graduate students in the M.S./B.S. OT program will be presented at the American Occupational Therapy Annual Conference, in Philadelphia.

She is also proud of the Department's close mentoring relationship with students even after they have graduated and started their careers. It has been a win/win. Some have been able to mentor York interns, while others such as Ivy Tilson, now pursuing a Ph.D., have returned to teach in the program.

And Dr. Kaplan's work in her field has not gone unnoticed. Among the awards she has received for contribution to her field, is the Max and Edith Wiener Award: for research and clinical work involving patients with Alzheimer's disease.



Dr. Lillian Kaplan

York has the only OT program within CUNY and is providing an important service to the profession and the larger university.

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit." – Aristotle

Tensor Program Wins “Diversity” CUNY Grant

The York College Tensor Scholars Program may still be a fledgling initiative but it is decidedly earning its wings by garnering a CUNY grant and hosting speakers from diverse institutions.

Through the efforts of York Mathematics professors, Dr. Lidia Gonzalez and Dr. Rishi Nath, who founded and co-direct the Tensor Program, a grant of \$3,000 has also been awarded through the CUNY Diversity Fund for a two-day Women in Mathematics Conference, at York in March of this year.

The Tensor Scholars Program, according to Dr. Gonzalez, came about quite organically.

“A group of students, and not necessarily all Math majors, came together as a [Math] circle,” said Dr. Gonzalez. “They expressed interest [in becoming a formal entity] and Dr.

Nath found information for a grant through the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) for women and girls; and we sat down and wrote it.”



Dr. Rishi Nath

And in the two years since the Tensor Program – which is unique to York – has launched a speaker series and hosted scholars from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), University of British Columbia and Montclair State University in New Jersey, as well as nearby Queens College, to make presentations.

“I am excited to be working with Dr. Gonzalez on this expanded initiative to support the

increased participation of women in the mathematical and computing sciences at York,” said Dr. Nath.



Dr. Lidia Gonzalez

According to their flyer, the CUNY Diversity Projects Development Fund was established to “support scholarly research projects and other educational activities for or about populations that are rationally underrepresented within higher education ... and to assist in the development of education projects, scholarly research, creative endeavors and professional activities, which promote diversity, multiculturalism, and non-

discrimination.”

And Gonzalez explained that the York program ties in well with the CUNY program.

“The Tensor program is a prototype for the kind of high-impact mentoring and interactions that York students require,” said Dr. Gonzalez. This program is very exciting as it builds a culture of inclusion, bringing together individuals who might not otherwise feel they have a place within the mathematics community.”

She added that the program “actively challeng[es] traditional views of mathematicians and embracing the diversity within our department and the college in general.”

YORK COLLEGE IS CUNY



VITA: Progress through Teamwork

by Phoebe Massimino, Robert Clovey, Wayne Forrester and Chun-Pin Hsu (School of Business & Information Systems)

The VITA Program is the IRS's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program that provides free income tax preparation assistance to low-to-moderate income individuals in our communities.

The mission of VITA is to provide America's taxpayers with top quality service by helping them understand and meet their tax responsibilities and by applying the tax law with integrity and fairness to all. Under the direction of Professor Robert Clovey, the York College VITA program is the largest college based e-filing VITA program in the country and has guided other colleges such as Queens College, Brooklyn College, and Adelphi University to begin their own VITA programs. During the 2010 tax season, approximately 4,000 Queens residents had their tax returns completed, generating about \$4 million dollars in tax refunds for York College's VITA clients.

The 2011 tax season brings new innovations to the VITA program including: 1) a new organizational and management structure, 2)

the opportunity for York students to complete internships and co-ops within the VITA program, 3) providing for "non-accounting" business majors to participate in the VITA program, 4) developing and implementing an orientation program focusing on people skills and customer service, and, 5) providing for a very collaborative approach among the various business disciplines.

For the new management and organizational structure, a strategic management team, headed by Professor Wayne Forrester handles administrative tasks. For the first time, the VITA program has designated students in supervisory roles managing work teams. This increases coordination and communication, provides additional support for the VITA representatives within a team environment, and provides management experience for students in supervisory roles, enhancing their leadership skills.

Students can now earn credits toward their degree through

their work at VITA by fulfilling the academic requirements of an internship, in addition to completing the required number of hours.

"Non-accounting" job duties are necessary for the smooth functioning of VITA. These Support and Human Resource duties, organized by Professor Phoebe Massimino, have been delegated to non-accounting business majors.



Prof. Clovey and the VITA program in action

Ensuring confidentiality and security within the document management process, maintaining student and client files, ensuring paperwork has proper signatures and approvals, handling the document destruction process, maintaining attendance records, greeting and signing in clients, and other responsibilities are handled by this team.

This specialization of function has the double benefit of allowing

other business majors to participate in VITA, while freeing up the accounting students to process more tax returns. New features of training include an orientation program focusing on professionalism, an expanded confidentiality agreement/code of ethics, communication skills and customer service skills.

Currently, most departments (Accounting, Finance, Marketing, Management, Economics, etc.) within an established school of business (SOB) operate independently. Accounting students generally have little or no interaction with Marketing or Human Resource majors except for taking one or two classes together. Similarly, the professors of the various disciplines (business and non-business) usually have minimal contact with each other. The VITA program at York is working toward providing an opportunity for these disciplines to work together in a meaningful way utilizing their various skills and technical expertise. For example:

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L-R: Prof. Wayne Forrester, Dr. Chun-Pin Hsu, Dr. Phoebe Masimino, and Prof. Robert Clovey

cont.'d from p.13

- Accounting students and their professors prepare and review tax returns;
- marketing students and their professors prepare and execute the marketing campaign
- finance students and their professors - provide financial advice, financial literacy information;
- management - manages the program and creates structure;
- human resources - recruits, trains, maintains and protects client and volunteer records, etc.;
- economics - assesses the financial impact of the program on the community.

For this 2011 Tax Season, Financial Management is a new VITA initiative which helps VITA Clients understand how to manage their finances. Under the leadership of

Professor Rahnuma Ah-san and Professor Chun-Pin Hsu, Financial Management will cover how to prepare budgets as well as other cash management techniques. Economics and Finance majors present workshops during the hours VITA is preparing tax returns.

Other functions necessary for smooth operations include capacity planning and project management techniques. This ensures minimal "backlog" and "idle" time for volunteers, and better management of waiting time for clients.

Regarding non-business functions, in the future, York College's faculty and students of Social Work will be invited to participate in the VITA program. The VITA program may identify clients who would benefit from, and be entitled to, govern-

ment and community resources and services that the clients may not be aware of.

Incorporating additional departments into the VITA program provides excellent opportunities for Service Learning among and between various disciplines. Looking forward, a job fair is being planned for students who participated in the VITA program. Students will meet prospective employers who value the skills learned through VITA.

All of these enhancements increase the efficiency, quality and excellent customer service provided to our clients while increasing capacity to process more tax returns. The various professors thank the administration, students and fellow faculty for their support of the VITA program.



Mock Research Conference

The Office of Undergraduate Research and students in Dr. Beth Rosenthal's Social Research Methods class co-sponsored a Mock Research Conference on December 7, 2010.

The course (cross-listed in Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work) is the first in a 2-course sequence covering research methods in the social and

behavioral sciences. The purpose of the course is to teach basic social science research concepts and procedures; and the application of these concepts and procedures to human service work.

The purpose of the Mock Research Conference was to introduce students to the idea of presentation of scholarly research at a research

conference and to facilitate the integration of course concepts in a professional-like setting. Each student developed a poster presentation that reflected many of the concepts learned during the semester; each poster contained the student's conceptual definition of a variable, a description of a literature search for arti-



Student explaining her poster during the mock conference

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cles about the variable (including search terms and databases and years searched), two articles describing studies that examined that variable, and two hypotheses using the variable that could be tested.

Among the variables studied by students were: discrimination, socialization, religiosity, child abuse, sexual orientation and parenting style.

Dr. Vicki Ashton and members of her SCWK 203 class attended the Conference as did Drs. Zhang, Nath, Schuller, and Divale.

Half the class presented for the first third of the class session (while the other half was the audience and walked around and asked questions and offered suggestions); the roles were reversed in the

second third of the class session. For the last third of the class session, all students presented while Dr. Ashton's class viewed the posters, asked questions and made comments.

Among the specific course objectives manifested in the Conference were that students demonstrate 1) knowledge of the scientific method (including the conceptualization of variables, measurement in social science); 2) that they are able to search the literature for research-based evidence; 3) that they can read and comprehend data in professional journals, use electronic databases, and analyze data using social sciences statistical software. Among the more general College objectives manifested at the

Conference were critical thinking and writing, and close reading.

The students felt that the Mock Conference was a very positive experience. Comments ranged from general ones, e.g., this was a "whole new experience," to specific ones about feedback: students appreciated "getting feedback from peers" and "it felt great for professors to view my work."

Finally, it encouraged students to expand their horizons, viz., "It broadened my horizons", "It made me think about different ways to go", and "It made me think beyond ..."



Students and faculty discussing the presented research



Above and below: More impressions from the mock conference



YORKCOLLEGE CUNY

School of Business and Bloomberg Collaboration

Bloomberg, a pre-eminent supplier of financial data, designed and developed a unique, independent, and global assessment for students interested in a career in finance called **Bloomberg Aptitude Test (BAT)**. During Fall 2010 semester York students had a unique opportunity to take the beta test for BAT for free. The test was open to all students in

Business and Accounting discipline and the test was held at York campus as well as at the Bloomberg head office in midtown Manhattan.

Eighteen York students participated in the test. Bloomberg expects that BAT will be used by recruiters and Bloomberg's 350,000 financial industry clients (central bank, sovereign wealth fund, government treasury, hedge fund, sell-side broker and

money manager) to select and screen job seekers in the competitive financial industry.

With the test, York students had the first hand experience of the skill sets needed in the industry. The test can be taken more than once and the results are confidential. Bloomberg is expected to roll this test out from February, 2011 with a hefty fee.

YORKCOLLEGE CUNY

Natural Science Seminar Exhibits



Chemistry major Tony Wan presenting his research

These presentations highlight the positive outcomes of motivated students mentored by the dedicated faculty.



Chemistry major Cosmon Barret concluding his presentation

Displaying the depth and diversity of the research environment in the science departments at York, seven students from the departments of Chemistry, Biology and Earth and Physical Science showcased their recent work at the Student Research Presentations session of the Natural Science Seminar Series @ York College on December 10, 2010 in the Academic Core building.

Cosmon Barrett, a senior in the chemistry program, led off the proceedings by presenting a summary of his literature readings in theoretical chemistry and molecular modeling, led by Assistant Professor Yolanda Small. He additionally proposed future work that may come to fruition in the coming semester.

Cassiany Alexandre and Tony Wan, two students working in the lab of Assistant Professor of Chemistry Mandë Holford explained the research they had been conducting on the synthesis and analysis of a compound called Tg09. This molecule is derived from the toxins of Terebrid

marine snails, and has potential as a neuroactive drug. In their collaborative presentation, they seamlessly transitioned from an explanation of Terebrid snail biology, to their synthetic chemistry strategy, to their promising but preliminary results (see also p.3 in this issue).

The Department of Biology was represented by two students Christopher Wilson and Dmitiri Serjanov, both Biotechnology majors working under Professor Louis Levinger. Wilson, who is also pursuing a minor in Chemistry, focused his talk around the novel functions he discovered for a particular type of RNA (a close cousin of the more famous DNA molecule), called pre-tRNA 3'-trailers. Serjanov presented findings that substitutions in a group of molecules called tRNA-seZ enzymes – which function in the same pathway as Wilson's molecules – may lead to pathogenesis.

Students representing the Green Club and the Department of Earth and Physical Sciences capped

off the session with a talk entitled "The Usage of Biochar: An effective way to reduce carbon emission and pollution." Led by Green Club president Adisa Charles, the students introduced the material called Biochar, formed from the pressurized heating of organic material – how it is made from recycled waste, and how it can potentially be used to reduce dependence on synthetic fertilizers.

Enrichment of soil with Biochar is not yet widespread, but according to their mentor Assistant Professor of Geology Ratan Dhar, the Green Club is "trying to submit to the EPA P3 program" a formal proposal for funding to develop economically feasible methods for Biochar production.

These highly professional research presentations highlight the positive outcomes of motivated students being mentored by the dedicated faculty, an endeavor with a long and fruitful history in the natural sciences at York College.

York Scholars “Rebuild” New Orleans

From January 10-13, a small group of York College students experienced a unique opportunity as participants in a community service program in New Orleans.

The students were part of a group from sister CUNY Colleges, Hunter and Queens, and participated in the program as an “alternative winter break.” This was the first time that York College students participated as a group under the York banner.

Known as “Rebuilding Together New Orleans,” the program affords participants the opportunity to help rebuild the “birthplace of jazz” following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

Accompanying the York students, all of them Merit Scholars, were Mondell Sealy, director of Development and Alumni Affairs at York, and York music professor Tom Zlabinger, who was already in the fabled city for a jazz conference, when the York party arrived. The York group assisted their assigned homeowners with rebuilding their home, damaged during Katrina’s rampage five years ago.

Rebuilding Together New Orleans (RTNO) is an organization, which

utilizes volunteer labor and corporate donations to rebuild the homes of low-income, elderly and disabled residents free of charge.

Qualifying homeowners must live in certain neighborhoods and must be either 60 or older and low-income; or disabled and low-income (any age), or a first-responder.

Students got as much as they gave.

“I feel we made a difference here, even if it was very small,” said York senior and Social Work major, Franny Jimenez, in her “daily reflection.” “I have to say it was a great experience. [But] it all went by so fast. [I] hope other people get the opportunity to help others in the way we did this week. [And] Bourbon Street is great!

Music professor, Thomas “Tom” Zlabinger was equally moved.

“The sun warmed the house and yard and having lunch with the family who owns the house made the heart even warmer,” said Zlabinger. “The house dates back to the 1700s. And we also met the owner’s granddaughter. So, seeing the past and the future together as we concluded our work, made it all make sense. In addition

to working on the house, we all became stronger and better members of our separate teams. While we swept away pieces of wood, sawdust, and dirt, all I could think about [was] how I was given more than I gave. Our four days are now part of a multi-generational house.”

But it was not all work and no play for Team York and the others. They took time to visit the various New Orleans landmarks, which remain; and for enjoying native cuisine. For many, it was their first taste of New Orleans staples, “po boy” and jambalaya.

Sponsored by the York College Foundation Board and with tickets supplied by JetBlue Airways, the students all expressed gratitude for the opportunity.

“It’s important that we continue this effort,” said Sealy, who acted as primary chaperone. “Queens, Hunter and Lehman have been doing it for three years and it was important that York participate. I hope that we will continue to participate. York is part of CUNY. This should not be a one-time effort.”



Above and below: The York team posing during a break



“While we swept away pieces of wood, sawdust, and dirt, all I could think about was how I was given more than I gave.”





CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

February & March 2011 Forums and Workshops

Thursday, Feb. 10	Workshop:	<i>Sound Sensations: Classroom Methods for Speech Training and Learning</i>
		12 - 2 pm CETL, AC 4EA1
	Facilitators:	Tom Marion, Performing & Fine Arts
Thursday, Feb. 17	Workshop:	<i>Teaching Effective Reading Strategies: Helping Students Explore Complex Texts</i>
		12 - 2pm CETL, AC 4EA1
	Facilitators:	George Fragopoulos, Writing Fellow, WAC WAC Writing Fellows Kostrzewa, Harris, McKelligan, Capuana, & Alsop Co-sponsored by the Writing Across the Curriculum Program
Wednesday, March 2	Workshop:	<i>Help Us Help You: Using Library Assistance to Design Course Assignments</i>
		3:30-5pm CETL, AC 4EA1
	Facilitators:	Scott Sheidlower, Library Sandra Urban, Library

Africana Studies Colloquium Spring 2011 Schedule

“Language Constructs and Racialized Identity in the United States”

Dr. Charles Coleman (Department of English)

Wednesday, February 9, 1-2:30pm

“Suriname: Political Acumen and Geopolitical Anxiety.”

Dr. Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith (Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs)

Wednesday, March 9, 1-2:30pm

“Victim-Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse: Understanding The Link Between Historical Trauma and Posttraumatic Growth.”

Dr. Selena Rodgers (Department of Social Sciences)

Wednesday, May 11, 1-2:30pm

All lectures are given in: African American Resource Center, 3B04

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duced the president who shared and discussed some aspects of her five-year evaluation and invited further feedback from the leadership team.

The first panel focused on “Enhancement through Gen. Ed. Reform.” Linda Grasso, Chair of the Department of English, expressed the view that the forthcoming new Gen. Ed. curriculum must “cultivate a distance from corporate models and educate students’ minds.” She also shared her enthusiasm for the unique opportunity the Gen. Ed. reform offers “for us as faculty to come together to create a new curriculum educating generations of students.” Following her presentation, Robert Clovey, Deputy Chair of the Department of Accounting and Finance Department, reported that his department supports the design of the reform, but still has several questions about how exactly the new Gen. Ed. will be implemented.

In her presentation, Donna Chirico, Chair of the Department of Behavioral Sciences, noted that the Gen. Ed. reform ought to be piloted and that improvements in the retention and graduation rates require cataclysmic shifts beyond the college gates. She asserted that graduation rates do not measure educational attainment and that students most likely to succeed in college are those who traditionally always fared best. She further pointed out that the most successful Gen. Ed. programs are small, sequential, offer flexible choices, and have a strong orientation to learning outcomes as their four key characteristics.

In her remarks – designed as a response to some of the points raised – Dean Summerfield remarked that Gen. Ed. really is a code term for Liberal Arts and Sciences. Noting a productive tension in the room between conceptual and imple-

mentation concerns, she stated that in her experience a clear vision that permeates the Gen. Ed. curriculum is needed before it comes to issues such as assessment. She also observed that in the past many CUNY colleges did not always sufficiently appreciate the assets that our students bring to the classroom and that they are often less in need of instruction of some of the “basics” than is regularly claimed.

Dr. Summerfield urged academic leaders and faculty to make sure that every student is visible in the educational experience offered at the college. Further, she observed that knowledge and information should not be conflated, and that teaching of science can no longer proceed “as usual.” In other words, new approaches may have to be explored more systematically. On the other hand, and still elaborating on her earlier theme, while it is necessary to

“liberalize the professions,” it is also important to “professionalize the liberal arts.” Finally, she noted the importance of mapping out York’s Gen. Ed. curriculum against other CUNY colleges’ curricula. York’s Gen. Ed., in other words, cannot exist in a vacuum, but must relate to what other CUNY schools are pursuing.

In the subsequent discussion, Provost Griffith reminded the group of several Gen. Ed. reform realities including the fact that Gen. Ed. reform at any institution is often a “messy” process that entails numerous opportunities for reality checks. He also stressed that it is not for the Provost or the Administration to say what the Gen. Ed. design should be. Moreover, the Provost also observed that sometimes there is a disconnect between what is espoused as good for students and what is desired for the faculty, and the design and implementation

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process and the architects involved will have to keep this tension in mind and resolve it.



Vice Chancellor Pamela S. Silverblatt

Another panel focused on how ownership of data-driven assessment can lead to systematic improvements in our understanding of factors that prevent higher graduation and retention rates, and to solutions to improve these critical indicators of our students' educational journey. As Assistant Provost Holger Henke noted, the unspoken rationale underpinning the need to improve these indicators lies significantly in the need to guide our students towards degrees that demonstrate a successful and timely completion of their meaningful educational journey. He recommended ownership by departments

and programs of their individual graduation rates, and commitments to improving these individual rates incrementally.

Aghajan Mohammadi, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, presented enrollment, retention and graduation figures across the Schools and departments that could become the basis for conversations along the lines proposed in the previous presentation. In making his contribution to the panel, Lou D'Alotto, Chair of the Department of Mathematics & Computer Science, shared how his department had systematically improved students' performance in one gateway course by the systematic, data-based, assessment of new learning software introduced in the course. Their research revealed relatively better performance in the sections of the course that utilized the software over those that did not.

The luncheon keynote speaker, Vice

Chancellor Pamela Silverblatt, outlined the labor relations landscape of the University and provided an update on the status of progress in the contract negotiations, notably with the Professional Staff Congress (PSC). She noted that while the contract negotiations had not yet been concluded, the expired contract continues to be in effect in all of its aspects. The keynote presentation was followed by Senior Vice President Jerry Posman on the current budget challenge, placing it in historical context and highlighting measures that would need to be embraced in order to meet the challenge.



Dr. Bob Baer during his presentation

The first afternoon panel examined "Enhancing Student

Experiences" and the second elaborated the theme "Enhancing Faculty and Staff Experiences." The Student Experiences session began with a presentation by Fenix Arias, the College's Director of Testing, who outlined the soon-to-be-implemented *Cardinal Pulse* system, which will enable faculty to identify both the outstanding students and those with special circumstances or who need help and support early in a semester.

Designed as an enhanced early-warning system, it will allow faculty to forward information to other student success and support offices within the college. Thus, it will become a faculty-initiated key element in a more holistic and "just-in-time" intervention structure to assist at-risk students, but also to spotlight success stories within the student body. The system will be implemented on a limited scope at first and expanded over time. The other presentations were di-

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rected to other specific areas to improve services to students and their performance and retention and graduation. Director of Academic Advisement Bob Baer spoke about new advisement procedures and recommendations.

Associate Registrar Jo-Ann Demsen addressed recent and imminent enhancements in the Office of the Registrar, and Stephen Tyson, Director of Academic Achievement, spoke about workshops offered on time man-

agement and other success strategies in college. Finally, Rishi Nath, Director of the new Office of Undergraduate Research, introduced some of the initiatives undertaken by this new college entity. In particular, he reminded the group of the forthcoming Second Student Research Day on April 14, and encouraged wide participation by faculty colleagues.

The final retreat panel dealt with "Enhancing Faculty and Staff Experi-

ences." Dawn Hewitt, Director of Research and Sponsored Programs, addressed strategies to enhance grant opportunities and productivity, and Gerard McNeil, Chair of the Biology Department, told the group about mentoring structures and processes his department is pursuing. The panel's presentations were rounded off by Daniel Kearney, York's Employee and Labor Relations Manager, who drew attention to a variety of profes-

sional development opportunities offered through CUNY Central and invited retreat participants to use HR as a resource in the quest to extend the professional development opportunities of faculty and staff.

In sum, in what was a long and agenda-packed day, our chairs, directors, deans, and other academic leaders had a very productive experience in Listening and Learning, part of our Leading.

Academic Leadership Retreat 2011



Apples

by Simon Volker (English major, Class of 2011)

Abstract: The concept for this story came to me one day when I was riding the E train back home and wondering what was I going to tell you today. I was contemplating the past few months of my life when I realized I had been listening to Nada Surf's song, "Inside of Love" on repeat for the past twenty minutes. Most of this song refers to the narrator's inability to penetrate love and to find out exactly what it is. Right then and there, in the midst of this new contemplation on the theory of love, the woman sitting right in front of me gave me the answer, and she did it with an apple.

"I'm so glad I cheated on you." That was the bullet through my stomach which left me coughing up blood and grasping at stars.

Your first words to me, well, not to me but to your friends whom I'd just met, were of your one-inch-large ex-boyfriend, coupled with the visual aid of your thumb and index finger hardly separated from each other. You made everyone laugh so hard, yet all I could think

about is what you'd tell your friends about me one day. I had a girl at the time, but I knew this wouldn't be the last time you'd make me laugh. You would share the same belief with me years later after we watched "Igby Goes Down" together, which was some dumb, intellectual movie that you said would make me think, and yet here I am, more years after that fact, and all I can remember from that night was your black, sweaty leather couch and how your face looked like in the dim afterglow of Hollywood credits. Our second date began that same night at 12 a.m., just so you could say you did not put out on the first. Your stupid logic made nothing but perfect sense to me, and we both exhibited the patience and self-control of a spoiled little rich kid from New Jersey.

You said "Woah," but I remembered your first words at the café. No matter how I disrespected it, you kept opposing my arguments. You convinced me for the sake of the moment, but I still never fully believed you.

Our existence revolved around your bodily fluid-stained leather couch, your television-aired shows and movies neither of us watched, and your coffee table immaculate under the glass and littered with Subway wrappers and Chinese food containers above it. You sat on me sitting on your rocking chair by the window. You smoked Lights; I smoked Smooths. We had our fair share of cigarette ash and embers fell on bare skin between philosophy, music, and un-public displays of affection. I inhaled what you disregarded and you, tasting like tar, convinced me you tasted like sweet carbonation.

We agreed that things were over, that the spark was gone, that I wasn't interested in you and that I genuinely believed it. You vanished from society but still kept me informed about the military men you had over. I had squirmed my way into another relationship and thought decreasingly less of you. You surprised me a year later, wanting me back and corrupting my inbox

with provocative unmentionables. I'd like to think you had nothing to do with why I gave up on my then-significant other, but I'm sure you had planned that out too.

Weekly meetings in your bedroom made me miss your couch, but I wasn't willing to count how much new DNA it had accumulated. We texted six days each week about how much we looked forward to Thursday, then spent the first half of each Thursday bickering like life-long friends about corn muffins, the ghost in your bedroom and why you didn't want to sleep in there without me. You laughed at my threats towards your invisible roommate and the three of us never took them seriously. We spent the second half of said Thursday manhandling each other and keeping tabs of opposing orgasms.

We had stayed up until daybreak one night, only exchanging words and oxygen-less breaths. You squirmed and shook like something was about to burst through your chest. I knew what you wanted to say, but I needed to

hear the words come out of your mouth. You refused, like a stubborn child, and waited for me to say it, or to start saying it first. Two slow words in and you blurted all three words out like you were holding in your breath for a week. I craved your irrationality, your peculiar way of always being right. After we finished laughing at the lack of logic behind your outburst, I looked you right in the eyes and recited the same three words I had only spoken a handful of times before. We slept in each other's arms for a week.

You had me thinking about this concept of love when we shopped for groceries together. We were one of those moral-less couples, feeling each other up in the freezer aisle and commenting on the sexual innuendo of apples and bananas. Supermarkets everywhere will never be the same. I remember, sitting on that couch with you, us crunching away on two apples while you watched *Seinfeld* and I kept telling you what a stupid show it was. We probably had this conversation simply because I couldn't stand listening to Jerry whine

anymore, but do you remember what I said about apples that night? I told you that in a way, love, to me, is like eating a really sweet, crunchy apple, when you already love eating apples.

You lowered the volume and looked at me like I was reciting Shakespeare in a Canadian accent. I said to you: "No matter how you look at an apple, no matter which way you turn it, whether stem side up or this weird gritty, leafy, asshole of an apple thing looking up at you, there's always somewhere to sink your teeth in. Eyeing the apple: those were our first conversations. Penetrating this crisp, outer layer of skin: that was our first date and our first kiss." You muted the volume at this point. I continued, "These following bites where I've enjoyed the sweetness, the tenderness, the texture of this apple's flesh: that's us dating, holding hands in public, the exchange of spit and the waking up next to you in the morning. The happiness of chewing this piece of fruit: that's this relationship of ours feeling right, natural and easy." You interrupted my mono-

logue and drove both tongue and apple chunks into my mouth, and not that I minded, but you never gave me a chance to finish what I was saying.

I realized that happiness with you would only last as long as I could keep taking bites out of that apple. They started out in huge bites, of which I could not get enough. That apple's juice made a mess over my hands and face, yet I did not care to clean it off, since the next bite would just leave another mess. Metaphorically speaking, I understood this juice in different ways. It might have meant the arguments, the fighting, the cursing, the screaming that occurred during our duration; it might have meant the loss of contact between me and my friends, my family, my job, my goals, my dreams, and my aspirations, as you became more necessary than any of those; it could also have meant the literal juices between us.

I realized that those large bites of indulgence would get smaller the longer we were together, which they did. I found myself scavenging for

miniscule bites around the core just for satisfaction's sake. This scavenging symbolized the excuses we both made to stay together, and when I ran out of those, I realized what I had left: a browned, unappetizing core with seeds and plastic-like shit that represented who you were past the love, the emotions, the connection, the noises and the fucking. It was the girl I was in love with, but stripped away of all the tangibles and the characteristics which made me fall in love with her in the first place.

I guess, in the grand scheme of things, to you, the girl who nearly gave me a key to her apartment, who prophesized the end of her romantic life after the loss of me, who contemplated creating new life with me, it's slightly ironic that I compare you to a piece of fruit, not because I see you as some tiny, unimportant object in the universe, but because I really love apples. Not the chalky red ones that taste like cardboard, but the firm, marbled and tenders ones that erupt with mildly sweet, scrumptious flavor.

In my life, I've seen people do different things with apple cores. I've seen them eat around the core, then discard it as quick as possible. I've seen some of them slice apples into wedges, treating each piece like an independent entity by dressing them up in costumes and lies like cheese and crackers to turn the apple into something it's not: a

canvas or an edible plate. Feel free to interpret that however you want, but others still, very few of them, can enjoy and eat every single part of the apple: the skin, the flesh, the core and even the stem. I've seen people like these who embrace the good and bad of something as delicious and precious as an apple fall and stay in love for years and years.

For you, the girl who breathed smoke with me, who planned futures with me, and who, after I saw who you really were, said you were glad you cheated on me, I realize it was worth knowing you, living with you, and ultimately, learning how to live without you. I know why you shot me through the stomach, and I understand. I also know I

shot you right through the heart afterwards.

What it comes down to is you were, by far, the sweetest, crunchiest, most delectable apple I've ever laid my hands on, but even with that truth, I still could not eat your core.

I always had a thing for oranges anyways.



Jazz Five
AT YORK

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Saturday, February 5, 2011 • 7:00 pm

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and **Leroy Comrie** (27th CD) Deputy Majority Leader NY City Council and Chair of Land Use Committee.

YORK COLLEGE 



Dear York College students and faculty:

The Office of Undergraduate Research is issuing a Call For Papers for our 2nd Annual Student Research Day event to be held on April 14th, 2011 in the Atrium. This promises to be an exciting day of panel presentations, poster presentations and creative works by York students for all majors.

Students representing any of York's three schools (Arts & Sciences, Business and Information Systems, Health and Behavioral Sciences) who have engaged in research activities in the 2010-2011 academic year may submit an abstract of the work they wish to present. Abstract submissions will only be accepted by using our on-line submission form. Students should gather the contact information for all co-authors, advisors, and poster abstracts.

For more information, and the link to register, please visit: www.york.cuny.edu/uresearch. Registrants are required to be currently enrolled York students. The advisor must be a member of the academic staff at York College or another recognized academic institution. The student's listed advisor will receive an email to confirm that the registered student is approved to present. Hence students should confirm with their advisors before registering.

The launch of a York College Undergraduate Research Program was first announced by Provost Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith at the CUNY Academic Council on January 6th, 2010. The mission of the program is to promote and facilitate student engagement in research and other creative activities. Our annual Student Research Day is a major part of the realization of our mission.

Registration and abstracts are due no later than February 25, 2011. Advisors, please encourage your students to submit. This is a highly rewarding program and makes for an exciting experience for the students and their faculty advisors alike. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Undergraduate Research at 718-262-2812 or uresearch@york.cuny.edu. We look forward to an enriching experience for York College students and faculty this April.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rishi Nath, Director
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York College, City University of New York College
Jamaica, NY 11451
uresearch@york.cuny.edu
718-262-2812



YORK COLLEGE
PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Chamber Music Series



ONYX VOCAL CONSORT
Friday, February 11, 2011 • 7:00 pm
Suggested Donation: \$10.00

Dedicated to the continuance of the legacy in vocal performance by people of African descent, the **Onyx Vocal Consort** is a coalition of artists who seek to educate and enlighten the community at large, particularly those who might be overwhelmed by the focus that pop culture demands. Through its performance of classical and contemporary repertoire, The Consort recognizes the historic contributions of people of color, and sows the seeds of inspiration and hope for ensuing generations of young artists.

YORK COLLEGE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
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Series Information: 718-262-2559
PAC Office: 718-262-3750
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Reservations are highly recommended

Major funding for this series provided by NYC Councilmembers
the late Thomas White Jr. (28th-CD), and
Leroy Comrie (27th-CD), Deputy Majority Leader
NY City Council and Chair of Land Use Committee.

FREE PARKING

YORK COLLEGE

THE MEETING

*A conversation between
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. & Malcolm X*

Saturday, February 19, 2011 • 7:00 pm

\$20.00 Adults / \$10.00 Students & Seniors



The Meeting is an engaging and intelligent play that depicts a fictional account of a secret meeting between Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Following the bombing of Malcolm X's home and shortly before he was assassinated, Malcolm and Martin meet in a room inside the historic

Theresa Hotel. This riveting play deals with issues that are still relevant today: war, poverty, racism, Black self-empowerment. They were men with different ideologies, but a common understanding of the plight of Black Americans.

THE YORK COLLEGE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
94-45 Guy Brewer Blvd., Jamaica, NY 11451

Major funding for this series provided by NYC Councilmembers the late Thomas White Jr. (28th-CD), and Leroy Comrie (27th-CD) Deputy Majority Leader NY City Council and Chair of Land Use Committee.

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FREE PARKING



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The deadline for submissions to the March issue of Academic Affairs Update is February 18, 2011.

All items should be submitted in MS Word

via email to:

AcademicUpdate@york.cuny.edu