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# Professor William Hughes Helps Overturn Conviction

## York Professor Helps Wrongfully Convicted

TERANDEROSE RUSSELL

On Tuesday, November 10, 2015, York College students and faculty gathered for an important panel discussion on wrongful convictions and the criminal justice system. The discussion surrounded the case of Juan Carlos “Johnny” Hincapie who spent over 25 years in prison after he was wrongfully convicted for alleged involvement in a murder.

According to the United States Bureau of Justice Statistics 2.2 million people were incarcerated in the U.S. prison system and county jails in 2013, more than any other country in the world.

Each year, roughly 10,000 people are wrongfully convicted.

The panel discussion was moderated by York College’s own journalism professor William Hughes, with a panel that

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## Deadline!

All items for the **January/ February 2016** issue of **Academic Affairs Update** should be submitted in MS Word to [AcademicUpdate@york.cuny.edu](mailto:AcademicUpdate@york.cuny.edu) by **February 3, 2016**.

**FIGHTING WRONGFUL CONVICTIONS**  
**JOURNALISTS POLICE THE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

FEATURING  
**JOHNNY HINCAPIE**  
 who spent over  
**25 YEARS**  
 locked up for a crime  
 he did not  
 commit

## York Professor

*Continued from previous page*

included Executive Editor and Publisher of *City Limits* magazine Jarrett Murphy, retired NYC Police Detective Pete Fiorello and former chairman of the New York State Board of Parole Robert Dennison, who were all involved in Hincapie's case.

Johnny Hincapie's nightmare began on September 2, 1990, when a Mormon family visiting from Utah to attend the U.S. Open was attacked and robbed while standing on a Subway platform by a group of six to eight teenagers looking for a fast buck to go to a nearby club. Coming to the defense of his parents, 22-year-old Brian Watkins was stabbed in the chest and later died. Hincapie became one of seven men who were convicted for the murder.

The death of Brian Watkins received wide media attention and caused public outrage since it came hot on the heels of the infamous Central Park Five Case that occurred one year prior. Facing public scrutiny, New York City then-mayor David Dinkins proposed a program designed to increase police protection.

In the late 1980s and early 90s, the crime rate in New York City was at an all-time high. Violence fueled by the crack epidemic sparked a combination of drug wars and drug-related killings that left children and teens parentless. This intense climate would unknowingly permeate the New York Police Department, turning good cops into bad and adding to the epidemic of wrongful convictions. Teens that got into trouble with the police were met with police brutality, manipulated into signing false confessions and given broken promises by police that they would be released if they confessed to crimes.

There is no case that brought more awareness to the corrupted NYPD than the Central Park Jogger Case. In April 1989, 28-year-old Trisha Meili was raped while jogging through NYC's Central Park. Five juvenile males—four black and one Hispanic—were arrested and convicted. In 2002, DNA evidence helped vacate all the sentences that the

defendants were convicted for. The innocent men sued New York City in 2003 and were finally awarded a city settlement of \$41 million in 2014.

Johnny Hincapie's case was similar. The same types of unethical police practices surrounded his conviction. He was arrested without a proper investigation, police lied to his mother about the right to have legal representation, and it was discovered that the same officers who were involved in misconduct in the Central Park Five case forced Hincapie to give a video confession, which was used to convict him. Hincapie's forced confession became the major obstacle in his case, a situation not unknown to many who have been falsely imprisoned.

When inmates seek parole, they often find themselves in an uphill battle because one of the main requirements for an inmate to be released is the admission of guilt for a crime and remorse for the criminal act. According to panelist Robert Dennison, "Three commissioners on the parole board that saw Johnny gave him a parole date to go home, even though Johnny did not admit to the crime. Three hours later, they called him back and said there was new infor-

mation and that his case was under investigation."

The University of Michigan Law School found that many causes of wrongful convictions were made by false confessions, unreliable witness identification, poor forensic evidence and inefficient legal representation. In Hincapie's case, his forced confession took over twenty-five years of his life. Eyewitness who could have testified that he was not on the scene nor involved in the crime were dismissed from being testified.

After years of working on the case, Professor Hughes teamed up with Robert Dennison, which led them to locate witnesses who were never found at the time. The newly found witnesses Santana and Luis Montero testified that Hincapie was with them at the turnstiles in the subway when the murder occurred. Montero's testimony eventually led to Hincapie's release from prison on a \$1 bond on October 6, 2015. Hincapie is now awaiting a possible retrial in his case.

The case of Johnny Hincapie should inspire many who want to correct wrongful convictions. The informative panel discussion moderated by Professor Hughes and his colleagues allowed everyone in the au-



Johnny Hincapie (left) with Professor William Hughes (right)

Photo: Valerie Victor

dience to understand the power they hold as civilians and the importance of shining a light on the flaws of our criminal justice system before it's too late.

Mr. Hincapie's case is not yet over. He could be retried and if found guilty, sent back to jail. But it also shows the power of a determined York College

journalism professor in trying to see an innocent man freed after being in prison from the ages of 18 to 43 for a crime he did not commit. ■

## A Long Road to Justice

GINA MARTINEZ

After almost a decade of hard work, York College journalism professor William Hughes has a lot to celebrate. This fall, after years of work on an investigative project, the professor's efforts helped free a wrongfully convicted man who spent more than 25 years in prison.

Johnny Hincapie was charged in the 1990 crime that was featured in an October episode of NBC's *Dateline with Lester Holt*. The episode, entitled "Tipping Point," went in-depth about a New York City murder and its aftermath.

In 1990, Brian Watkins of Provo, Utah was visiting New York with his family to see the US Open in Queens. Worlds collided on the 53rd Street and Seventh Avenue subway platform in Manhattan. Hincapie was part of a group of about 50 teenagers headed towards the Roseland Ballroom for a dance night.

A smaller group stayed behind and it was then the Watkins family was violently robbed. In the process Brian was stabbed and killed. His murder was just one of 2,245 in New York City that year, but it had an enormous impact on the city. Hincapie was one of eight young black and Hispanic men arrested and interrogated. He claims he was coerced into making a false confession after being beaten by officers.

Hincapie was sentenced to 25 years to life for the murder, but has proclaimed his innocence from the start. The road to clear Hincapie's name was a long one, and came about when Hughes was sought out by a friend of Hincapie's. "I met Johnny in the spring of 2006 while working as a crime reporter for a newspaper in Yonkers and he was an inmate in Sing Sing prison," Hughes said. "He was introduced to me by a woman named Kim Breden, who volunteered

teaching theater to prison inmates and believed Johnny was innocent. I researched his case and came to believe he might be telling the truth."

The more Hughes studied the case, the more he became determined to solve it. "About a year after meeting him I left daily journalism to become a teacher and took up his case in earnest," he said. "After being turned down by several magazines, I finally published an article about Johnny's story in *City Limits* magazine in 2010, the 20th anniversary of the murder. But at the time I hadn't uncovered enough evidence to bring before a judge."

A few months after publishing the article, Hughes met Bob Dennison, a former chairman of the NYS Parole Board, who offered to help with the case. "For more than a year we knocked on doors, wrote to and called potential witnesses until we found a man named Luis Montero, one of the original eight black and Hispanic men charged with the murder," he said. "Montero agreed to testify that Johnny was not present at the crime scene, which was enough to bring the case before a judge."

Dennison approached the noted civil rights attorney Ron Kuby, who agreed to take the case free of charge. Kuby filed a motion to vacate Johnny's conviction in the fall of 2013. It took nearly two years, but Hincapie's conviction was finally set aside on Oct. 6, 2015 by Justice Eduardo Padro.



Ron Kuby, noted civil rights attorney, who agreed to take the case free of charge

"Seeing Johnny walk out of jail as a free man was the most gratifying moment of my entire professional career," Hughes said.

On November 10th, 2015 in the Little Theater, the journalism program held a special event called "Fighting Wrong Convictions: Journalists Police the Justice System." Professor Hughes moderated the event alongside other key players who helped in clearing Hincapie's name. Guests included Dennison, Jarrett Murphy, executive editor and publisher of *City Limits* magazine and Pete Fiorello, a retired NYPD detective. In attendance as well was Hincapie himself, who spoke about what it was like to be free.

Now that the case is over for the most part Hughes is looking forward to helping other wrongfully convicted prisoners; he has already taken up another case. He is glad for the national attention the *Dateline* episode got and hopes some good can come from Hincapie's story "I think any and all media attention that helps the American public understand the magnitude of the problem of reckless police and prosecutorial misconduct is a positive thing," he said. ■



# Advancing Geoscience: Professor Khandaker Hard at Work

## Geology Faculty and Students Attend GSA 2015 International Meeting

The Geological Society of America (GSA) returned to the East Coast this year with another excellent scientific meeting, held at the convention center and hotels in the Inner Harbor area of downtown Baltimore.

Thanks to the participation of GSA's 18 Divisions, an International Interdisciplinary Interest Group (led by Dr. Nazrul Khandaker and Dr. Nadine McQuarrie, University of Pittsburgh), and 70+ Associated Societies, conference attendees had an excellent opportunity to hear many outstanding technical sessions, to advance geoscience, and to enjoy the company of colleagues and friends. Over 7,300 geoscientists from home and abroad attended the meeting. Professor Nazrul Khandaker (Earth and Physical Science) was approved by the GSA Council to act as Chair

of the newly formed GSA International Interdisciplinary Interest Group (IIIG). GSA is a premier geoscientific society with over 27,000 members and internationally known for promoting geoscience, service and stewardship, and formulation of the IIIG is quite strategic towards reaching GSA's globalization theme. Khandaker joined GSA International in 2011 and has been active in various capacities with the organization, including being one of the key organizers of the highly successful first joint GSA and Geological Society of China (GSC) meeting called "Roof of

the World," held in Chengdu, China in 2013. At both the 2014 and 2015 Geological Society of America (GSA) meetings, he participated as a mentor in the On To the Future Program (OTF), a GSA initiative that seeks to build a diverse geoscience community. The OTF Program awards partial travel scholarships to students from underrepresented groups in the geosciences to attend their first GSA Annual Meeting, where they meet with geoscience mentors who help them better understand geoscience research and career options and build their professional networks. Khandaker also recently compiled the 2014-2015 GSA International Newsletter with his colleague Nadine McQuarrie. ([http://www.geosociety.org/GSA\\_International/newsletters/ISnews\\_15oct.pdf](http://www.geosociety.org/GSA_International/newsletters/ISnews_15oct.pdf))

The newly formed GSA International has multiple purposes:

- Promote, create, and enhance opportunities for international cooperation
- Provide a forum for science and policy discussions that are international in scope and relevance
- Build collaborative relationships with divisions that are international in scope and relevance
- Coordinate meetings, symposia, conferences, and lecture tours on the geology of regions beyond North America
- Raise funds for foreign colleagues and students to participate in annual GSA meetings
- Strengthen cooperation with overseas geoscientific societies.

The GSA annual meeting provided many opportunities for geoscience students: to present research and to see the latest research results of top scientists across the globe; to interact with one another and discover mentors from various employment sectors; to learn about graduate schools and career opportunities; to go on field trips (some with discounted stu-



**GSA International Reception: Bridging Continents, Exchanging Greetings and Building Partnerships** Left to right: Dr. Margie Chan, Distinguished GSA International Lecturer, international student, Marilyn Suiter, GSA Council Member-at-Large & NSF Program Director, Dr. Jonathan Price, GSA President and Shirley Jackson (York geology graduate, now pursuing an MS degree at City College)

dent rates); and to attend any of the short courses. The York geology program was very well represented, as can be noticed from the following reflections contributed by geology students. Attending students were: Shirley Jackson (pursuing an MS in Sustainability at City College), Monia Salam (recent graduate), Barbara Barnett (senior), Precious Gooden (senior), and Kyla Seereeram (senior). Several research presentations were made by geology students and drew lots of attention from the participants.

## GEOLOGY STUDENTS COMMENT ON THE CONFERENCE

### BARBARA BARNETT

CUNY, Geology, York College  
Jamaica, New York.

My professor and mentor Dr. Nazrul Khandaker, who is always motivating and supporting me, told me about conducting research which he submitted as an abstract to GSA. I went to Baltimore at the yearly conference; I presented my research in the form of a poster. When I got there, I was surprised by the number of people in attendance. I attended different research power point and poster presentations, which gave me a rare opportunity to widen my perceptions of geology and its related fields. These people and presentations inspired me to think out of my comfort zone.

As the days proceeded I was even more impressed with the numerous educational activities that go on at the conference. My college mates and I were invited to breakfast by Professor Naz; there we met professors from other universities and organizers of GSA. It was there that my life began to change for the better through Dr. Stephan Boss from Arkansas University. He informed me about his university and what it has to offer based on my areas of interest. I was very impressed, even more when he told me of different scholarships that are available and that the university is very much interested in increasing its colored population. He shared a little of his educational background where I learned that he studied coral reefs in Jamaica West Indies. That day I met Marilyn Suiter, Program Director of the National Science



**York was well-represented at GSA's Baltimore Meeting (2015).** Left to right: Barbara Barnett (geology senior), Khandaker, and Precious Gooden (geology junior)

Foundation (NSF). She informed me of geosciences scholarships that are available to graduate students through NSF.

I want to appeal to students to attend the yearly GSA conferences, especially those in the sciences who have done or are conducting research and those who have interest in attending graduate school. The possibilities are endless.

### MONIA SALAM

Geology Graduate, 2015

GSA provides a venue for networking opportunities that cater to every discipline within geology. An exhibition is staged to enhance networking opportunities, divided into two sections, GeoCareers and Campus Connections. GeoCareers allow students and professionals to receive expert advice on their resumes, provide listings of current job opportunities, and most importantly representatives of these institutions conduct on-site interviews if the resume meets all desired criteria. GSA invites over a hundred universities for the Campus Connections exhibitions. These Graduate Schools set up booths for the entire duration of the conference. This allows undergraduate students to directly speak to graduate students of these universities about the application process, research opportunities and graduate programs (MSc and PhD) within these respected institutions. During my visits to the past

two GSAs, I have emailed professors with whom I am interested in conducting my graduate studies about the possibility of meeting and speaking with one another at the conference. If these professors were attending GSA, they were very willing to take some time off their busy schedule to speak with me about the potential for working with them.

Conducting undergraduate research is significant, but having the opportunity to present that research in a national conference like the current one holds more value. This allows students to receive constructive criticism from professional geologists. Attending GSA is crucial for undergraduate geology students. It gives an opportunity to network with professionals about jobs and graduate programs. But, most importantly, GSA provides students with an opportunity to physically witness what is out there in the geosciences field and become aware of the reshaping of the geologic field as a vital STEM career option for students.

### SHIRLEY JACKSON

BS, Geology 2013, Geoscientist Without Borders (Discipline Award).  
Master of Science Candidate "Sustainability" City College

During my tenure at York College from Fall 2009 to Spring 2013, I had the wonderful opportunity of being under the fine tutelage of Professor Nazrul Khandaker and Professor Stanley Schleifer in the Earth Science Department. These two Professors instilled in me the importance of networking, research and professional affiliations. It started with the small gesture of Professor Schleifer giving me a GSA (The Geological Society of America) and an AWG (Association For Women Geoscientists) magnet. He told me that it would serve me well to become a member of both organizations and make sure that I attended their next convention. Two weeks later I was off to my first Geology convention in Hartford, Connecticut. Upon my return, my mentor, Professor Khandaker conveyed to me that it is never too early to start thinking about research presentations.

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## Hard at Work

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Fast forward 6 years, and I just returned from attending my 5th international geological convention held in Baltimore, MD. I did research presentations at the GSA 2013 in Denver, Colorado and GSA 2012 in Charlotte, North Carolina. Even though I did not present research at this GSA convention in Baltimore Maryland, I realized the importance of reconnecting with old colleagues and meeting new ones. I always arrive at the conventions a day before the official start to attend the national executive board meeting of the AWG. I also make sure that I volunteer to work at the AWG exhibit booth. This is another great

opportunity to network with seasoned professionals in the geosciences profession. Currently I am a member of GSA, AWG, NABG (National Association Of Black Geologists), AGU (American Geophysical Union) and AAPG ( American Association Of Petroleum Geologists).

Attending these professional conventions is always a win-win situation. It is a great opportunity to hand out my business cards and network with fellow geoscientists from around the globe. At the GSA International reception Monday November 2nd, 2015, hosted by my mentor Dr. Nazrul Khandaker, I had the wonderful opportunity to meet and have an in-depth conversation with the President of GSA, Dr. Jonathan G. Price. We had a wonderful conversation about my upcoming African

International Service Learning trip to Senegal in January 2016. I will study and work at the Ecovillage of Guede Chantier near the border of Mauritania.

One of my projects for the upcoming year is to start a New York chapter of AWG with my colleague and fellow geology graduate Jonelle Isaac. Jonelle and I plan on soliciting members from seasoned professionals, new career professionals, faculty and promoting and advancing students in the geosciences. Membership will not only be for women, but also for the men who support and encourage women geoscientists to reach their potential. The local chapter will be a vehicle for networking, mentoring, professional development, socializing and supporting others in the field. ■

## NASA Awards Grant for K1-9 STEM Education

Thanks to the leadership of Naz Khandaker (Professor, Earth and Physical Sciences) and the work of his proposal team, NASA's Minority University Research and Education Project (MUREP) has chosen York to receive funding for a NASA MUREP Aerospace Academy (MAA).

York became one of the nine new NASA STEM Education sites selected through a rigorous and open competition nationally. The predecessor to the NASA MAA was the NASA Science, Engineering, Mathematics, and Aerospace

Academy, or SEMAA, which began in 1993, as a partnership between NASA Glenn Research Center and Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland, Ohio. The York site was one of the oldest and has offered the SEMAA Program to the

community since 1999. Through our previous SEMAA Program, we've served over 17,000 students since 1999.

MUREP awards are intended to promote STEM literacy, enhance aerospace research and development, and increase participation in NASA-related fields by faculty and students at minority serving institutions. The MAA already made its debut at York College for the first time on October 17, 2015 and it replaces the SEMAA (Science, Engineering, Mathematics and Aerospace Academy) Program. Dr. Marcia Keizs was the inaugural speaker of the fall 2015 NASA MAA STEM session at York on Octo-



Dr Keizs having a very happy moment with a NASA MAA teacher (far right) and former SEMAA students (far left) during the inaugural fall NASA MAA session, October 17, 2015.



4th graders having fun in the Aerospace Education Lab

ber 17, 2015 and highlighted the rich STEM content and necessity for taking advantage of this unique program to the attendees. It was an exciting event that drew in over 350 parents and students from the greater York community on a Saturday morning.

NASA's MUREP Aerospace Academies, established in only nine higher

education institutions nation-wide, will receive as much as \$160,000 per year for two years and up to \$100,000 for a third year. Their mission is to engage K1-9 students in Science, Aeronautics, Space Technology, and Human Exploration and Operations. Participating students will enjoy hands-on activities related to these areas, and will have access to

NASA technology through an Aerospace Education Laboratory, portable StarLab, and a Family Café, an interactive forum for involving families and communities in the project. MUREP is aimed at creating a STEM-conscious community and ensuring a much-needed STEM pipeline by encouraging underrepresented minorities and women nationwide. ■

## Professor Khandaker Receives Prestigious Award from AEEG

**P**rofessor Nazrul Khandaker (Earth and Physical Science) was honored in Pittsburgh on September 24, 2015 with the Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists' (AEEG's) prestigious Claire P. Holdredge Publication Award.

The award was given for his article "Geoengineering Constraints on Foundation: Case Study from Queens, New York City, USA," written with coauthors S. Schleifer, A. R. Slaughter, M. Ahmed and B. A. Sayeed and published in the *Journal of Earth Sciences and Geotechnical Engineering* (vol. 5, no. 14, 2015). The Claire P. Holdredge award, named in honor of a founding member of AEEG and the first president of the association, is awarded for a publication judged to be an outstanding contribution to the Engineering Geology profession. In his acceptance speech, Professor Khandaker noted that his "recent work involving geotechnical constraints on foundations, particularly dealing with urban settings such as New York City, re-



From left to right: Dr. Allen Hatheway (past President, AEEG), Nazrul Khandakar and Ken Ferguson (current President, AEEG).

mind ed all of us to utilize prior geological knowledge as part of geoen gineering design before any construction phase is contemplated." ■

## York OT Students Get 'Pinned'

Nearly 30 Occupational Therapy students recently realized their dream of graduating with their BS/MS degree from York College, CUNY.

"We had 29 joyful graduates at the Pinning Ceremony," said Dr. Andrea Krauss, program director and an expert in pediatric occupational therapy (OT). "This was truly a special evening as all the grads had family members attend—parents, friends, [spouses], children, grand-parents—it was quite a sight to see how proud parents and students were for this culmination of a successful journey to meeting the requirements for a Master's degree and now to be eligible to take their exam to become licensed occupational therapists."

The December 3rd Pinning Ceremony was preceded by the graduates' presentations of their research outcomes.



Among the happy graduates was Marveline Bazalais, an early member of York's Merit Scholars Program. The keynote speaker was also one of their own, Ms. Narida Aldridge, MS, OTR/L, a member of the Class of 2002. ■



# Johnson & Johnson Funds York Nursing Scholars

Johnson and Johnson's Campaign for Nursing's Future recently donated a Diversity Student Scholarship to five York College students. The five students who each received the modest scholarships were delighted with Johnson and Johnson's confidence in their prospects as future nurses.

"It is truly a great honor to be selected as a recipient of this award," said Solange Wilson. "I [started] my second year of the York's nursing program in the fall of 2015. With this financial assistance I can afford to go through this academic year with less financial strain. I will do my best to maintain the qualifications of this scholarship. I really appreciate the generosity."

Med-Murielle Pierre was no less grateful than her fellow student, Wilson.

"I am currently majoring in nursing with the hope of becoming a nurse anesthetist, said Pierre, in her thank-you letter to the company. "Your financial assistance will help me pay for my educational expenses, and help bring me one step closer to accomplishing my goal. Thank you for decreasing my financial burden and allowing me to concentrate on my education."

Gentjan Hasanaj expressed gratitude not just for himself, but for the many who will eventually benefit from the scholarship program.

"This scholarship will help generations of future professional registered nurses who will continue to promote health awareness," said Hasanaj. "[I thank you] for your efforts to help students, like me, who are in financial need as we attend nursing school. By selecting me for this scholarship you have lightened my financial burden which will enable me to focus more on school."

For Donnika Clarke, who plans to continue her education soon after earning her BSN at York, the scholarship is a gift that will keep on giving.

"This scholarship will help offset my tuition and expensive nursing textbooks," she said. After graduation I plan



Johnson & Johnson Diversity Student Scholarship awardees. Left to right: Solange Wilson, Stefany Nijman, Donnika Clarke, Med-Muriele Pierre and Gentjan Hasanaj.

to continue my education by studying to become a family nurse practitioner. Thanks to your scholarship I will spend less time worrying about education expenses and more on finishing the task at hand. In the future, I hope to follow in your footsteps and develop a nursing scholarship of my own."

Second-year nursing student Stefany Nijman promises that the scholarship she received will also be self-perpetuating.

"[Your] generosity has inspired me to help others and give back to the community," she explained. "I hope that I will be

able to help students achieve their goal just as you have helped me. Thank you again for your generosity and support."

York's president sees this inaugural support as important too.

"I am delighted that Johnson and Johnson's Campaign for Nursing's Future has made this generous donation to our nursing scholars," said Dr. Marcia V. Keizs, president of York College. "The company's forward-thinking investment in creating a diverse cohort of nurses across states as the baby boom generation ages is commendable." ■

## Dr. Ron Daniels Honored by *African Sun Times*

The *African Sun Times*, Africa's number one and largest newspaper in America, has named Dr. Ron Daniels as its 2015 Pan-African Person of the Year. The paper notes that Dr. Daniels, President of the Institute of the Black World and the Pan-African Unity Dialogue, has achieved good success in bringing together diverse groups in the Pan-African Diaspora, making everyone feel welcome to participate in the organization. The paper also commended Dr. Daniels for his 20 years of service to the people of Haiti. ■





## Health Fair Held at Health Promotion Center

The Department of Health and Physical Education and Gerontological Studies hosted a Health Fair on November 30, 2015 from 12-6 pm in The Health and Physical Education and Gerontological Studies and Services' lobby. The theme was "Healthy Body, Healthy Soul" with topics including Physical Fitness, High Blood Pressure, Overweight and Obesity Exercise Prescription, Physical Activities, Pedometer, Sugar Intake, Fiber Intake, The Benefits of Smoothies, The Five Dimensions of Health, Zumba Health Benefits, and Yoga. With a good turnout from the staff, faculty and students of the college, the Health Fair met its goal of spreading awareness of the benefits gained from proper nutrition and being physical active. ■



Cheril Lail at her Health Fair exhibit on blood pressure



Marlin Collado demonstrating a zumba pose



Sabitini Bisnauth on the benefits of walking



Jonnelle McDougal, a graduating senior in Health Promotion Management, displayed the teaspoons of sugar included in various drinks to encourage people to STOP and RETHINK daily sugar intake.

## Professor Oladipo Hosts NBEA International Conference

After two years of planning, Professor Olajide Oladipo (Business and Economics) presided over the Northeast Business and Economics Association (NBEA) 2015 International Conference at Kennedy Airport. The three-day event brought together researchers and policymakers to promote education and scientific research for global growth and development.

The event also attracted York colleagues, including Provost Panayiotis Meleties, who brought greetings on behalf of the College. At least one community leader, State Senator Leroy Comrie, was also in attendance. Senator Comrie commended Dr. Oladipo on attracting conference participants around the scholarship of business—a departure from the usual business conferences attracting buyers and sellers of goods and services only.

Dr. Oladipo, chair of the Business and Economics Department, was pleased with the conference, which benefited him personally as a scholar as well as serving the profession:

“By hosting the NBEA 2015, I took my research to a new level of engagement,” said Oladipo. “I am planning to use the Aviation Institute platform to



State Senator Leroy Comrie with Professor Olajide Oladipo

host an ‘International Conference on Global Aviation Industry’ in 2017.”

Dr. Oladipo’s scholarship in business and economics has already produced many published articles in important journals in his field. Published works include “An Analysis of Sectoral Exchange Rate Pass-through Effects on a Small Open Economy Using the Leontief Input–Output Technique,” in the *International Journal of Economic Policy in Emerging Economies*; “Does Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Cause Long run Economic Growth? Evidence from the Latin America and the Caribbean Countries,” featured in *Applied Econometrics and International Development*; and “Does Trade Liberalization Cause Long Run Economic Growth in Mexico? An Empirical Investigation,” an article published in *International Journal of Economics and Finance*. ■

# York Opens State-of-the-Art Human Performance Lab

Dr. Lynne Clark, Dean of the School of Health Sciences and Professional Programs (SHSPP), recently presided over the ribbon-cutting ceremony for York College's Human Performance Laboratory. The October 22 event, held in the Health and Physical Education Complex (HPEC), revealed the brand new state-of-the-art laboratory that will be a game-changer for the health sciences at York.

"Now with having the new Human Performance Laboratory fully functioning, the School's and the Health and Physical Education Department's BS [in] Movement Science program's dreams [have] become reality," said Dr. Clark. "Having the lab will afford the Movement Science program to seek national initial accreditation in the very near future."

According to Dr. Galila Werber-Zion, program coordinator for Movement Science, the fulfillment of the dream was a labor of love by many, herself included. But the laboratory was created primarily to answer accreditation requirements for the Movement Science major. Dr. Werber-Zion wrote a New York State Workforce Development Initiative (WDI) 2014-2015 grant proposal and received funds to develop the laboratory and the equipment purchase. The equipment and design of the lab were based on her expertise. At this point, three majors attend classes in the lab: PE K-12; Movement Science; and Health Promotion Management.

"This semester I have been developing the activities that are being conducted in the laboratory by these students," said Dr. Werber-Zion. "Down the road, the lab will also be used for collaboration and research activities among all SHSPP departments, as all of our disciplines intertwine."

Werber-Zion explained that students in the lab "have begun to acquire knowledge and skills used by professionals in the physical education, exercise science, and health fields." She added that future PE teachers are learning to utilize the

tools to evaluate physical performance as well.

"Future fitness trainers are learning to use equipment necessary to assess the physical condition of their clients in order to prescribe appropriate training regimens," said Werber-Zion. "Through hands-on learning, future employees of public health organizations are raising their awareness about chronic-disease risk-reduction and the enhancement of daily physical activity. Our equipment



From left to right: Dean Lynne Clark, Provost Panayiotis Meleties, Dr. Galila Werber-Zion, President Marcia V. Keizs, Dr. David Ajuluchukwu

is being used to assess fitness levels, including muscular strength and endurance, cardiorespiratory endurance, flexibility, and body composition—all of which relate to healthy living."

According to the professor, an exercise physiology laboratory with the kind of equipment York now has "looks at metabolic demand during exercise, cardiovascular responses to different types of exercise, and electrical activity of muscles during exercise." The students "will develop skills allowing them to assess the performance of individuals, hence the name "human performance laboratory." Students will also learn to develop physical activity programs for differing age groups.

"This will be the first program of its kind within the CUNY system to become an accredited program," said Dean Clark. "Most importantly, it will ensure graduates from the program to be eligible for NYSDE Certification to practice." Dr. David Ajuluchukwu, department chair, summed up the meaning of the lab succinctly: "Most people won't see a lab like this until they get to graduate school." ■

## Kudos!



Professor **Lilly Mathew** was recently granted a PhD in Nursing from the University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona (December 17, 2015). Her dissertation focused

on developing cultural competency of undergraduate nursing students in caring for vulnerable populations (Puerto Ricans) in New York City with health disparities. Using a Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach, Dr. Mathew developed

an educational tool using virtual simulations.



**Christina Miller** (Assistant Professor, Library) recently presented a paper titled "Using TRAILS To Assess Students' IL Skills and Foster School-wide Collaborations

and Educational Conversations" on November 3, 2015 at the New York City School Library System's 26th Annual Fall Conference.



## York Students Participate in Panel Discussion on the 2016 Presidential Election

Dr. Ron Daniels recently hosted a town hall meeting on the upcoming elections addressing the question, “Can Youth and Students Elect the Next President?” According to panelist Nisha Herrenberg, a York Political Science major, it might be feasible if they all join forces. “There has to be more participation,” said Herrenberg, president of the Political Science and Pre-Law Club. “We want our voices to be heard. We have to push for what we want.”

Asked what issues she cares most about, Herrenberg, a graduating senior, proves she has her finger on the pulse of some of the pressing issues. “Environment, water and air pollution are major problems,” she noted. “They need to put

a cap on gas emissions. Population and food are also important issues. Bernie Sanders is talking about it. Bernie wants to target those issues. That is something we definitely need in the coming years.” Pressed on the title question, Herrenberg focused more on being able to get what they want from whoever the next president may be. “If we join together and have our ideas concise and concrete we can make actual change,” she said.

Among the other student panelists were Gregory Hetmeyer and Jerome Barrett. Barrett honed in on two particular candidates in this cycle. “I love Bernie (Sanders) and his radical positions,” said Barrett. “But it’s ‘I have a dream’

before its time. It wouldn’t happen with ease. But yes, [students and youth] can elect the next president.” Barrett also likes Hillary Rodham Clinton and believes that the first-hand experience of the would-be “First Gentleman,” former president, Bill Clinton, would be an asset to her success as president. “He knows how to deal with the conservatives,” said Barrett. He did it as president.”

Dr. Daniels was impressed by the students’ engagement as well. “The students were very thoughtful in terms of their discussion and ideas,” he noted. “There were a couple of dissenting voices that engagement in electoral politics is not productive. But overall there was a lot of optimism. We hope to do one more [town hall] before the general election: one in the spring and one in the fall. The students who came were very smart and not lacking in enthusiasm.” ■

## Whistling Vivaldi Author Visits York

On November 4, 2015, Dr. Claude M. Steele, the author of this year’s York Common Reader, gave a presentation on “Stereotype Threat: What It Is and What We Can Do About It,” based on the ideas and research presented in his book, *Whistling Vivaldi*. A social psychologist and Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost at UC Berkeley, Dr. Steele has spent a lifetime building scholarly knowledge about stereotype threat and its influence on identity and performance.

The event was well-attended by students, faculty, and staff. Many professors brought their classes to hear the presentation, and many students stayed afterwards to ask the author to sign their books. During the lecture, Steele explained that all people experience stereotype threat, which arises when stereotypes based on gender, race, profession, ethnicity, and other aspects of an individual’s identity come into play in various social contexts. Steele emphasized that both good and bad stereotypes can have an effect in shaping people’s level

of comfort and even their performance in different situations. Awareness of the role of stereotype threat in human behavior can free individuals to cope with and move beyond stereotype threat. As human beings are always expanding, learning, and changing, stereotypes provide only a very limited perspective on a person’s identity and capability.

The Common Reader program at York College, sponsored by the York College Auxiliary Board, Academic Affairs and Student Development, seeks to integrate both academic and student development goals for students’ learning experience. This year, the book *Whistling Vivaldi* was chosen as the 2015-16 common reader and provided free of charge to all entering first-year students. Many faculty integrated portions of the book into their curricula, bridging students’ academic experiences across courses and encouraging their deep thinking about stereotypes, an important issue and concern that touches everyone. The author presentation was planned as the



Dr. Claude M. Steele and Professor Cynthia Haller, chair of the Common Reader Program Committee

highlight of a series of activities, including a first-year student pizza party at the outset of the semester and an informal book discussion the week following the author’s visit, which provided an opportunity for students to check in with one another about their impressions of both the book and the presentation. Faculty and students spoke together about specific experiences with stereotype threat and their approaches to overcoming its potentially detrimental effects. ■



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## Master's in Physician Assistant Program Receives Accreditation

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) has approved the conversion of York's Physician Assistant program from a bachelor's to a master's curriculum. Already approved by CUNY and NYSED, the master's program is set to launch in Fall 2016, with its first graduating class scheduled for January, 2019. Congratulations to Dr. Robert Brugna, Physician Assistant Program Director, and his colleagues in the Department of Health Professions for their success in bringing this program to York. ■



Dr. Robert Brugna

