A New Era in CCSU STEM Education
Sciences Merge With Former School of Engineering and Technology

Say goodbye to the School of Engineering and Technology, and hello to the new School of Engineering, Science, and Technology. The school’s July 1st reorganization reflects the emergence of STEM-based curriculum in higher education.

“STEM education grows out of the idea that the boundaries between science, technology, engineering, and math are permeable,” says Dean Faris A. Malhas, emphasizing the interdependence of the four disciplines. “By endeavoring to blend science, technology, engineering, and math in its approach, STEM education seeks to create 21st-century learning opportunities and skill development for a new breed of technical professionals.”

Having all four disciplines under one common administrative structure provides a better, more efficient allocation of resources.

“The new configuration allows resources to be focused on the applied sciences, and thus provides the best opportunities for cross-disciplinary discussions and program integration,” says Malhas, noting how a common organizational structure promotes collaborative research opportunities, a unified student recruitment strategy, and potential partnerships with local business and industry, particularly science and engineering companies.

continued on page 3
A New Era in CCSU STEM Education
4 Humanitarian Compassion: Bethany Grupp
5 Author Mary-Ann Tirone Smith '65
6 Dr. Jerold Duquette: Voter Polling
7 For Crying Out Loud: Dr. Rebecca Wood
8 Faculty Artistry
9 The Red Flag Campaign
10 CCSU Abroad: Remembering D-Day
11 Central's “Living Room” Turns the Big 5-0
12 Culture of Success
13 2014 Distinguished Service Award: Dr. Zdzislaw Kremens
14 CCSU Receives Record-Setting Gift of $6.5 Million
15 Taking Care of Business: New MBA
16 Bland to Beauty
19 Shining Star Astronomy Professor Kristine Larsen
25 Mapping a Brighter Future
26 Supporting Small Business Growth
28 Dance, Dance Revolution!

DEPARTMENTS
18 Campus Culture
21 In The News
24 Alumni News
27 Extra Credit

Published by CCSU’s Office of Marketing & Communications www.ccsu.edu/courier
“The STEM disciplines have a shared understanding of education and research,” Malhas explains. “Having like disciplines — as well as their academic departments — under a single administrative structure will lead to improved teacher training and professional development, outreach activities with K-12 schools in our region, as well as aligning with new and evolving standards, such as the Common Core Standards for mathematics, the Next Generation of Science Standards for the physical sciences, and the standards prescribed by the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association for engineering and technology education.”

A common unified administrative structure offers improved and streamlined curriculum development, course offerings, course scheduling, and new course development.

Part of the reorganization includes five departments expanded into six, with earth sciences and physics, now becoming geological sciences, physics and engineering physics.

“That’s the first example where we see a birth of a program blending one of the sciences with engineering,” said Assistant Dean James Mulrooney. “If you just look at the engineering field, with all the blending of the sciences, we have the raw material here. The sky’s the limit with what we could do, with of course the proper support from the state.”

Consolidating the four departments into one school gives CCSU a competitive edge, according to President Jack Miller.

“It’s a very important milestone for the University,” Miller says. “I think it will enable us to compete for a number of different types of funding and awards.”

Without as much of the “runaround,” Mulrooney believes a streamlined student learning experience will be the ultimate result.

“Now you really do have like-minded faculty and like-minded students,” he said, noting potential benefits to students, such as providing consistency in course offerings and ease of scheduling.

“The students, I think, are going to really benefit from this joint venture,” he says. “As we’re working together, the faculty will find ways for their students to interact where we can help each other with different projects.”

A STEM-educated workforce will be a key driver of the economy over the next century, adds Malhas.

“The shortage of STEM educated students limits our state’s ability to compete,” he says. “New educational models must be set up to address both the shortage and the needs of the workforce itself.

“The world is changing rapidly, presenting numerous career opportunities for students with degrees in STEM fields,” he says. “To reduce the gap, and prepare more K-12 and college students — especially minorities and women for STEM careers — CCSU must become a key player in the region by widening the education funnel so more students enter these critical disciplines.”

An innovative society requires a scientifically literate population and a robust supply of qualified graduates.

“STEM education prepares all students for the challenges and opportunities in today’s economy — not just for careers as scientists,” says Malhas. “Technology as a global knowledge economy is the future.”

— Keith Hagarty
Bethany Grupp  
Humanitarian Compassion  
Heartfelt Mission

Summer break conjures thoughts of relaxing, sunny, sandy beaches and exotic travel overseas. **Bethany Grupp** shares similar aspirations. However, with one difference: helping others.

Entering her senior year, Grupp, a political science major from Granby, Connecticut, traveled to Ghana twice over the last two summers for months on end, volunteering her time, money and hands-on service to a destitute orphanage in the small coastal town of Senya Beraku.

“I knew I wanted to take my experiences to the next level,” says Grupp. “People come up to me and ask why I choose to go to Africa when there’s poverty in the states, but poverty in the states is much different than poverty anywhere else, especially where governments are corrupt.”

During her teens, Grupp spent time volunteering in Mexico, building homes for the poor. This focused drive to help others in need led her to the tiny, underfunded and understaffed Ghanaian orphanage, a dilapidated facility so limited in resources and amenities that 40 children have no choice but to sleep in one room no bigger than a typical classroom.

“This year they at least had mats to sleep on, but last year they had nothing — they were sleeping on straw on the floor,” she says. “Everyday is a struggle for them. Everyday is a bucket shower. Their water is not clean, and they’re lucky if they even have that every day.”

Despite the extreme conditions, the only time Grupp even contemplated coming home was when she fell ill during her first summer, having to be hospitalized with cholera.

“As much as I love it over there, when you get sick, you just want to be home,” she says. “It’s hard. The days are long, and electricity is out half the time, so you’re always using flashlight and lanterns. It gets hard, but the children just make it worth it.”

One orphan in particular holds a special place in Grupp’s heart, a five-year old girl named Mary.

“I call her my baby. If there was a way to get her here with me, she would be here with me,” says Grupp. “Leaving her this last time was one of the hardest things I’ve ever had to do. I know what a mother’s love is now because I think about her every day, and all I want is the best for her. I want the best for all the kids. It’s just very difficult to get it.”

Thanks to Grupp and her family’s tireless fundraising efforts through YouCaring.com, her daily on-site blog, social media, and letter-writing campaign, the orphanage was able to buy school uniforms, provide health insurance for all of the children, and purchase a parcel of land large enough to build a new orphanage, with hopes of eventually also constructing a new school and hospital.

“The donations I brought secured the foundation and the piping for the new building, and they’re starting to work on the walls now, with the roof coming next,” she says. “I am just one person, and it’s so hard to raise money, but even a little bit goes such a long way over there because it’s American dollars.”

**Name:** Bethany Grupp  
**Major:** Political Science  
**Year:** Senior  
**Hometown:** Granby, Connecticut  
**Highlights:** Coordinates humanitarian mission and hands-on service for an orphanage in Senya Beraku, Ghana.  
**Career Ambition:** Work with non-profit and non-governmental organizations.  
**Quote:** “Sometimes I feel like I’m living in a dream because I realize this is what I want to do with my life.”

continued on page 20
Mary-Ann Tirone Smith ’65
Prolific Author’s Book Optioned For a Film

Author Mary-Ann Tirone Smith ’65 has penned several novels and short stories reprinted worldwide in seven languages, paperback, audio, and eBook editions. Born and raised in Hartford, with a two-year stint volunteering for the Peace Corps in Cameroon, Africa, Tirone Smith was awarded the Diana Bennet Writing Fellowship at the Black Mountain Institute at UNLV, where she completed work on her latest Civil War novel, The Honoured Guest: Anne Alger Craven, Witness to Sumter, in Her Words (Mary-Ann Tirone Smith, 2014). Her touching memoir, Girls of Tender Age (Simon and Schuster, 2007), is an ongoing favorite of book discussion groups, while her novel, Masters of Illusion (Grand Central Publishing, 1994), was recently optioned for a film by Amazon Productions.

Courier. What was your reaction when notified of Amazon’s interest in optioning your novel, Masters of Illusion, for a film?

TS. I thought, Amazon makes movies? Next they’ll own hospitals! I heard from my agent who told me she was contacted by Amazon Productions about Masters of Illusion, a story centered on the Great Hartford Circus Fire. The head of production at Amazon told me the circus fire book made a lasting impression on him — “such a rich story.”

Courier. You wrote Masters of Illusion 20 years ago. What do you attribute to its sustained popularity?

TS. This is the 75th anniversary of the Hartford fire, and there has been a renewed interest in circuses lately: a cable show; a sheet of stamps depicting the circus recently released by the US Post Office; the accident during the performance at the Barnum & Bailey in Providence, Rhode Island recently when eight acrobats fell from the top of the tent where they were doing stunts while hanging from their hair.

Courier. Will you be involved in the film’s script development?

TS. No. I’m not a scriptwriter. Ernest Hemingway once said that when one of his books was optioned for a film, he would drive to the border of California and throw his manuscript out the car window. A book is a book and a script — when it’s a good one — simply captures the essence of the plot and the characters. All the details are visual, most shown through action rather than dialogue.

Courier. Which actors could you envision playing your characters?

TS. I can only see my characters as I saw them. They still live on in my head; I can’t see any actors replacing them. However, I’ll take Susan Sarandon and George Clooney as the two protagonists.

Courier. What led you to a career in writing?

TS. As soon as I read a book, I wanted to write a book. My mother had a shelf of classic children’s literature in our living room, and my father made up a bedtime story for me almost every night. Sometimes he’d recite a poem: “My name is Ozymandias, king of kings. Look upon my works ye mighty and despair.” — Percy Bysshe Shelley (who I studied in Romantic Literature at Central).

Courier. Is there a subject matter you’re most drawn to write about?

TS. I just finished a Civil War novel. Many of my novels center on historical events. My three-book mysteries series focused on the
Dr. Jerold Duquette
Polling: Voter Sentiment or Self-Fulfilling Prophecy?

Be wary of accepting political polling results at face value, cautions Associate Professor of Political Science Jerold Duquette, who questions the validity and accuracy of the media’s standard poll-driven election analysis.

At CCSU since 2000, the published author of Regulating the National Pastime: Baseball and Antitrust and co-founder of the blog MassPoliticsProfs teaches courses on public administration, public budgeting and finance, public policy analysis, American national government, interest groups, political parties and elections, public opinion, public sector ethics, state and local government, as well as critical thinking and persuasive writing in the University Honors program.

Courier. As a highly sought after election season media commentator, how did you become an expert critic of the media’s poll-driven election analysis?

JD. My interest in voter behavior was piqued by the 2010 special US Senate election that sent Scott Brown to Washington. Brown’s 2012 re-election motivated me to co-found the blog MassPoliticsProfs.com. While writing weekly about the 2012 Massachusetts US Senate race for more than a year prior to Election Day, I became increasingly sensitive to the gap between poll-driven media coverage of that race and the larger political, institutional, and structural context of the race.

Courier. Did any anomalies during the 2010 senate race catch your attention?

JD. The media — perhaps gun shy from having failed to see Brown as a potential winner in 2010 — seemed to be greatly exaggerating Senator Brown’s chances of winning re-election in 2012. The reality of the race was that Brown never had a realistic chance of winning re-election, but the media kept using polls showing Brown as very popular and as being close to Warren. More than 10 months prior to Election Day — before Warren had even won the Democratic nomination yet — I called the race for Elizabeth Warren on my blog, and explained how I knew what the pollsters and reporters claimed not to know.

Courier. How could media-driven polling present a more accurate reflection of voter sentiment?

JD. I would like to see more visible qualifications regarding what polling data actually means, as well as more open discussion of when, where, why, and how polling data are interpreted. This type of discussion is, in part, what academic (political science) blogging is for.

Courier. How has MassPoliticsProfs grown?

JD. Critiquing polls and analysis of polling in the media is a significant chunk of what we do at MassPoliticsProfs. The blog, which we started in August, 2011, became increasingly popular among Massachusetts politicos, pols, and journalists. Just recently we finalized a deal to become part of WGBHnews.org, a media outlet that should expand our audience even more.

Scholarship: Critic of the poll-driven election analysis; questions potential influence of media polling tactics swaying voter opinion, patterns and turnout.

Title: Associate Professor of Political Science

CCSU Teaching Service: 14 years

Hometown: Longmeadow, Massachusetts

Education: University of Massachusetts at Amherst, MA/PhD; Graduate School of Business & Public Management at The George Washington University, MPA; Catholic University of America, BA.

Career Highlights: Co-founder of MassPoliticsProfs; author of Regulating the National Pastime: Baseball and Antitrust; numerous published articles and book chapters on campaign finance reform, political parties, Massachusetts politics and political culture, public opinion, and political socialization.

Elected Office: Massachusetts Democratic State Committee (2006-12) and Longmeadow School Committee member (2004-07).

continued on page 21
For Crying Out Loud
Dr. Rebecca Wood Uses Infant Cries to Study Caregiver Behavior

Why do we respond the way we do to a baby’s cry?
Do teen parents and adult parents react differently? Does culture play a role? What about gender, or those without children? How do our past experiences impact our responses?

Just some of the questions being investigated by Associate Professor of Psychology Rebecca Wood’s research on caregiver behavior.

“I have always been interested in the characteristics of listeners that affect their ratings of babies’ sounds, as well as their proposed responses,” says Wood, a developmental psychologist studying the physiological responses of adolescent and adult parents/non-parents over the course of an extended infant cry.

Using prerecorded audio of varying infant cries, Wood’s study asks participants to rate their interpretation of the sounds on a five-point scale, assessing high-to-low levels of distress. Participants’ physiological responses are then recorded every 15 seconds of the 10-minute infant cry session.

“We have a ton of acoustic measures already done on the cries,” Wood explains, “I want to see if the acoustic changes parallel the changes in physiology and ratings, and if those patterns vary for the different groups.”

The results, according to Wood, could have far-reaching implications.

“This protocol will be very useful in looking at all kinds of questions — the possibilities are almost endless,” she says. “For instance, we can look at culture, people who have a history of abuse, visual and auditory stimuli, facial expressions, and body language.

“We can also look at all different kinds of acoustics,” she adds. “I have certain acoustic variables I’m interested in, most importantly dysphonation (screeching) and inspiratory vocalizations.”

Comprehension to Context
Wood’s interest in the field began nearly 20 years ago as an undergraduate at the University of Utah. Working on a longitudinal study, she used a series of games to study infant social, cognitive, and physical capabilities. For instance, by playing a game of peek-a-boo, researchers could study a baby’s smile, gaze, and other similar factors associated with game changes.

“That was so interesting to me that I said: okay, I think developmental psychology is the way to go,” she says.

Over the last century, research in the field has focused more on trying to uncover the meaning behind infant cries. Wanting to take it one step further, Wood turned her attention toward caregiver behavior.

“I see the progression in the field as this: we had to first understand the sound before we could look at the whole context,” says Wood. “At first, people talked a lot about what kind of signal the baby’s cry really is, trying to figure out if specific hunger, pain, and anger cries exist, for example. There was a great deal of theorizing for a good five decades or more, and then once researchers started getting a handle on infant communication in general, they began thinking more about the sound itself, the colic context, and also crying as a proximal cause of abuse.”

Wood’s research explores the variables associated with negative responses to a standard baby cry, which could potentially lead to inappropriate, dangerous responses, such as shaking a baby.

continued on page 21
The collective talents of Central’s art faculty took center stage at the 2014 CCSU Department of Art Faculty Exhibition. Held September to October in the galleries of the Samuel S.T. Chen Fine Arts Center, the biennial exhibition is an opportunity to awaken students to the inspired artistic creativity of their professors, says Art Department Chair Mark Strathy.

“This is very important to inform the students about each artist they study with,” Strathy says. “The approaches to art-making in this exhibition are as varied as any sampling of artists in the general population.”

Spotlighting the Department of Art’s palette of creativity, the exhibition offers an eclectic, behind-the-scenes glimpse of the faculty’s distinctive vision and creative mastery.

Tapping into his travels across the United States and Europe, Strathy’s contribution to the exhibit features large-scale watercolors juxtaposed with objects from his Brooklyn-based studio. His work reflects a personal seven-year journey.

“I have led several study abroad trips through CCSU where we paint and draw on location,” says Strathy. “This is a transition in my work as I have painted large oils for most of my career. Each watercolor on this scale takes about two months.”

The exhibition embodies the department’s mission of providing academic experiences intended to broaden individual talent and artistic abilities; stimulate creative processes; develop skills needed to accomplish career objectives as practicing art professionals and educators; and afford opportunities to work with dynamic, energetic faculty members who are also active, exhibiting artists.

This year’s exhibition also marks the debut of the department’s newest faculty member, Assistant Professor of Art Brian Flinn.

“His works are compelling images which mix drawing and photo collage to create surreal environments,” says Strathy.

For more information about the exhibition and upcoming shows, visit www.art.ccsu.edu.

— Keith Hagarty
DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT

Time for Students to “Say Something”

THE RED FLAG CAMPAIGN

TAKES STAND AGAINST CAMPUS DATING VIOLENCE

You’re sitting in the library minding your own business. In an adjacent private room, a female student is crying on the floor. Visibly angry, someone who appears to be her boyfriend is sitting on a nearby chair, muttering rude comments to her. What do you do?

Year after year millions of men and women, many of whom are college age, are subject to domestic abuse. Seeking an end to the silence, Central’s Diversity and Equity Department is educating students to know the warning signs: When you see a red flag, say something!

“Most of us will not be victims, most of us will not be offenders, but all of us will be bystanders,” says CCSU Chief Diversity and Title IX Officer Rosa Rodriguez, who along with Nick D’Agostino, associate in the Office of Diversity and Equity, are spearheading Central’s Red Flag Campaign, a public awareness initiative designed to address and promote the prevention of dating violence on college campuses.

Peppered across campus is a series of small red flags, a subtle, yet powerful, reminder of the dating and interpersonal violence all around us right under our eyes.

In our nation, more than 1 in 3 females and 1 in 4 males have experienced physical violence, verbal abuse, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. Women ages 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 generally experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence.

Through the use of “bystander intervention” strategy, Central’s Red Flag Campaign encourages friends and other campus community members to “say something” when they see warning signs, or “red flags,” of dating violence in a friend’s relationship.

“We want to bring this very important issue to the forefront,” says Rodriguez. “We want to have students understand the importance.”

In September, US Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn) visited the campus to host a roundtable discussion on his proposed bill, “The Campus Safety and Accountability Act,” designed to strengthen accountability for college campuses dealing with sexual assault.

“We want to empower students to say: I’m going to remove my friend from this situation,” says Rodriguez.

Blumenthal is encouraged by the recent launch of the White House’s “It’s On Us” public awareness campaign, similarly aimed at preventing campus sexual assault.

Since starting CCSU’s Red Flag Campaign last year, the Office of Diversity and Equity have seen participation steadily grow from one lone group to now several participating University offices, including, but not limited to Athletics, Residence Life, and Student Wellness.

“My work is to empower students to recognize that this is not their fault and that there are people who are on campus to help them with that,” says Rodriguez.

To join or learn more about CCSU’s Red Flag Campaign and events, stop by the Office of Diversity and Equity, or visit ccsu.edu/diversity/redflag.

— Sintia Arelus
In commemoration of June’s 70th Anniversary of the D-Day invasion of Normandy, a collection of CCSU student journalists and professors traveled to France, reporting firsthand accounts from the storied war-torn beaches.

“Feeling the sand of Omaha Beach 70 years after D-Day was so awe-inspiring that it brought me to tears,” senior photojournalist Erin O’Donnell says of the trip, which also included expeditions to several World War II era landmark locales, French countryside points of interests, and the capital city of lights, Paris.

“We worked as a team throughout the trip as journalists to report on events, from witnessing President Barack Obama speak at the American Cemetery in Normandy to learning how to make authentic macaroons from a French bakery in Paris,” says O’Donnell.

As one of 19 students making the trip, Kassondra Granata described it as “one of the most beloved moments” of her life.

“Climbing Mont Saint-Michel and seeing the view from the top was beyond my imagination,” says Granata. “Being the first international group to have visited Bobigny déportation station, and seeing where Jews boarded onto Nazi trains to Auschwitz, Germany was heart wrenching.”

To document their daily experiences, the group created a webpage — www.ccsudday70.com — an online hub of their personal travel blogs, photographs, video news broadcasts, and updated social media posts.

As trip faculty director, Professor of Journalism Vivian Martin, who also serves as chair of the Department of Journalism, was proud of her students, encouraged by their connection to history with a journalistic eye.

“I hope they understand some of the challenges piercing through collective memory and some of the myths that surround remembrances of events,” says Martin, who was joined by Darren Sweeney, assistant professor of journalism. “I hope they are able to evaluate how they performed as journalists in the field, and come away from this with good clips for their portfolios.”

Taking a breather from her news correspondent role, Granata said she never felt as fortunate in life as she did standing underneath the Eifel Tower, dwarfed by its massive, steel presence. Still, there was another deliciously defining moment.

“Tasting fresh cider in Normandy and eating baguettes in a café in Paris will never leave my memory,” she says.

Student Kiley Krzyzek agrees, saying the trip served as inspiration to dive headfirst into new cultures, determined to learn the French language for an eagerly anticipated return trip to Paris.

“These lifelong memories that I have from my study abroad trip to France will be valued forever,” says Krzyzek. “This trip gave me a new appreciation for those who sacrifice for the freedom of others, and further confirmed my passion for being a journalist and the importance of sharing a story.”

— Erin O’Donnell and Keith Hagarty
The year was 1964.
The Beatles brought the British invasion to the Ed Sullivan Show. Nelson Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment in South Africa. The Warren Commission issued their report determining that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy — and a quaint, little structure opened its doors for the very first time on the north side of campus: the student center.

What began five decades ago as a mere 41,000 square foot replacement for old East Hall, now stands as the three-floor, 84,000 square foot “living room” of the campus.

“While the building has stood here for 50 years, the idea of the student center has been around for much longer,” Student Center Director Otis Mamed said during September’s 50th anniversary ribbon-cutting celebration.

The center provides a range of services for students including lounge and study areas, entertainment, Breakers Game Room, CENtix Box Office, tech services and host venue for the departments of the Student Center & Student Activities/Leadership Development, student clubs and organizations, LGBT Center, Women’s Center, Devil’s Den, campus bookstore, mail services, and more.

“We are a place to learn about being a good citizen in this community,” says Mamed, “a place to meet the diversity of the world, to learn to work together, to resolve differences, and make changes.”

Crooning a special, harmonious rendition of “Happy Birthday,” the a capella group Fermata The Blue kicked off the center’s yearlong anniversary of events. Commemorating a 50-year evolution of dance, members of the pep squad and dance team performed a rapid-fire montage of beats, shaking their hips to Elvis Presley’s “Hound Dog,” gyrating to Beyoncé’s “Single Ladies,” and swaying to five decades of dance hits in between.

The evolution of dance reflects the collaborative relationship between student activities and the student center, according to Scott Hazan, director of Student Activities and Leadership Development.

“It’s just been a great marriage of working together over the past 50 years,” says Hazan. “This has taken on many different increments of being together as one department, and also being separate as two different departments. But the common thread is that we’ve always been here as a great program to support the students in what they do.”

The student center is the lifeblood of the campus, says CCSU President Emeritus Richard Judd, who served as the center’s inaugural director (1964-70).

“There are three things which drive my mind about the University: one is the heart, one is the body, and one is the soul,” says Judd. “The faculty is the heart of the school. CCSU President Dr. Jack Miller and his administrative team are the body, the structure that makes this place work.”

Saving the best for last, Judd offers the final element: the soul.

“That’s all of our students,” he says, challenging each individual to add their own unique “flavor” to the CCSU experience.

“You are the ones who really put life and spirit into the University,” he says. “It happens with places like the student center, the residence halls, food services, and all of the activities that drive the life of the University.”

Calling the student center the symbolic heart of CCSU’s teaching-learning community, Mamed explains what makes the facility so unique.

“Sixty percent of college learning takes place outside the classroom, and much of that opportunity is provided right here,” he says, standing across a landscape of golden balloons and student leaders and center staff sporting limited edition 50th anniversary t-shirts.

“We want you to discover more clearly who you are. We want you to experience this in an environment that is fun,” he says. “We want to be the center of your community. We want to be your living room. Today is not about the building, it’s about you, the students. We’re celebrating you.”

— Keith Hagarty
UNIVERSITY NEWS

Culture of Success
President Miller: “We’ll Succeed Because That’s What We Do.”

Presenting the state of the University at September’s annual open meeting for faculty and staff, President Jack Miller proudly held up the ongoing plan for Central. Entering his tenth year of service, Miller says the progress made by the University over the last decade has resulted in the 2013-14 academic cycle being “nothing short of a great year.”

“There were so many excellent things that occurred,” says Miller, noting the target goals set forth in the document. “It’s because of the culture of success that all of you have helped to create.”

Some of CCSU’s noted highlights of 2013-14 include:

- Welcoming President Barack Obama to campus as he rallied support for an increase to the federal minimum wage.
  “That all happened with only seven days notice,” Miller explains, commending numerous University officials for “putting together an excellent day for Central” while under an intense time crunch. Obama was joined by Governor Dannel Malloy, federal administrative figures, and local and state officials.

- 12 percent increase to the 6-year graduation rate for full-time, first-time students.
  “In 2005-2006, our graduation rate was 40 percent — that was bad,” Miller says. “We set about to change that, setting a goal of 52 percent, which is good, or above the average for regional institutions of our type. Last year, it was 52 percent. Is there more work to do? Sure. But that’s tremendous progress, to raise the graduation rate by 12 percent.”

- 22 percent positive increase of faculty and staff satisfaction.
  “In 2007-2008, our Noel-Levitz mean score on the employee satisfaction items was 59 percent,” says Miller, noting the goal of reaching 100 percent. “We’ve made a lot of progress now at 81 percent from 59 percent. It’s a tremendous improvement.”

- $6 million increase to the value of the CCSU endowment.
  “Today, the value of the endowment is $53.7 million, well more than our goal,” Miller says, noting last year’s $47.7 million figure. Most of the funds in the endowment go toward student scholarship programs to help defray educational costs. “In 2005, the value of the endowment was a little over $18 million, and we set a goal of $40 million,” he adds. “We’ve more than doubled that.”

- CCSU School of Business launched the MBA program (see Taking Care of Business, p. 15), and was awarded accreditation by AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business). Central is only the second public university in the state to earn AACSB accreditation, and one of 687 in the world.

- Increased online, hybrid and blended learning courses and program offerings.
  “When we began measuring this in 2005-2006, we had 53 such courses,” says Miller. “Our goal’s to have 100, and last year we had 188. As technology explodes, there is more and more room to do this. The progress has been excellent.”

- The Institute of Education’s “Open Door Report” ranks CCSU 17th in the nation for its “short study abroad” academic programs, and 27th in the nation for “international study abroad” programs.
  “This is the sixth consecutive year that CCSU has placed in the national rankings,” Miller says. “No other Connecticut institution of higher education has placed as highly. That’s something we can all be proud of, and experiences our students definitely need.”

- US News & World Report named CCSU one of the top regional universities in the nation for serving military veterans, ranking #34 overall.

- New residence hall and dining facility on schedule for fall 2015 opening.
  “We broke ground on the first new residence hall on this campus in 20 years — this has been a long, long path,” Miller says of the eight-story, $82.3 million facility on the corner of Harold Lewis Drive and Ella Grasso Boulevard. Located at Gallaudet Hall, the new dining facility will bring a second dining option to students (in addition to current dining services at Memorial Hall). “The residence hall will house well over
UNIVERSITY NEWS

“Our culture of success is far more important than any individual goal in any individual plan. We’ll change. We’ll grow. We’ll become even more successful because of our culture of success.”

600 students when it opens at this time next fall,” Miller adds. “It will also enable CCSU to be a more effective steward of the state’s fund by being able to take out, one at a time, the existing residence halls to renovate, repurpose, and bring the quality of those up to a competitive standard.”

Some other notable projects still in development include: renovations to Barnard Hall (School of Education and Professional Studies); the construction of a new engineering building (between Elihu Burritt Library and Student Center Garage); full renovation of the Copernicus building; and the renovation of Willard and Diloreto Halls, which received an enthusiastic round of applause.

“But now that the social sciences building is complete and open for a year, the Willard and Diloreto complex moves ahead, with planning and engineering soon to begin on that construction,” says Miller.

Despite the University’s achievements, the president emphasizes the need to stay diligent.

“The graduation rate goes up, but it can go down, too, so we can’t rest on our laurels,” he says. “We’ve accomplished a lot, but there’s a lot left to do.”

Planning is important, however Miller urges the CCSU community to resist the urge to limit accomplishments to a narrow list of specific goals. Never underestimate the value of the culture, he adds, quoting legendary management consultant Peter Drucker’s famous line: “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.”

“There all kinds of serendipitous victories that all of you have every day, such as in your classrooms, in your research labs, in the library,” he says. “Look at the graduation rate. Look at the endowment value. Now look at enrollment. We’ll succeed because that’s what we do. We succeed because that’s our culture at CCSU.”

— Keith Hagarty

2014 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD:

Dr. Zdzislaw Kremens

Applauded for his passionate leadership over the last 15 years, Dr. Zdzislaw Kremens, dean emeritus of CCSU’s School of Engineering and Technology, is the recipient of the University’s 2014 Distinguished Service Award.

Describing the highly respected administrator and professor as an innovator who helped put the school on the map, President Jack Miller says the award recognizes Kremens’ outstanding contributions to building a vital part of the University and his dedicated service to students, colleagues, professional organizations, local, state, and international communities.

“The school thrived under his visionary governance,” Miller says. “He has dedicated himself to significantly improving the academic, campus, and community culture.”

Having retired from deanship last year, Kremens continues to be a valued, key presence at CCSU.

“This year’s honoree has often joked that his mother wanted him to be a professional pianist, but because he possessed no talent for it, he decided to become a scientist instead,” Miller quips. “We’re thankful for his decision.”

Always open to new ideas, Kremens works tirelessly with his faculty and staff, attaining many firsts for CCSU, such as procuring licensing and accreditation for the University’s first bachelor of science programs in mechanical and civil engineering, and expanding the school’s laboratory space and academic offerings to include a biomedical engineering program.

“Described by one of his colleagues as having an ‘infectious passion’ for the school, Dean Kremens hired faculty known both nationally and internationally,” says Miller. “His top priority has always been to provide our students with an excellent and affordable education, and he was especially passionate about establishing programs that provided access to college for students who might not otherwise have been able to attend.”
DONORS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

CCSU Receives Record-Setting Gift of $6.5 Million
Dr. Huang Chang-Jen “Opened Doors to the World”

Dedicating his life to promoting education, the late Dr. Huang Chang-Jen bequeathed $6.5 million to Central Connecticut State University — the largest bequest in the history of the institution.

“We are deeply appreciative of Dr. Huang’s support of CCSU,” President Jack Miller says of the industrialist, humanitarian, and calligrapher who passed away in 2012.

“He was a remarkable man, and we are grateful he chose CCSU as a place to continue his legacy,” says Miller.

Born and raised in Hunan, China, Huang’s relationship with CCSU began nearly 25 years ago when he endowed a scholarship supporting the exchange of students from Ouyang Yu Experimental Middle School in China to CCSU, and in turn, the exchange of CCSU graduate students to Ouyang Yu to teach English. He funded the construction of the school through his charity, the Ouyang Yu Foundation (named in honor of his first wife). In 1990, CCSU awarded Huang the honorary Doctor of Humane Letters.

“He was a dedicated philanthropist — driven to invest his wealth in ways that would make life better for people through education, science, and medicine,” his widow, Ha Lin Yip Huang, said during a recent campus visit. “He especially appreciated helping young people make their way in life, and his gift to Central Connecticut State University will continue to make that happen.”

Huang’s philanthropic legacy also includes the founding of the CJ Huang Foundation, supporting Asian American community-based organizations, establishing the Asian Liver Research Center at Stanford University, and helping to build the Shanghai Children’s Hospital and the Wuhan University School of Nursing.

Connecticut Board of Regents President Gregory Gray calls Huang’s legacy “truly inspirational.”

“Dr. Huang is a wonderful example of those for whom giving is a thoughtful and sustained activity,” says Gray.

After earning his bachelor’s degree from Wuhan University in China and his master’s degree in civil engineering from the University of Michigan, Huang moved to Thailand in 1955 and established the US Summit Corporation’s Bangkok Branch, rebuilding the Bangchak Oil Refinery into one of the largest conglomerates in Southeast Asia. He later served as chairman of H&W Enterprises, H&W Enterprises Bay Village, and H&W Development, LLC. He was also an associate at the Stanford Research Institute and served as an advisor to United States Congress.

“My father believed that through the scholarships and endowments he established, he was helping to open doors to the world for young people — giving them the opportunity to explore and learn about themselves,” his son, Paul Huang recalls. “His gift to CCSU carries on his belief — our family tradition — that helping others is the basis for our own happiness.”

— Janice Palmer

Huang’s generous gift benefits his existing scholarship fund and establishes a new fund supporting scholarships to students in the CCSU Schools of Business, Education and Professional Studies, and Graduate Studies. The gift also provides supplemental support for a proposed new student recreation facility, which, pending approval by the Board of Regents, will be named in his honor.
Taking Care of Business
School of Business Launches New MBA

Three letters can often separate a good university from a great one: M B A.

The CCSU School of Business is proud to launch the University’s new Master of Business Administration (MBA) program, offering three academic tracks: accounting, business analytics, and the Central track, an individually tailored approach where students choose from any of the specialization classes in business analytics and accounting to accommodate their own professional and educational needs.

“When you look at other schools of business that have a national reputation, that reputation is built on their MBA program,” says Jason Snyder, MBA program director and associate dean of the School of Business. “When you think about other major institutions, it’s the MBA program that often sets the brand identity for the school — we needed to have that.”

Recently earning AACSB International accreditation (Association to Advance Collegiate School of Business), the CCSU School of Business designed the new MBA program to exceed expectations and meet the academic needs and schedule demands of early-to mid-level career professionals. Also offered as a part-time program, students can earn their degree in just 10 classes through a flexible, cost-effective, blended hybrid format of campus-based and online learning options.

“The energy has been unbelievable, and the excitement that it’s generated among potential students has really been unexpected,” Snyder says of the inaugural 82-student enrollment (far surpassing the initial 50-student goal). “We wanted to capitalize on the AACSB accreditation. What that means for us is that we’re one of a very small number of schools of business that can guarantee a certain level of quality.”

Snyder and Associate Professor Mark D. Cistulli conducted exhaustive market research to discover what prospective students are looking for in an MBA program while exploring opportunities for growth.

“There’s a lot of competition in the MBA marketplace,” says Snyder. “Central is obviously centrally located, with the vast majority of students who are attracted to this school coming from within a 40-mile radius, so we knew there were a number of students in that radius who were interested in an accredited program.”

Associate Professor of Marketing Kuan Pin Chiang’s interactions with MBA students have further reaffirmed his belief in the program’s team-based learning emphasis.

“Teaching and learning go hand-in-hand,” he says. “My teaching approach is collaborative learning that nurtures students’ ideas and increases the value and impact of their MBA experiences at CCSU. I want them to feel that we are on a journey to discover, to investigate, and to learn together.”

The diversity of experience harnessed in the MBA classroom enriches the educational experience, providing a wealth of opportunity, says Cistulli, who also serves as program advisor.

“When you have someone who’s been in the so-called ‘real world,’ in many instances, they can add more value than any textbook can,” he says.

At its core, Snyder adds, learning is a shared experience.

“Bringing all of those perspectives to bear on an issue, idea, or problem generally tends to generate much richer conversations and deeper understanding of the concepts,” he says. “We offer as good a quality of program as anybody. We wouldn’t concede that to any other school in the region.”

To learn more about the new MBA at CCSU, visit www.ccsu.edu/mba.

— Keith Hagarty
AROUND THE CAMPUS

Bland to Beauty
Landscaped Grounds Project Transforms Campus Scenery

Matthew Warshauer is more than just a garden-variety history professor.

From his second floor office window in Social Sciences Hall, the aerial view of the sloping grounds between the building and Marcus White Hall has been a forgettable scene. With banal walkways offset by the dreary gray of dirt and clay, the area has routinely been used as little more than a quick cut-through passage to and from the west side of campus and Davidson Hall. Sure, there were benches to rest, but no energy or vibrancy.

Warshauer envisioned something far more ambitious and beautiful. “The landscape that was between these two buildings didn’t come close to matching how gorgeous these buildings are,” he says. “When I get an idea in my head, I can see the vision of what I potentially would love to do.”

Designing a landscape plan to resurrect the dormant grounds, Warshauer focused on one goal: create a peaceful oasis in the underutilized closed environment.

“I thought this could be such a perfect, little, serene area,” he says. “Now people walk through a little slower, and take a minute to go: oh wow, this is really beautiful.”

There’s an art to landscape design, according to Warshauer, a self-described “random landscaper.”

“I do very formalized gardens, too, but I like random looks because it’s easier to grow in, easier to maintain, throw new plants in, and take old plants out,” he says. “But just because it’s randomized, it doesn’t mean a lot of thought didn’t go into what types of plants would really work here.”

Turning gray into grand, the area now boasts a series of enhancements, featuring dozens of new plantings, patio, stone sitting wall, landscaped rocks and boulders, semi-dwarf spruce trees, Adirondack lounging chairs, and more.

“I really wanted dogwood trees, too. They’re early bloomers in the spring,” Warshauer explains. “We wanted plants that had a nice look at multiple times of the year, and were also extremely low maintenance. The nice thing is we’re still going to have a lot of the plants stay green throughout the year, like the andromedas and rhododendrons.”

He even incorporated plantings from his home garden inventory, such as hostas, ferns, and his personal favorite, blue star.

“Blue star is native to New England, and was the only plant in my yard when we moved in,” he says. “It’s the coolest plant because
it comes up almost looking like asparagus, and then it gets these delicate blue flowers on it in the spring, then it ends up looking like a grass, and ultimately ends up looking like a bush.”

Another of his personal plantings, witch hazel, now grows near the entry doors of Social Sciences Hall — an added boost for the impending winter doldrums.

“Witch hazel is specifically an early to late winter bloomer,” says Warshauer. “In the midst of February into March, maybe even earlier, those will go into bloom and have these beautiful yellow-reddish flowers, and release a very citrusy smell. When you walk out the door, you’re going to get hit with that fragrance right away.”

Warshauer credits CCSU Chief Operations Officer Richard Bachoo and Coordinator of Capital Projects & Facilities Planning Jim Grupp for being instrumental in bringing the garden to life.

“The area looks absolutely great!” says Bachoo, citing Warshauer’s commitment to excellence, whether in the classroom or toiling in the soil.

“I had complete trust in his ability to produce a result that would make us proud,” Bachoo adds.

The view from Warshauer’s office window now takes on a life of its own.

“The thing that gives me the greatest pleasure — beyond just being able to look out my window and see the beauty of nature — is to see students sitting there studying, hanging out, and reading,” he says. “I’ve been walking this campus for years, and have seen just amazing potential, but underutilized. This place could look like a botanical heaven.”

— Keith Hagarty
CCSU Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

In Spain, they call it Fiesta Nacional de España. In Uruguay, it’s Día de las Américas. In Argentina, it’s known as Día del Respeto a la Diversidad Cultural, or the day of respect for cultural diversity. In the United States, we know it by the same name it’s always been since first becoming a federal holiday in 1934: Columbus Day.

“What exactly is in a name?” Rolena Adorno posed during her recent “What Does Columbus Day Mean Now?” on-campus guest lecture. The sterling professor of Spanish and department chair of Spanish and Portuguese at Yale University reflected on the famed explorer’s impact on colonialism in the New World, slavery, and the political and sociological ramifications still affecting contemporary society, particularly across Central and South Americas.

As part of CCSU’s Hispanic Heritage month, Adorno presented the first-person account of a Quechua-speaking native Peruvian under the rule of Spanish colonialism, using excerpts and drawings from his rare autobiographical book currently housed in the Royal Library of Denmark.

“Language and communication were the issues from the very first day, and they are our very same issues still today,” says Adorno. “There are challenges that young people coming from diverse immigrant backgrounds face today. Hispanic Heritage month offers us the chance to reflect exactly on these matters.”

Unlike other months of cultural celebration, Hispanic Heritage is held mid-month from September 15 to October 15. The mid-September start date commemorates the corresponding time in which five Latin American republics gained their independence: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico, Chile, and Belize also now celebrate the anniversaries of their independence during this timeframe.

The roots of Hispanic Heritage date back to 1968 when President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a national Hispanic Heritage week. However, it wasn’t until 20 years later that President Ronald Reagan went one step further, declaring it a full month of cultural pride.

Other CCSU Hispanic Heritage month highlights include:

- “Not Your Father’s Hispanics: Connecticut’s Hispanic Population is Changing,” presented by Orlando Rodriguez, associate legislative analyst for the Latino Puerto Rican Affairs Commission, focusing on the increasing number of non-Puerto Ricans in Connecticut and how it might impact the political influence of Hispanics across the state.

- “Miguel Trelles: Latin Pop” presented by the Puerto Rican painter and printmaker and resident visual artist/programmer at the Clemente Soto Velez Cultural and Educational Center in the Lower East Side of New York City. Known for his on-going Chino-Latino painting series, Trelles works primarily with silkscreens, delving into dark humor with pre-Columbian icons, colonial archetypes, and contemporary Latino sensibilities.

- “Tocando Fondo” (or “hitting bottom”) discussion with authors Juan Carlos Rueda and Jose Luis Sierra presenting an open dialogue on various social problems affecting Puerto Rico. Designed to offer new perspectives and appreciation of the strengths of the Puerto Rican people, the authors’ book is a collection of 15 stories defining life struggles, difficulties and limitations of individuals, family, and communities, while saluting the self-governing island commonwealth’s resiliency, strengths, and accomplishments.

CCSU Hispanic Heritage month events were sponsored by the Office of Student Affairs, Pre-Collegiate and Access Services, Latin American, Latino, and Caribbean Center, History Department, Modern Languages Department, the Latin American Student Organization (LASO), and the Office of Diversity and Equity.

— Keith Hagarty
Call it an out of this world honor for Kristine Larsen, professor of physics and earth sciences astronomy, recently named the recipient of the second annual Petit Family Foundation Women in Science Leadership Award.

Honored last month during the Connecticut Science Center’s Green Gala in Hartford, the award recognizes exceptional leadership in promoting women’s participation and interest in science, technology, engineering, and math. Larsen was selected from a slate of the top women scientists in the state, including candidates from Yale University and the University of Connecticut.

“It is an honor to be recognized in this way,” says Larsen ’84, “but I am most gratified that it brings attention to the vitally important problem of raising the number of women who go into STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) careers.”

Recognized for ongoing contributions to her students, children in the community, and overall research in science, Larsen believes in order to truly excite others about science, she must live and breathe the passion.

“Finding connections to science in everyday experiences and popular culture is fun for me, and I try my best in turn to make learning fun for my students,” she says. “If I can demonstrate that science is fun and exists everywhere around us, I can capture students’ attention and help them learn.”

Mentoring in science must occur at all levels, she adds, emphasizing the need to not only interest young people in the field, but nurturing that interest through college and beyond.

“Dr. Larsen represents the best in Connecticut in the STEM fields,” says William Petit, foundation president. “She is an excellent mentor and true teacher. Helping others learn sciences creates a stronger and more vibrant society for all of us.”

The Petit family Foundation honors the memory and spirit of Jennifer Hawke-Petit, Hayley Elizabeth Petit, and Michaela Rose Petit.

— Janice Palmer
Mary-Ann Throne Smith continued from page 5

human need for justice. My first novel, The Book of Phoebe, (iUniverse, 2000) was autobiographical. Many fictional scenes ended up in my memoir, Girls of Tender Age, only as actual events and how they affected my life, family, and the little community that was contained in one square mile of a neighborhood in southwest Hartford in the 1950s: small town America in actuality.

Courier. Do any subjects give you hesitation?

TS. There is no topic or theme outside my comfort zone. I have taken to heart JFK’s maxim: “A writer must be true to himself and let the chips fall where they may.” I write what I like to write, and I generally have a vision. The creative process is indescribable.

Courier. Who is your favorite or most influential author?

TS. My greatest admiration, was and is, for William Shakespeare, thanks to Professor of English (the late) Francis Glasheen at Central. Shakespeare’s theme was human motivation, something no writer had written about before. I was pretty much blown away by King Lear. I tend to love books that reveal pieces of human nature that I’d never thought about before.

Courier. What advice would you give an aspiring author?

TS. Read incessantly. Join the Peace Corps. When you have settled down, find 20 minutes a day to write. Write what you want to write, what gives you pleasure and joy. That would be seven days a week. Punch the clock. It is all about discipline.

— Keith Hagarty
Professor of Anthropology Kenneth L. Feder was featured in the blog jasoncolavito.com examining the archeological mysteries behind cave systems in New Mexico.

Professor of History Heather Munro Prescott guest authored a piece in the “The Public Health” section of the Philadelphia Inquirer speaking on the history of emergency contraception.

Associate Professor of Geography Richard Benfield and Professor of Sociology John Mitrano were featured in the New Britain Herald opposing the move to Hartford by minor league baseball’s New Britain Rockcats.

Associate Professor of Political Science Jerold Duquette was featured on FOXCT speaking about the national gun debate’s influence on the Connecticut gubernatorial race.

Associate Professor of Political Science Ghassan El-Eid was featured on FOXCT discussing the American public’s sentiment towards US action against international ISIS targets.

Professor of Political Science Walton Brown-Foster had an op-ed commentary on race and class featured in the Hartford Courant.

Dr. Jerold Duquette continued from page 6

Courier. How do you respond to critics disagreeing with your view of polls as potential “self-fulfilling prophecies?”

JD. Much of the motive for blogging as an academic is to generate critical feedback and debate. At MassPoliticsProfs, we are particularly open to critical feedback from political professionals, including pollsters, consultants, and journalists. We want to be both an expert resource for them and to entice non-expert readers into greater interest in and understanding of politics. The MassPoliticsProfs have the luxury of providing media commentary and analysis without the interference of economic self-interest. We don’t have to sell papers or get ratings; our livelihoods are unthreatened by our media analysis. We can bring the insights, research findings, and methodologies of political science to the analysis of real time politics, which enriches public debate, without worrying about ‘biting the hand that feeds.’ This, in turn, makes it comparatively easier to have a thick skin when it comes to criticism of our analysis.

Courier. How has your academic service contributed to your scholarship?

JD. One of the strengths poli-sci profs bring to the public conversations about elections, polling, and politics in general is a particular kind of objectivity. Politicians, consultants, pollsters, and journalists depend on their political analysis of active, real time politics to put food on the table.

Courier. How do you incorporate critical thinking into the classroom?

JD. At a very basic level, all college courses are about helping students develop a critical perspective. Students in my American politics and public administration courses cannot avoid having to grapple with the causes and effects of public opinion on whatever particular content a course covers. Also, polling is done scientifically, which means that developing a critical perspective about it really means developing a scientific perspective. Because polling touches on, or at least can be connected to, the substance of every course I teach, my media analysis about polling serves as both a valuable model for my students, as well as a venue for student/professor collaboration.

Rebecca Wood continued from page 7

“If people can’t console a baby, they don’t know what to do, which can lead to all kinds of negative outcomes for the child and the parents,” says Wood. “There’s increased emphasis on looking at abuse that can result from a baby whose crying and can’t be consoled, or what predisposes some people to respond very negatively or even abusively, to a baby who’s crying.”

Age and Emotion Matter

Younger participants often rate infant cries as sounding far more distressed than adult participants.

“It doesn’t matter if the teenagers are parents or not parents — what matters is that they are teenagers,” says Wood. “Adolescents respond quite emotionally to the sound. The opposite pattern is found in adults.”

When presented with emotional stimuli, Wood says adolescents show more activation in the amygdala, or the “emotional seat of the brain,” instead of the frontal lobe, or “thinking” part of the brain, where we make judgments and inhibit emotions.

Additional factors, Wood explains, such as anger, empathy, and anxiety could also influence adolescent caregiver responses.

“I want to study those factors because I want to see if adolescents just stay anxious throughout the cry and don’t really respond to the acoustic changes,” she says.

Infants are sensitive to their caregiver’s emotions and temperament.

“Our baby can tell if you’re nervous interacting with him or her,” Wood explains. “Sensitive responses to infant signals, especially during the first four months or so are very important in establishing and predicting secure emotional attachments between infant and caregiver.”

These secure attachments, according to Wood, have lasting implications.

“Teenagers and young adults who have histories of secure attachments in infancy are less prone to the negative effects of stress,” she adds, “less likely to be anxious, and more likely to form secure attachments in adulthood.”

— Keith Hagarty
Serving as a gateway for cultural, educational, and economic opportunities with China, Central proudly welcomes the arrival of the Confucius Institute, establishing CCSU as the go-to resource center for the teaching and learning of Chinese language and culture in Connecticut.

“Our university is truly honored to be home to the very first designated Confucius Institute within the State of Connecticut,” says President Jack Miller, describing the international partnership as a “historic occasion.”

The Confucius Institute at CCSU offers study abroad opportunities, student scholarships, academic exchanges, teacher training, summer language camps in China, after-school and summer programs for at-risk youth in New Britain, and business and community outreach programs. Located in the Elihu Burritt Library, a collection of 3,000 titles will be housed by the institute and made available to the public, including Chinese textbooks, history, poetry, and literature.

Funded, in large part, by the Chinese National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (known as the Hanban) the institute operates in collaboration with Shandong Normal University, Central’s sister university in Shandong Province, China.

“We expect the years ahead will be highly productive and personally fulfilling for our students, our University, and for others in the state interested in studying or learning about Chinese culture and language,” says Miller, who in 2011 traveled to China to strengthen CCSU’s relationship with Shandong Normal University, lobbying for the University to host the institute.

“This really is a representation of two governmental entities, two nations, and two universities,” he adds.

Calling it a “critical milestone” in the history of the sister-state relationship, Steve Kliger, institute director and executive director of the Center for Public Policy and Social Research, says the arrival of the institute not only enhances the University’s stature and recognition, but also provides collaborative educational opportunities with Connecticut’s next generation of learners.

“By collaborating with local K-12 schools, our Confucius Institute seeks to facilitate a pathway of Asian Studies and Chinese language learners from high school to CCSU,” he says. “By bringing these students to CCSU to participate in our Chinese language and culture programs, we are helping them build on their interest in China as part of an educational or career path.”

CCSU joins the one hundred universities in the United States and 400 worldwide making up the Confucius Institute network. Through the institute, three visiting teachers from Shandong Normal University are currently teaching Chinese language and culture to students grades K-12, two in Avon Public Schools and one at the Gilbert
School in Winsted. In addition, the institute and CCSU’s Center for International Education are co-sponsoring the Passport to Global Citizenship program, sending up to 15 upper-class EOP (Educational Opportunity Program) students to China for ten days next May.

“It will be a comprehensive, door-to-door program that addresses all travel needs, and will offer an extensive exposure to, and interaction with, Chinese culture,” says Kliger, intending to make the trip an annual event.

The institute formally opened in June with a ceremonial exchange of gifts, well wishes, and spectacular performances, including more than an hour of dazzling dance and majestic musical performances by the School of Music at Shandong Normal University, the All Connecticut Chinese Chorus, Xi Wang Dance, and CCSU’s Department of Music.

Attendees included Governor Dannel Malloy, New Britain Mayor Erin Stewart, Consul General Guoxiang Sun of China’s Consulate in New York, and dignitaries from Shandong Normal University and the Shandong Province.

With 2014 marking the 35th anniversary of China-US diplomatic relations, Consul General Guoxiang Sun applauds the arrival of the Institute at CCSU, saying the two nations have developed one of the most important bilateral relations in the world.

“With the growing presence of the Confucius Institute around the world, the seeds of communication, understanding, harmony, and friendship are being sewed,” says the consul general. “They have taken root and are yielding fruit.”

To kick off the new school year, the University held its first Confucius Institute Day in September, celebrating the worldwide organization’s 10th anniversary. Events included the Wenqin Art Performance in Torp Theatre, a troupe of undergraduate students from China’s Zhejiang University showcasing varied artistic disciplines. Venturing to Rhode Island a few days later, the Confucius Institute at CCSU joined Bryant University, UMass-Boston, University of Rhode Island, and University of New Hampshire as co-sponsors of the Confucius Institute Day Waterfire Festival in Providence.

Through its sustained community initiatives and global outreach, the institute is the latest University commodity bridging cultural barriers, according to Kliger.

“Together CCSU’s Confucius Institute, Center for International Education, Department of Modern Languages, School of Education and Professional Studies, Asia Study Program, East Asia Center, and expert CCSU faculty bring considerable resources to the table in the field of China studies,” he says. “It makes CCSU a highly desirable university to attend.”

Calling it a “forward-thinking initiative,” Malloy says the institute provides the resources for students to compete in a global economy.

“We need more Chinese fluency and understanding of the business community and its operation in China,” says Malloy. “I can’t think of a better way to bring that about than with this institute.”

— Janice Palmer and Keith Hagarty
Elliott Sudal ’10, was featured in several articles, including *ABC News, Inquirer* and *Mirror*, for his exceptional barehanded shark wrangling abilities as the 25 year-old took down a 8’1” sandbar shark on the sandy shores of Nantucket, Massachusetts.

Ben East ’94 is one of 10 finalists for the Dundee International Book Prize. His manuscript *Sea Never Dry* focuses on the corruption of the Ghanaian justice system, Internet fraud, and the mistreatment of Ghanaian orphans for profit.

Donald M. Casey, Jr. ’86, a Stepney Elementary School teacher in Monroe, was awarded the Union Savings Bank Hometown Hero Award. The award honors individuals making a difference in the community.

McKinley Albert ’14, Erin M. Concepcion ’08, and Rob Ruffolo ’07 were named as three of *Hartford Business Journal’s “40 under 40 2014”* recognizing Hartford area men and women making great strides in their career at an early age.

Daniel Martinez ’11 transformed his BA in Communication into his dream job at ESPN. Featured in CtLatino.com, Martinez is an associate producer for the 10-year old Spanish language sports network.

Michael Knight Zayas ’06 is one of the key members in developing New Britain High School Health Academy. Featured in *The New Britain Herald*, Zayas looks to eventually bring this program to New Britain’s middle school systems as well.

Kris Pryce ’01 received the 2014 Teacher of the Year Award for Suffield. Profiled in the *Journal Inquirer*, Pryce utilizes her MS in Reading and Language Arts to further strengthen her students’ reading skills through technology and engaging curriculum.

Andrew Ragali ’12 is one of the leading news reporters at *The Record-Journal*, covering the Wallingford beat.

Nellie Shepard ’54 established a science scholarship for high school seniors. A teacher of chemistry and physics for over 30 years, her Nellie F. Shepard Scholarship makes its debut award in 2015.

Kathleen Sorbo Furie ’83 is the recipient of the 2014 Teacher of the Year award in Windsor. Honored for dedication and commitment to her students, Sorbo Furie spent the past 18 years teaching first- and second-grade students.

Michael J. Bertolini ’07 is taking the fantasy audiobook world by storm. His novel *The Cold Tower* can be purchased on several popular sites including amazon.com, audible.com and iTunes. He is currently writing his second series of books.

Robert Morgan ’67 is being inducted into the Plainville Sports Hall of Fame’s 2014 Class. Receiving a BS in Biology and a MS in Biology, *The Plainville Citizen* and *The Record-Journal* recently profiled Morgan for his accomplishments in high school football and track and field.
CCSU has a proud history of providing high-quality education in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to countless students. Many students have gone on to lucrative and notable careers in the field throughout Connecticut and abroad. Michael D’Amato is one such success story.

Graduating in 2011 with a BS in Geography, D’Amato was recently hired as a land use technician and zoning enforcement officer for the town of Somers. He credits his time at CCSU and ongoing support from the Department of Geography for guiding him on the right track to a valuable internship with the town of Canton.

“It is a phenomenal department, very close knit, and I have built some great relationships,” D’Amato says of the department. “Department Chair Dr. Cindy Pope was my advisor, and she was really great.”

To further bolster his post-graduation job prospects, D’Amato signed up for CCSU’s non-credit GIS (Graphic Information System) certificate program. GIS presents spatial or geographic data through a computerized process of capturing, storing, manipulating, analyzing, and managing.

When he first started the program, D’Amato admits GIS implementation in municipalities was still fairly limited. However, he has seen its use continue to grow.

“GIS isn’t going away,” D’Amato says emphatically.

The GIS certificate program consists of four courses: Basic Principles of GIS; Practical Applications of GIS; Advanced Principles of GIS; and Mobile and Web GIS. Designed for professionals looking to enhance their knowledge and skillset in GIS, the certificate program provides students with the knowledge and experience to work in the field of GIS, both in the public and private sectors. The program is geared towards entry and intermediate level GIS users who lack formal training and education in GIS, and does not require any previous work experience.

“When you leave college, they hand you a toolbox and it doesn’t change if you don’t change it,” says D’Amato. “The GIS certificate has given me new tools to do my job.”

CCSU will continue to offer the certificate program in the classroom with a variety of online hybrid programs in 2015, as well as one-day refresher courses to meet the needs and growing demands of the GIS community.

The next certificate class begins Thursday, February 6. To learn more about the GIS certificate program and other programs offered by the Office of Continuing Education, contact Director Christa Sterling at csterling@ccsu.edu or 860-832-2277.
How can the government assist local small business growth and sustainability? US Rep. Elizabeth Esty (D-5th Dist.) recently joined a CCSU Institute of Technology and Business Development (ITBD) roundtable discussion to tackle this question, hearing the concerns of several local startup company founders participating in ITBD’s Business Incubator Program.

“Startup companies are critical for sustainable job growth in our state and in our country,” says Esty, reaffirming her support of American entrepreneurship and its importance for continued economic growth in Connecticut.

Assisting state businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs since 1986, ITBD provides the tools to start and develop successful companies through technical training, skill development, industrial modernization, marketing, financial, and networking opportunities.

“The congresswoman’s visit was to understand from startup business owners what their challenges, their needs, their hopes and desires would be from the federal government in supporting their entrepreneurial efforts,” says ITBD Director Richard Mullins. “What could help them leverage resources that are available? What resources could they go and find on their own to enhance the development and growth of their business?”

Held in August at ITBD on Main Street, New Britain, the talks included local business owners and instructors, consultants and representatives of ITBD, formulating around the ITBD incubator program and the development of an ecosystem, or as Mullins explains, a series of parts working together to form an entity.

Offering entrepreneurs the space to create and develop their business since 1993, the incubator program maintains a 95 percent occupancy rate, currently providing 80 small business startups with access to affordable office space, shared services, educational programs, and business counseling services.

“Gaining capital and proper guidance in the business process continue to be the most pressing needs facing startups, according to Mullins.

“They’re often very good with their idea, but need to know how to do something with that idea, turning it into a business model,” he says.

With limited time scheduling availability, the forum provided an opportunity for busy company founders working in the incubator program to come together and share their thoughts and concerns with Esty, communicating both their success stories and ongoing challenges.

“Through innovation and technology, startups create new products and services that solve problems and support good-paying jobs,” says Esty. Startup companies are involved in a variety of industries, including technology, health care, retail, and education, says Esty, pointing to a Kauffman Foundation study between 1980 and 2005, which found that startups create an average of 3 million jobs per year.

To find out more about ITBD services, presentations, and upcoming networking events, visit ccsu.edu/itbd.

— Keith Hagarty
Professor of Art James Buxton had two of his sculptures selected for inclusion in the 64th Art of The Northeast exhibition, held in June at Silvermine Art Center in New Canaan. Buxton’s work was chosen by curator Andrew Russeth, art critic for New York Observer, Gallerist, and 16 Miles of String.

Lauren Reynolds, CCSU director of bands and assistant professor of music, was guest conductor during the Coast Guard Band Chamber Players’ September 7 production of “Fortune” in Leamy Concert Hall at the US Coast Guard Academy in New London. The concert featured musicians exploring the heritage of chamber wind ensemble music, performing pieces from Ludwig van Beethoven, Vincent Persichetti, Carl Orff, and more.

Professor of Physics Sadanand Nanjundiah presented a talk about the impact of climate change on July 30 at the New Britain Public Library.

Associate Professor of Physical Education/Human Performance Mike Voight’s recently published book The Sports Leadership Playbook: Principles and Techniques for Coaches and Captains (McFarland, 2014) provides the keys to leadership and an analysis of leadership theory by revered scholars and icons from business and other fields, applying the results to the world of sport.

Associate Professor of Mathematics Oscar Perdomo was the featured speaker during September’s Mathematics Colloquium, presenting a talk on “Minimal translational surfaces in the Euclidean space.”

Walton Brown-Foster, professor of political science, received the Charles “Chuck” Stone Award for Excellence in Teaching Political Science during September’s Education Summit for the Connecticut State Conference of NAACP Branches. Brown-Foster teaches courses in international relations, comparative politics, foreign policy, religion and politics, and African American politics.

Alyana James graduates Magna Cum Laude this spring. In addition to excelling in her courses, she also interned with the New Britain Public Defender’s office and with Senator Richard Blumenthal. Her advisor, Excellence in Teaching Award winner and Associate Professor of Political Science Robbin Smith, says, “Alayna is a superb student who reached beyond the classroom to understand the interaction of law, society, and politics.” Alayna credits Smith’s role in her success: “Many of the professors here, like Professor Smith, made a huge difference in my life—encouraging me to excel and to get involved.”

Your gift makes such successful student-faculty combinations possible, whether it supports scholarships like those that enabled Alayna’s education, or the academic programs that innovative faculty like Smith use to inspire students to greatness. Please support CCSU today!
DANCE, DANCE REVOLUTION!—Held October 31 in Welte Auditorium, the annual Dancentral Fall Student Choreography Showcase presented a special evening of rhythmic tricks and pulsating treats.