As Central Connecticut State University’s 2015-16 academic year opened, President Jack Miller spoke of an unavoidable, yet tantalizing theme: “the notion of change.”

“Everything’s different, yet everything’s the same,” Miller told faculty during the president’s annual opening meeting at Alumni Hall, Student Center.

“Time’s change. People change. Habits change,” he added. “Those that change with them, they mostly succeed. Those that don’t change with them, they mostly fail.”

One solution to help make a change to the rising operating costs that CCSU confronts, according to Miller, is to increase student enrollment and retention.

“What’s the long-term plan to get more students? Make ourselves more attractive. One of the ways to do that is to have better facilities,” said Miller. “This University is undergoing a building program, the likes of which the institution has never seen. That makes us more attractive.”

Attracting eyes, above the treetops along Harold Lewis Drive and Ella Grasso Boulevard, is CCSU’s new Mid-Campus Residence Hall. Housing over 600 beds, the new eight-floor, 220,000 sq. ft. residence hall offers three styles of rooms, with each spacious floor containing a kitchenette, three alcoves, and a group study room. The hall’s main floor features a large living room, fireplace, activity/game room, and fitness center. Leaving Barrows Hall,
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www.ccsu.edu/courier
CCSU Residence Life administrators have also moved into the new building.

Touring the new facility, the president was undeniably impressed.

“Our students deserve it. It makes me feel good to see our students have something this nice,” said Miller. “Seeing the living room, the fireplace, gathering spaces, workout room, exercise facilities, study areas, and dorm rooms themselves just made me so proud. They’ve done a magnificent job.”

Located near the athletic and recreation facilities, a new 22,000 sq. ft. food services dining facility is also on schedule for a January 2016 opening.

“That’s going to be a beautiful facility,” Miller said of the complex, designed to accommodate dining for approximately 1,200 students.

The new residence hall and dining facility join other recent University building projects, including the Helen G. Bichum Engineering Laboratory (2012); Social Sciences Hall, and the Public Safety building (2013); and the Athletics and Recreation Field complex (2014).

Other notable, upcoming campus projects include:

• Renovations to Willard and DiLoreto halls, scheduled for completion by 2018. Upgrades include new heating, ventilation, air-conditioning, lighting, computers/technology, and classroom/office space. Providing enhanced, aesthetic flair, the buildings will be connected by an elevated glass bridge, and enclosed, open atrium.

  “After years of talking about this, even long before my time, it’s great to finally see the engineering work completed and ready to go,” said Miller. During construction, the offices in Willard and DiLoreto halls will be temporarily relocated to Carroll Hall.

• Construction gets underway in 2017 for a new engineering building, located between the Elishu Burritt Library and the Student Center Parking Garage. The new facility also allows for Nicolaus Copernicus Hall to be dedicated entirely to the sciences.

• Scheduled for late 2018, the C.J. Huang Center (student recreational facility replacing the Bubble) features a gymnasium area, running track, meeting rooms, classrooms, and more.

• In 2018, the library begins work on a new technology center, reflecting, what Miller calls, “a new world” outlook for libraries. “Clearly, it’s a lot more technology,” he said, “with a lot fewer stacks (of books).”

• Other long-term projects for the University include renovations to Henry Barnard Hall (2019), Memorial Hall (2019), and Nicolaus Copernicus Hall (2020).

— Keith Hagarty
Can You Dig It?

Wiping away beads of sweat, Professor of Anthropology Kenneth Feder knows that sometimes the greatest discoveries can be found right under your feet.

For the last five years, Feder and his team of CCSU anthropology students have been excavating a site tucked deep in the thick brush of Peoples State Park in Barkhamsted, Connecticut. Their findings are uncovering some of the rare, valuable materials once used by the region’s aboriginal tribes in their daily lives, as well as the circumstances which possibly led to its economic demise.

“Much of modern archaeology is about helping retrieve the histories of people whose lives have been ignored,” says Feder.

In the 1950s, a Yale University research team excavated a large rock overhang in the forest park (discovered 50 years earlier) once used as a habitat by Native Americans (approximately 3,000 years ago during the Terminal Archaic period). Five decades later, the late Walter Landgraf and Andrea Rand ’96 (Anthropology) identified a hidden soapstone quarry located only a few hundred feet away. Noticing two round protrusions partially buried but affixed in the ground (upside down soapstone bowls in mid-development), they contacted Feder to conduct an excavation of the quarry. His team has been investigating the site for the last five years.

Why is this ancient Native American soapstone quarry discovery significant?

Soapstone was a big deal in southern New England before 3,000 years ago. Then ceramic technology moves in from the west (New York State) and the south (the Mid-Atlantic states). Soapstone is a great material, but it’s heavy and clunky and not widely available. But clay is ubiquitous. It’s everywhere. Once people embraced ceramic technology, then bye-bye soapstone and bye-bye to the economic (and social and political) infrastructure that moved that soapstone around.

Can you explain how the excavation site is theoretically “frozen in time”?

The large quarry shows evidence of a number of partially finished bowl blanks still attached to the source stone (we call them unharvested bowls). One explanation is that we have encountered a literal moment frozen in time, just as the soapstone industry was being disrupted and then replaced by ceramics. Imagine the scene 2,800 years ago: workers are furiously carving soapstone for trade when someone approaches their site and tells them, “Um, well, I’ve got some bad news for you. No one is going to need to trade with you to get that stuff anymore. There’s a cheaper option: pottery.”

What initially motivated you to dig into the Peoples State Forest excavation project?

An esteemed colleague and friend, the late Walt Landgraf (1941-2007) was a volunteer ranger for what was then called the CT Department of Environmental Protection. Walt, a science teacher at Northwest Regional High School in Winsted, had an encyclopedic knowledge of local history. He found the site hiking in Peoples State Forest with Andrea Rand, who had been a student of mine at Central. After Walt died, Andrea and her husband took me up to the place in 2009. I saw the great potential of the site and decided, as much as an homage to Walt as anything else, to investigate further.

That’s why the site is now named the Walt Landgraf Soapstone Quarry.

Why archeology? Were you the kid always digging in your backyard hunting for fossils and buried treasure?

I tell my students, and it’s absolutely true, that when I was about four, I wanted to grow up to become a dinosaur (tyrannosaurus rex, specifically). When it soon became apparent that this option—to become a member of an extinct species—would not be available to me, I shifted my career focus to paleontology. I figured if I couldn’t be a dinosaur, at least I could study them. I became obsessed and collected hundreds of dinosaur figurines, models, and books about them. I was the dinosaur kid. Eventually, my interest in the past expanded to include the human past.

What is it about Connecticut’s history that piques your interest?

Archaeology provides a window into another world—the world of antiquity. Applying the biblical phrase, perhaps we see that past “through a glass, darkly,” but it’s really the only approach we have to study the lives of people who lived before there was a written record through which they might tell us their stories directly. I am fascinated to look through all of those “windows,” and my work here in Connecticut allows me to do just that.

— Keith Hagarty
Mary Collins
Community Engaged Educator

Class Projects Offer a Voice to Vietnam War Veterans and Families

In recognition of her civic-minded commitment to connect students with their surrounding community, Associate Professor of English Mary Collins has received the 2015 Connecticut Campus Compact (CTCC) Community Engaged Educator Award.

Established in 1998 on the Fairfield University campus, CTCC is a statewide program based on promoting institution-wide engagement with communities, with the mission of improving community life and social responsibility. As one of CTCC’s four awarded categories, the Community Engaged Educator Award honors an outstanding individual’s significant impact on student civic learning and development through activities, such as academic service learning, co-curricular service engagement, and/or leadership development.

“I am stunned, to be honest, and humbled, because I know many CCSU professors do outstanding community engagement work,” says Collins. “While I may have won the award, the fact I come from a campus where such work is highly valued was really key.”

According to CTCC, award recipients represent Connecticut’s great diversity of community engagement work in higher education.

“It’s more common to associate civic engagement with classes on social work or nursing, for example, and yet my work shows that the humanities have so much to offer,” says Collins, who came to CCSU in 2007 after teaching for 12 years in Johns Hopkins University’s MA in Writing Program.

“In a time when so many feel that the liberal arts education might be losing its relevance,” she adds, “my civic engagement projects show that in fact we need it more than ever.”

Her recognition stems from two class projects (prompted by the suggestion of Eileen Hurst of the CCSU Veterans History Project) focusing on veterans issues: the Vietnam Veterans Magazine project and the Gold Star project. Both ventures were conducted by undergraduate students in Collins’ Advanced Creative Nonfiction class (ENG 483), with the Vietnam Veterans Magazine project tasking students with interviewing veterans, editing the transcripts into co-authored essays, then producing them into a magazine, with 1,000 free copies distributed to veterans across the state.

The Gold Star project focuses on families that lost loved ones in the war, with Collins raising $10,000 to fund a magazine and educational panel exhibit. As a special 50-year commemoration of the Vietnam War, the project chronicles the families’ untold stories and experiences: from the shock of first learning of their loss, to how they’ve managed to cope over the last five decades.

“I cannot describe to you what it’s like to look into the face of a mother or sister, or brother or father who lost a son in Vietnam and has not spoken to others about it in any detail for five decades,” says Collins. “The silence, the sense that the war was a ‘bad’ war and the soldiers should not have been there, was so suffocating for these poor families—the Gold Star project was an attempt to break that silence.”

Some of Collins’ other notable classroom/community programs in recent years include working with members of a local senior citizen center, inner city children with incarcerated parents, and profiling generations of New Britain Industrial Museum’s employees from a historical perspective.

Through community engagement projects, CCSU faculty and students further the University’s mission of educating thoughtful and responsible citizens while helping to address the pressing needs of their neighbors, says Carl Lovitt, provost & vice president for Academic Affairs.

“Professor Collins’s Community Engaged Educator Award recognizes the accomplishments of one of our most creative faculty members,” he says. “It draws attention to the value that CCSU places on community-based instruction.”

— Keith Hagarty
Rachel Schwell’s classroom approach values the importance of student empowerment.

As the recipient of Central Connecticut State University’s 2014-15 Excellence in Teaching Award notes, “It’s not about me, not about what I want to say, or what I want to talk about. It’s about what the students should get. It’s about what they should be able to accomplish, and what they can accomplish.”

Designed to recognize the importance of exemplary teaching at Central, award criteria is based on continued demonstration of: knowledge of discipline, commitment to student intellectual development, originality and creativity in teaching styles and techniques, respect and confidence of both students and colleagues, and an ability to inspire students while encouraging independent thinking.

“I was extremely honored, and happy to realize I was indeed part of a community that shares my values in education,” says Schwell.

An associate professor of Mathematical Sciences, Schwell joined CCSU in 2008 after serving as a visiting assistant professor at Trinity College and a teaching/graduate assistant at the University of Connecticut, where she earned her PhD and MS in mathematics. She received her BA in mathematics and French from the State University of New York at Geneseo.

A frequent contributor to on- and off-campus presentations, conferences, and workshops, Schwell serves on several department and University committees and holds professional memberships in the American Mathematical Society, Association for Women in Mathematics, Mathematics Association of America, Pi Mu Epsilon, and the Golden Key National Honor Society.

“Rachel is very obviously dedicated to her students,” says Jeffrey McGowan, chair of the Department of Mathematics. “That’s obvious from talking to students in her classes. I don’t think anyone was surprised when Rachel won.”

She was also nominated for the University’s prestigious teaching award the past three years, but was ineligible since she was a selection committee member.

Placing students at the forefront, Schwell’s teaching approach breaks from the traditional classroom lecture format by using pedagogical techniques (often utilizing the Moore method) or, as she says, helping students “learn how to learn.”

“To have these techniques recognized as successful and worthwhile, validates my ideals and my efforts,” she says. “I hope it also brings more attention to the idea that teaching is not defined by how much the professor speaks, but rather by how much the students learn.”

While the specifics of instruction vary from class to class, the Moore method places course content in the hands of students, leading them through subject material in more of a non-linear approach, consisting of independent presentations of solutions from material provided by the instructor.

This engaged approach to teaching often calls for Schwell to essentially “remove” herself as the figurative “head of the classroom,” which, she says, can be a rarity when teaching the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) disciplines.

“Educators in math and science often believe it’s harder for us than for those in more naturally discussion-based subjects to use non-traditional, inquiry-based methods, which it is,” says Schwell. “But I hope this will help allow STEM educators to see that it is indeed possible—even desirable—to involve students more in their own learning.”

It’s about empowering students to learn for themselves, to stand on their own, she adds, and less about merely trying to attain a decent grade or teacher admiration.

“This will be far more valuable to them than any ‘facts’ I manage to communicate to them during their short time under my guidance,” she says. “Because the progression through the course material is guided by the students themselves, they come to see that learning should be self-motivated.

“I want my students to realize that there’s profound joy and satisfaction in the struggle to understand, solve challenging problems, and answer unanswered questions,” she adds. “True self-confidence comes from overcoming this struggle. This is what learning really is.”

— Keith Hagarty

“The more responsibility students take for their own learning, the more they learn, and the more they learn about how they learn.” — Rachel Schwell
Ardent Mentor, Collaborator Feted for ‘Distinguished Service’
Sociology Professor Stephen Adair Honored

Public intellectual. Collaborator. Advocate. Leader. Just some of the qualities colleagues attribute to Sociology Professor Stephen Adair, honored with CCSU’s 2015 Distinguished Service Award, Central’s highest honor rewarding faculty or staff members for years of “exemplary service” to the University, community, and field.

Presenting the award at August’s annual Opening Meeting at Alumni Hall, President Jack Miller detailed the professor’s 17 years of contributions.

“The support for Professor Adair is extraordinary—illustrated by the long list of nominators and support letters,” says Miller, sharing highlights from what he described as Adair’s “comprehensive dossier” assembled by nearly two dozen people, including professors from three academic departments, colleagues from four out-of-state universities, two students, and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

“Dr. Adair’s efforts on behalf of students, colleagues, the University, and higher education far exceed our basic expectations for any faculty member or recipient of the Distinguished Service Award,” says Miller.

This is Adair’s second award from the University since first arriving in 1997 as an assistant professor. He received the Excellence in Teaching Award in 2003, celebrating his expertise and dedication as an educator. His work in the classroom, campus, and community is strongly influenced by his research, according to the president, citing issues near and dear to the professor’s heart, such as social movements, social class and inequality, human rights, and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

“Dr. Adair is known across our campus and within the state university system as a scholar motivated by his deeply held convictions on equality and fairness,” says Miller. “He has unselfishly devoted many, many hours advocating for change that benefits his students, the University, and community.”

Adair’s research and collaborations have resulted in an impressive list of scholarly work: 15 articles in peer-reviewed and professional publications, 32 disciplinary paper presentations, and 22 presentations on teaching and learning at professional conferences. Among the 20 grants funding his work, one was from the National Science Foundation and five were Faculty Development Grants.

In addition to teaching and research, he served as chair of the Sociology Department (2007-2013), assistant to the dean of Arts and Sciences (2003-2007), held seats on several faculty committees, and was instrumental in establishing the Faculty Advisory Committee to the Board of Regents (currently serving as vice chairman).

His peers describe his service to the Connecticut State University system as “heroic,” with his work on the Equity in Retirement Committee leading to a momentous change in the retirement system, benefitting more than 1,800 faculty and staff at the four state universities.

Adair, who earned a BA in English from the University of Vermont, and a Master’s and PhD in Sociology from Northeastern University, is a member of the CSU-AAUP Council, and president of the Association for Humanist Sociology.

— Janice Palmer
CCSU welcomes Dr. Kenneth Colwell as dean of the School of Business.

After engaging in numerous conversations with school stakeholders over the summer, Colwell, a self-described “academic entrepreneur,” is in the process of formulating a strategic plan emphasizing positive growth and change.

“As an entrepreneurship professor, I spent a lot of time working with and studying entrepreneurs, and their way of thinking rubbed off on me,” he says. “I am constantly on the lookout for opportunities to build and grow academic programs for the benefit of our current and future students.”

Colwell, who received his PhD from the University of Oregon (2003), and an MBA from San Francisco University (1999), has accumulated over 25 years of industry and academic experience. He previously served as associate professor and dean of the School of Business, Public Administration, and Information Sciences at Long Island University Brooklyn.

“Ken brings to this position a strong record of scholarship in the field of entrepreneurship,” says Carl Lovitt, provost and vice president of Academic Affairs.

One his highlight initiatives at LIU Brooklyn was instituting a comprehensive review of the school’s academic programs, determining if it met the needs of students and potential employers in terms of relevancy and timeliness.

“The result of this review was a large number of new or revitalized programs that helped to differentiate us in the hypercompetitive New York City higher education market,” says Colwell. “I believe we need to undergo the same sort of review here at CCSU.”

Similarly, he credits his role at the University of Miami for providing a strong foundation for his ongoing work with external stakeholders, developing co-curricular experiential education programs, and tireless fundraising efforts.

His previous positions include director of Entrepreneurship Programs within the University of Miami’s School of Business Administration (2009-2013); and an assistant professor of Strategy and Entrepreneurship at Drexel University’s LeBow College of Business/Baiada Center for Entrepreneurship (2003-2009).

Colwell’s industry experience includes administrative roles with Charles Schwab & Co, Inc. from 1991 to 1999, serving as director, senior project manager, manager of fixed income operations, branch supervisor, and registered representative. He’s also held positions as an account executive with Dean Witter Reynolds (1990-1991), and was a financial analyst at Roy F. Weston, Inc. (1987-1990).

Today’s college students, according to Colwell, base the value of their education on affordability and relevancy.

“It is no secret that the skyrocketing cost of higher education is making it a luxury that many working families struggle to afford,” says Colwell noting our nation’s $1.3 trillion outstanding student loan debt. “Yet at the same time, for most students, a college education is the surest path to a stable and fulfilling professional career. We need to find ways to make the cost of earning a degree lower for our students, and ensure that their time and money are well spent.”

In terms of relevancy, Colwell wants to see student commitment net a higher return on investment.

“The days of graduating students without specific job skills and expecting employers to train them are largely over,” says Colwell. “Employers expect their new hires to hit the ground running and make a contribution right away. We need to give our students the skills and experiences to do so.”

He cites the CCSU School of Business’s recent successful push to attain AACSB accreditation as a testament of fortitude and perseverance.

“That initiative required a huge amount of time and attention and understandably was the main focus of the faculty and administration. This effort was well founded,” says Colwell. “AACSB accreditation gives the school a critical point of differentiation and a strong signal to the market of the quality and rigor of a CCSU business education.”

As the school prepares its strategic planning process, garnering input from stakeholders (internal and external), Colwell, careful not to offer any specific examples until the process is completed, says a general outline of his vision for the school emphasizes program relevancy, differentiation, and student entrepreneurial empowerment.

“The result of this process will be a set of actionable and measurable goals and objectives that move us toward our collective vision of what the school can become,” he says.

—Keith Hagarty
Stanley Lotko ’51
Library Dedicates New Stanley A. Lotko Curriculum Laboratory

Stanley Lotko ’51 viewed life as an open book: each page, each day offers another opportunity to learn something new.

“Our ‘Uncle Gus’ was a man who embraced learning, and a zest for life,” his nephew, John Lotko, said following April’s dedication ceremony of the new Stanley A. Lotko Curriculum Laboratory. Located on the third floor of Elihu Burritt Library, the curriculum lab provides resources and materials to assist educators in curriculum planning, classroom planning, and student assessment.

The life of Lotko (1923-2011) was a celebration of learning. Before retiring as head librarian at the State University of Chicago, he served his country in World War II, earning his high school diploma in a US Air Force hospital while recovering from injuries sustained in an airplane crash. In 1951, he earned his undergraduate degree from the Teachers College of Connecticut (now CCSU).

“As a librarian in higher education, his reference section work, and all of his interests in libraries makes this a fitting place for Stanley’s name,” says President Jack Miller.

While available to the entire CCSU community, the new curriculum laboratory primarily serves students and faculty in the School of Education & Professional Studies. According to the library, the dual focus of the collection of materials is to offer teachers the resources to help plan curriculum and replicate a positive school library and media center. Combining the collections of materials into the new lab setting provides an inviting hub where teachers and students can create curricula, either individually or in groups.

“We’re so appreciative of his tremendous generosity to the University,” Miller says of Lotko’s legacy. “Not many people have the resources to do what he did, and even some of those who have the resources, don’t choose to do what he did.”

The lab is the latest example of the valued relationship forged between the Lotko family and Central, with donations totaling $1.1 million to date, including the establishment of the Stanley Lotko Scholarship, awarded to qualified students of Polish descent.

“We’re very pleased about all of the resources this is going to be able to support,” says Miller. “The name ‘Stanley Lotko’ is a remembrance, but the real legacy will be all of the students who are supported through his generosity.”

Lotko’s selflessness and charitable spirit were only rivaled by his indelible, candid nature and determination, says Associate Vice President of Institutional Advancement Nicholas Pettinico.

“He knew what he wanted to do, get done, and by gosh, he got it done,” says Pettinico. “His estate gift of $1.1 million was one of the largest CCSU has ever received, and it will provide scholarship for students for generations to come. That’s really quite magnificent.”

According to his nephew, “Uncle Gus” was a voracious reader with a passionate pursuit of knowledge, as evidenced by the mountainous stacks of books and reference materials in his apartment. He was a man who loved to travel, was always plugged into an audio book, and ever proud of his Polish roots.

“Stanley’s gift to CCSU is two-fold,” says Lotko. “It says ‘thank you’ to Teachers College (a term he used fondly) for jumpstarting his educational journey. His gift also gives back to that Polish community that gave unselfishly to him. His love of learning lives on in each aspiring Polish student who receives his scholarship.”

— Keith Hagarty
Donors Embrace Devil Double Dare Challenge

Do you accept the Devil Double Dare challenge? With nearly $93,000 raised in donations over a weeklong, fundraising blitz, the answer is a resounding “yes!”

Working with the CCSU Alumni Association, staff in the University’s Institutional Advancement division created the Devil Double Dare fundraising campaign in May as a public challenge to all Central alumni, family, and friends of the University to meet their matching gift of $50,000 in support of Central’s students, programs, and initiatives.

However, donors didn’t merely reach the $50,000 goal—they shattered it!—donating $92,847, for a total of $185,694 raised with the association’s matching gifts.

As part of the campaign, individual gifts of $25 to $1,000 were matched dollar-for-dollar, including gifts to all donation funds. Exclusions included company-matching funds, CCSU payroll deductions, and gifts from corporations and foundations (other than donor-advised funds). Donors were also encouraged to target their donation to a specific recipient, such as a particular school, department, or scholarship program of their choosing.

Helping to set new records at Central for number of donors in a calendar year, the Devil Double Dare campaign’s 604 donors helped the University significantly shrink the donor gap to a record-setting 4,503 donors over the past year (an all-time high mark for CCSU).

“The Devil Double Dare is an innovative multi-media-platform solicitation effort to drive donors and dollars,” says Chris Galligan, vice president for Institutional Advancement. “My thanks to the alumni association and valued donors for their generosity.”

— Keith Hagarty
ACHIEVERS

Student Leaders Making a Difference

Five Named 2015 President’s Citation Recipients

In recognition of their commitment to leadership and volunteerism, five graduating seniors were recently honored as CCSU’s 2015 President’s Citation recipients. Serving as an undergraduate career’s crowning achievement, the award recognizes academic success while paying tribute to students’ accomplishments and contributions in support of the University’s ongoing mission.

Honored during April’s ceremony were Cynthia Calderon, Brian Choplick, Kory Mills, Simms Sonet, and Michelle Zohlman.

“These five exceptional students have gone above and beyond to make a difference for others in our campus community and our surrounding community,” says event coordinator Kathy Poirier, associate director of the Student Center. “As this tradition continues, our students — especially these students — continue to be talented, selfless, ambitious, and visionaries.”

Members of the University community nominated dozens of student candidates for the distinction, with the names then reviewed by a selection committee, who then made final recommendations to President Jack Miller and Vice President for Student Affairs Laura Tordenti.

The recipients, according to Miller, embody the greater, civic-minded philosophy of CCSU.

“The students who we’re honoring today are indeed exceptional, but beyond that, they’re also representative,” says Miller. “These students have balanced not only their service commitment, but their academic accomplishments are very strong as well. They make connections for us with the community, and they make connections with the rest of our campus.”

The 2015 President’s Citation recipients’ notable contributions include:

- **Cynthia Calderon** (Accounting) of Bridgeport, CT, became certified by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) through their Volunteer Income Tax Assistance training program, spending countless hours helping to prepare income taxes for those in need. She is a board member of INTAKE, a Stamford-based non-profit organization that teaches classical music to youth through native instruments; and treasurer of CCSU’s Women Involved Now club.

- **Brian Choplick** (Economics) of Cheshire, CT, was involved in numerous clubs and associations across campus, including active roles as a New Student Orientation Leader, Student Success Team, Residence Life Assistant; president and captain of the CCSU Volleyball Club; founder and chairperson of the Club Sports Board; Student Government Association (SGA) senator and later president; and commuter student representative on the Student Union Board of Governors (SUBOG).

- **Kory Mills** (History) of Wethersfield, CT, interned (for Public History) with Connecticut Explored historic magazine, and (for Political Science) at the Connecticut State Capitol for Rep. Melissa Ziobron (R-34th); promoting ongoing active student engagement with the campus, he held leadership positions for the Central Organization for Latin American Dance Awareness (COLADA), Latin American Student Organization (LASO), Spanish Club, and served as a commuter senator and treasurer of SGA.

- **Simms Sonet** (Communication) of West Haven, CT, took an active role as a student leader in SGA, starting Competition for a Cause, a campus-wide community engagement project food donation drive benefiting a New Britain food pantry. He chaired the Student Life Committee, and was a peer advocate for Natural Helpers.

- **Michelle Zohlman** (Psychological Science) of Unionville, CT, embraced leadership roles as a New Student Orientation Coordinator, founder of Mission: Bleed Blue (encouraging students to attend events and promote engagement with campus activities), president and vice president of Central Activities Network, chairperson of SUBOG, named the 2013 CCSU SUBOG Volunteer of the Year; and received the 2014 CCSU Psychological Science Outstanding Research Award.

“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other,” Tordenti says, quoting US President John F. Kennedy. “Each one of these bright and diligent students—so busy with their studies, their jobs, and other activities—also found time to volunteer, to serve others in significant ways. We are thankful for all they have done to make a meaningful difference.”

— Keith Hagarty
Award-Winning Senior Breaking Barriers

Megan Hislop, Senior Technology and Engineering Education major

Hometown: Torrington, Connecticut

Leadership Roles: President (2014-16) CCSU Chapter of Technology & Engineering Education Collegiate Association (TEECA); CCSU Student Orientation Leader; Senior Coordinator, CCSU C.A.R.E.S. and Go Baby Go campaigns

Career Goal: Return to her high school as a Technology Education teacher

Blue Blood: “I loved this campus from the get-go. I came here for a tour of the campus during my junior year of high school, and remember immediately telling my mom I want to go here. There were no doubts.”

“Getting involved at Central was probably the best thing I could have done.”

Megan Hislop’s CCSU experience can be summed up in four words: Step up. Get involved.

“I don’t like to talk about it. I just like to do it,” says the senior Technology and Engineering Education major from Torrington.

“I don’t like being bored,” she quips. “Sleep is for the weak.”

In the past year, Hislop received the Outstanding Achievement Award from Connecticut Department of Labor Commissioner Sharon N. Palmer; the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association’s Donald Maley Spirit of Excellence Outstanding Undergraduate Student Citation; and was named a 2015 Women of Innovation honoree by the Connecticut Technology Council (CTC).

“I thought that was just the coolest thing,” she says of being CTC’s lone undergraduate honoree among a field of graduate and doctoral students. “Plus, I was the first person from Central to ever be named as a finalist.”

Collegiate Association (TEECA) as a freshman, Hislop was elected president less than a year later. She is also a member of her academic program’s National Honor Society and Professional Education program.

“She’s a real asset to our program,” says Michele Dischino, assistant professor of Technology and Engineering Education, and TEECA faculty advisor.

After joining the CCSU chapter of Technology and Engineering Education

Dischino. “She always does far more than I ever ask.”

Technically Speaking

Drawn to graphic design and technology, Hislop attended Oliver Wolcott Technical High School. As the third generation of her family to attend the Torrington school, she embraced its smaller class environment and emphasis on student-faculty connections.

“Some of my teachers were also my mom’s teachers,” she says, noting how several of them are also CCSU alumni from the Technology and Engineering Education K-12 program (the only program of its kind offered at any college/university in Connecticut).

“Going to a technical school greatly benefitted me with my computer knowledge,” she adds. “A lot of the software programs were a lot easier to learn with my background, enhancing some the skills I learned in high school while gaining new ones in college.”

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Serving as Senior Social Scientist to the Chief Economist at the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Kateryna Wowk ’04 is making waves to conserve our coasts.

Home to 39 percent of the nation’s population, Wowk says America’s shorelines are becoming “increasingly vulnerable” to the impacts of natural disasters, haphazard development, and degradation.

“This becomes especially evident when these vital areas are hit by severe weather events like Hurricane Katrina in 2005, which resulted in a tragic loss of life of at least 1,500 as well as over $100 billion in damages,” says Wowk.

Seven years later, Hurricane Sandy resulted in 285 fatalities, and an estimated $67 billion in damages across several northeastern states.

“The need to strengthen resilience to weather and climate events is one of many reasons why some counties and companies are changing the way they do business along our coasts,” says the Middletown-native. “They’re embracing sustainable practices that balance economic, social, and environmental concerns across management and operations.

“We have to do a better job in fostering an understanding that the value of natural assets people rely upon is not zero,” she adds. “Otherwise, this ‘natural capital’ will continue to lose on our balance sheets and in our decision-making processes, which puts us all at increasing risk.”

What are your primary duties and responsibilities at the NOAA?
I support NOAA’s chief economist on a number of social science topics, ranging from work with the private sector on incorporating natural capital into business planning, to providing more effective recommendations on risk communication and behavior, to closing knowledge gaps on the costs and benefits of natural infrastructure approaches along our nation’s coasts.

What are some of the more rewarding aspects of your position?
By far, I enjoy getting to work on such a breadth of issues. I get to meet and work with experts from all walks of life, from administration officials at the White House, to scientists out on ships—I’m really lucky to have a diverse network of insightful and talented folks. This also means that I’m always learning new things.

By contrast, what are some of the challenges you face?
It’s no secret that government can be bureaucratic. Change doesn’t happen quickly, which is frustrating. The politics can also be challenging. The right solution may be in place, but if there’s dissent in one branch, or sometimes even by one key decision-

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Olivia Nguyen ’13
Paintings Reach Hip Hop Icons, 50 Cent, Alicia Keys and More

Art, opportunity, and passion define Olivia Nguyen ’13 (BA, Art). Known in the art world as “FiyabOmb,” Nguyen’s inspired creations hang in the homes of prominent hip-hop icons, including A-list celebrities like 50 Cent, Big Sean, and Alicia Keys. She colorfully recalls how the motivation to follow her dream came in a snap.

“After college I worked at a nail shop for a while,” says Nguyen. “One day I was doing a pedicure and the women’s toenail hit my mouth. In that moment, I knew what I had to do. I quit and started focusing on my passion—ART!”

Nguyen returned to campus in July as keynote speaker for the annual Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) luncheon. For high school seniors unsure of their college outlook, EOP offers a five-week summer program designed for qualified applicants with the potential and desire to do college-level work but may not meet CCSU’s regular admissions standards. Graduates of the program are admitted to CCSU as full-time matriculated students.

EOP’s mission is to help incoming freshman students demand more and to raise expectations to strengthen academic standards.

“Olivia is an amazing example of what success looks like if you follow your passion,” says EOP Director Awilda Reasco.

Nguyen credits the program for supporting her passion and determination, keeping her on track and focused. She points to the EOP’s valuable lessons of perseverance for her tireless, entrepreneurial drive today.

“I was a Marketing minor, and to be completely honest I was not good at it,” she admits, “but I made it through, and learned some great fundamentals.”

Seeking ways to make a living as an artist without teaching a class, Nguyen knew the 12 months after graduation would test her determination. Her solution: Use her social media networks as a referral tool to help promote her art.

Her “FiyabOmb” online avatar comes from a 2009 Rihanna song referencing the term “Fire Bomb.” However, while setting up her social media accounts, she soon discovered its immense popularity, with the word already taken, and unavailable for any screen name. Undeterred, Nguyen decided to simply tweak it into “FiyabOmb.”

Before long, “FiyabOmb” was streaming live online painting showcases, some of which were as an invited guest of New Britain Mayor Erin Stewart ’09 and Hartford Mayor Pedro E. Segarra. With each completed artwork, her social media followers and fans took notice and began tagging specific celebrities, linking their profiles to her representative individual pieces. This targeted social media blitz quickly gained the attention of hip-hop heavyweights, like Big Sean, 50 Cent, Rick Ross, and Swizz Beatz, all of whom purchased portraits of their painted likeness.

This apparent overnight success has not come easy, according to Nguyen, who admittedly is still trying to catch her breath. With parents continually pushing her to find a path leading to a career in teaching or law, she believes her proudest moment was finally attaining their recognition as an artist.

“From the teachers and family members that wanted to see me succeed down to the people who wanted to see me fail,” she says. “All of it made me work harder.”

Artistic fulfillment, Nguyen has learned, comes from capturing the wonders of everyday life.

“I love being driven by my emotions or whatever I’m feeling in the moment, and it reflects in a lot of my pieces,” she says. “I will carry this outlook on art wherever life takes me.”

It now takes her to Atlanta, GA. Embarking on the next step in her career, Nguyen does it in her most prized art piece: her car. Her vehicle’s colorful tapestry reflects her own effervescent outlook on art and life: opportunity comes from taking risks.

“I’m extremely nervous because I’m relocating to Atlanta by myself. But I chose Atlanta because I want to see how I’ll do in a major city that isn’t New York,” she says. “I’m very big on comfort zones, but I feel like I want to throw myself out in the wilderness, see how I survive, and fend for myself.”

— Sintia Arelus
What happens when students become actively engaged in their community? Survey says: it’s a win-win scenario.

Working on dual, large-scale research projects with neighboring Newington and New Britain, 13 students from Professor of Sociology John Mitrano’s Community Research Methods course merged in-class, empirical research techniques with civic-minded awareness and action.

“Too often, students engage in mere intellectual exercises,” says Mitrano. “While these are certainly valuable in their own right, I believe education is enhanced even further through a more experiential approach with benefits that extend beyond just the student—to the larger community as well.”

For the Newington project, Mitrano and his team of senior Sociology majors helped local officials assess residents’ future housing needs while gauging levels of satisfaction with the town’s current housing situation. Collaborating with the town’s Housing Needs Study Committee, they formed a research plan, coordinated focus groups, and implemented a comprehensive survey.

“I enjoyed meeting with the students on several occasions, says Terry Borjeson, committee chairman. “I found them to be engaging, inquisitive, and intellectually curious.”

When facing “real life” challenges, students gain a far greater appreciation of the professional process, says Mitrano.

“Textbooks and professor lectures often present the research process as a tidy, neat, step-by-step process that, if followed explicitly, will result in a perfect, little study,” he says. “But in reality, research is often messy and complicated. Researchers have to learn to be flexible.”

With the Newington project, for example, students had to balance their assigned tasks with the unpredictable nature of local politics.

“Words in the survey had to be carefully selected so as not to appear partisan, and we had to ensure that no one political agenda was favored over another,” says student Brandon Dexter. “Assisting in developing survey questions and trying to navigate the appropriate verbiage was an excellent lesson for preparing documents for mass consumption.”

Students received a firsthand lesson in adjusting on the fly. Concerned by initial plans to only target a small sampling of Newington residents, the committee, seeking expanded reach, asked the team to distribute and analyze survey results from all of the town’s 13,125 residents.

“The result was a monumental amount of unexpected work, but the students performed remarkably,” Mitrano says. “They became quite adept at appeasing all parties involved while still maintaining their integrity as budding researchers.”

For the New Britain Senior Center project, the goals of the program evaluation and assessment were to: gauge the level of satisfaction regarding the center’s program offerings, identify degrees of interest in potential future offerings, and investigate barriers to activity participation from the town’s senior citizen population not affiliated with the center. To accomplish this task, students incorporated a variety of empirical research methods: holding focus groups with members, in-depth interviews with senior center staff, then using this acquired information to develop and distribute comprehensive surveys to New Britain seniors.

“The degree of maturity, professionalism, and ethics displayed by the student researchers clearly was a testament to Dr. Mitrano’s excellence in teaching and ability to prepare them for ‘real world’ research,” says New Britain Senior Center Director Michael Karwan. “Many seniors who participated in the study later commented how impressed they were with the student researchers, and the experience overall.”
Riding New Britain and Beyond

As if on cue to introduce his art-inspired, community cycling gallery exhibit, “Riding New Britain and Beyond,” Assistant Professor of Art Craig Frederick arrives via bicycle.

On display through September 30 at the New Britain Downtown District Visitors Center at 66 West Main Street, the informational, public service exhibit is part of the city’s recently launched “Bike New Britain” campaign to promote community accessibility. The collection features city-inspired, cycling-related photography, historical documents, and hand-painted bicycles, refurbished with a vibrant array of seats, tires, handlebars, and accessories.

“We’re in the midst of embracing ‘complete streets,’” Frederick says. “Timing is everything. This is happening in big cities and small towns all over the United States.”

The League of American Bicyclists recently named New Britain a “Bicycle Friendly Community,” citing the town’s design initiative to steer away from vehicular-centered streets in favor of streets more inclusive of pedestrians and bikes.

“It’s about being post-carbon and being healthy,” says Frederick. “Not to mention, partially a response to Generation X-ers wanting to be in urban, pedestrian-friendly environments with great public transportation and good bike infrastructure.”

“Riding New Britain and Beyond” coincides with the city’s new “Bike Share Program” at the New Britain Museum of American Art on Lexington Street, where depending on availability, residents can borrow a bike during museum hours with photo identification and $20 deposit (refunded when the bike is returned to museum).

In addition, the city will hold its 2nd Annual Hardware City Bike Tour on September 27, 9 a.m., getting underway at Walnut Hill Park and New Britain Museum of American Art. Organizers expect approximately 1,000 cyclists to participate in the tour, designed to showcase New Britain’s historical neighborhoods, landmarks, park, and scenic locations.

For more information, visit “Bike New Britain” on Facebook or www.BikeNewBritain.org

— Kate Callahan ’12
Central Connecticut State University’s Honors Program fosters an intellectual culture driven by the minds of both its students and faculty. Founded in the 1980s, the program enrolls approximately 200 of Central’s top students each year.

Designed for undergraduates with strong academic skills looking for a new challenge, the Honors Program at CCSU defines itself as an “interdisciplinary writing and reading intensive approach to intellectual theories of the past and present in the United States and around the world.”

Adopting a team-based instructional approach, program courses are taught by professors across varied disciplines in three primary areas of study: Western Culture, Science and Society, and World Cultures. Honors curriculum can be counted towards the general education requirement, and consists of two four-credit courses taken each semester of a student’s first two years, culminating in a junior year, four-credit capstone honors thesis.

“I would consider every professor I’ve had in the honors program to be brilliant,” says accounting major and student-athlete Morgan Wallace ’16, who under the advisement of Assistant Professor of Economics Paramita Dhar, took a keen interest in the relationship between post-secondary education enrollment and the increased cost of living. She recently completed her thesis, “Students of the Great Recession: How the Financial Crisis Affected College Enrollment.”

The thesis component is one of the program’s “greatest assets,” says Honors Program Director Paul Petterson.

“We have had a wide diversity of topics students have examined over the years,” says the associate professor of Political Science, explaining how students are encouraged to explore any topic of interest (not limited to their major alone) on the condition that they procure a full-time faculty member willing to advise them.

Students graduating from the program earn a permanent honors distinction on their transcript, and, according to Petterson, the student thesis project provides an impressive, presentable body of work considered by graduate programs.

For Wallace, hard work is already paying dividends.

“To date, I have gotten two internships and three full-time job opportunities (pending my graduation),” she says. “All of these offers were extended to me in large part because of the Honors Program at CCSU.”

Participating students must maintain a cumulative 3.0 grade point average (GPA) to remain in the program, and maintain a 3.2 GPA to be eligible for up to eight semesters of scholarship funding (starting at half in-state tuition and fees scholarship). At the end of each academic year, student transcripts are evaluated, with those achieving a cumulative 3.5 GPA or higher being recommended for upgrade to full in-state tuition and fees scholarship.

The distinguished faculty who teach in the program are motivated in part by the intellectual pleasures of engaging with highly motivated learners. Co-teaching with esteemed colleagues further enriches the mutual education of professors and students.

Recently completing a Global Sustainability course co-taught by Petterson and Associate Professor of Theatre Joshua Perlstein, Biomolecular Sciences major Matthew Saganelli ’17 knows how successful this approach can be.

“This course offered Dr. Petterson’s scientific and analytical approach to issues, such as limited natural resources and the environment,” says Saganelli. “While Professor Perlstein humanized these facts, statistics, and policies, showing us how each of them affects the individual.”

Saganelli is proud of the substantial growth he’s experienced throughout his academic and peer network.

“In my two short years, I’ve noticed the strong community this program builds amongst its students,” he says. “There’s no other opportunity to take three years worth of classes with the same group of people without being in your major.”

Watching the growth of students becoming fully “integrated with each other on another level” is one of the program’s lasting benefits, says Petterson.

“Students in the Honors Program at CCSU become a cohort over time,” he says. “They draw strength from one another.”

Open to “academically superior students,” the program defines these qualifications as students who are either: in the top 20 percent of their class; or who have scored 1,600-plus combined SAT scores (or Verbal or Written SAT of 600-plus). Students not meeting this criteria but are still interested in the program may still be eligible following review of a submitted writing sample and an individual interview. For more information about the program and admissions process, visit www.ccsu.edu/honors.

— Kate Callahan ’12
There are more than 50 million Latinos in the United States, quickly becoming our nation’s largest minority group. Recognizing strength in numbers, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the American Library Association (ALA) recently awarded Assistant Professor of Sociology Heather R. Rodriguez a $10,000 grant to explore the Latino experience in America.

“Through education, awareness, the arts, public film screenings, community history exhibitions, and community collaborations, CCSU can play a leading role in educating the surrounding community about the Latino experience,” says Rodriguez.

CCSU is one of 203 institutions selected for the “Latino Americans: 500 Years of History” program, with public screenings of the six-part, Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) TV documentary “Latino Americans” serving as the project’s cornerstone.

Produced for public television through NEH funding, the program shares stories of nearly 100 Latinos who helped shape 500 years of North American history. Presented throughout the 2015-16 school year, each on-campus screening will feature one of five invited scholars to lead discussion and Q&A sessions with audience members about the unique experiences and contributions of Latino Americans.

“The program serves to broaden our collective understanding of Latinos’ historical and cultural influences in the evolution of our nation”, says Carl Lovitt, CCSU provost and vice president for Academic Affairs.

“Professor Rodriguez put together an impressive proposal and convinced the selection committee that CCSU would be an outstanding choice for this effort,” he says.

In addition to providing financial support for “much-needed” programming, Rodriguez believes the grant will further enhance the reputation of various academic initiatives on campus, including the Latino and Puerto Rican Studies program.

Receiving the grant funding also allows CCSU to create opportunities to build long-term collaborations with community partners, adds Rodriguez, who, as the new chair of the Latino and Puerto Rican Studies program, enlisted the help of Associate Professor of History Leah Glaser to build upon each part of the documentary’s theme. Their combined efforts led to the creation of “Exploring the Latino Experience through Art, Film, and History,” a comprehensive presentation designed as an outreach for both the CCSU community and greater public.

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Additionally, students enrolled in history and sociology classes will document the Latino experience by conducting interviews and creating oral history exhibits, art installations, and commemorative altars (on display during screening sessions).

“The grant helps us create year-long, thematic programming on the Latino American experience that would address the needs and acknowledge the representation of various Latino communities, families, and students that are present on campus and in the surrounding area,” says Rodriguez, further commending Glaser’s efforts to initiate and strengthen partnerships with the Spanish Speaking Center of New Britain, the New Britain Visitor’s Center, and the New Britain Veteran’s History Project.

Upcoming screenings and scheduled guest speakers for the six, 45-minute episodes of “Latino Americans: 500 Years of History” include:

- September 30, Episode One, Torp Theater (Steve Pitti, Yale University)
- October 8, Episode Two, Torp Theater (Maria Montoya, New York University)
- December 10, Episode Three, Welte Auditorium (panel discussion with members of the Veteran’s History Project)
- February 11, 2016, Episode Four, Torp Theater (Mark Overmyer-Velazquez, University of Connecticut)
- March 10, 2016, Episode Five, Torp Theater (Anthony Mora, University of Michigan)
- April 14, 2016, Episode Six, Torp Theater (Erendira Rueda, Vassar College)

For updated screening information visit www.facebook.com/ccsulatinoamericans.
Making Historians @ CCSU
Thursday, October 1
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Founders Hall, Davidson

Polish Genealogy Conference
October 2 & 3
Alumni Hall, Student Center

Homecoming
October 9 & 10

Reaching & Teaching LGBT Students
Tuesday, October 13
3:15 p.m.
Sprague Carlton Room
Student Center

Community Engagement/Service Learning Workshop
Wednesday, October 14
4 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Philbrick Room, Student Center

Dollhouse by Theresa Rebeck
Directed by Jan Mason
October 14 - 17
Maloney Hall Black Box Theater

Papusza
Part of the Polish Studies
Fall Film Showings
Thursday, October 15
7 p.m.
RVAC 105

Ebenezer Bassett Birthday Celebration
Thursday, October 15
12 p.m. – 1 p.m.
Student Center Circle

2nd Annual Ebenezer D. Bassett Day Commemoration
Friday, October 16
5 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Torp Theater, Davidson
Reception to follow
Davidson Courtyard

US Air Force Band Concert
Monday, Oct. 19
7:00 p.m
Welte Auditorium

Weatherproof Your Course
Wednesday, October 21
Thursday, October 29
12 p.m. – 1 p.m.
Willard 004

TEDxCSCU
Wednesday, October 21
4:30 p.m. - 7:10 p.m.
Welte Auditorium

Hispanics, Immigration, and Civil Rights
Thursday, October 22
12:05 p.m.
Founders Hall, Davidson Hall

CCSU Choirs in Concert
Thursday, October 22
3:05 p.m.
Founders Hall in Davidson

CCSU Bands
Thursday, October 29
3:05 p.m.
Welte Auditorium

Orchestra Day
Thursday, October 29
8 a.m.-1 p.m.
Founders Hall & Welte Auditorium

Marcus White Piano Dedication
Thursday, November 5
3:05 p.m.
Marcus White Living Room

Forum: Keith Kramer with Susan Cheng
Tuesday, November 10
3:05 p.m.
Welte Hall, Room 019

Veterans Day Observance Ceremony
Wednesday, November 11
3 p.m.
Alumni Hall, Student Center
Dean Alfano
Chosen for Distinguished National Teaching Panel

Michael Alfano, dean of the School of Education and Professional Studies, has been named to the new Clinical Practice Commission (CPC) of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE). As one of 16 higher education and K-12 leaders selected from across the country, Alfano will help will examine the state of clinical practice (or field experience) in teacher preparation.

The CPC is charged with identifying a set of criteria that define clinical practice, lift up exemplary models in the field, and ultimately publish a set of recommendations for teacher preparation programs nationwide.

CCSU has a long history in advancing professional learning in the field of teacher preparation, says Carl Lovitt, provost and vice president of Academic Affairs.

“We are delighted that Dr. Alfano has been selected to serve on this distinguished panel,” says Lovitt. “It is a tremendous opportunity for this University to contribute to a critical, national conversation.”

With representation from professional associations, institutions of higher education, and K-12 school districts, the CPC works to develop a common understanding of effective approaches to field experiences. This fall, the group will develop a white paper, seeking input from the field, recommending ways to address common roadblocks to building successful district-university partnerships, such as issues of transportation, funding, and scheduling.

Preparation is a key lever to high quality teacher preparation, according to a 2010 clinical report (Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships) by the National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

“Teacher preparation at CCSU has a long and well-developed history of offering exceptional clinical practice opportunities for its teacher candidates,” says Alfano. “The Dr. James H. Naylor CCSU Leadership Academy in Hartford, as well as our ongoing and very successful partnerships with Cromwell and New Britain public schools, among others, provide our ‘preparing educators’ with the necessary experience to enter the teaching profession.”

— Janice Palmer

CCSU SUCCESS!

Last year, we set a record for scholarships awarded: Over $1 million was provided to 547 students. Our aim is even higher this year: More support for more students.

Please consider making a gift to your university. Your contributions will help sustain our ability to provide a truly exceptional collegiate education. And they help our students to succeed by providing scholarship support and the resources for an education that can make a difference in their and all our lives.

You can make a secure online gift at www.ccsu.edu/give. You can call the Alumni Office at 860-832-1740. Or you can return the attached business reply envelope with a check/money order/credit card (payable to CCSU Foundation). Thank you for considering CCSU and helping our students to succeed.
Joining over 300 Polish-Americans in the North Lobby of the State Capitol, Professor of History Mieczyslaw B. Biskupski was one of the distinguished guests honored during Connecticut’s 2015 Polish Day celebration. Sponsored by the Polish Legislative Caucus, Hartford’s May event commemorated the 224th anniversary of the Polish constitution, and honored the memory of the late Stanley Krawiec, state representative and event founder. President Jack Miller also received a citation honoring Central’s 40-year Polish Studies program. Biskupski is the descendant of Polish soldiers, artists, and musicians forced to flee Russian-occupied Poland in the early 20th century for political reasons. Author of several books on Polish history, he is the recipient of several academic and national awards, and serves as the Stanislaus A. Blejwas Endowed Chair of the Polish and Polish American Studies at CCSU.

Professor of History Robert Wolff was an invited panelist for “Conversations at Noon: Exploring Connecticut and the Slave Trade.” Held at Connecticut’s Old State House in Hartford, the program’s April installment (co-sponsored by the Stanley Whitman House in Farmington) was moderated by the Connecticut Television Network’s Diane Smith, with prominent state historians (including Wolff) joining author-historian Anne Farrow to discuss findings from her book, The Logbooks: Connecticut’s Slave Ships and Human Memory (Wesleyan, 2014).

Eileen Hurst, associate director of the Center for Public Policy and Research, commemorated the 70th anniversary of VE Day at the Fairfield Museum and History Center with a talk on the importance of oral history, memory, and legacy. Her appearance (part of the National Veterans History Project) also included theatre students from the Green Farms Academy presenting dramatic readings of letters from Fairfield veterans and their families, with some dating back to the Revolutionary War.

Associate Professor of Political Science Robbin Smith led a discussion at the Brookfield Library on the sociological and racial issues raised in the 1961 film, “Freedom Riders.” The 54-year old documentary chronicles the six-month journey, both harrowing and inspirational, of more than 400 white and black civil rights activists riding together on buses and trains through the Deep South in violation of Jim Crow laws. The film is a lesson in brotherhood, humanity, and faith in nonviolent activism in the face of constant racism and extreme threats.

Sean Walsh, associate professor in Physical Education and Human Performance, received fellowship status during June’s 62nd annual meeting of the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) in San Diego, California. ACSM is the largest sports medicine and exercise science organization in the world with over 50,000 international, national, and regional chapter members using their expertise, experience, and training in sports medicine and exercise to promote healthier lifestyles. Calling it an honor, Walsh, who served as ACSM New England chapter president (one of 12 regional chapters across the US), has actively published and presented his research in conjunction with service to the college and chapter.

Professor of English Aimee Pozorski hosted the book discussion “Philip Roth: First and Last” at the Oliver Wolcott Library in Litchfield, CT. Leading the June talk on the life and works of the renowned US writer, Pozorski has served as president of the Philip Roth Society, from 2009 to 2015; authored Roth and Trauma: The Problem of History in the Later Works (Bloomsbury Academic, 2013); and served as author-editor of Roth and Celebrity (Lexington Press, 2012) and Critical Insights (Ebsco/Salem, 2013).

— Keith Hagarty
Dr. Katya Wowk continued from page 13

maker, even the best solutions can be halted. That’s been difficult to accept.

In your research, you’ve discussed how natural habitats can minimize coastal damage caused by storms. How could these findings help advance resiliency efforts along shoreline regions? Natural infrastructure along our coastlines (e.g., beaches, dunes, wetlands, reefs, mangroves) can provide significant coastal protection benefits. We realized after Hurricane Sandy that many towns had natural infrastructure that lessened the storm’s damage, whereas neighboring towns without that infrastructure suffered more damages. With renewed interest and trust in these approaches, many agencies directed their Sandy Supplemental funding toward increasing implementation of these approaches. By helping public and private entities understand where and under what conditions these approaches are likely to provide cost-effective protection, we’ll be able to advance the ball even further.

How else can nature aid coastal preservation efforts? The benefits provided to humanity by marine ecosystems and resources are huge and invaluable. As the primary regulator of climate, the ocean generates half the oxygen we breathe, absorbs about one-third of all anthropogenic CO2 released into the atmosphere, and has absorbed 80 percent of all heat added to the global system. Coastal habitats filter pollutants, such as pesticides and heavy metals out of the water flowing through them, and provide retention, lessening coastal erosion. Ocean and coastal areas are also troves of rich biodiversity, provide food for billions of people, and many marine ecosystems exhibit unique genetic characteristics with untold values for medicinal, pharmaceutical, cosmetic, and biotechnological fields.

How did Central help you set sail on your career path? CCSU provided a great opportunity for me to expand my horizons. The ability to deepen my education through high quality teaching helped immensely. There was a lot of one-on-one attention, even in larger classes, which I really needed. I had a tough time coming out of my shell, so the relationships the teachers were able to develop with the students helped me to formulate and express my ideas in a trusted environment. It’s an institution to which I’ll always be grateful.

— Keith Hagarty

Exploring the Latino Experience continued from page 18

The year-long program gets underway at the Elihu Burritt Library (second floor), September 21, 3:30 p.m., with the opening of the art exhibit “Guayasamín unframed” by Assistant Professor of Modern Languages Rocio Fuentes.

“I hope this year-long programming will help everyone—Latino and non-Latino—realize that there should not be one single stereotype, or face, of what Latino means or looks like,” says Rodriguez. “Like other race or ethnic groups, there is diversity and variety. To say there is a standard or norm of what Latino looks like is to perpetuate stereotypes which can only hinder creative collaborations and positive social change.”

— Keith Hagarty
Pulse of the Community continued from page 15

The unexpected, intangible benefits gained throughout the research process were a rewarding bonus for student Cynthia Cunningham.

“Interacting with the senior center members face-to-face made the project much more personal,” she says. “After all, we could sit behind computers and input data all day long, but hearing concerns and feedback from the members themselves seemed much more valuable.”

The senior housing needs project is Mitrano’s third classroom collaboration with the town of Newington, with former students also conducting a town satisfaction survey in 2000-01, along with a “HUD (Housing and Urban Development) Small Cities Grant Funding Eligibility Study” in 2002. Some of his previous notable class/community projects, include a 2002-03 HUD grant funding eligibility study for Naugatuck; partnering with the Connecticut State Library on its redistribution plan for municipal library funding; conducting a focus group study for the Connecticut Town Clerks Association; and creating and implementing a citizen satisfaction survey for the town of Manchester.

— Keith Hagarty
Eight individuals making a positive difference in the Central community were honored at the 2015 CCSU Alumni Association Awards. Held each spring, the annual ceremony recognizes alumni and friends of the University who make significant contributions to help advance its mission and bring positive recognition to CCSU.

Sue Ann Collins ’75 (BA, Mathematics) and David Monte ’64, MS ’68 (Literacy, Elementary and Early Childhood Education) each received the Distinguished Alumni Award, recognizing outstanding professional and/or personal achievements, garnering credit for both the alum and the University.

Collins is senior vice president and chief actuary at TIAA-CREF, overseeing the company’s actuarial activities. She also serves on the CCSU Foundation Board of Directors and is president of the Hartford Stage Company’s Board of Directors.

Monte has been teaching at CCSU for over 40 years, and is currently a doctoral faculty member in Education Leadership. Serving on the School of Education & Professional Studies Advisory Board, he’s also held roles as chairperson of the Graduate Studies Committee, and president of NEW, the self-governing body of the School of Education & Professional Studies.

Receiving the 2015 Young Alumni Award were New Britain Mayor Erin E. Stewart ’09 (BA, Political Science-Public Administration) and Judith “Jude” (Page) Barry ’97 (BS, Business). The award recognizes professional and/or personal achievement of CCSU alums 40 years of age or younger.

As the youngest mayor in the history of New Britain (elected in 2013 at the age of 26) Stewart is the city’s 40th mayor, and the second woman to hold the office. Some of her initiatives include curbing homelessness and developing an eco-friendly “Smart City” plan, spearheading the largest solar power project in city history. She is a proud, lifelong learner of the state’s public school system, and education advocate, previously serving on the New Britain Board of Education.

Representing Aflac Insurance since 2001, Barry (president of CCSU’s Class of 1997) set the record for Connecticut’s highest sales figures, qualifying for the coveted President’s Club sales award more times than any agent in the state. As a member of Aflac’s prestigious Million Dollar Club, she attributes her career success to the meaningful, long-term relationships developed with her 150-plus clients.

Nicole Sanders MS ’05, EdD ’09 (Educational Leadership) and Robert J. Smith ’68 (Education) received the Community Service Award, recognizing extraordinary community service, and contributions advancing the improvement of society.

As principal at Northend Elementary School in New Britain, Sanders was named Civil Educator of the Year, the New Haven Savings Bank Teacher of the Year in Excellence Award, and the 2013 NAACP Woman of the Year. Recently retiring as founding director of the Center for Arts and Humanities at the University of St. Joseph, Smith has received numerous awards for his contributions to the arts. He served as chairman of English and director of Theatre at Woodstock Academy, adjunct professor in Theatre at CCSU, Graduate Education at Eastern Connecticut State University, and consulting faculty in Theatre at Charter Oak State College.

Robin Crothers and Carl F. Krein received the Friends of the University Award, recognizing a non-graduate individual or organization demonstrating distinguished leadership and/or service to Central.

Actively involved in Blue Devils Athletics, Crothers honored her late husband, Raymond, an accomplished runner, inducted in 1983 to the Blue Devil Athletics Hall of Fame. In tribute, the Alumni Track and Field Club and Athletics Department annually host the Raymond Crothers Memorial 5K X-C Race, awarding the Crothers Scholarship to a student athlete embodying high levels of dedication, talent, and achievement in track and field.

As CCSU’s retired head athletic trainer and former US Olympic athletic trainer, Krein established a nationally respected athletic training curriculum, and a scholarship fund in his namesake. Inducted into the CCSU Athletics Hall of Fame in 1995, Krein received CCSU’s Distinguished Service Award, and the Distinguished Athletic Training Educator Award of the National Athletic Trainers’ Association.

— Keith Hagarty
ALUMNI NEWS

FOXCT morning news team anchor Maggie Slysz ’10 (BS, Management) was named the 2015 Best Local Newscaster as voted by readers of New Britain Herald’s “Best of New Britain Awards.” Working the last two years as an anchor and social media reporter at WTIC-TV, Hartford’s FOX affiliate, the 28-year-old from Farmington began her television journalism career covering entertainment, lifestyle, and holiday programs before quickly transitioning to her role as anchor of the morning news broadcast.

Retiring as athletic director of Norwich Free Academy (NFA), the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference honored Gary Makowicki ’74 (BS, Education-Math) with a merit award during April’s state high school basketball championships. Named Athletic Director of the Year by the Connecticut High School Coaches Association, Makowicki’s 37-year career as an educator for NFA (his alma mater) included serving as president and interim executive director of the National High School Athletic Coaches Association.

Kelly McDermott ’04 was named executive director of the Wallingford Housing Authority. She previously managed Wallingford’s Housing and Community Development Department for ten years, receiving the Public Housing Resident Network’s Outstanding Developer Award in 2013. She also serves on the Board of Middlesex County Habitat for Humanity and Middlesex United Way Young Leaders Society.

Tom Phillips ’75 (BA, Political Science), president and CEO of Capital Workforce Partners, was featured in the “Business Scene” professional, one-on-one interview section of Bristol Press. Working for CWP since 2001, a nonprofit association of business and labor leaders, government officials and educators overseeing public-private partnerships for workforce training, Phillips offered insight into emerging business trends, issues, and labor practices facing the state and American workforce.

Cindy C. Rigling was named principal of Hamilton Avenue School in Greenwich. An educator for 27 years, Rigling ’01 (sixth year certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in Educational Leadership) previously served for seven year as the founding principal of the Capitol Regional Education Council (CREC) International Magnet School (IMS) for Global Citizenship, launching an award-winning inquiry-based program designed to close gaps in achievement between urban and suburban students.

Allison Kinard was named Emmett O’Brien Technical High School’s Teacher of the Year. Kinard ’09 (BS, Education-History) has been an educator at the school in Ansonia since 2009, saying she is both humbled and honored by the award, with school officials calling it a testament to her combined passion for history and student engagement.

Central Middle School (CMS) Principal Shelley Somers ’96 (sixth year certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in Educational Leadership) was named the 2015 CT PTA Middle School Principal of the Year. Honored during April’s Connecticut Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) Outstanding Administrator Awards program, Somers, who has been principal of the Greenwich public middle school for the last six years, was nominated by the CMS PTA, and chosen for the award based on her record of outstanding leadership, communication, community involvement, and professionalism.

— Keith Hagarty
A PRECIOUS PURSUIT

One ring to rule them all? Sounds like a question of science for Professor of Astronomy Kristine Larsen, recently cited in The Atlantic Monthly (May 2015) article, “Science’s Love Affair with The Lord of the Rings” discussing the motivations and potential scientific connections behind legendary British author J.R.R. Tolkien’s celebrated fantasy works, The Hobbit and Lord of the Rings trilogy. Award-winning movie adaptations have renewed a frenzied Middle-Earth fandom in recent years, however, according to Larsen in her paper “SAURON, Mount Doom, and Elvish Moths: The Influence of Tolkien on Modern Science,” Tolkien’s tales have captured the fascination of scientists, scholars, and fans alike for over half a century. Using the author’s popularity as a “hook” to get contemporary students interested in science, Larsen seeks the link between science and fantasy, uncovering possible scientific mysteries overlooked by other Tolkien scholars.

— Keith Hagarty

THE ICEMAN COMETH TO DUBLIN

Touring Ireland to promote his most recent book, Eugene O’Neill: A Life in Four Acts (Yale University Press, 2014), Professor of English Robert Dowling (right) visits the Áras an Uachtaráin in Dublin, rubbing elbows with fellow O’Neill aficionado, President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins. Dowling’s book comes out in paperback in spring 2016. President Higgins contributes this encomium: “Eugene O’Neill’s themes are reflective of the great themes of both Irish and American theatre: migration and the use and abuse of memory. O’Neill belongs to both the literary canons of America and Ireland. Robert M. Dowling’s definitive and compelling biography greatly enriches our understanding of O’Neill’s influences, the price and pain of his struggle, and its realization. We are indebted to Dowling for this fine informed study of a giant of literature which we share.”

— Keith Hagarty
What’s Trending at CCSU?

As 600 students moved into the new Mid-Campus Residence Hall at the end of August, the University’s social media channels buzzed with video and photos of the controlled chaos. Here’s a sampling:
See you at Homecoming!

Friday, October 9 – Sunday, October 11
www.ccsu.edu/homecoming