Another academic year has ended, and we’ve survived the very cold and snowy winter. As the summer months are finally upon us, I hope that we all can find time for much deserved fun and relaxation and renewal. It’s been a wonderful year filled with challenges and successes and new beginnings and historic anniversaries.

The City University recently welcomed a new Chancellor, James B. Milliken. We are excited about his vision for the University and the promise that it holds for students of all backgrounds and cultures. Chancellor Milliken’s commitment to access to higher education for underrepresented minorities, first generation college students, and low income students comes at a time of renewed national attention to higher education, as evidenced by President Obama’s recent education summit in Washington, DC. The Office of Special Programs (OSP) is especially eager to continue the national dialogue to increase student higher education attendance and graduation and, under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Frank Sanchez, we are planning to convene a CUNY “Summit on Access and Success in an Urban Setting” in the next academic year and in so doing we will bring CUNY into national prominence as a major provider of effective higher education opportunity to thousands of students who have academic potential but limited access to higher education.

The College Discovery Program, established in 1964, reached its 50th anniversary in February 2014 and the CD Directors are making plans for a special celebration in the upcoming fall semester. The federally-funded TRIO Programs, which are so well represented across CUNY campuses, are also celebrating their 50th anniversary this year. The SEEK Program, enacted into New York State law in 1966, will reach its 50th year milestone less than two years from now. Besides the profound importance of these programs in enriching the lives of the many thousands of academically and economically challenged students over the years, it is both thrilling and humbling to read in this issue about two very special students: Simone Gordon, the City College Student Support Services/TRIO Program student who was the college’s June 2014 graduation salutatorian as well as a Fulbright recipient, and Katsiaryna Hud, the York College SEEK student who just graduated as valedictorian of her college class. Congratulations to Simone and Katsiaryna – we wish you much success in all of your future endeavors!

(continued on next page)
In recent months the OSP convened two highly successful events. The bi-annual SEEK and College Discovery Program Tutor Talk Conference took place at Lehman College this past April. More than 100 SEEK, CD, and TRIO Program tutors attended the day-long professional development experience that included focus groups titled Student-Tutor Etiquette, Goal Setting and Productivity of Tutoring Sessions, and It’s OK to Ask for Help. Lehman’s Vice President for Student Affairs, Jose Magdaleno, provided an inspiring keynote address. April was a busy month as it also brought this year’s SEEK and CD prospective student leadership students together for a pre-conference afternoon filled with various leadership presentations and a viewing of CUNY’s highly regarded documentary, Second Chances: The SEEK/CD Story. As I write this, we are eagerly planning the June 2014 Student Leadership Academy Conference, and if the past nine years are any indication, I know that this year’s conference will be a wonderful experience for all involved.

The coming academic year will be challenging and also rewarding. The OSP is looking forward to continuing its consulting and collaborating with the Harlem Children’s Zone as it seeks to create a 13th year for students in order to help insure that they are fully college-ready. Another exciting development involves an RFP that will be issued by the United States Department of Education next fall or early winter for TRIO/Student Support Services (SSS) programs. Areas that will be targeted include students with disabilities, students in STEM disciplines, and ESL and ELL students. Proposal components that will be judged include need; goals; plan of operation; budget; and evaluation. The OSP will provide proposal writing assistance and professional development to TRIO and SEEK/CD Programs that wish to write proposals.

The OSP was extremely pleased to learn that the CD Scholars grant has been extended for another full year. The CD Programs at BMCC, Kingsborough Community College, and LaGuardia Community College participated in the CACG grant and have reported impressive student performance data from this past year. I look forward to sharing the results with you in a forthcoming issue of SOAR. Furthermore, SEEK and CD Programs that wish to obtain additional funding from the OSP next year should look for the RFP early in the fall semester. We hope to award funds early in the academic year so that the Programs will have sufficient time to develop and implement new initiatives.

All in all this has been quite a busy and productive year in the Office of Special Programs. We should be enormously proud of and inspired by the dedication and accomplishments of our students, faculty, and staff. I certainly am constantly in awe of the quality and quantity of the work produced in our SEEK, CD, TRIO, and Single Stop Programs. I look forward to the remaining summer months and to the coming 2014-2015 academic year. I have no doubt that Special Programs will continue to add to the greatness of our City University of New York!
The Office of Special Programs invited SEEK and CD Programs to submit proposals for additional spring 2014 funding. SEEK Programs were asked to address strengthening academic outcomes for second year students; increasing SEEK and CD Program collaborations that are designed to assist students make a more successful transition from College Discovery into SEEK; and strengthening the Program’s assessment efforts. CD Programs were invited to submit proposals that addressed increasing the retention and graduation rates of freshmen and second semester students; research and program assessment; and professional development initiatives. Four SEEK Programs and three CD Programs were awarded funding for the spring 2014 initiatives listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEEK Program</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Jay College SEEK Program</td>
<td>Furthering Leadership, Academic Growth and Success (FLAGS)</td>
<td>$33,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Velazquez Torres, Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lehman College SEEK Program</td>
<td>Enhancing Academic Outcomes: SEEK Science Immersion Project</td>
<td>$18,605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Annette Hernandez, Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medgar Evers College SEEK Program</td>
<td>Team Work Makes the Dream Work</td>
<td>$34,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Janice Zummo, Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens College SEEK Program</td>
<td>Strengthening Academic Outcomes for Second Year Students</td>
<td>$13,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Franklin, Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borough of Manhattan Community College CD Program</td>
<td>Development of an Online Intermediate Algebra &amp; Trigonometry Workshop Using Open Source and Open Content Information</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Pedro Perez, Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronx Community College CD Program</td>
<td>Assessing the Risks and Protective Factors that Increase Persistence for First Year Students in the College Discovery Program</td>
<td>$6,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia Suarez-Espinal, Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LaGuardia Community College CD Program</td>
<td>Academic Success Seminar: Online eMaster Tutor Training Course</td>
<td>$8,161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Kyoko Toyama, Acting Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Congratulations!
Every year, the Medgar Evers College Percy E. Sutton SEEK Program facilitates an Annual Holiday Giveback event. For the holiday season during December, children who are adopted, placed in foster care, or experiencing extreme hardship are invited to a Winter Holiday Party. At the party, SEEK students, staff, and peer mentors play games with the children and provide the students with holiday gifts. Basic resources provided to the children range from new coats and clothes to footwear. Annually, the SEEK Program also gives these children brand new pajamas and books to help them escape the reality of their environments, and instead, plunge into a world filled with literature and fantasy.

On Friday, January 10, 2014, SEEK had its fourth annual giveback event. It was held at the Faith Mission Christian Fellowship Church, located at 160 West 129th Street, between Lenox and 7th Avenues. Children from the neighborhood enjoyed three hours of hot food, cupcakes, gifts, and had warm interactions with members of SEEK and fellow collaborators including the church’s youth minister and Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) worker, Reverend Elizabeth Shahid.

SEEK’s fourth annual event brought the total number of people it has fed, clothed, and helped to 285. These are 285 individuals we have had the opportunity of not only helping, but we have also made a difference within the community. The highlight of the event was when a nine year old boy browsed a variety of books and became ecstatic because he was able to choose two books. He carefully examined each novel and thoughtfully critiqued its relevancy, according to his interest and ability to read it. His smile was more than enough to light up the room. Books in print are becoming a rarity for children living in a world filled with electronics and strife. Yet this young boy was passionate about browsing scientific novels.

The Medgar Evers College Percy E. Sutton SEEK Program has provided a holiday event for the last four years because we want to invest in the future of New York City children just as SEEK students are being invested in today.
One of the Brooklyn College SEEK performance goals for the 2013-2014 academic year is to “increase access to historically underrepresented students by effective recruitment and management of enrollment and to increase program efforts to uphold the SEEK mission to serve historically underrepresented populations.” We created a “SEEK Admissions Task Force” to recruit underrepresented students into SEEK by partnerships with Admissions officers, Talent Search, and minority faculty. Beginning in October, Brandon Bjertnes, Peter Collazo, Ebony Medas, Stephanie Pinho, and Warren Soare initiated this committee and achieved the following objectives: identified the high schools that our 161 freshmen attended and researched the predominately minority high schools in Brooklyn and beyond. In conjunction with the Admissions Office, the Recruitment/Admissions Task Force implemented a successful evening Minority SEEK Recruitment Event on December 16th, 2013.

More than 50 potential SEEK students and their parents attended and learned about the Brooklyn College SEEK Program. The Task Force members also created a one-page Brooklyn College SEEK informational flyer for recruitment, which was distributed at the event. The SEEK recruitment flyers have also been distributed to key admissions officers and members of the faculty who recruit black and Latino students through high school visits and special programs such as Talent Search and Veterans Affairs. Finally, the Task Force updated the Brooklyn College website to make it more user friendly and added more information for potential students and anyone else interested in learning more about the college and its programs. The Task Force plans to continue its recruitment work in the coming academic year.
In 1990, Mr. Adrian Solomon (pictured above in the back row on right) entered BMCC unsure of just where higher education would take him. Mr. Solomon mentions that he was not even that committed to going to college, and was only following the lead of his friend who was also starting college at the same time. Fortunately, the College Discovery Program staff and his counselor, Professor Vanessa Rozzelle (pictured above in front of Mr. Solomon), were here to help guide him along the way. Prof. Rozzelle looked at this street smart young man from the streets of Harlem and saw that he had that “it” quality that leads to success. And so they worked together to set and attain, and then reset and attain, some goals. Prof. Rozzelle states, “You see certain things in students, and you know they are going to be successful. For them to be at BMCC in the first place lets me know that they want something out of life. They just might not know what it is or how to get it. My job is to point them in the right direction and give them the praise and encouragement needed along the way.”

Mr. Solomon explained, “with my College Discovery counselor’s assistance, I realized the importance of earning a college degree. Once I got my Associate Degree, I found myself asking ‘what’s next?’ and I kept going.” And so, Mr. Solomon went on to get his Bachelor’s Degree at The City College and then he earned his Master’s Degree in Social Work while working as a CUNY CAP at BMCC’s Transfer Office. Finally, Mr. Solomon returned to BMCC in 2001 to work as a College Discovery Counselor AND give back to the organization that had given him so much. Mr. Solomon’s various duties as a CD Program counselor include moderating the monthly men’s discussion group, Barbershop Talk. Additionally, he gets to work side-by-side with Prof. Rozzelle, the woman who believed in his potential. And since returning to BMCC, he has even earned his law degree, all while working full-time and taking care of a family! Our graduates blossom into successful, community-minded individuals who excel in a number of fields including law, business, and medicine. This story is one of the many success stories of BMCC’s College Discovery Program. Most of the time, we do not know where inspiration will come from in life. However, we strive to be that source of inspiration.
Roberto Sequiera Joins OSP Staff

The Office of Special Programs welcomes Roberto Sequiera, recent Brooklyn College SEEK Program graduate and first President of the United Leaders of CUNY (ULC), who has joined our staff and serves as University Advisor to ULC. Born in Brooklyn to Nicaraguan parents who immigrated to the United States in 1988, Roberto attended public schools in predominantly Italian neighborhoods and had difficulty “fitting in” with the other students. Once in high school, he developed more of his own identity and realized that he neither had adequate academic resources nor mentors to help him pursue his early interest in political science. Roberto’s motivation to succeed and to overcome personal family obstacles led him to apply to The City University. Thanks to the advice of his high school counselor, he completed the SEEK section of the application and was subsequently admitted into the Brooklyn College SEEK Program.

While attending Brooklyn College, Roberto realized that he was not sure about what to major in. He was interested in psychology, and business, and marketing, but still could not make up his mind. Then he met fellow student and SEEK Program tutor Peter Collazo, who is now the SEEK Program’s Academic Support Coordinator. Peter was a tremendous help to Roberto and offered solid advice about college majors. Peter recommended that Roberto register for the course, “People, Power, and Politics” which was one of Brooklyn’s core courses. Roberto remembers that the professor was one of the best he ever had. More than that, the professor was a SEEK alumni himself! Roberto listened to the professor’s tales of doing research in South Africa and they inspired him to travel. While in college Roberto travelled to Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, and Ecuador. He felt “at home” in these countries and learned a lot about the people and their cultures, and also learned a lot about politics as he spoke with more and more educated people and discussed how to create social movements and how to mobilize students.

Roberto has a vast history of volunteer work: he mentored elementary school children who attend the Harlem Link Charter School and he did gardening for the NYC Housing Authority and the Bronx Land Trust, where he helped plant about 100 trees in Bronx parks.

He was a Tutor/Facilitator at a previous OSP Tutor Talk Conference. He attended the SEEK/CD Student Leadership Academy Conference in 2010 where he participated in various leadership discussions that led to the eventual development of the ULC. When he thinks about that accomplishment, Roberto feels like a proud parent, as he knows that the ULC will benefit the lives of many students. He appreciates all that SEEK did for him and how it taught him that “the world is your oyster”.

In terms of the ULC, Roberto proudly boasts that students from all 17 undergraduate campuses have been brought together in a united organization. The ULC has offered a Career Fair and it has assisted in hurricane relief efforts and has lent support to SEEK/CD Clubs in various colleges. Roberto’s goal is to see that all 17 campuses have a SEEK/CD Club. What’s next for Roberto? He wants to continue working with students and hopes to encourage them to “aim high”. Roberto has just been accepted into the Masters Program in Higher Education Administration in the Baruch College School of Public Affairs. How confident is Roberto about being successful? “How I get there, I don’t know. I don’t know what will happen. But I know that I will be successful”.

We wish Roberto all of the success that he so richly deserves!
This article was submitted by Jessica Jensen, SEEK Program Intern, Hunter College School of Social Work

The SEEK Department congratulates Dr. Monika Son on the recent completion of her doctoral degree in developmental psychology from the CUNY Graduate Center! Dr. Son adds this incredible accomplishment to her Master’s Degree in Mental Health Counseling and Personnel Services.

At the heart of Dr. Son’s doctoral dissertation is an exploratory study of how Dominican-American college students define success. Dr. Son says that she was interested in learning more about Dominican ethnic identity within a student population because at John Jay College, Dominican students are the largest single ethnic identity enrolled. Therefore, Dr. Son felt that learning more about how Dominican culture and identity impacts student success was central to her various roles within the SEEK Department. Dr. Son points out that often assumptions about ethnic groups are misleading in that there’s an overemphasis on homogeneity; therefore she was interested in exploring in-group variability amongst this population. She states, “when you work as a counselor you know there are important differences within a particular ethnic or cultural group. I wanted to know more about what accounts for those differences and to honor their experiences.”

Dr. Son would like to thank the SEEK Department staff, counseling faculty, and administrators. In particular, she would like to thank Director Dr. Nancy Velazquez-Torres, Dr. Schevaletta Alford, and her SEEK colleagues for providing much appreciated support throughout the entire process.

Congratulations Dr. Son!
Katsiaryna Hud was born in a northern part of Russia, Arkhangelsk. Her parents moved to Polotsk, the city of Belarus where she earned her high school diploma. She has one older sister with whom she is very close. Katsiaryna moved to Miami, Florida at the age of 21 as a refugee. She moved in with a friend who was the only person she knew in the United States and she worked odd jobs to support herself since she did not speak English.

She later moved to New York for more opportunities. Katsiaryna knew she did not want to attend a private college and chose CUNY because of the affordable tuition. Her first contact with York College was the CLIP Program. York College was the only senior college that accepted her as a SEEK-eligible student.

Initially, she chose Pharmaceutical Science as her major. After a lengthy discussion with her soon-to-be mentor, Dr. Desamero, she changed her major to Chemistry, allowing her more options in the science field. Since 2012 Katsiaryna has been conducting research with Dr. Desamero analyzing protein, which causes Type Two Diabetes in patients.

This summer Katsiaryna plans to take the MCATs and apply to medical school. At the present time, she is considering specialties in either ophthalmology or dermatology. However, this may change again once she begins her residency and there is a prevalent need in a different specialty. She has also applied to the Mayo Clinic to conduct research.

When asked what motivates her, she replied, “her family.” Ms. Hud values family above all else. Leaving her family in Russia was the hardest decision she had to make, and she wanted to excel and make her parents proud. The one piece of advice she would like to offer other students is to establish relationships with their faculty. “Do not be afraid to utilize the resources available on campus.” Ms. Hud noted her success in her English courses is attributed to the academic support she received from the Percy E. Sutton SEEK Program, namely tutors Shormin Hassain and Nekarassov Simon who diligently assisted her with her papers.

We wish Katsiaryna continued success as she pursues all of her future professional and personal goals and aspirations!
The College Discovery Program at Hostos Community College is proud to announce that three out of four brothers are enrolled in our program. The fourth brother will enter into the college in Spring 2014. The Advincola brothers are active in Hostos on campus activities and clubs. Currently the Advincola brothers are involved in the Student Leadership Program and in our Academic Excellence Recognition and Carlos had volunteered as a peer advisor in our summer program. They all declared they will pursue a Bachelor’s Degree once they complete their studies at Hostos. Each of them have chosen different courses of study and are committed to supporting one another on and off campus.

Josue’ has chosen a similar degree and will pursue Digital Design and Animation. After completing his degree he wants to increase his knowledge of art and animation. He wants to create his own cartoons and collaborate with fellow artists. Creating his own comic books and video games is one of his dreams.

Elias will be pursuing a degree in Accounting. After graduating from Hostos he wants to attend a senior college. Once done with his studies he would like to work for the government, or in a bank/corporation. He also wants to pursue becoming a private accountant to some clients.

Carlos is pursuing his degree in Liberal Arts and Humanities. He wants to fulfill his dream by becoming a best-selling author. He has begun the steps of getting some of his work published and it will be out next year. He also has a desire to work at Hostos Community College and to give back to the College Discovery Program.

Esteban has chosen Game Design as his major. Once he graduates from Hostos he plans to attend a senior college. He wants to make games and work in the game industry either as an independent developer or at an established media company.

Josue’ has chosen a similar degree and will pursue Digital Design and Animation. After completing his degree he wants to increase his knowledge of art and animation. He wants to create his own cartoons and collaborate with fellow artists. Creating his own comic books and video games is one of his dreams.

Elias will be pursuing a degree in Accounting. After graduating from Hostos he wants to attend a senior college. Once done with his studies he would like to work for the government, or in a bank/corporation. He also wants to pursue becoming a private accountant to some clients.

Carlos is pursuing his degree in Liberal Arts and Humanities. He wants to fulfill his dream by becoming a best-selling author. He has begun the steps of getting some of his work published and it will be out next year. He also has a desire to work at Hostos Community College and to give back to the College Discovery Program.
My name is Maria Ospina. I am a graduate of LaGuardia Community College and am a College Discovery Program alumna. I first heard about College Discovery when I was in high school and was working on my college application. However it wasn’t until I started as a student in LaGuardia that I actually got to experience all of the benefits of being part of the College Discovery Program.

I learned of all the benefits of College Discovery right from the start. My first semester there (since day one) I had a Counselor who was there to make my college experience not as difficult as it could have been. The process of registering for classes was easier compared to others who were not in College Discovery, figuring out what classes to register for and all the “silly” questions we think we have at one point were answered, and the fact that I was able to meet with the same person every time made it better because my counselor knew me already. Aside from receiving a monetary stipend which is also a very good benefit, there’s always someone in College Discovery to help you literally with anything! College Discovery has its own Financial Aid liaison so you don’t have to wait on long lines in the main Financial Aid office.

The College Discovery receptionist helps you make your appointments with the Counselors and the College Discovery Resource Center for tutoring and computer use, and also provides general guidance. Whether you have a homework problem, or need tutoring, or you need help to register, or you just need someone to talk to if you ever need to vent, College Discovery staff are there for the students! These are just some of the great things the College Discovery Program has to offer.

The hardest academic challenge for me was actually passing my classes. As bad as that sounds I always wanted to keep my GPA higher than a 3.0 but sometimes it was difficult for me to do that because I had to work while also managing other important aspects of my life. But I am so thankful for all the tutors that College Discovery has in room B208 which is the College Discovery Academic Resource Center. A great benefit was that since tutoring is scheduled by appointments, I could meet with the same person every time I went. To me, that was very important because I liked having a relationship with my tutor. It made me feel more comfortable. Other tutoring services on campus are group-based and they can’t always guarantee that you can work with the same tutor.

Having a relationship with your College Discovery Counselor is also very helpful and important. The idea of actually being able to talk to someone without holding back on anything is great! And that is what I had. Of course it takes time to allow yourself to open up but that is the point of building a relationship with your Counselor. I was surprised by all the extra help I could get and it was because of my Counselor that I was introduced to and guided through more opportunities.

When I was told that I was graduating I felt accomplished and very proud of myself. To me it meant that I’m half way there and one step closer to the career that I want to have. I am now a student at Queens College and my major is Psychology and Childhood Education. At Queens College there’s no more College Discovery, it now becomes the SEEK Program once you enter a senior college and SEEK has the same benefits as the College Discovery Program! This time around I plan on definitely taking advantage of all the benefits and exploring more. And that is a tip I would give to any new student to College Discovery; there are so many opportunities and ways to receive help in College Discovery and SEEK, so don't let it go to waste!

Thank you for your time!

Maria Ospina
My name is Jeffrey McClellan. I am a first-generation college student and was raised by my mother in a single parent household. Even though my mother had only limited college experience, she always believed in the importance of a good education. Growing up, my going to college soon became an important goal for both of us. However, there were few people in my community who I could actually speak to about preparing for higher education. Rather, I had to conduct my own research by turning to resources such as the Internet, the library, and books to find answers about how to prepare for college. While those resources were useful, what I really wanted and needed at that time was a strong academic support system.

Today, and for the past four years, I have had that strong academic support system. I am proudly enrolled as a graduating senior at Baruch College, where I have taken several courses in Human Resources Management (HRM) and Law and Public Policy. I have a strong passion for both helping and working alongside others, which has drawn me towards social organizations like the Percy E. Sutton SEEK Program and the Urban Male Leadership Academy (UMLA), Chi Alpha Epsilon’s Honor Society, NABA, New York Needs You, among others.

I would like to highlight two organizations in the aforementioned list. First is the Percy E. Sutton SEEK Program. While Baruch serves as a community, SEEK remains a family. It is a place where I can speak to counselors about demanding academic, professional, personal matters; where I can catch-up with fellow students who serve as sounding boards, mentors/mentees, friends, and companions; where there is an office to cultivate relationships and do work. With this, SEEK is nothing less than a family.

Second is the Percy E. Sutton UMLA. While SEEK undeniably remains a family, UMLA is a brotherhood. Simply put, what do you get when you bring together 60 black and Latino young men, from similar, yet different backgrounds, with unique, but broad experiences, and a work ethic that surpasses many of their peers? You get the UMLA. Without this program, my idea of who a responsible man of color is would probably still be socially constructed; my perspective on institutionalized racism, still clouded; and my definition of what a leader is, still arbitrary. In short, Baruch College has helped me become a better professional; SEEK has made me a better student; and the UMLA, my brothers, have helped me become a better man.

My goal is to graduate from Baruch’s Zicklin School of Business with a Bachelor’s in Business Administration (BBA) degree in Human Resources Management. Then, I plan to work as a full-time analyst at Goldman Sachs and gain practical hands-on experience in Human Resources.

I would like to wrap-up by offering three brief pieces of advice to my fellow students. Number one is take risks. Although cliché, become comfortable being uncomfortable. We tend to get so fixed in stability that we often forget to be nimble. Avoid becoming stale, which leads me into my next piece of advice. Number two, nurture your personal brand. My best bet is that you do not want to be known as the character with the stale brand. Continue to build, repackage, and protect your personal brand. Number three, be humble. Pay it forward. Remember that we did not all make it here solely on our own merits. We all stand on the shoulders of giants. We owe it to ourselves and to those who are not here yet but aspire to be here, to give and contribute back into the community, family, and brotherhood that have done so much for us. Thank you.
SEEK and College Discovery (CD) Programs do so much for our students, from their point of entry until commencement. It’s our collective mission to build a community of learners by surrounding our students with the academic, counseling and financial support they need in order to flourish; and flourish they do! Some students ambitiously enter the employment arena eager to begin their professional career. Equally, others are determined to deepen their scholarly study in pursuit of a graduate education, while some are endeavoring both simultaneously! Regardless of their trajectory, it’s important to acknowledge their journey and remain connected to SEEK and CD alumni. I recently sat down with a City Tech SEEK graduate and Beta Lambda Chapter Chi Alpha Epsilon National Honor Society member, Roselyn Rosa (2013) to discuss her journey as an undergraduate City Tech SEEK student and how it prepared her for her new graduate school experiences. Roselyn graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in Law and Paralegal Studies and is now pursuing a Master’s Degree in Public Administration at The City College of New York.

Nicholas Millet: What persuaded you to attend graduate school and pursue a Masters Degree in Public Administration (MPA)?
Roselyn Rosa: I studied law and paralegal studies for my undergraduate degree, so I wanted to pursue a graduate degree that was somewhat related to law but also a degree that will give me more knowledge on another field that can be utilized in a legal setting and in other areas also.

NM: How would you differentiate undergraduate from graduate schooling?
RR: You are more on your own. It’s a little less supportive. The class time is longer and they are really strict with attendance.

NM: Speaking of support, what was your undergraduate experience like as a SEEK Student?
RR: As a SEEK student I felt the extra support that sometimes is needed when pursuing an undergraduate college degree. I knew if I had any concerns or doubts, I could be able to contact someone at SEEK and get answers to my questions. This was really helpful.

NM: What was your most memorable experience as a SEEK student?
RR: The most memorable experience I had as a SEEK student was the attentiveness that the counselor and staff show, especially to freshmen. The transition into college can be quite difficult and they made me feel welcomed, advised me and helped me in pursuance of my degree. Every semester my counselor emailed or called me to ensure that I registered for the appropriate courses for the following semester.

NM: What do you think is important for SEEK students to do while an undergrad?
RR: It’s good to be involved when you can, because it’s a different experience and you’ll be able to learn more especially if you’re interested in the topic. For me, I went to Washington, DC with my department and we visited different museums and the United States Supreme Court. We were able to attend court proceedings to hear oral arguments.

NM: You sound like you were really involved. What clubs/organizations were you a member of during undergrad and did you hold any offices?
RR: I was a member of the Student Government Association; one year I was a secretary within that organization. In addition, I was a member of the Student Senate. I was a student delegate. I was also a member of the law and paralegal studies club.

NM: What advice would you give SEEK students who are about to graduate?
RR: The advice that I would give SEEK students who are about to graduate is to think and have a plan about what they want to do after graduation, whether they want to go to graduate school or not. Time goes by really fast, so take advantage of every minute.

As a Special Program’s counselor, it’s stories like this one which validate our student relationships and underscore the importance of having a presence in students’ lives from start to finish. Unquestionably, Roselyn has made the best of her undergraduate experience and is certainly poised for success. In addition to her graduate schooling, Roselyn is working at the Brooklyn Bar Association in an effort to broaden her professional capabilities and is excited about what the future has in store.
On April 12th, 2014, my partner, Christopher Chin, and I participated in the Empire State Association of Two Year College Biologists Conference at LaGuardia Community College. It was our first time presenting our research project on the Analysis of Tissue Factor in Metastatic Breast Cancer. Metastasis is the spread of a primary tumor to a secondary site that involves migration, adhesion, and angiogenesis; our research will elucidate the role of tissue factor in metastatic breast/tumor angiogenesis regulated by microRNA. As it was my first conference, I was very nervous to present brand new medical research to professional biologists. I was very afraid of misinforming my audience and being asked questions I didn’t know the answers to. However, I managed to get it together and presented my poster with my partner.

Even though we didn’t win, it was a great experience to be a part of. This conference has helped me grow confident in presenting my research in future events by seeing other students also present their research in various and relevant fields.
On Friday, January 3, 2014, the Council for Opportunity in Education rang the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange. This is an important recognition by many in our country’s financial community of the critical importance college access and success for low-income and first generation students, and the TRIO programs, play in assuring America’s economic future.

In addition to ringing the opening bell of the New York Stock Exchange, the COE delegation was honored with the presentation of a medallion, presented by Stefan Jekel, NYSE Euronext’s New York-Based Team Member, prior to the opening. The COE group was then taken to the floor where they met floor traders and toured the area. TRIO directors and administrators, TRIO students, and TRIO alumni were among the group who attended and stood on the NYSE platform — Paula Martin, Executive Director, Harlem Center for Education; Michelle Danvers Foust, Director, TRIO Pre-Collegiate Programs, CUNY, Bronx Community College; Lalla Green, CUNY, Bronx Community College Upward Bound and Talent Alumna, and Curriculum Coordinator, Bronx Community College; Bryan Caraballo, Participant, Bronx Community College Talent Search Program; Noah Morton, Freshman, Amherst College and Graduate, Harlem Center for Education; Maureen Hoyler, President, Council for Opportunity in Education; and Dr. Arnold Mitchem, President Emeritus, Council for Opportunity in Education.

Ms. Danvers Foust, Ms. Green and Mr. Caraballo represented the CUNY TRIO programs; and Ms. Martin and alum Mr. Morton represented non-CUNY TRIO programs in New York City. Mr. Caraballo is a 2014 recipient of the POSSE Scholarship and will be attending Middlebury College in the fall; Ms. Green is a graduate of CCNY, Sophie Davis program and a recent graduate of Bronx Community College School of Nursing. Noah Morton is currently a freshman, attending Amherst College and is also a Gates Scholar. Susan Ott, President of the Association for Equality and Excellence in Education, Inc. (AEEE), the regional wing of COE representing New York and New Jersey, was also in attendance.
Though the CUNY Assessment Tests (CATs) do not have the profile of college admission tests like the SAT or ACT, they are still serious high-stakes tests. Failing the CATs means placement into remedial classes, higher education’s Bermuda triangle.

The Manhattan Educational Opportunity Center’s (MEOC) adult basic education classes have long enrolled individuals who previously attended CUNY community colleges and talked of taking the CATs cold and not understanding their format or the implications of failure. In the Fall of 2011, the MEOC received a TRIO Educational Opportunity Centers grant from the US Department of Education and subsequently launched the College Connections Project (CCP). The CCP, in accordance with TRIO EOC regulations, provides college access services to adults age 19 and older who aspire to enroll or reenroll in college. In the late spring of 2012, the CCP launched a series of CAT Test Prep Workshops, and the workshops have become a core service of the CCP. The workshops are popular, and the CCP’s experience providing them affirms an interest among new CUNY admits in CAT test information.

The workshops are two hours in length, with the first part covering the sections of the tests, how the tests are administered, and the special program options that students have if they fail multiple sections. The second part of the workshop includes practice problems, strategies for the 90-minute essay, and recommendations for independent study. The workshops have been held at the MEOC, BMCC, and LaGCC, and are facilitated by MEOC College Advisors. They are promoted primarily via flyers at CUNY admission offices and posts on the BMCC homepage. More than 150 new CUNY admits attended one of eight workshops offered during the 2012-2013 year, and a recent workshop in December 2013 drew 23 attendees.

It’s impossible to know whether the workshops are making a difference in college enrollment rates or CAT test score pass rates without extensive research. Nonetheless, it has been gratifying to provide the workshops to eager audiences and receive positive feedback from attendees, including on survey forms provided at the end of the sessions. In the future, the CCP aspires to do more rigorous quantitative and qualitative research on the workshops.

Though CUNY has long provided comprehensive online information about the CATs on the CUNY website including practice problems and a dynamic online tutorial for the Reading section, there is widespread belief that more information about the tests needs to be provided to prospective students and recently admitted students. A 2011 report from a Working Group on Remediation organized by the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs states, “It is incumbent on CUNY not only to provide full disclosure about the importance of the tests to applicants well before they enter the testing lab but also more opportunities for test preparation.” The CCP’s efforts are aligned with this goal.

More information about the CAT Test Prep Workshops can be found at: 
TRiO at Kingsborough Community College identifies trends which impede academic progression, followed by the implementation of initiatives for redress. For example, we noticed that many students struggle to pass the college’s writing entrance exam, and are subsequently detained in developmental English classes in preparation for a second, even a third, try.

To address this issue, TRiO partnered with Hope Parisi, the academic director of the college’s reading and writing center, also an English faculty member, and wrote a successful grant to identify root causes for struggling writers. The short term goal was expediting exits from remediation. The long term goals were to strengthen overall writing abilities, develop metacognitive application of critical thinking and self-regulatory planning, and facilitate awareness which can anticipate academic expectations for writing in new contexts.

Looking Glass commenced in Fall 2012 and is comprised of three tutorial groups, each one meets weekly for two hours during the semester. There have been over 30 students to date. The center’s director identified three writing center tutors for the project and runs a weekly staff meeting on pedagogy. She selects texts to facilitate writing responses from students, also coordinating with class themes and texts of the developmental English class.

Out of 30 participants, 60% (18 students) passed the CAT-W exam and half of them (9 students) scored 60 or above. A score of 56 is passing. The highest jump: an immediate past score of 48 to a score of 64. Additionally, 66% of participants passed the reading exam, with three students scoring 90 or higher. A score of 70 is passing. A student, whose highest score had previously been 69, achieved a score of 95, which was Looking Glass’s highest reading score. Most students who did not pass still made notable progression.

True to its short term objective, Looking Glass has expedited a high percentage of students out of writing remediation and, serendipitously, out of reading remediation, too. Students are frequently surprised by their rise in scores. Looking Glass provides the attention to discrete writing issues which participants need to pass out of remediation and do well in college. The project stresses that good writing begins with good thinking and it develops both capacities.
Congratulations to Simone Gordon
CCNY Salutatorian and Fulbright Recipient

The TRIO Student Support Services Program (SSSP) at The City College is having a banner year! In addition to celebrating the 50th anniversary of the TRIO Program, it has so much more to be proud of and to celebrate. SSSP Director Elizabeth Thangaraj and her staff recently held an Honors and Awards Ceremony for graduating and continuing students. Students were enthusiastically recognized for their high academic achievement; for being inducted into the Chi Alpha Epsilon Honor Society, for inclusion on the Dean’s List, and for various Divisional and Special Service awards.

In addition to bestowing so many awards on so many students, Dr. Thangaraj had the distinct honor of recognizing one very special graduating student: Simone Gordon. Simone was named this year’s graduation Salutatorian, and is graduating summa cum laude with a 3.9 GPA. But that’s not all! Simone, who majored in Childhood Education, received a 2014-2015 Fulbright U.S. Student Award, and will be travelling to India on a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship. This year’s honors top off a string of honors and awards that Simone has earned in the last few years:

* She was a Colin Powell Fellow for Leadership and Service in 2011-12;
* She received the Josh and Judy Weston Public Service Scholarship in 2012-13;
* She received the Dr. Sidney I. and Eleanor T. Silverman Human Values Award for Outstanding Leadership in 2012;
* She received the Lucy Gordon Education Alumni Award in 2012; and
* She was inducted into the Chi Alpha Epsilon Honor Society in 2012.

CONGRATULATIONS, SIMONE! We wish you the very best of continued success.

CONGRATULATIONS to ALL of the students, faculty, and staff of CCNY’s TRIO SSSP
Lainga Tong  
Hunter College, Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Program

When I was nineteen, I immigrated to the US from Hong Kong with limited English. I improved my English skills in a GED center. After earning a GED Diploma, I enrolled in Kingsborough Community College, where I began to engage in research activities. I worked on two honors independent projects, presented at conferences and participated in a National Science Foundation (NSF) funded summer research program. Subsequently, I transferred to Hunter College in the fall of 2011 which awarded me a Presidential Scholarship and I was selected for the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program. I will be the first person in my family to be a college graduate and ultimately, a veterinarian.

Through an NSF funded REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) program at CUNY, I studied foraging behavior of Common Terns and Roseate Terns with Dr. Richard Veit on Bird Island, Massachusetts in the summer of 2011.

With the funding of an Avon/Tukman Award, I participated in the Independent Research and Research Training Program in Wildlife Biology at Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory (RMBL) in the summer of 2012. I conducted research on the behaviors of floral visitors with Dr. Alison Brody, Professor of Biology from the University of Vermont. I presented my research findings at the 20th Annual University of Maryland Baltimore County McNair Scholars Research Conference. Additionally, I participated in the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS), from which I received a travel award and a poster presentation award.

Currently with the support of the Raab Presidential Fellowship, I am working with Dr. Mark Hauber to study brood parasitism at Hunter College. This research experience not only provided me with field experiences and strengthened my research skills but also equipped me to work both collaboratively as part of a field crew, and independently, to work on my own senior honors project. A portion of our findings were included in three papers in which I am co-author. The proposal for the completion of this project has led me to be an Honorable Mention recipient for the 2013 Goldwater Scholarship.

I have also been awarded a competitive CUNY study abroad scholarship and was selected to participate in an overseas honors program in Ecuador and the Galapagos in January 2013, where I studied evolution ecology and conservation and engaged in field research on the flight strategy in Magnificent Frigatebird. The study abroad program has provided me opportunities to gain unique field experiences in the Galapagos and has strengthened my knowledge of evolutionary ecology by exposing me to Charles Darwin’s living laboratory.

With my outstanding academic achievement and responsibility, I have become a scholarly model in the Ronald E. McNair Scholar Program for other minority students and I have inspired them to follow their passion, to aim high, and to be responsible. In my free time, I also volunteer as an event organizer for the youth fellowship at New York Chinese Baptist Church. I have organized holiday and birthday parties, cooperated with the staffs from other fellowships to organize joint events, supported the New York-wide church summer events and managed event supplies.

In this spring semester, my friend and I were awarded the Green Initiative Fund (TGIF) to start a recycling project on campus. Hunter Recycles is a waste collection program which collects certain types of non-recyclables and ships them to Terracycle, a company that turns non-recyclables into new products. This reduces the amount of waste going into either our landfills or our environment.

My experience at Hunter College has significantly strengthened my passion for animals and science and served to ensure a thorough preparation for professional study. Through these cumulative experiences in veterinary practice and scientific research, I am determined to pursue a doctor of veterinary medicine degree. My specific career goals are to practice in a companion animal shelter or a wildlife rehabilitation center, and conduct non-invasive research in behavioral problems and disease management in shelters. Shelter medicine is a relatively young field and limited research exists. My future research will add to the body of knowledge related to shelter medicine and help improve the quality of life for shelter animals. As a translator for the local Trap-Neuter-Return program in China Town for the last year, I have found that most of the immigrants from

(continued on next page)
developing countries are willing to provide responsible care for their pets but cannot get access to modern animal care information and resources from shelters due to their limited English and computer proficiency. Therefore, besides practicing and researching, I have aimed to promote responsible animal care in low-income and immigrant areas through community outreach and raise public awareness of the need for education.

Publication
Moskát, C., Zölei, A., Bán, M., Elek, Z., Tong, L., Geltsh, N. and Hauber, M. 2014. How to spot a stranger’s egg? A mimicry-specific discordancy effect in the recognition of parasitic eggs. Ethology. (Accepted for publication on 2/12/2014)

Honors and awards
May 2014 New Haven Chapter Scholarship (Welfare Fund)
March 2013 Honorable Mention for the Goldwater Scholarship
2013 Sigma Xi, Elected Associate Member
2013 The American Association for the Advancement of Science, Student Member
June 2013 Raab Presidential Fellows Program, Hunter College
January 2013 Study/Travel Opportunities for CUNY Students Scholarship, CUNY
Nov. 2012 Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students Presentation Award
Nov. 2012 Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students Travel Award
May 2012 The Avon/Tukman Award for Summer Research Residencies, Hunter College
August 2011 Presidential Leadership Scholarship, Hunter College
June 2011 The Lucille Nieporent Memorial Award, Kingsborough Community College
May 2011 Excellence in Academic Achievement, Kingsborough Community College
May 2011 Dean’s List Scholarship, Kingsborough Community College
April 2011 Presidential Scholars Award, Kingsborough Community College
October 2010 43rd Annual Fall MACUB Conference Third Place Poster Presentation Award, MACUB
Dawn C. Davis a 38 year-old mother of two children who for many years worked as an agent for an insurance company. Unfortunately, in 2007, Ms. Davis was laid off from work. She explained, “The economy was doing really badly; therefore, I was unable to find employment.” While receiving unemployment Dawn continued the job search. She successfully obtained employment at the time her unemployment funds were exhausted as a Direct Support Professional assisting the mentally disabled with daily living activities. Dawn says, “It was a rewarding experience although the pay was minimum wage.”

In 2010, Dawn decided to work toward her goal of a Bachelor’s degree. She enrolled in LaGuardia Community College to major in Social Work, and as part of the program she was required to do an internship. Dawn was awarded an internship at Single Stop USA where she learned of resources that she could potentially be eligible for her and take advantage of as she completes her degree. As a result of the internship Dawn learned all of the valuable benefits for students and applied for several herself, including SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and an academic scholarship.

“When my internship was over, I was offered a part-time position at Single Stop as an Assistant Coordinator. Working part-time allows me to continue to pursue my career goals of being a Social Worker. Thanks to Single Stop USA I received the support needed financially to complete my degree program and help my family. I cannot thank the director of Single Stop USA enough for recognizing my hard work and my potential.” Dawn Davis has successfully completed her degree program and was accepted at Lehman College.

Best wishes for continued success in all of your endeavors!
If you have news that you would like considered for future issues, please email your information to shelley.ast@cuny.edu

Writer and Editor: Shelley Ast, Ph.D.