CUNY Creates Options for Alumni and for the Children of Alumni

For more than a century and a half, City University has been giving New Yorkers the know-how to build richer, more fulfilling lives. In the narrowest sense, the University’s diplomas have led to jobs with higher pay and greater satisfaction. But in the passing of the generations, it becomes evident that a CUNY education does more than just help to create wealth. A CUNY education also creates a wealth of options.

Consider the long list of alumni who have had distinguished careers in politics, finance and the sciences, and who raised daughters and sons with measurable degrees of success in their own chosen professions. Immigrants like the Austrian-born Bernard Spitzer went on to success.

Former state appellate judge William Thompson, Brooklyn College graduate and father of New York City Comptroller Bill Thompson, said:

"Open the doors to all — all the children of the rich and the poor side by side, always together and because of no sacrifice that of industry, good conduct, and pain.”

— Townsend Harris

Chancellor: 2005 Inaugurates CUNY’s Decade of Scientific Research

Chancellor Matthew Goldstein announced the kickoff of a ten-year period of expansion that will see hundreds of millions of dollars invested in the sciences throughout the University, with special emphasis on scientific research.

“This will be the decade for the investment in science at CUNY,” the chancellor told a lunchtime gathering of education advocates at the Harvard Club recently.

“Modern facilities and equipment are essential to our campuses, not only to accomplish truly innovative research but also to attract the best faculty researchers and to encourage and nurture the best students. That is why we will be investing more than $360 million to build new facilities or modernize existing science buildings at Hunter, Lehman, Queens, and City Colleges over the next few years.”

The goal is “to facilitate the development of an integrated research network throughout the University,” Goldstein said.

In this issue (beginning on page 7), CUNY Matters is highlighting some of the research being done by CUNY’s professors. The range of their work is as broad as it is collectively innovative.

Some of the projects could save countless lives. And as students are exposed to the research, they hopefully will become the advance guard of a new generation of scientists.

On Lehman College’s Bronx campus, a cornfield is being used as a natural lab that may yield knowledge that will feed and feed multimatics. On Staten Island, a nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometer is helping scientists understand human vision and heart disorders. In Brooklyn, a partnership with the

National Aeronautics and Space Administration is teaching the principles of research to a new generation of minority students.

CUNY Matters has also decided to put a public face on the advances from various campuses who are doing important cancer research, a field of investigation often associated with pharmaceutical companies, the federal government or hugely endowed research institutes.

Universities allow intellectual freedom and are not driven by bottom-line profit considerations as is the pharmaceutical industry,” says John Stevens, vice president for extramural grants in the research department of the American Cancer Society. “You need both kinds of research; otherwise, the pharmaceutical companies can take the university research to the next level by developing a drug.”

Investigations into the nature of cancer cells and treatments for it will grow during the ‘decade of the sciences,” according to the University’s executive vice chancellor of academic affairs, Selma Botman.

“CUNY remains committed to supporting cutting-edge research, and cancer research is a priority,” Botman says.

Recently the two-pronged reality of CUNY’s status as a science research university was driven home dramatically. A pair of University scholars, who found themselves in the public limelight as new Rhodes scholars, declared that the University had made great strides in the area of the sciences, but added that it still has a long (and costly) way to go.

Newly named Rhodes Scholars Eugene Shenderov of Brooklyn College and Lev A. Shvadchik of City College praised their professors but called for more investment in science research equipment and facilities. “Both Eugene and Lev have opined that a lack of up-to-date equipment in CUNY laboratories was a drawback to their education,” Chancellor Goldstein noted during his address at the Feb. 1 Harvard Club meeting.

And so the University is now responding to that call for improvement from two of its highly valued members.

Goldstein says that nationwide the number of students going into the sciences has been dropping and that it is important for CUNY to do what it can, here in New York City, to help reverse that national trend.

Part of the effort to turn things around is the planned Advanced Science Research Center, a university-wide $198 million facility that will be built on the campus of City College. According to Goldstein, the center will provide our best researchers with the high-end instrumentation they need and will facilitate the development of an integrated research network throughout the University.

The chancellor added “Only then can we ensure that faculty have the kinds of facilities to do their best work and that students are trained using the most sophisticated equipment guided by the best minds recruited to the University.”

At a Glance

At 50th Anniversary of Polio Vaccine, Fundraising Drive Begins

The University commemorates this anti-polio vaccine developed by Dr. Jonas Salk, a City College alumnus, with a drive to raise scholarships for students going to med schools. See page 11.

Campuses Deal With Domestic Impact of Iraq War

Nigerian immigrant Segun Frederic Akinlate, a student at City Tech, was one of those University students killed in the war theater. Colleges are trying to assist other students facing overseas duty. See page 12.

A Proposal for Middle East Peace

Queens College Professor Myron Rothblum came up with an innovative course that has equal numbers of Jews, Muslims and Christians. He teaches them to “walk in the other’s shoes.” See page 4.

Entering Careers in Foreign Service and International Affairs

Dana Agnew and other students are traveling and pursuing graduate work in international studies, hoping to have an impact someday on world affairs. See page 12.

Oath of Martinus is a Commitment to a Life of Healing

Scores of students take the oath every year at the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education, promising to care for others. They do so as at a “solemn oath” ceremony for students on the path to becoming physicians. See page 6.

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Rhodes Scholars Overcome ‘Challenges’

THE wonderful, prude-busting reparations are still being felt across the University. In a historic decision, this fall, two CUNY students three months ago won prestigious Rhodes scholarships, awarded every year to brilliant working students with exceptional leadership skills.

Levi A. Swinford of City College and Eugene Sundere of Brooklyn College—both immigrants from the former Soviet Union—will study at the University of Oxford in England. It was the first time ever that two students from CUNY were named Rhodes Scholars.

In the United States, the only other universities with more than one Scholar in the recent group of awardees were Harvard, the United States Naval Academy, M.I.T, Yale, the University of Chicago and the University of Virginia.

Chancellor Matthew Goldstein hailed the news as “historic” and fraught with significance for the University as it gains recognition for the academic advances it has made in recent years.

“Our newest Rhodes Scholars are shining examples of how CUNY today is renewing its enduring commitment to the advancement of immigrants—and all New Yorkers—through public higher education,” Goldstein said.

Brooklyn College student Sundere is a senior in the prestigious B.A/M program. In the weekend announcement he was on the beautifully sprawling campus where as president of the chess club he was hosting a blitz chess tournament. He is a graduate of Brooklyn’s Murrow High School.

Sundere is also a member of the Golden Key National Honor Society and a three-time letter-winner on the Brooklyn College varsity men’s tennis team. His interest in cancer research evolved from his experience in the Ukraine, part of the old Soviet Union, when he was a boy. In 1986, as a result of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster there, he developed leukemia. He came to the United States to receive treatment.

City College student Swinford, a senior and chemistry major, said he will use the Rhodes scholarship to pursue a Masters of Science, doing research in inorganic chemistry, focusing on the crystalline properties of aerosols.

“I first became interested in aerosol research in 1997 as a sophomore at the E"
Hardships, Now Heading for Oxford University

Culture Fieldston School," Sviridov recounted. "Then at CCNY, where I had the opportunity to do important research under the mentorship of outstanding faculty even as an undergraduate, I was hooked."

Sviridov, like Shenderov, was in Chernobyl in 1986 when disaster struck. The nuclear explosion triggered in him an interest in environmental research.

As is the case with so many students at New York City’s public university, Sviridov overcame obstacles in life that might have seemed insurmountable to others. He and his mother were homeless for a time after their arrival in the United States. But the experience only strengthened him.

In addition to an outstanding academic record, Sviridov has been involved in governance and public affairs both on and off campus. He served in undergraduate student government for three years, including as president of the City College student body in 2003-2004.

City College President Gregory H. Williams said, "We could not be more proud of Lev, and no one deserves this honor more. An immigrant who came to America with nothing, he has received one of the highest academic honors open to a young man or woman. He stands for the great promise of The City College, and of public education."

If Sviridov is ever in need of a Rhodes Scholar role model to inspire his political skills, he doesn’t have far to look. About half a mile across town, to the east of the City College campus, on 125th Street, is the New York office of one of the nation’s most high profile former Rhodes Scholars—President Bill Clinton.

Speaking of Brooklyn College student Rhodes Scholars, Leo Strovide of CCNY left, and Eugene Shenderov of Brooklyn College, both immigrants from former Soviet Union.

Shenderov, President Christopher M. Kimmich said, "Eugene is a winner, an outstanding student, active in the college and the community, with a wide range of interests. For him, as for so many immigrants who preceded him here, Brooklyn College is the gateway into productive lives and satisfying careers."

The first Rhodes Scholar to hail from a CUNY school was James T. Molloy, a City College graduate who was awarded the scholarship in 1939. Raymond Pertedfey, a Queens College student, received one in 1982, and in 1991, Brooklyn College student Lissette Nieves, a philosopher and political science major, was selected.

The Rhodes Scholarships were created in 1902 by the will of Cecil Rhodes, British philanthropist and colonial pioneer. This year, 32 Rhodes Scholars were chosen from the across the United States. They will join an international group of Scholars selected from other countries around the world. Approximately 95 Scholars are selected worldwide each year.

Degrees Have LED to Successes for Grads and Offspring

options, he indicated, must spring from a sense of obligation to one’s family and country.

"Happiness cannot be achieved solely by amassing possessions or power," he said. "Real happiness is a byproduct of serving others."

High up on the local list of CUNY Options alumni by virtue of a distinguished team of retired state appellate Justice William Thompson and his son Bill, the New York City Comptroller. The elder Thompson attended Brooklyn College, though the son exercised an option and went to Tufts. "We talk every day," the proud father said recently about Bill, Jr., a rising political star. The former judge, now practicing law on Court Street in Brooklyn at the firm of Ross and Hill, remembers the sense of privilege he felt while attending Brooklyn College in the years immediately after World War II. (Thompson served as a sergeant in the army infantry in Italy and received three battle stars.) After Brooklyn College, he went to Brooklyn Law School.

The ex-judge said there was a time, in the 1960s, when his estimation of his old college, and indeed of the University as a whole, dropped a bit. "It was because of the way they started letting everybody in," he said, offering his feeling about the then-controversial decision to have open admissions policy.

But then changes came along and finally they said, 'You're going to have to have the right A's to get in, and if you have to do remedial work, it's not going to be in the four-year colleges.' Everybody screamed and moaned that you're going to have fewer minorities. But that hasn't happened. The schools have been getting better and better. So it's going back up to the standard they had once before."

Asked if he would be happy to see his grandchildren attend one of CUNY's colleges now or in the future, retired judge Thompson said, "Absolutely. No problem. I'd be happy."

Indeed, there are extended CUNY Options families throughout the city. One extended family member also belongs to a rafted club known as the United States Senate.

Several ages, when it was time for him to go to college, young Charles Schumler headed up the New England Tunkipe and attended Harvard College, and then Harvard Law School. The CUNY connection is through his mom, Selma Rosen Schumler, who is a 1948 graduate of Brooklyn College.

Judging by the activities listed under her name in the yearbook, Selma Schumler had the groundwork for her son's future in politics. The yearbook says that Selma Rosen studied political science and was involved in the "bureau of government research."

If Charles Schumler ever felt guilty about not attending a CUNY college, he more than compensated for it. In addition to the connection through his mom, he married a Brooklyn College grad—New York City Transportation Commissioner Iris Weinshall.

And who could deny that one of the finest options that a person can be handed in life is love? Selma Schumler knows it. But others who have been affiliated with CUNY know it will last a lifetime.

According to the December issue of Vanity Fair magazine, in the 1960s two European immigrants met while attending City College and fell head over heels for each other. Jemima from Germany and George from Italy were very much into the free-wheeling atmosphere of the era, in spirit and mind. Together, the D’Capronis had a son they named Leonardo.

The Oscarnominated actor can be excused for not attending CCNY—his mother and father moved to Los Angeles soon after the mother became pregnant.

Perhaps more than anything else, a college degree should carry with it a sense of values, values that are passed on to one’s children, giving strength and depth to their options.

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On left, former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, a graduate of CCNY, and his son Michael, outgoing chair of the Federal Communications Commission.

A January article in Time magazine explained how the son of a CUNY graduate made his way smoothly through the halls of two Ivy League universities, fortified by the character and spirit that he picked up early in life from his father.

Elst Spitzer is quoted as saying that his father Bernard, now 80, ‘never let us forget how blessed we were and that we had an obligation to help those who were less fortunate.’ As children, Elst and his two siblings would sit at the dinner table and be prepared to talk about important issues of the day.

‘I was always expected not just to know what was going on in the world,’ Elst Spitzer says today. ‘But to care about it.’

As did former Secretary of State Powell, who derived from his CCNY experience a sense of obligation and duty to things and people beyond himself, Bernard Spitzer also learned that freshman is of greater value than money. And it was something that he made sure he instilled in son Elst and Elst’s two younger siblings when they were children, according to the Time article.

‘We tried to teach them that it isn’t enough just to make your own pile,’ Bernard Spitzer said. ‘You should make piles that you can share with the rest of the world and pass on someday to your own children.’
Queens Professor’s Middle East Solution: Walk in the Other’s Shoes

By Rob Suter

When I grew up, two things were my daily ritual—reading the most popular little place in Park Forest, recalls Mark Rosenbaum of his childhood in Chicago’s suburbs.

“We had a picture of Ben Gurion and a picture of Afta Shevone.”

One is remembered as a tireless champion for the creation of a Jewish homeland, the other as an advocate of reason in settling conflicts between nations. This, perhaps, tells much about why Rosenbaum lives indistinguishably for a cause others might consider futile: creating a bridge of understanding between Jews and Muslims in the Middle East.

Nearly three years ago, Rosenbaum, a history professor and director of the college’s Michael Harrington Center for Democratic Change, took on a history that tackles a radically different approach to exploring the conflict in the Middle East. Debuting last fall, “The Middle East and America: Clash of Civilizations or Meeting of the Minds,” includes film, readings, lectures and guest speakers with firsthand experience in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It’s best described as...
Easy Access to Continuing Ed Courses Via New Website

The University has introduced a new Continuing Education website featuring an interactive map and enhanced search engine, allowing visitors to select the nearest college and programs with just a click. The search engine can be used to find programs and classes at any CUNY campus. By going to www.CUNY.edu/contine..., users can learn about thousands of courses and activities from a one-session seminar on personal fitness to a 24-hour online training program for administrative dental assistants. Everyone who has always dreamed of writing the Great American Novel can type the word ‘fiction’ in the search box and, with 238 options pop up on the screen. Some 200,000 New Yorkers benefit from CUNY’s Continuing Ed programs, which are flexible, low-cost and conveniently located throughout the city. In addition to visiting the website, one can call 1-866-344-CUNY.

CUNY Law School Staff Helps Lepers and Others Suffering in Nigeria

Fred Rooney, 1986 graduate of CUNY Law School and the director of its Community Legal Resources Network, returned last month from a trip to Nigeria, where hecha de donations of money and clothing collected by faculty and staff at the school.

Fred Rooney with Adelobue Subaloye Rooney took the trip on the invitation of Adelobue Subaloye, a Nigerian immigrant who is a security guard at the law school and a Yoruba prince. Rooney was accompanied by his daughter Caitlin Stil-Rooney, 18.

In recent years Subaloye had told Rooney about the Nigerian Subaloye had left behind in his homeland, and how much help they needed. Subaloye spoke of lepers, orphaned children and the handicapped.

At Rooney’s instigation, the CUNY Law School Community Resources Network, with 700 pounds of clothing and financial donations that he brought from the United States, Rooney’s daughter went with Subaloye to a leper colony in Ogun State, part of Nigeria. They also visited Ogbomoso, where they met with officials and students from Ladoke Akintola University.

At the end of the trip, Rooney remarked about his friend co-worker Subaloye. “As a Nigerian in the diaspora, Adelobue continues to directly support both his immediate and large extended family through his hard work in New York. City After my amazing experiences in Nigeria this past week, I can return home and speak first hand of the warmth and hospitality of the Nigerian people.”

Rooney says he will continue working with Subaloye to try and devise ways to help meet the needs of the Nigerian institutions he visited. For further information, please contact Rooney at rooney@mail.cuny.edu.

Mayor Names Allan H. Dobrin to Election Task Force

Allan H. Dobrin, senior vice chancellor and chief operating officer, has been appointed by Mayor Michael Bloomberg to the new Election

Modernization Task Force. Corporation Counsel Michael A. Cardozo will head the nine-member body, which will recommend ways to improve the Board of Election’s overall efficiency and modernize the city’s voting machines.

Saying the task force will also encourage the state legislature to pass long-overdue legislation allowing access to more than $200 million in federal funds to upgrade the city’s outdated and inefficient election equipment.

A grad state of Queens College, Dobrin was named senior vice chancellor and chief operating officer in 2001.

He was previously commissioner of New York City’s Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications, and the city’s chief information officer.

Doctor of Audiology Program Approved

The Board of Trustees has approved a new Doctor of Audiology degree program (Au.D.) that will be offered jointly by the Graduate Center, Hunter and Brooklyn Colleges.

The new doctoral program is designed to prepare audiologists who will be able to meet the hearing health-care needs of New York’s culturally, linguistically and socio-economically diverse population. Hearing loss is the third most common disability in the U.S., behind heart disease and arthritis, affecting approximately 10 percent of the population. Graduates of the new doctoral program will be capable of providing comprehensive diagnostic and rehabilitative services for individuals from infants to senior citizens.

Demographic and technological developments are fueling a growing demand for audiologists. These developments include the aging of our population, the widespread use of newborn hearing screening programs, a decrease in digital hearing instruments and growing use of cochlear implants. The result is a growing need for technically sophisticated professionals who are also skilled at dealing with counseling and interpersonal aspects of the profession.

The transition from master’s to doctorate is in line with new standards for professional training adopted by the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) in audiology and speech-language pathology of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). Applicants for clinical certification and a nidating degree will be required to possess a doctorate degree.

The new CUNY Au.D. program is the only accredited clinical doctoral audiology program in New York City.

The Graduate Center, which will award the degree, currently offers doctoral degrees in 31 areas, including Speech and Hearing Sciences, while Hunter and Brooklyn Colleges offer master’s programs in audiology. The M.S. programs will be replaced by the new Au.D. degree.

Clinical and research services will be offered at the accredited clinical facilities on the Brooklyn and Hunter campuses, providing doctoral students with both supervision and laboratory experiences. Students will also benefit from additional clinical internship opportunities that exist at world-renowned facilities in the New York metropolitan area.

Dr. Keis Promises ‘Excellence’ at York College

Dr. Maria V. Keis has begun her tenure as president of York College vowing to bring “institutional stability and academic excellence” to the Jamaica-based institution.

“Look forward to working in partnership with faculty, administrators, students and alumni to achieve those goals,” Keis said. In appointing Keis, the Board of Trustees was expressing confidence in a figure long familiar to the University. Before her new position she was vice president for academic affairs at Bronx Community College, and prior to that she had served as acting president of York and acting provost of Borough of Manhattan Community College.

Chancellor Matthew Goldstein said: “Dr. Keis embodies extraordinary dedication and commitment of academic and administrative leadership at CUNY, including two terms as an acting president and your very well-prepared to assume the presidency of York College.”

At Bronx Community College since 1997, Dr. Keis improved existing curricula, revitalized the core curriculum, and expanded and enhanced the College’s academic programs. Her career spans over three decades at CUNY, including service as a professor of English at Queensborough Community College.

City Tech Launches Upgrade of Culinary Facilities

The hospitality management program at New York City College of Technology produces one of the nation’s most talented chefs and restaurateurs. But the college’s teaching kitchens were last upgraded over 40 years ago. To maintain the quality of its training program, City Tech recently embarked on a major renovation of its culinary training facilities, thanks to grants totaling $2.2 million secured by Brooklyn City Council members, Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz and the Independence Community Foundation. President Russell K. Hochler called the renovation “the key to a future in an academic program that has been a cornerstone of City Tech for more than 50 years.”

And the chair of the hospitality management department, James Real, said the renovated facilities “will enable us to provide students with the training and education that prepares them for the highly competitive hospitality industry.”

While initial work began this winter, major construction will be done over the next two years to avoid disrupting classes.

The Hospitality Management Program has 683 students, of which 422 are pursu- ing bachelor’s degrees, and the non associ- ate’s degrees.
A Mosaic of Modern Medicine: The University Trains Thousands

By Curtis Stephen and Ron Howell

On a blustery mid-January evening in Harlem, the spacious dining hall inside the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education was packed with relatives, faculty and others celebrating a special group of students and their symbolic first step into the medical profession.

The annual "white coat" ceremony introduces the students to principles of internal medicine, and involves two features rich in ceremony: the reveal of an oath pledging allegiance to the healing arts, and the donning of an enduring symbol of the medical profession—the physician's white jacket.

Dr. Olivia Carassquillo, 37, a graduate of Sophie Davis, offered words of encouragement to the rainbow array of future doctors. "Always remember that the core of your value is in being human," he told them.

Intricate values and giving back to one's community are at the heart of CUNY's efforts to produce a widely diverse corps of graduates going to medical schools. This is true not only for the Sophie Davis School, the 31-year-old accelerated medical program that trains doctors for underserved communities, but also for the premedical basic-curriculum programs at many of the senior colleges.

Since 1990, some 2,000 students have graduated from CUNY colleges and gone onto medical schools, according to figures gathered from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and Sophie Davis. In 2004, 117 undergraduates from CUNY institutions were accepted into medical schools.

Asians were the largest single ethnic group, with 40 percent of the total, reflecting a strong nationwide presence in medicine and in the sciences. The number of blacks was especially striking. They accounted for 26 percent of the total, two to three percentage points ahead of whites and a dramatic improvement from years past, according to the AAMC. CUNY today ranks among the top ten universities nationwide in the number of blacks applying to medical schools, according to calculations from AAMC data.

"That's phenomenal," said Dr. Clinton Brown, an endocrinologist, or kidney disease specialist, commenting on the number of African-Americans going from CUNY colleges into medical schools. Brown graduated from Queens College in 1971 and was a pioneer in the early efforts to get minorities into medical programs. He went to Tulane Medical School and today is based at Brooklyn's Downstate Medical Center.

The data clearly show that CUNY is "working really well to get students into medical schools," he said, referring to the data on African-Americans. He argued it is important for a city like New York to have an ethnically diverse population of highly-skilled physicians. "They have a sense of belonging and feel comfortable working there," he said. "I think you stand a better chance of those physicians being involved in the community, staying in the community.

As for Hispanics, Carassquillo, who was visiting his parents' house in the Bronx from Puerto Rico, is a symbol of a significant program. An assistant professor of medicine and health policy at Columbia University, he is one of scores of Hispanics who graduated from CUNY colleges and went onto medical schools around the country.

One of the recent graduates is Leonardo Santana, who immigrated to New York from the Dominican Republic eight years ago, at the age of 18, not speaking a word of English. He added cuminos to the streets and then enrolled in Bronx Community College, where he learned English and got his A.A. He earned his bachelor's at Lehman and today is in his first year at Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia.

Santana was also committed to boosting the number of Latinos in pre-med. Last year, 11 Hispanics, or nine percent of the total, went from CUNY colleges to medical schools. "We suffer from a lack of role models and I'm trying to break that... I want to be a mentor, to be able to mentor other people," Santana said in a telephone interview from Philadelphia.

He is aware of one very encouraging fact: that the physician who oversees health care for the whole United States is both a CUNY alumnus and an Hispanic.

Born to Puerto Rican parents and trained in New York City, U.S. Surgeon General Richard A. Carmona was a high school dropout before enrolling in Bronx Community College. He later attended the University of California, San Francisco, obtaining his bachelor of science degree there in 1977, and went on to earn his medical degree. In 2002 he was appointed Surgeon General by President George W. Bush.

In a speech last year, Carmona said he pinches himself when he thinks about his achievements, and gives credit to his alma mater in the Bronx. "The fact of the matter is Bronx Community College gave me an opportunity at a time when nobody else would," he said.

The University's aggressive efforts to turn out doctors for underserved communities date back 31 years, when the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education opened its doors, laying down a welcome mat for high-achieving students from low-income households. The course of study involves five years at Sophie Davis, leading to a bachelor's degree, and two years at cooperating medical schools. The cooperating medical schools are the State University of New York at Stony Brook, SUNY Downstate, New York University Medical School and New York University College of Medicine. Students pledge that when they become doctors they will practice primary care in an underserved New York City community. "We have a larger percentage of African-Americans, Asians and Latinos than we've had even 30 years ago," Dr. Stan Roman, who has served as Sophie Davis' dean for the past 15 years. "There are so many people who want to be in the medical profession, but discount it because they either can't afford it or were told they couldn't do it."

Asians by far have been registering the strongest gains among ethnic groups, at Sophie Davis as well as in pre-med programs nationwide. Dr. Christopher Chan, physiology professor at Sophie Davis, maintained that the success is due in part to the fact that some Asian groups have large numbers in health professions such as pharmacy. "Some of them come from such backgrounds," he said, and therefore as parents they might be especially "interested in their children getting into medical schools."

Chan and others noted that Asians have been excelling in science programs in local and public high schools, making their natural candidates for pre-med programs. "I think you need only look at our applicant pool," said Dr. Dan McBeth, associate dean for student affairs at Sophie Davis. "I think it mirrors what's happening in the public schools. High performing students who do well in high school will apply to schools like Sophie Davis. That's the phenomenon."

As for Latinos and blacks, programs are in place throughout the University to encourage them to go into the sciences and/or medicine. One such program, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and called Minority Careers (or MARC), has offices at several CUNY colleges including Brooklyn, Queens, Hunter, Lehman and City.

And then there is York College, which, for 20 years has been operating the Queens Bridge to Medicine program, serving about 70 high school seniors a year.

The students go to York College every day to study chemistry, calculus and English. The goal is to get them accepted into Sophie Davis and other pre-med programs, said Wesley Pitts, deputy director of the York program.

"The whole idea is to increase the number of underrepresented minorities.

The "Oath of Maimonides" Taken by Students at White Coat Ceremony

The eternal providence has provided me to watch over the life and health of Thy creatures. May the love for my art actuate me at all time; may neither avarice nor narrowness, nor thirst for glory or for a great reputation engage my mind; for the enemies of truth and philanthropy could easily deceive me and make me forgetful of my lofty aim of doing good to Thy creatures. May I never see in the patient anything but a fellow creature in pain;

Richard A. Carmona, U.S. Surgeon General and Bronx Community College graduate.
going into primary care medicine,” Pitts said. About seven students each year wind up going to Sophie Davis, which has an extremely tough admissions process, Pitts said. A number of other students end up “at places like Stony Brook, or Queens or City College or Brooklyn,” he added.

In a ten-year span examined by CUNY Matters, 1992 to 2001, the University sent 1,400 students to medical schools. Sophie Davis made up 563 of that total. Of the remaining 927, Brooklyn College had the largest number, producing more than a third, or 321. Hunter, City College, Lehman and York each also graduated students of color who went to medical schools during that period, according to the AAMC.

Brooklyn’s distinction is due in part to its special relationship with the State University of New York-Downstate Brooklyn medical center, which accepts students from the college’s B.A.M.D. program. One of the undergraduates in the program this year is Eugene Shendro, the immigrant from the former Soviet Union who was recently named a Rhodes Scholar.

The B.A. M.D. program is extremely competitive. “This year there were 250 applicants for our 17 spots,” said Dr. Ken Miyano, a physician who directs the program.

“This is a path by which many students from Brooklyn become M.D.’s,” Miyano said.

Further north in Brooklyn, where the concentration of racial minorities, especially blacks, is strong, Medgar Evervs College says it is aggressively encouraging students to become doctors and doctors. Last December, Medgar Evervs College President Edwin Jackson hosted a reunion at his Brooklyn home for several alumni who went on to become physicians.

Among them was Dr. Carole De Costa, who today runs a clinic and spa in downtown Brooklyn. Another object of pride at the Central Brooklyn college these days is Nigerian-born Dapo Yeku, who in February received letters of admission to three prestigious joint M.D.-Ph.D. programs: Albert Einstein, SUNY Stony Brook and the University of Iowa schools of medicine.

“I just want it known that we were able to do this, to train a student from fresh- man and have him stay here his four years and gain admission to such joint pro- grams,” said Dr. Charles Diddel, biology professor at Medgar Evervs. “This is the first Ph.D.-M.D. student we’ve had.”

Yeku is so talented that the boldly refused to be considered for just the M.D. programs. He always wanted to be a ‘researcher,’ Diddel said. It will take Yeku six or seven years to receive his two degrees and begin his work as a research physician.

The desire to become a physician, of course, knows no boundaries of ethnicity or gen- der. Some manifest it early in life; others, much later. But a reason d’etre of a university is to give students the wherewithal to recognize that desire and then act upon it, professors say.

Dr. John Wahlert, a paleo-epidemiologist in the natural sciences department at Bernard Baruch College, said many Baruch stu- dents are immigrants who believe the best way to get ahead in America is to take busi- ness courses. But then some of them are bitten by the sciences and by the idea of becoming a doctor.

“They start taking the sci- ences and discover that it’s a lot of fun,” Wahlert said.

But it’s fun, it’s also, for most of them, a huge challenge. And they confront that chal- lenge in personal ways.

Wahlert mentioned the case of Rudy Murilla, who was from a very poor family and had dropped out of high school at age 16. The young man realized he wanted more out of life and applied to Baruch. He planned to major in finance there, but an interesting experience helped change his mind.

According to a profile of him two years ago in the college alumni magazine, Murilla got the flu one semester and while in the hospital, waited for many hours to receive treatment. Finally he was com- plained to an attending physician who told him “If I thought I could do a better job to do it myself.”

And as Murilla decided he would indeed try to care for himself, and others as well. He did AIDS research in Uganda, and while in the hospital, waited for many hours to receive treatment. Finally he was com- plained to an attending physician who told him “If I thought I could do a better job to do it myself.”

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Campuses Come of Impact of Iraqi War, as Three Students Die Over There

Colleges across the University are coping with the local impact of the war in Iraq, even as they are absorbing the news that three students serving in Iraq were killed. Many others are on duty in the war theater, and campuses are trying to counsel and otherwise help students in the reserves and National Guard.

As the war has stretched, U.S. manpower has thus far. The military has turned to the Reserves and the Guard for additional troops, which in turn has affected CUNY’s students. At Brooklyn College, for example, six students are serving in Iraq and two recently returned from the war zone, according to Claudette Guinn, the Coordinator of Veterans Affairs. Twenty Reservists are eligible for call-up at the college.

“We keep in touch with students in Iraq via e-mail and phone,” Guinn said, “letting them know they’re in our thoughts, and furnishing them of developments at Brooklyn.” Her office recently helped a student return home to live following a death in his family.

The three students whose lives were claimed by the war in Iraq were: Francis Ogbia, an aspiring doctor who was a student at the College of Staten Island; and Frances Ogbia, a computer systems major at City Tech, and James E. Prevete, who was enrolled at Queen’s College before enlisting in the Army in August 2003. Francis Ogbia joined the National Guard after witnessing the attack on the Twin Towers on 9/11, said his father, Cyril. He was killed on January 17, 2005 in a vehicle accident near Baghdad. A 21-year-old member of the “Fighting 69th” National Guard Regiment, he immigrated to the U.S. from Nigeria in 1994 and applied for U.S. citizenship three years ago. Following graduation from Brooklyn’s Erasmus Hall High School he entered the College of Staten Island, where he majored in microbiology. Francis Ogbia wanted to become a doctor, but first “he wanted to give back to this country,” his father said, explaining why the young man enlisted.

National Guard Specialist, with a master’s degree in computer science from City Tech in 2003 and had begun the bachelor’s program in computer systems when he was called up in the fall. While he disagreed with the decision to go to war, according to his friend Ayo Bajulaiye, “no one could doubt that once he was called up he would give it his all.”

James E. Prevete, 22, grew up in Whitestone, Queens and graduated from St. Francis Prep in 2000. He began college at Sacred Heart University in Connecticut. After a year he took a semester off and enrolled at Queens College in 2002. He decided to enlist in the Army in August 2003. Prevete was killed last October in Habbaniya, Iraq, when the military vehicle in which he was riding exploded during a sandstorm.

“He was a very astute young man,” said Professor Andrew Hacker of Queens’ political science department, who taught Prevete. “I remember him because it was a very smart class and the competition was very stiff.”

While the anti-war film Paths of Glory was one of his favorite movies, according to his sister, Laura, he supported the war and told her he enlisted because he didn’t want to “watch other people defend his country on TV.”

### Students Take First Steps Toward Careers in International Affairs

**For Kerry Flye, the Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellowship offered an extraordinary opportunity to travel abroad in Morocco, along with the chance to meet a person she has admired all her life, former Secretary of State Colin Powell.**

“We visited the State Department and met Secretary Powell,” she said. “It was really quite euphoric for me.”

Flye is a senior majoring in political science at City College, where Powell’s alma mater, a native of the Caribbean island of Jamaica, she recently became an American citizen. Powell’s family also is from Jamaica.

The Rangel International Fellowship Program, based at Howard University in Washington, D.C., seeks to attract outstanding young people interested in careers in foreign service.

The Rangel program, geared primarily for graduating students, offers scholarship money toward tuition, room, board, books and fees.

### Teaching Art in Rwanda

**Van City College student Sydney Jordan-Cooley studied Rwanda as part of CUNY’s Rwanda Initiative last summer it wasn’t a typical study-abroad experience. A 23-year-old senior majoring in printmaking in City’s art department, Jordan-Cooley taught art to Rwandan students who were between ten and 13 years old.**

She found herself responsible for over 350 students at the Rwandan school, which also serves as an orphanage. This meant that her classes were stretched very thin.

“Teaching was much more difficult because of the language difference,” she noted. “But when I couldn’t explain an art concept, I could always show it.”

Jordan-Cooley agrees with Dr. Marina Fernandes, director of CCNY’s International Studies Program and organizer of the Rwanda Initiative, who described the CUNY students as “unofficial ambassadors” of the U.S.Originally scheduled to stay for six weeks inBounda, Jordan-Cooley remained another six weeks because “it was such a fascinating and rewarding experience that I wasn’t ready to leave.”

### From CUNY BA Program to Yale

**Dana Agmon came to the CUNY Baccalaureate Program with diverse life experiences. The member of a distinguished branch family, her great-grandfather was the leading rabbi in Morocco where she served as a first lieutenant in the Israeli Defense Force and is the founder of The Conspiracy of Hope, an organization that seek solutions for peace between Israel and the Palestinians. She was recently accepted to Yale University’s joint MA/MD program in foreign relations.**

“I found my interest in international affairs and politics fairly quickly when I took a course in Global Perspectives with Professor Chulso Uemarute at City College,” she said.

She noted that the CUNY BA Program exposed her to a wide range of academic environments. “While CCNY is my home college, I was able to take courses at Hunter, the CUNY Graduate Center and the New School,” she said.

Last summer she conducted research in the Middle East on the impact of gender-environmental differences on the relationship between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, as well as on the peace process. Her faculty mentor is Professor Jean Knaur of CCNY’s Political Science Department. Agmon will receive her CUNY BA in June 2005.

### Studying “Marginalized” Peoples

**Keisha Toms entered the CUNY Baccalaureate Program in the spring of 2002 and received a 645,000 Fellowship from the Institute for International Public Policy in 2003. As an IPP Fellow she traveled to Egypt and studied Arab and anthropology at American University in Cairo. She says she chose Egypt “to investigate the contributions of the marginalized indigenous African living on the outskirts of Egyptian society.”**

That was a full year spent with the Defense Intelligence Agency and the America Prepared Campaign, a non- profit organization that promotes terrorism preparedness.

“The CUNY BA Program’s flexibility gave me the time to take courses and design my own major,” she said. “I was challenged academically and accepted as an older student.”

Toms also captained the Medgar Evers College women’s basketball team, led the nation in rebounding for Division III, and was named CUNY’s Female Athlete of the Year. She received her CUNY BA in January 2005 and was accepted to Tufts University’s Fletcher School of International Affairs.

### Physicists Receive Prize

**At CCNY, Distinguished Professor of Physics Myrnam P. Sanlchack received the 2005 Oliver E. Buckley Prize in Condensed Matter Physics from the American Physical Society. She was cited for “fundamental contributions to experimental studies of quantum spin dynamics and spin coherence in condensed matter systems.” The prize includes a $5,000 award that she will share with Gabriel A. Alphonse of the University College, London, and David Assouline of the University of California, Santa Barbara.**

### Professors Win Fulbrights

**Two CUNY faculty members received 2004-2005 Fulbright Scholar grants. They are Dr. Latif M. Jij, who teaches the Herbert G. Fraker Professor of Mechanical Engineering, and Visiting Professor Linda R. Proost, who heads the College’s journalism program. Fulbright Scholar grants are awarded annually to leading U.S. faculty and professionals by the Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Board for study, teaching or research abroad.**
Move Over Hollywood, Let Brooklyn Take a Long-Overdue Bow

By Gary Schmidgall

Listen to a famous New York scribe’s fond memories of films in his native Brooklyn when the price of admission was just cents: “There were always more movie houses than dreams and they became our secular temples. The Minerva was on the corner of Seventh Avenue and 14th Street, passed each weekday morning in winter on the way to school. This was the smallest and least expensive of our dark dream palaces, open on Saturdays and Sundays. When piles of snow had turned black and scowling, or when rain poured down from the sky, off we went to the Minerva, to its marvelous bare seats, its success stories and heroes.”

That’s nostalgic.

Pete Hamill, writing in his foreword to The Brooklyn Film: Essays in the History of the Borough (McFarland), a collection of essays about the borough’s place—as studio site, as storytelling inspiration, and as “character”—in the cinematic world. Hamill adds that each of these Brooklyn theaters of his youth “was what comedians would call a ‘Tough Room.’” But even tough guys like Hamill liked to dream. “The movies helped us to imagine. The movies fed our souls.” Hamill’s point is clear: you can get only as much wisdom from movies as your goddess (if you can sympathize) on Minerva was a theater on Main Street in Allhambra, California, called the El Rey—minus the dirty words, of course.)

The Brooklyn Film has been edited by John B. Manbeck and Robert Singer, professors emeritus and professors of English, respectively, at Kingsborough Community College. A PSC-CUNY grant helped fund their research, and it scarcely needs adding that both are Brooklyn residents. (Manbeck was the borough’s official historian from 1993 to 2001.)

A preview of their book makes it quick-
ly clear that Brooklyn’s significance in film history is widely out of proportion to its population and its mere 81 square miles. This is made particularly obvious by a rather detailed 63-page “Select Filmography.” Manbeck’s work of films shot entirely or in part in Brooklyn. It runs from Academy of Music Fire (a 1903 silent short about fighting a fire at the original Academy of Music in Brooklyn Heights) to The Bridge (a 1970 horror flick with a Brooklyn Bridge scene). Slow motion memoir, in fact, started in Brooklyn well before the industry “discovered” the sunshine of Hollywood,” the editors say in the introduction. They point out that a rooftop on St. Marks Avenue in Park Slope was the location for the first film shot in New York City, a silent directed by Charles Chinnock in 1894. Brooklyn was later the back lot for the Edison company. With its famous view, the Brooklyn behind the camera could be claimed: “My research and publications on the subject can be attributed in large part to their cooperation and understanding.” It is their writing, adding that “Lasting friendship”

But in Brooklyn she grew to grace. In the movies, life is easier.

She was a Pioneer Among Scholars

E. and J. Polak, a professor of history at Queensbrough Community College, has just published an obvious labor of love honoring one of the first woman medievalists in the nation and, beginning in 1949, a long-time historian at City College.

In his editor’s preface to A Medievalist’s Odyssey: Elena Wiewiorska, Scholar Polish offers highlights of a life that involved the German-born Wiewiorska’s flight from the Nazis in the 1930s and after reunion from Czerniewice (a move to Zoppo-Paradies, Switzerland, soon followed).

Polak notes that he met her during his postgraduate work on the art of the 12th-13th centuries, the medieval art of letter-writing, and the emi-
nent humanist Paul Oskar Kristeller while adjunct status at Columbia University. “My research and publications on the subject can be attributed in large part to their cooperation and under-

Wiewiorska’s Contributions to the Study of the Art Dictum,” Kenneth Pemberton’s “The Birth of the Modern Nation State in the Work of Helene Wiewiorska,” and a “Commentary” by Ronald G. Witt. The final notes speak eloquently for itself a Wiewiorska’s bibliogra-

BOOK TALK OF THE CITY

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distinct neighborhoods of the borough.


Amata Schenckerd Laddoff’s essay, “Exploding Multiculturalism in Global Brooklyn,” looks at the controversial but not financially successful film The Siege (1998) because, with scanty precision, its first half focuses “on the sombering of an elo-
sive group of giant mortar who, in spite of the FBI’s frantic and technologi-

On a lighter and more archaic note, Cesar Del Valle’s “Brooklyn Montague: A Short History from a Fan’s Perspective” focuses on the early establishments were films were shown. Del Valle tells of projec-
tors called Eudoksos and Phanoropods, of the Kinetoscope patent that ran for 5 min; movies, then the “snick-madness” craze that swept Brooklyn in the 1900s as nickelodeons proliferated. Then he moves on to talk about Marcus Lowe’s first theater, the Royal at Pearl and Willowby Streets, which mixed vaudeville with film shorts, and then on to the huge, architecturally exotic film palaces of the 1920s and 1930s.

Mark Brown prices you can take the Dodgers out of Brooklyn, but not baseball out of Brooklyn film in his Brooklyn and Baseball in the Films of Paul Auster” paired with it in Joe Donofrio’s essay, “Life Worth Living: The Jackie Robinson Biopic.”

In the final essay, Michael Schiavo looks at how the 1990s was the “Golden Age of Brooklyn films” and by Afficcionado with Paul Rudd and Jennifer Aniston (screenplay by Wendy Wasserstein), processed Manhattan and Brooklyn amid the current cultural wars over sexuality. Schiavo concludes that director Nicholas Hytner “inverts” the usual borough stereotypes “by having a straight woman and her gay best friend try to re-invent themselves and family life in Brooklyn, safely removed from Manhattan-oriented conventions that make them insufferable.”

There are two small but charming touches in The Brooklyn Film. First, a short introductory letter from Red Hook native (and a City College master’s grad) Eli Wallach. Among his memories is taking the Italian director Sergio Leone on a scouting tour in Brooklyn for Once Upon a Time in America (1984), several scenes were eventually shot there. Second, the cover photo, which shows an audience watching a movie at an ice rink in the summer of 2001, with the Brooklyn Bridge in the background.
Blackboard Gains Acceptance as a Teaching Tool

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earning without email? For many professionals, it’s almost impossible. Teaching without Blackboard?” For some tech-savvy professors, it’s unfathomable.

These new enthusiasts of Blackboard, the course management software now in use throughout the University, say their early fears that instruction would be “dehumanized”—and that brick and mortar classrooms would be figmentarily demolished—were grossly exaggerated.

With the aid of “real time” discussion boards, one of Blackboard’s many features, instructors and students interact with greater frequency; and by posting and reading comments as their schedules allow, they are able to explore topics more deeply and, as a result, enhance the traditional classroom learning experience.

“I was suspicious,” says Dorothy Schulz, of the Law and Police Science Department at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. But now she believes many students actually learn more online. “They have to write more, and do that to they have to really read what’s been posted.” Student participants with Blackboard, says Professor Schulz, “requires a greater commitment.”

The same may be said for the faculty. Embracing new software can strike fear if not loathing, in the hearts of some scholars, who tend to see the printed page—opposed to the virtual one—as the true resting place of knowledge. But Blackboard involves an intellectual flexibility that many would argue is a hallmark of the scholarly life. In a practical way, using Blackboard means adopting and integrating existing course materials into a new learning framework. Though arduous effort may be required, the end result can be a richer teaching and learning experience.

Understanding this, more and more faculty are taking the plunge, or sometimes, tippin’ in, says Professor George Otto, CUNY’s Director of Instructional Technology.

Otto notes that 300 faculty and staff attended the first University-wide instructional technology conference held two years ago. The next year, that number doubled to 600. Last November, more than 900 attended as we shopped up to explore the new technology and its applications for pedagogy.

One report that 90 percent of the faculty who try online learning will continue to use it. Fifty percent of students who try it say they learned more than in the traditional class setting. Ninety percent say they learned as much or more.

“The movement now is towards hybrid or blended,” Otto says, “combining work online with a set amount of time, meeting in person in a class setting. This is especially suitable at CUNY where so many students work and have family obligations. CUNY is becoming known nationally as a leader in the development of blended courses.”

The University-wide introduction of Blackboard is at the cornerstone of this effort.

Many campuses have used their own versions of Blackboard assisted by an instructional technology director, often a faculty member. They also offered workshops to help faculty learn Blackboard’s functions.

In a major step forward, this academic year, the Blackboard Enterprise System—the most up-to-date edition of the software—has been released CUNY-wide.

CUNY System Administrator Mara Bianco notes that the “Enterprise” version offers upgrades that make it easy to transfer course plans and resources from one course to another, allowing for much greater ease in recycling and updating coursework.

“Going University-wide equals access among the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’ campus,” says CUNY Director of Education and Training Colette Wagner, previously affiliated with LaGuardia Community College.

A CUNY Steering Committee for Online Resources and Education, composed of representatives of each campus, meet weekly.

The degree of faculty enthusiasm for Blackboard runs a gamut, from those like Yelena Melkonian, who teaches economics at New York City College of Technology and says she can’t imagine going back to working without it, to those who believe in-person only contact is the essence of teaching.

Even faculty members who are wary of technology can’t help but be aware of it. Karen Lundstrom, New York City College of Technology’s instructional technology director, says, “Students ask professors ‘Why aren’t we using Blackboard in our class?’ So they look into it.” There have been lively and substantive discussions about Blackboard on the Senate Forum listserv.

Schulz, of John Jay College, first looked into using Blackboard a year and a half ago when a colleague asked her to develop an online version of her introductory Police Studies course. “It started off with Bob Hong, our campus’ computer guru, and learned.”

“I think that is nice about Blackboard in my other regular courses is that I don’t have to feel like a human copying machine. The things I’m not teaching those classes online, I do post announcements and handouts, and the students can check those anytime.”

Sylvia Richards, faculty development and instructional support specialist at Brooklyn College, has written about what many consider Blackboard’s strongest feature: “The use of Blackboard is huge here but we are still demystifying it for many.”

She demonstrated a simple example of the sort of creative feature professors can post. Her computer screen displayed short music for Mozart’s ‘Etude Klavier Musik.” As the piece played, each bar was highlighted in color on the sheet music. The highlighting moved along, allowing a student to follow the piece. The music lets you know what songs some professors like about Blackboard and what others consider the biggest unresolved issues and how to use—a tremendous time commitment.

Many find that commitment well worth it and, as one student puts it, almost “addictive,” as they seek new materials, links and posts to post and discuss. “In my field,” says History Professor Hiron w Ishida of Bronx Community College, “this has changed everything. We can bring students primary sources.”

Lehman College English Professor Nathalie Bailey and biology Professor Maryam Baniabd both took Professor Wach’s workshop on Blackboard last spring.

Bailey, who has taught at Lehman for 17 years, says it was “overwhelming to absorb the different technical procedures you have to know in order to do all the things you potentially can do, and I had to deal with glitches. The workshop took was very helpful in getting me through that.”

She uses Blackboard in Lehman’s computer lab with her writing students.

There was an American lit-

A World of Technical Information in the Palm of the Hand

Information is power, and a select group of students at Hostos use PDAs, or Palm Pilots, with global positioning software to study species of trees.

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Field Funded by a grant from the Institute for Technical Information in the Palm of the Hand

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A Little Role Reversal for Professors and Students

At LaGuardia Community College’s Center for Teaching and Learning, an unusual role reversal is transpiring: technology-adopt student mentors are helping interested faculty build web pages, troubleshoot software applications and demonstrate how to integrate sound and images into web sites. These students, called Student Technology Mentors (or STMs) also assist professors in the classroom. And they tutor their fellow students in class, helping them carry out the computer-assisted tasks assigned by the instructor.

Program director Josephine Cone guides the mentors, who also learn some traditional skills while they expand their computer abilities.

“The students learn that they can’t go in there and just fix something or simply do the task at hand,” says Rodyn Orgel, who works with Cone in the center. “They have to explain and demonstrate it. The process does a tremendous amount for their communicative skills. It can prove to be a huge help in their later professional life.”

Bret Eyun, assistant dean for academic affairs, says LaGuardia’s Center for Teaching and Learning gave the mentors recent training in teaching techniques, in addition to intensive training designed to sharpen their web design skills. They must furthermore complete a tutorial project requiring them to research an advanced software application and develop instructional materials about the topic.

The Center also runs a range of programs providing professional development support for faculty who want to learn about new digital teaching tools.

The largest program, Designed for Learning, which explores interactive pedagogy and interactive technology, was recently recognized with a Hoobler Award Certificate of Excellence for Exemplary Contribution to the Enhancement of Undergraduate Education.

Faculty who take part in the yearlong, faculty-led Designed for Learning program become eligible for sustainable “best practice” from a student mentor partner. And these partnerships are bearing fruit. Together the faculty and the mentors have developed hundreds of academic web sites, some of which can be seen at: http://www.lagcc.
cuny.edu/officewebprojects/default.htm.

And more than 5000 students each year take web-enhanced or hybrid courses at LaGuardia. Data show that these courses improve critical thinking and other outcomes.

Message from Chief Information Officer Brian Cohen Regarding Blackboard

Exceptionally high usage associated with the start of the new semester has resulted in significant portal service disruptions. With the introduction of new features and services, portal traffic has more than doubled in the last six months to 1.2 million pages served per month. Some faculty and students have reported difficulty in logging onto the portal and accessing the Blackboard software.

CBS has already taken several steps to help ease the congestion, but the portal may continue to experience service disruption during some peak demand periods. We are working to address these growing pains with additional hardware and software upgrades and other technical improvements throughout the semester. Some of this work is already complete.

We anticipate noticeable improvements from the steps we are taking.

We ask that you be patient as we work through this transition together, and we urge all portal and Blackboard users to refer to these tips in order to help us better manage traffic during peak use periods:

• Faculty should confirm the accuracy of all course management system information, including teaching assignments, courses, student enrollment and Blackboard tools, with their Blackboard administrators.

• Students and faculty should register with the portal as soon as they register for classes, thereby avoiding high demand (or peak) times.

• Consider adopting what some colleagues have developed—portal registration and training efforts that begin well in advance of the first week of classes.

• Provide detailed information to local “help desks” when experiencing problems.

• Know where your Blackboard course resides. Many courses still run on local installations at their colleges and they are not on the Enterprise Blackboard 6.0 system. Local Blackboard servers are most likely running earlier versions that may no longer be supported by Blackboard maintenance agreements.

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What Professors Can Do With Blackboard:

• Post a course’s syllabus, list of readings, assignments and class announcements. Some professors post their lectures after having given them. Students can retrieve postings at any hour. “They can’t come to you anymore saying they lost your handouts,” laughs Steven Wallach of Queensborough Community College.

• Post web links and audio and visual resources, bringing students’ reading and research far beyond the textbook and to post visual and audio resources. Artwork, scientific simulations, articles, primary historical sources and theatrical sound are just a few examples of resources posted by professors.

• Expand discussions from traditional professors-class style to discussions among students, who often comment on one another’s work and offer advice. Faculty can choose to join in or simply monitor.

• Foster on-line communities through “bulletin boards.” Gary Chinn of Baruch College says Blackboard allows students who can’t be on campus for course hours to participate in extracurricular activities by following announcements and topical chats. “This provides a much stronger sense of community than most urban commuter campuses have,” he notes. Academic departments set up Blackboard bulletin boards like traditional bulletin boards where students check about internships and study opportunities.”

Full course lecture, or partially recorded lecture, or screen presentations. Many professors post audio and video of their lectures, and use the course to help them in their teaching. At the College of Staten Island, Melpikian set up a web site “to form teams and become an observer at some points, looking in on discussions and seeing whether students come to a consensus as they work out problems. I try to see when it’s important and engage them as a group or as individuals.”

Lundstrom, Blackboard makes it easy for students to share modules. Students alert each other to resources. This increased communication makes learning collaborative. In the long run that helps with the time factor.”

Melpikian agreed. “This is how we communicate and learn in today’s world. This is the future.”

Blackboard, Inc., based in Washington, D.C., says the number of teachers and students relying on its e-learning software is growing, and is currently used by 12 million people at 2,000 universities and other schools around the world.

Facility and staffs attending recent University-wide Information Technology conference learn about Blackboard and other teaching tools