Graduates are Advised to Show Passion; Honors College Students are Called ‘Pioneers’

At CUNY campuses around the city, students marched in graduation ceremonies and heard speakers — U.S. Senators, human rights activists and others — who told them to continue their mission of self-discovery and to live lives of passion and commitment.

Latest estimates are that 31,700 students received diplomas from CUNY colleges in the 2004-2005 academic year. A preliminary statistical profile from the Office of Institutional Research shows the latest bachelor’s graduates reflect increasing levels of immigration to the city, with 50.9% of them foreign-born.

Some ceremonies echoed the University’s focus on the sciences, as at York College where President Marica V. Keizs spoke of Fiona Smith, one of two CUNY students selected to intern at the prestigious Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California, where Nobel Prize winners have worked. Hunter College handed a diploma to the other Salk scholar, Irina Chaikhoutdinov.

History was made this season. For this was the first graduating class of the CUNY Honors College, where students are called University Scholars. Speaking to the Scholars was U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton, who called them “pioneers” and said they were “living reminders of why we, as a city, as a state, and a nation, must continue to keep faith with the promise of higher education.”

Chancellor Matthew Goldstein described the Honors College as “a bold experiment that has been enormously successful, as well as a symbol of the academic renaissance that has transformed CUNY into a world-class institution.”

“At the Graduate Center, speaker Bill Moyers, the renowned journalist, paid tribute to retiring President Frances Degen Horowitz. “My heroes are people like her who make public institutions work. These are fragile contraptions and their leaders are always vulnerable to the fashions of the time, the perils of politics, and the pre-supsumptive judgments of the uninformed.”

At CUNY Law School, outgoing Dean Kristin Booth Glen wept as she presided over her last graduation, saying of her 10-year tenure: “I have been blessed to send about a thousand graduates into the professions.... You are our best hope for the future.”

Glen has been succeeded by Mary Lu Bilak, the Interim Dean, a graduate of Harvard Law School who previously served as Director of Academic Affairs. At John Jay College, new President Jeremy Travis gave an installation address noting how the college has expanded from its earlier narrow focus on criminal justice. “There has been a learning curve,” he said. “I am hoping that my degree and future career will enable me to contribute to the education of the people of Jamaica and help them bridge the digital divide that exists between them and other countries,” he said. “Mision plans to go to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute or Clarkson University. Many graduates overcame personal hardship, as did Ebony S. Francis, a 25-year-old single mother of two who graduated from Kingsborough Community College with a 3.97 average and will be attending Brooklyn College in the fall.

Continued on pages 10 and 11 →
Long-Term Forecast is for a

Long before he enrolled in college, Yoav Barth had a passion for business and finance. He knew that a BBA degree would be a ticket to the life he wanted; of course, he would have to be the owner of his own business. Now he’s on his way. An Honors College student, Barth was among the first to take advantage of Queens College’s new program leading to a bachelor’s degree in business administration.

There was a time, just two years ago, when the only route to a CUNY degree in business administration was through Bernard Baruch College. While Baruch is still the dream of business education — with a strong and growing national reputation — demand for degrees in business administration has been like a bull market, and other CUNY colleges have been receiving approval to grant business degrees. Today, for example, New York City College of Technology has been granted approval for College in the BBA programs provide accommodations for over about 600 students starting in the Fall 2006 semester. It offers students an alternative to late-night commutes after labs or design-studio work, and an even closer connection to the city itself.

I am indebted to CUNY’s students, faculty, and staff for their support of improved city and state budgets, including increased capital funding, through contact CUNY. During the recent state budget process, more than 400,000 e-mails were sent to state legislators by members of the community, which was very helpful to our efforts to achieve a budget that would provide message to your public representatives.

With the proposed capital program, we can truly build the University’s future, enabling CUNY to one day serve the children of the thousands of students graduating this month. Through continued public support, our physical campus will go toward higher learning.

It is no surprise to find CUNY grads at some of the city’s most prestigious companies, or among their top executives. But a reception hosted by Bear Stearns revealed something that was, perhaps, surprising to many: more than 550 of the firm’s nearly 11,000 employees are CUNY graduates. The recent gathering gave the University a chance to renew ties with successful alumni, and to create a partnership that will be copied at other prestigious firms around the city.

The story of how CUNY and Bear Stearns forged a connection goes back 40 years. In 1965, when Bear Stearns forged a connection goes back 40 years to the University as a whole and over the past several years has played an important role in Chancellor Matthew Goldstein’s drive to reinvigorate CUNY. A mong other things, Minikes nurtured the development of a mentoring and internship program for CUNY Honors College students at Bear Stearns.

This mentorship and internship program placed students in very prestigious positions,” noted Laura Schor, University Dean, CUNY Honors College. “Working with our Honors students, [Bear Stearns] found them to be just as good as students from Cornell and Wharton.” Six students participated last summer, the program’s first year, and seven have been accepted for this summer.

The Bear Stearns-CUNY reception was styled after similar events done for a few other colleges, including Columbia, Yale and NYU. Two Bear Stearns executives involved in the creation of the Honors

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Booming Market for Business Degrees

Students like Shah, Barth and Liang — who are all 21-year-old Honors College students — say that earning a CUNY BBA makes good business sense: "It’s an incredible education for half the price," says Shah, who is from Woodside. "Four years at Baruch is the same price as one semester at NYU."

"I turned down a scholarship at NYU," she says. "At NYU, I would have been a Social Security number, a small fish in a huge ocean."

Liang, a Briarwood resident who got offers from Bledsoes and Stony Brook Universities, says Baruch’s $3-million Subotnick Center, a state-of-the-art virtual trading floor, was one of the things that tipped the balance in Baruch’s favor. "Less than 10 schools have a facility like this," he says. "I have talked to people in other schools, and we have the biggest and best one."

Shah, who has been an intern at JP Morgan Chase & Co. for four years, and Liang, who interned at Bear Stearns last summer, say that Baruch has given them hands-on experience that will make the transition from classroom to office seamless. "In my opinion, Baruch is on a par with NYU and Columbia," Liang says. "It places you on an even battlefield with students from Warton, NYU and Columbia."

The Baruch experience, they say, has persuaded them to further their business education. "After working for a while, Shah wants to earn her combined JD/MB, and Liang plans to go back to school to get an MBA," says Alan Zimmerman, associate professor and area coordinator of the international business program at the College of Staten Island, says that enrollment in CUNY’s business programs will continue to rise because "business continues to make the news, and will be a long-term trend, especially in our school, where many of the students need to make a living even when they are going to school."

And he says that his field — international business — will be a constant draw. "I try to get my majors to do double majors in international business and finance, accounting or management," he says. "This will give them an edge in the job market.

Barth, a Great Neck resident who studied in Israel through the Honors College, says that understanding the business world, which his BBA and the diversity of his Queens College classmates helped him do, will be invaluable for his plans of starting his own business. By studying with students from many different countries, "I learned to challenge my assumptions and learned about things from different vantage points."

As for Liang, he’s looking forward to working in the hedge funds division of Bear Stearns in downtown Brooklyn. And he says that the Baruch BBA made all the difference. "After working on the college’s virtual trading floor, I knew trading wasn’t for me, but it gave me a feel for those who do, and I’ll be working directly with people who do trade.

Regardless of which job he chooses, Barth, who was an intern at Morgan Stanley, says he’ll always have his eye on being his own boss. "I may create my own hedge fund after working for a couple of years," he says, never hedging in his ambitions.

Piya Shah and Alan Liang received their bachelor of business administration degrees from Baruch College, which retains a national reputation as a flagship for business studies. They are photographed at Baruch’s “virtual trading” area, officially the Bette W. & Sandra Wasserman Trading Floor of the Subotnick Financial Services Center.

BBA is a distinction that companies are increasingly recognizing.

Phyllis Zadra, associate dean of Baruch’s business school, speaking of the business degree, says, “The students feel that this is the most direct route to being employed.”

John Flatteau, dean of the school of business at Medgar Evers College, says the college has put in a proposal for a master’s of professional studies in leadership degree program. The central Brooklyn college is also looking to broaden its own BS degrees in business, accounting, computer information systems and applied management by adding majors in advertising and other fields, he adds.

“We’re bursting at the seams. Enrollment has increased in the last two to three years and is now at an all-time high with the business school.” — John Flatteau, Dean of Medgar Evers School of Business

College internship program, Tony Brown and Maureen C. Corbett, helped orchestrate the event.

At the reception, Minikes and Chancellor Goldstein made brief presentations to the broad array of alumni. The employees included some who joined Bear Stearns straight from community college, a good number who went there from four year colleges, and others who hold CUNY diplomas and advanced degrees in business, law and other areas.

The final speaker at the evening reception, Ikhtiar Allen, a member of the Honors College class of 2005 and a City College economics major, described his transformation from insecure teenage immigrant from Bangladesh to a self-confident Honors College student and intern at Bear Stearns. Allen said he was looking forward to embarking on his career with the firm.

Alumni who attended said they were pleased to discover that so many of their colleagues were fellow CUNY grads and college presidents who attended were grateful for the opportunity to become acquainted with alumni, many of whom had not been in touch with their colleges since graduation.

Queensborough Community College President Eduardo M. Arti was pleased to meet a senior managing director of the firm who graduated in 1962. "He stated more than once that Queens College classmates helped him do, will be invaluable for his plans of starting his own business. By studying with students from many different countries, "I learned to challenge my assumptions and learned about things from different vantage points."

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The partnership with Bear Stearns is one the University hopes will serve as a model for relationships with other businesses in the city.

Chancellor Goldstein has recently initiated a conversation about partnership opportunities with Verizon Communications.

Chancellor Matthew Goldstein received an award from Mike Minikes, a Queens College alumnus and Bear Stearns office. The award reads: “Bear Stearns Honors our partner City University of New York for Developing Business Leaders of Tomorrow.”

CUNY MATTERS — Summer 2005
A Colleague and Friend Recalls the Fighting Spirit of Kenneth Clark

Although newspapers around the world published hundreds of laudatory paragraphs about Kenneth Clark, who died on May 1 at age 90, a former colleague and friend says one word sums up Clark's character: fighter.

Lawrence Plotkin, professor emeritus of psychology at City College, sat for a University Relations video interview and recalled his times with Clark, whose pioneering research played a pivotal role in the 1954 Supreme Court decision Brown v. Board of Education, which toppled the "separate but equal" doctrine and required the desegregation of public schools.

Clark was the first black to earn a doctorate in psychology from Columbia University, the first black tenured professor at City College and the first black elected to the New York State Board of Regents. He and Plotkin met while they were students in the 1940s, and they continued to work together on various projects through the 1980s after they retired.

"He never gave up his struggle to improve the condition of African-Americans, particularly young children in schools," Plotkin says. "He kept fighting."

Kenneth Clark did research showing many black children believed white dolls were better than black ones, paving the way to 1954 Supreme Court decision banning school segregation. This photo is courtesy of N Orth Center for Child Development, founded by Clark.

Even after he retired from City College in the 1970s Clark maintained a special bond with CCNY. "There was no City University when we started. His identification was with City College," Plotkin says. "He did all of his important work at City College and at the research institutes he set up afterwards."

Plotkin says that one only needs to look in any public-school classroom to see Clark's legacy, which literally is written in black and white: "This man, for what he's done, out of his life experience, has shown how to live an honorable life in a dishonorable country."

Top Bush Appointee is York Grad Who Says He Welcomes Controversy

The attorney appointed by President George Bush to head the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Reynolds said he believes the civil rights movement is "progress in the lack of a quality education," he said. That same line of thinking led President Bush to press for the No Child Left Behind act.

Reynolds' conservative positions have led critics to say the commission is turning its back on its original mandate to protect rights of minorities. "It's appointment is less about civil rights oversight than remaking the commission in the image of the [Bush] administration," said Wade Henderson, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, who was quoted in the New York Times.

Reynolds told CM the criticism only encouraged him. Being treated fairly in "the market" and preparing oneself to do what's right."

"Whatever topic we pick, there's going to be controversy. And since I know I'm going to piss somebody off, I might as well do what's right."

Gerald A. Reynolds

Learning from Disasters

In 1998, Wandarray Rentas got a crash course in class differences as Hurricane Georges hit her native Puerto Rico and wiped out the shacks of the poorest people. "It made me think about the way other people live and how they are affected by the location and the class they happen to be born into," says the Lehman College sociology major.

This summer, Rentas will get a chance to analyze the sociological effects of natural disasters during the Research Experience for Undergraduates, a program run by the Disaster Research Center. The program is based at the University of Delaware.

A Ticket to Diplomacy

Aspiring diplomat Natalie Waugh, who earned her bachelor of arts degree in international studies from City College in June, was one of 10 students in the country to win the 2005 Charles B. Rangel Fellowship in International Affairs.

The fellowship offers up to $28,000 to support master's degree studies. Waugh is nulling acceptances from the University of Denver's Graduate School of International Studies, the Monterey Institute of International Studies and Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.

In Salk's Footsteps

It was the death of his father that set O'ladapo O. Yeku, who graduated in biology from Medgar Evers College, on the path to a medicine.

Yeku watched helplessly as his once-vibrant dad deteriorated and died of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. He vowed he would use the death to stop the suffering of others.

Yeku, who will be an M.D./Ph.D. student at SUNY Stony Brook's School of Medicine in the fall, was one of eight CUNY pre-med students, including Fiona Smith of York College and Luczynka of City College, awarded Salk Scholarships.

The scholars, who studied childhood diseases, including Tetanus, influenza and malaria, a double major in biochemistry.

Of Feasts and Fulbrights

It is folk culture that fascinates CUNY alum Stephanie Trudean, and her research is leading to Italy, where thanks to a 2005 Fulbright Fellowship, she will study three religious feasts: Giglio in Nola, St. Joseph's in Caltabellotta and Festa dei Ceri in Gubbio.

In her project, "Festa, Family and Food," Trudean, a 2004 graduate of the CUNY Baccalaureate Program, will study the way that religious families in Italy and America to celebrate their culture through music, art, food and religious rituals.

Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
African Art at Queensborough

African art is dynamic, powerful and expressive. So says longtime collector Gary Schulze. “Not art for art’s sake,” Schulze says. “it was made for specific purposes like secret societies and royal ceremonies.” Schulze is exhibiting his collection, reflecting 30 cultures, 15 countries and 2000 years of history, in his solo show, which is at the Queensborough Community College Gallery through Sept. 30. “Artists and Patrons in Traditional African Cultures,” a display of more than 150 objects from Schulze’s 400-piece collection, comprises everything from terra cotta—hailing from the Nok area of Nigeria and dating from 500 B.C. to 200 A.D. — to Benin ivory and cast-bronze objects created in the 18th Century. “There are quite a few pieces that have never been seen before, like the metal chief’s mask and the ancient stone figures from Sierra Leone,” Schulze says. “Hopefully, when people see them, they will begin to develop an appreciation for African art.”

For more information, call www.qccartgallery.org or call 718-631-6396

City Tech Takes The Cake at Hotel Show

Students, faculty and alumni of City Tech took the cake — and much more — at the 136th Salon of Culinary Arts, organized by the Société Culinaire Philanthropique. For the first time ever, City Tech’s hospitality management team won the coveted Marc Salmon Trophy for the most points. In previous years this award has been won by the Culinary Institute of America or Johnson & Wales (of Providence, Rhode Island). City Tech also won a first prize in Pastry, first prize in Culinary and first prize in the Marc Salmon Competition for Complete Buffet. The International Hotel, Motel & Restaurant show, which sponsored the competition, was held recently at the Jacob Javits Center in Manhattan.

“A City Tech sugar piece, named “Hoffman’s Playland,” earned the Best of Show award. Professor Louise Hoffman oversaw the production of that scrumptious looking work of art, though the actual creation of it was done by students Catherine Angore and Nchola Hall, working with alumna Monica Ng, who is now employed in the pastry section at Café De Etats Unis in Manhattan.

Hoffman said that Professor Jean Claude deserved special credit for the victories — saying that “without his dedication and organization, the City Tech team would not have fared so well.”

Founded in 1947, the hospitality management program at City Tech was the first in the metropolitan New York area to offer a degree in restaurant and hotel management. Its students are proficient in all of the diverse hospitality industry, including the culinary arts, lodging management and all aspects of travel and tourism. It remains one of the college’s flagship baccalaureate programs.

A Match Made in Heaven: Dartmouth Med and Sophie Davis

Dartmouth Medical School recently entered into an arrangement with the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education at City College, allowing Sophie Davis graduates to enroll at Dartmouth as third-year medical students. Dartmouth, located in Hanover, N.H., thus became the first school outside New York State — and the first Ivy League school — to have such a partnership with Sophie Davis.

“This is generating a lot of excitement among our students,” said Dr. Stanford Roman, dean of Sophie Davis — and a Dartmouth College grad. “Not only will they now have an opportunity to complete their studies at an out-of-state medical school, but Dartmouth’s curriculum complements our interest in primary care.”

Sophie Davis offers a five-year curriculum for academically talented but often economically disadvantaged students, combining undergraduate studies and the first two years of medical school. After completing the program, its graduates transfer to a partner medical school for their last two years of clinical training.

Other medical schools that partner with Sophie Davis are: Albany Medical College, New York Medical College, New York University School of Medicine, the State University of New York Health Science Center in Brooklyn and SUNY Stony Brook School of Medicine.

Dr. David Nierenberg, Senior Associate Dean of medical education at Dartmouth Medical School, said his institution is excited about having this opportunity “to have this infusion of talented and diverse students transferring into the third year to enrich our student body.”

Sophie Davis students transfer into a medical school through a match process that offers the best fit for both students and programs. The Dartmouth match for Sophie Davis students is slated to begin this fall when interested candidates for the summer of 2007 will visit for interviews and prescreening.

Five colleges of the University were ranked tops in the Northeast in granting bachelor’s degrees to Hispanic students in such high-profile studies as architecture, business and marketing, computer science, English literature, protective services and psychology, according to a major educational journal.

In an annual survey of the “100 Top Colleges and Universities for Hispanics” by The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education Magazine, John Jay ranked No. 1 in the nation in awarding degrees in protective services and No. 3 in psychology degrees. The college also ranked No. 7 in public administration degrees.

Lehman was ranked No. 3 in computer science; Hunter was No. 4 in English literature; Baruch was No. 5 in business and marketing; and the City College of New York was No. 8 in architecture.

In master’s degree programs, Queens College was ranked 65th and Brooklyn 79th.

CUNY’s Graduate Center was No. 18 in the nation in awarding doctoral degrees to Hispanics.

The magazine’s survey was based on 2003-2004 data from the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics.

The college also ranked No. 7 in public services and No. 3 in psychology degrees.

The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education ranked tops in the Northeast in awarding degrees in protective services and psychology, according to a major educational journal.

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It Takes the Patience of a Scientist, and the Zeal of a Wildlife Warrior

By Judith Watson

Robert DeCandido documented how the flora of Pelham Bay Park has changed over the past 50 years. Lost were more than 100 species, some of which fed and provided sanctuary for birds that have since gone elsewhere. Among the losses:
- Ragged Fringed Orchids
- Blue Mallow Violets
- American Caltha
- Rhizomatous Reed Grass
- Canada Wild Rye

50 Years of Flora Lost and Flora Gained

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- Ragged Fringed Orchids
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- American Caltha
- Rhizomatous Reed Grass
- Canada Wild Rye

DeCandido's doctoral dissertation at the State Museum. The findings formed the basis for a report titled "100 Nights of Watching Birds Fly, and Sometimes Die"

By Judith Watson

Ever wonder how many birds pass through Manhattan on long migratory flights each spring and fall—and whether they crash into tall buildings?

For years Robert DeCandido wondered. But it wasn’t until the Empire State Building began keeping its lights on all night, in post 9/11 show of defiance, that he decided it was time to find some answers.

For almost 100 evenings during the spring and fall of 2004—and then again this spring—he spent dusk to midnight on the building’s observation deck counting birds speeding north or south.

He and a band of rotating volunteers counted 3,500 such birds in the spring and 10,500 in the fall. His aim, however, was not simply to tally, but to document what types of birds migrated at night.

On a few nights, the skies became a busy interstate of flapping wings. On October 11, DeCandido and his cohorts counted 1,768 migrants, mostly small species such as warblers, sparrows and woodpeckers.

DeCandido learned something else: migrating birds of a feather do not usually flock together.

“We generally saw small birds migrating in loose associations, and not tight flocks,” he reported.

Yet another curiosity DeCandido wanted to satisfy was whether urban lights on tall structures posed dangers for migrating birds. Bird enthusiasts had long believed so. On a foggy night in 1948, some 750 birds of 30 different species were found dead or injured at the base of the Empire State Building.

DeCandido in his research found that the landmark building did indeed present some risks to the feathered travelers. While he did not see any birds crash into the building, seven feathered corpses were found near the building’s base after a night of heavy rain. He also discovered that peregrine falcons used the building’s lights to aid in their nocturnal hunting expeditions. One falcon netted seven birds one evening.

Meanwhile, DeCandido and his fellow enthusiasts drew a little attention themselves, from building employees and other visitors. They would freely pass around their binoculars to their new friends and offer brief lessons in the art of bird-watching.

It gave DeCandido pleasure to know that observations were being taken to share his interest and concern.

“Whether it was seeing a quarter-ounce kingfisher in its mad rush across the black sky, or hearing the flight chirps of hundreds more emanating from the darkness above, people stopped to watch and listen.”

DeCandido reported. “This gave me hope: once people were aware, they cared.”

Indeed, in August 2004, building managers began turning off the structure’s lights at midnight. Furthermore, they began shutting them off even earlier on foggy or rainy nights, if large groups of birds begun circling the building.

And so it seems that his many nights of observation were bearing fruit.
Missionary, To Try to Save a New York City Park

Revolution, a small band of Americans held off 4,000 British Redcoats at Pell's Point, giving George Washington’s troops time to escape north from Harlem.

In the mid-1800s, the area filled with country estates for wealthy Manhattan families. The most fabulously was built by a merchant named John Hunter on an island just off the mainland, which he outfitted with Turkish carpets, wine cellars, Rafaels and Rembrandts. As the cachet of these estates waned, interest in creating healthy public retreats like Central Park grew. In 1888, New York City bought hundreds of acres of Westchester County along Long Island Sound and annexed it to create Pelham Bay Park.

The ecological trouble began with Robert Moses. He filled in marshes for playing fields, meadows for golf courses and, on a frigid day in January 1934, stood on the southern shore of Hunter’s Island, waved his arm and ordered Pelham Bay filled in. Orchard Beach opened 30 months later, on three million cubic yards of sanitation landfill and tons of white sand from the Rockaways and New Jersey.

Moses’ legacy didn’t end there. He cut swaths through the park with two highways. And after a federal court barred New York City from dumping garbage into Long Island Sound, Moses began the practice of filling salt marshes in city parks with garbage. In 1964, it was Pelham Bay Park’s turn and the city began dumping tons of refuse into a marsh and adjacent meadow. The practice was halted in the 1970s and the dump was capped in the 1990s.

Much of the park’s transformation had taken place before, however, a self-laughing botanist, undertook his study of Pelham Bay Park’s flora. The cumulative impact over the ensuing years was documented by DeCandido. More current urban threats include salted DeCandido observed as the loss of open intensifies mowing, and introduction of that DeCandido lamented. “Bobwhite quail and night hawks are very rare. Canada geese, though, are more common than 50 years ago, and so are raptors like the red tailed hawk, because migrating rap- pers find rodents and the resident park birds easy prey,” he reported. It’s like walking into McDonald’s with no one minding the store.

For much of the last century, bird enthusiasts from around the world traveled to the Bronx to view species of owls living in Pelham Bay Park. An abundance of owls, including long-eared owls, great horned owls and saw whet owls, made the park home. Only a few owls remain and they are elusive, despite DeCandido’s studied imitation of an eastern screech owl territorial call.

Two sections of the park have been designated wildlife refuges, the northern side of Hunter’s Island and the Thomas Pell Wildlife Sanctuary bordering the park’s two golf courses. Venturing through Hunter’s Island marshland on wooden planks, it is difficult to remember that this is Gotham.

DeCandido admits to occasional discouragement, but he does not shrink from the challenge of protecting this and other city parks from further loss of natural habitat. It’s not people like the environment, but what often does not translate into protecting the park. With care, foresight and good management, we can have development and keep our remaining natural areas—but people need to pay attention.

Convinced that educating the public is the surest way to raise attention levels, DeCandido spends his days leading bird tours in Central Park and his evenings in the fall and spring documenting bird migrations across New York City. His web site www.birdingbob.com, reports on upcoming outings and features photos of rare birds he has spotted. For four years, while he completed his doctorate, he taught biology at City College, and found photos by Robert DeCandido.

Some of DeCandido’s recommendations are disarmingly simple. Perhaps New York City biologists can start revitalizing the park by planting native wildflowers,” he suggested. “We can propagate seeds and have a planting field where we can restore the native habitat.

Preserving open park areas today requires understanding what they contribute ecologically and then using appropriate methods to pro- DeCandido said. The departure of birds that make their homes in meadows is truly troubling to DeCandido, who rarely ventures outside without binoculars dangling around his neck and a camera stuffed into a backpack. Because Pelham Bay Park lies along a natural migratory route, it is a spectacular location for bird watching in spring and fall months. But during other parts of the year, it is primarily home to hardy species like robins, blue jays and sea gulls (“weird” birds among the cognoscente) and, increasing- ly, raptors.

The warblers, thrushes, vireos, and tanagers have turned into tropi- cal migrants—they’re no longer breeding in many parks in New York City, DeCandido lamented. “Bobwhite quail and night hawks are very rare. Canada geese, though, are more common than 50 years ago, and so are raptors like the red tailed hawk, because migrating rap- pers find rodents and the resident park birds easy prey,” he reported. It’s like walking into McDonald’s with no one minding the store.

For much of the last century, bird enthusiasts from around the world traveled to the Bronx to view species of owls living in Pelham Bay Park. An abundance of owls, including long-eared owls, great horned owls and saw whet owls, made the park home. Only a few owls remain and they are elusive, despite DeCandido’s studied imitation of an eastern screech owl territorial call.

Two sections of the park have been designated wildlife refuges, the northern side of Hunter’s Island and the Thomas Pell Wildlife Sanctuary bordering the park’s two golf courses. Venturing through Hunter’s Island marshland on wooden planks, it is difficult to remember that this is Gotham.

DeCandido admits to occasional discouragement, but he does not shrink from the challenge of protecting this and other city parks from further loss of natural habitat. It’s not people like the environment, but what often does not translate into protecting the park. With care, foresight and good management, we can have development and keep our remaining natural areas—but people need to pay attention.

Convinced that educating the public is the surest way to raise attention levels, DeCandido spends his days leading bird tours in Central Park and his evenings in the fall and spring documenting bird migrations across New York City. His web site www.birdingbob.com, reports on upcoming outings and features photos of rare birds he has spotted. For four years, while he completed his doctorate, he taught biology at City College, and found photos by Robert DeCandido.

Some of DeCandido’s recommendations are disarmingly simple. Perhaps New York City biologists can start revitalizing the park by planting native wildflowers,” he suggested. “We can propagate seeds and have a planting field where we can restore the native habitat.

Win-win is not just about New York, since it is estimated that two-thirds of the world’s population will live in cities by 2050. “How we strike a balance between development for people and the needs of wild things,” he said, “will determine the future of wild things and the quality of life for the rest of us.”
Courses Being Added in Arabic and Mideast Studies

Thanks to a recent $192,000 award from the U.S. Department of Education, the University will begin expanding its offerings in Middle East studies.

The demand for courses in those subject areas — including the intensive study of Arabic — has increased markedly since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, University scholars say.

“We’re delighted to receive this very competitive award. It will give us the opportunity to expand, strengthen and institutionalize Middle East studies at CUNY,” said Professor Beth Baron, co-director of the Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center, known as MEMEAC, which is located at the Graduate Center.

Starting this fall, the CUNY Baccalaureate Program will offer a concentration in Middle East Studies, and students at Queens College soon will be able to major in it.

“We hope to have it [the new Middle East major] in place in the next one or two academic years,” said Professor Lee Knefelkamp, who also is a CCNY professor of Middle East studies.

“Many students are looking for job opportunities,” Baron said.

The recent $192,000 award from the U.S. Department of Education, or CUE, initiative, which aims to provide students with a more coherent learning experience from admissions to graduation.

Next year, everyone will have another chance to exchange ideas and propose answers about the future direction of college education.

That’s when Queensborough Community College hosts the annual conference.

How to Think Like Einstein: Let the Creativity Flow

When Professor Joe L. Kincheloe was in high school in Tennessee, his guidance counselor recommended he become a piano tuner.

Kincheloe says the counselor failed to recognize the spark that later led Kincheloe to author 39 books, including one on Albert Einstein.

Today Kincheloe has a message for educators: learn to recognize and nurture creativity in your students, and realize that some of the most creative ones don’t perform well on tests.

Kincheloe expounded on his thoughts in April at the Grad Center where he gave a talk titled “How to Think Like Einstein.”

“Einstein serves as an example of a brilliant student who did not do well in school,” Kincheloe said in an interview at his office at The Grad Center. “They [his teachers] were interested in low level functions, like memorization. Einstein was interested in new insights....”

Kincheloe, along with Shirley R. Steinberg and Deborah J. Tippins, is co-author of The Stigma of Genius: Einstein and Beyond M aden Education, published in paperback in 1999.

His April 6 talk was part of the Grad Center’s Science & the Arts series of lectures and events commemorating the annus mirabilis, or “miracle year” of 1905 when Einstein published his ground-breaking papers.

The organizer of the series was Brian Schwartz, a Grad Center physics professor and co-producer of a musical, “Einstein’s Dreams” based on a novel by Allan Lightman.
Rebalancing the Scales of Criminal Justice with DNA

By Gary Schmidgall

In 1983 a Massachusetts 23-year-old named Dennis Maher was convicted and imprisoned for two rapes and an attempted murder. Both rape convictions eventually were exonerated. For a time, it seemed as if the legal system was moving in the right direction, with a growing number of cases being overturned due to new evidence. But the system is far from perfect, and DNA evidence is often used in ways that can lead to wrongful convictions.

DNA is a molecule that is passed down from parents to their children. It is found in every cell in the body and contains instructions for how to make proteins, which are essential for the body's function. DNA is unique to each individual, making it a powerful tool in forensic science.

The Innocence Project, founded in 1992 by lawyer Barry Scheck at Yeshiva University's Cardozo Law School, has been instrumental in exonerating wrongfully convicted individuals. The project uses DNA evidence to help clear innocent people from prison.

But the system is not perfect, and there are still concerns about how DNA evidence is used. It can be compromised by contamination, degradation, or other factors, which can lead to wrongful convictions. DNA evidence can also be used in ways that are not in the best interest of the individual or the community.

The Innocence Project has been successful in exonerating wrongfully convicted individuals, but there is still work to be done. The scientific community needs to continue to develop new techniques and methods to ensure that DNA evidence is used in a fair and just way.

The Innocence Project also works to reform the criminal justice system, advocating for policies that will help prevent wrongful convictions in the future. This includes advocating for changes in plea bargaining, evidence collection, and DNA storage and preservation.

In conclusion, DNA evidence is a powerful tool in forensic science, but it must be used with care and caution. The Innocence Project and other organizations are working to ensure that DNA evidence is used in a fair and just way, and to prevent wrongful convictions in the future.
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Turning 9/11 into Triumph

When Sara Cuya was in third grade, her class took a trip to the Empire State Building. Standing on the observation deck, a thought popped into her head. Maybe one day she would design a building that would be part of that majestic skyline.

Now, 13 years later, Cuya is helping to design not only one building but also a whole village. She is one of three New York City College of Technology students working with Studio Daniel Libeskind to help rebuild Unawatuna, Sri Lanka, a small beach resort and fishing village decimated by December’s tsunami.

Cuya, whose parents emigrated from Peru, is the first graduate of City Tech’s baccalaureate degree program in architectural technology. She was selected for the Sri Lanka project because of her three-dimensional and computer-assisted design skills. Interning at Studio Daniel Libeskind—the famed architect’s firm—Cuya was assigned to create a 3-D model for one of the proposed community buildings in Sri Lanka.

“In the first week, I worked on mapping out components for the master plan of the village, which gave a rough idea of all the large structures to be designed—a community center, medical center, crafts center, hotel and restaurant,” she says.

Another City Tech student, Bala Balasubramaniam, who is from Sri Lanka, helped draw up plans for private homes. Balasubramaniam also translated letters sent to Studio Daniel Libeskind from residents of Unawatuna, where about 150 were killed by the tsunami.

“Let’s just say that before enrolling at John Jay, Jose Barlow had quite a bit of life experience. He was a war veteran, who had worked as a paralegal and later as a corrections officer. But his dream was to earn a college degree. This spring, at 70, he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Legal Studies.

Making his accomplishment even more inspiring is the fact that Barlow is visually impaired, suffers from diabetes and has difficulty walking because of an accident that occurred when he was a corrections officer.

“This was the dream I had that I thought wouldn’t happen and finally came true,” Barlow says. “The Disabled Student Services Office helped me tremendously. If it wasn’t for them, I would have dropped out.”

Born and raised in New York City, Barlow’s journey to a higher education took many detours. At 18, he joined the Army and served in the Korean War. He was assigned to the stockade and was a “prison charger”—apprehending prisoners that had attempted to flee. After six years of service, he returned to New York and worked as a legal stock transfer clerk—which today would be called a paralegal—for 14 years. He briefly worked as a 911 operator and then in 1974 decided to become a New York State corrections officer. The injury that disabled him occurred while he was on duty at Sing Sing.

Over the years, Barlow has been a volunteer for the Boy Scouts of America, serving in East Harlem, and he has received several awards for his positions he has held within the organization. He is also a volunteer with the American Red Cross and is the co-director leader of the Republican Party in East Harlem.

“This has been such a long time coming that Barlow is not sure what he will do next. ‘It’s been such a long time coming that Barlow is not sure what he will do next. I’m very pleased with my education in the U.S. for its flexibility and individually-tailored approach,’ he says.

“At the time I went to college in Romania [right after the fall of the communist regime of President Nicolae Ceausescu in 1989], students were treated as a group, not as individuals who have different interests and needs. The outcome then was an equal preparation in the given field. At CUNY, with its large offering of courses, I could really make choices to ensure a basic

School of Nursing.

As she looks forward, Alicea sometimes finds inspiration in looking back, to the time when her life seemed to be slipping away. While confronting cancer, she had been told she could not live long without a bone-marrow transplant. Her spirit sank as she learned that no one in her family was a match.

However, Alicea didn’t give up. While ill, she spoke out at Hispanic-associated community functions and organizations to increase awareness of the importance of bone-marrow donation and transplantation. When almost all hope was gone, Alicea found a donor.

Alicea won a scholarship from the National Association of Hispanic Nurses. The $2,000 award was from a grant from the AETNA/National Coalition of Ethnic Minority Nurses Scholarship program, which aims to increase the number of nurses from ethnic-minority groups and to encourage them to go into research. Now that Alicea has realized the first part of her life’s mission, to graduate with a nursing degree, she will embark on the second part: to continue studying and making contacts so that she can work with cancer patients, giving them a reason to live, as that nurse once did for her.
Risk-Taking and Ultimate Victory

A Selected Profile of Spring 2005 Baccalaureate Graduates

- Percentage of graduating students foreign-born: 50.9
- Number of countries represented: 176*
- Number of languages spoken: 127*
- Most popular Baccalaureate degree major: Business and Management
- Graduating students who are female: 63.4 percent
- Median age of all Baccalaureate graduates: 25
- Top countries of origin for foreign-born grads: Dominican Republic, Jamaica, China, Russia, Guyana
- Second and third most popular Baccalaureate degree majors: Social Sciences, Psychology

Source: Projected Spring 2005 graduates, Office of Institutional Research

She Found Herself

Kathleen Burke loves to figure out how things work, and when life wasn't working as planned, she enrolled at Baruch College.

"Baruch changed my whole life," says the 27-year-old Burke, who just graduated with a 3.98 grade-point average and a BBA in economics. It took Burke over a decade to get to Baruch. She left home at 16, followed the Grateful Dead and got married at 18 to a man who loved alcohol and drugs more than her. Living in poverty in Vermont, she decided to change her life. She got a GED, divorced and joined the Army.

Her first week at Baruch, she met her future husband, a fellow student. Burke's new interest is international law.

A Long Journey

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The mind is the most powerful tool of all," declares Madeline Gomez, a recent graduate of Queensborough Community College. A native of Puerto Rico, Gomez has little use of her hands and no use of her legs, wheelchair-bound, she had enrolled in The External Education Program for the Home-bound. As chair of the Coalition for Students with Disabilities, she helped pass legislation making text-books available in alternative formats for the disabled.

Gomez has enrolled in CUNY's Baccalaureate Program.

Counting on a Math Career

Kamal Barley, who just earned his BS in math at Edgar Evers College, has everything — well almost everything — all figured out.

The St. Lucia native will study math at Arizona State University, where he has a full scholarship, and where he plans to earn his doctorate. He then hopes to join the faculty of a leading research university. He wants to specialize in differential geometry.

Life After Vietnam

Hang Do, an immigrant from Vietnam, is excited about beginning doctoral studies in engineering science at Brown University. Hang had been tapped for the CUNY Honors College program through a College of Staten Island outreach program, and graduated at the top of his class there and at CSI.

His mother, who speaks no English, traveled from Hanoi for the graduation ceremony.
At the May 6 Intercollegiate Poetry Slam Finals — where fast-talking bards spoke their minds as they got things off their chest — the Queensborough team emerged the winner. And for 19-year-old Queensborough sophomore Xavier Smith, it was also a victory of a personal kind. He won top honors for reciting his piece, “Enter the Mind of a Young Black Male.”

“Everything I say is real, it’s what I’ve been through, it’s what I’ve lived,” says Smith of his performance that night at The Bowery Poetry Club in Greenwich Village. “It’s from the heart, it’s what I feel. I like the audience to feel what I feel.”

Getting students like Smith to compose and perform is what slams are all about, says George Guida, associate professor of English at New York City College of Technology, who was one of the organizers of the monthly intercollegiate competitions that started in October 2004.

“This is a tremendous self-esteem booster for them, and it gives them a community of people who support them, and it’s an intellectual endeavor.”

The recent war of words was a three-way affair involving Queensborough, City Tech and SUNY’s Westchester Community College.

Jabril Abdush-Shahid, an 18-year-old Queensborough freshman from Queens who was “born again on stage,” the slams are in sync with his “life goal to be remembered as a great writer through the ages like Shakespeare.”

The experience also has proved eye-opening for aspiring novelist Stephanie Rolon, a 19-year-old City Tech freshman from New Jersey. Standing before the microphone is the “scariest thing,” says Rolon, who performed “Thirty Days,” which detailed her breakup with her boyfriend, at the May 6 slam. “I had never really read my poetry to anyone before.”

Jabril Abdush-Shahid, an 18-year-old freshman at City Tech from Brooklyn who also is a rapper, says that “I do a lot of public speaking, and it helps me.”

The slams are part of a growing resurgence of the popularity of poetry on college campuses and in the mainstream culture, says Billy Collins, a former poet laureate of the United States and a distinguished professor of English at Lehman College. “Poetry is the only history available to us of a human emotion,” he says. “There’s only one poem of the human heart, and that’s poetry. The grief of absence, the joy of experience and the community of emotion make you feel like you’re not alone.”

The slams, which trace their roots to Allen Ginsburg’s “Howl,” the 1955 beat poem heard round the world, began in the 1980s in Chicago, when Marc Smith set up competitions judged by people off the street. In the 1990s slams went nationwide. With the 1998 film “Slam Nation,” the genre entered the mass-market and penetrated even deeper with the advent of Russell Simmons’ hit HBO series “Def Poetry Jam,” which is in its fourth season.

“I try to give the audience a mental picture because I can’t put them on the corner with me,” Smith says. “I’m trying to break the stereotype of the young black male who sells drugs and plays basketball and show that they have something to say.”

For the collegiate poets, the slams really aren’t about winning syllable by syllable, they’re all about wordplay and having one’s say. “It’s about me being heard and touching people. One person came up to me in tears,” Smith says.

Rolon says it’s about having a good time and bonding with peers. “We do it for fun,” she says. “Even though it’s a competition, we give tips to each other and talk about our poetry.”

Queensborough and City Tech are hoping to get more students, especially ones who are working in different disciplines like math and science, to participate.

“Poetry is another tool for studying the world,” says Lori Anderson-Moseman, an assistant professor in the English Department at Queensborough and the coach for the Queensborough slammers. “The team has people from all majors. There is no set content. You can write about everything from botany to racial politics.”

If all goes according to plan, next semester, the City Tech and Queensborough Community College poets will have a little more competition: In a grand slam, Guida recently sent out challenges to more than 50 colleges in the metro area. Abdush-Shahid, Rolon, Smith and Huallanca say they are more than ready to spread the word, rhyme by rhyme.

“It’s another way to go,” says Rolon. “I say to anybody who wants to perform. ‘Come to a slam.’”

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Professors are Called Possible ‘Saviors’ of Polluted Canal

They are being hailed as the sisters who may someday rescue the contaminated waters of the Gowanus Canal.

Niloufar and Naureen Haque — Niloufar, a neuroscientist and assistant professor of biology at New York City College of Technology, and Naureen, a biochemist who teaches at Barnard College — are scientific advisers to Urban Divers, a nonprofit that provides updates to the Environmental Protection Agency on the Arthur Kill and Gowanus waterways and area marshlands.

Last summer the sisters, who are natives of India, helped collect samples of the fabled “white stuff” that floats near the bottom of the Gowanus, one of the city’s most polluted waterways. The lab results are due in the coming months.

In this, their latest collaboration, the siblings want to know which microbes thrive in the contaminated Gowanus, which dumps into New York Harbor, and whether the chemicals are causing microbes to evolve and become harmful to people.

In May, at City Tech, the Haques presented “What Lies Beneath the Underwater World,” a mix of lectures and graphic presentations on pollution in area waters. They are getting City Tech students immersed in the subject by having them monitor various waterways.

Niloufar furthermore oversees two City Tech students who are doing research on Parkinson’s Disease, which is similar to Alzheimer’s in the accumulation of tau protein in the cerebral cortex of the brain.

She is also working with another student on a survey of genetic profiling, and has been mentor to a Brooklyn College student in a stem cell research project.

Naureen says there is not enough research being done on the waterways, and hopes what she finds out about the “white stuff” in the Gowanus can be used in the canal’s rehabilitation. A column about the Haques by Daily News writer Claire Richardson bore a headline saying “Sisters May Be Saviors of Canal.”

Much of the work being done on the Gowanus is through CUNY. Last year, Brooklyn College hosted a daylong conference to explore ways of restoring clear water and wildlife there. Professor Martin Schreibman, director of the college’s Aquatic Research and Environmental Assessment Center, has been overseeing student research that could have positive impacts on the canal.

Though much work remains to be done, Schreibman expressed optimism about the future of the Gowanus, saying that scientists are paying more attention to it.

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