Academic Summit

Pathways Ahead: Reform and Rigor

CUNY students will be required to take 30 credits in a number of specific and thematic areas, under the new Common Core framework developed by the Pathways to Degree Completion task force headed by Michelle J. Anderson, Dean of the CUNY School of Law.

These general education courses must satisfy specific, rigorous learning outcomes and will be accepted across the University, smoothing the confusing process of transferring credits from community colleges to senior colleges. In addition to the 30-credit Common Core, students at four-year colleges will take 12 “college option” credits in subjects to be determined by each senior college.

The new 30-to-42-credit core modifies requirements previously established by each CUNY college. In some cases colleges now mandate many lower-level courses — up to some 60 credits — and students lose the opportunity and time to explore subjects outside of their major on anything but an introductory level. However, because senior colleges require at least 120 credits for graduation, and community colleges 60, the new core leaves time for students to move more quickly to advanced courses and to explore new academic areas.

The draft Common Core was released in the fall, followed by a flood of feedback from the campuses and revisions by the taskforce, which was divided into a steering committee and a working committee. The task force presented its final proposal in December, saying the new framework would “develop a broad range of knowledge and skills, and ... build a solid intellectual foundation upon which students can engage in more sophisticated study and analysis at successively higher levels as they complete their degrees.”

The Pathways task force meetings, communications and deliberations leading up to the final draft were contentious at times, participants said.

Areas of discussion and disagreement included college proposals to mandate foreign language, history, speech and other subjects in the core.

Dean Anderson said, “We tried to hear as many faculty members across a range of disciplines as possible, accommodate their perspectives, and honor the integrity and...”

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The experiment is to be tried... whether the children of the people, the children of the whole people, can be educated; whether an institution of learning, of the highest grade, can be successfully controlled by the popular will, not by the privileged few, but by the privileged many.”

— Horace Webster

Founding Principal, The Free Academy

WINTER 2012

GRANTS & HONORS

Recognizing Faculty Achievement

CUNY students will be required to...
Building New York’s Future

This year, more students than ever are filling the classrooms of The City University of New York: 270,000 degree-seeking students, to be exact. Across our 24 colleges and professional schools, the CUNY community is supporting all of our students in earning a degree that will allow them to realize their professional aspirations and contribute to New York’s communities, joining the 1 million CUNY graduates already living and working in New York State.

That support is enhanced by the historic enactment of a predictable tuition policy for CUNY this year, and the growth in state funding for CUNY’s capital programs. CUNY does not have a need to raise tuition to support its capital programs, and the University believes it is better able to assist students and their families, as well as the University, a much-needed measure of stability. Thanks to the governor and the legislature, New York’s families can better plan for the costs of college, with the assurance that the state will maintain a constant level of funding for their education.

State support is vital to enabling CUNY to meet the needs of its diverse student body. While the University continues to attract an increasing number of high-achieving students — nearly an eight percent increase since last year alone — it is also enrolling a growing number of under-prepared students. Today, nearly eight out of 10 students who come to our community colleges from the New York City public schools need some remediation. Addressing the needs of students at very different levels of readiness requires a range of structured programs designed to enhance learning. That’s why CUNY continues to seek support for its community non-colleges, including our New Community College set to open this year. These colleges are the site of nationally recognized workforce-develop- ment efforts, as well as the most promising work to advance student success. For exam- ple, community college student in our Accelerated Study in Associate Programs initiative, or ASAP, have achieved twice the graduation rate of non-ASAP students. Participants in college-based learning com- munities have shown higher course pass rates and earned more credits than non-participating students.

When innovative programs such as these demonstrate outstanding results, we owe it to our students to expand their availability. CUNY is working diligently with the state and the city to scale up ASAP and other ini- tiatives across our community colleges. The University also continues to priori- tize its capital programs. CUNY does not have land to build additional facilities; it must maintain and upgrade existing build- ings. The average CUNY building is more than 50 years old, and some are more than 100 years old. As our enroll- ment grows (an additional 62,000 students in just the last decade), we replace the wear and tear.

Public support for our capital program has enabled tremendous progress — including, most recently, a new, 600,000-square- foot facility at John Jay College and a new location for the CUNY School of Law. That progress will continue this year, with a new Fiterman Hall at Borough of Manhattan Community College, to replace the building destroyed on 9/11, as well as a new science facility at Lehman College and a renovation of the Kupferberg Center Arts Complex at Queens College.

These and many other projects are being realized as a critical time when New York City needs jobs. Today, 20 percent of all the construction projects in the city are CUNY projects. Our partnership with the successful New York State Small Business Development Centers at six CUNY colleges has created or saved more than 21,000 jobs in key indus- tries, including construction, with an eco- nomic impact of well over $500 million.

With the continued partnership of the state, we hope to continue the progress of our capital program, which is alleviating serious space deficits at our colleges, providing crucial safety and maintenance work, and upgrading outdated laboratory and classroom space. In addition, the renovation of the Field Building, Baruch College’s facility at 17 Lexington Avenue, is urgently needed. The facility sits on the site of City College’s original home, the Free Academy, dating it to the very origin of CUNY and public higher education in New York City. The current building has been in use almost continuously since 1928, with minimal upgrades.

Building the facilities and programs that enable students to advance their learning must remain a statewide priority. A highly skilled workforce is the foundation of the state’s future. In partnership with the state, city, and all New Yorkers, CUNY is dedicated to preparing New York’s students for the very competitive global marketplace they will enter and ensuring the state’s vitality in the coming years.

This column is based on the chancellor’s testimony before the State Senate and Assembly fiscal committees regarding the 2012-2013 State Executive Budget.

Reforms Will Raise Unique Character

Unique character of each CUNY college.” As the committee worked, “discussions were passionate,” she added. “We took votes on everything, and the majority ruled.”

“No one group got what it wanted, but that may have been a great thing,” said steering committee member Paul Attewell, Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the Graduate Center. “We were very sensitive to the fact that there are a lot of faculty who have spent years building the general education for their colleges. We understood we were intruding on that space.”

“Every single college had major representation at every stage in the development of the Common Core,” said steering committee member Elizabeth Nunez, Distinguished Professor of English at Hunter College. “For decades I have witnessed individual colleges struggle to establish a core curriculum for their units with varying degrees of success and failure. So it is amazing to me that we were finally able to design a 30-credit Common Core for all CUNY colleges.”

Consisting of three-credit courses, to result in 10 courses and thus flexibility, the first 30 credits of the new Common Core include a 12-credit “required core” — six credits of English Composition; three of Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning; and three of Life and Physical Sciences. It also includes an 18-credit “flexible core” of six three-credit liberal arts courses.

Proposed CUNY Budget Covers

The University’s operating budget will increase 7.2 percent or $137 million — including an additional $71 million in state funds and $67 million in tuition revenue — under Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s 2012-2013 state Executive Budget proposal, praised by Chancellor Matthew Goldstein as offering CUNY “a critically needed measure of stability.”

“The governor issued the state Executive Budget about three weeks ago and overall it provides a stable condition for us for the next year,” Associate Vice Chancellor for Budget and Finance Matthew Sapienza told the Board of Trustees’ Committee on Fiscal Affairs at its Feb. 6 meeting. Sapienza added that both the state budget and New York City’s recently released preliminary budget for next year keep the community colleges at current funding levels and “We do not foresee any additional cuts to our senior and community colleges.”

Health benefits for adjunct instructors are funded under the state budget, Sapienza noted, saying that the $71 million state alloca- tion includes $57 million for such fringe benefits and mandatory needs, as well as $13 million for restoration of a onetime budget cut among the $95 million in reductions in effect this year.

The adjunct insurance was “part of our budget request and we’re very pleased to see that was funded as part of the gover- nor’s proposal,” Sapienza told the commit- tee. “With these funds we’ll be able to cover all of our mandatory needs costs for next year in addition to our fringe benefits.”

The additional $87 million in tuition rev- enue, he added, includes around $51 million to be generated by next year’s $300 tuition increase. About $10 million will be set aside for tuition assistance waivers for students, to cover the difference between CUNY tuition and the maximum $5,000 state Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award – expected to be a $430 gap when senior college tuition rises to $5,430 in the fall. The remaining $15 million makes up a revenue appropriation shortfall from last year, he said.

Unlike in recent years, the state budget...
Needs Plus New Benefits

including at least one connected with these disciplinary or interdisciplinary fields: World Cultures and Global Issues; U.S. Experience in its Diversity; Creative Expression; Individual and Society; and Scientific World. For each area, a set of expected learning out-comes — aimed at teaching concepts, critical thinking, research, communication, writing, speaking and other skills — was delineated by the task force. The 12 additional credits required at the four-year colleges will be decided entirely by those institutions.

The Board of Trustees approved a resolution in June establishing the Pathways initiative, launched by Executive Vice Chancellor Lexa Logue at Chancellor Goldstein’s request. Divided into two general phases, Pathways was charged overall with creating a curricular structure to enhance the quality of general education across the University and streamline transfers. The first phase, development of the Common Core, was carried out by the task force chaired by Anderson. Its work spanned five months and included two full-day retreats, at least 11 meetings of the steering and working committees, dissemination of reports, updates and other information through www.cuny.edu/pathways website, and much discussion through emails and other means.

The next phase of the Pathways initiative, led by Graduate Center President William Kelly, will determine University-wide course pathways for CUNY’s most popular transfer majors, making the process of transferring credits from one CUNY college to another more transparent, coherent and efficient. Faculty members from CUNY’s senior colleges and community colleges are meeting together in committees focused on particular disciplines, to identify three to six early courses in majors that will be recommended for students entering those majors. The courses will be made available at all colleges offering the majors.

To prepare for full Pathways implementation in fall 2013, the University will establish two new committees — an Implementation Advisory Committee, with representatives from each campus, to ensure that campuses and the University Central Office work together to smoothly enact changes; and a Coordinating Committee of faculty “to review campus-submitted courses for their suitability for the Common Core,” the chancellor said.

Atwell said he was “enthusiastic about the fact that transfer students will get a more transparent and practical way of getting to a B.A. if they start in the community colleges. We realize there will be modifications along the way.” Atwell said of the Pathways plan. “Our job was to make the first step. In some ways the first step is the hardest step.”

Excellence and Exploration

Pathways gives students a solid, focused liberal-arts foundation based on achievement. Prepared, they move quickly to challenging upper-level study and new intellectual paths, for a joyful, broad and more satisfying liberal arts experience.

For Transfers, Clear Pathways

The Pathways initiative will simplify the mind-numbing patchwork of course credit transfer rules. Faculty committees from across the University are determining the courses to be accepted for credit in such popular majors as nursing, criminal justice and business.

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Readiness for Undergraduate Programs” in the Bronx, directed by professor Hermine Martinez. Queensborough Community College has been awarded $201,343 in grant funding from the NIH-National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) for the “QCC – Bridges to the Baccalaureate Program,” directed by Patricia Schneider. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration has awarded a $149,156 grant to Gaffar Gallani of New York City College of Technology for “Achieving Proficiency in Engineering Research and STEM Education Through NASA Initiatives.” The U.S. Department of Education has awarded grants totaling $437,788 to Michelle Danvers-Foust of Bronx Community College for “Student Support.” Sharonna Levy, director of the SEEK Program at Brooklyn College, has received $334,150 from the U.S. Department of Education for the “Education Talent Search Program.”

Robert Alfano, Distinguished Professor of Science and Engineering at CUNY, has been awarded the first SPE Britton Chance Biomedical Optics Award in recognition of his pioneering work in the field.

Michael Kress of the College of Staten Island has been awarded $1,311,801 from the National Science Foundation for “MRI Instrumentation for Enabling Data Analysis.” A research project titled “Neurodevelopmental Perspective on ADHD,” directed by Jeffrey M. Halperin of Queens College, has received grant support totaling $833,572 from the National Institutes of Health. “A Living Laboratory: Revitalizing General Education for a 21st Century College of Technology,” a project at New York City College of Technology directed by Maura Smale, has been awarded $165,283 in grant funding from the U.S. Department of Education.

Enabling Creative Chaos: The Organization Behind the Running Man Event, a book by assistant professor of sociology Katherine K. Chen of City College and the CUNY Graduate Center, won the 2011 Best Book Prize for the Outstanding Book in Nonprofit and Volunteer Action Research from the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Volunteer Action.

Steven Markowitz of Queens College has received $987,784 from North Shore/Long Island Jewish Medical Center for the “World Trade Center Health Program.” “Peptide–Cell Interactions in Sarcotrophisms,” directed by Fred Naider of the College of Staten Island, has received $366,788 in grant support from the National Institutes of Health. Dean Louise Hainline of Brooklyn College has been awarded $167,132 for the project “RSE Option 2: Increasing URM Student Success in Off-Campus and Online Settings,” from the National Institutes of Health.

“Creating Hispanic Scientists,” a project at John Jay College under the direction of professor Anthony Carpi, has received a grant totaling $749,623 from the U.S. Department of Education. Esther Dalpes of Kingsborough Community College has received a $232,115
Timely Access to a World of Knowledge

During three mid-January weeks, students can fulfill prerequisites, earn extra credits — even study abroad.

For as long as she can remember, Sarah Leibowitz has had a keen interest in visiting the Galápagos Islands. But working on a double major in neuroscience and psychology at Macaulay Honors College at Queens College, she never had the time or the budget to fit a trip into her rigorous schedule.

So when she saw that Evolution, Ecology and Conservation — a study-abroad class in the Galápagos — was being offered during CUNY’s January Winter Session, she signed up immediately.

“Evolution has always been a particularly interesting topic to me. Because I am pre-med, I want to take most of my core science classes here at the campus during the school year, so I could not possibly take a whole semester off to study,” said the 20-year-old junior who will graduate in May 2013. “Taking the winter class in my sophomore year gave me an opportunity to study what I like without sacrificing my other classes. And this course made it convenient for me to realize my dream of going to the Galápagos.”

Leibowitz is among the nearly 14,000 students who enroll in one to two courses each year in CUNY’s Winter Session, which in 2012, on most of the campuses, ran Jan. 3 through Jan. 24.

In those three weeks, students sign up to study a variety of courses. Some, like Leibowitz, who has attended Winter Session classes every year, study abroad through programs like City College’s International Studies’ Seminar on Culture, Class and Gender in Morocco, where students live with host families to immerse themselves in local culture. In this three-credit course, they learn basic level Moroccan Arabic in their first week, reflect on their experience by writing weekly journals and write a 15-page term paper that pairs personal experience with scholarly research.

Others, like John Jay College senior Abigail Padilla, stay closer to their home campuses, earning credits for courses like Baruch College’s Fundamentals of Management; Brooklyn College’s Family and Children’s Health; City College’s Social Psychology; Hostos Community College’s American Government; and New York City College of Technology’s History of Western Civilization.

Padilla, who will graduate with a criminology major in spring 2013, has begun each new year with a variety of courses that have ranged from English grammar to constitutional law.

Since its inception in 2006, the Winter Session — offered at nearly all of CUNY’s campuses — allows students to fulfill prerequisites, earn extra credits, access courses that might be hard to get into during regular semesters, and in some cases, even graduate earlier.

“Taking the winter class in my sophomore year gave me an opportunity to study what I like without sacrificing my other classes. And this course made it convenient for me to realize my dream of going to the Galápagos.”

— Sarah Leibowitz, junior with a double major in neuroscience and psychology at Macaulay Honors College at Queens College

Now, she puts Winter Session courses on her calendar to make it easier to plan around her work schedule at Global Energy Efficiency, an Inwood-based energy-management company where she is a researcher.

“I had a good professor and productive classmates,” she said. “It was 9 to 12, which was perfect for me because it gave me the rest of the day to work and take care of my daily tasks.”

Studying during Winter Session will allow Borough of Manhattan Community College student Ashmir Gharti Chhetry to graduate on time. With 15 credits to go and aiming to compete his degree by spring 2013, the 19-year-old is looking forward to the required speech course he’s enrolled in. “I’ve heard other students talking about winter session; they told me it’s intense, challenging and interesting,” he said.

He’ll be the first college graduate in his family, he said, “so this is special for everyone.”

College of Staten Island senior Noor Daoud, who is working on a bachelor’s degree in economics and computer science with a minor in business and philosophy, was looking forward to spending January in China through the CUNY Shanghai University Program “because it will help me be a better social economist and will be a magnificent and unique foundation for my business prospects,” he said.

Daoud, who also is interested in taking the Business in Contemporary China course, a prerequisite for his economics degree, is using his College of Staten Island Presidential Scholarship and Study and Travel Opportunities for CUNY Students grant to finance his Winter Session studies.

“I’m either going to law school, or I’m going to study international relations to get to my ultimate goal of being a diplomat,” he said. “I know I will greatly benefit from this Winter Session course of study.”

And some students, like Queensborough Community College freshman Usabah Giri, a music production major, sign up for the sake of continuous learning. Giri, who came to New York from Nepal a year ago, is enrolled in two courses — English and psychology.

“I’m taking them because the college is just amazing,” he said. “The first time I stepped onto the campus, the vibe was amazing. I have loved all my classes so much that I didn’t want to stop learning, even for three weeks, and I wanted to make the best out of every second I spent in college.”

The 19-year-old Giri, an “A” student, would have taken more than two Winter Session courses — he had his eye on drawing — but there was no time in his schedule. "As it is, I’ll be in class from 12:40 p.m. to 6 p.m.),” he said. “I enjoy the learning process, and when I enjoy something, it gets easy.”

Making things easy and interesting for students is what CUNY’s Winter Session is all about. Sarah Leibowitz, who took Political Science 101 in her freshman year, journeyed to the Galápagos as a sophomore and was eager to start Classics 150 in the 2012 session, encourages other students to follow in her study steps.

“Whether it’s a core-curriculum class that you need or a class that you are interested in,” she said, “it’s a great opportunity to really focus on the class without the distraction or pressure from taking multiple classes at the same time.”
A unique exploration of “The Great Recession” in the context of economic upheaval throughout U.S. history is now available on a dynamic website and a richly illustrated companion calendar.

“The Unforgiving Economy” calendar, supported by The New York Times and JPMorgan Chase, was created by a team of archivists and historians at the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives at LaGuardia Community College, under the supervision of professor Richard K. Lieberman. It includes pages of economic milestones, starting with John Rolfe planting the first tobacco in Virginia in 1612 and British and Dutch pirates trading 40 to 60 enslaved Africans for provisions in Virginia in 1619.

“In the aftermath of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression,” Chancellor Matthew Goldstein wrote in the introduction to the calendar, this “is a timely look at the economic history of the United States, helping readers to understand the patterns of economic growth and crises in our nation’s history.” The project “received valuable input from the University’s finest scholars, whose participation underscores the integrity of the content.” Illustrated with scores of photographs and graphics drawn from the Archives and the Times, the calendar also offers overviews of key facets of economic history, one each month, from agriculture to the environment, from black migration northward to the role of 19th-century robber barons, from advertising and credit to the underground economy. The University is also releasing a “this date in history” app that draws upon research done for this and other CUNY wall calendars over the past seven years.

CUNY’s new this-date-in-history app reveals, for example, that on Jan. 18, 1919, President Woodrow Wilson and allied leaders opened the Paris Peace Conference in hope of settling issues arising from World War I. The app—which also draws from prior CUNY calendars on voting rights and citizenship, women’s leadership, immigrants, city life, freedom, health and public higher education — can be downloaded for free from Apple’s App Store and Android’s Market.

It can be viewed and downloaded at http://www.laguardiawagnerarchive.lagcc.cuny.edu/mobil/app/home1.php.

The text and most of the images from the University’s eight calendars are at www.cuny.edu/freedom.

Helping Haiti’s Universities
CUNY is helping create a network of three public universities located outside of Haiti’s capital of Port-au-Prince, which was leveled by the 2010 earthquake that took a quarter-million lives and left 1.5 million homeless. Since 85 percent of Haiti’s higher education institutions were in the capital, decentralizing is expected to promote greater access to education while strengthening regional workforces and economies. CUNY also has established a fellowship program giving six Haitian students from each of the regional universities a $500 stipend for books, etc.

But higher education is only one problem in the island nation. In a new anthology — Tectonic Shifts: Haiti Since the Earthquake — York College assistant professor of African American Studies and Anthropology Mark Schuller, who also teaches at the University of Haiti, and Latin America specialist Pablo Morales, present analyses by scholars, journalists, health professionals and activists who portray the aid community for the good of their continent (Ngozi O. Onuoha, Assistant Professor, City College, an A.S. in theater arts.)

Kempton Award Winners Announced
Undergraduate student journalists who described the plight of people who live in rat-infested tenements (Matthew Perlman, Hunter College), provided a compassionate look at undocumented immigrants surviving by collecting cans and bottles for the deposits (Basilisa Alonso, Lehman College), urged Africans to work for the good of their continent (Ngozi O. Onuoha, City College) and run a multilingual online news source (thebronxjournal.com — created and maintained by Lehman College journalism students who take The Bronx Journal Workshop) have won the University’s annual Murray Kempton Award competition named for the famed columnist who captured the soul of the city while often serving as its conscience. Winners receive $800.

State Approves New Degree Programs
The state Education Department has approved a number of new degree programs, including: at CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, the nation’s first M.A. in entrepreneurial journalism; at Hunter College, a B.A./M.A. and M.F.A. in dance plus a D.N.P. in community and public health nursing; at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, a B.A. in law and society and a B.A. in philosophy; at New York City College of Technology, a B.S. in math education and a B.S. in radiological sciences; at Queens College, a B.A. in middle eastern studies; at the School of Professional Studies, a B.S. in health information management and an M.S. in information systems; at Borough of Manhattan Community College and John Jay College, a joint A.S./B.S. in accounting for forensics/economics; at Hostos Community College, an A.S. in police science and an A.A.S. in game design; and at LaGuardia Community College, an A.S. in theater arts.

Vet Services Earn High Rating
The University again is included in Military Advanced Education’s annual Guide to America’s Top Military-Friendly Colleges & Universities — which set its bar higher for inclusion in the 2012 roundup than in previous years. “No school is more dedicated to promoting quality educational programs that serve all branches of our Armed Services and I am proud to be able to work with you to increase your military enrollments,” Military Advanced Education associate publisher Glenn R. Berlin said in his announcement to CUNY.

BOSTON — Winter 2012 | 5
There are hidden treasures throughout CUNY, programs launched and nurtured by faculty members with a particular blend of vision, passion and wherewithal. One of them is the Department of Photography at LaGuardia Community College, a program that started small in 1986 and became what remains CUNY’s only degree-granting program in photography. Its students’ work has become a signature of the college, earning the department a growing reputation as a jewel of the community colleges.

LaGuardia’s photography program, considered one of the top two-year programs in the country, now has some 200 students a year and many of them are accepted into highly competitive B.F.A. programs. It moved into state-of-the-art facilities two years ago and has been making the most of them with the kind of ambitious projects more often associated with top-flight four-year colleges — international trips, for instance, including a month-long expedition to Chile led by program director Scott Sternbach that departed Jan. 16.

LaGuardia’s photography department was started by Bruce Brooks, who now coordinates the school’s visual arts programs. Sternbach, a successful commercial photographer, joined as an adjunct in the late 1990s and later became the program’s director. He’s credited with growing the

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**Focus: Daily Jobs**

LaGuardia photo students create an exhibit-worthy collective portrait of neighborhood workers.

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Tradesman’s Tool
By Sharone Poole

Artist
By Young Kyu Park
program with department-wide projects and excursions, supported by grants he’s pursued, that have given students real-world experience and exposure for their work. It’s raised the profile of both the program and the college as a whole over the last few years.

The work of student photographers can be seen all over LaGuardia — in the poster-sized photos that hang in the front windows of the campus’s B building and in the pages of the college catalogue and on its website.

And, most recently, in the photographs now filling every wall on the second floor of the B building. “Long Island City Works” is the exhibit that emerged from the work of dozens of students who spent months fanning out from the college to create a collective portrait of the working life of the bustling, gritty neighborhood around the college.

“They did it with something that’s actually useful and important. Whether someone’s selling falafel on the street or fixing someone’s shoes down the street or working in a chair factory, we’re paying tribute to workers at a time when jobs are so much a part of the current climate.”

The students spent hours, sometimes days, with auto mechanics and street vendors, people who work in kitchens and welding shops and even a chicken farm. And in Long Island City’s few remaining factories. One happens to be where they make the most famous pianos in the world — Steinways, a photographer’s gold mine. The students found — and conveyed in their photographs — that the men and women who produce things like padding for moving vans are the heart and soul of industrial Long Island City. The exhibit’s poster image shows only a worker’s gritty hand — black with grease, thumb wrapped in a black bandage, grasping an oversized wrench.

“It’s kind of like magic when you have a roll of plastic and go outside and press a button, and when you see the photos you see something you didn’t notice before — even when you were shooting,” said Lidiya Kan, who photographed the Steinway factory with an old-fashioned (but up-to-date) film camera. She’s one of many students who consider it more magical to create their work in the school’s new 28-station darkroom than in the glare of a computer.

Young Kyu Park, one of the school’s most talented student photographers, is 32 and came from South Korea with a college business degree. He discovered that Long Island City has a vibrant colony of urban artists and wound up photographing 29. “I shot for a month and then I spent two months just looking at them,” Park says. “I wanted a consistency, so I picked the pictures where I truly engaged with the artist.” The best of them — inventive, magazine-quality portraits of artists in their elements — fill a wall of the exhibit.

Another student, River Soma, spent a day following Stephanos Koullias, a rooftop gardener of local renown who ferries his produce around Long Island City on a “Bucky Buckaw” work trike. “He’s a very spontaneous and energetic person, and I think that mischief comes out in the photographs,” Soma says. One of her photos shows Koullias exuberantly pedaling through the streets — shot from behind while she tried to keep up with him on her bicycle.

The Long Island City Works project was a lesson in an often overlooked part of the craft. “If you’re going to be a photographer, even a landscape photographer, you have to be able to go out and meet people and find ways to get the access you need,” Sternbach says. “The students had to go out into the community and seek out interesting people, talk to them, get to know them as people, not just faceless workers.”

While students at Hunter, Lehman and City College can earn B.F.A.s with a concentration in photography, LaGuardia’s associate’s degree in commercial photography, unique in CUNY, has been a springboard to B.F.A. programs in photography, most notably at the School of Visual Arts. The prestigious design school in Manhattan has come to regard LaGuardia’s photography program as a pipeline for talented commercial photography students.

To see more photos in the exhibit, snap the square with your smartphone.
Tech-Sharing Boosts CUNY First

A T HOSTOS Community College, students win prizes for using home grown technology to register for classes early and perform other tasks. At Brooklyn College, long lines at the registrar have thinned, thanks to a new online appointment scheduler for face-to-face advisement. And IT staff at John Jay College of Criminal Justice have devised a secure wireless link between two college buildings without using expensive fiber optic wiring.

Increasingly, grassroots applications are being shared — across departments and among the colleges — to improve communications and student services and promote efficiency and savings. Now a plan has emerged to incorporate many of these innovations into CUNY First, the sweeping, five-year-old initiative to shed antiquated 20th century software and streamline essential common University-wide business transactions, from registering for courses to paying bills.

“Tech-sharing and CUNY First are a natural fit,” said Executive Vice Chancellor Allan Dohrin, who also serves as the University chief operating officer. Dohrin noted that the CUNY First initiative has from the start been a full partnership with the colleges. “Together we are re-engineering the system. It would have been impossible without an open, collaborative culture.”

The topic of grassroots collaboration was presented at the annual CUNY IT Conference last December and quickly became part of monthly discussions at the University’s IT Steering Committee, which has representatives from every campus. “People liked the concept,” recalled Praveen Panchal, chief information officer at John Jay. “Now there is a buzz,” he said. “It’s a win-win for all campuses.”

Some campuses have long been quiet leaders in creating applications that can be used by other institutions. Brooklyn, for example, has “invented a number of tools and apps that have been borrowed by our peers,” said Mark Gold, assistant vice president for information technology services and chief technology officer. “Rather than leave these innovations at the local college level, why not share these tools?”

In the last few months, IT officials at individual campuses have been doing just that, engaging in a wave of productive collaborations. Discussions are very open, honest, enlightening,” said Brian Cohen, associate vice chancellor and University chief information officer. “We are looking for commonality, for more opportunities to share technologies.”

Launched five years ago, CUNY First faced the unprecedented task of replacing the patchwork of aging computer systems at the campuses with a new generation of information technology that would establish more uniform and cost-effective procedures University-wide. The first implementations are up and running at Queens College and Queensborough Community College. Full implementation across the University is expected to be completed within the next several years.

“CUNY First is a great and long-needed solution,” said Varun Sehgal, assistant vice president of information technology and chief information officer at Hostos. “Does it meet every need? No. But no single system can.”

Sehgal and others stress that “there is no need so unique at individual colleges that it can’t be adapted” from other systems. “If there were more collaboration it would eliminate duplication of efforts,” he says. “The key driver is, why waste time and resources if we can share?”

Colleges will be sharing through an IT “skills bank” aimed at assembling a database of IT personnel with an array of specialized skills, said Asif Hussain, chief information officer at Kingsborough Community College. “We’re surveying IT departments on all campuses,” Hussain said. “We want to identify resources that we can use inside CUNY, instead of going out and hiring consultants.” So far, more than 630 areas of expertise have been identified, he said.

Meanwhile, the colleges have begun offering other campuses a selection of innovative services created for their own students. Hostos’ “Student Reward Points Program” encourages students to better manage activities such as early registration, workshop participation and faculty evaluations. Each activity has a number of points associated with it and for every 1,000 points, students get a chance to win prizes ranging from MetroCards to big-screen TVs. (In four years, early registration and bursar payments went from about 1,800 to more than 4,200, with the student population ranging from 6,500 to 6,700.)

Hostos also created a self-service system to help computer users reset their passwords, and a Class Exception Management System (CEMS), which enables faculty and staff to notify students about unexpected changes in class schedules before they trek to campus. These systems can be easily shared with other colleges, and offer applications not provided by CUNY First, Sehgal says.

At John Jay, IT experts devised the Bridgewave wireless system, which provides a secure link between buildings without using expensive fiber optic wiring, says Chief Information Officer Praveen Panchal. “We pioneered this at CUNY,” Panchal said. “It’s very reliable and offers tremendous cost savings,” he said, adding that a similar system is being installed at Borough of Manhattan Community College. Brooklyn has created versions of a transferrable advisement appointment scheduling system for several functions, including admissions, registrars, financial aid and SHERPA. (Search for Education, Reference, and Knowledge). Students can set up appointments online, so that they’re expected and can avoid long lines. Since advisers know who’s coming in, if there’s a problem such as bad weather they can email to change appointments. “It’s almost a sea change” in campus operations, Gold said.
It’s Easy Be’in’ Green in Our City

By Gary Schmidgall

T

hat man from Stratford was an expert on the arboreal. He knew from deciduous.

Take Macbeth, who wistfully observes just before his demise, “My way of life/ Is fall’n into the sere, the yellow leaf…” Or the speaker in Sonnet 72 who, in midlife crisis, admits, “That time of year thou mayst in me behold/ When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang/ Upon those boughs which shake against the cold…”

What better time to contemplate the leafy splendors of our city than in the dead of winter, when New Yorkers have no choice but to stare out on “Bare ruined choirs/ Where the sweet flower did before hang/ Upon those boughs which now before us droop/ Plenteous in fruit.” Or the saucer magnolia “thrives in well-cared-for city medians,” while the sycamore maple is “highly salt-tolerant,” which is why it thrives on City Island in Long Island Sound. The hedge maple must be happy in our midst: it “tolerates pollution, compacted soils, drought, and tough urban conditions.”

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The guide wraps up with some tree-care tips, a short bibliography, and excerpts from Day’s interviews with some of the city’s notable “tree people.” Among them is Adrian Benepe, Commissioner of Parks (“I honestly think that New Yorkers care more about trees than people in any other city”) and Wayne Cahilly, who is closing in on 30 years at the Bronx Botanical Garden (“I don’t know anyone who has more knowledge about trees than Wayne.”)

Day gives the last word to Eric Thomann of the Community Garden Coalition. Thomann’s cadre of tree stewards—in-training recently drew up a list of the valuable attributes of trees, and the last bullet point best explains why we can’t plant enough of them: “trees bring people together.”

Street Trees of New York City got me to thinking about Stephen Slovick’s poem and the song he considers the best of his storied career. It was for “Pacification” in 1976, and its title perfectly captures where Leslie Day would like to be, if only in spirit: “Someone in a Tree.”

CUNY Matters welcomes information about new books that have been written or edited by faculty and members of the University community.

Contact: Sheila.McKenna@mail.cuny.edu
It can be confusing at first, but change in the workplace is inevitable — and often an improvement.

HOW DO CUNY employees — or workers anywhere — deal with change at the office? How do they handle new protocols, new supervisors, new schedules — or a new way of working online?

The short answer: Change is hard. But change in the workplace, the experts say, is also inevitable.

With this in mind, CUNY’s Office of Professional Development and Learning Management (PDLM) held a workshop on “Understanding and Managing Organizational Change.” For 19 managers and supervisors from seven CUNY colleges and community colleges, a registrar, an athletics director, a human resources specialist and a buildings and grounds supervisor, among others, attended the November session.

“Some people like change. Some people are energized by it,” said Ouida Vendryes, a consultant who led the session and is the president/CEO of Resolution Management. “But many, she added, “experience change as a loss. So there needs to be some acknowledgement of that.”

The day-long session included role-playing, a film, lectures, discussions and a quiz. PDLM is part of CUNY’s Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM). It provides training and professional development opportunities designed to enhance the knowledge, skills and competencies of all CUNY employees who want to “sharpen their professional tool kit.” Visit: www.cuny.edu/about/administration/office/ohrm/pdlm/about.html

In January, courses in business writing for professional staff and communications for administrative staff were held, said PDLM director Rhonnye Ricks. “But the majority of people who participate in our training are not managers and supervisors,” she added. The most popular courses with administrative staff include: “Effective Office Management for Today’s Workplace,” “Managing Multiple Priorities,” “People Smart Strategies for Positive Workplace Relationships” and “Attitude Is Everything,” which is also taught by Vendryes.

Although University Academic Affairs provides faculty development opportunities, Ricks added that “faculty members are particularly fond of three of our professional development courses: ‘Train the Trainer,’ ‘Working with Generations X, Y & Z’ and ‘Fundamentals of Presentations.’ We usually have one faculty member in each session.” PDLM also provides technology courses and University-mandated training in areas such as sexual harassment prevention, workplace violence prevention and passenger van driving.

At November’s session on “Understanding and Managing Organizational Change,” participants spoke about their own experiences.

LeRoy Smith, coordinator of the print shop at Brooklyn College, told about how he managed change years ago, a vintage tale that nevertheless is instructive today.

When the accounting functions of his department went from paper to computer, he had one employee who was particularly resistant. So he asked her to sit — for two days — with another employee who liked computers.

“She did no work, she just sat and watched for two days,” LeRoy said about the employee devoted to her paper system.

“And at the end, she said, ‘You know, it seems easier this way. I don’t have to do it by hand two or three times.’”

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Wendy Thornton, executive director of
student services and conduct at CCNY, spoke about an experience she had working at a different college, outside of the CUNY system. It was not a faculty position but she was also asked to teach. She resisted. But a mentor urged her on.

She said she was told, “as a professional there are things you are going to have to do that you don’t want to do but it’s required ... that has stuck with me through the years.”

In speaking on another topic, about changes at the top, Therese LeMelle, director of communications at Bronx Community College, noted: “For us a new president is a positive change. My office is receiving more support than previously.”

In a role-playing exercise, participants were asked to find partners, face each other, and then turn back-to-back and change three things about their appearances. The purpose of this was to show how small and hard-to-perceive changes can be perplexing.

“When we change things subtly people think we have a hidden agenda,” Vendryes said. “You don’t want to do these subtly. You want to put it out there.”

Vendryes also reminded the particpants to let others speak or as she put it metaphorically: “One microphone at a time.”

Marlene Ranjitsingh, director of finance and administration at Kingsborough Community College, agreed enthusiastically.

“Sometimes it’s good just to listen to what someone is saying,” she said. “I find a lot of times as human beings we just don’t listen.”

Excluded among Vendryes’ other tips for dealing with change were these: “Expect it. Look for it. Involve staff.” She also suggested “giving choices when possible but be clear and acknowledge that all ideas may not be used.” And finally: “Keep focus, and moving, and assess performances.”

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In America remains a great failure of primary and secondary education, according to Khalil Gibran Muhammad, new director of Harlem’s Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Hear his talk at City Tech.

Topology professor at Hunter College and the Graduate Center, has studied how Viking settlers managed to avoid destroying the land for centuries. “In Greenland they got it right, but the environment changed on them again,” he says.

The University of Chicago derailed the confirmation of Clarence Thomas as a U.S. Supreme Court justice 20 years ago, says she hadn’t intended to testify about her personal experience but realized that “At the heart of my testimony was the integrity of the court ….”

We have a disease that has affected millions of children and the exposed could pass it on to their own children, said James Mercy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, speaking at a national event at Brooklyn College. “It’s called violence against children.”

One of the bedrocks of the Jewish religion is a belief in the coming of the Messiah, but for some it can seem at odds with the history of the faith, ... at the Irving Howe Memorial Lecture at the Graduate Center. Wieseltier is literary editor for the New Republic and author of...

A summary of a study of sexual harassment almost 20 years ago shows that 9 in 10 women have experienced it at work, school, university and...