

IN THE NEWS

Teaching Excellence Rewarded

Professors **Dr. Karen Stephens** and **Steve Winter**, who have combined for nearly six decades of exemplary service to SUNY Orange, were named as winners of the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching during the Spring 2008 semester.

Winter, the longest tenured faculty member currently at the College in a full-time role, has been teaching business-related courses here for more than 40 years. Stephens, who attended SUNY Orange as a student, has held a faculty position in the Physical Therapist Assistant Department since 1992.

"At the heart of our work is 'teaching and learning,' and Karen and Steve exemplify the best of what we do," says **Dr. Catherine Chew**, vice president for Academic Affairs.

Throughout his tenure at the College, Winter has been a leader and visionary in implementing new and innovative programs designed with student learning in mind. Nearly 30 years ago, he was the first SUNY Orange professor to offer an Honors Course. He instituted the use of advisory boards in the Business Department that continue to support the College today.

More recently, he has actively pursued the use of instructional technology, having developed an online course for Principles of Marketing while also offering web-enhanced materials to supplement each of the courses he oversees today.

Winter's innovative ideas stem from a teaching philosophy in which he is committed to creating a partnership in the classroom. He understands and nurtures an informative and respectful rapport with students.

On developing that classroom atmosphere, Winter remarks, "It is always a work in progress. All parties must be flexible and seek the proper balance so we create an optimum fit to achieve learning."

A revered colleague and professor, Stephens has consistently demonstrated a strong respect for the welfare, value and dignity of her students, who gravitate to her easy instructional style and benefit from her guidance. She is a strong student advocate and is consistently called upon by the Student Services staff to assist with student advising.

In addition to the vast clinical background she brings to the classroom, Stephens has been a strong proponent of developing supportive and effective learning environments—implementing instructional methods that feature small student discussion groups and embedding critical thinking throughout her curriculum.

"I try to provide a stimulating learning environment that allows the student to feel free to ask questions and respond to questions without fear of censor," she explains.

As winners of the President's Award, both Stephens and Winter have been nominated for the 2008 State University of New York "Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence." ■



Steve Winter



Dr. Karen Stephens

Bridging the Academic Gap

In 2008, SUNY Orange's Collaborative Faculty Partnership program will once again unite educators from the high school and collegiate ranks to explore how they may more closely align the academic expectations placed upon students at both levels and increase students' academic success.

Building off a productive debut in 2007, SUNY Orange is embarking upon the second year of its faculty partnership program with Orange-Ulster BOCES Instructional Council. In the ensuing months, the College will pair its registered faculty members with educators from six Orange County high schools, as well as Orange-Ulster BOCES.

"Our goals are to identify shared expectations for students' success, increase students' academic performance and promote collaborative efforts among secondary and postsecondary educators," says **Rosana Reyes-Rosello**, director of SUNY Orange's Office of Educational Partnerships.

Participants will be paired (one College faculty member with one high school teacher) by teaching disciplines. They will work to identify a project or a unit of study with level-specific rubrics and meaningful assessment tools. Once their plan has been presented to the entire group and refined, the pairs will implement their initiatives from September through November. Assessment results will be presented to College and BOCES representatives in December.

Halpern Cited for Nursing Excellence

Cited as one of the region's 50 leading nursing professionals, SUNY Orange professor **Jean Halpern** was

selected to receive an "Excellence in Nursing" award as presented by *Hudson Valley Magazine*.

Halpern and her fellow recipients were honored during a May event at the Villa Borghese restaurant in Wappingers Falls, N.Y., where they received certificates of recognition and commemorative gifts. Twenty winners, chosen by a committee of medical professionals and editors, were to be profiled in a future issue of the magazine.

The winners came from local hospitals, private practices, schools, nursing homes and other healthcare facilities.

"I am extremely honored to have been thought worthy of such an award," Halpern says. "I only hope that I have influenced students to be the best nurses they can be. Nursing has been my entire life and I am so proud to have chosen this profession."



Jean Halpern

The award recognizes Halpern's tremendous accomplishments throughout her career at the College, but particularly her tireless efforts over the past 18 months in bringing "simulation technology" to the College's nursing curriculum.

"Life-like" simulation mannekins allow educators to use current technology in implementing training scenarios that cover virtually every potential medical situation, providing students with "real life" experiences before they acquire proficiency in the clinical setting.

"Jean is hard-working, enthusiastic and tenacious. She won't stop until she completes a project," explains **Dr. Catherine Chew**, vice president for Academic Affairs. "She is most deserving of this award and has been a true ambassador for both the nursing profession and the College." ■

Students Provide Tax Preparation Assistance

This past spring, five SUNY Orange accounting students, along with two students from the Pine Bush Academy of Finance, earned valuable "real world" experience through their participation in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

Upon completion of a thorough training program that included online and classroom work, as well as certification by a representative of the Internal Revenue Service, the students were approved to prepare taxes. **Daryl Goldberg**, accounting professor, coordinated the program on behalf of the College.

The students were assigned to Orange Works, a workforce development system in Orange County that provides links to resources and services in a professional business environment to individuals who are seeking employment, and to businesses building their workforce. In addition to providing a valuable resource for clients of Orange Works, the students' experience certainly adds an important professional element to their resumes.

"We find that our students thrive in situations like this, whether it is participating in the VITA program or completing an internship. They embrace the experience because they know it will benefit them after they've graduated," says **Suzanne Krissler**, chair of the Accounting and Office Technologies Department. ■

Information Commons Brings Technology to Students

The newly created "Information Commons" in the SUNY Orange Library has quickly become the technological epicenter of the Middletown campus by giving students access to nearly 60 computer workstations replete with software programs and internet access.

By replacing old book stacks, traditional study stations, card catalogs and bound copies of periodicals with contemporary information "hubs," SUNY Orange is bringing today's technology to the students' fingertips, says **Susan Parry**, library director.

The College has added a teacher's station and large-screen monitor in the existing computer lab to allow Library staff or faculty members to conduct instructional workshops for students.



"It was imperative that we change from our traditional library approach to a more contemporary space that reflected the needs of today's students," Parry explains. "We've tried to bring available research tools and processes together with the students' productivity needs, and that has been a very positive change for our students." ■



Administrators from Oaklands College in the UK visited SUNY Orange for three days in early November 2007 to continue discussions that had been ongoing between the two institutions for more than a year. Oaklands is part of "Further Education" in Britain, which is trying to implement changes so that country can operate educational programs more like those at American community colleges. Above, Mindy Ross (second from right), associate vice president representing the Newburgh Extension Center, discusses the College's planned branch campus, which will be situated at the intersection of Grand Street and Broadway, during the group's tour of Newburgh. Professor Diane Bliss (left) escorted the Oaklands group in Newburgh. ■

Global Initiative Succeeds in Debut

From Dr. Patricio Navia's opening lecture in April 2007 to a grand Cinco de Mayo event in Spring 2008, SUNY Orange spent more than a year concentrating on a myriad of Latin American cultural, political, social, historic and economic issues during the College's debut "Global Initiative."



Helping Children Get SMART This Summer

The SUNY Orange SMART Program, to be offered this summer, is yet another example of a collaborative effort between academic and administrative departments that yields benefits for the community.

Coordinated jointly by the College's Office of Educational Partnerships and the Occupational Therapy Assistant Department, the SMART Program—"Sensory-Motor Activities and Recreational Transition"—was created for children from pre-kindergarten age through sixth grade.

Its goal is to enhance children's physical and academic abilities by strengthening and refining their gross and fine motor skills, sensory-motor integration, handwriting skills, socializing skills and self-esteem.

In addition to the children receiving therapy, all eight sessions will include a question-and-answer period where parents can meet with the practitioners to discuss techniques and resources related to the goals of each session. The child will also receive individualized goals and instruction that

provides a bridge to the next school year.

The Office of Educational Partnerships, directed by **Rosana Reyes-Rosello**, provides the administrative oversight and organization of the program while OTA Department chair **Flo Hannes** and her staff are coordinating the lineup of licensed and certified occupational therapists to support the four-week program.

"The program is designed to enhance a child's skills and to improve their awareness of self-regulation while enjoying various activities. Typical sessions will include sensory-motor warm-ups, visual motor and perceptual activities, with an emphasis on fine motor skills and handwriting," Hannes adds.

"The children will work in small groups and receive individualized attention, all in a safe, interactive and fun environment," Reyes-Rosello adds. "This is an exciting and innovative summer program for students with OT needs. Sharing our resources to meet a local need is an example of our fulfillment of SUNY Orange's mission to be the community's college." ■

A rousing success by all accounts, the Global Initiative demonstrated the true collaborative atmosphere that exists at SUNY Orange, drawing participation from all corners of campus.

"I couldn't be happier with the participation, enthusiasm and collaboration I witnessed throughout this project," says **Dr. Catherine Chew**, vice president for Academic Affairs. "Our faculty embraced the Global Initiative and our staff supported it from the outset. And in the end, our students truly reaped the rewards of the hard work put forth by so many folks on campus.

"This project brought a global outlook to our curriculum and our community, and we will certainly be able to build off its success in future Global Initiatives," Chew adds.