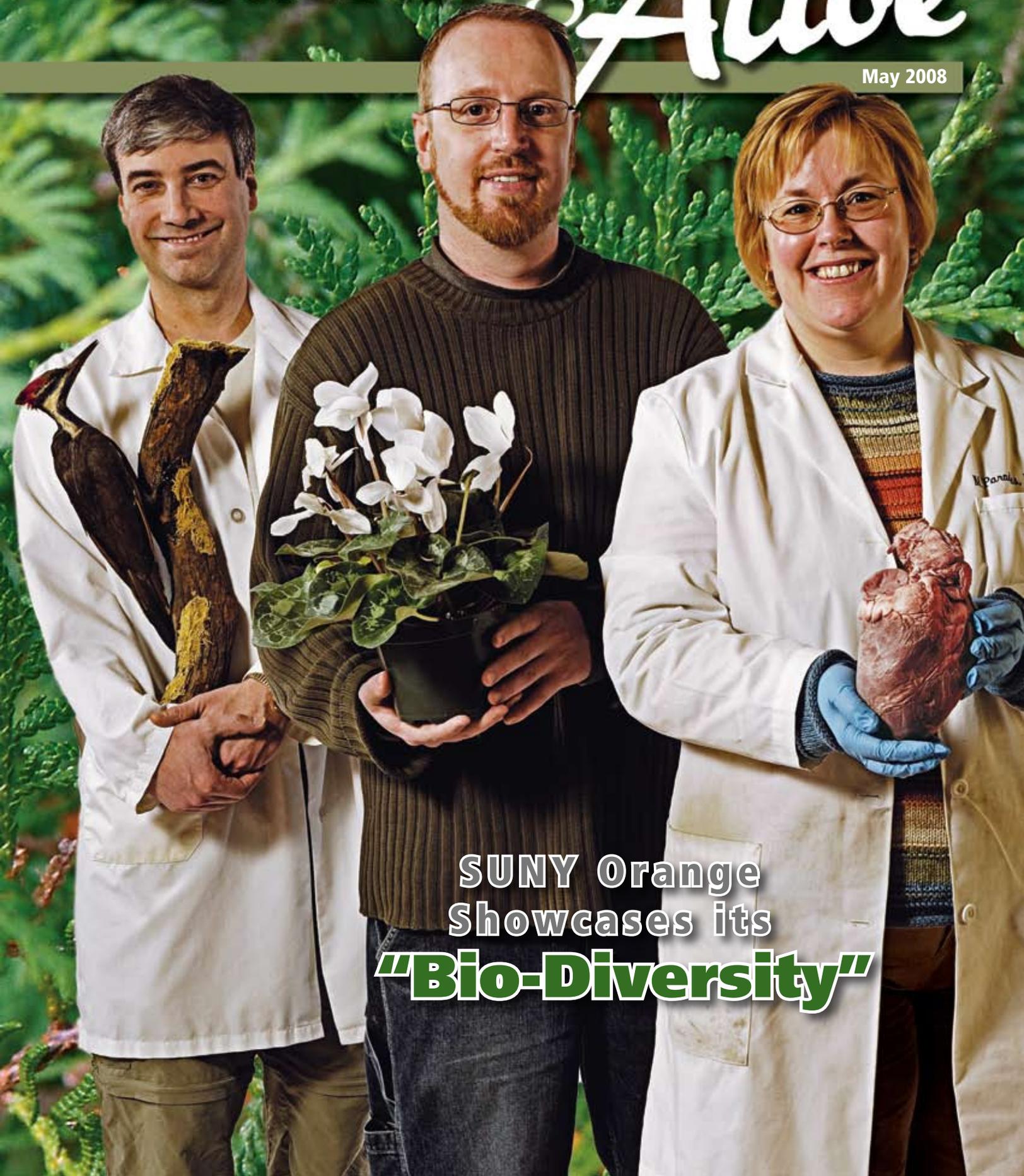


Learning *Alive*

May 2008



SUNY Orange
Showcases its
"Bio-Diversity"

Learning *Alive*

The Academic Affairs
Magazine of SUNY Orange

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From left, Dr. Joe Zurovchak (ornithology), Monty Vacura (botany) and Dr. Shelly Paradies (neuroscience) demonstrate the breadth of diversity that members of the College's Biology Department bring to the classroom.



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Dr. William Richards

President

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Learning Alive welcomes your ideas for future articles. Topics should focus on academic initiatives and the students, faculty and staff who are making learning come alive.

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Welcome

Teamwork is a critical element in the success of any organization, business or college. To prosper as a group, individuals must be able to work in harmony with others, both internally and externally.

I'm proud to say that the staff and faculty at SUNY Orange excel in their ability to collaborate with one another, unite their resources and strive toward a common goal. They also have demonstrated a willingness to embrace innovative ideas from outside the College while creatively teaming with business and civic leaders, and community members, to enhance our students' educational opportunities.

In this edition of Learning Alive, you'll read about our outstanding Biology Department, under the direction of Dr. Frank Traeger. This talented and creative group of educators and administrators is at the forefront of several exciting new initiatives on campus.

You will also learn about how our Continuing and Professional Education staff is expanding the College's outreach in business training, professional development programs and non-credit education. You'll see that a group of faculty sought to develop several "humanities initiatives" that sharpened their focus on classroom teaching, and you'll discover how a wide cross-section of campus personnel developed a model "learning community" aimed at assuring a positive "first year experience" for selected students.

We have young, energetic faculty who are bringing new ideas and backgrounds to the College, and seasoned professors who are enhancing their expertise with contemporary teaching methods. In the end, their wonderful efforts are keeping learning "alive" at SUNY Orange.

Sincerely,

Dr. William Richards
President, SUNY Orange

Human beings need community, that sense of belonging and contributing to something larger than oneself. Community Colleges adopted the term as their unique descriptor during the 1960's and 1970's—their era of greatest expansion. The term "community" at SUNY Orange includes activities in the classroom; in the department, within the College as a whole, or in relation to local, national and international society.

In an academic year in which we faced a variety of stressors that affected our daily routines, it seems important to be reminded that community building and teamwork are ever present and bountiful at SUNY Orange. Within the pages of this third issue of Learning Alive are stories about people and departments who individually and collectively are making significant contributions to the College community, and beyond.

For example, read about the First-Year Experience "movers and shakers," a team that is connecting the curriculum and helping students bond through a unique learning experience. Or read about the Biology Department, an "awesome" team of extremely talented and gifted faculty involved in anything and everything from environmental sustainability and ecological conservation to technological innovation and campus beautification.

Learning Alive is intended to showcase colleagues in Academic Affairs and this issue surely hits the mark. As you peruse the pages, I am certain you will be impressed by our activist community—a community that shares a common interest in learning and professional involvement. When we collaborate, work as a team and move beyond individual perspectives into the realm of common understanding, the possibilities are limitless. Enjoy your read!

Sincerely,

Dr. Catherine Chew
Vice President for Academic Affairs

Learning Alive

Strong internal teamwork and creative alliances with those outside of the College help keep learning "alive" at SUNY Orange.



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Teaching and learning come alive at SUNY Orange thanks, in part, to teaching excellence, academic partnerships, technological support, community outreach and international relations.

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Thanks to a strong team of administrators, the College's Continuing and Professional Education Department has successfully retooled and integrated its programming, operations, sales and marketing strategies to create a recipe for success.



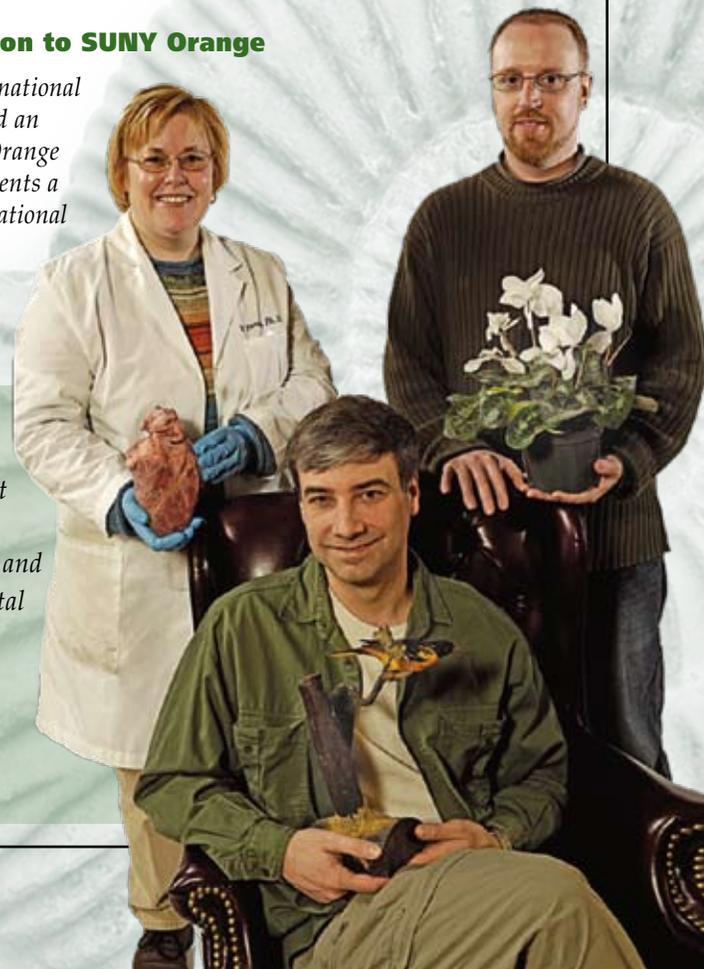
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A gleaming new Gilman Center for International Education, revised academic offerings and an influx of new faculty will allow SUNY Orange to globalize its curriculum and offer students a first-rate academic pathway to the international career of their choice.

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Cover Story: Demonstrating its "Bio-Diversity"

With a full-time faculty roster numbering 10 strong that is aided by a network of reliable support personnel, SUNY Orange's Biology Department is among the College's largest and most diverse. The faculty members boast an impressive portfolio of specialties, including family medicine, anatomy and physiology, neuroscience, ornithology, ecology, environmental science, dendrochronology, botany, evolutionary biology, genetics, developmental biology, nutrition and herpetology. Under the direction of Dr. Frank Traeger, the department aspires to a mission that is equal parts service, academics, campus enrichment and innovation.



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." ■

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."



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. ■



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.

The Latest Chapter: Class of 2007

By Tony Cruz

*M*ore than a century old and still going strong, Morrison Hall has witnessed many changes over her lifespan. And, oh, what a story she could tell.

Starting out as a mansion for Webb Horton and his family, she sheltered the wealthy. Little detailed text of her formative years is available but a slow walk accompanied by a good imagination may reveal some of her stories.

After many years of what must have been incredible living laced with the extravagances of life in the early 1900s, she moved to another phase of her life, becoming the centerpiece of a local community college and maturing to represent a symbol of hope for many who would not have otherwise had an opportunity to get an education. At first, she *was* the College, but soon the demand for education expanded her surroundings. She now presides over a family of buildings, administrators, faculty and students who comprise the cast of her latest chapter.

In August 2007 I had the good fortune of joining this story as one of a rather large batch of 18 new faculty hires at SUNY Orange. Our "Class of 2007" arrived during an exciting time for the College, as there were many improvements and changes taking place, and our group hailed from a wide cross-section of disciplines and backgrounds.

For example, **Dr. Michele Iannuzzi Sucich** (featured on page 17) left a medical practice to pursue teaching while retired New York City police captain **Robert Cacciatore** is a former head of security for Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

Backgrounds like these have bred an incredible amount of respect within our group, not to mention acquaintances and friendships. All are founded in our mutual outlook, commitment and

dedication to education. There is a natural sense of "team" that permeates our meetings and conversations as part of the Center for Teaching and Learning's new faculty development program.

What is interesting is the variety of previous career experience we bring from the outside world, all of which has enhanced our teaching and brought other aspects to the classroom. For example, **Robert Ricci** comes to us with a background as a building contractor who then moved into grant writing before he returned for his degree in literature. **Kristen Katzin-Nystrom**, on the other hand, comes from a long line of teachers, while **David Wang** brings knowledge and experience from his education in China.

Meanwhile, **Pam Rice-Woytowick** is a "homegrown" SUNY Orange alumna who returns to join our faculty, sharing her own student experiences, as well as her architectural creativity and expertise, with current students.

"The Class of 2007 is special. I recognized in August, during the initial orientation, that our search committees had identified an incredibly talented and gifted group of new faculty," says **Dr. Catherine Chew**, vice president for Academic Affairs.

The current administration and faculty have been extremely supportive, becoming both official and unofficial mentors to many of us. This nurturing has prepared us for the responsibilities necessary to better help our students.

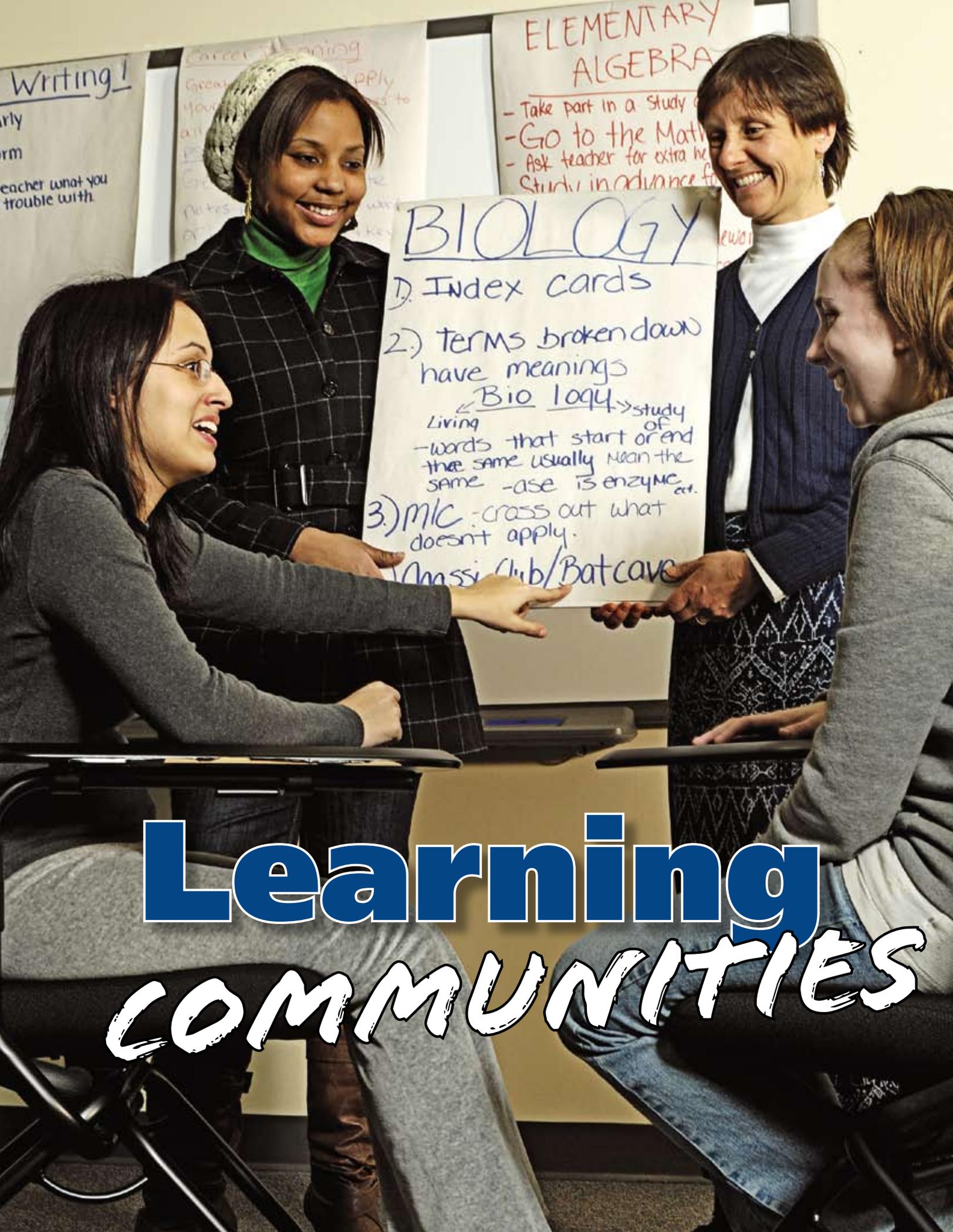
We know Morrison Hall will be here long after we are gone. In the scheme of things we are merely small, yet significant, parts of a continuously unfolding story. ■

Tony Cruz is an instructor in the College's English Department and a member of the "Class of 2007."



The Class of 2007

Name	Department
Robert Cacciatore	Criminal Justice
Patricia Cal	Nursing
Deborah Chedister	English
Anthony Cruz	English
Sandra Graff	English
Cory Harris	Global Studies
Michele Iannuzzi Sucich	Biology
Kristen Katzin-Nystrom	English
Stone Lamb	English
Barbara McCormack	Nursing
Michael McCoy	Global Studies
Alan McGlynn	Nursing
Stephen Meagher	English
Robert Ricci	English
Pamela Rice-Woytowick	Architecture
Shelly Sloan	English
David Wang	Applied Technologies
Heidi Weber	History



ELEMENTARY ALGEBRA

- Take part in a Study
- Go to the Math
- Ask teacher for extra help
- Study in advance for

BIOLOGY

- 1.) Index cards
 - 2.) terms broken down have meanings
 ↳ Bio logy ↳ study of
 Living of
 - words that start or end the same usually mean the same -ase is enzyme etc.
 - 3.) m/c - cross out what doesn't apply.
- Mass Club/Batcave

Learning COMMUNITIES

Creating a Positive “First-Year Experience”

By Sandra Graff

To facilitate creation of a new pilot program at SUNY Orange, aptly named “First-Year Experience/Learning Communities,” participating staff and faculty eagerly crossed course and professional boundaries in hopes that their team approach to teaching and learning will have a greater impact on students than the sum of their individual efforts.

Modeled after Kingsboro Community College’s learning communities and well-grounded in educational theory, this new pilot program has involved more than a year of training, preparation and collaboration across administrative lines between Academic Affairs and Student Services.

So far **Dr. Catherine Chew**, vice president for Academic Affairs, and **Paul Broadie**, vice president for Student Services, are very pleased with the team effort that has taken place with this project. Chew points out, “significant research has demonstrated that learning communities improve retention. The First-Year Experience/Learning Communities gives students study and life skills that will enable them to be successful.”

The program is funded in part by a Carl D. Perkins grant acquired by **Madeline Torres-Diaz** of Student Support Services. The grant’s aim is to link academics with college skills, career goals and support services for entering freshmen who have placed into developmental classes.

Since first-year students often do not see the connections among their courses, they may not immediately realize how skills learned in a writing course might be applied to good effect in other liberal arts courses. Thus, as in Kingsboro’s learning communities, three SUNY Orange courses (Basic Writing Skills 2, Psychology of Adjustment, and College Success Seminar with Career Planning) are linked and scheduled in succession.

A cohort of students attends the linked courses together. Tutors attend classes with students and then meet with them during Freshman Learning Options within the hours scheduled for group study, writing lab or individual tutoring.

A similar joint assignment has been developed in Middletown by **Melissa Browne** (Basic Writing Skills 2) and **Doug Sanders** (Psychology of Adjustment). They have transformed a traditional 12-page semester-long writing assignment into a series of

The learning community works well for me.

I like how most of the classes work together, like Basic Writing Skills and Psychology, for example. We usually see and work with the same people on the assignments.

Jovanny Aviles

Learning Communities student

In Newburgh, a journal assignment given to students serves as a shining example of how instructors plan joint assignments. When students submit their journals, Psychology of Adjustment instructor **Bob Bender** grades them for content and then gives them to Basic Writing Skills 2 instructor **Pat Sculley** to grade for organization and sentence skills. Newburgh student Crystal Kurz notes that her “journal overlaps for two classes, English and Psychology” and that she likes “the set up and the group of teachers who work well together.”

Another shared assignment involves the summary and the academic paragraph, powerful tools for learning and student expression. In Newburgh, as students learn about stress in their psychology course, they learn to summarize an article about stress and write an academic paragraph in response to the article in their writing course.

summaries and personal reflection paragraphs, assigned in manageable pieces throughout the semester. The link extends to Freshman Learning Options sessions, where student study groups summarize their textbook material to prepare for tests in the psychology class.

This teamwork also continues to the College Success Seminar with Career Planning—taught by **Maria Blon** in Middletown and **Jennifer Clayton** in Newburgh—where students learn relevant study skills, such as time management, and continue discussion and personal reflection on topics from the psychology and writing courses. In Blon’s course, students are using psychology topics to complete individual projects for their course portfolios.

One important benefit of learning communities that faculty, tutors and students noticed immediately is the way



Organizing and launching the College's debut "First-Year Experience/Learning Communities" project required considerable input and teamwork from many departments on campus. Among those who lent their time and energy to the project were, from left: Professor Maria Blon, Math; Mary Ann Van Benschoten, Library; Peggy Wasnieski, Learning Assistance Services; Joyce Depew, Records and Registration; Maureen Flaherty, Advising and Counseling; Anthony Scalia, Advising and Counseling; Eileen Burke, Learning Assistance Services; and Paul Eldridge, student tutor.

students have bonded and participated more actively in their classes. The process began when instructors and students came together at the program orientation, where students received tips on practical study skills concepts, were oriented to the College's online technological systems for students and faculty (Banner and Portal), and were taught effective utilization of Library resources.

Middletown student Kristin Neil appreciated "having the same people in each class because all of us have a bond now and study together." According to Browne, there wasn't "that usual shyness during the first couple of weeks when nobody wants to speak, so students are more engaged."

Newburgh student Jessica Trejos immediately became "used to the other

students and pretty comfortable with the teachers and tutor."

Another benefit of teamwork, observed by tutors **Kathy Castore** in Newburgh and **Paul Eldridge** in Middletown, is that students are very motivated to participate in the study sessions, as well as to work on writing skills. **Eileen Burke**, coordinator of Learning Assistance Services, has observed as the semester progressed something very constructive taking place with students in the Freshman Learning Options program: students are taking more responsibility for what happens in their study groups.

Sanders was pleased with the response he received when he checked in with his students on whether they had begun work on the next segment of their psychology writing projects.

One student responded that he was scheduled to write the second phase of this project over the weekend because it was in his planner.

"It is good that instructors with different perspectives and approaches have jumped out of our silos to work together in the learning communities for a common goal," Sanders says.

It is everyone's hope that what is learned from this pilot will improve planning and implementation of additional learning communities in Fall 2008, and beyond, to include more courses and involve more faculty members. ■

Sandra Graff is an instructor in the College's English Department. She teaches Reading and Study Skills classes in Newburgh and at Middletown.

A Renewed Focus on Teaching and the Classroom



Spurred by concerns that their concentration on teaching had been partially swept away by a recent wave of technological and administrative changes at the College, a group of Liberal Arts professors (including Mark Strunsky, above left, and Elaine Torda and Paul Basinski below) and instructors convened in an attempt to rekindle their focus on the classroom. Out of those discussions emerged several “Humanities Initiatives” that will benefit students (like MaryLee Shorr, above right) by creating connections across academic disciplines and maximizing an exemplary faculty talent pool.

By Richard Heppner

It had been a particularly rough semester. We had been bannerized, alpha numericed, recatalogued, trained and retrained. Somewhere in the back of our minds the words of **Jim Givant** kept creeping in, “When do we talk about teaching?”

After informally talking with a number of people, it became apparent that many within the College’s Liberal Arts Division were wondering the same thing. So it was, following further discussion at a Liberal Arts chair meeting, that I asked the chairs to seek out faculty interested in doing just what Givant had been suggesting. For lack of a better description, it would be a discussion on a new humanities initiative—one in which all ideas were welcome as long as they were about the classroom.

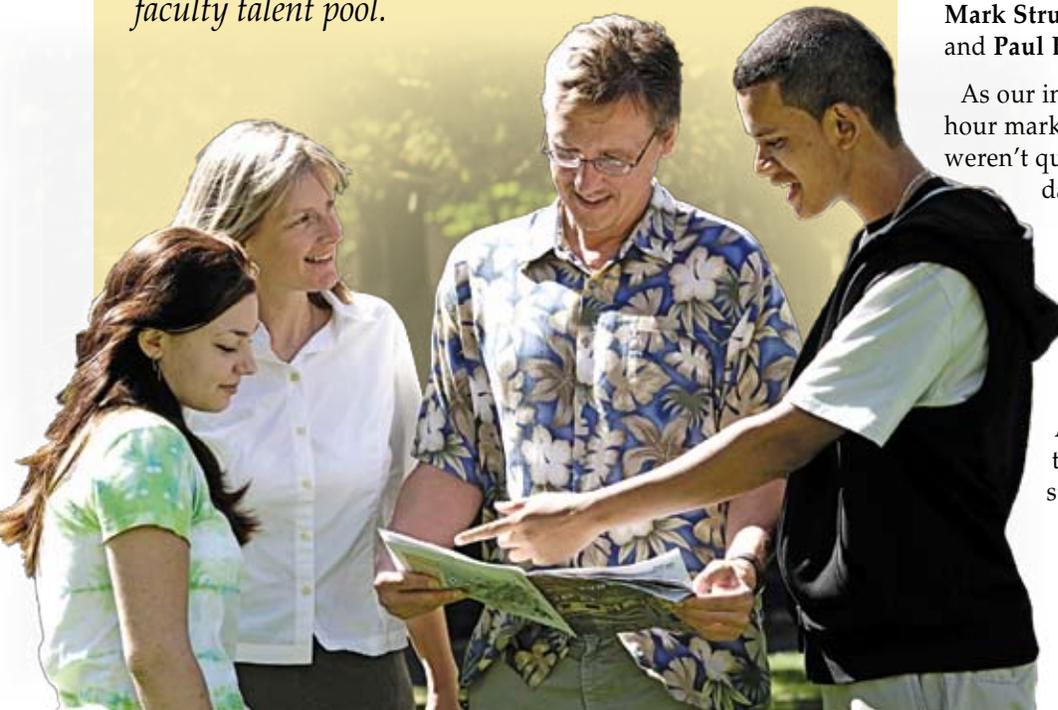
As is sometimes our nature in the liberal arts, our first meeting wandered every which way. Gathered over pizza, we touched upon a wide variety of topics, including 19th and 20th Century literature, the rise of modern art, corresponding social and political movements, poetry, popular culture, ethics, the great composers and anything else that seemed even remotely connected.

It was a gathering of both new faculty and “seasoned” veterans that included: Givant, **Elaine Torda**, and **Kristen Katzin-Nystrom** from English; **Michael McCoy** and **Heidi Weber** from Global Studies; **Susan Slater-Tanner** from Arts and Communication; **Robert Cacciatore** from Criminal Justice; and myself. In the weeks that followed **Mark Strunsky**, **Jennifer Lehtinen**, **Mary Warrenner**, and **Paul Basinski** would also join us.

As our initial conversation approached the two-hour mark, it was decided to meet again. We weren’t quite sure what we had accomplished that day but it was agreed that the discussion, in and of itself, was preferable to the content found at most of our recent meetings. Next time, we would try to make sense of it all and actually begin outlining some new initiatives.

Surprisingly, there was a next time. And, once again gathered, we began to focus on how to better engage our students in the very same discussion

continued on page 24



Department Showcases its 'Bio-Diversity'

By Mike Albright

Room 313 in SUNY Orange's Bio-Tech Building is relatively unadorned. Several filing cabinets fill one corner, a desk sits along another wall, several posters dot the granite walls and four rectangular tables form a square in the middle of the room.

On a campus where indoor space is at a premium, this small conference room—with windows that overlook Middletown's South Street and a large student parking lot—is among the most cramped you'll find. Despite its Spartan interior, Room 313 is clearly a room

with a "view," and that view is the vision of a curriculum and a learning environment that is shaped by the College's Biology Department.

When chair **Dr. Frank Traeger** presides over the department's monthly meetings in Room 313, he is less professor and more conductor, orchestrating a prodigious "think tank" of instructors whose suggestions, ideas and achievements often reach far beyond the walls of the Bio-Tech Building in which the Biology Department calls home.



(L-R): Dr. Michele Paradies, Dr. Joe Zurovchak, Marie De Fazio Shultz, Dr. Jennifer Merriam, Kirsten Gabrielsen

Biology: [bahy-ol-uh-jee] –noun.

The science of living organisms and life processes, including the study of structure, functioning growth, origin, evolution and distribution of living organisms.

The 10 full-time faculty members on Traeger's team possess an impressive portfolio of specialties, including family medicine, anatomy and physiology, neuroscience, ornithology, ecology, environmental science, dendrochronology, botany, evolutionary biology, genetics, developmental biology, nutrition and herpetology.

Thanks to its professional diversity, few, if any, academic departments at SUNY Orange can match the breadth of impact upon the College that has been exhibited by the Biology Department, which aspires to a mission that is equal parts service, academics, campus enrichment and innovation.

"I have worked in several different types of teaching positions in my career—a medical school, a graduate school, a four-year college and two different two-year colleges. I consider the group of faculty I work with here at SUNY Orange to be among the finest, most talented, and most dedicated groups of individuals anywhere in

the country," says **Dr. Michele Paradies**, who has been among the College's biology faculty since 2000.

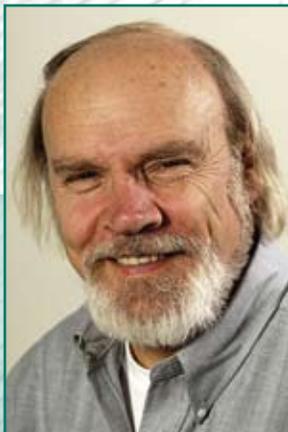
Two recent additions to the department faculty include **Dr. Michele Iannuzzi Sucich**, who joined the College in the summer of 2007, and **Dr. Anouk Verheyden-Gillikin**, who arrived at SUNY Orange in 2006. Each brings a unique background to the classroom that is not generally associated with a community college professor: family medicine and international research, respectively.

Iannuzzi Sucich graduated with a doctor of medicine degree (M.D.) from the State University of New York's



(L-R): Monty Vacura, Dr. Melody Festa, Dr. Frank Traeger, Dr. Michele Iannuzzi Sucich

Whether at work or play, Dr. Frank Traeger is a man on the move.



In addition to serving as chair of the Biology Department, a role he's held since 2003, Traeger is a member of the College's governance Executive Committee, leads the Staff and Chairman's Association as president, and heads the Professional Recognition Awards Committee.

The SUNY Orange Biology Department is among the largest at the College, encompassing 10 full-time faculty, plus a sizeable roster of supporting personnel—adjunct professors, technical assistants and a secretary. The Biology Department regularly offers more than 100 lecture/laboratory class sections and instructs more than 2,000 students per semester, all under Traeger's watchful eye.

Keeping pace with changes in science, medicine and the environment is a challenge, but one Traeger assures his department is capable of tackling.

"It's an ongoing process for us to keep our courses fresh and keep students up-to-date on the newest findings and methodology in the scientific realm," he says. "We want to encourage students' understanding of science as it relates to their everyday life as useful citizens, as well as to provide a strong background for those pursuing bioscience-related careers."

Traeger's commitment to establishing sound teaching and learning environments for SUNY Orange students extends far beyond College grounds in Middletown and Newburgh.

He serves on the Science and Engineering Advisory Board for SUNY New Paltz, helping develop articulation relationships with New Paltz that will create transfer opportunities for SUNY Orange students. Additionally, he has taught a variety of biology and laboratory technology courses at New Paltz since 1988, including a popular graduate offering "Advanced Topics in Biology."

Away from the College, he's a competitive sailor, having competed—and placed—in the North American Rebel Regatta in 2007. He also trains champion Gordon Setters, one of whom (Kira) competed in this year's Westminster Dog Show.

While serving as an Army medical technologist in the 9th Medical Laboratory in Vietnam, he received two meritorious service awards and the Army Commendation Medal for his actions.

Traeger earned his bachelor's degree from Ohio's Marietta College prior to completing his master's and doctoral (Ph.D.) degrees at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. He joined SUNY Orange's faculty in 1981 after serving as the head of electron microscopy services at The Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh, an affiliate of the University of Pittsburgh.

Health Science Center in Syracuse in 1998. Following a residency and fellowship, she spent the four years prior to her arrival at the College as an attending physician in a family practice in nearby Modena, N.Y. Aside from her doctor's duties, she simultaneously held an adjunct teaching position at SUNY Ulster.

Verheyden-Gillikin, meanwhile, is among the world's elite dendrochronologists, having spent much of her career researching the effects of the environment on tropical mangrove trees. She brings a unique "worldly" perspective to the classroom, thanks to extensive tours through Europe as a child growing up in Brussels, a student exchange trip to Thailand at age 18, and visits to Sri Lanka and Kenya for research projects related to her master's and doctorate degrees.

Despite the varied backgrounds of the instructors under his supervision, Traeger notes that the department thrives in large part because of teamwork and mutual commitment to shared goals.

"Everyone in the department shares a common interest in our students, common interests as educators and a common interest in promoting not just biology as a career, but biology as a subject for discussion in everyday life," Traeger says. "This department is at its best when ideas are exchanged and developed. All of the instructors take ownership in the courses in the department, even if they aren't teaching that particular course."

Such commitment to improving the College and its curriculum has helped department members form a cohesive unit in which creativity is welcomed and positive results often follow.

"These folks devote a lot of energy and passion to their craft," Traeger adds. "They engage in a wide range of independent work, but when they pursue a common goal, their cooperative and synergistic efforts come into play."

Students at SUNY Orange know they are in for an engaging and informative semester when they have “Dr. Z.” for a class.



Renowned for his creative teaching methods that energize students, **Dr. Joe Zurovchak** combines his flair for teaching with a wealth of environmental knowledge and experience to facilitate learning and understanding in the classroom and beyond.

A field biologist and ornithologist, Zurovchak has such a “good take on environmental science,” according to Biology chair **Dr. Frank Traeger**, that his Diversity of Life class is a popular elective for students not interested in a career in science.

But Zurovchak’s impact at SUNY Orange, and within the Hudson Valley, extends further than the classroom. In addition to chairing an ad-hoc Sustainability Committee, which in one year has already significantly strengthened the College’s “green initiatives,” he organizes students who collect data on water quality from local streams and forwards that information to regional water monitoring organizations.

He has served on the Orange County Bird Checklist Committee since 2001 and has participated in numerous bird counts, nature projects and conservation endeavors throughout the region.

Since arriving at SUNY Orange in 2000, he has immersed himself in a mix of campus-wide and departmental committees and has lectured on a variety of topics, including the recent nationwide Global Warming Solutions for America program.

“It’s exciting and rewarding to be part of a young, energetic department that is constantly seeking ways to strengthen its capabilities of servicing students,” Zurovchak says.

One look at the College’s schedule bulletin and it’s apparent that Biology is a department in constant motion. During the Fall 2007 semester, the department offered more than 100 lecture/laboratory class sections that encompassed nearly a dozen subject areas and included more than 2,000 students.

The department delivers a sizeable roster of classes and labs (Anatomy and Physiology I and II, Human Biology, Neuroanatomy, etc.) that support the curricula of the College’s eight health professions programs, which have long been respected within the community for developing competent and highly trained healthcare professionals. Health professions graduates of SUNY Orange are quickly absorbed into the workforce.

“Chances are, if you ever visited an Orange County medical, dental, diagnostic imaging or rehabilitative facility, you will see first hand the important role our students play in regional healthcare,” Traeger adds.

The department also fields a rich slate of popular SUNY general education science electives, including Diversity of Life, Field Biology, Environmental Biology, Biology for Today, Avian Biology and Prehistoric Life.

Biology also offers its own academic curriculum (Associate in Science degree in Math and Sciences) in which liberal arts students may concentrate their elective courses in biological sciences to prepare for transfer to four-year colleges and universities. This allows SUNY Orange graduates to pursue careers in diverse professions from astrobiology to zoology, medicine to environmental science, and teaching to research.

Most recently a newly developed General Ecology course has been added to the department and will be taught for the first time in Fall 2009. This joins a “major’s course lineup” encompassing General Biology I and II, Genetics, Comparative Vertebrate Anatomy and General Botany.

In addition, the Biology Department collaborates with the College’s Education Department in a SUNY New Paltz partnership, the Jointly Registered Teacher Education Program (JRTEP), helping prepare students who desire to become science or biology teachers at the elementary school, middle school or high school levels. And, through SUNY Orange’s growing Community College in the High School (CCHS) and New Visions programs, the Biology Department instructs some of the best and brightest high school students in the area.

Dr. Catherine Chew, vice president for Academic Affairs, uses one word—“awesome”—to describe the Biology Department. “I applaud this department for its innovation and team spirit. This faculty group is every administrator’s dream team. I get out of their way and let them soar!”



“Walter wants to create an academic environment that extends beyond the rigid walls of the classroom.”

Biology chair **Dr. Frank Traeger** calls **Dr. Walter Jahn** the department’s “jack of all trades,” but adds, “he a master of all.” He’s learned in genetics, has written a book on evolution and his Prehistoric Life class is one of the most popular courses on campus.

Throughout his 10-year tenure at SUNY Orange, Jahn has been a veritable force on campus, from his immeasurable contributions to the biology curriculum to his thought-provoking lecture series to his innovative forays into the use of technology in education.

He maintains a biology web site that has served as a tremendous educational tool for SUNY Orange students as well as a trusted resource for members of the community. The site includes a guide to wildlife and flora in the Hudson Valley.

Through a variety of projects and initiatives, the efforts of those in the Biology Department have improved the aesthetic beauty of the Middletown campus, stimulated the academic inquiry of the College community, promoted student success, enhanced the quality of life for employees, and supported the professional development of countless faculty and staff members.

During the 2007-08 academic year, **Dr. Joe Zurovchak** chaired the College’s first-ever ad-hoc sustainability committee that focused its attention on a series of “green” initiatives. **Dr. Jennifer Merriam** directs the Center for Teaching and Learning, tasked with developing

Evidence of his creativity is abundant in the hallways of Hudson Hall and the Bio-Tech Building. A master of creating visual cues to assist students, he just recently revamped a series of display cases that had remained unchanged for years.

He’s taught at Temple University, Philadelphia Community College and Philadelphia University. More recently, he’s taught a semester at both Mount St. Mary College and SUNY New Paltz. He arrived at SUNY Orange soon after earning his Ph.D. from Temple in 1997.

He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Paraguay from 1990-92 where he taught future teachers about Latin American biodiversity.

Jahn was one of many faculty members who were instrumental in the College’s successful debut “Global Initiative,” a year-long focus on Latin America.

lectures, presentations and discussions on varied topics aimed at helping professors improve teaching methods and enhance students’ learning.

Monty Vacura, botanist and department webmaster, recently inventoried the College’s entire botanical collection, including drafting detailed capsules on plant origins and methods for proper care and handling. **Dr. Walter Jahn** organizes an on-campus lecture series that has been instrumental in cultivating intellectual dialogue between faculty and staff from all corners of campus, and the community at large. He and Vacura also created and maintain a biology web site that

serves as a resource for students and community members by showcasing local plants, providing information on area wildlife and helping visitors learn more about plant and animal species of the Hudson Valley. Material on this site is linked to the Biology Department web site.

Similarly, Biology Department members are spearheading the department’s “Flora and Fauna Initiative” to preserve and develop the natural resources of the Middletown campus and Newburgh Extension Center, including botanical collections, College greenhouses, campus plantings, and the campus stream that runs along Wawayanda Avenue.

In conjunction with the “Flora and Fauna” undertaking, the College will establish themed Educational Gardens that will be located in the areas surrounding Hudson Hall and will be overseen by **Kirsten Gabrielsen**, a technical assistant in the department who serves in the newly created position of Botanical Conservator.

“We see the Flora and Fauna project as something that will enhance the visual beauty on campus,” Traeger says. “But it will also serve the educational needs of our students and the broader community as well. The gardens and greenhouses will be places everyone will be able to visit and enjoy. The stream and pond venues will provide us with an example of aquatic micro-ecosystems on a local scale. Students will be able to study animal and plant variations and adaptations in the different seasons, as well as the impact of environmental stressors. It will be a great resource for us.”

The “Flora and Fauna” project is emblematic of nearly every undertaking by the Biology Department. While the results typically impact many groups, the primary focus is always student-centered.

The department continually evaluates its course offerings so it can keep its curriculum current and adaptable. Of late, Traeger and his instructors

have been developing “active learning formats” and web-enhanced components for a number of classes.

“Joe (Zurovchak) has really embraced innovative teaching strategies aimed at getting students more actively involved in the learning process,” Traeger adds, explaining that students are more successful when they are integrated into the classroom topic rather than simply listening to lectures.

Student success is also at the heart of the BATCAVERN, a Biology-supported technology-based learning laboratory that serves several thousand biology and health professions students per year. In the lab, under the watchful eye of technical assistant **David Logan**, students can utilize available technology for research and review, gain access to lecture notes and other study materials, or receive tutorial assistance.

The Agassiz Society, the College’s student-run biology club, is yet another avenue for students to embrace learning, bond with classmates, and appreciate the educational and career opportunities available in the biological sciences. Professor **Grace Gloeckler**, the longest-tenured member of the Biology Department, serves as advisor to the Agassiz Society and has helped the organization immeasurably over the years.

Another veteran of the department, who rejoined its ranks in Fall 2007, is **Dr. Melody Festa**. A former chair of the Biology Department, Festa recently elected to return to the classroom following a successful three-year stint as the College’s academic vice president for business, math, science and technology.

“Melody brings a very important perspective to the department because of her experiences as an administrator,” Traeger notes. “I’ve seen her passion as a teacher re-emerge. She is our only full-time instructor at the Newburgh Extension Center and she is helping restructure our Intro to Biology course so that we can make that course more effective and serve our students better.”

Over the past few years, Festa has teamed with **Marie De Fazio Shultz**, the department’s second technical assistant, and professor emeritus **Thomas Alford** on the Orange County West Nile Virus Surveillance Project, supporting the Orange County Health Department.

Festa and Traeger are also leading the department’s input on designs for laboratories and biology facilities that will be part of the College’s planned Newburgh Branch Campus. With an expanded Newburgh curriculum that is sure to include sizeable increases in several health professions programs, there will be a vital need for more expansive biology offerings.

Traeger, Zurovchak and Merriam collaborated to develop the new General Ecology course that will debut in Fall 2009. The development of such upper-level biology courses provides students

with yet another opportunity to prepare themselves for the next step on their academic journey.

Dedication to their craft and a healthy respect for the educational process has vaulted each of the biology professors toward independent success, but it is their commitment to teamwork and cooperative ventures that allows the department to flourish in so many venues on campus and beyond.

While much inspiration is generated when the Biology “think tank” convenes in Room 313, the reverberations are felt throughout the College and community. ■

Dr. Michele Iannuzzi Sucich has always loved to learn. That constant quest for knowledge prompted her progression from learner to teacher.



As an M.D., Iannuzzi Sucich carries a unique resume to the SUNY Orange community. She joined the College’s biology faculty in the summer of 2007 following a four-year stint as an attending physician in a family practice.

Her background in patient education and care, supervisory experience and research skills are invaluable to students who may be thinking of an advanced career in biology. In addition, she’s able to incorporate real-life scenarios into her Anatomy and Physiology lectures and labs.

Following medical school, she completed a residency in family practice and a fellowship in geriatrics. Her fellowship included clinical research and publications in sarcopenia

(muscles wasting with age) and falls in the elderly. In addition, she collaborated on a project to implement, assess and publish a paper on an innovative application of technology in medical education.

She has always sought to find connections between her work, research, and teaching, whether it was educating patients on health-care issues, training future doctors under her tutelage or lecturing in a classroom.

“I’ve tried to use my personal learning to become an effective and approachable educator,” Iannuzzi Sucich says. “Teaching at SUNY Orange allows me to share my knowledge and my love of learning with my students to help them achieve their life goals.”

“Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision; the ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.”

– Andrew Carnegie

To chart CAPE’s future course, director David Kohn (standing in photo at right) relies upon, from left, Don Green, Linda Gramm and Dorene Iacovino.

By Mike Albright

Andrew Carnegie developed the opinion shown at left during the late 1800s as he forged a steel empire that reportedly made him the richest man in the world. Remarkably, Carnegie’s 19th Century philosophy on teamwork still holds true today.

At SUNY Orange, **David Kohn** doesn’t roam the halls and stairways of the Christine Morrison House quoting Carnegie, but the College’s director of Continuing and Professional Education has employed similar principles while overseeing a CAPE resurgence that has the College’s non-credit business booming.

Over the past two years, CAPE has witnessed a sizeable enrollment spike in non-credit courses, with nearly 8,000 students in classrooms annually. Contract training with local businesses, through CAPE’s Business Solutions and Professional Development division, has increased by 200 percent and enrollment in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes is up seven-fold. In addition, Kohn has streamlined the department’s business model and adjusted its organizational chart to create more efficient day-to-day operations.

“This department wouldn’t function without strong teamwork,” Kohn explains. “We’ve targeted four major areas that need to work together for us to offer the top-quality education, curriculum and customer service that our students expect and deserve.”

Kohn views the areas of programming, operations, sales and marketing as the core elements that, when clicking in unison, keep CAPE humming smoothly. “Without those four working together,

we can’t generate the necessary revenue and deliver the quality products we are offering now.”

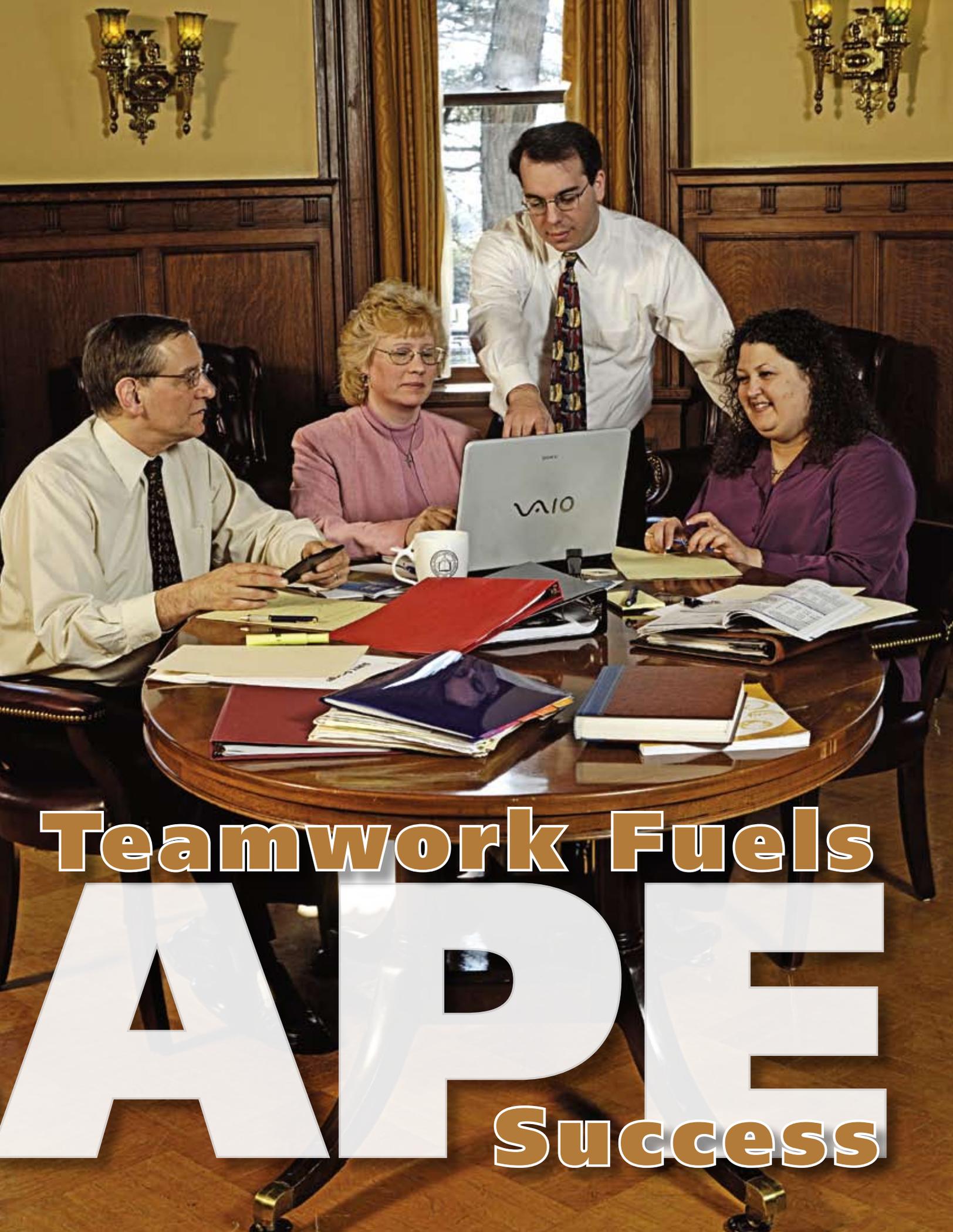
In addition to contract training, ESL classes and tuition-based non-credit courses, CAPE also offers state-mandated classes for drivers convicted of driving while intoxicated, manages the Institute for Nonprofit Leadership and Management, and delivers an array of workforce training opportunities for individuals and businesses.

In order to deliver top-notch programming while also meeting the demands of the department’s varied customers and clients, Kohn says CAPE relies upon a staff that is devoted to the department’s mission and objectives.

Don Green heads the Business Solutions and Professional Development division while **Linda Gramm** and **Dorene Iacovino** direct CAPE’s programming and operations, respectively. Along with Kohn, this foursome forms the nucleus of CAPE’s primary management team.

In addition, **Rob Larkin** coordinates the Drinking Driver program, **Lou DeFeo** oversees workforce development education and **Debbie Horowitz** manages the growing ESL curriculum. **April Kinne**, **Alice McGeady** and **Charlotte Sobanski** lead the administrative support team.





Teamwork Fuels

A P P E

Success

Green Serves on CRV Board

While tailoring supervisory training and service excellence programs to meet the needs of Middletown's Crystal Run Village, SUNY Orange's **Don Green** developed an in-depth understanding of the nonprofit provider's programs and client base. So when Crystal Run retooled its Board of Directors this past winter, the organization elected Green to serve the board.

His selection is yet another example of the strong footing SUNY Orange's Continuing and Professional Education department is gaining in the community.

Green, CAPE's business solutions and professional development coordinator, paired with Newburgh resident Milagros Greene as newly elected Board members, joining returning members Susan Kennedy (installed as president), Valerie Longfellow (vice president), Myrna Kurtz (secretary) and Louis Siegel (treasurer).

"Mila and Don each bring a distinct perspective to the board at this pivotal time in our history," explains Jim Lawler, executive director of Crystal Run Village. "Our goal of helping people reach their full potential considers every dimension of our organization—the people we serve and our staff. The dedication and energy of all our board members will make it possible to achieve our vision and mission."

Crystal Run Village, Inc. is an independent non-profit provider of community-based programs for more than 700 adults and children with intellectual and psychological disabilities and their families, living in the communities of Orange, Rockland and Sullivan Counties. The agency provides support in the form of housing, programs for learning and self expression, opportunities for employment,



community inclusion and recreation—all for the purpose of an individual's greater independence and contribution as a citizen.

Exploring a Partnership

In the coming months, SUNY Orange will be investigating how best to combine the academic expertise of the College's eight Health Professions departments with the respected business solutions programming offered by Continuing and Professional Education.

The goal of these discussions, facilitated by **Bob Misiak**, chair of the Diagnostic Imaging Department, is to allow the College to be more responsive to the needs of the healthcare industry in Orange County. A merger between the non-credit and credit "families" presents exciting possibilities.

"Between the two of us, if we put our heads together, we can unify the College's services in the eyes of the healthcare community," says **David Kohn**, CAPE director. "It would also allow us to strengthen our relationships with clients and service providers, which in turn could benefit the health professions programs."

Such a merger could have positive long-term effects for the healthcare industry, may create additional employment avenues for SUNY Orange graduates and would continue to cement the College's reputation as a resource for economic development within Orange County and beyond.

"You need to have the right people in the right places, and I think we have that now," Kohn says. "I give my staff latitude because I want them to have the responsibility and opportunity to do all of the things they need to do in order to grow their respective departments. When people take on a greater amount of responsibility, they get things done and you see the synergy of their combined efforts."

Establishing a cohesive administrative team has helped CAPE move its programs forward, but Kohn insists another key to his department's success is the relationships staff members have developed with their numerous instructors and trainers, those folks who most often are the public face of the department and the College.

"If our instructors and trainers don't feel as if they are part of the team, they will go elsewhere. For us, our instructors are at the heart of the programs we offer."

In two short years, Green has been able to elevate the quality of CAPE's contract training by hiring exceptional trainers, listening to business leaders' needs and developing targeted programs that address the demands



SUNY Orange's Continuing and Professional Education Team (L-R): Dorene Iacovino, Linda Gramm, Rob Larkin, David Kohn (director), Lou DeFeo, Don Green and Debbie Horowitz.

of local CEOs. Word of CAPE's burgeoning relationships with Crystal Run Village CEO Jim Lawler and Orange Regional Medical Center have percolated throughout the local business community, pushing demand for CAPE's contract training services to an all-time high.

"We are now viewed as a high-end, customized training provider by those who have contracted with us," Green says. "We've developed signature products and we've become a market-driven and client-centered organization where everyone is energized and passionate about what they do."

Similarly, CAPE's non-credit enrollment is thriving thanks to the combined efforts of Gramm and Iacovino, each of whom only recently joined the CAPE staff. Gramm, who previously worked for CAPE, is back following a stint with the College's Records and Registration office.

"Both are extremely detail-oriented. Doreen is developing new and improved policies and procedures for our course development, which will allow us to better meet the needs of our students," Kohn adds. "Linda's personality, communication skills, understanding of our clients' needs and knowledge of campus are invaluable."

The CAPE staff is presently working on several new initiatives, including a Limited English Proficiency and Contextual Learning in the Workplace grant program and the Green Talent Development Pipeline Partnership with other colleges in the Hudson Valley.

Having built a strong internal team, Kohn is now looking to partner with colleges and businesses throughout the region to further broaden the scope and impact of CAPE's available programming as his small community college staff seeks to continue producing uncommon results. ■

Bringing International Education to SUNY Orange

By Mike Albright

During his first tour of the sparkling new Gilman Center for International Education that bears his name, former Congressman Ben Gilman was moved to tears, overwhelmed by the beauty of a facility that SUNY Orange officials expect will usher in a new chapter in the College's quest to globalize its curriculum.

Carved predominately from the College's current Middletown Library and enhanced by a glistening circular glass and aluminum entryway off the Library's north exterior, the new Gilman Center commands your attention as you enter campus from East Conklin Avenue.

The Gilman Center will help SUNY Orange prepare students to take advantage of exciting opportunities provided by changes in the local, regional and global workplace. It will serve as a teaching and learning hub for courses in Global Studies, continue to attract prominent speakers to campus and showcase Gilman's outstanding accomplishments both at home and abroad. The Center will also provide educational resources to students, scholars and community members seeking to learn more about the global environment and the international role of the United States.



First day of digging –
Aug. 14



Pouring cement for flagpoles –
Sept. 14



Exterior walkways complete –
Oct. 9

"The College is tremendously lucky to have access to papers, documents, treaties and other items from Mr. Gilman's distinguished Congressional service," explains Bryan Gersbeck, a first-year political science student. "I'm sure they will be invaluable to me, my classmates and future students as we work and study on our way to a career in government."

The completion of the Gilman Center is just the latest in a series of initiatives undertaken by the College to broaden its curriculum to reflect the changing social, political, economic and cultural landscapes around the world. During the summer of 2007 SUNY Orange created a new Global Studies Department and this spring, the College is concluding its debut "Global Initiative: Latin America," a year-long focus on the culture, art, history, politics, music and culture of Central America, South America and the Caribbean.

Revisions to the International Studies degree program curriculum include the addition of a variety of courses (International Literature, International Art, Comparative Politics and International Relations) designed to "beef up" the foreign and international content of the curriculum within Global Studies, explains **Paul Basinski**, interim chair of Global Studies. The new courses, available for the Fall 2008 semester, will provide students with greater access and insight into global affairs.

Within the past year newcomers **Dr. Corey Harris, Michael McCoy and Heidi Weber** have joined Basinski, **Edgar Gutierrez** and **Dr. Jean Carlos Cowan** to comprise the new Global Studies Department faculty roster. **Dr. Michael Strmiska** will soon join the team as well.

This summer, Gutierrez and five SUNY Orange students will visit Urbino, Italy, for what is believed to be the College's first-ever study abroad experience for college credit. The students, who will study the Italian language, will be immersed in the culture, history and art of Italy throughout their one month in the country.

"Over the course of the College's 57-plus years of existence, we have gradually seen Orange County grow from rural farmland to a vibrant and bustling suburban community," says **Joan Wolfe**, chair of the College's Board of Trustees. "But, in truth, our community knows no boundaries today. We've become a global society, and it is imperative that SUNY Orange expand its own horizons to meet the changing demands of our students and our community."

"The Gilman Center for International Education will allow us to do that. It will be a place where students, faculty and scholars unite in the pursuit of academic excellence and intellectual inquiry. It will bring the world to our students, and our students to the world."

Within the first month of its completion, the Center served as the perfect backdrop for a collaborative meeting between College administrators and a 10-person delegation of Chinese educators and civic leaders who visited SUNY Orange in late February to investigate the College's workforce training and academic programs.

Throughout the Gilman Center's interior, suitable spaces will be allocated to showcase research papers, artwork, memorabilia and other items from Gilman's more than 30 years in Washington, as well as his travels abroad. International studies and global understanding were cornerstones of Gilman's career in government, and they also create the foundation for the mission of the Gilman Center.

Much credit goes to Library director **Susan Parry**, archivist **Mary Ann Van Benschoten** and Basinski who organized a portion of the Congressman's collection and developed suitable photo and memorabilia displays to accompany the facility's March ribbon cutting ceremony.

Ben Gilman's legacy was secure long before work began on the Gilman Center for International Education. But with the building's completion, Gilman's career will continue to serve as an inspiration to generations of SUNY Orange students, positively impacting the College curriculum and local community for years to come. ■



Interior work continues – Oct. 30



Entryway construction – Oct. 31



Façade and entryway work continues – Nov. 13



Conference room complete – Feb. 19

A Renewed Focus on Teaching and the Classroom

continued from page 11

we had shared two weeks earlier. The underlying theme of our first meeting had been connections across disciplines and how to demonstrate to students that the subjects we teach do not exist in isolation. To that end, it seemed an obvious starting point would be to look at the feasibility of offering paired courses.

Though certainly not a new concept, the thought of making another attempt at linking courses together in an effort to integrate the academic experiences of our students seemed to have obvious merit. The practical problem with paired courses, however, is how to get students to enroll in both classes? Depending upon the courses selected, some students might want or need one course within the pair, but not the other.

As a result, the group thought it best to pair both a required course (English 101) with a general education course (U.S. History Since 1865). While both courses can be adjusted to accommodate each other, the fact that they are both applicable to a wide variety of degree programs would seem to offer some insurance against cancellation due to low enrollment.

Another major initiative to grow out of the group's initial discussions has been the creation of an Introduction to Humanities course. Currently in the curriculum development stage, such a class would not only offer students a course of study that intellectually



Professor Susan Slater-Tanner, who directs the Harriman Student Gallery, was among those liberal arts professors who crafted a series of "Humanities Initiatives" geared toward engaging students, uniting academic disciplines and shifting faculty focus back to the classroom.

develops ways of reflecting on the human experience, but would also permit us to make full use of the remarkable resources within our academic community.

As currently planned, two to three faculty members would have primary responsibility for the course, not only sharing lecture time but working with each other over the course of two semesters toward presenting a cohesive overview of the humanities. With each new academic year, faculty assignments would rotate in an effort to tap into the wide variety of expertise represented by our faculty.

Along similar lines, the group has also been examining the possibility of creating an on-campus speakers list where faculty, possessing a specific

area of expertise within a broader field, might serve as a guest lecturer for a particular class. Such a possibility was recently demonstrated by the Women in Art discussion organized by Weber. Why not, for example, invite Slater-Tanner to speak on—and present—the Depression-era photos taken by Dorothea Lange in a post-1865 American history class?

By making connections such as these in the student's mind, we reinforce the entirety of the academic community while demonstrating our own partnerships and connections as faculty.

As we all know, the academic area has seen its fair share of changes over the past few years. Though necessary, such changes at times seem to have obscured the very purpose behind our academic mission. While the above initiatives are neither revolutionary nor earth shattering, they are offered as but one opportunity to refocus our attention on the classroom. No doubt they won't please everyone.

Change should be viewed as an opportunity, not a threat, which is why, as demonstrated by the commitment of those engaged in this initiative, we need to continue to construct and support an environment in which those with new ideas are encouraged to come forward and forge their own trail of innovation. ■

Richard Heppner is academic vice president for Liberal Arts at SUNY Orange. He formerly served as department chair and professor in the College's Arts and Communication Department.



SUNY Orange

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