The Association of Council Members and College Trustees awarded its Student Initiative Award to Amanda David of the Central New York Center. Ms. David is currently working towards her associate degree in human services, with plans to pursue her bachelor’s degree with an interdisciplinary focus on horticulture and human services.

Ms. David has a passion for organic farming and feels a social responsibility to share her knowledge with children, community members from low-income neighborhoods and adults with mental disabilities. In the winter and spring of the 2003-2004 academic year, Ms. David initiated and created a community garden project for the Ithaca community. Her vision for the People’s Garden Project stems from a belief that fresh, organic produce is often too expensive, and access is too limited, for low-income families. Consequently, these families experience poorer nutrition. Along with another dedicated community member, she approached the pastor of a local church who agreed to convert a gravel parking lot to a garden. She then advertised the project, created a working committee that grew to consist of 25 members. She planned several fund-raising events, which raised over $1,000. She also successfully approached local businesses and community members for donations such as tools, seeds, topsoil and fertilizer. Ms. David has also approached other local colleges within the community, specifically, Ithaca College and Cornell, for donations of items as well as academic expertise.

The result has been a bountiful half-acre of lettuce, kale, collard greens, peas and other greens, complete with benches for enjoying the garden and a birdbath. The garden is open to the local neighborhood. Volunteers harvest the vegetables and donate them to the church food pantry, enabling the food pantry for the first time to offer fresh produce. The future of the People’s Garden Project includes expanding and locating more sites throughout the community. Ms. David has approached another church, and a home school network has approached her about developing a garden for educational purposes.

In addition to this project, Ms. David runs a gardening club for children at a local elementary school. They have completed projects such as planting annuals in front of the school and composting. She is also a volunteer for Offender Aid and Restoration involving weekly visits with inmates at the county jail to serve as a community resource. Finally, she is a part of a home schooling network of parents that plan educational activities for their children.

Whether a college student, single mother, community advocate, human service professional or home school educator, Ms. David has fluently and ambitiously integrated her passions for horticulture and human services into almost every area of her life. What began as a class project has bloomed into reality. In the words of her faculty advisor, “I would classify her as an excellent student. I think her other tutors would also agree. She is quite impressive really.” It is students like Ms. David who remind us of the intimate and empowering connections between our natural and social worlds.

By Janet Aiello-Cerio, Alumni and Student Relations

According to the policy of the SUNY Board of Trustees, a referendum must be held every two years to determine if the Student Activity Fee shall be mandatory or voluntary. This vote is held at all SUNY campuses across the state.

As a SUNY institution, Empire State College participates in this voting process. I am pleased to report that our student body voted in favor of keeping the Student Activity Fee mandatory. Empire State College’s Student Activity Fee is currently $15 per term, the lowest of all SUNY institutions.

President Moore extends his thanks to all in the college community for their support, especially the deans, unit coordinators and the staff at each location who made the referendum a success.
By Sylvia Carter, M.A.L.S. Graduate Student

At the last meeting that I attended as a member of the Student Affairs Committee, we discussed ideas for articles to be included in this issue of our newsletter. An article relating the experience of a person of a minority race, from undergraduate to graduate studies at Empire State College was suggested, and a volunteer was asked for. I met the criteria, and I am happy to have taken this assignment.

The question of race can be a sensitive one. Also, in my opinion the experience of racial identity is different for every person. My cousin, Mags, once confided in me that she does not let a day go by without looking in the mirror, and contemplating her race. Conversely, in my household at least one of my children began school virtually oblivious to race, and identified his two young friends by the color of their hair, not by race or the color of their skin. To him they were “yellow John,” a child with golden tresses, and “brown John,” his playmate with dark brown hair. Having left behind the innocence of childhood, I do at times find myself aware of race. However, it is usually when I am the only minority in the room, which sometimes had been the case as I served on committees, and sat in on meetings at Empire State College.

I think that it is often difficult to decipher exactly why things happen in life the way they do. It is hard for many of us to accept that even today, people continue to be judged by virtue of circumstance of birth. Nonetheless, in some instances, race, religion, economic status and other ancillary factors do come into play, ultimately affecting how a person is viewed and accepted.

My own personal experience at Empire State College has been a good one. As an undergraduate student, and now as a graduate student, I must say that I have been treated neither better nor worse because of race, gender, age or any other detail incidental to my being. I have taken advantage of opportunities and scholarships set aside for persons of color, as well as those based on scholastic achievement. I have found the staff and faculty that I have personally dealt with to be quite cognizant of issues of concern to the so-called “under represented” segments of our college population. I have realized this, not only by means of casual conversation, but also through independent studies, and through interaction with members of study groups offered by our college.

A case in point is an excellent study group offered on Long Island at the Riverhead Unit. It is called “Multicultural Competence.” I was a part of that group from April through July of 2002. This study addresses questions on diversity, and highlights issues pertaining to: immigrants; American Indians; African Americans; Latinos; the disabled; the deaf; gay men, lesbians and bisexual people; African American women; and those with questions concerning white racial identity. Amazingly, a representative from almost every segment mentioned was present in that wonderful group of 2002. This gave us the opportunity not only to hear, to lament for, to empathize with, but also to understand the journey of those who are just like us in so many ways, and yet just a little different.

A final minority that I feel is worth mentioning was the focus of another excellent study group that I attended on Long Island during the spring of 2002. The study is called “Women in Midlife.” This study provides optimistic encouragement in the face of midlife; it discusses medical and natural alternatives for the middle aged; it provides camaraderie for both the weak and strong of heart; and it addresses the social situation both women and men find themselves in at this pinnacle of the life experience. This group is open to all male and female Empire State College students. It was a great experience! As you see, the Empire State College experience can be a good and upbuilding one, no matter who you are, or where you come from.

I am happy to say that I finished my undergraduate degree in 2004 with a concentration in legal and ethical studies, and through interaction with members of our college population. I have realized this, not only by personally dealt with to be quite cognizant of issues of concern to the so-called “under represented” segments of our college population. I have realized this, not only by means of casual conversation, but also through independent studies, and through interaction with members of study groups offered by our college.

SUNY Underrepresented Graduate Fellowship Program (UGFP)

The State University of New York (SUNY) established this fellowship to recruit, enroll and retain students who have been historically underrepresented in SUNY’s graduate and professional programs. Across the SUNY system, over 500 students are currently enrolled and, since 1987, over 600 students have graduated from the Underrepresented Graduate Fellowship Program (UGFP). UGFP provides tuition and fees along with a small stipend for the fall and spring terms.

UGFP is available to students from one or more of the following groups – African American, Hispanic/Latino and/or Native American – who are also matriculated in a master’s program and attending full time (9 credits or more per term). The graduate programs available through Empire State College are:
- Master of Business Administration
- Master of Arts in Teaching
- Master of Arts – business and policy studies; labor and policy studies; social policy; and liberal studies

You may obtain information about these programs at www.esc.edu/grad.

Contact the assistant director for student services at the Center for Graduate Programs for information about UGFP and an application, 518 587-2100 ext. 267 or Pat.Ryan@esc.edu. Awards are done annually and the application deadline is August 1.
Notice to Students

Rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. They are:
1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the college receives a request for access.
   Students should submit a written request to the college registrar that identifies the records(s) they wish to inspect. The college registrar will make arrangements for access and notify the student how the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education record that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading.
   Students should write the college registrar and clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.
   If the college determines not to amend the record as requested by the student, the college will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Note: This does not apply to the situation in which a student disagrees with an evaluation or outcome for an academic study. The Student Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure is followed for all requests regarding reconsideration of an academic decision.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
   One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is defined as a person employed by the college in an administrative, supervisory, academic or support staff position; a person serving on the college council; a person serving on the board of trustees; or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
   Other exceptions not requiring consent for disclosure include providing information to authorized representatives of the comptroller general of the United States and the Department of Education; the accrediting organizations carrying out their functions; to comply with judicial orders; and in the event of a health or safety emergency.
   Certain categories of information are designated as "Directory Information" by the act and by the college and may be released without the prior consent of the student. At Empire State College, this information includes:
   Category 1: name, address, phone number, dates of attendance.
   Category 2: previous institutions attended, area of study, concentration, degrees conferred (including dates).
   Category 3: participation in officially recognized college activities, date and place of birth, country of citizenship.
   Students who wish to prohibit the release of any or all of the categories of "Directory Information" may do so by completing the form provided for the purpose and submitting it to the Office of the Registrar at the Coordinating Center in Saratoga Springs within two weeks of the start date of an enrollment. It will be effective for one year following the date of the enrollment. If the student wishes to renew the request to prevent disclosure after one year, he or she must submit a new request. Copies of the form are available at all locations of the college.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning any failures by the college to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20202-5901.

A Reminder from Empire State College ...

If you are interested in financial aid and plan to enroll at the college on or after April 11, 2005, you will need to file a 2005-2006 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in January 2005. You should receive a renewal reminder by postcard or e-mail from the federal processor if you filed a FAFSA for 2004-2005. If you have never received or have forgotten your PIN, you should apply for one now at www.pin.ed.gov.

The deadline for submitting the FAFSA for consideration for college scholarships and grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG), Federal Perkins Loans and Federal Work Study (FWS) is April 1, 2005. The deadline for applying for Aid for Part-time Study (APTS) which requires a separate APTS application is also April 1, 2005.

Be sure to include the federal code on the FAFSA for Empire State College, which is 010286. The college codes for NYS TAP are 0913 (undergraduate) and 5680 (graduate students). Financial aid forms are available to you from the following sources:
- Online at www.esc.edu/FinancialServices (highly recommended)
- Your local Empire State College center or unit
- Empire State College Financial Aid document request line (800 847-3000 ext. 452)

New students considering Empire State College do not have to be accepted by the college before applying for financial aid.
Chris Borsella
Long Island Center

I am a 25 year old student who began my academic journey with Empire State College in June 2000. I am a native of Riverhead, New York, on Long Island, and graduated in 1997 from Riverhead High School. In November 2003 I earned my associate’s degree from Empire State College in World History, and soon I will receive my Bachelor’s in Historical Studies. In addition to being a younger student, I recently joined Empire State College’s Hauppauge Unit as a part-timer. My tasks include filing, telephone reception, taking payments and informing prospective students about the college’s overall mission. As a writer, I credit Empire State College in helping me improve my craft. My first book, The Italian Americans: A History on their Persecution, Identity and Activism from the Late 19th Century to Today, will soon be appearing in book stores. I am also going to be interviewed in an upcoming issue of PRIMO magazine for the poetry I write from an ethnic and socially oriented perspective. In my new role as SAC representative, I want to help the students and faculty at Empire State College in as many ways as possible.

Alfred Photography Show

From January 7 - 28, 2005, with the support of the Hornell Area Arts Council, Steuben Trust Bank exhibited the photographs of 16 Alfred Unit students. Their work was done under the direction of Diane Martin, an Empire State College art and photography tutor in Alfred, NY.

The students whose work was shown are Denise Atherton (Belfast, NY), Gina Bixby (Canisteo, NY), Blaine Bulkley (Avoca, NY), Lisa Denning (Belfast, NY), Tamara Denning (Belfast, NY), Mary Ellen Dropp (Hornell, NY), Sandra Fuller (Canisteo, NY), Angela Gillette (Hornell, NY), Cathy Houghtaling (Canisteo, NY), Christina Mead (Wellsville, NY), Karen Oyer (Hornell, NY), Jacqueline Palmer (Dansville, NY), Jenetta Price (Canisteo, NY), Billiejo Terwilliger (Hornell, NY), Robyn White (Angelica, NY), and Pamela Ann Walsh (Arkport, NY). Diane Martin wrote about the show, “It is fascinating to see how they have documented their worlds and the things that matter most to them. Many have chosen to capture the quiet, rugged beauty of the Southern Tier landscape; others have focused on their children; while still others have found or created their own personal visions.”

Expand Your Opportunities – Graduate Study at Empire State College

Empire State College offers five master’s degrees – all incorporating our long tradition of mentoring and individualized learning. The Master of Arts degrees include business and policy studies, labor and policy studies (with emphasis areas in labor studies and human resource management), social policy (with emphasis areas in community and government, criminal justice, education policy, health care policy and human service policy) and liberal studies (an individualized, interdisciplinary degree program). The M.A. programs are 36 credits and include attendance at three weekend residencies.

The Master of Business Administration is competency-based, includes course instruction on the World Wide Web and an assessment process that determines credit for knowledge already acquired. The 60-credit program also includes five weekend residencies.

For more information about the college’s graduate programs visit our web site at www.esc.edu or call 800 GO TO ESC (468-6372) ext. 429 or 877 YOUR MBA (968-7622).
Northeast Center Hosts Howard Dean

On November 8, 2004, former Vermont governor and Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean spoke to more than 1,000 attendees at the Empire State Plaza in Albany, New York. This event was the keynote address of the Northeast Center’s lecture series entitled “The Constitution and the Bill of Rights.”

Northeast Center student Eric Morin attended the event and submitted the following analysis for his Critical Thinking study group. Eric just finished his first term. He is a corrections officer for the county of Rensselaer and is an instructor for civil service test preparation courses at Hudson Valley Community College.

I would like to point out before my analysis of the Howard Dean lecture, that I am not a member of the Democratic Party, and I would not consider myself a fan of Howard Dean. However, going to the lecture with an open mind, I found myself surprised by Dr. Dean’s ability to generate enthusiasm throughout the crowd. Dr. Dean made many valid points concerning democracy, and the fact that he was able to push the democratic agenda so enthusiastically after last weeks’ loss of the democratic presidential nominee makes me believe that Howard Dean is a true democrat that believes strongly in his agenda.

Dean made the point that tobacco, oil and pharmaceutical companies have the ability to contribute millions of dollars to persuade government policy and that each person should get involved in politics at any level. Dean made the point that many small political contributions can raise more money than the political “Fat Cats.” He also made the point that “you are as good as anybody” and together, we can “take back our country.” Dean warned us “not leave the process up to your neighbor” and to get involved at any level.

Dean made the point that morally it is unacceptable for us to continue to rack up debt, leaving the deficit for our children to pay. Dean used humor to make the point that wherever he has gone “Iowa! and Ohio! and South Carolina! and Michigan!” (referring to his “Scream” speech that the media used to make him look like a raving lunatic) that 95 percent of all Americans want the same things; jobs, economic stability, health care, better schools and moral foreign policy.

Dean pointed out that Americans see education as the “gateway to bettering ourselves,” pointing out that Empire State College is an excellent example of mostly adult students, who are on the same path of improving their futures through education.

Dr. Dean made the point that all people are entitled to equal rights as guaranteed by law, referring to the civil union bill that he introduced over five years ago in Vermont which guarantees equal rights to gay and lesbian couples. Dr. Dean made the point that as a nation we tend to focus on what makes us different, and that we need to change this train of thought.

Dr. Dean also made the point that as a nation, we need to “begin to talk to each other again.” We need to focus on real issues like jobs, economic stability, health care, better schools and moral foreign policy; and not focus on seemingly trivial issues like skin color or sexual orientation.

Dr. Dean spoke on religious issues, pointing out inconsistencies in biblical laws that have changed in the past (i.e., eating shellfish will kill you). That biblical law has adapted over time and will continue to change over time. Dean made the statement that “faith without work is dead;” meaning that as a nation we have to take responsibility for our actions and become accountable to our faith by practicing moral lifestyles and not just preaching morality.

Dr. Dean did use propaganda as a means to incite the audience into cheer and applause by making statements about President Bush. Dean made the comment that Bush is “misleading” Americans as to “why we are sending our soldiers abroad.” Dean was able to get a major rise out of the audience by saying, “We’re going to give you the works next time around Mr. President!” implying that we would vote him out of office. I found this be comical because the fact of the matter is President Bush cannot be elected to another four year term.

Dr. Dean also used propaganda as a scare tactic to get a reaction out of the crowd by hitting on emotional issues claiming that the Republican Party is bringing us back to 40 years ago when “people were afraid to swim in a pool with African Americans” and gay couples had no rights. During this rant Dr. Dean was very loud and was swinging his arms as a way to incite the audience, which responded slowly but sheepishly to his impassioned plea for unity.

In the end, Dr. Dean spoke again about balancing the budget as a responsibility to our youth, and focusing on the important issues that bring us together as a country. He made the point that we should consider ourselves as “one big family;” black, white, asian, gay, hispanic, etc., and that we should help each other as “Jesus would.” Dr. Dean finished his lecture with the statement that “democracy is about the people” not the issues that make us different, but what makes us the same.

I found the lecture to be quite enjoyable, and I got the feeling that Dr. Dean expects to remain in politics. It would not surprise me if Howard Dean was going to run for president again in 2008 or another major political post. If so, I think he is getting a tremendous head start, by staying in the public eye and pushing his “Democracy for America” agenda.

I look forward to Empire State College’s keynote address and speaker for next year.

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the college.

Funded by the Student Activity Fee.
A transformation will be taking place in November in the form of Empire State College’s Student All College Conference 2005. The Student All College is modeled after the college’s annual All College Conference for faculty, staff and professionals, and seeks to bring together Empire State College students for sharing, support and inspiration. This conference will serve as a public recognition and celebration of our students and their academic and intellectual achievements and pursuits. Student development workshops and activities will also be offered.

The Student All College Conference grew out of the efforts of the Student Affairs Committee. Last year, SAC examined the ways we recognize the academic and personal achievements of our students. After researching already existing regional events and brainstorming new ideas, SAC wrote a proposal and secured funding through the Student Activities Fee (SAF) for this conference, the first of its kind for Empire State College.

The goals of the conference are to provide an arena for developing community among our students; to provide a forum for presenting creative and inspiring accomplishments of an academic nature; to foster the value of Empire State College as a learning community; to immerse students in academic culture; and to give students and faculty an opportunity to interact in a different forum. We are also planning to offer student development and success programming and opportunities for open dialogue between students and the administration.

Call for Proposals

Students, faculty, staff and professionals are encouraged to submit proposals for presentations to be given during the conference. Concurrent sessions are scheduled in 50 minute blocks. Proposals for the following types of presentations will be considered:

- individual presentation – a presentation of a piece of research or an academic project. Students are encouraged to review the work they have done for their studies here for ideas.
- panel discussion – a presentation or a discussion led by a panel of participants. Students and/or faculty who have collaborated on projects or academic work are encouraged to present in this format.
- poster presentation – Academic research or a project presented through a series of "posters" mounted on a single presentation stand. The entire presentation must not exceed 4 feet wide by 5 feet high. The presenter is expected to stand by the presentation during the designated session time frame.
- art gallery submission – The conference schedule includes a gallery of artwork created by Empire State College students. Your application for inclusion in the gallery must include a photo of the piece(s).

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee.

A special note to Empire State College students.

Giving a presentation at a conference such as this can be an extremely rewarding activity. It can validate your academic achievements and scholarship. It can serve as a professional accomplishment listed on your resume or application for graduate school. It can also give you a well-deserved sense of personal satisfaction. Ideas for presentations can come from research papers, study group projects, internships, credit by evaluation proposals, artwork, photography. We encourage you to take the time to review your academic work, discuss your ideas with your mentors and submit a presentation proposal for this exciting event. Those students invited to present at the conference must register for the conference separately.
Student All College Conference 2005
Transforming Experiences: Expanding the Community of Scholars

November 4 and 5, 2005 The Courtyard Marriott, Saratoga Springs, NY

Title of Presentation: ________________________________________________________

Type of Presentation: _____ Individual Presentation
                      _____ Panel Discussion
                      _____ Poster Presentation
                      _____ Art Submission

Name of Presenter _________________________________________________________

For submission of a panel discussion proposal, please list all panel members:
__________________________________   __________________________________

Address _________________________________________________________________

Phone # __________________________ E-mail Address ___________________________

I am a _____ Student _____ Faculty _____ Professional _____ Staff

Center/Unit/Program _______________________________________________________

Brief Summary of Presentation (100 word limit per presentation)
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Audio/Visual Needs: (equipment, cords, etc) __________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS IS MAY 1, 2005

Please submit completed proposal form (with supporting documents if necessary) to:

DoriAnne Sapienza-Palma
Retention Specialist
Empire State College
Hauppauge Unit
Room 1A11, 250 Veterans Memorial Highway
Hauppauge, NY 11788-5539
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