

# CTE "Learning about Learning"

Newsletter of the Center for Teaching Excellence, Bronx Community College, CUNY Fall 2005

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Title V Director

## FACULTY DIRECTOR'S CORNER



**Dr. Harriet Shenkman**  
Faculty Director  
Center for Teaching Excellence

### Pedagogies of Engagement

The CTE will celebrate teaching and learning this November by emphasizing pedagogies of engagement, which seek to deepen learning in and across the disciplines. In the most recent issue of *Liberal Education*, Carol Schneider, president of AAC&U, states that the ethos of the New Academy vision of liberal education is one of engagement, and Lee S. Shulman, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, maintains that "learning requires that students feel visible and accountable." Engaged learning in the sciences, applied learning and field-based learning in pre-professional programs, and more student-centered instruction based upon what we know about cognition in all disciplines promotes that kind of visibility.

A central question is: How do students engage with learning to discover new meanings, develop understandings that can be applied to new learning situations, and construct knowledge in the context of diverse subject areas? The ultimate goal is for students to use their knowledge to illuminate the human condition, and more specifically, their own understanding of their place in society and their role as responsible citizens.

During CTE Week, we will provide models of student excellence as a result of engaged learning as well as models of engaged pedagogy. The Advisory Board is planning displays and demonstrations in lobbies across the campus and several sessions centering on engaged pedagogy. Science and Math projects will be

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## Mark Your Calendar!

### CTE Week November 14th-18th

Save these dates, and please participate in this "Celebration of Student Excellence through Pedagogies of Engagement." Activities are being planned throughout the campus, so check our website.

The main event will take place at the Gould Memorial Auditorium, where special guest author Billy Collins, former U.S. Poet Laureate, will be reading from his work. Selected readings of works by students will also be part of this event.



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## New CTE Assistant Director: Bruce Rosenbloom



**Bruce Rosenbloom**  
CTE, Assistant Director

I am very excited and pleased to become CTE's Assistant Director and look forward to meeting many of you in the near future. My work at CTE will entail various responsibilities including conducting technology workshops, maintaining the CTE website, editing and layout for this newsletter, creating management reports and user documentation, and assisting Harriet Shenkman and Jerry Simotas.

I come to Bronx Community College having served over three years as an Educational Technologist at Adelphi University's faculty center—which had a mission similar to our Center for Teaching Excellence. I worked closely with faculty on various technology projects like electronic portfolios, and conducted many workshops from Blackboard to web design. Currently, I am an adjunct professor and teach technology courses to graduate students in Adelphi's School of Education.

Please feel free to contact me at X5951, or at my e-mail address:  
bruce.rosenbloom@bcc.cuny.edu

### IMPORTANT DATES



### CTE Advisory Board Meetings

September 8, 2005, 2:00—4:00 pm  
September 29, 2005, 2:00—4:00 pm  
October 27, 2005, 2:00—4:00 pm  
November 3, 2005, 2:00—4:00 pm

All meetings will be held in the  
President's Conference Room,  
Language Hall

## Title V Director's Corner



**Mitchell Wenzel**  
Title V Director

We are approaching the fourth year of our five year cooperative grant with Lehman College. You can see in this newsletter the numerous activities funded by the grant. We expect the CTE facility to be completed this year and provide an exciting venue for campus activities.

## Faculty Director's Corner continued

displayed in Meister Hall and PowerPoint presentations of Education majors will be running in Colston Hall. Perkins Tutors will demonstrate their successes, honors students will demonstrate their use of PC Tablets; the Debate Club will give a demonstration of their award-winning skills; student art will be displayed; "salsa shines" will be performed; and faculty who participated in action research projects and technology training will demonstrate their accomplishments. Most of these demonstrations model Gen Ed proficiencies and are just a few examples of the exciting work by faculty and students we can expect to see.

The main event in Gould Memorial Auditorium will feature Billy Collins, former Poet Laureate of the United States and Distinguished Professor at Lehman College, reading from his work. Students will take part in this event by reading their award winning written works as a result of a contest planned by an inter-departmental team. The library and the bookstore will support these efforts by creating a display of the author's work and a Presidential Grant awarded to Grace Cukras will fund student participation.

If you have illustrations of engaged pedagogy you wish to share, let a member of the CTE Advisory Board know. We invite you to join us in the exciting process of "learning about learning."

## CTE Website and Calendar: A Work in Progress

Our CTE website is being updated on a regular basis; please take a look. It is our hope to add relevant, useful and dynamic content to our site so it can be an ongoing resource to BCC faculty. The calendar of events is a useful location for finding workshops and events of interest to faculty. We also have the capability on our website for faculty to register for workshops. In the near future we are adding pages for adjunct faculty and testimonials about our workshops.

Our web address is:  
<http://www.bcc.cuny.edu/CenterForTeaching/>

Please notify us if you have a relevant item that you wish to post, or have a suggestion for our website. Just send e-mail to:  
CTE@BCC.CUNY.EDU, or call  
Bruce Rosenbloom at X 5951.

## Upcoming Workshops

**Getting Started with Blackboard**  
Leader: Jerry Simotas

**Integrated Skills Reinforcement**  
Leader: Phyllis Read

**Online Information Researching**  
Leader: TBA

**Title V Reading, Learning & Thinking**  
Leader: Harriet Shenkman

**Visual Learning and Inspiration**  
Leader: Bruce Rosenbloom

**Basic Web Page Design with Front-Page**  
Leader: TBA

Additional information on these and other upcoming workshops and seminars can be obtained from the:

**CTE Calendar of Events at the following address:**

[http://www.bcc.cuny.edu/CenterforTeaching/?page=faculty\\_development\\_workshops](http://www.bcc.cuny.edu/CenterforTeaching/?page=faculty_development_workshops)

## Tablet PC's at BCC



**Mr. Jerry Simotas**  
Director, CTE

During the spring semester of 2005 the Information Technology/CTE department of Bronx Community College in collaboration with John Jay College, College of Staten Island and Queens College embarked on a pilot project that has come to be known as "Mobile Computing at the City University." Each of the above campuses chose a different venue for the implementation of this project: BCC created the Honors College; CSI: Freshman Composition; JJC of Criminal Justice: UN/Interpol Research Study; and QC: Re-Enacting History (Freshman Year Program).

The major technical force behind these projects was/is the introduction and use of the PC-Tablet. BCC distributed twenty-one PC tablets (HP1100) to honor students enrolled in four different disciplines. This fall another 24 students will be selected to participate in the PC Tablet Honors program.

Notable recognition of the CUNY Mobile Computing project was given in a conference at the University of Delaware's Center for Digital Education in April, where BCC, CSI and JJC appeared in a panel presentation/discussion of their respective project outcomes under the topic of "Instructional Technology in Higher Education - City University of New York demonstrates how they are making it work!" In June we presented "*If Tablet Computers Are a Solution, What is the Problem?*" at the NYNJ Blackboard User Group Conference held at the Graduate Center. Both of these conferences were well attended and our talk generated a lot of interest.

At CUNY's 4th Annual IT Conference, scheduled for December 2, 2005, Bronx Community College and the other three campuses will once again get exposure for this ongoing project in a session presentation entitled: "*Steve Jobs and Michael Dell got this one wrong—Tablet PCs DO make sense!*". To date, reception of the PC Tablet by both students and faculty has been a great success!

## VP Sanchez Greet New Faculty



On August 25, VP Sanchez warmly welcomed 15 new faculty members to BCC, as part of the new faculty seminar. Also addressing the group was Dean Alice Fuller, Dean Nadine Posner, Dean Jason Finkelstein, Ms. Anidia Finaro (Benefits), and Ms. Carin Horowitz (Disabilities Services). After lunch, CTE's directors Dr. Harriet Shenkman and Mr. Jerry Simotas made presentations, and Mr. Bruce Rosenbloom conducted a tour of the campus.



### Teaching with Technology

**Dr. Howard Wach**  
History

A new and exciting faculty development activity was inaugurated in June 2005 when ten faculty members representing six departments gathered for an intensive week-long session on Teaching with Technology. Under the watchful eyes of program leaders (Professors Charles Alston, Matthew Crick, Stephen Powers, and Howard Wach) who are experienced faculty users of Blackboard and other instructional technologies, participants worked through a series of activities designed to integrate these tools into teaching and learning in ways that serve specific pedagogical and curricular goals. This reflects the program's fundamental premise: that pedagogy and course content should always determine the appropriate use of technology.

Results of the project began to be visible almost immediately as Prof. Neal Phillip (Department of Chemistry) taught his summer session CHM 17 class online with Blackboard and received highly positive feedback from students. More results from this program will be showcased during a CTE Week presentation to be held on Friday, November 18.

## Hall of Fame Grant Proposal

An interdisciplinary faculty team consisting of Susan Amper (English), Chris Grenda (History), Vaso Thomas (Social Science) and David Gordon (History), and Harriet Shenkman (CTE Faculty Director) will be submitting a proposal to National Endowment for the Humanities which will allow twenty-four faculty from BCC, Hostos, and Lehman to pursue scholarly study of three literary figures or three historic figures in The Hall of Fame for Great Americans. Dean Susan Polirstok will be the Lehman liaison and Cynthia Jones (English) will be the Hostos Liaison. The end product, if funded, would be innovative humanities teaching projects in all three colleges. ■



### Media Across the Curriculum

Eight professors have been accepted to the Media Literacy Program initiated by CTE in Spring 2005. They are: Christina Sassi-Lehner (English); James Freeman (Social Science); Joan E. Wilson (Education & Reading); Betsey Hallihan (Biology and MLT); Clarence Perkins (Business and Information Systems); Phyllis Read (English); Susan Amper (English); and H. Elizabeth Smith (English).

Professors will be employing a diversity of Gen Ed proficiencies while incorporating the N.Y. Times. Proposals submitted include scaffolding essay assignments leading to a research paper; responding to articles via letters to the editor; collating and classifying health-related topics leading to a research paper; summarizing articles on microbiology leading to in-class presentations; tracking and discussing current business trends; analyzing articles on Islam in the context of The Kite Runner and viewing OSAMA; and analyzing editorials and op-ed pieces as a means toward understanding the writing process. These innovative proposals are good examples of "pedagogies of engagement." Faculty feedback from the Spring semester indicated that incorporating the newspapers into classes added an important topicality to the subjects discussed.

## General Education Initiative Update

**Dr. Debra Gonsler**  
Communication Arts and Sciences

On June 6, 2005, BCC conducted its second General Education Institute. It was attended by over forty faculty members from the Academic Departments, Student Development, the Library and members from the Writing Across the Curriculum Initiative.

Attendees were familiarized with the work of the General Education Initiative during the 2004-2005 year. This included: a review of existing exercises specific to each discipline; a clarification of the General Education proficiencies that the exercises addressed; and the addition of an integrative learning experience into each exercise. At a Computer Lab in Meister Hall, each department worked on the exercises which were then transferred to disc for eventual incorporation into a compilation, *Competencies, Connections and Context: Exercises for a General Education*. After extensive work over the summer, it is now available for faculty use.

During the afternoon session, faculty explored ways the General Education might be further embedded into every facet of the BCC college experience. In addition, they explored capstone courses and experiences and how they might be incorporated into existing programs.

In the words of one attendee, the Institute was "a most energizing and fruitful experience." It is my hope that the energy, creativity and commitment to General Education continues in the upcoming year. I am confident, with the help of the 2005-2006 General Education Fellows, Matthew Crick (Humanities), Madeline Bates (Sciences) and Janet Heller (Careers) that this will be the case.

## CTE Spring Literary Event

**Dr. John Athanasourelis**  
Department of English



Photo: Angi Cruz

On Wednesday, May 4, 2005, writer Angie Cruz treated a standing-room-only crowd in Schwendler Auditorium to a powerful and thoughtful reading of excerpts from her latest novel, *Let It Rain Coffee*, in the first-ever public reading of the book. Cruz read of her protagonist's trip to a downtown club, where the music and excitement reminds him of his native Dominican Republic and his desire to return. A native of Washington Heights, Cruz spoke of her Dominican background and the often complex and subtle interaction of that identity with that of New York City and America as a whole.

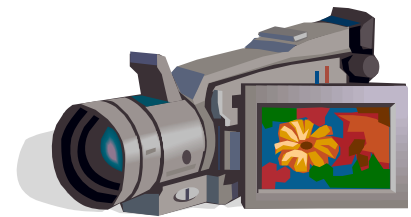
Several students asked questions after the reading and most questions focused on autobiographical elements in the novel and the importance of Latino culture to the writer. It was surprising to hear that Cruz was not a serious reader until age twenty, when she was a student at SUNY Binghamton, where she was inspired by slave narratives. If these untutored writers could achieve something significant by relating the facts of their lives, Cruz posited, she herself could express the significance of her own ideas to others.

The enthusiasm was perhaps best illustrated by the mob of autograph seekers at the end of the presentation and Cruz talked at length with many of those who came with copies of *Soledad*, her previous novel, or bought copies of *Let It Rain Coffee* provided by the BCC bookstore.

## Faculty Technology Survey to be Distributed in September

As part of CTE's effort to better serve our faculty, we will be distributing a comprehensive survey to all BCC faculty in September. The survey will focus on technology workshops we offer to faculty in order to ascertain what the demand for specific workshops will be.

Both full and part-time faculty will be asked to indicate the workshops they are interested in taking from an array of potential workshops. Once these survey results are analyzed, we can prioritize those workshops most in demand. Surveys will be distributed to all departments and via e-mail. We hope to get your cooperation in completing this important survey.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

CTE has purchased a digital video camera for professors to film their classes or design instructional videos. Prior to loaning out, we strongly recommend that you acquire experience with multimedia. CTE can assist you.

Please call Jerry Simotas at X5777 for more information on the camera.

**CTE** "Learning about Learning"

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