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FACULTY DIRECTOR'S CORNER



Dr. Harriet Shenkman
Faculty Director
Center for Teaching Excellence

We were very pleased with the participation of over 2,000 students, faculty, and administrators in CTE Week events in November. The photographs on the inside pages are testimonials to our vibrant learning community. In the spring, we continue to offer training for faculty to enhance teaching and learning through our collaborative program with Lehman College under Title V.

There are several ongoing projects for this semester. First, a group of new faculty members will take the lead in planning the agenda for their New Faculty Salon in March. Second, a team of humanities' faculty in conjunction with Melissa Kirk from Student Life will involve faculty and students in learning projects related to the Hall of Fame for Great Americans on our campus. Third, we will again be offering Media Across the Curriculum project in conjunction with the NY Times. In addition, we will be supporting college initiatives in general education, technology, and international education.

Please let us know if you have any exciting ideas that will help us to enhance teaching and promote learning at BCC. We welcome your ideas and your participation.



Blackboard is Upgraded to Version 6.3

Jerry Simotas
Educational Technology Director
Center for Teaching Excellence

In January, CUNY upgraded to the latest version of Blackboard—version 6.3 for all campuses including BCC. The new version has additional features and enhancements that we are currently reviewing. Later this semester, CTE will conduct a faculty workshop that explains the new features.



Upcoming Events

Look out for the following CTE events (dates to be publicized)

New Faculty Salon: March 9, 12 noon-2pm, RBSC 207

Faculty Technology Showcase

New Technology Workshops

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Important Dates

CTE Advisory Board Meetings

February 16, 2006, 2:00—4:00 pm
March 16, 2006, 2:00— 4:00 pm
April 27, 2006, 2:00— 4:00 pm

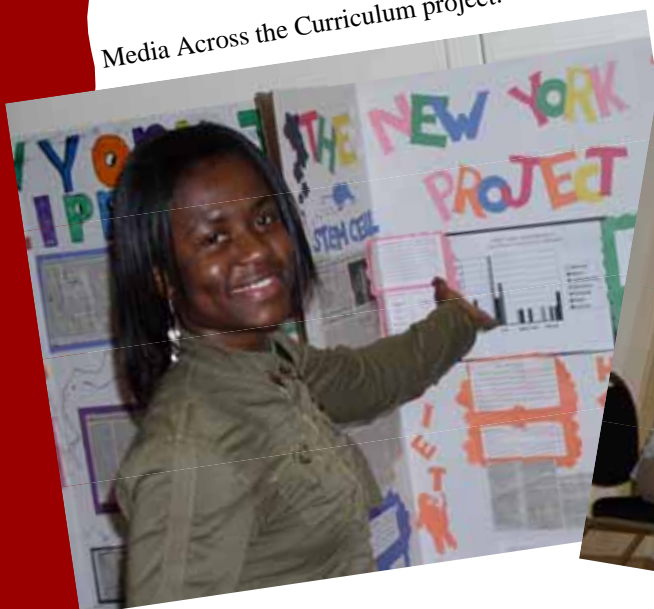
All meetings will be held in the President's Conference Room, LH.



Snapshots of Student Engagement with Learning

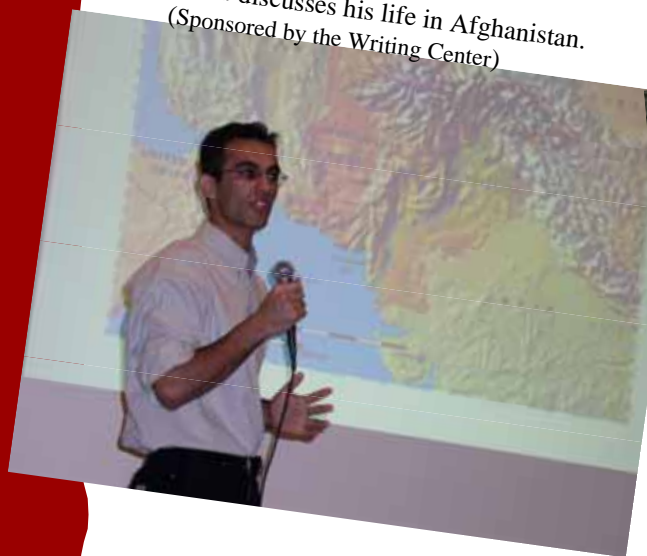
CTE Week 2005

Media Across the Curriculum project.



Poet Laureate awards poetry prize to student winner.

Nussarat Said discusses his life in Afghanistan.
(Sponsored by the Writing Center)



Interactive technology exhibit.





Snapshots continued

CTE Week 2005

Student art exhibition.



Award-winning student debate team.



Author Billy Collins signing books after presentation.



Students performing salsa solos.



Library exhibit: students composing poetry.



Tech BootCamp and Faculty Showcase

Bruce Rosenblom
CTE Asst. Director

In mid-January 2006, CTE conducted a series of technology workshops for faculty in various departments. During a two-week period, over 50 faculty attended workshops on Blackboard, PowerPoint, Finding and Using Learning Objects, and a two-day Technology Boot Camp. The feedback we received from attendees was quite positive. Given the success of these workshops, CTE will likely offer a new round of between-semester workshops in June, prior to the summer term.

For the spring semester CTE is collaborating with the TLTR Committee to showcase faculty using technology. We are planning three sessions in the Spring and will feature three faculty per showcase. Details on this and a webcasting workshop will be forthcoming. Significant progress has also been made with the CTE website that now includes simulations about Blackboard.



Title V Update

Mitchell Wenzel
Title V Director

Our third Center for Teaching Excellence week for 2005, under its Faculty Director Dr. Harriet Shenkman was another huge success. I also wish to thank all of those that made it a superb event once again.

This is our fourth year of the five-year Title V Cooperative Grant with Lehman College. The Activity of Faculty Development at the CTE is enabling both campuses to strengthen their programs by providing faculty with innovative teaching techniques as well as opportunities for pedagogical research. This year the Transfer Center at BCC has peer advisors that are trained at Lehman to work with our students. Under the Grant, the articulation activity has brought together faculty from both institutions in order to develop articulations in many disciplines. We hope to continue our negotiations of other articulations prior to the end of the Grant in 9/30/07.

On Salt Shakers and Plain Poetry: Billy Collins Honors BCC's Student Writers

Andrew Libby,
CUNY Writing Fellow

Billy Collins, the former poet laureate of the United States, visited BCC's Gould Memorial Auditorium to honor winners of this year's poetry and essay-writing contests on November 17, 2005. His talk, reading, and the ensuing conversation with students crowned the weeklong celebration of pedagogies of engagement sponsored by the Center for Teaching Excellence with the support of the Literary Arts Club and WAC.

The house was full as Collins, distinguished professor of English at Lehman College, opened the morning's program with remarks that directly addressed the leitmotif of this year's CTE week: engaged learning and engaged pedagogy. Collins assured students that poetry—often misunderstood as an entanglement in opacity—actually forms the fabric of everyday life and that what it teaches—that is, when it wants to teach rather than entertain or inspire—is an appreciation of the extraordinary in the midst of the utterly familiar.

Students picked up on this poetics of the ordinary. Jhnsanci Diaz, for example, examined how Collins's reading uprooted stereotypes about writing, "What really surprises me about the poetry event was the easy way that Mr. Billy Collins presented how to write poems. The topics of the poems were really easy to understand, they were from part of the daily life."

How familiar can it get? A salt shaker might prove a suitable object for initiating a poem, for everyone has what it takes to write poems. "We all start out as poets. Six- or seven-year olds produce brilliant, surreal poetry," Collins observed. You begin with expression (heartbreak for example, or a desire to prove your own aesthetic superiority) and arrive at something that is grounded in social interaction. "Form is sociable; anything that makes a poem hold together is form."

The time spent listening to Collins and the CTE prize winners resonated with

many students, who responded in writing to what they had experienced. "What inspired me the most about the readings is that they can relate to me, the way he read each one," observed Arelis Rodriguez. Luis, in Prof. Read's English class, championed Collins's irreverent attitude toward poetic inspiration, his disdain for the muses. "What inspired me the most was when he said what motivated him the most was when a person doubted him." Collins also recommended jealousy, revenge, and self-aggrandizement as excellent motives for writing good poetry.

Others appreciated connecting with their peers' poetry and the self-reflection it gave rise to. Several applauded Kamel Awawda's first-prize-winning "My Identity Card" for its complex articulation of identity. And another prize winner, Rayvonne Gomez, moved many with her sensitive evocation of vexed but loving father-daughter relationships. Stephanie Gonzalez reflected that "Hearing [her] read made me think about my father and the emotions that run through me about him."

Collins's poetics of the ordinary, and the tremendously good-natured spirit he delivered it in, seems to have found fertile ground to grow in at BCC, thanks to the opportunities created by CTE week. And BCC students have responded in kind, passionately opening new fields of inquiry and new ways to till them, both for themselves and



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