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of the City University of New York

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A Center for Teaching, Learning, Scholarship and Service

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"The Faculty Commons creates a locus of professional activities that enhance support for faculty development and assist in integrating new faculty into the College. It serves to address a major element contained in the College’s Strategic Plan."

Russell K. Hotzler
President
Building a Signature General Education and a Culture of Assessment through Faculty Collaboration

Bonne August, Provost

For me, the word nucleus invokes the central role of General Education in the overall college experience for our students and also its centrality to their particular areas of study, all of which grow from the basic knowledge of the General Education disciplines and all of which nurture students’ overall growth as well as their specific expertise.

Unlike a “core” which is static, a nucleus is both fundamental and dynamic, necessary to growth and diversification. It has essential elements but they are combined differently for each entity. The faculty is also the nucleus of the college. Collectively, they are the one enduring element. They are—in the by-laws and historically—the creators of the curriculum, and they are responsible for maintaining its vibrancy and quality and for determining students’ mastery.

As an institution, we aspire to create a General Education that is truly a nucleus for all we do: owned by faculty, understood by students, integral to the college’s identity, and actively assessed and reflected upon.

I am delighted to join with President Russell Hotlzler and Dean of Curriculum and Instruction Sonja Jackson, whose vision was instrumental in creating the Faculty Commons, in inaugurating this special place for the common work of faculty as you seek increasingly higher levels of collaboration and inspiration in strengthening the nexus of research and teaching.

City Tech Requests $2.5M from U.S. Department of Education to Redesign General Education for the 21st Century

A team that included Shelley Smith, Maura Smale, Mary Sue Donsky, Jonathan Natov, Peter Parides, Tammie Cumming, Julia Jordan, Barbara Burke, and Patty Barba spent ten days in June preparing an ambitious proposal to the U.S. Department of Education Title V program to redesign General Education. The redesign suggests a clear process for conceptualizing, implementing, and assessing curriculum change and the attainment of student learning outcomes. If funded, the award will enable the college to accelerate a process that is mandated by the Middle States Report of 2008. Plans focus on the inculcation of 21st century skills and a commitment to implement high impact practices that have proven effective in other higher education settings. While federal funding would enable the college to accelerate the pace of planning and program development, the college is committed to undertaking a comprehensive redesign of General Education with or without federal funding.
Welcome
Professor Julia Jordan, Acting Director

Welcome to Faculty Commons, City Tech’s Center for Teaching, Learning, Scholarship, and Service. Throughout CUNY there are centers for teaching and learning. City Tech is unique in its provision of ‘one-stop shopping’ (Namm 227) for the pursuit of intellectual growth and the enhancement of teaching in three related areas: pedagogical practice, assessment, and grant services. Faculty Commons is dedicated to support and advance individual and collective scholarship that is aligned with our college mission.

Funded in part by the CUNY-wide Coordinated Undergraduate Education (CUE), Faculty Commons will provide a series of workshops, seminars, and peer discussions to meet individual, departmental, and college needs. The Commons partners with Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), Instructional Technology (ITMS), the Ursula Schwerin Library, Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) and others to co-sponsor and engage part-time and full-time faculty in a robust schedule of ongoing professional development throughout the academic year.

Faculty Commons Fellows. This initiative, developed by Professor George Guida and PDAC, provides selected faculty from each school with the space, time, and resources to develop pedagogy and assessment tools that advance our thinking and that provide for success of our students. The Faculty Commons provides an incubator style environment in which the first cohort of Faculty Fellows chosen from those who applied will work. The fellows are Professor Lynda Dias, who will lead a college-wide conversation about Academic Service Learning, Professors Victoria Lichterman and Shauna Vey, who will develop a plan for instituting Communications Across the Curriculum, and Professor Djafar Mynbaev, who will develop and implement Electrical and Telecommunications Engineering Technology case scenarios that will expand opportunities for students to develop problem-solving skills and better prepare for the workplace.

Realizing a Vision

I could write several paragraphs defining the purpose of City Tech’s Faculty Commons and the important role it will play in anchoring faculty development activities on our campus. However, for me, the most important role that the Commons will play in the lives of faculty and the students they serve is to give both faculty and students permission to think, work, and imagine together in ways beyond the confines of a single classroom.

The poet Wallace Stevens wrote a poem called “The Man with the Blue Guitar,” in which the blue guitar becomes a metaphor for the imagination. It goes like this...

*They said, “You have a blue guitar. You do not play things as they are.”*

*The man replies, “Things as they are Are changed upon the blue guitar.”* (1982)

I hope that all the faculty who find their way to the Faculty Commons are changed by City Tech’s blue guitar.

All the best,

Sonja Jackson
Dean of Curriculum and Instruction

Dean Sonja Jackson and Professor Julia Jordan

Nucleus: A Faculty Commons Quarterly  Vol 1 – Issue 1
City Tech Welcomes
Dr. Tammie Cumming,
Director of Assessment and Institutional Research

Welcome, Tammie. We are delighted to have you as a colleague in the Faculty Commons.

I’m excited to be at City Tech with such a great group of faculty, administrators, and students.

Can you say a bit about your background and current research interests?

I’ve relocated from Iowa where I completed a PhD in Applied Statistics and Psychometrics from The University of Iowa, worked for eight years at ACT and then worked with a group of educational researchers with The National Learning and Achievement Organization, Inc. Additionally, I taught math and statistics at a large community college in our area throughout the years.

City Tech is poised for a sea-change as we strive to adopt “assessment for learning” as a key tool for understanding the effectiveness of instruction across all schools and programs. What does the term “assessment for learning” mean?

I think it’s really important to view assessment as a tool for instructors and programs. The goal of assessment is to know what the students are learning and identify learning objectives that need attention for student improvement. Faculty are experts in their field. As experts and instructors, they derive learning goals for the students who take their courses. Programs have learning goals, as well. Each of the goals can be measured. When instructors and programs use assessments to evaluate to what extent their students are achieving those outcomes, they assign a grade. However, a grade doesn’t communicate the particular skill set the student has as a result of taking a particular course or completing a particular program. The goal of the assessment for learning approach in the classroom is to provide the instructor with an opportunity to communicate the skills of a successful student in their courses. Similarly, program assessment provides a tool in which departments can report on what a successful student “can do” once they’ve completed a particular program. Additionally, through the assessment for learning model, if it’s noticed that any of the student learning outcomes for a particular course or program aren’t being achieved at a satisfactory level, which is set by the faculty, the data can help the faculty to formulate a plan to improve the student learning outcomes.

To what extent do you see yourself as an educator as well as an assessment and evaluation specialist?

I really see myself as support for the faculty. Assessment is faculty driven. My role is to help the faculty develop their assessment skills and learn to use the tool to their benefit – and not view assessment as just another “thing to do” on their schedule.

What is the importance of defining Student Learning Outcomes for each course? How hard a task will that be for faculty?

Defining the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) is essential for developing valid and reliable assessments. This usually isn’t a difficult task for faculty once they understand what a written SLO should include. Many faculty have already done this task, but if they haven’t, they probably just need a little guidance in the best way to construct them. I’ve never met a faculty member who didn’t have the SLOs for their courses formulated in their mind. The problem with that approach, however, is that SLOs need to be defined on paper so others can understand them, as well. The point is, the faculty are already operating with SLOs guiding their instruction and test development, but perhaps not in a systematic manner. Currently, we’re operating in a college environment where assessment is valued as a tool for improving student learning and
required for accreditation, so a systematic assessment for learning approach is encouraged here at City Tech.

What are the major priorities of AIR for the ’09-’10 academic year?

We have some very exciting plans for the upcoming academic year. We’re working on a college-wide assessment for learning approach. We’re also working on providing survey services on a much larger scale for the faculty. We’d love to see an online survey system in place for City Tech. We’d also like to see further development of the Data Dashboard, a fabulous tool for faculty and administration to obtain the data they need in a user-friendly environment.

The co-location of Assessment and Institutional Research (AIR), Faculty Development, and Grants in the Faculty Commons is intended to strengthen the teaching/research nexus. It is a place where faculty members can come to collaborate on research, find support for their own classroom teaching effectiveness, and seek external funding through grants for innovation and scholarship. How can we evaluate the success of the Commons itself in strengthening the teaching/research nexus? Are there measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes that we need to define in this inaugural year to establish a baseline for measuring the successful integration of teaching and research?

Great question. The Faculty Commons was established with goals in mind. The first step is to define the goals for the faculty commons. The second step is to define the objectives for the Faculty Commons that will help it meet its goals. The third step is to identify the measures, both indirect and direct, to capture the data to determine the extent the objectives are met. And then, we look at the data in the context of the objectives, using a rubric, and learn how we’ve been successful and where we need to improve. Then we formulate new objectives to help us meet our goals, and the cycle continues.

Is there anything else you’d like the faculty to know about your plans for AIR?

We’re here to support the faculty, staff, and students and we encourage you to contact us.

Thank you and best wishes for a wonderful year!

Thank you! I’m excited to be a part of the Commons, and look forward to doing some great work together.
Increasing Student Engagement in the Humanities at City Tech

Retentions and Transfigurations: The Technological Evolution and Social History of Five New York City Neighborhoods

Collaborative Knowledge: Exploring Interdisciplinary Pedagogy and Course Development

Green Brooklyn: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Urban Environmental Studies

Water & Work: The Ecology of Downtown Brooklyn

Increasing Student Engagement in the Humanities at City Tech

Designed by Professor Robin Michals
New York Native Learning

Looking for Whitman: The Poetry of Place in the Life and Work of Walt Whitman
Professor Matthew Gold Wins Second NEH Digital Humanities Grant to Continue Walt Whitman Study with Partner Universities

Professor Matthew Gold of the English department has won his second grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for a Phase 2 Digital Humanities project entitled *Looking for Whitman: The Poetry of Place in the Life and Work of Walt Whitman.* The $33,000 grant will enable Professor Gold to build upon his first digital humanities project, which engaged faculty and students at four universities--City Tech, NYU, the University of Mary Washington, and Rutgers University Camden--in a concurrent, connected, semester-long inquiry into the relationship of Whitman’s poetry to local geography and history. Students will explore the relationship between their immediate locale and a particular phase of the poet’s work. They will use an online collaborative space to investigate and share unique primary source materials, thereby expanding the boundaries of institutions and classrooms to reflect the central themes of Whitman’s work: democracy, diversity, openness, and connectedness.

NEH National Summer Institute for Community College Faculty to Be Held Here in June 2010

A locally inspired initiative, *Along the Shore: Exploring Brooklyn’s Historic Waterfront,* has become national in reach. Led by Professor of English Richard Hanley, project director, and Professor of Architectural Technology, Shelley Smith, co-director, an NEH-funded Summer Institute will bring community college faculty from across the nation to City Tech next June to explore iconic landmarks including the Brooklyn Bridge, the Brooklyn Navy Yard, Brooklyn Heights, Newtown Creek, and Coney Island. Starting with the assumption that meaningful landmarks involve preservation not just of buildings and physical fabric but of the lives, work, and play of those associated with the physical place, participants will consider the role of ‘landmarks’ in illuminating and commemorating both the cultural past and the living present. Lead faculty will include Professors Peter Spellane, Robert Zagaroli, Robin Michals, Caroline Hellman, and Mark Noonan, participants all in previous NEH funded projects at City Tech. Fifty participants will be selected twenty-five for each one-week of the program. Applications will be solicited nationally, reviewed by the project team according to NEH guidelines, and announced in Spring 2010.
Dr. Ellen Goldsmith, Professor of English Emerita, to Lead Seminar for Faculty on Connecting to Learning: Transforming Research into Practice

The Faculty Commons will offer its first Teaching Strategies Workshop on Friday, September 11, 2009. Dr. Ellen Goldsmith will give an interactive presentation on how knowledge of research in cognitive science and reading comprehension can assist faculty in enhancing learning opportunities for students. The session will be held in the Atrium Amphitheater, AG-30 from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.

RSVP: facultycommons@citytech.cuny.edu

Ellen Goldsmith, Professor Emerita of New York City College of Technology, holds an Ed.D. from Teachers College, Columbia University. Her teaching, research, curriculum, and professional development interests include developmental skills, English composition and literature, and family literacy. Scholar on Campus at City Tech in 1990, she established and directed the Center for Intergenerational Reading at New York City College of Technology from 1987 – 2006. Dr. Goldsmith has made frequent conference presentations at educational and literacy conferences, published articles and literacy programs, and consulted with schools and libraries.
The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has awarded a competitive grant of $514,000 to the Department of Nursing to expand the RN-BS program. This funding will enable the department to increase the number of students served from 143 to 350, an increase of more than 100%, over the three-year grant period. The program seeks to increase the ranks of Brooklyn’s minority nurses prepared at the baccalaureate level to better reflect the ethnic and racial populations of the surrounding community. The baccalaureate program began admitting students in 2006; it is now fully operational, accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, and poised for a major expansion.

The project will adapt the highly successful Vermont Nurses in Partnership (VNIP) model, a HRSA funded initiative, to meet Brooklyn’s significant healthcare needs. The VNIP model, which “fosters a workplace culture of nurturance and support and professional growth for novice nurses” has historically been used with nursing students in internships, new graduates transitioning into initial clinical employment, and nurses transitioning to specialties. The Director of the VNIP, Susan Boyer, will consult on adapting this model for use in an academic setting with nurses who are already in the urban workforce and are concurrently enrolled in an RN-BS program.

**Dr. Carmel Dato**, Associate Professor of Nursing and Coordinator of the RN-BS program, is Project Director. **Professors Peggy Rafferty** and **Aida Egues** are Co-PIs.

The project has national significance because nursing shortages in New York State are projected to be especially acute. Demand for nurses is projected to exceed supply by as much as 24% by 2020. Acute shortages of nurses is an emerging public health issue and one that is especially felt in low-income and medically underserved areas in metropolitan New York City. The borough of Brooklyn is ranked by HRSA as having the third largest number of medically underserved areas (Brooklyn has 334 MUAs) among all counties in the nation. There is not only a need for more nurses, but also a need for more nurses who are culturally responsive to the needs of the patients and communities they serve.
City Tech has been awarded a five-year grant by the National Science Foundation Directorate for Education and Human Resources, Innovation through Institutional Integration (I^3) Program to increase synergy among existing NSF funded STEM initiatives by creatively integrating activities and assessment. Provost Bonne August is the PI; Co-PIs are Deans Robin Bargar and Pamela Brown and Professor of Biology Vasily Kolchenko.

Using the laboratory as the cross-curricular element across a wide range of STEM courses of study, faculty dyads will develop interdisciplinary case studies that engage students in active learning to solve real-world problems taken from industry. The integrative themes undergirding the I^3 Incubator are broadening participation, integrating research and education, and developing a global workforce.

Mechanisms of integration are:

1. The creation of a multidimensional model of lab practice as a tool for benchmarking laboratory integration;

2. Creation of a cross-project matrix that charts diversity goals, outreach to high schools, involvement of industry, research opportunities for students, and significant learning outcomes;

3. A management structure informed by PIs of constituent NSF funded projects and industry leaders;

4. Location of professional development for faculty in the Faculty Commons; and

5. A strong web presence as a communication and dissemination tool.

The City Tech I^3 Incubator: Interdisciplinary Partnerships for Laboratory Integration will weave together dimensions of five current NSF-funded projects—STEP, REU, ADVANCE Catalyst, and two S-STEM programs.
And More...

Two NSF ATE Preliminary Proposals Encouraged for Full Submission
Two separate proposals from the School of Technology and Design have been encouraged for full development and submission to the National Science Foundation in October 2009. **Professor Shelley Smith** is leading a team that proposes an integrated program of **Technology Education for Architecture, Engineering, and Construction**. **Professor Andy Zhang** and his colleagues are proposing a project entitled **Learning Product Design through Hands-On Mechatronic Projects**. Each initiative focuses on preparing students to enter the workforce in fields that are critical to the New York City economy.

City Tech Welcomes Its First Fulbright Scholar in Residence: **Professor Istvan Bujalis**
**Dr. Istvan Bujalis**, Director of the Institute of Philosophy at the University of Debrecen, Hungary, will spend the Fall 2009 semester as Visiting Professor of Philosophy in the Department of Social Science at City Tech. **Professor Walter Brand** will introduce Dr. Bujalis to the college community and mentor him during his stay.

PSC-CUNY Grants Workshop
The City Tech Grants Office will hold a workshop entitled **Applying for a PSC-CUNY Research Award** on Thursday, September 10, 2009 at 2:30 p.m. in N227, Faculty Commons. We will review the PSC-CUNY Research Award Program and demonstrate how to apply online. New faculty members are encouraged to attend.

The Grants Office internal deadline for Regular Competition applications is October 6th. New faculty who were hired after June 1st may apply for in the out-of-cycle competition for which the Grants Office deadline is November 20th. The PSC-CUNY application system has later deadlines but the Grants Office must have a hard copy of submitted application and an internal approval form signed by your department chair and dean by the internal deadline. Please call the Grants Office at x5173 to reserve a seat at the workshop.

Workshop on How to Spend Your PSC Grant Award
The City Tech Grants Office will hold a workshop entitled **I Received a PSC-CUNY Award! What Do I Do Next?** on Tuesday, September 15, 2009 at 2:30 p.m. in N227, Faculty Commons. Receiving a PSC-CUNY award does not mean you will simply receive a check for travel or automatically be released from teaching. We will explain the nuances of managing your small RFCUNY grant to ensure that the process of spending the funds does not detract from your research. Both new and veteran PSC-CUNY award recipients are encouraged to attend. Please call the Grants Office at x5173 to reserve a seat at the workshop.

First Year Learning Communities
Led by **Dr. Estela Rojas**, 38 faculty across disciplines have linked their courses to create 18 learning communities in which over 400 first year students are enrolled. One thematic example is **Building Poetry**. Architectural Technology and English faculty find points of intersection developing theme based learning activities highlighting Student Learning Outcomes (SLO).

Faculty Workshops and Seminars
The Faculty Commons offers an array of opportunities for faculty at each stage of the professional life cycle. See Calendar Highlights on page 16.

Teaching Portfolio Workshops
Faculty across the curriculum are guided by colleagues in the Peter Seldin model of reflection and goals setting in four-day intensive seminars every January and May.

Classroom Management
Do students learn what the teacher teaches? A drop in series of guided conversations designed especially for new faculty or faculty new to teaching at City Tech.

Reading History
City Tech historians are exploring ways undergraduate students identify and use historians ‘tools’ to successfully engage in learning activities centered around primary sources.

Summer Institute for Teaching and Learning
40 Faculty participate in an annual renewal of teaching and learning strategies … sharing, reflecting, challenging our assumptions, creating an optimal learning environment.

Partners in Faculty Development
See Calendar Highlights on the back cover for events co-sponsored with the Ursula Schwerin Library, Instructional Technology, Writing Across the Curriculum, Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC), First Year Learning Communities (FYLC) and others.
NSF Funds City Tech’s $160K CPATH Computational Thinking Initiative

Dr. Tatiana Malyuta, Professor of Computer Systems Technology, will lead an interdisciplinary team in a two-year initiative to strengthen the teaching of computational thinking across the college. Co-PIs are Dean Robin Bargar, School of Technology and Design, Dr. Vasily Kolchenko (Biology), Dr. Raffael Guidone (Computer Systems Technology), and Dr. Matthew Gold (English).

Computational thinking has been identified as the essential competency of the 21st century workforce. Dr. Malyuta and her colleagues will create a model of curriculum development that can adapt to and reflect the rapid and continuous changes in information technology that affect every field. Faculty groups from across the college will be convened to develop key indicators of computational thinking. A set of exemplary case studies, instructional prototypes, and curriculum units will also be developed and disseminated.

The NSF Pathways to Revitalized Undergraduate Computing Education competition, CPATH, assists institutions in their efforts to teach students computing concepts and methods, equip them to reason at multiple levels of abstraction simultaneously, to think algorithmically and apply foundational mathematical concepts to solve complex problems, and to understand the dimensions and consequences of scale.

NSF Awards Research Grant to Professor of Physics Giovanni Ossola

Professor Giovanni Ossola of the Physics Department has won an NSF research grant in the amount of $144,450 over two years for a project entitled Automated Computation of One-Loop Scattering Amplitudes. Professor Ossola will take advantage of the largest and most powerful particle collider ever built, the Large Hadron Collider at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research located in Geneva, Switzerland. His project has two objectives: “to develop new theoretical tools for the calculation of multi-particle NLO scattering amplitudes; and to develop stronger research ties between the developments taking place at CERN and activities at New York City College of Technology.” Professor Ossola expects to communicate developments at CERN to his students and colleagues at City Tech which will broaden the impact of his involvement at CERN.
FACULTY COMMONS CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

SEPTEMBER 2009

9/3 New Faculty Reception Atrium Library
1pm-2pm
RSVP: msmale@citytech.cuny.edu

9/8 Writing Across Curriculum (WAC)
Meet City Tech Writing Fellows N227
1pm-2pm All Welcome

9/10 How to Apply for a PSC-CUNY Award Workshop
N227 2:30pm–4:30pm
RSVP: ebergonzo@citytech.cuny.edu

9/11 Pedagogy and Practice - Connecting to Learning
with Dr. Ellen Goldsmith AG30 9am–11:30am
RSVP: facultycommons@citytech.cuny.edu

9/15 Managing your PSC-CUNY Grant Workshop
N227 2:30pm–4:30pm
RSVP: ebergonzo@citytech.cuny.edu

9/17 Introduction to Blackboard (ITMS)
G604 1pm–2:30pm
RSVP: sali@citytech.cuny.edu

9/23 WAC Workshop N227 1pm-2pm
RSVP: rmichals@citytech.cuny.edu

OCTOBER 2009

10/7 REF Works Workshop
Atrium Library 1pm–2pm
RSVP: msmale@citytech.cuny.edu

10/20 New Scholarship on Open Access Workshop
A632 1pm–2pm
RSVP: msmale@citytech.cuny.edu

10/21 WAC Workshop N227
1pm–2pm
RSVP: rmichals@citytech.cuny.edu

10/22 Grants Workshop (topic to be announced)
N227 2:30pm–4:30pm
RSVP: ebergonzo@citytech.cuny.edu

10/23 STEM P-KAL Workshop
Creating Interdisciplinary Learning Activities
A632 9am–4pm
RSVP: facultycommons@citytech.cuny.edu

10/28 Google Scholar Reference Workshop
Atrium Library 1pm–2pm
RSVP: msmale@citytech.cuny.edu

10/30 CUNY STEM Conference at CityTech Synergy in STEM
AG30 9am-6pm

Especially for New Faculty -- Classroom Management Seminars -- N227
Tuesdays 10:30am–11:30am • September 8, 15, 22 and October 6, 13, 20, 27
Wednesdays 3pm–4pm • September 2, 16, 23, 30 and October 7, 21, 28

ALL WELCOME

We are Faculty Commons!

Faculty Commons Team (left to right first row) Barbara Burke, Julia Jordan, Sonja Jackson, Tammie Cumming;
(second row) Avril Miller, Patty Barba Gorkhover, Eleanor Bergonzo, Rachel Tsang, Raymond Moncada
Contact us at extension 5225 or facultycommons@citytech.cuny.edu
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