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Individual Highlights:

SUNY Cortland Voter Participation	2
Teaching in Costa Rica	3
Launch of Local Foods Café	4

President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll Member With Distinction



Carnegie Foundation Elective Classification in Community Engagement



The American Whistleblower Tour Comes to Cortland

Making a Difference by Taking a Stand against Wrongdoing

SUNY Cortland will be hosting two prominent representatives from the Government Accountability Project (GAP) on Tuesday, March 25th. Whistleblower Jon Oberg and GAP Director Louis Clark will speak in the Park Center Hall of Fame room at 4:30 on the topic of “Making a Difference by Speaking Out about Wrongdoing.” This event is free and open to the public. Both men will also appear as featured speakers in Craig Little’s White Collar Crime classes at 8:30 and 10:05 that day.



Jon Oberg

Louis Clark

Dr. Jon H. Oberg, while working in a research capacity at the Department of Education in 2003, discovered illegal payments to student loan lenders of federal tax dollars, but department officials instructed him not to investigate further. On his own time, he researched the payments and reported them to Congress, which in 2004 ended the payments, saving billions of dollars. In 2007, Oberg sued the recipients under the False Claims Act. Three years later, the Department of Justice announced it had settled four of the cases for over \$57 million.

Louis Clark serves as both President and Corporate & Financial Accountability Director of GAP. Clark assumed the directorship of GAP in 1978, having first served as legal counsel for the organization. As President, Clark serves as a spokesperson and public ambassador

for GAP, and frequently negotiates with government and corporate officials about legal cases and social reform initiatives. Clark often meets with international delegations from all over the world in order to describe GAP’s methodology, the laws that are needed to protect employees who speak up about problems, and how to use information to promote progressive social change. In his role as Corporate & Financial Accountability Director, Clark oversees numerous cases involving widespread financial fraud.

Dr. Richard Kendrick, Director of the Institute for Civic Engagement, said that “these two men each offer us examples of how one person can, in fact, make a difference. Their stories are very inspirational in describing their courage at speaking out even in the face of adversity.” Dr. Oberg’s work was instrumental in correcting a particular wrong, while Mr. Clark has been advocating for changes that make it easier for people to speak out when they see wrongdoing. “Both are outstanding examples of civic engagement through advocacy, and I

(Continued on page 4)

SUNY Cortland Student Participation in the 2012 Presidential Elections

SUNY Cortland has been involved in a research project called the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement. It is a project of the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at Tufts University. What is unique about this study is that it matches the names of registered voters and people who actually voted, against the names of our enrolled students; so it is among the most accurate measurements of our students' voting behavior that we can get.

The good news for our college is that we are registering a higher percentage of students to vote – 69% of our students registered as compared to 65% nationally. In 2012, you may recall that NYPIRG, the Institute for Civic Engagement, and UUP joined forces to launch a substantial voter registration, education, and participation campaign. NYPIRG provided a great deal of the staffing and coordination for this project, with our coordinator at the time, Amanda Carpenter, leading the way.

Where we need to improve is getting our students to the polls. Among our 7,249 enrolled students,

- 69% were registered to vote
- 50% of those registered to vote actually voted
- 34% of all enrolled students voted

Compared to national figures, the percentage of all SUNY Cortland students who voted, and the percentage who registered and voted are lower than national percentages. In 2012, 53% of all college students voted and 82% of college students who registered to vote actually voted. At institutions with Carnegie classifications similar to ours (master's degree granting public institutions), 49% of all enrolled students voted on average, and in the state of New York, 46.2% of the voting age population turned out to vote; however, only 34% of our enrolled students voted.

We are doing a good job getting our students registered to vote. Where we can improve is getting our students to the polls. The state of New York does not make it easy for college-enrolled students to vote, so we need to see what we can do to make it easier for college students to participate in the electoral process. At the same time, we need to do a better job of explaining how the voting process works in New York so that our students understand how to participate.

We now have a baseline for evaluation of our students' participation in the electoral process. Let's set a goal of reaching at least the same percentage of participation as other Carnegie institutions like ours.

Teaching in Costa Rica Transforms Education Majors

This past January, thirteen Kappa Delta Pi (Education) Honor Society students designed and delivered lessons for Costa Rican children and teachers. In doing so, they transformed themselves into reflective practitioners. Partnering with the organization, *Projects Abroad*, students lived with host families and worked for two weeks in an urban day care center.

The Honor Society advisor, Valerie Behr (Childhood/Early Childhood Education), accompanied the students. She said that the project “challenged students to explore ways of becoming reflective international educators.”

Through their reflections, students demonstrated their ability to empathize and to apply their empathy to pedagogy.

One student, for example, noted that she will “be able to empathize with a future ESL [English as a Second Language] student in my classroom and work extra with them to help make the learning process easier.”

Another wrote that “being abroad definitely helped me understand how frustrating it can be to learn a new language, so I want to make my future students love learning a new language in a fun way, just like I did in Costa Rica.”

One linked cultural considerations to the classroom: “When I walked into the daycare, I viewed it as chaotic and loud. Yet I grew to realize that Costa Rican children are expected to be loud, so when they are quiet, something might be wrong.”

She continued by recognizing value in the children’s behavior: “The children are loud and expressive, demonstrating lots of energy for playing and engaging in educational activities.”

Some students identified the importance of other socio-economic concerns, pointing-out that, with precious few resources, Costa Ricans use items that we might throw away.

One student wrote, “we need to take into consideration people’s situations and what they have available to use,” noting that a lack of resources leads children and teachers to be creative.

Students also enjoyed activities such as swimming in the Pacific, zip-lining, and volcano-walks. One student said, “I felt like I was in German folklore and at any given moment the trees were going to start speaking to me.”

Students commented on life’s relaxed pace in Costa Rica, as embodied in Costa Ricans’ phrase, “*Pura Vida*” (*pure life*).

One student explained, “Pura Vida symbolizes the idea of letting things go and simply enjoying life. “Pura Vida always.”

These students have embraced SUNY Cortland’s mission statement, which includes a dedication to diverse learning experiences. They also illustrated the value of “high-impact” learning strategies, such as travel abroad coupled with service to the community.

Each has begun developing a *dura vita*; a strong vita.

(Continued from page 1)

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I am very excited to have them on our campus.”

Founded in 1977, GAP is the nation’s leading whistleblower protection and advocacy organization. Located in Washington, DC, GAP is a nonpartisan, public interest group. In addition to focusing on whistleblower support in stated program areas, GAP leads campaigns to enact whistleblower protection laws both domestically and internationally. GAP also conducts an accredited legal clinic for law students, and offers an internship program year-

round. GAP’s whistleblowers’ speaking engagements are aimed at educating the public – particularly university students – about the importance of speaking out when one sees wrongdoing.

The Whistleblowers’ appearance is sponsored by GAP, the SUNY Cortland Sociology/Anthropology Department, SUNY Cortland’s Institute of Civic Engagement, and the Campus Artist and Lecture Series. For more information contact Richard Kendrick at 753-2481 or at Richard.kendrick@cortland.edu.

Former AmeriCorps Member to Launch First Local Food Cafe



A former member of SUNY Cortland AmeriCorps for two terms, and a Leadership in Civic Engagement Awards winner, Sara Watrous, is busy making dreams come true. Having served the local community as a member of Sustainable Cortland, Sara is now taking her desire to make locally grown and nutritious foods convenient and accessible to the community a step further by opening The Local Food Market & Café.

The Local Food Market will be located at 37 North Main Street, formerly Cortland Hardware, and will be a full-service grocery store that sources local products, while the café will offer prepared dishes using those same high quality ingredients. The market is scheduled to open later this spring, and Sara is hoping that the cafe, with community support, will also open this spring. Currently the building site for the operation is in the midst of renovations.

The Local Food Market (LFM) is the brain child of Chastity Mydlenski, owner of OMG Health Food Store in Homer. Co-owned by Sara and Chasity, the Whole

Heart Café will be run by Sara. As the former Program Coordinator for Sustainable Cortland, Sara has dedicated herself for several years to supporting local producers and creating a more sustainable future for our community.

Although they have most of the café expenses covered, Sara and Chastity are turning to the very community they are looking to support, by raising funds through an Indiegogo campaign. Indiegogo is a crowdfunding site that allows entrepreneurs, artists, and anyone with an idea, to raise funds through small contributions from family, friends, and complete strangers. Contributors are rewarded with "perks." For Whole Heart Cafe's campaign, contributors are rewarded with cafe specials, local products, bumper stickers, kids' cooking classes, a local food reception and more! Whole Heart Cafe's goal is a modest \$15,000 and the funding will assist in the purchasing of kitchen equipment.

To learn more about Whole Heart Cafe and The Local Food Market, check out: <http://igg.me/at/wholeheartcafe/> <http://www.thelocalfoodmarket.com/>