

# The Institute for Civic Engagement

Service Learning • Community Outreach • Research and Economic Development

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## Leaders in Civic Engagement Recognized

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### Inside this issue:

- Bringing Theory to Practice National Team visit 2
- Beard Gallery: A Transgressive View of Beauty 2
- Innovations in Service-Learning 3
- Community Clean-Up 4

On Thursday, April 21, people from the campus and from the greater Cortland community celebrated the dedication and good work of 50 people who have contributed to the quality of life in Cortland County and in other areas of New York State and the world.



Michael Dexter (Water Works) receiving his *Leadership in Civic Engagement Award* from President Erik Bitterbaum

In a packed Jacobus Lounge, one hundred people congratulated students, student groups, faculty, staff, and community members who have participated in projects that include physical and emotional health, equal treatment, tutoring, mentoring, professional development, housing, and the environment.

Opening remarks were delivered by Institute for Civic Engagement Director Richard Kendrick, City of Cortland Mayor Susan Feiszli, and SUNY Cortland President Erik Bitterbaum. President Bitterbaum and Vice President for Institutional Development Raymond Franco presented civic engagement scholarships. The scholarship winners and scholarships were Victoria Maione (Borg-Warner Morse TEC Scholarship for Volunteers and

Interns), Ashley Mosgrove (Institute for Civic Engagement Scholarship), Laura Brienza and Laura Platt (Judson Taylor Presidential Scholarship), Lori Jean Magnelli (Community Scholarship for Interns and Volunteers), and Juliann Lykos (Lambda Phi Delta Scholarship).

Thirteen AmeriCorps members and eleven members of Leadership House also received commendations; Maxine Cleveland (Class of '64) awarded the Cortland Area Chapter of the Alumni Association's Community Service Award to Jesse Campanaro.



Ashley Mosgrove receiving her *Institute for Civic Engagement Scholarship* from Dr. Raymond Franco, Vice President for Institutional Advancement

A complete list of award winners can be found at <http://www2.cortland.edu/programs/civic-engagement/leadership-in-civic-engagement>. Click on *Leadership in Civic Engagement Awards* (in the left-hand column).

## Institute for Civic Engagement

*Associate Director of the Institute for Civic Engagement, Christopher Latimer*

### SUNY Cortland Honored by Site Visit from *Bringing Theory to Practice* National Team

On April 26 and 27, SUNY Cortland hosted visitors from the Bringing Theory to Practice (BToP) national office. Dr. Don Harward, National Project Director (and President Emeritus of Bates College) led the team. Dr. Ashley Finley, National Project Evaluator and a sociologist, and Jennifer O'Brien, the National Project Coordinator, were also part of the visiting group.

SUNY Cortland is one of seven model demonstration sites for the 2010-2011 year, and was selected in national competition for funding from BToP. The project supports the integration and evaluation of high impact learning pedagogies in institutions of higher education.

High impact learning practices include student participation in learning communities, service-learning, undergraduate research, internships, and study abroad opportunities, among others. BToP is particularly interested in the relationship between such practices and student learning outcomes, especially student flourishing. In our campus' research project, we have defined "flourishing" as including

identity formation, perspective taking, emotional competence, and resilience.

The National BToP Team met with SUNY Cortland's BToP research team, the President's Leadership Coalition for Student Engagement, the Provost, the Vice President for Student Affairs, and the President, among others. The purpose of the visit was to assist the campus with the process of institutionalizing and evaluating high impact learning processes.

National Team members offered many ideas for advancing the integration of high impact practices into the college's academic and co-curricular programs. Chief among these was making sure the campus community stays informed about the evidence demonstrating the unique effect of high impact practices on student performance, including the evidence we are gathering from our own research on our campus. They also encouraged us to continue working on bridging the gap between what they see as various campus "silos" so that we achieve more collaborative approaches to high impact learning.

### Research & Economic Development: Cortland Art Downtown at Main Street SUNY Cortland

*Cortland Downtown Partnership Executive Director (and Main Street Building Administrator): Adam Megivern*

*The Research and Economic Development activities are operated from Main Street SUNY Cortland which is located at 9 Main Street*

### "A Transgressive Look at Beauty" Exhibit at Beard Gallery

An exciting exhibit of student work is now on display at the Beard Gallery in Main Street SUNY Cortland at 9 Main Street. The artist, photographer Brian Roach, is presenting seven large pieces of unusual complexity, intricacy, and nuance in his show, "A Transgressive Look at Beauty."

This BFA thesis exhibition documents Roach's exploration of the transience of human accomplishment and the inherent beauty in its inevitable destruction. His work exhibits transgression in the sense that it challenges what is traditionally seen as beautiful. Instead of representing the structures' original pristine state, Roach shows the structures in their current gritty and texture-laden state, created by time, the elements, and chance. Through layering and reconstructing the image through varying perspectives and exposures, Roach's work creates a fractured sense within the scene, presenting beauty and decay on a grand scale, and alluding to the fragility of the setting. Brian Roach is a senior in the Bachelor's of Fine Arts program at SUNY Cortland.

Roach was a featured photographer on The Focus Project, as well as one of the State University of New York's Artists of the Week. The exhibit runs until May 13; the Beard Gallery is at 9 Main Street.

## Innovations in Service-Learning

Service-Learning Coordinator: John Suarez. The Office of Service-Learning is located at Moffett #2105

### Technology in Experiential Education

“Kerry,” the exasperated teacher said, “I’ve told you a dozen times about having your smartphone in class: *Bring it*, or you won’t be able to complete your assignments!”

This imaginary and counter-intuitive scene may be only a few years away – or it may already be here. Many SUNY Cortland faculty currently require students to use evolving technology for a variety of purposes, and many of those faculty teach through experiential methodologies (including, but not limited to, service-learning).

A partial list of experiential-education faculty who require students to use evolving technologies includes people in departments such as Childhood/Early Childhood Education (Karen Hempson, Shufang Shi, and Christine Widdall), Communications (Caroline Kaltefleiter and Paul van der Veur), Computer Applications Program (Gretchen Douglas and Janet Ochs), English (Tim Emerson, Cynthia Sarver, and John Suarez), Foundations and Social Advocacy (Anne Burns-Thomas), International Studies (Paulo Quaglio), and Sport Management (Aaron Zipp).

Students in these individuals’ classes use technology to communicate directly with, and to create resources for, real audiences with real needs.

Students in the *Learning (In) Deed* learning community, for example, apply lessons learned in Gretchen Douglas’ CAP 100 (Computer Applications) course by using *Excel* to create their own graphs and charts, which integrate service-learning experience with database research. Students incorporate those visuals into Web pages that they design for use by nonprofit agency supervisors.

Some students, such as Kinesiology major Jimmy Richburg, integrate other media into Websites. For his fall 2010 CAP 240 (Intermediate Computer Applications) course, taught by Jan Ochs, Richburg built a multimedia Website for Greene Basketball Camp; the site includes a PowerPoint presentation, brochures, and forms.

### Learning about *process*

Aaron Zipp’s SPM 466 (Strategic Management) students collaborate in teams on problem-solving projects for for-profit or non-profit organizations. Many students use their smartphones (*Don’t put that away, Kerry!*) to share their ideas in PowerPoint and Prezi (another presentation software) formats through Skype. Vito Cataldo, one team’s

leader, said that his team proposed a Youth Center for the town of McGraw “so that children would have a safe and fun place to spend their afternoons.”

Cataldo said that, through the experiential element of their projects, students learned that “the solutions to our problems were not what was most important in this course, it was *how* we came to the answers.”

Learning about *process* is also important to Gretchen Douglas, who – in fall 2009 – built a Wiki (a Website that allows users to edit its content) on which her learning community students posted their class notes, then added to and corrected their classmates’ notes. Douglas observes that, as a result, “students learned valuable lessons about authorship, credibility, and critical thinking.”

### Student initiative

Some students are using these tools to strengthen their own community service initiatives. Inclusive Education major Ashley Mosgrove, for example, uses Facebook to promote the activities of a student club that she founded: Cortland Animal Allies. Through Facebook, she organizes and promotes meetings and events, such as fundraisers.

Mosgrove praises Facebook as a way for like-minded people to share ideas and news, saying that “when we did the SPCA fund raiser, the event got around to many people because I would invite all my friends, and then the organizer from Ithaca would invite all of his friends, and then Crown City Rollers advertised it on *their* Facebook, and so on.” Mosgrove is planning to create a Cortland Animal Allies Website or blog to improve the organization’s effectiveness.

### Role reversal and research

To help instructors learn why and how to use technology to improve education’s effectiveness and efficiency, one of Jan Ochs’ CAP 104 (*Computers and Society*) students is creating a Website with education-oriented technology resources. The student, Media Communications major Julia Fleming, said that she “interviewed teachers and Ed majors to find out what they know and what they want to know about [uses of technology in education]. A lot of people

*(Continued on page 4.)*

(Continued from page 3)

wanted to know how to use social media [for example] in their classes.” Fleming and her classmates created Wiki sites at which they provided learning materials in a variety of media.

Students are helping educators understand how to apply these new tools in experiential education courses, but the field is new and continually evolving, so it is an area ready for research for faculty and for their students as they explore ways in which evolving technologies improve or weaken learning in general, and civic learning in particular.

(An initial literature review reveals a paucity of peer-reviewed articles on the use of technology in experiential education. Refer to the short bibliography at the end of this article for sample articles.)

One new tool, *lip dub*, is “a kind of video that combines lip synching and audio dubbing to make a music video.” (This Wikipedia definition includes the following note, including emphasis: “This article needs additional citations for verification.”)

Caroline Kaltefleiter’s COM 350 (*New Communication Media*) students are recruiting peers to participate in a project in which students will lip dub editorials on state and federal decisions relating to education. The final products will be available this month on YouTube.

One site that currently hosts lib dubs is <http://universitylipdub.com/>, which was created by students at Hochschule Furtwangen University in Germany; the lip dubs were created by students in the Basque region of Spain and by students in Maine, USA. This site’s international component underscores the need for research into ways in which teachers and students can use technology in

experiential education to foster traditional learning goals such as critical thinking, and increasingly-important goals such as cross-cultural competence.

Paulo Quaglio uses Skype to help his students develop cross-cultural competence: his ICC 529 (Online ESL Teaching) students use Skype as the medium through which they tutor English-learners in Brazil, China, and Turkey. This approach has been very powerful: Students’ comments in written reflections, in exit interviews, and in focus groups have been so positive that ICC 529 will soon become a required course for International Studies majors.

Aaron Zipp points out that our students (our real “Kerrys”) are “learning [technology] as they go”: They experiment, process, and produce without instruction manuals; if our understanding of how people learn is correct, we – and our students – must research ways in which technology can enhance the transformational nature of experiential learning, including – and especially – reflection.

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## Community Clean-Up & Gardening, Part II: Saturday, May 7th

On Saturday, May 7th, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at 37 Church Street, volunteers will conduct a second City of Cortland Clean-Up and a second Cortland Downtown Partnership garden-beds mulching and planting event. Before May 7, register to volunteer at [www.cleanandgreenforaday.com](http://www.cleanandgreenforaday.com) and click on the link for Cortland County, or contact Stephanie Plude at [stephanie.plude@cortland.edu](mailto:stephanie.plude@cortland.edu) or at 607-753-4271. This event is co-sponsored by the Cortland Common Council, the Cortland Chamber of Commerce, the Cortland Downtown Partnership, SUNY Cortland AmeriCorps, and the Institute for Civic Engagement.



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