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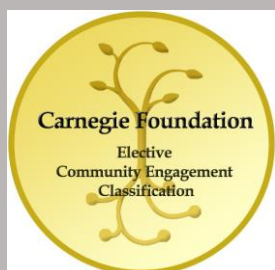
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President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll Member With Distinction



Carnegie Foundation Elective Classification in Community Engagement



Register—Pick A Party—VOTE!

Voting is a right and a privilege, but it is also a responsibility that every citizen must exercise. A vital and contentious race is at hand so it is essential that we all do our best to understand the issues and evaluate the candidates so that we elect the best representative for the growth and well-being of our nation.

Pick a Party!

Both the republican and democratic parties conduct primary elections to help select the final candidate to run for office. The New York State primary for the 2016 presidential race will be conducted on **April 19, 2016**. To participate in the primary election, YOU MUST be registered as a democrat or republican. To qualify for the April 19th primary, you must register as a democrat or republican by March 25.

Affirmative Action and the Constitution The Fisher Decision & SCOTUS

Should race be a factor in considering an applicant's admission to college? Dr. Timothy Delaune, SUNY Cortland Assistant Professor in Political Science, pre-law advisor, and an area expert on the Supreme Court, detailed the court's struggle with this question in a sandwich seminar held on February 17 in the Jacobus lounge.

Delaune 's talk focused on whether or not a university's affirmative action

To register (or re-register so you can select a party) go to NYPIRG in Room 215 of Corey, or access an online registration form at: <http://www.rockthevote.org/>

Registering with a party DOES NOT obligate you to vote for that party or candidate in the presidential election. You can still vote for whomever you feel is the best candidate on November 4; however if you want to help determine who will be nominated to run for your party, be sure to register with that party by March 25.

For a snapshot of primary results to date go to <http://tiny.cc/nvbk9x> and see how the delegates are stacking up for each candidate.



Dr. Timothy Delaune, an expert on the Supreme Court, explored the Court's ruling in Fisher v. University of Texas, Austin.

admissions policy was unconstitutional in the court's ruling in Fisher v. the University of Texas, Austin. Abigail Fisher, a Caucasian female, applied to the University in 2008 and was denied admission. Fisher filed suit, alleging that the University had discriminated against her on the basis of her race and was in violation of the Equal Protection Clause

“What Can We Do about It?”

Members of the greater Cortland community (GCC) have long partnered to address a key question regarding environmental and social justice issues: What can we do about them?

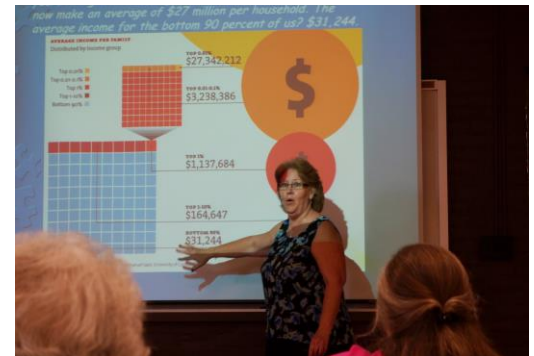
In 2001, three GCC members, led by the Seven Valleys Health Coalition, provided one answer by creating Cortland Counts, through which Cortland County can plan, and measure progress toward, goals in five quality-of-life areas: health, housing, environment, youth, and education.

In addition to meeting people’s immediate needs in these areas, many GCC partners are increasingly aiming to change procedures, policies, and laws that worsen environmental and social justice conditions.

One such partnership is the Economic Inequality Initiative, which began in November 2014 through SUNY Cortland’s participation in The American Democracy Project. Some Initiative members are especially concerned about hunger. Through the leadership of Lindy Glennon, Executive Director of the Cortland County Community Action Program, they formed The Hunger Coalition.

The Coalition’s answer to the question, “What can we do about it?” was to partner with the Homer and Cortland School Districts to devise a plan in which low-income children would not avoid eating lunch. Many do so as a way of avoiding the stigma attached to meals delivered through the reduced- and no-charge meals program for low-income families.

As a result of this partnership, the Cortland School District is exploring the option of a “community eligibility program, K-6,” in which all students will be provided breakfast and lunch at no cost to the families.



Lindy Glennon, Director of the Cortland Hunger Coalition, presents on poverty and hunger in Cortland County.

Another GCC group is the Environmental Action Board (EAB). Formed in August 2014, EAB includes scientists, former government officials, people with legal/regulatory expertise, and city and country dwellers. EAB member Alison King notes that these “community members offer a range of experience and expertise that is worth tapping.”

The initial focus of that expertise was the Ash-to-Trash proposal. That proposal would require Cortland County to send its trash (about 20,000 tons/year) to Onondaga County, which would incinerate the trash and send back 90,000 tons/year of ash, filling-up Cortland County’s landfill.

EAB members have addressed the issue in many ways, including testifying at the County Legislature, presenting research-based reports on the dangers of specific components of the waste, communicating with the County Health Department, and publishing editorials in the Cortland Standard. Their efforts contributed, at least, to a delay in a decision regarding acceptance of this proposal.

Some GCC members act through the United Voices of Cortland (UVC), which tackles social justice issues such as those related to the proposed county jail. It

The Fisher Decision continued from page 1

of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The University of Texas at Austin accepts students in the top 10% of each Texas high school's graduating class, regardless of their race; 81% of 2008's freshman class, were admitted under the plan (in accordance with Texas House Bill 588 passed in 1997).

The Supreme Court voided the lower appellate court's ruling in favor of the University and remanded the case, holding that the lower court had not applied the standard of **strict scrutiny**, articulated in *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003).

Grutter v. Bollinger was a landmark case in which the Supreme Court upheld the affirmative action admissions policy of the University of Michigan Law School. Because the school had a compelling interest in promoting class diversity, it instituted a point system in which race was counted as a factor.

The court held that a race-conscious admissions process that may favor "underrepresented minority groups," *but that also took into account many other factors evaluated on an individual basis for every applicant*, did not amount to a quota system that would have been unconstitutional.

Strict scrutiny is the most stringent standard of judicial review used by United States courts. It is part of the hierarchy of standards that courts use to weigh the government's interest against a constitutional right or principle. In this instance the court was to consider that if it is a mission of schools to foster diversity on campus, it cannot be a key factor; it can only be a consideration.

While reasserting that any consideration of race must be "narrowly tailored," with *Fisher* the Court did not go on to overrule *Grutter*, which was a relief for civil rights groups who feared that the Court may end affirmative action.

Fisher again appealed the Fifth Circuit's decision, and the Supreme Court agreed to hear her appeal. The case was reargued on December 9, 2015 and is expected to be decided on at the end of the 2015–2016 term.

During oral arguments, Justice Scalia questioned whether black students admitted to top-tier schools suffer because the courses are too difficult. As Justice Antonin Scalia died on February 13, 2016 and Justice Elena Kagan has recused herself, the case will be decided by the seven remaining justices.



- **Thursday, April 7, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. Main Street SUNY Cortland (#9 Main Street) – Community Conversations.** Participants will listen to and discuss a one-page excerpt from John Dewey's "Creative Democracy" essay. Participants will raise their own ideas regarding "political duties" in a democracy, and they will identify ways in which people can carry-out those duties through existing or new projects and organizations. This event is sponsored by the New York Council on the Humanities and SUNY Cortland's Institute for Civic Engagement. It is free and open to all.

- **Saturday, April 9 (workshop time to be determined), Core Union – The 7th Annual SUNY Cortland Student Conference on Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice.** Service-learning Intern Crissana Christie invites the audience to serve as her dissertation committee as she defends her "claimed learning statement" in an applied-learning-based SUNY, ten years from now. The Conference is sponsored by Multicultural Life and Diversity. Register at: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1BYDNrCRTu4GZThkZ0yXd9mo8vj-ZZtxZy-nWdEgiTzo/viewform>.

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What Can We Do continued from page 2

does so by addressing the County Board, by meeting with officials in the police and sheriff's departments, and by hosting professional-development events for officials.

A more recent initiative, Student Engagement in Politics (STEP), began with a call by Jo Schaffer (retired Visual Resources Curator, SUNY Cortland) for greater student involvement in political activities. By "political," STEP refers to actions such as the ones described above, as well as actions through a political party because, as Schaffer emphasizes, "younger people have to be encouraged to take part in the political processes that will determine their future."

Student development of skills related to political processes is one of the goals of this and other GCC projects. These skills are important to the "Office of the Citizen," as described during a 1960 speech at Syracuse University by Joseph Tussman (1914-2005, former Philosophy Chair, U. California at Berkley).

Tussman contrasted a counter-productive "marketplace" approach to decision-making (in which individuals promoted their individual interests over those of the greater good) with a deliberative and collaborative approach to public problems.

STEP participants' key concern is student development of deliberative and collaborative skills, including critical thinking and active listening skills, regardless of a student's political leanings.

To help develop these skills, Skylin Baestlin, Cortland Project Coordinator for New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) and the Union of University Professionals scheduled a February 18th "Higher Education Day" in Albany for SUNY and CUNY colleges.

One NYPIRG volunteer, Alexandra Cicero (also a Service-Learning Intern with the Institute for Civic Engagement), participated in the event along with 22 people from SUNY Cortland, and about 900 people from SUNY and CUNY. Cicero and her colleagues exercised their powers of the Office of the Citizen by discussing key educational concerns with their elected representatives' staff in Albany.

Cicero commented that "the process of students telling their personal stories while explaining why policies should be reformed starts to restore faith in the government. I definitely would do it again. You don't need to be a political science major or union member to lobby; all you need is a voice and cause."

STEP partners also include Matt Kemak (YMCA), Kelly Tobin (YWCA), and Institute for Civic Engagement staff. Student Government Association President Patrick Viscome is promoting STEP-related projects to other students and to the Student Senate.

In January 2017, the Seven Valleys Health Coalition will convene its annual Community Forum, at which GCC members will ask, "What have we accomplished so far?" and "What else can we do?"

Cortland Economic Inequality Initiative Awarded Grant

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), has awarded Cortland's Economic Inequality Initiative a \$1000 grant to conduct a community State-of-Poverty Simulation, as part of the American Democracy Project.

The project will be led by CAPCO (Cortland Community Action Program) and will be scheduled sometime this spring. The goal of the simulation is to educate local government officials, legislators and business owners about poverty.