

## Barriers to Election Success: A Panel Discussion

April 2019

Volume 12, Issue 7

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Cortland City Court Judge Elizabeth Burns, Johnson City Trustee Ben Reynolds, and Cortland County Legislators Ann Homer and Kelly Preston offered their insights and advice on campaigning for office in the March 27 panel discussion.

"I'm an elected official, but I'm not a politician," said Cortland County Legislator Kelly Preston.

Preston was a panelist with Cortland City Court Judge Elizabeth Burns, County Legislator Ann Homer, and Trustee Benjamin Reynolds, Johnson City Board of Trustees.

They spoke at the *Barriers to Election Success* panel discussion in Jacobus Lounge on March 27.

Preston was answering moderator Austen Johnson's question: *What first made you want to run for office?*

Preston and her panel colleagues each sensed that they could do at least as good a job as the people in, or running for, office.

Reynolds, currently the youngest elected official in NY State, said that younger people needed to be represented on the Johnson City Board

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## Ryann Hudson Awarded Newman Fellowship

Ryann Hudson, a junior at SUNY Cortland, has been awarded a prestigious Campus Compact *Newman Civic Engagement Fellowship*.

The fellowship, which honors Dr. Frank Newman, one of Campus Compact's founders, supports students' personal, professional, and civic growth as the next generation of public problem-solvers.

Hudson is a leader in strengthening the culture of civil civic engagement at SUNY Cortland and in the greater Cortland community.



Ryann Hudson, Newman Fellow

Through her initiative and teamwork, she has increased the number of activities at which students can discuss and address contentious issues in civil and informed ways.

*Continued page 8.*

*Barriers to Election Success*, from page 1.

of Trustees, and he was confident that he could represent them.

Homer realized that, with her unique experiences, she could bring a new perspective to the legislature.

Johnson's next question had two parts: *What were your expectations going into the campaign? In what ways did the campaign meet those expectations?*

Panelists knew that their campaigns required a good deal of work, but (to varying degrees) they were surprised at the amount and nature of that work.

Burns understood that campaigns require a lot of work, need to raise a lot of money, and must have a strong organization. She came to realize that a good campaign manager was an essential member of that organization.

Preston did not expect that her political party would not offer her any support, so she learned to rely even more on herself, spending an average of an hour per signature on getting names for her petition. She received 78 signatures.

Johnson, an Action Team intern, then asked, *What are some of the campaign barriers that you faced, that are not obvious to the rest of us?*

Burns said that she faced a party-related challenge similar to Preston's because many candidates were running in a variety of races, including Congressional contests, so funds were limited.

Another "people" barrier is the difficulty in convincing voters that a NYS Supreme Court judgeship is an important role, so Burns had trouble raising campaign funds.

Complicating the challenge further is that NYS Supreme Court candidates are forbidden from sharing their views on the issues. It was challenging, Burns said, "but fun – I met great people!"

Neither Preston nor Homer received help from their party because the area had been represented by the other party for years, so party resources were put elsewhere.



Ann Homer,  
Cortland County  
Legislator (left)



Kelly Preston  
Cortland County  
Legislator (right)

Each of them developed an individual, personal touch, often spending a good deal of time with one person or group.

Homer, for example, once spoke for four hours with one couple.

Homer pointed to a situation that she initially thought would be a barrier: She had two very different groups of constituents – older residents and affluent young families. However, she was surprised to find that she was well-received by both groups.

Reynolds worked hard to distinguish himself from his opponent, and – because of the way in which the ballots were designed – he worked hard to convince people to vote for only one person (him, of course).

Johnson's last question was, *knowing what you know now, what advice would you give potential candidates for office?*

Panelists encouraged anyone running for office to focus on an issue that they care deeply about and to show the local relevance of that issue.

Panelists also emphasized the importance of knowing one's audience, in part by knocking on every door during the campaign and listening to people's concerns and interests.

Another suggestion: Avoid negative comments about the opponent; rather, focus on the positive and on your strengths.

*Continued page 7.*



## Applied Learning Professional Development: *Designing Reflection Assignments Workshop*

On March 7, the Institute for Civic Engagement hosted faculty and staff from TC3, SUNY Oneonta, and SUNY Cortland for Professor Joseph Cope's *Develop Reflection Assignments* workshop.

Professor Cope, Associate Provost for Student Success and Professor of History at SUNY Geneseo, facilitated this workshop in which participants

- Named practical considerations when designing reflection assignments.
- Described strategies for incorporating self-reflective work into curricular and co-curricular experiences.
- Developed concrete materials that they can use as a foundation for developing self-reflective pedagogies.

Participants' individual assignments led to small- and large-group discussions on considerations such as an instructor's purposes for asking students to self-reflect.

Those purposes included helping students to identify their preconceptions and connecting course work with current events.

Eric Edlund (Physics) assigns self-reflection assignments as a way for students to think of themselves as scholars, as physicists. He also noted that self-reflection can help students develop a sense of pride.

Cope, who received the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching, added that self-reflection can be useful in developing learning skills and in learning how to deal with unstructured problems, which students encounter in problem-based learning and in common problem pedagogy.



Professor Joseph Cope

Alex Balas (Director, James M. Clarke Center for International Education) pointed-out that self-reflection can be useful as an assessment tool.

Helena Baert (Physical Education) built on that idea, saying that the Physical Education Department institutionalized reflection because it is a good way for students to help instructors be more effective, including in advising.

Cope said that the Geneseo English Dept. includes reflection as a part of its advising process

*Continued page 8.*

The next Applied Learning Professional Development Workshop:

***Integrating Applied-Learning Student-Learning Outcomes into an Academic Course.***

Co-conducted by Dr. Janet Nepkie, SUNY Oneonta, and John Suarez.

April 11, 4:30-6:00pm in Corey Union's Exhibition Lounge.

[John.suarez@cortland.edu](mailto:John.suarez@cortland.edu)

## Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners at the Eastern Regional Campus Compact Conference

### Coming Events

*All events are free and open to the public.*

April 9: *Whistle-blowing in Support of Democracy.* Julia Ganson. 4:30-6:00pm in the Fireplace Lounge.

April 22: *Debate – The Environment.* [Specific topic tba.] 7:00-8:30pm in Old Main’s Colloquium (#220).

April 24: *Sandwich Seminar – “CALP,” Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners,* a panel discussion by the five CALP pioneers. 12:30-1:30 in Brockway Hall’s Jacobus Lounge.

April 25: *Sandwich Seminar – Action Team Interns, Self-Directed Learning,* a panel discussion by the nine Institute for Civic Engagement interns. Noon to 1:00 in Brockway Hall’s Jacobus Lounge.

For more information:  
[john.suarez@cortland.edu](mailto:john.suarez@cortland.edu)

Amanda Tepfer (Physical Education), Valerie Widdall (Childhood/Early Childhood Education), and Christopher Badurek (Geography) participated in the March 25-27 Eastern Region Campus Compact Conference in Providence, Rhode Island.

These three individuals are members of the Institute for Civic Engagement’s *Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners* (CALP) professional development program, which funded their conference participation.

All three enjoyed, and benefitted from, the conference. Tepfer called it “very interesting, with good information.”

Widdall added that she enjoyed the “camaraderie with colleagues who have the same interests as I do.”

Conference workshops offered easy-to-implement strategies for class organization, icebreakers, ways of using reflections and assessments, and ways of connecting with the community.

Badurek said that many sessions highlighted the importance of close working relationships between applied learning faculty and directors of applied learning offices, emphasizing that “faculty can champion applied learning classes and the integration of applied learning into tenure policies,” as SUNY Cortland already does.

Tepfer began applying conference ideas to her PED 201 (Motor Development) course by considering ways of making her course more meaningful for her community partner (the YWCA) and by working on ways of designing student learning outcomes that more closely reflect students’ field work.

Tepfer, Widdall, and Badurek were impressed with Harvard University Professor Danielle Allen’s keynote address, which Widdall said was a call to arms for universities to lead the

restoration of democratic participation.

Widdall appreciated Allen’s message that that democracy has to begin in our classrooms and with our students.

“Democratic ideals need to be put at the forefront of our teaching,” she said, “and students need to see that they CAN create change through participatory democracy.”

Badurek would like to collaborate on a Geographic Information System (GIS) and data analysis project with St. John Fisher College’s director of service-learning, Lynn Donahue, as a way of helping to direct resources to where they may be needed most for greatest impact in low-income neighborhoods.

Such a project could map community resources and use photos to accompany the mapping. Badurek is interested in inviting Donahue to visit SUNY Cortland.

Badurek and Widdall are looking for grants to support their work, which, for Widdall, involves research through which she can implement democratic ideals in the elementary-school classroom.

Widdall said that “the conference’s energy was contagious, and hearing how others are integrating service-learning and democratic ideals in their classrooms was great.”

Christopher Badurek, Valerie Widdall, Greg Phelan, and Timothy Davis are the CALP mentors who work with the CALP faculty: Amanda Tepfer, Melinda Shimizu, Erica Pratt, Kent Johnson, and Alexandru Balas. On Wednesday, April 24, the CALP faculty will present their work at a Sandwich Seminar, from 11:30 to 12:30 in Jacobus Lounge.

CALP is supported by grants from the Institutional Planning and Assessment Committee, the International Programs Office, and the *SUNY Performance Improvement Fund*.

## Immigration: A Debate

Two College Republicans and three Young Democrats presented their respective views on five immigration-related questions in a February 18<sup>th</sup> event that was attended by 34 people.

One College Republican, Thaddeus Sitnik, could not attend because of commitments to the Air Force.

College Republicans Michael McDonough (President) and Andrew James sparred with Young Democrats Kayla Goldklang (President), John DeVito, and Joe Puccio on five questions:

- What penalties should people who enter the US illegally face?
- What should the US's Asylum/Refugee policy be?
- To what extent is the proposed Wall practical?
- Regarding the NYS DREAM Act – Should we allow undocumented immigrants to attend a SUNY college, and if so, should we allow them to receive financial aid?
- How should we improve our immigration policy?

College Republicans built their answers on the importance of protecting US citizens and on the principle of local control.

For example, the citizens of a city – no one else – should decide if their city should be a sanctuary city.

In contrast, Young Democrats drew on the value of multicultural communities, including “Acclimation Centers,” as a way of creating a safer US.

College Republicans defended their perspective by referring to narratives,



Audience and *Immigration* debaters

such as a case in which a US citizen was killed by an illegal immigrant, and with statistics, including federal government data (as reported by the National Broadcasting Corporation) showing that each dollar invested in a border wall returns \$5 in value.

Young Democrats noted that only one-third of undocumented immigrants enter the US illegally, whereas the other two-thirds arrive through legal means – simply over-staying their visas' expiration dates.

Young Democrats also described a streamlined immigration policy as an investment because immigrants add to the tax dollars that local, state, and federal governments collect.

The two sides agreed on certain aspects of an improved immigration policy:

- Strong border security is critical.
- We need more immigration judges.
- We need to promote *legal* immigration
- Potential immigrants should want to integrate into American society.

The debaters also agreed that the situation at our southern border in February 2019 is not a national security emergency.

During the Q&A portion of the event, an audience member asked debaters to comment on differences between southern border immigration in the 1970's and immigration today.

*Continued page 6.*

“It is better to debate a question without settling it than to settle a question without debating it”  
— Joseph Joubert.

*Immigration*, continued from page 5.



Kayla Goldklang, John DeVito, and Joe Puccio

McDonough noted a change in motivation: Decades ago, poverty was the motivator, whereas today people are trying to escape violence.

He added that we should help those people's countries address that violence.

A few audience members challenged the two teams to defend some of their statements. For example, one person wondered why the US is not accepting immigrants from countries that, he said, were destabilized by actions taken by Elliot Abrams.

During the 1980's, Abrams was a central figure in the Iran-Contra affair, in which the Reagan administration illegally sold arms to Iran, then funneled money from those sales to an insurgent group in Nicaragua, the Contras.

McDonough replied that such actions were common in many complex Cold War situations, which is one reason why the US should help countries in Latin America solve their socio-economic problems.

The session grew tense as a different audience member pressed DeVito on his use of the phrase, "waste of time," when referring to US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

DeVito said that ICE is not a waste of time, but that ICE should focus on identifying real criminals, not people who are escaping violence.

DeVito acknowledged that entering the country illegally makes that person, technically, a criminal, but if that is the person's only illegal act, ICE should devote its resources to tracking-down immigrants who have committed serious crimes.

As soon as the event ended, the debaters, moderators, and other students began planning for another debate – this time on an environment-related issue.

That debate is scheduled for April 22 (Earth Day), from 7:00pm to 8:30pm in Old Main's Colloquium.



Austen Johnson, Michael McDonough, and Andrew James

Moderating the debate were Connor Vick (President, Political Science Association) and Austen Johnson (Coordinator, Cortland Counts Group of the Institute for Civic Engagement's *Action Team* interns). Johnson also prepared an information page for the audience.

Audience members included international students, President Bitterbaum, Professor Ibipo Johnston-Anumonwo, and members of the League of Women Voters of Cortland County and of NYPIRG.

The debate was designed by the debaters and moderators in a meeting attended also by Ethan Gormley (project coordinator, NYPIRG) and John Suarez (director, Institute for Civic Engagement).

## Play To Provide

### ZUMBA Event Raises Funds for Cortland YMCA's After-School Program

By Sara Coyle,  
Institute for Civic Engagement Action  
Team Intern.



ICE Action Team Intern Rachel Gillman

Action Team intern Rachel Gillman, a SUNY Cortland sophomore, has taken the initiative to begin a new start-up project, *Play To Provide*.

Her mission is to raise money for the YMCA of Cortland County, located about 2 minutes off campus. The \$163 that she raised will buy sports equipment and school supplies for the YMCA's after-school program.

On March 27th, Gillman hosted a Zumba event in which 35 people participated in a Zumba class that was conducted by a certified Zumba instructor at SUNY Cortland, Hannah Hogland. Hogland donated her time to the cause.

Prior to the event, Gillman and other Action Team interns tabled outside of

popular dining facilities to raise money by selling \$3 tickets to the Zumba event.

The class was upbeat, with all participants enjoying the fast-paced environment of the class.

Gillman plans to collaborate with other clubs to make bigger events, such as a carnival or fair, and she would love for *Play to Provide* to continue after she graduates.



Judge Burns and Ben Reynolds

*Election Barriers*, from page 2.

Judge Burns suggested working on someone else's campaign first because doing so helps a person learn the logistics of campaigning. Also, get as much information as possible from the Board of Elections, such the names of the most frequent voters.

Other suggestions dealt with a candidate's relationship with political parties: Develop a relationship with one's local political party so that it is more likely to offer help. Candidates should also register their candidacy with more than one party and be sure that their names are listed in one of the top rows at the voting booth.

In a way, earlier in the discussion Reynolds offered advice – stay positive – when said, “my expectations were not met; I was shocked. I won!”

The Institute's Community Outreach Coordinator, Cynthia Guy, organized this event.

#### Coming in the May issue:

Action Team interns discuss college with students from 14 high schools at McGraw High School, and with students from Syracuse's Corcoran High School in Jacobus Lounge.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Leadership in Civic Engagement Awards Reception

The Year in Review.

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*Designing Reflection Assignments,*  
continued from page 3.

Xaver (TC3) said that TC3’s first-year-  
experience courses conduct reflection  
through journaling.

Balas pointed-out that an instructor  
needs to develop students’ trust  
because students can delve into  
personal matters in their reflections.

Participants also considered practical  
considerations, such as the type of  
feedback to provide and the role of  
grading (if any) in reflection.

Participants have since been invited to  
join the SUNY Workplace *Reflections*  
Group, which provides faculty and staff  
the opportunity to share questions and  
ideas related to reflection.

This workshop’s participants were  
Helena Baert, Physical Education;  
Alexandru Balas, J. M. Clarke Center for  
International Education; Dakin Burdick,  
Institute for College Teaching; Eric  
Edlund, Physics; Kathy Hemmingway-  
Jones, English; Kent Johnson,  
Criminology; Janet Nepkie, SUNY



Dakin Burdick, Janet Nepkie, and Patty Tvroha.

Oneonta, Music Industry; Patty Tvroha,  
TC3, Human Services; William Veit, Risk  
Management; Chris Xaver, Communication  
and Media Studies, TC3, and John Suarez.

The workshop was co-sponsored by the  
Faculty Development Center, the Institute  
for College Teaching, and the Institute for  
Civic Engagement.

It was supported by the Institute’s  
*Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners*  
(CALP) Program, which is funded by an  
Institutional Planning and Assessment  
Committee grant, a grant from the  
International Studies Office, and by a  
SUNY Performance Improvement Fund  
grant.

*Ryann Hudson Awarded Newman Fellowship,*  
continued from page 1.

Her efforts have also increased the  
number of students who participate in  
such events, which include a town hall  
meeting, a debate on Immigration, and  
five deliberative dialogues.

Hudson co-directs student/community  
member taskforces that grew out of  
the dialogues; those taskforces are  
tackling concerns regarding freedom of  
speech, low voter turn-out,  
homelessness, and local climate  
change-enhanced extreme weather  
events.

As an Institute for Civic Engagement  
*Action Team* intern, she partners with  
student clubs, including the Young

Democrats and the College  
Republicans.

She is treasurer of SUNY Cortland’s  
Political Science Association, she is co-  
creating the campus’ Generation Vote  
organization, and she is the first SUNY  
Cortland student to be elected to the  
League of Women Voters of Cortland  
County.

President Bitterbaum praised Hudson,  
saying, “Ryann Hudson embodies  
SUNY Cortland’s mission: She is a  
student who grows as an engaged  
citizen with a strong social  
conscience.”