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Spring 2004

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President's Letter

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Greetings CSPA!

CSPA is in an exciting time of the year. Our meeting on June 14-15 is where we as an Advisory Board welcome newly elected and appointed members to the board and say thank you to those leaving the board. Congratulations to Robin Diana, Peter Fagan, Heather Maldonado, Joshua Buland, Michael Fogarty and Wendy Wheeler for being elected to their positions.

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The upcoming conference, "Falling into CSPA, A Time for Change" at Hudson Valley Resort and Spa on October 24-26 should be a great conference. More information is included inside this edition. The call for Programs has gone out and is available at the Organizations website, <http://www.cspanys.org/conf.htm>. Please consider presenting a program and attending this year's conference. We are excited to announce that the 2005 conference will be held in Rochester. Confirmed dates and location will be announced later this summer.

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CSPA is a wonderful organization that has positively impacted many of our colleague's lives at some point. In the time of budget choices, CSPA continues to offer an affordable and professional organization with valuable professional development opportunities.

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Have a wonderful summer! I hope that each you get some time to enjoy the nice weather of summer season in New York.

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Sincerely,

Graham Knowles
President of CSPA/NYS

PODIUM

It's Not The Destination—It's The Journey

Robert C. Armstrong
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

It is with great sadness that I must announce that I am resigning as Editor of *The CSPA Commons*. I have accepted the position of Associate Director of Residence Life at Worcester State College in Worcester, Massachusetts, which of course means that I will be leaving RPI. It's a sad day all around (except for me, truth be told, as I am pretty happy about my new gig).

I began my career in residence life in 1988 at New York University as an Administrative Assistant. I had moved to New York City in hope of getting into publishing. I lived illegally in the Third Avenue North Residence Hall (a college buddy of mine was on the Graduate Assistants at the time and I slept on the floor of his room for two months) and as fate would have it I ended up working in the building in which I was improperly residing. From NYU, I went to SUNY Stony Brook in 1991 (I look at this time in my career as my unofficial Master's work) where I learned the student development trade. Did I mention that I had been a commuter student at Pitt?

Long Story short, I have bounced around for a long time from school to school. I have made some good decisions and some really bad one. At RPI, I have grown as a professional (and I needed to grow) and I have accepted the fact that I am pretty good at what I do. I don't know how to sell vacuum cleaners and I am not tech savvy, but I am pretty damned good at making connections with college students.

In my varied career in higher education I have had ups and downs (at times, it seemed to me that downs were all I had) but my time at RPI has been my finest to date. My association with CSPA, albeit brief, has been great (despite having to nag members for articles). For the first time in my career, by being Editor, I feel that I have given back to the trade that has given me so much. I have also come to embrace the fact that it isn't the destination, but the journey. So long CSPA.

CSPA Voters Take to the Polls and Elect New Officers

Leah M. Cassellia
Past President, CSPA NY
Hofstra University

The results are in! Thank you to all members who took the time to review the candidates and send in their votes. A total of 309 Ballots were sent out, 95 ballots were returned. It is my pleasure to announce the newly elected officers for CSPA. Thank you to all of those who ran for offices in CSPA. We appreciate your time and effort.

And the new officers are:

Robin Diana, President Elect
Heather Maldonado, Vice President for Professional Development- Elect
Peter Fagan, Vice President for Conferences- Elect
Joshua Buland, Member at Large
Michael Fogarty, Member at Large
Wendy Wheeler, Member at Large

Congratulations!!!

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KIOSK

The Graduate Perspective

Jill Kurecka
New York University

Learning from our Graduate Programs
Issue 2: "We learn better together"

The students we work with will be next generation of leaders in the world and today's student personnel graduate students will be the next generation of leaders in our field. The work that these students complete not only helps them become stronger professionals, but also should serve as a guide for us to continue strengthening ourselves. The graduate programs throughout New York State vary in size and structure, but each program offers its own traits that uniquely prepare its students to enter our profession. By supporting and understanding these graduate programs, and to an extent the students who emerge from these programs, we are not only developing our scope of professional knowledge, but also adhering to its vision. In an effort to share and educate each other, the following article is part of a series that portrays the Student Personnel Administration graduate programs throughout the state.

The Higher Education Administration program at Syracuse University addresses the notions of community, inclusion, collaboration, and equity in its outcomes. The graduate program at Syracuse University is one of the oldest in the country. Dr. Vincent Tinto who serves as the chair, has helped to build what he refers to as, "...a collaborative community for all our members that cuts across the borders that divide academic and student affairs, faculty, and students." The mission of the program has two components, consisting of collaboration and community. The program strives to prepare its master and doctoral students to be active in enhancing the learning, development, and attainment of all students (soeweb.syr.edu). The two year program at the master's level allows students, via assistantships/internships, to work directly with undergraduate students in both residential and non-residential capacities including community colleges, private, and state universities. This addresses the implementation of theory with practice, contributes to professional development, and creates a collaborative community. Doctoral students are engaged in theory, research, and enhancement of education.

More specifically, the methods that are implemented at Syracuse University to meet the proposed objectives include the development of a graduate learning community. This approach allows graduate students to experience learning communities themselves with the intent utilize them in future practice. The experience serves to connect theory to practice as one is not only able to teach, but also to observe as expressed in the following statement, "Learning better together, is a way to make learning a coherent multiple lense to be able to see each other as an other (Vincent Tinto, personal communication, April 9, 2004)".

Additionally, the "Pathways to College Success" longitudinal research study is expanding as we speak. The Lumina Foundation for Education funded this study of developmental education learning communities. Initially to be funded for three years, it is expected to extend past five years in order to track student progress through the higher education system. Housed in the higher education program at Syracuse University and under the direction of Dr. Tinto and Dr. Cathy McHugh Engstrom, this study addresses the issues of urban institutions, poorer students, and traditionally underrepresented groups. Since there has been no systematic effort to identify a successful academic intervention program, this study examines the impact of academic assistance programs on the long-term retention and success of these students. With a \$956,000 grant from the Lumina Foundation for Education, the Higher Education Program at Syracuse University is able to sustain its efforts in this national longitudinal study. For more information on this project, please contact hied@sued.syr.edu.

References:

Vincent Tinto, personal communication, April 9, 2004

www.soeweb.syr.edu/higheredu.html: Syracuse University, School of Education home page

QUADRANGLE

Not Your Typical Student Affairs Spring Break

Patricia Houmiel Petacchi
Marist College

Spring break in student affairs: two weekends with no crises, five days with very little student traffic to prepare for the final eight weeks of the semester; or 10 days in Ireland and Scotland with a small group of student leaders. For Spring Break 2004, I chose the latter.

On Thursday, March 11th I departed Marist College with Cassandra Giarrusso, Resident Director, and six students: two class officers, three Resident Assistants and one Club President to begin a Spring Break experience of a lifetime. We spent the first five days in Dublin, Ireland staying with home-stay families in the Dublin suburbs. I was a little nervous about this at first, In loco-parentis in Ireland? My nerves were quickly allayed as I met Mrs. Daly and Owen my home-stay family, who were extremely welcoming. Things got better when I realized how near the house was to a great local pub, the DART, a bus stop and the ocean!!! We spent four days touring the Dublin area and celebrated St. Patrick's Day with the Irish. It's an American myth that the Irish don't celebrate St. Patrick's Day, they do!!

On our final day in Dublin we went to Dublin City University where we had a full schedule of tours and meetings. We toured residence facilities, classrooms and the library, the gym, theatre and the on-campus market, where they sell beer and wine. We also met with their housing coordinator, a small group of student leaders, the Director of Financial Aid and the Vice President for Student Affairs. What a fantastic day for all. We oohed and aahed over the leather furniture in the residence halls, single rooms with en suite bathrooms and their subterranean parking garage. The Irish hospitality was almost overwhelming, we had a fantastic lunch in a dining hall housed in a building from the 15th Century, a drink in the on-campus pub and then dinner in Dublin with all of our newly found friends.

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The Marist gang in Howth, Ireland. Photographer unknown.

AUDITORIUM

In Tribute—Lisa Pierce: Colleague and Friend

Pete Libman
Former Region 9 Co-Coordinator

On Monday, March 8th, 2004, CSPA lost a good friend. Lisa Pierce, a former Region 10 Coordinator, died from injuries she sustained in the water taxi accident which took place in Baltimore Harbor on Saturday, March 6th. Lisa, 34, worked as a Residence Hall Director at Stony Brook from 1994-97, during which time she served as Regional Coordinator of CSPA's Long Island Region. According to Valerie Gurka, a former colleague of Lisa's at Stony Brook, Whitman College Residence, where Lisa worked, "Lisa was instrumental in developing community there. This community still stands today due to Lisa's leadership." Lisa was also very involved in student leadership while working at Stony Brook, being involved with the Women in Science and Engineering Program.

After leaving Stony Brook, Lisa worked as an Assistant Director of Residence Life at New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT). From there she worked for a year as the Director of Residence Life at Drew University in New Jersey. Lisa then returned to NJIT, where she had been working as the Assistant Director for Leadership Development. It was her work in this capacity that brought her down to Baltimore, as she volunteered to drive and chaperone a group of NJIT engineering students who were attending a conference there. Knowing she would have some free time while the students were at the conference, Lisa invited her parents, who lived nearby in southern New Jersey, to join her. The family was taking a sightseeing cruise around Baltimore Harbor when a gust of wind capsized their water taxi. Lisa's father Thomas survived the accident, but Lisa and her mother JoAnn, along with three other people, died.

Lisa touched all who knew her. She was truly a shining light in the field of Student Affairs, and was loved and admired by students and staff alike. Her energy and enthusiasm, along with her bright smile, were unmatched. She was very committed to Professional Development, having organized many CSPA regional events, and attended many state and national conferences over the years. NJIT is planning on naming their new Leadership library in Lisa's honor. Lisa kept in close touch with many of her former Stony Brook and CSPA friends over the years, many of whom were in attendance at her funeral.

Membership News

William Kernan
Columbia University

It's NEVER too early to renew your membership in CSPA!

As you may know, the CSPA membership year runs from August 1st to July 31st. Every year around this time I am asked if it is too early to renew membership for the coming year.

And every year I answer "of course not."

For many of us it makes sense as we try to squeeze those remaining few professional development dollars out of our current budget before the start of a new fiscal year. So, if you find yourself in this situation, please feel free to renew early!

CSPA is proud to offer quality regional and statewide programming, networking, leadership opportunities, and professional development for the continued low membership fee of \$20.00 for full-time professionals and \$10.00 for graduate students.

Membership applications can be found online at our new and improved website, www.cspanys.org. Membership questions may be directed to William Kernan, CSPA Membership Coordinator at 212-304-5564 or wdk2002@columbia.edu.

Welcome New Members!

William Kernan
Columbia University

Welcome to CSPA!

Please join us in welcoming the following folks to CSPA who have either renewed their membership or joined for the first time since the last edition of our newsletter:

Welcome back to Donald King (Cornell) and Michael Dolan (Emmanuel), former Graduate Student Representative!

And welcome to new members Danielle Scibetta (Buffalo State), Kimberlie Ball (Hilbert), Lisa Baer (Keuka), Gretchen Ryan (Cornell), Victoria Lopez-Herrera (Cornell), Leo Pedraza (Cornell), Karen Coleman (Ithaca), Craig Dillaman (Cortland), Natalie Haig (Pratt @ MWP), Melissa Beach (Siena), Jermaine Privott (Albany), Erin Hornbeck (Albany), Angelina Gamradt (NYU), Dave Neely (NYU), Stephany Samules (Hofstra), Brandon Smith (Adelphi), and Marney Buss (IUP)!!

Write For The Commons!

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The next day we took a short flight to Edinburgh, Scotland—one hour by plane, but a world away. We checked in to our accommodations at a guest house run by the University of Edinburgh right off of The Royal Mile. We were in the heart of the old town, old as in 15th century. As Edinburgh is a much smaller city, and we were all starting to drag a bit, we took a less aggressive pace in Edinburgh. On our first full day in Edinburgh we met with a contingent of staff and students from the University of Edinburgh. We again toured many of their facilities and met with staff including two wardens, the Scottish name for an RD. I kind of like it actually, warden, has a nice ring to it. We then had a great lunch and were given a list of must dos and must sees for the remainder of our time in Edinburgh.

As we toured the Scottish Highlands, castles, and took a boat tour on Loch Ness we spent a lot of time comparing and contrasting DCU with the University of Edinburgh and Marist College. We discussed the new binge-drinking trend in both Ireland and Scotland and how effective our response to binge-drinking has been in the U.S. Finally, we daydreamed a college that incorporated the best of all of these worlds.



Marist in Dublin. Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland. Photographer unknown.

I returned to Marist exhausted but full of wanderlust and new ideas that could not be overshadowed by full mailboxes and the many students who wanted answers about housing selection yesterday. The first few weeks back were a bit hectic to say the least, OK the first few months back have been hectic, but would I do it again? Well, for next year I am thinking London, Bath and Stonehenge....Spring Break 2005, here I come!!