Pathways Open, New Choices

T’S PATHWAYS ahead.

The University’s new, improved general education and credit-transfer system known as Pathways is now open for registration with students choosing from a full menu of approved courses for the new core requirements, as well as for 10 popular transfer majors set for a fall 2013 launch.

Some 2,000 Common Core courses have been submitted for fall, according to Executive Vice Chancellor Lexa Logue, who has been directing the multifaceted initiative, launched by a Board of Trustees resolution in June 2011 to establish a new general education framework for the University and streamline transfer of general education, major, and elective courses. “All the classes students need are going to be available,” Logue said. “Every single area of the Common Core including English Composition, Life and Physical Sciences, and Math and Quantitative Reasoning, has been approved and are ready.”

Called Pathways to Degree Completion, the Pathways reforms establish a framework of core-course, credit, subject area, and learning requirements for undergraduates while giving colleges flexibility in deciding specific courses and graduation requirements. All entering freshmen and transfer students, and many currently enrolled undergraduates, will plan their academic programs according to the new framework this fall. Even current students who continue their studies at the same college may opt in to Pathways, while some may benefit more from continuing with their original academic sequences. Students should consult their academic advisors, their colleges’ Pathways web pages, and cuny.edu/pathways for more information about course registration, Pathways, and how to make informed choices, Logue said.

The new system requires all undergraduates to take a “Common Core” curriculum consisting of 30 credits, or 10 three-credit courses that have been accepted as meeting “learning outcomes” – specific determinations of what students should learn and know by the end of a course – developed by subject-based faculty committees. The core consists of a 12-credit Required Common Core – two English Composition courses, one Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning course, and one Life and Physical Sciences course – and an 18-credit Flexible Common Core of at least one course each in the thematic areas World Cultures and Global Issues, U.S. Experience in Its Diversity, Creative Expression, Individual and Society, and Scientific World. In addition to the University-wide Common Core, baccalaureate students will take an additional six to 12 “College Option” credits in subjects determined by their colleges, giving the four-year colleges an additional opportunity to put their own stamp on the new general education framework.

“Every college has the option of putting its own flavor on their students’ courses,” Logue said.

Continued on next page
New Challenges to Higher Education

From funding shifts to student demographics to new technologies, public higher education is changing quickly and dramatically. For universities willing to examine their operations and experiment with new ideas, there is a great opportunity. If universities want to evolve, they must be more responsive — to students, to government, to business.

• We need to pick up on cues from potential students — the generation that has always lived in cyberspace, that has known women as secretary of state, that thinks gene therapy has always been available. How can we best engage them in learning?

• Government and private funders are demanding accountability and data-driven assessment. Institutions must learn to gather and use data in sophisticated ways in order to demonstrate student success.

• Universities also need to seek advice and direction from companies whose employment needs can shape the direction of curricular innovation. The New York Tech, a public research institution in New York City, for example, is based in part on the idea that many ideas originate in the market, rather than in the university — so its programs are highly connected to business and industry.

Just as we must listen to our external constituencies, we must also embrace change within our institutional operations. A sense of urgency must motivate us.

• Opportunity costs are high and unions, governance leaders, faculty and administrators will have to find common ground to address some new realities.

Our colleague George Mehaffy at AASCU (American Association of State Colleges and Universities) has pointed to a couple of key trends:

• The rate of tuition increases is unsustainable. Between 1998 and 2008, the Consumer Price Index increased by 75 percent, while tuition for public four-year institutions rose by 325 percent. Many students are in debt that will have difficulty retiring.

• Institutions generally spend more on graduate education than on lower-division courses, which often provide more revenue. But as increasing numbers of first-year students come to college less and less prepared, universities must devote more resources to supporting student readiness.

MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) and other alternative delivery models — whether online degrees or hybrid courses — have the potential to change traditional instructional, financing and assessment models. Eventually, an institution may determine the curricula, governance and pricing to offer an entire degree through the existing menu of MOOCs. But more research will be needed before we know how much demand will result in a tectonic shift in content delivery.

MOOCs aside, what are students actually learning in college? Are they gaining the advanced skills they need through our current modes of instruction?

• Faculty are changing, too. In 2009, part-time faculty comprised almost half of all faculty in degree-granting institutions — the highest percentage since 1970. However, the quality-assurance measures in place for full-time faculty are not as robust for part-timers.

• Our student body is also different. More students are finishing their education at a college or university different from the one at which they started. And more are part-time, adult learner and dual enrollment students.

Institutions must account for student mobility while still providing the co-curricular activities and student supports they need.

• In addition, what does "shared governance" mean in an era of financial and technological change? Is it clear that faculty must have a substantial role in the academic governance of a university. However, there will continue to be considerable disagreement as to the exact contours of that role. Where does the impetus for change originate? How does an institution remain nimble within a traditionally rigid governance framework?

Finally, how will we finance higher education going forward? Government support is declining, as even enrollment has increased, and the financial burden is increasingly placed on students. A recent Moody’s report suggested that universities will have to lower their cost structures through technology, operational efficiency, and new markets. We must create new models for supporting higher education and maintaining access.

In a time of transition, higher education has an opportunity to reassert, reimagine, and rejuvenate its operations. If we embrace this time of change, we can ensure that universities can prepare a new generation of graduates ready to lead a new and very different 21st century world.

Continued from page 1 specific requirements,” said Logue, who noted that some campuses are requiring students to take a science lab or study a foreign language. John Jay College, she pointed out, has incorporated a justice theme “through-out” its general education requirements. The baccalaureate colleges “are doing different things, which is fine,” she commented.

The baccalaureate colleges have also selected their “College Option” courses, Logue said. A third structural change — the selection, by subject-based faculty committees, of the first three-to-six “gateway” courses into each of 10 of CUNY’s largest transfer majors — has also been completed. Approximately 30 gateway courses have been approved for those majors: biology, business, criminal justice, economics, English, nursing, political science, psychology, sociology and teacher education.

“We have now finished 10 of the majors,” said Logue, who noted that those areas of study are declared by almost two-thirds of CUNY students who have transferred to a senior college and declared a major. “That’s going to greatly help students, she said, because “they will have the confidence that they will not lose credit” for the gateway courses if they transfer to another CUNY school.

“It can help students who are transferring as soon as this fall” since some have taken some of the approved courses, Logue added.

She suggested that students may come to prefer majoring in subjects with the entry courses already approved University-wide because “if they do have to transfer, they’ll have certain guarantees.” The process of identifying and approving gateway courses for additional CUNY majors and bringing them into the Pathways framework is continuing, she said.

Pathways was initiated by Chancellor Matthew Goldstein in large part to ease a maze of problems experienced by many decades of students transferring from one CUNY college to another. Many found that credits they attempted to transfer were rejected by their receiving colleges, forcing them to repeat classes, lose time and sometimes funds. Often, courses taken at one college as general education or major courses were accepted only as elective courses at another college, leaving students with few or no elective options for enriching their academic experience as juniors or seniors. By having general education courses within a discipline continue in the city. She worked out across the University, successfully completed courses will be able to transfer seamlessly, and there will be a similar process for the gateway courses for the majors.

The Board of Trustees unanimously approved Pathways nearly two years ago following public hearings and extensive University-wide consultation. In February, the New York State Board of Regents approved the University’s new Master Plan.
Students New Choices

including the Pathways initiative. In presenting the Master Plan document to the Regents, it was noted that CUNY “is today navigating a course of academic achievement and innovation, while sustaining its traditional roles and responsibilities. Indeed, CUNY is a leader in defining public higher education for the 21st-century, whether developing new approaches to student learning, building collaborative research models, or creatively partnering with the city’s communities.”

The initiative also brings the University’s number of required general-education credits into line with other U.S. universities, and Pathways’ emphasis on specifying learning outcomes for each course and holding courses to those standards, has drawn praise from educators around the country, making Pathways a new general-education model that transcends CUNY.

“Everything — the courses for general education and the courses for the majors — is done according to learning outcomes,” said Logue. “This helps to guide how the course is taught and how the course is assessed, because then the assessments can be used to make changes in the course in the future — to improve it and to enhance student learning.”

Accreditation organizations such as the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, which accredits individual CUNY colleges, and other professional accreditation processes organized by discipline, “all want” colleges to have specific learning outcomes, she pointed out. She added that federal financial aid can depend on positive reviews by the accreditors.

Accreditors “want to see evidence that the college has an assessment plan, ... learning outcomes, that the learning outcomes are being assessed and that the information gained from the assessment is being used to make changes.”

Hundreds of CUNY faculty from every campus and every discipline have participated in steering committees, task forces, and subcommittees that have developed the Common Core, the learning outcomes, the gateway courses for the majors, and other features of the Pathways reform.

Although Pathways was designed primarily by faculty, the initiative has been criticized by Professional Staff Congress leadership and some others who have alleged infringements of faculty’s prerogative in approving and designing curriculum, in part because all of the three-credit core courses will be taught in three contact hours a week, in some cases cutting a fourth contact hour.

“Some faculty members may have to teach more individual courses” under the new system, said Logue, but “the total faculty work load in terms of contact hours stays the same.”

In some cases, “it’s going to mean that faculty have to teach differently than they have,” she said. “But the bottom line is what’s good for our students.”

“The (Pathways) steering committee wanted students to have more courses of three credits, rather than fewer courses of four credits,” she explained. “They wanted that breadth. And in the end, every single Pathways course has been designed and approved by CUNY faculty.”

Among Honorees in Albany

“Every single Pathways course has been designed and approved by CUNY faculty.”
—— Alexandra Logue

CSU student Mary Beth Melendez is congratulated on her Student Service Corps award by Board of Trustees Vice Chairperson Philip Alonso Berry, left, and CUNY president William J. Fitz.

“Maybe I’m blessed because I’m blind and can’t see the broken houses. But I can see the broken hearts.”
—— Mary Beth Melendez, College of Staten Island graduate student, who called volunteering “the human thing to do.”

Major Michael R. Bloomberg and Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo have congratulated the University on the 50th Anniversary of the CUNY Research Foundation. The mayor proclaimed Jan. 24, 2013 as “CUNY Research Foundation Day,” and the governor issued a citation praising the foundation’s work. Richard Rothbard, president of the Research Foundation, noted that it manages approximately $400 million annually in grants and contracts from federal, state, municipal and private sources and that faculty and staff funded through the foundation are carrying out cutting-edge research in a host of important fields. The U.S. Department of Education has awarded $1,200,000 to Sheilah Paul of Medgar Evers College for “Teacher Preparation for Special Education.” Baruch College has received $698,596 from the National Science Foundation for a project directed by Stuart Schulman titled “Student Entrepreneurs.”

Dean Anthony J. Tamburri of CUNY’s John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, and Joan M. Migliori, the institute’s assistant director of community and international programs, recently received the Order of Merit of Savoy from the American Foundation of Savoy Orders Inc.

The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded four CUNY Libraries the Muslim Journeys Bookshelf, a collection of books, films and other resources that will introduce the American public to the complex history and culture of Muslims in the

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received a $2,552,100 grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce for the “NOA CREST Center.” A $429,992 grant has been awarded to Cathy Spatz Widom of John Jay College from The National Institutes of Health — Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development for “Continuation of a Longitudinal Study.” Paul Attewell of the Graduate School and University Center has received $636,336 from the National Science Foundation for a project titled “Building an Interdisciplinary Research Community to Prototype Computationally-Intensive Analysis of Large Scale Educational Datasets;” and $113,299 from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for “The Role of Academic Momentum in Degree Completion.”

“Adaptive Evolutionary Responses of Mice,” a research project under the direction of Jason Munshi-South of Baruch College, has been awarded $260,113 in grant support from the NIH-National Institute of General Medical Sciences.

Gerald Mallon of Hunter College has been awarded $1,150,000 from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services/Administration for Children and Families (ACF) for the “National Resource Center for Permanency & Family Connections: A Service of U.S. HHS/ACF Children’s Bureau.” Kingsborough Community College has received an $899,799 grant from the National Science Foundation for a project titled “On-Campus Discoveries in Science,” directed by Loretta Brancaccio-Taras.

The luncheon also celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Caucus CUNY Scholars Program, State Sen. Adriano Espallat and Commissioner of NYS Homes and Community Renewal Darryl Towns also received CUNY awards for helping start the internship program. (See video http://youtube/Klly541bmwI).
Chancellor Matthew Goldstein is one of 10 senior advisers assembled by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences to guide The Lincoln Project: Excellence and Access in Public Higher Education — a three-year nationwide initiative that will advocate for the importance of public colleges and universities, which are facing challenges from technological changes, cutbacks in government support and competition from other education providers. The project will organize a series of national conferences and engage leaders in government and industry.

President Obama's State of the Union address and Mayor Bloomberg’s State of the City address had one common thread: CUNY. Obama praised the Pathways in its “students will graduate with a high access in public higher education — a focus in computers or engineering.” Two school diploma and an associate degree appear the partnership to build a center in his speech, pledging to advocate for the importance of public colleges and universities, which are facing challenges from technological changes, cutbacks in government support and competition from other education providers. The project will organize a series of national conferences and engage leaders in government and industry.

In the 2013 CUNYAC/Con Edison Basketball Championships, it was the CSI Dolphins and the Baruch Bearcats who came out on top. The top-seeded men's division Dolphins won their record-breaking 13th championship over the John Jay Bloodhounds, 83-68. In the women's division, the Bearcats beat the Brooklyn Bulldogs, 73-62, making them the winning-est women's basketball team in the school’s history. The winners advance to the NCAA Tournament.

For Baruch MFE students, it’s been twice as nice. They won second place in the International Association of Financial Engineers’ Academic Case Competition and took third place at the Rotman International Trading competition. “No other high-performing team has been able to perform as consistently as ours,” said Dan Stefanica, director of the Master’s Program in Financial Engineering. “Having our students at the top of academic competitions and case competitions is remarkable and unique.”

The Long Good-bye: Journalism Dean Stephen B. Shepard and some 350 other Newsweek alumni assembled at the school to bid farewell to the magazine that has been dishing up the news every week for the last 80 years. The print edition’s presses may have stopped, but the collective memory lived on, at least for the length of the party, in reminiscences by the likes of Ed Kosner, Peter Greenberg, Walter Shapiro, Darinda Elliott and Lynn Povich, Shepard's wife. Shepard too, is parting. He's stepping down as dean at the end of 2013 but will stay on at CUNY as a professor, working on special projects for the school.

Study, Study, Study: Crime in the city may be down, but New Yorkers' anxiety isn't according to a survey conducted by Hunter's Silberman School of Social Work and the East Harlem service agency Union Settlement. Some 77 percent of the respondents put the need for crime reduction at the top of their list. The fear is set against the backdrop of the city's controversial stop-and-frisk policy, which assistant professor Brett Stout of John Jay was quoted in DNAinfo as saying that the Morris Justice Project survey showed that the policy hasn't been effective in getting weapons off the street because "nearly all those stopped are innocent." Meanwhile, a study by professor Stephanie Luce that reported that more than a third of the protesters in the Occupy Wall Street movement came from households with annual incomes of at least $80,000 drew headlines in the Telegraph, the Los Angeles Times and the Gothamist.

A No-Star Review: China Central Television, that country’s equivalent of public TV, was reviewed in CNN.com by College of Staten Island Professor Ying Zhu, author of Two Billion Eyes: The Story of Chinese Central Television, didn’t soft-peddle the network’s real purpose, which he wrote is to “try to project the country’s soft power.” His assessment: If it wants to play with the big guys, like CNN, it has to adopt a more independent editorial policy that tackles sensitive issues head on.

C CUNY Digital Gallery Now Offers Historic News at Your Fingertips

COVERAGES of Albert Einstein’s 1921 CCNY visit — including his high praise for the college. Accounts of Depression-era campus protests and rallies. News spanning the years of World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War, McCarthyism, Civil Rights and the Vietnam War. This trove of historical information appeared in The Campus, CUNY’s oldest continuously published student newspaper, during its first 74 years. These issues — from the debut on Sept. 30, 1907, through 1981 — are available on-line free online at http://digital-archives.cuny.edu/gallery/. It’s the latest addition to the archives at CUNY’s Morris Raphael Cohen Library’s Digital Gallery, which eventually will also offer post-1981 issues of The Campus online (they’re all presently available on paper, while issues since November 2010 can be accessed on The Campus website, //cunycampus.org/).

In a 1921 issue, The Campus quotes Einstein, who was at CCNY to give a series of talks, as saying: “I was astonished at the close friendship between our faculty and students — a condition rarely seen or even possible in German universities. It is an admirable example of American democracy.”

The digital archive project was organized by City College’s archivist, professor Sydney Van Nort, in cooperation with CUNY’s chief librarian and associate dean, Pamela Gillespie. Headlines from the past now can be quickly recalled electronically.

HISTORY LESSON

Life at the Plaza: Baruch students – and the public – now have good reason to linger longer on campus: 25th Street between Lexington and Third Avenues has been turned into a pedestrian plaza, whose beachy sand-colored gravel is set with bistro tables and chairs that invite everyone to sit for a spell. The interim plaza, which will be replaced with a permanent one after a year, was declared a “transformative event” by President Mitchel B. Wallerstein.

Nicolas Montano has made a name for himself in CUNY history by being only its sixth student to win the prestigious Marshall Scholarship to study in the United Kingdom. A senior, he’s enrolled in the CUNY Baccalaureate Degree Program at John Jay. When he completes his undergraduate degree in Psychology of Juvenile Delinquency and International Criminology this semester, he’ll head to England to begin two graduate programs: a master’s in
Research Methods in Social Policy and Sociology at the University of Liverpool, then a master’s in Criminal Justice Policy at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Law School professor Jenny Rivera is “deeply honored” to have been appointed to the New York State Court of Appeals. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo said that Rivera, his first nominee to the court, “has dedicated her career to public service and defending the right to a just place will greatly benefit New York.”

First Lady Michelle Obama leaves the White House with CUNY Vice Chancellor for Facilities Planning Iris Weinshall on her route to the U.S. Capitol for President Obama’s ceremonial swearing-in for his second term. Weinshall is married to New York Sen. Charles Schumer, who headed the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies.

F rom its beginning 155 years ago, The City University of New York has always had a dual mission: Deliver high-quality education and serve the citizens of the city. Today, CUNY’s 6,700 full-time faculty carry on this legacy, contributing in ways that truly transform our city, benefiting the lives of millions of New Yorkers every day. Many provide critical training for the city’s diverse workforce. They teach young scientists to explore new fields such as photonics, biodiversity and nanotechnology; they train municipal employees in emergency preparedness for large-scale disasters; they create programs that teach health industry professionals how to detect early incidence of oral cancer and better care for people with developmental disabilities.

In the following months, you’ll find the compelling stories of such CUNY faculty — just a few of the remarkable men and women whose service reflects the unique, historic bond between the University and its city.

As a student at Brooklyn Tech in the early 1990s, Mandé Holford had her sights set on attending a private university that would eventually lead to a career in international law. But as the third of five children, her two older siblings already going to private colleges, she disappointingly decided to attend LaGuardia Community College, near home. “But it turned out to be something positive,” she said. Chemistry professor Lawrence Johnson brought Holford into his lab. And not only was he an “excellent mentor,” Holford said, she made an unexpected discovery. The life of a researcher suited her.

“I want to get the word out that science is rewarding.”

PROFESSORS AT WORK

FOCUS: "Science ... takes a lot of initiative and drive, but all you need is an active, imaginative mind, which we’re all born with. All you have to do is nurture it.”

NAME: Mandé Holford
COLLEGE: Hunter
TITLE: Assistant professor of chemical biology

“Take these snails that eat fish. How is that possible? It turns out the venom is like a cluster bomb; it hits all the organs of the prey and shuts them down.”

Holford and other scientists have been studying the snails to learn how to develop therapeutic cures from substances found in nature. In a number of studies, a peptide named bilins from a cone snail species, was found effective in providing relief from chronic pain in HIV and cancer patients. Now Holford is doing more targeted searches.

In 2008, she returned to CUNY, first reuniting with her York colleague, Larry Johnson, while also taking a dual appointment as a research associate in the AMNH invertebrate zoology division. Three years later, she joined Hunter’s chemistry department. Her research has won awards including an NSF CAREER award.

Holford remains active in the AMNH after-school Science Research Mentoring Program, which places about 200 students with scientists-mentors in fields such as astrophysics, earth sciences and conservation biology.

In particular, Holford is committed to getting women into the lab. On Feb. 25, on a panel with other CUNY scientists, Holford testified at a City Council higher education hearing on the subject of “Recruiting and Retaining Women into the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Fields.” Also testifying were Vice Chancellor for Research Gillian Small, CCNY Professor of Biomedical Engineering Maribel Vazquez, and Tetsiana Nosach, a Ph.D. candidate in physics at the Graduate Center.

Through an NSF grant, Holford has created a two-year program called RAISE-W (Resource Assisted Initiatives in Science Empowerment for Women). The initiative provides faculty mentors on individual research projects, with coaching sessions to teach important “soft skills,” such as time management. Holford points out that long-term success in science, like business, often requires women to juggle many personal and professional tasks.

Such initiatives also support the University’s broader mission of bringing high-quality science education to underrepresented populations. And promoting science is essential to “building an intelligent citizenry in the city,” she added. “We need to help people learn about something else ... We want to spark their imagination.”
A visionary initiative “Built by and for Students” is streamlining connections between University-wide communities.

One night in the spring of 2009, Arber Ruci was sitting in the City College library with two close friends, supposedly studying — each with a laptop open to Blackboard, another to Facebook.

Typical Millennial multitasking.

But on this particular occasion, the trio made a sudden creative leap between computer screens. Like many other students, they were frustrated with Blackboard, which they felt was somewhat dry and uninspiring software. “We thought, ‘How cool it would be to combine the two of them’ [Blackboard and Facebook], providing social networking in the college context,” Ruci recently recalled. “And the name, ‘InYourClass’ just sort of popped out.”

College classmates Fani Maksakuli and Ari Xhelo, all first-generation Albanian immigrants — built the first version of Ruci admits. “There was this huge gap between the learning management platform [Blackboard] and the college experience. Our goal was to create a space that would make it comfortable for students to have a school identity online, the same way Facebook does.”

Now, roughly four years later, InYourClass has about 22,000 users at nine campuses, including City College. Usage of the site (www.cuny.edu/inyourclass) has grown exponentially in recent months, thanks largely to wide-ranging counsel from a cadre of advisers — ranging from faculty members to high-tech business experts and top University administrators — as well as some initial funding from City College and the University.

The original threesome has expanded to a team of seven that works out of offices at CCNY and at CUNY’s Computing and Information Services office at 395 Hudson St. The fledgling company also has landed a major consulting contract to design a similar system for the CityTech campus.

While InYourClass (IYC) represents a uniquely student-driven venture, it is among several fast-growing social media initiatives that have sprung up around the University, such as the Academic Commons website for faculty and graduate students and the OpenLab platform for the CityTech campus. Each of these sites is customized for specific users, but they share a common theme: They’re not just about social media.

“Once we saw the system, we realized that InYourClass provided tremendous potential as a much needed tool for communications and collaboration at CUNY,” said Brian Cohen, Associate Vice- Chancellor for Technology and University CIO. “That is why we decided to make a modest investment in the venture and then pilot it at nine CUNY campuses. Our hope is that, not only students and faculty will find it useful, but that administrators will also want to use the broadcast feature to make announcements and the group function to communicate to select groups of students, faculty or other administrators. Our hope is that, once it is on the market, InYourClass will fill a significant need in higher education institutions and that CUNY can also profit from this success.”

Ruci and his partners acknowledge that much of their success has been due to the broad range of support generously offered along the way. “We’ve been very lucky because we were able to surround ourselves with a great group of advisers whose goal is to see us succeed,” Ruci said. “They trusted our vision, to make the CUNY environment better, so they helped us get to where we are now.”

One of the earliest supporters of InYourClass was City College Associate Professor of Economics Kevin Foster. Ruci and his partners were actually students in one of Foster’s classes when they approached him with their idea, and he agreed to let them test it as a demonstration project in class. Soon, other experts began to pitch in, offering feedback, advice and moral support. “One of the real talents of Arber’s team is their ability to bring in people and get
them on their side,” Foster said. “The faculty and staff responded entrepreneurially, with creativity and imagination. There was no past precedent for this kind of guidance, and it’s turned out to be a really good community effort.”

Another key mentor was City College President Lisa Coico, who first met the InYourClass team in the spring of 2011 at one her open monthly forums. “At one of these student forums, the team pitched their venture and need for administration support. “It was clear to me that this was not just a theoretical project,” Coico recently recalled. “This group had already done a great deal of research and development. Their mission was clear, their business plan accurate and their enthusiasm overflowing.”

A few months later, the team had a second fortuitous encounter. Late one Friday afternoon, they ran into a top Stanford University administrator who was visiting the CCNY campus, conferring with officials about a proposed Stanford-CUNY collaboration to create an applied science campus in New York City. After they explained the concept behind InYourClass, he invited them out to Palo Alto to make a pitch to build a similar platform for Stanford. “He told us, ‘I will introduce you to everyone you need to talk to,’” Ruci recalled. “There will be those who love you and those who hate you. And they’ll all be in the same room. If you come out alive, you will have a shot.” They survived a five-hour grilling and ended up winning the highly competitive contract.

Today, Ruci and his colleagues balance the work at Stanford (they plan to have the site up by the end of summer) with continuous tweaking and expansion of InYourClass. The social media platform already offers a host of features, such as the School Wall, which allows students to post something that everyone can see, like buying or selling books, announcing upcoming events or seeking tutoring. Students also have the ability to join groups and connect with their peers or faculty, regardless of where they’re enrolled. Another “cool feature,” noted Ruci, is Filelocker, which allows users to store all their documents online, with no limit on storage capacity. It acts as a flash drive, but can be accessed from any computer.

The next big challenge for Ruci and friends is to integrate InYourClass with complex University-wide systems, such as CUNYfirst. And by the fall, the group expects the site to be fully functional, with a mobile app, across all campuses. “InYourClass was designed to create a place where our generation could be comfortable having a school identity online,” Ruci says. “Now we’ve become more than that. Ultimately, we’re trying to become a one-stop-shop for student life.”

INCE THE CUNY Academic Commons and OpenLab were designed several years ago, one thing has become clear: They were built to change.

The Academic Commons — a major initiative of the University’s Committee on Academic Technology — was created as a social media website for faculty and graduate students to exchange ideas, collaborate on projects and scholarships, as well as connect with colleagues University-wide.

OpenLab is a digital platform designed to support teaching and learning and strengthen campus life at the New York City College of Technology campus — part of a broad, five-year initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Both are based on a concept of dynamic, democratic change, an online community that is expected to evolve, based on continual interaction between designers and users.

“It’s an interactive model,” said Jenna Spevack, an associate professor in CityTech’s Advertising Design and Graphic Arts Department and co-director of OpenLab. “It’s organized to grow and change, based on feedback.”

The Academic Commons (http://commons.pr.cuny.edu), which has grown to almost 4,000 members from a few hundred since late 2009, is “increasingly being integrated in life at CUNY,” said Matthew Gold, director of the Commons and Assistant Professor of English at CityTech. The site now hosts more than 450 groups which span the spectrum of academic life — everything from scholarly roundtables to bikeCUNY, a group for those who bike (or want to bike) to work. “People are using the Commons to connect to each other,” Gold says. “They realize this is a place to share work.”

It is also the place to launch many other places like it. With a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the Commons team now offers “The Commons in a Box,” a free, open-source software package that helps other organizations easily install and customize their own Commons platforms. “We’ve already had nearly 3,000 downloads of Commons In a Box,” Gold said. “We’re developing an ecosystem and filling a real niche for a wide range of organizations.”

Meanwhile, CityTech’s OpenLab (http://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu), offers a platform where students, faculty and staff can meet and share their ideas. “It’s an extension of the classroom learning environment,” Spevack said. The site allows students and faculty to share documents and portfolios; create study groups; enhance classes with multi-dimensional texts; and check in on what’s happening in various classes — without having to log in. Launched about a year ago, it now has almost 6,000 users, with 442 courses and more than 30 campus clubs signed on.

“There’s a need at CUNY for a digital space that fosters increased collaboration and communication,” Spevack said. And while OpenLab presents yet another option in the increasingly crowded field of social media, she’s not worried about user overload. “A huge part of our job is to expose students to the real world,” she said. “You’re going to have to adapt over and over again to different ways of learning.”
Proud Daughter Reflects on Whitney Young

A PBS DOCUMENTARY on civil rights icon Whitney Young Jr. that capped Black History Month at Bronx Community College told how as National Urban League leader he championed employment equality by appealing directly to corporate and government leaders — and several U.S. presidents.

But to Marcia Young Cantarella — who has been associated with Hunter College for many years, formerly as an associate provost, and now as an adviser and consultant to the college’s Black Male Initiative Program — Young was first and foremost her dad.

“In the early years of the Movement in the 1950s in Atlanta I was not old enough to really understand what was going on, though we took part in boycotts and I did understand why those took place,” Cantarella recalled in an interview with CUNY Matters. “I did not see firsthand his work at that time. During the 1960s I was in my teens and was very involved at that stage,” said Cantarella.

Carrying on a family tradition of concern for education and economic equity, in addition to her Hunter positions Cantarella has run a senior program at New York University, where she earned master’s and doctorate degrees in American Studies with a focus on American business; she also has taught, and been a dean, at Princeton.

As head of Cantarella Consulting, she applies her skills and background to challenges including student access, diversity, and success in higher education. She is the author of I CAN Finish College: The Overcome Any Obstacle and Get Your Degree Guide. Cantarella also speaks to student groups and blogs on the Huffington Post about issues of student success in college.

She recalls a father who took her to the library and on Sundays would make waffles. “He made a point of making sure I had everything I needed. I felt very valued.”

The family moved to Atlanta in the 1950s, when Young became dean of the Atlanta University School of Social Work. They lived in a segregated “but very affluent” community, Cantarella recounted, and she continued to spend quality time with her father.

“Daddy enjoyed sports. He would take me to college football for me to see the marching bands,” she said. “He liked jazz. I remember Nina Simone coming to our house, Oscie Davis and Ruby Dee, and Harry Belafonte.”

Cantarella became aware of her father’s commitment to the civil rights struggle “as things began to heat up and the six-ins start-ed. Young’s students were among those demonstrating, and he had to be bailing out students and not be home for dinner.

The family moved to Cambridge, Mass., when Young spent a semester at Harvard University. “Daddy was being groomed to take over the leadership of the Urban League,” Cantarella said. “I was engaged in the issues Daddy was dealing with and he took me to events.”

Young gave her the freedom to express her own opinions and demonstrated that he respected them.

“I had the privilege of meeting many people through him: Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey. I interned for Robert Kennedy in Washington.”

— Marcia Young Cantarella

“I remember as a teenager we were arguing about something. He had one point of view and I had another one,” Cantarella said. “He had the Urban League Research staff find research to prove his point, which meant he’d taken my point of view very seriously.”

As a college student, she opposed the Vietnam War. Her father introduced her to McGee Bundy, a top adviser to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson on the war, then he stepped aside “so I could state my point of view to McGeorge Bundy,” Cantarella recalled.

She soon began to realize the dangers Young faced.

“After the John F. Kennedy assassination we had Secret Service protection for a few months,” Cantarella said. “Daddy had a driver and a bodyguard. That was scary. When you had seen Medgar Evers shot we knew not to have the front light on so he wouldn’t be silhouetted in the door.”

She wasn’t allowed to go to the March on Washington and was told “it was a security question,” she said.

But Young gave her an opportunity to be involved in policy-making even as a teenager. “Once, at an Urban League conference. I went to my father and noted that I didn’t see any young people in leadership roles only ‘old people’ in their 40s; what would they know about the needs of young people?” She was 16. Cantarella and a friend challenged Young and he invited them to make a presentation to the Urban League’s board.

“Eventually the board made a stipulation there’d be two board members under 30 permanently because of the young people in the movement,” Cantarella said. “At one point my son, Mark, was one.” Children of board members founded an Urban League Youth organization.

Commenting on her father’s power broker status in the movement, Cantarella noted that other civil rights icons — Martin Luther King Jr., Roy Wilkins, James Farmer and Stokely Carmichael — were part of it, but each had a different role.

“What Daddy did was balance them,” she said. “He made the private sector feel at ease that he was somebody rational .... I had the privilege of meeting many people through him. Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey. I interned for Robert Kennedy in Washington.”

Cantarella enrolled at Bryn Mawr College and she and her father kept in touch. “I’d come home for holidays,” she said. “He would write to me when he traveled.” Her Bryn Mawr Class of 1968 invited him to be the graduation speaker.

“He was traditional with expectations: I should get my college degree, ultimately get married” — which she did, in 1980, to professional colleague Francesco Cantarella.

Whitney Young was not to be there, however. On March 11, 1971, Young suffered a heart attack and drowned while swimming with friends in Lagos, Nigeria.

Her father’s major influence on her, Cantarella said, was exposure to the corporate world and leadership. She has written, consulted and done training on leadership, entrepreneurship, work and family issues for various corporations.

“My work now focuses on helping students understand the relationship between their education and the world of work,” said Cantarella. “I’m my father’s daughter.”
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AC K on Nov. 26, 2010, the former Czech/Israeli pianist Alice Herz-Sommer began her day as usual, practicing a Bach invention in her small apartment in London’s Hampstead district. The Czech ambassador to Britain soon arrived to deliver a short speech (interrupted several times by Alice, then just age 107) and a brass plaque honoring her contribution to Czech culture.

Her last name translates as “heart of summer,” and much spiritual and artistic warmth radiates from the story of her long life, as recounted by Caroline Stoessinger in her memoir cum biography: *A Century of Wisdom: Lessons from the Life of Alice Herz-Sommer, the World’s Oldest Living Holocaust Survivor* (Spiegel & Grau). The book comes highly touted: There is a front-cover blurb by poet Rainer Maria Rilke and authors (first names) was born in Prague in 1903 to a family of well-known artists: Arthur Schnabel. In 1931, then the birth of her only child, son Daniel Barenboim, who became a friend of hers.

Marriage to Leopold Sommer came in 1931, then the birth of her only child, son Rafi, in 1937. In 1943 the entire family was sent to the concentration camp at Theresienstadt (her mother disappeared there and Leopold was shipped to die in Auschwitz). The Nazis made it a “model camp” by giving the Jewish artists a modicum of freedom for internal performances. The camp also had enough musicians for four orchestras to perform simultaneously, and they even mounted Verdi’s “Requiem,” with Alice playing the piano at a few performances — as the orchestra’s string players were lost to Auschwitz. She gave more than a hundred recitals there, including Chopin’s complete piano works. Being limited to only one hour of practice was just another cruelty: “To practice was unthinkable,” For Alice and many other musicians, survival was music: “Music was our way of remembering our inner selves, our values.”

After the war, at age 45, Alice moved with Rafi to Israel about a year after the state was founded. There she threw herself into four decades of teaching piano at the Jerusalem Academy of Music. She recalls fondly seeing for the first time the 10-year-old prodigy David Oistrakh, who became a friend of her son — who turned into a top-ranked cellist and founder of a French music festival in Gex.

A new chapter in her life began at 83, when Alice moved to London to be near her now-London-based son and two grandsons — and became a post-grandma for continuing education. She also survived breast cancer at this time. “She is a strong believer in formal education as a major factor in longevity,” says Stoessinger. Alice started attending London’s University of the Third Age, focusing in particular on philosophy. She became a particular admirer of the Jewish writer, poet, and thinker Spinoza, the prophet of democratic values, separation of church and state, and tolerance among nations and peoples. She also likes to quote Nietzsche for his thoughts on music, among them: “Without music life would be a mistake.”

For nearly 20 years, until she was 104, she attended classes three times a week. The horrible moment of her entrance to Dachau was “Arbeit Macht Frei” (“Work Makes You Free”), but a more wonderful way that is Alice’s own deep conviction. In a chapter on “Alice the Teacher,” she says that a piano teacher’s most important lesson is merely this: “Love to work .... Instill a love of work, a love of practicing, ... Love the process of learning.” Fittingly, Stoessinger has given the final chapter, “Alice Today,” an epigraph from Ecclesiastes: “The life of one that labours ... only for a few weeks. A visitor asked Alice why, at 108, she spent so much time practicing. ‘Some days I practice by myself. Not bad, I think,’ she replied. ‘But the longer I work the more I learn that I am only a beginner.’ The artist’s job is never done. It is the same with life .... As with music, I search for meaning, I practice life.”

Alice begins her days practicing Bach. It is no surprise she took to philosophy later in life since, to her, “Bach is the philosopher of music .. he is the God of all the Gods of Music.” Noticed fingering a piece mentally with no piano nearby, she is asked what she is playing. “Bach, of course.”

Next on the honor roll is Beethoven.

She is of an optimistic bent; her twin sister Mitzi, who died nearly 20 years ago, was the pessimist. Here the prose of advanced age get the better of the cons. “Only when we are so very old do we realize the beauty of life,” she says. And don’t make the mistake of whining about aches and pains in her presence. “Complaining does not help. It just makes everyone feel bad.”

Alice’s centurion wisdom, quoting loosely from Spinoza, is this: “Things are as they are supposed to be. I am still here — never too old so long as I breathe to wonder, to learn, and, yes, to teach. Curiosity — interest in others, and, above all, music. This is life.”

Well, there’s one other thing: chicken soup.

For the last 25 years (until she recently switched to meals on wheels), Alice’s daily menu consisted of homemade chicken soup at lunch and dinner. Stoessinger includes Alice’s own full-dress recipe on page 90 — along with her family recipe for Moravian apple cake.

Closing the volume are a few pages of observations “In Alice’s Words.” Among them:

“When you love your work you are never bored. Boredom is unhealthy.”

“School is only the beginning. We can learn all our lives.”

“Stay informed. Technology is wonderful.”

And, perhaps most personally: “Music saved my life. Music is God.”

CUNY Matters welcomes information about new books that have been written or edited by faculty and members of the University community. Contact: Sheila McKeena (mail.cuny.edu)

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**BOOKTALK**

_Saved from the Holocaust by Music_

_By Gary Schmidgall_

A decade in the making, _Searching for Zion: The Quest for Home in the African Diaspora_ by Arthur Schaefer, Fordham University Press, 420 pp., $34.95, offers a threads-thru-the-waters analysis of how food has been financialized and the powerful consequences of this change.

_Willy_
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“Talent Search Program,” co-directed by Abraham Nyameh. The Graduate School and University Center has received $596,977 from the National Science Foundation for “The CUNY Science New GK–12 Program,” under the direction of Vice Chancellor for Research Gillian T. Small.

Sherryl Graves and Robert Thompson of Hunter College have been awarded $1,249,531 in grant funding from the National Science Foundation for a “Mathematics & Science Teacher Education Residency.” David Kennedy of John Jay College has received four grants, totaling $687,683, from the Detroit Public Safety Foundation, the New Orleans Community Support Foundation, the State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management and the Nicholson Foundation via Robert Wood Johnson’s “Building a Healthier Community” Initiatives project. The New York City Chancellor for Research and Economic Development awarded $575,000 in grants to Patricia Rachal of Queens College for the “New York Deaf and Blind Collaborative.”

Sherry E. Stow, the Nicholson Foundation professor in Residence at Queensborough Community College, has again been awarded the Queensborough Community College Foundation’s $1,000 award for Professor of the Year. Stow, who teaches political science classes and directs the Queensborough Political Science Improvem ent Program, said she is “very grateful for the support of the College community and the (Queensborough) students.”

Grant & Honors

The New York City Human Resources Administration Office of Child Support Enforcement has awarded $3,068,718 to the Graduate School and University Center for the “CUNY School of Professional Studies to Develop Procedures and Training Courses for Staff of the Child Support Program,” under the direction of John Moguel, senior university dean for academic affairs and dean of the CUNY School of Professional Studies. The National Institutes of Health has awarded $598,972 to the New York City Department of Education for a “Minority Partners, Training and Community Outreach” program. The New York State Department of Health has again provided $1,196,723 for “Research to Build a Sustainable System.”

Denise Ward of Queensborough Community College has received a $755,313 grant from the U.S. Department of Education for a “21st Century Community Learning Center.” Mare Linda of Kingsborough Community College has received a $755,313 grant from the U.S. Department of Education for a “21st Century Community Learning Center.”

Expert Advice Makes Tax Time Less Tiring

S aving for Retirement — or for anything — may not be a typical priority for those in their 30s. But Amy Jeu, 35, a Hunter College Geoscience Laboratory Technician, first learned that money matters when she graduated from Hunter with a master’s degree in Geophysical Information Science from the University of Minnesota, took his advice and invested 15 percent of his paycheck in a Tax Deferred Annuity (TDA), which includes a fee factored in by Halliday.

Werner is one of a number of fiscal professionals who — as a benefit to CUNY employees — are available for consultations regarding tax-deferred voluntary savings plans. Some, like Werner, will meet employees on their campuses, individually or in group sessions. Others are available in their office, by phone or at off-campus presentations. For example, the Teacher’s Retirement System (TRS) invites members who are new to its TDA program to a presentation at its offices in lower Manhattan. A condensed version of the class is also available to participants online.

Job classifications and titles often determine eligibility in TDA plans. But there is at least one CUNY-sponsored 403(b) TDA plan available to all employees. Representatives from TIAA-CREF, TIAA-CREF TIAA, and MetLife can also provide TDA plans. These TDA plans are investments that can be made in tandem with pension contributions or after an employee has vested in a pension plan and is no longer making contributions to their own pension plan.

Since this is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor, see your College Benefits Officer for more information. For TDA plans, enrollment is open all year. But with April 15 approaching, not only was Amy Jeu delighted to have a TDA, she also was comforted that as a Halliday client she is entitled to free financial advice regarding other matters. This is especially important to her this tax season since, as a result of damage from Hurricane Sandy, Jeu felt she needed to sell her house in Coney Island. She is now looking to purchase a condominium on higher land.

“I think this year’s taxes will be very very, very confusing,” she said. “Flood, damage, loss, FEMA money.”

TIAA-CREF, which also offers TDA plans to CUNY employees, has similar services. “We provide advice around all of the participant’s assets, not just the TIAA-CREF products,” says Raymond J. Schmierer, director of TIAA-CREF’s Business Access for College Completion program.

“Medgar Evers College has received a $300,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education for a ‘Minority Science Improvement Program Cooperative Grant with Queensborough Community College,’” direct- ed by Umesh Nakagata and Naishen Yao. A “Collaborative Project: Integrating Learning Resources for Information Security Research and Education,” directed by Soon Chun of the College of Staten Island, has received $133,333 in grant funding from the National Science Foundation.

City College has received a $1,196,723 grant from the National Science Foundation for “The Phase I Robert Joyce Scholarship Program at CCNY: Expanding the Teacher Academy Program for STEM Education in Urban Schools,” under the direction of Despina Stylianou, Issa Saleme, Richard Steinberg and Yanli Wyner. Brett Eyon of LaGuardia Community College has also received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Title V) for a project titled “Making Transfer Connections.”

Coping With New Pre-Tax Transit Limits, Fare Hikes

W ith SO MANY EMPLOYEES and students using public transportation, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s across-the-board fare hikes that went into effect March 1 have University-wide implications. CUNY employees, however, are eligible to use pre-tax earnings to cover certain public transportation costs through the WageWorks program. The IRS has now released an annual inflation adjustment raising both the transit and parking monthly pre-tax limits to $245 for 2013. Prior to the passage of this law, the pre-tax benefit was limited to $125 per month for public transit expenses and $240 for parking expense.

For more details, go to www.cuny.edu/muscath/.

If you wish to change your monthly transit deduction due to the increased monthly pre-tax limit as well as the increased fare increase or have any questions, contact your campus HR office.

YOU LIKELY NOTICED a difference in your Jan. 10, 2013 paycheck. This is because the temporary reduction in the Social Security payroll tax — 4.2 percent for employees for the last two years — expired Dec. 31, 2012. Effective Jan. 1, 2013, the tax for employees is 6.2 percent. The retirement savings plan. This led her to Black. He met with her in his Manhattan office and spent more than an hour explaining why she needed to put more of her salary into a TDA.

Over the years, incrementally and with advisement from Black, Fisher moved from deferring about 3 percent of her income to more than 20 percent. Last December she retired, although she still teaches an English course at Queens College and is now running a program in which classical musicians who are Queens College students bring chamber programs to public schools. “I have Ira Black to thank that I have been able to retire,” says Fisher, now 65.

Two other University employees who have deferred part of their incomes are Jean Willis and Susan Jones-Crenshaw — respectively payroll director and assistant director of payroll at Hunter College — both of whom, like Amy Jeu, used Halliday. Willis, 66, has worked for CUNY for 37 years, is planning on retiring this year and hopes to volunteer in literacy programs and food banks. Crenshaw, 50 — who has a bachelor’s and master’s degree from Hunter — is now confident that in about 15 years she, too, can retire. Werner says he set up “a plan to allow Susan to make decisions on Susan’s terms; to eliminate the element of surprise.”

Meanwhile, she too, is celebrating having less taxable income as of April 15. “It lowers my gross pay,” she said. “I’d rather take it and put it away before Uncle Sam can.”

Correction: Kennedy family chronicler and Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Professor of History at the CUNY Graduate School and University Center David Nasaw spoke with Sen. Edward M. Kennedy upon reading previous unreleased family records. The winter 2012 issue of CUNY Matters misidentified the senator from Massachusetts, who died in 2009.