Smart Moves

Sharp students seeking marketable skills, affordable tuition and fast-track programs like CUNY Justice Academy are driving record enrollment at the University.

CUNY expects a record spring 2010 enrollment and projects that next fall’s registration will likely top last fall’s record high. Colleges were still reporting preliminary figures at press time, but Robert A. Pritchik, senior university dean for the executive office and enrollment, said the trend appeared headed toward bigger spring enrollment than last year and a bustling fall.

This is in keeping with the national trend, as the difficult economy propels students to community and senior colleges to update their skills and earn new credentials. President Obama spotlit community colleges with a $12 billion, multiyear pledge of support. And the Post-9/11 GI Bill is paying the tuition of a flood of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans.

At CUNY, the birth of the dynamic Justice Academy, which links six community colleges with John Jay College of Criminal Justice, is drawing in additional students. Last fall, some 1,600 started in criminal justice and 200 began forensic science. When they earn their associate degrees, they’re guaranteed admission into John Jay’s bachelor’s program.

As in the fall, the rush to college prompted some community colleges to close admissions early. Borough of Manhattan, for example, stopped new admissions on Dec. 21 and cut off registration for returning students on Jan. 8. As of Jan. 4, it had 1,700 more students than at the same time in 2009, pointing to more than 22,200 students for the spring. “We’re closing early because there’s no space to put people,” said college spokesman Barry Rosen.

LaGuardia Community College expects to retain significantly more returning students in the spring semester starting in March. As of Jan. 4, it had registered 7,551 returning students, up from 5,107 on the same day in 2009—a 47.9 percent increase. “The economy is such that many more students are opting to stay enrolled so they can proceed to completion of their degrees,” said Michael Barton, associate dean for enrollment management and student development.

Reine Sarmiento, LaGuardia’s assistant dean of enrollment services, said that with so many students coming through the University’s central application center, the college does not expect to have direct admissions for the spring. Meanwhile, LaGuardia has expanded online and hybrid classes for students, as well as remedial and English as a second language courses to prepare students for college entry.

Kingsborough Community College divides its fall semester into 12-week fall and 6-week winter modules. As registration continued on Jan. 4, there were 1,732 more winter registrants than in 2009, a 25 percent rise. That compares to a 10 percent year-over-year increase for the fall of 2009. “That surprised us, because normally you’d assume that registration would be the same” in the two modules, said David Gomez, dean for instructional services. He also noted an increase in preparedness. “We’re placing more directly into freshman comp rather than developmental courses.”

At New York City College of Technology, which offers associate and bachelor’s degrees, students registered early “because they want to be sure they have programs and will be full time for the spring semester,” said Marcella Amorza, vice president for enrollment and student affairs.

More students who have earned associate degrees or interrupted their studies are returning for bachelor’s, along with more veterans, and parents are attending student orientation sessions, she said. “There is a sense that in the face of such uncertainty, this is a good time to prepare for the future.”

At Queens College, Admissions Director Vincent J. Angrisani noted an influx of second-semester transfers from expensive colleges like Adelphi, Hofstra and residential SUNY campuses. “These are bright students with 90 averages and 1300 SATs who are coming to Queens after one semester because they’re struggling financially. We don’t pry, but they’ll say they can afford the tuition, but not the room and board. And they’re very strong students, which is great to see,” he said.

As of the end of December, 530 transfer students had enrolled and a total of 1,200 were expected from the more than 2,160 students admitted. “We predict that the show rate will be higher than the norm, but a lot of students are having difficulty finding classes, which is a concern,” he said.
Continuing What Lincoln Started

REMEMBER the Beatles’ song “A Day in the Life”? “Woke up, fell out of bed, dragged a comb across my head.”

Let’s imagine a day in your life.

You woke up, fell out of bed, then brushed with fluoride toothpaste. You gulped an electrolyte sports drink after exercising and headed for work, where you checked your e-mail and Googled (several times). You told a coworker about your daughter’s high school biology project: not frog dissection but sequencing brine shrimp DNA. Before lunch, you were surprised the scanner read the crumpled bar code. On the way home, you stopped at the hospital, where your father was feeling fine after laser cataract surgery. That night, you convinced your son to put aside his videogame and walk the dog. Surfing cable television, you were convinced your son to put aside his videogame and walk the dog, checked the TV’s in-and-yearout at universities—which immeasurably improves your life. Consider vaccines (such as the one for polio, thanks to CUNY alumnus Jonas Salk), insulin, the electron microscope, ultrasound, pacemakers, MRIs, computers, development of the Internet, search engines, traffic management, radiation and cancer therapy to name just a few. These discoveries have come about through a unique team effort that requires highly educated faculty who have the facilities, support and time to pursue new inquiries. It requires students and postdoctoral researchers who are equally interested in these questions and skilled to help answer them. It requires a government willing to support the pursuit of new knowledge and its commercialization. And it requires businesses and investors willing to take the risk of bringing the new ideas to market.

The United States has a history of ambitious and far-sighted support for such inquiry. In 1862, while in the midst of the Civil War, President Lincoln signed the Morrill Act, enabling the development of public universities, and in 1902, it charted the National Academy of Sciences. During World War II, government-funded university research helped develop radar, medical drugs and atomic weapons. Post-Sputnik, Washington pumped money into research. And in the 1980s, the Bayh-Dole Act allowed federal grant recipientsto benefit by commercializing the products of their research. That federal investment has paid off handsomely. Research universities are engines of prosperity, generating economic growth, jobs, and the services and tools that companies need. And public institutions educate almost 80 percent of U.S. students, developing generations of entrepreneurs, scientists, health-care professionals and small-business owners. CUNY alone has almost twice as many students as the entire Ivy League.

But today, we are seeing a regression of public support for public universities. Nationwide, between 1987 and 2006, the average share of public universities’ operating revenues from state sources dropped from 57 percent to less than 41 percent. As the Chronicle of Higher Education recently noted, in Asia, 20 percent of students major in engineering; in Europe, 13 percent do; but in the United States, only 4 percent of college graduates major in engineering.

When research productivity slows, when graduation rates of science and engineering students lag, our country’s innovation slumpstoo. The decline of support for public higher education and the resulting stagnation is nothing less than a national security crisis. We need more scientists, engineers and technological innovators. And we need to develop the talents of all of our citizens. The naming of a record five female Nobel Prize winners this year—in economics, literature, medicine and chemistry—will, I hope, further encourage the development of the talent waiting to be discovered in our schools. America’s best resource is still its people. That means robust funding for research. And it means instilling in every child the mindset and the preparation for college. We need to develop the talents of our future inventors, our future Nobel Prize winners. The United States is the only one of the 30 countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development whose 25- to 34-year-olds are less educated than its 55- to 64-year-olds. That’s unconscionable—a signal bell for anyone interested in our future prosperity. We must keep our universities healthy. As President Obama has said, “Time and again, when we placed our bet for the future on education, we have prospered as a result.” So let’s make sure that every “day in the life” of our children, and our children’s children, is made better by the power of our own innovation.

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New York Times

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[Signature]
Talent at CUNY

New programs focus on guiding top community college graduates into top CUNY senior colleges.

Nurtures Budding Science and Math Teachers’ Dreams

Dreams from around the world and since 2005 has annually paid the tuition and, depending on need, book costs for 20 CUNY community college students. All intend to become math or science teachers in New York City’s public schools.

“Dr. Rickel is helping people with their dreams,” said Flores, who expects to graduate from York College in 2011 with a bachelor’s in mathematics. “It’s a blessing to have someone to help.”

Rickel, a psychologist in private practice and a professor at Weill Cornell Medical College, has been concerned with young people throughout her career. Teaching at Wayne State University in Detroit, she developed a program for teenage mothers who returned to school. During a Congressional Fellowship with then-Sen. Donald Riegle Jr. of Michigan, she addressed adolescent mental health needs with Tipper Gore on Hillary Clinton’s health care task force.

When her husband died, she came to work as education director at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. With thoughts of her mother (an elementary and middle school teacher) and aunt (a math and science teacher), Rickel decided to set up her own foundation.

To be considered for Rickel grants, students need a minimum B average, faculty recommendations, financial need and a persuasive essay about why they want to teach math or science in the city’s public schools. For more information, go to teachingscholars.org.

CUNY Senior Vice Chancellor Jay Hershenson, who designed with the Rickel Foundation’s board in November, called its work “enormously important. It fits right in with the efforts that CUNY is making to advance science, technology, engineering and math — the STEM fields. The Rickel Foundation gains extra depth because of Dr. Rickel’s personal involvement with the students who receive grants. She’s inspirational.”

Opportunities Are Knocking

From prestigious internships and research summer to rigorous, pre-professional academic programs, the University is forging collaborations to increase opportunities for high-achieving students. A recent conference spotlighted high-end programs with Wellesley and Skadden, Arps lawyers.

Koh, the University’s vice chancellor for undergraduate education and dean for undergraduate education and CUNY, said, “To start opening those doors.”

The community colleges, meanwhile, are focused on preparing their high achievers to compete. “Our honors program at LaGuardia is designed to upgrade the student for them,” said Koh. “We help them get up to speed… especially in writing. We give them leadership experience.”

She added that CUNY community college directors have been meeting to share their concerns and forge new opportunities within CUNY for their students.

“The primary objective is to have a voice, to speak for our honors students,” Koh said. “To start opening those doors.”

York College student Fatima Flores, left, benefited from tuition help available from the organization founded by Annette Rickel, right.
**Vice Chancellor Ernesto Malave**

Creative Administrator, Gifted Mentor, Beloved Colleague

**ERNESTO MALAVE**, Vice Chancellor for Budget and Finance of The City University of New York, died Nov. 22 after becoming ill while representing CUNY at a conference in Puerto Rico. He was 51. A memorial service is scheduled for Feb. 5.

As chief financial officer for six years, Malave oversaw and managed the finances of CUNY’s 23 colleges and professional schools and central administration, including the University’s investment portfolio. Regarded as a creative administrator gifted at navigating financial complexities and challenges, Malave was also a mentor to CUNY administrators, students and others, a colleague who rose through the ranks in diverse administrative roles to become a chief budget officer.

**MEMORIAL SERVICE**. “A Celebration of the Life of Vice Chancellor Ernesto Malave,” will be held Feb. 5 from 10 a.m. to noon in the main theater of Hostos Community College, Building C, 500 Grand Concourse, The Bronx. Those interested in attending are asked to please RSVP to memorialsvp@mail.cuny.edu. Information about a cablecast and webcast of the memorial service will be available on a special website, cuny.edu/ernestomalave, which has been created for members of the CUNY community and others to post written tributes, photographs, video testimonials and other memorabilia of Vice Chancellor Malave. Assistance with posting will be available through the website.

CUNY Puerto Rican Faculty Recruitment Project… demonstrates the full breadth of his involvement with diverse issues involving CUNY.”

“Ernesto never lost his sense of responsibility to the community from which he came and always served it with excellence,” said New York Secretary of State Lorraine Cortés-Vasquez, who knew Malave before and during her tenure as a state Regent and at the Hispanic Federation.

Dolores Fernandez, a professor of urban education at the CUNY Graduate Center, said Malave was an enormous help in 1998 when she became president of Hostos Community College in the South Bronx, where he grew up.

“Ernesto was at my school weekly monitoring me and teaching me the ins and outs of the complexities of the budget system,” she said.

As a student leader at Borough of Manhattan Community College, Malave served as a member of the University Student Senate from 1979 to 1981; as student representative to the CUNY Board of Trustees’ Committee on Faculty, Staff and Administration in 1979-1980; and as BMCC Student Government President in 1980-1981.

He earned a bachelor’s degree from the College of New Rochelle in 1984. Malave joined the CUNY staff as an admissions advisor in the Office of Admissions Services in 1983. Two years later, he was appointed assistant director of governmental relations, responsible for representing the University’s interests at City Hall and in Albany. He joined the University budget office in 1989 as a budget analyst and assistant to the budget director and later became executive assistant to the vice chancellor for budget, finance and computing. In January 1996, he became CUNY’s acting budget director, a post he assumed fully in 1998. Chancellor Goldstein named Malave interim vice chancellor for budget and finance in 2002 and vice chancellor in 2003.

Survivors include his wife, Miriam, sons Ernesto and Erik, mother Aida, brothers Alfonso and Daniel, sisters Virginia and Sandra and a large extended loving family of nieces, nephews, cousins, uncles, sisters and brothers-in-law.

He was an extraordinarily gifted colleague and friend, devoted to his family and to his University in every conceivable way... He will be sorely missed.”

— Chancellor Matthew Goldstein
Distinguished Author, Scientist Win Top Awards

NOTED CUNY LITERARY and science faculty members have received major honors in their fields.

Hunter College Distinguished Lecturer Colum McCann has won the 2009 National Book Award in Fiction for his best-selling novel Let the Great World Spin. Joseph L. Birman, Distinguished Professor of Physics at City College and cum laude alumnus of the class of 1947, is one of three recipients of the American Physical Society’s Andrei Sakharov Prize for 2010.

“As fiction writers and people who believe in the word, we have to enter the anonymous corners of human experience to make that little corner right,” McCann said in accepting America’s top literary award for his tale of 1970s New York City told through characters whose lives are touched by famed tightrope walker Philippe Petit and his memorable 1974 high-wire act between the World Trade Center towers.

Dublin-born McCann’s fiction has been published in 30 languages. In 2009, he also was awarded top literary honors by Ireland and France. At Hunter, he teaches fiction in the college’s MFA program.

Next month in Washington, professor Birman is to receive the Sakharov Prize, named for the Russian theoretical physicist who became a dissident and received the 1975 Nobel Peace Prize. For about 35 years Birman, a grandson of Russian-Jewish immigrants, has advocated for the rights of repressed scientists — first in the former Soviet Union and later in China, Cuba, Iraq, Iran and the United States. He is currently working to help Dr. Arah Alaei and Dr. Kumar Alaei, brothers who are medical doctors who have been imprisoned by Iran for trying to treat AIDS patients in rural areas. His goal has been to put “pressure, noise and a spotlight” on governments that repress scientists. Among scientists he has helped who have become independent research scholars are Lehman College Distinguished Professor of Physics Eugene Chudnovsky and professor emeritus Andrei Weissman of The College of Staten Island.

Shaw, Sapienza Appointed to Key Budget Positions

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the Board of Trustees has appointed Marc V. Shaw interim Senior Vice Chancellor for Budget, Finance and Financial Policy. His appointment follows the untimely death of Vice Chancellor for Budget and Finance Ernesto Malave on Nov. 22, 2009, at age 51. Shaw, who has served as Trustee since 2002, has more than two decades of senior management experience in state and municipal government. He served as First Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayor for Operations to Mayor Bloomberg, as Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, as Budget Director and Commissioner for the Department of Finance under former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, and as senior staff member to the City Council Finance Committee and the State Senate.

The Executive Committee has also appointed Matthew Sapienza as Associate Vice Chancellor for Budget, Finance and Financial Policy. Sapienza has provided more than 21 years of distinguished public service in senior level budget and finance administration, including five years as University Budget Director beginning in October 2004, 11 years at the New York City Board of Education, including as Deputy Budget Director for the public school system, and five years as a Senior Budget Analyst for The New York City Fire Department. “Mr. Malave’s passing has left a large and unexpected void in the University’s administration,” said Chancellor Matthew Goldstein. “Fortunately, in Marc Shaw and Matt Sapienza, the University has experienced public servants who are uniquely qualified to step into the breach under these challenging circumstances.” A national search will be conducted for a permanent appointment to the Senior Vice Chancellor position.

New Student Trustee Brings Experience Plus Fresh Ideas

CORY PROVOST, a Brooklyn College graduate student active in student and community affairs since high school, has been elected the 25th chairperson of the University Student Senate — giving him a seat and a vote on the CUNY Board of Trustees.

Provost, who earned his B.A. at Brooklyn College, is pursuing a master’s degree in urban policy and administration; he plans to seek a doctorate in political science with an eye toward teaching. His leadership positions have included the presidencies of Brooklyn College’s NAACP and Mentoring Alliance. Currently he is president of the college’s Graduate Student Organization.

In his new leadership posts, Provost said he is most concerned with “making sure CUNY remains as affordable as possible for students,” and with “the financial stability of the University as we go through the next couple of years of economic downturn.” He added, “I truly believe CUNY has set an example that should be replicated. CUNY offers students in difficult positions many, many opportunities to progress.” He plans to improve University Student Senate communications with the help of a new website and a “marketing strategy” in order to make it easier to “develop conversations” about issues of concern to students.

As an undergraduate, Provost helped to organize Brooklyn College’s “Thanksgiving Feed the Homeless,” and spent time in New Orleans helping rebuild homes following Hurricane Katrina. He has been active in several communities through his work with New York State legislators, and is also concerned about educating young fathers on their importance to families and to the future success of their children.

Roy DeCarava, 1919-2009

ROY DECARAVA was an international- ly renowned photographer best known for his black-and-white images of daily life in Harlem and candid shots of jazz giants. His work is in the collections of many of the country’s major art institutions, including the National Gallery of Art, the National Portrait Gallery, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, The Museum of Modern Art and The Metropolitan Museum of Art. In 2006, he received the National Medal of Arts, the highest award the U.S. government gives to an artist.

For 34 years, DeCarava was a professor at Hunter College and taught until his death in October at 89. “Roy DeCarava was devoted to a traditional form of photography — the silver print,” says Sanford Wurmfeld, retired chair of the Department of Art at Hunter who still teaches at the college. “Within the limitations which the medium offered, he was able to create a whole world in his work — as he was justly famous for finding incredible subtleties in the dark areas of his prints.”

DeCarava studied painting and architecture at the Cooper Union School of Art and the George Washington Carver Art School before turning to photography in the 1940s. In 1952, he became the first black photographer to win a Guggenheim Fellowship.

According to colleagues, DeCarava was kind and sensitive to his students, gently questioning them to “urge them on to self-discovery,” says Wurmfeld. “He understood that posing the right questions could open up worlds of opportunities for his students.”
GET READY for the new CUNY.edu. The University this semester is launching its new website—a visually dynamic, more powerful, rich media tool for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and, increasingly, the world. Today, more than 1 million unique visitors searching more than 5 million page views each month rely on the University’s premier information source. This fifth generation of CUNY.edu extends its reputation for service with advanced function and innovative design inspired by ideas from across the University community.

More than a year ago, the Office of University Relations began gathering opinions and ideas to assemble a deeper understanding of users’ experiences. While many positives were noted, users also said that information was not always logically organized or easy to find. A team of web developers went to work. Their yearlong effort produced a website that is wider, more natural to read, with a crisper, cleaner, up-to-date look. More images, video and audio are integrated throughout. Navigating

A transformed CUNY website promises quick links to key topics and services.

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Morphosis

and campus events, plus streaming videos and much more.

around the website is simpler. Separate content is directed to faculty, students and staff; extra attention is directed to prospective students seeking to build relationships with the University. And the website offers users a host of services — everything from searchable office telephone numbers for faculty and staff at every campus to a detailed catalog of courses and their availability, sign-ups for e-mail alerts, online searches and applications for jobs across the University, links to the Office of Computer and Information Services’ suite of business services on the CUNY portal, and, of course, quick links to the colleges and professional schools.

So here, across these two pages, is a preview-in-print of the new CUNY.edu. The University will be testing the site through early February. For a virtual preview, log on to CUNY.edu and click the beta site link at the top. Check out all the new features. Comments are welcome, so click the link for ideas and suggestions, and leave yours.

FIND IT
— These links, including “Top Searches” and “Most Visited Pages,” are determined by the most popular topics searched by users. They’re available in the blue website “attic” that expands when you click on “Find it.”

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— Customized news, updates and links are tailored to specific University audiences — future students, current students, faculty/staff and alumni.

GATEWAY TO THE CUNY PORTAL
— This is where everyone from prospective students to alumni can log in to carry out University business such as applying for admission, registering for classes, accessing Blackboard and other services.

BETTER SEARCHES
— The Google search function is customized for CUNY data, returning more productive, relevant results with suggested links.

THE ENERGY INSTITUTE
— Link to the website of CUNY’s innovative Energy Institute, which involves faculty and resources from all campuses to explore technologies that can provide low-cost, sustainable energy solutions for New York City and the state.

THE DAILY REPORT
— CUNY news, including Newswire, and events across the University, updated daily.

THE FOOTER
— A consistent part of every page, it provides lots of helpful information without your jumping back to the home page. Quick links are featured prominently on the home page, as well as in the footers.
As the City Turns

FIFTY-YEAR-OLD Sahaf Hasweh left her native Jordan for New York City a dozen years ago. Nineteen-year-old Najada Xhemo of Albania has lived in the city for only two years. They come from different countries and different generations, but they share the same dream: to improve their English so they can earn a college degree and fit into American life.

“They — and another 1.7 million immigrant adults in the city who don’t speak English fluently — are New York. And ‘We Are New York’ is the new educational-TV show produced by CUNY and the Mayor’s Office that is helping them meet their goals.”

The nine-part, city-financed dramatic series, which has been praised by the Obama administration and national experts, was filmed in New York City neighborhoods with a cast that is reflective of the city’s immigration population. In addition to language lessons, it gives immigrants a city sense to a variety of everyday issues, including domestic violence, education, finances and health.

The series was created by Anthony Tassi, executive director of the Mayor’s Office of Adult Education, and Leslie Oppenheim, University director of language and literacy programs.

“The city chose CUNY because Leslie is the best English-language instructor in the city,” Tassi says. “She had ideas for a TV show, and CUNY has the expertise in language learning and has a commitment to immigrants.”

The campuses are extremely welcoming to immigrants. It was a no-brainer to go with CUNY, and it worked out wonderfully.”

In “We Are New York,” immigrants help immigrants through a series of realistic plots that are as lively and sophisticated as those on TV soap operas and sitcoms. The dialogue is slowed slightly, and English subtitles make it easy for new learners.

“I wish I had seen this when I first came to New York,” says Hasweh, who is in the CUNY Language Immersion Program at The College of Staten Island. “It would have changed my life.”

Hasweh, who wants to go back to school to complete a major in early childhood education, says that in addition to improving her English skills, the show opened her eyes about a lot of city programs. “I watched ‘Asthma: The Soap Opera’ [shown in TV clip above] and didn’t know that the city offers free health insurance to poor children even if they don’t have green cards,” she says.

Xhemo, who enrolled in the CUNY Language Immersion Program at Queensborough Community College to study for the SATs, says the episode “Stay in School” was particularly helpful as she sets her sights on college. “This video is about my life; it’s about immigrant people and how they come here and start living,” she says. “I learned a lot. The schools here are a lot different from the ones I know.”

Hasweh and Xhemo are among the more fortunate of the city’s immigrants because they managed to get into an English-as-a-second-language class. There is only space and budget for some 75,000 students each year.

The CUNY Language Immersion Program attracts immigrants from a wide variety of countries, so not only don’t they speak English, but they also seldom speak each other’s languages. “We Are New York” puts them on common ground. “It has helped my students bond,” says

WHERE TO SEE “WE ARE NEW YORK”

Full episodes may be viewed at www.nyc.gov/LearnEnglish. The series airs on Channel 25 Saturdays at 4 p.m. and Sundays at 7:30 a.m.; on Channel 74 Fridays at 10 p.m. and Sundays at 1 p.m.; it’s also shown on Cablevision’s Channel 22.
**Urban Planning from a Savvy Flâneur**

By Gary Schmidgall

ANY YEARS AGO, when I first came to CUNY as a Mellon post-doc at the Graduate Center, I sublet a tiny apartment in a funky tenement building on West 10th in the Village, just above a lampshade boutique called A Shady Lamp. Since I rarely saw a customer in it, its owner preferred to let it out as a sublet to a drug dealer (both now fondly recalled). Nonetheless, it was as much about urban planning as it was about a life in the Village. With its small door, double-paned aluminum windows, and the outsized personality of its owner, it was a perfect urban laboratory for Sorkin, the CUNY Distinguished Professor of Architecture, who has lived there for nearly a quarter century. It is not in New York University (“an amazingly dead ear to contemporary concerns”), the landmarks regime (“ludicrous in form and function, the judgments and approvals according to a theory of the mean”), and Donald Trump (“who thought a hotel on Waverly Place is a great idea”).

Sorkin’s work is littered with references to Jane Jacobs, who fought epic battles with developers over urban form; and his architectural style is in tune with the democracy of everyone having to negotiate in the slow-moving traffic flow by garbage trucks. Sorkin revels in the disruption of city life, and his enemies, aside from his landlady, are predictable: New York University (“an amalgamation of the arts and humanities”). His current obsession, however, is with the Tube, and the signage on the former Hudson Square, which now houses the spewing point for traffic exiting the Holland Tunnel.

Sorkin’s walk is littered with examples of how to do urban planning in the best traditions of Jane Jacobs. He is an ardent defender of the democracy of everyone having to negotiate in the slow-moving traffic flow by garbage trucks. Sorkin revels in the disruption of city life, and his enemies, aside from his landlady, are predictable: New York University (“an amalgamation of the arts and humanities”). His current obsession, however, is with the Tube, and the signage on the former Hudson Square, which now houses the spewing point for traffic exiting the Holland Tunnel. Sorkin takes a fascinating mediation on traffic and pedestrian control. He recalls the profusion of “movement systems” in India — buses, rickshaws, bullock carts, elephants, bikes, and, in the past, those ubiquitous cows — and in a fairly rare burst of planner-speak calls it “the ultimate convulsive collision of circulatory modes.” But he admits things are not as bad as they could be. A typical stroll takes Michael Sorkin along Spring Street.

**Sorkin on the Good City**

Sorkin on the Good City

The core of the very nature of the good city: the struggle for diversity, the struggle for self-organization. Neighborhoods are not like genera
tions, fixed cohorts that march through experience together. They house multiple
dynamics

By protecting continuity, rent control is the social equivalent of landmarking. “Gentrification” is a term of artful deception and should not be applied to more inclusive styles of reviving urban places.

One of the tests of a good contemporary city is, “Do we detect Disney?”
The idea of a flexible bubble of personal sovereignty is at the core of urban civility.

Sorkin muses south into Soho, “the nation’s poster-child for gentrification,” which he clearly is fond of. “If there is a place in New York with the dimensions of a nine-century European city, this is it.” But he also sees reason to worry for it, noting the downside when a neighborhood becomes a tourist destination and the habitat of high-end metrosexuals.

The dicey task of crossing Canal Street (the badly disguised freeway for New Jersey-Brooklyn drivers) sets Sorkin off on a fascinating meditation on traffic and pedestrian control. He recalls the profusion of “movement systems” in India — buses, rickshaws, bullock carts, elephants, bikes, and, of course, those ubiquitous cows — and in a fairly rare burst of planner-speak calls it “the ultimate convulsive collision of circulatory modes.” But he admits things are not as bad as they could be.

A typical stroll takes Michael Sorkin along Spring Street.
NEW FOCUS ON AUTISM

Varied CUNY-wide initiatives confront its many puzzles.

By Barbara Fischkin

At Brooklyn’s P.S. 396, special education teacher Shavon Paul is keeping a watchful eye on the small group of students in her class. She teaches six boys, all of whom have autism. Suddenly, one boy begins to wail. His arms flap in the air. Paul tries to verbally soothe him, but it doesn’t work and this might mean a set back. A year ago, he used to cry constantly. Quickly, Paul moves the boy to an empty table, sets down the countermaze he’d been working on and asks him to continue. The boy quiets down and the room seems to sigh with relief.

A few evenings earlier, after a similarly grueling day in the classroom, Paul had logged online to a Hunter College post-master’s degree applied-behavior analysis certification course — one of two offered by the University. Geared to educators and other professionals who work with autistic students, it is also part of a broad CUNY effort, partially centered at Hunter, to addresse the growing incidence of autism, a potentially devastating neurological communication, social and behavioral disorder.

Varied initiatives in education and research are aimed at a similar goal: to create a cadre of local educators, therapists, health and other professionals who understand autism. At Hunter, much of the focus is behavioral. At Brooklyn College, a range of educational approaches is explored. City College researchers are looking at the role class size plays in educating students who have autism. At Queens College, which like Hunter is home to a branch of the state-funded Regional Centers for Autism Spectrum Disorders, there is also a bilingual outreach to the immigrant community.

Fifty years ago, only about one in 10,000 children was diagnosed with autism. The advocacy and fundraising organization Autism Speaks, citing recent data from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration, believes that today it’s one child out of 91.

The newly formed autism center at Hunter, which involves the college’s five schools, was a direct response to the increase in autism on New York City schools. According to the city’s education department, in June the system was serving 7,664 students on the autism spectrum in public and nonpublic schools, a figure that does not reflect children under 5 who have already been diagnosed.

“Our programs support the families and practitioners who work with these children, drawing upon Hunter’s strengths in teacher training, research and community outreach,” says Hunter president Jennifer J. Raab. CUNY Distinguished Lecturer John Brown, who teaches the class Paul takes, notes that “I have tons of New York City school teachers taking classes that are not required so they can serve their students with autism more effectively.”

Officials at Autism Speaks believe the rise in the number of affected children makes autism more common than the pediatric versions of AIDS, diabetes and cancer combined. Some experts say the increase is due to better diagnosis. But many who have worked in the field of developmental disabilities for years disagree, and even the CDC notes that “a true increase in the number of people with an ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) cannot be ruled out.” Autism Speaks states on its website that “there is no established explanation for this increase, although improved diagnosis and environmental influences are two reasons often considered.” Many researchers believe a genetic predisposition combined with environmental toxicity at a vulnerable time in the development of a child may be at the root of the disorder.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

The post-master’s degree applied-behavior analysis course sequence that Paul takes is formally known as an “Advanced Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis.” Taught by Brown, a seasoned and well-respected behavior analyst hired last year by Hunter College, it provides course-of-study programs at the college. Apart from these programs, students who would like to gain certification must perform 1,500 hours of fieldwork that adheres to Behavior Analyst Certification Board guidelines and take an examination conducted by the board.

Classes are offered at the Hunter campus and online. The methods advocated by the course have been praised by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the New York State Department of Health. Although Paul is confident of her skills as a special education teacher and has learned a lot on the job, she enrolled in the Hunter course because she wanted to know more about autism. Every child is different, she says, and the disability strikes with varying levels of severity. “I have questions about how to deal with certain situations,” Paul says. “And that course also helps me to speak the language to another person who is in the same field.”

According to Brown, Paul did the right thing by moving the distraught student to another table. The technique — re-direction — often involves a split-second decision to find the right distraction, one that will enable a student to continue working.

Brown says re-direction is based on general data, science and technology — and the specific data and needs that apply to the particular student. That, the professor emphasizes, can require complicated analysis and re-analysis. For example, what do you do if Plan A does not work? Behavior analysis, Brown says, is a method of determining whether the technology works for a particular student in a particular situation. It is science, not a random bag of tricks.

Also at Hunter, psychologist Michael Siller is researching toddlers who are at risk for autism — including younger siblings of children who already have it. And his staff also teach parents how to encourage their children’s communication during play time.

Behaviors that raise concerns that a child might have autism typically begin between 12 and 24 months. So Siller is studying warning signs, such as lack of shared eye contact, affect and communicative gestures or the presence of repetitive play to see if some of these behaviors can be effectively targeted during early intervention. Researchers are trying to find out whether developmental delays associated with autism can be extinguished, modified or prevented by early intervention. Siller’s playtime work with children addresses this possibility; he often carries a bag with special toys to the houses of his participants.

“Most children with autism find it difficult to include their parents when playing with a toy,” Siller says, although he is careful to emphasize that many parents with typical children also need help with these skills.

Melinda Cornwell, an undergraduate student and mother of a son with autism, is
among those who assist Siller as a research assistant and playtime “interventionist.” She says she tries to help young children at risk for autism discover that playing with another person can be rewarding and fun — a concept that is not always simple for children with autism to grasp.

Siller has also written a workbook for parents: Our Special Play Time: Finding Ways to Improve Play Time With My Young Child. The book illustrates concrete steps for parents to help their children connect and develop enthusiasm for toys, playmates — and their relatives.

"Several CUNY professors are reaching out to potentially underserved communities at home and abroad."

Many autistic children have sensory deficits. They feel objects too intensely or not enough or have trouble sitting still for long. Frequently, handling these issues is left to occupational therapists during individual sessions while teachers remain baffled about what to do about them in the classroom. To address this, Hunter Assistant Professor in Early Childhood Special Education Donia Fahim teaches a master’s class in which sensory integration is one of the evidence-based practices taught. Teachers scan a checklist informing them of their own sensory issues, such as adjusting their earrings or necklaces, and that helps them better understand their students’ behaviors. After discussing the checklist, Fahim provides strategies for overly fidgety children. These include teaching them to recognize when they are upset and using relaxation strategies and self-management skills. Teachers need to help students learn to ask for a break when they are overstimulated, she says.

They need to teach students that “time out” is not a reward or punishment but a way to regulate their behavior.

Hunter professor Shirley Cohen trains New York City public school teachers in the innovative “ASD Nest” program she co-designed at 15 elementary schools. It mixes typical and high-functioning autistic children in the classroom, which Nest advocates say benefits both groups. The students who have autism model the typical students. The typical students learn to live in a world where people have differences.

During recent visits to Nest classrooms in Manhattan and Queens, it was often difficult to distinguish the children who had autism from those who didn’t. At P.S. 112 in East Harlem, for instance, students planned for a teleconference with NASA. An autistic student who has communication difficulties was asked what her role in this activity would be. “To communicate with NASA” she said triumphantly.

"LaGuardia and Goldman Sachs Pioneer New Initiative”

like Paul, many teachers believe the more education they have the better. Patricia Mahalco — who teaches higher functioning second graders at P.S. 186Q in a Nest program in Bellrose, Queens — is also earning her applied-behavior analysis certification. Recently, she signed on to the same online session as Paul.

One day in the summer, Mahalco visited the Nest students she teaches during the school year. She peeked into a classroom and held her breath when a boy was asked to pretend that he was in ancient Greece and to play a game popular with children of that time and place.

“He doesn’t like to pretend,” Mahalco said.

But sometimes, with autism, breaking large tasks into smaller ones helps. Mahalco nodded as the student’s summer teacher asked him to try to pretend for just one round of the game. He did that — and then kept playing. He stayed in ancient Greece.

LaGuardia and Goldman Sachs Pioneer New Initiative

THE SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER at LaGuardia Community College will be the first partner of the Goldman Sachs Group Inc. in a new $50 million initiative aimed at unlocking the growth and job creation potential of 1,000 small businesses across America. CUNY Matters recently spoke with Jane Schulman, vice president of LaGuardia’s Division of Adult and Continuing Education, which oversees the center.

Q: LaGuardia’s Small Business Development Center was started in October 2001 to help businesses affected by 9/11. What impact has it had on the local economy?

VICE PRESIDENT SCHULMAN: We’ve helped thousands of startup and small businesses via one-on-one counseling and large group seminars. We’ve also helped them gain access to about $25 million over the past decade while helping them develop or maintain approximately 100 jobs.

Q: Where would these small business owners go if the center didn’t exist?

A: While there are a few other small business development centers, they wouldn’t have had the kind of access that we offer. LaGuardia’s center is a constant presence that has been extraordinarily helpful to small businesses in our community.

Q: How will Goldman Sachs’ new 10,000 Small Businesses Initiative work, and who can benefit?

A: The model [will] reach out to existing small businesses throughout the country in terms of what they need to grow. For example, they need access to capital, an understanding of business plans, and an understanding of their market as well as new markets. This program will provide them with an on-the-ground curriculum that speaks to their needs in these areas.

Q: How will the money be used?

A: Approximately $300 million will go for capital investments so small businesses will have access to capital through Community Development Investment Funds. Some $200 million will be for an education component. We’re very proud that LaGuardia is the first community college where this program is being implemented. Eventually, some 20 community colleges across the nation are expected to be involved.

Q: Why are community colleges a good place to invest this way?

A: Because we understand the real-world situations facing local businesses and are positioned to devise real-world solutions.

Q: With the economy in crisis and joblessness at 10 percent, what are the biggest barriers to small businesses?

A: Lending institutions are not lending money, and small businesses need capital just to keep going, much less to grow and expand. In addition, small businesses need to think differently in this economy, because business plans that worked in the past may not be successful now, and that’s an area where we can be very helpful.

Q: Is there a type of a small business that thrives in an economy that’s not thriving?

A: Yes. For example, we’ve been working with a daycare center on a business plan, and we also helped them get access to capital. This allowed them to grow. We’ve also worked with a mechanic who wanted to open a service station. While he had some capital, we were able to help him put it in the right place by helping him understand marketing and how to identify prospective clientele.

Q: What advice would you give someone who wants to start a business in any economy?

A: Think it through carefully, and seek expert help. Even though you have a good idea and are good at what you’re planning to do, you must understand many other aspects to have a successful business. Our curriculum will help small business owners understand management, understand fiscal issues and understand other things that they may not have had formal training in.

Q: The Small Business Development Center has been praised for addressing the needs of the local immigrant population. Will this be part of the new initiative?

A: Absolutely! At LaGuardia we are tuned in to the immigrant community. We can offer them help to understand the culture of running a business in the U.S. and how that may be different from the culture they’re familiar with.

Q: As the center nears its 10th anniversary, what are your future plans?

A: To extend our outreach, and the Goldman Sachs initiative will help us do so. For example, we’re planning an interactive website to enable small businesses to access resources without having to visit the campus. We are also working to develop curricula, both credit and noncredit, in order to expand our offerings and help entrepreneurs understand how to develop and grow small businesses.
JANUARY

sunday  |  monday  |  tuesday  |  wednesday  |  thursday  |  friday  |  saturday
---|---|---|---|---|---|---
3  |  4  |  5  |  6  |  7  |  8  |  9  
*PODCAST*  |  WINTER SESSION BEGINS  |  CUNY TV  |  WINTER SESSION BEGINS  |  15  |  16  |  Lehman College
10  |  11  |  12  |  13  |  14  |  15  |  16  
Lehman College  |  Alonzo King’s Lines Ballet  |  4 p.m.  |  $25-$35; age 12 and under, $10  |  20  |  21  |  22  |  23  
24  |  25  |  26  |  27  |  28  |  29  |  30  
Brooklyn College “Hairspray”  |  3 p.m.  |  $30-$40; age 12 and under, $10  |  2 p.m.  |  8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.  |  8 p.m.  |  Queensborough C.C.
31  |  |  |  |  |  |  
Lehman College  |  So voro Gospel Choir  |  3 p.m.  |  $25-$35; age 12 and under, $10  |  |  |  |

Plaster casts of the famed *Cigar Martins*, a gift of Charles M. Leapo to City College in 1852, have been meticulously restored (fence of the Partenon, North X XXX, above and, at right, um-restoration) and are now on display at the atrium gallery of Olympic Tower, 641 Fifth Ave, at 51st Street. Free

FEBRUARY

sunday  |  monday  |  tuesday  |  wednesday  |  thursday  |  friday  |  saturday
---|---|---|---|---|---|---
3  |  4  |  5  |  6  |  7  |  8  |  9  
Riverhead Community College  |  Borough of Manhattan Community College  |  3:30 p.m.  |  10 a.m. (Ala 2/23)  |  Free  |  Free  |  Free
10  |  11  |  12  |  13  |  14  |  15  |  16  
Queens New York  |  Robert Sims & Alison Buchanan — An Evening of Opera  |  8 p.m.  |  8 p.m.  |  8 p.m. (Also 2/6)  |  Suggested donation $10  |  Suggested donation $10
17  |  18  |  19  |  20  |  21  |  22  |  23  
BMCC  |  BMCC  |  BMCC  |  BMCC  |  Brookline College  |  Baruch College Perspectives on Immigration lecture series  |  12:30 p.m.  |  12:30 p.m. (Also 2/28)  |  Free  |  Free
24  |  25  |  26  |  27  |  28  |  |  
*PODCAST*  |  Borough of Manhattan Community College  |  8 p.m.  |  8 p.m.  |  8 p.m.  |  |  |  |

Looking for events, visit cuny.edu/events and click “Events.”

Details of calendar events can change without notice, so always call in advance.

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