Walencik Displays His Honor as Flag Bearer for CEHS

Senior C&T faculty member takes the position in stride with a smile.

Dr. Vincent Walencik was recently honored with the title of gonfalonier (or “flag bearer”) during commencement ceremonies for MSU at the IZOD Center in East Rutherford on May 20, 2011. He was chosen to lead the procession for the College of Education and Human Services by carrying a massive flag emblazoned with the school’s official crest.

“The only reason I was asked to carry the flag is that I am a senior member of the faculty,” Dr. Walencik said, adding jokingly, “Of course, if you want to say that I won the Nobel prize for the discovery of beer, got the Olympic gold for puddle jumping while blowing bubbles, and ate the most mustard at this year’s Nathan’s hot dog eating contest, feel free to do so!”

Dr. Walencik led a procession of faculty members at the commencement ceremony, but the flag apparently obstructed his view while he walked down the aisle. “If a cliff were in front of me,” Dr. Walencik remarked after the fact, “I would have walked right off of it.”

Dr. Vincent Walencik poses for a photo before beginning to lead the CEHS procession during MSU commencement exercises on May 20 at the IZOD Center in East Rutherford.
Good News From Our Teaching Graduates

As we all know, the work of a teacher is never easy, and the reality is that these are tough times for preservice teaching candidates entering the job market. However, we wanted to use this space to celebrate and commend the work of some of our wonderful C&T graduates who have been successful and found work in New Jersey school districts! We wish all of the following students luck in their teaching endeavors this fall:

- **Ivan Schwindel** has been hired as a part-time elementary Physical Education teacher in the Livingston School District.
- **Brian Cooper** has been hired as an Earth Science teacher at Randolph High School.
- **Shareen Shibli** has been hired as a math teacher at North Bergen High School in the North Bergen School District.
- **Kathleen Hummel** has been hired as a science teacher at Bogota Junior/Senior High School in the Bogota school district.
- **Eric Fingerman** has been hired as a math teacher at Eastside High School in Paterson.
- **Martha Garcia** has accepted a position with an anti-bullying AmeriCorps program at Glenfield Middle School in Montclair.

Raul de Molina Receives Honorary MSU Degree

TV journalist Raul de Molina, known worldwide as co-anchor of the top-rated entertainment news show *El Gordo y La Flaca*, was awarded an honorary degree at commencement exercises on May 20, in a move that celebrated MSU’s wide diversity of student backgrounds and experiences.

De Molina, who was named in 2008 as one of the 15 most influential Latinos in the United States by magazine *People en Español*, told the 15,000 MSU students who were graduating to embrace the changes in their lives and repeated several times that “Anything is possible.”

De Molina’s own history is a never-ending series of changes: De Molina was born in Cuba, raised in Spain, came to the United States at 16 years old to pursue an art degree, and worked for several years as a freelance photographer for the Associated Press. A chance encounter led to a television career, and for the past 21 years he has worked in the U.S. Hispanic television market.

In his speech, he even poked fun at his nickname, El Gordo (“The Fat Guy”), saying that he has even been given the opportunity to write a diet book, *La Dieta del Gordo*.

“If I was able to do all of this,” De Molina told the crowd of graduating seniors after relating his own history, “all of you are able to do much more.”
Spotlight Shines on Department Administrator

As part of a new series profiling members of the Curriculum & Teaching Department staff, the department would like to introduce you to Susan Hagen, our department administrator.

Ms. Hagen advises approximately 450 graduate students in initial teacher certification programs, works closely with the Center of Pedagogy, and makes sure approximately 100 students are ready each semester for Fieldwork and Student Teaching.

She collaborates with faculty members in subject area departments on admissions decisions, as well as oversees the scheduling of courses offered by the C&T Department.

Ms. Hagen is also a certified yoga instructor who teaches weekly at a yoga studio in Montclair, in addition to an on-campus course for students, faculty, and staff.

She is also a huge fan of theatre and has performed in several community theatre productions across New Jersey.

Fine Investigates Student Learning at LDA Conference

Workshop is part of NJ conference on assisting students with social & emotional learning challenges.

This past Spring semester, Dr. Elaine Fine presented at an annual conference hosted by the Learning Disabilities Association of New Jersey.

Dr. Fine hosted a workshop session titled “The Missing Link: The Role of Executive Functioning in Moving from Learning to Application.” The session explored the gaps between what children have learned and how they apply what they learn in new situations.

The conference was titled “Working with Social/Emotional/Learning Issues” and included a presentation by keynote speaker Ron Glodoski.

A national leader and expert on the issues of bullying, substance abuse and resiliency, Glodoski is dedicated to helping others transform the lives of at-risk kids. Glodoski’s book, How to Be a Successful Criminal: The Real Deal on Crime, Drugs, and Easy Money, has received national acclaim. Through his own experiences, Glodoski reaches out to kids with respect and help teach them how to choose a better way of life for themselves.
Book is Launchpad for Forum on Teens’ Brains

Barbara Strauch, medical science and health editor of the New York Times, was the keynote speaker for the Symposium on the Teenage Brain, an academic meeting at MSU this past spring semester sponsored by Curriculum & Teaching.

The symposium, which drew nearly 400 students and faculty members in attendance, featured Strauch as well as a panel of professors from the University’s Department of Family and Child Studies. They discussed emerging research on the teenage brain and practical strategies for teaching adolescents. The meeting was held in the conference center of University Hall.

Strauch told attendees about the findings written in her new book, The Primal Teen: What the New Discoveries About the Teenage Brain Tell Us About Our Kids. She highlighted the physical nature of the transformation during adolescence, drawing upon the latest research to illustrate that the changes in the teenage brain are as dramatic and crucial as those during the first two years of life. After the keynote address, the panel discussion concentrated on detailing practical strategies for working with adolescents both inside and outside of the classroom.

The symposium was informative and interesting, providing attendees with information about emerging research as well as practical strategies when working with teenagers.

C&T Students Lauded for Achievements & Excellence

Student awards help honor academic excellence, service goals, and research endeavors in multiple disciplines.

The following distinguished students in the Curriculum and Teaching Department were honored this spring for their academic excellence, service to the community, and utmost commitment to education. Our congratulations to all!

- **Janely Jose** received the Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society Award for her ideals of scholarship, high personal standards, a commitment to education, leadership qualities, and active participation in educational communities.
- **Joel Mendez** and **Ebone Lawrence** both received the Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society Officer Service Award for their high personal standards, a commitment to education, leadership qualities, and active participation in educational communities.
- **Shareen Shibli** received the Outstanding Undergraduate Student Award for her commitment to further social justice issues throughout mathematics curriculum and her ongoing participation in workshops and in-services on this topic.
- **Mary Fuchs** received the Outstanding Graduate Student Award for her commitment to academic excellence, her communication skills spanning multiple media including video, audio, print, and online environments, as well as her work with 77 undergraduate students as a teaching assistant.

- **Nataly Chesky** received the Outstanding Doctoral Student Award for her research on how news media has historically framed issues related to reforming math education.