A message from the Dean

As we celebrate the completion of degrees by over 1,500 graduate and undergraduate students in CHSS, we have the opportunity again to reflect on our successes as teachers and advisers and to consider what we can do better. There is a growing consensus in higher education that students benefit from, and are eager to experience, the application of new knowledge both inside and outside the classroom. This edition of the newsletter considers some hands-on projects in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, from archaeological excavations to the restoration and redistribution of hearing aids through our Audiology clinic.

In every case, students are engaged with instructors in the application of the ideas and concepts that they have learned in the classroom.

We also feature several articles on outstanding faculty colleagues, including Emerita Professor of Spanish Joanne Engelbert, who has stayed active and interested in Montclair State University. The depth and array of faculty talent and strength in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences -- past and present -- are among our most valuable assets.

This is my last newsletter as Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. I will be watching the growth and progress of the College from Ohio, where I am relocating to be closer to my family. I leave the College in the capable hands of Associate Dean Dr Luis Montesinos, who will serve as Interim Dean while the search for a permanent dean continues. I want to thank the CHSS faculty and staff for their hard work during the 2013-2014 school year and throughout my five-year term as dean and to wish them well in their continuing work on behalf of our students.

In this issue....
CHSS Celebrates its Graduates

Montclair State University’s College of Humanities and Social Sciences held its Convocation ceremony on Monday, May 19 at the University’s Sprague Field. In attendance were family, friends, and guests of many of the 1,287 candidates who were to receive baccalaureate degrees from the College.

Patricia Nachtigal, Esq. ’68, member of the Governor’s Higher Education Council, delivered the keynote address and was presented with the Distinguished Alumni Award by the College. Ms. Nachtigal is also a member of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee of the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, an urban research and advocacy organization dedicated to the advancement of New Jersey’s urban areas and residents. She was formerly a member of the Board of Directors and senior vice president and general counsel of Ingersoll-Rand, PLC, a global equipment manufacturer. She also served on the Ingersoll-Rand Executive Committee.

President Susan A. Cole offered words of greeting and College of Humanities and Social Sciences Dean Marietta Morrissey presided over the ceremony and made closing remarks. Also featured were students Ian Callahan, who delivered the senior address, and Tonianne Dougherty, who received the outstanding Academic Achievement and Service Award.

The candidates’ degrees were conferred at the 2014 Commencement ceremony on Friday, May 23 at the IZOD Center in East Rutherford, New Jersey.
Convocation 2014
Parents, family, faculty, and honored guests, thank you for attending today’s convocation. Students, congratulations to you on your success! Today marks a milestone in our lives, a feat in itself, and a moment to be cherished forever. Years of hard work, homework, determination, and all-nighters have led us here, and for that, we must celebrate. We did it.

I have the amazing privilege to speak to you today, and I am humbled to be standing up here. But I hope that with these words I speak to you as a peer, a classmate, a friend—someone who might as well be sitting in the same seat as you. Our journeys have been different, but today, we are on the same course. No one is perfect and, let’s be honest, no one is ready for the reality that lies before us. But together, we go on.

As I reflect on my four years at Montclair, I never could have imagined the amazing experience that would unfold here. I have learned an incredible amount and formed lifelong friendships. Yet, along the way, I have made my share of mistakes and faced uncertainty. I even changed my major as a junior. With these memories in mind, I have to laugh because I realize I did not follow the path I thought I would find after leaving high school. Montclair State University was not what I expected it to be, and because of that, it has been more than I could have ever hoped for.

As a freshman, my dreams were burning bright. But after some time, they exploded like supernovas. In the debris, I felt lost, and I thought I had failed. Luckily, new stars soon began to form. Promising opportunities appeared at Montclair and different dreams were in the making. I learned to follow these ambitions and trust my intuition, even when I couldn’t see the stars. While discovering this direction, I learned how to love myself. I have learned to let others love me. And I have learned to let go of those who don’t. Looking back now, I see how perfectly the stars have aligned, and for that, I couldn’t be happier.

For those of you who can relate, I hope you understand this: success is not achieved through dedication alone. Many people in life have passion and a strong work ethic. But from what I have learned on this campus, it is the kind, the conscientious, the clever, the curious, the open-minded, the flexible, and the wise who realize their biggest dreams. Class of 2014, work hard, but always bring your personalities, your patience, your optimism, and your well-earned education to every endeavor you encounter. And as my yoga teacher from the Rec Center told me, “if you fall – even if it’s flat on our face—you are still moving forward.”

To close, I will say this: let your achievements lift you up, but don’t let your failure bring you down. Cling to your friends, because they are your hand-picked family. Love your family like they are your friends. And remember Montclair-- these years have been special, sometimes confusing, but most of the time, spectacular. Finally, in the future, as you are finding your way, look up at the sky, and follow the words of Van Gogh: “Be clearly aware of the stars and infinity on high. Then life seems almost enchanted after all.”
Prof. Tiger Roholt teaches Philosophies of Art, Existentialism, Contemporary Philosophers, and Social and Political Philosophy in the Department of Philosophy and Religion. Now in his fifth year at Montclair State, Roholt reflected positively that, in comparison to his teaching experience in other academic institutions, not only do the faculty seem to be very happy here, the students ‘seem to be pretty broadly informed culturally’—a very good thing given his areas of expertise in Philosophies of Art! He is especially pleased with the mix of students from different majors (music, art, etc.) in his philosophy courses.

Dr. Roholt, a serious and devoted drummer and guitarist when he attended the University of Minnesota, was asked what attracted him to philosophy: “My first philosophy course really caught me by surprise—it came out of nowhere. I was broadsided how exciting it was for me—I guess the reason was that I discovered there were thousands of years of thought about how to think, how to act, how to believe, how we construct our identities, how to think differently about what we do….It really just grabbed me!”

While pursuing his doctorate at Columbia University, Roholt continued to pursue his musical career. “I played a couple of years, but then I realized for me to get the most out of my academic career and this larger experience I’d need to devote all my energy to philosophy. Like music, it was a creative outlet for me, so I shifted from music to philosophy.”

For the uninitiated among us, Dr. Roholt was asked to briefly explain, “What is philosophy of aesthetics?” Using philosophy of art to illustrate, he replied: “The easiest way to understand it—just think about a few of the main questions a philosopher of art works on. One would address questions like: What is the value of art? What is art? What is the aesthetic experience? What is the relationship between art and politics? What is the relationship between art and ethics? There are lots of ‘Philosophers of…. All the ‘philosophers of’ try to think about the greater issues, stepping back in a way that someone working directly in the field -- like an artist ‘doing’ art -- takes for granted.”

Roholt was asked how he would address a challenge from a student—or the parent of a student, for that matter—when presented with this question: “What does one do with a philosophy degree?”

An enthusiastic and persuasive cheerleader for the study of philosophy, Prof. Roholt observed that philosophy “is the perfect undergrad experience to navigate the future.” Continuing, Roholt observed,
“Young people will change jobs many times...They will be recreating themselves multiple times as they change jobs (given the shifting market/technologies, etc.)....Given that environment, philosophy is quite useful—it teaches you how to think, solve problems, how to approach issues in different ways, teaching you how to engage in a dialogue with someone who opposes your viewpoint, how to explain why that view is not right, how to get the other to support your view, etc.”

Offering additional incentive to attract students struggling with a choice of major, Roholt cited some “interesting, shocking data.” “Looking at midcareer wages of philosophy majors, while they may not do as well as other majors right out of school, five to ten years out of school they’re doing better financially—they have become ‘the real knowledge workers’” with the necessary skills to succeed in the evolving marketplace.

The New Jersey Hearing Aid Project

Contributed by Mary Ann Re, Ph.D.

An innovative new hearing aid project was launched in New Jersey in January, 2014. Montclair State University’s Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders is partnering with the New Jersey Department of Human Services’ Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Sertoma, Inc./Hearing Charities of America in this unique endeavor. The New Jersey Hearing Aid Project (NJHAP) is an effort to provide low income seniors with access to hearing aids and related services that otherwise would not be available due to high costs. At the present time, eligibility is limited to those who are at least 65 years of age, are residents of New Jersey and meet specific income requirements. In the future, eligibility criteria may be revised to include individuals younger than 65. The goal is to dispense at least 100 hearing aids during the first year of the project.

The NJHAP involves not only determining eligibility and providing qualified New Jersey residents with hearing aids, but also collecting used hearing aids and reconditioning them. The Center for Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology (CASLP) in the Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders at MSU houses the hearing aid bank for all devices donated to the project. Audiology doctoral students work with audiology clinical preceptor, Dr. Maris Appelbaum, in the CASLP to test and catalogue all donated hearing aids. Some of the individuals deemed eligible for hearing aids through the NJHAP also come to the CASLP for testing and fitting of refurbished devices.

Learn more about NJHAP at http://www.hearingaiddonations.org/programs/the-new-jersey-project/
America's history can be discovered at sites across the country. From monuments to battlefields to museums to historic structures and homes, visitors learn about the people and events that constitute the stories we use to understand America's past. However, the historic landscape is also a space of conflict, since the stories we tell often are contested. It is rare that a single interpretation of the past can meet all the expectations of America’s diverse population. This is especially true when the stories are related to slavery.

I have been studying the archaeology of slavery and freedom in America for the last 20 years, and an example of my work, involving the interpretation of slavery at Rock Hall Museum on Long Island in Lawrence, New York, was recently featured in the New York Times. I was part of a team of researchers working to recognize the history and archaeological presence of the 17 enslaved Africans who lived at the site in the late 1700s. Rock Hall was built by Josiah Martin in 1767, a former sugar planter in Antigua who moved to New York to expand his family’s business interests. Martin brought enslaved Africans with him to do the work of setting up and running his new home. From historic maps we know that an outbuilding stood in the west yard, very close to the manor house, and it was thought that this was the main kitchen for the household since the still standing manor house does not have one. An entrance into the basement of the manor house from the west yard further supported this idea.

In looking for archaeological deposits to identify the kitchen, a set of unexpected remains was discovered. In one area a small tabby (crushed shell) fireplace was identified. Tabby construction was well known in Antigua, though it was not used at all north of Georgia, so it seemed that someone constructed a fireplace using techniques learned in Antigua. Given that the laborers at the site were enslaved Afro-Antiguans, we proposed that this fireplace was a sign of their impact on the site. We

“It is stories such as this that open our eyes to the rich diversity that America’s historic landscape contains.”

Dr. Chris Matthews
then turned to ask if anything else might reflect the contributions of the enslaved laborers to the history of Rock Hall.

My colleague, Ross Rava, pointed out a small collection of unusual artifacts found at the top of the stairwell that connected the west yard and the basement. These included bird shot, and also straight pins and nails originally thought to have been accidentally dropped as people used the staircase. We now know that entrances like this one are frequently associated with intentionally deposited artifacts used to protect spaces from ancestral spirits and malevolent beings. Rava also pointed out that the deposit was located between two small sandstone chips. He had thought that these were used to mark the location of the staircase, but we now think that they served as the boundaries of a ritualized cache intentionally placed at the top of the staircase to protect the space used by African-descended people.

We concluded that the enslaved Africans not only built the kitchen, including its fireplace and likely the manor house itself as well, but that they also claimed the kitchen as their own space. It was certainly where some of them worked, and it may also have been where they lived. By marking it as a ritual space, they denoted the kitchen as culturally separate, as African, and under their control.
If you inhabit either Dickson Hall or Schmitt Halls, you will have seen him ‘wandering the halls’—not aimlessly, but purposefully—armed with architectural plans, a trusty yardstick or, perhaps, a notepad to capture your responses to his inquiry: “How’s the heat today?” or with the change of season, the variant, “How’s the AC?” Yes, I am referring to our very own CHSS Associate Dean, Dr. Alan Cottrell. When asked if it came as a surprise that he, a Renaissance scholar, would be assuming a myriad of ‘infrastructural’ responsibilities in his new position as Associate Dean, he replied, with a smile, “Ironically, it was the first thing they told me about—‘facilities!’” While admittedly low on the ‘glamour’ scale, Dr. Cottrell highlighted the critical importance of ‘facilities’ to students, faculty and staff. “If it’s hot, or cold, or noisy—it has an impact….It’s all about the use of the building, rather than image—It’s important!”

While Facilities may have been ‘the first thing’ mentioned in the interviewing process, Dr. Cottrell does indeed have three other significant areas of responsibility: Finance, Undergraduate Curriculum and Communications. With respect to Facilities (as well as all other domains, of course), Cottrell explains, “The Dean provides the leadership, setting the expectations and promoting an atmosphere of collegial cooperation among all parties. Facilities appreciates that we’re not just a source of complaints. We explain their position on issues to our faculty and staff, resulting in a less adversarial relationship than might otherwise exist. Overall, it’s nothing different from what you do at home—I leave it to the pros and trust in their professionalism. The ‘managing Facilities’ part of my job is mostly a question of communications and organization.”

Dr. Cottrell was asked to identify the accomplishment in the Facilities realm of which he is most proud. That was an easy one: “Getting Schmitt Hall on line” for which he served as self-described ‘point person,’ leaving the details in the excellent hands of Michael Heller, Director of Language Learning Technology. He added, “Of greatest satisfaction was the establishment of mutually beneficial relationships with HVAC, the movers, housekeeping, and the like” for whom he expressed his appreciation for their support and responsiveness. As will come as a surprise to no one who has occupied space in Dickson, the most problematic issue was “the AC situation—our electrical load was at capacity….Remember, the building was designed before computers—those labs generate lots of heat!”

Given that he bears the brunt of our complaints, it was comforting to hear, “I get thanks all the
time!...You have to let people feel they have a place to complain to. I organize the complaints and pass them on to Facilities.” But it’s a fact of life—there’s always something to complain about. “In Schmitt, true, the AC problems were resolved—but Dickson has more offices with windows, as well as more bookshelf space.” Yes, there’s always something!

Looking forward to the 2014-15 Academic Year, the Associate Dean noted, “I’ll still be working with Facilities...HVAC is working better now that we’ve tapped into the new power plant and eliminated some of the electrical load on the building.” In addition, Dr. Cottrell reports, “Classrooms have been remediated, more computer labs have been built, new furniture has been purchased.... But, needs will evolve.” As an example, Cottrell referenced the need for conversion of Dickson’s small testing spaces into larger ones as new Psychology professors move in—a reconfiguration necessitated by evolving research needs and techniques. But, for the most part, “Next year I’ll be responding to things we don’t know about yet.”

And more good things are on the horizon. It will come as welcome news to all Dickson Hall residents and users, faculty and students alike, that Brantl Lecture Hall will be renovated this summer—new carpeting, seating, painting, the works!

As to his professional research life, “in his spare time” Dr. Cottrell continues his work on Italian Renaissance humanist Angelo Poliziano and on completing two books currently underway.
Valentín Soto, Assistant Professor of Spanish in the Department of Spanish and Italian, is—and I quote—“the humble servant and advisor of Sigma Delta Pi,” Montclair State University’s Chapter of the National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society. Recipient of an A.B. from the University of Puerto Rico and a B.A. from the City College of New York, Professor Soto went on to earn an M.A in Hispanic Linguistics from the National University of Mexico, an M.A. in Spanish Peninsular Literature from the University of California at Los Angeles and a Ph.D. in Latin American Literature from Stanford University.

He has published numerous articles on Latin American literature and is currently hard at work on a new textbook that will be appropriate for the varied backgrounds of students of Spanish (i.e., Anglo, native speakers and heritage speakers) and that will incorporate the latest linguistic research of the Real Academia Española. Professor Soto reflected on the differences between the MSU student community and his experiences in his earlier teaching positions, noting that at Montclair State “I came in touch with real people of the ‘real world’—students working, with families, [people who are] 60 or 70 years of age.” His textbook will incorporate tools and methods adapted to this student body.

Under his mentorship, MSU’s Hispanic Honor Society has been named a national “Honor Chapter” for its outstanding activities in 2012-13. This is the fourth consecutive year they have received this award that was bestowed on only 16 chapters nationwide in 2013. In addition, because of earning “Honor Chapter” status for a complete triennium (2010-13), Montclair State was one of only nine chapters nationwide to be confirmed for the prestigious Octavio Paz Award. In 2011, Soto was recipient of the extraordinary honor of the national Minaya Alvar Fanez Award, granted annually to Sigma Delta Pi’s chapter adviser of the year. Indeed, even the briefest of conversations with Professor Soto makes crystal clear his unbounded pride in his students, especially the members of Sigma Delta Pi.
A professor of Latin American Literature and Translation in the Department of Spanish and Italian from 1972 to 1999, Jo Anne Engelbert founded the Translator and Interpreter Training Program in Spanish in 1974, directing the Program until her retirement from Montclair State University in 1999.

Jo Anne’s professional accomplishments are impressive indeed. Among many other accolades and awards, in 1993 she was presented the Distinguished Scholar Award, followed in 1994 by the Distinguished Teacher Award. During her career at MSU, Jo Anne translated works by some forty Latin American writers. Her book *Return of the River*, the collected poetry of Honduran Roberto Sosa, won the National Translation Award in 2004.

Jo Anne believes the highlight of her career was founding the Spanish/English program in translation and interpretation at Montclair. This concentration enables students to use their language skills in a wide variety of critical fields from law and diplomacy to finance and the arts. She is delighted with the advancement of the program under the direction of Dr. María José García Vizcaíno. Jo Anne is extremely proud of the students who have used the program as a springboard to significant achievement in the US and overseas.

At the time of her retirement the Translation Scholarship was created by Dr. Engelbert’s colleagues. Since then Jo Anne has made a yearly contribution to the fund as a way of expressing her gratitude to her colleagues and her support for talented students who share her enthusiasm for the fascinating challenge of translation and interpretation.

Since her retirement, Jo Anne has been living in St. Augustine, Florida where she continues to translate poetry and to work as a community interpreter, teaching an occasional graduate course in poetic translation at the University of Florida at Gainesville. Please note: Jo Anne “adores” hearing from her students and former colleagues, so emails are welcome.
If you follow politics at all, or if you tune into NPR, ABC News, FOX News, BBC America or a host of other stations or local affiliates, you should be familiar with our very own ‘media celebrity,’ Prof. Brigid Harrison. A frequent commentator on the political scene, Dr. Harrison, Professor of Political Science and Law, teaches courses on U.S. politics and American government, and has held offices in numerous professional political science associations.

Asked about the origin of her interest in politics and the political process, Dr. Harrison responded, “It started around the kitchen table when I was a child....My father was a City Councilman who ran for mayor....Plus I was very young at the height of Watergate....It was what my family was talking about.” Surprisingly, she had not majored in political science at Stockton College, but in Liberal Studies. Having debated between law school and graduate school, she ultimately chose the latter, studying
comparative politics and international relations, turning to American Government as the focus for her doctoral work at Temple University.

Asked to name a personal hero in political life, historical or contemporary, Dr. Harrison immediately responded, “I’ve always loved Jefferson—but so does everybody!” Reflecting but a moment more, she continued, “U.S. Senator George Mitchell—the person who brokered the Northern Ireland (Good Friday) Peace Agreement. Talk about a situation that looked intractable, thinking that’s the way it’s always going to be. If anyone had said that we’d see peace in Ireland in my lifetime, I wouldn’t have believed it. Frankly, he was inspiring. It shows you what one person can accomplish. So amazing.”

Harrison is also an expert on the politics of the Millennial Generation. In characterizing this phenomenon, especially in relation to political life on campus and changes she has observed over time, she was adamant: “I just don’t buy this thing that kids aren’t ‘political’ or ‘engaged’ these days. The biggest difference is how young people participate in politics. As a discipline, political science hasn’t acknowledged their participation…You hear about the ‘decline in civic participation’. Students today are just not doing the kinds of things people used to do to demonstrate ‘civic engagement.’ In my personal experience with my students and in my research, I have found they are quite political, convincing others of their opinions by using technology.” Illustrating her point with public reactions to the recent racist comments by Los Angeles Clippers’ owner Donald Sterling, Dr. Harrison remarked, “It went viral on Twitter, which was as important as any political statement could have been. [Social media is] a public space for articulating your opinion, creating a mass of opinion—true, the ways of participation are changing—but yes, young people are engaged!”

So how does Prof. Harrison prepare for those interviews on fast-breaking news, sounding so confident and on her toes? “You just need to be on top of things... For an election show, in particular, you need to know the ins and outs of each district and all the candidates—it’s rather nerve racking!...When I first started, I’d prepare a lot. Now it’s just force of habit. [Ultimately,] you have to trust the reporter; hopefully, no one’s trying to make you look bad!”

In conclusion, asked about the advice she would offer her three children regarding the pros and cons of embarking on a political career: “My two daughters have absolutely no interest in politics. My son, on the other hand, is fascinated by it...He’s definitely his mother’s son! He also has the temperament for it. I wouldn’t be surprised if he fell into that niche, and if not, into government policy....But then again, who knows. He’s only eleven at the moment.”
The College of Humanities & Social Sciences

Contact us:

Interim Dean Luis Montesinos—montesinosl@mail.montclair.edu
Associate Dean Alan Cottrell—cottrella@mail.montclair.edu
Interim Associate Dean Emily Isaacs—isaacse@mail.montclair.edu
Assistant Dean, Jeffrey Indiveri-Gant—gantj@mail.montclair.edu
Assistant to the Dean Leslie Wilson—wilsonl@mail.montclair.edu

Phone: 973.655.4228
Fax: 973.655.7852

1 Normal Avenue
Dickson Hall, Room 401
Montclair, NJ 07043

www.montclair.edu/chss