DYSON COLLEGE RESPONDS TO THE WORLD TRADE CENTER DISASTER

Forums Held at New York City, Pleasantville and White Plains Campuses

“T”here was a prevailing sense that we needed to talk,” says Sangeeta Rao, Program Coordinator for the Center for Community Outreach. “How Could This Happen? A Campus Forum on the World Trade Center Disaster” was quickly organized by Dyson College staff and faculty at the New York City campus. At Dean Gail Dinter Gottlieb’s request, Roger Salerno, Associate Professor of Sociology, met with Denise Santiago, Director of Multicultural Affairs, and Sangeeta Rao to coordinate the event. And there the seeds were sown that resulted in a collaboration to organize the forum and recruit panelists.

“We felt that an academic response, via a forum to provide background information and a venue to discuss this horrific event, would be appreciated by students, staff, and faculty,” Dean Gottlieb observes. “I was pleased by the eagerness of faculty to participate at all three campuses.” The forums, held over a two-day period in New York City with two sessions each day on October 1st and 4th, drew approximately 400 students.

Faculty with expertise in the fields of Middle East politics and history, U.S. foreign policy, Islamism, political science, criminal justice, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, and economics were called upon to serve as panelists in discussions encompassing, but not limited to, terrorism, religious fundamentalism, racial profiling, backlash against Muslim communities, and the wisdom of war. Outside speakers, including Bill Goodman from the Center for Constitutional Rights, and Emira Habibi-Brown, Executive Director of the Arab American Family Support Center, contributed greatly to the conversations. Roger Salerno notes, “What this was about was trying to give people various perspectives as they attempt to understand the many issues surrounding the attack.”

As a panelist, Aseel Sawalha, Associate Professor of Anthropology, shared her expertise on the Middle East. “My goal was to demystify the concept of Arabs as they are portrayed in the media,” she comments.

Denise Santiago, a discussion moderator, commented that the students who attended had thoughtful and intelligent questions. “Students are not apathetic!” she maintains.

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A BRAZILIAN SOJOURN

After a three-day briefing in Washington, D.C. at the Brazilian Embassy, Dean Gail Dinter-Gottlieb, along with the presidents, provosts, and deans from 11 U.S. universities and colleges, was whisked away to the cities of Brasilia, Sao Paulo, Recife, Salvador, Curitiba, and Rio de Janeiro in Brazil this summer.

“The purpose of the trip was to meet educators from 100 of the 150 colleges in Brazil to explore opportunities for faculty and student exchanges and visiting scholars,” explains Dean Gottlieb. The group of U.S. educators was hosted by a Brazilian university in each of the seven cities, where “the beginnings of possible collaborations were forged.”

As a result of this initiative, “For the first time, a pilot program that involves two Dyson classes and one Lubin class in a field trip to Brazil is being planned. Dyson Professor (Maria) Luskay, Dept. of Communications, is offering a Producing the Documentary class, about the trip; Lubin Professor (Claudia) Green will offer a hotel management class; and I will offer a cultural field studies class. One major focus of the trip will be environmental issues,” reports Dr. Betty Torrance, Director of the Center of International Programs. The trip is planned for spring break 2002.

“These initiatives are just the beginning of what we expect will be an enriching exchange of cultural and educational programs between our two countries,” adds Dean Gottlieb.

The trip, sponsored by the Fulbright Scholar program under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Education, arose from an initiative signed by former President Bill Clinton and President Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil. Dyson College was the only college from the Northeast selected to participate in the U.S./Brazil Post-Secondary Education in Partnership/2001 Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad Program.

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Campus Forums on the World Trade Center Disaster

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At the Pleasantville campus, Marie Werner, Associate Professor of Human Services and Sociology, says “I was speaking with other faculty members about the terrorist attack and how students expressed the need to learn more about the issues not being raised in the classrooms.” Based on those conversations, she organized a series of informal discussions held on October 3 and 10, where faculty gathered with approximately 100 students during the common hour to explore the issues. Reza Afshari, Professor of History, and Ghassan Karam, Adjunct Associate Professor of Economics, shared their knowledge of the politicization of Islam and the spread of fundamentalism in the region, followed by a question and answer period.

At the Lubin Graduate Center in White Plains, a Pace Campus Community Forum, “The September 11 Tragedies: A Discussion of the Emotional, Public Safety, Economic, and Political Impact,” sponsored by the Department of Political Science & Graduate Public Administration and the Michaelian Institute for Public Policy and Management, took place on October 2 at 5:30 pm.

“The resources of the Michaelian Institute lends itself very well to a forum of this nature,” says Brian Nickerson, Director of the institute and organizer of the event. The forum was open to the public as well as the Pace Community, drawing a crowd of approximately 60 people. “The issue of greatest concern discussed was the economic impact of the attack,” he adds.

Students who attended found the discussions instructive and helpful. Olga Bashkatova, International Management major, remarks of the discussions in Pleasantville, “I came away with a greater understanding of the origins of the fundamentalist movement. I would like to see more forums scheduled.”

According to Dean Gottlieb, similar events are being planned for the not-too-distant future.
MEET THE NEW ASSOCIATE DEANS

Joseph Franco, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Humanities

“What’s very important to me is that students know that I am available to them,” states Dr. Joseph Franco, who was appointed Associate Dean for Humanities in September 2001. Considering Joe’s extensive background in counseling, psychology, and sociology, it’s just the attitude you might expect. In addition to the day-to-day issues involved in managing the humanities disciplines, Joe’s goals include working closely with faculty on mentorships and the development of new programs and majors. Additionally, he adds, “I hope to continue to collaborate with Career and Co-op Services to help students find employment for graduates and alumni.”

Joe’s career with Pace University began in 1987, when he hired on as Assistant Director of Career Services and was quickly promoted to Associate Director of Career Services. Along the way, Joe was a Lecturer of Sociology and Communications, Adjunct Assistant and Associate Professor of Sociology, and is currently a full-time Associate Professor of Sociology.

Before joining Pace University, he was Assistant Director of Admissions at Iona College and Coordinator of Freshman Academic Advising at Mercy College.

A frequent conference presenter, Joe has shared his expertise in cultural diversity with seminars such as “Interacting with Diverse Cultures” held at Westchester Business Institute and “Diversity in the Workplace/How to Deal with Difficult People,” at several of the Big 5 accounting firms. His research has focused on corporate fraud and teaching pedagogy.

Joe earned his Ph.D. in Sociology at City University Graduate Center, New York City, and holds an M.S. in Philosophy, an M.S. in Social Science: Criminal Justice, an M.S. in Counseling and Development, and a B.S. in Psychology.

In his free time, Joe says he’s a “jet skiing nut.” He enjoys traveling to warm weather locations in pursuit of his passion for jet skiing and wave running. “It’s my catharsis,” he admits. When he needs a more accessible escape, his interest in foreign films runs a close second. Joe, the youngest of five siblings and the only one who has earned a college degree, resides in Briarcliff Manor, New York. 

Michael H. Roberts, Ph.D., Associate Dean for the Sciences and Mathematics

“I enjoy pushing paper,” declares Dr. Michael Roberts. Well, let’s be more specific. What he really enjoys is visioning curricular issues. “Working with higher levels of administration who are interested in developing innovative curricula is truly a pleasure,” he beams.

Appointed Associate Dean for the Sciences and Mathematics in September 2001, Mike’s two main goals are developing cross-school initiatives and improving the enrollment picture at the University. “I would like to see the development of a ‘management in biotechnology’ program that would combine management courses offered at Lubin with Dyson science courses, and computer science courses at CSIS,” he explains.

Mike has been with Pace University since the Fall of 1999, when he hired on as a Professor of Biology and Chairperson for the department in Pleasantville. In the fall of 2000 he became Chairperson of the department at the New York City campus as well. Prior to joining the University, Mike was Chairperson of the Department of Biology at Clarkson University in Potsdam, NY. A behavioral neurobiologist, Mike has conducted extensive research in circadian rhythms, which concerns the body’s daily cycles or internal clock. “Although most of my work has been done on the biochemical level, I am intrigued by the effects of jet lag, shift work, and time schedule changes on the human body,” he notes. He has been published in innumerable scientific journals on the topic, and is a member of scientific societies such as the New York Academy of Sciences and the Society for Research on Biological Rhythms.

Mike earned his Ph.D. in Biology at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, and also holds an M.S. and B.S. in Biology.

A person with diverse interests, Mike is a dedicated motorcyclist and proud owner of a 1982 BMW R100RS motorcycle. He relishes road trips to the White Mountains in New Hampshire and enjoys skiing, music of almost any genre, and musical theater. Mike, married to Patricia Aikens, Ph.D., is the father of two daughters, Cathy and Becky, and has a home in Riverdale, NY and a cabin in New Hampshire.

The response of the University to this crisis has been remarkable

has Afghanistan sheltered him? The teach-ins presented by our faculty gave important background information, but the ongoing education our students receive prepares them for a life of questioning and learning.

The response of the University to this crisis has been remarkable, from the staff and students in Pleasantville who hosted the staff and students from New York, to those who helped to reopen the New York campus only eight days after the attack. The aftereffects are still with us, but as a community, Pace reacted magnificently.

My warmest wishes for the holiday season, and a hope for peace, justice and brighter days.

- Gail Dinter-Gottlieb
Physician Assistant Student Aids Those in Need on September 11

“I just focused on taking care of the patients. And I am proud to have been a part of an incredible team effort in the ER that day,” says Yan Pronin, a Pace University Physician Assistant fourth-year student.

Yan, of Brooklyn, was on duty at 7 a.m. for surgical rotation that fateful day, September 11, 2001, at NYU Downtown Hospital’s emergency room. “After the collapse of the first World Trade Center tower, all medical staff was mobilized in the emergency room,” Yan explains. “We treated about 350 wounded firemen and policemen over the next four hours.”

Amid the chaos of the attack, Yan calmly tended to approximately 15 patients and steadily assisted physicians in treating many more. “It was amazing just how organized the staff was and that absolutely no one panicked.” Most patients were sent on to other area hospitals such as St. Vincent’s, Bellevue and the Hospital for Joint Diseases.

Once the flow of patients ebbed, Yan and co-workers took to the streets and handed out masks and water to the scores of people evacuating the city. Yan said that the hospital also gave food to anyone who came to its doors.

Although no additional patients arrived after 7 p.m. that day, Yan and the entire medical staff remained at the hospital for the next 24 hours. It wasn’t until early evening that Yan had a moment to contact his family. “My parents were very relieved to hear from me,” he admits.

“This experience has made me realize that I have chosen the right profession. It was a tremendous feeling of satisfaction to help people, and I will remember the faces of each and every person I treated for the rest of my life.”

Pace University has established a scholarship fund, “Pace Remembers Memorial Fund,” that will supplement tuition support from Governor George Pataki’s proposed World Trade Center Memorial Scholarship Fund. Pace will make up the difference between the CUNY and SUNY tuition support level to provide a four-year full tuition supplement for up to 75 spouses and children of the victims of the World Trade Center attacks.

An endowment for additional scholarship support has been established. All proceeds will provide financial aid and assistance for any spouse or child of a victim of the attacks. Additionally, a percentage of the gifts received by the University to the Annual Giving Program from alumni and friends will be designated in support of the endowed scholarship fund.

Contributions may be sent to: Office of University Advancement; Pace University, One Pace Plaza; New York, NY 10038; Telephone, 212-346-1276. Checks should be made payable to Pace University.