



Academic Affairs **Update**

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WINTER 2019

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Fall Arts & Sciences Expo Features Italian Hip-Hop Performer/Scholar

This past fall featured a different kind of Arts and Sciences keynote address at York. In an unexpected performance, Francesco Carlo (aka Kento), a “resistance” rapper, blogger and social activist from Reggio, Calabria, Italy, brought down the house.

During his presentation, Kento seemed content to only speak about his music and his published poetry, until Dr. Thomas Zlabinger, a Music professor at York, asked during the Q & A session if Zlabinger and his hip hop band of York student musicians could perform with Kento.

Kento had already heard the band as they had been the “opening act” to his lecture. The guest, who has performed throughout his native Italy and elsewhere, instantly accepted the challenge. Backed by the students and Professor Zlabinger, armed with guitars, bass and drums, Kento and student rapper, AJ Ceniza, went toe to toe. The beat of the music, along with the cadence of the two rappers rhyming back and forth like tennis players in a heated match, made this the most exciting Fall Expo of them all.

Dr. Donna Chirico, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, explained how and why she found this keynote speaker.

“I discovered Francesco Carlo, aka Kento, through his memoir *Resistenza*



Rap—Resistance Rap: Music, Struggle, and (perhaps) Poetry, How Hip Hop Changed My Life,” Dean Chirico, who distributed the engaging book, ex-

plained. “When it became apparent that he would be in the United States around the time of the Fall Arts and Sciences Expo and was looking for a site to present his work, I immediately asked for him to come to York. I anticipated an outstanding presentation combining his music with his story and no one in the room was disappointed. It is hard to believe that this was his first formal presentation in English.”

In the memoir, Kento pays tribute to the rap artistry of the likes of Biggie Smalls/Notorious B.I.G. (real name: Christopher Wallace), Tupak Shakur, Public Enemy and The Roots. He also cites the influence American political activists and writers such as Angela Davis and Amira Baraka have had on his activism and poetry.

Deadline!

All items for the **Spring 2019** issue of **Academic Affairs Update** should be submitted to Marcia Moxam Comrie (mcomrie@york.cuny.edu) by **April 26, 2019**. Text should be sent in MS Word. Photos should be sent as separate hi-res files (preferably not less than 1MB).

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Fall Arts & Sciences Expo

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Dr. Chirico, who in addition to being Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, is a long term psychology professor at York. She saw value in having this particular artist as keynoter at the event.

“Kento allowed our students to see and understand that rap and hip hop, although an art form developed in the United States as mediums of political expression, exist well beyond the United States,” said Dr. Chirico. “The culture and movement is world-wide because all countries have citizens who are victims of oppression, racism, and violence. Music is a way to ameliorate the social environment—[it] is a form of non-violent revolution.”

Kento agreed.

“Italian Hip-Hop has a 30-year history,” said Kento, who released his fourth solo album last year. “It started in the underground and gained popularity around 2006 in big cities such as Rome. It was originally brought in by Italians living abroad. Baggy pants kids used to be seen as criminals...drug dealers. Now they are a political movement. Italian Hip-Hop is very close to Italian society”

The artist also took the opportunity to drive another nail in the coffin of the mafia stereotype.

“Words fight injustice,” Kento explained. “Get out of the stereotype of mafia. It is there, but not everything is mafia.”

According to Dr. Zlabinger, the students who performed are all participants in the weekly Community Jam Sessions held at York on Tuesdays at noon in the Academic Core LL01. He was excited to participate in the Expo.

“When Dean Chirico put out the call for participation last fall, I immediately thought of the students who come to perform every week,” said Zlabinger. “The nature of the session is that we perform original material and often just grooves. It is a chance for musicians on campus and in the greater community to come together musically and socially.”

Zlabinger says all “instruments and abilities” are welcome and they often



Research presentations in the Atrium



Kento performing with the York student hip hop band

get MCs “who come out and spit bars over the grooves.” The student performers that day were, **Gra.CD:** rhymes, **AJ Ceniza:** guitar, **Zarif Hasan:** guitar, **Israel Ponte:** guitar, **Tom Zlabinger:** bass, **Cheinnell Cassell:** drums; and **Michael Devore:** drums.

But it wasn't all music and talk; student researchers also presented their outcomes in the poster sessions, ready to discuss their findings in chemistry, biology, earth science and other disciplines. Topics included: “Assessment of Water Quality: Urban Versus Suburban Areas” Jenat Fahima and Rebecca Victoria under the mentorship of Dr. Ratan Dhar (Earth and Physical Sciences); “Calcination of Calcium Carbonate” by Khadija Rabbani and Dr. Daniel Robie (Chemistry); and “The Effect of Neurotoxin Streptozotocin on Memory Using a Rat

Model Sporadic Alzheimer's Disease.” Students and faculty on this last project were Dilranie Nauth, Farrah Hussin, Daaiyallah Ibrahim, Khama Callinder, Dr. Abbas Kouzani and Dr. Francisco Villegas (Behavioral Sciences). Dr. Kouzani, according to Dr. Villegas, is “a collaborator from the Deakin University, Australia.”

Computer Science was also well-represented at the Expo with a variety of projects developed under the direction of Dr. Adefemi Sunomnu. His student participants included Shane Andrews (Klient Keeper—a client management program for small businesses); Sharif Uddin (Train Ticket Management in Bangladesh); Jessie John (Electronic Medical Manager); Brian Hernandez (French Language Teacher); and Zarif Hasan (Music Synthesizer).

Dr. Sunomnu, who was very visible throughout the proceedings, was pleased with the outcome.

“I was proud of my students' presentations of their projects,” said Sunomnu, a professor of Mathematics and Computer Science.

A second Expo, Undergraduate Student Research Day, is scheduled for May 9, 2019. A celebration of scholarship, the event features research by students and faculty from all disciplines in York's three schools. ■

York Welcomes New Faculty

School of Arts and Sciences



DAVID JOHNSON
Assistant Professor,
Behavioral Sciences

Dr. Johnson holds a PhD in Neuroscience from Weill Cornell Medical College. His research uses classical fear conditioning as a model paradigm and employs psychophysiological, fMRI and behavioral genetics approaches across three major lines of research.

One line of research is focused on testing how the process of memory reconsolidation might be targeted to persistently prevent fear memories from returning. This research could inform the design of reconsolidation-enhanced exposure therapies, leading to more effective treatment of stress and anxiety disorders, especially for individuals who don't respond well to traditional exposure therapies. The second line of research is focused on examining dispositional and situational factors that mediate fear learning and extinction processes. This research is focused on identifying intrinsic and extrinsic factors that might make certain individuals at-risk for developing fear-related disorders after experiencing severe trauma. The third line of research is exploring the extent to which shared social group status impacts the capacity to learn about threats while observing the experiences of others. The overarching goal of the research program is to increase understanding of the role that emotional learning processes and associated neural mechanisms play in the development of fear-related disorders such as PTSD and phobia, with the hope that this research will set the stage for better diagnosis and more effective clinical treatments.



DINA LIPKIND
Assistant Professor, Biology

Many of the tasks in our daily lives, from spoken language to using utensils, involve complex behaviors learned during infancy. Dr. Lipkind is interested in the developmental learning of complex skills in animals and humans. As an animal model system Dr. Lipkind uses the zebra finch, a songbird

species capable of vocal imitation. She studies how juvenile males learn the courtship song of their father, using experimental and computational approaches to manipulate and analyze the birds' vocal development. The insights and computa-

tional tools obtained from studying songbirds are applied to the analysis of vocal development data of human infants. Dr. Lipkind holds a PhD in Zoology from Tel Aviv University.



JUANA RAMOS
Assistant Professor,
World Languages and Literatures

Juana M. Ramos was born in Santa Ana, El Salvador. She has been living in New York since 1990. She is a writer, poet and educator. From 1999 to 2007, she was an Adjunct Lecturer in the Department of Foreign Languages at York College. In 2007 she became a full

time Lecturer of Spanish. Dr. Ramos holds a PhD from CUNY Graduate Center in Latin American, Iberian, and Latino Cultures.

As a poet Dr. Ramos has participated in and represented her country in different poetry conferences and cultural activities in New York City, México, El Salvador, Spain, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Honduras, Cuba, Argentina, and Puerto Rico. In June 2010 she published her first poetry book *Multiplificada en mí* and in 2014 a second edition, revised and extended, was published. Her poetry book *Palabras al borde de mis labios* was published in Mexico by miCielo ediciones, 2015. Her poems have also appeared in anthologies, digital journals and blogs and literary magazines in Latin America, the United States, and Spain.



THITIMA SRIVATANAKUL
Assistant Professor,
Math and Computer Science

Dr. Srivatanakul earned a PhD degree in Computer Science in 2005 and an MSc in Software Engineering in 2001, both from the University of York, UK. Her PhD dissertation, titled "Security Analysis with Deviation Techniques," was supervised by Professors Dr. John

A. Clark and Dr. Fiona Polack. Dr. Srivatanakul also has a BEng in Computer Engineering from Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.

Dr. Srivatanakul's scholarly interests lie in the field of web security, software engineering and social media. Her recent research includes work in the area of security analysis, uses of social networks in education, digital literacy, and the use of online surveys.

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New Faculty

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JOSHUA WARNER
CLT, Performing and Fine Arts

Joshua Warner is an award-winning scenic designer for theatre, film, and television. Credits include Off-Broadway: *Between the Sea and Sky* (NYMF - Winner Outstanding Overall Design), *The Boys From Syracuse* (Musical's Tonight!). Other NYC: *You Can't Take It with You* (St. Bart's Players),

Ciao Bambino (13th Street Rep.), *The Comedy of Errors* (York College OUTREACH). Regional: *Twelfth Night*, *Noel: The Brooklyn Christmas Story*, *Macbeth*, & *Good King Wenceslas* (Stages on the Sound), 2016-2018 Resident Scenic Designer (24 productions) for the College Light Opera Company.

Joshua Warner is recipient of the 2018 NYMF Outstanding Overall Design Award (*Between the Sea and Sky*), and EVVY Awards for Outstanding Scenic Design (*Taming of the Shrew*) and Outstanding Production Design for Television (*The Mike Cantalupo Show*). He is currently full-time Technical Director and lecturer of Scenic Design at York College. He has a BFA degree in Scenic Design from Emerson College and is currently an MFA Candidate in Theatre Design at Brooklyn College.

School of Health Sciences & Professional Programs



JENNETTE ALLEN-MCCOMBS
Assistant Professor, Social Work

Dr. Allen-McCombs' areas of specialty are trauma-informed child welfare practice and alternatives to incarceration for adolescent felony offenders. Her research focuses on the implementation of organizational change within nonprofit child welfare agencies. Findings from her research were presented

at a national social work conference.

Dr. Allen-McCombs has dedicated her career to assisting youth in crisis in a variety of settings from medical clinics to state and county district attorneys' offices. She has conducted several professional workshops that address issues facing at-risk youth. Dr. Allen-McCombs received her doctorate from Stony Brook University.

DIANA DAUS
Assistant Professor, Occupational Therapy

Dr. Daus graduated with her BS with a concentration in Psychology from C.W. Post LIU where she served as a TA for un-



dergraduate courses, including statistics. She continued to teach as a TA at SUNY Stony Brook for introductory biology and biochemistry in a research lab investigating integral membrane proteins and fluidity of cellular membranes. She traveled extensively, working with people with mental disabilities from 11 countries until returning to Touro College to attain an additional BS and MS in Occupational Therapy. After pediatric, mental health and adult OT practice, she returned to Touro as a full time faculty member in the OT department. Her research aims included: green tea and supplementations effect on health, breast cancer awareness, gender perspectives in OT, pediatric treatments/ motivators and neurodegenerative diseases. She attained her PhD in Health Science and Research in July, 2018 and is excited about the wide range of opportunities York has to offer. Her current research focuses on treatment of neurodegenerative disorders.



MATTHEW DINER
Assistant Professor, Social Work

Dr. Matthew Diner, PhD, LCSW is an Assistant Professor of Social Work. His research centers on mindfulness and secondary traumatic stress within the context of worker resiliency, and self-care practices for mental health workers. His other areas of interest include international social work, mental health, and program development. Prior to joining York College, Dr. Diner was professionally trained in several evidence-based therapeutic modalities and worked as a psychotherapist and clinical supervisor. He earned his MSW and PhD at the Wurzweiler School of Social Work at Yeshiva University.



FOLASADE M. KOLADE
Assistant Professor, Nursing

Folasade M. Kolade had her initial nursing and midwifery education in Nigeria, where she practiced in both hospital settings and the community. She graduated from Daemen College, Amherst, New York with a BS in 2007 and an MS in Nursing Education in 2010. She completed her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree in Public Health Nursing at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in 2013. She also holds a Master of Legal Studies degree from the Santa Barbara and Ventura Colleges of Law in California.

Prior to her teaching career in nursing, she worked in a variety of health care settings including acute care/ICU, operating room, oncology, and telemetry. She has also worked with diverse populations in maternal/child health, midwifery, and

public health. Dr. Kolade has taught in the classroom, clinical, online, and simulation-learning environments in the RN-BSN and baccalaureate degree programs in nursing. Her nursing education and practice is related to community/public health, fostering community and academic partnerships, development of home care simulation for community health nursing course and inter-professional collaboration. An AHA-certified BLS instructor, Dr. Kolade teaches BLS to healthcare providers and in the community.

Dr. Kolade's passion is helping nursing students develop critical thinking and clinical reasoning skills to launch them towards their full potential in the nursing profession.



EVA RODRIGUEZ
Associate Professor,
Occupational Therapy

An alumna of the York College Occupational Therapy program, Dr. Rodriguez has a BS in Occupational Therapy, an MA in Interprofessional Studies-Pediatric Dysphagia from Lesley University, and an MS and PhD in Post Secondary and Adult Education from

Capella University. Her current clinical research interests include Driver Rehabilitation evaluation. She teaches Introduction to Driver Rehabilitation and Advanced Neurosciences in Cognition & Rehabilitation.

STEPHANIE STORE
Assistant Professor, Nursing

Professor Stephanie Store began her career in 1999 at Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit as a staff registered nurse. She has held various leadership and teaching positions since that time. In 2010, Professor Store became a Family Nurse Practitioner and began to practice and care for patients in the community. She also began her career in academia as an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Nursing at York College in 2013, teaching students in various clinical settings and in the classroom. She received the Most Distinguished Adjunct Award from York College in 2016. Her passion for teaching, service, and scholarship developed, and she decided to pursue her doctorate and become a full time faculty member in 2018 as an Assistant Professor of Nursing at York College. Since joining the faculty full time, Professor Store has participated in applying for a grant and is pursuing a certificate in Simulations. ■

Kudos!



Dr. Elizabeth Alter
(Biology), a participant in nearly \$570,000 in New York Ocean Research Grants awarded to three investigative teams including Stony Brook University (SBU), York College, CUNY and the Wildlife Conservation Society. The grants, made in partnership with New York Sea Grant (NYSG), the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) are part of the New York State Ocean Action Plan, a state-wide initiative focused on learning more about the ocean ecosystem and any ongoing environmental changes with the aim of making responsible decisions about the future of New York ocean waters.

According to *NY AG Connection*, the teams "will work to identify the biodiversity of the offshore ecosystem of the New York Bight and investigate the species and uses of New York's ocean environment."

Known for her research in evolutionary genetics, marine biology, vertebrate biology and ecology as well as conservation biology and environmental DNA, Dr. Alter has been a prolific grants recipient over the years and a dedicated mentor to her students.



Dr. Linda Grasso's seminal work, *Equal Under the Sky: Georgia O'Keeffe and Twentieth Century Feminism*, has been named an "Outstanding Academic Title" by Choice magazine. Each year, the January issue of *Choice* lists the "Outstanding Academic Titles" from the previous year, identifying key publications for academic libraries. Fewer than 10 percent of the books and electronic resources reviewed by Choice make it onto the list. Dr. Grasso's book was deemed "essential" and "a magisterial and perceptive study" by the original reviewer.

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Dr. Girija Dubey (Earth Science and Physical Sciences) published two papers in 2018:

"Dynamical Properties of Magnetized Two-Dimensional One-Component Plasma" (with Godfrey Gumbs and Vassilios Fessatidis). *Physics Letter A*, 382,1374(2018)

And (2) "Thermal Conductivity Behaviour of MWCNT Based PMMA and PC Composites" (with P.Jindal, R. Bhandari, N. Dhiman, C. Bajaj and V. K. Jindal). *Advanced Nano Energy*, 216, 1(2018).



Jonathan Quash, director of the Men's Center, successfully defended his PhD dissertation, "Leadership in Higher Education." His dissertation research focused on peer-mentor program designed for Black males at public universities. Congratulations, Dr. Quash!

His dissertation research focused on peer-mentor program designed for Black males at public universities. Congratulations, Dr. Quash!

Middle States Accreditation Update



President Marcia V. Keizs recently reported to the York College community that the college has submitted the Monitoring Report to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. She thanked the members of the Monitoring Report Committee (MRC), for their work “in leading us” to this important goal.

The president publicly thanked the co-leads, Provost Panayiotis Meleties and Dr. Debra Swoboda, who in the early weeks of the process worked diligently with our external consultants, Ms. Anna Pond and Dr. Meredith Reitman, as well as with our CUNY colleagues, Ms. Karen Kapp and Dean Lucinda Zoe, to understand the strength of our assessment program and to identify the gaps that needed critical attention.

Dr. Keizs also expressed deep appreciation to the chairs of the three crucial committees leading assessment: Dr. Linda Barley, Dr. Timothy Paglione and Dr. Charmaine Cruise; to Dr. Donna Chirico, Dr. Xiaodan Zhang and Ms. Nazia Naeem, who along with the team from IT, Mr. Claudio Lindow and Mr. Rafael Nunez, worked on the production phase; and to Dr. Aghajan Mohammadi and the team in the Office of Institutional Research who responded to the many data requests.



AESSC Assessment Committee at work

She also extended her thanks to the leaders of the various offices and departments for their commitment in building assessment holistically into their areas, as required by Middle States. The president also reflected on the contribution of students, who have also played a role as appropriate into this college-wide endeavor.

“This effort has been all-consuming and I am honored that as a college community we have risen to the challenge thus far,” said Dr. Keizs. “The work we have accomplished is evident from the depth and breadth of the report and includes, but is not limited to, some of the following major benchmarks having been established and other processes clarified and amplified.” She is especially thankful for the following accomplishments brought about by the process:

- Establishing a committee accountability structure;
- Establishing an institutional effectiveness framework;
- Establishing an institutional effectiveness process grounded in institutional learning outcomes and student outcomes;
- Developing a comprehensive effectiveness plan that encompasses the three main areas of assessment: academic programs, general education and AESS;
- Developing templates, rubrics, integrated time frames for budget, planning and assessment as well as structures and schedules for closing the loop and communicating outcomes to relevant constituencies;
- Developing and writing each chapter of the report with all the attendant figures and appendices; Updating critical sections of the College’s website to more accurately reflect assessment activities at York.

President Keizs also noted that the self-study process and the Commission’s action revealed gaps, including how assessment has historically occurred in silos. The college has now developed a framework that helps demonstrate the interconnectedness of all assessment activities. “We are now looking forward to the Middle States visit on March 19 through 20, and I am hopeful that our work will have succeeded,” she said.

For more on the Middle States report, visit <https://www.york.cuny.edu/president/institutional-effectiveness/middle-states/monitoring-report-2019> ■

Spring Symposium Focuses on Culture of Assessment at York

February 14 wasn’t just Valentine’s Day at York College this year; it was also the day of the college-wide symposium focused around Middle States and building assessment into every aspect of the college’s academic and institutional culture.

President Marcia V. Keizs, who was also observing her 14th anniversary as president of York College, and Provost Panayiotis Meleties both thanked those who have served on essential assessment committees.

The presentations that followed addressed the ways that assessment has been incorporated into a range of academic and institutional areas, ranging from student outcomes to IT, HR, Marketing and Communications, fundrais-



President Keizs addresses the audience

ing, Admissions, Registrar and nearly everything in between.

Dr. Meredith Reitman and Ms. Anna Pond, consultants and experts on assessment at CUNY, teamed up to present the

college's Institutional Effectiveness Process and Framework and to highlight Middle States' particular concerns for York.

"Their (Middle States') four concerns have been focused," said Dr. Reitman, and she outlined the ways in which the Monitoring Report, which York prepared for submitting to Middle States, addressed these concerns. "Chapter One focuses on Student Success, Chapter Two on General Education, Chapter Three on the use of results to improve institutional effectiveness, and Chapter Four on communication of results to stake holders."

The chairs of the three main assessment committees, Dr. Debra Swoboda, Dr. Timothy Paglione, Dr. Linda Barley and Dr. Earl Simons, who spoke in the

absence of Dr. Charmaine Cruise, as well as IT team leader Mr. Claudio Lindow, also described the specific work of their respective committees.

The Symposium served as an enlightening event for the college community members who may not have been as involved as those who served directly on the committees.

President Keizs also took the opportunity to congratulate Dr. Selena T. Rodgers and the Master of Social Work program for having just received "official notification that the Commission on Accreditation (COA) decided to Grant Candidacy Status to York's MSW Program."

This is a significant achievement given that the MSW program was only launched in the Fall of 2018. ■

York Team Wins Third Place in Accounting Competition

The York Team won 3rd place at the 2018 Deloitte NABA NY Case Study Competition held in New York City on Saturday, December 8th. Eight colleges participated in the competition: Monroe College (1st place winner), Baruch College (CUNY) (2nd place winner), Brooklyn College (CUNY), Lehman College (CUNY), Medgar Evers College (CUNY), Mercy College and St. John's University.

This is the second time the York team has entered the competition and the first time it has placed in the top three. This year's team is predominantly comprised of new members (five of the six team members are first-time participants) and includes a freshman and a sophomore (a competition requirement this year).

Now in its twelfth year, the annual competition is sponsored by "Big Four" accounting firm Deloitte and hosted at its headquarters in New York City. The competition provides students the opportunity to display their qualitative, quantitative, and communication skills in a collegial, competitive, and thought-provoking environment with senior business executives. Students are presented with real world business-related issues and work with advisors from

top accounting and financial firms to develop tactical recommendations that address key issues in the case. They must develop and then present strategic response recommendations before a panel of judges.

All case study participants have the opportunity to interview for an internship or mentorship program with Deloitte. The top three teams receive cash prizes and are honored at the NABA NY Annual Scholarship and Awards Gala.

The Deloitte NABA New York Fall Case Study competition is open to undergraduate and graduate students with a 3.3 GPA or higher who are active members of a National Association of Black Accountants (NABA) student chapter. NABA represents the interests of more than 100,000 people of color in furthering their educational, professional, and career aspirations in the related business fields of accounting, consulting, finance, and information technology. ■



The team members (pictured above from left to right) are: Francis Carrillo (junior), Shanice Isidore (senior), Oyindamola Osunleti (freshman), De Zhun (Steve) Xie (senior), Trishauna Brissett Daley (junior) and Carmen Nuesi Peralta (sophomore). Steve serves as the team leader. Dr. Geraldo Vasquez serves as the faculty advisor.

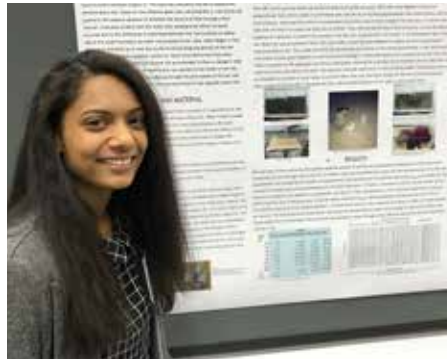
GSA President Robbie Gries Praises York Geology Students

A team of York geology undergraduates, alumni, and a NASA pre-service teacher led by Dr. Nazrul Khandaker earned quite a distinction at the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America (GSA), held in Indianapolis, in November 1-5, 2018. GSA president Robbie Gries conversed with most of the team at various events including the President's Reception, the GSA International Reception, the On To The Future Program and the Campus Representative breakfast where invited students responded to her inquiries related to the status of the geoscience education.

Gries was impressed to notice several women geology students on the team, particularly women from an urban setting. She encouraged York students to stay on track and be job-ready for future employment opportunities.

Gries broke the gender barrier as the first female geologist to serve as president of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG). She shared her own experiences with York students and urged female geology students to undertake geoscience education to begin a career or enter graduate school.

One York geology student on the team, Jasmin Budhan, was singled out for praise by the evaluator reviewing her poster entry in the GSA Geology and Society Division's Best Student Paper Award competition. While the evaluator noted that posters were not eligible for an award, the evaluator thought Jasmin Budhan's work



Jasmin Budhan presents a poster at the 2018 GSA annual meeting

deserved to be considered for its display of "real dedication and curiosity." The evaluator noted that Budhan had done the work from scratch herself with few resources and only the help of her father.



Nazrul Khandaker receiving GSA award with GSA President Robbie Gries



Gugu Ginindza with GSA President Robbie Gries

Funding from the SEEK Program, Con Edison, and National Grid enabled students' participation in this prestigious international geoscience conference.

The GSA annual meeting in Indianapolis will remain notable in terms of York's participation since Dr. Khandaker was recognized with a life-time career service award from the organization (2018 Distinguished Service Award) for his service to the geoscience community at home and abroad. Dr. Joann Stock from CalTech University provided the citation for Dr. Khandaker, who became the first CUNY faculty ever to receive such a prestigious award from the GSA. ■



Left to right: Jasmin Budhan, Gugu Ginindza and Mildred Mensah-Selby with GSA President Gries

Student Kudos!



York College Communications Technology major **Camryn Bruno** has been chosen New York City Youth Poet Laureate. The honor has brought Bruno, a freshman who grew

up in Trinidad and Tobago, many opportunities to share her poetry at events throughout Southeast Queens and features in numerous newspapers and in TV interviews.



Grad Student Defies Experts' Predictions of a Dim Future

At first glance, Ahra Sung is like any other student at York College, bright and driven. But spend a little time with her and one soon discovers that this particular student is extraordinary.

A 2018 York College graduate with a BS in Pharmaceutical Science, Sung is now continuing her education in the Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Science and Business program here at York. By itself that may sound like a fairly typical academic success story, but while she was still a toddler, Sung was diagnosed as autistic. Her parents were told she would never learn in school.

But learn Sung did, completing elementary school all the way through high school where she was prepared for college.

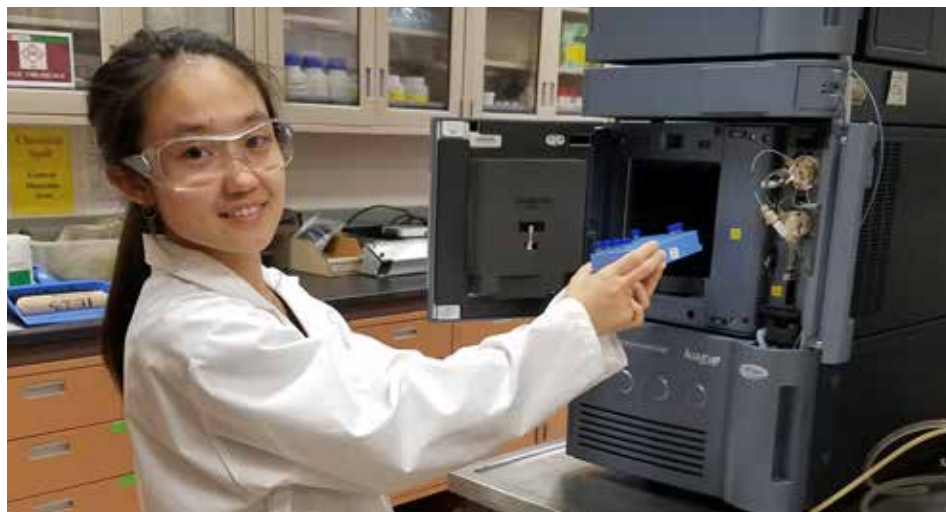
"The professionals labeled me retarded and said I wouldn't be able to achieve potential," says Sung. "I went to a special Ed program and then in the second half of kindergarten I was placed in general education."

Born and reared in Flushing, Queens to Korean immigrants, Sung attended the Queens School of Inquiry where she took advanced courses.

Arriving at York in 2014, she registered with the Students with Disabilities Office and sought writing help from the college's TRIO program. She also participated in a York photo exhibit called "See Me," featuring students and employees with physical or developmental challenges. The exhibit, conceived by the Counseling Office, was displayed in York's library.

"When I first came to York, I was struggling a lot socially and with where to go for help," says Sung. "Now I know where to go, and the Trio Office helped me with my graduate school application as well. I check in with them to let them know how I'm doing."

According to Dr. Deb Chakravarti, one of Sung's professors, it was important to ensure the special needs student was given the tools to succeed.



"You have to build people to succeed, and my colleagues were very supportive," says Chakravarti, who first met Sung through Dr. Bulbul Chakravarti, his colleague.

Sung also worked with Dr. Daniel Robie (Chemistry), researching crystals. Under his mentorship, she presented at the Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium of the American Chemical Society's New York section.

Sung and her mentors have found ways to help her master her challenges with focus and attention. Because she is easily distracted, she holds small soft toys when needed to stay "in the moment."

Her mentors have found that another key is intellectual engagement. "Once Ahra is focused on a subject, she can think it through to its end," says Robie. "I try to give her topics that are so interesting, she focuses on them immediately."

In fact, she did so well that Dr. Deb Chakravarti, who also serves as the Director of York College's—U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Partnership program, sought out an internship at the FDA's Northeast Food and Feed Laboratory (NFFL) located on York's campus, for Sung.

He spoke with Kent Herman, Deputy Director of NFFL, who agreed to give

her the opportunity many other York students have had to intern at the facility. There, Sung learned state-of-the-art analytical techniques including the use of inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (ICP-MS) to detect trace metals such as arsenic, chromium, cadmium, lead, mercury, etc., in food and feed samples.

Dr. Chakravarti is thankful for the team that helped Sung succeed in her internship: Dr. Truett Vaigneur and Lisa Maycock from York's Center for Students with Disabilities; Kent Hermann, Tracey Harrison, Dominique Stutts, and York alumnus, Anthony Kovalenko, from the FDA; as well as Ahra's classmate, Omadevi Somai.

"I didn't want this to end in failure," Chakravarti repeated. "You have to build people up for success, not for failure."

Dr. Robie, for his part, is optimistic about Sung's prospects in the graduate program.

"I have high expectations of Ahra in the MS program," he says. "I have encouraged her to devote a lot of time to her work since well-spent study time is the key to success."

Sung has her own mantra: "Don't let your disability define your ability as a person," she says. ■

Human Resource Management Students and Faculty Celebrate Success

Dr. Phoebe Massimino and student members of York's Human Resource Club and the York College Student Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management closed out the academic year with a dinner and awards ceremony.

The December 7th, 2018 event featured an address by keynote speaker Anne Chamberlain, University Director of Talent Acquisition at the CUNY Office of Recruitment and Diversity. The event serves as an opportunity to celebrate the end of the year, to honor those who have supported the programs, to introduce current members and to elect new members.

Among the topics Ms. Chamberlain discussed were technical improvements her office made in the CUNY hiring process and how much the process has been streamlined.

"I came to CUNY in 2003," she said. "We were just posting the first jobs to the system but you couldn't submit resumes. We could post jobs to the site, but (applicants) had to mail in their resume. Now everything is done online and we're very proud of that."

Dr. Massimino, a beloved Human Resources professor and mentor, chaired the

event and extended a special thank you "to all who support the Human Resource Club and the Student Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management at York College; our wonderful students, faculty and administrators." ■

Dr. Phoebe Massimino (left) with keynote speaker Anne Chamberlain (right)



Kudos!



Kudos to **Dr. La Toro Yates** (Executive Director for Enrollment Management) on his recent induction into the Saint Peter's University Athletics Hall

of Fame. Dr. Yates played football for two years at his New Jersey-based alma mater, earning First-Team All MAAC, ECAC All-Star team and also serving as 1993-1994 Team Captain. He was also honored as a "Top Of Their Field" Distinguished Alumnus in the spring of 2018.

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LGBTQ+ Symposium Uses Innovative 360° Virtual Recording

As part of a larger 360° Virtual Reality documentary project, the recent LGBTQ+ Symposium, held at York on November 29, 2018, used new technology to document the vital work of LGBTQ+ activists and influencers from the Queens community.

Jointly organized by York Performing and Fine Arts faculty, Daniel Phelps and Larry Tung, the LGBTQ+ symposium included two panel discussions in the round that focused on the current as well as the historic work of LGBTQ+ activists in Queens.

The panels were unique for the combination of their subject matter—direct testimony from LGBTQ+ activists who have worked and continue to work throughout the community—and the format in which they were held. Panel members stood in a loose circle with a 360° Virtual Reality camera at their center, sharing insights, stories, and challenges, while the camera recorded them and the audience from every angle.

Prof. Phelps aims to “use this technology to create new ways to document scenes.” He notes that the footage produced from these recordings allows the viewer to make the decision about where to point the camera and how to experience oral histories.

The Symposium recording is just one part of Prof. Phelps’ larger Future American Retrospective Project, which aims



LGBTQ+ Panelists Being Recorded

to create a collaborative form of documentary by allowing viewers to make choices about how they watch with the ultimate goal of allowing new viewpoints to emerge.

Prof. Phelps built the 360° Virtual Reality Camera he used to record the panel conversations as well as other interviews from scratch. “When I first conjured this up,” he said, “no one was even working on this.”

Seed money to develop and build the camera came from a 2017-2018 Enhanced Professional Development PSC-CUNY grant that Prof. Phelps received.

The Symposium itself is part of a larger project supported by \$19,000 in funding awarded via LaGuardia Community College and City Council member Daniel Dromm’s office to document LGBTQ+ issues specifically in Queens.

For the second part of that project, documentary footage from the Symposium will be featured in the York College Art Gallery in April 2019. Footage will also be shared with the Queens Public Library’s “Queens Memory Project” and the Wagner Archives at LaGuardia Community College.

A multi-channel installation of the project will travel to Queens Public Library sites throughout the borough over the next year, widening the audience and bringing the oral testimony of these activists to people throughout Queens. ■



Professor Daniel Phelps

Kudos!



Dr. Tom Zlabinger directed the jazz ensemble for the All-County Middle School Music Festival presented by MEANYC (Music

Educators’ Association of New York City). Professor Zlabinger was the inaugural director of the jazz ensemble and he was asked to return this year to celebrate the festival’s Fifth anniversary. The concert, which took place at Bishop Loughlin Memorial High School featured the music of Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Tito Puente, and the Beatles.

<http://www.york.cuny.edu/academics/academic-affairs>

Professor Lam Has Creative Residence

Assistant Professor George Lam (Performing and Fine Arts) served as Composer-In-Residence at the Chautauqua Opera Company in the summer of 2018. The company premiered three new songs that were settings of poems by Chautauqua's resident poets, including the world premiere of *Underwater Acoustics* for mezzo-soprano and orchestra (poem by Queens College alum Rajiv Mohabir).

Another new song that grew out of the residency, *Sissieretta Jones, Carnegie Hall, 1902: O Patria Mia*, was performed on February 18 at the Minetta Lane Theatre, as part of an Audible.com special event focused on *Olio* by Tyehimba Jess. Jess's Pulitzer Prize winning collection of poetry centers on African American performers in the early 20th century. The piece Lam set to music was based on the life of Sissieretta Jones, the first African-American singer to perform at Carnegie Hall. Professor Lam's String Quartet was also recently selected for performance by Ensemble Ipse, and was presented at Areté Gallery in Brooklyn, New York in December 2018. ■

