

# the independent voice

Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges... Educators, Employers, Community Partners

## Connecticut's Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes Program: a Model for the Nation



Judith B. Greiman, President, Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges

Municipalities, faced with increased costs and decreased state revenue, have recently begun to look to find ways to generate extra money. Unfortunately, some of their proposals attack the longstanding policy and principle of tax exemption of nonprofit higher education in Connecticut. Tax exemptions, given to colleges and universities as well as to non-profit hospitals, schools and cultural organizations, are based on the recognition of the longstanding tradition that such institutions serve the public good by enhancing the education, health and general welfare of the state's citizenry.

As de Tocqueville noted in the 1830s, Americans have a unique tendency to create voluntary associations to meet important public needs. This tradition has been supported by laws granting an exemption from federal income tax to nonprofit organizations dedicating their resources not to individual profit but to public service. As old as the federal income tax, the result of this exemption has been a blending of independent nonprofit and governmental providers in a number of

important service areas such as higher education, hospitals and human services.

While states have grappled over the years with ways to tax their citizens, the notion of granting a property tax exemption to nonprofit institutions of higher education has been in effect at least since the adoption of the U.S. Constitution. At that time, states began to model their property tax systems based on the British model, which incorporated an exemption for institutions of higher education. Over time, each state has developed some form of exemption for property owned by colleges and universities, either through specific charters, constitutional provisions or statutes. As with the federal tax exemption, the unifying concepts supporting this exemption are the public benefit derived from these educational activities and a belief that the government should not be the sole provider of such services. Tax-exempt status for institutions of higher education provides necessary and important support allowing colleges and universities to pursue their basic mission of teaching, research, and service. Because of such policies, universities are able to survive now and for future generations.

While the tax exemption outlined above is common in all states, Connecticut's response to it is not.

Connecticut's payment in lieu of taxes program is one of a handful in the nation. In almost every other state, there is no state payment to towns for the revenue that would have otherwise come in from tax-exempt institutions. Additionally, it is the only PILOT program that mandates reimbursement at such a high level. Connecticut's PILOT program of grants to municipalities is an important recognition of the fact that colleges, universities and hospitals benefit everyone residing

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here and not just those who happen to live in the particular city or town in which such an institution is located. Although the State does not always pay the statutorily mandated amount to towns, funding levels have been close to the mandated 77% level for a number of years and climb even higher with the addition of the Pequot funds that are distributed according to the PILOT formula. This year, PILOT reimbursement is at 63% and the additional Pequot funds bring the reimbursement to towns up to 76%. Most states have no such funding mechanism for colleges and hospitals. In

other words, we are ahead of the curve as Connecticut goes the extra mile in providing revenue to towns in recognition of the statewide benefits provided by these institutions.

In Connecticut, we are lucky to have the kinds of higher education neighbors that all towns seek to have. They are strong community partners year round bringing national and international exposure to our state. Whether it is in the arts, K-12 schools, economic development initiatives, sports or key degree programs, Connecticut's colleges and universities enrich our neighborhoods and our region while serving as key employers and educators. They are true community partners that take this role seriously, utilizing their resources to strengthen and enhance the vibrant communities in which they live.

Rather than concocting new schemes that work against strong town-gown relationships and that fly in the face of established state policy, we should work together to ensure statutory funding of the PILOT program.

### *Late Breaking News!*

*Appropriations Committee Adds 3% Increase to Need-Based Student Aid*

## Mitchell College's Library Becomes Cultural Center for Both Campus and Community



Mitchell College's Graphic Design students discuss their work in a recent student exhibit in the College Library

The Mitchell College Library is much more than a place to study and do research. In the last few semesters, the Library has become the cultural center on Mitchell's small 65-acre waterfront campus. With picturesque views of the Thames River flowing into the Long Island sound, the Library has become the perfect venue for everything from musical performances and art exhibits to faculty lectures and poetry readings.

When Director Suzanne Risley, now Vice President for the Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, arrived at Mitchell in 2001, she decided the Library needed to build on its role as a campus cultural center. Since, the Library has hosted over seven professional art exhibits, including the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame Exhibit, two concerts, two faculty lectures, four gallery talks and receptions and they are now planning their third exhibit of student art work.

The Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame, a highlight in the calendar of Library events, was held in March of 2003 to coincide with Women's History Month. This was just the beginning of a consistent schedule of cultural events to be held in the recently renovated and newly furnished library. The Hall of Fame reception featured keynote speaker Adrienne Baughns-Wallace. Baughns-Wallace is an inductee featured in the traveling exhibit and the first woman and African-American anchor of a major newscast in

Southern New England (WFSB TV 3).

But this campus cultural center has broadened its reach beyond the campus boundaries. The community of southeastern Connecticut has responded with enthusiasm to their open (and free) invitation to the Library events. Recently, over 100 students, staff, faculty and members of the public attended the gallery talk and reception for Winfred Rembert. A well known New Haven, Connecticut artist, Rembert paints on leather and vividly portrays his life experiences as a young black man in Georgia. The exhibit, the College's opening event for its Black History Month Events series, featured a dynamic collection of his unique works. Rembert talked about his use of bright colors on leather as a medium that accurately portrays the life and times of African Americans before the Civil Rights movement began and signed copies of his book, Don't Hold Me Back, My Life and Art, published this past fall. Guests most enjoyed his demonstration of his painting on leather technique.

The work of local and professional painters, illustrators and iconographers has been shown over the past two semesters as part of the Library's ongoing Art Exhibition Series. And, in February, an opening reception and gallery talk was held to honor the work of Mitchell College's own Graphic Design students. Karen Ward, assistant professor and head of Mitchell's Art Department, presented a gallery talk. Ward's own work will be featured throughout the month on April.

The Mitchell College Library opened its 2003-2004 Series with artist Mark Patnode's "Painting on the Beach" exhibit, in October. A plein air painter whose work has focused on the Connecticut landscape, Mark Patnode had recently

turned his attention to "Painting on the Beach," a workshop he taught on Mitchell College's Beach this past summer.

In September, During Latin American Heritage month the Library created special book displays and a detailed research guide, and hosted two events, both open to the public. The first event, a concert-lecture titled "Waking Dream," was presented by local author, playwright and theater director, Resurreccion Espinosa. The second event featured Mitchell College faculty member Quelia Quaresma-McHugh presented her multimedia lecture and discussion "Poverty and Luxury: the Social Functions of Carnival in Brazil."



Winfred Rembert, a Mitchell parent, author and painter, demonstrates the art of painting on leather.

"These opportunities for gathering, experiencing, and engaging in thought and discourse are, in my mind, representative of all that is unique and vital to the academic experience," states Risley. "This past year was only the beginning of what I hope will become a wonderfully rich community building tradition at Mitchell."

### Albertus Magnus College's Blended Courses Ahead of Trend

December's Entrepreneur Magazine featured hot trends for 2004; among the hottest is e-learning with blended courses. Albertus Magnus

Albertus (cont.)

College's Accelerated Degree Program (ADP) for adult students was ahead of the trend, offering NetOption, its blended course format, on-line in January 2003.

Blended courses combine classroom and on-line instruction. The ADP blended classes meet for four weeks with an instructor at the College's main New Haven campus and for four weeks asynchronously on-line, which means that students can log on whenever it is most convenient for them.

"Our students are very busy working adults and they find that these courses provide tremendous flexibility," says Annette Bosley, ADP director. "They are all for anything that helps them manage their lives more efficiently as they juggle demanding jobs, family life and coursework."

In the last academic year, ADP offered 10 blended courses, two in each of five mods—a mod is an eight-week class. Among the courses were Information Systems Security, Introduction to International Relations and Emerging Internet Issues. The mod that started March 22 offers Internet Marketing and Spanish/Hispanic Civilization and Culture. The goal for the next academic year is to have approximately a third of ADP's courses taught in this format.

Bosley notes that surveys go out to participants after every blended course. "Feedback from students helps us structure future courses," she says. "Those who try NetOption love it, and the results are extremely positive. It's all about flexibility."

Here's what students like about blended courses: "I was able to work at my own pace." "It saves money on gas." "The Freedom!!!!"

Barbara Onofrio is a psychology major in the Accelerated Degree Program. So far, she has taken three NetOption blended courses. "With these courses, I can fit my studies around my schedule," she says. "I have a full-time job, and not having to rush to school all the time is one of the best things. I'm able to do assignments when it's most convenient for me."

Albertus (cont. on p.3)

## Teikyo Post Receives Grant to Fund Export Management Certificate Programs

Teikyo Post University has received a U.S. Department of Education Title VI B grant to fund two certificate programs at TPU – a Certificate in Export Management (CEM) and a Professional Certificate in Export Management (PCEM).

The grant supports the internationalization of faculty, students and curricula, while at the same time assisting the small business community to engage in international business, especially in terms of exporting manufactured goods. Grant funding will also support student internships, seminars, faculty development and library resources.

“The challenge of a University-based business education program is to balance the need for solid business knowledge and practices with the need to be ‘ethical’ citizens in an ever-evolving global economic environment,” said Dr. Patricia Sanders, TPU’s vice president for academic affairs. “This is particularly true at the present time as the world becomes more integrated economically, socially and politically.”

According to Sanders, “The U.S. Department of Education Title VI-B grant project is designed specifically to provide this balance to its business majors through curriculum enhancements while at the same time providing practical hands-on information to members of the regional business community who are contemplating the conduct of international business.”

The project has three goals: to enhance Teikyo Post’s academic programs so that it may better serve the region’s business community; to create a climate conducive to the expansion of the Connecticut’s interest in pursuing international commerce; and to secure a long-term working relationship between the university and its

cooperating partners – the Greater Waterbury Chamber of Commerce, the Smaller Manufacturers Association and the Oxford Economic Development Corporation.

“The course of study will focus



Pictured left to right are: Dr. Barry Foltos, international business professor at TPU; Marcin Walewski, Deputy Commercial Attache (Poland); Michael Keating, (Czech Republic); and Barnabas Nemeth (Hungary).

on practical knowledge and provide hands-on experience through the use of student internships,” said Dr. Barry Foltos, associate professor of international business at TPU. “It will also allow us to create a seminar series on topics in the global business environment.”

The first course would cover export leads. “We would develop a marketing approach for a small company doing international transactions, covering the challenges they will face for the first time - help them get their feet wet, make initial contacts and launch their initial endeavor,” he said, adding it would have a “practical, hands-on approach.”

Foltos explained that the second course would involve the “mechanics – typical documents, typical financials, the nuts and bolts of actually doing business overseas,” while the final part would be a “systems course – how to keep an export operation running, when to expand and form a department, what kind of shipment volume to anticipate.” He added that through the internship component, “Our students would be

able to get the job done without straining the internal resources of a small company,” he said, “Our focus would be, ‘What can we do to get them prepared so the company will be a good candidate for export?’”

“The idea is to work with companies who want to do business overseas, but don’t have the resources, time or manpower to devote to it,” said Foltos, who pointed out that seminars by state agencies and companies who currently have exports will be part of the program.

The first course, Introduction to Export Management, began in late October, offered through Teikyo Post’s Accelerated Degree Program.

For information about the Certificate in Export Management program, contact Dr. Barry Foltos at 203-596-4605 or via email at [bfoltos@teikyopost.edu](mailto:bfoltos@teikyopost.edu).

### Albertus (cont. from p. 2)

Carrie Horvath, an MIS instructor, has taught several blended courses at Albertus. “Data Base Development, Systems Analysis... I’ve found that it really doesn’t seem to matter what the course is, people jump right at it,” she says. “Probably the biggest plus is that blended courses allow people, very busy people, to take control of their own time.”

If going on-line at 5 a.m. suits one student, doing so at 5 p.m. may be best for another. At Albertus Magnus College, the Accelerated Degree Program’s NetOption blended courses are all about flexibility for the busy adult student.

For more information about the Accelerated Degree Program, go to [adp.albertus.edu](http://adp.albertus.edu), or call 203-773-8505.

## TPU Announces Alliance with WMD Task Force, Inc.

Teikyo Post University has announced the signing of a strategic alliance with WMD Task Force, Inc., a leading expert in homeland security and domestic/community preparedness, to develop a progressive program that will lead to the development of academic specializations in Homeland Security.

The initial program, scheduled for fall 2003, will focus on a *homeland security* seminar offering continuing education units (CEUs). This seminar will address Terrorism, Emergency Preparedness, Vulnerability Assessment Models, Situational Awareness, and Weapons of Mass Destruction. Teikyo Post University will also work with WMD Task Force in developing courses in a more traditional academic format culminating in a fully accredited baccalaureate program with a major in Homeland Security by 2006.

With the University’s reputation as one of the nation’s leading distance learning institutions, the homeland security seminar will also be incorporated into the TPU ONLINE program. Students can complete course work any time during the week at their convenience.

The alliance will help provide corporations, communities, and groups with academically trained specialists with an expertise in homeland security. These skilled leaders of tomorrow will be in a position to better protect their communities, employees, revenues, critical infrastructures and facilities.

About WMD Task Force Inc. WMD Task Force Inc., an expert in domestic preparedness and crisis management, provides high quality consultative services, education and training programs, and safety/protective products to anyone seeking to reduce the vulnerability of their corporation, community, or group to terrorist activities.

## The Community is the Classroom at Trinity College

When Vijay Bhirud, '05, of Darien, began as an economics major at Trinity College, he never dreamed he would intern with a community development lender in Hartford, let alone play a pivotal role in developing programs for low-income businesses.

During his internship with the Community Economic Development Foundation (CEDF), last fall, Bhirud developed a benefits program to help stabilize the growth of the roughly 120 CEDF borrowers' businesses, negotiating discounts on benefits such as payroll services. This semester, Bhirud is developing a guide to all the goods and services offered by the small businesses of CEDF. The group is looking for larger corporations that are willing to purchase goods and services from CEDF clients as part of the overall strategy to support small business in Connecticut.

Bhirud's internship was an integral part of his Sociology 206 class, *Organizing by Neighborhoods*, requiring field work at a community organization in the Trinity neighborhood. "This class is just one example of how our relationship with Hartford works," notes Urban Learning Coordinator, Elinor Jacobson. As a seasoned community and

faculty liaison, Jacobson has worked with more than two-thirds of the faculty and innumerable students over the last several years to develop Trinity's renowned Community Learning Initiative (CLI). In fact, 59 percent of students who graduated in 2002 took at least one CLI class.

Not surprisingly, a 2002 summary of student evaluations, entitled: "Students' Perceptions of Community Learning Initiative Courses at Trinity College," shows that CLI courses were viewed a positive academic experience by the majority of respondents. For example, 88 percent of students strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, "The community fieldwork in this course enhanced my learning and understanding of the course topics."

And, CLI courses appear to have a lasting effect on the students: 77 percent of Trinity students strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, "I will probably volunteer or participate in the community after this course." Eighty-five percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, "The community fieldwork in this course showed me how I can be

more involved in the community."

Lauren Albrecht, '04, credits the community learning component of an anthropology class she took as a sophomore with piquing her interest in the neighborhoods of Hartford. "As part of my Ethnographic Methods in Writing class, I started doing research about the computer literacy programs at a local community center called Jubilee House," she explains. Albrecht has since turned that initial curiosity into a passion for community involvement that has resulted in an internship and a summer job at Hartford's Institute for Community Research.

Each year, as the faculty's involvement increases, so does the ingenuity with which they find ways to include community learning in the classroom. Jacobson summarizes, "Trinity and Hartford share unlimited potential for building a stronger community; it's simply a matter of thinking creatively."

### Did You Know?

Households headed by persons with a bachelor's degree or more were 27 percent of all households, earned 42.2 percent of all household income and paid 51.1 percent of federal individual income taxes.



The Independent Voice is a publication of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges, a public policy association representing Connecticut's nonprofit independent higher education institutions.

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The Independent Voice follows a regular rotation schedule featuring four of the sixteen member institutions in each quarterly issue.

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