

# theindependentvoice

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

## College Prep as the Default Curriculum: High Standards Produce Results



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

Across the country, states are grappling with students who do not perform well in high school, students who enter college in need of serious remediation in core areas and/or students who are not able to matriculate to college due to poor K-12 preparation. Connecticut faces similar problems, particularly in our urban schools.

Because our sole natural resource is our well-educated citizenry and because our population in Connecticut is not expected to grow in the coming years, we must be deliberate in how we address the preparation gap. We must set high standards for our students, their schools and families and provide the tools necessary for success. As noted in *Education Week* recently, "A deep pool of research suggests that students' chances of making it to college, and succeeding there, increase significantly if they take

challenging high school courses."

Other states have been bold in their responses to this challenge. Texas has enacted a law that makes a college-prep curriculum the default for all high school students. This has pushed change down to the middle and elementary levels. Arkansas has developed the "Smart Core" default college-prep

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curriculum. Indiana, which has a recommended college-prep curriculum, is considering making this the default curriculum and tying it to admission at state four-year institutions. Connecticut, known for its highly educated workforce, should not lag behind other states.

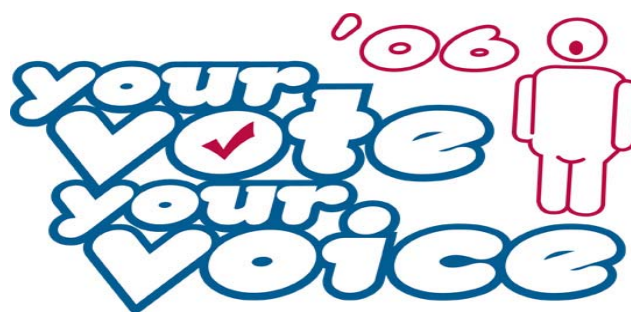
It should be further noted that research now shows

that a rigorous curriculum is also needed for students who intend to go into skilled jobs in the workforce rather than college. As outlined by the ACT in its recent report, *Ready for College and Ready for Work: Same or Different?*, "High school students who plan to enter workforce training programs after they graduate need academic skills similar to those needed by students planning to enter college. The findings suggest that the math and reading skills needed to be ready for success in workforce training programs are comparable to those needed for success in the first year of college. Based on these results, ACT recommends that all high school students should experience a common academic program, one that prepares them for both college and workforce

training, regardless of their post-graduation plans."

Other nations are raising the educational bar by setting high standards for their students and making sure that resources are provided to teachers to get results. These countries have accepted the challenge of the global marketplace and have embraced the notion that students skilled in technical fields are the key to the economic future of the nation. Connecticut should lead the United States in meeting this challenge from other countries.

Connecticut's future prosperity depends on educational achievement for all of our citizens. Reaching this goal will require strong leadership at all levels, but working together to a common end, we can claim Connecticut's rightful place among the states and the world as an education innovator.



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## Finding the Invisible City in Hartford

*Trinity Students Create Living Maps*

Part philosophy, part social science, part information literacy, and a test of students' abilities to translate abstract information into practical applications, Invisible Cities, a new, interdisciplinary First-Year course at Trinity College, is providing a means of identifying Hartford features that are not always readily apparent—youth resources, abandoned buildings, food resources, educational resources, and historic sites—in the form of a state-of-the-art data source for area agencies.

The brain child of Trinity College Professor and Chair of Philosophy, Dan Lloyd, and “team taught” with Rachael Barlow, the College’s social sciences data coordinator, the class quickly claimed close ties with Hartford groups such as Hartford Areas Rally Together (HART) and Citizens’ Research Education Network, Inc., (CREN).

Invisible Cities students considered the historical,



ideological, and political forces that shape Hartford, and other cities, and other forms of data that describe cities. Next, in the community learning component of the class, the students created highly navigable Web-based maps, known as mashups. Each mashup pinpoints the location of, and gives basic information on, a designated topic: historic sites; recreational centers and activities for youth; educational resources; abandoned build-

ings; and food resources—such as grocery stores, farmers markets, and soup kitchens.

Mashups combine “what” and “where” on a single screen, so users can zero in on

exactly the information they need at any moment. Lloyd and Barlow hope the maps produced by the Trinity College students will ultimately become a sort of civic “yellow pages,” and contribute to an active, engaged citizenry of the city. “On every street of Hartford there’s something to learn, something to do, or something needing citizen action,” Barlow explains. “We hope that these maps will become a lasting resource for their community users.” To illustrate the point,

Lloyd adds, “Hartford has many recreational opportunities that are oftentimes overlooked. The purpose of the youth activities map is to provide the youth of Hartford with a list of recreational centers and activities that they can become involved in. This map provides the information you need to plan fun, safe, after-school and weekend activities.”

For the historical map, the user is presented with 22 historical spots in Hartford, each with a brief description explaining the significance of the location. The map identifying abandoned buildings in Hartford is part of an effort to motivate owners to rehabilitate their properties—making their names and numbers public is one tactic.

To view the Invisible Cities mash-ups, go to: <http://prog.trincoll.edu/gis/projects/fymashups/>

## Mitchell College purchases historic Michael’s Dairy

*Students get the scoop on running a small business*

After 70 years, the popular Michael’s Dairy Ice Cream business on Montauk Avenue in New London reopened for the season on Friday, May 5 with record-breaking sales, under the new management of Mitchell College. Later that month (May 24), Mitchell College purchased the southeastern Connecticut summer-time destination from longtime owner, Michael Buscetto, Jr.

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“For years the College has had dreams of reacquiring the Dairy which was once property of the Mitchell family estate,” said President Mary Ellen Jukoski. “The Dairy will provide great learning opportunities for our



business and marketing students.”

Assistant Professor Don Benoit and students from the College’s Business Development Department have worked

and continue to work with the Dairy’s General Manager, David Platt, in efforts to build a business and marketing plan for the Dairy.

The department is also looking at long-term use for the rest of the property, including the historic Dairy barn. Any plans will be made in conjunction with the College’s Campus Master Plan. Efforts will be made to preserve

the historic nature of the Dairy property.

For a very long time the Dairy made its own ice cream in the legendary red barn on Montauk Avenue. Now the ice cream is purchased from a farm in Massachusetts. But, according to Buscetto, Benoit and Platt, all long time residents in the area, “it is just as good!” The Alfred Mitchell family, who owned the property that is now mostly Mitchell College, also owned the Dairy property until it was sold to the Buscetto family back in 1943.



Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy Form a New Partnership

Fourteen cadets, seniors and juniors at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, some who had never taken art courses previously, enrolled last semester in a new, introductory drawing class at Lyme Academy College. This first-time collaborative effort between the two academies was deemed a win-win project, drawing praise from associate professor Peter Zallinger and enthusiastic response from the cadets.

The alliance of the two academies originated with Astrid Horan, LACFA trustee and former Board president, and George White, a member of the Coast Guard Academy Board, who invited Academic Officer Captain Ann Flammang to tour the art academy. She then met with LACFA Dean Alan Barkley and associate professor Susan Stephenson to design a class tailored for the cadets. The result - Drawing I taught by Associate Professor Peter Zallinger, who also is a U.S. Naval Reserve lieutenant.

For the cadets the weekly drawing course offered not only a creative opportunity but a change from the daily

military regimen. Senior cadet Jared Cherni who hails from Ranchester, Wyoming, who is usually involved in engineering problems, said the drawing class afforded



him skills which he can apply to his senior project - designing a patrol boat. Senior cadet David Connor from Riverdale, N.Y. signed up for the class because after he fulfills his service requirement (cadets are required to serve a two-year tour of duty and a total of five years), he hopes to become a cartoonist or comic book artist. Kristen

Bucher of Hamilton, North Carolina, took high school art classes but all the technical requirements at the Coast Guard, left no time for art. "Having this dedi-

cated block of time each week to devote to art is great," she said. And after her tour of duty she hopes to study art or art history. All the cadets interviewed concluded that this was their "most enjoyable class of the semester."

Peter Zallinger, who is accustomed to teaching students who will become professional artists, said that he was "pleasantly surprised and pleased" with these first-time art students. "They have done a good job. They listen and follow instruction well and that shows up in the results," he concluded.

The U.S. Coast Guard Academy, based in New London, offers a Bachelor of Science

degree, graduating about 200 cadets this year. The Coast Guard mission is "to protect the public, the environment, and U.S. economic interests in the nation's ports and waterways, along the coast, on international waters or in any maritime region as required to support national security." As the oldest life-saving service in the world, the U.S. Coast Guard clearly demonstrated that tradition in the heroic rescues of hundreds stranded by the recent Hurricane Katrina.

This collaboration was a unique and innovate arrangement for both institutions. Dean Barkley noted: "It is great to co-operate and partner with another post-secondary educational institution. We were delighted to have these students from the Coast Guard Academy on campus."

History may have been repeated in the 21st century for the tradition of teaching art at military academies dates back to a time when the noted artist Robert Weir (father of J. Alden Weir, an early American Impressionist) was a drawing instructor at West Point Military Academy.

Did you Know?

The percentage of 25- to 29 year olds who completed at least some college increased from 34 to 57 percent between 1971 and 2005.

Between 1992-93 and 2003-04, the percentage of full-time, full-year undergraduates with federal loans increased from 31 to 48 percent, while those receiving federal grants, available to those who qualify by income, remained at about one-third.

The U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics - "The Condition of Education 2006".

BLENDING COURSES A HIT WITH  
ADULT STUDENTS  
AT ALBERTUS MAGNUS

"We've re-invented ourselves to take advantage of technology and make it work for our students," says Annette Bosley, director of continuing education at Albertus Magnus College.

Educating the adult learner has been part of the mission of Albertus Magnus for more than 20 years. In 2003, Albertus introduced, in its Accelerated Degree Program (ADP), the AMC NetOption — an innovative course delivery system that combined, or blended, on-site and on-line learning. For the typical blended course, students meet once a week in the classroom and perform weekly assignments from home in a virtual technology environment. During the past three years, the use of the blended format has become an increasingly important and popular tool for helping adult students to achieve their dream of attaining a college education.

More than 90 percent of the adult students in ADP have taken at least one blended or on-line course this year.

"We started AMC NetOption with two courses," notes Bosley. "Our students quickly saw the advantages, and

they let us know how well the format worked for them. In end-of-course surveys, they told us, time after time, that this blended approach was making them more efficient and effective students."

Survey results showed that adult students—who need to squeeze as much time as possible for study from their already busy schedules—liked the face-to-face experience of the traditional classroom coupled with on-line time that offered greater flexibility for completing assignments. They also liked saving on baby-sitting costs and—in these days of \$3-a-gallon-gas—cutting back on driving to class.

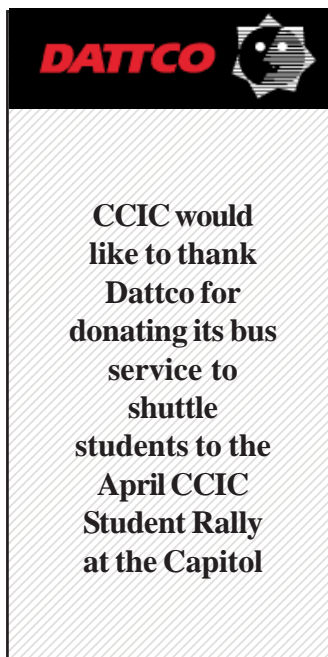
In all of 2003, ADP offered 10 blended courses; in the 2005-2006 academic year it offered 136 blended courses. The number of fully on-line courses has been growing as well, up this academic year to 36.

During Mod 5, which began in May—the accelerated program year is divided into five eight-week modules or "mods"—70 percent of courses are in a blended or on-line format. With the

current mod, all new students will take an Information Literacy Training Workshop to make sure they know how to use the computer for research.

Among ADP blended courses being offered this spring are: Religion and Nature; Literature of the Immigrant and, for the first time, The Death Penalty in America.

The College also offers courses in the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies and Master of Arts in Leadership degree programs in the AMC NetOption format.



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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