

theindependentvoice

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



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

CCIC congratulates Governor M. Jodi Rell and Lieutenant Governor Kevin J. Sullivan as they assume their new duties. We look forward to a strong partnership with them in meeting the needs of Connecticut.

CCIC's Legislative Success

Positive actions taken in the legislative session just completed were:
Increasing need-based

financial aid by 3%;
Increasing the payment-in-lieu-of-taxes program by \$5 million; and,

Providing funding to finish the build-out of the Connecticut Education Network.

Recent Hartford Courant Editorial

Common Ground for Colleges May 19, 2004

It's not often you hear of presidents and top administrators of independent colleges such as Yale, Wesleyan and Trinity sitting down at the table together for a soul-bearing session on finances. Laudably, that has been happening in Connecticut, where representatives of 16 private colleges and universities have hatched a long-term plan to save money by sharing costs, services and, eventually, new programs.

This effort by the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges has been rewarded with planning money and a \$150,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The grant will be used to lay the groundwork for sustained collaboration.

Innovative cost reductions through group purchasing will help temper rising tuition and lower affordability. Not all of Connecticut's independent colleges are as well endowed as Yale or Wesleyan, nor do all cater strictly to wealthy students. Through the state's student grant program known as CICS, about 5,000 Connecticut residents a year have a chance to attend these schools, which are among the best private colleges in the nation. About a quarter of the students in the program are minorities.

It's in the state's interest to keep college costs down at private as well as public colleges so Connecticut scholars have a chance to aspire to schools with the most suitable program rather than the lowest price tag.

Cost-sharing has already enabled smaller members of the consortium, such as St. Joseph College, to share news-clipping services or conference calling and training opportunities that they might not otherwise be able to afford. Yale has agreed to share its contract for bottled water and, potentially, office supplies. The state can help by opening some of its contracts to the independent colleges.

These measures are just the beginning of a culture shift that will keep private education accessible to the greatest number of students.

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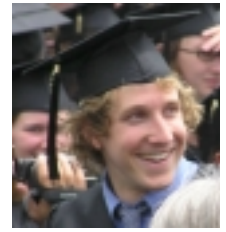
Collaboration Update:

CCIC currently has groups actively working together in the areas of risk management, transportation, technology, student health insurance, custodial supplies, environmental health and safety, health insurance, auditing, training, and internships.

Our activities are creating opportunities for savings and enhancing the services that member campuses can provide to both students and employees while developing relationships across the sector that are invaluable as institutions work to be flexible in today's higher education climate.

Contact Judy Greiman at greimanj@theccic.org if you would like to get involved.

Many who care get their degrees while they work, the Univeristy of Bridgeport IDEAL way



Daniel Cayer

Many employers offer college tuition reimbursement. This benefit makes it possible for many adults to return to college to finish their bachelor's degrees while working full-time, thus improving their education and advancing their careers simultaneously.

Karen Eisenman, executive assistant to the president and CEO of Schick-Wilkinson Sword in Milford, is doing exactly that. Having switched from dental hygiene into a business career, she searched for an accelerated degree program that would accept the college credits from her Associate's Degree and transfer them into a bachelor's degree program. She found the IDEAL fit at the University of Bridgeport School of Continuing and Professional Studies.

"UB's IDEAL program has been ideal for me," Karen says, "because I can complete my degree while attending school at night and on weekends. Course offerings allow much needed flexibility in my personal life to manage home and work-related responsibilities."

The IDEAL difference for Karen is, according to Eileen Sheridan, director of the program, is threefold: "a) the quality and breadth of course offerings for working adults; b) small class size that enhances sharing of knowledge and development of friendships; c) professors who combine academics and experience in the real world with a passion for teaching."

Another strength of the program is its new leadership. "Eileen Sheridan, director of the IDEAL program, has made a world of difference since she arrived," Karen said. "She is generous with her time and never seems rushed. Academic advisors are excellent, too."

Looking toward completion of her degree in August, Karen

plans to keep on studying, perhaps taking courses in marketing and sales. The corporate world suits her, she says, because she learns as



much on the job as she does in the classroom. "I'm surprised sometimes at what I know that I take for granted. I like to be where the action is."

It is especially important, Karen says, to recognize student achievement. Letters of commendation from the dean's office mean a lot to students as well as to their employers who can see from such letters that their tuition dollars are well spent.

Dozens of IDEAL courses are offered online, as well. Karen hasn't taken advantage of this convenience, however, because she spends so much of her day on the computer as it is. She prefers the classroom environment where she interacts with other students, gets to know the professors, and is required to make class presentations (an essential skill in the business world).

Sheridan says the program is really ideal for those "looking for a manageable way to finish college without disrupting work and family life." She urged those who may be interested to contact her at (203) 576-4828 or via email: Sheridan@bridgeport.edu

The IDEAL Program offers

bachelor's degrees in business administration, general studies with a concentration in business or social sciences, and in human services.

Sheridan said students can "make themselves, their families and their boss proud as they gain skills, build confidence, advance their career and earn a college degree — the IDEAL way!"

Connecticut College Student Awarded Fulbright to Mongolia

A Connecticut College graduate from Shelton, Conn., will be one of the first three Fulbright Grant students to travel to and study in Mongolia.

Daniel Cayer, who received his bachelor of arts degree in May with a major in philosophy, will return to Ulaan Baatar in the fall to study religion. He will focus on understanding how Mongolians are choosing which religion to practice 12 years after the fall of communism opened the doors of religious freedom that had been shut for 70 years. He will work with two of the country's most influential organizations, the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition and the Mormon Mission.

"Most people inherit their religion," he said. "But the religious precedent has been disrupted. The old patterns of inheritance are no longer intact. There have been many years now of Western influence with more emphasis on the materialistic, which entered an extremely weakened religious environment."

Cayer traveled to Mongolia for the spring semester of his junior year at Connecticut using one of the many opportunities

offered through the college's study away program. He plans to use the experience in Mongolia as an opportunity to write, a calling he feels drawn to. In fact, he chose Connecticut College because of its writing program, its small class sizes and reputation for academic excellence.

He is a graduate of the Freshman Focus Interdisciplinary program that combined the fields of philosophy, literature, sociology and medieval history to examine the theme of "Choice in a Pluralistic Society." He was a senior member of the college's water polo team and a member of the philosophy advisory board. During his Connecticut College career, he also performed improvisational comedy and was a volunteer Big Brother to a teenager in New London.

During his high school career, Cayer was selected as a national Merit Commended Scholar, the New Haven Register Youth of the Year and King of the Barnum Festival, a competition among 18 area high schools for student leaders and community service activists.

Administered by the Institute of International Education, the Fulbright program operates in more than 140 countries and offers a variety of grant opportunities. In the past decade, Connecticut College has had an average of more than one Fulbright Fellow annually working on various projects in Ecuador, Germany, Argentina, Korea, Japan, Italy and Switzerland. Connecticut College, located in New London, is a co-educational, residential liberal arts college with 1,800 students and a strong focus on international studies.

Rensselaer at Hartford Cohort Students Participate in Habitat for Humanity

The cohort educational experience at Rensselaer enables graduates to form long-lasting professional relationships, one of the highest-valued benefits cited by students. Each cohort, consisting of 25-30 students, moves through the curriculum as a unified group, which encourages the students to collaborate and learn from each other over an extended period of time. The cohort system fosters relationships that extend well beyond the classroom and provides ample opportunities for networking and social interactions. This is true for all of the signature cohort programs offered by Rensselaer at Hartford including the Weekend M.B.A. (WEMBA) and the Executive Master's Program (EMP).

Rensselaer's WEMBA Class 10 is a perfect example of the special bonds that are formed within a cohort. Twenty students from this WEMBA group decided to celebrate the completion of their degrees by volunteering their labor at a Habitat for Humanity site. The volunteer project was organized by class member Christopher D. Lepp, Commercial Quality – Six Sigma Black Belt, GE Consumer & Industrial. The students were joined by eight members of the faculty and staff at Rensselaer at Hartford to form the volunteer team. On a Saturday in April, the volunteers for the building project for the Hartford Area Habitat for Humanity worked a full day assisting with such tasks as framing, siding, and insulation of two adjacent homes. Despite the driving rain and the thick mud, the team accomplished much more work than what they were assigned to complete that day, and surprised the Volunteer Site

Manager from the Habitat for Humanity organization with their impressive drive and



WEMBA members take a well-deserved break at the Habitat for Humanity project.

determination.

Lepp enthusiastically noted, "The Habitat for Humanity project allowed us to demonstrate what 'communitarity' really means, come together one last time as a group before we graduated, and to help out some families. It was great to work side by side with the Rensselaer faculty and staff on a project that benefited the



Watch that thumb! Rensselaer students work on the framing for a house.

community." At the end of the day, the team relaxed and shared a few laughs together at a local restaurant. The spirit of WEMBA Class 10 proved once again that the cohort learning experience at Rensselaer at Hartford is a special part of education for working professionals.

LYMEACADEMY COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS JOINS THE CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

The LymeAcademy College of Fine Arts is New England's only independent college of fine arts and one of only three such accredited schools in the country dedicated exclusively to traditional education in the fine arts of drawing, painting, printmaking and sculpture.

The Academy College, with a campus of more than 40 acres in the beautiful village of Old Lyme, is defined by the rich cultural history of this area. At the turn of the century, the early Lyme Colony artists were drawn to this extraordinary landscape along the Connecticut River, and established the center for American Impressionists at the home of Florence Griswold, known today as the Griswold Museum. Now within this historic climate, the work of the College is to continue to play a role in securing the future of the fine arts by providing an exceptional educational environment.

The Academy was founded in 1976 in Old Lyme by the distinguished sculptor Elisabeth Gordon Chandler, who had been deeply concerned with the educational opportunities for fine artists in this country. She noted that art schools and colleges had turned away from the traditional techniques, embracing conceptual art. Her premise was that in order to be a serious artist one must study the fundamentals of the disciplines that produced the master artists from Michelangelo to Picasso.

Through that vision and her incredible zeal she was able to raise funds and the Academy was born, true to the historic definition and demanding the

highest standards of academic and artistic excellence. She attracted a number of excellent teachers including Harold Goodwin who established the painting department and served as president and acting dean for the first two years. Elisabeth, now at age 91, continues to teach, serve on the board and is the College's "most formidable spokeswoman."

The Academy became a fully accredited College, first acknowledged by the state of Connecticut in 1992, and then by the National Assn. of

Schools of Art and Design and in 2001 by the New England Assn. of Schools and Colleges. The College has earned

its reputation for excellence by offering a rigorous and disciplined curriculum and recently was hailed by The New York Times as having "significantly contributed to the renaissance of representational art in America."

The College offers a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting or Sculpture in a four-year program; a Certificate Program in painting or sculpture in a three-year program, and a Post Baccalaureate Certificate for those who have completed an undergraduate degree, but want to strengthen their conceptual abilities, studio skills and develop a cohesive body of work, to qualify for graduate school or other professional opportunities, in a one-year program. The College also offers a Continuing Education Program of credit/non-credit classes for adults and Pre-College and Young Artists Programs.



ST. VINCENT'S COLLEGE CONTINUES TO PREPARE HOSPITAL CODERS

Three employees have transitioned into new careers at St. Vincent's Medical Center as a result of a new certificate program at St. Vincent's College, Judy Dempsey formerly of Patient Access, Christine Nicolett and Mary O'Day, both previously Unit Secretaries, are now working as hospital coders after graduating from the College's Hospital Coding Program.

According to Ellen Berquist, St. Vincent's Medical Center Director of Health Information, "these positions really fill a need we had and the graduates all seem to be enjoying their new careers." Berquist also mentioned, "the main thing about coding is that you see the disease 'process' of the patient, whereas it does not require patient contact. This position satisfies curiosity in medicine without patient contact."

The coding program was developed to accommodate the staffing needs of the Medical Records Department's at St. Vincent's Medical Center as well as other hospitals in Fairfield and New Haven counties. In turn, the students train within their respective departments, which meets their learning needs.

The Hospital Coding Program is a way for employees currently working in hospitals to move into the administra-

tive side of the medical field. The program is offered as a nine-month course that begins in September and ends in June.

Students in the program learn medical terminology, basic anatomy and physiology, insurance claims, nomenclature and classification systems utilized in health record coding, a total of 15 college credits. This program is offered two evenings per week, giving students the ability to take courses while continuing their present employment. Courses may be taken individually, if a certificate is not desired.

According to Virginia Stoeffel, Director of Continuing Education at St. Vincent's College, "careers in hospital coding are really emerging." The program is suited for individuals who aspire to pursue a challenging health care career. Medical records and health information technicians are projected to be one of the fastest growing occupations. This is attributed to the rapid growth in the number of tests, treatments and procedures (which will be increasingly scrutinized by third-party payers, regulators, courts and consumers). According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, job

prospects for trained technicians are good. Employment trends indicate a 49% increase in employment nationwide, with a 36% increase in Connecticut through 2012.



Rep. Richard Roy presents an academic award to Jessica Mintner during an awards ceremony at the State Capitol

CCIC Welcomes Seven New Member Presidents

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Dr. Frederick S. Osborne
LymeAcademy College of Fine Arts

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Dr. Evelyn C. Lynch
Saint Joseph College

Dr. John K. Fisher
Saint Vincent's College

Dr. James F. Jones, Jr.
Trinity College

Dr. Steven Kaplan
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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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President

Judith B. Greiman
Connecticut Conference of
Independent Colleges
ph: 860.236.0900
fax: 860.236.0910
e: greimanj@theccic.org
www.theccic.org

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

Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges

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