

SEEK NEWS

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 2 SPRING/SUMMER 2010

CSI

FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

Special points of interest:

- *Caring counselors and staff*
- *Enhanced financial assistance*
- *Free academic and other workshops*
- *Personalized services in our Learning Center*
- *Career building opportunities*
- *Computer facility with technical assistance*
- *Exciting leadership training*

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Greetings to all our SEEK family, colleagues and friends.

It's hard to believe that another academic year has come to an end. As I wrote to you in our last newsletter, this has been a busy and exciting year filled with many fantastic student accomplishments. We started the year with over 190 new freshmen -- bright, motivated incoming members of the SEEK family. We ended the year with almost 50 graduates -- some with associates, but most with baccalaureate degrees. They are future teachers and scientists, nurses and business people -- all

moving on to new phases of their lives. We are sad but excited to see them go. They make me proud.

As for me, I treasure my days with the Program. Every day brings something new to savor, from attending a SEEK for Excellence Club event (of which there were many this semester), sending a SEEK contingent off to Albany, hearing about our academic achievers and their honors, or seeing our serious students at work in the Learning Center. Our students are lively and engaged. They may struggle with many challenges, but every day they make me

proud.

I also treasure my days with my SEEK colleagues -- the counselors, support and tutoring staff and others who work so tirelessly to help our stu-



(continued on page 2)

NEWS FROM THE COUNSELING TEAM

Greetings from the SEEK Counseling Team!

Some of you may be wondering . . . what is counseling and why would a SEEK student ever need a counselor? At SEEK, we see counseling as assistance with personal and academic challenges. While it's true that many people (e.g. your friends, your family or religious advisor) can give you assistance, your CSI SEEK counselors bring a nonjudgmental perspective and wealth

of professional experience to our working relationships with you. First of all, we're good listeners -- and willing to supportively discuss anything you bring up. Second, apart from being great sources of information, we can help you sort out every day issues that might get in the way of your success. We can also help you find the resources to face more difficult life problems. So, please remember that we are here to help and support

you through CSI challenges, and to celebrate with you during the good times, too!

**Dr. Julie Davelman
Dr. Fran Fassman
Ms. Miriam Perez-Lai**

**THE SEEK
COUNSELING TEAM**

NEWS FROM THE LEARNING CENTER

Do You Know *Your* SEEK Learning Center?

Most students know that the SEEK Learning Center is the place to be if you want individual, one-on-one help with a subject, especially English or math. However, this semester students found themselves treated to an expanded menu of *group* workshops on many different topics. SEEK staff and faculty offered sessions on plagiarism (avoiding it), common writing mistakes (preventing them), math anxiety (conquering it), note-taking

skills (improving yours) and more!

If you take advantage of these workshops, you will take away key pieces of information that you didn't know before. Sometimes it's might be just a little thing that improves your coursework or exams. Or maybe – like the research strategies workshop – you'll learn critical skills for doing a large assignment. Either way, students who use the Learning Center find its services extremely useful. So whether you're an "A" student or not stay tuned for Learning Center events starting up in the fall.

You'll also notice that SEEK students are now asked to log into a computer when they arrive in the Learning Center. This is because SEEK has joined the "modern" world, and is now tracking its services and preparing required reports via a new system called "Tutor Trac." The new system is expected to cut down on paperwork – leaving more time for staff to concentrate on YOU. Remember, we're here to help you succeed.

Ralph Pagan,
Learning Center Coordinator

FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR (continued)

**"OUR STUDENTS
ARE LIVELY AND
ENGAGED...
EVERYDAY THEY
MAKE ME
PROUD."**

dents succeed. I admire how hard they work, the respect they give to others and the good will and good humor they show. Each day with them is important and fun, and they make me proud.

No matter how well things are going,

we can always do better – so a major emphasis this semester has been working on an expanded plan for evaluating our actions. Busy as we are, we've made a point of carving out some hours to work on improving our Program Assessment Plan. This semester, we've given a lot of thought to goals and objectives, learning outcomes we hope for our students, and ways to measure our efforts.

I hope you'll enjoy reading this newsletter, and delight, as I do, in seeing all that goes on in CSI's SEEK Program.



Director Gloria Garcia, Dr. Roberta Vogel and Ms. Miriam Perez-Lai at Commencement 2010. Photo courtesy of Dr. David Traboulay.

SEEK RESEARCH ASSISTANTS PROJECT

The SEEK Research Assistants Project has just completed its sixth year. This Project places qualified SEEK students with faculty and staff research supervisors who use the students as assistants, and mentor them regarding research design and methods. This year the following students were in the Project:

Angelica Popolano (junior/ Women's Studies) – for a second year with Prof. Angela Sammarco (Nursing)

on a new text re: women's health issues.

Darja Sabarova (sophomore/ Chemistry) – with Prof. Qiao-Sheng Hu (Chemistry) on the development of new organocatalysts for organic synthesis.

Joseph Rasmy (sophomore/ Chemistry) -- with Prof. Sebastien Poget (Chemistry) on (among other things) the inactivation mechanism in potassium channels.

Loreyda Sanchez (sophomore/ International Studies) – with Prof. Michael Twomey (History) on the Irish revolution of 1916.

Patrizia Armfield (senior/ Performing and Creative Arts) – with Antonio Gallego (Media Services) on photography, videography and film editing.

Congratulations to these students for saying "yes" to the wonderful opportunities at CSI!

CHI ALPHA EPSILON NEWS

Chi Alpha Epsilon (XAE) National Honor Society was created to recognize the academic achievements of students who first enter college in educational opportunity programs like SEEK. XAE members have distinguished themselves through their exemplary performance in their academic work.

The Chi Alpha Epsilon (XAE) induction for spring 2010 was held on May 5, when 3 students were inducted as new members of the society. They are the Honorable Michael Allamby, the Honorable Ejona Beshku, and the Honorable Anum Karamat.

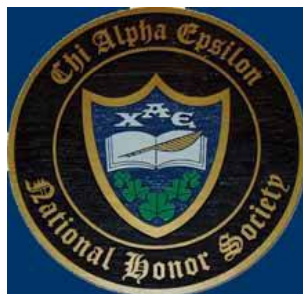
In addition, four (4) XAE members received jewel upgrades for their continuing high academic achievements during fall 2009. They are:

- the Honorable Francesca Navarro, Order of the Ruby key (GPA between 3.5-3.74);
- the Honorable Rhagina Chisolm and the Honorable Loreyda Sanchez, Order of the Emerald key (GPA between 3.75-3.99); and
- the Honorable Leona Manuzza, Order of the Diamond key (GPA of 4.0).

Many of our XAE members received numerous other awards in recognition of their outstanding academic achievements and community service (see “News to Know” on page 7 and article below).

Congratulations to our XAE Scholars!

Dr. Roberta B. Vogel, XAE Advisor



SEEK STUDENT WINS AWARD FROM RICHMOND COUNTY PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

This April, graduating Chi Alpha Epsilon member Shannon Foreshee received the Carl Boxhill Award from the Richmond County Psychological Association (RCPA). This award, named in honor of Dr. Carl Boxhill, a psychologist and one of the early members of the RCPA, recognizes high academic achievement each year of a graduate in psychology at one of the colleges on Staten Island. While at CSI, Shannon entered the CUNY Baccalaureate Program, the University-wide alternate degree program in which students work on an individualized area of specialization under the guidance of a faculty mentor. His area of concentration was Foundations of Art therapy, an amalgamation of the Art and Psychology majors. He plans to pursue a Masters Degree in Art Therapy.

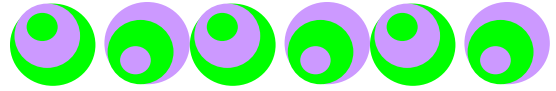


Shannon Foreshee with Dr. Roberta Vogel at the Richmond County Psychological Association Award event.

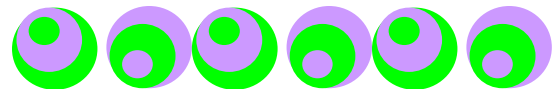
SEEK IN ACTION: THE STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS PROGRAM

For the past nine years, SEEK's *Strategies for Success* Program and its dynamic coordinator Ms. Georgia Landrum have escorted SEEK and other CSI students out into the community, where the students have served as mentors and tutors for elementary and intermediate pupils in after-school sessions. This year the Program served more than 200 children, and also continued a Financial Literacy Project (funded by the JPMorgan Chase Foundation), which provided young people at both schools with workshop sessions on saving, spending, investing and donating money. In addition, *Strategies* was invited to expand its operations this spring to a new venue in Staten Island's Stapleton neighborhood. This site serves children from kindergarten through eighth grade.

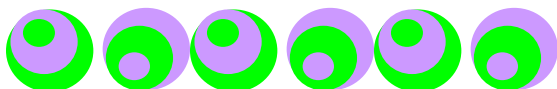
To support all these activities, SEEK was successful in raising \$115,000 from a wide range of sources, including a continuing subcontract with the Jewish Community Center's Beacon Program and a large grant from the Staten Island Foundation. Other donors included the Richmond County District Attorney's office, the South Shore Rotary Club, the YMCA and Time Warner Cable.



Below: Homework Help at I.S. 49.



Left: New Strategies for Success site— JCC Cornerstone at the Gordon Street Community Center.



Right: Environmental Science Workshop at I.S. 49.



SEEK IN ACTION: THE "SEEK FOR EXCELLENCE" CLUB

Spring 2010 was another busy semester for the "SEEK for Excellence" Club. Club members organized two big educational programs during the spring – one in March on relationships ("Are you Romantically Challenged?") and a second one on managing credit and understanding credit reports. The Club (and SEEK Director Gloria Garcia) also participated in "Close the Deal" – a job search "fashion do's and don'ts" show sponsored by the CSI Career Center. Lastly, Club members organized a spring drive to collect used children's books for the "Reach Out and Read" Foundation.

These activities followed an equally busy fall, during which (as reported in our last newsletter) Club members worked on two separate projects for Habitat for Humanity, led workshops on domestic violence, and organized a standing-room-only celebration event for Hispanic Heritage Month, to name only a few. Most deservedly, at year's end the Club and its officers won awards and certificates of recognition from student government and the Office of Student Life.

Cheers to club officers and Ms. Miriam Perez-Lai, SEEK counselor and tireless club advisor!



Debbie Kee (Student Life) and club members with Ms. Perez at the Student Life Awards event.

SEEK GOES TO ALBANY



(photo 1)

Back in February, at the beginning of the "Spring" semester, SEEK led a contingent of CSI students to the annual NYS Association of Black, Puerto Rican and Asian Legislators Caucus Conference in Albany. Sponsored each year by NYS legislators, this conference brings together college students from all over the state to participate in a weekend of activities designed to help them understand the legislative process.

With piles of snow still on the ground, a group of hardy students boarded the early morning bus (photo 1) with SEEK Counselors Roberta Vogel, Miriam Perez-Lai and others from CSI for the educational, three-day visit to the state's capital. Viewing these photos, it appears that our students had a fun but busy time (photo 2), including joining CSI's President, Tomás Morales and Vice President for Student Affairs Jerald Jones-Woolfolk at some of the events (photo 3).



(photo 2)



(photo 3)

SEEK CAREER CORNER



What Do Employers Look For??

Most SEEK students will tell you that they came to college to prepare for a good job. If you are just starting your undergraduate work -- or close to finishing -- it's worth keeping in mind what employers say they look for in prospective employees. While grades and accomplishments are important, employers cite three broad skills-sets they look for. In general, they want persons who:

Academic Skills: communicate well (verbally and in writing); think critically and logically; use technology; apply ba-

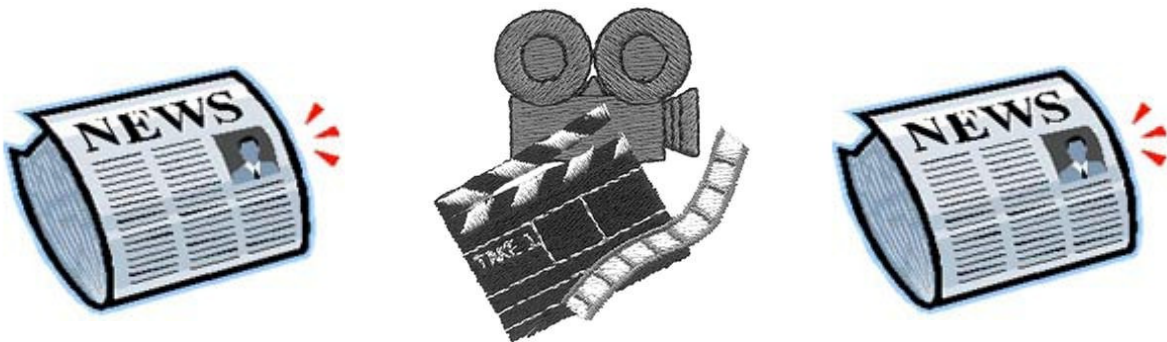
sic math to solve problems; find information and apply it appropriately; know how to learn.

Personal Management Skills: demonstrate honesty and integrity; show initiative and persistence; know how to set goals, prioritize and manage time and resources effectively; are flexible and creative.

Teamwork Skills: can understand the organization's goals and work within its culture; plan and make decisions with others; respect the thoughts and opinions of others; lead when appropriate and contribute to the group to get the a job done.

College is a time to develop these competencies, and CSI and SEEK offer many ways to do so. Plan to leave CSI with all of these skills finely tuned!

Dr. Fran Fassman, Counseling Coordinator



SEEK STUDENT EARNS NOMINATION AT SINY FILM FESTIVAL

Recent graduate Stephen Barnett (January '10, *Summa Cum Laude*) received a nomination for "Best Local Film" as part of the SINY 2010 Film Festival that took place in June. Entitled *Staten Island Ferry*, Stephen's film is a five minute documentary about the experience of riding the ferry during the 30-minute journey from Manhattan to Staten Island. As a student at CSI, Stephen participated in the CUNY Baccalaureate Program, earning his degree in an individualized course of study focusing on dramatic and cinema arts. Post-graduation, he is continuing his artistic pursuits and further development as a filmmaker, and has completed a screenplay and is working on a second. Stephen is an example of the creative spirit that infuses so many of our SEEK family, and we wish him all the best in his future endeavors!

NEWS TO KNOW

- The newest member of the SEEK family is baby Nina Josephine Davelman, born to our own **Dr. Julie Davelman** and husband Leo on May 22. We all look forward to spending time with Nina, and to Dr. Davelman's return to the SEEK Counseling team in the fall.
- At CSI's annual honors ceremony in May, **Rhagina Chisolm**, one of our graduating SEEK students, won two awards for service – the CSI Auxiliary Services Corp. Award *and* the CSI Alumni Student Leadership Award. Rhagina, who completed the coursework for the BA in English last January, has since continued her association with SEEK as a pivotal staff member of our *Strategies for Success* Program. In addition to the CSI awards, Rhagina was the recipient of a 2009 Black History Month Student Leadership Award presented by State Senator Diane Savino, is a member of the Dean's List and a past president of the CSI Dance Club. During her years at CSI, she participated in many other campus and civic events, and exemplifies the fabulous new professionals that graduate from the SEEK Program.
- Other SEEK graduates this season earned high academic honors, including **Stephen Barnett, Shannon Foreshee and Leo Lei**, all of whom graduated *Summa Cum Laude*, meaning "with highest praise or highest academic distinction." Another distinction, *Cum Laude* ("with honor") was bestowed on three additional SEEK graduates -- **Nervana Gaballa, Eva Guardascione and Kathleen Van Manen**. Nervana received additional honors from the Dept. of Media Culture, and Kathleen also received the Phi Beta Kappa Award. Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most widely known academic honor society, recognizes the most outstanding arts and science graduates each year.
- Two SEEK students, **Tiffany Pham and Latoya Sinclair**, were recently selected for the annual "Who's Who Among Students in American Universities & College," a national program recognizing college students for outstanding leadership, scholarship and service.
- SEEK students were also active participants at CSI's annual spring Conference on Research, Scholarship and Performance. **Audra Morales-Cheng** participated with other dance students in a lecture/demonstration focusing on dance curricula. **Iman Ayeesha-Platt** was both a co-curator of, and presenter at, the student art exhibition in which SEEK artists **Angelica Popolano** and **Suzie (Sky)** also exhibited. Musical performers included **James Fletcher** (on sax) and **Joseph Giunto** (drums) appearing in the "CSI Big Band" (with James reappearing in CSI's "Jazz Combo"). **James and Joseph** also joined faculty mentor Dr. Bill Bauer and other students at a Poster Session featuring the creative work of a performance group called *Not from Concentrate* in which they blend jazz, blues and classical music with ska, a style born in Jamaica. Last but not least, **Leo Lei** presented his work with faculty mentor Dr. Natacha Gueorguieva re: computer based methods for diagnosing abnormal heart rhythms.
- The College of Staten Island, and especially the SEEK Program, were featured in a new report entitled *Promoting a Culture of Student Success: How Colleges and Universities Are Improving Degree Completion*. Published in April 2010 by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), the report cited SEEK as CSI's first "learning community" and gave SEEK credit for being one contributing factor in rising graduation completion rates at CSI.
- Our SEEK faculty and staff assumed many campus leadership responsibilities during the year. Just to name a few -- Dr. **Fran Fassman** (Counseling Coordinator) was elected to serve on the CSI Hillel Board of Advisors; **Dr. Roberta Vogel** (SEEK Deputy Director) was appointed by **President Morales** to the CSI Foundation Board of Directors; and SEEK Director **Gloria Garcia** serves on several important campus committees. Your SEEK counselors and administrators are out working for the college, and making sure that SEEK remains in the forefront.
- On another front, five SEEK students prevailed in the Spring '10 Student Government elections. They are: Cesar Torres and Paul Olivier (freshmen), Abdul Aunikoro and Michael Allamby (sophomores) and Justin Cruz (junior). Congratulations to all!

DANCE IN MOTION

As Director Gloria Garcia said in her message on page one, SEEK students are “lively and engaged.” They are also amazingly creative. Thus it’s no surprise that, along with all of the other accomplishments reported on in this issue, SEEK students played a prominent role in this year’s Spring Dance Recital. Directed by Professors Charles Thomas, Niambi Keyes and Nubia Braithewaite, *Dance in Motion* presented on April 29 featured at least nine of our students in eight different dances. Dancers included Anthonett Adewale, Audra Morales-Cheng, Glorivee Lopez, Jacelyn Alcaide, Joanna Irizarry, Justina McGhie, Krystal Morgan, Michael Garrett and Sara Attia. Michael also was one of the choreographer’s for a dance called “Inevitable Chemistry.” A fabulous evening for SEEK and CSI!



CSI

WE’RE ON THE WEB!

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THE SEEK PROGRAM IN ACTION



SEEK NEWS is a publication of the SEEK Program
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