

W
E
S
T
C
H
E
S
T
E
R
N
C
O
L
U
M
B
I
A

Kathwari Honors Program



**Meet dean
Dr. Michelle
Brown**

***Hansel and
Gretel wins
national
recognition***

wcsu.edu

MANAGING EDITOR

Paul Steinmetz '07, Public Affairs & Community Relations

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Jeffrey Talbot, University Publications & Design, Enrollment Services

EDITORS/Writers

Sherri Hill, Public Relations
Sharmila Munver, G.A., Publications & Design
Robert Taylor, University Relations

PHOTOGRAPHY

Peter Puccio '03, Media Services (aerial)
Peggy Stewart '97, Publications & Design
WCSU Archives & Special Collections

CONTRIBUTORS

Lynne LeBarron, Institutional Advancement
Jay Murray, Enrollment Services

WCSU FOUNDATION

Ronald Pugliese '74, Chair
Theresa Eberhard Asch '64 & '72, Vice Chair
John Trentacosta, Secretary/Treasurer
Scott Brunjes '85
Carlos Dos Santos
Anthony Caraluzzi, Director Emeritus
Anthony Cirone Jr., '88
John B. Clark
Isabelle T. Farrington '43, Director Emerita
John Fliryaw '92
Erlend Hagman
M. Farooq Kathwari
Lynne LeBarron
Sean Loughran
Raymond Lubus '80
Deno Macricostas, Director Emeritus
Martin Morgado
David W. Numberger '72, Director Emeritus
Cory Plock '98
MaryJean Rizzo-Rebeiro '87
Forest Robertson '07
Todd Skare
Dane Unger
Patricia Weiner '86
Robert J. Yamin '79

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Joshua Beckett-Flores '05 & '10
Lauren Bergren-Gore '13, Vice President
Pamela Brown '86, '88
Lois Crucitti '71, '98
Thomas Crucitti '69, Executive Director & Life Member
Sharon Fusco '67, Life Member
Mark Gegeny '01, Member-at-Large
Anna-Maria Heredia '01
Raymond Lubus '80, President & Life Member
Alan Mattai '72 & '77
Rute Mendes Caetano '99
Morgan Murphy '15
Corey Paris '14
Elaine Salem '64, Life Member
Kay Schreiber '79, Life Member
Sheryl Scott-Smith '15, Secretary
Monica Sousa '04, '10 & '16
Diana Wellman '64, Treasurer
John Wrenn, Jr. '74 & '80, Life Member
Linda Wrenn '77
Kimberly Williams '99

The Cupola is an official bulletin of Western Connecticut State University and is published by Western Connecticut State University, Danbury, CT 06810. The magazine is distributed free of charge to alumni, friends, faculty and staff. Periodical postage paid at Danbury, Conn. and additional mailing offices.

Change of address: Send change of address to Office of Institutional Advancement, WCSU, 181 White St., Danbury, CT 06810, or email olrerosj@wcsu.edu. For duplicate mailings, send both mailing labels to the address above.

Contents: ©2019 Western Connecticut State University. Opinions expressed in The Cupola are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of its editors or policies of Western Connecticut State University.

CONNECTIONS



Brown named dean of Macricostas School	4
Interim dean of School of Professional Studies	4
Enrollment up and NY & NJ recruitment grows	5
Advisement Center assures students succeed	5
Professor Canada: the trauma of desegregation	6
<i>Hansel and Gretel</i> is NOA winner	6
Up and sunning on the Westside campus	7
New Biological Diversity master's degree	7
Wong earns 2018 Provost's Teaching Award	8
Athletics news and new Athletics programs	10
Opportunities earned in Kathwari Honors Program	13
WCSU Homecoming 2018	16
Alumni: Where are they now?	18
Bilingual students hone interpreting skills	19
Experiences of first-generation students	19
HPX receives national accreditation	19
Macricostas Entrepreneur of the Year	20
Westconn Society breakfast for student success	20
Robertson's formula	21
Issues and solutions in higher education	21
Intelligent and interesting podcasts	22
Nixon lives and teaches art with intensity	23

“Spray Safe, Play Safe”

The screening premiere of a series of original film shorts produced at Western Connecticut State University will showcase the “Spray Safe, Play Safe” community education program to promote healthy and effective practices in chemical spraying for tick management in residential settings. The family-oriented event featuring the premiere of “Tick Control Gets Reel,” directed and produced by Associate Director of Media Services and Instructional Technology Scott Volpe, will be from 6 to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, April 10, at the Ridgefield Playhouse, 80 E. Ridge Road. in Ridgefield. The premiere is sponsored by the WCSU Tickborne Disease Prevention Laboratory, the Ridgefield Health Department, the Western Connecticut Health Network and Lyme Connection. WCSU and the Ridgefield Health Department produced the project funded by a grant from the U.S. EPA.

COMMUNICATING

WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

March 22 Sip & Sketch

Enjoy a fun and creative evening of drawing from a live model while enjoying wine and snacks. All skill levels; guests must be at least 21. Participants are welcome to bring their own supplies. The evening runs from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Drawing Studio (Room 241) on the second floor of the Visual and Performing Arts Center on the university's Westside campus. To make a reservation, visit the WCSU Eventbrite page.

March 22 Jazz

Four of the Jazz Combos will perform standards and original compositions at 8 p.m. in the Veronica Hagman Concert Hall of the Visual and Performing Arts Center. To purchase tickets, visit the WCSU Eventbrite page or call (203) 837-8732.

March 26 Luncheon

The 2019 Macricostas Entrepreneur of the Year Award will be presented to Cynthia Roy, president and CEO of Regional Hospice and Palliative Care, at 11:30 a.m. at the Ethan Allen Hotel, 21 Lake Ave. Extension in Danbury. Reservations for the luncheon may be made by calling (203) 837-8486 or visiting www.wcsu.edu/eoy.

March 27 Career Fair

The Career Success Center will host the 24th annual Career Fair from 1 to 4:30 p.m. in the Feldman Arena of the O'Neill Center on the Westside campus in Danbury. Employers encompassing all majors will attend. The fair is open to WCSU students and alumni only. Sign up through westconnworks.com or call (203) 837-8263.

March 28 Exhibit

The Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition will be from noon to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday and 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, through Monday, April 8, in the Art Gallery of the VPAC on the Westside campus. The exhibition will be free and the public is invited. For more information, visit wcsu.edu/art/gallery/exhibitions/.

March 30 Lacrosse

The women's lacrosse team will face Plymouth State University at noon. The men's lacrosse team will face Plymouth State University at 1 p.m. at the Westside Athletic Complex. Admission is free and the public is invited.

April 2 Meet & Greet

The SGA, Alumni Association and Career Success Center will host an Alumni/Student Meet & Greet from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Westside Campus Center Ballroom. Alumni will have the opportunity to network with fellow alumni and current students, as well as with representatives from area businesses and the academic deans. It's a great opportunity to identify students to mentor or hire as interns. To register, go to <https://westconn.tfaforms.net/160>.

April 5 Globetrotters

The world-famous Harlem Globetrotters will display their usual fun and high-spirited showmanship during a game at 7 p.m. in the Feldman Arena at the O'Neill Center on the Westside campus. For more information or tickets, go to www.wcsu.edu/tickets.

April 6 Opera

Scenes for the whole family. Current students in the Department of Music will perform with alumni scenes from *La Traviata*, *Little Red Riding Hood* and *The Consul*. Performances begin at 7 p.m. in the Veronica Hagman Concert Hall of the Visual and Performing Arts Center.

April 6 Theatre

The Department of Theatre Arts will present “Crazy For You” on the MainStage Theatre of the Visual and Performing Arts Center on the Westside campus. Visit the WCSU Eventbrite page or call (203) 837-8732 for tickets.

April 6 Reception

Join the Alumni Association Board for a pre-theatre “Crazy For You” reception at The Daily Grind in the Westside Campus Center at 6:30 p.m. for an 8 p.m. performance. For more information or to make a reservation, call (203) 837-8298.

April 9 Luncheon

The Office of Diversity and Equity will host “Lunch with a Leader” with Dr. Michelle Brown, dean of the Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences at 1 p.m. in room 212/214 of the Westside Campus Center. Open to WCSU faculty, staff, students and alumni only; space is limited. For more information, email stokesk@wcsu.edu.

April 16 Softball

The softball team will face Rhode Island College in a doubleheader that begins at 5 p.m. on the university's Westside campus. Admission is free and the public is invited. For more information, send an email to amess@wcsu.edu, call (203) 837-9014 or visit westconnathletics.com.

April 20 Baseball

The WCSU baseball team will face UMass-Boston in a double-header that begins at noon. Admission is free and the public is invited. For more information, send an email to amess@wcsu.edu, call (203) 837-9014 or visit westconnathletics.com.

April 20 Orchestra

The WCSU Orchestra, conducted by Fernando Jimenez, will perform at 3 p.m. in the Veronica Hagman Concert Hall of the Visual and Performing Arts Center. To purchase tickets, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/wcsu-orchestra-tickets-48124957042 or call (203) 837-8732.

April 23 Chamber Singers

The Chamber Singers, conducted by Kevin Jay Isaacs, and the University Choir will perform at 8 p.m. in the Veronica Hagman Concert Hall of the Visual and Performing Arts Center. For tickets, visit the WCSU Eventbrite page or call (203) 837-8732.

May 3 Theatre

The Department of Theatre Arts will present “Much Ado About Nothing” in the MainStage Theatre of the Visual and Performing Arts Center. Performances at 8 p.m. on May 3 and 4; 2 p.m. matinees on May 4 and 5. For tickets, go to wcsuwpac.eventbrite.com or call (203) 837-8732.

May 5 Percussion

The WCSU Percussion Ensemble will perform at 3 p.m. in the Veronica Hagman Concert Hall of the Visual and Performing Arts Center on the university's Westside campus. To purchase tickets, visit eventbrite.com or call (203) 837-8732. For a complete list of similar SVPA events, visit www.wcsu.edu/svpa/events/.

May 9 Student Directors

The WCSU Theatre Arts Department will present student-directed one-act plays at 7 p.m. in the Studio Theatre of the Visual and Performing Arts Center on the university's Westside campus. The performance is free, but reservations are recommended. To reserve a seat, call (203) 837-8732.

May 19 Commencement

WCSU will host its 2019 Commencement Ceremony at 10:30 a.m. in the Webster Bank Arena at Harbor Yard, 600 Main St. in Bridgeport. For more information, go to <http://wcsu.edu/commencement/>.

HAPPENINGS

Brown named dean of Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences

Dr. Michelle Brown began her new position as dean of the Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences on July 16, 2018.

The school is home to 13 academic departments in the sciences and liberal arts, which offer a total of 21 undergraduate majors and five graduate majors.

Brown had served since June 2017 as university fellow for academic excellence at Shenandoah University. In this capacity, she had been a member of the senior academic leadership team, assisting the vice president for academic affairs in many areas including university program accreditation reaffirmation, strategic planning, and faculty and curriculum development. She also administered the honor



Dr. Michelle Brown

code and created and led a series of diversity initiatives.

A member of the Shenandoah University faculty since 2010, Brown was an associate professor of English and served from 2014 to 2017 as English Department chair, leading a restructuring and expansion of the department curriculum that earned her the Wilkins Appreciation Award for Significant Contribution to the Development of the University. She previously was coordinator of Core Quest, an initiative to develop a centralized framework of academic advising for students who have not declared a major.

Brown received her Ph.D. in English in 2008 from the University of Maryland at College Park. She earned an M.A. in English and a B.S. in Communication and English at James Madison University. Her research and instruction focused on African and post-colonial literatures, with additional teaching experience in women's and gender studies, critical theory, LGBTQ literature and creative writing. She also participated extensively in academic programs for first-year university students. She received several research grants at Shenandoah University as well as a Wye Faculty Fellow award from the Aspen Institute.

An active participant in community service activities, Brown served since 2010 as a classroom volunteer at public elementary and middle schools in Rockingham County, Virginia.

Palladino named interim dean of School of Professional Studies

Dr. Joan Palladino, the chair of the Department of Nursing for six years, has been named interim dean of the School of Professional Studies, which oversees Education, Social Work and Health Promotion Studies in addition to Nursing.

She joined the WCSU nursing faculty in fall 2004 and has been a nurse for 38 years, working primarily in critical care. She earned her BSN from St. Joseph College in West Hartford in 1980, and an MSN in nursing education from the University of Hartford in 2004. In April 2004, Palladino was inducted into the Nursing Honor Society, Sigma Theta Tau. She received the peer recognition award from her fellow MSN graduates in May 2004. Palladino graduated from the University of Hartford's Doctorate in Educational Leadership Program in May 2009. She received the prestigious Regent's Award there for her dissertation work. Her research involves support for new graduate nurses in their first employment after graduation and mentoring and support for nursing students.

"Although I have been a nurse my entire career, I am also an educator, so moving into the dean's office, and working with Education, Social Work and Health Promotion Studies fits my background and interests," Palladino said. "I look forward to helping all our excellent programs in the School of Professional Studies build on their successes."

Palladino is a member of American Nurses Association and the Connecticut Nurses' Association where she also works on the Government Relations Committee. Palladino has a dual membership in the Iota Upsilon-at-Large and Kappa Alpha chapters of Sigma Theta Tau. She is a past president of the Kappa Alpha Chapter and continues to be a board member.

Palladino was a Certified Critical Care Nurse from 1999 to 2014 and she continues to practice in the acute care setting. She is a certified instructor for Basic Life Support and Advanced Cardiac Life Support and has participated in the Nurses' Health Study from Harvard School of Public Health for the past 25 years.



Dr. Joan Palladino

WCSU enrollment up and NY & NJ recruitment grows



Jay Murray, Associate Vice President, Enrollment Services

Enrollment has grown at Western Connecticut State University for the first time since fall 2010.

Fall 2018 full-time undergraduate enrollment is up 1.5 percent over that of fall 2017. Fall 2018 total full-time enrollment (undergraduate, graduate, full-time and part-time) is up .1 percent. WCSU was the only Connecticut State University up in total enrollment for the fall. The incoming freshman class has grown 85 students to 914, an increase of 10 percent. The total number of graduate students at WCSU was up 5.5 percent.

Enrollment Services has been focused on growing WCSU's out-of-state population through the NY/NJ initiative. Enrolled new students from New York increased to 331 up from 254 in 2017, a 30 percent increase. Enrolled new students from New

Jersey increased to 13 from 2 in 2017. The percentage of out-of-state students increased to 14.7 percent – up from 10.2 percent in fall 2017.

We also were able to increase the academic quality of the incoming class. The composite SAT score of the fall's incoming class was 1112, versus 1081 in fall 2017. Enrollment Services also hosted four school counselor events in New Jersey (Union, Middlesex, Hunterdon and Morris counties). We met with more than 200 school counselors as part of our recruitment efforts, and we plan to build on our success as we head into fall 2019.

Our new branding and messaging have resonated and been well-received by prospective students. Our print and online marketing and recruitment strategy allows us to reach and engage each new student individually. We are working with university departments and agency resources to coordinate our media, social messaging and internet presence as we develop new technology, campus tour and student retention strategies.

Advising assures students succeed in graduation goals

The Advisement Center's mission is to support students success and increase student retention as we build relationships between all newly admitted students and WCSU. Our efforts are designed to meet the NECHE Accreditation Standards for Students, Teaching, Learning and Scholarship.

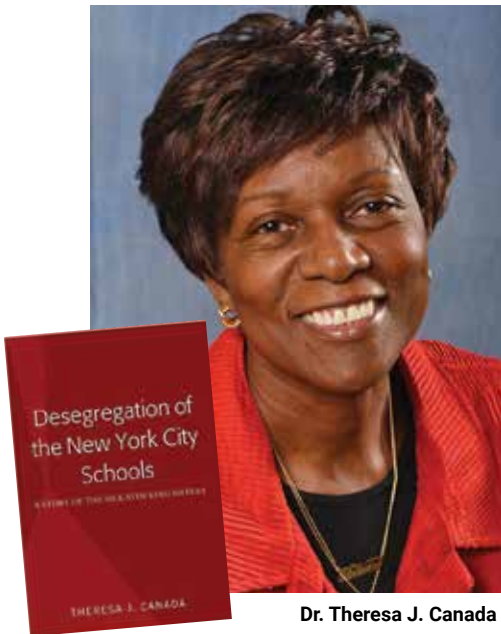
The primary objective of the Advisement Center is to support all Exploratory Studies/Undecided students through the pursuit and selection of a major. As part of this process, students explore a diverse range of subject areas, which exposes them to different disciplines and areas of study. The Advisement Center works closely with department chairs and faculty within each of our four schools, so that once a student decides on a major, our professional staff facilitates the transition into their new academic department and major. The center provides advisement, registration and academic success planning to all students and develops workshops and events to meet students' needs. Our advisers recognize each student has needs and goals that require unique strategies for each success.

We are available to meet with any student to support academic and personal development. This includes academic planning meetings, time management workshops, assessments to help with declaration of major, developmental meetings and encouragement to participate in campus activities and student-run organizations. The center also serves as a conduit between students and the array of campus services available to them, such as physical and mental health services, housing, financial aid, academic support services, student clubs and organizations, study-abroad opportunities and information on the variety of major and minor programs of study offered at WCSU. Our individualized approach allows us to customize plans and referrals to campus resources, providing students the opportunity to achieve their personal and educational goals and to stay on track for graduation.



Isabel Carvalho, Director, Advisement Center

Canada publishes about trauma of desegregation



Dr. Theresa J. Canada

In her book, "Desegregation of the New York City Schools: A Story of the Silk Stocking Sisters," Dr. Theresa J. Canada, associate professor of Education, sheds light on the trauma and triumphs of seven students of color in the mid-1960s during an experimental integration in public schools.

Canada remembered the stark differences in resources and opportunities between the all-white school and her old segregated school. "There was no real gym" in the previous school, she said. "The lunch room was converted from a gym. There was a little small playground." In contrast, the new school had a cooking room,

auditorium, music classroom and gym. As a prerequisite to acceptance into the elite all-white school, African American and Latino students had to pass a test. Canada aced her art test and was accepted into Lily D. Blake school, also called P.S. 6.

Canada's recollection, and interviews with six other students who integrated the school, included stories of discrimination and struggles as well as the support they received from teachers and other students. Today she credits the experience in part for her later educational and professional success.

The book is currently available at Amazon.com.

Up and sunning

New projects add power and space to the Westside campus

Two significant infrastructure improvements were recently completed on the Westside campus. A new greenhouse addition increased the seating capacity of the Westside Campus Center dining room by 120. The additional capacity was necessitated by the growth of our athletic programs and increased demand for dining services by students in the School of Visual and Performing Arts. The installation of a 315kw solar array on University Boulevard marked the completion of the first such project on campus and was a zero cost initiative contracted and supported by CSCU. The solar array will provide clean and sustainable electricity to Grasso Hall at a fixed rate for the next 25 years, at a cost equal to nearly half that previously charged by the utility company.



Above: new Campus Center greenhouse seating extension; background: University Boulevard solar panels.

National Opera Association's winner is *Hansel and Gretel*

The WCSU Opera spring 2018 production of Engelbert Humperdinck's "Hansel and Gretel" has received first-place honors in the 2017-18 Opera Production Competition sponsored by the National Opera Association.

The WCSU "Hansel and Gretel" production, directed by Professor of Music Dr. Margaret Astrup, achieved a first-place tie in Division I with the University of Missouri at St. Louis. The 2018 NOA competition attracted 78 applicants for full opera productions at universities, colleges and young artist training institutions across the United States. Twenty-four judges drawn from academic music programs and from professional opera companies

nationwide determined prize winners in eight competition divisions based on cast age, budget size, type of musical accompaniment and other factors.

Suzanne Ramo, co-chair of the NOA competition committee, observed that judges "commented on how exciting it was to see so much talent and creativity on display, and those who work outside

of academia remarked especially that the future of our art form is in good hands." Ramo noted that WCSU and other higher education institutions participating in the competition also benefited in "getting feedback not only from their colleagues at other schools, but from singers, directors and producers actively working in the professional world that many students aspire to join."

The WCSU "Hansel and Gretel" production featured Olivia Conforti as Hansel and Christine Manalo as Gretel. Other performers included Dan Satter, Nicole Salamon, Sergio Mandujano, Amy Cerbie, Callie Sorrento and Carly Sacco.



WCSU teams with SCSU on Biological Diversity master's

WCSU and Southern Connecticut State University are working together to offer a new Master of Science in Integrative Biological Diversity degree.

Dr. Theodora Pinou, professor of Biological and Environmental Sciences, is coordinating the 30-credit curriculum with courses taught on both campuses. Faculty from the WCSU Biological and Environmental Sciences Department and the SCSU Environment, Geography and Marine Sciences Department will participate as course instructors and research mentors.

Program objectives include the education of students in the use of molecular research methods to assess diversity among organisms and environmental health, and in the use of GIS, GPS and other technological tools to examine, quantify and describe biodiversity.

Master's candidates will be able to collaborate with a wide range of corporations, educational institutions, conservation and wildlife organizations and other partners where students

can apply their skills and knowledge to real-world experiences in the exploration and monitoring of biodiversity. Among these partners are the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the Housatonic River Valley Association, the Candlewood Lake Authority, the Norwalk Aquarium, the Atlantic Marine Conservation Society, Connecticut Audubon, FirstLight Power Resources, the Cape Eleuthra Institute, and the Great Hollow Nature Preserve and Ecological Research Center. The program also maintains international collaborative relationships with the University of Guadalajara CUCBA and the University of Athens.

"For teachers in secondary education, it will help them to inspire their students," Pinou said. "For biology majors who have focused mostly on the cellular and molecular level during their undergraduate studies, this program will teach them to see how these units, when they come together, can result in adaptability."

Edwin Wong earns 2018 Provost's Teaching Award

Dr. Wong reflects, during his Provost's Teaching Award speech, on the impactful trajectory our determination and power of giving become in the lives of those we may never meet. Wong was nominated for the award by the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching Committee and delivered this talk at the university's fall opening meeting.



Dr. Edwin Wong welcomes a new student during the WCSU Opening Gates Ceremony.

The boy was riding his bicycle to school as he usually did, but there was a city bus blocking his view that day, so he didn't see it coming. By the time the car had come to a halt, passersby ran over to push it off the boy's body. As they rushed him to the hospital, the boy wondered if he'd ever walk again.

His high school sent out a call to his classmates for volunteers who could visit him at the hospital once a week. One student, a vivacious girl, star of the women's track and field team, offered to go. As weeks passed, and another semester came, the boy was slowly recovering. And he and the girl eventually fell in love.

But they grew up in a world of turmoil, a world war. They had spent their youth running for cover as air raid sirens warned of enemy planes overhead. And with their country still reeling with the aftermath of the war, another threat arose as a communist government took power.

The boy and the girl began their first year of college. But they had no illusions that this would last. People were being arrested. Institutions were being shut down. Borders were closing. The boy and girl made a pact that they would flee to British Hong Kong and find each other again. He went first, but she was still scrambling to help get family members out. She even had to disguise herself as a soldier to get across the border, but finally she made it out as well. And, yes, they did find each other again.

They got married in Hong Kong. The very next day he left on an airplane to the United States, to join up with his father and mother, who already had a business running a restaurant in Washington, D.C. But it would be another two whole years before the girl, too, would be allowed into the U.S.A. to join him.

Reunited again, the boy joined the U.S. Army and was assigned as a cook and a baker because, according to Army logic, Chinese people must be good at that since they operated so many restaurants. During this time, they had their first son — a bright, handsome child who was destined for great things.

After an honorable discharge from the Army, the boy resisted the urging of his parents to join them in the family

“Their attention and encouragement made all the difference in the world for my father — and ultimately for me.”

The boy and girl made a pact that they would flee to British Hong Kong and find each other again. He went first, but she was still scrambling to help get family members out. She even had to disguise herself as a soldier to get across the border, but finally she made it out as well. And, yes, they did find each other again.

restaurant business and, instead — at the encouragement of his wife — entered college. It was not easy going. He had chosen engineering as a major because that's where everyone said the jobs were. He could handle the math, but the engineering terms and English language in general was difficult to master. You could see it in the margins of his textbook, which were riddled with key terms translated into Chinese. He was placed on academic probation that first year.

Why am I telling this story? As you've no doubt guessed, the boy and girl are my father and mother. Like today's immigrants — whether legal or otherwise — they too longed for freedom to live and love and learn and to fulfill their potential. And I've often wondered what would have happened if my father had failed in his attempts at college.

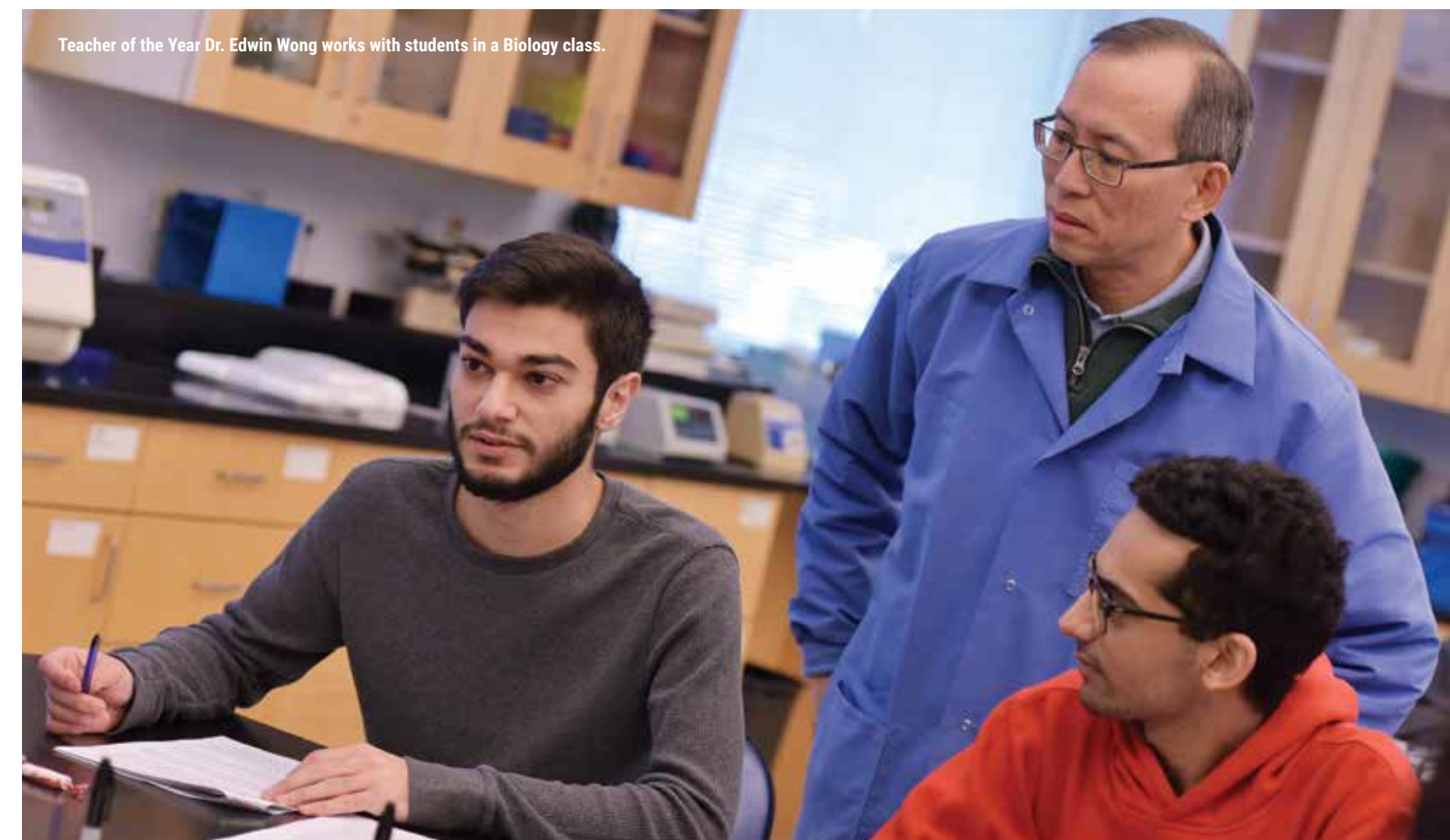
The turnaround came for him when two professors went the extra mile to help a young Chinese immigrant. One was an English professor, while another one taught an engineering course. To them he was not a “foreigner” to be scorned or

another name on a roster to be overlooked. Their attention and encouragement made all the difference in the world for my father — and ultimately for me.

My father eventually graduated on the Dean's list, and went on to a long and fruitful career as a civilian engineer for the United States Navy, earning patents and commendations for designing systems that protected our ships from enemy attack. More importantly, my father and mother taught me to love learning and to love giving back to others, because so much had been given to us.

As we start a new year of school, I am again challenged — not only with what my syllabus will look like or how many points I'm assigning for quizzes — but with the kind of impact I will make in the lives of my students. Will I be a hinge point in the trajectory of their lives, swinging them towards the positive rather than the negative?

I am forever indebted to two professors I never met, two people who changed the trajectory of my family. I hope that, someday, my students can say that of me, too. Thank you.



Teacher of the Year Dr. Edwin Wong works with students in a Biology class.



Men's Soccer WCSU captured its second straight Little East Conference Tournament title, defeating Keene State College, 2-1 in overtime. The Colonials, which tied a program record with 17 wins, went 17-4-3 and earned an automatic berth in their 10th NCAA national tournament.



Women's Soccer The Colonials did not allow a goal in the LEC Tournament and went on to win their third straight and 11th league title this past fall. WCSU, which went 14-9 overall and 6-2 in league play, made its 14th appearance in the NCAA Division III National Championships.



Men's Basketball Charles "Guy" Rancourt is the program's 12th head coach. The '97 WCSU graduate returned home after success as an assistant at the Division I level at Florida State University and Stony Brook and a combined 14 years as head coach at Lycoming College and John Jay College.



Women's Cross Country Sophomore Emma Chapman and senior Carole Allers were named to the First-Team Singles All-Little East Conference Team in November. WestConn went 3-13 as Head Coach Ed Lucas looks to grow the program to one of the best in the conference.



Women's Field Hockey WestConn enjoyed its most successful season in program history in 2018. It set program-best marks with 11 wins (11-8) and nine Little East Conference victories (9-3). The Colonials earned a fifth seed for the Little East Conference Tournament.



Men's Football With eight straight wins, head coach Joe Loth became the program's all-time winningest coach. The Colonials finished second in the MASCAC and were among the "Also Receiving Votes" in the American Football Coaches Association national rankings for several weeks.



Men's Golf WestConn revived its men's golf program this fall after 27 years. The Colonials, which played their home matches at nearby Redding Country Club, finished fourth in the Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference Championships under the guidance of Roger Knick.



Men's Cross Country One of four new intercollegiate programs added in August. The Colonials' best finish was a 10th-place showing in the very competitive Purchase College Invitational. First-year coach Ed Lucas will have the Colonials competing at the highest level in no time at all.

Benefits, opportunities in Kathwari Honors Program

The Kathwari Honors Program at Western Connecticut State University is one of the more innovative programs in the country. Designed to expose students to modes of inquiry and to illustrate the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to exploring a topic, the program is built on the assumption that knowledge is an open set of questions and ideas to be explored, rather than a closed set of facts to be memorized.

The Kathwari Honors Program was founded to foster and nurture academic and civic excellence among outstanding students in all four WCSU schools: the Ansell School of Business, Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences, School of Professional Studies and School of Visual and Performing Arts.

Victor Namer, a member of the Kathwari Honors Program, is also an intern at CityCenter Danbury and president of WCSU Honors Students of Compassion. The WCSU senior is a psychology and political science double major with a minor in conflict resolution and wants eventually to work in fields related to nonprofit work, urban planning and conflict resolution.

"Working at CityCenter Danbury is an opportunity that brings people together," Namer said. "Here, I get to work hands on with people within the Danbury community, and I am able to pursue my passion of community organizing. As a student in the Kathwari Honors program, I have been given more than just opportunities. You are provided with an environment to thrive, and that has made a large mark on what leadership means to me. It has been a humbling experience realizing that the more involved you get, the more you are working for the well-being of others."

Assistant Director Jessica Lin '15 described the benefits Honors students are offered.

"Many of our incoming students who were offered and accepted a merit-based scholarship at WCSU, are also offered a preliminary semester within our program," Lin said. "As a result, our incoming classes now average around 110-120 students every fall. All of our students, even freshmen applying for their spring semester, have priority registration, which gives them the ability to register for classes before most seniors."

Lin explained how this helps students with time management and making sure that they are able to get the classes that they need and want to take, and it also allows them to sign up for up to 21 credits without additional fees.

Some students graduate with the Kathwari Honors Program designation, their degree, as well as a minor, on top of chosen internships, jobs, community involvement and activities within three years, Lin said.

Honors students work on campus, sit as executive council board members for various clubs, and are involved in a number of opportunities. They normally reach out to and recruit more Honors students to events and potential job and internship opportunities.

"That really helps bring our community together," Lin said. "We also work with a number of nonprofit organizations and off-campus groups to develop more experiences that encourage and challenge our students to step beyond their comfort zones and really bring their social as well as leadership skills alive and into action."

Dr. Christopher Kukk, a Political Science professor and director of the

Kathwari Honors Program, added that after attaining good academic standing during sophomore year, students can become research and/or teaching assistants. This adds to students' resumes, gives them new opportunities and helps hone their skills. This particular opportunity is not common among other universities across the country.

The Ifran Kathwari Honors House is open 24/7 to its students. In addition to Kukk and Lin, five Honors assistants help with day-to-day operations. These assistants reach out to new and returning WCSU and non-WCSU faculty, coordinate agendas and minutes for Honors Council and Honors Course Committee meetings, and manage social media pages and event publicity. Classes and presentations occur on a daily basis at the Ifran Kathwari Honors House.

Incoming first-year students applying to the Honors Program need a combined SAT score of at least 1,200, excluding the writing component, or a 28 on the ACT; a high school grade point average of 3.5 out of 4.0 or above; high school class rank; and community service and extra-curricular activities.

In April 2015, the WCSU Honors Program received a \$1 million donation from Farooq Kathwari, CEO of Ethan Allen Interiors, and his wife, Farida. The university honored the gift by naming the Kathwari Honors Program at WCSU and the Ifran Kathwari Honors House, in memory of the couple's son.

Kathwari Honors students often graduate in fewer than four years, become Fulbright Scholars and receive offers from the world's leading graduate schools, including Northwestern University's Kellogg School and Emory University's School of Law, and major CT employers.

From top left: Rachel Rossier, Samuel Cournoyer, Dr. Christopher Kukk, Nathan Walker, Alexis Koukos, Karim Naba Abigail Lynch, Stephen Kipp, Jessica Plouffe, Jessica Lin, Hao Nguyen, Subhatra Chelladurai, Erika Sabovik, Bakhtawar Izzat

Kathwari Honors Program at Western Connecticut State University

Honors Council

Responsible for supporting and advising the director on the development and implementation of the Honors curriculum; approving all Honors course and seminar offerings; and selecting the recipients of any Honors awards or scholarships that are directly under the Kathwari Honors Program.

Members

Director of the Kathwari Honors Program

Dr. Christopher Kukk

Dean of the Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences

Dr. Michelle Brown

Faculty members

Natural Sciences/ Math

Dr. Chuck Rocca

Dr. Mitch Wagener

Humanities

Dr. Brian Clements

Dr. Paul Echeverria

Social/Behavioral Sciences

Dr. Rotua Lumbantobing

Dr. Oluwole Owoye

Ancell School of Business

Dr. Michele Ganon

School of Professional Studies

Open

School of Visual and Performing Arts

Dr. Margaret Astrup

Student Representatives

Samuel Cournoyer

Nathan Walker

Kathwari Honors Program staff

Dr. Christopher Kukk, Director

Jessica Lin, Assistant Director

James Cantafio, Student Assistant

Fatima Izzat, Student Assistant

Hao Nguyen, Student Assistant

Rachel Rossier, Student Assistant

Nathanial Walker, Student Assistant

Kathwari Honors Program alumni-volunteers

Emily Cole-Prescott

Sarah Hoegler

Alexis Koukos

Kimberly Lockwood

Lauren Muller

Ryan Prescott

Shreya Yedav

Non-WCSU faculty and Emeritus

Professors teaching for Kathwari

Honors Program

Dr. John Briggs

Lobsang Dhargay (Geshela)

Dr. Stephen Dydo

Dr. Eric Lewis

Dr. Tashi Rabten

Dr. David Thompson

Honors Students of Compassion Club

Executive Board:

Victor Namer, President

James Cantafio, Co-Vice President

Nathanial Walker, Co-Vice President

Erica Bower, Treasurer

Faculty teaching Honors courses

Dr. Katherine Allocco

Dr. Carina Bandhauer

Dr. JC Barone

Liang-Fang Chang (adjunct)

Dr. Brian Clements

Dr. Jennifer Duffy

Dr. Wynn Gadkar-Wilcox

Dr. Don Gagnon

Frank Gawle

Dr. Nicholas Greco

Dr. Casey Jordan

Stacey Kolbig

Dr. Christopher Kukk

Dr. Heather Levy

Dr. Leslie Lindenauer

Dr. Averell Manes

Sabrina Marques

Dr. Bruce Pflug (adjunct)

Elizabeth Popiel

Dr. Lisa Reynolds (adjunct)

Dr. Maryann Rossi

Kenneth Scaglia

Dr. Maggie Sachse-Skidd

Jack Tom

Dr. Cigdem Usekes

Dr. Mitch Wagener

Dr. Kerry Walker

Dirck Westervelt (adjunct)

Student-eye view of the Honors Program

Fatima Izzat studies Digital and Interactive Media Arts (DIMA) and is an Honors assistant in the Kathwari Honors Program. She also is a student worker in University Publications and Design and the director of fundraising for the student club Western Marketing Association.



Fatima Izzat

CUPOLA: Tell us about you. How did you come to WCSU?

Fatima: Hello! I am Fatima Izzat and I am a current junior at WCSU. When I was applying for colleges, both of my brothers were already at WCSU; they told me that it was an underrated university. I decided to try out my first semester here since it was close to home, and I could immediately see my future unfolding here.

What attracted you to the Kathwari Honors Program and how did you get involved?

The students. I would try to stick around after my Honors 100 class and to stop by between classes in order to talk to students and the Honors assistants. I heard about what they did on and off campus, and it proved to me that it is possible to grow here. I started volunteering in as many activities as possible, such as Western Day of Service and PeaceJam, and then decided to start searching for an on-campus job in order to make the most of my time here.

Can you share an experience that was made possible through the Kathwari Honors Program?

Being in this program helped me connect to different departments, students and activities around campus. After being an Honors student for a whole year, I wanted to start working

on campus. Jess Lin (the assistant director of the Honors program) recommended me at the Career Success Center, and I started working

there in the fall 2017 semester. Through this job, I was able to help students at WCSU to learn about campus resources. I also learned basic tips of peer mentoring and was able to implement my skills from DIMA in social media, communications and other media arts for the Career Success Center.

What would you say to Mr. Kathwari about his decision to fund and endorse the Kathwari Honors Program?

The students in this program not only try to find answers, but they keep asking questions. They are inspired individuals who want to further inspire others. They want to do great things, and they help each other grow to get beyond those goals. These students are intelligent, driven and compassionate. Mr. Kathwari is a great example of what these students aspire to be: a leader who helps others grow.



Farooq Kathwari

How and when did you go from Honors student to Honors Assistant?

During the spring 2018 semester, I talked with Jess Lin about some ideas I had that could help students around WCSU (not necessarily

part of the Kathwari Honors Program) learn more about what this program is and how to get involved in it and the community. I had offered to help create videos, advertisements, or whatever she and (Honors Director) Dr. Kukk thought worked. After a few weeks, Jessica and Dr. Kukk offered me a job as Honors Assistant of Social Media, Publications and Photography. I was (and still am) very amazed at how my ideas became something that I am able to pursue right here at WCSU.

How does the program benefit students and the university?

This program allows students and the university many opportunities to learn unusual things, to create, explore, and to bring back all this knowledge and experience and give back to the community. Many students within the program help start mission trips, community service opportunities, as well as different workshops to help themselves and fellow students build experience.

What are you currently working on? How does it fit in with the program's aspirations?

I am working on quite a few things. I have been assisting with social media marketing for the program as well as other departments within WCSU. I am doing content creation, planning, scheduling, posting and analysis for Honors and different departments. I have been implementing all four modes of inquiry (textual analysis, scientific/mathematical analysis, historical/social/cultural analysis and artistic creation and analysis) within my works, which helps me effectively manage these accounts and keep learning as I go.



WCSU HOMECOMING 2018



Where are they now?



2019 Connecticut Teacher of the Year, two-time winner of the Bridgeport Teacher of the Year award and National Teacher of the Year award hopeful **Sheena Graham '83** said, "It's kind of amazing."

About her preparation to speak before a 16-member panel after she was chosen as a candidate, she said, "I was shaking. You don't know what they will ask, so you can't prepare. You just have to be you and do you."

Graham studied classical piano at WCSU. During her time at the university, Graham taught pre K-12 students as a graduation requirement, which helped her solidify her career direction. Graham was one of the WCSU student government pioneers who attracted attention in the 1970s by calling for an expansion on what is now the Westside campus.

Nicole Struth '12 is the education director at the World Affairs Council of Connecticut, where she helps students explore opportunities to become active global citizens.

A major in Political Science, Struth credits WCSU for giving her "a solid education in political science and international affairs that I use to engage high school students around Connecticut." Struth chose WCSU due to its low cost, location and small class size. "I knew I would get individualized attention and have a more engaging classroom experience."



Struth plans to continue her work of expanding and improving state education programs. "I would not be where I am today without my experience, and the overwhelming support, at WCSU," she said. "I am grateful I had the opportunity to learn from such knowledgeable faculty and from my peers."

Velya Jancz '80 and Ehris Urban '13 dare you to be a Green Witch, to live in harmony with nature. Jancz and Urban, a mother-daughter team, give presentations and workshops on holistic healing. "Healing comes from nature, history and within," Jancz said. They focus on energies where women help women.

Jancz, an English and History major, said, "I took every class that Dr. Herb Jannick gave. He made learning history fun."

Urban studied Anthropology and Sociology: "Dr. Jeannie Hatcherson is sincere and energetic. I went to India with her on a volunteer trip." Urban, who was afraid of public speaking, took



a public speaking course at WCSU, and later taught an ESL class in Danbury.

Jancz and Urban have made guest appearances on TV, and have events scheduled throughout the Northeast region.

Johnathan Stark '00 is a psychology major and a professional bassoon and clarinet player. Stark served as an education administrator, assistant dean of Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Affairs, and student affairs officer for the Office of Graduate Student Affairs.

Stark's passion for a career in higher education began at WCSU when he served as a resident assistant. While hard work and determination helped him achieve his goals, he says, "I didn't do it alone."



He credits Maribeth Griffin, director of Residential Programs and Staff, and past resident directors Kevin FitzGerald, Dave Carpenter and James King for providing a series of pathways.

Currently, he serves as Columbia University's Data Science Institute's chief administrative and operations officer. Stark will complete his Doctorate of Education in Higher Education Management in 2020.

Terry Dolan '78 teaches gifted students at the Bullhead City Middle School in Bullhead City, Arizona with a unique blend of art intertwined with history, math and science. She teaches these subjects using sarcophagus, kirigami, origami and a hamsa. "Teaching with art gives children a voice they are not using. It's catharsis, a non-verbal way to express themselves."

Dolan, who majored in History and minored in arts said, "WCSU had a reputation for being the best teaching college



in the state." She explained that small classes allowed her to receive individual attention. "We did research for teaching at Yale every week. Dr. David Detzer was a history professor. He was tough and knowledgeable; we flourished in

his class." She still refers to his lecture notes. Dolan hopes to publish a book on teaching art-based integrated lessons.

If you have an alumni story you'd like to share in our next issue, please contact Paul Steinmetz, director of University & Community Relations at Steinmetzp@wcsu.edu.

Bilingual students will hone their interpreting skills

In his WCSU course on community interpreting, Spanish Adjunct Professor Miguel Purgatorio, a professional interpreter and translator, teaches in English, but students are expected to be bilingual. Training sessions ground students in what they need to know to launch a career in medical interpreting, educational interpreting or social services interpreting.

"Community interpreting is one of the fastest-growing professions in the world," Purgatorio said. Content includes ethics and standards of practice, interpreting protocols and skills, professional identity and role of the interpreter, medical terminology and practical interpreting exercises. This course had never before been offered at any higher education institution in Connecticut.

Bilingual nursing students and medical staff are also welcome to complete the training. Participants must hold a diploma for completion of secondary studies or equivalent, demonstrate oral proficiency in their working languages and show literacy in their working languages.

"Community Interpreting" will be held at WCSU during Summer Session II twice a week on Saturdays and Wednesdays from July 2 to Aug. 3.

Purgatorio completed a training program in The Community Interpreter International with Cross-Cultural Communications, LLC last July.

Pre-collegiate students learn from first-generation college graduates

In November, the Pre-Collegiate and Access Program at WCSU partnered with the Office of Diversity and Equity, Intercultural Affairs, the Kathwari Honors Program, Enrollment Services and Institutional Advancement to celebrate first-generation students on campus.

The day started with administrators, current students, alumni, and faculty sharing their experiences as first-generation college students and the impact that those experiences have had on their lives. Next up after the speakers was a musical performance given by a group of first-generation students from the School of Visual and Performing Arts.

Throughout the day current first-generation WCSU students had the opportunity to complete an application for the Dianna Storbino Poodiak WCSU Foundation Scholarship. The application included the question, "Personally what does it mean to be a First-Generation student?"

The attendees also received an I'm First shirt and pin to bring awareness to first-generation students on campus. The day culminated with a group picture with all 200 attendees.



Robert Pote, Director, Pre-Collegiate & Access Program

Health Promotion Studies earns national recognition



Department Chair Dr. Robyn Housemann and faculty member Dr. Emily Stevens celebrate accreditation.

The Health Promotion Studies bachelor's degree program at WCSU has received accreditation of the Council on Education for Public Health, affirming that the undergraduate curriculum meets the rigorous academic standards required for the CEPH seal of approval.

The Department of Health Promotion and Exercise Sciences (HPX) undergraduate curriculum in Health Promotion Studies offers four options for concentration including community

health, wellness management, holistic and integrative health and allied health professions. Completion of the bachelor's degree program prepares HPX graduates to sit for the Certified Health Education Specialist examination, the nationally recognized credential for health educators.

The accreditation process helped department faculty to reevaluate the curriculum and introduce refinements where needed.

Roy is the Macricostas Entrepreneur of the Year



Cynthia Roy, president and CEO of Regional Hospice and Palliative Care

Western Connecticut State University will recognize Cynthia Emiry Roy, president and CEO of Regional Hospice and Palliative Care in Danbury, with the 2019 Macricostas Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

Roy has applied her entrepreneurial career exclusively to nonprofits, armed with the same drive and skills exhibited by successful business owners.

Her most recent major projects included directing construction of the Regional Hospice Center for Comfort Care and Healing, which opened in 2015, and running the highly successful operation – set a new standard for the way hospice

care is offered not only in Connecticut, but across the country. Roy has grown the non-profit from a small business to an \$18 million organization. The 36,000-square-foot building, which cost \$14 million, is a fully licensed specialty care hospital and the only facility of its kind in Connecticut.

“I’m on a different path, spiritually and professionally, to do this work,” Roy said. “People think running a nonprofit is easy, not like a regular business. But it is a health care business, with tremendous meaning and profound privilege.”

The award will be presented on Tuesday, March 26, at 11:30 a.m. at the Ethan Allen Hotel in Danbury. The award is given annually to recognize local business leaders whose drive, intelligence and creativity lead to notable business success. The program’s benefactor is Constantine “Deno” Macricostas, the founder of Photonics Inc., in Brookfield, who is a longtime supporter of WCSU and its students.

For reservations, call (203) 837-8486 or visit www.wcsu.edu/eoy.

Chemistry professor seeks many ways to help students

Dr. Forest Robertson graduated from WCSU in 2007 with a bachelor’s in Chemistry and has returned with a goal of nurturing students.



Dr. Forest Robertson

Robertson’s journey took him to Dartmouth College, where he earned a Ph.D., and then to a postdoctoral position at Yale as well as a job in industry. But his desire to teach brought him back to WCSU, where his own professors had offered care and guidance for their students.

“When I was a student here at WCSU, the entire department was one group of mentors,” Robertson ’07 recalled. “The mentorship I received from all of them shaped me into the person I am today.

In essence, they held me by the hand in the beginning, put their arms around me when times got tough and showed me the beauty of research.”

Robertson’s educational philosophy has manifested itself in part with a curriculum for his sophomore organic chemistry course.

When he noticed that students were not reading the pre-lab materials, Robertson was determined to make it more interesting. So he wrote a serialized adventure series featuring “The Young Chemist,” who discovers principals of chemistry – such as recrystallization, distillation and column chromatography –

while traveling through a countryside filled with ominous characters.

The series was a hit, with students eagerly asking for the upcoming chapters and admitting that they related to the young chemist as they forged their own paths.

A member of the WCSU Foundation board – the group of community leaders that undertakes fundraising for the university – Robertson knew that many WCSU students need financial help. “I joined the Foundation to help find ways to increase scholarships and other support,” he said. “If a student can cut back on the number of hours they work on a job and can devote that time instead to their studies, they will get more out of their university education.”

Join us at the WestConn Society Breakfast for Student Success



Farooq Kathwari, CEO of Ethan Allen

The WCSU Foundation Board will host the annual WestConn Society Breakfast from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 7, at The Ethan Allen Hotel. This year’s honoree is Farooq Kathwari, CEO of Ethan Allen. Kathwari and his family are active supporters of WCSU – as evidenced by their support for the Kathwari Honors Program and Irfan Kathwari Honors House.

Kathwari is a prominent international businessman who has been president of Ethan Allen, based in Danbury, since 1985 and chairman and CEO since 1988. He transformed the company into a leading manufacturer and retailer of home furnishings.

The breakfast will feature the sale of plants suitable for Mother’s Day. Your participation in this event provides support for talented students with limited means to participate in out-of-classroom opportunities that enhance their college experience and foster their growth as individuals. The WestConn Society is the oldest continuous giving program sponsored by the WCSU Foundation, providing an important source of private donations.

Please email Nancy Barton at bartonn@wcsu.edu for sponsorship opportunities. Visit wcsu.edu/giving/events/ for tickets to the breakfast.

Provost’s new blog examines trajectory of higher education

Dr. Missy Alexander, WCSU provost and academic vice president, has created a weekly blog about issues and solutions in higher education, with a focus on Western Connecticut State University.

In the aptly named “WCSU Provost Blog,” Alexander examines not just the stresses on a public university but of K-12 education as well, and how the systems might work together with less friction. She has tackled online coursework, diversity and student evaluations of their professors’ teaching, and always pairs a current challenge with one or more approaches to find solutions.

Many of the issues that Alexander writes on confront questions about the value of America’s education system. She explains the workings of a university with a liberal arts foundation, where students become life-long learners who are able to understand and discuss ideas, and which in turn helps



them find meaningful jobs and careers.

In one of her latest blogs, Alexander examined the component of WCSU’s curriculum that requires a critical thinking competency. Such knowledge is helpful in deciphering messages in a politically conflicted environment. Alexander concluded:

“This is where I see the heart of teaching critical thinking. We must

develop in our students the confidence and skills necessary to challenge facts and evidence and the desire to pursue the next set of answers. The belief that there are answers to be pursued and that those answers might be within our grasp is about as optimistic as any rational person can be.

So here’s to an optimistic semester, filled with questions, contradictions, and the desire for more understanding.” Visit Alexander’s blog at wcsuprovostblog.com/.

‘What will our students remember in 20 years?’

Just when it seemed like everyone was doing a podcast, WCSU’s Media Services Department decided the university shouldn’t be left behind. Scott Volpe and Pete Puccio helped professors and others develop their voices and now there are a number of WCSU-based podcasts on trends that pertain to students, the campus and issues in higher ed and around the world.

These podcasts are raw and honest. Unlike many highly produced pods that attempt to create interest and suspense with corny dialogue and booming music, WCSU podcasts feature intelligent discussions with interesting and important people.

“Literacy Ladies,” the invention of professors Darla Shaw and Leslie Lindenauer, was the first WCSU podcast. The hosts riff on topics of spelling, reading and writing — and make them interesting.

Maribeth Griffin, a director in the Residence Life department at WCSU, created “Gab & GROW” as a way to help

students navigate campus life. She brings in professors and staff to talk about programs on everything from drug and alcohol use, to financial security, to how to get the most out of the Math Emporium and Writing Center.

The Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) is a WCSU institution that often takes the lead on examining new ideas in higher ed and whether they should be adopted at the university.

A recent edition of the eponymous podcast examined a philosophical and practical question for professors: “What will our students remember in 20 years?”

“Behind the Curtain” is an effort by host and Assistant Professor of Communication Jacqueline Guzda to illuminate some of the darker corners of American politics. Her torch of knowledge has enlightened listeners on subjects like media bias, the Me-Too movement and the Pro Truth Pledge.

Following the visit of the Dalai Lama to WCSU, Professor Chris Kukuk dived

into the study of compassion and how it can be woven into all human endeavors. When Tracy Day heard him speak, she suggested they do a podcast together, and “The Compassionate Achiever” was born. Kukuk and Day interview people — from police chiefs to teachers to experts on artificial intelligence — as they search for new applications of compassion around the world.

Paul Steinmetz, former journalist and current community relations director for WCSU, says he is the humorous one in this group of podcasters. Steinmetz brings his wry but thoughtful outlook to interviews with university students, administrators and professors, as well as leaders from throughout the region. Co-host and Social Work major Chantel Williams, discusses that week’s campus events and provides a student-eye view of life at WCSU.

Listen and subscribe to WCSU podcasts by searching for WCSU Media on iTunes, Soundcloud, Google Play, Spotify or anywhere you find podcasts.

Plonia Nixon teaches art as she lives – with intensity

Professors by their nature are supportive of students, but Plonia Nixon, a longtime adjunct professor of Art and Art History at WCSU, has taken it a step further with annual and substantial financial support for student scholarships.

Nixon worked with the university’s Office of Institutional Advancement more than a decade ago to create scholarships for art students. She has funded them ever since with annual contributions.



Plonia Nixon

Born in the Netherlands, Nixon (then Van Der Hoeven) and her family survived the German occupation during WWI. She has vivid memories of atrocities and deprivation, as well as of the country’s liberation. After the war, however, Nixon was able to attend prestigious Dutch art schools and upon graduation, become a teacher and work in the fashion industry.

In 1971, the adventurous young woman traveled to the United States for a visit with her sister. “My sister had married an American and lived in New York City. I went there for an Easter holiday — and I never went back.” A few years later Plonia and her husband Richard moved to New Fairfield, where they made their home on a large, wooded tract of land that also included a pond and several cabins.

In 1981, Nixon introduced herself at Western Connecticut State University and was appointed an adjunct professor, a

position she has held ever since. Her husband passed away 1991, but she continued to create art in her home studio, exhibit in shows and teach at the University.

Long known for her courses in Art History, which she illustrated with her own collection of 12,000 slides, she relinquished that class when the School of Visual and Performing Arts moved to its Westside location. According to Nixon, the new building is spectacular and modern, but it could not easily accommodate her use of slides. Instead of converting them to digital images, she decided to stop teaching Art History.

Nixon continues to enjoy teaching, especially her figure drawing class. “I work with the students hands-on and share my expertise with them,” Nixon said. “Just seeing how I can help the students transform their work from nothing to something at the end of the semester gives me great satisfaction.”

“There was no dull part of my life,” Nixon continued. “It’s always been full of events and happenings and I’ve always been active and I’ve always wanted to learn. There is not a day that is not an adventure. I still see it that way.”

The Plonia & Richard Nixon Scholarships in Art support undergraduate and graduate students and are awarded on merit and financial need through the WCSU Foundation.

Please contact Lynne LeBarron, Interim Vice President for Institutional Advancement at (203) 837-8188 or lebarronl@wcsu.edu for more information about starting a scholarship or making a gift to the WCSU Foundation.

Wine Tasting to support student success

The WCSU Foundation will host its third annual wine tasting in support of student scholarships and other initiatives.

The popular event will be held from 5 to 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 6, at the WCSU Science Building atrium on the Midtown campus, 181 White St. in Danbury.

Tickets are \$35 and the public is invited. For tickets, visit wcsu.edu/giving/events/ or call (203) 837-9820.

The event will include numerous tables with a variety of wines, beers and liquors, and company representatives to assist with tasting. The fundraiser will be a great time to mingle with the WCSU community and general public.

The WCSU Foundation Inc. effectively raises funds and carefully manages charitable gifts for the support of the university. Proceeds from this event will go to support student success at WCSU by funding scholarships and helping talented students with limited means to participate in out-of-classroom opportunities.

Local attorneys Yamin & Yamin, LLP, are sponsors of the wine tasting, which is held in association with the Central Package Store of Bethel.



Planned giving through the Legacy Society

For more than a century, WCSU students have benefitted from the generosity of those who know the importance of a college education. Indeed, what better role models than the graduates of a former teachers college to highlight the significance of higher education to our society? Including a charitable bequest in your will is a simple way to make a lasting gift to WCSU.

Today, Western Connecticut State University educates more than 6,000 students a year, many of whom cannot afford a college education without

the support of our alumni and friends. In fact, some of the largest support WCSU receives comes through planned gifts, many in the form of charitable bequests.

The Institutional Advancement office is here to work with you and your advisers to help craft a legacy that meets both your philanthropic and estate planning goals.

Please contact Julie Pryor-Bennett, Major Gifts Officer, Institutional Advancement at (203) 837-8111 or pryorbennettj@wcsu.edu.





Office of Institutional Advancement
181 White St., Danbury, CT 06810

Support student success at WCSU today

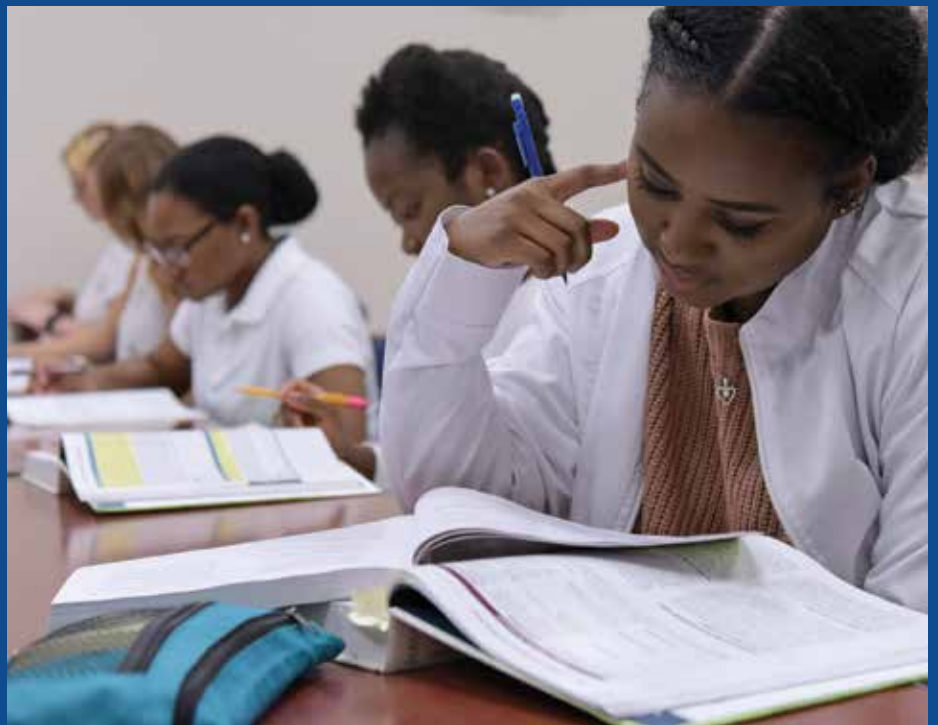
Thanks to donors like you, Western Connecticut State University continues to meet the educational needs of our diverse and talented student body and helps them define their academic path and build lasting relationships with faculty, staff and fellow students in the campus community.

Gifts to the Fund for Western of any size help:

- Enhance student support through scholarships
- Provide for unique student/faculty research and students' ability to attend and present their original research at regional and national conferences
- Strengthen WCSU's community partnerships, resulting in additional student internships and jobs

Please consider joining one of our giving societies:

- President's Club: \$1,000+
- Fairfield Hall Society: \$500 to \$999
- WestConn Society: \$250 to \$499
- Century Club: \$100 to \$249



Please make your gift today at
wcsu.edu/onlinegiving
Call us at (203) 837-9820
Visit us at wcsu.edu/giving

Please make checks payable to
WCSU Foundation
181 White Street
Danbury, CT 06810

