Newsweek’s Alter to deliver undergraduate address

Newsweek columnist, author and television analyst Jonathan Alter will be the commencement speaker at Western Connecticut State University’s undergraduate commencement ceremony on Sunday, May 24.

Alter writes a column for Newsweek that examines politics, media and social and global issues. He also is a contributing correspondent on NBC News and his 2006 book, “The Defining Moment: FDR’s Hundred Days and the Triumph of Hope,” was a national bestseller.

The 2008 campaign was the seventh presidential election Alter has covered for Newsweek. He frequently interviews American presidents and other world leaders, regularly breaks news and has authored more than 30 Newsweek cover stories on everything from shrinking confidence in the American news media, to Bill Clinton’s first interview after leaving the presidency, to Barack Obama’s first magazine cover before he arrived in the U.S. Senate. Beyond politics and media, he has written extensively over the years about terrorism, anti-Semitism, at-risk children, national service and a wide variety of other issues, including his own battle with cancer.

Alter will speak about leadership themes he learned while researching Franklin Roosevelt, such as the importance of optimism and hope, and discuss how they might relate to Obama’s presidency. As Alter wrote in “The Defining Moment,” “Roosevelt revivied the spirits of a stricken nation. . . FDR’s stunning debut in office was the flowering not just of versatile thinking but of brilliant instincts for leadership. Who influenced him? How did he transform himself into a surpassingly inspirational figure? What grand mixture of timing, cunning and character gave him and his generation what he later called a ‘rendezvous with destiny’?”

Alter joined Newsweek as an associate editor in the Nation section in March 1983, and became media critic the following year. He was named a senior writer in February 1987 and a senior editor in September 1991. For two years prior to joining Newsweek, Alter was an editor at The Washington Monthly. He has also freelanced articles for such publications as The New Republic, Esquire, Slate and The New York Times.

A Chicago native, Alter received his Bachelor of Arts in history with honors from Harvard in 1979. Besides “The Defining Moment,” he is coauthor of “Selecting a President” and the coeditor of “Inside the System.”

Commissioner of Higher Ed. to speak at graduate ceremony

Michael P. Meotti, commissioner of Higher Education in Connecticut, will be the commencement speaker at WestConn’s graduate commencement ceremony on Friday, May 22.

Meotti, who was named commissioner in March 2008, oversees the Department of Higher Education, which develops public policies to guide Connecticut’s higher education system of community colleges and universities.

When he was appointed, Meotti said he looked forward to helping Connecticut build upon its educational foundation.

“Higher education provides a strong foundation for both personal
“Bringing in outside clinicians from New York City fits perfectly with the university’s strategic plan of exploiting our proximity to this cultural center.”

Assistant Professor of Music Jamie Begian

True to the theme for the 2008 President’s Initiatives Fund awards, “Learning Opportunities that Differences Can Create,” the 10 projects selected last year to receive grants totaling $116,000 have made an important contribution to educating WestConn students for the challenges of future work and citizenship in a diverse society and an interdependent world. President James W. Schmotter, who has approved a total of 22 project grants from the fund since 2006, emphasized in his announcement of the 2008 awards that the university is committed to carrying that educational experience far beyond its campus boundaries.

“Our students will not only grow academically,” Schmotter said, “but by learning more about communities beyond the campus, be they local or global, they will better understand the complexities and power of human diversity in our world.”

Here are some of the ways in which 2008 President’s Initiatives Fund projects have helped to deepen students’ appreciation of diversity in their community and their world:

- **Step into the World in Geneva:** The 18-day program, scheduled to coincide with the UN’s 60th anniversary celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, afforded the opportunity for students to attend a regular session of the UN Human Rights Council and meet with an international array of diplomats and nongovernmental organization representatives in Geneva.

- **Bridges of Peace and Hope:** This project, a collaborative venture with Danbury Public Schools under the supervision of Professor of Education Dr. Darla Shaw, culminated with a concert on April 7 featuring children’s folksinger John Farrell and 280 community performers.

- **Diversity Lecture Series:** The seed planted by President’s Initiatives Fund support for the creation of a Diversity Lecture Series during the spring 2008 term has blossomed into a continuing program of speakers bringing unique perspectives on immigration, race relations, human rights, and other important cultural and public policy themes.

- **Capoeira Project with DanceBrazil:** Another example of the Fund’s success in bringing the world to WestConn was its sponsorship of the “Capoeira Project,” realized in collaboration with the Danbury newspaper Tribuna in spring 2008.

- **WCSU Annual Jazz Festival:** Over the past 14 years, the WCSU Jazz Festival has established its place each spring as an enduring and popular annual tradition with its winning medley of professional and student performances, complemented by a full schedule of jazz clinics and workshops taught by world-class musicians.

- **Math Mentoring Enrichment Program:** Ten WestConn undergraduates currently participate in this math-enrichment program for students at Broadview Middle School and Roberts Avenue Elementary School in Danbury, which seeks to use the inherent difference between the university and public school environments as an opportunity to provide a dynamic learning experience for both mentors and mentees.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9
Community Report Card on region’s health released

Danbury Hospital, the Danbury Health Department, United Way of Western Connecticut and WestConn released a Community Report Card on the health of residents in the region at a special presentation in late January.

Connecticut Commissioner of Health Dr. Robert Galvin was the keynote speaker at the event held in the ballroom of the Westside Campus Center.

The report card, sponsored by a variety of businesses and health care and human services providers, was designed to help those who wish to spur further improvement in the health of residents.

The report covers the towns of Bethel, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield and Sherman.

While research conducted to produce the report card found that the region’s residents are generally healthier than state and national averages, the data suggest areas of potential improvement and ways to achieve such improvement.

Dr. Linda K. Rinker, WCSU provost and academic vice president, who was a co-chair of the Report Card steering committee, said the new information will help the community focus on important health and wellness issues.

“This Report Card supplies data which, for the first time in many years, look at a large number of indicators that will give us a more complete look at where we stand as a community,” Rinker said.

Andrea Rynn, director of public and government relations at Danbury Hospital, and also a co-chair of the committee, said the report will provide guidance to area providers, public health officials, cities, towns and other organizations.

“The report’s recommendations are designed to spur discussion and community action,” Rynn said. “It will give us a roadmap to move into the future.”

Scott LeRoy, Danbury’s director of health, housing and welfare, said the collaborative work on the report card will make future work easier.

“The health of our citizens goes well beyond the boundaries of each municipality and being a partner in this study allows us all to see our communities and ourselves more clearly,” LeRoy said.

Michael Johnston, chief executive officer of United Way of Western Connecticut, said the report card will help organizations and communities measure outcomes with special precision.

“What’s key about the report card is that we now have a tool that will be invaluable in helping us identify new trends and issues that require attention as well as a benchmark for measuring our success tackling our community’s challenges,” Johnston said.

The report card includes indicator measurements in these areas:

- Our community
- Economic stability
- Education
- Health status of residents
- Risk factors
- Diseases

The final report will soon be available at: www.westernctreportcard.org

WestConn takes regional theatre festival by storm

The Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) is a national theatre program involving 18,000 students from more than 600 academic institutions across the country. College theatre departments nationwide get a chance to showcase their work and receive assessment from KCACTF judges. The festival also offers workshops, individual student readings and social luncheons to give the students a chance to network with the many actors and directors who judge their work.

In January, the WCSU theatre arts department took the Best Associate Production award with its staging of The Who’s 1969 rock opera, "Tommy," at the KCACTF Region I Festival in Fitchburg, Mass. Directed by Theatre Arts Department Chair Sal Trapani, "Tommy" is the story of a young pinball wizard suddenly thrust unwillingly into the public eye after a traumatic childhood. The rock opera was written by The Who’s front man, Pete Townshend, to express feelings of enlightenment after being guided by a spiritual master in the late 1960s. Featuring Michael Grispin, a freshman theatre major, as Tommy, the production included an impressive cast of individuals.

As a freshman to take the lead role in such a big production is a lot to undertake, but I feel it went off without a hitch. KCACTF was one of the high points in my training, so far, as an actor. I feel our performance put WestConn theatre in the spotlight of the festival."

Along with the recognition for entire productions, KCACTF recognizes the efforts of individual actors, stage managers and various other crew members. Nick Bussett, senior theatre major, was the alternate winner in the stage management competition to go to the national KCACTF in Washington, D.C. Other mentions included Kymberlee Powe, senior theatre major, who took second place in costume management, and Alfiya Menconi, senior graphic design major, who captured second place in the poster competition.

“We did fantastically well at this festival,” said Trapani. “We had nine students do readings! This is unheard of at KCACTF — usually schools will get no more than two or three. The students spent their free time taking workshops and making valuable connections in the world of theater. I believe it was a very beneficial experience for the department.”

WestConn first competed in the acclaimed regional portion of the festival at Fitchburg State College in Fitchburg, Mass., showcasing its first associate program, Anton Chekhov’s “The Cherry Orchard,” in 2007. The production, directed by Associate Professor of Theatre Arts Pamela McDaniel, received a merit award as Outstanding Associate Production for Region One.
From its African roots to the somber songs of slavery and from the dawning of the jazz age to today’s rhythms of hip-hop, African-American music has strong historical connections.

An accomplished author and expert on the social history of jazz, Dr. Burton Peretti, professor of history and non-Western cultures and department chairman at WestConn, has just had his most recent book published. "Lift Every Voice," released in January 2009 by Rowman & Littlefield, covers the history of African-American music from its West African beginnings to the popular music of today.

The author of "Jazz in American Culture," Peretti was asked by his publishing editors in 2005 to write this book. Thanks to a Connecticut State University System research grant, Peretti was able to expand his expertise on the origins of jazz, as well as territories such as vaudeville and hip-hop. The book, Peretti said, helps illustrate continuity and change.

"I think music is the most powerful expression of African-American culture over the centuries," Peretti said. "I was especially excited about the chance to read the recent scholarship of African-American music. I learned that there are strong connections between gospel and soul music and rap and between African-American pop music and the blues."

Peretti said that while much of the music of black Americans differs from its African heritage, "there are qualities that are preserved," he said. "Every new generation always has its new music and it’s innovative."

Some interesting facts that Peretti discovered while writing the 200-page hardcover book include the African-American roots of the barbershop quartet. "Its black roots are ignored by the early 1900s," said Peretti. "But the harmony later reemerges in black gospel quartets of the 1920s and ’30s, which later influence the doo-wop groups of the 1950s."

The book’s title is spun from "Lift Every Voice and Sing," a famous 1900 anthem written by African-American brothers, J. Rosamond Johnson and James Weldon Johnson, to celebrate the birthday of Abraham Lincoln.

"I thought it was appropriate. It’s an admonition. There’s that element of uplifting the people, which is a big motif after emancipation," Peretti said.

For more information, call Peretti at (203) 837-8309.
Danbury:

No. 1 — CSUS enrollment
No. 3 — CSUS alumni residents

By Terri Raimondi

Danbury is the home of 1,419 students who are enrolled in one of the four universities of the Connecticut State University System (CSUS) — more than any other city or town in the state.

Being the largest university system in the state, with approximately 36,000 students and 180,000 alumni, CSUS plays an integral role in the education of Connecticut students as well as the state’s cultural life and economic well-being. Currently, 93 percent of CSUS students are Connecticut residents, and no community has more students attending Western, Southern, Central or Eastern Connecticut State University than Danbury.

“The Connecticut State University System focuses squarely on Connecticut, and nearly 9 in 10 of our graduates stay in the state to pursue careers, raise families and contribute to the state’s vitality,” said Chancellor Dr. David G. Carter. “We’re accessible, affordable and provide high quality education, preparing students to succeed in the 21st century knowledge-based economy.”

WCSU President James W. Schmotter said the four universities are part of Connecticut’s economic foundation and will help the state compete in the future.

“These numbers demonstrate how WestConn and the other Connecticut State Universities serve the needs of the students and families of our state,” Schmotter said. “I’m gratified that so many Danbury residents recognize the quality and affordability that our CSUS institutions provide.”

Danbury also is among the communities with the highest percentage of CSUS alumni in the state. Danbury is ranked third with 3,530 known alumni living in Connecticut, exceeded only by New Haven and Hamden. CSUS graduates are a critical asset to Connecticut’s workforce in such high-demand fields as nursing, education, and the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

“Everyone in Connecticut knows someone who attended Central, Eastern, Southern or Western, and with good reason,” Carter said. “Graduates of these universities are making a difference, everywhere in Connecticut, in communities large and small. The leadership they provide across many fields of endeavor is what makes this state a great place to live, learn, work and stay.”

The solid track record of the four CSUS universities — reflected in a record-setting 6,870 degrees awarded in 2008 and on-campus public policy debate. Students from any discipline of study are encouraged to be a part of the debate team as each discipline can bring new and diverse ideas to the table.

For more information, call (203) 837-8486.

For more information, call Gadkar-Wilcox at (203) 837-8565.

Debate Society adds to awards tally

The success story continues for WestConn’s Roger Sherman Debate Society, as the team advanced recently to the quarterfinal round at a national debate championship, a student debater was nationally ranked, and the team’s coach, Associate Professor of History and Non-Western Cultures Dr. Wynn Gadkar-Wilcox, was named Debate Director of the Year for 2008-09.

At the Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) Junior Varsity/Novice National Championships held in early March at Towson University in Maryland, WestConn’s squad advanced to the quarterfinal round as one of the final eight novice teams competing, ultimately losing to Army by a score of 2-1. The team always has been competitive but advancing to the quarterfinals in a national tournament was WestConn’s best finish to date.

Gadkar-Wilcox expressed pride in his team’s success while acknowledging the groundwork laid by his predecessor. “For a team that originally was funded from the pockets of (former debate society director) Associate Professor of Political Science Dr. Christopher Kukk, to now being one of the largest teams in the region, surpassing Dartmouth, is an accomplishment,” he said.

In addition to the team’s success at the tournament, Debra Salvato, a freshman majoring in political science from New Fairfield, was named 20th Novice Speaker in the nation — another impressive milestone for the debate society.

The accolades accumulated in 2009 began in February, when Gadkar-Wilcox was honored as the 2008-09 Debate Director of the Year by the Society Advocating More and Better Argumentation (SAMBA). The annual SAMBA award winner is determined by debate directors and coaches from across the northeastern United States and the announcement was made during the CEDA Northeast Regional Debate Championships in late February at Baruch College in New York.

In discussing the award, Gadkar-Wilcox said, “I was very surprised, but it was nice to be recognized and given the award by Cornell University Debate Director Sam Nelson. The people who decide this award are very influential, and it’s a reflection of how our team has progressed.”

He also turned the spotlight back on his students. “I think it’s a credit to the members of the debate team how it keeps expanding and improving,” he said. “There is a core of very dedicated students who have worked very hard to turn the team into more of a family. This is what contributes to our success.”

While the debate season is now over for the year, the team is still meeting to prepare for an on-campus public policy debate. Students from any discipline of study are encouraged to be a part of the debate team as each discipline can bring new and diverse ideas to the table.
“My first impression of the trip sank in at the breakfast in the Armory,” Szabo wrote. “I thought it would be the usual few key students and faculty from the universities, but indeed there was a crowd from each school. This implies good organization, but more importantly the seriousness of the situation facing the university system was made relevant by the good turnout.”

Wetmore added: “The breakfast was a terrific way of starting off the day because it gave WestConn students the opportunity to show clear strength in numbers over the other CSU’s to say they were there to send a strong message that what was being proposed by the legislature as far as cuts for the CSU system was unacceptable. ... Before meeting with the Danbury delegation, we split up into groups and roamed the halls of the Capitol, meeting with every representative and senator who would listen to us. The meeting included representatives from both the House and Senate and from both sides of the aisle. They were Reps. Jan Giegler, Bob Godfrey and Jason Bartlett, and Sen. Mike McLachlan, as well as former Sen. David Cappiello. We spent nearly two hours trying to get straight and honest answers from the representatives.”

Millburn said: “As a student and firm believer in the value of education, it is absolutely ridiculous to close a university, especially in times of economic hardship. Some of the information provided by the university upon attending Lobby Day addressed this problem directly. For every dollar of funding received by WCSU, the return is $3.75 in regional output. Also, WCSU provides 2,165 jobs to the Danbury area and 76 percent of WCSU graduates stay in Connecticut. I went to Hartford to fight for something I firmly believe in, but upon reading this information the economics student in me was equally enraged. College graduates stimulate the economy by becoming the intelligent workforce of tomorrow and the primary engines of growth in the economy. Education should be the absolute last consideration for cuts in funding for this reason. With the facts stated above, the representatives could not possibly close WCSU.”

Wetmore reported, “Rep. Bartlett stated he was glad that the students were ‘insulted’ that they would put the closing of a CSU on the table and that these cuts were even being considered. The representatives made
Two important friends of WestConn who passed away in the last year — Richard Asch and John Azzariti, both of Danbury — were honored with the Community Service Award for their tireless work and support of students.

Asch participated in many activities and with his recent retirement as a senior district sales manager at Boehringer Ingelheim, he planned to begin volunteering several hours a week at WCSU. He had a special interest in encouraging area businesses to increase their support to the university and in cultivating new companies by sharing the WestConn story.

Azzariti sat on the Steering Committee of the Ancell School of Business at WestConn. He also helped many students over the past 20 years launch their careers in accounting. As the managing partner of the Stamford office of KPMG, Azzariti led the way in attracting the attention of major public accounting firms to WestConn. He not only gave students a chance by hiring them when they graduated, but he mentored many during their careers.

The awards were presented on March 25, when the WCSU Foundation hosted its annual WestConn Society Luncheon in the Westside Campus Center Ballroom. Theresa Eberhard-Asch accepted the award from President James W. Schmotter on behalf of her late husband.

“One way you can honor Rich is to volunteer yourself and particularly to help the students here at WestConn,” she said. “Rich always enjoyed giving much more than getting, and helping these students would be a fitting legacy for him.”

Kathleen Azzariti accepted the award in her husband’s memory.

“John had a big heart and he wore it right on his sleeve,” she said. “It is so fitting that this award come from the university. It is such a great resource for the community and for John it was so important to extend a hand to the students here and give them the opportunity to learn and to succeed.”

Dr. G. Koryoe Anim-Wright, vice president for Institutional Advancement, said both Asch and Azzariti would be remembered with scholarships in their names.

“Both men were wonderful friends to the university, always were smiling and had words of encouragement for everyone,” said Anim-Wright. “They were two of our most avid supporters and never missed an opportunity to share with friends their love of WestConn. These awards, and the scholarships we have created in their names, will ensure that their legacy continues at the university.”

To see a gallery of images from this event, visit wcsu.edu/flickr.

WestConn Society Club presents Community Service Awards at annual luncheon

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Foundation honors Union Savings Bank at 23rd Annual University Ball

WestConn faculty, staff, students and friends will honor Union Savings Bank (USB) for its tireless efforts to foster community growth at the 23rd University Ball this spring. The popular annual event will be at 7 p.m. on Saturday, May 2, in the Feldman Arena of the William O’Neill Convocation Center on the university’s Westside campus. This year’s theme, “A Beacon on Main,” illustrates how USB has anchored Danbury’s downtown for more than 142 years, and, under the leadership of President and CEO John Kline, has continued a history of generosity and activity that has moved the city constantly forward.

Tickets for the ball are $200 per person and are available by calling (203) 837-8279 or online at wcsu.edu/ball. Information about being a sponsor is also available online or by calling.

top 10 reasons why you should attend the University Ball:

10. You’ll get to show colleagues that you actually do have social graces.
9. A good chunk of your ticket is tax deductible.
8. What an excuse to buy those way-too-expensive shoes!
7. It’s a Dancing-with-the-Stars opportunity (Dr. Schmotter’s dance card isn’t filled yet).
6. The last time you wore a tuxedo was 1969 and it involved tie-dyed ruffles. They’re out now.
5. Face-time with donors means chatting up scholarship funding for your programs.
4. Hey, you could score a swanky stay at a Mazatlan resort on a measly 20-dollar raffle ticket.
3. Unlike bailouts, this WestConn Stimulus Package is a sure thing.
2. Because you missed the other 22 University Balls.
1. No tipping!

See you at the Ball!

23rd Annual University Ball
Saturday, May 3, at 7 p.m.
Cost: (203) 837-8279 to RSVP or visit wcsu.edu/ball
Mark Case: Fall ’08 Employee of the Semester

Mark Case, the university’s director of administrative services who is known for his can-do attitude and his careful and ethical adherence to purchasing rules, was recognized as the Employee of the Semester in a Student Center ceremony last month.

Police Sgt. Richard Montefusco and Paul Simon, director of the Westside Campus Center, were the unofficial masters of ceremony.

Live chat sessions supplement orientation, admissions efforts

“Do all music majors live in the dorms by the music building?” “How is the pre-med program at WestConn?” “Are there scholarships available?” “How is the food?” “Where will I find quiet places to study?” “How many freshmen live on campus?” “Can I take astronomy classes my first semester?”

These and dozens of other questions were posed recently by prospective students during live chat sessions conducted through WestConn’s Facebook page. On Jan. 29, Feb. 5 and 26, and March 26, administrators and staff representing Admissions, Financial Aid, University Computing and other campus departments convened in front of their computers to answer questions in an online chat room created especially for the events and accessible via the university’s Facebook page.

WCSU Web Content Specialist Jeff Shpunt, who assisted with the technical development of the live chat, also sat in on the first session. “I’m glad the university decided to move forward with the chats,” Shpunt said. “With the new generation of students coming in, communicating this way is something they prefer. There’s no pressure, it’s not face-to-face, so they can ask questions anonymously. I think the students ask more ‘real’ questions about the things they are concerned about than they would in person. It’s also more convenient for them to be able sit at home and participate in these chats.

“We’ve gotten a lot of positive feedback,” he continued. “The students are thankful for the interaction.”

Director of Admissions Steve Goetsch agreed.

“Admissions chats on Facebook have been very successful for us,” he said. “We are constantly aware of the changing venues to communicate with our students. Our message to students stays constant whether it is in a Viewbook, on our Web page, or via a Facebook chat. We work diligently to stay current with the newest medium students are using, as we try to connect with them to communicate the information they need.”

Goetsch said additional chats have been scheduled for April 9 and 23. “We try to do them every two weeks.”

For more information, call Goetsch at (203) 837-8286.

Women’s Basketball Team earns NCAA bid; Rybczyk also honored

The Women’s Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) has announced the 2009 Russell Athletic/WBCA Victory Club Award recipients. The Russell Athletic/WBCA Victory Club Award is presented to each WBCA-member head coach who achieves career wins of 200, 300, 400, 500 or more, in 100-victory increments.

WestConn Women’s Basketball Coach Kim Rybczyk captured both her 200th collegiate coaching victory and 100th victory at her alma mater this past season. The Colonials went 21-6 and made their 11th appearance in the NCAA Division III Championships.

Rybczyk was recognized during the Russell Athletic/WBCA National Coach of the Year Luncheon on April 6 at the Hyatt Regency St. Louis Riverfront during the NCAA National Convention, held in conjunction with the NCAA Women’s Final Four.

The Women’s Basketball Team earned an at-large bid in the 2009 NCAA Division III National Championships, where it faced host Brandeis University in the first round on March 6. The Brandeis University women’s basketball team was not bonded with the women and over the game’s final 13 minutes to secure an NCAA Tournament first-round victory, 62-49.

M.F.A. Exhibit

A photo caption on the Campus Briefs page of the Feb/March Communique failed to name the artist whose work is pictured. The painting depicted is by Master of Fine Arts student Karen Bartone.

CSUS Lobby Day (cont’d.)

it clear that they did not want to close a CSU school, but many of these cuts were being seriously considered. After the meeting, handfuls of students were able to get into scheduled meetings with their local representatives as well as meeting with Minority Leader Larry Cafero. These meetings were very productive in making our claims to leadership that we cannot take additional cuts.”

The students’ efforts were successful, Milburn said.

“Our large numbers were impressive and our message was clear; we will hold our representatives accountable and cuts in education are not acceptable.”

“The actual lobbying part was an eye-opening experience,” Szabo concluded. “I have never much bothered to write to my region or state representatives, and would not have thought about physically tracking them down in the state capitol and verbally lobbying them for a change. A trip like this makes the government system come alive and jump out of the textbooks and lecture rooms. By going through the process of interacting with legislators, I felt that I can make a difference in a government that is so much larger than me.”

Wetmore wrote, “Together the students sent a strong message from the western part of the state that they are behind their faculty and their university and they recognize hard decisions have to be made, but they are not willing to give an inch when it comes to cuts that are going to cripple the university and their future."

Milburn agreed. “Lobby Day was an invaluable experience. The students represented WCSU in an intellectual and respectable manner. Our presence was felt and understood by all in attendance.”

For more information about Lobby Day, call Associate Professor of Political Science Dr. Christopher Kukk at (203) 837-8247.

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The Women’s Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) has announced the 2009 Russell Athletic/WBCA Victory Club Award recipients. The Russell Athletic/WBCA Victory Club Award is presented to each WBCA-member head coach who achieves career wins of 200, 300, 400, 500 or more, in 100-victory increments.

WestConn Women’s Basketball Coach Kim Rybczyk captured both her 200th collegiate coaching victory and 100th victory at her alma mater this past season. The Colonials went 21-6 and made their 11th appearance in the NCAA Division III Championships.

Rybczyk was recognized during the Russell Athletic/WBCA National Coach of the Year Luncheon on April 6 at the Hyatt Regency St. Louis Riverfront during the NCAA National Convention, held in conjunction with the NCAA Women’s Final Four.

The Women’s Basketball Team earned an at-large bid in the 2009 NCAA Division III National Championships, where it faced host Brandeis University in the first round on March 6. The Brandeis University women’s basketball team was not bonded with the women and over the game’s final 13 minutes to secure an NCAA Tournament first-round victory, 62-49.

M.F.A. Exhibit

A photo caption on the Campus Briefs page of the Feb/March Communique failed to name the artist whose work is pictured. The painting depicted is by Master of Fine Arts student Karen Bartone.

CSUS Lobby Day (cont’d.)

it clear that they did not want to close a CSU school, but many of these cuts were being seriously considered. After the meeting, handfuls of students were able to get into scheduled meetings with their local representatives as well as meeting with Minority Leader Larry Cafero. These meetings were very productive in making our claims to leadership that we cannot take additional cuts.”

The students’ efforts were successful, Milburn said.

“Our large numbers were impressive and our message was clear; we will hold our representatives accountable and cuts in education are not acceptable.”

“The actual lobbying part was an eye-opening experience,” Szabo concluded. “I have never much bothered to write to my region or state representatives, and would not have thought about physically tracking them down in the state capitol and verbally lobbying them for a change. A trip like this makes the government system come alive and jump out of the textbooks and lecture rooms. By going through the process of interacting with legislators, I felt that I can make a difference in a government that is so much larger than me.”

Wetmore wrote, “Together the students sent a strong message from the western part of the state that they are behind their faculty and their university and they recognize hard decisions have to be made, but they are not willing to give an inch when it comes to cuts that are going to cripple the university and their future."

Milburn agreed. “Lobby Day was an invaluable experience. The students represented WCSU in an intellectual and respectable manner. Our presence was felt and understood by all in attendance.”

For more information about Lobby Day, call Associate Professor of Political Science Dr. Christopher Kukk at (203) 837-8247.
New course examines homosexuality (cont’d.)

by LeRoi Jones. "Playwrights started making bold statements about being gay," Gagnon said. In this play, a teenage boy is beaten up in the high school bathroom by students who didn’t accept his homosexuality. “The Boys in the Band” also was penned during this time. “It’s an impossibility rich topic,” said Richard Halliburton, professor of biology at WestConn, who will speak on Darwin’s life, work and influence. “You can think about the entire legacy of 19th century thought,” said Burton Peretti, WestConn professor of history of history and non-Western culture, who will speak on “Those Lincoln-Obama Comparisons” (TELEGRAPH.CO.UK).

Meotti (cont’d.)

success and the economic competitiveness of our state,” Meotti said. “Like many families throughout Connecticut, members of my family have been fortunate to pursue college degrees that my grandparents would never have imagined to be possible. The availability of quality public and universities and student financial aid made that possible.”

Meotti has an extensive background in public policy, having served as president of United Way of Connecticut and president of the Connecticut Policy and Economic Council. He served eight years in the State Senate during which he was assistant majority leader and vice-chair of the Education Committee.

The commissioner counts among his accomplishments a report that points to potential weaknesses in Connecticut’s support of education. For instance, while the state is ranked among the top five in income and education level, many students are not ready for college-level math or English courses and need to take remedial classes.

Meotti credits the program that WestConn has forged with Danbury and Bethel high schools, called “Building a Bridge to Improve Student Success,” as a model to address the weakness of some college students. It pairs high school teachers and college professors to ensure students are ready for college-level work.

Meotti is a graduate of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and the Georgetown University Law Center.

President’s Initiatives (cont’d.)

• Opening the World of Danbury to WCSU Students: This project, introduced by the WCSU Division of Student Affairs, takes WestConn students out into the Greater Danbury community to learn from the wide-ranging social, economic and cultural diversity to be found in the area’s historical sites, neighborhoods, restaurants, shops and entertainment venues.

• Project Bumpspark: This nonprofit television production project offers an example of how the President’s Initiatives Fund can help to create educational opportunities for a wider community.

For more detailed information about the projects, please visit wcsu.edu/president/initiatives.

Theatre Festival (cont’d.)

Enrollment in WestConn’s theatre arts department has been steadily growing, and with the university’s close proximity to New York City and Broadway, students have been offered excellent opportunities to flourish on the stage. From winning awards for its first two years competing at KCACTF to participating bi-annually at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland, the department has gained valuable recognition in the world of theatre arts.

“Keep your eyes open,” said Powe. “You never know where you will wind up. I was a performance major, but as time passed I realized I had a knack for costume design and management. The more experience I get due to the WestConn theatre department, the more I can carve my niche in this discipline.”

For more information, call Gagnon at (203) 837-9062.
A. Members of the WCSU Dance Team perform a scene from “Love Story.”

B. Ian, an MTV intern (right), interviews a WestConn student who came to one of two casting calls held on campus in March to solicit participants for a new reality-TV show the cable network plans to produce.

C. WCSU freshman guard Stephanie Slonski, #20, and senior forward Isabella Henry, #34, go up for a rebound against UMass-Boston.

D. (l-r): Pianist Alan Farnham accompanies Albert Regni, principal saxophonist with the New York Philharmonic and New York City Ballet Orchestras, during a concert for piano and saxophone held in Ives Concert Hall in February.
A. Students selected to participate in the Hancock Leadership Program applaud the program’s benefactor, W. Jason Hancock (right).

B. A Women’s History Month highlight was a fashion show depicting WestConn fashions through the ages. Fashion from the ’50s is modeled by Catherine Caulderbanks.

C. Students hosted a “Kiss a Pig” fundraiser to support Habitat for Humanity during a weekend series of events.

D. Stein Villumstad, deputy secretary general of Religions for Peace, discussed “Religion as a Missing Link to Diplomacy” at a talk sponsored by the International Services Office, the WCSU International Center, the Honors Program and the Newman Center.

E. Rev. DeForest Blake “Buster” Soaries Jr. discussed “The New Promised Land: Martin Luther King’s Dream and its Reality in the Age of the Obama Presidency,” as part of the university’s Diversity Lecture Series. “To live long enough to see a member of an oppressed minority rise up to become the most powerful person in the world is unbelievable,” Soaries said. “It’s unprecedented.”

F. U.S. Rep. Chris Murphy, D-Fifth Dist., (right) visited campus to “deliver some good news to WestConn students! There is the potential for some students here at WestConn to save thousands of dollars as you seek to pursue your education.” As WCSU Enrollment Management Officer William Hawkins (left) looked on, Murphy outlined the recently passed federal stimulus package that increased the tax credit for college tuition to $2,500 a year, boosted Pell grant payouts and added millions of dollars to work-study funds. “I feel as a younger member of Congress a duty to speak out for students,” Murphy said.

G. The WCSU Jazz Orchestra performs.
Western Connecticut State University

**CAREER FAIR**

**FAIRWEDNESDAY, APRIL 8**

O’NEILL CENTER / 1 TO 4:30 P.M.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS & BRING RESUMES!

OPEN TO CURRENT STUDENTS & ALUMNI

MORE THAN 50 EMPLOYERS ATTENDING!

CO-OPS, INTERNSHIPS & SUMMER JOBS AVAILABLE

ENTRY-LEVEL & EXPERIENCED CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

GOT SOME QUESTIONS?

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER: WWW.WCSU.EDU/CDC OR 837-8263

Thursday, April 30, 7 p.m.

WCSU jazz faculty

Friday, May 1, 7 p.m.

WCSU Jazz Orchestra with guest Dafnis Prieto Trio

Saturday, May 2, 7 p.m.

Concert with Danilo Perez Trio

www.wcsu.edu/tickets
or (203) 837-8499

Celebrating the diversity of student research at WestConn.

Thursday, May 14, 2009, 2:30 to 5 p.m.

Stevens Research Library, WCSU Midtown campus

**VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS**

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**WestConn Research Day**

**Western Connecticut State University Opera presents:**

**figaro**

**the marriage of**

**Cabaret to benefit WCSU child care**

Thursday, April 16, 2009

Westside Campus Center Ballroom Showtime – 7:30 p.m.

Jazz orchestra and dancing at 9:30 p.m.

Join us for our 12th Cabaret to benefit WCSU child care!

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