

Housatonic

COMMUNITY NEWS

December 2011

Interfaith

Housatonic Community College is among a select number of colleges and universities across the United States chosen to participate in President Barack Obama's *Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge*.

The challenge was launched in March 2011. President Anita Gliniecki accepted an invitation to participate, and Linda Bayusik, Housatonic's Director of Student Activities, coordinated a response and submitted the proposal accepted by the White House.

Housatonic's interfaith initiative will focus on promoting health, exercise and wellness practices, especially those dealing with food and healthy choices. The initiative will

introduce wellness practices, such as meditation, from a variety of cultures. There will be community outreach as well as on-campus programming.

The Student Life Office is a perfect home for the program. Humming with a constant stream of students seeking information, advice and mentoring from Linda and Assistant Director, Kelly Hope, the office is the central hub for information and campus culture. Overseeing over 20 clubs, the Student Senate, the Wellness Center, Student IDs, student activities and events as well as cultural trips, the celebration of diversity event and outreach activities like the Pay it Forward Scholarship keeps Linda, Kelly and student workers busy.



Interfaith Service: "an important way to build understanding between different communities and contribute to the common good."

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On top of those responsibilities this semester has been the promotion of the interfaith program. Linda has been visiting student clubs, academic departments and campus committees to make sure the word is out. She has discussed ways the principles of interfaith can be incorporated into campus events and even the curriculum.

Her one-on-one efforts are important. Not everyone sees interfaith as a full separation of church and state. "That is why dialog becomes important. Everybody can be involved," she

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says. "It's not about converting people to others' beliefs but to learning more about understanding each other.

"We can all be involved because we are a very diverse community here at HCC. It doesn't matter what our religions or non-religious beliefs are. I really hope that all the departments can work together."

"Faculty," Linda says, "can do simple little things in the classroom to teach about interfaith." She points to a Web site that offers ideas for educators: www.ifyc.org

"Basically, what I am doing this semester is just planting the seeds."

The spring semester should see a heavy crop of activities, both in and out of the classroom, that reflect interfaith themes. An HCC Day of Service is planned for April 21, 2012. Linda hopes to get many HCC students, faculty and staff involved to serve the community that day. Anyone wanting to join the interfaith team or be involved with the day of service should contact her; ideas and suggestions are also appreciated. ~Linda Bayusik, Susan Monroe

"No matter what religion someone is or is not, health is a major concern." - HCC's Interfaith Initiative proposal

Upcoming Interfaith Activities

Martin Luther King Memorial

Health Screenings

Tai Chi, Yoga, Aerobics Classes

Weight Loss Programs with Incentives

Nutrition Classes

Community Service Day

Did You Know?



Graphic interpretations of the word "coexistence" are often seen on bumper stickers and tee shirts to promote the principles of diversity and interfaith.

The above interpretation is based on the original design by Polish artist, Piotr Mlodozieniec.

The image was first seen at an international exhibition on the theme of coexistence at Jerusalem's Museum on the Seam in 2001. Other artists who interpreted the theme include Yoko Ono, Milton Glaser, and Lanny Sommese. The artists' works can be viewed on the museum's Web site: www.coexistene.art.museum.

Symbol Key:



Miss Puerto Rico, Glorivee Vazquez; Miss Teen Puerto Rico, Janice Cancel; and Little Mister Puerto Rico, Christian Cancel, were part of a celebration of Diversity sponsored by Student Activities.

World Peace: What Can Students Do?



On Thursday, October 13, HCC welcomed Ms. Aye Aye Thant for an inspiring and uplifting speech and discussion about steps students can take to get involved in conflict resolution. Ms. Thant is the daughter of U Thant, third Secretary General of the UN, generally credited with helping to peacefully mediate the Cuban Missile Crisis. The event, which was hosted by Professor Rob Nelson and the Writing Center, drew about 150 students, faculty and members of the community.

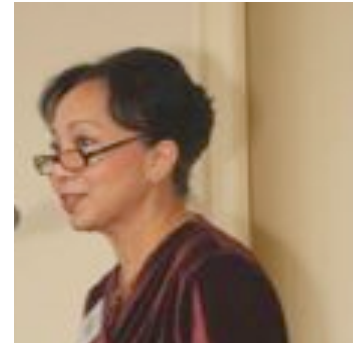
The talk began with a brief PowerPoint presentation by Professor Nelson, who explained in general terms both the accomplishments of U Thant and HCC's commitment to local and global diversity. Professor Nelson called upon one of his students, who

has traveled to Africa to build schools in Benin, to stand and be recognized by the assembly. Ms. Thant then described her father's childhood of deprivation and poverty; she contrasted this with his rise to prominence in the world of global diplomacy at the height of the Cold War.

She offered students insights into her father's lifelong dedication to education, and she concluded with a list of practical tips students might enact in their daily lives to bring about conflict resolution.

Following a brief Q and A period, President Anita Gliniecki greeted Ms. Thant and her husband, who was also in attendance. It was truly an eye-opening gathering.

~Rob Nelson, Assistant Prof. of Developmental English

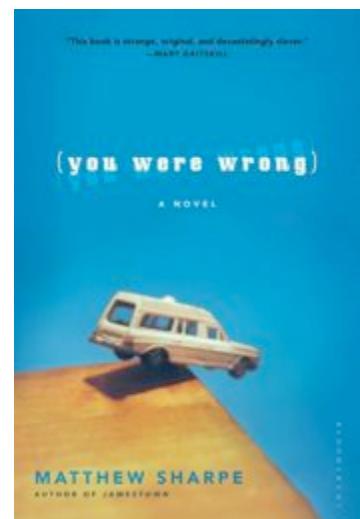


(Photo: Suzanne M. Sheridan)

Writers in the Housatonic Classroom



Mathew Sharpe, whose latest novel, the mystery, *You Were Wrong*, read and discussed his writing and research with Housatonic students. Sharpe was the first writer to take part in the Writer in the Classroom series coordinated by Peter Everett, Public Services Librarian.



Housatonic's Six Million Dollar Woman

Housatonic bids a fond farewell to its Director of Institutional Advancement

Magaly Cajigas and Cindy Cominsky offer an appreciation of Maureen Dowdle's contributions:

In Maureen's years here at HCC she established a set structure to board management, financial direction and the ability to cater to two different demographics—the inside donors (all faculty and staff) and outside donors (individual, corporate, foundations, and organizations). It takes someone with great skill to complete that daunting task. She may joke and say "I have no friends here," but in reality she does, those that understand how difficult it is to raise money, especially during tough economic times. Yet she managed to keep this locomotive running.

During the first ever, Major Gift Campaign, "Pathway to Success," she accomplished along with the board of directors, and HCC staff and faculty the goal of raising \$1 million dollars and met it. These dollars raised assisted many College programs and also gave fruit to scholarships, which helped students in need.

"I have learned a lot working for Maureen, and her level of energy and professionalism are the reasons the HCC Foundation Office has grown to where it is today."

*Cindy Cominsky,
HCC Foundation Scholarship Coordinator*



In her thirteen-year tenure at the helm of the Housatonic Community College Foundation, Maureen Dowdle raised more than six million dollars.

In the area of special events, needless to say, Maureen raised the bar with the creation of the Alumni Hall of Fame Gala Event. In the past three years of this event the Foundation has garnered new donors and friends. The Gala has also brought Chaz Palminteri and Levar Burton, celebrities who we never would have thought would travel to Bridgeport. With this event we have also encouraged the outreach to the HCC alumni members by inducting past Housatonic graduates in the Alumni Hall of Fame. Maureen along with board sponsors, committee members and student volunteers made this event successful.

In a nutshell, Maureen Dowdle has raised the bar for the Foundation—the only direction to go now is upward and onward.

*~Magaly Cajigas,
Institutional Advancement Associate*

Operational Values at Work

Biology Faculty are Teaching “Integrity”

This Fall 2011 semester at Housatonic Community College, the Organizational Culture Steering Committee (OCSC), chaired by Edwin Chapman, has recommended and encouraged the infusion of the “Operational Value” term **Integrity** into the overall HCC academic and workplace Community.

In response to this recommendation by the OCSC, the full-time Biology faculty members of the Math/Science Department at HCC have elected to incorporate the specific example of the MMR vaccine and autism link controversy into various *Biology* and *Anatomy & Physiology* course lectures regarding the instruction of the term **Integrity** as it relates to science.



Background

The MMR vaccine is an immunization shot against measles, mumps and rubella (also called German measles). The MMR vaccine and autism link controversy was a case of scientific misconduct, which triggered an international health scare. It followed the publication in 1998 of a paper in the acclaimed medical journal *The Lancet* by lead author Dr. Andrew Wakefield, which presented apparent evidence that autism spectrum disorders could be caused by the MMR vaccine following administration to children.

The flawed studies performed by Wakefield have since been declared “fraudulent research” by the *British Medical Journal* in 2011. Consensus within the respected medical community of both the U.S. and U.K. is that there is currently no direct scientific evidence linking the MMR vaccine to the development of autism in children, and that, in fact, the benefits of receiving the vaccine greatly outweigh the risks.

“The MMR vaccine and autism link controversy was a case of scientific misconduct, which triggered an international health scare.”

However, the claims in Wakefield’s 1998 *The Lancet* article were already ubiquitously reported throughout the U.K., the U.S., Canada and Ireland, and as a direct result, MMR vaccination rates in these countries have decreased significantly. This decline in the MMR vaccination of children has led to a greatly increased incidence of measles and mumps, resulting in deaths and severe and permanent injuries. As a result, many prominent physicians, editors and international medical journals have recently boldly emphasized the likely direct association of Wakefield’s fraudulent behavior to disease epidemics and tragic deaths.

Summary

Through this particular case study example, HCC *Biology* and *Anatomy & Physiology* students will hopefully appreciate and begin to comprehend the significance of **Integrity** and the types of serious negative consequences that may result to an entire society due to the blatant lack of **Integrity** exhibited by only one individual. ~Kathleen Toedt, Assistant Professor of *Anatomy & Physiology/Biology*

Higher Education Update

Nation's Top Community College

On December 13, 2011, The Aspen Institute named Valencia College in Orlando, Florida the nation's top community college.

The prize recognizes student learning, completion, equity and employment/earnings after college. Joshua Wyner, Executive Director of the Aspen Institute's College Excellence Program, said Valencia is a "shining example of what really matters in community colleges, and that's helping students succeed through learning, graduating and getting good jobs."

Nearly half of Valencia's students are underrepresented minorities — African American, Hispanic/Latino or Native American — and many are low-income. Yet, more than 50 percent graduate or transfer within three years of entering college, compared to under 40 percent for community colleges nationally.

Valencia will receive a \$600,000 prize to support its programs. The Aspen Institute's mission is to foster values-based leadership.

What Does Success Mean to Us

Community colleges are taking a major step forward in redefining what "success" means for our institutions.

This year a Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) will give community colleges what many believe has long been lacking in reporting their successes to the public and policymakers: specific metrics that assess how they do in areas such as student progress and achievement,

implementation of career and technical education programs (credit and noncredit) and transparency in reporting outcomes. Until now, the colleges have been largely assessed using the same measures as 4-year universities, which, in many cases do not match their mission or the characteristics of their student populations.

American Association of Community Colleges President and CEO Walter G. Bumphus explained, "Many traditional measures of institutional effectiveness can produce an incomplete or inaccurate picture of community college performance.

"Given the increasing reliance on our colleges to educate the growing numbers of students to keep our nation competitive," Bumphus said, "it is essential that the public and policymakers understand what we do and how well we do it."

The VFA developed its metric and an accompanying manual over a 5-month period with the help of 58 community colleges, both large and small and including two state systems.



Housatonic student interpretations of William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night, or What You Will* on display at the Westport Playhouse's production of the play in October.

***Housatonic Community News* welcomes articles, photographs, announcements and feedback. The deadline for the February 2012 issue is February 3, 2012.**

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