

UniversityPlace

Closing the Gap



Steve Santori

Horace H. Smith, left, Anne L. Shelly, Barbara A. Yonai, and Barry L. Wells are among the staff and administrators who have helped guide SU's efforts to improve student retention.

When the Syracuse University Retention and Attrition Committee released its December 1987 report on graduation rates, the news was grim: Only 40 percent of African American students who enrolled from 1980 to 1982 had persisted to graduation within 6 years, and African American students graduated at a 6-year rate 23 percentage points lower than their Caucasian counterparts.

Fast forward to today and the picture brightens considerably. "We have work left to do, but we've made tremendous improvement," says Barry L. Wells, senior vice president and dean of student affairs. "We've shrunk the gap between African American and Caucasian 6-year graduation rates to just 6 percentage points, while improving the University's overall rate to better than 75 percent—the highest SU has ever recorded."

SU's overall improvement has been assisted considerably by better graduation rates among students of color. The impact has not gone unnoticed. In a spring address to the University community, Vice Chancellor and Provost Deborah A. Freund moved up the timeframe for meeting her retention goals for the general student population, calling for an overall graduation rate of 80 percent by next year and 85 percent by 2009.

According to the Center for Support of Teaching and Learning (CSTL), which has monitored the University's retention rates since 1989, there are other signs of improving African American retention rates on campus as well. In 2000, for exam-

ple, only about 4 percent of SU's African American freshmen dropped out after their first year. "It's a lower percentage than any other ethnic group and the lowest rate on record for this key indicator of future retention," says Barbara A. Yonai, associate director of CSTL.

This vast improvement, however, faces one remaining obstacle: perception. "Unfortunately, numbers of people—parents, students, faculty, and staff—still think about SU in terms of 20 years ago," Wells says. "This snapshot shows that we're no longer a laggard in retaining African American students; we're rapidly becoming a leader."

Freund has established a peer group of 12 universities against which SU measures its performance in several areas. Since 1989, none of those peer institutions has improved its graduation rate gap as much as SU has. Not only that, but according to an NCAA survey of Division I private institutions, SU's current gap of 6 percentage points clearly

outshines the national average gap of 23 percent.

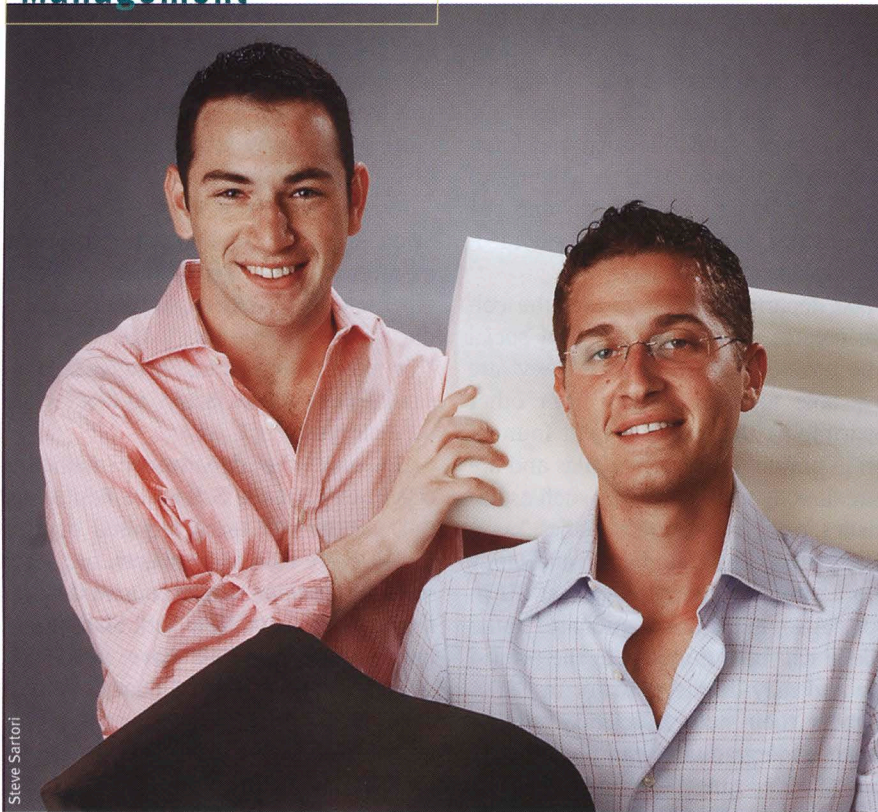
"People must abandon dated perceptions," says Horace H. Smith, associate vice president of undergraduate studies in the Division of Student Support and Retention. "We were once average, but now we're exceptional. For African American students at SU, the University's core value of diversity doesn't just mean retention for retention's sake. It means facilitating their successful participation in the University community."

Anne L. Shelly, director of the Center for Retention Studies, concurs. "The students really tell the stories behind these great numbers," Shelly says. "We have talked with students who have left and those who are still pursuing degrees. In both cases, we have learned a lot about what the institution is doing or not doing that influences decisions to stay or to leave."

Shelly credits several programs for their influential role in improving retention. For example, the Student Success Initiative is aimed toward assisting at-risk students, whether they are having academic problems or considering leaving SU for other reasons. Other initiatives include the creation of learning communities, which help students forge stronger connections with other students who share the same interests and goals, as well as with key faculty and staff members. "Staff are building strong relationships with students to understand what's getting in the way of success and to help open up new resources," Shelly says.

—Matthew R. Snyder

Management



Steve Sartori

Student entrepreneurs Steven Darling '03, left, and Brian Bushell '03 display contour and TV/reading pillows that they sell through the Memory Foam Factory, a business they created.

Comfortable Entrepreneurs

For marketing and finance major Brian Bushell '03, the road to running a successful business was paved with a sore back, a stiff neck, and years of tossing and turning on an uncomfortable mattress. While searching for a way to improve his sleep, he discovered memory foam—a dense, temperature-sensitive material that conforms to the body. Bushell's research revealed that most foam mattress toppers sell for upwards of \$300. So in July 2002, he and roommate Steven Darling '03, a sociology major, took matters into their own hands. With assistance from a manufacturer in New Jersey, they created the Memory Foam Factory in hopes of appealing to students and their tight budgets. "We knew many students who, like us, wanted comfortable beds, but couldn't afford them," Darling says. "We never expected the business to get this far."

Operating out of their bedrooms, they began offering memory foam mattress toppers starting at \$79.95—a feat they accomplished by shipping products straight from the factory—and later

added an entire line of contour pillows and TV/reading pillows. Today, marketing efforts on Google and their web site, *memoryfoamfactory.com*, account for the company's customer base, which is 60 percent students and growing at a monthly rate of 150 percent. "We have a unique connection to our market," Darling says. "As students, we understand our customers' needs very well because we live among them."

Last spring, Bushell and Darling won the East Coast Collegiate Entrepreneur Competition. Bushell credits the guidance of professors for helping get the company off the ground. "In my entrepreneurship class, we practiced marketing to students and writing formal business plans," says Bushell, who received the Syracuse Student Entrepreneur of the Year award from the School of Management. "That gave me the experience I needed to manage a company."

Professor Michael Morris, Witting Chair in Entrepreneurship, assisted the pair during their start-up process. "These students demonstrate that anything is possible," Morris says. "In the entrepreneurship program, we believe every student is an entrepreneur waiting to happen."

—Kate Gaetano

Architecture

Career Network

In 1998, Connie Caldwell, director of career services in the School of Architecture, e-mailed a salary survey to the school's alumni, hoping to learn more about the profession and better serve students in their job searches. After receiving a modest 52 responses, she set out to improve the system of connecting with alumni and gathering information from them. With the help of the SU Center for Support of Teaching and Learning, Caldwell established an electronic Alumni Career Network and began conducting a more comprehensive annual alumni survey online. Today, more than 500 people participate in the survey (cstl.syr.edu/arc/results.asp) and about 900 alumni are registered with the network. "I ask alumni questions about salaries, benefits, vacation time, whether they're licensed architects, and the culture of their firms," Caldwell says. "I want to have that information to pass on to students for career planning and also to share with alumni in the network."

During her senior year, architecture student Kristin Shumaker '02 clicked through the results of the online alumni survey, checking out the starting salaries of architects in cities where she was interested in finding a job. "The survey is full of practical information," she says. After reviewing the survey results, Shumaker tapped into the Alumni Career Network to learn more about the firms where alumni work. "That proved very useful for me, as I am now working closely with an alum I had contacted while at Syracuse," says Shumaker, an intern architect at Clark Patterson Associates in Rochester, New York.

Caldwell uses the career network to post notices on job openings and questions from students or alumni seeking advice on a range of career-related topics. Each question elicits as many as 50 responses from alumni, like Shumaker, who offer tips. "The system has helped me so I want to make sure it's useful to others," Shumaker says.

—Margaret Costello

Arts & Sciences

A New Home for CSD

To better meet the educational demands of the field, the Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) program moved from the School of Education to the College of Arts and Sciences this academic year. The field of communication sciences and disorders draws upon principles from biology, physics, linguistics, and psychology to investigate and improve people's speech, hearing, and language abilities. "All four of those subjects are in the College of Arts and Sciences," says CSD professor Linda Milosky, who helped organize the program's transition. "The primary reason for the move was to strengthen the ties to the disciplines on which the field is based."

Department chair Ray Colton says that, nationally, the field has shifted to emphasize a liberal arts education that better prepares students for a wider array of employment opportunities than previously existed. Unlike 30 years ago, when

most CSD graduates found jobs providing speech-language therapy in schools, today's graduates often work outside of academia, due to the introduction of such medical advances as cochlear implants, hearing aides, genetic testing, and functional MRIs. "Now a large percentage of our graduates go into hospitals and private practice, and there's a lot more medical emphasis," Colton says.

The department's move into the college creates more academic and social opportunities for students. "They are now able to take courses from other departments that build a solid foundation in physics and mathematics and are more directly related to CSD, such as linguistics, psychology, and statistics," says Lufeng Shi, a Ph.D. student in audiology who earned a master's degree at SU in 2001. "Also, many undergraduates in the college will be introduced to the profession and may decide to major in CSD." To meet their natural science requirements, undergraduates can now choose from a wider range of non-lab science courses offered by CSD that address the connection between basic research and

its practical applications. For CSD students, the change encourages them to interact with students from other disciplines and learn from a variety of perspectives. "They're getting exposed to more of the University, and that's a positive," Milosky says.

As part of the College of Arts and Sciences, CSD faculty can collaborate more easily with faculty members from other natural science departments. "From the faculty perspective," Milosky says, "the move reduces administrative responsibilities and allows faculty to focus more on their research."

However, the department maintains close ties with the School of Education. CSD faculty still teach required courses for inclusive education majors, and CSD students continue to take courses through the school to earn New York State teaching certification. "We have good colleagues in the School of Education, and we look forward to continuing those relationships and developing new ones with faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences," Milosky says.

—Margaret Costello

Student Affairs

Sharing Cultures

At the beginning of each year, the Hong Kong Cultural Organization (HKCO) celebrates the arrival of the Lunar New Year with an elaborate dragon dance performance. This year, the HKCO Lunar New Year celebration included some new additions, thanks to a \$5,500 grant from the University Encounter (U Encounter) program. The extra money enabled the student group to hire professional Kung Fu fighters from New York City and pay for additional decorations, says Stevenson Lau '03, HKCO president. "Without U Encounter, we couldn't have done a show like that," Lau says. "The show definitely brought our culture to the University and showed how important this holiday is."

U Encounter was established in 2002 by the Division of Student Affairs to award grants to student groups to help support events that demonstrate a theme of cultural or social significance. The theme will change each semester to allow differ-



ent groups to become involved in the program and host events. Those events include lectures, workshops, performances, and international holiday celebrations. This year's chosen theme is "Celebrating International Arts and Culture." "We wanted to establish a theme that was broad enough so that numerous groups could apply," says Ellen King, director of student events. "Now, we are getting a wide variety of programs."

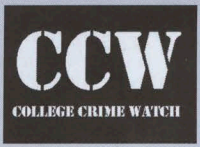
Last December, 14 groups applied to the program for funding and received a portion of the \$80,000 in available grant money. The amount allotted to each group varied according to the scope of the proposal and the group's need for funding, King says. Among the U Encounter-funded events last semester were the Black Artist League's "Dance Explosion" and the Office of Multicultural Affairs hosting a performance by Jabali Afrika, a band from Kenya.

Besides promoting cultural activities for students, another of the program's goals is to encourage collaboration among departments, divisions, and organizations, King says. "If two groups share a program, we would love to help support it." More importantly, student groups that lack the necessary funding to share their culture with the campus community will now have the opportunity to do so. "U Encounter opens up a lot of opportunities for students and for members of the campus community to experience something they'd typically never be exposed to," King says.

—Cori Bolger

Public Safety

Safety First



Members of SU's College Crime Watch (CCW) created pamphlets, designed a web site, wrote press releases, rallied students, and attended a national conference—and they're just getting started. An outgrowth of Youth Crime Watch of

America—a national organization that enlists students in crime reduction efforts within their schools and communities—CCW was piloted in approximately 10 colleges and universities across the country this academic year. SU Director of Public Safety Marlene Hall discovered the program online and enlisted the help of Jill Lentz, operations manager for residential security, and Grant Williams, senior lieutenant for crime prevention, to start the initiative and serve as co-advisors to the student-led group. “One of the benefits of CCW is that each institution can customize its own plan,” Lentz says. SU’s plan focuses on a campus watch, hate crime prevention, and off-campus student safety.

Courtney Bell '03 joined CCW last fall because of safety issues she encountered as a resident advisor. “Our members

include a variety of students who are involved in different campus activities, from residential security aides to graduate students,” she says. “Having such widespread membership helps get the word out to more people.” Spreading the word was the goal at the 2003 International Youth Leaders Crime Prevention Conference in Miami this spring. Throughout the group’s trip, which was sponsored by Anastasia Urtz, dean of students in the Division of Student Affairs, Bell and several other members introduced SU’s CCW program and encouraged high school seniors to initiate campus watch programs once they enter college.

Rigaud Noel '04, who helped CCW become a registered student organization this year, believes everyone should be active in promoting campus safety. “People care, but they need to be willing to do something about it,” Noel says. To encourage student involvement, CCW members also collaborated with the R.A.P.E. Center to place hundreds of stickers bearing safety tips and the CCW phone number in academic buildings and residence halls. In the fall, the CCW team plans to partner with the Division of Student Affairs and other departments to present orientations to incoming students. “We’ve been fortunate to have so many student leaders in the SU community who want to see College Crime Watch succeed,” Lentz says. “Our goal is to get the entire campus involved.”

—Kate Gaetano

Law

Disabilities Advocacy

A man in Mexico, fearing persecution because of his mental illness, fled to the United States to seek asylum. His lawyer in California contacted law professor Arlene Kanter, a disability rights expert. Kanter worked on a legal brief for the man, writing that people with disabilities in Mexico are institutionalized and treated so poorly that the man would likely die if he were returned home. She argued the United States should grant asylum to this man and others with mental or physical disabilities, just as it does for individuals who face persecution based on their religious beliefs, political views, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Although the Board of Immigration Appeals ruled against granting asylum to this particular man because of improving conditions in Mexico’s mental health institutions, the board’s decision established the right of people with disabilities to seek asylum in the United States. “This was the first such case,” says Kanter, director of the Office of Clinical Legal Education. “Since the case was decided

two years ago, at least a dozen other cases have been filed throughout the United States.”

To strengthen research and knowledge in the disability area, the College of Law and the School of Education created a joint degree program this spring that gives students with an interest in law and education—especially disability studies—the opportunity to receive a law degree and a master’s degree in education in three years. “This unique program will build upon the well-established and internationally renowned strengths of SU in the disability field,” says Kanter, who was instrumental in developing the program with School of Education professor Steve Taylor G’77. “Few universities have such a long and successful track record in disability research, academic programming, advocacy, and faculty productivity.”

As a group, people with disabilities have been deprived of fundamental rights, including liberty, education, privacy, family, and employment, Kanter says. More than 600 million people worldwide have some kind of disability; two-thirds of these individuals live in developing countries where they may suffer from abuse, segregation, and discrimination.

Kanter, who has worked in the disability rights field for 20 years, became interested in asylum for people with disabilities several years ago when she began working with Mental Disability Rights International, a nonprofit organization in Washington, D.C., that advocates ending abuse of people with disabilities. She was recently appointed to the United Nations’ International Watch Committee to work on a proposed UN convention on the rights of people with disabilities, and she was hired by the National Council on Disability, a federal executive agency, to draft a paper on disability and foreign assistance.

Kanter invites students in her Disability Law class to work on independent projects as part of the course, and many of them conduct research comparing disability laws in various countries. “There are many reasons to do this kind of work,” she says. “Legal advocacy and scholarship with and for people with disabilities can actually save lives, while bringing attention to the abuse and discriminatory treatment of people with disabilities that continue to exist in many countries.”

—Kristen Swing

Maxwell



Conflict Management Center (CMC) coordinator Lina Svedin, standing, leads a monthly lunch discussion with CMC associates. At this meeting, Svedin is focusing on conflict management designed specifically for non-governmental organizations.

Turning Conflict into Opportunity

The Chinese word for crisis consists of two characters—one representing “threat” and the other “opportunity.” That understanding of crisis as opportunity serves as the foundation for the Conflict Management Center (CMC) at the Maxwell School. “Conflict can be threatening because it is potentially hostile,” says Lina Svedin, the center’s coordinator and a political science doctoral student. “That’s why people run away from conflict.” However, through such conflict management techniques as those practiced at the CMC, difficult situations can be resolved through mutual agreement. “We view conflict as a situation that provides possibilities for finding an equitable solution for meeting the needs of opposing groups,” Svedin says.

An educational project of the Program on the Analysis and Resolution of Conflicts (PARC), the CMC offers training programs in interpersonal conflict resolution, negotiation, meeting facilitation, and supervisory mediation to the University community and beyond. “We’ve had unprecedented opportunities this

year to offer training and help resolve conflicts,” Svedin says.

The center’s recent activities included mediating conflicts between individuals, working with the Eastside Neighbors in Partnership to teach conflict resolution skills to at-risk youth, and training members of two fraternities that were suspended for fighting. “In working with the fraternities, we focused on the leadership of the houses, discussing with them the issues underlying the dynamics of conflict,” Svedin says. The fraternity leaders worked with the center to develop a joint plan for training other house members, and executed that training themselves with guidance from center staff. As former president of one of the fraternities involved, Marc Klein ’03 found the experience valuable. “The members came away with a much stronger understanding of the severity of the events that transpired and how they could be avoided in the future,” he says.

The center also trained mediators for the Office of Human Resources’ new staff complaint process, offering custom-

designed sessions that covered the basics of mediation and featured skills demonstrations and role playing. “It went very well, and the center’s staff members were very accommodating,” says Curlene Autrey, director of resolutions processes. “Mediation is so important to this process, because we hope most staff complaints will be remedied at that level.”

Established in the late 1980s, the center—which is staffed primarily by volunteers from across the University—conducts “Train the Trainer” sessions each fall and spring. A 25-hour mediation training is offered during the spring semester for individuals interested in serving as volunteer mediators with the CMC or qualifying to mediate in the New York State court system. “This year there’s been more interest in volunteering than ever before,” Svedin says. “It’s a positive experience that provides good, basic, applicable skills, whether or not you want to pursue this as a profession.”

—Amy Speech Shires

University College

Online Interpretations

Professor Linda Shires has taught English at SU since 1981, but this term she tried something completely new: teaching an online course. She found it quite different from her classroom experiences. Because the teacher and student never see each other, they connect through their words, which must be chosen carefully and shared consistently. "Regular posting isn't an option, it's a requirement," Shires says. "There is no sitting back among class members. They have to remain in conversation with each other and with me for the course to work."

One surprising benefit of online education, Shires believes, is that shy students or reserved teachers have more opportunities to be expressive. "As a teacher, I'm more open online, somewhat more talkative, and just as passionate about what I teach," she says. In her Remembering the Holocaust class, Shires finds students "dare more" in the online version. "I teach about historical trauma and various representations of it," says Shires, who first taught the class on campus during the fall 2001 semester when the September 11 terrorist attacks occurred. "Yet that event came into our classroom discussions comparatively little." In contrast, the online class—being a mixed-age group—brought to its discussions a more wide-ranging frame of reference, a broader

knowledge base, and a greater willingness to explore other historical traumas. "They did not hold back from sharing films or books they've seen or information they've discovered or their reactions to 9/11, the *Challenger* tragedy, terrorism, or Iraq," she says.

Shires believes an element of openness is essential for a student to learn and grow as a person. She values her online students' frankness, which extends beyond discussing intellectual issues to sharing emotions and personal stories, as well as disagreements of interpretation. "I like this," she says. "As a teacher, it requires me to flex all my muscles and have a sense of never knowing what I will find or need to draw upon in myself when I put my cursor over 'Discussion Board.'"

Shires's course is one of several online offerings made available by various SU academic departments through University College each semester and during the summer months. Selected credit courses can be completed entirely over the Internet—allowing for geographic and scheduling flexibility—and used toward the fulfillment of requirements for degree programs at SU or other schools. "Central to UC's mission is an effort to

serve the needs of the nontraditional student," says Robert Colley, associate dean of marketing and distance education at UC. "Online education enables us to extend our reach. It is an important element in our mix of flexible formats that appeal to a diverse student population."

—Amy Speech Shires



Education

International Planning

While visiting Syracuse University last September, six officials from the Indonesian National Center for Family Planning (BKKBN) took an unscheduled—but inspiring—trip to the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls, New York. The officials were here to receive assistance from the School of Education's Training Systems Institute (TSI) to enhance the quality of their organization's human resources. Professor Philip Doughty encouraged them to tour the landmark during their stay. "You couldn't get them out of there," recalls Doughty, executive director of TSI, which provides educational training to local, state, national, and international communities. "Here were these Indonesian women learning about American

women who improved the lives of other women—just as they're doing in their country. It was a powerful experience."

The experience underscored the mission of BKKBN, a government agency that employs 50,000 people to provide quality reproductive health services in Indonesia. It also dovetailed with the purpose of their visit—to develop a proposal to partner with TSI in creating an international training center for BKKBN's staff and other family planning workers from around the world. The center would be modeled after what's known in the United States as a corporate university—a facility that provides training and staff development to increase productivity, motivation, and professionalism in the workplace.

Drawing on University and community resources, Doughty and his team of students, faculty, and administrators arranged for the Indonesians to visit the BlueCross BlueShield corporate university in Seneca Falls. The group of Indo-

nesian officials, which included two SU graduates, also met with the University's human resources office, a local family planning agency, and a mental health center in Utica to observe the inner workings of these related organizations. They participated in numerous workshops, seminars, and discussions that culminated in a final proposal to be submitted to the Indonesian government. If the proposal is accepted, TSI will consult on the project and help BKKBN develop its corporate university.

Doughty believes the project exemplifies SU's push for multidisciplinary initiatives—a component of the Academic Plan. "This project is a community venture," he says. "One department doesn't own all the knowledge, which makes the larger University a critical factor in terms of helping BKKBN. We built upon expertise from other departments and good relationships with outside organizations, which is what a university should be about."

—Lindsay Beller

Human Services & Health Professions

Integrating Medicine and Therapy

A patient who suffers from chronic headaches visits a doctor. When the patient claims to experience every possible side effect from the prescribed medication and fears the onset of a brain tumor, the physician refers the patient to a family therapist for treatment of an anxiety-related illness. This is just one example of the cases that Department of Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) professor Suzanne Haas-Cunningham manages in her role as clinical director of the Family Medicine/Family Therapy Program at SUNY Upstate Medical University. The collaborative training program brings together four MFT graduate students with residents from St. Joseph's Hospital family practice residency program in Syracuse. The group meets weekly in joint therapy sessions with clients who have been referred by physicians from a family practice associated with SUNY Upstate. "As family therapists, we try to get relationship-oriented cases," Haas-Cunningham says. "We believe health and stress are related to the family relationships you maintain."

The purpose of this collaboration is to link the two professions by integrating medicine and therapy. "When you're trained in family therapy, you tend to look at relationships as primary; but when you're trained in the medical field, you see the physical body as primary," she says. "We need to consider all aspects of a person's health—not just the isolated parts."

Once a doctor makes a referral, Haas-Cunningham invites the client to participate and assigns an MFT student to conduct the therapy session. Haas-Cunningham, the other MFT students, and the medical residents then observe the session from behind a one-way mirror. Following the session, the client and therapist receive feedback from the students and residents.

The residents aid clients in a variety of ways, including offering informed suggestions from a medical perspective. "Their input is especially helpful when a patient expresses dissatisfaction with the relationship with his doctor, or is confused about medication," Haas-Cunningham says. "But most importantly, the residents encourage patients to go back and talk with their doctors."

Tziporah Rosenberg, an MFT doctoral candidate and student therapist, says this collaborative approach between doctors and therapists was one reason she was drawn to the program. "I've always believed in the value of that connection," she says. Haas-Cunningham, who has run the program since 1990, agrees the connection is important. "The students learn about observation, therapy, and being part of a team that includes a medical person," she says. "The program provides a service to the clients and trains professionals to learn from and connect with each other." —Lindsay Beller

Engineering & Computer Science

Visual Reinforcement

U.S. soldiers arriving on foreign lands often navigate unfamiliar terrain to complete their missions. SU engineering researchers are among a team of scholars helping these soldiers better envision their environment. With funding from the U.S. Department of Defense's Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative, the team is working on the Mobile Augmented Battlespace Visualization project to provide military units with accurate, coherent, three-dimensional renderings of landscapes, including details of building facades, over a short time period. "We're trying to combine information from a variety of sources—radar, sonar, intelligence reports, maps, observations from the air—to create a consistent and accurate picture for the ground soldier who may only have a laptop," says electrical engineering and computer science professor Pramod Varshney, who heads SU's research team.

Varshney, professors Kishan Mehrotra and Chilukuri Mohan, and several electrical engineering and computer science graduate students make up SU's division of the multiuniversity team. Other team members include researchers from the University of California's Berkeley and Santa Cruz campuses, Georgia Tech, and the University of Southern California. The team hopes to complete a prototype within the next two years, Varshney says.

The SU group is responsible for information fusion (integrating the various information sources into one) and representing, calculating, and conveying the uncertainty of the information. For example, a soldier may report seeing tanks moving westward from a camp at 6 p.m. He then may have to estimate the tanks' speed, direction, or numbers. "No matter what information we have, there will be some uncertainty associated with it, and we need to be able to calcu-

Newhouse

Competitive Cooperation

Patricia Longstaff looks to a pack of wolves to help understand why the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Telecommunications Act of 1996—legislation that was created to encourage competition—actually led to more cooperation among cable, telephone, and other communications companies. In her book *The Communications Toolkit: How to Build and Regulate Any Communications Business* (MIT Press, 2002), Longstaff explains how wolves banding together to protect themselves from danger correlates to media companies like Time Warner and AOL merging to pool their resources and remain competitive in a technologically advancing global market. "If you look at ecological systems, you could have actually predicted those corporate mergers and partnerships," says Longstaff, professor of television-radio-film and communications. "Introducing new



Professor Pramod Varshney points to pictures of the SU campus and the Carrier Dome that demonstrate how the visualization research project he is involved with works.

late how reliable the information is and visually convey that to the decision-maker," Varshney says. One way the SU researchers have tried to depict this uncertainty on a computer screen is by displaying a sharp dot with a fuzzy ring around it. The dot's movement (representing the tanks in the example) could be predicted based on information gathered from a variety of sources that

have been coalesced using complex equations and statistics.

Team member and graduate student Qi Cheng says she is grateful for the opportunity to apply her knowledge of algorithms and statistics toward the development of a marketable product. "This project has given me the opportunity to do research and see how it is used to solve a specific problem," she says.

Although the researchers are currently focused on military applications, the knowledge and processes developed in the project can be transferred to fuse information and calculate uncertainty in such areas as economics, medicine, and the environment. "The research could have countless applications," Varshney says.

—Margaret Costello

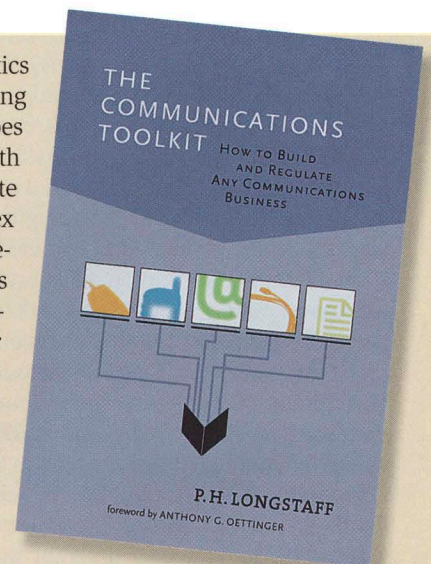
competition into a system encourages cooperation."

Drawing on examples from such disciplines as ecology, economics, theology, and world history, Longstaff's book introduces revolutionary theories to help businesspeople and policy makers around the world keep up with the constantly changing communications industry. She creates a new framework for communications businesses and explains how all media are constructed from the same building blocks and follow a similar set of rules. "Instead of regulating newspapers, radio stations, or cable companies, we should regulate senders, channels, coding and decoding, and receiving devices," says the former communications and corporate lawyer. "Then we'd apply the same regulations to everyone regardless of the medium or the technology used."

Her book is already being used in classrooms at Harvard University, where she is a research associate at the Center for Policy Research. A supporter of the Academic Plan's commitment to interdisciplinary studies, Longstaff is working with SU statistics faculty on a study

to help predict the characteristics that make for a top grossing Hollywood movie. She also hopes to participate in a project with SU's Systems Assurance Institute to examine how such complex communications systems as telephone and Internet connections can be safeguarded against terrorists. Longstaff shares her expertise on communications issues as a member of the U.S. State Department's Committee on International Communication and Information Policy. "I like to think of myself as a pivot point between disciplines," she says. "I look at a lot of disparate information and see what it all has in common to understand the bigger picture."

—Margaret Costello



Information Studies

Reinventing Urban School Libraries

Most of the 31 New York City elementary school teachers sitting around kid-sized tables in the Seymour Magnet School library in Syracuse last summer had not been on the “student” side of the classroom for many years. The teachers, enrolled in the School of Information Studies’ Preparing Librarians for Urban Schools (PLUS) program, were listening to a lecture on how to teach information literacy skills to children. After spending 10 days on campus for orientation and initial courses, the teachers have continued their studies from home, communicating with faculty via the Internet. “I already loved what I was doing,” says Gayle Richardson, a Brooklyn elementary school librarian. “It can only get better.”

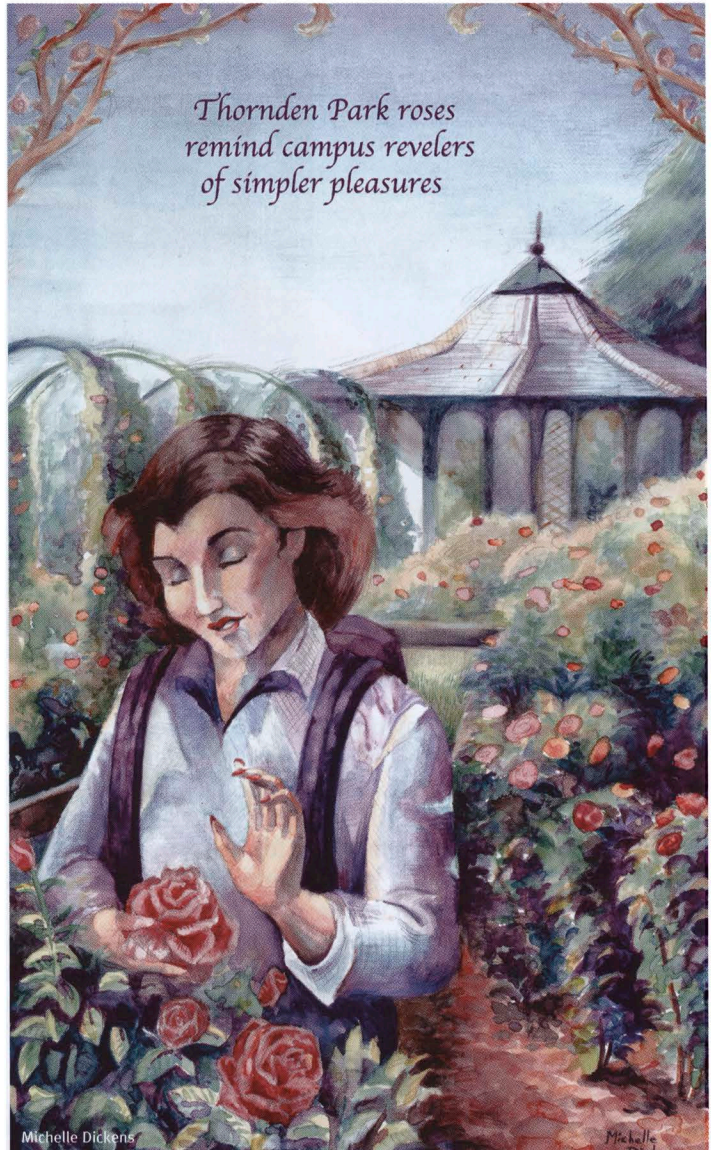
Richardson was among the first group of teachers to participate in PLUS, a distance learning program that enables them to earn master’s degrees in library science. Under the direction of Professor Ruth Small, School of Information Studies faculty members restructured the library science curriculum for the PLUS program to reflect the specific needs of library media specialists working in inner-city elementary schools. The PLUS program is part of the 21st Century School Librarianship: Reinventing Urban School Libraries initiative, designed to radically change New York City elementary school libraries during the next five years.

This initiative is the result of an unprecedented public-private partnership among SU, the New York City Department of Education, a variety of corporations and architectural firms, and the Robin Hood Foundation, which supports anti-poverty initiatives in New York City. The Robin Hood-led project includes renovating most of New York City’s elementary school libraries; equipping the libraries with the latest technology; stocking the libraries with a core collection of books and software; and providing opportunities for teachers to be trained and certified as librarians. “These libraries are important educational tools for our communities,” says David Saltzman, executive director of the Robin Hood Foundation.

The initiative’s first phase included opening 10 pilot libraries. Twenty-one more libraries are scheduled for completion by the end of 2003. “The teachers apply what they learn from us to their work with children in these beautiful new school libraries,” Small says. “This initiative is a wonderful opportunity for us to be part of a program that helps disadvantaged kids reach their full potential.”

—Judy Holmes and Christine Yackel

Visual & Performing Arts



This poster was created by Michelle Dickens '03 based on a haiku written by local poet Ellen M. Agnew.

Haiku Art Celebrates the City

It didn't take long for illustration major Michelle Dickens '03 to decide which haiku she wanted to illustrate for a class assignment. Drawn to “the graceful message” of a poem about Thornden Park roses, she worked in watercolors, finding their transparent look and “soft feel” appropriate to the poem’s tone and message. “The haiku I chose had a beautiful flowing quality,” she says. “I try to retain a sense of beauty in everything I paint.”

Dickens was one of the 27 students in Department of Visual Communication professor Roger DeMuth’s advanced illustration class to receive an unusual fall assignment: selecting and illustrating a haiku about an aspect of Central New York life for sub-

Hendricks Chapel

A Spiritual Picture

mission to the Syracuse Poster Project, a collaborative initiative involving students, local poets, and the business community. This year—the project's second—16 student creations were selected for reproduction as posters to be exhibited by the Downtown Committee of Syracuse in kiosks located in the city's center. "The project brings together local poets and Syracuse University art students to create city-based poetry posters," says Jim Emmons, who originated and coordinates the project, which this year was supported by a grant from the Central New York Community Foundation and sponsored by HSBC Bank. "The idea is to make the downtown area more vibrant and to celebrate the city." In addition to displaying the posters on the downtown kiosks, the project frames a set of small prints for rotating, month-long loans to downtown exhibition spaces. Prints of the posters are also available for sale, in the hopes that the project can eventually become self-sustaining.

DeMuth says participation in the project provides numerous benefits for students, including the experience of taking their artwork from its "raw stage" through such processes as scanning, digitizing, selecting type, outputting, and making color corrections. "The students learn a lot and enjoy it," DeMuth says. "And the project gives them some great exposure."

That exposure means a lot to young artists like Dickens, who hopes to work in the animation industry and plans to attend graduate school. "This project was exciting because it was closely related to the assignments I expect to get as a professional," she says. "The exposure in town is a wonderful kickoff to the work world."

—Amy Speech Shires

When the Reverend Kate Bell arrived at Hendricks Chapel last fall, the new chaplain of the Interdenominational Protestant Campus Ministry (IPCM) embraced the challenges of serving a campus of diverse students with unique religious and spiritual needs. It didn't take Bell long to realize that not only did she need to guide the spiritual paths of campus members, but she must also ensure the ministry's financial future. "We're utterly dependent on donations," Bell says. "We're running on a deficit budget, so I spend much of my time fund raising and promoting our work to our sponsors instead of building spiritual relationships with them."

To help ease the burden of fiscal concerns and refocus on ministry work, IPCM has launched a \$1.5 million cam-

paign to endow the chaplain's chair through the sale of limited edition prints of Syracuse University landmarks. The prints, created by local artist and retired Syracuse adjunct art professor Francis Sweeney, feature black-and-white images of the Saltine Warrior sculpture located in front of Shaffer Art Building, Hendricks Chapel, Crouse College, and the old University commercial area. The 8-by-11-inch matted prints are being sold in sets of four for \$175 and can be viewed online at hendricks.syr.edu/ipcm.html. (Orders can be made online or by calling 315-443-5040.) Only 100 sets will be produced, and each will be numbered and signed by the artist. The owners' names will be recorded in a permanent registry maintained by Friends of the Arts, a local business.

The ministry also intends to commission a set of limited edition color prints by Sweeney that will depict a variety of activities within and around Hendricks Chapel. "People have so many memories associated with Hendricks Chapel," Bell says. "We want to capture those special memories of the chapel in their seasonal settings."

The IPCM represents the interests of four Protestant denominations: the Presbyterian Church, the United Church of Christ, the American Baptist Churches, and the United Methodist Church. Bell leads the 11 a.m. Sunday service in Hendricks Chapel, which often attracts non-Christians and Christians from other denominations. "My first priority is to be loving and welcoming to everyone on campus," Bell says. "I would like to be able to devote more time to that goal. Having an endowed chair will enable me to do so."

—Margaret Costello

