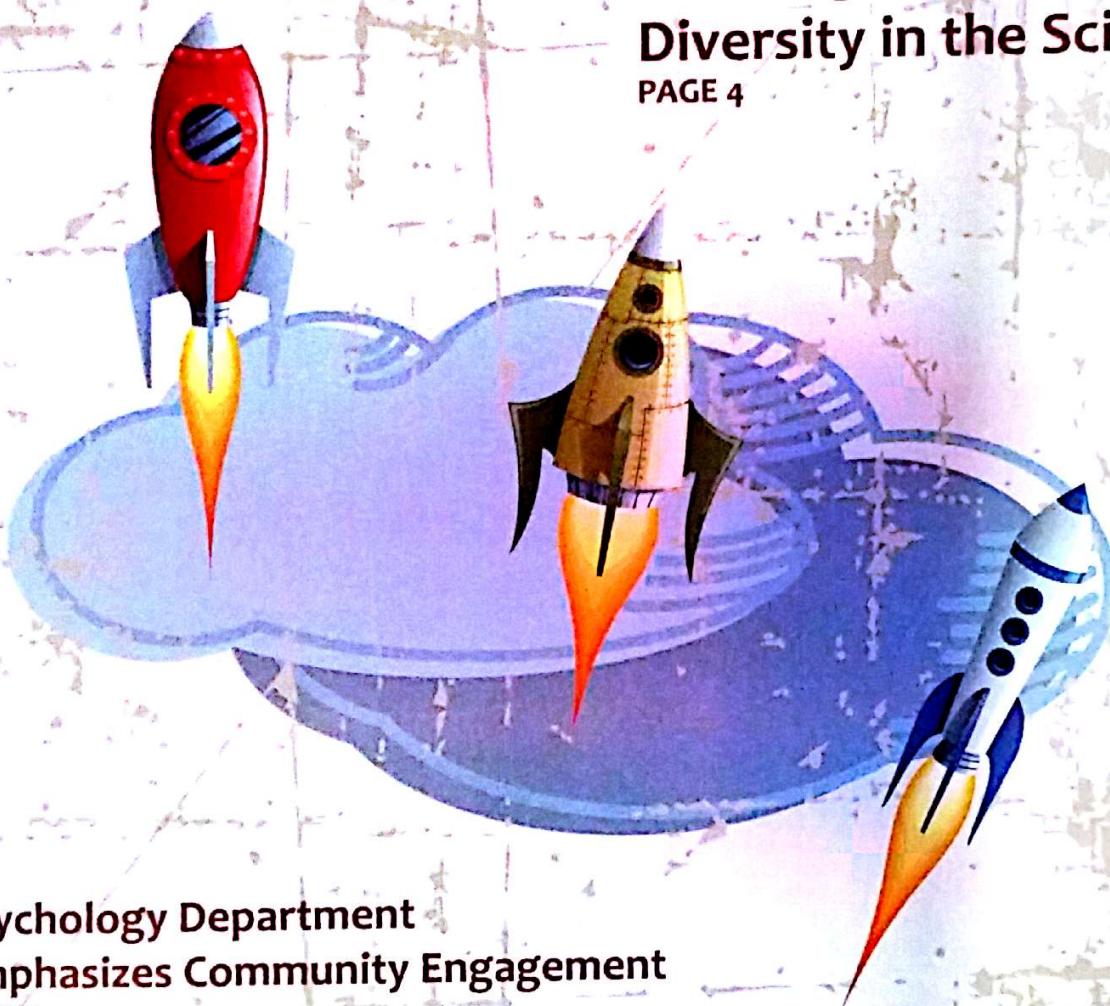


# **UNFETTERED INQUIRY**

**School of Arts & Sciences  
Fall 2016**

**Working Toward  
Diversity in the Sciences**

**PAGE 4**



**Psychology Department  
Emphasizes Community Engagement**

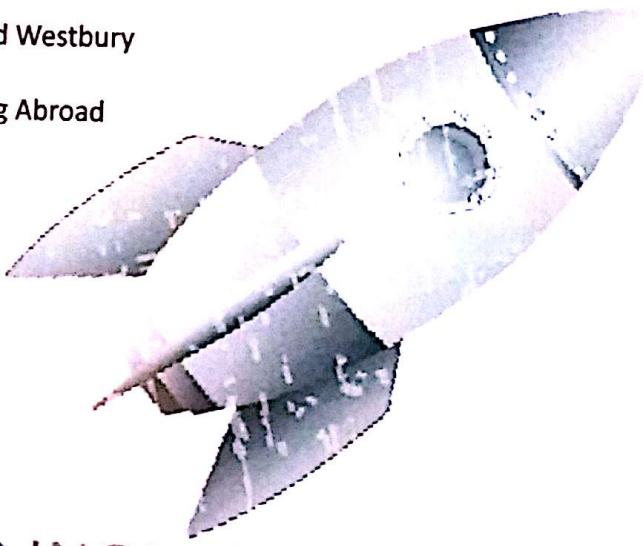
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**Recognizing Value in Studying Abroad**

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## UNFETTERED INQUIRY

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## Editor's Remarks

*"Certain qualities characterize the thoughtfulness of liberally educated persons. First and foremost is curiosity, a desire to know and, especially, to understand. From this flows a questioning attitude, a lack of self-certainty, and a propensity for unfettered inquiry."*

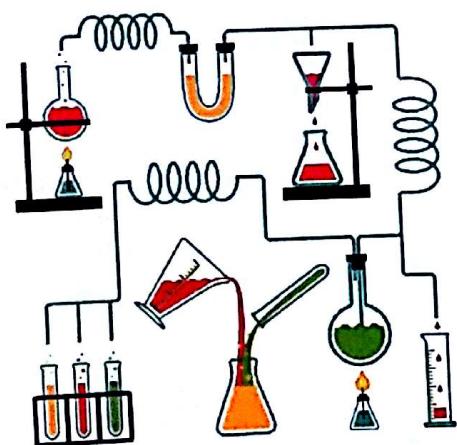
*From Liberal Arts at the Brink by Victor Ferrall  
Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011*

Unfettered Inquiry is a magazine published by the School of Arts and Sciences at SUNY Old Westbury. We seek to highlight the work of our faculty, staff and students as well as to demonstrate how the liberal arts can enrich our personal and professional lives. At a time when many students and parents are beginning to question the value of a college education, we aim to give our readers an understanding of how higher education benefits both individuals and the larger community.

In the 21st century, innovations in technology have transformed the way we learn and communicate. For today's students, scientific literacy is an essential skill for success beyond college. Yet in American higher education, college science departments often lack cultural and economic diversity. In this issue, we take a look at the ways Old Westbury works to build a diverse body of science majors. In addition, we learn how Old Westbury's Collaborative Media Center teaches students to take advantage of today's digital communication tools. Another trend which has come to define the 21st century is globalization. In this issue, we explore the wide range of study abroad programs that prepare Old Westbury students to succeed in a global economy.

It has been a privilege to document Old Westbury's commitment to education and social justice in words and images. We hope that reading the 2016 issue of Unfettered Inquiry will be an experience that is both educational and inspiring.

Jon Kleinman  
Editor in Chief  
Academic Advisor  
SUNY Old Westbury



# Working Toward Diversity in the Sciences

"We don't just want to increase the number of American students in STEM. We want to make sure everyone is involved....that means reaching out to boys and girls, men and women of all races and all backgrounds. Science is for all of us."<sup>1</sup>

These words, spoken by President Obama at the fifth annual White House Science Fair on March 23, 2015, affirm the president's commitment to making careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) available to Americans from across the cultural and economic spectrum. While higher education professionals support Obama's position, polls of

faculty and students in STEM departments reveal that there is still much work to be done by America's colleges and universities in order to expand diversity in the sciences.

*Bayer Facts of Science XV: A View from the Gatekeepers* was a survey given by the Bayer Corporation to faculty who chaired STEM departments at the nation's top 200 research universities. The survey's results highlight the barriers faced by women and minority students pursuing degrees in science. Of the department chairs surveyed, more than one third gave their institution a grade of "C" or below for retaining and graduating un-

der-represented minority students.

Many STEM professors expressed concerns about the way introductory science classes are taught. Nearly half the department chairs surveyed by the Bayer Corporation believe that large lecture classes which "weed out" students of lesser ability are harmful, particularly to minority students. Seventy-one percent of department chairs surveyed cited the need for increased academic support and mentoring of students by faculty. A lack of academic preparation, due to inadequate coursework in math and science in high school, is cited as the most significant barrier facing under-represented minority students pursuing STEM degrees.<sup>2</sup>

The New York Times notes that 28 percent of students attending a four year college plan to earn degrees in Math, Science or Engineering, but only 16 percent of bachelor's degrees awarded are in those fields. The highest rate of attrition is among women and African Americans.<sup>3</sup>

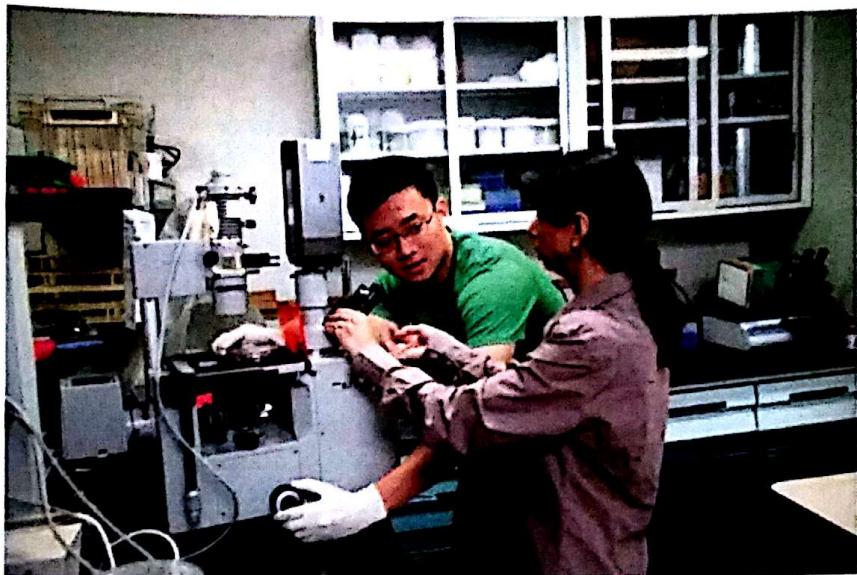
While women and minority students who pursue degrees in science face substantial obstacles, Professor of Chemistry and Physics Duncan Quarless is confident that



Associate Professor Manya Mascareno and Joseph Park, Biology, Class of 2012

Old Westbury provides a supportive educational experience. "I am happy to say that here at Old Westbury, there is quite a bit of diversity within the core of potential role models for STEM students," says Quarless. "There are many opportunities for Old Westbury students to develop relationships with faculty mentors."

Quarless acknowledges that coursework in the natural sciences is demanding. In his words, "The introductory classes for STEM majors are challenging survey courses that require a diverse set of skills for the comprehension of scientific information and concepts. Quantitative reasoning is an essential prerequisite skill." The rigorous nature of introductory coursework, however, does not stop Old Westbury from using innovative approaches to teaching. "We use active learning strategies in many of our courses," says Quarless. "These strategies include the use of blended forms of assessment and instruction and collaborative learning. Through the complimentary activities of the First Year Experience program we have been able to provide co-curricular experiential learning internships



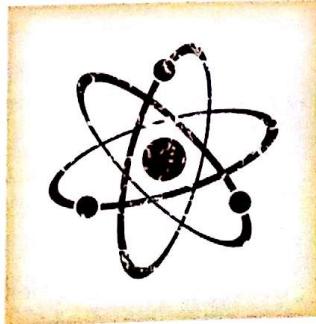
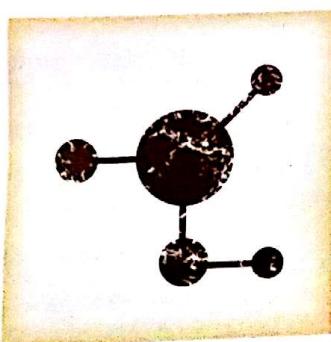
Joseph Park and Associate Professor Manya Mascarenas

which strengthen students' ties to the neighboring communities."

Professor Fernando Espinoza, in the Chemistry and Physics Department, believes that faculty must take a proactive approach to students who lack adequate academic preparation in math and science. "My response is to dedicate time to teaching the skills that some students may be lacking. A diagnostic assessment of students must be done the first day of classes to as-

certain what deficiencies there may be. Knowing that, one can then tailor the instruction to address those aspects." Espinoza rejects the view that faculty who teach introductory science classes are "gatekeepers." Instead, he feels introductory classes should serve as gateways to further work in the STEM field.

Distinguished Teaching Professor of Chemistry Robert Hoyte speaks in more detail about mentoring students. "The most important



*"Social justice in the sciences is a matter of participation.  
We need to have participation of under-represented  
minorities in every field of endeavor."*



Karam Kumar, Biology, Class of 2016

mentoring relationships develop through working side by side in the laboratory," claims Hoyte. "It is essential for faculty to be engaged in research and to involve undergraduates in their work." Hoyte notes that Old Westbury has had a variety of externally funded programs to engage students in research, including projects supported by the National Institute of Health and the National Science Foundation.

The New York State funded Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program, commonly referred to as C-STEP, specifically aims to increase the number of under-represented minority students seeking careers in STEM and the health professions. Distinguished Service Professor of Physics Henry Teoh, who serves as director of C-STEP at Old Westbury, likens the program to a "College within the college." He notes that C-STEP students have a higher rate of graduation than their Old Westbury peers. Associate Di-

rector and Old Westbury alumna Monique Clark states, "Many of our students lacked exposure to Math and Science in high School. We let them know they're not alone."

One of the ways the C-STEP program provides support is through mentoring and tutoring by peers. "Our peer mentors and tutors know what it's like to come from a disadvantaged background," says Clark. "We select students who've participated in campus activities and have good relationships with faculty." In an effort to address the lack of science role models for men from under-represented communities, C-STEP initiated a male ambassador program. Students selected represent C-STEP at open houses and student activity fairs.

The annual statewide C-Step student conference is another valuable educational opportunity. Each year, Old Westbury students present scientific research at the conference, and have the chance to meet peers and faculty from campuses across New York State. In April, 2015, 10 Old Westbury students participated in the annual C-STEP conference. Biology majors Kendra Gataw (Senior), Yuvraj Singh (Senior) and Fareeda Rouhsdy (Senior) all gave poster presentations, as did Biochemistry major Aileen Espinal (Junior). At the 2016 conference, Psychology major Amber Lynn Alvira (Senior) and Biology majors Bettina Tranquille (Senior), Karan Kumar (Senior) and Nimra Hameed (Sophomore) all gave research presentations.

Professor Hoyte, who has been teaching Chemistry at Old West-



Karam Kumar and Associate Professor Manya Mascarenas

bury since 1972, claims, "Social justice in the sciences is a matter of participation. We need to have participation of under-represented minorities in every field of endeavor." With a supportive environment that fosters close contact between students and faculty, Old Westbury is working towards President Obama's goal of educating a culturally diverse pool of future scientists and health professionals.

#### Notes:

1. Jones, Richard. "President Obama on STEM Education." *American Institute of Physics*. 24 March, 2015.
2. International Communications Research. "Bayer Facts of Science Education XV: A View from the Gatekeepers – STEM Department Chairs at America's Top 200 Research Universities on Female and Underrepresented Minority Undergraduate STEM Students." [Executive Summary]. December, 2011.
3. Perez-Pena, Richard. "Colleges Reinvent Classes to Keep More Students in Science." *The New York Times*, 26 December, 2014.

# Dyanna Taylor Presents Acclaimed Documentary

**Migrant Mother**, Dorothea Lange's stark portrait of an out-of-work pea picker and her children, is an essential image of the Great Depression. Lange's photography put a human face on the poverty and westward migration that defined the Dust Bowl of the 1930's. Lange's work and life are the focus of Dyanna Taylor's documentary *Dorothea Lange: Grab a Hunk of Lightning*. On March 26, the School of Arts and Sciences, the Office of Academic Affairs and the Women's Center presented a screening of the documentary along with a talk by Taylor.



Dyanna Taylor, Dean Barbara Hillery, Associate Professor Carol Quirke and Associate Professor John Friedman

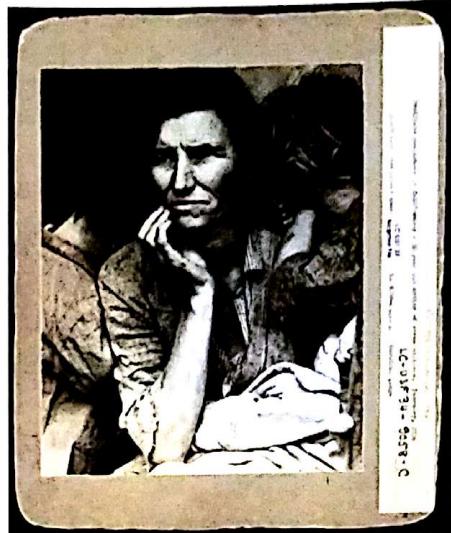
As the program began, Women's Center director and Associate Professor of American Studies Carol Quirke remarked, "Centers like ours imagine new possibilities for women." Taylor, who is Dorothea Lange's granddaughter, stated, "I've fought for women's rights. I've also fought for men's rights and social justice." Taylor noted that Lange's photography, which clearly portrays economic inequality and discrimination, speaks to our present as well as our past. *Grab a Hunk of*

*Lightning* detailed Lange's work photographing migrant workers for the US Agriculture Department. During the Second World War, the Office of War Information hired Lange to document the internment of Japanese Americans. Lange's photographs of internment camps were among the film's most haunting moments.

After the film, Taylor shared her insights on how technology has changed the way Americans view photographs. "We are so inundated with images in contemporary society that we've forgotten how to look," she remarked. Taylor's visit to campus helped remind faculty and students of photography's power to connect us to our past and inspire a passion for social justice.



Dyanna Taylor previewing "Grab a Hunk of Lightening" at SUNY Old Westbury.



Migrant Mother photo by Dorothea Lange.

# Psychology Department Emphasizes Community Engagement



Stephanie Purka, Psychology, Class of 2015

The Association to Benefit Children (Cassidy's Place) is a Manhattan based organization dedicated to serving preschoolers who have experienced poverty. HorseAbility is a program which uses horseback riding lessons to improve the self-esteem and motor skills of special needs children and adults. The Long Island Alzheimer's Foundation is committed to improving the quality of life for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and their

families. In addition to serving communities in need, these three organizations share another common thread. They all offer Old Westbury psychology students the opportunity to complete a one semester field placement that is a required part of their coursework.

The field placement is a unique opportunity for psychology students to extend their education beyond the classroom. The hands-on experience that students gain gives them a new understanding of the relationship between an individual's mental health and the larger community. Assistant Professor Ashlee Lien, who coordinated field placements for the psychology department during the 2013-14 academic year, has seen students develop a new view of people in need of help. "They become aware of the social causes of mental health problems," notes Lien. "They learn about the importance of organization and leadership and see how social services are tied to budgets and government spending."

In addition to completing a doctorate in Community Psychology at Wichita State University, Lien worked as an advocate for mental health consumers and was involved in strategic planning for a coalition on homelessness prior to becoming a faculty member at Old Westbury. Her education and professional experience have given Lien a unique perspective on mental health that goes beyond traditional psychologists' focus on the individual. Lien stresses that mental health is strongly shaped by the interaction between individuals and their environment. Her training taught her that a community can be planned and structured to allow for optimal health.

Lien, who is familiar with the challenges faced by first generation college students, is always impressed

**"I've learned as much from our students as they have learned from me, and I encourage them to learn from one another."**

with the determination and resilience of Old Westbury students. "Our students have overcome much adversity to get to college, and they continue to balance extensive commitments to work and family while pursuing their education," she states. "I've learned as much from our students as they have learned from me, and I encourage them to learn from one another." In Lien's view, the personal attention and encouragement that students receive from faculty help them overcome the challenges of earning a degree in the face of social and economic obstacles.

Distinguished Service Professor Minna Barrett is a member of the psychology department who played an instrumental role in making the field placement program a part of the curriculum. Her longstanding commitment to social justice and activism has included fundraising for the children's burn center in Vietnam's Bach Mai Hospital and involvement in the movement to close Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant. "We are one of the few undergraduate institutions to offer a supervised practicum and an accompanying seminar," notes Barrett. She believes that working in the larger community and applying knowledge builds students' confidence and fosters multi-cultural awareness. "Their training can be used outside the traditional context of psychology," Barrett emphasizes. "Any organization looking to improve life for communities and individuals is open to our graduates."

Melanie Chotkowski (Psychology, Class of 2015) completed a field placement with the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence. During her time with the organization, Melanie honed her clinical skills. "I learned to ask clients the right questions and



Colleen Aldrich, Psychology, Class of 2015

learned how to probe clients without making them uncomfortable." While providing screening, intervention and referral to services for Long Island residents with substance abuse issues, Melanie observed a strong correlation between addiction and psychological disorders.

"Depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder are often linked to drug and alcohol abuse. Many of our clients were veterans struggling with these issues." Melanie speaks positively of her experiences as an Old Westbury student. "I felt engaged in every class!" she notes. She found Brain and Behavior and a Senior Seminar in Clinical Psychology to be two of her most valuable classes, and she appreciates the personal and professional guidance she's received from Dr. Lien.

One of Old Westbury's guiding principles is that a liberal education connects learning in the classroom with engagement in the community. The college aims to prepare students who are not only lifelong learners, but are civically engaged and aware of the social, political and economic forces that affect their lives. The wide range of community-based opportunities available to psychology majors allows them to experience the transformative educational experience that Old Westbury takes pride in delivering.

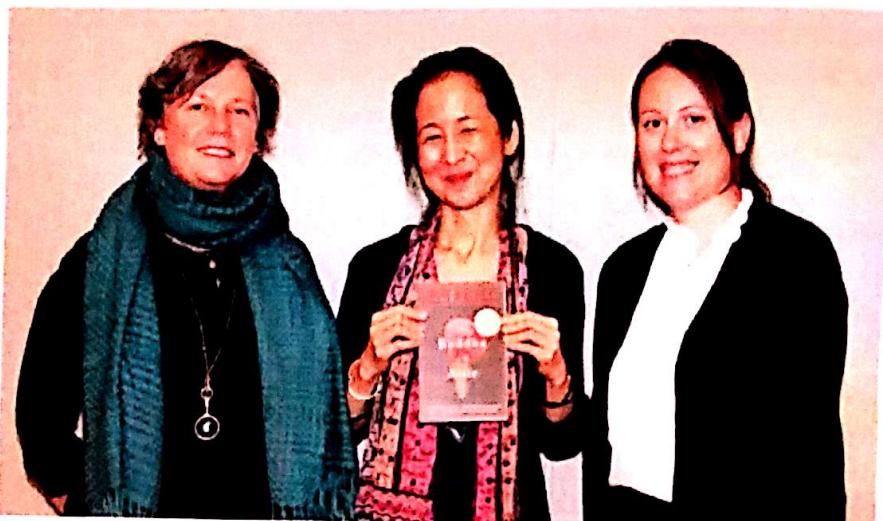
**"We are one of the few undergraduate institutions to offer a supervised practicum and an accompanying seminar."**



Assistant Professor of Psychology,  
Ashley Lien



Author Julie Otsuka



Associate Professor Carol Quirke, Julie Otsuka and Assistant Professor Jacqueline Emery

# Julie Otsuka Visits Old Westbury

During a highly-anticipated appearance at Old Westbury, award-winning author Julie Otsuka described the inspiration for her novel *The Buddha in the Attic*. While on tour to promote her first historical novel, *When the Emperor Was Divine*, Otsuka talked with many readers who had been touched by her portrayal of a Japanese-American family who experienced internment during World War II.

Those who came to Otsuka's book signings often shared their own family history. Otsuka was surprised to learn that many of her readers had ancestors who came to the United States as "picture brides." These women immigrated to America in the beginning of the 20th century to marry men who

they only knew through exchanged letters and photographs. "I ran across so many stories that I wanted to tell them all," Otsuka recalled to the room full of Old Westbury students, faculty and staff. Otsuka's second novel, *The Buddha in the Attic* traces the story of a group of women who were brought from Japan to San Francisco to marry Japanese immigrant men.

Otsuka's appearance was part of a year-long, grant funded project titled Crossing Borders: Erasing Borders: New Immigrants and Racial and Gender Inequalities in the 21st Century. A collaboration between Associate Professor of American Studies Carol Quirke, Assistant Professor of English Jacqueline Emery and the First Year Experience Program, Crossing Borders, Erasing Borders was funded by the SUNY Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

The series of events aimed to educate the campus community about the challenges and persistent inequalities faced by immigrant women. In addition to Otsuka's appearance, a panel discussion with Long Island activists and a student symposium on gender and immigration took place during the 2014-2015 academic year. The symposium featured a keynote ad-



dress by Pakistani-American author Bushra Rehman. In Emery's words, "Immigration is a journey across many borders – national borders, class borders and gender borders." Emery cites research showing that immigrant women are often expected to be mothers and caretakers and notes that the demands of family can be difficult to balance with the pursuit of an education and a career. While she has seen Old Westbury students struggle to balance work and family responsibilities with their studies, Emery believes that a caring and empathetic faculty offers the students a great deal of support.

"As a faculty member, I try and listen to my students and learn about their struggles," Emery claims. "In addition, I challenge them to develop their writing, critical thinking and scholarship to the best of their abilities." At a dinner and reception before Otsuka's talk, it was clear that *The Buddha in the Attic* had



engaged and challenged many of Old Westbury's students. The students were eager to share their insights into the novel's symbolism, as well as its themes of assimilation and gender roles. They patiently waited in line for the chance to meet Ms. Otsuka and have their copy of the novel signed.

As she spoke to the audience, Otsuka noted that she treated the novel's setting as another character in the story. She strived to make California seem as new and strange to the reader as it did to the characters in her book. In their eyes, the United States was a "topsy-turvy world where women laughed out loud without covering their mouths and food was attacked with heavy metal instruments." She noted that the novel's characters

**"Immigration is a journey  
across many borders –  
national borders,  
class borders and  
gender borders."**

were brought to America from Japan because it was then illegal in California for Japanese men to marry white women. Nothing prepared these women for the discrimination they would face in America.

Responding to questions from the audience, Otsuka acknowledged that writing *The Buddha in the Attic* involved a process of overcoming shame. In her words, "Japan is a shame based culture where you do not air your dirty laundry in public." Otsuka noted that while the book was at times painful to write, she was glad to give a voice to an earlier generation of immigrant women. After concluding her presentation, Otsuka remained to sign copies of her novel and talk with students and faculty. The evening was an auspicious start to an engaging series of programs on gender and immigration.





Associate Professor Catherine Bernard (left, middle) with students.



Leah Richberg, Psychology, Class of 2015

# Recognizing Value in Studying Abroad

Submitted by William Lynch, Senior Admissions Counselor

*"Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime."*

These thought-provoking words, from one of America's great literary minds, Mark Twain, offer insight into the importance of international travel. From Istanbul, Turkey to the medieval city of Sarlat, France, SUNY Old Westbury students are broadening their minds and expanding their horizons by studying abroad. Each year, Old Westbury students make the journey to one, or even two, of a myriad of countries.

One alumnus, Michael Bayne (Accounting - class of 2014) says, "Being abroad will change your life in many ways. In addition to being able to immerse yourself in a different culture and learn about it, you get to meet

new people. You experience the social aspect of another country." Michael, who studied Spanish language and art at the University of Santiago de Compostela, hopes to ultimately live and work in Spain.

Another Alumna who benefitted from study abroad is Leah Richberg (Psychology - class of 2013). Her ambitious itinerary included studies in Spain and Cuba during the same summer. Leah completed an internship in Barcelona and spent the rest of the summer teaching English to health educators. She credits her study abroad experience for giving her the confidence to work, travel and live independently. Leah experienced life in two very different Spanish-speaking countries and was impressed by the depth of knowledge that her professors and guest lecturers in Cuba possessed.

The Gilman Scholarship for Pell eligible students is just one of many opportunities available to those looking

to fund their travels abroad. In 2015, three Old Westbury students won the award. Janel Dunkley (Business Administration –class of 2016) used her Gilman Scholarship to deepen her knowledge of Arabic and pursued her interest in public health while in Morocco. Sharon Pierre-Louis (Sociology –Class of 2016) studied how China and the United States differ in their approaches to raising children with her Gilman Scholarship. She learned a great deal about China's one-child rule and its effect on Chinese family dynamics.

In the summer of 2014, SUNY Old Westbury students participated in faculty-led programs in Istanbul, Bordeaux, and Paris, France. Dr. Catherine Bernard taught a Survey of Art in Southwestern France, where students had the opportunity to learn about French culture and history by visiting museums, medieval castles and prehistoric caves. Dr. Bernard, a native of France, guided students and shared her knowledge of art and culture. One student remarked, "Having a native of France who spoke the language and knew the culture was a huge plus." The course ended with students sharing photo-journal presentations about the artwork they viewed.



Old Westbury students taking in the beauty of Sarlat, France.

For the 2015 Summer session, we sent ten students to China and Spain on our faculty-led programs. Students also attended Summer programs in Italy, the United Kingdom and France. For those who cannot study abroad, SUNY Old Westbury is participating in an initiative to internationalize learning in the classroom. Collaborative Online International Learning, or COIL, connects SUNY Old Westbury students virtually with students from other



Mike Bayne, Accounting, Class of 2014

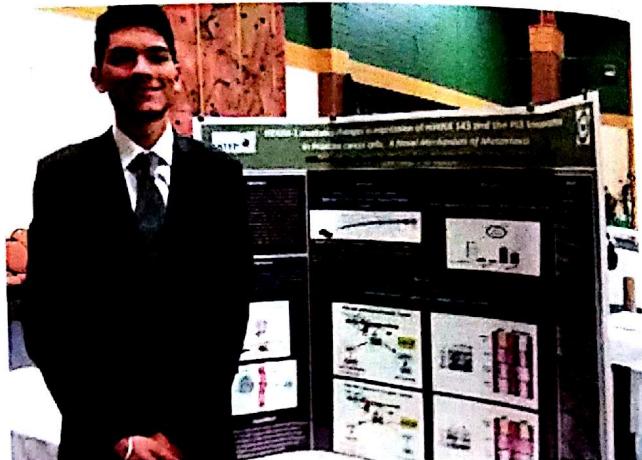
countries. Dr. Michael Onorato, Assistant Professor of Marketing, has partnered with Upper Austria University for his Global Business course with the hope of bringing a group of Old Westbury students to Austria in order to learn about international business practices.

The advantages of international study cannot be overstated. From a professional vantage point, students improve their cross-cultural competencies and their prospects for employment. They take with them the wonderful memories of having lived and experienced life in another country—memories which will last a lifetime.

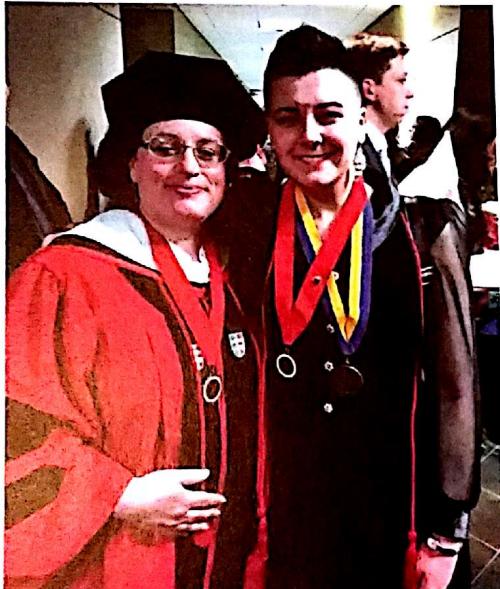


## STUDENTS

**B**iology Major Yuvraj Singh (Class of 2015) received a Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence. During his time at Old Westbury, Yuvraj worked as research assistant to Assistant Professor of Biology Manya Mascareno. He studied early indicators for prostate cancer, and gave a presentation on this research at the 2015 statewide CSTEP conference. In addition to his coursework in Biology, Yuvraj enjoyed taking classes taught by the American Studies department, particularly classes that focused on the role of immigration in United States history. Yuvraj was a member of Old Westbury's Honors College, and worked as a volunteer tutor and peer mentor for fellow Honors College students.



Yuvraj Singh at CSTEP Conference.



Associate Professor Margaret Torrell and Melody Beth Tomlinson

**E**nglish Major Melody Tomlinson (Class of 2015) received a Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence. As an Old Westbury student, Melody worked as a peer consultant at the college's writing center. Helping students to improve their academic writing skills was a rewarding experience for Melody. She was a member of the International English Honor Society (Sigma Tau Delta) and represented Old Westbury at the inaugural SUNY-wide Undergraduate Research Conference, presenting her Senior Thesis work on 19th century Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky. Melody greatly appreciated Old Westbury's small class sizes, which allowed her to develop relationships with several faculty mentors. She plans to attend graduate school and pursue a career teaching English.



Kaila Clark and Assistant Professor Kathleen Greenberg

# FACULTY



**M**arianne Morea, Math Redesign Coordinator at Old Westbury, was honored with a SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service.

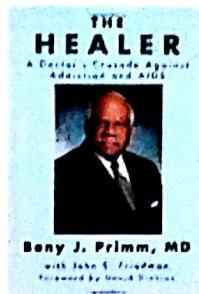
Morea has led the redesign of several introductory Mathematics classes. Improved use of instructional technology and peer tutoring have allowed more students to succeed in Mathematics classes which fill proficiency college requirements and serve as gateways to more advanced courses in the Natural Sciences.

**A**sistant Professor of Politics Economics and Law Edislav Manetovic led a group of Old Westbury students to the National Model United Nations in Manhattan. The students who participated had all completed Mantelovic's Model United Nations class and studied the rules and procedures followed by United Nations diplomats. All student teams were assigned a specific country to represent throughout the competition. Old Westbury students represented the West African Republic of Ghana in committee meetings and debates. At the closing of the conference, Old Westbury students received an honorable mention for their performance. Manetovic plans to start a model United Nations club at Old Westbury during the 2015-2016 academic year.

Old Westbury students at the National Model United Nations.



**A**ssociate Professor of American Studies John Friedman collaborated with physician Beny J. Primm on *The Healer: A Doctor's Struggle Against Addiction and AIDS* (Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2014).



**I**nstructor of English Victor Visconti was honored with a SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Adjunct Teaching. Visconti, who has been teaching at Old Westbury since 1975, developed the classes "Horror Literature" and "Structure and Grammar of the English Language."



**P**rofessor of Biology Rita Colon-Urbán was promoted to the rank of Distinguished Teaching Professor by the SUNY Board of Trustees. Colon-Urbán has been teaching Biology at Old Westbury since 1979, and has involved many students in her research into infectious disease. Colon-Urbán has published articles with Old Westbury students as co-authors and has received funding from the National Institute of Health and the National Science Foundation.



# HONORS & ACHIEVEMENTS



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