Status: Implemented; student participation

Project Abstract

Did you know that you’re never more than six feet away from a spider, bug, or other small creature? The majority of our students do not know about this. They know very little about the invertebrate world around us. This project is meant to expand the horizons of our students in natural science (primarily in biology), to show the world of sciences, to seed interest and adventures in their young minds and to arouse interest and perspective opportunity for further education in science.

New York has excellent opportunities for that, and one of the major research centers in New York is the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), which will be a collaborative institution in our project. AMNH is the largest natural sciences research institution in the world. AMNH has five divisions and conducts research in invertebrate and vertebrate zoology, molecular biology, anthropology, paleontology, and physical science. Our project will be based in Division of Invertebrate Zoology, where the Primary Director of the project is a Research Fellow. Invertebrate Zoology has a completely equipped research laboratory and library for students, and additionally has Scanning Electron Microscope facilities and a molecular laboratory that also can be used by students.

THE NEW 2008 CALL FOR MINI-GRANTS
AN OVERVIEW

Drawing on the success of previous Title V–Strengthening Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program (2004-2009) COBI faculty development programs, the Professor Magda Vasillov Center for Teaching and Learning and Hostos Office of Academic Affairs are pleased to announce the faculty development support program for the academic year 2008-2009. The Committee On Beautiful Ideas will award seven $2,000 mini-grants to improve student learning and faculty teaching.

The theme this year is “Effective Teaching for Intentional Learning,” and faculty will be encouraged to reflect on ways to engage students while sharpening course goals and outcomes. Mini-grants will support teams of two faculty members, from the same or different disciplines, working on new pedagogical approaches, re-developing existing curricula, re-imagining syllabi, etc., with an eye to purposefully challenge Hostos students to take responsibility for their education. Proposals that effectively tie classroom activity to general education learning outcomes are especially encouraged.

Interested faculty teams should contact the CTL and submit an application by Friday, December 5, 2008. Teams with especially promising proposals will attend a retreat and then be asked to re-submit a more detailed plan that includes descriptions of the proposal’s intellectual significance, intended outcomes, work plan, and assessment procedures. A committee will then award mini-grants of $2,000 to the seven winning project co-developers. Grantees have one academic year to implement their proposals. For more information, please visit: http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/oaa/ctl.

Division of Academic Affairs
Office of the Interim Provost and Vice President
The Professor Magda Vasillov
Center for Teaching and Learning
Committee On Beautiful Ideas

Hostos Faculty Scholarship,
Leadership & Innovation
Holiday Reception and Celebration

Award Winning COBI Innovations

Inside this booklet:
Brief Abstracts of Award Winning COBI Innovations

Sponsored by United States Department of Education
Title V

Eugenio María de Hostos Community College
Of The City University of New York
500 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10451
http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/oaa/ctl.htm
COBI: A History

Established in spring 2005, a Title V subcommittee was appointed by the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs to assist the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning in the development of the faculty development component of the Title V grant. The subcommittee was charged with ensuring the success of an initiative that targeted shifting the paradigm on teaching and learning through pedagogical innovations to improve student learning outcomes.

The resulting grassroots movement was designed to motivate faculty to re-craft pedagogical practices to incorporate innovative ideas into the curriculum, which was manifested as a competitive call for beautiful ideas (proposals) from which successful faculty teams would be rewarded with a prestigious recognition ceremony and three hours of release time during the fall or spring semester in the following academic year.

The subcommittee worked diligently week after week to create the context, structure, and competition guidelines; submission, review, and selection requirements; retreat goals, purpose, coordination, and execution; award ceremonies and mechanisms to recognize our outstanding faculty; procedures for documenting the productivity of faculty release time; finding conceptual space for the institutionalization of winning, innovative projects, among other responsibilities. As the immensity of the task began to sink in, so did the impending, potential burden that the project could have created for Hostos faculty.

In an intentional effort to keep the proposal, selection, and implementation processes manageable and inviting, the initiative was divided into three, user-friendly, stages of development. More information about the stages is found in the call for beautiful ideas (mini-grants).

The mantra of this creative and innovative committee was to employ the concepts that defined the competition: proposals became beautiful ideas; the call for beautiful ideas replaced the call for proposals; the Title V subcommittee became known as the Committee On Beautiful Ideas, and the resulting COBI acronym has become synonymous with innovation in teaching pedagogy in order to enhance teaching effectiveness and engage students intentionally and actively in the processes of learning.

The blue monarch, as an evolutionary entity, was selected to represent the work of this ever-evolving committee which has continued to morph from year to year incorporating the needs of the college into the priorities of COBI and the calls for beautiful ideas. The 2008 call for mini-grants is the first of its kind, but is based on the foundation established by COBI. Instead of receiving release time, seven mini-grants of $2,000 per project will be awarded, and all mini-grant projects are expected to be completed and incorporated into the life of the faculty or the college by the 2010-2011 academic year.

Beautiful Idea
Introduction to Humanities Online Classes with a Bilingual Focus

Award Winning Faculty
Professor Jairo Taylor, Humanities
Professor Lisa Tappeiner, Library

Status: On hold

Project Abstract

Using Blackboard as support, we propose an online asynchronous class targeting both English and Spanish speakers at Hostos. All materials in this class would be presented in a bilingual format (readings and exercises will be posted in English as well as in Spanish). The discussion board would have two different groups; one for Spanish speakers and a second one for English speakers.

This class would be open to two groups of students; the first of which would be Spanish speaking students placed in SPA 121 and taking an ESL or an ENG class, and the second of which would be comprised of English speakers with a least ENG 1301.

Hostos Community College has a very significant population of Spanish speakers that are struggling with proficiency in English. The purpose of this class will be to create an environment that will allow this cohort of students to feel comfortable in the content of Introduction to Humanities. They will be able to read and write in Spanish but at the same time, they will have the opportunity to read the materials and participate in the forum that will be posted in the English part of the class, since the class content will be available both in Spanish and English.

Beautiful Idea
You are Never More than Six Feet Away from a Spider

Award Winning Faculty
Professor Vladimir Ovtcharenko, Natural Sciences
Professor Francisco Fernández, Natural Sciences
WINNING COBI INNOVATION PROJECTS AWARDED FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2008-2009

CD Library of Anatomy and Physiology Laboratories
Professor Ralph Schwartz (Natural Sciences)
Professor Vladimir Ovtcharenko (Natural Sciences)

Collation-Convite: A Narrative Collective
Professor Cynthia Jones (English)
Professor America Trinidad (Education)

Development of a course “Mathematical Structures of Music” bridging mathematics and music education
Professor Alberto Bird (Humanities)
Professor Alexander Yaninsky (Mathematics)

Hollywood in the Classroom: Student-made Science Videos
Professor Zvi Ostrin (Natural Sciences)
Professor Mohammad Sohel (Natural Sciences)

Problem-Solving Course in Mathematics
Professor Kathleen Doyle (Mathematics)
Professor Ruili Ye (Mathematics)

To get to the buds, you need to nourish the roots and STEM
Professor Julie Trachman (Natural Sciences)
Second developer to be announced

Voices in Flames
Professor Angel Morales (Humanities)
Professor Nelson Núñez-Rodríguez (Natural Sciences)

Project Abstract
The Grand Concourse will be one-hundred years old in 2009. This beautiful idea draws its inspiration from the concept of a centenary celebration/ reflection that will engage students in local history and primary sources. Grand Concourse One Hundred metaphorically refers to not only the street itself but the Bronx in general and individual student life experiences viewed through history and self-expression. Student-driven projects will be the backbone of this project: student art, student “life experience essays,” drama, an oral history interview or simply a research paper organized around a theme such as ethnic experiences in relation to the larger city of New York. Students will be able to explore ethnicity and the relation of economic class in terms of a particular time period of the Grand Concourse or a life experience in the Bronx. Using ethnicity or another topic the student will express him/herself through written prose or an exhibition piece, possibly autobiographical or indicative of one particular ethnic or religious group’s experience as framed by these topics. In late 2008 this project will culminate in one or several exhibitions exploring these themes along a timeline for the Centenary of the Grand Concourse in 2009. While the Grand Concourse symbolized striving and achievement for some, for others it signifies exclusion as noted in a recent Bronx Museum brochure. This student-driven project will explore these themes in relation to student identity and self-expression. It may be collaborative with other academic departments or local institutions.

Beautiful Idea
Hidden Assets: Information Literacy Across the Curriculum

Award Winning Faculty
Professor Robert Cohen, Language and Cognition
Professor Miriam Laskin, Library

Status: Pending college-wide governance approval

Project Abstract
The Middle States Accreditation Standards clearly identify information literacy (IL) as a vital component of educational offerings and as an essential skill of a general education curriculum, noting that it is “vital to all disciplines and to effective teaching and learning” (MSCHE, 2000). Since the 1990’s, the expanding development and use of computers, software, digital information and multimedia resources has meant that library faculty have been in the forefront of teaching IL skills essential for both teaching and learning in this new Information Age. IL facilitates and supports the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge and strengthens critical thinking and reading, evaluation, analysis and use of information to produce new knowledge. IL is a way of understanding our...
Beautiful Idea

**CD Library of Anatomy and Physiology Laboratories**

*Award Winning Faculty*
Professor Ralph Schwartz, Natural Sciences
Professor Vladimir Ovtcharenko, Natural Sciences

**Status:** *Project co-developers currently taking release time*

**Project Abstract**

“CD PHOTO-LIBRARY OF ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY LABORATORIES” which will be distributed to the students, faculty, study rooms and tutors, we hope will enhance both the learning and teaching in the Anatomy & Physiology laboratories.

The CD Photo Library will allow the students to “bring the laboratory home” or to virtually anyplace that there’s a computer. The discs will make the laboratory experience more profitable because the students will be able to better prepare for the laboratory classes. This CD library will facilitate home studying by providing the students with a set of images that the instructor actually uses in class, images of the actual dissections performed by the students as well as images from the student microscope slides. It will allow the students to make a direct connection between classroom notes and the visual materials (dissections, microscope slides and models).

The CD Photo-Library will give students another tool that will allow them to better prepare for exams at home, in school or anywhere. By distributing the CDs to the Anatomy & Physiology tutors and the Biology Department’s study rooms it will facilitate the tutoring and group learning experience.

One of the ways we plan to evaluate the project is to get direct feedback from the faculty, students and tutors. This way we can continue to modify and improve the material. We also expect there to be an improvement in student performance in class participation and grades. We also expect to see a reduction in the number of students dropping the class.

Beautiful Idea

**Collation-Convite: A Narrative Collective**

*Award Winning Faculty*
Professor Cynthia Jones, English
Professor America Trinidad, Education

**Status:** *Project co-developers taking release time in spring 2009*

Beautiful Idea

**Going Interdisciplinary: Uniting the Disciplines at Hostos Community College Through the Study of Language**

*Award Winning Faculty*
Professor Cristina LaPorta, Humanities
Professor Ian Scott, Humanities

**Status:** *Ideas implemented in classroom practices*

**Project Abstract**

According to the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (from the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project 1999) there are five elements that should be ideally implemented in any foreign language program. They are called the "Five C’s": communication, cultures, connection, comparisons, and community. The "Five C’s" will be the driving force in the overall mission of this project. The mission of the project is to re-design syllabi in already existing language courses to connect with syllabi of seminars designed specifically to link foreign language learning to select disciplines that the Humanities Dept. and Modern Languages Unit can incorporate progressively into an interdisciplinary and comparative studies curriculum project.

Beautiful Idea

**Grand Concourse One Hundred**

*Award Winning Faculty*
Professor William Casari, Library
Professor Felix Cardona, Behavioral and Social Sciences

**Status:** *Pending implementation*
Beautiful Idea 2006

American Literature through History, American History through Literature

Award Winning Faculty
Professor Craig Bernardini, English Department
Professor Marcella Bencivenni, Behavioral and Social Sciences

Status: Pending college-wide governance approval

Project Abstract
History and literature are complementary disciplines. Just as the study of history may be enhanced by the study of literary works that reflect the events and the spirit of the period under investigation, so the study of literary works may be enhanced by the study of the historical context in which a work was produced, and which it may have helped to shape. As such, we thought it would be beneficial for Hostos students if they had the opportunity to take a class team-taught by a history and an English professor, in such a way that, rather than one discipline being subordinated to the other (history only there to illuminate the text, or vice-versa), the two disciplines were mutually reinforcing.

Beautiful Idea

Electronic Portfolios

Award Winning Faculty
Professor Carl Grindley, English
Professor Patricia Frenz-Belkin, Language and Cognition

Status: Completed. The white paper is on file and available for review online

Project Abstract
In recent years, the use of ePortfolios has become increasingly common in academe. They are now in place, for example, at LaGuardia Community College and at City Tech. In brief, an ePortfolio is a web-based tool that enables students to create professional web-spaces that highlight their academic successes, professional qualifications, learning experiences, creative projects and so on. If implemented at Hostos, each student would receive their own "permanent" web-space that they could use to showcase their past, current and future projects. This multimedia-friendly space would incorporate not only text, but images, audio, video: representative samples of every single type of experience encountered at Hostos. Usually, such ePortfolios allow students to better establish connections between their coursework, their vocations and...
Beautiful Idea

Hollywood in the Classroom: Student-made Science Videos

Award Winning Faculty
Professor Zvi Ostrin, Natural Sciences
Professor Mohammad Sohel, Natural Sciences

Status: Project co-developers are currently taking release time

Project Abstract
Our project will explore the pedagogical benefit of an active learning project in which students will create short science videos on scientific themes. Working in groups of three or four students, each group would create a short (3-5 minutes long) “mini-video” based on concepts in a specific science course. Because the students will need to draw upon their textual, aural, and visual skills when creating the videos, this project should serve as a powerful learning tool to enhance the students’ understanding.

It is contemplated that this student video project could be readily expanded within the Natural Sciences department, eventually transforming it into a campus-wide—and ultimately a CUNY and intercollegiate-wide—endeavor that would turn students (and even teachers) into active creators of videos on course concepts and content!

Beautiful Idea

Problem Solving Course in Mathematics

Award Winning Faculty
Professor Kathleen Doyle, Mathematics
Professor Ruili Ye, Mathematics

Status: Project co-developers are currently taking release time

Project Abstract
The directors propose the creation of a new course in mathematics on problem solving. The course is intended to provide an alternate, terminal 100 level course for students who are interested in pursuing careers in mathematics or science which could also be taken as an elective for students who are already engaged in upper level mathematics courses. Students who are enrolled in the Teacher Academy would benefit greatly from observing different techniques of teaching and different types of problem solving. Honors students would be able to easily adapt the course into an Honors Contract. The course non-sequential and there is no rigid syllabus, thus the instructor is free to guide
Professor Mohammad Sohel, Natural Sciences

Status: Pending incorporation into classroom practice

Project Abstract
Science education is an important part of general as well as vocational education. Knowledge and skills acquired in science courses are necessary for becoming an informed citizen, for an individual success in the current global market economy and for economic development of the country as new generations take charge positions. Yet, the percentage of students interested in science and engineering is diminishing. According to the National Science Board data, USA has a lower percentage of college students choosing science and engineering career than at least 20 other developed countries, and only marginally higher then Kyrgyzstan (8). Many of young people enrolled in Hostos Community College do not even consider a career in science. Two major reasons for student disinterest in science were determined after our conversations with them. First, some students believe that they’re not smart enough, and that “you have to be a genius to be a scientist.” Second, many students find science boring.

Active engagement of students in science is the main goal of this project. We plan to achieve it using an inquiry-based learning model of science education via a project-based laboratory course. Research has shown that “diversification of teaching strategies such as project based learning increases compatibility between student learning preferences and instructors teaching styles which can lead to not only higher grades but also the post-course attitude to sciences.” (4). Changing student attitudes towards science, encouraging them to consider careers in science and engineering is the intended outcome of the project.

students towards non-standard topics for exploration without worrying about the results of a standardized test.

Beautiful Idea
To get to the buds, you need to nourish the roots and STEM

Award Winning Faculty
Professor Julie Trachman (Natural Sciences)
Second developer to be announced

Status: Project co-developer scheduled for release time in spring 2009

Project Abstract
Hostos Community College, like many other American educational institutions, has implemented General Education parameters across all disciplines with the intention of making our students better able to face the demands of today’s global economy. In part as a result of instituting General Education programs, scientific literacy of American adults went from approximately 10% to 28% in the last 20 years. Numerous education and science organizations advocate increasing American scientific literacy and decreased entry into STEM professions is that many K-12 students do not receive an appropriate foundation in basics including science and mathematics. Many K-12 educators themselves are poorly educated in STEM disciplines.

Beautiful Idea
Voices in Flames

Award Winning Faculty
Professor Angel Morales, Humanities
Professor Nelson Núñez-Rodríguez, Natural Sciences

Status: Co-developers scheduled to take release time in spring 2009

Project Abstract
Global warming is one of the most important challenges mankind is facing in the new century. It is more than a scientific issue; it is an ethical and social crusade to preserve the planet for the next generations. Educating the future professionals implies a commitment from the instructors beyond the traditional stretches and the boundaries of the curricula. This faculty mission is crucial at Hostos Community College given the fact that our classroom environment is located in the poorest district of the nation. Our
community can be used as a real world example of the future complex and interdependent society our students will face as professionals. It is imperative that they be ready to confront the worldwide climatic crisis. By using theater as a powerful tool to outreach the community, we intend to connect our students with the high and elementary schools in our area. This way, they will have a venue to raise their voices outside Hostos as natural leaders of the community passing a scientific message concerning the environment. A theatrical performance in these schools regarding the environment, lesson plan devising, pre- and post-performance workshops, and the development of a teacher resource guide will represent a joyful and hopeful wave to convey knowledge to the South Bronx. As our current experience with the theatrical production of Nature’s House has demonstrated, the legacy of this endeavor begins with the selection of the script, and continues with the rehearsal and craft processes. We are certain this experience will extend beyond the writing and post-performance discussions. It will represent a life-long lesson, as our sustainable relation with the planet must be.

videos, and presentations to student groups and the college community? How do students develop collaborative relationships across and within disciplines? How does faculty mentor students to conduct research concerning the respiratory system?

The new paradigm behind our COBI project exemplifies the Hostos Mission Statement in encouraging “…intellectual growth…through the development of…critical thinking proficiencies needed for lifelong learning…” The completed projects will “…be a resource to the South Bronx and other communities…by providing…expertise for the further development of the communities it serves.”

Beautiful Idea
When the Word Travels

Award Winning Faculty
Professor Karin Lundberg, Language and Cognition
Professor Paul Italia, English

Status: Pending college-wide governance approval

Project Abstract
The student body at Hostos constitutes a community of learning that in itself shares a global level of information and knowledge. It forms a natural habitat where global literacy can thrive and grow into a beautiful synthesis of human experience and capability. However, often students are unaware of their own contribution of knowledge as to who we are in our constant human exchange of information and ideas. They tend to see themselves as socially and culturally isolated and remain in a status quo that limits their means of self-expression that in turn inhibits their academic literacy development. The fact, rather, that this diverse student body functions as a unique factor in an immense dynamic of cultural transformation that is as old as the world itself, offers great prospects for a stronger global self-awareness in the Hostos student community.

To introduce an interdisciplinary course that addresses this inherent capacity and special quality of Hostos students as it addresses the need for improvement of academic communication skills would provide an inspiring platform for incoming freshmen.

Beautiful Idea
Wonderful World of Science: Challenging New Scientists

Award Winning Faculty
Professor Olga Steinberg, Natural Sciences
Beautiful Idea
Know As You Go

Award Winning Faculty
Professor Minerva Santos, Language and Cognition
Professor Gail August, Language and Cognition

Status: Implemented and being used by faculty and students

Project Abstract
This beautiful idea, Know as you Go, is inspired by the desire to make achievement in academic courses a beautiful experience for our students. We propose to select one introductory content course which attracts many students and to develop an on-line, interactive tutorial for that subject. Students would get practice and feedback on the important vocabulary and concepts for the course, as well as in-depth reading experience with topics related to the course. The tutorial would be available to any student in the college, and could be used before the course to study, practice, and review course materials. It could also be used before the course, to enable a student to become familiar with the course, materials, and after the course to review important materials and to prepare for more advanced courses in the subject area.

Beautiful Idea
Virtual Resources for Teaching the Respiratory System and Asthma

Award Winning Faculty
Professor John Gillen, Natural Sciences
Professor Kathy Donohue, Allied Health Sciences

Status: Pending final identification of online resources and website access

Project Abstract
Our COBI project attempts to change the traditional teacher-centered paradigm of teaching into a learning-centered professor/student paradigm. In this new paradigm students acquire knowledge through assessing and analyzing information using inquiry skills, communication and critical thinking. Professor and students learn together, supporting a cooperative, collaborative culture. Our COBI project asks the following questions: how do faculty mentor students to use critical thinking skills to collect and evaluate information in the form of animations about air pollution, the respiratory system and its disorders, asthma in particular, and then to use the information to demonstrate leadership in designing and implementing teaching plans,
**Holiday Reception and Celebration**
Hostos Faculty Scholarship, Leadership, and Innovation
Office of Academic Affairs and Professor Magda Vasiliov C.T.L.

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**Beautiful Idea**
*Colloquium in Urban Ecology: An Ideal Environment in an Ideal Society (Pre-req. CHE 210 and BIO 210)*

*Award Winning Faculty*
Professor Debasish Roy, Natural Sciences
Professor Francisco Fernández, Natural Sciences

**Status:** Pending college-wide governance approval

**Project Abstract**
Definitions of “Urban” vary among countries and often are specific to the political, social and economic context. The United States Census Bureau defines urban areas as populated regions with a density of 1600 people/sq km or greater and a minimum population of 2500. The ecosystem associated with the urban areas and urban population is usually defined as the Urban Ecosystem. Urban ecosystems are shaped by the process of urbanization, which involves the conversion of rural and other areas due to increase in the urban population or to the spatial spreading of the cities or both. These models are best understood by recognizing that urban ecosystems are dynamic and influenced by different types of driving forces. The idea that people and their activities influence the ecology of urban areas has relatively long history and it is one of the successful initiatives of UNESCO through its MAN and the Biosphere (MAB) program.

**Beautiful Idea**
*From the Classroom to the Community: Women and Work-An Academic/Experiential Course (including optional Supervised Internships in Women’s Studies)*

*Award Winning Faculty*
Professor Jerilyn Fisher, English
Professor Amy Ramson, Behavioral and Social Sciences

**Status:** Pending college-wide governance approval

**Project Abstract**
In Women and Work, class readings and assignments would facilitate personal reflection as they promote socio-historical analysis about issues that affect women (as women) and men (as men) in both the public and private sectors of employment. Topics will include leadership; power; the history of women in service professions and social change fields; sexual harassment; the culture of change in the workplace; men in non traditional jobs; analyses of organizational structures-hierarchical and egalitarian; assertiveness training to cope with sex discrimination. Assignments would draw from interdisciplinary readings from the fields of sociology, history, psychology, literature, feminist theory, and economics.

**Beautiful Idea**
*Integrating Online Collaborative Learning into ESL 036*

*Award Winning Faculty*
Professor Paula Korsko, Language and Cognition
Professor Catherine Lyons, Library

**Status:** Ideas implemented into classroom practices

**Project Abstract**
Web 2.0 refers to a new generation of web-based technologies that emphasize collaboration between users and especially content creation and sharing. It includes technologies like blogs, podcasts, RSS, social bookmarking and wikis. Web 2.0 is also sometimes referred to as the “participatory web” or the “semantic web.” In December 2005, Stephen Abram, Sirsi Dynix vice president of Innovation, wrote “Web 2.0 is ultimately about a social phenomenon – not just about networked social experiences but about the distribution and creation of Web content itself, ‘characterized by open communication, decentralization of authority, freedom to share and reuse, and the market as a conversation’” (Abram, 2005, Web 2.0 section, para. 2). Web 2.0 applications have changed our students’ expectations of online services. The typical experience in distance-education classes needs to evolve to keep with our students’ current technological and social expectations. Many Hostos Community College (HCC) students are digital natives, that is, they have never known life without the Internet. And, more importantly, the new social culture fostered by immersion in technology is not only changing this generation, and how they learn, but also affect the workplace. They are going to need the information literacy skills to navigate and evaluate information from resources where everyone is a content creator. Regardless of how our students come to Hostos, whether or not they are digital natives when they begin classes, they are going to need experience working with these same technologies, and understanding the social rules of this new culture, for their future academic and professional success.