A Title V subcommittee was appointed by the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs in spring 2005 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 new, innovative, ideas into the curriculum. The result was 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 following academic year to integrate the project into the life of the college.

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. 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 throughout this call for beautiful ideas.

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 2010-2011 academic year.