Engaging on Multiple Levels

On April 2, Lauren and I had the pleasure of attending a senior vocal recital presented by Matt Reese. He was kind enough to invite us, and we joined hundreds in Legacy Hall for a magnificent evening of music from Ravel to Sondheim.

The evening reinforced the power of teaching and the impact Columbus State University has on our students. Matt and other May 2011 graduates will pursue graduate studies, while scores will join the workforce, becoming teachers, nurses, computer programmers, second lieutenants and more. At our recent Career Fair, orchestrated by our Center for Career Development, the largest number of CSU students ever participated in a slowly improving job market that portends better things to come for these and future graduates.

Each month during this academic year, our Enrollment Management team has me visiting high schools in metropolitan Atlanta. In Gwinnett, Cobb, Fulton, DeKalb, Rockdale and Newton counties, along with the Muscogee, Atlanta and Marietta public school systems, I have had the honor of bringing greetings and opportunities from Columbus State University to dozens of college counselors and their thousands of advisees. Recruiting Director Kristin Williams and her team have been working mightily to deliver the Columbus State University message to the complex metro Atlanta marketplace. All 35 University System of Georgia institutions are deeply interested in drawing students from this source of more than 55 percent of all Georgia high school graduates.

Our recruiters have demonstrated professionalism and efficacy by building “brand awareness” for all that’s distinct about CSU in this complex arena. How wonderful it was to visit in a Cobb County high school with a CSU senior teaching there this semester. Likewise, what a pleasant surprise to find a College of Education and Health Professions graduate student interning in a counseling center at a DeKalb County high school. It’s worth noting our student is completing an M.S. in counseling from a program reviewed by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, an independent agency that accredits master’s degree programs in counseling. Her advisor in DeKalb indicated their system would only consider hiring students from CACREP-accredited graduate programs such as we have at Columbus State.

Our second cohort in our education doctoral program is well under way. Our incredible new Student Recreation Center has become a hub of student wellness. The Department of Communication is renovating at RiverPark, in the Carpenters Building, for a broadcast program, and this summer, we will move into a magnificent new facility at Oxbow Meadows Environmental Learning Center as part of a collaborative community effort with Columbus Water Works.

These are all signs of an engaged university that, guided by exceptional faculty, delivers cutting-edge programs that continue to reinforce the value of the Columbus State University experience.

Celebrated Columbus-born artist Bo Bartlett poses in front of his painting, *Inheritance*, in CSU’s Illges Gallery during an ArtWalk between the Corn Center for Visual Arts venue and two other Uptown Columbus galleries on March 24. Hundreds enjoyed the inaugural ArtWalk, which launched a major, month-long Bartlett exhibition. Bartlett visited with art-lovers at all three galleries during the evening.
Recreation Center Helps Transform Student Life

High Expectations Help Miss CSU Achieve Goals

MPA Program Progessing Despite Loss of Leadership

Runner Shines in Nation’s Cross-Country Spotlight

So long colstate! All campus email addresses now end with @ColumbusState.edu; Web transition ends Aug. 2.
Art Group Studying in Japan Home Safe After Earthquake

When the terrifying earthquake and tsunamis hit Japan in March, six students and two faculty from Columbus State’s Department of Art were just finishing a weeklong study abroad experience focusing on ceramics in Kiryu, Japan.

By then, though, the group was in Tokyo, a safe distance from devastated areas of the country, but then the nearby nuclear reactors started deteriorating. Travel throughout the country was impacted, and CSU’s group was not exempt.

Their original flight home was canceled. Thanks to a lot of efforts by the Center for International Education, the provost’s office, the president’s office and American Airlines, the group was rebooked on a departing flight two days later. However, the group could not find transportation from the hotel to the airport.

Two more days passed before they finally made it out of the country. A small CSU group, including the director of the university’s Counseling Center and several family members, met the group in Atlanta and bused them back to campus.

“My sincere thanks to all for the professional and compassionate manner in which this was handled,” CSU President Tim Mescon said after the students were home. “I’m glad all are back safely. Our thoughts and prayers are with the nation of Japan as they work through the challenges of overcoming this exceptional tragedy.”

Nonprofits Honor CSU for Uptown Revitalization; Whitewater Ahead

Columbus State University’s investment in Uptown Columbus, creating a thriving RiverPark Campus, is also paying off with recognition.

Two nonprofit organizations dedicated to improving Columbus’ downtown area, Uptown Columbus, Inc., and the Business Improvement District, recognized the university in February with its fourth annual Rozier Dewylder Leadership Award, presented annually to an individual or entity that embodies the vision and energy of Dewylder, a Columbus architect credited with launching the revitalization of the area now known as Uptown.

Current Columbus State President Tim Mescon accepted the award on the university’s behalf and immediately asked his predecessor, Frank Brown, to hold the award. Mescon credited Brown with the vision for CSU’s presence in Uptown Columbus.

About 350 students now live on the RiverPark Campus and attend classes among about a dozen different buildings now owned and used by the university.

Uptown Columbus Inc. and BID coordinate economic revitalization initiatives in the overall downtown area. Their annual meeting featured whitewater canoe Olympian Joe Jacobi, who spoke on the potential economic impact of the 2.5-mile whitewater course that’s being developed on the Chattahoochee River near Uptown.

When completed in 2012, downtown Columbus Ga., will be home to what developers believe will be the longest urban whitewater course in the world. Find out more about the project at http://columbusgawhitewater.com/.
Student Pianist Earns Top U.S. Composition Award

A Columbus State freshman, pianist Liliya Ugay, won $3,000 and performed for music teachers from across the nation in March after claiming the top Young Artist award in the 2010-2011 Music Teachers National Association Composition Competition.

She's the Schwob School of Music's second student ever to win an MTNA title in the 19-26-age division. As first-place winner, Ugay got the prize money and the opportunity to perform her composition, *Slipping Dreams*, at the March 29 MTNA national conference in Milwaukee.

Ugay began taking piano as a child in her native Uzbekistan, formerly a Soviet republic. Later adding composition lessons, she won her first composition competition at age 14 in her hometown of Tashkent, Uzbekistan's capital.

“In my country, the music school where I studied was extremely strong, but the college-level education there limits, rather than develops, your professional skills,” Ugay said.

She found her way to Columbus State after a suggestion from a friend who attended CSU prompted Ugay to successfully apply for a Woodruff Scholarship.

Ugay said she feels lucky to have the opportunity to study with Schwob professors Fred Cohen and Alex Kobrin. “It is hard to imagine a better and more intelligent composition teacher than professor Cohen, and I cannot believe that the famous world-renowned pianist Alexander Kobrin is my piano coach,” she said.

Kobrin, CSU’s L. Rexford Whiddon Distinguished Chair in Piano, has mutual regard for his student. “Her dedication to music and a hunger to learn would make any teacher proud,” he said. “She never stops searching for a deeper understanding of music and has the soul of a composer.”

College of Education and Health Professions Dean Starts Work at CSU July 1

Barbara Buckner, associate provost at Coastal Carolina University, will become CSU’s next College of Education and Health Professions dean, starting July 1.

“Dr. Buckner has sterling credentials and a unique understanding of issues facing education in the current global economic environment,” said Tom Hackett, Columbus State’s interim provost and vice president for academic affairs. “It became clear from our conversations that she has a vision in terms of how the field of education can be a leader in addressing these issues.”

Buckner, a longtime education professor, was hired after she visited Columbus State Nov. 29-30 as a dean finalist for a series of interviews, an informal “meet and greet,” and a presentation to COEHP faculty.

Buckner has been at 8,700-student Coastal Carolina University in Conway, S.C., since 2005, first as associate dean of its education college. She became associate provost for assessment and accreditation in mid- 2007. In both roles, she dealt with accrediting bodies: the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education on behalf of the education college and the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools on behalf of the university.

Buckner’s “tremendous amount of experience in accreditation compliance” will be particularly valuable as Columbus State begins working soon toward regularly rescheduled reaccreditation of its teacher education programs, Hackett said.

Before Coastal Carolina, Buckner was an education professor and interim associate dean at Longwood University in Farmville, Va. A former elementary and middle school teacher, she earned a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Ohio State University, a master’s in science education from Clarion and an elementary education doctorate from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Buckner will replace David Rock, who resigned last summer to become the University of Mississippi’s education dean. Longtime Associate Dean Ellen Roberts has been serving as interim dean since then.
Historian’s Book Adds Context to South’s Second Creek War

A new book by a Columbus State history professor contends the Creek War of 1836 was far more significant than traditionally portrayed.

John Ellisor’s *The Second Creek War: Interethnic Conflict and Collusion on a Collapsing Frontier* (University of Nebraska Press) demonstrates how the federal government’s relocation of Creek Indians from present-day Alabama to Oklahoma transcended what’s been commonly regarded as a “minor police action.”

The relocation was part of a prolonged, armed conflict extending to Georgia and Florida, with whites and blacks joining remaining Creeks in some cases to battle other whites. Ellisor lectured on “Columbus and the Second Creek War,” discussing points made by his book, during January at Columbus Public Library’s main branch.

The publisher touts the work as the “first book-length examination of the Southern Creek War.” Ellisor’s archival research reveals an intense competition for land and resources that pitted whites, sometimes allied with Creeks, against other whites. Thus, the idea that white society united to round up and drive away the Creeks mischaracterizes Southern society in that era.

Professor Explores Opera’s Impact on American Literature

In *Overtones of Opera in American Literature from Whitman to Wharton*, Columbus State English professor Carmen Skaggs explores the influence of opera on American writing, in both poetry and fiction.

The book, recently published by Louisiana State University Press, explores how major writers used opera in capturing the transformations of a rapidly changing American literary landscape during the 19th and early 20th century.

The book begins with a brief history of opera in such cities as New Orleans, New York and Boston, and then takes the reader through opera’s infiltration into literature in works by Walt Whitman, Edgar Allan Poe, Louisa May Alcott, Kate Chopin, Willa Cather, Henry James and Edith Wharton.

Skaggs grew up playing the piano and singing, and had always been a lover of opera. As a Mercer University undergraduate, she initially majored in music and literature. However, when she began working on her master’s degree in English at the University of Georgia, she took a seminar course on Henry James and Willa Cather.

“When I started reading their work, references to opera kept popping up,” she said. “It was something that I knew about, was interested in, and wanted to explore more.”

Nursing School Earns New Accreditation

Columbus State’s School of Nursing has earned a seal of approval from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the leading accrediting body for baccalaureate and advanced degree nursing programs.

The accreditation affirms that the school meets or exceeds the nation’s highest standards to prepare and advance the training of nursing professionals.

The designation follows moves by Columbus State to better serve registered, working nurses through a planned online master’s program, in addition to a recently updated two-track bachelor’s program.

Columbus State last fall launched an online undergraduate program for registered nurses as part of its Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. “Our new RN track is fully online and offered year-round in 8- to 10-week sessions to accommodate registered nurses working full-time,” said professor Sheri Noviello, the nursing school’s new interim director. “It complements our traditional pre-licensure track.”

College of Education and Health Professions Interim Dean Ellen Roberts called CCNE accreditation an indicator of quality.

“It says to prospective students, other institutions and the community that our nursing graduates meet the highest standards of professional preparation,” she said. “We have every reason to be proud of our faculty and programs in the School of Nursing and value the contribution they make to the delivery of excellent health care in Columbus and the region.”

Columbus State’s CCNE accreditation is effective through 2015, with subsequent reaccreditation covering up to 10 years.
Study Abroad Students Seize Opportunities in England

From the stage to the ice, a pair of Columbus State University students took advantage of unanticipated opportunities during separate fall semester study abroad programs in England. Melora Slotnick landed the lead role in an Edge Hill University theatrical production, while Charlotte Walker enjoyed her time on Oxford University’s women’s ice hockey team. They are among 100-150 top Columbus State students who each year take advantage of programs in about 20 countries through CSU’s Center for International Education.

When Columbus native Charlotte Walker, a political science major, signed up for Columbus State’s Oxford University program, she had no idea she would fulfill her dream of playing competitive ice hockey. After arriving at Oxford, Walker attended Freshers’ Fair, a weeklong Oxford Student Union event involving about 450 clubs, teams, societies and other groups. Walker didn’t think she would be able to take time from her studies to participate – until she discovered the Oxford University Ice Hockey Club’s women’s team, the Oxford Women’s Blues. She excitedly raced back to her dorm and “Skyped” her mom to “send my skates, pronto.”

“I decided that I would make time, no matter what,” she said. Despite returning to Columbus prior to the regular season, Walker’s preseason with the squad included scrimmages against the Oxford Vikings, the university’s men’s “B” team.

“As far as I know, I am the only student from CSU to play a university-level sport (at Oxford),” she said. While Walker was training on the ice, about 140 miles away on the outskirts of Liverpool, Melora Slotnick was portraying Mary Henry in Edge Hill University’s production of Carnival of Souls. Adapted from a 1960s horror film, the production centered on Slotnik’s character surviving a near-fatal accident and being haunted by a phantom that seemingly inhabits a run-down pavilion.

“The show was a success,” said Slotnick, a junior theatre education major from Jonesboro. The opportunity also was unexpected. “I received a flyer from one of the tutors about auditions, and I went just planning on having fun in a workshop-style audition,” said Slotnik. She received a callback, then the lead role offer. “I was ecstatic,” she said. “The rehearsal process was workshop-based and very beneficial for me as an artist.” Slotnick said she and castmates explored the separation between the screen and stage by delving into aspects of physical theatre and various acting techniques, also experimenting with green screens and filmmaking. “It was a short process and a lot of work but an incredible experience.”

Columbus State Hosts NCAA Rifle Championship

Columbus State University and the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit at Fort Benning teamed up in March to host the 2011 NCAA Rifle Championship.

It was the second time that Columbus State University has hosted a team national championship event (Division II golf championship, 1987) and the first time that Fort Benning and the Army Marksmanship Unit have hosted an NCAA championship.

But it was the first time that an NCAA championship was held on Columbus State’s campus and the first time any portion of an NCAA-sanctioned championship was held on a military base.

The University of Kentucky rifle team, coached by Columbus native Harry Mullins, won that program’s first national championship with a 4,700 team total score.

Although finishing 2010 with an individual national champ in Columbus State’s first year competing, CSU didn’t qualify to field a team in the 2011 championship. CSU coaches are optimistic 2012 will be a better year for Cougar shooters.

Dempster Christenson, an all-American from the University of Nevada, finished 15th of 48 in the air-rifle competition at the Lumpkin Center.

Walker

Slotnick

Spring 2011
Small Co-Ed Cheerleading Unit Wins National Championship

Columbus State's Small Co-Ed Cheerleading team won the Universal Cheerleaders Association National Championship in Orlando Jan. 15, claiming the fourth Small Co-Ed Cheerleading Team national championship in school history.

It was the second big win for Columbus State at the 2011 UCA Championships as Tommy Goforth and Ali Anderson won the Partner Stunt competition the evening before. CSU's Jason Riel and Chelsie Horton teamed up to finish behind them in second place while Jon Lee and Cassidy Drysdale took home fourth.

Columbus State's Large Co-Ed team took home second place.

Army, Club Football Team Battle

In what organizers hope will become an annual tradition, Columbus State's club football team clashed in October with a team from the Army's “Hammer Brigade” (3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division) at historic Doughboy Stadium in Fort Benning, fighting valiantly but losing 29-13 to soldiers who won an early trip home from Iraq by making the team.

The Doughboy Classic, attracting a crowd estimated at 6,000, was the highlight of Fort Benning's Soldier and Family Appreciation Day, an event that drew thousands more than just those who came to the game. The day was designed to officially welcome back the 3rd Brigade from duty in Iraq and included free music, free food, free games and more.

“This is a fantastic reflection of the partnership between the Manuever Center of Excellence and Columbus State University,” CSU President Tim Mescon said of the game.

Brown, Whitley Awards Go to Thomas Black, Janet Davis

Winners of Columbus State’s top annual awards for friends and alumni were formally recognized March 31 at the annual President's Recognition Dinner.

The Frank D. Brown and Leadership Excellence Award went to Thomas Black, retired executive vice president of Tom's Foods, and Janet Davis, TIC Federal Credit Union president and CEO, received the other top award, the Thomas Y. Whitley Distinguished Alumnus Award.

Also a retired Bradley-Turner Foundation administrator, Black has supported Columbus State for more than 25 years. He has served as a CSU Foundation trustee, including two terms as chair.

Under Davis, a 1981 CSU business administration graduate, TIC assets have increased $152 million during her 19-year tenure. She also has directed a transformation and expansion of the credit union into innovative banking centers for its 40,000 members in Georgia and Alabama.

Also during the dinner, honorary alumnus designations went to local community leaders and CSU supporters Martha K. Cunningham, T. Samuel Rawls Jr. and Sherry Wade.

John Barwick III, with CSU bachelor’s degrees in accounting (1973) and education (1975), plus a master’s degree in education (1981), received an Alumni Service Award.

The CSU Alumni Association established the Brown Award honoring CSU's third president in 2008, the year he retired, to recognize an individual non-alumnus or organization that exemplifies his leadership skills and ideals. The Whitley Award, named after CSU's founding president, is presented each year to the CSU or Columbus College degree-holder who has most lived up to the high standards set by the award's namesake, who died in 2001. Columbus State's alumni board approved this prestigious award in 1980, and it's been presented annually since then to a Columbus College or CSU graduate.
Leaving a Mark

New Recreation Center Transforming Student Life

By Bill Sutley

Columbus State University’s gleaming new recreation center has been for, by and about the students since day one. What’s difficult is deciding when, exactly, “day one” occurred.

For Campus Recreation Director Rick Cravens, who frequently makes the “day one” assertion, the building started taking shape decades ago. It was on Cravens’ mind when he was a Columbus College student back in the early 1980s, before he went off to Florida State for a master’s and learned some colleges had more to offer in terms of recreation than eight pieces of used fitness equipment crammed into a Woodruff Gym classroom.

By contrast, the 106,000-square foot facility that opened Jan. 11 in the middle of CSU’s campus has fulfilled Cravens’ dreams and then some. After three months, more than 1,000 students a day, on average, are using the three-story, $23 million center’s amenities, ranging from free weights to state-of-the-art fitness and aquatic centers.

Hundreds more students, visitors, faculty and staff stroll daily through the center’s spacious concourse, allowing them a vantage point to check out activity in all but a few of the center’s spaces.

“Students are very excited about it,” Cravens said. “There’s nothing in Columbus like it.”

While visions of the center took shape years earlier, momentum toward opening day began picking up in early 2008, as Cravens manically shared his evolving dream, spending dozens of hours lobbying student groups and individuals, trying to persuade students to vote to pay $100
A couple of years earlier, just after Gina Sheeks became vice president for student affairs, then-President Frank Brown called her in and charged her with moving forward with a recreation center. Until then, the idea was mostly a pipedream—fortified by a handful of elevation drawings drafted by a local company at the request of Larry Kees, Sheeks’ predecessor. When Tim Mescon succeeded Brown in mid-2008, he kept the ball rolling.

Students were the key to the funding because, by state law, taxpayer money can’t fund a university’s non-academic building. A student vote isn’t required, and many schools simply impose a fee and then administrators decide what should go into a new recreation center. Sheeks and her Student Life staff decided they wanted student buy-in. In 2008, Cravens began spending many hours with then-Student Government Association President Alex Acton sitting outside Davidson Student Center with architect’s renderings on a foam board, talking to passers-by about what they might want in a recreation center.

“Rick was a major force,” says Acton, now working on a master’s at Georgia State University in Atlanta. “He’s always been great with students, but his willingness to listen was a big part of this gaining the support it needed.”

Cravens got the campus Web Team to set up a special website where students could learn details about what was proposed and offer input. He organized bus trips that took student leaders to see recreation centers at Georgia State and the University of West Georgia.
A Jan. 18 grand opening drew a diverse crowd that included Cody, top, and Columbus State boosters, middle, from right, Ann and Billy Key, plus four-degree alumnus Greg Bryant. Spinning, above, is now one of the fitness classes offered. Action at the center – from water volleyball to classes in movement rooms overlooking the aquatic center – continues long after sunset.

He even came up with a marketing slogan: “It’s gonna leave a mark.” Just as an intramural sports injury might “leave a mark,” his pitch was that voting for the center would allow students of 2008 to leave a mark on Columbus State.

And they have. Among the center’s features:
- An aquatic center that encompasses a five-lane, 25-yard lap pool, a “lazy river,” therapy pool area and adjacent sauna.
- A wide range of fitness classes – strength, cycling, step, kickboxing,
- Beyond Fit – Other Rec Center Benefits

Josh Burston, current SGA president: “It’s definitely amplified (student life). I’ve seen thousands of students I’ve never seen. They’re actually mingling a little more and, hopefully, from that, they’ll get more involved in on-campus activities.”

Alicia Tatum, assistant professor of exercise science and Wellness Program coordinator: “From a scientific standpoint, exercise is equivalent to an anti-depressant. And those endorphins produced by exercise – the runner’s ‘high’ – actually make you more alert. I think we’re going to see students who feel better about themselves and performing better academically.”

Kimberly Mullen, senior director for student engagement: “It doesn’t matter what color your skin is or what background you’re from, all students can come together here. … I think, whether you’re fit or not, there’s something here for you.”

Todd Myrick, director of Residence Life: “It really helps with the stress level at work. We’re really working all the time. Often, we have to come out in the middle of the night. It’s tough if you’re not in a good place with your mental and physical health.”

Students now enjoy high-performance Cybex exercise equipment.

Homecoming King Tray Holloway shows the Rev. Bernice King, youngest daughter of Martin Luther King Jr., the center’s bouldering area after she spoke at CSU’s Legacy Celebration Banquet there Feb. 18.
Students enjoy relaxing in the aquatic center’s therapy pool and pickup basketball games, in the main pool, below, or on adjacent courts.

Focus on Columbus State University

Spring 2011
Part of the reason has been 22 weekly “movement classes” organized by Coffield. She oversees 15 part-time student and non-student instructors holding certifications in such skills as leading popular Zumba workouts.

In all, 60 student workers keep the center humming 17 hours a day. All have been trained by Coffield and Day in CPR and the use of portable defibrillators that are available on each floor. Between them, Coffield and Day have nearly two decades of experience with YMCAs – locally for Coffield, who has an exercise science degree from Columbus State, and throughout central Tennessee for Day, who moved here from Nashville.

“There are so many possibilities here,” Day said, surveying the aquatic center that nearly wasn’t.

Coming to CSU meant Day could “come up with my own programs. I could essentially put safety first.” All of his 10 lifeguards are certified, and he’s giving them extra training – a result of his certifications with four different organizations. Initially, at least, he’s focusing on safety by making swim lessons available for student non-swimmers.

The social potential of the aquatic center – featuring faux palm trees and beach-like temperatures of 85 degrees and 70 percent humidity – isn’t lost on Student Life staffers and recruiters who are already planning luau gatherings for new students attending orientation. Elsewhere in the center, there’s a strong hangout vibe, with many students taking advantage of wireless Internet to study at tables dotting the concourse, overlooking a massive court capable of accommodating four simultaneous pickup games.

“I’m surprised at the number of people using the facility,” said Cravens. “I thought I knew a lot of people at CSU, but I’ve decided I don’t know anybody.”

He thinks the center has offered a “sense of belonging” to a lot of students – including a surprising number of commuter students.

“I see it continuing to help us transform student engagement, serving as a social hub for all student populations,” Sheeks said. “I think it helps promote the idea that we’re an environment that’s committed to health and wellness.”

It’s also part of what Sheeks calls Columbus State’s “ongoing transition from a commuter campus,” where the average student was age 27 a few years ago, “to a more traditional residential campus.” Campus apartments are full, and the average student age is now 23.

Although Cravens’ recreation center dream is now reality, it’s clear he and his staff won’t quit listening to students anytime soon – including the thousands of prospective students the center is expected to attract.

“A lot of what I like about this place is we’re still taking a lot of input from students – what they want and when they want it,” says student worker Tess Moore, a junior exercise science major. “I love it. I think it’s one of the best things to come to campus.”
When Hayley Henderson was a young girl, she had a severe speech impediment and doctors told her family she would forever have problems communicating.

However, one therapist didn’t believe the pessimistic predictions. After working with Henderson for three years, he signed her up for a public speaking competition with 4-H, and she won first place.

Fast forward about 15 years and that same girl is preparing to sing as a contestant in the Miss Georgia pageant and is already a seasoned conference speaker.

“I’ve seen that you can become anything you want if you really want it, and I want to show others that,” Henderson says. “Through service,
working hard and doing something you are really passionate about, you can make a difference.”

For Henderson, that sentiment is more than talk; it’s a mantra the 20-year-old actively personifies. A junior communication major at Columbus State University, Henderson may be the busiest student on campus.

Not only is she the reigning Miss CSU, she’s also on the March of Dimes National Youth Council, is one of seven Georgia Woman of the Year scholarship recipients, a member of the National Honor Society, facilitates leadership training for students and professionals around the country through FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America), works 30 hours a week, serves as a Teen Advisor intern and is an avid volunteer in the community.

“Hayley is an amazing student,” says Stuart Rayfield, assistant professor and director of CSU’s Servant Leadership Program, in which Henderson participates. “She astounds me on a daily basis with all that she does and the number of things she is involved in outside the classroom, all while still maintaining a 4.0 GPA, which is a just incredible.”

Henderson says she’s always kept this kind of a schedule, and these kinds of high expectations of herself.

She grew up in Cataula in Harris County, just north of Columbus. From a small town, she had big plans.

By her count, she was involved in 16 different organizations in high school and walked away after graduation with 15 different scholarships. She had her sights set on the University of Georgia and was accepted there on a full scholarship. But Henderson, a deeply spiritual person, said something told her she needed to stay closer to home, so she decided to try Columbus State for a couple of years, thinking she would concentrate on just her studies, then move on to a bigger school.

“T thought I would just get my core classes here and then go. And when I wasn’t involved, I felt like I wasn’t making a difference. I wasn’t meeting anybody. That just wasn’t me,” she said. “Now, I’m not leaving. I love it here for many reasons.”


She’s vocal about her university and says her experiences here show that Columbus State deserves to be more widely recognized.

Her favorite example is when she was asked to apply to be one of only seven students in the country to serve on the youth council of the March of Dimes, an organization she has been supporting since high school.

“I was going against students from Harvard and Princeton – these big name schools. The scariest moment was getting on a plane and flying to Fort Lauderdale to meet this group of people I had never met. But I was selected,” she says. “From that moment on, I knew this was my way to make a difference in a very strong organization that I believe in but also to tell people about CSU.”

Rayfield says some may initially underestimate Henderson as a “southern belle” with her accent and her big smile. “But as soon as people get to know her, people understand why she would be selected among students nationwide for a role like that.”

Henderson hopes to parlay these experiences into some kind of career in communication or public relations, where she can help others take advantage of opportunities. She still has an itch to try broadcast journalism, which was her original goal in college. Chick-fil-A, whose corporate values mirror hers, has hired Henderson to do marketing locally – hint: that’s her in the famous cow suit around town – and seems to have their sights set on grooming her for bigger things.

“When you talk about legacy and leaving a legacy – I just want to serve people,” Henderson says.

Rayfield confirms that Henderson is much more than talk when she says things like that.

“She is very passionate about helping other people and you can see that in the work that she does,” Rayfield says. “She just has a genuine concern and love for everyone that she interacts with. It’s just amazing everything that’s been able to get done.”
olumbus State’s fastest-growing graduate degree may have lost its founder, but the Master of Public Administration Program stands poised on the cusp of international accreditation, thanks to the late Bill Chappell.

Chappell, 62, died Jan. 7 from a heart attack while battling cancer, living long enough to see graduation and enrollment totals jump significantly as the program served more disciplines.

“Dr. Chappell led the program to be well-positioned for (the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration) evaluators,” said political science professor Kimberly Gill, Chappell’s successor as acting director of the MPA program. Factors in recent progress include:

• A Fort Benning-oriented recruitment initiative.
• Recent addition of an MPA track in environmental policy studies, joining government administration, justice administration and health services administration tracks.
• Development of several online MPA Program courses, including an option to complete the government administration track entirely online.

The new track prepares students to manage environmental issues from positions in local, state and federal agencies, as well as nonprofits and private businesses.

“This is a great opportunity to enhance awareness about the impact environmental issues have on our daily lives,” said global environmental policy scholar Fred Gordon, who joined the faculty last fall.

Greg Domin, former chair of the Department of Political Science and MPA Program, now interim associate provost, said the new degree track is especially timely. “Environmentalism and terms such as ‘not in my backyard’ related to waste disposal are increasingly relevant to political science and policy experts,” he said.

The environmental administration track is expected to gradually impact MPA enrollment – now at a near-record high of 358 and well above the low of 173 in 1998-1999. Historically, justice administration has been the most popular track, with hundreds of police officers achieving a master’s through the program’s Georgia Law Enforcement Command College.

Shon Ingram launched a consulting practice upon completing his health services administration MPA in 2005. “It was always my goal to run my own business, and the tools I developed in the program really helped me build a quality geriatric care management firm,” said Ingram, a former hospital and nursing home administrator.

Ingram’s MPA-fed savvy helped him identify Knoxville, Tenn., as the base of an underserved market for what became his Eldercare Life Solutions.

As a full-time professional with a young family, CSU obliged Ingram’s focused commitment. “I approached each class as a business seminar, more so than an academic venture,” he said. “The whole experience was eye opening, providing a window into the real workings of health care, business and the public sector.”

Another graduate said he appreciated the way the MPA program understood the demands on full-time, working students. “Folks like Dr. Chappell went out of their way to make sure I had every opportunity to complete my degree on time,” said Bill Doerr, who got his government administration MPA in 2004.

Recently appointed associate vice president of development and alumni relations for Georgia College and State University, Doerr said the knowledge gained by earning the MPA also yielded credibility with colleagues. “The coursework was broad enough to allow me to translate the concepts presented in class to my career but went far enough in-depth to learn valuable skills such as budgeting and personnel development for a large organization.”

Local district attorney’s office investigator Chris Samra, who earned a justice administration MPA in 2008, credits his degree with providing him cutting-edge insight contributing to arrests in high-profile local crimes.

“My CSU education has equipped me to ‘think outside the box’ and contribute new ideas and theories,” said Samra, who also earned an undergraduate degree in criminal justice from CSU. “For example, I was able to help my senior co-investigators comprehend and apply a homicide suspect analysis by a leading forensic psychologist we had brought in for a recent case. (The psychologist) was speaking in the framework of theories I had just learned in school.”
Samra, who now teaches online criminal justice courses as a CSU adjunct professor, is “dedicated to his work,” said one of his mentors, Michael Bailey, now CSU’s interim criminal justice department chair.

A 1996 MPA graduate and former Muscogee County deputy sheriff, Bailey followed a traditional route to his degree. But many local, state and federal law enforcement colleagues have gotten their MPAs through the Command College, organized in 1995 through a CSU-Ga Association of Chiefs of Police partnership.

In a similar effort, CSU is adapting its MPA government administration track to Fort Benning’s Maneuver Captains Career Course and its 250 enrollees.

“Outreach to Fort Benning represents another move to diversify the MPA student body,” said Gill. “We’ve tailored electives and transferable electives to the captain’s course, and the online option makes it possible to complete the program regardless of duty reassignment.”

Domin, who oversees CSU’s Graduate School, believes the move stands to give the MPA, as well as other graduate programs with online options, “a prominent foothold in Fort Benning for the first time.”

The military outreach also represents the latest piece to a program soon to be evaluated by NASPAA. Gill and her faculty colleagues are preparing a self-study to be presented to NASPAA in August, followed by a fall site visit from association officials.

Bill Chappell’s work continues through the careers of more than 1,500 who earned the Master of Public Administration under his watch.

Now, those degree recipients, including many of Georgia’s civic and law enforcement leaders, are giving back through the new Bill Chappell Memorial Scholarship fund. The new fund will assist MPA students with tuition and book costs.

“Twenty-five percent of immediate proceeds will help deserving students complete their MPA degrees, while the remaining funds will be used to endow the scholarship,” said Tom Hackett, interim provost and vice president for academic affairs.

“Our goal is to raise $50,000.”

Send checks specifying the fund to: CSU Foundation, 4225 University Ave., Columbus, Ga. 31907-5645. To donate online by credit card, visit http://www.ColumbusState.edu/giving, click on the Give Now button, follow the instructions and specify the scholarship fund. Credit card donations may also be made by calling 706-568-2028.

Remembering Bill Chappell

Bill Chappell joined Columbus College’s political science faculty in 1976, after a stint as a signal officer in Vietnam. Among memories of his 35-year tenure:

Tim Mescon, CSU president: “Twenty-eight years ago, Bill helped create the MPA program,” subsequently impacting public policymaking—“not just in Georgia but around this country.”

Tom Hackett, interim provost and vice president for Academic Affairs: “The MPA, now the largest graduate program on campus, is one of his many legacies. He laid the foundation for all graduate programs to follow.”

Kimberly Gill, Acting MPA Program director: “The students in the (MPA) program were his passion. He always put them first.”

Cynthia Wright, 2009 MPA graduate: “Dr. Chappell’s guidance gave me confidence and made me realize I could broaden my horizons with determination and hard work.”

Tim Chitwood, Columbus Ledger-Enquirer columnist: “(Chappell) was an inveterate storyteller who once told a friend he was in the wrong profession in the wrong era: He should have been a traveling raconteur of the Middle Ages, compensated with food, drink and lodging for entertaining villagers with his tales.”

Delane Chappell, his widow: “CSU kept him going during his times of illness. He loved this place with a passion.”

Political Science and MPA Program Interim Chair Tom Dolan said the accreditation process is providing an outside perspective of program strengths and areas for adjustments. “Accreditation also will enhance both job placement prospects for our graduates and our ability to attract quality students,” he said.

Gill said the memory of Chappell has strengthened faculty resolve to complete the process. “Accreditation was Dr. Chappell’s dream,” she said. “I want to help see it through.”
Focus on Columbus State University
Spring 2011

Columbus State University’s champion runner, Meshack Koyiaki, owes his success to a childhood fascination with an animal in his native Kenya. Baby zebras led Koyiaki to Columbus, Georgia.

As a youngster, Koyiaki was living with his maternal grandmother, who doted on him as the youngest child in residence. After observing baby zebras near her home, he decided to try for a closer look.

“I was so little that they weren’t scared of me,” Koyiaki said. “I started chasing them and chased them all day. At the end, I didn’t catch any. I was supposed to go look for the cows and bring them back home. I forgot about everything but the zebras. It was how I started running.”

Koyiaki hasn’t stopped running and has no intention of doing so anytime soon. One of three seniors on the men’s cross-country team, Koyiaki recently completed a stellar season. He won every race on the 2010 regular season schedule and was named Peach Belt Conference runner of the year for the second straight year. Koyiaki was PBC runner of the week four times during this almost-perfect season.

Michael Crouch of Queens University in Charlotte, N.C., was a familiar name and face to Koyiaki, who had already beaten Crouch three times. Their fourth meeting was for higher stakes. Crouch, Koyiaki and the rest of the field competed in the NCAA Cross-Country Championship in Louisville in early December.
None of their previous races had been through snow. “I’d never raced in snow before,” Koyiaki recalled. “It snowed for three straight days, Wednesday through Friday, and the race was Saturday. I looked at the snow and thought, ‘No way.’”

Koyiaki’s running style and preparation aren’t conducive to snowy terrain. “I use my toes and the balls of my feet,” Koyiaki said. “I started out in short spikes and changed to longer ones, but they were not working either. I woke up that morning and, usually I run two miles as a warm-up, and I usually sweat. That day, I ran three miles and I was still cold. I’m skinny and don’t have a lot of body fat, and I was really cold. I said, ‘Let me just do what I can do.’”

His second-place finish became the only major blemish on Koyiaki’s otherwise flawless season.

Koyiaki has competed in his last cross-country event for CSU, but he still has a season to run track for the Cougars. He’s unable to visualize peeling off his uniform for the final time.

“This is my home,” Koyiaki said. “There is nothing better than being a CSU alumnus. I don’t want to think about my last race. I’ll always be a part of this program. It’s been amazing. Our team is like a family unit.”

Fellow senior John Neill praises the teammate he and other close friends call by his middle name, Lerionka. “His personality is very humble,” Neill said of Koyiaki. “People don’t realize what a great athlete he is. Here at CSU, we have the number one runner in the nation, but nobody knows it. When he lost to Crouch, he didn’t pout, and he made no excuses.”

Neill and other teammates enjoy visiting Koyiaki at the apartment he shares with the team’s third senior, Nicholas Kering, and graduate assistant Benson Kimetei. (Both are also Kenyan.) “Their home is open and very inviting,” Neill said. “When you go there, he’ll fix Kenyan tea and food.”

A favorite food is Ugali, a cornbread made from scratch. “You put it on a plate and chop up beef or chicken,” Koyiaki said. “Then you add collard greens, onions, tomatoes and little oil and mix it together. I like to fix Kenyan tea too. You take water and milk and boil it, then add sugar and Kenyan tea. People coming here from Kenya bring tea back for us.”

Koyiaki arrived at CSU in the summer of 2009, a raw talent needing to be molded. Enter veteran coach J.D. Evilsizer.

“I knew he had a lot of talent,” Evilsizer said. “He just needed someone to give him the right direction to make that talent blossom. We used a basic training strategy any decent coach would use.”

Koyiaki remembers those early days. “I didn’t have much endurance,” Koyiaki said. “I started doing 8-10-mile runs, about 80-90 miles a week. Then we started on hill work too, mixing in the hills and long runs. Then we did speed work. He [Evilsizer] had a plan and it worked.”

Koyiaki is the third oldest child in the blended family of Ann and Edward Koyiaki. He has two brothers, two sisters, three step-sisters and two step-brothers. He is the only one to attend college – and the only one to leave Kenya. He hasn’t seen his family since he arrived at CSU.

“Sometimes I talk to them on the phone every weekend,” Koyiaki said. “A plane ticket costs around $1,500, so you can’t go there for a short visit.”

Koyiaki’s parents placed a strong value on education, not the norm for Kenyan families. “My mother didn’t go to school,” Koyiaki said. “My father went through the eighth grade. My mother can add and subtract and speak some English, but has no understanding of English. Her daddy believed that school is somewhere people go who don’t have anything else to do.”

Koyiaki’s father had a different philosophy. The elder Koyiaki joined the police force and then landed a job as a presidential escort because he spoke better English than his colleagues. He served in that capacity until 2002 and is now a police officer in a leadership post, two years from retirement.

“My father let us go to school because he knew the importance of school,” Koyiaki said. “He took me to school and said, ‘If you drop out of school, go build a home somewhere else.’”

Koyiaki attended boarding school in the ninth grade. “It was my first experience away from home, and I was very homesick,” Koyiaki said. “I was the youngest one in school. Everybody was bigger than me. I didn’t get home for two months.”

After high school and five months at home, Koyiaki and his father began looking for a training camp so he could run. He went to a camp at Kenyatta University, and a coach was recruiting runners for Chattahoochee Technical College in Marietta, Ga.

“A professor knew the coach and introduced Nicholas and me to him,” Koyiaki said. “We got scholarships to Chattahoochee Tech. I checked out their website and found out about classes. I’m interested in business, though my grandma wanted me to be a doctor.”

In the summer of 2009, Evilsizer was recruiting Kering for CSU. “I knew Nicholas had a friend who trained with him, but I didn’t have enough scholarships for two. It turned out that somebody else didn’t come and I offered one to Meshack,” Evilsizer said.

As his time in a Cougar uniform draws to a close, Koyiaki dreams about the future. He plans to graduate in May 2012.

“After graduation, I want to try to qualify for the Olympics and maybe race as a pro runner,” Koyiaki said. “I’d like to use my business knowledge to open businesses here and in Kenya. I’d like to open a school to help needy kids and orphans and maybe a training camp in Kenya to help kids get to America.”

Coach J.D. Evilsizer, back- ground, helped Koyiaki realize his full potential.
Class Notes

1968
Nancy Buntin, A.A., was among four alumni of University System of Georgia schools honored March 26 at the Seventh Annual Regents’ Awards for Excellence in Education Celebration for their contributions to Georgia public higher education. Each of the system’s 35 campuses submit nominations, which evaluates an external panel. Buntin’s recognition acknowledged her leadership as a Columbus College student, followed by a 30-year career at Synovus and, now retired, as a volunteer and “unofficial teacher, mentor, friend, career coach and confidante to a large number of women.”

1970
Jana Jones Ellerbee, B.S.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Forrest Road Elementary School in Muscogee County.

1971

Don Keeble, BBA, was recently named president of Pine Lake Country Club’s nine-member board of directors. Pine Lake Country Club is one of Michigan’s premier golf and family-oriented sports clubs, providing its members with a wide variety of award-winning golf, tennis, boating and swimming programs. Keeble is currently the CEO of Merchant Analytic Solutions lives in Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

1972
Charles Brock, B.S., and his rocking chairs were featured on the Martha Stewart Show on January 21, 2011. The rocking chairs Brock constructs are handmade out of walnut and carved to give each chair a flowing look. Each chair can take 150-200 hours to build and cost $5,000-$12,000. Brock lives in Columbus with his wife, Shelia.

1973
John Pearman, B.S., retired as financial manager from General Mills Inc., in Minnetonka, Minn., in August 2010 after 40 years of service.

1975
Patricia Adams Woodall, B.S.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Brewer Elementary School in Muscogee County.

1976
Roger Buterbaugh, B.A., was selected as the 2010 Civilian Employee of the Year for the U.S. Army’s National Ground Intelligence Center in Charlottesville, VA.

1978
Thomas Queen, B.S., has retired after 32 years of service as District 3 planning and programming engineer for the Georgia Department of Transportation.

1984
Donna K. Mathis, B.S.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Midland Academy in Muscogee County.

1985
David Turner, B.S.Ed., retired from Aflac’s information technology department after 25 years of service as vice president of advanced technology.

1987
Deborah Scott Goss, B.S.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Baker Middle School in Muscogee County.

1988
Kathy Dees Dennis, B.S.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Richards Middle School in Muscogee County.

1989
Amy Carswell Taff, B.S.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Britt David Magnet Academy in Muscogee County.

1990
Denise Daniels Dowdy, B.A., was promoted to Senior Community Manager with the American Cancer Society.

1991
Tammy Veasey Massengale, B.S.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Waddell Elementary School in Muscogee County.

1992
Denise Walton, B.A., pastor of South Columbus United Methodist Church, has been appointed the new United Methodist district superintendent in Dublin, becoming the first African-American woman to sit on the nine-member cabinet of the South Georgia Conference.

1993
Andre Blanchard, B.S., a licensed clinical social worker, was named the Outstanding Social Service Worker in a Private Agency by the Georgia Conference on Children and Families.

1995
Carleton Coleman, B.S., received the 2010 Governor’s Award in Customer Service for Individual Excellence by then-Gov. Sonny Perdue in October. He’s the Columbus-based district manager for the Division of Aging Services in the Georgia Department of Human Resources.

Patsy Fleming Gray, B.S.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Carver High School in Muscogee County.

Trikella L. Nelson, M.Ed., counseling and guidance director at Columbus High School, was named Georgia’s 2010 High School Counselor of the Year by the Georgia School Counselor Association, meeting in Athens. She had earlier been named 2008 and 2010 High School Counselor of the Year for Region 5, encompassing Muscogee and 15 other nearby Georgia counties.

Alicia R. Nichols, M.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Davis Elementary School in Muscogee County.

Violene Reese, B.S.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Rigdon Road Elementary in Muscogee County.

1997
Elizabeth Wilheit Carlisle, B.S.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at St. Elmo Center for the Gifted in Muscogee County.

Kimberly Smith Jones, B.S.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Key Elementary School in Muscogee County.

1998
Dale Blaess, B.S.Ed., a kindergarten teacher at the William J. Underwood School in Newport, R.I., was surprised at school by her governor and education commissioner in November, when it was announced she had won a $25,000 Milken Educator Award. Called the “Oscars of Teaching” by Teacher magazine, the Millkins were created by education reform leader Lowell Milken in 1987 to honor exemplary public school teachers. Today, the awards are one of the country’s premier teacher recognition programs, having awarded more than $60 million to more than 2,400 educators.
1999
Nichole Baugh, M.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Double Churches Elementary School in Muscogee County.

Hilda A. Flores, B.S.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at St. Mary’s Magnet Academy in Muscogee County.

Denise M. Fox, M.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Midland Middle School in Muscogee County.

Amy Richburg Parker, B.S.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Eagle Ridge Academy in Muscogee County.

2000
Leigh Ann Younghblood-West, BSN, graduated from Troy University with her Master of Science in Nursing – Family Nurse Practitioner degree in May 2010.

2002
LaShawn Mincey, B.A., was inducted into CSU’s Athletic Hall of Fame in April. A four-year starting point guard for the Lady Cougars, Mincey helped CSU women’s basketball to its most successful four-year period as her teams posted a 109-22 record. Mincey still holds CSU records for most games played in a career (130), most games started in a career (128), career assists (698), career steals (407), steals in a season (120) and steals in a game (10).

Ryan Taylor, BFA, has been named art director of IQ, which bills itself as a “next-generation ad agency.” He and his wife, Leann, live in Atlanta.

2003
Lisa Welch Barnes, B.A., has been promoted to manager of the advertising compliance department at Aflac.

LeAnn Moore Jones, B.S.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Downtown Elementary School in Muscogee County.

Candace Turner, B.S.Ed., was inducted into CSU’s Athletic Hall of Fame in April. Turner, now head girls’ basketball coach at Northside High in Columbus, was a four-year starter for CSU and helped the Lady Cougars to a 108-24 record in her career. She was a part of two NCAA Elite Eight and Final Four appearances, two South Atlantic Regional championships, two Peach Belt Conference championships and two PBC Tournament titles. Turner still holds CSU records for free-throws made and attempted in a season and a career, and sits second on the all-time scoring list with 1,377 points.

2004
Ashley Snell Chaplin, B.S., is currently doing her residency at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center in North Carolina.

Paul Hampton, M.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Double Churches Middle School in Muscogee County.

2005
Yandel Brown was inducted into CSU’s Athletic Hall of Fame in April. Brown became the most prolific scorer in Cougar history during his short, two-year career as he set a single-season record for points with 892 in the 2004-2005 season, his senior year. Brown was named the 2005 Peach Belt Conference Player of the Year and also earned PBC Tournament MVP honors that season.

Clayton Graham, M.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Jordan High School in Muscogee County.

Hirofumi Motegi, B.S., earned his doctorate in chemistry from Virginia Tech in 2010 and then returned, in September, to present his research to CSU undergraduates and faculty in Stanley Hall. Motegi won CSU’s 2004 Outstanding Chemistry Student Award.

Christine Powell, M.Ed., a teacher at Columbus’ Northside High School, was among 10 finalists announced in early March for 2012 Georgia Teacher of the Year. Powell teaches journalism, art history and literature. The finalists were chosen from a pool of 154 applicants who were selected as Teacher of the Year in their school districts. The applications were read by a panel of judges that included teachers, past Georgia Teacher of the Year winners and finalists, administrators, community leaders and others. The finalists were chosen based on the strength of their essay responses.

Limor Raz, B.S., was recently accepted to join the Mayo Clinic faculty as research assistant professor in the Department of Physiology. This position will allow Raz to continue her training as she completes her Ph.D. in neuroscience at Georgia Health Science University (formerly Medical College of Georgia).

2006
Willie Cooks, M.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year for the Woodall Program. (Based in Muscogee County School District, the program serves severely emotionally disturbed and behavior-disordered students from eight counties.)

Monica Lumpkin, B.S.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Blanchard Elementary School in Muscogee County.

2007
Nicole R. de Vries, BBA ’07, MBA ’09, was recently named the 2010 Jaycee of the Year for the state of Georgia. De Vries is now manager of academic data in Columbus State’s office of the provost and vice president for academic affairs.

Mark Gibson, M.Ed., was recently named the new county administrator of Whitfield County. Gibson had been serving as city manager of Alma. He now lives in Whitfield County with his wife, Cindy, and his four children.

Richard Howard, M.Ed., is currently assistant principal of instruction at Upson Lee High School in Thomaston. He and his wife, Paula, have four children.

Derrick Schofield, MPA, became the new Tennessee Department of Corrections commissioner in January, when his appointment was announced by Gov.-elect Bill Haslam. A former assistant commissioner and chief of staff for Georgia’s Department of Corrections, Schofield will now oversee Tennessee’s 14 prisons, more than 20,000 inmates and 5,000-plus employees.

Angel C. Vines, B.S.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Wesley Heights Elementary School in Muscogee County.

2008
Adam Kilcrease, B.S.Ed., who teaches seventh-grade geography at Phenix City Intermediate School, was featured in February on WRBL-Channel 3 as a recipient of the Golden Apple Award, sponsored by MEA Federal Credit Union, which serves educators. Kilcrease told WRBL viewers he had been a paramedic when he returned to school at Columbus State. He credited a geography class taught by Amanda Rees, CSU assistant professor of geography, with sparking his interest in the field.

Karen Murray, MPA, retired in December 2009 as a lieutenant overseeing the Criminal Investigations Division after 30 years with the Thomasville Police Department.

Francesca Panto Hernandez, BBA, married Miguel Hernandez, B.S. (2009), in October 2010. The couple live in the Columbus area.
Connecting current students... 

2009
Carey Bray, B.A., is currently teaching English to French students in Valence, France.

Julie Anderson Hagan, M.Ed., was named 2011 Teacher of the Year at Double Churches Middle in Muscogee County.

2010
Anna Kaminski-Reed, M.Ed., was recently featured in Chattahoochee Valley Neighbors. The article featured Kaminski-Reed and her efforts to receive her master’s degree in educational leadership while helping lead key institutional initiatives for CSU in launching an online degree in educational leadership. Kaminski-Reed was forced to retire early from the Air Force due to an injury, thus creating opportunities to fulfill her desire to become a professor. Kaminski-Reed and her husband, Jeremiah, recently moved to Aviano, Italy, where she is directing Embry Riddle University’s campus programs.

Nadir Khashimov, a former Schwob School of Music Woodruff scholar and student of violin professor Sergiu Schwartz, was awarded the grand prize at the Yankelevitch International Violin Competition in Omsk, Russia. As winner of the March competition, Khashimov received a $40,000 cash prize and a violin made by Italian violin maker Eugenio Degani in 1894, valued at $75,000. Khashimov, now at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, will be engaged for a series of prestigious concerts in Europe and Asia and will also appear as a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, performing the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto.

New Alumni Director Named

Columbus State’s new director of alumni relations welcomes the challenge of improving the university’s outreach to former students.

“CSU is expanding so rapidly,” said Jennifer Joyner, who started to work Jan. 4. “There’s a great opportunity to raise alumni engagement to a new level.”

Joyner, a Macon native, returns to her higher education career roots after four years of guiding the Children’s Miracle Network for the Columbus Regional Medical Foundation. She replaces Ray Lakes, who retired last fall.

“Jennifer impressed the search committee with her broad knowledge, passion and commitment to engaging alumni,” said Meri Robinson, director of annual giving and alumni relations for CSU.

Joyner previously worked in admissions and directed alumni services for Mercer University. “It’s exciting to be back in the youthful, creative atmosphere of a university setting,” she said.

Also a former assistant director of development for the University of South Carolina Beaufort, Joyner described a three-part approach she takes to fostering alumni engagement:

- Building relationships with current students.
- Focusing on recent graduates via social networking, including social media.
- Maintaining the support of core, long-time alums.

Making current students aware of the value of an “engaged alumnus” is a vital, yet often overlooked, function of an alumni affairs operation.

“There are always so many talented graduates with creativity and insight that can be cycled back to the university through mentoring and other networking opportunities connected to their degree program,” said Joyner, an honors graduate in communication from Mercer. “Subsequently, alumni can discover the value of their degree increases with their contributions to the growth and success of their program and university.”

Joyner and her husband, Richard, have a 4-year-old daughter, Audrey. Beyond home and office, her focus is service-oriented. She’s a Phi Mu fraternity area membership director and an adviser for CSU’s Theta Theta chapter, a Miss Georgia organization trustee and a sustainer for Junior League of Columbus.

Calendar of Events May-October

May

1-2  CSU Baseball. Lander. 1 p.m., 4 p.m., 1 p.m. Ragsdale Field

2  Schwob School of Music. CSU Guitar Studio. 7:30 p.m. RiverCenter

3-19  Continuing Education. Free: Helping Columbus Work: Resume and Interviewing Workshop. 6-8 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Elizabeth Bradley Turner Center.


9  Graduation. 6:30 p.m. Columbus Civic Center.

14  May Semester: First Day of Classes.

16  Continuing Education. Everyday Handywoman Series: Tools 101. 10 a.m. Elizabeth Bradley Turner Center.

29  Schwob School of Music. Opera and Musical Theater Sampler. 1 p.m. RiverCenter

30  Memorial Day. No classes. Offices closed.

June

4  How to Bee a Beekeeper. 1 p.m. Oxbow Meadows.

4  Continuing Education. Everyday Handywoman Series: Basic Electricity. 1 p.m. Elizabeth Bradley Turner Center.

6  Columbus State University. Summer 2011 Orientation: Fort Benning. 706-568-2180.

6, 13, 20, 27  Coca-Cola Space Science Center. Astronomy Night. 9 p.m. Callaway Gardens Center.

6  Continuing Education. Green Building and Preparing for LEED Green Associate Exam. 55 online sessions, daily through July 31.

7  Columbus State University. Summer 2011 Orientation: West Point. 706-568-2180.

7-12  Continuing Education. Adult Re-Entry: Your First Step Toward Success. 6:30-8:45 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Elizabeth Bradley Turner Center.

8  Columbus State University. Summer 2011 Orientation: Main Campus. 706-568-2180.

13  June Semester: First Day of Classes. 706-507-8800


14-18  Schwob School of Music. Southeast Trombone Symposium. 1 p.m. RiverCenter


18  Continuing Education. Everyday Handywoman Series: Basic Plumbing. 1 p.m. Elizabeth Bradley Turner Center.

Focus on Columbus State University

Spring 2011
18 Coca-Cola Space Science Center. Astronomy Night. 9 p.m. FDR State Park.
21–25 Schwob School of Music. Sixth Annual English Horn Masterclass with Carolyn Hove. RiverCenter
23–24 Columbus State University. Fall 2011 Orientation: RiverPark. 706-568-2180.
28–July 3 Schwob School of Music. Guitar Foundation of America International Convention. RiverCenter
28 Cunningham Center for Leadership Development. Learning and Technology Symposium. Register online at www.ColumbusState.edu/CunninghamCenter.

July
7-8 Columbus State University. Fall 2011 Non-Traditional Student Orientation: Main Campus. 706-568-2180.
9 Insectival. 11 a.m. Oxbow Meadows.
11, 18, 25 Coca-Cola Space Science Center. Astronomy Night. Callaway Gardens Center. 9 p.m.
14–15 Columbus State University. Fall 2011 Orientation: Main Campus. 706-568-2180.
21–22 Columbus State University. Fall 2011 Orientation: Main Campus. 706-568-2180.
28–29 Columbus State University. Fall 2011 Non-Traditional Student Orientation: Main Campus. 706-568-2180.
29 Columbus State University. Fall 2011 Transfer Student Orientation: Main Campus. 706-568-2180.
30 Coca-Cola Space Science Center. Astronomy Night. 9 p.m. Providence Canyon.

August
1, 8 Coca-Cola Space Science Center. Astronomy Night. 9 p.m. Callaway Gardens.
2 Columbus State University. Fall 2011 Orientation: Fort Benning. 706-568-2180.
3 Columbus State University. Fall 2011 Orientation: West Point. 706-568-2180.
8–9 Columbus State University. Fall 2011 Non-Traditional Student Orientation: Main Campus. 706-568-2180.
9 Columbus State University. Fall 2011 Transfer Student Orientation: Main Campus. 706-568-2180.
15 Columbus State University. Fall Semester: First Day of Classes. 706-507-8800
27 Coca-Cola Space Science Center. Astronomy Night. 9 p.m. Coca-Cola Space Science Center.

September
5 Labor Day. No classes. Offices closed.
9–11 CSU Theatre Department. “Aesop’s Fables” On Stage. 7:30 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday, CSU Theatre on the Park.

October
8 Coca-Cola Space Science Center. Astronomy Night. 7 p.m. Coca-Cola Space Science Center.
10–11 Columbus State University. Fall Break. No classes.
22 Oxbow Meadows. Tricks, Treats and Trials. 5 p.m. Oxbow Meadows.
6 Schwob School of Music. CSU Wind Ensemble. 7:30 p.m. RiverCenter
16 Schwob School of Music. Choral Concert. 7:30 p.m. RiverCenter
20 Schwob School of Music. CSU Jazz Band. 7:30 p.m. RiverCenter
23 Schwob School of Music. CSU Percussion Ensemble. 4:30 p.m. RiverCenter
27 Schwob School of Music. CSU Wind Ensemble. 7:30 p.m. RiverCenter
29 Schwob School of Music. CSU Chorale and Philharmonic. Time: TBA. RiverCenter

Creating Opportunities

Our Annual Fund offers alumni and friends a chance to play a leading role in sustaining Columbus State. It’s at the core of a tradition of graduates stepping forward to advance our region and state. To learn more or give online, visit: www.ColumbusState.edu/giving or send a check payable to the CSU Foundation, 4225 University Ave., Columbus, GA 31907.
If you would like to speak to someone, please contact Kelley Gibson, Annual Fund director, at 706-507-8434 or gibson_kelley@ColumbusState.edu.

Spring 2011 Focus on Columbus State University
Parents: If this issue is addressed to a son or daughter who no longer lives at home, please send the correct address to the Alumni Office at the above address above or email us at alumni@ColumbusState.edu. Thank you.