StAC 2012 Schedule
Adam’s Mark Hotel – Buffalo, N.Y.

Welcome to the 2012 SUNY Empire State College Student Academic Conference. The Niagara Frontier Center is honored to host this year’s conference, which is a great opportunity for you to enrich your learning and, also, to network with students from other college locations. Enjoy the conference and your time in the Buffalo-Niagara region.

Dean, Niagara Frontier Center

Friday, Oct. 12, 2012

10:30 - 1:30 p.m. Registration
1:30 - 1:50 p.m. Opening Plenary
2 - 2:50 p.m. Concurrent Session I
3 - 3:50 p.m. Concurrent Session II
4 - 4:50 p.m. Concurrent Session III
5 - 5:30 p.m. Break
5:30 - 7 p.m. “Welcome to Buffalo,” Art Show/Alumni Reception
7:30 - 9 p.m. Improv Show (Eclectic Improv Company) – Coffee and Ice Cream Bar

Saturday, Oct. 13, 2012

7:30 - 8:30 a.m. Breakfast
8 - 9 a.m. Registration
9 - 9:50 a.m. Concurrent Session IV
10 - 10:45 a.m. Plenary/Student Panel – Meg Benke, Acting President
11 - 11:50 a.m. Concurrent Session V and Poster Sessions
Noon - 1:30 p.m. Lunch and Keynote Speaker (Althea Luehrsen ’02, ’11 Executive Director, Leadership Buffalo)
1:30 - 2:20 p.m. Concurrent Session VI
2:30 - 3:20 p.m. Concurrent Session VII
3:30 - 3:45 p.m. Wrapup
### Friday, Oct. 12

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<td>1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Erie Preconvene Area</td>
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<td>Erie Ballroom A</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
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<td>Jane Cudmore and Colleen Reedy, Niagara Frontier Center</td>
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<td>Nan DiBello, Dean, Niagara Frontier Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 - 2:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Concurrent Session I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>Evaluating Public History Exhibits Based on Schwak and Hueber: Bringing the Nontraditional to the Forefront</td>
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<td>Sara Rofofsky Marcus, School for Graduate Studies, MALS</td>
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<td>Local public history exhibits occurring in local public history repositories, serve a small population or marginal group. These exhibits, repositories and museums can be physical, virtual or a combination such as a physical museum’s online exhibit or Web presence. Marginal groups are often ignored, or ostracized in the field of museum and archive studies. This research intends to (1) raise awareness of the creativity, artistic effort and professionalism that occurs in a rarely explored field through evaluating the educational success of a public history repository of male/male spanking artifacts, a digital project started by a single person, to preserve and make accessible primary source LGBT visual content of print and moving images; (2) to demonstrate that in all fields there can be educational value and value of preserving knowledge for the future; and (3) to bring forth qualities that make these repositories a benefit. This collection of ephemera, consisting of still photographs and videos, as well as informal interviews and discussions between Meador and those involved in the creation of these artifacts, serves as a digital repository of local public history for the community interested in m/m spanking.</td>
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<td>Julie Krasinski, Niagara Frontier Center</td>
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<td>This session is a brief presentation of the past, present and future of social media and its impact on society.</td>
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*Suny Empire State College • Student Academic Conference • October 2012*
Wright
The Student Connection – YOUR Student Newsletter!
Sandra Barkevich, editor
Center for Distance Learning
This presentation includes an explanation of what we’re looking for at The Student Connection (writing level, length, basically a rundown of our submission guidelines) as well as some insight into the submission process and working with an editor along with time set aside for a question and answer session.

Ontario
Community-based Theater for Social Change
Cynthia Norris-Dorren
Genesee Valley Center
Theater is often regarded as a form of entertainment. But there is another vantage point from which to look at theater – that is namely, as an agent for social change. This was the focus for the capstone study in which the presenter explored how theater has been, and can continue to be, used in different ways for the betterment of the world. The presentation will give some special attention to what has been done in the African-American community not only historically but also locally, in the Rochester area recently.

3 - 3:50 p.m.
Concurrent Session II

Sullivan
Digital and Multimedia Technology: Its Impact on Audiences, Their Role and Their Affect in Mediated Live or Virtual Contexts

Part A. Taking Back the Narrative – How Fans Transform Popular Culture to Fit Their Own Worldviews
Paul Rehac, Niagara Frontier Center
This presentation will examine a trend within popular cultural fandom, the reworking of existing film, video and audio texts into completely new narratives. Popular culture has always produced “fans” and “fandom.” Going back as far as the 1960s, fans have been creating their own stories, popularly known as fan fiction, based on their favorite television shows and movies, like “Star Trek.” However, the advent of digital technology has enabled a growing number of fans to recreate narrative from pieces of film and music, in some cases dramatically changing or even erasing the original storylines that made up the text.

Part B. Interactive Art and Performance Using Isadora Programming Software
Paulette D. Harris and Susan Forbes, Mentor, Niagara Frontier Center
This is a lecture/demonstration with some audience interaction/participation on the creation of an immersive performative event in which the audience and performer create work that intuitively responds to criteria like audience laughter, performer movement, or a kid with a Wii controller.

Superior
Fifty Shades of Grey
Ronald J. Sigeti, Niagara Frontier Center
This award-winning presentation will look into adult students and their credit card debt. This light-hearted presentation will discuss:
- origins of credit card debt and credit card entanglement
- loyalty and what credit card companies “know”
- bankruptcy, and positive and negative effects of credit cards
- fatal debt and traps
- recent changes to the credit card laws that everyone should know
- recent scams
- economic and social costs
- long-term consequences
There will be a question-and-answer period at the end of the presentation. All questions are welcome.

Michigan
The Politics of Portraiture in Viceregal Peru
Agnieszka Anna Ficek
Center for Distance Learning
This presentation discusses the political and racial significance of the colonial-era Inca Portrait in the Viceroyalty of Peru. It examines and contrasts the underlying politics in both kinds of Inca portrait: one commissioned by the Spanish which showed a small image of each of the 14 Inca kings in chronological order, followed by the Spanish kings from the time of the
conquest; and the full-sized individual Inca portraits commissioned by the surviving Inca nobility. This presentation will explore the importance of representation and why the second kinds of Inca portraits were outlawed by Spanish Royal Edict in the 18th century.

Wright

Animal Hoarding: Looking Beyond the “Cat Lady”
Allison Cardona, Metropolitan Center
Animal hoarding is a complex and poorly understood mental illness that affects an untold number of people and animals. Limited research has been conducted on the underlying mental illness that causes individuals to amass large numbers of animals and neglect them. Animal hoarders are in denial that a problem exists and will continue to collect animals even in the face of deteriorating conditions. Theories exist about the components behind the illness and include delusional disorder, an addiction model and obsessive compulsive disorder, among others. A research proposal was designed to study a sample of animal hoarders to determine whether the combination of personality disorders and a triggering or traumatic event preceded the onset of hoarding. The presentation will explain the process of the research proposal including the literature review, participants and method for the study.

Ontario

Making the Most of Your College Experience
Lori Mould, Genesee Valley Center
The presenter will be demonstrating that there can be more to being a college student than attending classes and turning in your assignments. There are so many variables to becoming more successful when your college career is over. The presentation will cover areas that include, but are not limited to, internships; study abroad and regional study with other colleges; alternative break opportunities service learning/community service; attending conferences; becoming involved within your college center; and attending workshops.

Superior

Finding Your Values: The Fabric of Self-Leadership and Success
Amy L. Brotka, Niagara Frontier Center
This session emphasizes concepts learned in social psychology and by studying leadership dynamics for many years. The presenter crafted the presentation for networking groups and career seekers who have embraced its positive impact. The presentation is followed by a “values finder” exercise.

Richardson

The Female Condition: Archetypes in Contemporary American Poetry
Jessica Milani-Marsico
Center for Distance Learning
Female archetypes, despite their historical connotation, live on today; they are often the fodder on which literature
grows abundant and lush. Contemporary American poetry is no exception. “Blades” by C.K. Williams, “a song in the front yard” by Gwendolyn Brooks, and “In Celebration of My Uterus” by Anne Sexton will be read and analyzed to bring a modern light to The Maiden, The Whore, and The Wife/The Patient.

**Wright**

**Conflict and Provocation in Mediated Disputes**

*Kim A. Taylor, Esq.*

*Hudson Valley Center, Nanuet Unit*

Overlooked emotional aspects of conflict present special challenges in mediated disputes. Some negative emotional states, experienced by a disputing party, represent intense internal conflict resulting in feelings of “provocation.” Provocation here is defined as feeling (i) in opposition to the other party and (ii) a threat to the core self. Provocation triggers issues of self-worth or security, and the threat feels real. For the provoked person, the conflict has temporarily reordered reality. The presentation will touch on the physiological, psychological and emotional sources of provocation, how neutrals might approach a provoked party and the implications of provocation in everyday interactions.

**Michigan**

**Black Masculinity Scale Development**

*Mark Solomon; Damon White; Lynette Nickleberry, Mentor; Jordan Wright, Mentor*

*Metropolitan Center, Brooklyn Unit*

Attempts to define African-American manhood have been scarce. Given the dearth of published research that focuses specifically on black masculinity, there is a need to better understand masculine identity with consideration for societal, interpersonal and black cultural context. Black men occupy a unique location on matters of gender and race that present a complexity and richness to conversations around social identities. Gender is a “central organizing principle around which social life revolves” (Kimmel 2000, p. 5). The experiences of African-American men are unique because of past and present obstacles that they continuously strive to overcome, including those born out of slavery, oppression, racism, paternalism, Jim Crow and mass incarceration, to name a few. Further, men and masculinity studies is an area where most of the research is normed on white men, while the results are often applied to men of other racial groups as well. Grounded in the psychometric research on masculinity scale development, black identity scale development and black masculinity qualitative and theoretical research, a group of students and Empire State College mentors developed constructs and questions measuring subjective notions of black masculinity. Drawing on a rich and extensive selection of empirical research, The Black Masculinity Scale is an attempt to conceptualize and identify common masculine themes or constructs relevant to black American men. This scale was designed to measure intellectual and experiential subjective aspects of black masculinity and to define what is or is not relevant to African-American men with respect to their understanding of masculinity. Intense conversations about black identity and masculinity surfaced as we collectively, and under the guidance of our mentors (scholars specializing in black masculine identity and psychological testing and measurement), began to develop our scale, addressing questions such as: What does it mean to be black and male? And what does “black” mean as it relates to education, family, style and masculine identity? This panel will discuss the effectiveness and challenges of student-mentor efforts towards developing The Black Masculinity Scale and our plans to further test the construct and psychometric validity and reliability of this scale on a national sample of black American adult men.

5 - 5:30 p.m. **Break**

*Beverages available*

**Erie Preconvene Area**

5:30 - 7 p.m. **“Welcome to Buffalo,” Art Show/Alumni Fountain Room Reception for All Students and Alumni**

*Cash bar*

7:30 - 9 p.m. **Improv Show (Eclectic Improv Erie Ballroom B Company) – Coffee and Ice Cream Bar**
Saturday, Oct. 13

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.  Breakfast, Light fare
Erie Preconvene Area

8 - 9 a.m.  Registration
Erie Preconvene Area

9 - 9:50 a.m.  Concurrent Session IV

Richardson  Exploring Digital Badging in Open Education
Amy McQuigge
Coordinator for Open Education
Office of Research, Innovation and Open Education

Open education provides individualized, accessible and community-oriented opportunities for life-long learning. As open educational resources (OER) continue to grow, the authenticity, authority and quality of open courses, textbooks and technology has become an important area of evaluation. Digital badging not only provides a way for students, faculty and administrations to assess OER, but also each other in dynamic peer and educational communities through their contributions, activities, skills and accomplishments.

Ontario  Evolution of Women in the Workplace: Changes in Societies View of Gender Roles and Women in the Workplace
Ellen M. Nicollof, Niagara Frontier Center

In this session, the presenter will present her research paper from her cultural diversity class, Evolution of Women in the Workplace. The paper discusses the changing views of gender roles and how these changes are influencing women in the workplace, by examining the stereotypical views, gender-role perceptions and challenges faced by women. As part of the presentation, she also will speak about her personal experiences. Currently, she is a principal owner in a local engineering and surveying company comprised of 45 employees.

Superior  Having Our Voices Heard: The Speech Dis-fluency of Stuttering
Eloise Tyler, Metropolitan Center

The presenter is an African-American woman who is challenged with the speech dis-fluency of stuttering and she is doing a research project focusing on stuttering from the perspective of African-Americans. The project encompasses the gathering, documentation and dissemination of information on how stuttering affects the quality of life of African-Americans who stutter. A questionnaire has been designed to gather data, and a conference implemented to connect African-Americans who stutter and community outreach programs. This presentation will provide Empire State College students the opportunity to be enlightened about the effects of stuttering from a quality-of-life perspective from people who stutter.

Wright  Marketing Plan of Opening a Chinese Restaurant in the Albanian Market
Nikoleta Gurra
University of New York in Tirana, Albania/SUNY Empire State College

This presentation is a marketing plan about opening a new Chinese restaurant in Tirana, Albania. The company is briefly described, the competitors are analyzed and some objectives about the company and what control mechanisms it should have are explored. There is an analysis of the company’s strategy, which is a result of the targeted market, followed by analysis of the marketing mix and some implications of how the Albanian market affects the application of the marketing mix.

Michigan  Keep Calm and Carry On: One Apprentice’s Perspective of Life and Work in the Electrical Trade in the United Kingdom
Jeannie Lockwood
The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies

The IBEW Local Union 3 of New York City has just established an exchange program with the United Kingdom. For one month this summer, one apprentice will go there to work, and one apprentice from there will come here. The presenter is honored to be the apprentice going to the UK, and this presentation will discuss what she did, what she learned, and how the overall experience went for her.
Saturday, Oct. 13 (continued)

10 - 10:45 a.m. Plenary/Student Panel

**Erie Ballroom A** Mixing It Up:
A Discussion with the Acting President and Empire State College Students
Meg Benke, Acting President
Vickie Eberth, Shirley Ferraro, Niagara Frontier Center; Danny Ferreyra, The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies; Timothy Minahan, School for Graduate Studies; Heidi M. Romer, Niagara Frontier Center
Did you know there are a variety of ways to achieve your academic goals at Empire State College? Students will describe their experiences participating in a variety of modes of learning from independent studies, blended or online studies, to residencies to community-based studies or internships. The acting president will moderate the panel and there will be time for a question-and-answer period at the end.

11 - 11:50 a.m. Concurrent Session V

**Sullivan** Poster Sessions
(See page 9 for descriptions)

**Ontario** The American Dream: Was it Ever a Reality?
Matthew Bermudez, Danny Ferreyra, Afiya Jackson, Volodymyr Sulyk
The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies
This session explores the idea of the American dream, studies its origins and reflects on what it means today. The session will analyze how it has changed, and why. A short video interviewing people who have studied this will be made in the session and used as the presentation, before opening the floor up to questions and comments.

**Superior** Alumni Student Panel
Moderated by Maureen Winney
Director of Alumni and Student Relations
Kimberly Backey, Shirley Ferraro, Vicki Haas, Craig Maitland
Niagara Frontier Center
This session is a conversation with Empire State College alumni, with thoughts on academics, degree planning and career advice.

1:30 - 2:20 p.m. Concurrent Session VI

**Wright** Hemingway’s “The Sun Also Rises:” Anti-Semitism, Betrayal and the Neurotic Search for Glory
Michael Kaufman, Hudson Valley Center
Ernest Hemingway’s negative portrayal of Robert Cohn in “The Sun Also Rises” put an end to the author’s close friendship with Harold Loeb, upon whom the Cohn character was based. Loeb was an influential part of the 1920s Paris literary scene that included the likes of Gertrude Stein, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ezra Pound. But it was Hemingway’s cruel depiction of Cohn that would come to define Loeb for the rest of his life. Today, he is virtually unknown. This presentation will explore possible explanations for Hemingway’s ignominious portrayal and also shed light on Loeb’s contribution to 20th century American literature.

**Richardson** Women Peacekeepers
Florence Parmelee, Northeast Center
This presentation is a slideshow about the differences that women peacekeepers can make and the advantages of women in negotiating peace.

Noon - 1:30 p.m. Lunch and Keynote Speaker

**Erie Ballroom** Capitalizing on Your Skills and A and B Experience to Transform Your Career
Althea Luehrs '02, '11
Executive Director, Leadership Buffalo

11 - 11:50 a.m. Concurrent Session V

**Ontario** Wright May Courts Affect Social Change? Receivership and Code Enforcement in Buffalo, N.Y.
Talia Rodriguez, School for Graduate Studies (M.A. Social Policy)
Margaret Tally, Mentor
This case study examines the receivership program, as a judicial remedy, as administered by the Buffalo Housing Court in Buffalo, N.Y. The study works to profile the creation of the program and its performance from October 2010 to October 2011. The case study results indicate that the receivership program is sustainable, purposeful and appropriate in keeping with the courts mission statement.
Ontario
Creative Process, “The Artist’s Way”
*Judith A. Ott, Niagara Frontier Center*
“The Artist’s Way,” by Julia Cameron, is a guide book for anyone who wishes to discover their own creativity. It helps us become the creator we desire to be. Through the process we learn to acknowledge our own inner creative child, deal with many issues of the past, and give ourselves the freedom to become the person we long to be.

Superior
Emotional Intelligence in Today’s Workplace: It’s Value, Implications and Challenges
*Janel C. Lucas, Central New York Center*
This presentation is about the value of emotional intelligence within today’s workplace. A well-run organization must function – not only effectively – but also optimally. However, a workplace is much more than simply a building made out of mortar and stone. You see, a workplace is run by people. These people must run the organization in an efficient, orderly, successful manner. Many, many recent studies show that workplace success is defined by having the quality of emotional intelligence at work. A person who possesses the trait of emotional intelligence experiences far fewer physical or mental ailments, less anxiety, less stressors, more career successes and personal satisfaction while in the workplace. All of the studies show that a happier workplace is indeed a healthier, more productive workplace. What’s more, supervisors at work would do well to institute workplace trainings in this exciting, provocative, relatively new field of emotional intelligence.

Michigan
The Impact of Society and the Media on Nonsuicidal Self Injury in Adolescents
*Robin Steron, Genesee Valley Center*
Has there been an increase in nonsuicidal self-injury among adolescents? Experts estimate that 20 percent of adolescents have experimented with NSSI. Young people are seeing images of self-harm in the media, reading stories of self-harm in books, and sharing experiences of self harm with strangers and friends alike through the Internet. The session will examine references to self-harm in movies, television and on popular websites, and explore the possibility of contagion of NSSI through the media. Participants will discuss how those in the human services profession can lessen the spread of NSSI due to media and societal influences.

Richardson
Women and the Labor Movement: We Can Do It!
*Sherry Cruz, Jeannie Lockwood*
*The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies*
This presentation will look briefly at the history of women’s involvement with the trade union labor movement, specifically from the perspective of the IBEW Local Union 3 of New York City. The session will examine the challenges these women have faced, the advocates they have had, and what the future looks like for them.

2:30 - 3:20 p.m.

**Concurrent Session VII**

Ontario
Digital Portfolio
*David Preston*
*Niagara Frontier Center, Olean Unit*
This session explores the virtual portfolio created using a combination of Blender 3D, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Soundbooth and Acid Xpress. The virtual portfolio consists of a 3D animated character and environment all created within Blender. The project contains virtual rooms that display a wide variety of things the presenter has created over the years and shows the many different computer programs that he has experience with.

Superior
Misir: A First Glance at Music, Passion and Culture in the 20th Century
*Candice M. Drave*
*Genesee Valley Center, Canandaigua Unit*
This presentation is an introductory look at Egyptian music of the 20th century. It is meant to introduce Western ears to Arabic music, as well as look at important and influential performers. It also looks at the development of technology and how political changes in the 20th century impacted Egyptian music.

Michigan
Prospects of the “American Dream”
*Carolyn Massey, Genesee Valley Center*
The economically disadvantaged in America cross all racial boundaries and poverty creates universal hardships on
people of all ethnic and cultural groups. African-Americans encounter distinctive difficulties, having excessively high rates of unemployment, poverty and crime in their neighborhoods. This presentation explores the concept of “equal or equitable opportunity” and the definitions of success, opportunity and money. The relationship of economic inequality to the high incidence of inner-city crime in African-American communities in Rochester, N.Y., and nationwide is explored. The effects on the well-being and progress of African-American families and the reasons why many in this minority group have chosen alternatives to the “Dream” will be discussed.

Wright

“What Can Students Do? Unearthing Environmentalists at Empire State College”
Brandon Burger, Ralph Sheehan,
Sara Tomerlin-Hedger, Christine Waikiki
Central New York Center
This presentation is a four-student panel that speaks on hot topics in urban environmental studies. The panel was part of a residency that took place at the Central New York Center this past spring. The panelists have worked together to create a diverse and rich presentation that touches on environmental science, history, art, education and law. The focus of the presentation is on issues that are important to the people of New York. It will incorporate PowerPoint, as well as cutting-edge findings and interesting text from environmentalists, such as Richard Louv and William Cronon. The group and studies have been overseen by mentor Yvonne Murphy.

Richardson

Keeping Focused in the Eye of Adversity
Jamal Arabaty, Vickie Eberth,
Sean Farrell, Vicki Haas, Bonnie Roesch
Niagara Frontier Center
This panel comprises several students with ideas for successfully managing school, work and life, along with the unforeseen incidents and accidents that happen along the way. The mission is to leave attendees with a sense of promise and ability to continue in all they do with a positive attitude. Each participant will have a varied background and have something unique to bring to the group.

3:30 - 3:45 p.m.
Erie Ballroom
Wrapup
Join us for this informal debriefing session to let us know your thoughts on this conference, what worked, what didn’t, etc.
Poster Sessions

11 - 11:50 a.m.  Saturday, Oct. 13
Sullivan

Take a walk around and talk to the presenters about their creative and academic work.

1. Unemployed Over 55: The Emerging Policy Threat of Jobless Older Workers in America
Cristy Dwyer, School for Graduate Studies
Through a narrative analysis based on secondary data collected by Over 50 and Out of Work’s – 100 Stories, this poster examines bio-psychosocial effects of unemployment through a qualitative lens while producing two quantitative analyses based on secondary empirical data using SPSS to determine (a) the primary correlates of unemployment and (b) the primary correlates of substance abuse as it relates to length of unemployment among jobless older workers.

2. u empower you – we provide the tools, however, you must do the work!
Phoebe Wilson, Center for Distance Learning
Empowerment allows for achievement (academic and personal), and for full participation in American society. Healthy self-esteem leads to healthy choices and healthy conduct. The onus of responsibility for your life really is up to you. We do face the future with outcomes from choices we make, as well as for the outcomes from choices that our parents make or have made. As a young adult, it is up to you to realize what you need to know before you need to know. Why learn life lessons the hard way? You may not need empowerment, however someone you know does.

3. Motivation
Jamal Arabaty, Kameylah Hakim, Niagara Frontier Center
This presentation is in a mixed-media format, that puts together music and images to match the words of a student’s essay on motivation. Unfortunately, the student passed away before completing his Empire State College studies. A computer will be set up with a continual stream of the presentation. Students and professionals alike who read this essay were all impressed by its reflective thought. This is not a research presentation but will be a display of two students’ work – that of the photographer and the student who wrote the essay – and, hopefully, the words will serve as an inspiration to other students.

4. An Abundance of Life in the “Lifeless” Antarctic
Donna Colucci, Genesee Valley Center
The Antarctic is often perceived as a lifeless expanse of wind and snow, home to Emperor penguins and not much else. In reality, three other types of penguins, six types of seals and a variety of seabirds inhabit this enormous area. The poster will include color photos of the various animals, as well as descriptions of their breeding, feeding and migratory habits. Additionally, the poster will address the various nations who have claimed parts of the Antarctic and attempts to minimize man’s impact on this vast wilderness through the Antarctic Treaty System.

5. The Student Affairs Committee
Jim McMahon, Coordinator of Student Services, The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies
This poster presentation will serve to define and outline the purpose and activities of the Student Affairs Committee. It also will enumerate the direction and mission of the associated subcommittees.

6. Modern Brazil in the 21st Century
Steven Jones, Niagara Frontier Center
This presentation will explore aspects of contemporary Brazilian society such as the political and economic changes that have transformed Brazil into one of the world’s most advancing countries. For example, Brazil currently has the world’s sixth largest economy and one of the fastest growing. The overall goal is to dispel myths and stereotypes that some in the U.S. might have due to the lack of large-scale Brazil-U.S. interaction and lack of widespread Brazilian-American communities. This poster also will explore Brazilian culture and how a deeper understanding of this country will strengthen ties and promote cross-cultural dialogue.
Althea Luehrsen ’02, ’11
Executive Director, Leadership Buffalo

Althea Luehrsen is the executive director of Leadership Buffalo. Prior to her appointment to Leadership Buffalo, she was at the University at Buffalo since 2001 and held positions as the executive director of UB’s Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership and assistant vice president for corporate and foundation relations.

She has an extensive background in business and leadership that includes management positions with the University at Buffalo, Abbott Laboratories and Marriott Corporation. She also is the president/owner of the Strategic Solutions Group specializing in strategic plan facilitation and small business consulting.

Luehrsen is a graduate of SUNY Empire State College where she received both her B.A. and M.A. Her published work, titled “A Historical View of the Development and Growth of Women-Owned Businesses in the United States and the Motivation Behind the Growth,” can be accessed online. She currently holds several board and committee positions including vice president of the WNY Affiliate Susan G. Komen Foundation, Erie Community College Foundation Board and Empire State College Alumni Board member.

Luehrsen is the recipient of a number awards throughout her career, including being named Women in Leadership Honoree by the National Association of Women Business Owners in June 2012.
Student Presenter Biographies

Jamal Arabaty, Niagara Frontier Center, is the Student Affairs Committee representative for the center, and is an active participant in college events. He is continuing his long-time goal of graduating and receiving his degree in Business Management and Economics with a concentration in business administration. He says, “It will be nice to finally have documentation to back up my many years of managerial, ownership and participation in businesses, as well as photo and video journalism, including all aspects of photography.” In addition, he also is the father “of five wonderful children and is 100 percent devoted to my family. They were a major inspiration for my returning to college.”

Kimberly Backey, Niagara Frontier Center, received her EMBA degree with a concentration in management from the State University of New York at Buffalo (UB) and her Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from SUNY Empire State College. She has more than 15 years of supervisory, management and leadership experience. She is the director of a federal program for a nonprofit agency in Erie County, and is responsible for maintaining program integrity and administering and overseeing a financial budget of over $1.5 million. She has experience in development and management of budget, hiring, retaining and removal of staff. She has taught diversity of adults in various capacities, including individual classes, seminars, off-site classes and technical assistance. She has developed and implemented many professional development workshops and trainings, including Situational Leadership, Strengths Finder and team building. She serves on the executive committee for the Buffalo Branch of the NAACP, is a member of the National MBA Association, and serves as a mentor to many in her community.

Sandra Barkevich, Center for Distance Learning, is a student majoring in Business, Management and Economics. Barkevich became student editor of “The Student Connection” in January 2012 and serves on the Student Affairs Committee as a student representative for the Center for Distance Learning.

Matthew Bermudez, The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies, is from Brooklyn. He was inducted into the IBEW Local 3 in 2007 and earned an associate degree in Labor Studies. He plans to continue his education to earn a bachelor’s degree.

Amy L. Brotko, Niagara Frontier Center, is an avid learner and has studied leadership dynamics for many years. She decided to attend SUNY Empire State College as part of her personal growth plan. She will be receiving a B.S. in Business, Management and Economics and has plans to obtain an MBA in organizational leadership.

Brandon Burger, Central New York Center, is slowly working his way toward a degree in Historical Studies with a focus on environmental and regional history. He started at Empire State College two years ago after a 12-year hiatus from college, during which he focused on the development of his shipping, receiving and truck-unloading skills.

Allison Cardona, Metropolitan Center, began her studies in fall 2011 at Empire State College, and is on track to receive a Bachelor of Science in Public Affairs. She has worked for the ASPCA for the last nine and a half years and brings her professional experience to all aspects of her studies.

Donna Colucci, Genesee Valley Center, is working on a degree in history. A single mom to a teenage boy, she loves the outdoors. Learning about the variety of wildlife in the Antarctic was quite the surprise and the inspiration for her poster. She is excited to be presenting again at the Student Academic Conference and looks forward to meeting some of her fellow students.

Sherry Cruz, The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies, was born in the Dominican Republic, pursuing labor studies at Empire State College, and electrical engineering. She is a proud mother of one teenage son, and lives in New York City.

Candice M. Drave, Genesee Valley Center, Canandaigua Unit, is an aspiring ethnomusicologist. She is presently enrolled in Empire State College at the undergraduate level. She wants to specialize in the Middle Eastern music, particularly music from the Arab world. She is most interested in music from 20th century Egypt, and is constantly researching this topic.

Cristy Dwyer, School for Graduate Studies, earned both her A.S. in 2008 and her B.S. in public health policy in 2010 from Empire State College. She was honored as a recipient of the 2010 SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Student Excellence, and is scheduled to receive her M.A. in Social Policy in December 2012.

Vickie Eberth, Niagara Frontier Center, is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, associate real estate broker and president of the Women’s Council of Realtors. She recently returned to Empire State College after a 20-year hiatus to complete her degree. She has a strong interest in the care and housing of the elderly.

Sean Farrell, Niagara Frontier Center, has a very diverse background with experience from numerous fields ranging from health care to emergency management. These experiences have allowed him to develop a unique set of skills so a level of flexibility can be achieved in any
situation. He will graduate in December of 2012 with a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Empire State College and is continuing his education for his MBA.

Shirley Ferraro, Niagara Frontier Center, graduated from Empire State College with her bachelor’s in Business, Management and Economics, with a concentration in human resources management in spring 2012. During her last year of college, she served as the Niagara Frontier Center student representative and is currently featured in an Empire State College commercial. In addition to serving as student rep, she has had the opportunity to serve on the Student Affairs and Student Engagement committees. She was an engaged student and would like to see other students become fully immersed in their student experience. She feels this leads to active networking which can subsequently result in that next job. At the very least, interesting and useful connections can be made.

Danny Ferreyra, The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies, is from the Bronx and was inducted into IBEW Local 3 in 2009. He is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Labor Studies and has developed a passion for organizing.

Agnieszka Anna Ficek, Center for Distance Learning, originally from Poland, is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in art history at Empire State College. She would like to continue her academic career focusing on the art of colonial Latin America. She began her research on the Inca portraits while studying at the University of South Australia.

Nikoleta Gurra, University of New York in Tirana, Albania/SUNY Empire State College, is a native of Albania but grew up in Greece. During her last year of high school, she started investigating universities that would give her what was necessary for a successful career. After a long search, she chose to study at the University of New York in Albania earning a dual degree from UNYT and Empire State College. She has been so satisfied with her experience that she convinced her brother and many other students from Greece to study at UNYT. She will be entering her senior year of studies and graduating with a degree in business administration. She is very interested in marketing and her next goal is to earn a master of science degree from Lancaster University in the U.K. She has finished an internship at Agna Group and will be completing another internship at Vodafone Albania, in the marketing department. After finishing her M.S. in the U.K., she plans to go back to Albania and open a consulting company. There are many opportunities in the Albanian market and many new businesses are opening. However, they are facing a lot of problems and they end up shutting down. She wants to create a consulting company (there is no such company in Albania) which will prepare marketing plans and help businesses to succeed.

Vicki Haas, Niagara Frontier Center, is a 2012 graduate of Empire State College with a B.S. in Business, Management and Economics through the business residency program. During her final undergraduate year, she was the recipient of the C. Penn Wettlaufer Scholarship for Academic Achievement. She also was honored to be chosen as one of a select group of students throughout New York state to earn the 2012 SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Student Excellence. She is employed by the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning as field manager of a regional storm water GIS mapping project. In addition to these responsibilities, she also owns Haas Management Company, a woman-owned business providing environmental testing and education throughout Western New York. Over the last 15 years, she has conducted hundreds of professional radon testing services for homeowners and businesses. She also is co-chair of a nonprofit organization, Western New York Earth Day Family Expo, and participates in many other community and Empire State College alumni events.

Paulette D. Harris, Niagara Frontier Center, artistic director, Paul Robeson Theater, is in her last term at Empire State College. She is active in the Buffalo theater community and concentrates her work in the African-American community. She develops theater-based activities for kids in her community and is excited to work with Professor Susan Forbes in expanding her knowledge in integrating interactive arts experiences for them at the African-American Community Center of Buffalo. She has a substantial directing career and is a mainstay on the staff at Channel 2 in Buffalo.

Afiya Jackson, The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies, is from Brooklyn and was inducted into IBEW Local 3 in 2009. She graduated from Empire State College with a Bachelor of Arts in Labor Studies and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Spelman College. She works for EJ Electric at the World Trade Center.

Steven Jones, Niagara Frontier Center, started the interdisciplinary studies program in the fall 2010 semester with a concentration in international studies which involves courses that lead to a greater understanding of global affairs such as history, economics and political science. He also has chosen a minor concentration in Latin American studies so that he can apply his studies to a specific country or region. His poster will allow him to demonstrate how contemporary Brazil is playing an increasing role in the global community. After graduating, he hopes to continue his studies at the graduate level focusing on international relations.
Student Presenter Biographies (continued)

Michael Kaufman, Hudson Valley Center, is a fourth-year Cultural Studies student. He has worked as a writer and editor for more than 30 years and has been published in national magazines and anthologies. He currently writes for two blogs, The ONC (www.theonc.org) and Zest of Orange (www.zestoforange.com).

Julie Krasinski, Niagara Frontier Center, will be graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Educational Studies to become an instructional designer. She plans on utilizing the latest technology, programs and multimedia components in order to enhance the learning process.

Jeannie Lockwood, The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies, enrolled in Empire State College in 2009. She is completing a Bachelor of Arts in Labor Studies to complement her career as a Local 3 electrician because she knows that, “the more educated we are as tradespeople, the better we can support and represent our union.”

Janel C. Lucas, Central New York Center, of Syracuse, is presenting her paper, “Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace,” about the relevance of emotional intelligence in today’s workplace. She is currently completing the last semester of her bachelor’s degree in Human Services from Empire State College. She submitted her proposal at the urging of Professor Heidi Nightengale. She was a student in Nightengale’s Emotional Intelligence course in the fall 2011. Her family includes a 25-year-old daughter, 21 and 19-year-old sons, and a 7-year-old grandson.

Craig Maitland, Niagara Frontier Center, is a member of GEICO’s management team at their Amherst, N.Y., location. His responsibilities have included supervision, quality control and management development. He began his studies in the FORUM Management Program at SUNY Empire State College in 2005. He achieved his undergraduate degree in June of this year with a Bachelor of Science in business administration.

Carolyn Massey, Genesee Valley Center, is earning her degree in Community and Human Services with a concentration in health leadership and policy. She has worked in nonprofit and health care service, community relations and grant project management. She enrolled in September 2011. She says she chose Empire State College because of “options with course studies, ability to design my degree, flexibility with classes and cost effectiveness.”

Timothy Minahan, School for Graduate Studies, is a student in the MBA program. He serves as the co-chair for the Student Affairs Committee. He plans to graduate in 2014. He is a career banker who is currently employed as a senior commercial banker for JP Morgan. He is the proud father of 11-year-old twin boys. He is an avid runner who has completed 12 marathons and the Lake Placid Ironman.

Jessica Milani-Marsico, Center for Distance Learning, has been a fervent academic since she began reading. Expecting to graduate from Empire State College in May 2013, she is applying to the CUNY Grad Center M.A./Ph.D. program in linguistics. She aspires to bring an interdisciplinary approach to socio-cultural linguistics in the fields of research, academic writing and teaching.

Lori Mould, Genesee Valley Center, is a nontraditional student who is majoring in photojournalism and documentary production. During her time in college, she has utilized many of the character and resume building avenues in her presentation. The personal growth that has been achieved through service learning and community service projects has been life altering.

Ellen M. Nicoloff, Niagara Frontier Center, started at Empire State College in 2009 in the BME residency program with a focus on project management. Currently she is a principal with a local engineering and surveying firm. Interest in her topic choice stems from more than 14 years of experiences and challenges in a predominantly male-oriented industry.

Cynthia Norris-Dorren, Genesee Valley Center, comes from a singing, performing family, and she has spent her life doing both in a variety of venues, including composing and performing original songs. Her degree focus, performing arts for community service, reflects her efforts and intention to utilize music and theater as community-building portals.

Judith A. Ott, Niagara Frontier Center, lives in Hamburg, N.Y., and works in the radiology department of Sisters of Charity Hospital in Buffalo as a nuclear medicine technologist and a radiology clerk. She began classes at Empire State College in January 2012 and is completing an associate degree in Interdisciplinary Studies.

Florence Parmelee, Northeast Center, attended Empire State College from fall 2010 until graduation 2012 with a B.A. in social welfare policy. She currently works at a hospital and is looking to expand her horizons. Her presentation was for a class which emphasized the need for more diversity in both world economies (by encouraging smaller, Third World, economies) and negotiations between countries.

David Preston, Niagara Frontier Center, Olean Unit, is studying instructional design at Empire State College. His classes have covered a wide variety of techniques for working with different types of multimedia such as audio, video, 3D animation, photography, photo manipulation, blogging, Web design and more. Some of the course work can be time-consuming and stressful at times, so he is thankful for the motivation and support from his girlfriend, friends and family.
Paul Rehac, Niagara Frontier Center, is a writer, musician and media artist. Currently, he is pursuing a MALS degree at Empire State College studying transformed narratives in popular culture. As a scholar, he is working to understand the effect of different media and readers on narratives as they are re-imagined and reconstructed through the eyes and ears of fans.

Bonnie Roesch, Niagara Frontier Center, is a wellness coach who specializes in Eastern medicine theories and therapies. She now knows that it was years of stress, her own personal healing and a massage therapy license that got her there. Grateful to Empire State College for her degree plan in mind-body studies, her goal is to educate others how unexpressed emotions can affect our physical and mental health.

Talia Rodriguez, School for Graduate Studies, graduated from Kenmore West Senior High School in 2007. She attended St. John Fisher College, majoring in political science and sociology, graduating in 2010. While at SUNY Empire State College, she completed her M.A in Social Policy with a concentration in affordable housing. She is now attending SUNY at Buffalo Law.

Sara Rofofsky Marcus, School for Graduate Studies, is a MALS student at Empire State College, with a focus on archives and public history. She is an online instructor, working with the able assistance of her two children and her husband. Her research interests include underrepresented and marginalized groups.

Heidi M. Romer, Niagara Frontier Center, is the executive assistant to the president and acting liaison between the leadership team, board of directors and other constituencies, both internal and external, for Harmac Medical Products Inc. She has the acumen to handle complex situations, coordinate and direct multiple projects and activities within this role. Prior to Harmac, she worked with Xacti, a technology firm in South Florida, the Buffalo Control Board, legal services and nonprofit organizations. She is an alumna of Erie Community College and current student at Empire State College in business studies. “I love Empire State College! The courses and program structure available through the business studies program are unique and have provided an enriching educational experience for me. With four classes left, my goal is to graduate in spring 2013.”

Ralph Sheehan, Central New York Center, is from NYC and moved to Buffalo, N.Y., in 2002. After a major injury at work as a building tech/manager, he started working toward his B.A. in environmental studies. He plans to gain new employment in green building/business work.

Mark Solomon, Metropolitan Center, Brooklyn Unit, a first-year student whose concentration is in accounting with additional studies in global cultural diversity and human services, has a love for history of the African-American experience. He has assisted with the Maafa (Swahili for disaster) commemoration of the Middle Passage the third week of September, and also assists with the safe surrender project that brings the courts to the black church.

Robin Steron, Genesee Valley Center, started at Empire State College in January of this year and is studying Community and Human Services. She works part time as the administrator of her synagogue, plus home-schools her two children. The oldest has graduated and is away at school, while the younger is in eighth grade. She chose her topic “because I had noticed a dramatic increase in the number of teens that I know that either engaged in self-harm themselves, or know someone who self-harms. I wanted to find out if there really has been an increase in this behavior, and if so, what might be the cause.”

Volodymyr Sulyk, The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies, is originally from Ukraine. He migrated to the U.S. in 1997 and was inducted into IBEW Local 3 in 2007. He chose to pursue a college degree at Empire State College because he wanted to further his education. He graduated from the college with an associate degree in Labor Studies and plans on continuing his education.

Kim A. Taylor, Esq., Hudson Valley Center, Nanuet Unit, has more than 20 years of experience in complex negotiations and finance. She began her studies in psychology at Empire State College in September 2011, exploring the psychological roots of conflict. She lives with her family in Rockland County, and practices in New York City and Rockland County.

Sara Tomerlin-Hedger, Central New York Center, studies poetry and social action at Empire State College. Her poems have appeared in La Bloga, The Blue Guitar and KDViations. In 2011, she was invited to read on the France Kassing FM radio show hosted by the University of California Davis. She lives in Syracuse, N.Y., with her husband and son.
Maria Tripi, Niagara Frontier Center, is from Western New York, and calls the town of Tonawanda home. She is a single mother of three adult children and grandmother of four. She recently completed her B.S. in Social Theory, Social Structure and Change at Empire State College, paving her way into the MALS program at the Niagara Frontier Center. She is an avid learner; loves the outdoors, spending time with her family and enjoys a strong connection to her community, including the people, places and things that define it. She actively engages in her community by serving on several boards in various capacities. Under the guidance and with the assistance of Dr. Rhianna C. Rogers, she is currently researching An Ethnographic Survey of Western New York Research Project: Cheektowaga, N.Y. (2011). “We believe this information will be helpful not only for the institution, but the community of Western N.Y. overall,” she says.

Eloise Tyler, Metropolitan Center, began her Empire State College education journey in 1991. She is obtaining a B.S. degree in Business, Management and Economics, with a concentration in nonprofit management. Her future goals are to attend seminary. She chose her topic because she stutters.

Christine Waikiki, Central New York Center, will graduate in May 2013 with a concentration in human rights and responsibilities. She hopes to work as an advocate for low-income individuals and the working-poor families in Buffalo.

Damon White, Metropolitan Center, Brooklyn Unit, is a third-semester student, who is working on a degree in Community and Human Services. Currently a certified alcohol and substance abuse counselor, White has worked in several modalities within the substance-abuse field as a counselor/case manager. He is dedicated to helping individuals who suffer from chemical dependency realize their own self-worth and discover how much they have to offer to others within their communities and society at large. White graduated from Bayside High School, Bayside, Queens in 1985 and attended Virginia Union University in Richmond, Va., 1987 - 1988 as a mass communications major. He is father of two daughters, ages 24 and 8. Born and raised in South Jamaica, Queens, N.Y., he has lived in Brooklyn for the past 12 years. White is a lover of jazz and gospel music and a member of an all-male gospel recording group called Manifest, who released their debut CD in August 2011. He aspires to go on to graduate school and receive his master’s degree in gender studies. He is a devout Christian who is devoted to improving his overall lifestyle. He focuses his energies on mental, physical and, most of all, spiritual growth. He shares his experiences with others through songwriting, academics and everyday connections with individuals from all walks of life.

Phoebe Wilson, Center for Distance Learning, will earn her master’s degree in psychology; thereby adding an accredited, substantive dimension to her biography and small business. Her poster presentation introduces attendees to the significance of the Institute of Empowerment, a 501©(3) not-for-profit collective consultancy.