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UPDATE is edited by  
 Gale Terrill, Commencement  
 Coordinator & Assistant to  
 the Provost



## From the Desk of the Provost

It is hard to believe that the fall semester is over and the holiday season is here. Hopefully you have all registered for your spring courses. We are hoping that the spring will not have any weather challenges. The unusual snow storm in October on the heels of Hurricane Irene in August was a challenge. We thank all of our students and faculty for being flexible and for helping us all “weather the storms.”

Since we did not produce a July issue of the Update, this issue includes some graduation highlights and some updates on changes impacting the College and you, the students.

This was the first year that we offered two summer terms. It was a great success. Enrollment was up 44 percent over last summer. We will offer two eight week sessions again next summer.

We made a number of other changes that will impact you this year. Some have already gone into effect and others will during the year. We moved away from the annual matriculation/student services fee to a semester fee. We have implemented a new software program called Starfish to help with student retention and a new student authentication program called Acxiom to help us meet the federal Higher Education Act compliance rules. You can read more about Acxiom in the March 2011 issue of the newsletter.

The Academic Counseling Office has developed a number of webinars and chats to help you develop your concentration plan of study. Once again, students will be able to get their library questions answered through QuestionPoint—our new “ask the librarian” feature. Starting in January, we will have a one week break between 5 week and 8 week terms. This allows students time to catch their breath, the faculty time to get grades in before the next term begins, and time for the counselors to work with the students if course changes need to be made. We have purchased a new survey tool and will be making changes to the student evaluation of faculty and courses process. In addition, we have made some changes that impact you indirectly, such as a new faculty resource center, a faculty development requirement, and a stricter course assignment policy.

In the March UPDATE, I wrote about the possible reorganization of higher education in Connecticut. The legislators approved the reorganization and it became effective July 1. A Board of Regents (BOR) was established to oversee all of the community colleges, the four state universities and Charter Oak. All members of the new BOR and an interim President of the Board, Dr. Robert Kennedy, have been appointed. The new board will be fully operational January 1, 2012. At that time, the BOR will select a permanent President. The

BOR established a student advisory committee, and we have a representative on that committee, John Thomas. (There is an article about him in this issue.) We will be developing a process for you to communicate with him so he can represent our student body.

As part of our regional accreditation process with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), the College has to submit a 10 year evaluation and then a five-year report. Charter Oak received its regional accreditation renewal in 2006 so this summer we had to submit our five-year report. If you want to read the Five-Year Report and the letter received back from NEASC accepting our report, it is available on our web site. We have been asked to address a couple of issues in 2013--governance because of the new structure of the BOR, and as we develop new programs, the resources to support them.

One thing that hasn't changed is graduation. Once again it was a wonderful event. I urge all of you to plan now to attend when you graduate. It is hard to describe the atmosphere on that day—the smiles, the pride, the enthusiasm, the feeling of “I did it”. You have to be there to experience it. We had a record number of graduates and guests. Our honorary degree recipient, David Mathews, gave a heartfelt and inspiring speech. He reminded us how lucky we are to have the opportunity to further our education: “You are some of the most fortunate folks on earth. Less than seven percent of adults in this world have your level of education.” He also reminded the graduates that education never ends: “Now begins your next journey, one that will require of you continued flexibility, adaptability and persistence. Continuing your education, whether formally or informally, is crucial. Today change happens so quickly that standing still is actually going backwards.” Although you have not graduated yet, his words speak to you as well. He reminds us that we have to be lifelong learners. Dave epitomizes lifelong learning and he is a wonderful example of the Charter Oak graduate.

Wishing you a happy holiday and a wonderful new year.



Dr. Stephen Misovich, Marshal, leading the graduates of the class of 2011.





# Graduation News

## Commencement Day June 5, 2011!

As you can see from the photo on the previous page, commencement day was absolutely beautiful! Temperature was in the mid-70's and the sky a gorgeous blue!

We had a record number of graduates attend this year, over 180, and as you can see, Welte Auditorium was filled to the brim. What a joyous, joyous day. Many of our faculty and staff were also on hand to meet our graduates and their very proud families at the brunch preceding the ceremony and at the reception following. !

Five hundred and fifty graduates comprised the class of 2011. Of those 60% were female and 66% of the graduates were from Connecticut. Graduates represented 37 states and 4 countries, as well as graduates serving overseas in the armed services. The average age was 39 and the ages ranged from 16 to 70.

Joseph Thomas Crouse was our youngest graduate this year at the age of 16. He received his BA degree with a concentration in psychology. He is currently working on his MA degree in psychology and his MBA degree in strategic management, which he hopes to complete by the end of the summer. He has been accepted by West Virginia University into a Ph.D. program in economics.

Graduation was a family affair for mother and son Meriden, Connecticut residents, Victoria and Thomas Zakrzewski who have earned bachelor's degrees, Victoria in Literature, Thomas in Criminal Justice as well as for East Hampton, Connecticut residents, Mary and John Connolly –husband and wife, who have earned Bachelor of Science degrees with honors in Individualized Studies.

Charter Oak awarded an honorary doctorate to David C. Matthews (right), a member of Charter Oak's Class of 1992, Mr. Matthews grew up in Morocco, France and Turkey. Never able to pursue an undergraduate college degree as a traditional student, he earned his Bachelor of Science degree with a concentration in Political Science from Charter Oak. "Without Charter Oak," he says, "it would not have been possible for me to accomplish what I have to date. I am so grateful."

In addition to his Charter Oak experience, he has been a Visiting Scholar, VS/MCF, in Public and International Affairs at The Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University. Much of his career has been spent in the private sector managing business operations in a variety of industries. He has additionally served as management consultant, negotiator and investment advisor to numerous business entities. He 'took a break' from the business world in the mid-1990s to serve as Country Director for the Peace Corps in the Kyrgyzstan capital of Bishkek.



Mr. Matthews, a member of the U.S. Department of Defense Civilian Expeditionary Workforce is currently completing a five month language emersion program in Dari with the AFPAC Hands program. In February, 2010, he deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan where he served as a primary expert in Economics and Development with involvement in counterinsurgency strategies. Prior to that, he served for two years with the Department of State as Senior Economic Advisor for the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Diyala Province, Iraq.

In November of last year, General David Petraeus, Commander of the International Security Assistance Force, presented the NATO Medal to Mr. Matthews for his service as Senior Strategic Advisor for Stability Operations. Mr. Matthews has returned to his duties in Kabul.



Lindsay Pagani (left), Contracts Coordinator with United Technologies Corporation, gave the “Message from the Graduates.” Here are some excerpts from her speech.

Lindsay noted that she “spent weeks wondering if my experiences were similar to others or if anyone would be able to relate to what I have to say. But I have learned that our stories ARE similar. We share the qualities of courage, strength and determination. We are non-traditional students who chose to pursue higher education despite life’s twists and turns and ups and downs. . . .”

“There are moments in life that are etched into your heart and mind forever. Today will be one of those moments. Enjoy it. So as we graduate today, I urge all of you to take the advice of my family and friends... Celebrate this moment, cherish this moment and feel this moment because you have achieved an incredible accomplishment!”

If you will be graduating during this coming year, plan now to attend graduation on Sunday, June 3, 2012, take the advice of Lindsay to “celebrate this moment, cherish this moment and feel this moment because you have achieved an incredible accomplishment!”

I hope to meet you at graduation next year!

Gale Terrill  
Commencement Coordinator





## Award Recipients for the Graduating Class of 2011

The **Doris G. Cassidy Award** was established by Connecticut's Board for State Academic Awards in recognition of Ms. Cassidy's lifelong commitment to adult education and to Charter Oak State College. Ms. Cassidy served as a founding member of the Board, established the Charter Oak State College Foundation and served as its volunteer executive director. Currently she serves as Assistant Director of Academic Programs at the College and is an Academic Counselor to students pursuing concentrations in history and the humanities.

In addition, Ms. Cassidy (above) was the first Chair of the Board for State Academic Awards and a member of the Board for 10 years. She was instrumental in the 1977 establishment of the Connecticut Open Learning Assistance Corporation, known today as the Charter Oak State College Foundation.

Cognizant of the need for outside funding to support development of new Charter Oak programs, Mrs. Cassidy, as the first executive director of the Foundation, worked closely with Dr. Bernard Shea, the College's first president "to provide support for the purposes of the College if state funding was lost." It was intended that Foundation resources would make it possible for members of the public to continue receiving advisement, testing, and other services that make open access to academic credentials a reality.

The Doris G. Cassidy Award is presented each year to those graduates of Charter Oak who have achieved excellence in innovative learning and who exemplify the essence of the Charter Oak mission. Recipients are selected from the graduates of the College for the twelve-month academic year immediately preceding the spring commencement exercise. The award is announced and presented once a year during the graduation ceremony.

### Doris G. Cassidy Award Winners

**Shaun Albrechtson**, Parker, Colorado, Bachelor of Arts in Theater Arts.

**David R. Blessing**, Attleboro, Massachusetts, Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership

**Jon K. Brackin**, Semmes, Alabama, Bachelor of Science in Individualized Studies.

**August DeFrance**, East Hampton, Connecticut, Bachelor of Science in Individualized Studies.

**Barry Kleinman**, Long Beach, New York, Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies.

**David P. Wrinn**, Norwalk, Connecticut, Bachelor of Science in Public Safety Administration.

### Awards for Outstanding Academic Performance

Each year the Connecticut General Assembly recognizes graduates from all of the colleges and universities in Connecticut for their academic achievements:

**Carolyn E. Bystrak**, Burlington, Connecticut, Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership.

**Dawn E. Politz**, Burlington, Connecticut, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

### Alpha Sigma Lambda (ASL) Honor Society Induction

ASL Chapters are in regionally accredited colleges and universities that offer two- or four-year degrees to nontraditional/adult students. Charter Oak students selected for induction must be matriculated and have a minimum of 24 graded semester hours at Charter Oak. Members shall be selected only from the highest ten percent of the class and must have a minimum grade point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale. Charter Oak may also honor faculty and staff who have made significant contributions to its adult students. Congratulations to all the new inductees!





## Graduation Date Changes!

Beginning August 2012, Charter Oak will confer degrees three times a year (May 31, August 31, and December 31).

Diplomas will be issued three times a year as well, 4-6 weeks after the May, August and December conferral dates. Please refer to the "Graduation" tab once you click on "Students" in ACORN for more information on the new graduation dates.

**PLEASE NOTE** that students who have not paid the graduation fee **AT LEAST** one month prior to their anticipated date of graduation, **WILL NOT** have the degree conferred.



### E-Student Self-Service Now Available!

We're excited to announce the availability of FREE Student Self-Service at Charter Oak State College. Student Self-Service saves you a trip/call to the Registrar's Office by providing you with the ability to perform the following services securely via the Web, 24/7. To access this information please login to your ACORN account, click on the 'Students' tab and then select "Verification of Enrollment" from the menu on the left.

- Print enrollment verification certificates to send to health insurers, housing providers or other organizations requiring proof of your enrollment
- Check the deferment forms and electronic notifications sent to your lenders
- Obtain a list of your student loan lenders and link to real-time loan information
- View your enrollment history
- View enrollment verifications provided to student service providers at your request
- Order an official transcript or view the status of your previous transcript requests.

## Criteria for Letters Confirming Your Graduation

We receive a number of requests from students asking that a letter be sent to a college or to an employer verifying the date of their graduation. We are more than happy to honor this request. However, you should **not** make the request unless the following criteria have **ALL** been met:

1. Your academic autobiography or your concentration and essay has been **approved**.
2. You have submitted your graduation application and survey (see deadlines for submission).
3. You have completed **all** academic requirements (contact your academic counselor).
4. **All** of your transcripts have been **received** by Charter Oak.
5. **All** fees have been paid (including the graduation fee).
6. **All financial aid requirements** have been completed.

When you have met the above criteria, requests should be made in writing to the Associate Registrar, Paul Morganti, 55 Paul J. Manafort Drive, New Britain, CT 06053, or email [pmorganti@charteroak.edu](mailto:pmorganti@charteroak.edu). The request should include the name, title and address of the recipient.



# Undergraduate Program News



**Select your Spring 2012 courses NOW!**

Thinking about taking an on line course this spring? Registration is currently open. Deadline to register for full semester and term 1 courses is January 18. Deadline for Term 2 courses is March 21, 2012. **Only payment at time of registration will secure a “seat” in your course.** We recommend that you register early to avoid being closed out of the course you want.

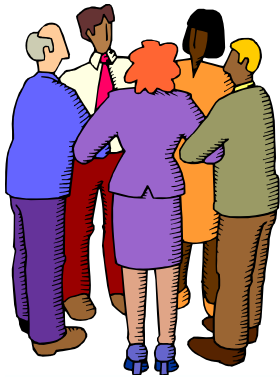
To view a listing of spring courses, click on <http://acorn.charteroak.edu>. On the right side of the screen, click on the Course Search option and choose Spring .



## Textbook Rentals!

In an effort to help our students save money, the College has signed an agreement with MBS Direct for students to rent some titles starting this fall. In addition to new, used and e-book texts, students can check to see if a rental text is available for their courses. Rental texts are not available to students using vouchers. However, voucher students have the option of paying directly for rentals, and request reimbursement. Please contact Peggy Intravia at [mintravia@charteroak.edu](mailto:mintravia@charteroak.edu) for further information. The bookstore is now open for spring at [www.charteroak.edu/bookstore](http://www.charteroak.edu/bookstore).

# Student News and Services



## Want to Meet Fellow Charter Oak Students?

Do you sometimes wish there was an opportunity to talk with other Charter Oak students as you would if you were on a campus? While we can't replicate the experience of a shared cup of coffee in the cafe, we do offer an alternative. Charter Oak students have an active presence in our eLounge located on Facebook.

Here's the link: [http://www.facebook.com/CharterOak?v=app\\_2373072738](http://www.facebook.com/CharterOak?v=app_2373072738). It's always open. Make a cup of coffee and go make friends!



## WELCOME New Staff at Charter Oak!

Angela Chapman has joined Charter Oak as the Administrative Assistant to the President. Angela is originally from Brooklyn, NY and has been a Connecticut resident for 11 years. She comes to COSC from Advanced Behavioral Health, Inc., where she was the Executive Assistant to the President and CEO for six years. Angela has worked in the Administrative field for over 15 years.

Angela is excited to be a part of the great work done by COSC. Helping adults achieve their goals of higher education is very special to Angela, as she completed her undergraduate degree as an adult and is currently an MBA student at the University of New Haven with expectations to graduate in May of 2012. Angela believes that the education provided at COSC gives adults the opportunity to have a "second chance" in life and that puts a smile on her face.



**Congratulations to Carole Weisberg, Connecticut-Parents as Teachers "Champion of the Year" award winner!**

Carole Weisberg (holding her award) with Pamela Langer, CT State Coordinator of Parents-As-Teachers (CONN-PAT). Pam Langer presented the award. Carole received the award for her work on developing the parenting educator's credential. Carole is the Coordinator of Programs for Early Childhood and Youth Educators at Charter Oak State College.







## Student Association News: Make a Difference

Each year your Student Association sponsors events (both on-ground and online) to enrich your experience at Charter Oak. These events are planned by the Student Association officers and board members. This is a volunteer group that is small in number but they make important decisions. Please consider joining. The time commitment is minimal (just 2 or 3 meetings a year) and you do not need to be in Connecticut. We are happy to conference you in using the computer or telephone.

What does this group do? They plan programs that they believe would be beneficial and of interest to their fellow students. The more students who participate in decision-making, the greater the chances of making choices that will spark the interest of the student body. Last year we sponsored several webcasts on job related topics such as “what’s hot and what’s not” in the job market, interviewing skills and using social media for professional growth.

Got some ideas that you think we should implement? No ideas now, but you’re interested in dialoging with other Charter Oak students? Let us know you’re willing to join. Contact Linda Larkin, Director of Academic Services, at [llarkin@charteroak.edu](mailto:llarkin@charteroak.edu) or telephone her at 860.515.3841.



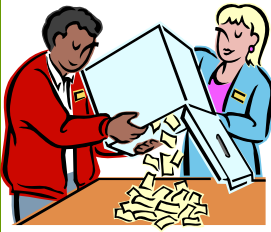
## Course Evaluation Survey

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness would like to thank students for continuing to make the online course evaluation system a success. In the last year, we have installed a new course evaluation system that is more automated and is easier to use. Students shared their overall opinions on their courses and instructors, along with their views on eleven specific aspects of their experience in their classes. We hope that an even larger percentage of students will participate in online course evaluation this year. Students’ overall ratings of their courses and instructors were positive this past year – 80% of students rated the overall effectiveness of their instructor as “High” or “Very High,” and 81% of students rated the overall effectiveness of their course as “High” or “Very High.”

In addition to the overall ratings, students provided valuable comments about their classes. The insights that students provided played a significant role in helping Charter Oak continue to enhance its courses while preserving the things that the school does best. We would like to remind students that the Office of Institutional Effectiveness will email links to the online course evaluation survey during the final week of instruction in each sub-term. The students then have 2 weeks to complete the surveys.

If you have any questions about the course evaluation system, please contact Cris Dittrich, Research Associate for the office of Institutional Effectiveness at [cdittrich@charteroak.edu](mailto:cdittrich@charteroak.edu).





## Charter Oak State College Elects Representative to the Student Advisory Committee of the Board of Regents

Early in December, your Student Government elected fellow student, John C. Thomas, as your representative to the newly created Student Advisory Committee. This committee, reports directly to the Board of Regents which oversees Charter Oak State College, the CT four state universities, and the CT public community colleges.

**John C. Thomas** is a lifelong resident of the central Connecticut area having grown up in Hartford and now living with his life partner in Glastonbury. John has two adult children and 3 grandchildren. He is well aware that his grandchildren see him pursuing his studies and is proud to be a role model for them, exemplifying the importance of higher education and lifelong learning. John came to Charter Oak State College in 2009 to pull together the various credits he had accumulated over the years and to map out a coherent study plan towards a degree. He anticipates accomplishing his goal and receiving a Bachelor of Science degree with a concentration in Organizational Leadership in late 2012 or early 2013.

John is an experienced leader, having served for over twenty-one years at a local youth development organization managing a number of the agency's programs, most recently its lauded and successful AmeriCorps program. Currently negotiating a career transition, he is acutely aware of the importance of a degree as he seeks new employment opportunities. As John looks ahead, it is his goal to leverage his COSC education with his life experiences and to integrate this into all future endeavors.

He sums up his new role in the following way, "As the COSC Student Rep, I will be a conduit of information that articulates student needs, desires, and concerns to the Board of Regents. Conversely, I will endeavor to inform my fellow COSC students of the Board's activities as appropriate and necessary. Finally, I hope to provide meaningful influence for the COSC community as it pertains to the Board of Regents goal of preparing more students to meet the challenges of the 21st century."

**Christopher H. Cook** of Torrington, CT was elected as the alternate representative. Chris is completing a Bachelor of Science degree with a concentration in Youth Development and is employed as the Home/School Liaison at the Connecticut Junior Republic, a private special education school in Litchfield.

We thank both gentleman for their commitment to the College and wish them well as they serve their terms on this important state-wide Advisory Committee.



 CharterOak  
STATE COLLEGE **FOUNDATION**

55 Paul J. Manafort Drive, New Britain, CT 06053

The Charter Oak State College Foundation has its own website <http://www.coscf.org> with lots of important information for students and alumni.

We hope that all of you will take a look at the website and make recommendations. If you are ready to graduate and would like to consider purchasing a leaf on our Virtual Tree, please contact Angela Chapman at [achapman@charteroak.edu](mailto:achapman@charteroak.edu).

# CharterOak STATE COLLEGE



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