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 Commencement
 Coordinator and Assistant to the
 Provost and Dean of
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From the Desk of the Provost

Shirley M. Adams

I thought I would take the time to update you on what is happening at the state and federal level regarding higher education.

At the federal level, there are three sections of the Higher Education Authorization Act that will impact us. The first is *student authentication*. Online colleges need to have processes in place to be able to authenticate their students. Please read the article on Acxiom (page 3) to learn what we are doing to meet this requirement. The second is in regard to the *credit hour*. Online colleges must demonstrate that learning taking place in online courses is equal to learning that takes place in the face-to-face classroom, based on credit hour assessment. The third is *state authorization of online courses*. If a student is enrolled in an online program in a college located in a state other than that in which the student resides—and the student is the recipient of financial aid—the college must be registered in the state in which the student resides. We, as well as other online colleges, are trying to determine what this means. Meanwhile, a number of educational groups are trying to delay or withdraw this requirement since it targets online students and online learning only, and the cost may be prohibitive to small colleges. (If an out-of-state student takes a “face to face” course, the college offering the course doesn’t have to be licensed in the home state of the student.) In addition, there are talks about reducing Pell grants and changing the way colleges calculate default rates on financial aid. Both of these will have a direct impact on students.

At the state level, Connecticut, like many states, is facing a budget deficit. One of the plans to save money is to reorganize higher education. Currently the state system consists of the University of Connecticut, the four state universities, the twelve community colleges, and Charter Oak State College. The proposal is to consolidate the boards of each entity into one. The University of Connecticut is not included. The proposal also cuts the budgets of each entity and places the budget under the new board. No one has been able to show how this reorganization will save money, but we do know that cutting our budgets will have a direct impact on our students. Student services, financial aid, course offerings, and creating new programs will all be impacted.

A number of charter Oak students provided testimony at a February 28th Appropriations' Committee hearing. They all did a fantastic job. However, our students were outnumbered by the bus loads who came in from the other colleges. I was impressed by the enthusiasm all of the students demonstrated, not only for their colleges, but for taking an active part in the democratic process. The students came wanting to be heard. If you feel that Charter Oak has had a positive impact on you, PLEASE take the time to let your state legislators know: <http://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/CGAFindLeg.asp>

Shirley M. Adams



New Fee Structure

Charter Oak State College has changed its matriculation fee (Academic Service fee) structure. The matriculation fee structure made sense when Charter Oak was primarily an aggregator of credits. However, now that we offer over 250 online courses and most of our students take our courses, the College is in a position to lower the matriculation/academic service fee and raise course fees slightly to maintain the same amount of revenue. The College also recognizes that the initial annual matriculation/academic service fee has been a barrier to enrollment for some students.

The new fee, called the College Fee, reduces the initial high cost of matriculation and it puts the College on a three semester (fall, spring, summer) schedule that works more efficiently for students, including those on financial aid. The semester fee will be \$165 for in-state students and \$220 for out-of-state students.

The new fee structure has been carefully calibrated so that its implementation is fair to all currently matriculated students. Letters will be sent to all matriculated students explaining how the change will impact them.

Along with the new fee structure are the following new policies that will become **effective July 1, 2011**.

Degree Seeking Students:

Students must apply, be accepted, and pay the College Fee to matriculate at the College. Students must pay the College Fee each semester—fall, spring, summer. Students who miss a semester and then return will be subject to the fees of the current semester and the previous missed semester(s). Students can pay two (2) consecutive semesters worth of back payments and still retain the degree requirements in effect during their initial matriculation at the College.

Students who fail to pay the College Fee for 2 consecutive semesters will be administratively withdrawn (AW) from the College at the beginning of the third semester.

Students who have been administratively withdrawn and wish to return to the College must reapply to the college and pay the prevailing application fee. They must comply with any new degree requirements in effect at the time of reentry/rematriculation.



- ◆ Students, who have an approved concentration plan of study (CPS) and successfully completed the Cornerstone course, will need to pay a program reassessment fee.
- ◆ Students who do not have an approved CPS but the Cornerstone course was successfully completed, will take a one-credit re-entry course.
- ◆ Students who did not successfully complete the Cornerstone course will need to retake the Cornerstone course.
- ◆ Students who matriculated prior to 7/1/2010 and who rematriculate less than one year after having gone inactive and who have an approved CPS will be exempt from taking the cornerstone course.

The College fee will not be refunded to students who formally withdraw from the College. Students who return at a later date will need to reapply, pay all the required fees and must comply with any new degree requirements in effect at that time. The same policies in the paragraphs above apply.

Students Earning a Credit Credential or Certificate:

Students earning a credential or certificate, not an associate's or bachelor's degree, need to complete the application fee for the credential or certificate. Students will be billed the College fee each semester that they take courses.

All Other Students:

Students who are taking courses from Charter Oak to transfer back to their home institution or who are taking courses as applicants will also pay the semester fee. Applicants will be limited to 12 credits before they must matriculate and take the Cornerstone course.



Who Are You?

Academic integrity and protecting your personal information are very important to everyone at Charter Oak State College. As part of this effort, the College has partnered with Acxiom to electronically verify the identity of all students. This partnership will allow us to remotely check your identity, just as you would present your driver's license at the counter of a traditional college.

Acxiom is one of the world's largest processors of consumer data. They process over 32 billion data records each month. They combine public data with complex algorithms and seamless integration into existing technology to help ensure that when someone logs into our system they are who they say they are.

When this feature is activated and you log onto the Acorn Portal you will initially be prompted to answer security questions that will be based on your personal history—places you have lived in the last 5 years and cars you have owned—to name a few. These questions will be simple for you to answer but difficult for someone pretending to be you.

After the initial security screening, we will use Acxiom randomly, both at portal entry and within Blackboard. Currently, we are using the following parameters which are subject to change: If you miss only one question, you will be allowed to continue in the portal or course shell. However, if you miss two questions, you will be prevented from going further until you contact the Registrar's Office where you will be asked additional questions to verify your identity. The process will take less than one minute to complete and is 100% secure and encrypted. Look for this service to begin in the next several months.



Graduation News

Annual Commencement Ceremony Scheduled for Sunday, June 5, 2011

The annual commencement ceremony will take place at **1:30 p.m.** on Sunday, June 5 in Welte Auditorium on the campus of Central Connecticut State University, which is adjacent to Charter Oak State College.

Information about ordering caps and gowns has been mailed and e-mailed. If you did not receive the information, it can be downloaded from our web site at <http://CharterOak.edu/current/academics/graduation/> For those who can't attend, the ceremony will be Webcast, and we will read your name, if you desire.

The Student Association will host a brunch at **11:15 a.m.** in the Student Center Alumni Hall. Information about the brunch and ceremony will be mailed in mid-April to Charter Oak students who have graduated or plan to complete degree requirements between July 31, 2010 and May 31, 2011. Reservations for the brunch are required. Be sure to make your reservation early, because we have had to turn people away in the past

Please plan to attend the reception following the ceremony. You will have the opportunity to meet your academic counselor as well as President Ed Klonoski, Provost Shirley Adams and other members of the Charter Oak staff. Light refreshments will be served.



If your prospective graduation date is July 31, 2011, please submit your graduation application and survey immediately, if you have not already done so. This will ensure that your final degree requirements will be tracked, and you will not be disappointed!

There is no penalty for submitting your graduation application early. In fact, it's encouraged. This way the Registrar's staff and your academic counselor can be on the lookout for your final transcript(s) or your academic autobiography approval. **You may even be able to graduate sooner than you expect!**

The graduation survey is also very important to help us improve our service and to alert us to any problems that you may have had with your Charter Oak experience. We also like to hear about the good stuff, too! Each survey is read by the Provost and the President, so make your voice heard!

PLEASE NOTE: You will not receive your diploma if there is a **HOLD** on your record—such as not having completed your financial aid exit interview or if there is an outstanding balance on your account.



Charter Oak is going “**GREEN**” for the June 5, 2011 Commencement Ceremony

Commencement tassels are going green and white, and we’re also making our commencement ceremony environmentally “green”. Charter Oak will be using the “GreenWeaver™” cap and gown from Oak Hall. In addition to helping reduce plastic bottles in landfills, all of the caps and gowns are manufactured in Virginia.

Some important features of “GreenWeaver™” are:

- An average of 23 plastic bottles removed from landfill for each gown made.
- CO₂ gas emissions are reduced by 54.6% in the process of manufacturing fabric from plastic vs. virgin polyester.
- Using thermal recycled energy (like used to produce GreenWeaver fabric) saves energy use by 52.6% over petroleum.
- Softer to the touch and more breathable than traditional polyester fabric.
- “Tag less” size labels stamped with soy ink.
- “GreenWeaver™” passed the color fastness test with a 4.5 in both wet and dry testing. The fabric also exceeds all requirements for flammability.
- Plastic bags used to store the caps and gowns are made from recycled plastic.
- For every gown purchased, Oak Hall will make a donation to an on campus sustainability program of the college/universities choice.

The cost for the regalia will be \$30. Tassels can be purchased for \$5.00 **Information will be e-mailed to students in March, so please be sure to check your Charter Oak e-mail account!**

In addition to offering the environmentally friendly commencement regalia, Charter Oak will also print fewer commencement programs and will use recycled paper stock.





Graduation Fee Deadline !

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 by the Board.

For instance, if you have completed all degree requirements for the May 31, 2011 graduation date and the fee has not been paid by April 30, 2011, your records will not be audited. If the fee is received after April 30, your records will be audited for the next degree granting date, which is July 31, 2010.

PLEASE PAY ATTENTION TO THESE DEADLINES!!

Graduation Date:	Graduation Application and Graduation Survey due by:	Graduation Fee and Transcript Deadline:
Jan. 31	Sept. 30	Dec. 31
March 31	Nov. 30	Feb. 28
May 31	Jan. 31	April 30
July 31	Mar. 31	June 30
Sept. 30	May 31	Aug. 31
Nov. 30	July 31	Oct. 31



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. The request should include the name, title and address of the recipient.



Undergraduate Program News



Select your Summer courses NOW!

Thinking about taking an on line course this summer? Registration begins on March 28th, but you can view the offerings now. **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 summer courses, click on <http://acorn.charteroak.edu>. On the right side of the screen, click on the Course Search option and choose Summer 2010-2011 from the drop down menu (spring is still the default). Please note that you have to scroll **UP**, because Summer 2010-2011 is located above Spring 2010-2011 in the dropdown menu.



Course Evaluation Survey Office of Institutional Effectiveness

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness would like to thank students for continuing to make the online course evaluation system a success. The response rate to the evaluations increased to 52% this fall, with students sharing 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 spring.

Students’ overall ratings of their courses and instructors were positive this past fall – 78% of students rated the overall effectiveness of their instructor as “High” or “Very High,” and 77% 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 for each course during the final week of instruction. Students will receive a separate email for each course in which they are enrolled. Each link is only valid for the course listed in the email and can only be used once.

If you have any questions about the course evaluation system, please contact David Hemenway, Director of Institutional Effectiveness at dhemenway@charteroak.edu.

Student News and Services



Charter Oak Reorganizes!

As part of Charter Oak's commitment to provide better services to its students, we recently reorganized our distance learning office, registrar's office, and graduation office.

Since Charter Oak did not offer any courses for the first 18 years of its history (1973-1991) it made sense to create a distance learning office that would design courses, hire faculty, and handle registration.

Because the College was still primarily an "aggregator of credit" institution, the registrar's office spent most of its time evaluating transcripts. However, much of that has changed. Charter Oak now offers 253 online courses (including capstone courses), and more Charter Oak students are taking Charter Oak courses. Therefore, the demands on both offices have changed. More emphasis needed to be placed on course development, instructional design, and course evaluation. As a result, the College increased the instructional design staff and created an Instructional Design Office. The distance learning office will now be called the Undergraduate Program Department. It will be responsible for hiring and training faculty, outcomes assessment, course scheduling, course/program determination, working with our online book store, maintaining our online library, and handling student/faculty complaints. Both of these offices report to the Dean of Undergraduate Programs.

The course registration and grade function has moved over to the Registrar's office, along with the graduation audit function that was handled by the graduation office. The CPS/AA process will move back to the Academic Affairs office from Academic Services allowing the Academic Services Office more time to work on student retention.

We made this change effective February 1, 2011. However, we know it will take some time to work out these changes because some students have already downloaded forms that will now go to the wrong office. Internally, **we will make sure the forms and phone calls get to the correct office for action.**

We appreciate your patience as our staff adjust to their new roles and responsibilities!



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. It's always open. Make a cup of coffee and go make friends!



Student Information Week 2011

Moving Ahead with Confidence!

Your Student Association invites you to attend any or all of the following **FREE** workshops geared to prepare you to complete your degree and rise to the next level in your career. Each evening, join us for a **light dinner at 6 p.m.** and **the presentation at 6:30 p.m.** in the Fleet Conference Room at Charter Oak State College

Live too far away? Join us through the live Webcast. More information will be posted on the Charter Oak Web site in March at <http://www.charteroak.edu>

Monday, March 21st

Workforce Trends – What’s Hot, What’s Not

Where: Fleet Conference Room at Charter Oak State College at 6:30 p.m.

Reservations Required – limited to 30 on-site participants

Contact Jennifer Schaefer at jschaefer@charteroak.edu or call 860.832.3884.

Presenter: Judith K. Resnick serves as the executive director of the Connecticut Business & Industry Association Education Foundation.

Tuesday, March 22nd

Finding Balance – From Obligation to Choice

Where: Fleet Conference Room at Charter Oak State College at 6:30 p.m.

Reservations Required – limited to 30 on-site participants

Contact Jennifer Schaefer at jschaefer@charteroak.edu or call 860.832.3884.

Presenter: Lois J. Coon is a Counseling Psychotherapist who helps clients embrace the mind-body-spirit connection, and find internal balance in periods of change and transition.

Wednesday, March 23rd

Successful Interviewing Techniques

Learn how to develop an interview strategy, interview do’s and don’ts, interview etiquette, and more.

Where: Fleet Conference Room at Charter Oak State College at 6:30 p.m.

Reservations Required – limited to 30 on-site participants

Contact Jennifer Schaefer at jschaefer@charteroak.edu or call 860.832.3884.

Presenter: Dr. Fitzgerald is an Associate Professor of Communication at Central Connecticut State University. Prior to coming to Central she worked for Visa International where she was responsible for hiring decisions.

Thursday, March 24th

Social Media and Networking for Professional Advancement

Where: Fleet Conference Room at Charter Oak State College at 6:30 p.m.

Reservations Required – limited to 30 on-site participants

Contact Jennifer Schaefer at jschaefer@charteroak.edu or call 860.832.3884.

Presenter: TBD More information to follow.



WELCOME

New Staff at Charter Oak!



Introducing Moses T. Adgers

Lori Gagne Pendleton, Director of Admissions, is pleased to announce that Moses Adgers has joined our admissions counseling staff. He is a native of Hartford, Connecticut and a graduate of Northwest Catholic High School, North Carolina Wesleyan College, and is continuing graduate work at Trinity College this summer. His professional career in Higher Education began in 1998 when he served as Assistant Director of Admissions, first at N.C. Wesleyan and then at Fairfield University. After four years in the admissions field, he spent two years working in Student Activities at Trinity College in Hartford and five years in Housing and Residence Life at Eastern Connecticut State University. He has now come full circle and returned to his roots as an admission counselor at COSC.

Moses notes that he has thoroughly enjoyed his first months here at Charter Oak State College. “Having the opportunity to work with a unique and motivated student population has been a genuine pleasure. “I truly enjoy working in a position that allows me to assist students during the initial stages of their Charter Oak State College journey. I have also been afforded the opportunity to travel near and far to interact with various people while representing the College. The best aspect of this position is the fact I am constantly learning new things while improving upon existing skills. Each person’s circumstance is different, thus no one approach works in all situations. This makes everyday fresh, and every interaction offers a new set of possibilities and options.”

Introducing Daniel Facchinetti

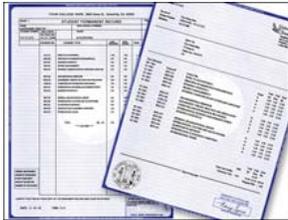
Daniel V. Facchinetti has joined Charter Oak as an Instructional Designer. He comes to COSC from the University of Rhode Island where he was a Ph.D student and teaching assistant within the English department. He has worked for six years integrating online course management systems into his teaching pedagogy while working closely with Information Technology. He mentored and assisted faculty members in preparing content for online delivery and migrating content to Blackboard. He also focused on instructors’ individual needs in concert with the pedagogical requirements of their courses.

Dan believes strongly in the value and importance of online education and views the field as a truly exciting evolution of modern pedagogy. As both a student and a teacher, Dan has always considered the connection between learners and educators central to his work. He notes, “Working with Charter Oak faculty in their online teaching gives me a genuine sense of engagement with the educational process, which is something I’ve always seen as deeply meaningful work. This position allows me the opportunity to help people, both students and teachers, in a really unique way, and seeing what students get out of their educations at Charter Oak provides me with the sense of purpose and fulfillment that called me into teaching in the first place.”

Introducing Bevin Rainwater

Bevin Rainwater has joined the Instructional Design team as a Course Developer. Bevin works with Charter Oak faculty to build clear, effective courses in Blackboard. She comes to COSC from Renzulli Learning, a UCONN Research and Development Corporation, where she was a Spanish Language content specialist. Bevin is also a freelance graphic and web designer with various skills related to web development with software proficiencies in Adobe Illustrator Photoshop, Dreamweaver, Flash, and more. She also holds a Masters in Foreign Language Education and was formerly a professor in both the University and K-12 systems.

Bevin considers herself a life-time learner, appreciating the value of education and learning something new each day, including skills learned while working at COSC. She feels that this outlook gives her an appreciation for education, for improving herself and finding something new to take joy in. Continuing your education, whether formally through an institution, or by taking initiative yourself through reading and research, helps keep your brain active and thriving. “It is truly a pleasure to be working for an institution of higher education that helps individuals realize their educational goals while gainfully employed in the workforce or seeking employment. Education should be accessible to all...Everyone should have a chance to continue their education.”



Everything you need to know about requesting transcripts

Degrees are conferred on specific dates six times a year, the last day of the months of January, March, May, July, September and November. If you are graduating and need to have your transcript show that you have completed your degree requirements, you need to put a note on your transcript request form saying “hold until after graduation.”

If you need a transcript prior to your graduation date, you might want to ask us to enclose a letter explaining your graduation status. Put a note on the transcript request form to indicate that you need such a letter. The institution to which you are sending the transcript and letter will probably need a transcript sent after the degree has been conferred. If so, you will need to make a second request, noting that we should wait until after the degree has been conferred before sending the transcript. Transcript request forms are available at the following link:

<http://www.charteroak.edu/Current/Forms/TranscriptRequestFromCharterOak.pdf>

The cost of a transcript is \$10 (\$20 for a rush transcript). If you include charge card information, transcript requests can be faxed to our Business Office at (860) 832-3910. Complimentary transcripts are sent to graduates after degrees have been conferred, but they are student copies.

PLEASE NOTE: A hold will be put on the record of anyone who owes a fee or anyone who has not completed the financial aid exit interview. **The hold will prevent official transcripts and diplomas from being sent out.**



 **CharterOak**
STATE COLLEGE **FOUNDATION**

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

The Charter Oak State College Foundation has its own website 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 Marlene Woodman at mwoodman@charteroak.edu.

