A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR
Maria D. Martinez, Director, Center for Academic Programs

It has been another exciting and eventful year for the Center for Academic Programs (CAP). In December the CAP-Storrs staff moved their offices from Monteith to the newly renovated Center for Undergraduate Education (CUE). Nineteen academic departments are housed in the CUE, all committed to serving students. With all these services in one place, we hope to see many students taking advantage of the convenient location. Please stop by and visit our new home.

We are very pleased to welcome two new staff members to the CAP team. Cliff Marrett came on board in June as an advisor for the Upward Bound/ConnCAP program. He has impressive experience in supervising, advising, and counseling high school and college students and most recently worked as a site based coordinator for the Nutmeg Big Brothers and Big Sisters in Hartford. Student Support Services/ConnCAS has recently hired Carl Dean, Jr. as a counselor for the program. Carl began his college career at UConn in the summer of 1981 as an SSS student himself, receiving his B.S. from the University. He has an extensive counseling, advising, and management background and comes to us from Southend Community Services, Inc. in Hartford where he was a business youth manager. Please join me in welcoming them both to the department.

Student Support Services/ConnCAS worked with the Office of Admissions to bring one of the largest groups of students to UConn through SSS this summer. The SSS team continues to be innovative and has expanded their services. This summer, philosophy classes enhanced the existing summer curriculum which is comprised of English, math and expressive writing in performance courses. In addition, students in the summer program had access to the new CUE building’s state-of-the-art computer lab for afternoon and evening tutoring. With the library located right across the walkway, they became familiar with the academic core of the University. A highlight of the spring semester was the establishment of the first 3.0 Recognition Reception for the purpose of celebrating those students who have consistently achieved the goal of a 3.0 GPA. Study abroad opportunities for SSS students continue to flourish with Avery Point’s Maritime Study Abroad program in Albufeira, Portugal and ten SSS students traveling to Liverpool, England this summer. Please refer to the detailed article and pictures featured in the newsletter.

Educational Talent Search has much to be proud of this year with the continuation of their Early College Awareness program and the achievement of 90% of their project participants being enrolled in courses which are suitable for placement in post-secondary education. Of the 675 students served this year, 168 were seniors. Qualified students applied to over 180 colleges and 95% of the seniors were placed in a post-secondary institution.

The Upward Bound/ConnCAP (UB) program continues to be a leader in generating academic growth as well as the skills and motivation necessary for the completion of secondary education, the achievement of post-secondary placement, and graduation from an institution of higher education for the at-risk youth in Connecticut. During the summer program again this year, fourteen students held part-time work study positions in various campus offices. We want to thank the departments and units who graciously participated in this project.

This year the GEAR UP program was able to fully develop the partnerships as outlined in their grant. They also received two awards which will support professional development and aid in preparing students for college attendance and the workplace by linking their schooling to technology and careers. GEAR UP has continued to collaborate positively with other University programs such as Upward Bound and the UCONN School of Business through the Teenage Minority Business initiative.

The Center for Academic Programs continues to meet the goal of increasing access to higher education for those students who come from underrepresented ethnic or economic backgrounds and/or are first-generation college students. We hope you will enjoy reading about the accomplishments of the past year.
KWASI GYAMBIBI RECEIVES PEER EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

SSS Peer Advisor Kwasi Gyambibi received the inaugural Graduate Peer Educator of the Year award for “outstanding dedication to undergraduate peer education.” SSS Counselor Marie McCain, together with Heart House Director Janice Wilbur and CPIA Basketball Counselor Ted Taigen, nominated Kwasi for the award, citing his value to the UConn community as a role model for undergraduate students: “Kwasi exemplifies self-discipline, a mature and respectful approach to problem-solving, motivating and empathic interactions, and most importantly, highest self-regard and personal integrity.”

Kwasi became a SSS Peer Advisor during his junior year, and soon joined the summer program residential staff as well. After finishing his undergraduate dual-degree (BS in Human Development/Family Studies and BA in Sociology), Kwasi began work on a Master’s Degree in Sport Management and Sociology of Sport through UConn’s Neag School of Education. While pursuing his MA, Kwasi was awarded a Graduate Assistantship in the SSS program which allowed him to expand upon the work he had begun as an undergraduate. He took on a supervisory role in the Peer Advisor program, recruiting, selecting and training new PAs; he developed and managed SSS cultural and social programming; and he taught sections of Freshman Year Experience classes. At the same time, Kwasi also served as the Graduate Academic Advisor for UConn’s football team, and assisted with management of the men’s basketball team (he had, in fact, been a basketball walk-on player during his junior and senior years at UConn).

After receiving his Master’s degree in May 2004, Kwasi parlayed his UConn experience into two consecutive internships: first, he worked as an academic advisor for athletes at Florida Atlantic University, and then he returned to Connecticut to work with summer youth programs in Hartford. Not surprisingly, given Kwasi’s personality and talents, both internships have turned into offers of full-time employment. Now Kwasi faces the pleasant challenge of choosing between two opportunities to do what he does best: inspiring young people to strive for similarly bright futures.

SPOTLIGHT ON SSS/CONNCAP ALUMNUS ADRIAN MICHAEL SAYAPHET

UConn/CAP Student Support Services is proud to highlight alumnus Adrian Sayaphet.

Adrian was very active in campus life, which was due in large part to his involvement in the SSS program. “Without the SSS program, I would’ve been lost in the mix of searching for my comfort zone, friends, and more importantly, the transition into my first year of college. Throughout my years at UConn, the 97 SSS program was essential in my development as a person, providing me with great support from academics to creative self-expression.”

Mr. Sayaphet graduated from the University of Connecticut in 2001 with a degree in Marketing and Communication Science. He currently is working at Epitome Fashion Line in Bridgeport and Hartford, CT where he serves not only as a designer and marketing director but is also co-founder. Adrian’s success, however, has not been limited to only one area of his life. He has been successfully serving his community in a variety of ways including his time as an English teacher at an alternative school where he played an active role in guiding urban youths onto a positive path through creative writing and self-development workshops. Other community service efforts include Helping the Homeless, Toys for Tots, Chief Advisor for Nubians United by Integration as One, various drug prevention programs and producing an award winning documentary on domestic violence for Bridgeport, CT in 1997.

We would, however, be remiss if some mention wasn’t made of his more creative pursuits. Adrian, also known as Buddha LuvJonz, has found inspiration from his Asian-American roots and has been described as “a socio-poetical, abstract, fun individual [who] deliver[s] cultural metaphoric words onto the canvas of your mind.” He has performed his works all over New England appearing as headliner, guest, and featured artist at many venues ranging from small cafés to large scale events.
SSS STUDY ABROAD

The past year we have again offered our Student Support Services (SSS) students the opportunity to study abroad. Through collaborations with organizations such as the Ocean Technology Foundation, who provided invaluable scholarship assistance, the Center has been able to continue offering study abroad opportunities for SSS students at the University of Liverpool, England and Albufeira, Portugal. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the people and offices whose continued support has made the SSS study abroad program a success, especially Jean Main, Director of Student Financial Aid Office, Jeet Joshee, Assistant Dean of the College of Continuing Studies, as well as Ocean Technology Foundation members Richard Cooper, Captain Jack Ringelberg, and Melissa Ryan.

Portugal

SSS participant Joe Hartung, along with ten other UConn students, participated in Avery Point’s Maritime Study Abroad program in Portugal May 11- June 2, 2004. The trip focused on internships at a marine mammal facility, Zoomarine. While there, the students worked with trainers and caretakers of seals, sea lions, sharks, birds of prey, and spent time in the rehabilitation center caring for a stranded baby dolphin.

In addition to working with marine mammals, the students traveled throughout Portugal. Time on the beach was accompanied by a magnificent sailing trip to view the coast, just as the Portuguese sailors would have done centuries ago. A number of important historical sites were on the students’ travel itinerary. They visited Sagres, the furthest western part of Europe, in order to learn about the maritime impact of Portuguese explorers. Also, the students traveled to the town of Silves, where the 11th century castle still stands, bearing witness to the battles between Christians and Moors for dominance of Portugal. At Evora the students toured different historical sites, some of which dated back more than 1,800 years, including the ruins of a Roman temple and a cathedral which housed a chapel comprised of 5,000 monks’ bones.

Joe Hartung said that this trip to Portugal has changed his life: “It was an unbelievable experience that I’ll never have the chance to do again. I think any student should go for it.” Joe received a farewell gift from the trainers at Zoomarine in order to help him remember this once-in-a-lifetime experience and the lessons he learned.

Liverpool

SSS was fortunate to return to Liverpool for a three-week program, which took place June 12th – July 3rd. SSS counselor Leo Lachut accompanied a group of ten CAP/SSS students. While in Liverpool, the SSS group studied black roots history, focusing on the cultural and political context of 400 years of black settlement and development and the role that the city played in the African slave trade. Students met with individuals and community groups, attended lectures on contemporary issues and visited various social, political, and cultural sites as a means of augmenting their educational experience.
This year the SSS group was given the opportunity to encompass more sites into their itinerary. For example, the group spent an evening in London and traveled throughout the island of Ireland, stopping in both Belfast and Dublin, where they learned about the role that indentured servants played in Ireland’s history. The students also traveled to the Netherlands to experience another side of Europe and while there they visited the Anne Frank House among other historical and cultural sites.

Erica Granoff, a participant in this year’s program, stated that while in Liverpool they were given a guided tour of the docks. Their guide told them to “see with their eyes not their emotions” in order for them to realize that all of buildings, docks, etc. exist today only due to the slave trade. Erica felt that this was the most moving experience in Liverpool and brought the realities of the slave trade home.

Cuba

During the 2003 Winter Intersession three SSS students were sponsored by SSS to participate in the Cultural Study in Cuba that was offered through the College of Continuing Studies. This three week program was a combination of classroom instruction and practical exposure through visiting various cultural and historical sites throughout the island including the Museum of the Revolution, the AIDS Sanitarium, and the Santa Ifigenia Cemetery. In addition, the curriculum allowed for extensive travel across Cuba specifically to Havana, Trinidad, Santiago de Cuba, and Matanzas. The students who participated in the program remarked not only on the strong sense of Cuban society and culture they received but also on the beauty of the Cuban landscape.

MY EXPERIENCE AS AN INTERN IN LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND

Jose Santana

Being away from home for this long in Liverpool, England has been the most physically and mentally challenging experience I have had to take up so far. In turn, I have realized how many accomplishments I’ve made at this point in my life. Through just the simple social interactions among the people along the way already initiated a difference that needed to be made. Engaging the youth in Liverpool helped in diminishing many misconceptions on both sides of the cultural fence. The eagerness I saw in people who wanted to know so much more about me as a person and as an American inspired me to bring new ideals to my meaning of life. It wasn’t until I was so far away from home that I learned more about myself and my surroundings. The role as an intern forced me to get rid of many roadblocks that kept me from excelling in life. I found myself taking new challenges such as engaging the youth into higher education programs, guest speaking, video promotions, etc. I reflect on so many of the things that got accomplished in such a short time. Now I recognize my potential in educating young people as well as those that might be curious in finding their direction in life.

In the past I have found it very difficult for me to do traveling as a non-student primarily because of financial constraints. Basically, realizing the difficulty it would be for me to take on a trip for this long on my own convinced me to take that chance. Students who took the challenge in pursuing higher education already sit with an unforeseeable advantage in finding their greatness but taking up a challenge in studying abroad further expands upon their gifts. The end product could only be greater opportunities being offered, to people with international experience that wait in the later parts of life.
UPWARD BOUND (UB/CONNCAP)

The University of Connecticut’s Upward Bound/ConnCAP Program has gained a reputation as a proven intervention program for at-risk youth in the state. UB has been a vehicle to generate academic growth as well as the skills and motivation necessary to complete secondary education, post-secondary placement, and graduation from an institution of higher education.

One hundred and fifteen students attended the UB summer program in 2004. These intensive six-week residential programs are designed to advance students’ academic skill levels in literature, composition, foreign languages, science and mathematics, while promoting personal growth through extracurricular experiences. Students need to complete 30 hours of community service every year in order to participate in the summer component of the program. One of the greatest contributions to the success of the residential summer component is made every year by the tutor/counselors who serve as mentors, disciplinarians, tutors, teachers’ assistants, and role models for the students.

UB continued their work-study initiative which allows students the opportunity to acquire experience in their chosen field or career. This past year 14 high school students participated in the program while attending the UB summer session at the UConn Storrs campus. These students worked in departments such as Financial Aid, the School of Business, the School of Nursing, & the Center for Academic Programs.

The academic year component of UB seeks to provide students with academic enrichment seminars, student development and counseling services, as well as cultural activities and field trips. An advisor meets with each student once a week to monitor academic progress and provide guidance in career, personal and recreational activities. Activities during the academic year include college visits and fairs, attending the TRIO Day Conference, and Academic Days at the Storrs and Waterbury campuses.

SPOTLIGHT ON UPWARD BOUND/CONNCAP PROGRAM ALUMNUS BRANDON M. GRAHAM

Brandon M. Graham is a successful alumnus of the University of Connecticut’s Center for Academic Programs (CAP) Upward Bound (UB) program, who has never forgotten the “wonderful foundation” he received from UB. He has described the Upward Bound program as professional, committed, and vital to the advancement of much of the underrepresented population of Connecticut, who need UB as a means of getting themselves into college and on a path to success. Mr. Graham believes that a program such as Upward Bound, “serves to position young minorities to reach for greatness and choose to live a better quality of life through the attendance of a four-year university and implanting the importance of academic tradition.”

Mr. Graham attended Sacred Heart University where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in English with a concentration in journalism, and has since gone on to achieve MBA candidate status there. As an undergraduate he applied his gifts as a writer when he edited the university’s literary magazine, Horizons. Professionally, Brandon Graham has been innovative, daring and successful. He started Brownstone Publishing, Inc. (BPI) in 2000 in order to create and distribute world-class literature, which gives a voice to today’s urban audience. Brownstone Publishing, Inc. has sought to publish a wide variety of authors’ work by taking advantage of a multitude of formats -including hardcover, trade paperback, mass market paperback, audio, electronic, and digital- which allows BPI to provide the written word to the largest audience possible.

Mr. Grahams’ love for the written word has translated into other areas of his life. He is a popular lecturer known for his compelling delivery, which “provides a blend of drama, knowledge, and inspiration.” His first book of poetry, A Love Supreme: amputated feelings and prosthetic apologies, was published in 2003. His poetry inspired by the work of Nikki Giovanni and influenced by Saul Williams, “speaks to the heart of the human condition.”
SSS STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICE UPDATE

In the summer of 2004 the SSS program added 258 freshmen to the UConn student body. The students at Storrs, Avery Point, Hartford, Stamford, and Waterbury underwent an intensive six-week summer program that covered English, math and writing/learning courses. In addition to the rigorous academic schedule, the students also participated in student development workshops, seminars, and cultural activities.

The SSS Pre-Collegiate Summer Program is designed to strengthen academic competency, facilitate transition to the University, and develop the skills necessary for success at the postsecondary level. Throughout the summer and academic year the SSS staff provides the students with the academic, financial, and personal advising they need, which are only parts of the support structure available to them.

News from SSS Storrs

This year the SSS program has been busy expanding services, reviewing and improving current assistance programs. This past spring study hall quiet hours were added throughout the academic semester, Monday-Thursday for 3 hour blocks, during which English and math tutors were made available to aid our freshmen students. Additionally, a 3.0 Recognition Reception was held to celebrate those UConn/SSS students who received a 3.0 grade point average or higher during the academic year. We are also proud of the success of our study abroad program, which brought SSS back to Liverpool, England, and since has become a model for TRIO programs. On campus SSS students have continued to assume leadership positions and remain active in various student organizations and community activities.

The summer program got off to an exciting start this year, bringing one of the largest group of students to attend UConn through SSS. Our usual English, math, and writing/performance curriculum was expanded to include philosophy, a first-time offering for our program. With afternoon and evening tutoring now located in the CUE buildings' state-of-the-art computer lab (and right next door to the library), the students have been immediately integrated into the academic core of University life.

We wish to congratulate the many SSS students who earned a place on the Dean's List for their outstanding grades in 2003-2004, as well as to all those whose GPAs met the SSS goal of 3.0 or above. We also would like to extend our sincere thanks to faculty, for their support in providing us with information on our students' progress.

News from Avery Point

SSS students continued to play a very active role at the Avery Point campus including participating in the Associated Student Government. In addition, Avery Point students became involved in their first Service Learning project, which entailed visiting an independent living facility in Mystic, Connecticut and interviewing the senior residents about their career choices and success stories. Additionally, three SSS students volunteered to be ushers for "Shakespeare by the Sea", held at the Avery Point campus. As a result of their community projects and involvement in campus activities, two SSS students were awarded Community Service Awards during Avery Point Awards night. The Portuguese Study Abroad program through Avery Point continued on this year with one SSS student, Joe Hartung, participating.

News from SSS Hartford

This year SSS Hartford students continued to exhibit their commitment to the University community as well as to the outside community through CONNPIRG, the Black Students Association, the Associated Student Government, and the Puerto Rican/Latin American Students Organization (PRLASO). In fact, the Connecticut Department of Education bestowed upon PRLASO a Community Service Award for 2003-2004.

Of special note is that this past year SSS Hartford students held 85% of the student labor positions on campus. The SSS Hartford students have also excelled academically with twelve CAP/SSS students making the Dean's List for the spring semester and two having perfect 4.0 GPAs. At the Spring 2004 awards ceremony on the Hartford campus, several SSS students received UConn Hartford Scholarships as well as Book Awards.

News from SSS Stamford

Students from SSS Stamford excelled scholastically this year, with numerous students named to the Dean's List for the spring semester, and two students nominated and accepted to the Stamford Campus Honors program. SSS Stamford also recognized their students through their Annual Awards Ceremony, where ten students were awarded scholarships.

News from SSS Waterbury

SSS Waterbury students were active on a variety of fronts this year, including many activities sponsored by the Associated Student Government and especially in the Puerto Rican/Latin American Student Organization (PRLASO), where SSS students held the offices of President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Several SSS Waterbury students received awards this year, including three who received the Outstanding CAP Student Award, one who was awarded the Martin Luther King Award, and one who received the English Award. Several students were recognized for attaining the SSS goal of a 3.0 GPA and two students participated in the study abroad program in England.

We are proud to highlight SSS Waterbury Coordinator, Lillie Squires-Wright, who has been a Multiple Year Honoree of Who's Who Among America's Teachers. Her biography will be published in the 8th edition of Who's Who Among America's Teachers, 2003-2004, which honors those educators nominated by students from Who's Who Among American High School Students, Who's Who Among American High School Students-Sports Edition, and college students honored on the National Deans List.
GEAR UP

This year has been extremely successful for the UCONN GEAR UP Program in terms of partnerships, activities conducted for youth, professional development workshops, and full implementation of GEAR UP activities within the schools!

In July, GEAR UP received a total of $93,000 from The National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) and the SBC Foundation. Selected through a competitive grants program managed by NCCEP, the SBC Foundation funded 79 collaborative partnerships across the SBC 13-state service area.

Funds from the SBC Foundation will support professional development trainings at Wilbur Cross High School in order to enhance teaching and learning functions in the classrooms by using instructional technologies.

The second award is connected to preparing students for college attendance and the workplace by supporting an academic achievement program for middle school students that will engage youth in the educational process by linking their academics to technology and careers.

GEAR UP has worked collaboratively with partners to provide counseling, tutoring, mentoring, and academic advising to 433 students in grades 7th-9th at East Rock, Edgewood Magnet Schools, Wilbur Cross, Hill Regional Career and James Hillhouse High Schools. Last year 85% of our 8th grade cohort was promoted to the 9th grade and taking a college preparatory sequence in high school.

The middle school college awareness program The Maximizing Adolescent Academic Excellence (The MAAX) served 258 students with 153 seventh grade students and 105 eighth grade students participating in the in-school program. A total number of 1,881 direct service hours have been delivered to students in school during this year. On average, each student has received 7.3 hours of MAAX curriculum sessions since the start of the school year. Equally impressive is the 307 hours of programming extended to students enrolled in the after school program.

Our 9th grade students attended 12 Saturday Academy sessions at Gateway Community College. These intensive sessions were designed to provide students with appropriate course selection process, college requirements, financial aid, career explorations, and tutoring. The 9th grade cohort had the opportunity to tour Quinnipiac University and speak with college students about campus life and their transition from high school to college.

In collaboration with the Upward Bound Program and the UCONN School of Business our students participated in the Teenage Minority Business Program. The program consisted of business faculty conducting classes on different business related subjects such as accounting, finance, management information systems, and marketing. Students had the opportunity to interact with university students and alumni about their experiences in college and in the world of work.

EDUCATIONAL TALENT SEARCH (ETS)

The goal of Educational Talent Search is to identify qualified first-generation and low-income students, assist them through the various transitions from middle school to high school and, ultimately, to a successful placement at an appropriate post-secondary institution. The long-range goal is to impact high school attrition rates and to redirect and rectify low levels of academic preparation and motivation such that students will successfully complete college and/or other post-secondary programs.

The academic accomplishments of all ETS students for the academic year 2003-2004 continue to be outstanding. This past year ETS served 675 students, 380 in New Haven and 205 in Windham, and academic advising indicates that 90% of our high school project participants are enrolled in an academic curriculum appropriate for college placement.

For the past two years, all middle school students in both New Haven and Windham have participated in an affective counseling model titled Early College Awareness. This six-week course is age and grade specific, and addresses the many facets of college placement including SAT preparation for juniors and seniors as well as workshops on the financial aid process. College tours are also an integral part of the program which are designed to help students experience college life firsthand. This past year these tours brought New Haven students to both Yale College and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and Windham students attended the college fair in East Hartford. The students also took part in educational field trips designed to heighten awareness of the various occupational and career opportunities with employers located in each target area. In addition to the field trips students were introduced to Career exploration through guided discussions, career inventories, and questionnaires.
**Center for Academic Programs Mission Statement**

The Center for Academic Programs (CAP) increases access to higher education for high potential students who come from underrepresented ethnic or economic backgrounds and/or are first-generation college students. CAP prepares students for successful entry into, retention in and graduation from a post-secondary institution through its four constituent programs. Educational Talent Search, GEAR UP, and Upward Bound/ConnCAP provide programming to increase middle and high school students’ college access and retention; Student Support Services provides programming to facilitate students’ retention in and graduation from the University of Connecticut. CAP designs and implements these programs in accordance with guidelines set forth by its funding bodies, including the University, the State of Connecticut and the U.S. Department of Education and other programs which promote educational opportunity for all.