First Generation Coordinator Seeks Students, Mentors

By Glenda Isaacs Burgeson, Community Editor
Communication & Marketing

When Margo Thomas reaches out to first generation students at CSB, she has a pretty good idea what they are experiencing.

Thomas was the first in her family to attend college. Now, as coordinator of the First Generation Student Program at CSB, she works to identify first generation students at CSB and coordinates programs and support to help them take full advantage of the college experience.

The First Generation Student Program is a new initiative funded by a two-year $100,000 Wal-Mart College Success grant from the Council of Independent Colleges. The program has several objectives: to increase the enrollment of first generation students; to increase their retention and graduation rates; and to strengthen their connection to campus, faculty, staff and other first generation students.

The CSB program defines first generation students as those whose parents did not complete a four-year college degree. As a category, first generation students are growing in numbers on college campuses, Thomas said. While research suggests that first generation students are more likely low income and/or students of color, that’s not necessarily the case at CSB, she said. Here, they more likely are middle income and white.

Thomas is working with Admission and other departments to develop more efficient ways to identify students who might benefit from the program. By marketing to all first year CSB students, she has reached 60 students who identify themselves as first generation. The number of first year, first generation students at CSB is estimated at 150, based on information on financial aid forms and data collected by the Office of Institutional Research.

This spring, 35 faculty and staff responded favorably to an invitation she extended to attend a dinner for first generation faculty, staff and students. All 35 had been first generation students.

“They were very excited to talk about their experiences,” she said. At a dinner introducing the students, faculty and staff, the students welcomed the opportunity to talk about their experiences.

Those experiences can include a sense of wariness that may discourage a student from seeking help, Thomas said.

Although she was proud to be the first in her family to attend college, she sometimes felt that her classmates and fellow students shared a basic knowledge about college life that she didn’t have.

“You don’t want to appear stupid by asking simple questions,” she said. “For example, what is the difference between a college and a university? People would ask me what college I was in, and I didn’t understand what they were talking about. I thought I am a college student and I attend the same college as everyone else.”

Sometimes, the confusion can have consequences beyond embarrassment. A first generation student might not understand the role of an adviser, Thomas said.

“I didn’t use my adviser until I needed a signature for graduation,” she said.

Thomas wants to make sure first generation students know that the adviser is there to help them.

Thomas also serves as a resource for parents who may have financial concerns or other questions and aren’t sure where to turn. It is reassuring for them, as well, to know that Thomas is looking out for the well being of their daughters.

Thomas wants faculty and staff to know that she welcomes their input, and is seeking first generation faculty and staff to serve as mentors next year and encourages referrals of first generation students to the program. She can be reached at mthomas@csbsju.edu.
Student-produced Documentary Debuts

A student-produced documentary on micro-lending in the South American country of Chile made its debut at CSB/SJU March 30.

*Del Micro al Cambio* (“From the Micro to the Change”) was shown March 30 at SJU and March 31 at CSB.

This was the second student-produced documentary in a series that strives to bring under-told global issues to the CSB and SJU community. In 2008, the group produced a documentary on fair trade coffee in Guatemala, *Somos de Café* (“We Are Coffee”).

Micro-lending addresses an unfilled niche in the credit market through the issuance of small loans to empower impoverished entrepreneurs who aim to start or expand their small business. The micro-lending process is especially prevalent in under-developed and developing countries.

The current effort began in the spring of 2008, when CSB senior Andrea Carrow wrote a business plan for a non-profit organization that would essentially produce educational documentaries on global issues.

With the help of the Donald McNeely Center for Entrepreneurship at CSB and SJU, Carrow launched her own non-profit organization and through grants started the project with a budget just short of $10,000. She was able to garner funding through several different sources, including the CSB Student Philanthropy Fund; the Undergraduate Student Research Grant at CSB and SJU; Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) at CSB and SJU; and Target Corp.

Carrow then studied in Venezuela in the fall 2008. When her semester ended in November, she traveled to Chile and began connecting with local micro-lending organizations and micro-credit recipients. After Christmas, CSB senior Ashleigh Leitch and SJU seniors Tom Allen and Martins Kronbergs met Carrow in Santiago to conduct a series of interviews for the documentary.

The documentary spotlights Lino Morales, who started his candy-selling business with a half kilo of sugar and a micro-loan and now has expanded into six cities in Chile. It features information about the history of micro-loans and the micro-lending process and practical ways to become involved.

“Our goal (with the project) is to not only educate the campus community about micro-lending, but to inspire action,” Carrow said. “We are aiming to raise awareness and encourage participation.”

The finished documentary will be also available to interested schools, churches and organizations around the region. To obtain a copy of the DVD, please contact Carrow at arcarrow@csbsju.edu.

Last year, seven students produced the documentary on fair trade coffee that was shown at CSB and SJU as well as a number of different venues around the region. Carrow is the only student returning from that production team.

Retired National Park Service Historian Speaks at CSB

Dwight Pitcaithley, the chief historian (retired) of the National Park Service, came to CSB as a Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellow March 22-27.

Pitcaithley presented two public events. He spoke on “Confronting the Causes of the Civil War: The National Park Service and American Memory” March 24 at CSB. Earlier that same day, he spoke on “Remembering the Civil War: Memorials and Monuments” at the Stearns History Museum, St. Cloud.

Throughout the week, Pitcaithley also visited classrooms at both CSB and SJU, working with reading groups of students and faculty.

Pitcaithley has devoted his career to public history — history outside the classroom — and the preservation of national parks as the chief historian of the National Park Service from 1995-2005. He served as president of the National Council for Public History in 1998, served on the editorial board of *The Public Historian* from 1991-97, on the Council of the American Association of State and Local History, and currently serves on the editorial board of *The Journal of American History*. In addition, he has been a distinguished lecturer for the Organization of American Historians.

He has published several papers pertaining to public memory and the role of historic sites in public education, including “Historic Sites: What Can Be Learned from Them,” for which he won the James Madison Prize of the Society for History in the Federal Government.

Since 1993, Pitcaithley has taught at the university level, first as an adjunct professor at George Mason University (1993-2004) and currently as a professor of history at New Mexico State University.

Pitcaithley is the first of two Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellows to come to CSB and SJU this school year. In April, poet David Wagoner will visit the SJU campus.

The Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellows program, which is administered by the Council of Independent Colleges, brings prominent artists, diplomats, journalists, business leaders and other non-academic professionals to campuses across the U.S. for a week-long residential program of classes, seminars, workshops, lectures and informal discussions.

For more than 35 years, the Visiting Fellows have been introducing students and faculty members at liberal arts colleges to a wide variety of perspectives on life, society, community and achievement. The program has placed more than 3,500 Fellows at more than 250 private and public colleges. There are nearly 100 distinguished professionals currently serving at Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellows.

McNamara Speaks on “A Conservative European Memo to Obama”

What do Europeans think of the new administration of President Barack Obama?
Sally McNamara, a senior policy analyst in European affairs at the Heritage Foundation's Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom in Washington, D.C., gave a lecture on “A Conservative European Memo to Obama” March 11 at SJU.

The event was co-sponsored by the Eugene J. McCarthy Center for Public Policy and Civic Engagement at CSB/SJU, and Mark Kennedy's Frontiers of Freedom Lecture Series. Kennedy, who served Minnesota in the U.S. House of Representatives from 2001-07, is a 1979 graduate of SJU.

In addition to her lecture, McNamara spoke with selected students from CSB and SJU March 11. She also addressed an international political economy class, taught by assistant professor Derick Becker.

McNamara concentrates on American relations with the European Union and European countries, with particular focus on economic reform policy, trade issues and the war on terrorism. She also analyzes NATO’s evolving role in post-Cold War Europe.

A native of Nottingham, England, who came to America in 2004, McNamara served as chief parliamentary aide to Roger Helmer, a member of European Parliament in Brussels. Previous to that, she acted as a regional press officer for the British Conservative Party in the East Midlands, United Kingdom, and served on the Nottingham City Council.

The Thatcher Center was created in 2005 to study and help strengthen transatlantic relations. Its primary focus is to preserve and improve relations between the U.S. and Britain; advance American to preserve and improve relations between transatlantic relations. Its primary focus is in 2005 to study and help strengthen

Cardinal Kasper Delivers Diekmann Lecture and Receives Pax Christi Award

Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, delivered the Godfrey Diekmann, OSB, Lecture and received the Pax Christi Award from Saint John’s Abbey and University March 23, at the Abbey Church.

Cardinal Kasper was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart in 1957 and became bishop for that diocese in 1989. He was created a cardinal in February 2001 and has been the president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity since March 2001. He holds a doctorate in theology from the Theological Faculty of Tübingen, was an assistant to Leo Cardinal Scheffczyk and the Rev. Hans Küng, and taught dogmatic theology and was dean of the theological faculty in Münster and later in Tübingen before he became a bishop.

As the highest honor awarded by Saint John’s Abbey and University, the Pax Christi Award recognizes those who have devoted themselves to God by working in the tradition of Benedictine monasticism to serve others and to build a heritage of faith in the world.

The Godfrey Diekmann, OSB, Lecture is the annual lecture sponsored by The Godfrey Diekmann, OSB, Center for Patristics and Liturgical Studies. The Diekmann Center was created to honor the life and work of the Rev. Godfrey Diekmann, OSB (1908-2002), one of the 46 theologians chosen from around the world to prepare the schema on liturgy during the Second Vatican Council. A lifetime Minnesota resident, Diekmann entered Saint John’s Abbey at the age of 17 in 1929. He taught theology at Saint John’s University for 65 years before retiring in 1998.

The Diekmann Center seeks to deepen contemporary understanding of the early Christian theologians of the first seven centuries A.D. Their vision of the Christian life is explored through research and educational endeavors including a public lecture series and seminars for students, scholars and pastoral ministers. The Diekmann Center promotes theological learning that engages both the mind and the heart. The wisdom of the early Christian writers bears witness that the study of theology must be steeped in prayer and reflection within a community of learners.

SJU Senior Wins E-Scholars Elevator Pitch Competition

When you have 90 seconds to sum up a business idea, you better be engaging, passionate and clear.

SJU senior Ang Li was that and more at the E-Scholars Elevator Pitch Competition Feb. 20-21 in Seattle. Li's elevator pitch on a business idea he is developing with another Saint John's student, Tom Henderson, was judged No. 1 at the competition, which featured approximately 45 students competing from CSB/SJU; the University of Portland (Oregon); and St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas.

Elevator pitches refer to the 20 to 60 seconds an entrepreneur has to interest a venture capitalist in his or her business idea. The elevator pitch (or elevator speech) is an overview of an idea for a product, service or project. The name reflects the fact that an elevator pitch can be delivered in the time span of an elevator ride.

Li and Henderson are developing a business idea called “PawPrints.” Persons would send a photo of their pet to PawPrints, and PawPrints would send it to a selected artist in China, who would do an oil painting of the pet and then send it back to the customer.

In the competition, students presented twice during the first round to judges on Feb. 20. The total score from the first two presentations determined a top 10, and that group advanced to Saturday’s final competition. Volunteers from Booz Allen Hamilton judged the elevator pitches.

Li almost didn't make the final. He was 11th after the first day of the competition. But one of the finalists had to drop out, and Li moved up to the final 10.

"I was very excited and worried to hear that, because I only had one hour to prepare for (the presentation),” Li said.

“I changed about 40 percent of the old pitch, and added something new, such as a new name, new opening and new financials. I was a little nervous because I didn't have enough time to get prepared and I really wanted to do my best."
“During lunch, Paul Marsnik, associate professor of management at CSB and SJU, announced that I was the winner and I was really surprised. Although I knew I did well, I never expected to win the contest.”

Li won a $300 prize, and CSB and SJU will receive the E-Scholar National Trophy for the year.

He is in the fourth cohort of students of the Entrepreneurial Scholars Program at CSB and SJU. The program gives selected students (E-scholars) the opportunity to pursue their interest in entrepreneurship throughout a three-course sequence in entrepreneurial studies. The courses occur over a two-year period.

Guest Professor Presents “The History of Race and Mulatez in Latin America”

Joan Bristol, associate professor of history at George Mason University, spoke on “The History of Race and Mulatta in Latin America” March 19 at SJU. Her visit was sponsored by the CSB/SJU Latino/Latin American Studies Program.

Her presentation discussed race relations, racial identity and racial categories in Latin America, with special attention to the “mixed race” category of mulattez, the biological and cultural mixing of European and African heritage.

Bristol received her doctorate in history from the University of Pennsylvania. She is the author of Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches: Afro-Mexican Ritual Practice in the Seventeenth Century (University of New Mexico Press, Diálogos series, 2007). Bristol’s new project explores the intersection of gender and racial ideologies in colonial Spanish America.

Middle Eastern Historian Delivers Koch Lecture

Dr. R. Stephen Humphreys, an expert in Middle Eastern history from the rise of Islam to the present, delivered the spring lecture in the Koch Chair in Catholic Thought and Culture series March 18 at CSB.

His lecture was “Prosperity in Adversity: Adaptations of the Christian Communities of Syria and Mesopotamia to Muslim Rule during the Early Islamic Centuries.”

During his speech, Humphreys examined how the Arab-Muslim conquest of the Near East in the mid-seventh century changed the environment in which the Christian communities of Syria and Mesopotamia lived. He also included observations on the current situation of Christian communities in Syria, Jordan and Iraq.

Humphreys is the King Abdul Aziz Al Saud Professor of Islamic Studies and professor of history at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he has taught since 1990.

After receiving his doctorate from the University of Michigan in 1969, Humphreys has also taught at the State University of New York at Buffalo, the University of Chicago and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is the author of six books, including Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry (1991, Princeton University Press); Between Memory and Desire: The Middle East in a Troubled Age (1999, 2005, University of California Press); and Mulawita ibn Abi Safyan: From Arabia to Empire (2006, One-World).

The Koch Chair provides opportunities for faculty, staff and students at CSB and SJU and the general public to gain an enriched understanding of the heritage of Catholic thought that has shaped not only the faith tradition of CSB and SJU but also the pursuit of knowledge across disciplines.

SJU Bookstore Hosts Norris at Book Signing and Reading


Norris is an award-winning poet and author and a Benedictine oblate. She is a member of the Saint John’s University Board of Regents and resides in Hawaii and South Dakota.

HMML Opens New Exhibit

An exhibition, Book Marks: The Trail Readers Leave Behind, showcases a selection from the extensive rare book collection of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, SJU.

The books in this exhibition all bear the marks left by previous generations of readers who wrote them, marked them, damaged the covers or warped the bindings, revealing a portal to their thoughts and ideas.

Han Holbein the Younger of Basel, Switzerland, drew marginal pen sketches much in the manner of medieval manuscript illustration, to produce a one of a kind keepsake for his good friend, Desiderius Erasmus. Although Erasmus commissioned Holbein to illustrate the new edition of his bestselling book, The Praise of Folly, written in 1511, this facsimile from the HMML collection shows viewers one of the very rare self-illustrated printed books Holbein gave only to close friends or relatives.

F. Cojetan referred so frequently to the tiny pocket volume of Thomas a Kempis’ De imitatione christi (The Imitation of Christ), written around the 1700s, that the book took the shape of his hand. The contents of this handbook encouraged the reader to cultivate interior spirituality with Christ as the model.

These and other books under glass have a story to tell, and Theresa Vann, curator of Malta studies and professor of medieval history, is the storyteller. Book Marks: The Trail Readers Leave Behind is a co-creation of Vann and Jill Dubbeldee Kuhn, public programming and exhibition associate, who joined the HMML staff in November. Vann invites viewers to experience the books for themselves.

“Book Marks is for people who love old
books, and who wonder about the people who read them,” Vann said. “The exhibit takes you by the hand and leads you into that world. We show you how each old book is an artifact that teaches about its past owners. We explain how scholars deduce a book’s history by examining its condition. We put each book within its historical or cultural context. What I love best about the exhibit though, is that the books were not selected for their beauty or their value (although some of them are both); they were selected because they speak eloquently about the thoughts and concerns of human beings we otherwise know nothing about.”

Book Marks and other evidence of the presence of readers are on display, including current folios of *The Saint John’s Bible* showing marginalia and insight about the human interaction with its creation.

**Faculty Staff/Notes**

Imad Rahal, CSB/SJU assistant professor of computer science, published *Vertical Association Rule Mining: From Data Representation to Data Mining*. His book describes his research over the past five years of data intelligence and bioinformatics. It provides a unique and fairly comprehensive treatment of a popular data mining task known as “association rule mining.” Along with the theory, the book highlights the versatility of the presented framework in different application domains ranging from citation analysis to precision agriculture and bioinformatics.

Bruce Campbell, CSB/SJU associate professor of Hispanic studies, recently published *Viva la historieta: Mexican Comics, NAFTA, and the Politics of Globalization*, by the University Press of Mississippi. Campbell critically examines the participation of Mexican comic books in the continuing debate over the character and consequences of globalization in Mexico. The focus of the book is on graphic narratives produced by and for Mexicans in the period following the 1994 implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), an economic accord that institutionalized the free-market vision of relationships among the United States, Mexico, and Canada.

**Michael Hemmesch**, SJU director of media relations, gave a presentation titled “Internal Communication at Saint John’s: A Case Study” during a staff workshop on Jan. 28 to the communication and marketing staff at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul.

The English Department is pleased to announce that *Melissa Hendrickx*, CSB senior, has won this year’s Wagner-Berger Prize for Excellence in Creative Writing for her story “Culinary Therapy.” Melissa is a senior English and German major from Brookings, SD. The $1,000 Wagner-Berger Prize is awarded annually for the best original work of fiction written by a CSB student. Look for Melissa’s story this spring in *Studio One*.

**Kamil Tokarski**, SJU first-year music/piano performance major, won first place and grand prize in two separate music competitions March 7. The first was the St. Cloud Symphony Young Performers competition, held at SCSU. Kamil performed the Saint-Saens Concerto #2 in G Minor, Movement III. He was awarded a $500 scholarship and a performance with the St. Cloud Symphony at its May 2 concert at Ritsche Auditorium at SCSU.

On Saturday afternoon, Kamil competed in the Collegiate Young Artist Competition sponsored by the Minnesota Music Teachers Association, this year at Bethel University. Kamil presented a 30-minute program of solo piano music, and was awarded the grand prize, which includes a cash scholarship, a performance at the Honors Concert on March 21, and a solo performance at the Honors Concert at Northrup Auditorium on May 31.

Kamil, an international student from Poland, is a piano student of Fr. Robert Koopman, professor of music and fine arts division head.

**In the Media**

Denis McDonough, SJU ’92, was featured March 10, in a MinnPost.com article by Al Eisele, SJU ’58, “Minnesota insider: Stillwater native joins Obama’s national security team.”

Colman O’Connell, OSB, CSB senior development officer, was featured March 8, in a *St. Cloud Times* story, “Inspiring woman: Sister enjoys working at St. Ben’s.”

Louis Johnston, CSB/SJU associate professor of economics, was quoted March 6, in a *St. Cloud Times* article, “St. Cloud-area foreclosed homes find new owners.”

Matthew Heinzelman, curator of Austria/Germany Study Center at HMML, was interviewed March 6, on Deutsche Welle radio network about collapse of Historisches Archiv in Cologne, Germany.

*The Saint John’s Bible* was featured in a Spring 2009 ACCU Update article by the Rev. Michael Patella, OSB, “The Saint John’s Bible: A Catholic Response to a Nation of Fundamentalists and Atheists.”

The Rev. Jerome Tupa, OSB, SJU chaplain, was mentioned in a Spring 2009 ACCU Update article, “Sacred Steps Exhibit Opens at University of St. Thomas, MN.”

Derek Larson, CSB/SJU associate professor of history and environmental studies program director, was featured March 4, in a *St. Cloud Times* Writers Group piece, “Class welfare? Know who wins.”

Louis Johnston, CSB/SJU associate professor of economics, was quoted March 4, in a *St. Cloud Times* article, “State deficit: $4.6B, with federal help” and “St. Cloud-area jobless rate hits 9.4%.”

Dan Finn, CSB/SJU professor of theology and William E. and Virginia Clemens Professor of Economics & the Liberal Arts, was featured in the March U.S. Catholic article, “Can this market be saved?”

Saint John’s was featured March 3, in a
Events Calendar

SPRING 2009

April 6, Professor Faegheh Shirazi, University of Texas, “The History of Veiling in Islam” (Campus contact: Manju Parikh), Global Awareness Speaker, 7 p.m., Gorecki 204 A&B, CSB.

April 7, UTS forum, 5-9 p.m., location TBA.

April 12-15, Asian Studies Residency (Campus contact: Manju Parikh), time and location TBA.

April 15-16, Professor Joseph L. Mbele, St. Olaf College, class visits (Campus contact: Lisa Ohm), time and location TBA.

April 16, Ravi Shankar & Tina Chang, “New Norton Anthology of Poetry from the Middle East, Asia, and Beyond: Language for a New Century” (Campus contact: Mark Conway), 7:30 p.m., Gorecki 204, CSB.

April 17, A Tribute to Br. Dietrich Reinhart, OSB, (Campus contact: Lisa Ohm), time and location TBA.

April 17, Dr. John Corvino, “What’s Morally Wrong with Homosexuality?” Sponsored by the S. Nancy Hynes Center for Women, time and location TBA.

April 17-18, Professor Joe Gallion, Pi Mu Epsilon Conference (math) (Campus contact: Kris Nairn), time TBA, Pellegrene Auditorium and surrounding classrooms, SJU.

April 18, Dr. Laura King, social psychologist, U of Missouri, Columbia, keynote speaker at Minnesota Undergraduate Psychology Conference (Campus contact: Pam Bacon), 11 a.m., Alumnae Hall, Haehn Campus Center, CSB.

April 20-23, David Wagoner, visiting poet. (Campus contact: Annette Atkins).

April 21-22, Nel Noddings, visiting educator and philosopher. (Campus contact: Tony Cunningham).

April 22, ninth annual Celebrating Scholarship & Creativity Day, student presentations on both campuses. Plenary speakers Nel Noddings (CSB Gorecki Theater) and David Wagoner (SJU Steven B. Humphrey Auditorium) at 1 p.m. A schedule is posted at http://www.csbsju.edu/undergraduateresearch. (Campus contact: Marcus Webster).

April 23, Politics & a Pint, Green Art and Environmentalism, with art professor and artist in residence Richard Bresnahan and visiting Norwegian professor Chris Butters (Campus contact: Stacy Penk), 4:30 p.m., Brother Willie’s Pub, SJU.

April 27, Fr. Kilian McDonnell & Michael Dennis Browne, poetry reading from God Drops and Loses Things (Liturgical Press, 2009), sponsored by the Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research (Campus contact: Carla Durand-Desmarais), 8 p.m., location TBA.

April 29, Ivan J. Kaufman, “Follow Me: Christian Monastics and Lay Evangelicals, co-sponsored by Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research and Saint John’s Abbey (Campus contact: Carla Durand-Desmarais), 8 p.m., Petters Pavillion, SJU.

May 9, CSB Commencement, Belinda Jensen, KARE-11 Chief Meteorologist (Campus contact: Emily Cook), 2 p.m., HCC Field House, CSB.

May 10, SJU Commencement, Rev. John P. Foley (Pax Christi Award), Dr. Sharon Daloz Parks (Campus contact: Doris Matter), 2 p.m., Abbey Church, SJU.