

# Academic Affairs Update

## YORK COLLEGE

### Provost Inaugurates Student Research Conversations

The York College community witnessed the inauguration of a new feature of the student research program on November 16, when Provost Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith tapped into his field of expertise to launch the *Research Conversations* series.



Students and staff attending the lecture

This series is the latest started at York to showcase the scholarship of York's world class faculty and distinguished administrators and to boost student engagement in research across the college.

Provost Griffith's talk, "Punishment and Crime in the Caribbean," was engaging and well attended, bringing a new topic to the fore at York, where there is a rather large Caribbean and South and Central American student population.

Sponsored by the Of-

fice of Undergraduate Research, the well-attended Conversation covered prison reform, drugs, murder, rape and vigilantism, and the importance of foolproof evidence to conviction and punishment. It even cited cases in which the police and even the government may be complicit.

Accordingly, the Provost also touched on "The Dudus Affair," a development which badly tarnished the image of the island of Jamaica in the eyes of the world. Christopher "Dudus" Coke was being sought by authorities in the United States for drug trafficking to the US. Political interests were thought to be at stake should Coke be extradited for trial. What followed in Jamaica was a standoff between the suspect, his supporters, the police and the armed forces which led to the death of more than 70 citizens within two weeks.

Dr. Griffith also discussed the death penalty as part of the response to

the high incidence of violent crimes in the Caribbean and in Latin American countries.

"The response by the public," he says, "is lock 'em up and lock 'em up for longer periods. Hang 'em and hang em high."

He revealed that in Guyana, his own native country, the government has decided to keep hanging on the books, but to not exercise it if certain criteria of a given crime are not met. And he discussed prison reform and the conditions under which prisoners are held and for those charged with supervising them there.

Well-known and respected in the area of Caribbean security, crime, drug trafficking, and terrorism, Dr. Griffith is an in-demand speaker across the Caribbean and the United States. He testified in Congress in fall 2009 before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on the security situation in the Caribbean and President Barack Obama's plan to help deal with it.



#### Special points of interest:

- Geology team at national conference
- York Prof. presents social work research
- In the Spirit of Collective Work & Service

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## In the Spirit of Collective Work and Service



**L. to r.:** Dr. Selena T. Rodgers (York College Social Work Program, Department of Social Sciences), Carey Quay (Director, Association for the Advancement of Blind and Retarded, Inc.), Michele Danowitz (Assistant Director, AABR), Nadine Robinson (York College Social Work Alumni), Jaime Rivas-Williams (Vice President, York College Social Work Club), Andreau E. Charles (President, York College Social Work Club), and AABR consumers.

**Exemplary leadership, commitment, innovation, integrity, passion, and service are synonymous with these students.**

In the spirit of collective work and service, Dr. Selena Rodgers, member of the York College Early Academy (YECA) Planning Team Committee and Michele Neuhaus, YECA Liaison, collaboratively mentor Nadine Robinson (York Social Work program graduate 04' and a student in the Social Welfare Program at Stony Brook University).

The YECA initiative was established at York College in 2006. YECA's mission is to provide a highly supportive and academically challenging learning environment for traditionally underserved, but strongly motivated students with high potential for future academic and career success.

As part of her community development field practicum, Nadine works closely with Ms. Neuhaus and the students at YECA to build the Junior Leadership Program. She also participates in big brother/big sister group activities, as well as a workshop for parents and students to help coordinate other college and career exploration experiences. In addition, Nadine has worked closely

with the Social Work Club to implement several successful projects, including, Social Work School Graduate School Fair and a Breast Cancer Walk. In her role as Field Instructor, Dr. Rodgers provides weekly clinical supervision for Nadine.

In the spirit of collective work and service and upholding the primary mission of the Social Work Profession, enhancing human well-being and helping meet the basic human needs of all people, on November 24, 2010, Dr. Rodgers, Nadine, Andreau E. Charles, President, York College Social Work Club and former employee, AABR; Jaime Rivas-Williams, Vice President, York College Social Work Program and other club members joined with the Director, Care Quay and staff members at the Association for the Advancement of Blind and Retarded, Inc. (AABR) to serve holiday lunch to 120 consumers.

AABR is committed to accomplish its mission; following the lifespan of people served while providing serves including education, training and housing with the support

of their family, agency staff and communities in which they live. The agency offers an array of programs and services to individuals with developmental disabilities and autism and their families.

During the Fall 2010 semester, the Club has been involved in several service activities that are linked to the Club's mission; service, scholastic, and professional development, namely; the collection feminine products to be donated to Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees, Inc., participation in 2010 Breast Cancer Walk. The Club also hosted an edifying Economic Forum featuring Dr. Richard D. Wolff, entitled "When Capitalism Hits the Fan: A Marxian View," as well as the 6th Annual Social Work Graduate Fair (approximately 45 students and seven graduate schools were in attendance).

The words exemplary leadership, commitment, innovation, integrity, passion, and service are synonymous with Andreau and Jaime. These club officers are on the move ... Andreau has applied

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## Social Work Professor presents work at Columbia U.

On November 15, 2010, Dr. Selena Rodgers (Dept. of Sociology and Social Work) presented a paper at the Columbia University “Women and Society” Seminar, co-chaired by Dr. Michele Gregory (Dept. of Social Work). Dr. Rodgers’ paper, titled “Child Sexual Abuse in Men and Women of African Ancestry: Engendering Spiritual Well-Being and Posttraumatic Growth,” is based on a number of years of social research and has been supported

by grant funding for over the last 17 months.

Dr. Beryl Satter (Rutgers University), who has written about the historical perspective of the sexual abuse paradigm, offered comments which included, “I want to commend Dr. Rodgers for taking on this immensely important topic that has never been conducted before. The framing is hugely important; the desire to look at how one’s historical past, culture, and post-traumatic growth molds the story that men and women use to respond to childhood

sexual abuse is very much breaking new ground in both the academic and clinical practice environments.”

The Columbia University Seminar is a multi-discipline roundtable dedicated to exploring and advancing scholarly issues which have an impact on women’s lives. The seminar holds monthly meetings at Columbia University, hosting local, national and international scholars, members of the community and students.

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**L. to r.: Dr. Beryl Satter (Rutgers University), Dr. Selena T. Rodgers, Dr. Michele Gregory**



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graduate studies at Wurzweiler School of Social Work at Yeshiva University. He has also been offered a full-time position with Episcopal Social Services (his current social work practicum) to provide foster care and adoption services to children and families. Jaime has submitted her appli-

cation to Fordham University’s Master of Social Work Program. What is more, Jaime received the 2010 Outstanding Service Award from the Queensboro Council for Social Welfare, Inc., United Way of New York City, and the NYC Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers for her

service to people of Queens and to the Social Work Profession. Additionally, the York College social work program presented Jaime with the Vera Douthit Memorial Award – this tribute is given to students who demonstrate academic excellence and a commitment to service.



**L.-r.: Nadine Robinson, Jaime Rivas-Williams, Andreau E. Charles, and Tiffany Cudjoe**