

# ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

**YORK** College

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## President Keizs At Regional Council Summit



**President  
Marcia V.  
Keizs**

In August, Dr. Marcia V. Keizs, president of York College, attended a summit called by Governor Andrew Cuomo and Lieutenant Governor Robert Duffy in the state capitol.

The meeting of the New York State Regional Economic Development Council Summit in Albany was convened for the Regional Council co-chairs and a select number of regional council members such as Dr. Keizs, to share the

results of the Regional Council initiative.

The Regional Economic Development Council was established a year ago by Governor Cuomo and charged with identifying projects that will stir economic development and job growth statewide. The New York City Regional Economic Development Council is co-chaired by CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein.

The all-day meeting featured updates from each of the 10 regions on the implementation of the strategic plans, and their respective transformational projects, as well as a discussion on future directions. Following the summit,

Chancellor Goldstein released a statement expressing his gratitude.

"I would like to thank Stuart Appelbaum and Marcia Keizs for representing the New York City Regional Economic Development Council at the summit," said Chancellor Goldstein. "The governor applauded their excellent presentation on our region's vision, the status of our implementation agenda and priority projects, and the criteria for the 2012-2013 priority projects. In response to several questions, Stuart and Marcia emphasized our focus on areas of high need and opportunity zones and

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## York College Mourns President Emeritus Bassin

The York College/CUNY community is in mourning following the death of its former president, Mr. Milton G. Bassin, who died on August 13, 2012. The president emeritus had been in



**Milton G. Bassin**

failing health in recent years but still had a great love for the college to which he was devoted. He literally and figuratively built York College from the ground up.

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### Special points of interest:

- **Astrophysicist Wins Major Grant**
- **New Honors Director**
- **New Director for African American Studies Resource Center**

## Former Field Education Director Honored

The Office of Field Education of the Social Work Program marked its first “Social Work Matters” Special Brunch on, Wednesday, May 23, 2012. The event was a way to introduce the forthcoming Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) assessment trainings and to acknowledge social work supervisors, seminar instructors and field education advisory council for their dedication to mentoring and supervising our students.

The CSWE is a non-profit national associa-

tion representing more than 2,500 individual members, as well as graduate and undergraduate programs of professional social work education.

Presenters at this special brunch included York College administrators, social work program representatives, field education supervisors and alumni.

The keynote address was delivered by our former Field Director, Dr. Alma Norment (1985–86) and (1996–2003). She gave a riveting account of how the

program and field education progressed to solidify itself in the college. Dr. Norment was awarded a “Special Recognition Award” in appreciation for helping to establish the Office of Field Education, Social Work Program at York College and for her invaluable contributions and leadership to students, faculty, and community partners.

York College President Marcia Keizs attended and offered her heartfelt thanks to an estimated 50 attendees.



**L. to r.:** Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith (Provost & Senior Vice President, Academic Affairs), Lynne Clark (Dean, School of Health and Behavioral Sciences), Alma Norment (York College Former Field Education Director), Selena T. Rodgers (Field Education Director), Vadim Moldovan (at the time Social Work Program Director)

## Environmental Science Major Scores Big Internship

Ezazul Haque, a senior majoring in Environmental Health at York College/CUNY, had an inspiring spring and summer this year.

Haque recently wowed the College community with his presentation on using the nutrition from New York City’s waste water for processing as bio fuel. Equally important, he is concerned with the damage being caused to humans by toxins in the

water supply in developing countries such as his homeland of Bangladesh. So between fuel and drinking, his academic focus seems to be all water all the time.

His faculty mentor, Dr. Ratan Dhar, whose expertise includes biogeochemistry, environmental science and hydrogeology, explained that New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) was sending waste water

to the University of Tennessee for the process.

“I asked them, ‘Why are you sending it all the way to Tennessee when York is right here,’ said Dhar. “[So] we’ve brought it to York. We [have] found lots of toxic metal in it. After this we’ll send it back to DEP.”

Haque’s research, which he presented at York’s Third Annual Undergraduate Research



**Ezazul Haque**

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## York College Social Work Professors in Cuba

by Vadim Moldovan



Dr. Moldovan (4th from the right) and Dr. Rodgers (5th from the right) during their Cuba visit with the Council on Social Work Education

Early this June, Drs. S e l e n a R o d g e r s (Director of Field Education) and Vadim Moldovan (then Program Director) had the honor of visiting Cuba with a group of American social work scholars and administrators. It was the first such delegation sponsored by the *Council on Social Work Education*. The itinerary consisted of meetings with agency administrators, social work practitioners, faculty, and other academics. Among places visited by the delegation were the University of Havana, a model housing project in the country, a senior citizen center, a community center, a psychotherapy center, and an after-school program.



Dr. Rodgers and Dr. Moldovan visiting Plaza de la Revolución in Havana

Clearly, Cuba is a country in transition. This can probably be said about most countries in the world. Stability is a rare luxury of closed regimes and prosperous states. Yet, the Cuban transition is particularly important to an American observer as it is long-expected. The United States has been doing its best for the past 50 years to isolate

Cuba, damage its economy, and ultimately effectuate a political turnaround.

For five decades Cuba has stood up to the American economic blockade and even prospered as a client state of the late Soviet Union. The early 1990s, however, were calamitous. With the demise of the Soviet Union, vast economic assistance has suddenly stopped. Sensing that the Cuban regime is on the ropes, the United States government has attempted a coup-de-grace by imposing additional economic sanctions and tightening the embargo via the Helms-Burton law in 1996. Standards of living plummeted and Cubans experienced hunger and malnutrition for the first time since the Revolution.

Despite the recent developments that have led to some improvements in the economy, the country is gearing up for more hardship and its leadership is planning significant economic reforms, such a wholesale reduction in the public sector workforce, in the hope that the new-

ly unemployed would be absorbed by the growing private sector. It was particularly telling to hear from a prominent Cuban academic that the old socialist model has “exhausted” itself.

As the entire Cuban society is in crisis, so is the profession of social work. In the 1980s and 1990s, Cuban universities prepared 40,000 social workers creating such a glut that currently universities have closed their social work programs altogether. What concerns Cuban social workers even more is the role and status of social workers in the Cuban society. In the state-controlled society, the profession of social work lacks autonomy and suffers from an ill-defined identity. Low status of social workers stems from the fact that social work is not considered a bona fide profession on par with that of medical doctors, nurses, lawyers, etc. but an auxiliary service to other professions – a cadre of para-professional helpers so to speak.

Consequently, the profession is fragmented

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Head Coach Ashley Greene

## New Women's Volleyball Head Coach

York's Athletics Department is pleased to announce the hiring of Ashley Greene as the new Head Women's Volleyball Coach at York College.

"After an extensive interview process, Ashley truly stood out as the candidate that we believe can get the job done," said York Athlet-

ic Director Ronald St. John.

Greene comes to York after a stellar playing career at SUNY Old Westbury where she graduated in 2011 with a degree in Secondary Mathematics Education and made the Dean's List for three straight years. A three-year member on the women's volleyball team, Greene

earned Skyline Conference Second-Team All-Star honors in both 2010 and 2011 after leading the Panthers in kills and ranking second in hitting percentage both seasons.

Over the past year, Greene has also served as the head coach of the Performance Volleyball Club in Long Island, as well as the Assistant Coach for the Bay Shore Middle School team.

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– scattered among different areas of application and lacking cohesiveness and integrity. The lack of social work tradition is typical for all socialist and post-socialist states as they have been sole providers of direct social remedies in the form of free education, medical care, child care, cheap housing, etc. Besides, the very existence of social problems in a socialist state is somewhat of a taboo because socialism as an ideology derives its credentials from the purported ability to eliminate social problems.

Yet social problems abound in Cuban society – poverty, prostitution, substandard housing, and substance abuse. One of the main official concerns is ageing popu-

lation. Cuba boasts one of the highest life expectancies in the developing world – 79 years – quite an accomplishment when compared to 73 years in the Dominican Republic and 63 in Haiti. However, this accomplishment has turned into a demographic crisis against a plummeting birth rate that simply cannot support the growing elderly population.

The emerging mixed socialist/capitalist economy will claim its victims, but the social work profession in Cuba should be responsible for mitigating the effects of growing economic inequality. Whereas the Cuban socialist state, due to fiscal constraints, is renegeing on some responsibilities for welfare of the people, the social work profession can step

up as an advocate and a policy-maker, particularly due to the fact that social work ethics are socialist in character.

It is also up to the American social workers to attempt to export an integrated value-based brand of social work to Cuba. Our Cuban counterparts are hungry for such collaboration, and we should hope that the connections we have made will evolve into much more than academic tourism. At the same time, American social workers have much to learn from our Cuban counterparts – from their struggles, successes, and resilience in the face of global oppression and economic adversity.