Richard Alvarez Appointed College’s First Vice President for Enrollment and Retention

Richard P. Alvarez views his new position as Queens College’s first vice president of enrollment and retention as an opportunity to again be where he believes he has always been happiest: on a college campus where he can be closer to the people to whom he has devoted his entire career: students. “I still feel like I’m an admissions counselor,” he says. “That will never go away.”

In July President Félix V. Matos Rodríguez announced that Alvarez, CUNY’s longtime university director of admissions, had joined the administration as part of an enhanced focus on student recruitment and retention. Alvarez, in fact, began his career in 1985 as an admissions counselor at Montclair State College (now University) in New Jersey. He subsequently moved on to Pace University, where he served as part of its enrollment management team—including as director of admissions, NYC campus—for 14 years, before embarking on his 13-year tenure at CUNY’s Central Office.

His experience at CUNY, where he worked closely with the enrollment teams at all of the university’s campuses, finds him uniquely qualified to address the challenges here at Queens. He also brings the perspective one can only have acquired as a product of the CUNY system: He earned a BA in communications from Hunter College and an MSEd in higher education administration from Baruch College.

Alvarez has a hands-on approach as a manager/administrator. “I still like to go out and talk to parents and to community leaders,” he says. “And I know that’s something I will continue doing within my role here.

“We at the college need to do a better job sharing what we do. Our faculty are doing incredible work. The student experience from an academic perspective is excellent,” he observes. “We just need to tell that story much earlier so that people aspire to be at Queens College.”

As part of his strategy to improve enrollment, Alvarez would like to reconnect with alums who have college-bound children to make sure they’re seriously considering their alma mater as a destination. “I do think that we could do a better job of getting our alums to feel that, ‘This school really did well by me; I’d like my child to have the same opportunity.’”

He knows that all parents want something better for their child. “Our job is to convince them there is nothing better,” he notes.

QC’s “affordability factor” is an important asset, Alvarez believes, as today’s students are increasingly confronting the fact that their career aspirations may require having a graduate, professional, or terminal degree.

“We need to help students and their families understand that an education at Queens College is going to open doors at the graduate level—and not just in terms of academic excellence, but also in terms of affordability,” he says.

Alvarez wants them to know that what they save here on an undergraduate degree they can later put toward a master’s. “And I hope,” he says, “they will do that here, as well.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
New Faces on Campus

Twenty-eight new faculty members recently settled into their offices and lab spaces on campus and began the process of getting to know their students and colleagues. Here are brief introductions to four of them. To see the complete list, visit qc.cuny.edu/NewFaculty2015.

CHAO CHEN (Computer Science)

He earned a master’s degree in Singapore and came to the United States for a doctorate at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI).

Chen joined the college’s faculty after two postdocs—at Rutgers University and the Institute of Science and Technology Austria—mentored by leading lights in his field. The first postdoc, under the direction of Herbert Edelsbrunner at Vienna, was more theoretical, but then “I really wanted to get my hands dirty and get into real-world problems, real-world applications.”

At Rutgers, Chen explored applications such as spine, cardiac, and brain imaging, for example, to analyze “the live beating heart” and how dendrites function in communication. “You have to know how to tune the model, add in different assumptions, and simplify to make the model work on actual data,” he observes.

RPI’s Daniel Freedman inspired Chen to venture into topology. Chen became intrigued with “the shape of data in the most global sense. We don’t know whether we’re standing on the surface of a really huge ball or on a really huge donut, unless we zoom out a lot,” he notes. Big Data is vasty voluminous, clanging with noise, and “always more difficult than we imagine,” says Chen. “We’re not really catching the whole surface; instead, we catch samples.”

This fall Chen is furthering his research and teaching undergraduates Data Structures—the course covering stacks, queues, hash tables.

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PIÑEIRO earned her doctorate of education and master of arts degrees in educational administration at NYU’s Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development; she holds BA degrees in political science and communication from the University of Pennsylvania.

Meryl Kaynard, who served for over five years as general counsel and special counsel for labor/management relations under three Queens College presidents, has left the college to join CUNY Central’s general counsel office.

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New Inductees into Athletics Hall of Fame

Celebrating good sports on the court, the field, the ice, and the staff, the Office of Athletics recently announced its 2015 Hall of Fame inductees. Launched four years ago, the Hall of Fame recognizes outstanding performances by students and coaches. “This induction class is very special,” says Athletics Director China Jude.

“Many of these inductees are still engaged in collegiate sports as athletes, coaches, and administrators, and have received honors for their work around the country.”

Eight individuals and one team will be feted at a dinner following the college’s Annual Golf Outing on Friday, October 16. For tickets to the induction dinner, visit qcgolfhof.com or call the Athletics Office at 72795.

Here are the 2015 Hall of Fame inductees:

Sharon Beverly ‘76, ’87

MS competed in basketball in 1974–76 and participated on the team that won the AIAW regional championship. After serving as an assistant coach under Lucille Kyvallos, Beverly became head coach in 1980. She played a significant role in the department’s transition from Division III to Division II and ended her administrative tenure at QC as an assistant athletic director.

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Paul Chakrian ’81, ’84

MS played varsity lacrosse for QC from 1976 to 1981, serving as team captain during his last season, when he broke the school record for saves in a single game. A physical education major, he subsequently coached QC varsity lacrosse for two years and studied educational supervision and administration at Brooklyn College.

Scott Cohen ’77 played varsity ice hockey at Queens College from 1973 to 1977. As head coach of the team, he led it to consecutive league championships in 1979 and 1980.

Pete Ginnegar ’80 was conference champion in hockey, established the school’s assist record in lacrosse, and played defense in soccer. He holds a BS in physical education from QC and a master of art in athletic administration from Springfield College. Ginnegar currently coaches the Israeli National Lacrosse Team and the men’s lacrosse team at Claremont College in California.

Aline Pascale Lubin was QC’s head volleyball coach from 1993 to 2010. Under her leadership, the women’s volleyball team won the first Conference Championship; her athletes were frequently named conference MVPs and most of the 2003–2004 roster was chosen for the all-conference team.
heaps, and much more. “This is one of the most important classes in computer science. I have this responsibility,” he believes, “of making sure that when graduates go into industry, they understand all the basic principles. Overall, I’m very excited.”

“When I’m teaching in a writing course,” observes MAAZA MENGISTE (English), “as much as anything it is teaching how to read: how to break apart a sentence, a paragraph, looking at how the nuances of words carry a book or a story.” Recently a visiting professor at QC, Mengiste is now an assistant professor. In her epic novel, newspaper columns, b&w photographs, and a documentary, she has movingly told nuanced tales of acclimation and transformation, love and war, lived experience and imagined lives.

“It doesn’t matter where you’re from,” Mengiste believes. “We’re all made up of these different identities.” The many consequences of Ethiopia’s revolution forced Maaza and her family from their homeland. She lived in Nigeria and Kenya before coming to America. Adjusting to a new life in Colorado at age 7, and learning an American version of the English she was learning in Kenya, she recalled, “I realized very quickly that I needed to read as much as I could to catch up and stay caught up. That might have been one of the things that pushed me into literature.”

Mengiste’s acclaimed first novel, Beneath the Lion’s Gaze, begins in the time and place where she was torn from her home: Addis Ababa in 1974, the final year of the long reign of the “Lion of Judah,” Haile Selassie. It follows a family unraveling in the struggle for freedom. The novel was a finalist for the 2011 Dayton Literary Peace Prize. The Guardian named it one of the 10 best contemporary African books. Her columns for that paper address heartfelt concerns, among them humanitarian crises, African identity, and how art “can provide a level of comfort.” Novels, she elaborates, “are one way to begin considering issues or circumstances that might feel too large otherwise.” When our own questions “are condensed into two or three characters, and we watch them walk through its lives, it narrows the lens and maybe sometimes we find some answers.”

Mengiste’s forthcoming novel, The Shadow King, led her to an unfamiliar time and place: 1935 Italy and its occupation of Ethiopia. She spent almost a year in Italy on a Fulbright, researching in the Fascist archives. Other prestigious fellowships have included the Puterbaugh and the Prague Summer Program.

At QC, Mengiste is excited by the “intellectual energy” that her students with their world languages and experiences bring to her classes, among them African American literature and a fiction workshop. In the MFA program in creative writing and literary translation, she notes, “My students are writers. Sometimes they need a little guidance, pushing, reshaping. But I haven’t felt I had to teach anyone to be a writer.”

Passionate about multiculturalism, persuasive in discussing how institutions can create a respectful climate of cultural competence, DAVID P. RIVERA (Counselor Education) has become a beacon of therapeutic practices. The associate professor is devoted to helping marginalized people deal with their identities and emotional pain. Caring and compassion have permeated his scholarship, his practice as a counseling psychologist, his professional activities, and his higher education experience, including at CUNY and most recently William Paterson University. He earned his bachelor’s degree from the University of Wyoming, his master’s from the Johns Hopkins University, and his PhD in counseling psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Photos from Godwin-Ternbach exhibit: (top) Lynn Gilbert, Bhukara, Uzbekistan, 2014; (bottom) Didier Vanderperre, Turpan Bazaar, Xinjiang, China, 2014

Trading Places

Since 2010, QC’s “Year of” series has highlighted the arts, history, and culture of a single country: China, Turkey, India, Brazil, and South Africa. For 2015–16, the campus is pursuing a different route: It’s the Year of Silk Roads. Dating perhaps as far back as 100 BCE and linking Asia to Europe, this trade network encouraged the exchange of ideas as well as material goods, making the Silk Roads an apt metaphor for global education.

“In many instances, Silk Roads is the logical next step of ‘Year of,’” says its program director, Marleen Kassel (History), who is working closely with Morris Rossabi (History), Carl Riskin (Economics), Kristina Richardson (History), and Warren Woodfin (Art) to plan two semesters of events.

“This theme enables us to do comparisons among China, Turkey, and India. To date, the ‘Year of’ country series has been largely a bilateral study—the United States and the country of focus. We have talked about a second stage which would allow us to do a broader study of topics of international significance, such as water and water usage, access to education, social justice, and the like. If we move to this second stage, we would invite guests from former ‘Years of’ to join us in the discussion.”

QC’s Silk Road programming started with Welcome Day, when freshmen marched onto campus to the music of a traditional Bukharian ensemble. Upcoming highlights include an introductory lecture at free hour on October 14 by Rossabi, an expert on the Silk Roads. From October 15 through December 15, the Godwin-Ternbach Museum will exhibit large-format photography by Lynn Gilbert, who recorded interiors in Turkey and Uzbekistan, and Didier Vanderperre, who captured street scenes in Xinjiang, China. Internationally renowned ethnomusicologist Theodore Levin will present “Musical Meridians of the Silk Roads” on Monday, November 2, at 4:30 pm, and Woodfin, guest curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art show Liturgical Textiles of the Post-Byzantine World, will discuss Byzantium’s influence on the arts of the Silk Roads on Wednesday, December 2, at free hour.

The Year’s schedule will also feature performances, workshops, sports on the Quad, and, next semester, a student-focused celebration of the spring Persian holiday, Noruz. For more information, including the latest calendar of events, visit silkroads.qc.cuny.edu.

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Rivera studies the issues impacting people of color and sexual minorities, especially the microaggressions that can erode a person’s well-being and even livelihood. In the 1970s psychiatrist Chester M. Pierce coined the term “racial microaggression.” The concept gained wider currency around 2007. These micro-slurs and subtle snubs, even when unintended, can make people feel they are second-class citizens because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, education, culture, or other factors.

Resolving multicultural issues brings about what Rivera calls “difficult dialogues” within institutions and among individuals. QC’s Center for Ethnic, Racial & Religious Understanding has its own initiative on these “complicated conversations,” he notes. It was QC’s remarkable diversity that made the college an attractive fit for Rivera: “a place where my research philosophy and topics would be nurtured.” This year he serves as board co-chair of CLAGS: the Center for LGBTQ Studies—the nation’s first—which is housed at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Rivera’s courses on group counseling—his favorite modality of therapy—guide students in developing “their own therapeutic voice, their therapeutic orientation” as counselors. Teaching Socratic-style, he sits with them in a circle “to try to remove as much of the hierarchy that already exists between students and professors.”

“It was under Cheyenne, Wyoming’s “big open skies, full of stars at night” that Rivera “grew up with a big appreciation for nature, and for family and community.” Since then, he has had his own “aha! moments” reflecting on what having a “different identity” meant in high school. While at times he misses the West’s wide-open spaces, QC’s sweeping view of the Manhattan skyline symbolizes for him the “awe-inspiring” magnitude of the contributions of CUNY, QC, and their graduates. He also thrills to seeing the city close-up: This year, Rivera ran his first New York City Marathon.

KARA SCHLICHTING (History) says it was some great faculty members and undergraduate courses at Cornell University that convinced her that she wanted to become an environmental historian. While, as she explains it, the classic version of environmental history is about wild places, having grown up in coastal Connecticut at the edge of the New York metropolitan area, Schlichting instead developed an interest in places more familiar to her, places where elements of urban living overlap the natural world. In the New York metropolitan area, this is most prominently seen in waterfront areas.

One of those areas, certainly familiar to members of the QC community, was the subject of a lecture Schlichting gave two years ago at Stevens Institute of Technology while she was a PhD candidate at Rutgers University. It was titled “‘From Dumps to Glory’: City Planning, Coastal Reclamation, and the Rebirth of Flushing Meadow for the 1939–1940 New York World’s Fair.”

Schlichting’s work in American history of the late 19th and 20th centuries sits at the intersection of urban, environmental, and political history. Her dissertation examined metropolitan growth in greater New York from the perspective of the urban periphery, focusing on property regimes, environmental reclamation issues, and the collaborative city-building work of grassroots actors and professional planners.

Schlichting’s teaching interests range from the history of New York City, the 1960s in America, and the city in American history to environmental history, including an interdisciplinary class on water. “I’m interested,” she says, “in how you think of a healthy harbor or a healthy coastline, and who decides on how property should be used and what’s an appropriate use of the waterfront.”

Schlichting has been awarded a Mellon fellowship in urban landscape studies at the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection in Washington, DC, for next spring for her new project, “The Nature of Urban Coastal Resiliency: Twentieth-Century Governance, Environmental Management, and Design.” And students in one of the courses she plans to teach can certainly expect a field trip to that not-too-distant site once dominated by the Trylon and Perisphere.
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ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME – from page 2
Lubin was NYCAC Coach of the Year in 1993 and 1997 and ECC Conference Coach of the Year in 2003 and 2004.

Gregory Vaughn ’78 (deceased) was a top performer in basketball in the 1970s, setting four QC records that stand to this day. He organized tournaments and sports-related programs in Brooklyn and Queens while mentoring youths. He also helped develop playgrounds and basketball courts in public housing projects in Queens. Basketball courts in Baisley Pond Park have been dedicated and named in his memory.

Shalonda Young played basketball for QC from 1984 to 1988. Scoring over 2,000 career points, she finished her collegiate career as the 30th highest scorer and the 11th highest in free throw percentage in the nation. An American Women’s Sports Federation All-American in 1987, Young was named to the First Team All-Conference in the Mideast Conference and selected twice in the Cosmopolitan Conference.

The 1978–1979 Varsity Ice Hockey Team won two Metropolitan Collegiate Hockey Conference Championships in a row, coached by Lou DeLuca ’72.

Nollywood ranks with Hollywood and Bollywood as one of the three largest, most valuable film industries in the world, yet American scholarship on Nigerian film lags far behind its prodigious output. In Nollywood Stars: Media and Migration in West Africa and the Diaspora (Indiana University Press), NOAHTSIKA (Media Studies) tackles a subject that surprisingly few have explored: the actors themselves. He argues that, unlike African art film where auteurs hold sway, in Nollywood stars exercised their own agency in the industry’s regional and global ascendency, especially across the African diaspora. Tsika explores key aspects of stars’ agency, such as their acting abilities, their cosmopolitanism and multilingual skills, their entrepreneurialism in literally transporting and publicizing the films outside Nigeria, their adaptation to the visual and material qualities of changing cinematic technologies, and their ability to perform and become known transnationally—integrating into the entertainment cultures of other nations without losing their distinctive styles and personas. Tsika breaks new ground in showing that Nollywood stars are not the passive creations of an industry, but rather have been essential conditions of its existence and phenomenal success.

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The third edition of *Becoming a Reflective Mathematics Teacher* was recently published by Taylor and Francis. Its four authors are all members of QC’s SEYS Department: ALICE F. ARTZT, ELEANOR ARMOUR-THOMAS, FRANCES R. CURCIO, and THERESA J. GURL. A Korean version of the second edition of the book has just been published . . . FRAN CURCIO (SEYS) was inducted into the New York State Mathematics Educators Hall of Fame on September 25 . . .

YIN MEI CRITCHELL (DTD) was invited to choreograph the new musical *Dreams* by composer Klaus Badelt. It will be performed in Beijing’s National Centre for the Performing Arts in October . . . A poem by KIMIKO HAHN (English), “Not Nothing,” was featured on the website of the Academy of American Poets on August 24 . . . CHINA JUDE (Athletics) was elected assistant vice president for athletics of the Minority Opportunities Athletic Association . . . Last April CHRI$$ HANUSA (Math) and the students in his Mathematica class visited the Shapeways factory in Long Island City, where 3D printers turned their computer-generated designs into real models . . .

MIHAELA ROBILA (FNES) was invited to participate at a United Nations Expert Group Meeting organized by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, where she presented a paper on “Policies on Family Violence in Europe: Developments and Challenges” . . . Governor Andrew Cuomo recently appointed MANUEL ROSA (Urb. St.) as the director of community relations for the Governor’s Office of Faith-based Community Development Services . . .

CAROLINE RUPPRECHT (Comp. Lit.) presented a paper on “Übersetzung als Begegnung: Pham Thi Hoai und Yoko Tawada” at the Internationale Vereinigung fuer Germanistik at Tongji University in Shanghai, China, on August 28 . . .

JOHN TYTELL’s (English) long review of the City Lights Pocket Poets Anthology appeared in the July 3 Los Angeles Review of Books . . . The film *Vigilante*, with a screenplay by RICHARD VETERE (Media Studies), was recently named one of the best independent films of the 1980s by BAMcinématek and the Cinema Conservancy.

To kick off Hispanic Heritage Month, Congressman Joseph Crowley ’85 (ctr) held a ceremony honoring prominent Hispanic Americans, including (l–r) QC President Félix V. Matos Rodríguez; Juan Tineo, founding member of the Hispanic/Latino Cultural Center of New York; Assemblyman Francisco Moya; Rep. Linda Sanchez; Dr. Mario and Ana Henriquez, founders of the Salvadoran Renal Foundation; and Assemblyman Michael DenDekker.
Mandala with Buddhist Deities, Tibet or Nepal, 19th–20th century.

Five Continents, One Borough: Art Treasures from the Homelands of Queens. Selections from the Collection of the Godwin-Ternbach Museum

This exhibition offers 33 striking artworks from all corners of the world that Queens residents have called their homes. Works range from pre-Columbian textiles to Buddhist objects. Five Continents, One Borough is on view at the Citi DeFord Gallery in Long Island City through Jan. 12. Information: www.gtmuseum.org.