

QC GLOBAL

QUEENS COLLEGE, CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK | SPRING 2022



Elizabeth Hendrey

Dear Colleagues,

We are delighted to have the opportunity to share with you the 2022 *QC Global Newsletter* as we are returning more and more to the campus for in-person courses and events after the long pandemic.

This fourth edition of the newsletter illustrates college initiatives and our colleagues' scholarly contributions around the world, from Central America and Caribbean countries to those in Europe and Asia. In March 2022, Queens College hosted four officers from Israeli Hope in Academia, the state-sponsored Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion program in Israel. We are also sharing information about the Global Student Success Program (GSSP), in partnership with Navitas, and the recently established Global Scholars Achieving Career Success (GSACS) program; this includes examples of QC students and faculty collaborations with scholars in several countries.

We have continued to portray colleagues from several departments, this time from Philosophy; Urban Studies; Middle Eastern Studies and Arabic; Drama, Theater and Dance; Linguistics and Communication Disorders; Secondary Education and Youth Services; and the School of Earth and Environmental Science. Our colleagues continue to conduct fascinating work from designing innovative collaborations between QC students and faculty with those in Jamaica and El Salvador, to studies of Italian

Renaissance texts in Netherlands and of earthquakes and tsunamis under the sea in Turkey, Haiti, Japan and Bangladesh. Colleagues can also read about the role of Chinese transnational banks in immigrant communities and linguistics research in Spain. There is also mention of the collaborative curriculum development partnership established by our college and the Wuhan Institute of Design and Sciences, Jackie Chan Film, and Media Academy Dance Program in China.

I am grateful to our faculty for sharing their work with us and the campus community. I thank our department chairs, Meghan Healey, Eleanor Armour-Thomas, Jeff Bird, Melissa Checker, Michael Newman, and Yunzhong Shu for their support with developing this issue.

Please share with us updates on your international work so that we can include them in the future editions (email mihaela.robila@qc.cuny.edu).

Elizabeth Field Hendrey

Elizabeth Hendrey

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Global Student Success Program (GSSP)

Lin Reed and Emma Berryman-Moore

The Global Student Success Program (GSSP) is a partnership program between Queens College and Navitas, a leading global higher education organization that partners with universities to increase international students' access to higher education and prepare them for future success. Students enroll at QC through the Global Student Success Program (a three-semester first-year experience) or as a general admission student. Since the first cohort of students in Spring 2020, the GSSP has enrolled 175 students at QC to date. The Navitas Global Sales and Marketing team has offices in numerous countries



Group photo at the library

marketing QC to prospective students all over the world via its agent and institution partner network. Although impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in the past couple of years due to significantly reduced student mobility and increasing visa challenges, the GSSP program has maintained a healthy growth in enrollment and tripled new student numbers in the Spring 2022 semester compared with Spring 2020. The partnership has expanded QC's reach and impact in the global higher education field, broadened international education on campus, and expanded learning opportunities for students.



Zoom photo collage, GSSP Spring 2022 orientation

GSSP offers personalized one-on-one support to students from their initial application until graduation. The GSSP

Office assists with many aspects of student life, including expediting the admission process, offering orientation programs to transition students to the American classroom, and providing academic and social experiences throughout the year. Students meet frequently with the GSSP advisors and work closely with the office on academic skill-building and college acclimatization. An additional non-credit support course is offered to GSSP students each semester to help them identify U.S. academic culture and expectations, review appropriate communication with peers, faculty, and staff, discuss plagiarism and academic misconduct, and build academic skills and habits.

NEW STUDENTS:

Enrollment:

Spring 2022: 74 new students

Fall 2021: 38 new students

Spring 2021: 20 new students

Fall 2020: 18 new students

Spring 2020: 25 new students

Top 5 Countries of Origin:

Bangladesh, Pakistan, Myanmar,
India, South Korea

Most Common Majors:

International Business,
Computer Science, Corporate
Finance, Psychology, Biology

Students participate in Peer Education which is a peer-mentoring initiative with a focus on academics and study habits; there are also Student Success Workshops that offers increased support from instructors with an additional tutorial hour scheduled in credit-bearing classes. The GSSP Office also hosts three leadership programs: Peer Education, Student Ambassadors, and Orientation Leaders. Since the first intake, the GSSP program maintains an average course pass rate at 91%, an average retention rate at 97%, and an average 3.3 GPA.

Israeli Hope in Academia Officers Visit Queens College

Sophia McGee, Center for Ethnic, Racial and Religious Understanding (CERRU)

On March 14, 2022, Queens College hosted four officers from Israeli Hope in Academia, Israel's state-sponsored Diversity, Equity and Inclusion program. The delegation included Yosepha Tabib-Calif, director of Israeli Hope in Academia, Meytal Eran-Jona; head of the Diversity and Inclusion Office, Weizmann Institute of Science; Professor Yifat Bitton, president of Achva Academic College of Education and Science; and Professor Shulamit Almog, presidential advisor and commissioner on gender equity at the University of Haifa.



Ms. Sophia McGee

The visit was organized by Professor Sophia McGee, founding member and former director of the Center for Ethnic, Racial, and Religious Understanding and lecturer in the History Department at Queens College. Participants were welcomed by Queens College President Frank H. Wu, and Queens College



President Frank H. Wu

Vice President for Communications and Marketing Jay Hershenson. They then brainstormed with Dean of Diversity Jerima DeWese, Vice President for Student Affairs Jennifer Jarvis, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness Rachel Fester, and Kessler Presidential Scholars Director and Associate Professor Barbara Simerka, among others.

Continued on page 3



From left to right: Jennifer Jarvis, Sophia McGee, Rachel Fester, Meytal Eran-Jona, Shulamit Almog, Frank H. Wu, Yosepha Tabib Calif, Yifat Bitton, Jay Hershenson

The Israeli Hope in Academia (IHA) program was established by Israeli President Ruven Rivlin in 2016. Among the goals of the program are to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion; train faculty in cultural competency; and provide transitions from the academy into the world of work. The program concentrates on the well-being of Arab Israeli, Palestinian, Bedouin, and Haredi populations attending Israeli colleges and universities. In the past year, resources have also been allocated towards improving the experiences of first-generation college goers and women in STEM professions.

This visit is part of an ongoing relationship between McGee and officers of Israeli Hope in Academia. McGee last hosted IHA participants on the Queens College campus in February of 2020 and engaged in joint trainings with them in the summer of 2020. Additionally, she presented at a conference at Hebrew University with other CUNY professors and members of IHA in 2019. McGee is grateful to Shahar Sadeh, director of Strategic Affairs at the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, for facilitating this relationship.

Global Scholars Achieving Career Success (GSACS) connects QC Students and Faculty with Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Schiro Withanachchi, Economics

Queens College (QC) students are participating in a virtual exchange project, Global Scholars Achieving Career Success (GSACS), sponsored by The Stevens Initiative, a foundation that honors the life and vision of J. Christopher Stevens, a career diplomat who was killed in Benghazi while serving as U.S. Ambassador

to Libya. The initiative is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and administered by the Aspen Institute. The Stevens Initiative also receives support by the Bezos Family Foundation and from Morocco and the United Arab Emirates.



Zoom photo collage, GSACS Spring 2022 orientation

GSACS is a two-year virtual exchange/ Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) program between students and faculty in nine partner institutions within CUNY (Borough of Manhattan Community College, Guttman Community College, Hostos Community College, LaGuardia Community College, Queens College) and the Middle East and North Africa (Abdelmalek Essaadi University in Morocco, Jordan Institute of Science and Technology in Jordan, Palestine Ahliya University in Palestinian Territories, and The American University in Cairo in Egypt).

GSACS is designed to develop students' career competencies through an experiential learning project on one UN Sustainable Development Goal: Clean Water and Sanitation (#6) or Reducing Inequalities (#10). Students who complete a GSACS-implemented course are invited to join the U.S. State Department's International Exchange Alumni Network.

According to Matthew Lussenhop, acting assistant secretary of state for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, "People-to-people exchanges are critical to advancing global peace and understanding." In Queens College's April 8, 2021 news release, President Frank H. Wu acknowledged the Stevens Initiative, "for giving our students a valuable opportunity to develop the professional skills and cultural understanding that will prepare them for the global marketplace."

In Fall 2021, over 700 students developed relationships with their peers abroad and

engaged with local and global communities while building skills in empathy and leadership in their bi-national teams.



Professor Jill Carvajal

For example, Professor Jill Carvajal's course on Principles of Marketing was paired with a course titled Entrepreneurship and Innovation, taught by

Professor Ahmed Abdou at Palestine Ahliya University. Students converted ideas to start-up using the topic of water. This included kidney failure advice mobile apps, water awareness apps, etc. In Professor Wendy Leynse's course on Ethnography of Childhood paired with Professor Yasmine Moataz's course on Social Class and Inequality at The American University in Cairo, students delved into issues of childhood inequalities in both locations using their empirical research in parks and other shared spaces.

On December 1 and 4, 2021, QC students presented their projects and engaged in career development workshops that guided them to make connections between their GSACS experience and future career success at the international Global Scholars Achieving Career Success Fall 2021 Student Conference. This two-day virtual conference was attended by over 300 students, faculty, staff, and other participants from Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Palestinian Territories, and New York City. The conference featured two keynote speakers, Judge Zahid N. Quraishi (United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey and the first federally appointed Muslim American judge in the U.S.) and Saed K. Khayat, scholar in hydrogeology and isotopes hydrology at Palestine Technical University Kadoorie.

One QC student shared, "This GSACS project was very rewarding! It was amazing to connect with students halfway around the world." Another QC student stated, "It was so interesting to learn that gender inequality is so similar in different countries. Also refreshing to see how women inspire women."

Continued on page 4



Professor Taruna Sadhoo

In the first year, six QC Faculty were selected as fellows across disciplines to facilitate a GSACS module in their courses: Kirsten Beck (Classical, Middle Eastern, and Asian Languages), Jill Carvajal (Business and Liberal Arts), Anna Alexis Larsson (English), Wendy Leynse (Anthropology), Taruna Sadhoo (Cooperative Education), and Suzanne Strickland (Sociology) with Ashraf Shady



Professor Ashraf Shady

(Elementary and Early Childhood Education) as content expert and Schiro Withanachchi (Economics and BALA) as P.I. The program will continue through Spring 2023, with additional QC faculty fellows for the 2022–23 academic year.



Faculty and Students Global Experiences

Social Sciences

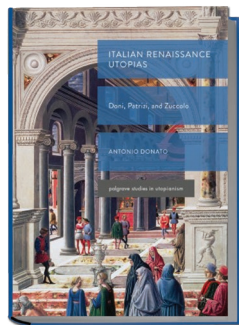
Antonio Donato, Philosophy



Antonio Donato

Antonio Donato is an associate professor of medieval and renaissance philosophy in the Philosophy Department. In recent years, he has explored the rich process of the transmission of texts from one culture to another. His work centers on three questions: What happens when a text developed in a particular culture is received by a different one? How is a text's original message reinterpreted in a different environment? What strategies are employed to render a text more suitable for an audience different from the intended one?

These questions are critical for our global and multicultural society in which texts belonging to different cultures are continuously received and reimagined by readers from other traditions. Donato approaches these issues through two case studies: the reception in the Italian Renaissance of Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* and Thomas More's *Utopia*.



Donato's research on the reception of *Utopia* in sixteenth-century Italy culminated in the publication of a study and translation of several Italian Renaissance utopias that had

not previously been available in English. His book reveals how the various literary and conceptual features of *Utopia* (e.g., social and political commentary, irony, and utopianism) were reimagined by some Italian authors. In the *Mad and Crazy World*, Anton Francesco Doni turned More's subtle irony into extreme ambiguity, calling into question the value of any attempt to imagine an ideal society. Francesco Patrizi (*Happy City*) and Ludovico Zuccolo (*Happy City; Republic of Evandria*) curtailed More's idealism, giving rise to "realistic utopias." Donato's investigation of Italian Renaissance utopias shows that, through the process of adapting *Utopia* to the cultural, political, social, and literary context of sixteenth-century Italy, these works revealed potentialities that were unexpressed in the original.

In 2019, Donato was awarded a five-month fellowship to conduct research at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (NIAS) in Amsterdam, where he worked on several Italian Renaissance adaptations of the *Praise of Folly*. The interdisciplinary nature of NIAS allowed him to think about his work from new perspectives. As he puts it, "the experience of having access on a daily basis to scholars from other disciplines gave me the opportunity of learning different ways of looking at my topic. As a philosopher, I am trained to concentrate on arguments and ideas when studying a text. My conversations with literary scholars have alerted me to the value of considering some philosophical texts also as works of literature."

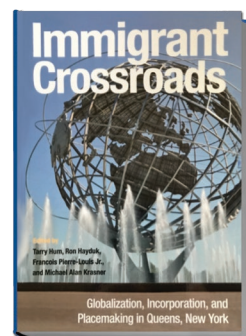
Donato is currently continuing the research he began at NIAS. In his project, he explores the hypothesis that in the Italian Renaissance, *Folly* was regarded as a form of "willing self-deception," which consists of overlooking one's faults (and those of others), underplaying terrible truths, and looking at the world through distorted lenses. In the Italian Renaissance, this make-believe way of relating to reality was seen as a necessary strategy to cope with the tragedy of the human condition.

Tarry Hum, Urban Studies



Tarry Hum

Tarry Hum is a professor of urban studies and an urban planner. Her research centers on the community and economic development of New York City's multi-racial immigrant neighborhoods. Hum is the lead co-editor of a 2021 volume, *Immigrant Crossroads: Globalization, Incorporation, and Placemaking in Queens, New York* that examines how New York's global city status is attributable, in part, to the borough of Queens where nearly half of all residents are foreign-born and neighborhood streetscapes reflect a hyper-diversity of ethnicities, languages, and cultures. She is currently on sabbatical to complete her third book on Chinese transnational capital, immigrant growth coalitions, and New York City building policies and practices in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis.



Hum was invited to submit a paper for a 2017 conference called A Shared Future: Fostering Communities of Inclusion in an Era of Inequality, hosted by the Harvard Joint

Center for Housing Studies. Her paper, "Minority Banks, Homeownership, and Prospects for New York City's Multi-Racial Immigrant Neighborhoods," examined the dynamic composition of Asian banks including Chinese transnational banks such as the Industrial and Commercial

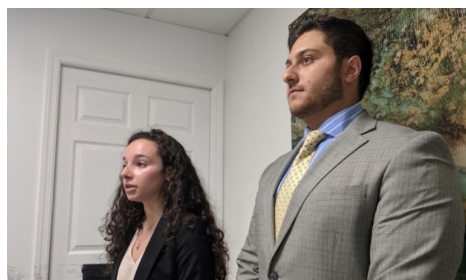
Bank of China (ICBC), which is one of the largest financial institutions in the global economy. Hum's paper examined the role of Chinese banks in residential mortgage lending as home purchases remain a primary strategy for asset building and obtaining middle-class status.



ICBC branch in Flushing, Queens

While Chinese banks issued home mortgages nearly exclusively to Asian borrowers, the share of loans made to Asian investors, rather than owner-occupants, increased significantly during

the study period. This finding raises concerns about the impact of Chinese investment capital on neighborhood stability, affordability, and demographic composition. Although Asians are not underbanked in the same manner as Black and Latinx populations, the growing presence of investment capital in multi-racial immigrant neighborhoods contributes to housing precarity in two ways: rising property prices that are prohibitive for prospective low- and moderate-income purchasers and places renters at risk of displacement, as well as incentivizing illegal home conversions (both owner-occupants and investors) to subdivide property in order to make mortgage payments or exploit the outstanding demand for affordable housing. Her paper was included in a 2018 volume published by the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University.



Queens College's Destany Batista and Josh Emrani present their Flushing banks study, June 2019

Macaulay Honors College Urban Studies major, Destany Batista, and Labor Studies major, Josh Emrani, took an independent study with Professor Hum in Spring 2019 to assess the financial landscape of downtown Flushing – a vibrant commercial district with many small immigrant-owned businesses. Based on

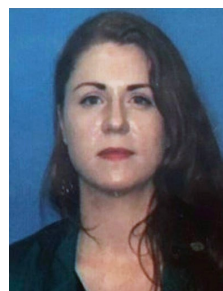
an analysis of FDIC bank deposit data by zip codes, Destany Batista and Josh Emrani found that Flushing has the highest volume of bank deposits outside of key Manhattan financial centers such as Wall Street and midtown. Even with a high bank density, the students summarized studies that find Flushing's small businesses continue to face barriers in capital access. They presented their findings at a June 2019 meeting with representatives from the Greater Flushing Chamber of Commerce, Hanover Bank, Santander Bank, and Morgan Stanley.

Hum's current book examines multiple forms of transnational capital including EB-5, an immigrant investor program, and the reliance on cross-border investments by immigrant growth coalitions and city planners to underwrite the transformation and gentrification of local neighborhoods.

Arts and Humanities

Kirsten Beck, Middle Eastern Studies and Arabic

Global Scholars Achieving Career Success (GSACS) Experience Summary



Kirsten Beck

As part of the Fall 2021 GSACS program, my elementary Arabic I students at Queens College had the pleasure of working with a group of Mahmoud Salahat's students at Palestine

Ahliya University (PAU). Our students' collaborative work centered around the UN Sustainable Development Goal #10: Reducing Inequalities. They worked in teams across classrooms on three progressive assignments to explore issues and solutions related to language inequalities both in Queens, NY and in Palestine.



Their shared inquiry-based question around local issues of language inequality offered an enriching lens for cross-classroom engagement and a framework for meaningful and compassionate language exchange. The QC students explored the linguistic realities of their local communities in Queens and the greater New York City area and shared their findings with their colleagues at PAU. The PAU students likewise conveyed their local knowledge to their QC colleagues. Each group was relatively new to communicating in the primary language of the other, requiring students to negotiate their interaction cross-culturally and cross-linguistically. Successive assignments asked students to compare what they learned from one another and generate questions and potential solutions to issues they identified.



We found the framework provided by the GSACS program, including our specific focus on language inequality, to be especially productive for language exchange. It increased students'

awareness of often overlooked privilege and language-based struggles, placing their own struggles with learning a new language into a larger social context.

Students' main channel of communication was a private Facebook group, where they posted videos, written comments, and organized group Zoom meetings with their team members. Their final projects summarized their findings and reflections from their collaborative work throughout the semester. The GSACS organizers invited all participating students to attend and present at the transnational virtual student-led conference in December 2021. The students that attended were rapt by the presentations and the keynote addresses; the conference exceeded their expectations and served as a productive reward for their hard work throughout the semester.

Continued on page 6

Yin Mei Critchell, Drama, Theater, & Dance

This year, Queens College and Wuhan Institute of Design and Sciences, Jackie Chan Film and Media Academy Dance Program have secured a contract for collaborative curriculum development partnership. Between these two institutions, we have established and planned several exciting programs, including the 3+1 dual-degree program where Chinese students attend three years in Wuhan with one third of their classes designed by Queens College's faculty, and another year in Queens. We also planned international exchange programs where students from Wuhan would attend summer courses, seasonal festivals, or spend one semester at Queens College to further their study. In addition, we have substantial faculty exchanges planned between the two institutions in the form of online teaching and an in-person visiting scholar program.



Physical Theater: "Hamlet" (Shakespeare). Directed by Professor Yin Mei with the theater students at the Jackie Chan Film Academy in Wuhan, China.

It is my wish that when international travel becomes available again, our students from Queens College will be able to study overseas, visiting Wuhan Institute to further their academic interests. A Triangle Project is in the process of gathering funding, with the aim of selecting creative projects through open call and bringing those projects to Queens or Wuhan, immersing the students in cross-disciplinary dialogues



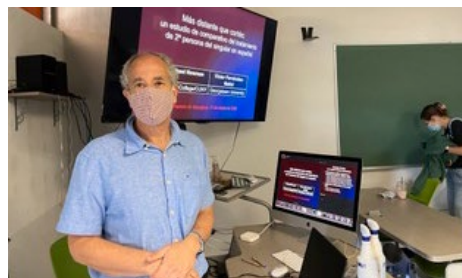
Physical Theater "The Field of Life and Death," adapted from a Chinese novel written by Xiao Hong, a well-known woman writer in 1935. Directed by Professor Yin Mei with the theater students at the Jackie Chan Film Academy in Wuhan, China.

and creative processes, and then having a third place to present their collaborative outcomes. I am excited for the collaborative possibilities that the Triangle Project will generate.

For the past year, although students in Wuhan have held online classes due to the pandemic, the breadth of selection of courses available to them did not suffer. Our online courses covered a significant portion of important dance pedagogies, frameworks, and approaches. They include Laban movement analysis, dance therapy, acting, creative process, site-specific and physical theater.

These courses were taught by an amazing faculty roster which included six adjunct professors from the Drama, Theatre, & Dance department at Queens College. This past year marks an important year for Queens College's partnership with Wuhan Institute, and we look forward to the many more to come!

Michael Newman, Linguistics and Communication Disorders



Michael Newman

Michael Newman's research and teaching are highly international. In research he has collaborated with the noted Catalan sociolinguist Mireia Trenchs-Parera on language attitudes and ideologies of teenagers in Barcelona, the famous capital of Catalonia, Spain. Language attitudes in Catalonia are particularly interesting because virtually everyone is at least to some degree bilingual in the two official languages, Spanish and Catalan. The results show that instead of people preferring one language or the other, many are proud of their bilingualism because it shows them to be cosmopolitans, not based solely in one ethnic identity or the other.

That work began in 2003–2004 when he was a Fulbright Scholar based in that city which led to three research articles in sociolinguistic journals. During a subsequent

sabbatical in 2011, he conducted follow-up research there and then led a study-abroad class during the summer of 2012. That summer program led to an ongoing exchange program with the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), Catalonia's premier university, in which two QC students and two UPF students change places each year. The program is also open to faculty, who can also exchange positions. Professor Newman hopes to take up this role himself once he steps down as chair after 2023. Finally, with respect to Catalonia, he is a member of the research group Adquisició de Llengües des de la Catalunya Multilingüe, Language Acquisition in Multilingual Catalonia (ALLEN CAM) and the TRANSLINGUAM Project, which investigates college multilingualism.



Other international projects feature explorations of the Spanish language. Currently he is involved in a long-term project on the use of second person singular address, in English accomplished

by the lone pronoun *you*. Spanish, however has a so-called formal *usted* pronoun versus the informal *tú* form (and other variants too) that speakers need to decide between when they talk to a person. Which forms do they usually use? What makes them decide which one to pick? How do these decisions vary from community to community? His research with a colleague at Georgetown, Víctor Fernández Mallat, explores how Spanish speakers in different places use the different forms. So far, they've collected data from Chile, Colombia, Spain, Mexico, the US, and most recently Puerto Rico. As a research assistant, he has employed a talented general linguistics major Paola Duran, who is coding the data. Included is a photo from Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Mayagüez, where he gave a talk on this topic as part of the fieldwork in March 2022.

Continued on page 7

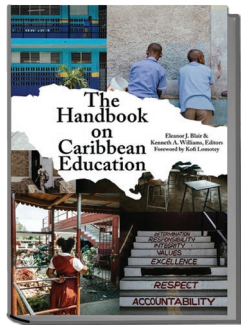
Education

Jacqueline Darvin, Secondary Education and Youth Services



Jacqueline Darvin

Jacqueline Darvin is a professor and program director for Secondary Literacy Education, as well as the deputy chair of the Department of Secondary Education and Youth Services. Since she began at QC in 2004, her research has focused on culturally relevant pedagogy and the teaching of culturally and politically sensitive issues in secondary classrooms. As part of this larger research agenda, her interests have included a focus on 21st-century diverse literacies and how language use, linguistic discrimination, and the use of different languages and dialects (including Jamaican English) in the classroom impact the teaching of critical literacy and social justice issues.



Darvin's international research presentations in the Caribbean started in 2006 when she presented at The Learning Conference at Sam Sharpe

Teachers College in Montego Bay, Jamaica and at later conferences for the Society for Caribbean Linguistics at the University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica (2016) and University of Trinidad and Tobago (2021). In 2021, she co-authored a chapter in *The Handbook on Caribbean Education* with Aisha Spencer from the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus. This chapter is titled "Until You Too Have Journeyed: Empowering Teachers through a Cross-Cultural Online Collaborative Learning Space" and describes an innovative collaboration between education students at the University of the West Indies, Mona, in Kingston, Jamaica and Queens College.

This partnership sought to increase pre-service and in-service teachers' sensitivity and knowledge of the politics

of language in both Jamaica and New York City, where many Caribbean students and families migrate. Through carefully facilitated online communication, using an easily accessible and free smart phone application called Flip Grid, teachers in the US and Jamaica were able to discuss issues of equity, diversity, inclusion, culturally relevant pedagogy, democracy, and social justice associated with the politics of language in both geographical spaces. The experience enabled them to share their views, respond to the views expressed by their peers, provide recommendations on how to best support speakers of Caribbean English-lexified Creole (CECs), and share their best practices. Jamaican students discussed the Jamaican language situation through three units exploring the sociocultural, historical, and environmental factors intricately connected with the use of language in Caribbean poetry, while American students discussed the complexities of language through a unit on linguistic discrimination, variation, and dialects of English other than Standard English.

Future international collaborations are planned for Darvin with her colleagues at the University of the West Indies, including an international children's literature conference that was supposed to occur in 2020 but was postponed due to the pandemic and is rescheduled for 2023. In 2022, Darvin has a chapter forthcoming in an edited book titled *Social Justice Perspectives on*

English Language Learners. Her chapter is geared specifically toward teachers and administrators of secondary ENL students and is designed to sensitize them to the issues surrounding the teaching of ENL students. It also provides ways for them to consider these complex, multifaceted issues facing ENL learners from social change and social justice perspectives.

Lillian Moncada-Davidson, Secondary Education and Youth Services

International Teaching Experience in Central America



Dr. Moncada-Davidson gives a lesson in El Salvador.

Taking early childhood education to the poorest children in Central America has been a rewarding professional experience. In the early 1990s, in El Salvador, a non-governmental organization (NGO), the Hilda Rothschild Foundation, was founded as the umbrella covering three decades of work that included preparing empirical educators and teachers while building early education programs for poor children.



Dr. Moncada-Davidson working with women at one of the markets in El Salvador.

The mission was to provide high-level early education to the traditionally marginalized. Montessori education, a method usually considered elitist, was chosen to educate this vulnerable population.

The work started in the late 1980s with an invitation from an NGO working in a community of mostly squatters in the outskirts of Guatemala City. The goal was to start an early education center as part of broader initiative of economic production involving women. The women had minimal education, at best three years of schooling, but they were enthusiastic and eager to learn to become preschool educators.



Dr. Moncada-Davidson giving a math lesson to one of the teachers in El Salvador.

Didactic materials were built from local and often disposable objects. Several women became effective educators, and some went to the university graduating with teaching degrees. The Montessori program established is still thriving despite the area becoming dangerous and infested with youth gangs.

In the 1990s, the peace agreement following El Salvador's bloody civil war promoted the participation of civil society in rebuilding the nation. To contribute to this process, a community development program was introduced in a population of people displaced by the war. The purpose was to help women struggling alone to help themselves out of poverty and social disadvantage. They received training in several areas, and as a result, were able to work as community health promoters, bakers, early education teachers, and technology assistants while their children attended the preschool. Early in the 21st century, a series of natural disasters impacted the region, forcing people to leave their homes or emigrate. The area was declared at-risk, bringing closure to the development program.

In 2012, responding to a request from the municipal government of the nation's capital, the project—now called EDUCAMBIO—was introduced in San Salvador. The plan was to establish similar preschools in each of the markets of the metropolitan area. The programs were attended by women with little or no formal education. Teaching them about Montessori education was a difficult undertaking. Initially there was discontent and resistance as some rejected the project. With those who accepted to participate, very successful programs were built. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, hundreds of licensed teachers from every part of the country interested in improving a deficient preschool program, participated in the EDUCAMBIO project, creating an impact on rural and urban public schools. With time, most programs flourished and benefitted hundreds of children with a strong early start. Others failed and returned to the system's ineffective preschool education.

Most recently, the COIL program at Queens College was a motivation to continue working internationally. During fall 2021, in collaboration with the University of Gerona, Spain, Queens College students had the wonderful experience of participating in this international bilingual exchange project.

Math and Natural Sciences

Cecilia McHugh, School of Earth and Environmental Sciences

Cecilia McHugh is a distinguished professor at the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, a member of the City University of New York doctoral faculty in Earth and Environmental Sciences, and an adjunct senior researcher at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University in Marine Geology and Geophysics. Her research focuses on marine geology and sedimentation processes to understand earthquake and tsunamis, sea-level changes, climate and the impact of anthropogenic activities in the local rivers and estuaries such as the Hudson and Long Island Sound. McHugh's latest research is on mega-earthquakes and tsunamis driven by the need to better understand these

Continued on page 9

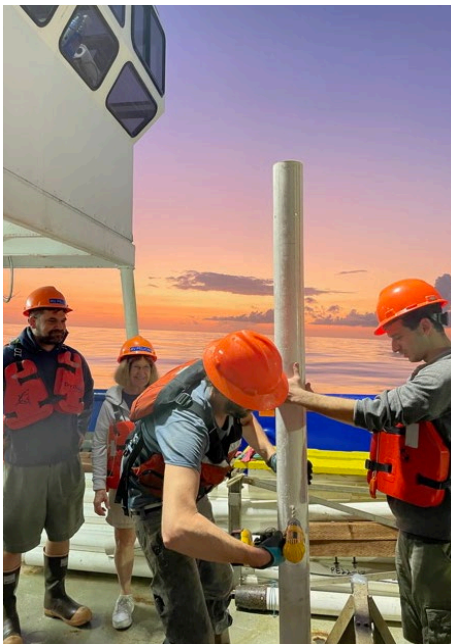


The R/V Pelican team arriving back at Ocho Rios, Jamaica after the Jamaica Passage survey.



R/V Pelican in the Jamaica Passage in January 2022 on its way to study the devastating Haiti 2010 and 2021 earthquakes.

natural events and the hazard they present to adjacent heavily populated coasts. As part of these studies, Professor McHugh is one of the precursors of the emerging field of submarine paleoseismology that studies earthquakes and tsunamis under the sea. This work began in Turkey in 1999 after catastrophic earthquakes caused thousands of casualties and much destruction. Professor McHugh led expeditions in Haiti to study the magnitude 7.0 earthquake in 2010 and magnitude 7.2 earthquake in 2021, as part of RAPID Responses, and she is studying the disastrous magnitude 9.0, 2011 Japan earthquake and tsunami.



The R/V Pelican team arriving back at Ocho Rios, Jamaica after the Jamaica Passage survey.

Professor McHugh has participated in 36 sea-going expeditions, including five ocean drilling expeditions, to the Marmara Sea in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Caribbean Sea, the Japan Trench in the Western Pacific, the Eastern Indian Ocean offshore Australia and Bangladesh, the Southern Ocean offshore New Zealand, and the Western North Atlantic. These took place on the New Jersey Continental Margin, Canterbury Basin, offshore New Zealand, the western margin of Australia, and the Japan Trench.

These studies are conducted by using sound emitted from the ship; the sound travels through the water column and penetrates beneath the sea floor. The sound returns are received by the ship. Through computer processing, acoustic images are produced of the sea floor and sub-bottom. These images guide the core sediment sampling strategy which is done with long tubes that recover up to 40-meter long layers of sediments. When there is an earthquake, the shaking and motion of an earthquake disrupts the sediment. Layers that show sediment deformation are identified and dated with radioisotopes, which allows the team to reconstruct the history of earthquakes for a region. This provides an understanding of how

often and where these earthquakes have occurred and can potentially occur in the future.

Professor McHugh enjoys working with graduate and undergraduate students, and her students participate in sea-going expeditions where they learn about science and how to conduct marine research. Most importantly students learn to set goals and work for them. McHugh came to the U.S. after high school with little knowledge of English. So indeed, Queens College students' goals and dreams can be achieved. She would like to inspire others to pursue their goals because they can come true.



From left to right: Dhiman Mondal and Sharif Mustaque, Queens College PhD and MA students; Masud Iqbal (Dhaka University); Cecilia McHugh; and a Dhaka University student studying the 1762 earthquake and tsunami in Bangladesh.