The College of New Jersey

Welcome to the Fall 2008 issue of TCNJ’s Graduate Column Newsletter!

In this issue, we are pleased to share information regarding: online student resources, new availability of library IM chatting, Global Programs and a TCNJ Olympian, Intramural Sports, four outstanding graduate students within various programs, and important upcoming calendar dates and reminders for students!

On behalf of the Office of Graduate Studies, best wishes for an enjoyable Fall semester. We look forward to seeing you on campus!

Susan Hydro, Assistant Dean – Office of Graduate Studies

This Will Knock Your SOCS Off!

Figuring out the internet sometimes can be a tricky thing and it is easy to feel overwhelmed and like a novice when it comes to mastering cyber space. Luckily, The College of New Jersey provides three helpful and easy ways online to maximize learning with the availability of course resources, a way to keep track of personal information and billing, and ability to stay in tune with campus activities, notices, and opportunities. SOCS, TESS, and EMAIL…Oh my!

TCNJ offers a site called SOCS, which is a course management system that enables students to access classroom resources, communicate with classmates, and keep track of their progress. A link to SOCS is located at the top, right hand corner of the TCNJ Homepage and is as simple as logging in using the webmail user name and password. This is referred to as a Unix name and password. Once logged in, the MAIN MENU screen is viewable and contains links to a student’s current semester courses, instructors’ names, and location and time of each class. On the left hand side of the screen is an extremely useful CALENDAR available to view upcoming assignments, tests, and reminders posted by the professor. This information can be viewed by the day, the current week, the month, or as the whole semester. It is a great way to keep track of upcoming important assignment dates.

By clicking a specific course title, there is an inside look at all of the available information the professor has provided to help students right from home! These availabilities can all be found on the left hand side of the screen within the various tabs.

Need to ask a classmate a question? There is an easy way of contacting classmates by using the EMAIL tab. A list of classmates appears, and by simply highlighting... Continued on pg 2

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Articles written by Marisa Heinold, Graduate Assistant
Knock your SOCS...cont.

a name and pressing the arrow button, a student can email attachments or questions to anyone in the class! The double arrow button can be used to email the entire section at once. What a helpful way to stay connected to colleagues in between class meetings!

Forget to write down the readings due for next class? No problem! A RESOURCES tab provides syllabi, homework assignments, handouts, and class power point slides posted by the professor. A student can constantly access these useful materials using this tab. It is often a location where professors might post links to textbook websites and helpful study guides.

Want to work together with classmates? Students can upload assignments, messages or discussions to be viewed by the entire class with the capabilities of the DISCUSSION tab. Professors often request submission of class presentations so the entire class can access helpful information from their classmates. This tab also contains a search feature to help the user find certain articles or discussions posted by classmates.

Wondering where to find feedback on some of your work? Three tabs are useful in tracking the student’s own progress on class materials and feedback for projects, papers and/or assignments. By using the DROPBOX feature, students can upload materials accessible only to the instructor in order to have work reviewed and critiqued. If they want further feedback and grades from the professors on their submitted class projects and assignments, students can look under the ASSESSMENTS tab or GRADING tab.

All of these easy features are usable and serve as a function of what each professor makes available. SOCS is able to connect a student to Academic Policies, TCNJ library, printing information and Tutoring center sites by simply clicking Academic Links at the top right. Tips, support sites, and a manual are always available to help guide new users.

Starting to feel the technology ambition? Another useful online resource is TESS. Students can access course catalogues, schedules, and register for classes online by logging onto TESS. This system of student information is found easily at the top of the TCNJ homepage. Students login with the 8 digit student ID number and enter their pin to access student records and personal information, view financial aid summaries, and pay their student bills online! Students are encouraged to call 609-771-2648 for help with login problems or assistance.

With an understanding of SOCS and TESS, checking Zimbra email should be a breeze! Students should be sure to check email frequently as TCNJ issues important daily reminders, program information, and upcoming campus events! Professors use it as a main connection with students outside of the classroom. TCNJ email can be forwarded to other accounts, but still should be checked regularly for the latest information provided by The College. For more information on forwarding, students can visit http://www.tcnj.edu/~helpdesk/documents/ForwardEmail.pdf

Now that you’ve got SOCS, TESS, and Email at your fingertips, use them with ease and utilize the resources provided by TCNJ and the faculty to help you through the graduate experience.

TCNJ Library Invites you to Chat!

The TCNJ Library is beginning a trial basis of real-time interactions with a librarian by using IM Chat Reference Service. The service is available two hours per day, Monday through Thursday. Students are invited to “chat” with a librarian using the IM features in order to have reference questions immediately answered through an online conversation. Depending on the user response, the hours of availability may expand after the trial period. Students can access this system by using the IM Chat Reference box that can be found on the library’s homepage. The Ask-A-Librarian page also provides a variety of ways to contact a librarian via phone, email, and now IM chat. Students are also encouraged to put the library on their AIM or Yahoo! Buddy List. AIM users can contact tcnjlibrary2 and Yahoo! users can IM tcnjlibrary3. Students are able to see for themselves whether or not a librarian is online for reference help! For the IM Chat weekly schedule, visit http://www.tcnj.edu/~library/info/chat_schedule.html.

The library also just updated their Links Tutorial. This is an informative page to help navigate students through databases and search engines, learning how to accurately and successfully research for information. For more information on the IM Chat and Links Tutorial visit the library homepage at http://www.tcnj.edu/~library/index.html
Reach for the Gold with Global Programs

The Olympics come but once every four years as athletes compete to make a name for their country, their sport, and their own careers. This particular summer Olympics took a great focus towards swimming as Michael Phelps chased his dream to become the greatest Olympic athlete in history. While one swimmer made Olympic history with his gold this summer, another made history with his college.

Kaburu Gilbert is a student at the TCNJ-Johannesburg, South African site. He competed in the 50m free style event on August 14 with a time of 27.72 seconds. He finished 7th in the fourth heat of the qualifying rounds and placed 82nd overall. Even though Kaburu Gilbert did not capture the gold or have the Uganda flag raised at the medal ceremonies, he experienced his own pedestal moment in great honor of his country. Kaburu Gilbert “felt like [he] had the world at [his] feet” as he proudly carried his nation’s flag during the Opening Ceremonies of the 2008 Olympic Games. He said the memories of these games and his experience will stay with him forever.

Just a few weeks before representing his native country of Uganda in the 2008 Olympics, Kaburu Gilbert was deeply immersed in his studies in the TCNJ-Johannesburg, South Africa graduate programs. Gilbert is working to earn his teaching certification and masters degree in elementary education at The College of New Jersey’s site in Johannesburg, South Africa. As part of the graduate work, all TCNJ-Johannesburg students must design and complete an inquiry project. Gilbert is investigating how teachers, students, and parents perceive connections between academic performance and participation in organized physical activities. Gilbert selected this topic because of his concern about the recent movement toward diminished support for physical activities as a result of increased focus on academics in his nation. He hopes his research will provide some useful information as educational policies are being developed in Uganda.

Johannesburg, South Africa is just one of TCNJ’s sites in the Graduate Global Program where certificate and degree programs are pursued with coursework in Elementary, Secondary, and Special Education, ESL, and Educational Administration. Other graduate global sites include Mallorca, Thailand, Egypt, Bolivia, and Taiwan. Courses and academic sessions vary between the different site locations. Students can travel to these sites as an abroad experience, incorporating educational learning, cultural insight, and international pursuit of knowledge.

TCNJ students can now say they have something in common with a 2008 Olympian! Graduate students are encouraged to seek more information about Johannesburg and all the other sites through the Graduate Global Program by visiting the web site at http://www.tcnj.edu/~graduate/global/. For students interested in completing coursework in one of these sites, the Global Program Coordinator, Stuart Carroll, can be contacted for additional information. Dr. Carroll can be reached by email at szcarrol@tcnj.edu or by phone at 609.771.2221.

Kaburu Gilbert is not only an Olympic inspiration, but also makes an impact as an educator as he studies in the College’s South African graduate program. The College of New Jersey wishes Gilbert the best of luck through his future educational and Olympic endeavors!

Time out!

Need a study break? Graduate students are eligible to compete and play in TCNJ intramural sports! All you need is to be in good physical condition, covered by the school insurance or personal insurance, and to have paid a student activity fee. There are different leagues to participate in depending on your level of competitiveness. You can recapture your glory days of an undergraduate athlete, or compete moderately for a fun break from class and work. Various sports are offered in the Fall, such as flag football, soccer, volleyball, tennis, and bowling. Hoop it up by signing up for basketball in the winter. Enjoy a season of indoor soccer, volleyball, dodgeball, and floor hockey in the Spring. So put the books down, round up a team and have fun in sports again in the intramural leagues! For more information visit www.tcnj.edu/~intramur/

Not interested in sports? Head to the Physical Enhancement Center to try out the free weights, cardio and resistance training equipment as a different type of study break. It is located in Room 271 in Packer Hall, located next to the Brower Student Center. All you need is your Student ID! Students or members can bring a guest by purchasing a $5.00 one day pass! Check out www.tcnj.edu/~sa/pec/ for more fitness center information.
Meet Your Fellow Graduate Students

The College of New Jersey offers degree and certificate programs that challenge the graduate students to learn, apply, and excel in the career field of their choice. With the help of a very friendly and supportive faculty, the graduate students experience the high caliber courses that will prepare them for their field. All of The College’s students exhibit dedication within the various departments, and in order to get a closer look at these experiences, the Office of Graduate Studies sought recommendations from program coordinators to highlight several outstanding students. These four students were gracious enough to volunteer their time to allow an interview that highlights their work, achievements, and glimpse of each of their programs. It was a privilege meeting these students, and The Office of Graduate Studies is honored to highlight them in this Fall 2008 issue.

Hannah Frankenbush
5 Year Deaf Education Program

Meet Hannah Frankenbush! Hannah is a student in the 5 year Deaf Education Program and is graduating this May, 2009. Hannah transferred into this program after already completing the undergraduate portion of two years at Raritan Valley Community College. She is currently in the middle of the first of her two internships required by the program, working as a 2nd grade teacher at West Amwell Township Elementary School until December. In January, she will begin an internship at Marie Katzenbach School for the Deaf.

Prior to her Graduate Program experiences at TCNJ, Hannah and her two brothers were home schooled. Her parents were unhappy with the schools in their township, so she learned at home from first grade until her junior year in high school. She then finished at the Raritan Valley Community College. Although she was schooled at home, Hannah was enrolled with an accredited school that sent her textbooks, syllabi, and exams. She completed all of her work at home, and the tests and papers were then sent back to the school and graded by a certified teacher. Hannah says her home school experience was excellent. Hannah taught herself how to play the guitar and her parents enrolled Hannah and her two brothers in the many recreational town sports and clubs so they could have a healthy social life outside of home. Hannah feels so grateful towards her parents for all the effort and time they put into her education.

As a child, Hannah was very interested in sign language. She had a friend whose mother was an interpreter and very involved with the Deaf community. She would teach Hannah how to sign to songs. When Hannah was 14, she began taking non-credit sign language classes at RVCC, where she later studied for two years and became the youngest to graduate from her RVCC classes at 19. It was her sign teacher at RVCC, George Johnston, who advised Hannah to continue her studies at TCNJ, highly recommending the Deaf Education Program. Since coming into the program at TCNJ, Hannah has met many professionals who have been in the education field for many years and bring a lot of stories and ideas to the class discussions. It is Hannah’s favorite experience in graduate school to have these stories and ideas bring her textbooks to life.

Being in her first year of marriage, student teaching all day, and attending classes at night, Hannah has a lot of commitments as she finishes up her last year of the program. Between reading her articles, writing her school lessons, and hanging out with her cat, Oprah, Hannah finds it is easier to set aside specific time for certain things in order to get it all done. Her advice to graduate students about balancing many things is to take time for loved ones. Even setting aside the textbook for a twenty minute dinner together makes it all seem easier. Hannah also tries to get her work done during the week so that she can enjoy a nice day off over the weekend!

After Hannah completes her program in May 2009, she hopes to start a teaching job the following September. Her dream job is to work with students who are deaf or hard of hearing in her own elementary classroom. As Hannah gets ready to leave TCNJ, her advice to incoming graduate students is to come prepared to learn. “It’s so easy to want to rush through life, but if we do that, we miss out on so many things.” She found that her classmates have so much valuable information to share and advises students to come to class prepared to listen and share with one another. TCNJ wishes Hannah the best of luck as she finishes her last semester.

Heidi Wachtin
ESL Certification Program

Introducing Heidi Wachtin! Heidi previously completed a Master of Arts in Teaching at TCNJ in December of 2000. She then became an elementary school teacher and later decided to come back to school. She wanted to work more effectively with her students who were coming to school with little or no English back-
Meet the Students...cont.

Heidi is currently a 4th grade teacher at Millstone River School in the West Windsor-Plainsboro School District. While working as a teacher, Heidi began organizing an African-American History play performed by her students. One reason for starting these plays was because she felt it was a perfect avenue to build self-confidence in her students. It helped her young students work as a team, which she finds is a critical element in the classroom. Each year, her students create plays about an African American who has made impact on society. Heidi feels so rewarded being able to celebrate the incredible contributions of these people through these plays.

Heidi’s plays have grown more sophisticated and the students no longer only perform at the district’s celebration. Heidi and her students have received funding to take the play “on tour”! They have visited and taken their play to five other elementary schools in the district. The program even aired on the local TV channel over the summer. Heidi loves how her students are understanding history and have a hope that the audience learns from their performance.

Heidi found this process of play creation amazing because she was able to see her students become fascinated by history and use drama to express their outrage of how people were mistreated. Heidi has been able to connect her ESL students with their classmates through these plays, using last year’s class as a prime example. More than a third of Heidi’s students were learning English and all of them spoke in the play. Each student was very important to the play and to each other. By the end of the play, all of the students developed an amazing rapport.

Along with the profound impact Heidi has made on her elementary students and the schools around her, she continues to make strides in the education field as she presented a video survey at the NJ ESL/Bilingual Conference two years ago. The presentation entitled “English Language Learners in the Mainstream Classroom: Their Experience” consisted of participants experiencing what it is like to be immersed in a language foreign to them, followed by the viewing of her video, and a final explanation of conclusions drawn by Heidi and her TCNJ colleague, Shayne Christi. The video involved interviewing several 4th and 5th grade students from her school about their experience and used these responses as a tool to help teachers learn about what the new students experience in the schools. The students spoke candidly about their fears, challenges, and successes. They were able to give advice on what to recommend for future students. There were also interviews from native English speakers and their experience having English learners in their classroom. Heidi was enlightened to hear how empathetic they were and felt they had just as much to gain as they had to give. Heidi loved the experience and felt it was wonderful, feeling as though the teachers gained a lot and became inspired to do something similar in their schools.

As Heidi nears leaving the TCNJ program, she has made incredible contributions along the way. She has loved the flexibility of her program because it honors those who are working by offering classes in the evening. Heidi feels a refreshing experience in these classes as she was able to meet and enjoy so many different people at various stages of their learning. Heidi feels free to present her learning in various non-traditional ways, and this has made her feel that the work required by the program has been meaningful to her profession. She has plans of continuing to educate herself and going to school to keep her thinking fresh and alive. Heidi feels thrilled to be in a place with her job and schooling that feels like it fits just right!

For graduate students in education, Heidi advises that the “what” and “how” they spend a lot of time learning about is meaningless without being aware of the “who.” “It is when we find ourselves with the children that the education has meaning.” With this remarkable advice, Heidi feels very happy where she is. TCNJ honorably encourages Heidi after her program completion and we look forward to the innovative contributions Heidi makes inside and outside of her classroom!

Meet Faridun Nurullo, an exchange student from Tajikistan! Faridun is studying 5 courses in the TESL program here at TCNJ and so far, he is loving his experience in New Jersey. Faridun is studying here as a part of an exchange program and a fellow TCNJ student from the History Department is spending the semester in his university. Faridun has spoken with some of the professors in his university and has found out that the TCNJ student is doing great and is very happy. Faridun hopes she enjoys the beautiful mountain area and expects her to have fun there!

Faridun is here at TCNJ for a semester and has been working with professors who have a lot of experience and have been very helpful, which he feels has been an important part of his stay.
Meet the Students...cont.

here at TCNJ. Previous to studying at TCNJ, Faridun obtained two Masters Degrees in Teaching English as a Second Language. His first Masters Degree was in a 5 year program in English enabling him to teach English to secondary school students. He then worked for a year with university students, teaching English from the beginning stages of phonetics. His students then progressed and learned grammar, rules, and communication. Faridun earned a scholarship to study in an MA TESL program for 2 ½ years in India. While there, he felt like his teaching abilities had progressed with his continued studies. Faridun and some of his faculty members started an English club that allowed students a place to go and further their English skills through reading and conversation outside of their classes. It became a discussion club for the students. It later got funding from the American and British Embassies, providing books, speakers, and a lot of support for their club. It soon became a part of the English Corner, an organization where students could go and learn about scholarships and abroad opportunities to explore their English.

Faridun wanted to teach students at a variety of levels of their English speaking capabilities. He took a Communicative Learning Teaching class that was discussion-based because he wanted to implore the concept that it is important to learn from more than just reading and he wanted his students to learn from discussion when he began his teaching at the Technological University. He worked with other teachers to put together a database analysis where they could figure out the students’ levels of English and then they could assign teachers to these students depending on their different English needs. His experiences soon led him to TCNJ.

Since arriving to the U.S. August 14th, Faridun has been enjoying his stay. He has several classes with the same students, and he tells us they have been very friendly and good to him. He corresponds with classmates, which is helping make his stay here better. Faridun is handling the coursework wonderfully and said he is trying really hard in all of his reading and learning. One of his favorite things about TCNJ so far has been the Eickhoff Dining Hall where he loves the opportunity to eat anything he wants, always surrounded by a surplus of people. He has also been enjoying the gym facilities. Faridun loves to play soccer at home, so he joined the intramural teams here and is having a great time with the practices and games he has several times a week.

Faridun spent his first 10 days of his visit in New York where he said his dreams came true of seeing the Brooklyn Bridge. He loved it! He also saw the Statue of Liberty where he “waved and said hello to her!” Faridun was able to see the Atlantic Ocean when his Professor, Joan Gross, took him to the shore. The waves were amazing to him and he loved every minute he spent near the ocean. Faridun has appreciated the hospitality and friendliness that everybody has shown him while he has stayed here, and he hopes to spend the New Year here before returning home in January.

Faridun will complete his practicum for his program at home as an arranged Independent Study, so he will still correspond with TCNJ professors. He spoke very highly of the people he has encountered and feels they have been great to him. He has loved staying here and appreciated the opportunities and experiences TCNJ has provided him. He is very proud to be the first exchange student from Tajikistan here and still “can’t figure out if it is a dream or reality.” TCNJ is proud and happy to have him here and wishes Faridun the best of luck as he continues his studies and enjoys the U.S.

Meet Yolande Pastrana, an 8th grade Language Arts teacher in the New Brunswick Middle School. Yolande is finishing her last semester at TCNJ and will be completing the Bilingual ESL Certification this December, 2008.

Before coming to TCNJ, Yolande previously obtained two Masters Degrees. She attended The Stevens Institute of Technology, earning a Masters of Science in Management. She also holds a Masters of Science in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Scranton. Yolande previously worked in private sector for major financial and telecommunications corporations before she started working in the classroom. She transitioned into teaching and was able to carry her organizational, planning and management skills to her classrooms. Yolande started teaching 5th grade in a self contained classroom and eventually taught a range of subjects including Science, Math, and Social Studies to 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. Her experiences led her to an 8th grade Language Arts classroom where she teaches 3 classes, seeing 85 students throughout her day. She is also a part of an advisory committee that aides 14 students. Her days are often challenging, but Yolande loves teaching and the interaction with all of the students she encounters. Her work has been very rewarding because two years ago Yolande was voted by her peers to receive the New Jersey Teacher of the Year Award for the 2006-2007 school year! Yolande was very surprised but enjoyed and appreciated this honor.

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Meet the Students...cont.

from her peers and her school. She was awarded recognition from the State and attended a luncheon with her Superintendent. 

After her days at school, Yolande attends night classes for her program where she is absorbing all the different kinds of feedback from her peers that have become important to her learning. She enjoys these interactions through discussions and projects associated with her classes. Yolande likes coming to school at TCNJ because she finds that she is learning a different type of problem solving that has become very helpful to her teaching experiences. The experiences at TCNJ provide different solutions and perspectives to teaching and learning for Yolande, which makes it a very positive experience. Yolande advises graduate students to take all of these opportunities presented in class and learn through these interactions as tools to compile to become a better professional.

In her spare time, Yolande supports an organization called HISPAN which has implemented a mentoring program for Middle School students in high need areas. HISPAN currently has 85 volunteers who are professionals from different fields in the private sector. The organization exposes students to AT&T High Technology Day, Career Day, and the Choices program. The volunteers visit schools in the tri-state area with the goal of inspiring students to stay in school and pursue a college education after graduating high school.

After completing the program in December, Yolande plans to continue to teach her 8th grade classes. One day, Yolande would love the opportunity to teach in a high school or a university and use what she has learned and experienced to help teach, guide, and mentor high school or college students. Yolande is deeply committed to making a difference in students’ lives. TCNJ congratulates Yolande on her 2007 award and upcoming program completion, hoping the best for her continued teaching years ahead!

Mark Your Calendar!

Graduation/Program Completion Application Deadlines

September 22: Deadline to apply for December 2008 graduation (degree/completion posting)

January 29: Deadline to apply for May 2009 graduation (degree/completion posting and commencement)

February 23: Deadline to apply for August 2009 graduation (degree/completion posting)

Graduation Notice

If you are planning to graduate in December, but have not yet applied to do so, please contact Records and Registration at: 609-771-2647.

*A $35 late fee will apply. Visit www.tcnj.edu/~recreg/calendars for more details

Fall 2008 / Spring 2009

November
4th-14th: Spring and summer registration window
(If you are a non-matriculated student, wait until admission decision and then register in January)

26th-28th: Thanksgiving Break

December
16th: Last day of Graduate class

January
20th: First day of Spring classes
20th-26th: Add/Drop Week

Important Reminders

!!

December Graduation Notes

Students planning to Graduate December '08 who have not yet filed an application for graduation and/or certificate completion must do so immediately. In addition to the $75 graduation application fee, the $35 late fee will apply as well.

May Graduation Notes

Students planning to Graduate May '09 MUST apply for graduation and/or certificate completion by January 29, 2009. Contact your program coordinator with any questions regarding your ability to graduate in May 2009.

Electronic Billing

Students are reminded that all billing is completed electronically by using TESS. Remember to check for E-mail notifications that are sent to your TCNJ account for any outstanding financial obligations because paper bills will NOT be sent.
**Did you Know?**

*Library Room 413 is a designated graduate group study room!*  
  
*Graduate students may register throughout the registration window, but November 4th is reserved just for you! If you are a non-matriculant applying for spring matriculation, you should wait for an admission decision and register in January, if accepted.*