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inside cgs

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH • COLLEGE OF GENERAL STUDIES



WINTER 2015

*Pictured above: Sofia Sandoval
See her story on page 2.*

A New Home for CGS

In the summer of 2014, the University of Pittsburgh College of General Studies (CGS) and its associated units—the McCarl Center for Nontraditional Student Success, the Office of Veterans Services, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute—relocated to a new signature space on the first floor of Wesley W. Posvar Hall.

The entrance to the new space is located next to the historic Forbes Field home plate, bringing CGS “home” on campus.

The move was initiated by Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor Patricia Beeson, whose goal was to increase the visibility of and access to CGS and its associated units and to better showcase the essential contributions of the college.

The move provides CGS students with improved access to:

- the rich intellectual resources of the University;
- CGS staff members in key areas such as advising, academic affairs, enrollment management, and student support;
- essential amenities such as parking and libraries; and
- designated spaces for tutoring, quiet study, and meeting.

The new space provides a computer café in a glass-walled, modern lobby area; a quiet study room; a tutoring room; a student lounge; a kitchen; offices for key student support staff members, including the McCarl Center director, CGS Student Government administrator, math tutor, and career counselor; and direct access to an outdoor courtyard.

WELCOMING ALUMNI AND STUDENTS

CGS held several events in the fall of 2014 to showcase the new space and welcome students, alumni, and the entire Pitt community.

In September, F. James McCarl III (BA '73); his family and friends; and key University leaders, including Chancellor Patrick Gallagher and Provost Beeson, attended a rededication of the McCarl Center and an open house to tour the new space. The next day, CGS hosted an open house for all members of the campus community, inviting staff, faculty, and students to check out the new location.

Also in September, CGS students were welcomed back for a new school year and to the college's new home with a barbecue and karaoke night. During homecoming weekend, a continental breakfast was held to invite alumni to visit the space.



NEWS IN BRIEF

CONFLICT ZONE EXHIBITION

CGS brought Conflict Zone, an exhibition of images of Iraq and Afghanistan captured by leading photojournalists, to the University Art Gallery in October.

BA IN LEGAL STUDIES DEGREE PROGRAM RECEIVES TOP RANKING

The College of General Studies' bachelor's degree program in legal studies was ranked number one in the country by TheBestSchools.org.

PITT DESIGNATED A MILITARY FRIENDLY SCHOOL

The University of Pittsburgh was designated a 2015 Military Friendly School by Victory Media, Inc., thanks in part to the services provided by the Office of Veterans Services, which is housed in CGS.

Message from Julia Helgert, CGS Student Ambassador

When I transferred to the College of General Studies from the Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences here at Pitt in the fall of 2013, I remember feeling like a newbie all over again. I didn't know much about CGS



other than the fact that I wanted to major in media and professional communications.

After attending just one CGS event, a seminar about scholarships, and meeting Sherry Miller Brown and other CGS students, I remember feeling like this place could be my home away from home. Everyone at CGS welcomed me and other new students with open arms and encouraged us to get involved in the many opportunities the college has to offer. Throughout the past year, I have become involved in many of the extracurricular activities within the College of General Studies, one of the most noteworthy being the Student Ambassadors Program.

The CGS Student Ambassadors Program was specifically designed to assist nontraditional first-year and transfer students with their college transition by pairing them with an experienced CGS student who provides guidance and support throughout the new students' first year. I became a Student Ambassador because I wanted to give students the exact experience that I was given this time last year when I was a new student. Through the Student Ambassadors Program, we are constantly giving new students the invitation and opportunity to come and see what CGS is all about. We plan tons of events throughout the academic year based on student interests, reach out to new students to let them know when the events are happening, and host the events to make students feel welcomed.

Becoming a student ambassador has made my journey as a CGS student that much more enjoyable. Not only has being an ambassador drastically improved my leadership skills, but I also have met and formed friendships with so many people that I never would have known otherwise. Plus, we have so much fun! Some of the events we have held so far this term include our annual welcome back barbecue and karaoke night; the CGS prefireworks celebration at homecoming; and the 12th annual National Nontraditional Student Week from November 3 to 8, which was packed with round-the-clock events and seminars for CGS students.

The experience that the Student Ambassadors Programs affords new students and its ambassadors is truly invaluable. There is no doubt that this program is a huge asset to CGS!

CGS Scholarship Supports Student Research

Daniel Peluso, a double major in media and professional communications in CGS and geology in the Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, recently presented his research at the Science 2014—Sustain It! conference at the University of Pittsburgh. CGS awarded Peluso its Academic Achievement Scholarship to support his efforts.

Daniel Peluso



The Academic Achievement Scholarship rewards motivated students who demonstrate academic excellence. This scholarship covers the costs associated with presenting a paper or poster related to a student's academic studies at a conference.

Peluso's research focuses on exoplanets, or planets orbiting stars outside our solar system. The culmination of his research was a 3-D animation. The short film, titled *The Quest for Another Earth*, spotlights the observations of exoplanets by the research team at the Allegheny Observatory and explores a recently discovered exoplanet, Kepler-186f, which is 500 light-years from Earth and has been called an "Earth cousin" by astronomers because of its similarity to Earth.

Peluso completed this work as part of a fellowship awarded by the Atlantic Coast Conference

International Academic Collaborative and the University of Pittsburgh. As part of his research, Peluso visited the Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI), which is operated by the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy and NASA, at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Md., to meet with its team of 3-D animators and astronomers. Peluso's research also included astrophotography of the night sky in Sonoma, Calif. Peluso worked with Arthur Kosowsky of Pitt's Department of Physics and Astronomy in the creation of the project.

At Science 2014, Peluso presented a research poster featuring screenshots from the film, an explanation of how the film was made, and pictures from his astrophotography and visit to STScI. Conference attendees also were able to view the animation.

To learn more about supporting CGS and its student scholarship fund, visit cgs.pitt.edu/support.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Sofia Sandoval: Arts Meet Medicine

Natural sciences and studio arts may not seem like two majors that go hand in hand, but to Sofia Sandoval, they form the perfect combination.

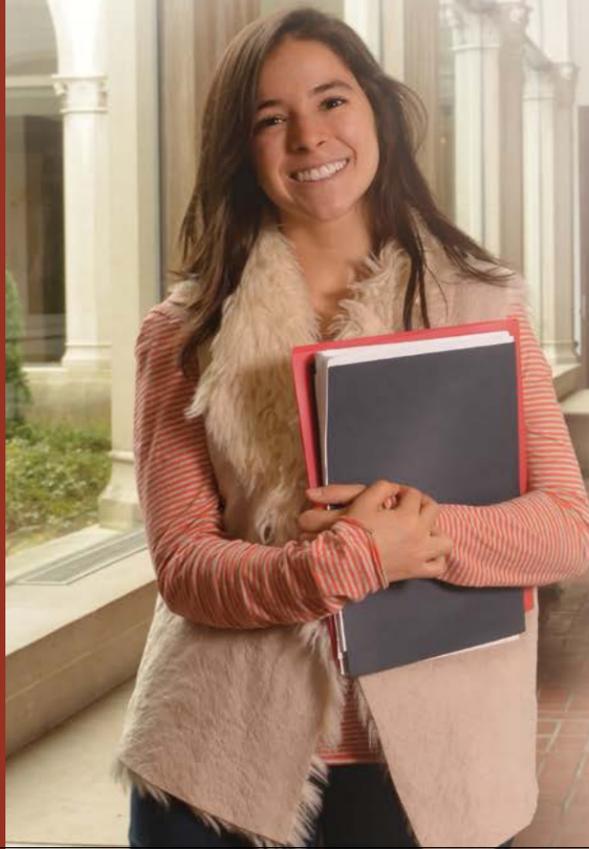
"Ever since I was young, I've always had a deep passion for art and expressing myself through art," says Sandoval. "As I got older, I began to realize that I also was very interested in helping others and wanted to devote my life to service to others. I began looking into careers that would allow me to do that yet also allowed versatility in what my job would actually look like. That's when I decided that I wanted to be a pediatric reconstructive surgeon."

"When I came to college, I started taking the art classes that I loved and thought about how they could help me become a better doctor one day. And then it hit me: A surgeon is just an artist with a scalpel and the human body as a canvas. I began to look at different second degree options that would have me taking premedicine classes but that also allowed me to take other classes I was interested in."

That's when she found the CGS natural sciences program, which allows her to complete the science courses required for medical school while also taking the art classes that interest her and even to minor in French. The ability to design her education to meet both her needs and her interests is what Sandoval calls the "absolute best benefit" of the natural sciences degree program at CGS. "I can tailor my interests and desires to take specific science classes (both natural and biological), which no other degree lets me do," she says.

Sandoval also completed a summer study abroad program in Nantes, France, in 2014, and is a resident assistant and tutor. She plans to apply for a Fulbright scholarship and take a gap year before beginning medical school.

"I began school thinking that I would go straight through to medical school and try to get it done as soon as I could. Yet, throughout my time here at Pitt, I've realized that I want to take a lot more risks and opportunities to truly enrich my education and in the end help me be a better doctor," she says.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Foster J.J. McCarl (BA '98)

J.J. McCarl owns a business coaching practice in which he works with business owners to give them the confidence, motivation, and tools necessary to achieve their personal and professional goals. The McCarl Center for Nontraditional Student Success within CGS is made possible through the support of McCarl and his father, F. James McCarl III (BA '73).

What do Pitt and the College of General Studies mean to you?

"CGS holds a special place for me because it gave me a second chance when other schools wouldn't. At the time, I thought that I had made a wrong turn and was at the wrong place in my life. Pitt taught me that I wasn't at the wrong destination; I simply wasn't done with the journey."

How did your CGS degree prepare you for your career?

"Whereas I was initially concerned with having a seemingly more general 'Communications' degree, I have found that the education elements that made up my Bachelor of Arts actually created a more venerable and far-reaching educational foundation. I have been able to take the skills I learned in nonverbal and small-group communications and use them as a springboard into learning neurolinguistic programming skills, which I use in management, education, and training within my business coaching practice."

What is your advice to current CGS students?

"Give back. Volunteer. Be of service. We need to take care of each other. Nothing matches the



Foster J.J. McCarl (second from right) joins, from left to right, Chancellor Patrick Gallagher, F. James McCarl III, Carol McCarl, and Provost Patricia Beeson at the rededication of the McCarl Center in September.

feeling you get from philanthropy. Also, some of the most professionally beneficial relationships in my life started as a result of simply trying to help someone. This is why my father and I started the McCarl Center for Nontraditional Student Success. We want to help and support the efforts of nontraditional students just like us."

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at the University of Pittsburgh is a membership-based community of adults, age 50 and older, who are passionate about learning. Established at Pitt in 2005, OLLI at Pitt is supported by the Bernard Osher Foundation and is one of 119 such institutes located on college campuses throughout the United States.

"The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute fosters lifelong learning through courses and programs that engage the learner, provide social interaction, and enrich lives," says OLLI Director Jennifer Engel. "OLLI's faculty, which include University of Pittsburgh professors and retired faculty members, challenge participants to understand the cultural forces of today, to interact socially and intellectually with one another, and to live empowered lives.

"Because there are no tests, no grades, and no degree requirements, it is the perfect

environment for adults to explore new topics and meet other interested adults," Engel concludes.

Engel became the director of OLLI in July following a 15-year career with the Sarah Heinz House, a Boys & Girls Clubs of America organization on Pittsburgh's North Side. She brings with her experience, vivacity, and a new direction for OLLI. In just a few short months, Engel has released a new strategic plan, worked closely with OLLI members to add and improve classes and events, and launched an annual fundraising campaign.

Of her experience with Osher, member Ruthe Karlin says, "At first, the Osher classes were just an avenue for exploring subjects in which I was interested. As the years have gone on, I find I am a member of a community. I see people I know from Osher everywhere—on the bus, at concerts, and at plays. It enhances my life in so many ways."

To learn more about OLLI, visit cgs.pitt.edu/osher.



Osher Director Jennifer Engel (back left) meets with Osher members in the new Osher lounge.

Letter from the CGS Alumni Society President

Dear CGS alumni,

As we start a New Year, it is a good time to recall some of the highlights from the past year and look forward to new initiatives.

Some highlights from 2014 include the following:

- CGS, the McCarl Center for Nontraditional Student Success, and associated units—the Office of Veterans Services and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute—moved into a new space on the ground floor of Wesley W. Posvar Hall. This beautiful new space gives CGS greater visibility on campus, and provides room for students to study and relax between classes. I know I join all in appreciation of Jim and Carol McCarl's generosity and in welcoming CGS alumni to future events in the new McCarl Center!
- The CGS Alumni Society was awarded a Gold Banner—and received a contribution to

the CGS Scholarship Fund—during the 2014 Homecoming Banner Awards and Scholarship Recognition Luncheon. The banner is awarded to alumni groups that demonstrate excellence in communications, fundraising, student recognition, alumni programs, and scholarship.

Looking forward:

- The Pitt Alumni Association Board of Directors is discussing how social media can be further used to engage Pitt alumni, above and beyond the new association Web site. Bookmark the new site at www.alumni.pitt.edu and check back often for news and events.
- The School and College/Regional Campus Committee of the Pitt Alumni Association is reviewing the program that funds events for alumni, in an effort to create new and exciting events. I have the great pleasure of collaborating with representatives from every alumni group at Pitt in this

venture, and am especially thankful for the expertise of Jeff Gleim, Carol Lippert, Gary Pollock, and committee chair Mike Dobosh.

As always, I appreciate the opportunity to keep CGS alumni up to date on the alumni society's activities, and welcome any comments you may have. I can be reached at bmountjoy@alumni.pitt.edu.

Thank you, and hail to Pitt!
Bruce D. Mountjoy



Bruce Mountjoy and McCarl Center Director Sherry Miller Brown



CGS alumna Victoria Artis (BA '14) is pictured with Chancellor Emeritus Mark Nordenberg and Chancellor Patrick Gallagher at the Pitt men's basketball game versus Virginia Tech on February 8, 2014.



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Word on the Street

In October, CGS held an open house for prospective students. Here's what some of the guests had to say about what draws them to CGS.



"My son, Wakeel, is an aspiring doctor. CGS provides a great opportunity for him to fulfill his dream while he works and raises a family of his own. I am a Pitt alum and have encouraged my children to keep the Pitt legacy alive in our family."

Vikki Ayanna Abdullah



"I've been in school for three years, and it's time for me to complete my degree and start my career. I came to the CGS open house to get some questions answered: What classes can I take? What are the steps to transfer? A staff member broke it down to show me how my credits will transfer."

Richard Clemmons



"I have an undergraduate degree and am looking to further my career through a certificate program. I checked out CGS to see what my options are, and to find a program that's perfect for me."

Megan Edwards



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the photography exhibit Champions of Pitt, which opened in the McCarl Student Success on November 7, 2014.

The exhibit features pictures of notable Pitt athletes, including football, basketball, wrestling, and track stars, who have brought distinction to the University from the 1936 Olympics through the 2014 NFL Draft.

The opening reception, hosted by the CGS Student Government and CGS Alumni Society, was held during 2014's National Nontraditional Student Week and featured a visit from Pitt's number-one fan, ROC, the Pitt mascot.

The exhibit will run through 2015.

Pitt's biggest fan, ROC, poses with CGS student Morgan Donaldson (top left), her husband, and four sons at the opening reception of the McCarl Center's Champions of Pitt photography exhibit.

CGS alumni Shavonte Zellos (BA '08) and Roger Kingdom (BA '02) are just two of the Pitt athletes featured in

running a basketball camp. She is currently pursuing a second degree in legal studies at CGS. She also is a star senior guard for Pitt's women's basketball team and the 10th highest scorer in Pitt women's basketball history.

Kiesel spent 26 days in Vietnam, teaching math to sixth and seventh graders and assisting in education through academics and sports.

"I'd like to go into coaching in the future, and I love kids," said Kiesel. "It just seemed like the perfect opportunity."

Alumni News and Achievements

Brianna Kiesel (BA '14) traveled to Vietnam this past summer to represent the University of Pittsburgh as part of the Coach for College program. The program promotes higher education among children in other countries, encouraging adolescents in rural parts of developing nations to consider furthering their

