a week in the life of Technology & Engineering Education at CCSU

James DeLaura may be the longest-serving professor in the School of Engineering and Technology, but he's keeping his department as up-to-date—and as busy—as ever. Take the week of March 30, 2009 for example.

Early Monday morning, DeLaura, assistant professor Michele Dischino, and seven Technology and Engineering majors landed at Bradley International Airport, home from a weeklong study trip to China. Eleven other T&EE students had preceded them at the airport two days earlier, returning from the annual convention of the International Technology Education Association in Louisville.

It may have been the first day of school after spring break, and the first day of student advising for the fall, but as it turns out, Monday would be the quietest day of the week.

On Tuesday, twenty seniors from **West Haven High School** toured the School of Engineering and Technology. The event was organized and directed by TEE major and West Haven graduate Stephen Shine, who decided to attend Central a few years ago while on a similar tour. Sophomore Johnny Kassay led an impromptu question-and-answer session in the Human-Powered Vehicle lab, describing students' preparation for a national competition two weeks away.

The first annual **Girls in Tech Expo** was held at CCSU on Wednesday, April 1, and the TEE department was instrumental in its success. About 200 eighth- and ninth-grade girls from New Britain and surrounding towns attended the event. TEE students Ben Haase and Joe Palmucci facilitated the two whole-group sessions, and four of the eight breakout workshops were designed and taught by students in associate professor Patrick Foster's teaching methods class: Mike Lipson, Diana Nagler, Christopher Reynolds, and Michael Stock. Also assisting with the Girls in Tech Expo were TEE majors Stephen Beale, Adriano Borgia, David Gorski, John Matteis, and D.J. Mobley.

In an activity organized by associate professor Michael Vincenti, the department on Thursday welcomed eight students from **Lyme/Old Lyme Middle School** and their technology teacher, Jennifer Caffrey. These sixth- and eighth-graders were members of a team which had won the last two "School of the Future" national championships, and had just completed a design which they hoped would help them retain their title. Four eighth-graders gave a thirty-minute presentation of the design to a standing-room only crowd in room 101, then adeptly answered questions from the college students. It was a bit of a role reversal: middle-schoolers presenting to preservice teachers!

On Friday, senior Steve Fix and recent graduate Phil Gatcomb spent the day working with Vincenti to construct a racetrack for model cars powered by CO_2 cartridges. This vehicle-testing apparatus was being designed and made by CCSU students for the state Technology Student Association convention in May.

That afternoon, five CCSU freshmen, led by TEE major Elz Antunes, facilitated a biotechnology lab activity with a group of high-school juniors and seniors at **Big Picture High School**, a public magnet school in Bloomfield. This was the first in a series of Friday sessions at the school. Bryan Hull, also a TEE major, assisted Antunes.

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The school week may have ended on Friday, but not so the TEE activities. Antunes and Hull were among a group of students, including Kim Clark, Nicholas Gaeta, and D.J. Mobley, who got up early on Saturday morning to assist with the annual **Connecticut Science Olympiad** at UConn. These future teachers had worked for the prior two months with middle-schoolers in New Britain and Farmington on four technology-related events, including structural engineering and a catapult contest. Later that morning, DeLaura, Dischino, and graduate assistant Alan Riggs represented the department at CCSU's annual **Spring Open House**. Riggs led prospective students and their families on a tour of our facilities, including the Technology Education Lab in Copernicus Hall, where he and Vincenti described some of the department's current projects.

Meanwhile, assistant professor David Sianez spent the day at CCSU's Kaiser Gymnasium. He and a number of volunteers, including Johnny Kassay, Erik Klaube, Stephen Beale, John Matteis, Chris Garratt, readied facility for the week's biggest event.

On Sunday, Sianez supervised the statewide **VEX Robotics championship** at Kaiser. The culmination of months of preparation, the daylong event featured more than forty teams of competitors from high-schools in Connecticut and surrounding states. In all, more than a thousand people attended the championship. A dozen CCSU students assisted in running the event, including Rachel Kane, John Matteis, and Ed Szydlowski.

Three undergraduates in particular had key roles. Johnny Kassay entertained the crowd as the emcee and color commentator, Stephen Beale served as one of four referees, and Jeff Rodriguez coordinated the judging. Rodriguez should know something about quality robotics: nine days earlier, he had been declared the national champion in the Technology Education Collegiate Association (TECA) Robotics Contest held in Louisville.

For Rodriguez and the other students involved in the Louisville trip—CCSU-TECA president Laura Baker, Tim Bouffard, Mike Bono, David Gorski, Jon Horan, Rachel Kane, John Matteis, Diana Nagler, Chris Reynolds, Staci Stamm, and CCSU-TECA's treasurer Gill Rondinone, who organized the trip—it had been a long week.

For Beale and the others who had just returned from China, it had been longer. Jon Cap, Ben Haase, Eric Klaube, Tom Lutka, Tom Stegner, and Michael Wilcosz had taken a journey they described as "eye-opening," "amazing,"—even "life-changing."

By Sunday evening, Johnny Kassay still had a little energy left. After the Kaiser gymnasium had been returned to its original state, he made the short trek from the gym to the Tech Ed lab in Copernicus Hall, taking what was left of his voice with him. Instead of retiring to his dorm room, Kassay worked for a few more hours with Vincenti on the TSA racetrack.

And a few hours after that, another busy week began.

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The Technology and Engineering Education program at Central Connecticut State University offers several programs leading to K-12 teacher certification in Connecticut, including a four-year baccalaureate degree. Two programs are also available for students who already hold a bachelor's degree. For more information, visit *www.teched.ccsu.edu*, call 860-832-1850, or write

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