

Spanish major in Suffolk among new academic offerings

Education programs College-wide receive State accreditation

by Susan Kane

A Spanish major in Suffolk, an upper division recreation major and a theatre arts minor in Brooklyn and three additional certificate programs are among the new academic offerings now available at St. Joseph's. In related news, the College last fall received official notification of the accreditation of its teacher education programs from the State Education Department, and proposals for several new graduate and undergraduate degrees are now under State review.

In a memo to faculty and staff in November, SJC President S. Elizabeth Hill announced that the child study and secondary education programs in both Brooklyn and Suffolk had been awarded a full seven-year accreditation, "with no caveats, conditions or restrictions." The New York State Education Dept. visiting teams that conducted the College's review highly praised SJC's teacher preparation programs, saying that they "could serve as a model for others throughout the State," S. Elizabeth noted.

S. Elizabeth congratulated members of the education faculty. "They continue to build on the well-established reputation of our teacher education programs, and to provide our students with the best preparation for their careers in teaching."

Spanish major debuts in Suffolk

Students who wish to teach Spanish—or work in fields such as government, community health, social work and the private sector—can now major in the language in Suffolk. The program, leading to a B.A. in Spanish, is modeled after the longtime Spanish major on the Brooklyn Campus, with a few new and updated courses. Up until now, Spanish was offered in Suffolk only as a minor or as an area of concentration for child study majors.

According to Assistant Professor Antoinette Hertel, associate chair of the Dept. of Modern Languages, the major was added at the request of students, many of whom had to transfer to

neighboring colleges to take advanced-level Spanish courses and teach Spanish on the secondary level. Despite the absence of a major, six Suffolk students opted to minor in Spanish and 37 child study majors chose the language as their area of concentration in fall 2003. The growing number of Spanish-speaking residents and increased support for international education in the U.S., along with a greater need for Spanish language teachers, made the addition of the major particularly timely and relevant, Prof. Hertel said.

"I'm thrilled and I think it's only going to grow," Prof. Hertel said recently, noting that the department already has about 20 declared Spanish majors.

The course of study for Spanish majors includes opportunities for study abroad and internship programs to help students master acquired communicative competencies learned in class, Prof. Hertel said. This June, about 20 students (including some new Spanish majors) have signed up for a study abroad program in Alicante, Spain, and next summer a group heads to Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Currently under review in Suffolk is a Latino Studies minor, an interdisciplinary program with courses in social sciences, history, English, Spanish and music. The Department hopes to introduce the minor this fall.

New programs in Brooklyn

In Brooklyn, the College has introduced a two-year upper division program leading to a B.S. in Recreation (with a concentration in therapeutic recreation) under a recently-signed articulation agreement with Kingsborough Community College. Designed at the current time for transfer students from Kingsborough with an A.A.S. degree in therapeutic recreation, the plan is to expand the major to a full four-year program and to add a community recreation concentration as a second track option.

"It's exciting that we can meet the needs of this student population [at Kingsborough], while at the same time meeting the needs of the profession," said Recreation Dept. Chair Dr. Gail Lamberta. "The demand is there." In the past, many Kingsborough recreation majors have not obtained the four-year degree needed for certification, Dr. Lamberta said, because the closest college to offer an upper division program (Lehmann) is two hours away.

The Suffolk Campus has offered a recreation major (with both concentrations) for years, and surveys have indicated that virtually all alumni have found employment in the field, often upon graduation—indicating a growing need for skilled recreation professionals at sites such as hospitals, rehabilitation, assisted-living and long term care centers, governmental and private recreational facilities, YMCAs and others. St. Joseph's is the only college on Long Island to offer a four-year degree in recreation.

The Brooklyn Campus also unveiled a new 18-credit minor in theatre arts, which debuted last fall. Like the

Spanish major in Suffolk, the impetus was student demand. "There is a definite need for the theatre minor on this campus," said Fr. John Gilvey, Ph.D., assistant professor of speech communication. "First, the students I have taught over the years expressed interest in it."

"Second, look where we are," he continued, noting the Brooklyn Campus' close proximity to Manhattan. The College sponsors trips to Broadway plays, which have been favorably received by students, resulting in increased enrollment in theatre courses as well as involvement in the campus student acting troupe, the Chapel Players.

New certificate programs

The College also announced three new certificate programs, two through the School of Adult and Professional Education (SAPE) and the third through the School of Arts and Sciences. SAPE's certificate in medical office management and certificate in care management are currently being offered in both Brooklyn and Suffolk. The former, an 18-credit program, is for adults seeking employment in hospitals, medical and dental offices and billing and insurance companies. The latter, a 12-credit certificate, was designed for those interested in the fields of gerontology and/or social work. The certificates may be earned by themselves or applied toward an SJC bachelor's degree in either health administration or community health and human services.

Beginning this fall, the School of Arts and Sciences will offer a certificate in religious studies intended to prepare students for leadership roles and service in church-affiliated fields such as religious education, youth ministry, social outreach, marriage preparation and family ministry. According to Religious Studies Department Chair Dr. Thomas Petriano, the 18-credit certificate will be available in both Brooklyn and Suffolk. In addition to two required religious studies courses, students must choose 12 electives that combine religious studies classes and related courses from other departments, such as philosophy, psychology and social sciences.

Dr. Petriano also noted that St. Joseph's has been accepted into *Theta Alpha Kappa*, the National Honor Society for Religious Studies/Theology. Founded in 1976 at Manhattan College in Riverdale, NY, *Theta Alpha Kappa* honors excellence in these academic fields and currently hosts over 200 local chapters at public and private institutions throughout the U.S. ■

