During this year’s All College Day festivities, Ybor City Campus faculty member Katen Amin was recognized for all the terrific work he does and was awarded with the 2007 Employee Achievement Award in the Faculty category. Katen, who teaches in the A.S. program, has worked very hard to distinguish himself. Some of his accomplishments include:

- Participated in the HED grant which is a one year international business and trade certification for Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (spent 10 days in South Africa meeting with international representatives of companies such as GM, Toyota, etc.).
- Championed clicker technology at the Ybor City campus.
- Developed a marketing club that is in the process of being converted into a chapter of the collegiate Marketing Association.
- Organized a soccer team with HCC faculty and students to represent HCC in the community.
- Offered resume writing workshops in the community.
- Participated in the student success and retention committee.

In addition, Katen is developing a golf tournament to support a local charity and creating a business program for employees of Tampa Electric Company. He also serves as the chair-elect for Cluster 10. Katen is the first member of the Ybor City Campus to receive the college-wide award.
Parlor 1601 Gallery

It used to be a Metropolitan Deluxe store, but now the space, located beneath the Big City Tavern, is Parlor 1601 Gallery, which opened in late September. With 3,000 square feet of space, Parlor 1601 Gallery has become a true asset to the Ybor City Campus community.

The exhibition space is the result of a novel partnership between Centro YBOR and Hillsborough Community College that began last spring when the Center’s management asked Tracy Midulla Reller of the art faculty if her students would like to participate in an art show in conjunction with the Ybor City Arts Fiesta. She said yes and the artistic relationship continues to flourish.

The art show at Centro YBOR was such a successful display of creative talent that management offered HCC a bigger canvas to work with: an empty retail space on 7th Avenue to build their own art gallery.

Reller jumped at the offer but still had to pitch the idea to HCC. With an agreement in hand, she drafted the work into a class being taken this semester by HCC art students who busied themselves prepping the place for opening day.

“The Parlor gallery is 100% donated space, free of charge courtesy of the Centro YBOR owners, and a true gift to the college, the community and the students,” said Reller who has spearheaded the metamorphosis. “We recognize this as an excellent learning experience and a free exhibition venue for the college. Having this extra venue for the students is a unique and fortunate opportunity.”

By the end of the fall semester, the class will have hosted a total of six shows, most of them running about a week and a half each, including a student photo exhibition, a juried student exhibition and possibly a year-end closing faculty exhibition, said Reller. The gallery will be open from 6 pm to 10 pm for the following exhibitions:

- Nov. 29: Juried Student Exhibition
- Dec. 15: HCC Art Faculty, Staff and Alumni Exhibition
What would you do if you read this comment from a student on a survey—or better yet, in the closing paragraph of the student’s research paper: “Thank you for this assignment”? Would you pinch yourself to see if you were dreaming?

Judy Nolasco, English faculty at YB, is so used to it that it doesn’t even register anymore. Judy’s been getting feedback like this since Spring ’05, when she instituted her Personal Development Research Paper as the term paper assignment for her ENC-1102 classes.

It was an approach born out of frustration. “My students and I were just bored with the tired old topics they had been writing about for years,” Judy says. “And I was tired of grading their intentionally or unintentionally plagiarized papers.”

So one morning, during her daily check-in with her two adult daughters (who also are educators), Judy confided her predicament. The two young women shared how, in hindsight, they wished someone had encouraged them to think about real-life issues, e.g., what’s involved in buying a home of one’s own, paying for health insurance, etc.

A seed was planted. Judy started thinking about what other areas might be useful, in a practical way, for her students to research.

“I would ask them often throughout the year if they had started to make plans for college or for a job.” The answers were no surprise. “Many had not thought beyond the weekend, let alone what they would do after graduation.”

The seed began germinating. “I started thinking about where my current college students live, what kinds of jobs they might be interested in, and for some, what college, if any, they might like to attend after community college.”

And so a research paper assignment took shape that integrated just such personal, educational and professional issues. The paper is fully documented in MLA style and follows the traditional conventions of academic writing, except in one respect. “(My students) were happy to hear that I was going to allow them to write their paper in first person—except for the research part.”

That “research part” caused another innovation in this assignment. Judy asked Alicia Ellison, Librarian at YB, to help her students find credible sources for the topics. Alicia created a hand-out that guided students to information sources that support their decisions regarding their future life plans. “But even beyond giving them the factual data about best places to live or which college to choose,” Alicia says, “I tried to find students tools that would actually help them think through these issues and guide them on the journey of discovery that is this assignment.”

Judy and Alicia have been selected to present their collaborative project in February, 2008, at the annual conference of the Two-Year College Association (TYCA)-SE. TYCA is an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English. The conference will be in Louisville, KY.

There, they will share the secret to creating an assignment that engages students, teaches them to make research-based decisions, connects academics to their lives, and actually makes them “glad” (eventually) that they “had to write this paper.”

The overall assignment has proven worthwhile to many students who have told Judy that it helped them clarify their life plans. “I even had one young lady, who has since gone on to USF, write to me about how she is using her paper as a checklist, crossing off each goal she set for herself as she achieves it.”

Creating Assignments that Matter to Students

By Alicia Ellison

What started as a paper hand-out in January, 2005 has evolved into an online “research starter kit,” viewable here: http://hccfl.edu/facultyinfo/aellison2/jnolasco.html. Students have praised the kit as an invaluable aid in completing the assignment.

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On October 30th and 31st, the SGA sponsored a fall festival, bringing games and goodies to faculty, staff, students, and their families.

The plaza was filled with games and vendors, and happy students enjoyed candied apples and funnel cakes. The smiling kids pictured at right had just finished playing the basketball game, a smaller version of the game featured at fairs and carnivals. Besides the many games, students could create their own candied/caramel apples at one stand. They could go down the line and select from a number of available toppings.

The children from the Child Care Center joined in the fun with a costume day and a trip to gather treats. (Sorry for the fuzzy photo; it’s difficult to get everyone to stand still for long.)
Congratulations to the 2007 Hispanic Heritage Committee for presenting another exciting celebration. Committee Chair Luz Lorno planned an ambitious schedule, which included a presentation on Salvador Dali, an art exhibit called “En Español,” a poetry recital (in Spanish), a Latin Fiesta! (complete with food and entertainment for two shows, one in the afternoon and one in the evening), and a Travelogue, an exhibition of Hispanic art, culture, and dance.


Gallery

Carolyn Kossar has been very busy with the newly refurbished Ybor School of Visual and Performing Arts Galley.

In addition to working on the Hispanic Heritage Festival and arranging the En Español Art Exhibit, Carolyn has brought in other interesting artists to discuss their work.

Pictured at right between Dean Emery Alford and EAP Professor Bill Elmendorf (who served as translator) is Ecuadorian artist Maria Chiriboga, master woodcarver of polychrome devotional art, and her sculpture The Virgin of Quito.

Ms. Chiriboga gave a captivating discussion about her work to a room full of guests. One interesting fact: When she came through Customs, agents drilled holes in the pieces to ensure that she was not smuggling contraband.

Ms. Chiriboga appeared as a part of ARTE 2007: Tampa Bay’s Festival of the Americas.