

**April 22, 2016**

*Naugatuck Valley Community College, The Faculty Senate and the  
Office of Academic Affairs presents*

## **The Role of the Liberal Arts in Higher Education and Democracy**

8:00 AM - *Arrival and Continental Breakfast*

**Room T531**

9:00 AM - *Welcoming Remarks*

**Dr. Daisy Cocco DeFilippis, President  
Naugatuck Valley Community College**

**Kathy K. Taylor, Esq.  
President, Faculty Senate**

**Dr. Ron Picard  
Associate Dean, Academic Affairs**

9:15 AM - *Keynote Address: Why Liberal Education Matters*

**Dr. Michael S. Roth, President, Wesleyan University,**



Michael S. Roth '78 became the 16th president of Wesleyan University in 2007, after having served as Hartley Burr Alexander Professor of Humanities at Scripps College, Associate Director of the Getty Research Institute, and President of the California College of the Arts. At Wesleyan, he has increased grant support for students who receive financial aid and has overseen the launch of the Allbritton Center for the Study of Public Life, the Shapiro Creative Writing Center, and four new colleges emphasizing interdisciplinary research and cohort building: the College of the Environment, the College of Film and the Moving Image, the College of East Asian Studies and the College of Integrative Sciences. Author and curator (most notably of the exhibition "Sigmund Freud: Conflict and Culture," which opened at the Library of Congress in 1998), Roth describes his scholarly interests as centered on "how people make sense of the past." His fifth book, *Memory, Trauma and History: Essays on Living with the Past* was published in 2012. His most recent book, *Beyond the University: Why Liberal Education Matters*, is a stirring plea for the kind of education that has, since the founding of the nation, cultivated individual freedom, promulgated civic virtue, and instilled hope for the future. He regularly publishes essays, book reviews, and commentaries in the national media and scholarly journals. He continues to teach undergraduate courses and through Coursera has offered MOOCs, the most recent being "How to Change the World."

10:45 AM - Concurrent Sessions

11:45 AM

Presenters:

- **Jon Brammer**, Instructor of English and Humanities  
Three Rivers Community College

**Contemplative Pedagogy: Embedding Humanity in the Classroom**

**Room T645**

Contemplative pedagogical approaches in the liberal arts provide a strategy for embedding meta-skills crucial to any occupation in the vast majority of content courses and professional programs. Given that most graduating students will shift through multiple career iterations in their lifetimes, it seems both pragmatic and ethical to focus on a broad base of practical traits that can lead to success in any employment context.

In this session, a brief history of the value of liberal arts will serve as a backdrop for the idea of meta-skill development through a contemplative approach. The presentation will include theoretical ideas about the value of contemplative practices and several demonstrations of technique that can be applied easily in a classroom setting.

- **Bernie Fitzpatrick**, Instructor of Social Sciences  
Naugatuck Valley Community College  
**Donald Trump and the End of the Civil Society**

**Room T646**

Michael Roth in *Beyond the University: Why Liberal Education Matters* states that Democracy needs highly educated people because the people are the Sovereigns in the USA. He is defending Liberal Education as a means to this relevant need in a Democracy. Robert Putnam in *Bowling Alone* believes "Civil Society" is dying because of the lack of "community contact" that Bowling Leagues and other community activities offered to society.

I posit that the Donald Trump phenomena is an excellent example of both of these statements. Mr. Trump's lack of civility and decorum in all of the debates and the outlandish and often untrue statements that he makes, denigrating numerous people and classes of people, are examples of the loss of civility and a "Civil Society". The large angry crowds that Mr. Trump "whips" into heightened frenzies are further examples of this loss of the "Civil Society".

- **Jane Fried, Ph.D.**, Professor Emerita  
Central CT State University  
Principal, Learning with Mind and Heart

**Integrating Academic Rigor and Personal Engagement: Some Ideas for Answering the Eternal Question, "Why Do I Need to Know This?"**

**Room T647**

Learning to compare and contrast, to evaluate evidence and make well-reasoned choices... all of these cognitive skills are essential to effective participation in any group that uses democratic processes. Helping students understand the link between liberal learning, good thinking and life's serious issues is challenging. Students tend to focus on course content and not realize that the analytic skills they learn all contribute to their future effectiveness as members of communities, families and other groups. By combining both academic rigor and awareness of the developmental process of *self-authorship* faculty members can engage students in the learning process in powerful ways. Participants will learn methods for creating classroom processes that integrate academic rigor and personal engagement to support both student learning and intellectual curiosity.

- **Richard Gerber, Ph.D.**, Professor of History  
Southern CT State University  
Adjunct Professor of History, Charter Oak State College

**Enlarging History: The Historical Studies Curriculum at Charter Oak State College**

**Room T648**

Charter Oak State College's pending concentration (major) in Historical Studies enlarges the history curriculum from the conventional emphasis on historical or geographical time periods and thematic topics to a wider historical dimension. Historical Studies includes courses of an historical nature offered in programs other than History. These might include (a) professionally-oriented courses (American Business History; The History of Montessori Education), and (b) Arts and Sciences courses (British Literature of the Middle Ages; The Symphony from Mozart to Stravinsky; The History of Biology – Aristotle to Pasteur). The expansion from History to Historical Studies creates flexibility, offering students a panoply of choices – and credits -- not now available.

This presentation explains the purpose of Historical Studies, the structure of the new program and the role of academic advisers. The presenter wishes reactions from the listeners about the idea of the new concentration and welcomes recommendations to improve it.

12:00 PM - Concurrent Sessions

1:00 PM

Presenters:

- **Rose-Mary Rodrigues**, Coordinator of PA 12-40 (Developmental Ed)  
Naugatuck Valley Community College  
and  
**Robert Sheftel**, Director of the Academic Center for Excellence  
Naugatuck Valley Community College

**Leading with Love in the Liberal Arts: The Democratic Role of Academic Support Centers**

**Room T645**

The Liberal Arts allow students to graduate better prepared for leadership roles. Students who study the liberal arts learn important integrative and creative thinking skills. The student with a liberal arts education will have transferable skills that others may not. Educating the whole student will make for the best future employee, as these students are prepared for today's jobs and the jobs of tomorrow that may not exist yet.

Using effective, practical strategies, Academic Support Centers democratically instill the love of liberal arts regardless of student background. Furthermore, students have access to a diverse group of tutors similar to the demographics of the student body.

Academic Support Centers value openness and fairness for all, student success, academic excellence, intellectual pursuit, diversity among students and staff, assessment, accountability, continuous and responsive improvement. We seek to empower our students to be self-learners.

12:00 PM - Concurrent Sessions Continued

1:00 PM

- **Toni Ryan, Ph.D.**, Adjunct Professor, Department of Educational Leadership  
Central Connecticut State University

**Humanitas: Using the Liberal Arts for Liberation in Educational Leadership  
Degree Programs**

**Room T646**

Professional programs in Educational Leadership typically help aspiring leaders to develop practical skills to operate programs and provide educational leadership. With the multitude of demands leaders face, there is little time for critical explorations of the impact of schooling on those whom schools serve. Philosopher Michel Foucault observed, "people know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what they do does." This session investigates the power of liberal arts to liberate participants in educational leadership programs from the limits that the discourses of accountability and measurement have imposed. It offers an approach to Educational Leadership that is grounded in critical pedagogy, and asks leaders to examine their assumptions regarding the purpose of education and of leadership. Examples of new directions for critical investigations in Educational Leadership coursework will be provided.

- **Chester Schnepf**, Chair of Humanities  
Gateway Community College

**Room T647**

**Literature is not Just A Dry Retelling: Include Yourself Whenever Possible**

Every teacher has had a journey in life which must be brought forward besides the pages of the textbooks, and when a teacher is willing to share personal narratives with students, he or she really becomes an educator and more importantly a human being. As the Greeks so correctly put it "A life unexamined is not worth living."

- **Rick Walker**, Adjunct Professor of Writing and Research  
Charter Oak State College

**A Practical Strategy for Epistemological Engagement of Non-Traditional Learners  
in an Intensive, Required, Online Writing and College Research Class**

**Room T648**

Epistemologies are funny things. They seem to change with the times and student engagement in the creation of knowledge fluctuates correspondingly. We will discuss the nature of debate vs dialogue and critical thinking and liberal education in our complex culture of vast information, relativism, distractions and ambivalence, and look at the potential of online teaching and self-empowerment. We will reference the success of the Charter Oak State College IDS 101 Cornerstone Seminar; an intensive online class in college writing and research. In this course students choose their own topics so it is vital to meet them wherever they are in their knowledge base and careers, and encourage and empower them to formulate or grow their own epistemology in a community of scholars for the common good. A bibliography will be provided.

*Naugatuck Valley Community College engages in conversations on  
diverse, inclusive and civil topics of interest.*