

Anouk Verheyden-Gillikin

Trained scientists can observe the growth rings of a tree and provide a detailed biography of that tree. But when there is an absence of rings—such as in tropical mangrove trees—that’s when **Anouk Verheyden-Gillikin** stands out from the crowd.

Because of her experience in cutting-edge research into the “cycles” of growth in mangrove trees—detailed in a paper entitled “Annual Cyclicality in High-Resolution Stable Carbon and Oxygen Isotope Ratios in the Wood of the Mangrove Tree *Rhizophora Mucronata*” published in the December 2004 edition of *Plant, Cell and Environment* magazine—Verheyden-Gillikin was invited this past February to be the keynote lecturer at a prestigious workshop in Potsdam, Germany.

Her appearance at the workshop placed Verheyden-Gillikin among 50 of the world’s elite dendrochronologists—including Graham Farquhar who is credited with developing the isotope model for plants—and it gave her just one more “world experience” she can impart upon her students here at SUNY Orange.

“By measuring isotopes in the wood, you see a cyclicality. From the cyclicality, you essentially see the rings,” she says of her research on tropical trees, which generate little or no visible ring boundaries because tropical climates don’t have the significant seasonal changes necessary to create visible tree rings. “They are invisible rings that you can extract through a chemical analysis. It is very new. In 2004, three publications came out on the subject, and I was one of them.”



Concluding her first year on the College’s faculty, Verheyden-Gillikin has been a welcome addition to the Biology Department. She brings a unique perspective to the classroom, thanks to extensive tours through

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Europe as a child growing up in Brussels; a student exchange trip to Thailand at age 18; a one year stay at England’s University of Manchester; and visits to Sri Lanka and Kenya for research projects related to her master’s and doctorate degrees.

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that science is not something that you *have to accept*. As long as you know the limitations, then science works fine, but if you don’t take those limitations into consideration, then science doesn’t work,” she says. “By integrating dendrochronology into my classes, I hope students will have a better understanding of the global carbon cycle, the increase in carbon dioxide levels and global climate change.”

Currently, she is working with Vassar College professor **Brian McAdoo** on a National Science Foundation grant proposal that would provide money for community college instructors to be involved in research. The current proposal is for a trip to Indonesia to study the effects of the recent tsunami on the mangrove ecosystem.

In her short time on campus, Verheyden-Gillikin has represented SUNY Orange on an international stage and she’s injected an international and global flavor to her lectures, with a focus on challenging her students to think beyond their own limitations.

Faculty Collaborators

Stacey Moegenburg

During **Stacey Moegenburg's** 17-year tenure on the faculty at SUNY Orange, computer-aided design (CAD) software revolutionized the architecture profession, forever altering the private sector as well as the educational community. Now, new waves of technological and software advances are once again changing the face of architecture, and Moegenburg is shepherding the College's battle to keep pace.

Through an extensive benchmarking review of the College's curriculum over the past two years, Moegenburg has positioned SUNY Orange to retain its deserved reputation as the pre-eminent feeding ground for local employers and regional architectural institutions.

A large portion of Moegenburg's work has occurred behind the scenes, in collaboration with her talented team of adjunct professors, as she's infused the most recent software applications into the curriculum. But, the most visible example of her efforts is a sparkling new CAD laboratory that will be unveiled on the third floor of the Bio-Tech Building this spring.

Early in her analysis of the SUNY Orange curriculum, Moegenburg conducted a series of employer and graduate surveys. The results cemented in her mind that SUNY Orange graduates excelled in production drawings (blue prints) and freehand drawings, two strengths she was committed to retaining.



Visiting sister institutions also proved to be very beneficial. "Checking out other facilities gave me ideas for a new lab. Seeing students' work helped me gauge our projects and assignments. Plus, I realized that architectural technology programs all deal with the same challenges.

"This lab will provide us two benefits. It allows us to catch up with the technology and it gives our students a better working space that enhances their academic and learning experience," Moegenburg explains. Along with the on-campus lab, students will have the chance to

study and review plans throughout construction of the College's Newburgh branch campus, which will give them a "true learning laboratory" experience as well.

All of the changes are aimed at helping students become more employable, or preparing them for successful transfer to another college once they've acquired their associate's degree.

"We are trying to switch to a multimedia approach," Moegenburg says of the programmatic revisions. "Now, students leave here with a portfolio that shows what they've done. Moving forward, we want students' portfolios to showcase their software abilities."

With the next technological upgrade just over the horizon, SUNY Orange's architectural technology program will be ready to capitalize, thanks to Moegenburg's hard work, dedication and vision.

Jean Halpern

With the advent of simulation technology and an array of "life-like" mannekins that offer training scenarios covering virtually every potential medical situation, nursing programs are now able to provide students with "real life" experiences before they acquire their first full-time job.

During her Fall 2006 sabbatical, **Jean Halpern**, an associate nursing professor at SUNY Orange, spearheaded the College's drive toward integrating simulation technology



into its curriculum by investigating the entire spectrum of the technology and its implementation. She traveled 8,669 miles and visited 11 labs and universities, spanning from Seattle, Wash. to Springfield, Mass.

"Simulation technology allows students to feel more comfortable and gives them the sense that they can handle any situation, because they have encountered it before," Halpern says.

A veteran of more than 35 years in nursing and education, a semester spent examining the latest technology energized Halpern as she unfolded a road map she thinks the College can follow to enhance its ability to produce expertly trained and competent nurses. With strong leadership from **Pat Slesinski**, newly appointed chair of the Nursing Department, Halpern has begun eyeing how the College

can more effectively and efficiently implement the technology into the nursing program.

"Today's students are different learners than we were in past generations. They are from the technological age. It only seems logical that we craft programs that meet their needs," Halpern says. "Simulation provides a safe environment for learning, is non-threatening, and promotes better clinical judgment and critical thinking."

The College already possesses one SimMan, a life-size male mannekin, and two Nursing Kids, designed to replicate a child between the ages of 6 and 8. By acquiring additional mannekins, including SimBaby, Halpern envisions countless collaborative possibilities between the College and the healthcare providers of Orange County.

"Simulation is expensive, but it is better for students to learn, and make mistakes, in the lab setting rather than the hospital. Regular mannekins, classroom work or case studies can't help you do that," she adds. "Also, folks in the community realize that they can really use this technology, and it would be great to have the College as the background for the community to learn."

Halpern contends the residents of Orange County will benefit most from the advent of simulation technology because it breeds more confident practitioners, whether they are veteran nurses or new graduates of the SUNY Orange program.

Kevin Scott

Since taking over the SUNY Orange Symphonic Band in January 2006, **Kevin Scott** has sculpted a remarkable turnaround for the group by reaching out to the community, plucking talented artists, and infusing his dedicated, professional and workmanlike attitude into his performers' practices and concerts.

So when Scott pronounces his vision of the symphonic band serving as a beacon not only for the College, but the entire Hudson Valley and beyond, it's easy to believe he will accomplish his goal.

"I'd like to take this band into New York City and perform a program, to let people know that the SUNY Orange Symphonic Band is not just geared to a small community college," Scott says. "I don't see our band members as strictly performers, but as ambassadors for the College. We want to reflect a positive image, in our music, in our attitude and in the way we carry ourselves."

Scott would like to create an outlet for performers desiring to showcase their talents, while giving music aficionados a place to enjoy quality concerts. And now that the College has partnered with the City of Middletown to practice and perform at the historic Paramount Theater, he sees no reason why the band won't continue to prosper.

"Many of the high school bands in this

area are excellent, so there is a talent base there," he adds. "And moving to the Paramount has been a huge ego boost for the performers, and it makes them feel more at home in a community setting rather than a campus setting."

With assistance from **Mark Strunsky**, chair of the Arts and Communication Department, Scott plans on broadening his outreach into the community. He is intent on fostering strong collaborative relationships with high school bands, as well as local performers and composers, in order to add more diversity and talent to the band.

"My hope is we can create an outlet where those kids who play in high school bands now can come to keep their music at a high level, or 10 years down the road they can come back and play for pleasure. Regardless of their situation, this band is a place they can call home," Scott adds.

Scott maintains there is much more work to be done, but he's already accomplished so much in a short time that the band's future, as well as its present, is clearly in good hands.



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