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School of Education and Psychology

GRADUATE DIVISION



Touro College

EDUCATION CHRONICLE

ISSUE 1
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Focus on Literacy

This issue of Touro College Education Chronicle highlights the
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN LITERACY PROGRAM.

Elaine Nikolakakos,
*Director, Master of Science
in Literacy Program*

212-463-0400 Ext. 327

**Monday to Thursday,
9:00 am – 5:00 pm**

Friday 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

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The Master of Science in Literacy Program was created at Touro College to provide professional public and private school educators with an integrated, interdisciplinary course of study that is based on current research and theories of learning and teaching. Students successfully completing the program are eligible for New York State certification at both the Birth-Grade 6 and Grades 5-12 levels. The Master of Science in Literacy Program began in the winter of 2002. By design, the program presents courses that allow its students to develop a broad understanding of the teaching of literacy from Birth to Grade 12. According to the program's Director, it is vitally important that an elementary school teacher be aware of the

approaches to literacy that are used in the middle schools and high schools. Conversely, it is essential for middle school and high school teachers to under-

stand literacy not only at those levels, but at the elementary school level as well. This global approach to the teaching of literacy helps shape the teacher's curriculum and methodology and helps prevent what Professor Nikolakakos refers to as



Professor Elaine Nikolakakos

“instructional finger pointing.” Professor Nikolakakos notes that there is a “small window of opportunity” in which educators can help their students develop literacy skills and learn to read. With that in mind, the literacy program at Touro College emphasizes early literacy and complements it with a comprehensive

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Focus on Literacy

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study of ways to help adolescent and adult readers who are experiencing difficulty mastering their reading skills. The needs of students whose first language is not English are also recognized and addressed in the teaching literacy program.

The Masters of Science in Literacy Program is growing. Initial enrollment included 10 students. This fall that number has swelled to 100. As the student population grows, so too does the faculty expand. Current

professors all bring to the program vast experience in teaching literacy in an urban setting. They have practical classroom, school-based, and system-wide experience, which is readily shared with their students. Full-time staff includes, among other notable individuals, a Reading Recovery specialist. Adjuncts are active teachers or supervisors as well as recently retired educators.

When asked to highlight a few courses that exemplify the mission and focus of the Master of Science in Literacy Program, Professor Nikolakakos is quick to mention *Basic Reading Instruction* and *Literacy in the Bilingual/Multicultural Classroom*.

The basic reading instruction course, which is taught by Professor Nikolakakos, explores the current approaches to teaching reading in a developmental context; the creation of language-rich environments in the classroom and the home; the nature of oral and written communication; assessment of

language and reading skills; factors influencing literacy development at home and school—including the influence of television, DVDs, and computers; approaches to organizing functional reading programs; and approaches to working with English language learners and students with

special needs. In keeping with the program's approach to a global literacy program, the first half of the course is devoted to the student population ranging from birth to grade 6, and the second half to instruction for students in grades 5-12. Special attention is paid to understanding the important role home factors play in literacy development at all ages. *Literacy in the Bilingual/Multicultural Classroom* analyzes current research and theories of first and second language acquisition as related to methods of teaching, listening, speaking, reading and writing in a classroom that is multicultural and bilingual. Teachers learn to better understand the impact learning to speak and

communicate in more than one language has on a student whose first language is one other than English. The concept of "language acquisition confusion" is explored and techniques to address this phenomenon are presented. The importance of the use of multicultural literature as part of a comprehensive literacy program is also discussed and suggested readings are shared and presented for possible use in the teachers' own classrooms. Cultural issues and their impact on developing effective literacy skills are part of this course, which focuses on the birth to grade 6 population during the first half of the semester and grades 5-12 during the last half of the semester.

Modern technology and its effects on the communication skills of today's young people are explored in the course *Education Technology in General Education and Special Education*. Teachers look at computer-assisted learning and other instructional technology devices that facilitate communication, learning and related functions for general education and special education students. The use of technology is presented to show how it can foster literacy acquisition and assist students with reading disabilities. The computer as a learning tool and its *direct* application in the classroom is an integral part of this comprehensive course that also studies recent developments in the field of assistive technology for students with special needs.

Professor Nikolakakos is quite interested to see how the New

"Professor Nikolakakos is always willing to take the time to help me with any problems. I have always received individual attention. Registration is quick and classes are always available."

— R. Madera, Student

York City Department of Education's uniform curriculum approach to literacy will fare when it is introduced in many of our public schools this year. Noting that many of the students enrolled in the Master of Science in Literacy Program work in the public schools, she believes it is imperative that the program's students understand the process of curriculum evaluation. To that end, the program integrates into its courses methods and approaches used to evaluate curriculum and ways to supplement curriculum to make it more meaningful to the children. "We show

"The literacy program at Touro College truly accommodates educators. Classes are small and flexible. The professors are knowledgeable in terms of the latest research and trends in literacy, and they are cooperative and understanding."

— C. Ramirez, Student

our students how to take the cur-

riculum and adapt it to their classroom, to make it local," says the professor. "Our aim is to teach teachers how to teach reading, so that their students will develop a love for reading and a love of reading. We emphasize the three Rs: Read, Read, Read."

For more information about the Master of Science in Literacy Program at Touro College, you may contact Professor Elaine Nikolakakos at 212-463-0400 Ext. 327, Monday to Thursday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm; Friday 9:00 am – 2:00 pm, or log on to our website: www.touro.edu

Faculty Profiles

Yuriy Karpov, Ph.D.
Associate Dean for
Graduate Studies;
Professor of Psychology
& Education

212-463-0400 Ext. 200

Monday to Thursday,
9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Friday 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Dr. Yuriy Karpov, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, began his professional career as a student of psychology at Moscow State University, in Russia, where he earned his bachelor's, master's, and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in educational and developmental psychology. It was during his study

and tenure at Moscow State University that Dr. Karpov was intro-



Dr. Yuriy Karpov

duced to the theory and philosophy of the world-renowned Russian

educational psychologist, L. S. Vygotsky. Having performed in-depth research in Vygotsky's ideas in child development, education and assessment, Dr. Karpov formulated and experimentally substantiated new criteria for children's cognitive development. The results of his studies were published in a number of professional journals. Some of his writings were translated into English and Spanish. Two textbooks also resulted from the research, one of which is still a required reading for graduate students at the Department of Psychology at Moscow State University. Students worldwide have been

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Faculty Profiles

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inspired by Dr. Karpov's works. At least four doctoral dissertations as well as 10 master's thesis projects have replicated his research or have used the data as the basis for new studies by Russian, Chinese, and Vietnamese researchers.

Shortly after arriving in the United States in 1991, Dr. Karpov established himself as a productive researcher in the field of educational and developmental psychology. He was Visiting Associate Professor of Psychology and Human Development at the Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, where he taught courses on child development, educational psychology, and assessment of intelligence. In 1994, he joined the staff of the Graduate

School of Education and Psychology at Touro College, where he teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on child development and cognitive education. At Touro College, he continues to study ways to implement Vygotsky's ideas in education and in the analysis of children's cognitive and metacognitive development.

A prolific author, Dr. Karpov's scholarly research and ideas have appeared in such prestigious journals as *Contemporary Psychology*, *American Psychologist*, and *Educational Psychologist*. His most recent article, "Internalization of children's problem solving and individual differences in learning" has been accepted for publication in an upcoming issue of *Cognitive Development*. He is a contributor to the recently released Cam-

bridge University Press publication, *Vygotsky's Theory and Practice in Cultural Contexts*, which includes his chapter, "Development through the life span: A neo-Vygotskian perspective." Dr. Karpov's latest book, *Children's Learning and Development in Socio-Cultural Context: The Neo-Vygotskian Approach*, has been accepted for publication by Cambridge University Press in 2004. The book will introduce to American psychologists and educators an innovative approach to child development that has been created by followers of Vygotsky.

For more information about the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Touro College, you may contact Dr. Karpov or log on to our website at: www.touro.edu

Boris Gindis, Ph.D. **Director, Bilingual/Bicultural Certification Program;** **Professor of Psychology and Education;** **Administrator of Online Programs**

212-463-0400 Ext. 299

Monday to Thursday,
9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Friday 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Dr. Boris Gindis performs many tasks in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Touro College. As Director of the Bilingual/Bicultural Certification Program, Dr. Gindis coordinates and

monitors the New York State bilingual certification program in special education, school psychology, speech pathology, school social work and guidance counselor. As Professor of Psychology and Education, he teaches courses in psychology and special education, including *Assessment of Individual Differences: A Socio-Cultural Perspective*; *Cognitive Assessment and Intervention*; *Assessment of Social-Emotional Functioning*, and *Mental Retardation*; and *Developmental Disabilities*. As Administrator of Online Programs, Dr. Gindis developed an online format of bilingual courses at the Graduate School of

Education and Psychology. Students are now able to take courses in the comfort of their own homes, a major convenience for many students who are also working parents. Since the introduction of these online courses, the number of students in the Bilingual/Bicultural Certification Program has increased from 80 to more than 170.

Dr. Gindis brings to his many tasks at Touro College more than 20 years experience in school psychology. A graduate of the State University (Ryazan, Russia), where he earned his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in education, Dr. Gindis also possesses a Doctor of

Philosophy degree in developmental and educational psychology from the Moscow Academic Research Institute of General and Educational Psychology, Russia. His two-year post-doctoral studies in school psychology were conducted at the City University of New York. He is a licensed psychologist and a certified bilingual school psychologist (Russian) in New York State.



Dr. Boris Gindis

An expert in the Social-Cultural Activity Theory (also known as

“Vygotsky’s Theory”) Dr. Gindis has written extensively on the application of Vygotsky’s scientific legacy

to the field of school psychology and special education. He was a guest editor to two psychological journals, *Educational Psychologist*, and *School Psychology International* in 1995 and 1996. Dr. Gindis is a co-editor of, and a contributor to a comprehensive volume titled

Vygotsky’s Theory of Education in Cultural Contexts, which was pub-

lished by the Cambridge University Press this year. He authored a number of book chapters and has published articles in such prestigious professional journals as *Remedial and Special Education*, *Culture & Psychology*, *School Psychology International*, *NASP Communique*, *Educational Psychologist*, *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *School Psychology Quarterly*, *Mental Retardation*, *The Journal of Special Education*, and *American Journal of Mental Retardation*.

For more information about the Bilingual/Bicultural Certification Program or Online Bilingual Courses at Touro College, contact Dr. Gindis or log on to our website: www.touro.edu

Roslyn A. Haber, Ph.D.
Director, TESOL/ESL Program

212-463-0400

Monday to Thursday,
9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Friday 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Touro College is proud to announce that Dr. Roslyn Haber has joined the staff of the Graduate School of Education and Psychology. Dr. Haber will serve as Director of the TESOL/ESL Program, as well as teach a number of courses.

Dr. Haber has been in the field of New York City education for 34 years, with degrees from New York University (Bachelor of Arts – English); and Teachers College, Columbia University (Master of

Arts – Curriculum and Teaching; Master of Science – Educational Administration; Master of Arts – Special Education; and Doctor of Philosophy – Special Education/Administration). She has taught courses in TESOL and special education at Adelphi University as well as Fordham University, where she also taught evaluation and assessment. At Touro she teaches courses in special education, testing and TESOL.

Dr. Haber is a recognized expert in testing, assessment, bilingual education and special education. A private practitioner in assessment of children’s educational needs, she is the co-author of the Language Assessment Battery (LAB), used in the New York City school system

for the past 25 years to help identify the appropriate services and programs needed to support Hispanic students with language learning



Dr. Roslyn Haber

issues. In her private practice, she has provided expert advice to

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School-Based Support Teams and to the parents and teachers of children who are multi-handicapped. In 1990, Dr. Haber was the recipient of the United States Special Educator Award from the Council for Exceptional Children. She has lectured to department of education officials, government leaders and heads of colleges and universities throughout the world on the topics of special education and bilingual education. She has addressed audiences in Wales, China, England, France, Spain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Ger-

many and the former Czechoslovakia. She recently returned from a lecture engagement in Vienna, Austria, where she spoke on current issues in bilingual education. Later this year, Dr. Haber will be presenting to a group of educators and government officials in Dublin, Ireland.

The Master of Science in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) Program in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology received New York State accreditation last spring.

Dr. Haber was the catalyst behind the design and structure of the course of study. According to the director, the goal of the TESOL/ESL program is to develop teachers at Touro College who will be able to help prepare their students with the social and academic skills needed to successfully face the challenges of the 21st Century's global community.

For more information about the TESOL/ESL Program contact Dr. Haber or log on to our website: www.touro.edu

Mel Imas, Ph.D.
Director, School Psychology
Department

212-463-0400 Ext.552

Monday to Thursday,
9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Dr. Mel Imas assumed the directorship of the School Psychology Department in the fall of 2001. At that time, the school psychology program, which is accredited by the New York State Education Department, was in jeopardy of ending. Under Dr. Imas's leadership, however, enrollment has increased steadily. In the fall of 2003, there will be 100 students in the School Psychology Program at Touro College working toward their 60-credit master's degree.

Dr. Imas brings to the Director's position 37 years of experience in education and school psychology.



Dr. Mel Imas

He holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and physiology from Hunter College and a master's degree in school psychology from the City University of New York. He was awarded his Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Sarasota, Florida, in 1972, where he specialized in assisting adolescents in need of psychologi-

cal support and intervention. He is certified by New York State as a school psychologist and as a teacher of general science and biology. Dr. Imas is State-certified in California as a teacher for Effective Training Associates.

Throughout his career in education, Dr. Imas has served as a classroom teacher, a school psychologist, and a program administrator. He was also the co-founder of Pinebrook Educational Group, Inc., a privately owned teacher center/consultant group that was affiliated with the College of New Rochelle, Monmouth College, and the University of Hartford in the late 1970s and early 1980s. During that time, he taught graduate courses in communication skills, self-esteem and coping with stress. Dr. Imas was also responsible for conducting research to identify the educational needs of teachers and

their students, developing curriculum, and preparing course schedules. More than 7,500 educators participated in over 50 different graduate-level education courses through the Pinebrook Educational Group. Dr. Imas has also served as a consultant to a variety of professional organizations including Bell Labs, Family Services of Westchester, and the Board of Cooperative Educational Services.

Dr. Imas's educational background and professional experiences have helped him structure the school psychologist program at Touro College with an emphasis on practical application to real-life situations. In almost all

instances, members of the program's faculty are practicing school psychologists. Dr. Imas himself teaches the *Introduction to Psychology* course, which sets the tone for the empathetic approach to understanding the role, responsibilities and challenges of the school psychologist.

The scope of responsibilities of the school psychologist is changing, especially in the New York City Department of Education. School-based Support Teams were, until this year, comprised of an educational evaluator, a school social worker, and a school psychologist. The educational evaluator posi-

tion has been eliminated, bringing the configuration of the team more in line with the New York State model, in which the school psychologist performs all three functions. With that in mind, Dr. Imas is in the process of developing a new course of study—*Contemporary Issues in School Psychology*—in which students will explore and study the latest research, laws, trends, and techniques relevant to school psychology in a 21st century school setting.

For more information about the School Psychology Department at Touro College, you may contact Dr. Imas or log on to our website: www.touro.edu

Ronald Lehrer, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology,
Chair of Graduate Studies
in Education and
Special Education

212-463-0400 Ext. 552

Monday to Thursday,
9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Friday 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

The Graduate Studies in Education and Special Education Program at Touro College, under the leadership of Dr. Ronald Lehrer, offers students the opportunity to earn a Master of Science degree in Education and Special Education at one of three levels: Early Childhood (Birth-Grade 2); Childhood (elementary school:

Grades 1-6); and Middle Childhood (middle school: Grades 5-9). Dr. Lehrer serves as Chair of the Graduate Studies in Education and Special Education Program, and also teaches a number of courses.

Dr. Lehrer holds a number of undergraduate and graduate degrees in the field of education and social work. He received his bachelor's degree from Hunter College with a major in music and a concentration in education. He has a master's degree in special education from Brooklyn College, where he studied with the noted existentialist psychotherapist Rollo May. He completed his Master of Social Work



Dr. Ronald Lehrer

degree at Hunter College, and was awarded his Doctor of Philosophy degree from New York University in Clinical Social Work.

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He is a practicing psychotherapist and has been in private practice for many years.

Dr. Lehrer began his 30-year career in education as an assistant summer school teacher in the early days of the Head Start Program. That experience was followed by seven years with the New York City Department of Education, where he served as a teacher of special education, Kindergarten-Age 21. During those years, Dr. Lehrer helped create a model primary school program for children with special needs ranging from the gifted and talented to students with moderate and severe disabilities. The school demonstrated that with the appropriate human and

fiscal resources "inclusion" – a concept not embraced by educators at that time – could succeed. This experience was to shape Dr. Lehrer's approach to teaching special education in today's society. Students studying at Touro College are taught how inclusion can work and how to develop attainable goals for all students regardless of their learning differences and disabilities.

Among his many published scholarly works, Dr. Lehrer is the author of *Nietzsche's Presence in Freud's Life and Thought* (1995), and was a contributing editor for *Nietzsche and Depth Psychology* (1999). His articles on psychotherapy and related topics

have been published in *The Psychoanalytic Review*; *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*; *Philosophy, Psychiatry and Psychology*; *The Newsletter of the Society for the Advancement of Philosophy and Psychiatry*; and the *Freud Encyclopedia*. He is a contributor to the soon-to-be-published *Edinburgh Encyclopedia of Psychoanalysis*, and his book review will soon appear in *Isis*, a professional journal about the history of science.

For more information about the Graduate Studies in Education and Special Education Program at Touro College, you may contact Dr. Lehrer or log on to our website: www.touro.edu

Maestros Excelentes Program at Touro College

One of the goals of the Graduate School of Education and Psychology is to develop a solid working relationship with community-based organizations and other schools of higher education. Dr. Lehrer is proud to announce that Touro College and the National Puerto Rican Forum have forged such a relationship through the Forum's *Maestros Excelentes* Program. The *Maestros Excelentes* Program, funded by the United States Department of Labor, was created to train and support New York City teachers and prospective teachers. It assists the Department of Education in addressing the ongoing need for certified teachers and to improve school diversity in New York City and Puerto Rico by creating a cadre of qualified teachers. Program participants are offered test preparation for the New York State Teacher Certification Examination (NYSTCE); professional development in pedagogical instruction; and goal-setting and career counseling. This fall the test preparation course will be offered at Touro College's West 23rd Street campus for Touro College students as well as those attending other institutions of higher education.

Nilda Soto Ruiz, Ph.D.
Director, School
Administration and
Supervision

212-463-0400 Ext. 796

Monday to Thursday,
9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Friday 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

The School Administration and Supervision Program is under the leadership of Dr. Nilda Soto Ruiz. She joined the staff of the Graduate School of Education and Psychology in the fall of 2002, and serves as Director of the program. Dr. Soto Ruiz's first tasks were to develop and implement the reorganization of the program's administrative support office and to create a process to ensure that faculty is continually provided with the most current information regarding New York City learning standards and changes in licensing and certification as prescribed by the New York State Education Department, as well as other policy and procedural modifications that impact on the duties and responsibilities of school administrators and supervisors. Dr. Soto Ruiz was more than prepared for these challenges, having brought to her new assignment 36 years of experience with the New York City Department of Education where she served at various levels as a teacher, supervisor and administrator.

Dr. Soto Ruiz is a graduate of the City College of New York, where she earned a bachelor's degree with a major in Spanish. At New York University she received her master's degree in foreign languages in an

elementary setting. Her Doctor of Philosophy degree was conferred on her by New York University, where she specialized in administration/supervision and bilingual education. Beginning as a teacher of common branches, Dr. Soto Ruiz has also taught English as a Second Language and foreign languages. Her supervisory experiences began as a teacher trainer and continued with district-wide responsibilities as Director of Professional Development, Deputy Community Superintendent and Community School District Superintendent, District

9, in the Bronx. At Central headquarters, Dr. Soto Ruiz served as Deputy Executive Director of Recruitment, Chief Executive for Instruction, and most recently, Superintendent for Monitoring and School Improvement. Her college-level teaching experience includes New York University, The College of New Rochelle, and Hunter College.

Of her many professional associations, Dr. Soto Ruiz's membership on the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York is one of the most important to her current assignment at Touro College. She serves as Chair on two of the Board's committees: the Committee on Academic Affairs and Research, and the Committee on Community

Colleges. Dr. Soto Ruiz is the Vice-chair of the Committee on Fiscal Affairs. The experience Dr. Soto Ruiz has received by serving on this prestigious Board has translated into a more effective and efficient way for her staff to relate to and to assist City University students enrolling in the for the Supervision

and Administration Program at Touro College. Her first-hand knowledge and understanding of the students' transcripts help to make the transition from the City University to Touro College an easy one. Chairing committees and participating on



Dr. Nilda Soto Ruiz

others offer Dr. Soto Ruiz the opportunity to stay informed about the latest trends and issues in education including the achievement of standards, licensing and accreditation, and which curriculum is being used and how its effectiveness is being evaluated. This information is shared with faculty members, who, in turn, present it to their students. By receiving the most current data on educational policies and practices, aspiring supervisors and administrators will be better prepared to move up the career ladder.

In June of 2003, Dr. Soto Ruiz participated in the national conference of the American Council on Education. The conference, held in

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Washington, D.C., brought together trustees and their representatives from major colleges and universities across the country. Dr. Soto Ruiz served on the panel. *Trustees Perspectives on Leadership*. Other

panel members included the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Syracuse University, the former Commissioner of Higher Education from the state of Maryland, and a Trustee from the state of Kentucky.

For more information about the School Administration and Supervision Program at Touro College, you may contact Dr. Soto Ruiz or log on to our website: www.touro.edu

The Committee on Educational Philosophy and Liberal Arts to be Established

George Cohen, Ph.D.

Professor of Education

212-463-0400 Ext. 769

**Monday to Thursday,
9:00 am – 5:00 pm**

Friday 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

The Graduate School of Education and Psychology is planning to create The Committee on Educational Philosophy and Liberal Arts, which will be coordinated by Dr. George Cohen.

A major programmatic function of the Committee on Educational Philosophy and Liberal Arts will be the formal integration of liberal arts and sciences with the general and specific pedagogical cores. For example, one professor of English literature teaches a course in language and literature for middle school students. Another professor has a background in literature and the arts as well as expertise in teaching adolescents. That professor teaches the course, *Historical and Cultural Studies for Middle School Students*. The two professors are

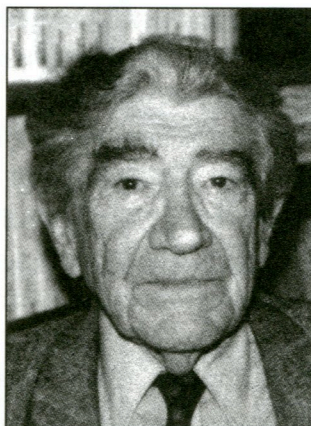
members of the Committee, which will be established to encourage them to meet and share their perspectives of course material with one another. These diverse and complementary perspectives are then integrated into each instructor's specific course, thus enriching and expanding the course participants' understanding and knowledge of English language and literature and providing effective ways for the students to pass on this knowledge in their own classrooms. This paradigm of cooperation and communication among the liberal arts and sciences and pedagogy will be replicated in other subject areas such as history, philosophy and science.

Currently, the EDSE 600 course, *History and Philosophy of Education and Special Education*, is offered by three programs in the Graduate School: Education and Special Education; School Psychology; and Administration and Supervision. Program heads recruit instructors for the course independently. Dean Anthony Polemeni, rec-

ognizing the need for greater communication among the programs to ensure the integration of this course with the pedagogical courses, tapped Dr. Cohen to coordinate this effort. As Dr. Cohen envisions it, one of the more important administrative functions of the Committee on Educational Philosophy and Liberal Arts will be to provide instructors for the EDSE 600 courses at times and places specified by the program chairs or directors. While this structure relieves the program chairs or directors of the responsibility of identifying philosophy and history scholars and will assure that people trained in education, special education, philosophy or history teach this course, no instructor can teach without the approval of the program chair or director.

Dr. George Cohen is quite familiar with creating new educational programs and organizations. He helped found Sangamon State University in Springfield, Illinois—an upper division school for community college graduates continuing

their college education—and served as that school's first Academic Vice President. He started ORT—Organization for Rehabilitation through Training—a school dedicated to training individuals to become productive members of the work force. And, he is one of the founders of Touro College. Dr. Cohen's formal education includes a bachelor's degree from Yeshiva University and graduate studies in philosophy at Columbia University, where he earned both his Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees. His teaching experience includes Columbia University,



Dr. George Cohen

Long Island University, and Touro College. In addition, Dr. Cohen was

Associate of Higher Education for the New York State Education Department, a position that provided him with invaluable experiences related to designing and operating colleges and universities. Recognized worldwide as an expert in the field of philosophy, Dr. Cohen presented his paper, "The Role of Philosophy in Maimonides and Averroes" at the Mediterranean XXV Conference, sponsored in part by Dowling College, Istituto Internazionale Giuseppe Garibaldi, and the University of Manuba, (Tunisa), in Castellammare di Stabia, Italy, this past summer.

Touro Responds to the Epidemic of Childhood Obesity

Dr. Anthony Polemeni, Dean of the Graduate School of Education and Psychology, is planning a pioneering program of study for teachers, administrators and school psychologists. The program will address the bio-psychosocial consequences of school-age obesity and its impact on education. Dr. Polemeni said, "America's youth is experiencing an alarming epidemic of obesity that is increasing in a geometric progression. More than 12 million school-age children under the age of 18 are affected. It is impacting on our ability to teach and on their ability to learn. It is important that our graduate students, soon to become teachers, administrators and school psycholo-

gists receive the education and skills necessary to address the challenges that face one out of every five school-age overweight children. I want our students to be uniquely prepared to understand the nature of the most common health problem facing children today."

The Epidemic

At the turn of the last century, less than 5% of adult Americans were obese and childhood obesity was an anomaly. Now, at the start of the 21st Century, the National Institute of Health reports that 65% of adults and 20% of school-age children are overweight. The prevalence of overweight children is a public health

concern because it predisposes them to a host of health problems, notably diabetes and heart disease. It is important not to overlook the emotional cost on children and the resulting mental health consequences.

Social Discrimination

Prejudice and discrimination underlie and fuel the mental anguish of school-age children. They are most often teased, bullied and ostracized by their peers. Societal disdain of obesity has created a profound phobia: "fear of becoming fat." This phobia has fostered many dangerous health practices. Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia

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Childhood Obesity

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Nervosa have become national public health concerns among children and teens. Smoking is a leading cause of death and disease. Nonetheless, fat-phobic teenage smokers are the group most resistant to smoking cessation efforts. The threat of tobacco-related cancers or pulmonary disease is seemingly less fearful than that of becoming fat.

Obesity and Psychopathology

Many recent research projects have demonstrated a significant relationship between obese children and the risk for psychopathologies such as conduct disorder, oppositional defi-

ant disorder, social phobia, ADHD, depression and dysthymia. These psychological burdens of course have a negative impact on education. Dr. Mel Imas, Associate Professor of Psychology and Director of the School Psychology Program, will be addressing children's obesity issues by integrating innovative curricula within the School Psychology Program. Dr. Imas said, "It is important that our graduates, school psychologists and school administrators be prepared to deal with this contemporary real-life health and education crisis. The new course material will better prepare them to serve both children and parents as well as enhance their career opportunities."

Some Topics of New Curricula

- *Effects of Childhood Obesity on Learning and Behavior*
- *Hormones and Behavior: Early Pubescence*
- *Prejudice and Discrimination: Peer, Parent, Teacher, Society*
- *Identifying Eating Disorders: Anorexia, Bulimia and Dangerous Dieting Behaviors*
- *Physiological Impediments of Childhood Obesity*
- *Psychopathologies: Onset by Obesity*
- *Effects of Pharmaceuticals on Learning and Behavior*

For more information about the School Psychology Program at Touro College, contact Dr. Imas at 212-463-0400 Ext. 552, Monday to Thursday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm.



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