Dr. Francis J. Vasko, professor of mathematics, has been teaching at Kutztown University since September 1986. In 1974, Dr. Vasko received his B.S. in mathematics education, graduating with highest honors from Kutztown State. He then moved on to Lehigh University where he eventually received his Ph.D. in industrial engineering/operations research. Before coming to teach at Kutztown, and while studying for his Ph.D., he worked as an employee in the Research Department at Bethlehem Steel solving a variety of real-world applications in operations research. He then served as a consultant to Bethlehem Steel Corporation from September 1986 thru March 2003.

In 2005, Dr. Vasko was awarded the C. R. Chambliss Faculty Research Award. This award is given to Kutztown University faculty who are conducting the highest level of research at the school. Over the last 20 years, Dr. Vasko has published 45 papers which have been read and discussed internationally. Besides publishing his own papers, he has also acted as a referee for papers between authors divided by continents, languages and seas.

In discussing his teaching and research, Dr. Vasko stresses the words “practical” and “holistic.” His experience at Bethlehem Steel gave him the unique opportunity to use mathematics to solve real-world business problems. In effect, those experiences have given him an invaluable first-person perspective which he brings into the classroom, validating and enhancing the importance of his students’ projects and studies, thus allowing his students to understand how math can be used and implemented in the workplace and actual situations. His experience with Bethlehem Steel has also given him valuable communication skills in dealing with non-mathematicians. He brings this wisdom into the business math classes he teaches at KU.

His current and future work includes both undergraduate students as well as KU faculty members from other departments. At the moment, he is working with undergraduates on a project concerning Ant Colony Optimization, a controversial topic involving intense statistical analysis using several computers simultaneously. His current and future preoccupation is with DNA computing, a topic which spans the globe, involving biophysics and intense laboratory work.

Dean’s Corner  Dr. Bashar Hanna

On Saturday May 12, 2007, the largest graduating class in the history of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) at Kutztown University earned their degrees. We congratulate these 429 students who join the CLAS alumni/ae family.

I am certain these newly conferred CLAS graduates will make valuable contributions in their discipline of study and society as a whole, whether entering the workforce, teaching or continuing their education.

I am also pleased to report that we are projecting more than 500 freshman to enroll in the CLAS in the fall. We look forward to welcoming these students to the CLAS family and to our beautiful campus.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Website can be found at www.kutztown.edu/academics/liberal_arts/index.shtml
Ruthie Malenda graduated in May with a B.S. in physics degree. Miss Malenda began her college career as a math major, a subject which she always liked, particularly because it provided her a sense of certainty in what she was doing. Pondering the applicability of the math she was learning, however; Miss Malenda became drawn to physics by Dr. Paul V. Quinn who showed her how her ability and knowledge in mathematics could be applied in a more useful, detailed manner. She then submerged herself in physics research in order to discover whether or not she liked it. She never looked back.

Miss Malenda is the author of a research paper on fission titled “Visualization of Dissociative Recombination of Electrons with C3H3+.” The paper expounds on how she created a molecular dynamics computer program to model the interaction of atoms in C3H3+, a molecular ion which only exists on one of planet Jupiter’s moons.

Busy with her studies and research, Miss Malenda had little time for hobbies. She was, however, the president of The Society of Physics Students at KU. During the spring semester, she led the society to Princeton University where they visited its Plasma Chambers, machines that study the fission problems she addressed in her paper and research. She found the visit to be a particularly stimulating experience.

Miss Malenda was involved in Lehigh University’s REU (Research Experiences for Undergraduates), a program sponsored by the National Science Foundation and led by Dr. Peet Hickman of Lehigh University. She presented her research paper to the REU group at Lehigh, The Society of Physics Students at KU, as well as the KU Board of Trustees. Miss Malenda will attend graduate school at Lehigh University, where she will enter a five-year program that will culminate with a doctoral degree in physics.

Her father, James W. Malenda, is a Kutztown University professor of fine metals and jewelry making. Influenced in part by the time her father spent with her each summer with his profession, Miss Malenda would eventually like to teach physics at the college level.

When They Are Not Teaching...

Ms. Jane Todd Cooper, Department of English, as J.C.Todd, co-edited a special feature on contemporary Slovenian poetry in translation for The Drunken Boat (Fall/Winter).


Dr. Eric Johnson, Department of History, published a review essay in the latest edition of the journal Eighteenth Century Studies.


Middle States Decennial Review

Kutztown University is involved in its decennial re-accreditation process through the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. There are six regional accreditation commissions for higher education in the United States (i.e., Middle States, New England, North Central, Northwest, Southern, and Western). The Middle States Commission on Higher Education is the regional institutional accreditor for 522 colleges and universities in Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and several overseas locations.

Kutztown was first accredited in 1944 as Kutztown State Teachers College and was most recently reaffirmed by the commission through a Periodic Review Report in November 2003.

In the 2005–2006 academic year, a 19-member steering committee and 14 subcommittees, representing faculty, staff, and students, was formed to gather data and answer 110 self-study research questions related to 14 Middle States standards of excellence. These committees are currently in the process of preparing a comprehensive self-study report not only for the Middle States evaluation team but also for the entire campus community.

Dr. Arnold Speert, president of William Paterson University and chair of the evaluation team, has been invited to campus for a preliminary visit on October 29–30, 2007. This will be followed by the evaluation team visit on March 30–April 2, 2008. For more information, please check the Kutztown University Middle States website at www.kutztown.edu/committees/middlesates or contact Dr. Carol V. Wells, chair, Middle States Steering Committee.
2007 LAS Graduation Awards

Alpha Kappa Delta International Sociology Honor Society Award • Robin R. Jones
Computer Science Award • Isaac Riekst
Cyrus E. Beekey Award in Biology • Renee E. Adam
Bradley Rahn Commencement Award • Julie A. Renninger
Delta Kappa Gamma Ruth Bonner Award in English/Communications • Dawn Burke
Emma S. Richards-Bausch Award in Literary Criticism • Amanda Coleman
Newton and Edna Geiss Award in English • Nicole Ciesla
Outstanding English Majors Award • Alexandra Cavallero, Amanda Coleman, Daniel Landis
C. Josephine Moyer Geography Award • Devon B. Hain
Bright and Lucille Beck American History Award • Marietta E. Dooley
Anthony J. Mazzaferri Award for Distinguished Scholarship in History • John W. Shaffer

Martin Luther King, Jr. History Award • Jessica M. Clarke
Kappa Mu Epsilon Award in Mathematics • John F. Hughes
Mathematics Student Teaching Award • Jeffery M. Kerchner, Vi T. Nguyen
Department of Modern Language Studies Award in French • Jaclyn M Yara, Kendra L. A. Siwik
Department of Modern Language Studies Award in Spanish • Jennifer N. Sease, Katie L. Riedel

Linda Oswald-Bogart Award • Amanda S. Behney (Spanish), Anna Farrell (French)
David F. Hottenstein Award in Nursing • John Kramer
Charles H. Boehm Award Earth/Space Science/Astronomy Award • Dana L. Gerhart
Pauline B. and John E. Simpson Earth Science and Marine Science Graduation Award • Timothy A. Jenesky
Roy W. Hamme Memorial Award in Physical Sciences • Judy G. Cherian
Gill-Lauer-Sharp Psychology Award • Lauren L. McLean

Academic Achievement Award Recipients—2007

The award recipients photographed with Dr. Bashar Hanna and President Cevallos (left to right): Chantel K. White – Copper Medal, Social Work and Psychology; Molly L. Sweitzer – Gold Medal, Fine Arts and Biology; Sarah A. Brandon – Silver Medal, Psychology; Timothy A. Jenesky – Gold Medal, Geology; Patricia A. Yetter – Copper Medal, Marine Science/Biology.

October 20 Family Day
October 27 Homecoming
November 3 Scholarship Ball
March 30–April 2, 2008 Middle States Evaluation Team visit


Dr. Kim Shively, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, published:

- “Religious Bodies and the Secular State: The Merve Kavaklıçı Affair” (Journal of Middle Eastern Women’s Studies, Fall)

Dr. Edward Simpson, Department of Physical Sciences, co-authored the following articles:

- “A new window into early life: Microbial mats in Earth’s oldest siliciclastic tidal flats (3.2 Ga Moodies Group, South Africa),” Geology, Vol. 34, pp. 253-256.
- “Depositional facies of the tetrapod footprint assemblage from the Mississippian Mauch Chunk Formation, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania” (Geological Society of America Abstracts with Programs, Vol. 38, No 2, pp. 64-65).
- “Tetrapod footprint assemblage of the Mississippian Mauch Chunk Formation, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania” (Geological Society of America Abstracts with Programs, Vol. 38, No 2, p. 64).
- “Palaeosauropus primaevus: Dusting off old Mississippian footprint” (Geological Society of America Abstracts with Programs, Vol. 38, No 2, p. 65).

Dr. Marie Squerciati, Department of English, published a concert production of Mozart’s “Abduction from the Seraglio,” and presented a script which was performed by actor Michael York at the Cincinnati May Festival, May 2006.

Dr. Sarah Tindall and Dr. Edward Simpson, both of the Department of Physical Sciences, co-authored:

- “Effects of local faulting on sedimentation of the Late Cretaceous upper and capping sandstone members of the Wahweap Formation, Kaibab uplift, Utah” (Geological Society of America Abstracts with Programs, Vol. 38, No. 6, pp. 33-34).
- “Timing of Late Cretaceous fault-fold interactions, East Kaibab monocline, Utah: Implications for the onset of Laramide deformation” (Geological Society of America Abstracts with Programs, Vol. 38, No. 6, p. 38).

Dr. Sarah Tindall, Department of Physical Sciences, received an American Chemical Society – Petroleum Research Fund grant for $49,964.
