

## CCC'S HERITAGE PROJECT:

# Out of the Classroom & Into the City

In an era of standardized tests, common curriculums, and unified syllabi, Capital Community College has launched a wonderfully unique, creative, and inspiring project.

The Hartford Heritage Project has both faculty and students excited about learning because it links courses with the city's artistic, cultural, and historic institutions.

"The class is not confined to four walls; the whole city is our classroom," said **Minati Roychoudhuri**, English faculty. "Students are getting connected to their city and taking pride in

Hartford."

The project began when Humanities Chair **Jeff Partridge** applied for and received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). With this support, a team of 14 Capital faculty members embarked on a 2-year study program that included 17 full-day seminars, along with readings and field trips.

They learned about social justice at the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center; the Amistad trials, Prudence Crandall, and Black law at the Old State House; Caribbean religion and West Indian Culture at the Center for Urban Research, Education, and Training; Irish and Italian immigration at St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church; and much more.

From these experiences, the faculty developed "Learning Communities," which are typically

paired courses that share a common theme, the same group of students, and often overlapping assignments.

One Learning Community centered on the G. Fox building where the college is now located. It connected an ESL class with a Communications course. Students interviewed former G. Fox employees and produced a talk show in the college TV studio.

"The purpose is to not only build connections among students, since the same group are in multiple classes together, but also to use the theme to engage students in creative, practical, or 'real world' ways as they learn the subject matter of the courses. So, Hartford and its history/culture provide the theme for these particular learning communities," explained **Kevin Lamkins**, English faculty.

Jeff Partridge taught a course on Immigration this spring. Using Hartford as a case study, the class visited Hartford museums and cultural institutions to learn about immigration and its impact on the city. Students researched and presented projects on people or organizations that shaped the Capital city, such as former Mayor Ann Uccello, the Heublein Company, and Architect George Keller.

Faculty have incorporated Hartford's arts community into their traditional courses. Through a relationship with the Hartford Stage, the college launched its "One Play" program. This semester the play was "Abundance" by Beth Henley.

English Professor **John Christie** explained, "Each semester between 400-500 Capital students and employees go to the play; some have

Capital's "One Play" program focuses the entire college each semester on a play offered by Hartford Stage. *At left: Humanities Chair Jeff Partridge introduces the cast. Below: the cast talks to students, many of whom not only saw the play, but also read it in their English class.*



never been to a play before. They are offered discounted tickets. Students pay just \$5 and faculty pay \$15.”

He continued, “Students read the play in their English class. They get a chance to meet with the director and to talk with the cast about the challenges of acting, their characters, and acting techniques. And, they can discuss the experience with hundreds of their colleagues throughout the college.”

The Hartford Heritage project is building connections between the college and the city in numerous ways that are enhancing learning and increasing awareness of the rich resources of Connecticut’s capital city.

The college has been approved for a \$300,000 challenge grant from NEH to continue the program, if it can raise \$600,000 in private matching funds. Donations to help meet this challenge are welcome.

For more information, visit <http://www.capitalcc.edu/hhp/>



At the Hartford Public Library, students in a Heritage Project Immigration course presented projects on people that shaped the Capital city. The trio of students above researched Architect George Keller. They are describing his accomplishments to Professor John Christie.