

TOURO LINKS

DIVISION OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Transforming Lives



ISSUE V AUGUST•SEPTEMBER 2014

About the Touro College and University System

Touro is a system of non-profit institutions of higher and professional education. Touro College was chartered in 1970 primarily to enrich the Jewish heritage, and to serve the larger American and global community. Approximately 19,000 students are currently enrolled in its various schools and divisions. Touro College has branch campuses, locations and instructional sites in the New York area, as well as branch campuses and programs in Berlin, Jerusalem, Moscow, Paris and Florida. New York Medical College, Touro University California and its Nevada branch campus, as well as Touro University Worldwide and its Touro College Los Angeles division are separately accredited institutions within the Touro College and University System. For further information on Touro College, please visit www.touro.edu.

A Note From the President



Touro College was created in 1970 in the service of knowledge, compassion and social justice. Our mission was, and continues to be, to educate and enrich the historic Jewish tradition of respect and dignity for others, all the while remaining committed to Jewish continuity and more broadly, to humankind. I am pleased to present our distinguished alumni with this latest issue of Touro Links, the theme of which—“Transforming Lives”—exemplifies the expression of our mission through the impressive work of our exceptional graduate students. Through their accomplishments, they are changing the lives of others as well as their own, in keeping with Touro’s vital mission and making the world a better place for all.

The hard work undertaken at Touro’s professional schools and at the Division of Graduate Studies could not be realized without the vision and administrative talent of truly accomplished leadership. In that vein, I am delighted to announce to alumni the appointment of Dr. Nadja Graff as vice president of the Division of Graduate Studies. Dr. Graff has been serving as interim vice president for the past year, since Vice President Dr. Anthony J. Polemeni, one of Touro’s most distinguished academic leaders, stepped down from the post. Dr. Polemeni passed away on May 22.

As an esteemed and gifted administrator dedicated to Touro’s mission, Dr. Graff brings a high caliber of professionalism and experience to her new role. She received her undergraduate degree in biology from the City College of New York and her Ph.D. from Columbia University in biological sciences. She then joined Touro as a professor of clinical biochemistry and an academic coordinator in the School of Health Sciences’ Physician Assistant program, going on to serve as the founding director of the Manhattan campus PA program in 1999. Since 2010, she has served as associate dean of the School of Health Sciences, and chairperson of the Touro College and University System Academic Integrity Council since 2012. Dr. Graff’s academic experience encompasses more than 30 years of teaching in higher education.

I am confident that with her insight into the history and vision of Touro, she will lead our Division of Graduate Studies into a new era of growth and success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan Kadish". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Dr. Alan Kadish
President and CEO
The Touro College and University System

A Message From the Vice President Division of Graduate Studies



As I assumed the position of Vice President of the Division of Graduate Studies in our great institution, I had the pleasure of beginning to work on this issue of Touro Links. Each personal story has provided me with a unique glimpse into the richness of the outstanding schools that comprise the Division, as well as of our sister professional schools. The stories are compelling and inspiring, and they personify the Touro spirit of innovation and dedication to community. They are also a testament to the vision of our past vice president, Dr. Anthony Polemeni, may he rest in peace.

The theme of this issue is “Transforming Lives.” I invite you to explore Touro Links and read about our innovative programs and the myriad ways in which our students and alumni have changed the lives of others through their hard work and scholarly achievements.

From the **Graduate School of Education**, meet alumna Georgia Kouriampalis, who founded a special high school in Brooklyn for overage, under-credited students in danger of dropping out of the system.

The **Graduate School of Technology** students have been helping children in our public schools improve their writing using online portfolios and a workbook called “Six Words for Schools.”

Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine first-year medical student Jemima Akinsanya formed COMPASS (“Creating Osteopathic Minority Physicians Who Achieve Scholastic Success”), to engage in outreach at recruitment fairs and to mentor peers struggling with the demands of medical school.

Our veterans make extraordinary sacrifices for our country, and when they come home our students are ready to assist them. **Touro Graduate School of Social Work** students offer concrete help through social work field placements, and the **Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center’s** students provide legal services programs.

Students at the **Graduate School of Psychology** are participating in an ongoing investigation on the efficacy of certain interventions in schizophrenic patients.

These stories and others reveal the commitment, compassion and caring of our students, who are mentored at Touro by exemplary faculty that guide our students to become dedicated professionals, scholars and leaders. Our graduates leave Touro in pursuit of opportunities that allow them to transform lives, showing every day that a Touro education has the ability to change the world.

I am proud of how Touro College is contributing to a better society one student at a time. Remain active members of the Touro family and partner with us as we move forward in the fulfillment of our mission. I welcome your feedback and ideas.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nadja Graff".

Nadja Graff, Ph.D.
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Memorial Tribute to Vice President Anthony J. Polemeni

February 1, 1935 – May 22, 2014

In the movie classic, “It’s a Wonderful Life,” George Bailey learns how his life touched so many others. Such was true of Dr. Anthony J. Polemeni, former vice president of the Touro College Division of Graduate Studies, who passed away on May 22, 2014.



Dr. Anthony J. Polemeni

Dr. Polemeni led by example. His love of people was demonstrated by his open door policy. He welcomed any and all students, faculty and staff and generously offered his advice and guidance.

“Dr. Polemeni was an outstanding educator, leader, colleague and friend. His legacy, in addition to his wonderful family whom he cherished, will be the exceptional academic programs, which he built and nurtured during his distinguished career—especially at Touro,” said Touro President and CEO Dr. Alan Kadish.

The son of Italian immigrants, Dr. Polemeni’s story began in Brooklyn. He received his baccalaureate degree (summa cum laude) from St. Francis College, and a master’s degree from Columbia University. He earned his Ph.D. from St. John’s University.

Over the years, Dr. Polemeni held many positions within the world of education, from teacher of French to director of research evaluation for the New York City Board of Education. Under his leadership, New York City developed the first secure standardized test and the Language Assessment Battery (LAB), which is still being used in schools today.

After leaving public education in the late 1970s, Dr. Polemeni embarked on a successful career in international business. His travels would take him around the world and back again. In 1997, he returned to education as the director of the Graduate School of Education at Mercy College’s Bronx campus. In 2001, Dr. Polemeni joined the Touro College family as dean of the Graduate School of Education

& Psychology. When he assumed this position, the school had an enrollment of approximately 500 students. During his administrative tenure, the student population swelled to more than 5,000, making Touro the largest graduate school of education in New York State.

In 2008, in recognition of his outstanding leadership and many accomplishments Touro’s Founding President Dr. Bernard Lander selected Dr. Polemeni to be the inaugural vice president of the newly-formed Division of Graduate Studies, which includes

all seven of Touro’s graduate schools. It is only fitting that the words used by Dr. Polemeni of his mentor, Dr. Lander, be said of him: “We applaud his willingness to allow new ideas and programs to develop in order to provide Touro students with high-quality instruction and a variety of experiences that can be translated into the best teaching and administrative practices in the schools.”

Dr. Polemeni was awarded the prestigious “Educator of the Year” award in 2007 from Columbia University Teacher’s College, Phi Delta Kappa Chapter. The event was held at Columbia, where Dr. Lander remarked, “Dr. Polemeni is a very special person at Touro, one for whom I have utmost admiration.”

In 2010, Dr. Polemeni was honored by the Association of Orthodox Jewish Teachers and received its Higher Education Distinguished Leadership Award. In the New York State Legislative Resolution of April 25, 2010, the legislation described Dr. Polemeni as one whose life has been “committed to the pursuit of excellence in the education of the youth of the Empire State.”

Dr. Polemeni is survived by his devoted wife of 49 years, Martha, and their four successful children and 10 grandchildren.

Indeed, Dr. Polemeni touched the lives of thousands and gave them the opportunity to have “a wonderful life.” ■

Alumna Launches a “Transfer School”

Georgia Kouriampalis, Class of ‘05



Georgia Kouriampalis, alumna and founding principal of Brooklyn High School of Leadership and Community Service in Brooklyn.

Three years ago, at the age of sixteen, Joel Cartagena was ready to drop out of high school. Living in a homeless shelter in the Bronx and caring for his mother, who has cancer, Cartagena was suspended for having too many absences on his record. Adding to his sense of defeat, he had taken three years of ninth grade, but was still unable to pass due to extenuating circumstances at home. A diploma seemed out of reach.

.....

Enter Brooklyn High School for Leadership and Community Service (BHS LCS), one of 52 “transfer schools” in the New York City Department of Education, located in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. Founded in 2008 by Georgia Kouriampalis, an alumna of the School Leadership Program at Touro’s Graduate School of Education (class of ‘05), in partnership with Brooklyn Community Services, the BHS LCS serves students from 16 to 21 years of age who are lacking credits and, like Cartagena, are in danger of dropping out.

Kouriampalis, who is the school’s principal, says, “It’s a second chance place. Our students are dealing with many issues — court dates, visiting parents in prison,

unstable housing situations and cases of abuse. They're heroes just by showing up."

Like other transfer schools, BHSLCS is designed to re-engage students who often are from the poorest communities. They face extreme challenges, including severe behavior problems due to neglect, or are being raised by extended family members overwhelmed by their needs. They tend to be older than students in traditional high schools, and lack the credits needed to graduate on time with their peers in mainstream schools.

Given the needs of the transfer student population, BHSLCS offers more support than a regular high school might. Students are eligible to receive anywhere from 15 to 18 credits per year. The trimesters are rolling, so students can graduate at any time. Clinical support is provided by Brooklyn Community Services, a local community-based organization, with four social workers on site.

"We create a family atmosphere and a safe haven," says Kouriampalis. "We want students to believe in the power of transformational change."

This is a path Kouriampalis knows firsthand. Raised in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn by Greek immigrants with a sixth-grade education, Kouriampalis learned the values of hard work, honesty and helping other people. She attended Soterios Ellenas School, a K-8 grade school which, she said, was "rooted in owning your history, culture, identity and spirituality."

Early on, Kouriampalis discovered a passion for teaching and for working with youth, in particular. After receiving her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from Brooklyn College, she completed her master's degree in Secondary Education

from the College of Staten Island before coming to Touro, where she earned her Master of Science in School Administration and Supervision. Her first teaching job was at Fort Hamilton High School in Brooklyn where she taught English for more than ten years—and also had been a former student. "It took some getting used to, calling my former teachers by their first names," she says.

There, she learned the importance of mentoring and the role of a caring teacher in a student's life. As coordinator of student activities and student government, a position she held her last three years, Kouriampalis oversaw countless activities—everything from team sports to student clubs. In 2005, her last year at Fort Hamilton, she was voted Teacher of the Year. To this day, she's still in touch with her former students.

The importance of connecting and giving back was cemented by Kouriampalis's experiences at Touro, where she studied with Alan Sebel, a professor at the Graduate School of Education and a former school deputy assistant superintendent who would become one of her trusted mentors. Sebel recognized Kouriampalis's spark instantly.

"It was evident immediately that she had a special ability to be a great leader down the road," he says. "She's continued to give back to Touro, returning to my classes to talk to students about the transition from teacher to administrator. She's remarkable, and I know there's so much more she will contribute to the school system over time."

The admiration is a two-way street. Kouriampalis says, "Whether you're in his class or not, Sebel makes time for his

Kouriampalis, the school's principal, says, "It's a second chance place. Our students are dealing with many issues. They're heroes just by showing up."



students. Even though he was my professor 11 years ago, he's still in my life. I've touched base with him around every professional decision."

One such decision of Kouriampalis's was pivotal: deciding to start her own transfer school. After Fort Hamilton, Kouriampalis took a position as the assistant principal of organization with South Brooklyn Community School, another transfer school. This showed her the importance of having a clinical element on site for the disadvantaged every day.

As she considered returning to the classroom, her colleagues started to plant other seeds. She recalls, "I kept getting tapped on the shoulder, 'Hey, why don't you start your own school?'"

Kouriampalis then took a position in 2007 with one of the New York City Department of Education's network teams, focusing on education administration. "I thought, if I am going to open my own school, I wanted to learn from different leaders," says Kouriampalis.

For a year, she worked on a proposal for BHS LCS and put together a planning team that included Sebel, and spent time delving into her ideas about education. Many of her foundational philosophies have roots at Touro. In Sebel's class, she had made connections between her personal life and professional journey, identifying her core values and leadership style.

Kouriampalis says, "There is a lot of power in someone saying, 'You have to be accountable to who you are.' His course

really taught me how to build in self-awareness and self-reflection as a leader, and maintain trust in the process."

While Kouriampalis was busy honing in on her mission and vision, she was also at a particularly challenging time in her own life. After a three-year stint in hospice following a brain-related injury, Kouriampalis's older sister died in April 2008, months before the school would open.

Throughout her family's grieving process, the compassion of the hospice workers—as well as coworkers, her spiritual community, mentors, friends and family—only fueled her motivation to create an inspired and loving experience for her future students.

"It made me want to give back," Kouriampalis says. "My sister was full of kindness, happiness and faith. She didn't get to live, but we do. I thought, 'How can I bring this sense of understanding to kids who don't have parents in their lives?'"

By the time BHS LCS opened in September 2008, Kouriampalis's team was ready. Most important was to make the students feel loved and supported. Kouriampalis is a firm believer that the way one speaks to students and staff affects the entire community. In one of her old notebooks from Touro, she'd written, "Life is about human relationships before human achievements."

Now in its sixth academic year, Kouriampalis clearly is achieving success. Her office is wallpapered with appreciative notes from staff and students, and the school is getting rave reviews from students, faculty and parents alike for creating a safe, secure



and comfortable environment—one filled with respect, good communication and engagement, while at the same time setting high academic expectations. Students once on the verge of disappearing from the school system instead are graduating and going on to college and the job market.

“Despite the horrible loss of a beloved 21-year-old who was part of the community for three years—one week before New York State exams and two weeks before graduation—26 students graduated,” Kouriampalis said of the Class of 2014.

To create opportunities for the students, Kouriampalis and her staff have forged partnerships with local organizations, including New York Cares to create murals; Downtown Community Television Center to bring teaching artists to the classroom; and

The school is getting rave reviews from students, faculty and parents alike for creating a safe, secure and comfortable environment—one filled with respect, good communication and engagement.

Educational Video Center to demonstrate the power of documentary filmmaking to English classes. In addition, former City Councilwoman (and current New York City Public Advocate) Leticia James granted the school \$150,000 to set up a computer lab. “We continue to create access and build opportunities for our students,” says Kouriampalis. “We’ll try anything.”

Since its inception, BHSLCS has faced its share of challenges, including the untimely losses of four other students due to separate incidents of violence, and one staff person due to natural causes. Many of the students have expressed their own fears about not

living past their 21st birthdays. In response, the school set up a healing wall, where students can create poetry and artwork. Hallways are covered with inspirational quotes, as well as images of butterflies, which had become an important symbol of metamorphosis to Kouriampalis during her sister’s illness.

After attending the funerals and seeing grieving parents, Kouriampalis’s resolve to heal and continue has been strengthened.

How, is a question Kouriampalis and her staff contend with on most days. “Every student is unique in terms of what they need,” she says. In Cartagena’s case, he mentioned to Kouriampalis that he’d studied robotics in high school and even traveled to Tokyo to compete in a robotics competition. When he said that the activity had provided him with a positive distraction from his struggles, she arranged to have a robotics lab set up.

Cartagena says he feels at home at BHSLCS. “Here, if something happens, the teachers are quick to react, like parents would,” he says.

The stresses in his life haven’t gone away, Cartagena says. His grandmother and aunt recently had strokes, and his grandmother moved to Puerto Rico. Focusing on schoolwork is a serious challenge.

Of his circumstances, he says, “I don’t know why I was put in this predicament, but then Georgia explained to me the butterflies,” referring to Kouriampalis’s philosophy that “life is messy like the caterpillar stage, but if you are resilient and hang in there, you get to the butterfly stage.”

“At the end of the day,” he continues optimistically, “I know something good is going to come out of it.” ■

Graduate School of Education Receives Seven-Year Accreditation



Dr. LaMar Miller

On a snowy morning last December, members of the Touro community gathered at the Lander College for Women – The Anna Ruth and Mark Hasten School to celebrate exciting news, delivered by Touro College President and CEO Dr. Alan Kadish: The programs in Teacher Education and School Leadership at the Graduate School of Education (GSE) at Touro College had been awarded full accreditation for seven years by the Inquiry Brief Commission of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

The accreditation to the School's educational leadership and teacher education programs encompasses the six Master of Science degree programs offered by the GSE—in Education and Special Education, Instructional Technology, Mathematics Education, School Leadership, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and Teaching Literacy.

“Attaining this significant accreditation requires a rigorous and exhaustive review. The results represent an exemplary achievement for the administration, faculty, staff and students of the Graduate School of Education,” said Dr. Kadish. “We congratulate Dean LaMar Miller, Ph.D., who led the School through the challenging accreditation process and continues to provide leadership for one of the largest schools of education in New York state.”

Said Dean Miller, “We are extremely pleased to be receiving this accreditation, which is a tribute to everyone in our community. As we celebrate our 20th anniversary, we are proud of our diverse student body, our commitment to high quality education, the personal attention afforded our students and the innovative teachers, administrators and educational leaders we graduate every year—especially those serving high-need and diverse student bodies throughout the city and the state of New York.”

Established in 1993, the School currently enrolls approximately 3,260 students, most of whom are in the M.S. programs in Education and Special Education. About 76 full-time, 11 part-time and over 103 adjunct faculty teach at the School, which offers classes in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and Bay Shore, Long Island, as well as online.

The School is the largest provider of new special education teachers to the city's public schools, and one of the largest providers of teachers to “high-need schools”—those that face special challenges in helping students succeed. The School has also been ranked first in New York state for graduating minority students with master's degrees in education, and among the top-ten universities for graduating minorities nationally in four categories, by the magazine *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*. ■

Linking Education and Technology

Kristin Domnisch, '13, and Sara Silver, '13, Motivate NYC Kids with Technology

Every year, master's degree candidates in the Touro Graduate School of Technology's Instructional Technology program are asked to complete a final project, a culmination of their passion for using technology in the classroom. Here are two projects, both conducted in New York City public schools, which showcase diverse ways to incorporate technology into educational settings.

Kristin Domnisch: "Our Classroom Library"

At P.S. 34 in Queens Village, where Kristin Domnisch (class of '13) teaches kindergartners and first graders in a special education class, technology is limited. There are laptops at the school, primarily used by teachers to draft individualized education plans for students. There are overhead projectors. The smartboards, interactive whiteboards that use touch for user detection, aren't PC-compatible and are essentially gathering dust.

But this didn't stop Domnisch from exploring the ways in which technology could benefit her students, setting an example for the school. As an undergraduate at St. Joseph's College, Domnisch had a concentration in math and computer science. She was familiar with the possibilities. "In this day and age when so many are using smart phones and tablets, I thought it would be a great opportunity to bring in some 21st century skills to the classroom," she says.

In her quest, Domnisch enrolled in Touro's Master of Science in Instructional Technology program. The program provided a framework for her daily classroom activities, and her final project, "Our Classroom Library," was the most gratifying. In this project, Domnisch

focused on the writing skills of her students, whose disabilities ranged from speech impairment to autism, from impaired mobility to ADHD, as well as other kinds of learning differences. New York City is now testing kindergartners, so to prepare her students, she wanted to create a project that would improve their writing and oral language abilities.

In her fourth year of teaching, Domnisch had a natural sense of when to give students more guidance and when to give them space to explore. Using a Motorola Xoom tablet, a Smart Voice recorder and Microsoft Expression Web to create an online space that would show students' progress and showcase their work, Domnisch began with the basics. "The students came to me not knowing much of anything," she says. "They didn't know their letters. They had poor oral expression."

In September, to enhance their writing, she wanted the students to use a microphone to record their thoughts and then listen to the recordings as a basis for writing. In the beginning, the students had difficulty writing certain phrases, such as "Chicka-chicka-boom-boom." By the end, though, the



Kristin Domnisch, class of '13, used online technology to develop the writing and oral language abilities of her students with special needs.



“CHICKA-CHICKA-BOOM-BOOM.”

students demonstrated growth, as shown by a rubric, and were even able to display their published pieces on the website Domnisch had created. The online portfolio, which included students’ original voice recordings, became a source of pride. Not only could they see how their skills had developed, but they could also share this progress with fellow students.

“This project really enhanced their writing, as well as their drive to write,” says Domnisch. “It was amazing.”

Dr. Issac Herskowitz, founding dean of the Graduate School of Technology, says of the project, “Kristin’s diverse

“Kristin’s diverse group of special needs students in her school benefitted from the technology she learned in our program. Her success is truly remarkable.”

— Dean Issac Herskowitz

group of special needs students in her school benefitted tremendously from the technology she learned in our program. Her success, given the population and her limited resources, is truly remarkable.”

Buoyed by her students’ performance, Domnisch will continue to find ways to implement technology into the classroom experience. If a technology coordinator position opens up at her school, she’ll be first in line to apply. Mostly, though, the project showed her what is possible for a classroom with students of multiple disabilities. She says, “It was so rewarding to see the growth of the students—that’s my favorite part.”

Sara Silver: “Six Words for Schools”

When Ernest Hemingway was once famously challenged to pen a short story in six words, he wrote, “For sale: baby shoes, never worn.” In 2006, Larry Smith, founder of SMITH Magazine, gave his own twist to this powerful exercise, asking readers to tell their own life stories in just six words. Today, with several six-word memoir books published, the concise memoir has become its own movement—and, for Sara Silver (class of ‘13), a vital educational tool.

Silver’s foray into teaching was born of enthusiasm. As a former recruiter for Teach for America, she started to pay attention to her own pitch. “You could say I recruited myself,” she notes. “This is a profession I was made for.”

Last fall and seven years later, Silver was still at her original Teach for America placement school, P.S. 146 in East Harlem, where she taught third, fourth and fifth grade students. The Boston University and Pace University alumna became more and more interested in the ways that technology could improve her offerings to students, which ultimately led her to Touro’s master’s program in Instructional Technology.

For her final project, she was interested in aligning common core standards with a project that would enliven her classroom. After Silver’s father introduced her to Smith, who explained that more teachers across the country were using the format as a teaching tool, she decided to embark upon “Six Words for Schools” as her final project.

Silver connected with a colleague, Elisa Collazo, on the project, and together they began brainstorming with fellow teachers on how a six-word curriculum might best suit current educational goals. With feedback from colleagues, including Smith, Silver designed “Six Words for Schools,” a workbook for guiding students through a step-by-step writing process and exposing them to other memoirs (including one by pop star Taylor Swift, which reads, “My diary is read by everyone.”). Using lists and descriptive exercises, students are able to reflect on what truly matters to them.

“The restraints of the six words really bring out the students’ creativity,” says Silver, who implemented the program in three classrooms, with 75 students participating.



Sara Silver, class of '13, developed a workbook, "Six Words for Schools," which enlivened her classroom.

"It's amazing how many writing principles can be covered in six words."

The technology piece was layered in via a site called voicethread.com, which became an online repository for students' stories, where they could use voice recordings and add in imagery using Pixlr, a photo editing tool, to further enhance their stories. The Voice Threads component allowed students

to deepen their narratives—a plus, since many had a hard time narrowing their most important sentiments to six words. For example, one student wrote in her original memoir: "Beautiful colors and rainbow loom bracelets." On Voice Threads, she added a colorful abstract image, as well as another memoir: "I sold all my bracelets—ca-ching!"

The students responded wholeheartedly to the project, with many asking if they could work on it outside of class. "This was a refreshing project to do with the kids," says Silver. "A lot of

what we do is mandated, so it was great to do something different that excited both kids and teachers, inviting students to think critically and creatively about their work."

The workbook was so well-received that Silver collaborated with SMITH Magazine and publisher Hamilton Buhl to make the workbook more widely available. Also, there is a new site, sixwordmemoirs.com, where students can continue

"It was great to do something different that excited both kids and teachers, inviting students to think critically and creatively about their work."

— Sara Silver

to experiment with the form.

Dr. Herskowitz says, "Sara exemplifies the sense of creativity and innovation we instill in our students through the Instructional Technology Program."

Going forward, Silver says her goal is to adapt the workbook for use in high schools and to keep the Six Words for Schools movement going. When it comes to her own motivation, Silver's personal six-word memoir may be the most revealing: "When there's passion, work becomes pleasure." ■

Hope for the Warriors

Katie Levy, '14, Makes a Difference in the Lives of Veterans



Last December, Katie Levy MSW '14 received a surprise email in her inbox: Her first clinical client, who had served in Iraq, had sent her a photograph of his Christmas tree. Levy, who was enrolled in the Touro Graduate School of Social Work's accelerated Master of Social Work program, understood that the image was more than a holiday greeting. She surmised that she had earned her clients' trust—no small feat when working with a former military population that deals daily with the ravages of war.

"I knew that meant a lot," says Levy, who graduated in June.

Since the beginning of the fall 2013 semester, Levy had been in a clinical placement at Hope for the Warriors, a national organization dedicated to improving the lives of "post-9/11 servicemembers" through a wide range of offerings, including outdoor activities for injured veterans, support services for military families and scholarships for spouses and caregivers.

Levy was also the first recipient of Touro's "Serving Those Who Served Us" military fellowship at the Graduate School of Social Work, which was established last year as part of a larger effort by the School to prepare students, through specialized education fellowships, to serve the emergent needs of the community, including older adults and those with persistent mental illness.

Melissa Earle, Ph.D., LCSW, associate dean, administration and program initiatives, says of the military fellowship, "Serving veterans is part of our responsibility. These men and women fought for us."

Dr. Earle, whose background is in trauma therapy, teaches the military social work curriculum at Touro. She also serves as chair of the Mental Health Association of New York City's Women Veterans subcommittee, which is how she made the connection with Hope for the Warriors.

As part of the fellowship, which includes a \$5,000 grant, Levy took Dr. Earle's military social work class to gain an understanding of the particular needs of veterans, many of whom have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and are dealing with traumatic brain injuries.

Levy also participated in an ongoing seminar with all Touro fellowship recipients, to reinforce the lessons of her field placement. As part of the seminar, fellowship recipients traveled to the Northport Veterans Administration in Long Island, where they learned about many issues veterans face, including having experienced sexual assault in the military and dual diagnoses.



Dr. Earle notes that Levy represents the very best of what the fellowship can be. “She’s smart, sensitive and committed,” says Dr. Earle. “She’s also very talented. When she came to run a strategy by me, I could tell she had a good handle on the work. But that extra step showed just how much she cared about getting it right.”

In her field placement and in her academic career, Levy flourished. At Hope for the Warriors, she worked with clients on everything from processing claim benefits to therapy sessions, most of which were conducted via Skype or the phone, since her clients were spread out across the United States. Of the long-distance setup, Levy says, “Initially, I was apprehensive, but now I see the benefits. For those injured in combat, it can be difficult to get out of the house. Plus, it somewhat removes the stigma of receiving help.”

Ideally, Levy says, the calls would take place once per week, but in practice, she would be available for clients whenever they needed her. One of the biggest lessons she learned was that people will open up when they are ready. “It’s important to show that

you care and remember, without pushing,” she says.

In addition to her clinical work, Levy was also involved with program development at Hope for the Warriors. Locally, there is a pilot program for women veterans in New York City, which includes group work. Levy helped organize a volunteer outing for the group of 12 female veterans, where they painted the walls of a Bronx public school. She also worked on a retreat for female veterans in Vermont, assisted with several lunches for women veterans at John Jay and Baruch colleges and participated in Spring New York Cares Day by painting benches in a city park with a group of women veterans.

Tina Atherall, MSW and executive vice president of Hope for the Warriors, says that the need for women-focused work is significant. “What we’re finding is that reporting is different with women who don’t necessarily identify as veterans, and in this population, there is a strong desire for community work.”

As this piece of Hope for the Warriors programming developed, Levy played a

A veteran in Washington D.C. participating in one of the many “Run for the Warriors®” races dedicated to wounded and fallen servicemembers and their families.

Levy was the first recipient of Touro's "Serving Those Who Served Us" military fellowship, which was established last year to prepare students to meet the emergent needs of the community.

Hope for the Warriors' Women Veterans Initiative Winter Retreat in Woodstock, Vt.



key role. "Katie helped us establish policies and procedures," says Atherall. "She was fantastic and truly part of the team, not just an intern."

Levy, a native New Yorker, has long held a conviction to help others. When she was in high school, she spent many a Saturday morning volunteering at her local soup kitchen. Raised by a pair of lawyers (now both judges) who met at the Legal Aid Society, Levy's values were naturally tuned into social justice issues.

Despite embarking on two other career paths—including a short stint in publishing at Harper Collins and an exploration of the physical therapy field—Levy's social work

sensibilities eventually led her to 23rd Street in Manhattan, to Touro's Graduate School of Social Work, which she entered in January 2013. With the full confidence of someone who has made the right choice, Levy says simply, "I loved it."

She first learned about Touro's military curriculum during an early interview at Touro, after she mentioned that "Matterhorn," a novel about the Vietnam War by Karl Marlantes, was one of her favorite books. For Levy, the military fellowship fit into her interests and natural curiosity about people. She says, "For whatever reason I am drawn to people who have a very strong code of values and ethics."

When Levy finished her 300 clinical hours she focused on plans to take the licensing test to become a social worker. She says she would love to work at an organization like Hope for the Warriors, with a model of supportive counseling.

As far as the fellowship, the partnership between Touro and Hope for the Warriors will continue. Says Atherall, "I love what Touro is doing with advanced scholarship in this area. Whenever I see that there's a school dedicated to serving the military population, our organization needs to be dedicated to that type of program." ■

TouroCOM Opens New Pathways for Minorities

Jemima Akinsanya Launches COMPASS

In the spring of 2013, Jemima Akinsanya, then a first-year student at Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine (TouroCOM), was tutoring a local high school sophomore through MedAchieve, an after-school medical science enrichment program based in Harlem, when she had an insight. This young student was bright and ambitious; however, Akinsanya realized, perhaps she lacked a clear road map to achieve her goals.

“After talking with her, it occurred to me: ‘What if we started a program to mentor students and help guide them into medical school?’” Akinsanya recalls.

Around the same time, she had also been speaking with fellow classmates about their paths to medical school. These conversations illuminated for her some of the difficulties that minority students experience getting useful guidance on the college and med school path. Many either don’t know physicians or even that osteopathic medicine is an option.

Akinsanya thought starting a program to help minority students might also include those already enrolled at TouroCOM, to give them a stronger support system. With this in mind, the seeds of COMPASS, which stands for “Creating Osteopathic Minority Physicians who Achieve Scholastic Success,” were planted.

Akinsanya turned to her advisor, Tipsuda Junsanto-Bahri, M.D., assistant professor of internal medicine and pathology, who was impressed by her drive to give back.

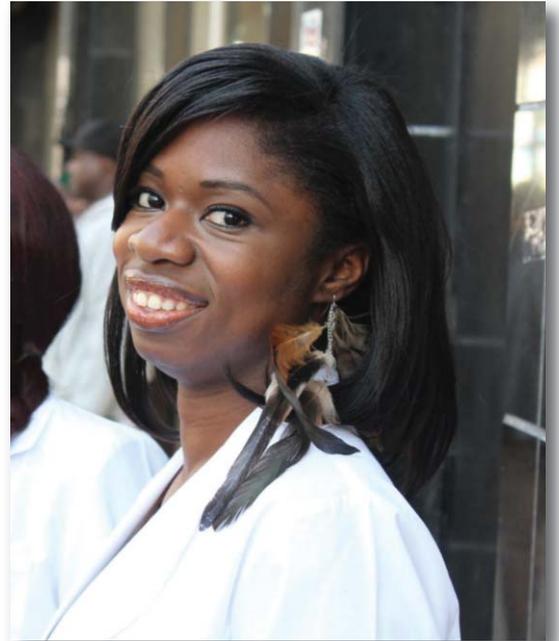
“I said, ‘Wow.’ This is a young woman who has plenty on her plate, in terms of studying, and she wants to start this program to help others. She’s a true force, always

moving forward,” says Dr. Junsanto-Bahri.

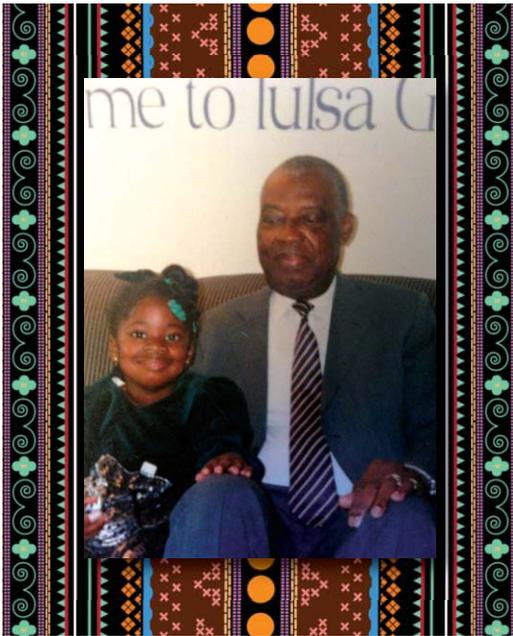
Akinsanya, who was born in Lagos, Nigeria and moved to the United States when she was one year old, was an undergraduate biology major, with a double minor in chemistry and psychology, at Montclair State University.

After graduation, Akinsanya began researching osteopathic programs. She was impressed by TouroCOM’s commitment to practicing medicine in underserved communities. Touro also offered the option to earn a master’s degree that could lead into the medical school program. She says, “This was exactly what I wanted.”

Akinsanya’s interest in bringing quality medical care to underserved communities first crystallized when she was sixteen years old and her grandfather broke his hip. Living in Nigeria, her grandfather did not have access to advanced medical care. Though eventually he came to the U.S. for better care, his subsequent deterioration made a huge impact on Akinsanya, who then decided to pursue a pre-med path.



Jemima Akinsanya, founder of COMPASS



“Mima” excited about her grandfather’s first visit to see the family in Tulsa, Ok.

After graduation from Montclair, she enrolled in the Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies in Biological and Physical Sciences degree program at TouroCOM, which would be crucial to her later success. “That was a very important year,” she says.

“It helped me learn how I study best and gave me a solid foundation going into my first year of the DO program.”

By the time she had the motivation to start a new student-led recruitment initiative in her first year of the DO program, Akinsanya was already an established member of the TouroCOM community. With Dr. Junsanto-Bahri’s support, Akinsanya approached Dean Robert Goldberg, DO, and Emil Ruiz, senior director of admissions at TouroCOM. Both administrators gave her the green light.

The need for the recruitment work was great. Nationwide, only six percent of osteopathic doctors were minorities. This is one of the reasons TouroCOM made an institutional commitment to recruit minorities and promote cultural competency for all physicians-to-be. To address the latter issue, Jeffrey Gardere, Ph.D., who teaches a cultural competency course, brings into the classroom actual patients to explain how their experiences could have been improved.

Ruiz was so impressed with Akinsanya’s ideas that he offered to become the group’s advisor.

“Jemima—or ‘Mima’ as we call her—is a natural leader who has continually demonstrated a passion for cultural awareness that speaks to the heart of TouroCOM’s mission,” says Ruiz. “COMPASS was formed in order to provide a support group for TouroCOM minority students and help promote osteopathic medicine to aspiring medical school students, who often do not realize that through diligence, hard work and unparalleled motivation, they, too, can become physicians who go on to care for their communities.”

With the support of administrators, Akinsanya and a group of her peers got to work, supporting TouroCOM’s already strong recruitment efforts. Their first official outing was last March, to a medical school fair at City College of New York, at which the medical students spoke with undergraduates

“COMPASS was formed to provide a support group for TouroCOM minority students and help promote osteopathic medicine to aspiring medical school students, who often do not realize they can become physicians.”

— Emil Ruiz
Senior Director of Admissions, TouroCOM

one-on-one and even addressed the larger group of attendees. Akinsanya says, “We got great feedback. The students asked questions about osteopathic medicine and how it differed from allopathic medicine.”

Motivated by the positive response, Akinsanya and her peers set out to reach more students, including those at the

high school level. COMPASS student ambassadors visited the Community Health Academy of the Heights, on 158th Street in Harlem. There, they taught the students about three different types of illnesses and then had an actor role-play a patient with symptoms, leaving the students to guess what the correct diagnosis might be. “The distance from high school to medical school is great,” she says. “The seeds we plant now won’t blossom for years, but it’s still important to create that exposure.”

The COMPASS recruitment efforts also include distribution of “Student-to-Student” brochures that answer questions prospective minority applicants have about TouroCOM, as well as provide insight on what it’s like to attend medical school in vibrant New York City.

On campus, COMPASS provides informal mentoring for students in the master’s program. Akinsanya has a handful of students she checks in with monthly. As a peer resource, she answers questions about what classes to take, or just listens if her fellow students are feeling overwhelmed with the demands of school. “No one can get through medical school alone,” she says. “I want to make sure that people know they’re not alone.”

The enthusiastic reception to COMPASS is, no doubt, rooted in Akinsanya’s compassionate leadership. Though it’s still early on in her med school tenure, she says she’s leaning toward a specialty in psychiatry. Last summer, she completed a psychiatry rotation at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, working alongside third- and fourth-year students from Harvard Medical School. “I’ve always been interested

in human behavior, and even if I choose a different specialty, I think I’ll always be a psychiatrist at heart,” she says.

A major focus of Akinsanya’s efforts is keeping students engaged on campus, such as by scheduling COMPASS meet-and-greets. Last fall, a group went to Amateur Night at the Apollo, right across the street from TouroCOM’s 125th Street location. “Community building is a big part of what we do,” she says.

COMPASS’ work has been well-received in the wider community, as well. Gina Moses, associate director of application services at the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine, is working with Akinsanya to replicate the project at other osteopathic schools across the country. Though the program is in its incipient stages, Akinsanya reports already there is substantial momentum behind it.

Recently, Akinsanya received the Sherry R. Arnstein Minority Student Scholarship after submitting an essay about her work with COMPASS and her passion to help others. In the essay she writes, “I believe that the COMPASS program can serve as a force that causes a chain reaction in a generation that is not only committed to serve the underserved, but committed to inspiring one another.”

Based on all that she has accomplished in a relatively short period of time, it appears this future osteopathic physician is making great strides on both counts. ■



Akinsanya showing students how to use a stethoscope and listen to each other’s lung sounds.

A Tale of Two Lives

Robyn Polansky, Making Things Better



Robyn Polansky's first love is philanthropy. Hailing from a charitable family, Polansky grew up volunteering at shelters and learning from her parents' example of giving back to important causes. When she was in high school, Polansky served as the president of her school's Key Club chapter. If there was one thing she was certain of, it was that she wanted to make a difference in the world.

However, when Polansky graduated from Union College with a Bachelor of Science in economics, she didn't pursue a career path in the not-for-profit world. Instead, she decided to accept a job in finance in the venture capital division at Thompson Financial. "I was interested in exploring something new, and I fell into it," says Polansky.

Years later, Polansky, who is currently pursuing her Master of Business Administration with a specialization in General Management from Touro's Graduate School of Business, has risen through the professional ranks. Now a vice president at the wealth management company Bessemer Trust, where she started in 2002 as a fund administration assistant, Polansky focuses on investment/fund manager research, asset allocation and portfolio construction for investment managers who have private clients with portfolios in excess of \$75 million. Of her current company, she says, "I found myself working with really smart people and learning at every step of the way."

Her quest for new educational experiences has included volunteer engagements as well. For eight years, following a trip to Israel with the

Friends of the Israeli Defense Forces (FIDF), Polansky was very active with the FIDF, helping the organization in their Young Leadership Division. "I worked on everything, from fundraising and strategy to organizing events and volunteer engagement—and everything in between," she says.

Now, the organization has grown considerably, with a budget of more than \$25 million. Polansky decided to step down from her official post on the FIDF Young Leadership Executive Board, in part because of her growing responsibilities at school and also because she felt it was time to let the next generation step in. Her work in the charitable arena, though, is anything but over.

Currently, she is on the board of directors of Strength to Strength, an organization that aids victims of terror around the globe; serves on the executive board of the Council of Young Jewish Presidents, which promotes networking and advancement opportunities for the next generation of leaders; and volunteers with Bottomless Closet, which is dedicated to helping teach low income women how to become more self-sufficient.



Her philanthropic activities don't end there, either. A few years ago, she ran and completed the New York City Marathon and raised money for

Teen Continuum, which provides non-medical assistance for teen cancer patients. She also supports CAMERA (Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America). In 2011, The Jewish Week honored Polansky as part of its "36 Under 36" feature

on young leaders shaping Jewish life around the world. Even with the time constraints of her full-time job and coursework at Touro, Polansky manages to find ways to contribute to causes she's passionate about.

"My life is a story of finding balance," she says. "I have a full professional life and a full charitable life in which I am able to find meaning."

Her coursework at Touro has opened up new pathways of understanding as well. As a lifelong learner looking for new challenges, Polansky went back to school to increase her knowledge, choosing Touro for its smaller class size and the faculty, who are high-level practitioners. Once she completed courses, including quantitative analysis and managerial finance, she was able to gain greater footing in her job. After taking a course in negotiation and conflict resolution, she

Dr. Sabra Brock, who tapped Robyn Polansky to become the founding president of the Touro chapter of the National Association of Women MBAs, calls Polansky "a doer."

acquired greater confidence in her negotiation skills.

In many cases, though, Polansky has been figuring out that much of what she's already doing has a particular name or technique. "It's been great bringing this added dimension of academia to my life," she says. "All of my professors are so engaging. I can't wait to get back to class."

Sabra Brock, Ph.D., interim dean of the Graduate School of Business, was so impressed with Polansky's abilities that she tapped her to become the founding president of the Touro chapter of the National Association of Women MBAs. Dr. Brock says, "Robyn is a 'doer.' I expect her to use the education she is receiving at Touro to great advantage as she advances in her career."

If her current attitude, not to mention resume, is any indicator, advancement is likely. Polansky expects to graduate with her MBA in December 2015 and is open to the ways that her experiences, both professional and philanthropic, are slated to expand. Whether in her career or charitable work, she says, "I have always gone into situations as a student and said, 'Let me see where I can get involved as a leader and make things better.'" ■

"My life is a story of finding balance," she says. "I have a full professional life and a full charitable life in which I am able to find meaning."

Educating Tomorrow's Nurses

Touro Opens New Horizons

When Dmitry Bolshin lost his job in 2008, he didn't know where to turn. The Ukrainian native had been working in finance, on mortgage-backed securities, when the market crashed. Subsequently, there was no work, especially in Bolshin's particular area. Before his last day, he was tasked with training someone in India to cover his role. Bolshin wondered, "What can I do that can never be outsourced?"

.....

His wife, who works as a physical therapy nurse, suggested he explore nursing. Bolshin warmed to the idea, especially given the job security. Then, following a death in his family, he started placing even more value on the importance of helping others, and last fall enrolled in Touro's Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S) program. Eventually he plans on enrolling in the school's new "RN to BS" program in nursing as well.

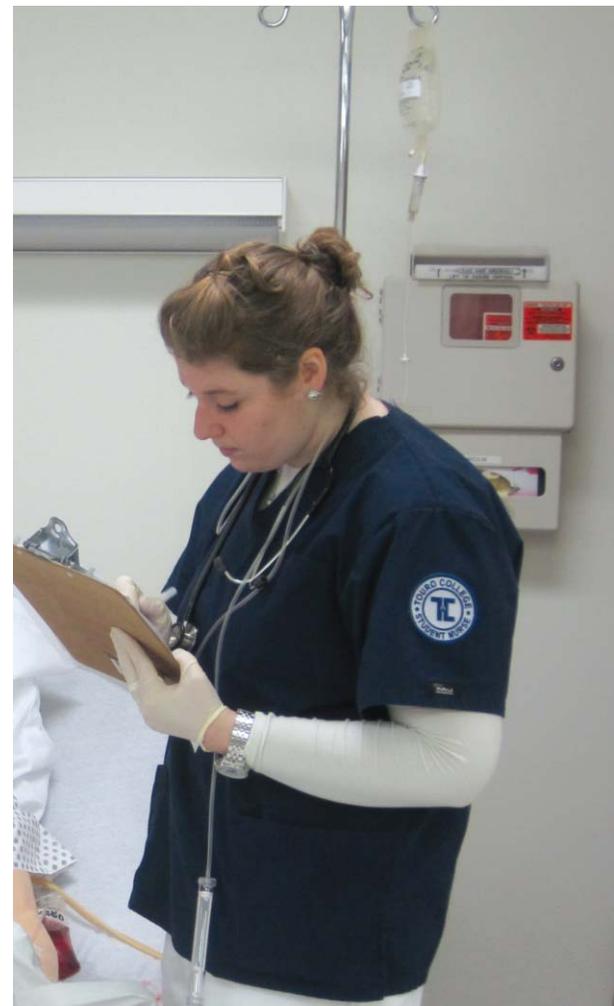
The Bachelor of Science is the latest offering from Touro's growing Department of Nursing. The first class, comprised of 34 students from diverse backgrounds, enrolled last fall. Many nursing students, like Bolshin, have discovered that the security inherent in the profession of nursing makes it an attractive option, especially in today's economic climate.

Sandra Russo, chairperson of the Department of Nursing, also notes that with the median age of nurses at 55, a shortage is predicted in approximately five years as more nurses near retirement age.

"Our program has been growing fast. There will always be a need for nurses," says Russo.

As the job opportunities expand, so have Touro's offerings. In addition to the new bachelor's program, an A.A.S./B.S. dual degree program has been added, as well as the "RN to BS" program for nurses who have their associate's degrees. Currently, four faculty members either have or are pursuing their doctorates in nursing, strengthening the quality and depth of the education students receive. The Department is also in the process of applying for accreditation from the Commission of Collegiate Nursing Education, which it anticipates receiving.

Last October, the Department moved into a brand new building in the Midwood section



of Brooklyn, with state-of-the-art facilities. Given the rising interest in nursing and Touro's program, the development is expected to continue, with plans to build out the second floor of the current building with additional classroom space, skills labs and faculty offices.

Touro's offerings even extend offsite, with evening classes one night a week at nearby Maimonides Medical Center, so that working



Student nurse in a simulation training with a Laerdal VitalSim mannequin, a high-tech teaching tool popular in nursing and other health science laboratories. The mannequins are used to teach students clinical skills in a realistic way so they can provide quality care to patients.

nurses can finish their bachelor's degrees. "We have a great relationship with Maimonides," says Russo. "They hire many of our graduates."

Anthony Dorf, who entered the B.S. program last fall and served as class president, is currently working in the cardiology department at Maimonides, where he administers stress tests and EKGs. About nursing, he says, "This is my profession—it is what I was meant to do."

Completing his bachelor's will not only earn Dorf a higher pay grade, but it will also deepen his expertise. "Knowledge is power," he says. "The staff here [at Touro] really knows what they teach."

The quality of the education is reflected in national test scores, too. According to Russo, Touro students' pass rates for the nursing exam boards are above the national and state passing percentages.

In addition to the myriad nursing tracks, the personable atmosphere at Touro distinguishes the program from others. Russo notes that the classes tend to be very mixed in terms of ethnicity, religion and levels of experience. The diversity is definitely a plus. "Everyone learns from one another," Russo says. "By the end of the term, the students are like one big family."

Jessica Ruocco, a former special education teacher, entered the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program last fall and hopes to one day work in pediatrics. She found her way to nursing after tiring of working in the classroom. Her father, who works as a nurse at Maimonides, had left a nursing publication around the house and Ruocco started flipping through it. She realized that nurses worked not only in hospitals, but also worked privately. The flexibility of working privately piqued her interest, as she is someone who loves to travel.

Last semester, Ruocco completed her clinical rotation at Maimonides, which was more overwhelming than she'd previously expected. "By the end, though, all the lights were clicking. I'm excited for that to continue."

She's not the only one. With the growing offerings of the nursing program and specialized faculty attention, many of the students are planning careers tailor-made to their interests. Bolshin, who ultimately would like to combine work at a hospital with a private nursing job, says, "Nursing has so many possibilities." ■

"Our program has been growing fast. There will always be a need for nurses."

**— Sandra Russo
Chairperson, Department of Nursing**

OPERATION EDUCATION

Touro Law School Reopens Veterans' and Servicemembers' Rights Clinic



A veteran of the Iraq war was enrolled at SUNY-Stony Brook, working toward his master's degree in social work, when he hit a brick wall. Despite having served in the military and being a United States resident, the veteran wasn't, in fact, a citizen. He possessed his Green Card, but hadn't applied for citizenship, which meant he wasn't eligible for a clinical internship, a requisite for his degree program.

Unsure of where to turn, the veteran was referred to the Veterans' and Servicemembers' Rights Clinic, a recently-revived program at Touro's Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center. Christina Knorr, a third-year law student, worked with a volunteer immigration attorney to help the vet apply for citizenship and ultimately land the internship he wanted.

Often the process for getting help is overwhelming and the guidance of an advocate can make a tangible difference. Knorr says, "It didn't take long but the help made a big difference. Now he can pursue his dream."

Suffolk County, Long Island, where the clinic and law school are located, has the largest population of veterans of any county in New York state—an estimated 80,000 former service members—and one of the largest populations in the U.S. Of this population, an estimated 5,000 are homeless. Even for those who are not homeless, returning home after a tour of duty can bring a host of challenges, such as coping with forgotten traffic tickets, dealing with debts, child support and/or mortgage payments, getting the appropriate benefits and finding jobs (or getting old ones back).

To address these myriad needs of veterans—especially preventing or alleviating homelessness and removing obstacles to reintegration into civilian life—the Law Center initially opened the clinic in 2010, and ran it for two years before it had to shut down in 2012 due to lack of funding. But Touro, understanding the growing need to help returning soldiers who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan and aging Vietnam-era vets, was determined to reopen it. After finding new funding from private foundations, government sources and individual donors, the clinic reopened its doors in August 2013



under the leadership of Ken Rosenblum, Touro's longtime associate dean for administration.

Rosenblum, who has been at the law school for 24 years, was the perfect choice to run the clinic. A Vietnam veteran with five years of active duty as a U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps officer, where he worked as a court-martial prosecutor, Rosenblum was strengthened by volunteer legal work he had done on behalf of veterans, including with the local chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America.

"These are men and women who have made extraordinary sacrifices for their nation. Among Vietnam veterans there is a foundation principle that never again will a generation of veterans abandon another," says Rosenblum, explaining his dedication. "We, as a school and community, owe this to the vets for their service."

While the circumstances of a particular war—and the demographics of the vets who serve—may vary, shared experience in the military is a plus when it comes to providing legal assistance.

"The veterans' ethos is to keep it all in and not tell anyone when you're experiencing hardship," Rosenblum says. "To the extent that vets will open up at all, it's going to be to another vet."

Of the nine second- and third-year law students involved with the clinic last fall, two are U.S. military veterans themselves—one who served in Iraq and the other in Afghanistan. This past spring, 11 new students were signed up for the seminar and

clinic work, several of whom had family histories of military service.

To help students communicate with their clients, the clinic includes weekly three-hour seminars that focus, in part, on the unique language and culture of veterans. For example, using acronyms when referring to war is a key signifier of understanding the veteran experience, i.e. asking vets if they served in "OEF" (Operation Enduring Freedom) or "OIF" (Operation Iraqi Freedom) can help establish instant rapport.

The seminars also cover practical skills like interviewing and public speaking; legal subjects common in veterans' work, like professional ethics and confidentiality, debt collection, credit, traffic tickets, child support modification and bankruptcy; as well as the more traditional veterans' benefits and discharge review and upgrades.

Students work on cases 12 to 15 hours per week, and also sit in on Suffolk's Veterans Treatment Courts, one of about 20 in the state that help veterans by diverting them from the traditional criminal justice system and providing them with the tools they need to live productive and law abiding lives through treatment, rehabilitative programming, reinforcement and judicial monitoring.

Many veterans find themselves involved in the criminal justice system due to "battlemind," where they are still in the mindset of combat and the threat of imminent danger, even after returning home. This could lead to an overly-aggressive response to what might otherwise be an everyday situation, such as getting stuck in a traffic jam.

Left: Clinic student Matthew Domanick with Clinic Director Ken Rosenblum

Right: Clinic students and veterans advocates meet with N.Y. State Senator Lee Zeldin. L-R: Ken Rosenblum; Don Howe, Suffolk Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter #11; Senator Zeldin; clinic students Christina Knorr and Tesla Carrasquillo; and Ralph Sanchelli, Suffolk VVA #11.





Background, L-R: Spring 2014 Vets Clinic students Giuseppe Rosini, Priscilla DeLeon, Rachel Klebanoff; Clinic Director Ken Rosenblum; clinic students Jess Montefusco, Robert Manetta, Paul Lipsky and Matthew Domanick. Foreground, center: The Honorable John Toomey, Presiding Judge, Suffolk County Veterans Treatment Court; flanked left and right by the peer-to-peer counselors from Suffolk County Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America; and far right, Eric Bruno, LCSW, Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator, Northport VA Medical Center. Students visited the Veterans Treatment Court. Judge Toomey and court staff spent an afternoon in the clinic seminar discussing the work of the court.

Other vets recently returned from combat suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and/or traumatic brain injury (TBI), which could lead them to self-medicate with drugs or alcohol. These courts give vets charged with relatively minor non-violent crimes a chance to get out of the criminal justice system, and earn a reduced charge or a lenient sentence, in return for completing an individualized treatment program, which might include drug or alcohol rehab or anger management counseling.

For Angela Pugliese, a third-year law student in the clinic last fall, the experience was eye-opening. “I have many friends who are veterans, but it’s another thing to learn directly from people who have suffered service-related injuries that you don’t know personally,” she says. “This is a population that often doesn’t realize how much trauma they have incurred. And we can really help.”

As Pugliese came to understand in her tenure at the clinic, one symptom of PTSD is a lack of awareness that one is suffering. She was able to work hand-in-hand with the Northport VA Medical Center on behalf of a veteran who was having a hard time finding a job and had fallen behind on his child support payments. As it turned out, PTSD was at the root of his situation. Pugliese teamed up with a social worker at the Northport VA to get a proper medical evaluation, which she then brought to the court to get the vet a break on his child support payments until he could get back on his feet.

“It’s definitely gratifying to identify the problems and then help out in a concrete way,” says Pugliese. “As a law student you play psychologist, listening and realizing just how often help goes unasked for because there’s not an understanding of the system.”

Many veterans find themselves still in the mindset of combat and feeling the threat of imminent danger, even after returning home.

In addition to performing much-needed services, the students agree that their experience is valuable for their law careers. Pugliese, for example, currently works at a law firm that specializes in workers’ compensation. The firm may open a branch specializing in veterans’ benefits, something she’d now be well-prepared to handle. Knorr has benefitted greatly by practicing her listening skills and learning how to establish trust with clients.

Another student, Justin Hoitsma, offers a slightly different perspective. Having completed two deployments in Iraq, Hoitsma knew as soon as he heard of the clinic that he wanted to get involved. He says, “With my prior experiences, I knew I could bring a lot to the table.”

Hoitsma, who was born in the Bronx and raised on Long Island, says he always knew he wanted to help people, which is partly what drew him to law. As a second-year student at the clinic he had many opportunities to help. On one occasion, he helped a veteran get their disability rating status re-evaluated so the vet could qualify for increased benefits. In another case, he worked with a veteran who needed his re-enlistment code altered so that he could qualify for the New York City Police Department. Hoitsma explains that it’s easy for veterans to receive a code that might not be entirely accurate, especially if there had been a disciplinary issue. Making slight changes can have a big impact.

Whatever the issue, Hoitsma remains matter-of-fact about his role. “These are people who fought for our country’s freedom,” he says. “I never looked at the work as challenging. To me, it was just something that needed to be done.”

Last semester, a new group of clinic students took on cases, though many from the fall remained in contact with

Touro's Veteran's Affairs Program

A New Initiative From the Office of the President

Rosenblum and social workers at the VA. In one instance, Pugliese has made herself available. "I would hate for a vet to feel like he or she is being passed around," she says.

The work at the clinic extends beyond the individual cases, too. After witnessing bureaucratic roadblocks firsthand, several students, with Rosenblum's support, approached New York State Senator Lee Zeldin. The students asked Senator Zeldin, who served in Iraq himself, to introduce legislation they had drafted to make it easier for vets to resolve problems with the State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

In the proposed legislation, the DMV would have to appoint a liaison to help veterans cut through the red tape of reinstating their licenses after their tours; in another bill drafted by the students, veterans courts would be given greater discretion over waiving mandatory court fees that can cause financial hardship on vets, many of whom are already strained monetarily.

This is just the beginning. The good work done at the clinic is certainly fulfilling a need—and all who are involved are striving to ensure its longevity. Hoitsma says, "With the current conflicts around the globe, I certainly hope the clinic has staying power—it's essential." ■



Colonel (Ret) Geoffrey Slack

Earlier this year, the Office of the President formally established the Veteran's Affairs Program to support veterans who are currently enrolled at a select number of Touro campuses in New York City and Long Island. Colonel Geoffrey Slack, who recently retired after a 34-year tenure with the U.S. Army, is spearheading the program.

He says, "The program's principal goal is to assist veterans and their dependents (spouses and children) through the process of entering Touro College at either the undergraduate, graduate or professional program level, and to continue to offer direct assistance throughout their education at Touro."

Presently, Slack is on a fact-finding mission to identify the baseline issues. Slack is focusing on how veterans interface with Touro, via the registrar, bursar, financial aid office and more. As the budding program develops, it may expand, depending on the scope of need. Going forward, recruitment efforts may become part of the program's activities as well.

"Veterans benefit from having a network," Slack says. "I joined the Touro team because I was profoundly impressed by the level of concern for the educational needs of veterans by the leadership of Touro College. From the president of the college down through the entire academic and administrative staff of Touro, I have been welcomed, encouraged and supported as we work to build the Veteran's Affairs Program."

For more information, please contact Colonel Slack at: 631-665-1600, ext: 6317.

Connecting the Dots

Research Consortium Pioneers Intervention for Schizophrenic Patients

Imagine that a cat is walking across the street. To the average observer, the cat's physical characteristics are familiar: smooth fur, four legs, a delicate nose. But to a schizophrenic patient who suffers from a perceptual organizational deficit, the feline might look more like a small lion.

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In another example of a perceptual disorder, what might appear like a watch to one person could be unidentifiable to the schizophrenic patient, due to an inability to integrate the basic elements of the object, i.e. the shape of the face, or the strap, or the numbers. The disorder is not delusional in essence; patients are simply unable to automatically connect the disparate parts of an object or setting.

As one might imagine, these gaps in perception can greatly—and negatively—affect a patient's ability to function in the world. They challenge the way patients relate to others and can impair their independence. While there has been plenty of research on these types of perceptual disorders within schizophrenia, none has focused on whether or not there is hope for improvement within the disorder—until now.

Last fall, Richard Waxman, Ph.D., interim dean of the Touro Graduate School of Psychology, launched a new research consortium to investigate whether a cognitive rehabilitation would improve patients' perceptual organization abilities and, in turn, improve their overall level of functioning. Other participating institutions are Brooklyn College, which is part of the City University of New York; the Manhattan Psychiatric Center (MPC), a state hospital located on Ward's Island; Rutgers University; and Touro's own New York Medical College.

Dr. Waxman and his co-investigator, Daniel Kurylo, Ph.D., associate professor at Brooklyn College, designed a

computer program that inpatients at MPC use to gauge their levels of perception. Patients are shown a series of lines and dots and are guided to identify horizontal and vertical lines, as well as shapes. Pencil and paper exercises are also used to teach patients how to integrate visually complex material. Patients at MPC participating in the computer-based intervention have been meeting with research assistants three times a week for four months. There is a metric built into the computer program so that patients can see how they are improving.

Rebecca King, a master's student in Touro's Mental Health Counseling program, has been working at MPC since last fall and has seen marked advances. "Some [patients] start on level zero and stay there for three sessions, while others move to higher levels—17 or 20," she says. "The patients become really happy when they can see an improvement."

The idea for the rehabilitation can be traced back three years to a conversation Dr. Waxman had with Dr. Kurylo, with whom he has collaborated before. Dr. Waxman, whose background is in neuropsychology, was thinking about the concept of neuroplasticity, as it applies to improving brain functioning. Cognitive rehabilitation is generally applied to cognitive disorders, but more recently, Dr. Waxman says, it has become an acceptable treatment for psychotic patients, too. Given the lack of treatment available for those with



Dr. Richard Waxman and his research team meet to discuss the ongoing schizophrenic research project at the Manhattan Psychiatric Center.



perceptual disorders in schizophrenia, the pair decided to create the rehabilitation intervention.

In order to combine resources and create a top-notch study, Dr. Waxman and Dr. Kurylo began to develop the consortium. The same computer-based intervention is expected to start at Rutgers in the fall of 2014, headed by Dr. Steven Silverstein, a leading schizophrenia researcher and director of research as well as director of the Division of Schizophrenia Research at Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care.

Dr. Waxman says of the consortium thus far, “It’s been a great experience. Everyone complements one another.”

Not only is the research poised to make an important contribution to the field of schizophrenia research and rehabilitation, but it also has provided a unique opportunity for students to gain valuable clinical experience. The participating students are from Touro’s Graduate School of Psychology, Lander College for Men, Lander College for Women – The Anna Ruth and Mark Hasten School and Brooklyn College.

“It is very valuable for students to have this type of research experience,” says Dr. Waxman. “For many, this is the first time that they have seen patients and have been able to learn firsthand about pathologies they’ve studied in the classroom.

Rebecca King, a master’s student working at the Manhattan Psychiatric Center since last fall has seen marked advances. “The patients become really happy when they can see an improvement.”

They can also ask important questions, such as, ‘Is this what I want to do?’ and ‘Is this a population I want to work with?’ ”

In King’s case, she plans on applying for her doctorate, so having this research in her portfolio will give her a greater advantage. Ultimately King, who grew up in Crown Heights and East Flatbush, would like to open a non-profit in a low-income community with mental health and education services, in hopes of removing the stigma of receiving mental health services within the African American community.

King sees her experience at MPC fitting in with her longer-term goals. “In the beginning, I was nervous, not having had much experience being around inpatients with these types of diagnoses,” she says. “As time passed, I learned how to adapt. This amazing experience will help me later on in my career—it’s important to be able to communicate with every type of person.”

The research itself fits into a growing trend within the Touro Graduate School of Psychology.

“We’ve been trying to increase the volume of research,” says Dr. Waxman. “Not only have there been substantial projects, but we have also brought on faculty with significant design and statistical expertise to facilitate projects.”

Though the data is not yet complete, Dr. Waxman and his colleagues expect to see the preliminary results by the end of the summer and have plans to continue the research for at least one more year. If the findings are as promising as expected, the team will apply for funding from the National Institute of Mental Health. Dr. Waxman says, “If this does impact patients’ lives, having a more generalized effect on their level of functioning would be very exciting.” ■

Bright Like a Diamond

Jewish Studies Attracts Top-Tier Scholars



Ira Bedzow, Class of '12

Ira Bedzow is a triple threat, in more ways than one. In addition to being an ordained rabbi, an accomplished scholar and a published author, Bedzow holds three advanced degrees in Jewish-related studies.

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He has completed a master's degree from the University of Chicago; in 2012, he completed his Master of Arts in Jewish Studies from Touro's Graduate School of Jewish Studies, his thesis exploring how Jewish law could be a foundation for contemporary philosophy; and recently, Bedzow completed his doctorate from Emory University, where he wrote his dissertation on contemporary Jewish virtue ethics, or how someone can become a moral person through the Jewish tradition.

And that's just scratching the surface of his accomplishments. As an undergraduate, the Florida native studied political science and economics at Princeton University. In addition to his present studies, he is also working as senior scholar of the Aspen Center for Social Values, a think tank with a mission to "leverage the unique assets of the Jewish tradition to promote serious thought about—and to bring a fresh and unique voice to—social and societal challenges that confront the world today."

While he was studying at Touro, he turned one of his papers into a book, "Halakhic Man, Authentic Jew," a philosophical text on the teachings of Rabbis Joseph B. Soloveitchik and Eliezer Berkovits—thanks to the support of Michael Shmidman, Ph.D., dean of the Graduate School of Jewish Studies. He has also recently accepted a position at New York Medical College to be the director of the new Biomedical Ethics and Humanities program.

Naturally, Touro's Graduate School of Jewish Studies is proud to have Bedzow join its ranks of distinguished alumni, who have gone on to distinguished careers in academia and Jewish education across the globe.

Since 1981, when Rabbi Dr. Bernard Lander, the founder and first president of Touro College, invited Dr. Shmidman to

establish the Graduate School of Jewish Studies—Touro’s first graduate school—the school has attracted an illustrious group of passionate, committed students. Like Bedzow, many hold bachelor’s degrees from Ivy League and top-tier institutions, including Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Sorbonne, Oxford University, Cambridge University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. According to Dean Shmidman, most incoming students have extensive academic backgrounds in Jewish studies, often having studied at yeshivot or women’s seminaries.

These solid academic foundations translate into high-quality classroom experiences. Dean Shmidman says, “Everyone is highly motivated. Some are here studying for the sake of studying, while others will go into the field of Jewish education. The common denominator, though, is uncommonly high enthusiasm.”

For Bedzow, who was in school for the love of learning as opposed to just “getting a piece of paper,” the passion for Jewish Studies at Touro was infectious. “I fell in love with the world view and motivations behind the Graduate School of Jewish Studies,” he says. “The majority of professors are involved with their subjects at a very personal level. They care—and care that their students care, too.”

Over the years, this extraordinary level of collegiality and dedication has been Touro’s hallmark. In a recent application to the New York State Department of Education for the establishment of a Ph.D. program in Jewish History, the Graduate School of Jewish Studies submitted positive evaluations from a



Rivka Schiller, Class of ‘13

number of external bodies. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education accreditation teams have singled out the M.A. program’s “well-designed curriculum,” its “carefully designed and well-executed” quality program and cited its “extraordinarily dedicated staff, deeply interested in students and their progress.” In 2006, following an assessment by the Doctoral Readiness Evaluation Team, Professor Marc Saperstein of The George Washington University wrote, “It now seems to me that the Touro Graduate School has the potential for offering one of the stronger programs in modern Jewish History available in the United States.”

The graduates certainly seem to agree. Rivka Schiller (class of ‘13) frequently takes on projects as an archivist at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. Schiller received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Chicago, where she focused on modern Hebrew language and literature. Says Schiller, “Dean Shmidman was one of the driving forces behind why I applied—he’s got it all covered, the academics and the religion. His brilliance and leadership stand out.”

“Everyone is highly motivated. Some are here studying for the sake of studying, while others will go into the field of Jewish education. The common denominator, though, is uncommonly high enthusiasm.”

— Dean Michael Shmidman

Schiller, who also has an advanced degree in Library Science from Dominican University, came to Touro with a desire to explore Yiddish and modern Jewish history in Poland, with a focus on the Holocaust period. Prior to entering Touro, she had heard about Professor Natalia Aleksiu, Ph.D., a well-known scholar in the fields of Eastern European Jewish history and the history of the Holocaust. "It was a great opportunity to study closely with someone with Dr. Aleksiu's level of knowledge in

"It now seems to me that the Touro Graduate School has the potential for offering one of the stronger programs in modern Jewish History available in the United States."

*— Professor Marc Saperstein
The George Washington University*

areas I was interested in," adds Schiller, who ended up taking four courses with Dr. Aleksiu.

Under Dr. Aleksiu's guidance, Schiller ultimately wrote her thesis on an organized Jewish community in Poland entitled, "Jews in Chmielnik: 1556-1946: The Rise and Fall of a Polish Jewish Community." Schiller traced the history of the town, essentially a shtetl, from the Middle Ages to after the Holocaust. "It was a very different way of life, not one we can fully understand today," says Schiller.

As the granddaughter of Holocaust survivors, the topic had a personal element. In

the course of her research, Schiller, who hadn't originally set out to write about Chmielnik, discovered the autobiography of a distant relative of hers, who shared the same surname [Gorlicki] as her great grandmother and namesake. As a result of her thesis, her personal genealogy expanded, too.

The warmth of her fellow students provided inspiration. "We had a very good, strong coterie of students who seemed genuinely interested in cross-fertilization and sharing different ideas," says Schiller. "This wasn't a setting in which I witnessed too much reticence."

As far as the academic output, Dean Shmidman notes that there have been a significant number of "first-rate" theses produced by Touro graduate students over the years, including those by Bedzow and Schiller. With current plans to establish a doctoral program, the quality of work will only improve.

"Students are getting state-of-the-art scholarship in the field," says Dean Shmidman, noting the program's broad selection of courses in medieval and modern Jewish history, plus a new Master of Arts concentration in Jewish Education at the Lander College for Men in Queens.

If the doctoral program had been an option when Bedzow was looking, he says, "I definitely would have applied. Look at the master's students that come out of the program—imagine what the Ph.D. students would do." ■

Biotechnology Entrepreneurship

Expanding the Borders of a Pharmacy Education

In a 2014 report from U.S. News and World Report, “pharmacist” was ranked fifth among the country’s top professions, due, in part, to the field’s rapid expansion. By 2022, the pharmacy profession is expected to have grown by 14.5 percent.

To give its students a competitive edge, the Touro College of Pharmacy recently offered “Biotechnology Entrepreneurship,” a concentrated elective conceived and taught by Zvi Loewy, Ph.D., professor of pharmaceutical and biomedical sciences and interim dean. The course exposed students to the growing field of biotechnology and pharmaceutical healthcare via lectures from faculty with industrial experience and CEOs/executives from the private sector.

Citing the pharmacy program’s already rigorous offerings in science and patient care, Dr. Loewy explains that the course began as a way for students to expand their horizons.

“We at the College of Pharmacy want to provide opportunities for students so that they can choose a career that best suits them, both their academic interests and their quality of life,” says Dr. Loewy.

In “Biotechnology Entrepreneurship,” nearly 30 students were exposed to various aspects of the



business side of pharmacy, such as the process of FDA regulatory approval when developing a new product. They also learned how to compile an intellectual property portfolio, as well as how to assess the value of a product.

During the intensive elective, which met for four days a week, the students—most of them in their third year of the program—heard firsthand accounts from business, legal and investor relations professionals including CEOs, intellectual property attorneys, regulatory affairs experts and business development leaders from the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries.

Dr. Loewy, who also offered his experiences as an entrepreneur, says, “There were a lot of high-powered people who came in and shared their knowledge with our students.”

Students were quizzed periodically and given opportunities to evaluate different companies’ business models. At the end of the course, they wrote papers addressing the role of a pharmacist in biotechnology

The Touro College of Pharmacy now has agreements with large pharmaceutical companies, including Novartis, Bayer, Bristol Meyers Squibb and Novo Nordisk, for student rotations.

entrepreneurship. Dr. Loewy anticipates that a number of the papers will evolve into published works.

Upon completion, a majority of the students expressed a tremendous interest in obtaining a rotation in industry, beyond the traditional hospital and retail setting. In a recent development, the College of Pharmacy now has agreements with large pharmaceutical companies, including Novartis, Bayer, Bristol Meyers Squibb and Novo Nordisk, for student rotations. Genewiz, a pioneer in the field of pharmacogenomics that specializes in DNA sequencing, has also expressed interest in partnering with the College of Pharmacy.

Dr. Loewy says, "This is an initiative we're proud of. Students have responded very well. Now, they're excited to explore things that were probably not on their horizons when they were starting off."

Given the enthusiastic response, the course will likely be offered again next year. ■



Aleks Ilchekes, a fourth-year student from the

class, says he was fascinated to learn just how multi-dimensional a successful biotechnology entrepreneur must be.

Regarding the outside lecturers, he says, "It was really inspiring listening to these people, not only because of their success stories, but also to see how passionate they were about their respective fields."

Currently, Ilchekes is considering other professional options in pharmacy. He says, "The knowledge I gained in this course really expanded my idea of what a pharmacist can do besides working in a clinical setting or a retail drug store."



Vicky Nguyen, also a fourth-year student in the course, says her

eyes were opened to how a pharmacy background can help patients. "I am hoping to integrate my expertise in pharmaceuticals, and dream of the possibilities of helping patients prevail over any diseases," she says.

Hearing the outside speakers sparked her enthusiasm, too, for thinking outside of the box. "The course made me realize that one should be a risk-taker and keep moving forward, despite any potential failures—because your own innovations can ultimately lead to great success," she adds.



Avanti Kallianpur, a fourth-year, was drawn to the course because of her own background in

business; prior to entering Touro, she worked in finance. "I was intrigued by how to marry my two interests," she says. "I'm interested in the future of pharmacy and wanted to learn more about the impact pharmacists have in the realm of biotechnology."

Kallianpur adds, "The most interesting thing I learned from taking the course was how many non-traditional roles are available for someone with a PharmD degree."

The Writing Center

Touro's Division of Graduate Studies

This year marks the launch of The Writing Center, a new effort of the Division of Graduate Studies (DGS) to empower students and help them improve their writing capabilities. Recognizing a need to further support students in all seven graduate schools of the DGS, Professor Robert Laub, the director, and his associates Dr. Nicholas Aiello and Dr. Mel Elberger, created the Center under the leadership of Dr. Nadja Graff, vice president of the DGS.



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The Center is designed to strengthen students' general writing skills and provide consultation for coursework, certification requirements and overall career development. The Writing Center is partnered with the Touro Library to ensure students have access to resources that will support their writing development. Open five days a week, the

Center also offers guidance on cover letters and resumes.

Located at Touro's main campus at 43 West 23rd Street in Manhattan, The Writing Center provides instruction in a one-on-one tutoring format, as well as in seminars now taking place at various Touro campuses. The seminars focus on reading comprehension, essay writing and test-taking skills and strategies related to the Academic Literacy Skills Test (ALST), a requirement of the New York State Education Department for teacher certification.

The Writing Center staff is interested in speaking with alumni who would like to "give back" to Touro by serving as pro bono tutors for students in need of writing assistance. Alumni interested in exploring this opportunity should contact Robert Laub, at 212-463-0400, ext. 5791 or at Robert.laub@touro.edu. Anyone interested in visiting the Center, please contact Michael Aiello, administrative assistant, at 212-463-0400, ext. 5273 and 5562. The Writing Center community can also be found at mytouro.touro.edu. ■

Touro is Building Alumni Connections Worldwide

We are Touro

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100,000 alumni across the globe

Whether you are celebrating your 40th or first alumni reunion, Touro's multifaceted and dynamic alumni community welcomes you.

Engaging with your fellow alumni is all about being a part of the Touro legacy; it is about personal and communal growth and reconnecting with your alma mater.

Touro graduates have myriad opportunities to get involved, such as through educational programs, reunions, networking events, anniversary celebrations and community outings. For example, this year the Lander College for Women-The Anna Ruth and Mark Hasten School celebrated its 40th anniversary with a delightful dinner and awards ceremony. The Touro College 2nd Annual Spirit Night with the New York Mets at Citi Field brought over 140 members of the Touro family out for a night of school pride. Check the calendar on www.touro.edu for upcoming events and happenings.

Touro has expanded its offerings of educational forums and programs for our college community and alumni. These have included the Presidential Scholars Lecture Series; "Y'mei Iyun"—Days of Torah learning; and workshops and seminars.

"The Presidential Scholars Lecture Series is an educational forum that exemplifies the importance we place on our responsibility to cultivate informed and open conversation around critical issues," says President and CEO Dr. Alan Kadish. "Our commitment to the Jewish intellectual tradition extends beyond our students to our alumni and to the broader community, as we strive to foster meaningful discussion."

Become a mentor and volunteer.

Many Touro programs are seeking alumni to advise in the area of career services or to volunteer to participate in phonathons. The Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine (TouroCOM) this past spring expanded its TouroCOM Alumni Mentor Society with well over 150 members—graduates who have made themselves available to current medical students. The Society fulfills an important need to build a thriving

educational network. Soon-to-be alumni can contact current alumni and obtain information on the job market, rotations and potential employment opportunities.

Dean Robert Goldberg, DO, noted "This is a wonderful way to stay connected, by letting the students see that they are of value to the school, as opposed to focusing solely on how the school is of value to them."

The TouroCOM Alumni Mentor Society has been gaining momentum as third- and fourth-year students, who have benefitted from the counsel and resources, including introductions for potential residency placements, have become eager to give back. Bernard Lanter, M.D., director of clinical rotations at TouroCOM, and Karen Isaacs, Touro alumni director, began reaching out to these new alumni last year. Dr. Lanter says, "By getting recent graduates involved now, they are serving a tremendous purpose and helping current students by giving back. As a physician, you have to give."

Added Eric Levine, Ph.D., vice president, Institutional Advancement, "Many initiatives have been set in place to enable alumni to contribute their personal, financial, academic and professional knowledge and experiences to Touro and become effective leaders for the college."

Let's keep our connections strong. Have you changed jobs? Continued to advance your education? Written a new book? Launched a new company? Married and expanded your family or moved to another part of the world? Send us your news for alumni newsletters and publications.

Also, if you have an idea that you would like to develop for the Touro alumni community, or need to update your contact information, please contact Karen Isaacs at 212-463-0400, ext. 5532 or via email at alumni@touro.edu.

To learn about the growing list of alumni benefits and services plus other Touro news visit mytouro.touro.edu and www.touro.edu. For the latest in Touro merchandise, visit www.mytouroshop.com.

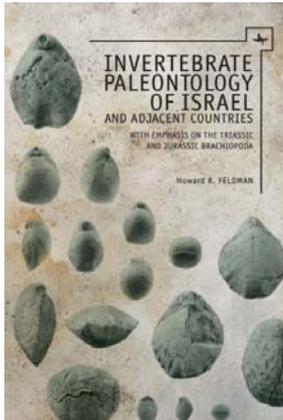
Giving at Touro is easy and online! Please visit us at www.touro.edu/giving or email us at giving@touro.edu.

We are Touro alumni.

Touro College Book Roundup

Recent Releases

Touro College is pleased to celebrate the literary accomplishments of members of its community. Within the past year, Touro College Press published the following books:



Invertebrate Paleontology of Israel and Adjacent Countries: With Emphasis on the Triassic and Jurassic Brachiopoda

By Howard R. Feldman, Ph.D.

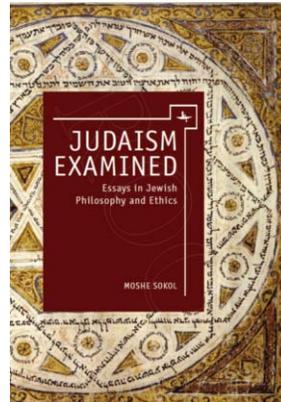
Since 1978, Howard Feldman, Ph.D., professor of biology at Lander College for Women – The Anna Ruth and Mark Hasten School, has been traveling to the Middle East and studying brachiopods—or, marine invertebrates found on shallow sea floors. In particular, he has been

focusing on invertebrates from the Mesozoic Era, an interval of geological time from approximately 252 to 66 million years ago. In his new book, “Invertebrate Paleontology of Israel and Adjacent Countries: With Emphasis on the Triassic and Jurassic Brachiopoda,” Dr. Feldman offers up a rare look at this area of paleontology. As colleague Arthur J. Boucot of Oregon State University’s Department of Zoology writes in the book’s foreword, “Feldman has earned an important position in our profession.”

Dr. Feldman’s extensive research dates back to the period of the Tethys Sea, an ocean that was a precursor to the Mediterranean, and a time when all the continents were connected as the supercontinent of Pangea. As the land mass began to split apart in the Jurassic movement—separating North Africa, Israel, Arabia, Somalia and northwest India—the brachiopod population, too, moved apart.

While working as a research associate in the Division of Paleontology (Invertebrates) at The American Museum of Natural History, Dr. Feldman explored the timing and sequence of the break-up of the continents by looking at the brachiopods. In the course of his work, Dr. Feldman unravelled the complicated taxonomy of Jurassic brachiopods, discovering new genera and species. His book is divided into three parts: coverage of Triassic brachiopods of Makhtesh Ramon, a large erosional crater in the Negev, a desert region in southern Israel; chapters that deal with the Jurassic brachiopods and brachiopod-dominated communities of northern Sinai; and research in Hamakhtesh Hagadol, another erosional crater in the Negev.

Dr. Feldman’s research is ongoing. He explains, “This is a big job. In northern Sinai there are 6,000 feet of sediment to sift through.”



Judaism Examined: Essays in Jewish Philosophy and Ethics

By Moshe Sokol, Ph.D.

Over the years, Moshe Sokol, Ph.D., dean of the Lander College for Men, professor of philosophy and a faculty member of the Graduate School of Jewish Studies, has delved into many key themes in Jewish philosophy and ethics in his scholarly work, via the lens of a rigorous analytical perspective. “Judaism Examined: Essays in Jewish Philosophy and

Ethics,” Dr. Sokol’s most recent publication, is a compilation of essays, the first set of which explores the challenge of living a Jewish life, and includes essays on pleasure, joy, human suffering, Jewish ritual practice and the philosophical life. A second set of essays analyzes the value and meaning of autonomy, human freedom and tolerance in Jewish thought, crucial themes in western political thought and life.

Dr. Michael Shmidman, dean of Touro’s Graduate School of Jewish Studies and editor of Touro College Press, says Dr. Sokol’s volume “advances the engagement of classical Jewish themes with Anglo-American philosophy, shedding new light both on the Jewish tradition, and on the western philosophical enterprise.”

Other essays in the volume examine the many meanings of Jewish texts, and such crucial issues in applied Jewish ethics as ecology, medical ethics and justified homicide. Finally, a number of essays plumb the depths of the thought of one of the most influential and creative Jewish thinkers of the twentieth century, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik.

“I have always been profoundly drawn to the intellectual riches of Jewish tradition, its classical sources and wisdom,” says Dr. Sokol. “By applying analytic, philosophical and critical thinking, we can illuminate them even further to provide more clarity and uncover insights that were only latent without this kind of method.”

For Dr. Sokol, having these essays in a single volume “captures different moments in my intellectual autobiography.” When he received the final product, he says, “The dominant feeling was one of joy—it is extremely gratifying to see the fruits of my labors all together. It reflects a set of concerns that I’ve tracked over time, revealing methodological patterns and passions as well.”

Touro College Faculty Publications

Touro is proud of the contributions its faculty makes to the larger intellectual community. Please join us in celebrating publication of the following works:

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Brock, S. (2013). *At the intersection of education, marketing, and transformation*. New York, NY: Touro College Press.

Brock, S., & Brodahl, C. (2013). A tale of two cultures: Cross cultural comparison in learning the Prezi presentation software tool in the US and Norway. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Research*, 12(1), 95-119.

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Aiello, N., Grillo, L., **Bellavia, T. D.** (Illustrator), & Walsh, K. (Illustrator). (2013). *The forever-green tree*. New York, NY: Wayland Publishing.

Cerniglia, E. G. (2013). Musical play in early childhood classrooms: Taking it one step further. *Young Children*, 68(5), 68-73.

Chen, S. J. (2013). The voice and ultimate goal for successful English language learning. *Idiom*, 42(4), 4-5.

DeCharon, A., Duguay, L., McDonnell, J., Peach, C., Companion, C., Herren, C., . . . **Repa, T.** (2013). Helping ocean scientists represent and communicate science. *Oceanography*, 26(1), 98-105. doi:10.5670/oceanog.2013.08

Karpov, Y. V. (2013). A way to implement the neo-Vygotskian theoretical learning approach in the schools. *International Journal of Pedagogical Innovations*, 1(1), 25-35.

Shuch, S., Nikolakakos, E., & Reeves, J. (2013). A study of the influence of online courses on grading. *International Journal of Assessment and Evaluation*, 19(2), 1-12.

Toom, A. (2013). A study of learning motivation of current and prospective school teachers in online psychology classes. In ACSET 2013: *Official conference proceedings* (pp.98-114). Osaka, Japan: IAFOR.

Toom, A. (2013). Implicit lessons of the virtual classroom. In L. Gomez Chova, A. López Martínez, & I. Candel Torres (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 7th International Technology, Education and Development Conference (INTED)* (pp. 6054-6061). Valencia, Spain: IATED.

Toom, A. (2013). Integrative education: Teaching psychology using literature and informational technologies. *US-China Education Review*, 3(5), 297-304.

Toom, A. (2013). Virtual psychological laboratory: Studying cognitive development in childhood with the use of literature. In L. Gómez Chova, A. López Martínez, & I. Candel Torres (Eds.), *EDULEARN13*. (pp. 6316-6322). Barcelona, Spain: IATED.

Zaken, O., & Olson, J. (2013). But where will the money come from? Experts' views on revenue options to implement Campaign for Fiscal Equity v. State of New York. *Educational Considerations*, 40(2), 13-20.

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JEWISH STUDIES

Aleksiu, N. (2013). As citizens and soldiers: Military rabbis in the Second Polish Republic. In D. Diner (Ed.), *Simon Dubnow Institute yearbook 12* (pp. 221-242). Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Aleksiu, N. (2013). Regards from the land of the dead: Jews in Eastern Galicia in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust. *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów*, 2(246), 257-271.

Kaplan, Z. J. (2013). A marital dilemma: French courts, foreign Jews and the secularization of marriage. *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 64(2), 365-382.

Kaplan, Z. J. (2013). From ritual murder to treason: Antisemitism in early modern and modern France [Review of the book *A tale of ritual murder in the age of Louis XIV: The trial of Raphael Levy, 1669*, by P. Birnbaum]. *H-Judaic, H-Net Reviews Online*.

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