As summer approaches, I am heartened by this season of new beginnings. Sacred Heart held its 50th anniversary year commencement ceremonies on May 17 and 18, and there was such energy in the Webster Bank Arena as we witnessed 367 graduate students earn Master of Arts in Teaching degrees or Certificates of Advanced Studies in Administration, Literacy, or Teaching. And while undergraduates at SHU do not major in our College, many who earned Bachelor’s degrees participate in our Five Year program that also includes teaching certification and a Master’s degree.

I am delighted to highlight a few of our accomplishments over the past six months. On February 12, 2014, as part of SHU’s 50th Anniversary Celebration and in commemoration of Black History Month, the College sponsored a talk by Dr. Freeman Hrabowski III, president of the University of Maryland-Baltimore County. A mathematician by training, Dr. Hrabowski enlightened an audience of practicing educators, teacher candidates, and community stakeholders on the importance of creating pipelines from PK-12 to graduate school to increase minority participation and guide African Americans and other students of color for STEM success.

Relatedly, the College recently secured a Math and Science Partnership Grant from the State of Connecticut to prepare the next generation of educators. This project enables science education professors, practicing teachers, and teacher candidates from Connecticut and other states to strengthen their understanding of scientific concepts and hone their instructional methods for student achievement. Adjunct Professor Bonnie Maur, with the support of biology professor Mark Beekey, conceptualized the program, which continues through the summer. Phase II of this multiphase project, begins in the fall.

In April the College offered its second literacy conference, which brought together teachers, reading specialists, and candidates in our Connecticut Literacy Specialist Program. Organized by Professor Karen Waters, the annual conference is the capstone event. Recently our college added the Horizons program to its orbit. Horizons at SHU serves children and youth from Bridgeport’s public and parochial schools by providing them with a strong life foundation through rigorous academic, cultural, and physical enrichment along with the tools to become good citizens and successful college students. Through a summer day program on the Sacred Heart University campus and Saturday enrichment activities during the school year, Horizons students hone their academic skills in reading and math, while also learning swimming, musical instruments, martial arts, and more. Headed by Executive Director Jeffrey Rumpf, the program is entering its third year.

Turning to new programs, one has been launched with more in the works. For SHU undergraduates who major in Art and Design, there is a new strand in Art Education. Spearheaded by Jonathan Walker, Department Chair of Art and Design, together with education professor Toni Bruciati and art consultant Barbara Pollock, the program enables MAT candidates who have majored in Art to earn initial certification in Elementary Education with a cross-endorsement in K-12 Art Education.

Special Education cross-endorsement is slated to begin summer of 2015. Designed especially for practicing teachers, the program consists of two summertime practicum experiences in special education settings along with evening coursework during the school year. Headed by Professors Jacqui Kelleher and Terry Neu, the program enables participants to become effective teachers of students with disabilities.

We continue to seek state approval for a doctoral program in educational leadership that includes Connecticut superintendent certification. The tentative start date has been pushed back to fall 2015. Finally, we are offering another exciting strand of doctoral education—a specialty in Higher Education and Adult Learning that we hope to begin fall 2015. This program prepares individuals for careers in higher education administration, as well as for teaching roles within post-secondary and corporate environments.

A word about recent legislation requiring master’s degrees in academic content areas: Connecticut has set July 1, 2016 as the date when educators must hold appropriate subject area master’s degrees for transition from provisional to professional certification. Farrington College’s current master’s degree satisfies this requirement to June 30, 2016. The College is revising its masters’ programs to align with the new subject-area requirement.

Open communication within the education community—current candidates, alumni, and other educators—is essential. Please forward to colleagues and friends. We are eager for more people to learn about our outstanding initial and advanced certification and degree programs.

Sincerely,

James C. “Jim” Carl
Dean
Math and Science Partnership Project

Freeman A. Hrabowski III Speaks at Sacred Heart

As part of SHU’s 50th anniversary celebration, Farrington College of Education hosted Freeman A. Hrabowski III, President of University of Maryland, Baltimore, as guest speaker on February 12th. In the afternoon at a ‘meet and greet’ reception, the personable Dr. Hrabowski met with students, faculty and staff. In the evening, he enthralls a full house at the Edgerton Center for the Performing Arts as he shares the back story of how he walked with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as his passion for teaching and learning. There was something for everyone in Hrabowski’s talk — poetry, science, humor, mathematical creativity, childhood and inspiring stories of his family life. A voracious reader, Hrabowski revealed that he reads three to five novels a week to understand the minds of others.

Dr. Hrabowski has served as president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, since 1992. His research and publications focus on science and math education with special emphasis on minority participation and performance. He chaired the National Academies’ committee that produced the recent report Expanding Underrepresented Minority Participation: America’s Science and Technology Talent at the Crossroads. He was also recently named by President Obama to chair the newly created President’s Advisory Commission on Education Excellence for African Americans.

With Philanthropist Robert Meyerhoff, Hrabowski co-founded the Meyerhoff Scholars Program in 1988, which encourages all high-achieving students to pursue advanced degrees and research careers in science and engineering and to advance underrepresented minorities in these fields. Hrabowski has authored numerous articles and co-authored two books — Beating the Odds and Overcoming the Odds — which focus on parenting African Americans to high achievement in science.

A child leader in the Civil Rights Movement, Hrabowski was prominently featured in Spike Lee’s 1997 documentary Four Little Girls on the racially motivated bombing of Birmingham’s Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in 1963. Born in 1950 in Birmingham, Alabama, Hrabowski graduated at 19 from Hampton Institute with highest honors in mathematics. He received his MA in mathematics and PhD in higher education administration and statistics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In 2011, he was named one of the Top American Leaders by The Washington Post and the Harvard Kennedy School’s Center for Public Leadership. In 2012, he received the US News & World Report STEM Solutions Leadership Hall of Fame Award. Hrabowski serves as consultant to the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, National Academies, and universities and school systems nationally. He holds numerous honorary degrees.

In a fitting conclusion to his talk, Dr. Hrabowski urged his audience to:

• Watch your thoughts; they become words.
• Watch your words; they become actions.
• Watch your actions; they become habits.
• Watch your habits; they become your character.
• Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

We were honored to have Dr. Hrabowski walk among us. It was a great day for the university.
FCE Organizes Literacy Conference

SU’s 2nd Annual Literacy Conference was held on April 12, 2014. The conference is designed to share cutting edge literacy strategies developed by professors and graduates of the Connecticut Literacy Specialist Program (CLSP), a state-approved advanced reading certification program. Dean Jim Carl of the Farrington College of Education, Dr. Karen C. Waters, Director of CLSP, and Adjunct Professor, Dr. Eleanor Osborne welcomed participants to a morning of interactive and innovative workshops conducted by this year’s reading candidates. The theme of the conference was “Literacy in the New Age: Standards, Strategies, and Assessment.” Workshop sessions encompassed many aspects of literacy instruction including the Common Core State Standards, Response to Intervention, Technology in Literacy, English Language Learners, Emergent Writing, Close Reading and more.

Presenters for this year’s conference conducted research and evaluation over two semesters. The work aligned with state endorsement guidelines for the Reading Consultant Certificate. During the fall and spring semesters, Dr. Osborne provided direction, mentorship, and supervision to the candidates as they designed and honed their presentations to prepare them for the work that they will be called upon to do as reading consultants in their districts. The conference format prepares candidates to become established reading professionals with the experience of presenting to an audience of larger scope than a traditional classroom.

The invitation for the conference was extended to Bridgeport, Trumbull and Fairfield Public Schools, the University of Bridgeport, the Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport, the Stamford Literacy Cohorts, and SHU MAT candidates. For the more than 60 people in attendance, the conference enabled participants to learn from each other and take valuable intervention strategies back to their schools.

Book Ends — A Site-Based University Reading Clinic

Book Ends, SHU’s site-based university reading clinic, has been serving the community since 2008. It is a nurturing and interactive clinic that empowers children to increase their reading achievement through multimodal and research-based practices in literacy. As part of their preparation, certified teachers pursuing advanced certification in literacy provide one-on-one instruction that considers students’ interests and strengths, while targeting the foundational skills of the Common Core State Standards and the comprehension anchor standards. Students in grades 1-4 are eligible for enrollment. Each child is partnered with a certified teacher who tutors with the philosophy that children learn to read by reading, and that success comes from many opportunities to practice.

Following a comprehensive evaluation, instructors and certification candidates develop a customized intervention plan that meets the needs of each child. Parents have an opportunity to meet and talk with their child’s tutor following each session. Children receive take-home materials to practice newly-acquired skills. Research states that when parents are involved in their children’s education, reading achievement increases. At Book Ends, tutors encourage parents to read with their children for 10-15 minutes every night between tutoring sessions. The program consists of an initial assessment, twelve 90-minute tutoring sessions, an interim progress report, and a final diagnostic report with recommendations for next steps.
Three New Faces

Jeffrey Rumpf, Executive Director, Horizons Enrichment Program

The newest member of the Farrington College of Education, Jeffrey Rumpf, was hired as Executive Director of the Horizons Enrichment Program in January 2014. Prior to joining Horizons at SHU, Jeff was Executive Director with Hudson River Sloop Clearwater. At Clearwater, Jeff’s work with Green Cities raised substantial funds for the betterment of the environment. As a Clearwater representative, he worked on the Sustainability Plan for New York State, affecting the “triple bottom line: ecology, economy and equality”, as he worked with “green architects” to lower the carbon loads in NY State. Prior to Clearwater, Jeff was employed by Catholic Charities and the YMCA, where he established a turnaround reputation for fund raising. At the Y, Jeff was engaged in youth and family development – bringing members of Westchester County’s diverse population together to share high quality programs that change lives – holistic programs such as, a camping branch in Putnam County, the first universal pre-K program and adventure camps for middle school students. 9/11/2001 was a turning point for Jeff, as he and his staff assisted in the recovery – many youth lost parents and those whose parents were undocumented workers were in special need of counseling and assistance. Jeff reached out to Catholic Charities, which offered a 1,000 acre site in Putnam Valley for his work with the youth of 9/11, Little Heroes.

Currently, Jeff’s work with Horizons has established a plan to work on an organic garden, in partnership with Chartwells, to teach healthy eating. The holistic program includes music integration, social emotional learning, as well as new alliances, such as Chartwells running enrichment and swimming at the University of Bridgeport’s pool.

A native New Yorker, born in Nyack – Jeff currently lives with his wife, Laurie and three sons in Hopewell Junction, New York. Jeff is a self-declared “outdoor enthusiast” and “absolutely love[s] the outdoors”. He enjoys backpacking, canoeing, rock climbing, kayaking and fishing.

Daria Corey

Daria Corey joined the Farrington College of Education in Fall 2013. In her role as Administrative Assistant, she supports the Doctoral Studies Program and the Horizons Enrichment Program. Daria currently lives in Bridgeport, where she was born and raised. Her parents, Arthur and Ellen, as well as her children, Alicea and Malcolm, live and work locally. Daria’s mother, Ellen, is also employed at SHU as an Admissions Specialist in University College.

As a young girl, Daria’s first job was a paper route, delivering newspapers to customers’ homes. By the second year, Daria had 65 customers and had purchased her first ten-speed bike. Her belief is that working as a youth “Builds your character at an earlier age.” Daria has also held successful management positions at consumer services companies that working as a youth “Builds your character at an earlier age.” Daria has also held successful management positions at consumer services companies for People’s Bank, Blockbuster Entertainment, and Wayside Furniture. Dana received her bachelor’s degree from Sacred Heart University in 1991, during her employment at Comp-U-Card (CUC International). Deeply affected by the events of 9/11/2001, Dana sought other employment and was hired in 2002 by Doug Bohn, then Registrar of Sacred Heart University. One of Daria’s favorite aspects of working in the Office of the Registrar was her involvement with veterans. Dana received the Team Leadership Certificate MBA-2010 and hopes to pursue her MBA in the future.

Daria’s church affiliation is Friendship Baptist and Daria is currently engaged. Although she loves to “cook a little” Daria admits to being a BK frequent flyer. Pizza is her favorite food. She enjoys shopping, relaxing with her dog, Coco Larue, reading Essence magazine and watching Lifetime TV. What’s on Daria’s Wish List? Travel to California, the Bahamas, Africa, Hawaii and Broadway to see The Lion King.

Nancirose Piazza

Over the past year, faculty in the Farrington College of Education has been working closely with teachers at Bridgeport’s newly launched Fairchild Wheeler Inter-District Magnet High School. Nancirose Piazza is a talented student at that school. Nancirose lives in Shelton and completed her school district’s math curriculum sequence at the end of her ninth grade year. She also completed Calculus III at Gateway Community College in Grade 9 and will have completed 18 credits at Sacred Heart University by the end of this summer. She passed the entry mathematics test for Housatonic Community College at the end of Grade 6.

In 2013, Nancirose opted for the new Fairchild Wheeler Magnet High School so she could specialize in its Information Technology and Software Engineering School. At FHHS, her school principal turned to Sacred Heart for help in designing college level STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) courses that could best meet her needs. Dr. Lois Libby in FCE has been working with the Mathematics and Computer Science Departments at SHU, as well as at Fairchild Wheeler High School to provide the most beneficial and challenging program for her. Nancirose’s favorite courses are those that pose interesting and problems that she can ponder with no correct answers. One such course at SHU was “Chemistry in Context.” She is proficient in Media Flash and Java Script. Currently, writing gaming code engages her the most. She likes being an independent learner and finds that an essential difference between high school and college courses is the extent to which professors give latitude in completing assignments. Her college classmates have sought her as a tutor when they “cannot catch on to a problem.” A renaissance gal, she also developed art that attracts multiple hits on Facebook.

Nancirose would like to pave the way for more Fairchild Wheeler students to attend early college courses at Sacred Heart University and feels that both institutions can benefit from the cross fertilization. In a recent meeting Bridgeport Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Fran Rabinowitz, and Dean Carl of FCE discussed the need for successful early college experiences for students from Bridgeport high schools. Nancirose’s story demonstrates the benefits of the early college option at Sacred Heart.