

# Today's Leaders Inspire

**O**N THE HEELS — high heels — of this year's historic campaigns by women for America's two top jobs, a select group of more than 350 participants gathered Nov. 14 at the fourth annual CUNY/New York Times Knowledge Network Women's Leadership Conference for tips on achieving their own ambitious goals.

The young student leaders may not be quite ready for White House runs. But their thought-provoking questions and ideas showed that they — as much as the female legislators, business executives and educators on the dais — exemplify the conference topic: Advocates for Change.

Five official student bloggers — all members of the 2008-2009 CUNY Women's Public Service Internship Program — continually posted their observations throughout the seven-hour conclave at New York's Roosevelt Hotel (to read their full reports, go to [www.cuny.edu/womensleadership](http://www.cuny.edu/womensleadership)).

Bursts of applause were frequent from the conference-goers, most of whom were women. They cheered mothers who juggle family responsibilities, jobs and college courses they hope will help them break the infamous glass ceiling. They cheered the University, their colleges, their professors, each other. And they cheered two major new role models: President-elect Barack Obama and his early challenger, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton — who they'd just learned was being considered for Secretary of State.

Obama's win has been a "sea change," Chancellor Matthew

Goldstein told the group, noting that "in 1964 there were black people who couldn't vote in this country." Now, he said, "Anything is possible. All that's needed is a

willingness to work hard, learn from the mistakes of others and have the forcefulness of purpose to say, 'Yes I can.'"

"The reason we're here today is to cele-

brate what we *can* do, and what we *have* done," said Trustee Valerie Lancaster Beal, leading up to Senior Vice Chancellor for University Relations Jay Hershenson

heralding women's initiatives and later presenting awards to Kim Jasmin of JPMorgan Chase and Brenda Griebert of TIAA-CREF, the conference co-sponsors.

An inspiring keynote speech by New York Secretary of State Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez, the first woman to hold that office, had students lining up to speak with her afterward.

Statistics — and experiences — shared during the conference indicate that women are still under-represented in leadership positions despite having more education than men. They are more likely to earn the minimum wage or less, often have to work twice as hard as men in the same jobs, and are held to different standards. The U.S. ranks 27th in the world for women as top executives — after such countries as Argentina, Cuba and South Africa, reported Vice Chancellor for Human Resources Management Gloriana Waters.

Many people believe the fact that wives do most of the domestic work in the home has a lot to do with "why women take less demanding jobs, jobs that don't involve leadership," said Interim Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost Alexandra Logue.

But there are signs of progress: Current thinking, e.g., that feminine traits, such as consulting widely before making a decision, are indicative of good leaders, Logue said.



*Student bloggers who reported their thought-provoking observations of the conference are, from left: Nastasiya Korolkova, Soribel Feliz, Megumi Saito, Kamilla Bryan, Catherine Zinnel.*

## U S E F U L C O N N E C T I

**W**OMEN'S LEADERSHIP ([www.cuny.edu/womensleadership](http://www.cuny.edu/womensleadership)) is just one of many compelling subjects covered in a series of interactive University websites that put invaluable information at your fingertips.

You can hear audio and watch video illuminating key struggles for human rights and milestones in American history, learn about achievements of CUNY faculty and students as well as University philanthropic activity, find leads for jobs and get advice on personal issues including citizenship and immigration.

The websites, which are illustrated with archival photos and drawings, build on information featured on printed calendars issued over the last few years. Also available via these online sources are school curricula (for Grades 7, 8 and 11) developed by the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives at LaGuardia Community College.

Most of the information — published in partnership with The New York Times Knowledge Network — is available in Spanish as well as English.

In addition to the Women's Leadership website — which summarizes the recent conference and includes links to blogs by students who covered the meeting — the newest in the series of online resources grew out of the 2009 City Life Calendar.

**City Life:** This highlights the importance of cities throughout American history as magnets for creativity in the arts, commerce and politics stemming from diverse people and ideas. The City Life home page also provides the links to several of the following topic sites, as well as to community service resources. [www.cuny.edu/citylife](http://www.cuny.edu/citylife)

**Let Freedom Ring:** Listen to sounds of freedom, including slave narratives, Malcolm X's "Message to the Grassroots" speech, songs of labor, and an interview with a Roe v. Wade attorney. [www.cuny.edu/freedom](http://www.cuny.edu/freedom)

**Nation of Immigrants:** Immigration milestones from the 16th century to the present day are spotlighted via CUNY Radio podcasts, video of distinguished speakers and a list of prominent immigrant University alumni.

[www.cuny.edu/nationofimmigrants](http://www.cuny.edu/nationofimmigrants)

**Voting Rights and Citizenship:** This section begins with events leading up to the adoption of the U.S. Constitution and continues through contested elections and the expansion of voting rights to women, African-Americans, Native Americans and Chinese-Americans. It then moves on to discuss the country's newest voices. Link via [www.cuny.edu/citylife](http://www.cuny.edu/citylife) or [www.cuny.edu/freedom](http://www.cuny.edu/freedom)

**Women's Leadership in American History:** Read about the country's First Ladies, women in politics, the nation's four-month women's strike for workers' rights, women and war work, feminism and the women's movement, and trends toward increased numbers of women in science and sports. Link via [www.cuny.edu/citylife](http://www.cuny.edu/citylife) or [www.cuny.edu/freedom](http://www.cuny.edu/freedom)

**Student Jobs:** The University's employment-opportunities initiative aims to help students obtain part-time and full-time work, as well as internships. This site includes links to jobs as court interpreters, as representatives at New York

# Tomorrow's

"Leadership is hard for everybody, but we're put in a box — you saw it in Clinton's campaign," said luncheon keynote Carla A. Robbins, deputy editorial page editor of The New York Times. "It's going to be better for you," she assured young women in the audience. As for now, "You can have it all, but you're not going to sleep very well."

Young idealists often haven't yet climbed high enough to hit the glass ceiling. But blogger Catherine Zinnel, a Macaulay Honors College senior and political science major at Hunter College, wrote that, while interning in state and city government jobs, she learned of "the double standards that are unfairly imposed on female leaders, from appearance to family responsibilities."

Other bloggers reflected on the conference's government panels:

"I was frustrated to see that if everything was so clear — we lack the money, we need the money, we need to do A, B, and C to see change happen — then why was it not happening?"

... Why are all these policymakers so clearly willing and dedicated to reform, still not seeing these reforms happen? I suppose it takes years of patience and perseverance, and activism on the part of the legislator's constituency, to really get things done. I suppose, to echo this morning's testament, we need to put more women on it." — Macaulay Honors College senior Nastasiya Korolkova, an international relations major at Baruch College.

"Currently, about one-third of all City Council members are females. In contrast, in the CUNY Model City Council Project, in which high school students learn about NYC government and legislation ... females make up two-thirds of all partici-

pants. Could we hope to see a greater female representation in our legislature in the near future? — Megumi Saito, a senior pre-law major at City College.

Elected officials discussing their views during panels on advocating for change in government were New York State Sen. Ruth Hassell-Thompson; Assemblywomen Barbara Clark, Deborah Glick and Annette Robinson; New York City Councilwomen Gale Brewer, Melissa Mark-Viverito, Rosie Mendez and Diana Reyna. The conference was chaired by LaGuardia Community College President Gail Mellow, with panels moderated by other women college presi-

dents; it was coordinated by Pat Gray, the University's director of special events and corporate relations. Closing remarks were by Ann Kirschner, dean of Macaulay Honors College.

Speaking on a panel about Justice for Women and Children in the Family were New York Family Court Judge Bryanne Hamill, CUNY School of Law Interim Assistant Dean for Student Affairs Angela Burton and pro-

fessor Donna Hae Kyun Lee of the Battered Women's Rights Clinic at the CUNY Law School.

What traits mark a good leader?

Some tips from keynote Cortes-Vazquez:

- Be bold and courageous, which is not reckless, but fully conscious of consequences.
- Never forget the shoulders you stand on and the responsibility you have.
- Arm yourself with information so you can combat the misinformation.
- You have to *be* your word.
- If you need to step back because you get tired, transfer the power to someone else.

Waters adds: "Watch how people who have power use it. Pay attention .... You have to build that network. We have to build it."

Most ambitious young people also know not to overlook role models of the opposite sex. John Jay College senior Ajibade Longe, one of the few male students in the audience, said he was there because he hopes to become an attorney specializing in human rights. His inspiration? His grandmother, who as a girl was denied an education in their native Nigeria, but now runs an elementary school there. "Out of nothing, she became something," he said proudly — words often heard around CUNY.

“... Watch how people who have power use it. Pay attention ....”

## ONS

City's Citizen Service Call Center and with the U.S. Government Census Bureau for the 2010 census. It also provides information about the state's next Civil Service Professional Careers Test, and links to numerous other employment resources. [www.cuny.edu/studentjobs](http://www.cuny.edu/studentjobs)

**Faculty/Student Achievements:** Highlights include a faculty video showcase, podcasts of faculty lectures and features on faculty/student teams working on research projects in science and teacher development.

[www.cuny.edu/lookwhoisteaching](http://www.cuny.edu/lookwhoisteaching)

**Philanthropic Activity:** Read about alumni, friends and other philanthropists and foundations that are providing an unprecedented level of private funding to University schools and programs, supporting scholarly research by world-class faculty and endowing student scholarships at every college. "They are investing in CUNY, investing in New York, and investing in futures," Chancellor Matthew Goldstein says. [www.cuny.edu/invest](http://www.cuny.edu/invest) and [www.cuny.edu/investing](http://www.cuny.edu/investing)

## Technology Plays Many Roles University-wide

**S**EVEN YEARS AGO, BRIAN COHEN joined CUNY as its chief information officer. Recently, CUNY Matters sat down with Cohen, who is also associate vice chancellor, to talk about how technology is changing CUNY.

**Q:** What role has technology played in shaping education at CUNY?

**A:** Over the last five years the University has invested between \$350 million and \$400 million in technology infrastructure improvements. You can see the results of this investment when you visit our colleges and see the latest technology in the labs, libraries and classrooms. The technology investment has also been used to introduce new systems and computer facilities over the last five years: upgrading our Blackboard online course management system; developing the DegreeWorks On-line Academic Advisement system, expanding our resources for our scientists through the High Performance Computing Center, as well as our CUNY computer grid.

Over the next five years we're going to see technology playing three major roles: It will be an "enabler" helping the University to become a more efficient organization. It will be an "enhancer" that will enrich the experiences of students and faculty. And, finally, technology will be a "supporter" of everything we are trying to do, providing better services on both the administrative and the academic side.

**Q:** One of our biggest current technology projects is CUNYfirst. Tell us how it fits into the University's long-term strategy.

**A:** When CUNYfirst started over seven years ago, it was a conceptual project addressing the need to replace our antiquated computer systems. The student systems, the personnel systems, our financial systems — all were based on 1970s technology. CUNYfirst will replace all those systems with one single integrated system. ("First" stands for Fully Integrated Resource and Services Tool.)

And we believe the University will thus be far more efficient in delivering critical services, operating and supporting the needs of our students. For example, in the future, if a student finishes a two-year CUNY community college and moves on to a four-year college, or goes on to do graduate work at CUNY, the student will no longer need to create a new record for each institution.

**Q:** What about some of the other technological tools that students and faculty are using?

**A:** Now we run Blackboard in one location supporting the entire University. It has allowed us to reduce the cost of providing Blackboard services across the board. Over the next several months we will be upgrading from Blackboard 6.3 to 8.0, which provides enhanced features and greater opportunities for collaboration. CUNY will be the first institution of this size to deploy Blackboard 8.0. In fact, it is already being used by the Online Baccalaureate program.

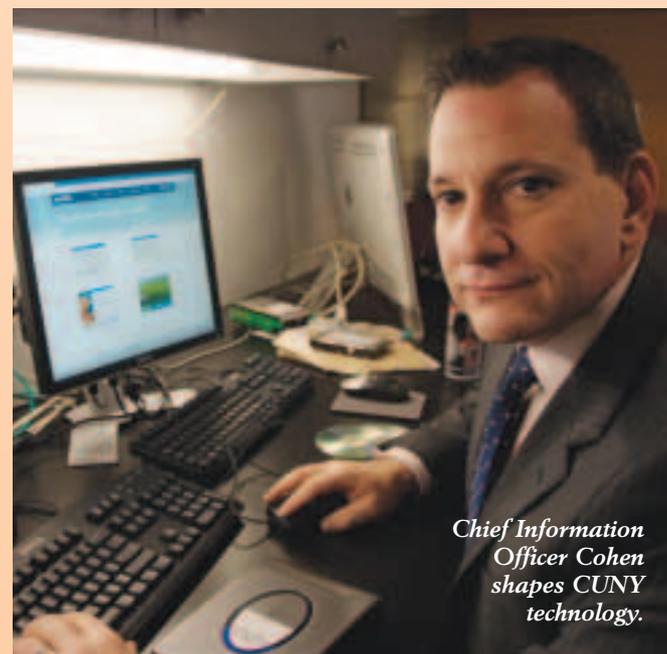
Other systems we're working on include DegreeWorks, an online academic advisement system, which students can use to determine whether or not the courses they are taking meet their curriculum requirements before they meet with a faculty member for advice. It also gives them the capability to think through "what if" scenarios: What would happen if I change my major at this point?

**Q:** One of the critical things today is how a university communicates with its students. What kinds of systems is CUNY using?

**A:** There are two types of communication initiatives that we have been working on. The first, Live@Edu, came out of many discussions among the University's IT directors. We found that, in some cases, students were getting e-mail addresses from their campuses; in many other cases, they weren't. We also found that, because of the high costs of running an e-mail system, it was very difficult for us to have a standard service across the University. Now, via a partnership with Microsoft, the University is able to offer all of its students e-mail services at no cost. Access to student e-mail is simplified via the Internet and accessible from virtually everywhere. And, as our students graduate, their e-mail accounts remain available to them as alumni accounts. Since we started this effort last year, Live@Edu has already established 175,000 e-mail accounts.

**Q:** What about the second initiative?

**A:** The second communication initiative is CUNY Alert, which evolved out of the tragic shooting incident at Virginia Tech. That tragedy heightened our own awareness that we needed a better tool to communicate with students, faculty and staff



Chief Information Officer Cohen shapes CUNY technology.

about any kind of emergency situation. CUNY Alert is a partnership with New York State's Emergency Management Office. Students, faculty and staff register for the system at their campus of choice, and if there is an emergency at that campus, we alert them through the system, either by e-mail or phone; by landline, cell or text message — or all three. Since we activated the system nine months ago, we have had almost 90,000 registrations and we have already used the system several times. Most recently, the College of Staten Island alerted its campus community of a fire and advised everyone to avoid the area.

**Q:** Along with the many benefits of the Internet age, there is a growing concern over security issues. What sort of measures is the University taking to assure security and privacy for users?

**A:** One initiative involves our shift away from using Social Security numbers as IDs, not only for students, but also employees. We've been looking to use the CUNY portal as a means of logging into our systems. We've also been investing substantially in security, providing better software to protect the environment and minimizing the amount of spam that comes into the University that potentially brings viruses. And we have licensed anti-virus software for the entire University.