A team of marine researchers from Stockton is partnering with recreational divers to assist the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in mapping the Robert J. Walker shipwreck, a U.S. Coast Survey steamer that sank to the silty bottom over a century and a half ago, after colliding with a commercial ship. With the Civil War fast approaching, a cause for the wreck was never earnestly pursued.

Stockton faculty, students and staff from the Marine Science and Environmental Field Station are working through the Summer Intensive Research Experience (SIRE) program to help digitally preserve the historic site about 10 miles from the Absecon Lighthouse in Atlantic City. This summer they are creating high resolution video, side scan imagery and a map of the seafloor’s depth around the wreck.

“We are painting a picture of what’s invisible,” said Steve Evert, manager of the college’s field station and assistant director of Academic Labs.

Stockton’s remotely operated vehicle (ROV) and a brand new multi-beam and dual frequency side scan sonar system are being used to capture footage and sonar images while simultaneously measuring depth, respectively.

Although sonar and multi-beam technology itself is not new, Evert said that Stockton’s co-registered bathymetry and dual frequency side scan sonar system is state-of-the-art. He estimates that less than 50 of the EdgeTech 6205 units are in use throughout the world with about one quarter in academia.

Out on the ocean, Evert steers the vessel over the wreck in calculated sweeps, as the EdgeTech 6205 sonar records a picture of what lies below. Then the boat is anchored and students take turns navigating the ROV.

“We teach the students how to use the marine technology,” explained Evert, “in preparation for careers.”

“You have a group right here in front of the wreck and we are gung-ho,” said Dr. Straub. He went on to explain that Stockton students are among the small handful of individuals who have ever witnessed the RJ Walker shipwreck.
Stockton Marine Researchers Digitally Archive Walker Shipwreck

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This month, Stockton’s high resolution footage and a finely tuned map of the shipwreck will be passed on to a team of advanced divers with the NJHDA who are volunteering to swim through the wreck. Stockton’s data will familiarize the divers before they meet the wreck in the dark waters of the Atlantic. The series of scientific dives will “ground truth” Stockton’s data, explained Evert.

The project has received wide news coverage, including major articles in The Star-Ledger, Philadelphia Inquirer and The Press of Atlantic City. To see more photos, visit Stockton’s Flickr site or visit the RJ Walker Shipwreck Mapping Project’s Facebook page.

Dr. Lisa Cox Co-Directs Tim Howard NJCTS Leadership Academy

Dr. Lisa Cox, associate professor of Social Work and research chair of the Stockton Center on Successful Aging (SCOSA), co-directed the Tim Howard NJCTS (New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome and Associated Disorders) Leadership Academy at Rutgers University on Aug. 1-3.

The three-day intensive pilot program was designed to empower 23 teens to acquire necessary skills to manage living with Tourette Syndrome, a neurological disorder characterized by uncontrollable movements known as tics. People living with TS often experience greater degrees of bullying and isolation than the average person.

Dr. Cox, who has been involved with NJCTS since 2000, served as a member of the year-long planning committee and assistant director of the academy. During the planning process, Tim Howard, Everton and Team USA’s goalkeeper, shared his personal insight of living with the disorder.

At the academy, participants engaged in lectures, workshops and group discussions. One psychiatrist discussed the parts of the brain that affect behavior and explored where and why tics start. Later, another psychiatrist and geneticist led a discussion on executive function disorder which affects organization and processing skills among many with TS. Adult coaches, who also have TS, were also on hand to provide mentoring to the young participants. Click here to read the event coverage in People.

“The participants were trained to be resilient self-leaders and advocates. They left the academy empowered to go forth and educate people that they might come across in the workplace, or at their college or university,” Dr. Cox explained. “The knowledge participants acquired will also help them communicate better with their own family members.”

During the institute, Dr. Cox delivered two presentations, “Psychological Aspects of Living with TS” on Saturday, and “The Power of Resilience and Courage in Facing Social Issues” on Sunday.

“As part of the session on Psychological Aspects, we wanted the participants to learn tools that would help them cope well not only with their physical manifestation of the tics, but also to better understand how the mind works and how to cope with the disorder. We focused on how important self-esteem and resilience are in coping with a condition that is still very much misunderstood by the general public and very smart people,” Dr. Cox explained. “On Sunday, we used an experiential approach, wherein participants responded to vignettes designed to show how to effectively cope with TS while dating, when taking classes in college, during an interview, or in an everyday workplace setting.”

While Dr. Cox shared her expertise on the subject, she said the experience will benefit her research because it has increased her knowledge about the importance of resilience across the lifespan when one has to cope with a chronic, visible neurobiological challenge. “In my graduate-level Psychopathology and Cultural Neuroscience class and social work practice classes, I can certainly use the genetics and executive functioning information that was shared at the Academy to teach students how people with neurological challenges have assets and strengths as well as challenges,” she said. “Most importantly, the experience taught me the value of telling and taping stories of resilience and that stigma is still very much evident in mental health and we must work to eradicate that.”
Stockton Critical Thinking Institute Sends Three to Conference

The Stockton Critical Thinking Institute (SCTI) sent three Stockton faculty members to attend the 34th annual International Conference on Critical Thinking and Educational Reform held in Berkeley, Calif. from July 26-31.

Dr. Marcia Fiedler, assistant professor and coordinator of Jewish Studies; Dr. Lee Ann Guenther, associate professor of Physical Therapy; and Dr. Bill Reynolds, associate professor of Social Work and director of the Institute for Faculty Development, were invited as speakers at the conference.

Dr. Fiedler and Dr. Guenther led a lively conference roundtable discussion on their approach to the Critical Thinking Teaching Circle and its impact on Stockton faculty.

Dr. Reynolds presented “Developing a Sustainable Model for Faculty Development in the Pedagogy of Critical Thinking” to a crowd of more than 75 conference participants.

In addition, the Stockton group also attended sessions on topics such as Socratic questioning, assessing critical thinking and asking essential questions, among others.

As part of the College’s ongoing effort to promote critical thinking teaching and learning, the Critical Thinking Teaching Circle and Institute for Faculty Development will co-sponsor several events for the Academic Year 2014-15. Descriptions and dates for these events will appear on the IFD calendar.

Christy Goodnight Attends Leadership Institute at Harvard

Christy Goodnight, outreach librarian at the Richard E. Bjork Library, recently attended the Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians at Harvard University. Goodnight was among the 104 other librarians from across the globe who were selected to participate at the institute from July 27 through Aug. 1.

The Leadership Institute, led by faculty chair Joseph Zolner, senior director of the Harvard Institutes for Higher Education, focused on applying leadership concepts to practical challenges of leading and managing the academic libraries. The institute’s curriculum included readings, discussions and case studies, which each participant prepared based on leadership at their institutions. Participants discussed how emerging technology and information services are redefining the purpose and function of the academic library, and how to lead priorities into campus-wide planning efforts.

Goodnight, who has attended other leadership institutes in the past, said the experience was “transformational.”

“It was a whole week of amazing professors, lectures and presentations from 8:30 in the morning to 5:30 at night,” she explained. “In the evening over dinner, my fellow participants and I would continue the discussions sometimes long into the night debating topics such as the driving forces of change within our institutions, uses of strategic mapping, and accelerating our adaptive capacity.”

Dr. Lee Bolman, Marion Bloch Missouri Chair in Leadership at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and co-author of Reframing Academic Leadership, gave several lectures based on the book’s topic of reframing organizations. Throughout the week, he used political, structural, human resources and symbolic frames to illustrate how to reframe organizations.

“It gave us a structure to look at everything we are encountering in our positions on campus and how we can reframe organizations in order to create leadership opportunities,” Goodnight said.

Goodnight said a diverse group of participants allowed for international perspectives during group discussions.

“It gave us more global awareness of where our profession is going and what we are doing as leaders not just here in the US, but in other countries,” said Goodnight, who is presenting her research, “Beneficiation of Business Information” this week at the Pacific Northwest Library Association in Montana.

For more information about the Harvard Institutes for Higher Education, click here.
Dr. Amy Papalexandrou Leads Summer Session in Athens, Greece

This summer, Dr. Amy Papalexandrou, assistant professor of Art History, and her husband, Dr. Nassos Papalexandrou, professor at the University of Texas at Austin, served as co-directors of one of the two summer sessions at The American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

Dr. Amy Papalexandrou and Dr. Nassos Papalexandrou applied and were selected as summer session directors. In addition to running one of the summer sessions, they served on the committee that reviews the applications and selects the students.

“Typically one session has a greater number of philology and history students, and the other has students who are more interested in material culture,” Dr. Amy Papalexandrou explained. “We had the latter since both of us are archaeologists and art and architectural historians.”

The American School is one of 17 foreign archaeological institutes in the country and is a member of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers. The seven- and half-week summer sessions give an intensive introduction to Greece, from ancient times through today. The program consists of continuous travel to study ancient sites and monuments both in Athens and throughout the country.

“I was fortunate to have had a year-long fellowship here during my own dissertation research in the 1990’s,” Dr. Amy Papalexandrou said.

Participation is competitive, and the 20 students chosen consist of advanced undergraduates, graduate students, and a small number of high school teachers. Everyone is required to participate in all of the trips and events, and to give two site reports.

Dr. Amy Papalexandrou said the program is rigorous and exhausting but also incredibly rewarding.

“For students, most of whom have never been to Greece even though they have studied its history, it is a formative and sometimes life-changing experience. It was a pleasure and an honor for us to have been part it,” she said. “It was a fantastic experience that allowed us to meet new colleagues, travel the country and be part of a collective journey that was formative for our students.”

Stockton Co-Sponsors FAA Conference Hosted at Seaview Hotel

Stockton Seaview sold out rooms for two nights last week as the venue hosted the 2014 Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Worldwide Airport Technology Transfer Conference from Aug. 5-7.

Janice Bond, associate director of Stockton Seaview, coordinated all efforts with the FAA over the past year and represented Stockton at the event.

Dr. Harvey Kesselman, provost and executive vice president; Dennis L. Filler, director of the William J. Hughes Technical Center; and Mike O’Donnell, director of FAA Office of Airport Safety and Standards, gave welcome remarks at the opening session. Scott Murrell, chief civil engineer of Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, gave the keynote address.

Sixteen countries were represented and nearly 250 administrators, researchers, consultants and aviation professionals gathered and presented on a myriad of aviation-related topics including runway safety; scanning and detection technologies; pavement materials; performance; and technology, and more.

The conference was co-sponsored by Stockton and the FAA. For a list of other participating organizations, sponsors and exhibitors, view the conference program.

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News about distinguished students can now be found at Distinctive Stockton Students. To contribute a news item for the blog, please contact the editor at distinctive@stockton.edu