



Jerry Spindell

**FINALLY OFFICIAL**—Representatives of the Board of Higher Education and MSCA/MTA gather August 1 to formally sign the 2004–2007 contract. Seated are BHE chancellor **Judith Gill** and MSCA President **Patricia Markunas**. Standing are **Fred Clark**, executive officer, State College Council of Presidents; **Peter Tsaffaras**, BHE director of human resources; **Robert Antonucci**, president, Fitchburg State College; **Dana Mohler-Faria**, president, Bridgewater State College; **Janelle Ashley**, president, Worcester State College; **Mark Peters**, counsel, Council of Presidents; **Donna Sirutis**, MTA Higher Education consultant; **Anne Wass**, MTA Vice President; and four members of the MSCA Bargaining Committee: **C. J. O'Donnell**, chapter president, Mass. Maritime; **Len Paolillo**, Mass. College of Liberal Arts; **Peter Hogan**, chapter president, Fitchburg State College; and **Gail Price**, MSCA treasurer, Bridgewater State College.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Romney Administration Commits to Fund MSCA Contract

Patricia V. Markunas

On July 18, Chancellor **Judith I. Gill** informed me in writing that the Romney administration agreed to submit the required request for legislative funding of the 2004–2007 MTA/BHE agreement, which was ratified by the membership and executed by the parties in March.

This notification capped an extraordinary seven weeks of waiting to hear from the administration as to its recommendation concerning funding. It followed an unprecedented demand by the administration in June that the MSCA agree to terminate its participation in fact-finding and waive any financial claims for the 2004 fiscal year, and further agree that recommendations made under college governance mechanisms not be arbitrable for the term of the new agreement. Only by conceding these two issues was the MSCA able to secure a commitment that the funding process could move forward.

### Legislative Action Expected

As this edition goes to press, we expect the administration to file a request for funding soon so that the legislature can take action in the fall. We will keep faculty and librarians up to date on the contract fund-

ing process through email and website postings, sending only confirmed and verifiable information.

We appreciate your patience.

The effective date of the contract is March 1, 2005, which marks the date for the first round of pay increases that will be paid retroactive to that date. A summary of the contract provisions and a spreadsheet to assist faculty and librarians in determining their pay increases have been posted on the MSCA website <[www.mscaunion.org](http://www.mscaunion.org)>.

### Contracts on Campus and Website

The MSCA Bargaining Committee and MTA Consultant **Donna Sirutis** worked with **Mark Peters**, Esq., attorney for the presidents, on the final 350-page contract this summer. It should be available in hard copy from chapter offices and in electronic form on the MSCA website by September. The parties converted many of the contract's evaluation forms to an electronic format to aid chairpersons, library program area chairs, peer evaluation committees and others in the conduct of evaluations under this agreement.

### PTR Process and Choices

We also worked on the implementation of the new post-tenure review (PTR) process. All faculty

and librarians who held tenure at a state college as of September 1, 2004, will receive, by return receipt mail, detailed information about this new process and their choices relative to it. **This is crucially important information.** All eligible faculty and librarians should review the information, attend campus meetings concerning PTR, and return the PTR process election form to their campus Office of Academic Affairs no later than October 14, 2005.

On behalf of the MSCA, I would like to commend the MSCA Bargaining Committee, the MSCA Board of Directors and MTA Consultant Sirutis for their strength and determination to get this contract funded. I would also like to recognize the work and commitment on the part of BHE Chair **Stephen P. Tocco**, Chancellor Gill, and Presidents **Robert Antonucci** and **Dana Mohler-Faria** to get approval from the administration for the contract funding.

I know that it is not easy for you, the membership, or for us, the leadership, to work so hard to get the contract settled and then have to wait patiently while the wheels of state government grind very, very slowly. We still have a way to go in this process, but, thanks to your support, an important hurdle has been passed. Thank you again.



## New Mass Home Loan Program for Educators

All certified educators in Massachusetts, including state college faculty and librarians, are eligible for low-cost loans under a \$100 million program launched recently by Sovereign Bank New England and state Treasurer **Timothy Cahill**.

Advocates say it will stabilize communities and schools and help the state meet its goal of developing a more educated workforce by enabling more teachers to reside in cities and towns, where rising prices and a limited supply of new homes are making home ownership more difficult to achieve.

Under the Massachusetts Educators Home Loan Program, educators buying their primary residences or refinancing an existing mortgage to obtain fixed rate home mortgage loans and home equity loans may make down payments of as little as 5 percent.

No fees will be charged to lock in rates or to apply, and closing costs will be discounted.

**Joseph Campanelli**, Sovereign Bank New England president, said the down payment provision will appeal to teachers who are having trouble coming up with the 10 to 20 percent deposits that some banks require on mortgage loans.

Educators who would like to apply for Sovereign's Massachusetts Educators Home Loan program may visit any one of Sovereign Bank's 240 banking offices in Massachusetts, or call 888-758-7076.

—*From the State House News Service*

## Contributors Needed

We are still looking for contributing editors from Bridgewater State, Mass Art, and Mass Maritime. Contributing editors are invited to submit news notes, reports, and features about people, programs and issues on their campuses.

By contributing, you will help keep your campus in the news; you will also advance the sharing of vital information and ideas about our professions and about public higher education.

If you'd like to serve as a contributing editor this year, please give us a call or send an email to **Ben Jacques**, Editor, 781-438-5596 or [bjacq@juno.com](mailto:bjacq@juno.com).

### MSCA Perspective

A publication of the Massachusetts State College Association, the faculty and librarian union for the nine state colleges in Massachusetts.

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## Task Force Finds Graduation Rates Average; Calls for Programs to Improve Retention

*Ben Jacques*

**John Brockelman**, chair of the BHE Task Force on Graduation Rates, summed it up simply: "We're about average; we want to be better than average."

He was reporting July 18 on graduation rates at Massachusetts state colleges to the Joint Committee on Public Higher Education at the State House. The report ranked Massachusetts state colleges 13<sup>th</sup> nationally among peer institutions in 29 states, slightly above average for six-year graduation rates.

This was in stark contrast to a misleading report issued 18 months ago by the BHE that showed state colleges "falling behind" universities and other non-comparable institutions. That report

sparked protests from faculty, administrators and legislators, who challenged the report's methodology and data. It led in April 2004 to the creation of the current task force charged with "developing an understanding of the issues that influence degree completion" and recommending steps for improvement.

The BHE task force brought together education, union, business and finance representatives, including MSCA President **Pat Markunas** and **Nancy D. Harrington** (Salem State College) and **Mary Grant** (Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts). For comparison purposes, the task force used states with at least three public colleges meeting the Carnegie designation of Master's-1 institutions—state colleges that offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs and masters degrees in three or more disciplines.

The task force analyzed data from six Massachusetts state colleges, excluding the special mission campuses of Mass Maritime, Mass College of Art and MCLA. It reported an overall 46 percent graduation rate for students entering the state colleges as freshmen in 1997. Although a small percentage of the rest obtained degrees from other colleges, or are still enrolled, 36 percent had dropped out of higher education (see graphic, above).

### Low Income Factor Trumps All

The task force found, further, that "students who do not complete their degrees, both nationally and in Massachusetts, are disproportionately low-income, minority, male and first-generation college students."

While 51 percent of white females graduated within six years, the rate dropped to 40 percent for white males; 37 percent for minority females, and 32 percent for minority males.

But income level was the overriding factor in low graduation rates, reported **Lynette Robinson-Weening**, BHE associate vice chancellor. A study tracking high school students showed that 76 percent from families earning \$75,000 or more obtained associate's degrees or higher, while only 19 percent from families earning \$25,000 or less earned college degrees.

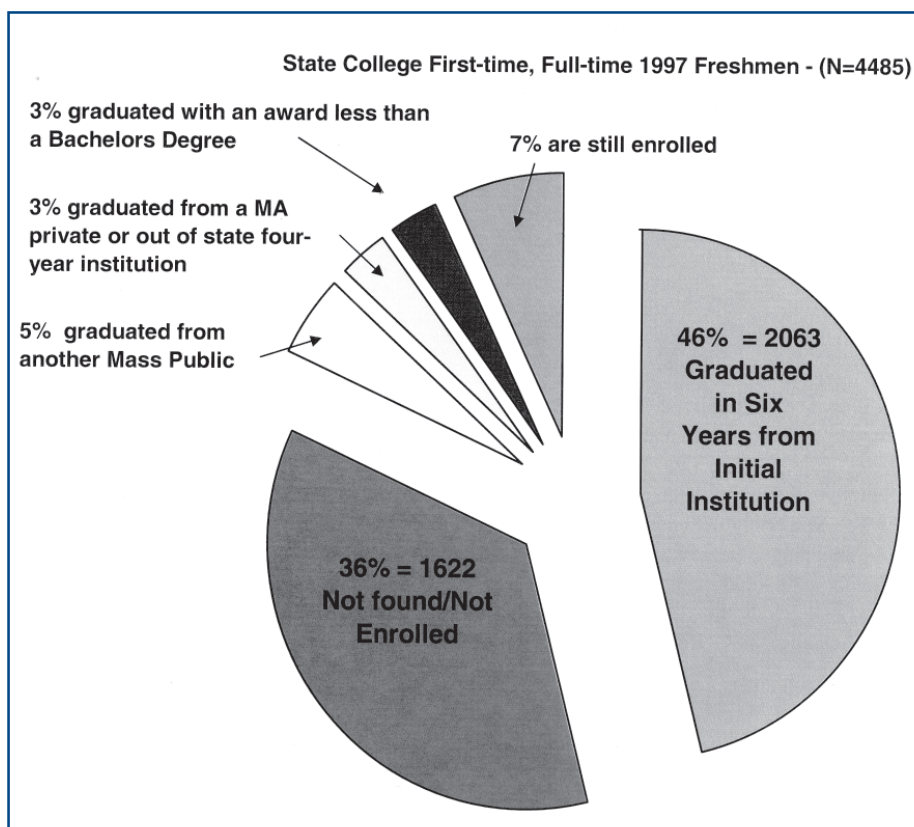
"That's why financial aid is so important," Robinson-Weening said.

The task force also studied transfer and first-year retention rates. "The major factor in increasing the percentage of first-time, full-time students who graduate . . . is increasing the number of students continuing past their freshman year," the report stated.

### How to Reduce the Gaps

The task force made numerous recommendations and set five-year goals. These include boosting the overall graduation rate to over 50 percent in five years, the first-year retention rate to 80 percent, and the transfer graduation rate to 58 percent.

But the recommendations went much further,



calling for broad financial and programmatic support for the state colleges, including first-year programs, advising, tracking and reporting services. It called on colleges to apply and share "best practices" in their retention programs.

### More Full-Time Faculty

The task force also called for hiring more full-time faculty, especially to teach first-year courses. "The percentage of full-time faculty has shrunk on our campuses, which affects both advising and course availability," Markunas said. She called for restoring full-time faculty levels to the 2001 levels. She also urged restoring colleges' "base funding" to 2001 levels.

### More Dollars for Students

Appropriations for financial aid, cut by 20 percent since 2002, should be returned to previous levels, the task force stated. But it also called for increased need-based aid for students, including more grant money. "Financial support in the form of grants rather than loans is critical to improving graduation rates for students with high financial need."

The report cited data showing that families in the lowest 40 percent in income "would need to spend 46 percent of their annual income to pay the cost of a Massachusetts public, four-year education, after factoring in financial aid."

## Gurnon Named Mass Maritime President

**Richard G. Gurnon**, acting president, has been appointed president of Massachusetts Maritime Academy. Since 1978 he has served the college in various leadership positions, including executive vice president, vice president for student services, and commandant of cadets. As acting president, he has directed all academic and administration programs at the Academy.

Before joining the staff at Mass Maritime, Admiral Gurnon was a patrol squadron pilot for the 26<sup>th</sup> Naval Air Division in Brunswick, Maine, and an instructor at the United States Naval Officer School in Newport, R.I. He also served as a naval aviator and department head in the U.S. Navy Reserves in South Weymouth.

Gurnon graduated from the U.S. Navy Flight School in Pensacola, Florida/Corpus Christi, Texas. He holds a bachelor of science degree in nautical science, specializing in aeronautical engineering, from the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis.

He holds a masters degree in teaching with a concentration in earth sciences from Bridgewater State College, and has completed the Massachusetts Higher Education and Executive Leadership Institute, sponsored by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education and the New England Resource Center for Higher Education.



# Understanding Civil Rights and Liabilities Can Protect You and Others

Ben Jacques

As faculty members and librarians, we play complex roles. We engage daily with students, challenging them to think critically. We advise them academically and in their student organizations. We participate in shared governance, serving on committees that set goals, establish programs and write policy. And we contribute to decisions on hiring and promotion through our work on peer evaluation, tenure, search and promotion committees.



Ben Jacques

Lee Weissinger

"Faculty have a unique role in defining the culture of a college," Lee Weissinger, MTA attorney, said in a recent interview. "It's a more democratic environment, so there is a lot of shared decision making. But with the benefits of being a player comes shared responsibility."

That's why Weissinger is urging us to bone up on civil rights and liability issues—for our own protection, but also for our colleagues and students.

At a workshop for MSCA members last fall, Weissinger outlined landmark statutes establishing civil rights and discrimination laws.

- The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, religion and national origin.
- The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines of 1980 define sexual harassment in the workplace.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibits an employer from discriminating against someone with a disability who, "with reasonable accommodation," can "perform the essential functions of the job."
- The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, amended by the Older Workers Benefit Protection Act, prohibits employment discrimination against persons 40 years or older.
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 provides that no one in the United States "shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving" federal funds. This law also "recognizes sexual harassment as unlawful sex discrimination."

Massachusetts laws go further in some areas. For example, Mass General Laws Chapter 151B prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and genetic information. State law also fills in the gaps in other areas, including a prohibition of age and disability discrimination.

The burden of proof in discrimination cases is similar in Massachusetts and on the federal level, and rests with the individual charging (alleging) discrimination, Weissinger said. She highlighted several court rulings that establish employee and employer responsibilities. And she listed cases that define and qualify disabilities, ranging from asthma to alcoholism.

## Challenging Assumptions

"Issues of discrimination continue to emerge on state college campuses and across the nation," Weissinger said. "It's something faculty members need to be aware of and guard against."

She noted that underlying assumptions often prevent us from seeing others accurately, and used the example of an Asian-American student at a workshop who complained that she was expected to perform in stereotypical ways in school.

In interviewing job candidates with disabilities, "we may need to challenge our assumptions about a particular disability," she said, "and understand that there are many ways to make accommodations."

Weissinger cited successes in applying civil rights and discrimination laws in education, including salary equity by gender and a range of inclusions and protections fostered by implementation of the Title IX law. She said MTA's Legal Division is seeing an increase in requests for legal assistance in "reasonable accommodation" issues for persons with disabilities.

## Protections of Union and Contract

She stressed the benefits of being in a union with bargaining agreements containing due process protections. "In addition to existing laws, members are protected by contract," she said. She gave examples of recent cases at state colleges in which employee rights were upheld. And she noted that MSCA has an agreement with the employer barring the use of anonymous student complaints.

In all personnel matters, MSCA members have the backup of MTA legal support, she said. When the employer makes decisions affecting members, "at least we have the ability to challenge those decisions, and the employer must establish in a neutral forum, be it court or arbitration, that the decisions are fair and supported by evidence."

For an outline of the workshop, "Civil Liability Issues in Higher Education," call the MSCA president's office at 978-542-7282.

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## Veto Override Restores Health Insurance Rates

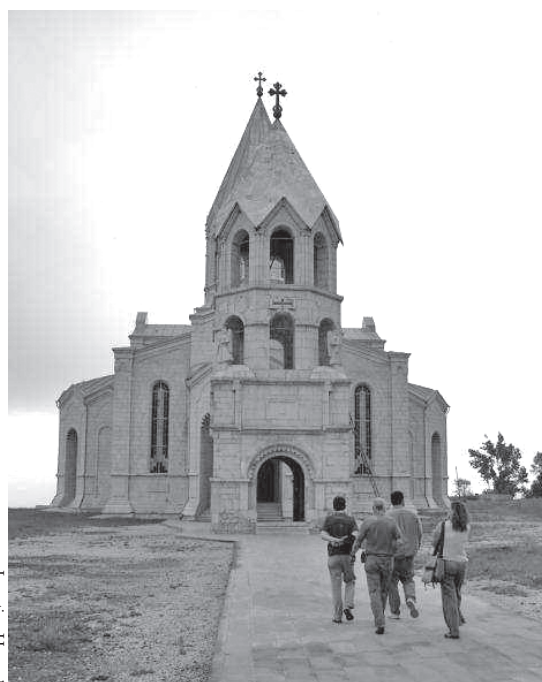
By a unanimous vote in the Senate and a 140-11 vote in the House, Massachusetts legislators in July overrode the governor's veto of a bill reducing the share of the health insurance premiums state employees pay.

Beginning in January, the premium split will be restored to 85/15 for all state employees hired before June 30, 2003; while those hired after that date who make more than \$35,000 will pay 20 percent. New employees earning less than \$35,000 will pay at the 85/15 rate.

"Now's a good time to thank our senators and representatives in the State House," MSCA Pat Markunas said. "They were committed on this issue on behalf of all public service employees."

Overrides of other vetoes by the governor and amounts restored include: Salem State College Second Degree Nursing – \$915,900; Head Start Grants – \$1.4 million; Education Reform Reserve Account (the so-called "Pot-Hole" account for school districts facing extraordinary expenses) – \$4.4 million; and North Shore Community College Public Policy Institute – \$250,000.

## Building Democracy



Leonina Homel

*In Nagorno-Karabakh to observe elections this summer, an American team including two Worcester State faculty members visits a church near the site of a strategic battle in Nagorno-Karabakh's struggle for independence. Read their account in the October Perspective.*



## FACULTY/LIBRARIAN SPOTLIGHT

## Confessions of Accomplishment

### Framingham Faculty Share Pride in Achievements

Alan Feldman

In January, when our faculty was protesting stalled negotiations, I received an e-mail request from the editor of this publication to write an article spotlighting professors' achievements. I forwarded the request directly to the faculty—with the heading “Confess or Turn in a Colleague.”

Within days I had an array of responses, and what I can put here is only a small sample. Some people “confessed.” For example:

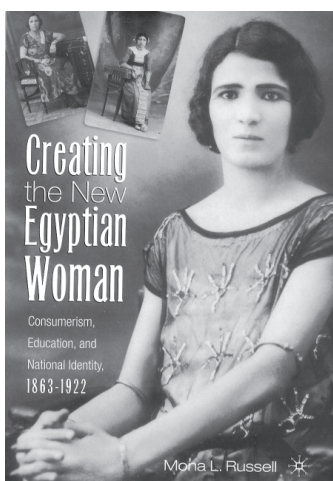
Dear Alan,

I am not generally one to toot my horn, but since you asked, my book came out in October, *Creating the New Egyptian Woman: Consumerism, Education, and National Identity, 1863-1922*, published by Palgrave [Macmillan, 2004].

Mona Russell

Later Mona loaned me a copy of the book cover. The woman on the cover is her great aunt, and two smaller images of her grandmother appear as well. Mona is a professor in the history department.

Of course I knew of another publishing highlight. Art Nolletti, Jr., who teaches with me in the English Department, had completed a 20-year project, *The Cinema of Goshō Heinosuke: Laughter through Tears*, a definitive study of this major Japanese director, published this year by Indiana University Press.



Other faculty members ratted out their colleagues. When they did, what most impressed me was, first, the variety of activities that make up the faculty's perception of its own achievement, and, second, the pride faculty members feel in each other's work.

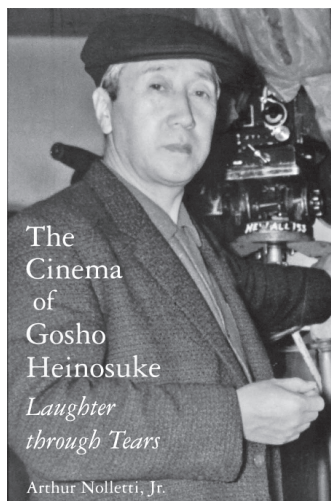
“Alan,” my computer science colleague, Suban Krishnamoorthy, wrote, “I think Tom Koshy from Math has done an outstanding job with publication of books and several research papers and more. I think he is the best deserving candidate.”

“Hi, Alan—” wrote Barbara Milot, chair of art and music, “John Anderson, Liz Perry and I are all presenting at the upcoming College Art Association Annual Conference in Atlanta (pretty unusual that three faculty from a small department will be at a national conference)—is this the kind of thing you are looking for?”

Yes, I guess. Reading the official announcements in our *Focus* never clued me in on the value of the item listed, especially if it was something remote from my own field.

Not all the e-mails spotlighted research or publications.

“Dear Alan,” wrote Julia Scandrett, from my own department, “Would people be interested in the fact that of 11 student teachers completing the English Secondary Education licensure program, all 11 have been hired as full time teachers in English? The 100 percent rate is something I, Lisa Eck and Evelyn Perry are very pleased with.”



After she informed me of a paper she and two colleagues had recently published, another faculty member sent the following note as an afterthought: Alan:

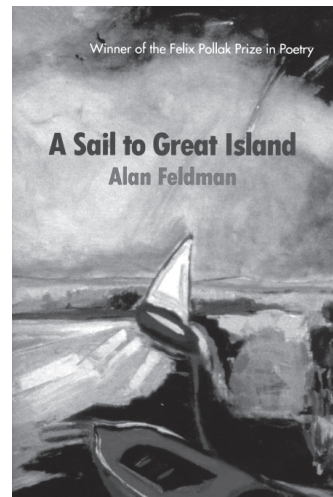
I was NOT intending to nominate Jessica, Robert & Me when I wrote to you yesterday – I only told you about our paper to share the news. I actually wish to nominate Lisa Eck for her role in the student production of *The Laramie Project*. The quality of their production was really superior and it spoke well of the college community. I realize that Lisa will say that it is the students that did the work and deserve the recognition, but it is their faculty advisor who made it possible. Thanks.

Susan Massad

I'm familiar with the age-old debate about merit: what it is, and who's qualified to decide about it, and whether its recognition is divisive or motivating. For the moment, I'll have to withhold judgment. But what I do know is that for those few days in winter when these e-mails started coming in I felt a surge of satisfaction in listening to the pure expression of a faculty taking pride in itself.

“Pretty unusual,” as my colleague Barbara Milot phrased it so modestly.

—Alan Feldman, professor of English, is vice president of the Framingham State chapter and Distinguished Faculty of the Year at Framingham. His recent books are *A Sail to Great Island* (2004), which won the Felix Pollak Prize in Poetry from the University of Wisconsin, and *State College 101*, a book about his colleague Elaine Beilin and her work with a freshman writing class. He is a Perspective contributing editor.



## ‘If you can skip, you can dance’ — Caitlin Corbett Teaches New Moves

Susan Sturgeon

It's been quite a celebratory year for Caitlin Corbett, associate professor of dance in the Sport, Fitness and Leisure Studies Department at Salem State College. Last December she celebrated her dance company's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a concert at Massachusetts College of Art, followed by another at Salem State College in February.

Even as a child, Corbett got a physical thrill out of new ways to move. Like a budding pilot just learning to fly, she liked to invent and reinvent gesture and movement that was intimate and specific to her as an individual.

“In the studio, the first thing I aim for, when I'm making a dance is movement — not structure, not content — pure movement that speaks for itself,” Corbett says. “I'm interested in finding ways to move that my body has not yet experienced. This obviously means stepping away from the more conventional movement vocabulary that one might find in a dance class.”

From the beginnings of her professional dancing and choreography in the 1960s, she has been interested in the everyday, pedestrian elements of movement. She has created her own dance vocabulary and has attracted dancers to her company who are hungry to move in new ways.

Much of her choreography is specifically matched to her own body and can be athletically difficult for other dancers. She feels that dancers may unlearn



Caitlin Corbett

Adrian Catalano

natural gait and gestures, but she wants to keep her pedestrian notion, so she has always worked with some non-dancers, working hard to make sure that they know she is not trying to make them look silly, but poetic and beautiful. Hers is a democratic approach, which highlights their beauty as dancers, not as stars, as seen in ballet.

Corbett is always in pursuit of beauty, but sees it in movement which is edgier and gawkier than traditional ideas of beauty. One can see in her choreography and performances the theme of strong, powerful and sensual women—independent but also interdependent.

“Although I don't see my work as overtly political, I do find myself consistently returning to this notion of beauty. I am so utterly tired of the conventional, stereotypical beauty in our culture today—how many people do you know who fit into a size 0?—and my work tries to redefine beauty to be more inclusive of who we are. Can clunky be beautiful? Why not?”

As a teacher, Corbett pursues these ideas passionately and explores modern dance with her students less from the Britney Spears model they aspire to and more from the modern dance and individualistic perspective. But she does not want to destroy their interest in dance. She strives to celebrate their love for dance instead of rejecting the style they have formed by watching MTV. Since she is not preaching to the choir, she has an opportunity to positively affect students' self expression in personal and individual ways.

She has disdain for the forces which promote anorexia and the requirement that dancers have perfectly gorgeous faces. However, with maturity she has given herself permission to include some lushness in her dancing and her choreography. She admits that dialog with her students may have influenced her. In her choreographic work for her students, she wants to strike a balance, so that the work is simultaneously

challenging and accessible to them. She no longer feels the need to battle, but allows her work to be softer and more lyrical now.

To prove her motto that “if you can skip, you can dance,” she included a dance called “Joycie's Pie” in the February concert, pared it down from 50 to three minutes and invited anyone at SSC to join. Twelve non-dancers volunteered. “It was a great way of building community,” she said.

Since then, Corbett has choreographed *Bat Boy, the Musical*, her first collaboration with the Theatre Department at Salem State.

“Collaborating with Bill Cunningham, Karen Gahagan and our fantastically talented students on *Bat Boy* last semester was an amazing experience for me. Choreograph for a musical? Never in a million years did I

think I would or could do that! It was enormously challenging — a completely different medium than I am familiar with. Bill's directorial style is exceptional. He knows exactly what he wants, and he has total faith in his collaborators. So, once I understood his vision, I was given ‘carte blanche.’ And, of course our students were terrific to work with — wonderfully creative and willing to try anything. I learned so much from that experience.”

—A librarian at Salem State College, Susan Sturgeon is a contributing editor.



Adrian Catalano