

## WHAT'S INSIDE

Graduate Pearl Eni Reflects on CGS.....	2	Office Spotlight: Veterans Services.....	3
Scholarship Helps Student to Focus on Education.....	2	Letter from the CGS Alumni Society President.....	3
Student Spotlight: Brett Zuck, CGS Scholar-Athlete....	2	Alumni News and Awards.....	4
Alumni Spotlight: Betsy Benson (BA '86).....	3	Announcements and Word on the Street.....	4

# inside cgs

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH • COLLEGE OF GENERAL STUDIES

SUMMER 2014

*Pictured above: Brett Zuck  
See his story on page 2.*

## What's Next for CGS

Historically, the role of the University of Pittsburgh College of General Studies (CGS) has been to make the academic resources of a world-renowned research university available to students of all ages and at all stages of their careers. That role has never been more important to fill.

Today, CGS is the region's best choice for busy students who want to fit a college education into their already full lives.

Results-oriented degree programs, flexible scheduling, and individualized student support services provide the opportunity for those busy with work, family, and community responsibilities to pursue their dream of getting a degree.

From its humble beginnings as the Department of Afternoon, Saturday, and Evening Studies—which was founded in 1911 and was designed to offer a limited number of off-campus courses—to the world-class degree-granting academic unit that it is today, CGS has remained rooted in a liberal arts tradition while constantly innovating to meet the evolving needs of its students.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, "In recent years, the percentage

increase in the number of students age 25 and over has been larger than the percentage increase in the number of younger students. ..." In keeping with this trend, CGS will continue to respond to the needs of today's students with new programs and services.

*“Peer mentors are chosen for their desire to give back to others, especially to new CGS students.”*

### Expanding Online Course Offerings

To continue to make a Pitt degree accessible to increasingly busy students, CGS is expanding its online course offerings. During the 2013–14 academic year, CGS offered 154 online, self-paced, and hybrid courses—more than ever before.

This year also saw the return of CGS alumnus **Carol L.S. Trent** (BA '05) as a visiting instructor in the administration of justice program. In addition to teaching, Trent spent the year transforming four on-ground CGS courses into online courses for the 2014–15 academic year.

### Bringing Services to Our Students

In the spring of 2014, CGS Career Consultant

**Brianna McMeekin** began offering online career counseling appointments via Skype for CGS students, as well as all military-affiliated students and student veterans. This service provides the same great face-to-face interaction and support that is provided in an on-campus appointment without requiring the student to come to campus. Using Skype, McMeekin is able to bring Pitt's outstanding career support services to students whenever and wherever they are available.

### Peer Mentoring

In 2012, **Sherry Miller Brown** (BA '78) launched the Peer Mentoring Program at CGS, which she continues to grow today. The program is designed to provide opportunities for new students to engage with current students, providing guidance and support throughout the new student's first year. The goal is to ease the transition into Pitt's culture and administrative procedures, welcome each new student into the CGS community, and help new students to access University resources.

"What better way for new students to start their work at Pitt than to have a successful continuing student show them the way?" says Brown. "Peer mentors are chosen for their desire to give back to others, especially to new CGS students."

*Pictured from left to right are the CGS 2013–14 peer mentors: Christina Jutzi, Mary Pat Rocco, Janet Asbury, Lynda Porter, Brady McCormick, Morgan Donaldson, Matt Hannon, Pearl Eni, Travis Ritter, and Julia Helgert.*



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### A Fresh Face for CGS

CGS and its associated units—the McCarl Center for Nontraditional Student Success, the Office of Veterans Services, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute—will relocate to a new signature space on the first floor of Wesley W. Posvar Hall in summer 2014. The move will provide CGS students with improved access to the rich intellectual resources of the University; CGS staff and support services; essential amenities such as parking and libraries; and designated spaces for tutoring, quiet study, and lounges. Stay tuned for more details!

## Graduate Pearl Eni Reflects on CGS

**Pearl Eni** (BS '14) was the graduating class speaker at the CGS graduation ceremony in April 2014. She was nominated for the 2014 Emma W. Locke Award, which is presented to a graduating Pitt senior in recognition of high scholarship, character, and devotion to the ideals of the University.

"I remember the first time I came to Pitt: I took the 28X from the airport, and when it turned onto Forbes Avenue, I caught my first glimpse of the Cathedral of Learning. Of course, I had seen it before in pictures, but it was so much more impressive in person! During orientation week, I found out that I could take classes in the Cathedral, so I proceeded to do so every term until my last.

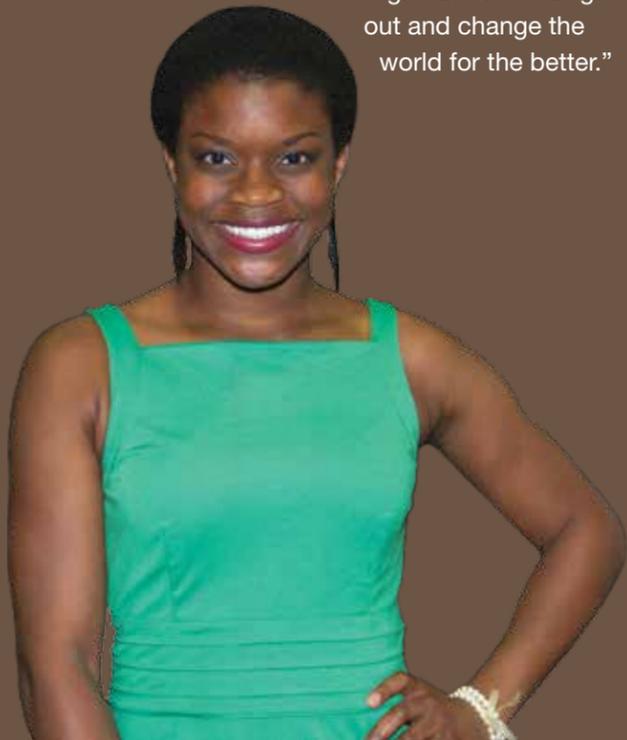
"When I transferred into the College of General Studies, I found myself spending even more time in the Cathedral, particularly in the McCarl Center. While in CGS, I served as president of the Alpha Sigma Lambda honor society, a mentor in the Peer Mentoring Program, and a teaching assistant for the Mastering the University course. Accordingly, the McCarl Center became my go-to place for meetings, events, and study sessions.

"I didn't come to Pitt knowing that I would become a part of CGS, but I am so glad it ended up that way. My major allowed me to satisfy my premed prerequisites as well as my intellectual curiosity.

"My CGS experience, however, was not only about the academics; it also was about the relationships I formed along the way. It was about the guidance of my advisor, Krista Stokes; the encouragement of my mentor, Sherry [Miller] Brown; and the support of Associate Dean Cristina Ruggiero and many others on staff who make the fourth floor of the Cathedral such a special and remarkable place.

"There really is no place like Pitt. During my undergraduate career, I was able to accomplish my dreams and make new ones. I believe that this school does an excellent job of providing an environment in which students can thrive.

"After spending four years here, I can truly appreciate Pitt's ongoing celebration of building better lives. Because of Pitt, my life was changed for the better, so now I have an even greater desire to go out and change the world for the better."



## Scholarship Helps Student to Focus on Education

CGS student **Mark Jacobina** was one of three recipients of the Bettye J. and Ralph E. Bailey Scholarship in the spring of 2014. Jacobina, a 55-year-old social sciences major, came to CGS to make a change in his career. In his words, "While making a career change later in life means I may not retire in the traditional sense, I am following my passion for understanding the human mind and behavior and laying the foundation to become a master's-level psychotherapist."

Jacobina—who is married, works full time with individuals with developmental disabilities, and has cared for his aging parents throughout his time at CGS—says that receiving the scholarship provides him with "a bit of breathing room."

"Balancing work, family, rest, and school is difficult. The financial stress of paying for school adds to the pressures of my life. This scholarship puts a little more oxygen in the room, making this work just a bit less stressful and helping me to focus on the true work at hand: my education," he says.



Mark Jacobina

The Bettye J. and Ralph E. Bailey Scholarship was established in 2005. The Baileys created the scholarship out of appreciation for the challenges faced by adult students—challenges that Bettye Bailey understands firsthand.

Bettye enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh as her husband, Ralph, was becoming a prominent leader in the American energy and financial sectors and her four children were beginning their own college careers. After years of balancing her life as a mother, wife, and student, she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in social sciences from CGS in 1984.

The Baileys created the scholarship for adult students who are pursuing an education while tending to family and work. Their generosity allows busy students like Jacobina to follow their dreams and succeed, passing on the unique opportunities that CGS provides from generation to generation.

To learn more about supporting CGS and its student scholarship fund, visit [cgs.pitt.edu/support](http://cgs.pitt.edu/support).

### STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## Brett Zuck, CGS Scholar-Athlete

**Brett Zuck** (BA '14) was one of more than 30 CGS student-athletes honored for outstanding academic achievement at the annual Scholar-Athlete Awards Breakfast, hosted by the Pitt Alumni Association on February 25, 2014.

Zuck started playing football in seventh grade but didn't pursue playing for Pitt until his senior year in high school. He explains, "As anyone who knows how athletics in Division I works, it is almost impossible to end up on a roster when you get into the recruiting process that late. But through a combination of luck, connections, and things just falling into place, I was asked to join the team as a preferred walk-on."

Zuck attributes the flexibility of CGS classes and the support of his advisor with helping him to achieve his success. "One of the biggest challenges I faced as a student-athlete was scheduling classes around my football schedule. With an off-campus facility and a disciplined schedule, at least eight hours of every day was blocked off for football. The availability and variety of classes that CGS provides made it easier to work out a schedule where I could get the most out of my education while having the time to devote to football.

"My CGS academic advisor, John Oravetz, was vital to my success and to making my Pitt experience an enjoyable one," he continues. "Being a former Pitt student-athlete himself, he understands the importance of time management and helped me to make my schedule work. He even helped me to secure a summer internship with the U.S. Secret Service between my junior and senior years."

That internship led Zuck to pursue a career doing investigative work for a federal agency after graduation. Career opportunities such as this are in fact what attracted Zuck to CGS. He says that CGS' results-oriented majors provided "seemingly unending possibilities as far as career paths" and that he felt CGS would enable him to turn his interest in law into something he could pursue as a career.

"My experience as a CGS student has been incredible," concludes Zuck. "I have learned how to develop new ways of learning and thinking throughout my educational experience."



Brett Zuck

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

# Betsy Benson (BA '86)

**Betsy Benson** is the publisher and vice president of *Pittsburgh Magazine*. The following is taken from a video interview conducted with Benson. To watch the complete interview and hear from other outstanding CGS alumni, please visit [cgs.pitt.edu/alumni-stories](http://cgs.pitt.edu/alumni-stories).

### Did any faculty members have a particularly strong influence on your life?

"One of the special things about CGS' print media communications major was that a lot of the classes were in the evening at that time, and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and *Pittsburgh Press* reporters and editors would come over to the Pitt campus after work and teach the classes. So I had one class after another with working journalists, and I really found my niche there. I really learned a lot and decided that I, in fact, did want to work in print journalism. And I had a good foundation to do so."

### What image stands out in your head from your time at CGS?

"I think of my husband, who used to say that we rooted for the CGS Generals instead of the [Pitt] Panthers. We always laughed about that. We kind of had our own little experience at Pitt, a really enjoyable one. [I remember] playing Frisbee on Flagstaff Hill. And I always remember, at the end of the day when we were meeting after class, John would be sitting in the big chair on the first floor of the Cathedral [of Learning]. He's a big guy ... but that chair even dwarfed him. So I visualize my husband sitting in that giant chair. ... It's still there, and it's kind of a nostalgic thing."

### How has your life been different because of CGS?

"CGS was kind of there for me at a time when I was transitioning, deciding what the next step

was going to be for me for college. I found my niche here. I gained a lot of confidence that I could have the career that I wanted. I had a lot of great professors who taught me the nuts and bolts of my profession-to-be. And I was able to do two really great internships while I was going to school here. From one of those I got my first full-time job. And I ended up there for 16 years. So it was a pivotal place for me to be, a supportive place for me to be, at a time when that's exactly what I needed."



Lieutenant Colonel Hector Sheppard with his family, including his son, Pitt student Shamaal Sheppard



## OFFICE SPOTLIGHT

# Office of Veterans Services

CGS is proud to house the University of Pittsburgh Office of Veterans Services (OVS). Since the creation of OVS in 2009, Pitt has been recognized in the top 15 percent of military-friendly universities in national publications such as *Military Advanced Education*, *G.I. Jobs*, and *Military Times*.

"OVS is solely dedicated to serving veterans and military-affiliated students as well as their dependents and spouses," says OVS Director **Ryan Ahl**. "Our mission is to facilitate the transition of veterans from military to University life; support their ongoing academic success; and assist veterans, guardsmen, reservists, spouses, and dependents in receiving their military education benefits."

Serving more than 500 students on Pitt's campus in Pittsburgh and on four regional campuses, OVS strives to be a one-stop shop for veterans, military-affiliated students, and their dependents, offering:

- preadmission counseling sessions;
- scholarships and benefits facilitation;

- a new student orientation and first-term success course;
- academic success programs;
- free tutoring; and
- career services, resources, and fairs.

OVS also supports a community of veterans on campus, connecting students to each other as well as to valuable University resources.

**Paul Kantner**, a veteran and current CGS student, describes his experience with OVS: "As I began exploring schools, Pitt immediately stuck out because its Office of Veterans Services basically provided concierge service long distance to me, which allowed me to schedule my classes without worrying about the financial portion of school. I ended up coming here, and OVS has continued to provide outstanding support."

To hear more of Kantner's story, visit [cgs.pitt.edu/veterans](http://cgs.pitt.edu/veterans). To learn more about OVS and the Veterans Alumni Council, visit [veterans.pitt.edu](http://veterans.pitt.edu).

# Letter from the CGS Alumni Society President

## Dear CGS alumni,

Career development has always been a central goal of the College of General Studies, and recent initiatives by both the CGS Alumni Society and the Pitt Alumni Association will expand access to career development opportunities for CGS students and alumni alike.

This fall, the CGS Alumni Society will host a career development social. The event will feature the unveiling of a new career network that will replace the Pitt Career Network and partner us with LinkedIn. This new tool will allow Pitt students and alumni to interact with more than 277 million LinkedIn users.

I also am very excited about the rollout of a new alumni Web site, which will unite all of Pitt's alumni groups under one Web presence. It will make alumni events and information accessible to all and will make it much more convenient for alumni groups to join together in professional and social groups.

Finally, plans are under way for a gala opening of CGS' new home this fall. This summer, CGS will move from its longtime home on the fourth floor of the Cathedral of Learning to a new space on the ground floor of Wesley W. Posvar Hall. I guess we can now say that we will be literally "home," as we will be near the home plate from Forbes Field!

I appreciate the opportunity to keep CGS alumni up to date on the society's activities, and I welcome any comments or concerns that you may have. I can be reached at [bmountjoy@alumni.pitt.edu](mailto:bmountjoy@alumni.pitt.edu).

Thank you, and hail to Pitt!  
**Bruce D. Mountjoy**



**Bruce D. Mountjoy** (BA '91) is president of the CGS Alumni Society and represents CGS on the board of the Pitt Alumni Association and its School and College/Regional Campus Committee. Mountjoy works at Citizens Bank and has hosted and produced the *Bluegrass Jam Session* on 91.3 fm WYEP since 1978.

# CGS Announcements

## We Want to Hear from You!

Whether you graduated last year or 20 years ago, you are part of the CGS alumni community. We'd like to reconnect. Please take a few minutes to complete a brief survey and tell us how CGS can continue to serve you. Participants will be entered for a chance to win a \$100 cash card. Visit [cgs.pitt.edu/alumni](http://cgs.pitt.edu/alumni) to complete the survey today!

## Save the Date: Homecoming 2014

University of Pittsburgh Homecoming 2014 will be held October 24–26. Visit [alumni.pitt.edu/homecoming](http://alumni.pitt.edu/homecoming) to learn more, and stay tuned for details on CGS homecoming events!



University of Pittsburgh

College of General Studies  
Fourth Floor, Cathedral of Learning  
4200 Fifth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PITTSBURGH, PA  
PERMIT NO. 511

## Word on the Street

What unique CGS services have been most useful to you as a student?



“Access to student leadership programs helped me a lot. I wasn't involved on campus my first time around, and CGS has helped me to have a more enriching and well-rounded college experience.”

**Kim O'Connor,**  
legal studies major



“My CGS advisor really pulled it all together for me. She always gave me great advice and, as she got to know me, helped me to find my path and choose the major that was right for me.”

**Garth Gerber (BA '13)**



“The varied topics covered in my intro classes helped me to find what was interesting to me. I am still learning what I like and discovering myself, and CGS lets me do that.”

**Morgan Donaldson,**  
public service major



FSC FPO -  
Printer will place  
MIX

The University of Pittsburgh is an affirmative action, equal opportunity institution. Published in cooperation with the Department of Communications Services. DCS95082-0614

Contributing Writers  
Pearl Eni  
Rebecca Farabaugh  
Bruce D. Mountjoy

Publisher  
Cristina Ruggiero  
Photography  
Jim Judkis  
Center for Instructional Development  
& Distance Education

Questions or concerns? E-mail us at [cgs@pitt.edu](mailto:cgs@pitt.edu).

SUMMER 2014

inside cgs

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH • COLLEGE OF GENERAL STUDIES

Pitt Alumni Association 2013 alumni award winners, including Cynthia Louise Meshanko, second from left, and Deborah Walker, third from left. Also pictured from left to right are Jeff Gleim, Kevin Conley, Alfred Moyé, Jeff Marzina, Bruce F. Hadburg, Jane Allred, Al Novak, and Jill Weimer.



In February 2014, after more than 30 years of employment at the University of Pittsburgh, Walker was nominated by Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto to manage the Office of Municipal Investigations, a unit that investigates complaints against city employees.

**CGS Alumnus Named Advocacy Volunteer of the Year**  
Alumnus **Deborah Walker** (BA '01) received the 2013 Advocacy Volunteer of the Year Award from the Pitt Alumni Association. The Advocacy Volunteer of the Year Award is given to an individual who helps to promote the cause of higher education at the state level and has gone above and beyond in advocating on behalf of the University of Pittsburgh. Walker is dedicated to serving the community. She has volunteered with organizations such as America's Promise Alliance, the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh's Campaign for African American Achievement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Adopt-A-School Program, and the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations. In 2010, Pittsburgh City Council appointed Walker to the Pittsburgh Citizen Police Review Board as a law enforcement specialist, and in July 2012, she was appointed by Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett to serve as a commissioner on the Governor's Advisory Commission on African American Affairs.

**CGS Alumnus Named Pitt Career Network Volunteer of the Year**  
Alumnus **Cynthia Louise Meshanko** (BA '94) was named the 2013 Pitt Career Network Volunteer of the Year by the Pitt Alumni Association. This award honors alumni who have been outstanding mentors to students and fellow alumni as they prepare to enter the world of business or change careers. Meshanko earned a BA in legal studies at CGS as well as a Certificate in Russian and East European Studies in 1994. Currently an intellectual property docket technician at K&L Gates LLP, Meshanko originally joined the Pitt Career Network as a resource for her own career. She enjoys sharing her experience of reinventing herself for the job market with students at networking events.

## Alumni News and Awards



To share your news in a future CGS newsletter, e-mail Rebecca Farabaugh at [ref47@pitt.edu](mailto:ref47@pitt.edu).