Beyond Bullying
New Grant Looks at Suicide Risk in LGBT Youth

The National Institute of Mental Health has awarded a three-year, $2.8 million grant to the Steinhardt School to study the causes behind suicide risk for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. Arnold Grossman, professor in the Department of Applied Psychology, is the principal investigator of the study, which also seeks to discover avenues of interventions to lower the risk of suicide among LGBT teenagers and young adults.

“Study after study has found higher rates of suicidal behaviors among LGBT youth than for their heterosexual peers,” explained Grossman. “Other research has pointed to potential causes. For instance, compared to prior generations, today’s LGBT youth identify and disclose their sexual and gender identities earlier in life. As a result, they are more likely to be exposed to risk factors—such as bullying, harassment, marginalization, and the feeling of being rejected by, as well as a burden, to families and friends.”

The team, which includes researchers from the University of Arizona, will also explore how emotional resiliency can change across various LGBT developmental milestones. Grossman notes that what is effective support for an LGBT youth in early adolescence may not be effective for the same person in late adolescence or early adulthood.

John A. Frank and Michael McCutcheon, doctoral students in counseling psychology, will serve as research assistants in the project.

Celebrating Excellence: Dafnis Prieto and Francisco Núñez Are Recipients of MacArthur “Genius” Awards

Two members of the Steinhardt School community were among the twenty-two recipients of this year’s “genius” awards from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation: Dafnis Prieto, an internationally-acclaimed percussionist and adjunct faculty member in the Jazz Studies Program; and Francisco Núñez (BS ’88), founder and director of the Young People’s Chorus of New York City and an alumnus of the Music Education Program.

Prieto is a drummer and composer who melds modern jazz harmonies, Cuban clave rhythms, other Latin and African influences, and funk-inspired arrangements to create works of great stylistic diversity. His recordings include Absolute Quintet (2006) and Taking the Soul for a Walk (2008).

Núñez, a conductor, composer, and pianist, is the founder of the Young People’s Chorus of New York City. With more than one thousand young people in five after-school choruses and thirteen choruses in its Satellite School Program in inner-city public schools, Núñez’s program exposes young singers to an unmatched variety of music and music makers.

The MacArthur fellows receive a five-year $500,000 grant to pursue their scholarly or artistic work.

Steinhardt Selected for ‘100Kin10’ to Help Boost Supply of Teachers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math

NYU Steinhardt has been selected for 100Kin10, a national movement created in response to the United States’ need for 100,000 science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) teachers in 10 years.

The formation of 100Kin10 follows the Obama Administration’s 2009 announcement to move U.S. students from the middle to the top of the pack in math and science achievement. In his 2011 State of the Union Address, the President called for a new effort to prepare 100,000 STEM teachers over the next decade who have deep content knowledge and strong teaching skills.

As a 100Kin10 partner institution, NYU Steinhardt will help achieve the organization’s goals through a range of initiatives, including a STEME Education and Research Center where Steinhardt faculty will research how teachers learn to teach STEME subjects and how children and youth, especially those in underserved communities, come to master these subjects. Associate Professor Pamela Fraser-Abder will serve as principal director of the program, collaborating with STEM faculty at NYU’s Faculty of Arts and Science and NYUPoly.
Eduardus Halim has been named the inaugural holder of the Sascha Gorodnitzki Faculty Chair in Piano Studies. The endowed professorship, made possible by a gift from the estate of Virginia Gorodnitzki, was created in recognition of her late husband’s legacy as a musician and teacher.

The endowment will house materials that celebrate and recognize the pianist’s distinguished career. The materials will provide scholars with a rich archive for research and study into Gorodnitzki’s life and teachings. Since his 1987 debut, Halim has appeared with such orchestras as the Baltimore Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, Malaysian Philharmonic, and Russian National Orchestra. He has given recitals in New York at Alice Tully Hall and the 92nd Street Y, and in Washington D.C. at the Kennedy Center. His awards and honors include the Young Concert Artists International Auditions as well as the Avery Fisher Career Grant.

Charlton McIlwain, associate professor in the Department of Media, Culture, and Communications, (below) is the recipient of the 2011 Daniel E. Griffiths Research Award for his book, Race Appeal: How Candidates Invoke Race in U.S. Political Campaigns (Temple University, 2011).

Erin O’Connor, an assistant professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning (above, with Perry Halkitis, associate dean for research and doctoral studies), has received the 2011 Gabriel Carras Research Award for her study, Teacher–Child Relationship and Behavior Problem Trajectories in Elementary School. The yearly research awards honor the memory of former deans who were committed to advancing knowledge through research.

In October, master’s and doctoral students presented the results of research in education, health, psychology, media, and the arts at Steinhardt’s annual Dean’s Grants for Student Research Colloquium.

The colloquium brings together students who have been awarded up to $1,000 to explore a faculty-sponsored independent research project or a specific component of thesis or dissertation work. Among the topics discussed: “Defunct Models of Pollution: Ocean Plastics and Body Burdens,” Max Liboiron (Media, Culture, and Comunication) and “How Women Holocaust Survivors Promote Social Justice within an Ethic of Care,” Shelby Weltz (Applied Psychology).
Parents are Complicit in Helping Underage Kids Join Facebook, Survey Finds

Many parents know that their underage children are on Facebook in violation of the site’s restrictions and are often complicit in helping their children join the site, according to a study led by danah boyd, a research assistant professor in the Department of Media, Culture, and Communications.

The findings, which appeared in First Monday, a peer-reviewed online journal, coincide with a federal review of the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). COPPA mandates that web sites obtain “verifiable parental consent” before collecting information on children under 13. Facebook has a minimum age requirement of 13. Among the study’s findings: 36 percent of all parents surveyed knew that their child joined Facebook before the age of 13; 68 percent of these parents helped their child create their account.

Poverty-Related Stress Affects School Readiness

Stress in the lives of poor children contributes to an achievement gap between children from low-income homes and their more advantaged classmates, researchers from New York University, Pennsylvania State University, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill have found. The research team, led by Clancy Blair, a professor in the Department of Applied Psychology, focused on executive function, a specific set of cognitive processes important for regulating behavior, managing new and potentially confusing information, adjusting to school, and making academic progress in the early elementary grades.

Looking at almost 1,300 young children, the researchers found that children from lower-income environments had worse home environments, received less positive parenting, and had higher levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, than children in slightly better-off homes. Higher levels of cortisol were associated with lower levels of executive function abilities for all children.

“In sum, early stresses in the lives of children living in poverty affect how these children develop executive functions that are important for school readiness,” explains Blair.

New Research Shows Asian American and Pacific Islander Students Need More Support to Attain College Degrees

The Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) population is one of the fastest growing populations in the United States, but many contend it is too often overlooked in federal higher education policy priorities, including the college completion agenda. According to a new report released by the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE), the AAPI community is an untapped asset that is critical to both achieving the national college completion goal and ensuring the United States’ economic sustainability.

“With globalization as a mantra in the college completion agenda, it is essential to look at the importance of reaping the full benefits of diversity in American society and increasing degree attainment among all underserved communities,” said Robert Teranishi, an associate professor in the Department of Administration, Leadership, and Technology, who served as the study’s principal investigator.
New York University

Under Secretary of Education Martha Kanter and Dennis Walcott, chancellor of the New York City Department of Education, were guests at policy forums held at NYU Steinhardt this fall.

In November, Kanter spoke about President Obama’s education plans at a forum hosted by the Steinhardt Institute for Higher Education Policy. Walcott discussed issues of teacher effectiveness and assessment at an NYU Steinhardt policy breakfast.

“We’ve got a big agenda, lots of work ahead of us and three buckets for strategy: access, quality, and completion,” Kanter said of the President’s education plan that includes preparing 100,000 STEM teachers, strengthening community colleges, and introducing advisory boards on historically Black colleges, minority institutions, and tribal universities.

At Steinhardt’s Breakfast Policy forum, Walcott and Hamp Lankford, professor of educational administration and policy studies (University at Albany, SUNY), wrestled with the challenges of defining what it means to be an effective teacher and how to identify quality teaching. Lankford praised the measures undertaken by the New York City Department of Education to introduce multiple approaches to teacher evaluation.

W. Gabriel Carras

In a 54-year career, W. Gabriel Carras, professor emeritus and former associate dean served as a professor, friend, confidante, and mentor to generations of faculty, students, and staff members. He took great pride in the New Faculty Orientation program he established, a monthly seminar that guided new hires through the policies, procedures, and culture of academic life. In 2004, the school established the Carras Award for Promising Young Scholars to honor the former dean’s lifelong commitment to mentoring Steinhardt’s junior faculty.

Nancy Swortzell

An associate professor and a co-founder of Steinhardt’s educational theatre program, Nancy and her husband Lowell established the NYU Program in Educational Theatre in 1966, and thousands of students have been the beneficiary of a comprehensive program which privileges art as well as education. A gifted director, she will be remembered as being instrumental in importing groundbreaking ideas in drama pedagogy and educational theatre to American audiences. She left a generous bequest to support Steinhardt’s educational theatre program.

Why do we swear?

In an interview with Radio Canada, Diana Sidtis, professor in the Department of Communicative Sciences and Disorders, describes what happens in our heads when we use bad language. You can listen to a podcast of the interview at steinhardt.nyu.edu/csd/swearing.

Helping Others: A Gift of $18.31 Is A Senior Class Tradition

“At NYU we are constantly talking about change on campus, but as students, we seldom have the opportunity to lend a direct hand in making a difference,” says Barbara Leung, a senior who studies media, culture, and communications, and French. “The 1831 campaign offers us the opportunity to help incoming students. It shows them that we are a community and that we will give back in any way we can.”

The 1831 Fund is the Senior Class’ annual gift to other students: every senior’s donation of $18.31 goes directly to financial aid for NYU students. To support our seniors and incoming students with a gift to the 1831 Fund, visit www.nyu.edu/1831-fund or call (212) 998-6878.

THE NYU STEINHARDT MISSION

NYU Steinhardt advances knowledge, creativity, and innovation at the crossroads of human learning, culture, development, and well-being. Through research and education, within and across disciplines, the school’s faculty and students evaluate and redefine processes, practices, and policies in their respective fields and, from a global as well as community perspective, lead in an ever-changing world.
“Culturally we are a study in contrasts; it is our work as painters that brought us together,” John Torreano said of his friendship with Wasel Safwan, an artist from the United Arab Emirates. In October, the two met to share their unique perspectives on art at an event called Drawing in the Desert: A Conversation. In Safwan’s desert studio, two hours outside NYU’s Abu Dhabi campus, the painters discussed their unique artistic experiences, then shared a lunch of barbecued lamb, chicken, rice, and flat bread with their guests. During the visit Steinhardt students drew in the desert to the artists’ great pleasure. Safwan was touched that his guests “were surprised, happy, and willing to see modern art in the Empty Quarter of Al Ain’s desert dunes.”
In the 1850s, Seneca Village, a thriving community of mostly African descent, was razed by the City of New York for the creation of Central Park. This past summer Ariane Dandeneu and Ashley Anderson, students in Steinhardt’s Department of Teaching and Learning, took part in an archeological dig of the site through an internship with the Institute for the Exploration of Seneca Village History.

The group conducted limited excavations in the yard of a resident named Nancy Moore, and the home of William G. Wilson, a sexton at All Angels’ Episcopal Church. It was close to clean-up time on a hot and humid afternoon when Dandeneu unearthed a small shoe with its leather sole and fabric upper.

“I was overwhelmed with my heart fluttering,” said Daneneu of her find. “Here was a tangible item. At one point in time, somebody wore this shoe. They were here, walking on this ground.”

At the Seneca Village dig, students learned firsthand how rich the urban environment could be for teachers of history, science, math, and humanities. Pictured above from left to right: Ashley Anderson, NYU Professor Suzanne Carothers, Ariane Dandeneu, and Adjunct Instructor Cynthia Copeland, a director of the Institute for the Exploration of Seneca Village.