
University computer course featured in "Business Daily"

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Business Daily recently featured an Intergenerational Computing class taught at the University by professor of computer science Jean Coppola.

Intergenerational Computing is a class where each student is paired up with an elderly individual to teach them to learn how to use computers.

According to the article in *Business Daily*, 70 percent of adult computer users are 50 to 64-years-old, while only 38 percent are in the 65 years and older age group, but Prof. Coppola thinks these percentages can change.

Prof. Coppola's program has earned four awards: the Jefferson Award, the Isabel Brabazon Research and Evaluation Award (and received a \$5,000 research grant), the 2009 MindAlert Award for General Mental Fitness and the New York Campus Compact Carter Academic Service Entrepreneur (CASE) Award.

On Sept. 23 Prof. Coppola had a meeting with Telikin, a company that in her words "makes an affordable touch screen computer truly designed for the elderly."

Leinhard School of Nursing faculty members Dr. Lin Drury and Dr. Sharon Wexler work with Prof. Coppola on the program. All three faculty members are "anticipating running an honors section of [the] course on the Westchester Campus in the spring," Prof. Coppola said.

The Pace Press caught up with Prof. Coppola to discuss her class and the program expansion.

The Pace Press (TPP): What inspired you to create the program?

Jean Coppola (JC): In March of 2005, the Westchester County Government's office called Pace to ask if they could send a faculty member and some students over to an Intergenerational facility in Mt. Kisco to celebrate, "Take My Grandparents to Work/School Day" — but in reverse!

TPP: Besides the basics of e-mail and instant messaging (IM), what else do your students get from the class?

JC: Many senior citizens have a desire to learn email, how to navigate the internet and select the best Medicare options. Older adults not exposed to computers know it is time to learn, so they are "not left behind" while opening doors to better communication with their families and friends. Moreover, older adults know information they desire on a daily basis can be found on the internet whether they are interested in pursuing hobbies or obtaining life changing medical information.

TPP: Do you think this will help some of them get back into the workforce if they so choose?

JC: We are hoping that particularly for the Henry Street Settlement consumers that this will happen. With other community partners, we do meet the occasional senior citizen who desires to get back either working or in school.

TPP: Since winning four awards, have you seen a significant growth in programs like the one you run? Has more interest come from the recognition of your work through these awards?

JC: Since March 2006 we have made over 40 presentations both locally and at national conferences. We have definitely seen an increase in these types of programs, but still find that the course, Intergenerational Computing, is unique. We are starting to hear from people that were in the audience during our presentations requesting more information on email and conference calls to model our program. Recently, we heard from organizations in Virginia Beach, Va.

TPP: You have also been featured in the Henry Street Settlement and NYAHS Advisor. Has your program expanded since getting so much coverage?

JC: The project is an octopus and grows in new and exciting directions constantly! We try to select projects and supporting grants that would most benefit the Pace student experience. We will be piloting a few new projects this semester. The company Telikin.com will be providing equipment for our students to use at our community partners.

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