

Letter from the Dean



This, the fourth edition of *The Innerlink*, comes with a new creative director and a new look. The new creative director is Lesley Lang, our new college Communications Coordinator. Lesley came to us from the Cuyahoga County Public Library, and joined our staff late last spring. She established herself quickly, and has already made a big difference in the quality of our college's print and web communications. Under her leadership, *The Innerlink* will now be published several times a year and, we hope, will be even more visually attractive and engaging.

While CSU did suffer a major budget cut last spring, the more recent news is very good. CSU has record enrollments this fall. CSU is now a university of 16,445 students and is enjoying a 16.4% increase in new enrollments over last fall. In addition, our new recruits are stronger academically; the new first-year students have an average GPA of 3.0+. CLASS alone now enrolls 3,420 majors, which is higher than anything I have seen since becoming dean in 2005. Moreover, we are keeping more of the students that we recruit. Fall-to-fall retention of first-year students is up an impressive 10% over last year. Finally, although the CSU Trustees held the line on tuition increases again this fall, larger enrollments mean increased tuition income, and this will help the university weather any additional budget cuts that the state may be forced to make.

We are pleased to welcome a new President to CSU. Dr. Ronald Berkman arrived on campus in July, and he has quickly moved to connect himself to Cleveland-area leadership, to study the university deeply, and to personally assess every aspect of plans to move the university forward. According to his introductory letter—available on the CSU website—his goal is for the university to have a “transformational effect on the social, economic, cultural, and political life of the city, region, and state” as well as on the lives of its students. He also wants CSU to be a “major player driving the renewal of the city’s urban core.” In addition, when the President speaks, he always emphasizes the central role of a liberal education in the future success of university graduates. It seems, then, that the university is in for a very exciting future under Dr. Berkman’s leadership, and one in which CLASS will play a vital role.

Over the past several years, readers of *The Innerlink* have met interesting representatives of our college’s faculty and programs. This year you will be introduced to more of them: enterprising archaeologists, mentors to new music composers, globe-trotting language professors, and a troupe of talented and entertaining theater artists. These reflect the diverse experiences of faculty and students in our three major divisions—fine arts, humanities, and social sciences. In addition, you will learn about one of our most successful alumni, Mr. Andrew Puzder, a History major who became the head of a large restaurant corporation. Finally, you will learn about special honors received by our faculty and staff. I would like to highlight the work of two such people. In October, Dr. Murali Nair, professor in our School of Social Work, will receive CSU’s 2009 Distinguished Teaching Award. Dr. Nair, whose work in India was featured last year, is one of our most energetic faculty members, and he is constantly thinking of ways to improve the academic experience of his students. Second, Dr. Michelle Chinoda, a wise and dedicated student mentor, was awarded CSU’s Distinguished Advisor Award for 2009. Both of these awards are the result of Dr. Nair’s and Dr. Chinoda’s exceptional commitment to CSU students, but they also reflect the more general orientation of CLASS faculty and staff to student success. We are very proud of their work.

Best wishes,

Gregory Sadlek

Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences