

Teachers

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Todd Herrell, Faculty Liaison

At the start of each teaching cycle at CUNY Prep, Mr. Herrell asks his students to think about "how you know what you know." "I encourage my students to question everything and try to teach them how to think and not what to think," he said. "I want my students to walk away with confidence in what they know and what they can do." He earned an Associate of Science in Criminal Justice at Herkimer County Community College, a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and a masters degree in Secondary Education from Hunter College. After four years of working in the corporate world, Mr. Herrell decided to make a change and enter teaching. "I like teaching because every day is different," he said. "I also like working with young adults. They are very informed and when they learn something new that they can apply to their lives, you can see the excitement in their eyes." Golf is one of Mr. Herrell's favorite hobbies. He also enjoys reading, particularly non-fiction, as well as listening to all types of music.

Rondi Silva, Humanities Teacher

Ms. Silva understands the mindset of CUNY Prep students. "She dropped out of school when she was 16. "I always loved learning — real education — but always hated school," said Ms. Silva. "I guess I hoped to do it better, and not let so many students like me slip through the cracks." Despite her youthful uncertainty, Ms. Silva hit her stride in college, earning a bachelor's degree in art history summa cum laude. She got her masters in art history at Hunter College and is currently in the Urban Ed PhD program at CUNY's Graduate Center. Travel and art are Ms. Silva's hobbies and she is passionate about both of them. She regularly visits museums and galleries, and believes that art "connects humanity throughout the centuries." "Travel keeps me tuned in to the larger world," she said. "It broadens the way I think about people, heightens and hones my understanding and appreciation of other cultures." Ms. Silva has been at CUNY Prep since the school opened four years ago. She has developed a unique understanding of students at the school. "There is also something very special for me about working with students who were out of school before they came to us," she said. "I know what it feels like to be smart and have a lot to offer, but be dismissed and put down because of the "dropout" label. At CUNY Prep, we see students as whole people and believe strongly in their ability to succeed academically."

Cindy Spector, Faculty Liaison

Ms. Spector believes that her love of teaching stems from a love of learning. "I believe my calling in life is to make a difference," she said. "I can do that through teaching." A Humanities teacher at CUNY Prep since March 2004, Ms. Spector has taught courses in colonialism, government, social justice and violence and social movement. "I love sharing information that I know and combining it with things that the students share," she said. Ms. Spector earned her B.S. in History and Education from Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois. She received an M.S. in Human Resources Development from Georgia State University. In her free time, she enjoys listening to music and cooking. Both activities enrich her life and expose her to different philosophies and

cultures, she said. "The most important lesson I want my students to learn is to challenge themselves intellectually," said Ms. Spector. "I hope they challenge the mainstream and push back using their minds, not their fists."

Tracy Hill, Lead Science Teacher

Ms. Hill says that one of the things she likes best about teaching is that it gives her the opportunity to learn. Ms. Hill graduated from Long Island University/C.W. Post Campus with a Bachelor's degree in science and a concentration in medical biology. She started her career as senior laboratory scientist in the microbiology division for a global corporation and worked on projects for pharmaceutical companies, oil refineries, and even NASA. Despite the importance of her work, she did not feel fulfilled. "My work helped people in many ways but I wanted to be among the people I helped," she said. Her brother in law suggested she try teaching. After working at Thomas Jefferson High School in Brooklyn for six years, she came to CUNY Prep. "CUNY Prep is a unique school, it has small classes and true student involvement," she said. "No classroom is the same. People are encouraged to be truthful about every situation. We can come together as a community because our weaknesses are strengthened and our strengths are challenged."

Glen Reynolds, Science Teacher

Mr. Reynolds grew up in a culture where he saw "people lifting themselves and their families out of poverty through education and so I know it can be done." He pursued his primary and secondary education in Jamaica. He was admitted to the Adult Degree Program at Lehman College and earned a Bachelor's degree in 1995. "I stand as a living witness that a person from humble beginnings need not succumb to colorless dreams and dwarfed goals," he said. In addition to being a science teacher at CUNY Prep, Mr. Reynolds is also in charge of the Science Club. His hobbies are reading, traveling, cricket and soccer. "The first two appeal to me because they take me away from my daily realities, educate me and broaden my experiences and horizons," said Mr. Reynolds. Teaching appeals to Mr. Reynolds because he loves to share information that can lead to a person being successful in life. He believes that students at CUNY Prep should not flinch in the face of adversity but cultivate a spirit of tenacity.

Frantz Barbier, Lead Math Teacher

Before his job interview at CUNY Prep, Mr. Barbier had never considered teaching out-of-school students. "I was shocked and amazed. Our students do not fit the high school dropout profile. They are bright, enthusiastic, focused and determined to make a better life for themselves. I am proud to call myself their teacher." He graduated from Hunter College with a B.A. in English Language Arts and elementary education. For 15 years, he worked as a supervisor for a summer day camp in the Bronx. He also tutored children and adults in a variety of subject areas for about 14 years. Mr. Barbier said that for him, teaching "is not just a job, it's my life's work." He enjoys coaching youth basketball, and running. "I want my students to know that they can accomplish anything they set their minds to doing. CUNY Prep is a stepping-stone to their academic futures and, more importantly, their future careers and aspirations."

Josiah Silverstein, Math Teacher

Before he came to CUNY Prep in fall of 2006, Mr. Silverstein used to work in the film industry. "It was fun, but at the end of the day, everything I had sweated the past 12 hours over was still make-believe," he said. "I needed to do something real that made a difference in people's lives." In addition to teaching math, Mr. Silverstein brought his love of film and photography to CUNY Prep. He has started a photography and darkroom class for students. He graduated Stuyvesant High School in 1996 and the University of Michigan in 2003. Mr. Silverstein praises CUNY Prep's "highly motivated students." "Every student here is attending CUNY Prep because they want to, not because someone else is forcing them to."