**Program brightens students’ futures**

**Blackboard virtually connects mentors to high school classes**

By Dana Lynn Flatkevl
Managing Editor

Remember when you were in high school and thought college students were years older and had mounds of experience? The high school students from the Burlington County Institute of Technology (BCIT) have been given the chance to change their perceptions of college students.

Every fall a handful of Rider students participate in the Electronic Writers Workshop, which has been designed to virtually connect BCIT students with mentors who help them develop workplace-writing skills.

“The BCIT students look up to the their college mentors,” said Dr. Robbie Clipper Sethi, chair of the English department. “This class also gives the mentors the opportunity to be admired for what they have accomplished in school.”

The Electronic Writers Workshop is part of Rider’s Workplace Writing Program, overseen by Dr. Mary Morse, a professor in the English department who specializes in business writing.

Rider students interacting with 24 students at BCIT’s Westampton campus and four students at the Medford campus are: Jeffrey Fiedler, Christina White, Maria Diana, Eric Sheydwater, Melanie James, Steven Lucarelli, Andre Middleton and Rita Ponzo. Sheydwater is finding the mentoring experience to be a helpful opportunity.

“It’s an awesome experience,” said Sheydwater. “I’ve learned to cooperate with three girls and to learn what to say and not to say to them.

However, at the same time, they are learning from someone close to their age, and it makes the experience real because sometimes the students feel as if their teachers aren’t as approachable as their mentors are.”

Julie Trommelen, a BCIT student who has Sheydwater as her mentor, feels this experience was very helpful to her.

“Eric has helped me out a lot,” said Trommelen. “This class gets me ready and prepared for college because now I know what is ahead of me.”

Morse’s excitement grows over the semesters, as the program becomes more known to students.

“This course is reaching high school and college students basic communication skills,” said Morse. “Something that can be valuable for everyone who participates.”

As knowledge about this course grows, Morse hopes to recruit more mentors.

“I am looking for students with strong writing skills or who have been recommended by a faculty member or student,” said Morse.

The program continues next fall in 2003 and recruiting will begin this spring. If anyone is interested in finding out more about this course contact Dr. Mary Morse at mmorse@rider.edu or call her at x. 5570.

---

**Rider students out of touch with mid-term elections**

By Todd Tarczyinski
Special to Features

Dr. Myra Gutin, professor of Communication, put her Political Communication class to work with a survey of students and faculty conducted last week in Daly’s Dining Hall and in the Student Center.

The majority of people who responded to the survey said they were registered to vote and close to three quarters also intended to vote.

Nearly two thirds of respondents identified with the Democratic Party, while one third identified with the Republican Party.

Only a few claimed to be independent. With such a high profile Senate race in New Jersey, surprisingly nearly half said “no” or had “no idea” if there was a Senate race when asked.

On the other side of the House, the Congressional races which occur every two years, respondents had even less of a grasp on the political process.

Every Tuesday and Thursday, the mentors meet in the Swiflik computer lab where the one-on-one chat sessions take place.

“The mentors are using a rather informal environment, which allows them to approach their students in different ways,” said Morse. “Each mentor has a different way of reaching their goals.”

Through Blackboard the mentors can post assignments, chat in their groups or the virtual classroom and grade the BCIT students individually.

Fortunately, the curriculum has shifted to meet the needs of the Burlington County students and Rider’s current workplace writing concentration,” said Sethi.

Rider students interacting with 24 students at BCIT’s Westampton campus and four students at the Medford campus are: Jeffrey Fiedler, Christina White, Maria Diana, Eric Sheydwater, Melanie James, Steven Lucarelli, Andre Middleton and Rita Ponzo. Sheydwater is finding the mentoring experience to be a helpful opportunity.

“Eric has helped me out a lot,” said Trommelen. “This class gets me ready and prepared for college because now I know what is ahead of me.”

Morse’s excitement grows over the semesters, as the program becomes more known to students.

“This course is reaching high school and college students basic communication skills,” said Morse. “Something that can be valuable for everyone who participates.”

As knowledge about this course grows, Morse hopes to recruit more mentors.

“I am looking for students with strong writing skills or who have been recommended by a faculty member or student,” said Morse.

The program continues next fall in 2003 and recruiting will begin this spring. If anyone is interested in finding out more about this course contact Dr. Mary Morse at mmorse@rider.edu or call her at x. 5570.

---

**Q: Do you think it’s important to vote and did you this year?**

**Photos and interviews by Madeleine Johnson**

Mike Kurowskis, Freshman

“No, because all the politicians are the same.” (Did not vote and has not yet filled out a voter’s registration).

Matt Carey, Freshman

“Yes, especially in local elections because you’re more affected locally than you are nationally.” (Did not vote).

Natalie Sitzer, Freshman

“Yes, because we have the right as individuals to choose who runs the country and not all countries have this right.” (Did not vote).

Brian Spitz, Sophomore

“It’s important to vote because it is a privilege most Americans take for granted.” (Voted via absentee ballot).