

## Top Shape

by Amber Gardner, senior

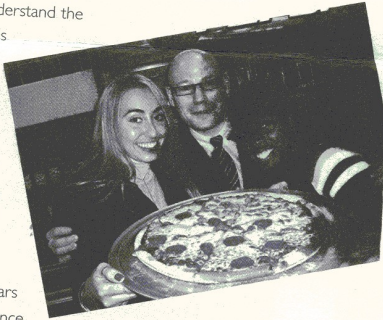
As the spring 2008 semester comes to a close, the Brooklyn College Quad and Library are occupied by students buried in books, tenaciously typing term papers and studying for finals. For nearly five dozen undergrads in The Entrepreneurship Experience Program (TEEP), however, the ultimate test is applied.

Each student in TEEP, a small business management program, submits a journal of their semester's work experience as staff in the café located in the first-floor game room of the Student Center. The management logs are filled with suggestions for improving the café. Myles Bassell, an instructor of economics and an advocate of active learning, crafted the hands-on program to help students develop an entrepreneurial mindset, gain small-business management experience, understand the use of business models, and learn how to prepare business and marketing plans. "The most significant learning occurs when students apply these concepts to the daily management of the café," said Bassell. TEEP members devoted ten hours a week to the café and were also active in all related advertising, marketing, promotion, and merchandising.

In collaboration with Students 4 Students, TEEP organized the Spring Fever Festival to promote the Student Center. "The event was designed to lure students into the Student Center with blaring contemporary music and a promotion that included free food, drinks, and games," said Bassell.

"If you don't understand the everyday operations

of a business, it is impossible to manage it and make improvements," said Christina Cracchiolo, a TEEP member and senior. Cracchiolo began her TEEP internship with six years of managerial experience



at a lucrative local bakery. Running a small, growing business posed an exciting new challenge for the business management and finance major. "This experience showed me all of the hard work and brainstorming that goes into success," said Cracchiolo, who, with her coworkers, envisions an outdoor extension of the café and a healthier menu that may include salads, sandwiches, and wraps.

Ryan Buck, director of the Student Center, notes that the wider selection of products already added to the menu has contributed to the steady increase in patronage of the café and game room. "In nine months, the students and staff have taken a closed café counter and transformed it to a hub of student life," says Buck, who sees the café as a prime example of a happy marriage between business and community service. "It's only through collaboration that such things are possible and it is only the beginning!"

For more information, visit: [www.myspace.com/bcstudentcenter](http://www.myspace.com/bcstudentcenter)  
or <http://userhome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bassell/studentcenter>