The Verrazano School
Faculty Guidebook
# THE VERRAZANO SCHOOL - FACULTY GUIDEBOOK

## Table of Contents

- The Verrazano School Mission Statement and Program Goals .......................... page 3
- About The Verrazano School ........................................................................ page 3
- Benefits of The Verrazano School ................................................................. page 4
- The Verrazano School Contact Information .............................................. page 4
- Admission Requirements for Incoming Freshmen ....................................... pages 5-6
- Admission Requirements for Current CSI and Transfer students .......... pages 5-6
- The Verrazano School Requirements .......................................................... page 7
- Verrazano Course Information ................................................................. pages 7-9
- Enrollment Appeal Processes for Unmet Requirements ......................... pages 9-10
The Verrazano School Mission Statement

The Verrazano School provides motivated and talented students with an exceptional baccalaureate experience at the College of Staten Island/CUNY in order to produce a community of students and graduates who strive for and achieve academic excellence in their course of study, are well-prepared for graduate studies and professional success, are connected to their local and global community through service and leadership, and are empowered with lifelong intellectual curiosity and strong personal integrity.

The Verrazano School achieves its mission through an integrated program of academic courses and learning communities; constructive contact with full-time faculty; forward-thinking academic advisement and career preparation; engagement and support of faculty-student mentorships and collaborations; and academic, social, and cultural learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom.

The Verrazano School Program Goals

1. To foster critical thinking, scientific inquiry, problem-solving skills, and integrative cross-disciplinary work.

2. To support students’ development of strong oral and written communication skills.

3. To promote academic excellence and in-depth disciplinary knowledge.

4. To advance career opportunities through professional development.

5. To encourage meaningful community involvement and engaged global citizenship.

6. To create intellectually curious learners with a strong sense of personal integrity.

About The Verrazano School:

The Verrazano School is a selective undergraduate honors program at the College of Staten Island (CSI) that provides motivated and talented students with the highest-quality undergraduate education possible.

Students choose from the full range of majors offered at CSI and received personalized assistance and guidance as they seek internships, pursue research opportunities, and prepare for careers or graduate studies. The Verrazano School provides a foundation on which students build their skills and talents, explore their interests, and create a positive, memorable, and valuable college experience.
Benefits of The Verrazano School

- Integrated program of courses and learning communities
- Constructive contact with full-time faculty
- Smaller class sizes
- Personalized academic advisement and career preparation
- Academic, social and cultural learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom
- Priority registration for classes
- Opportunity to apply for Verrazano Study Abroad Scholarships to help support a study abroad experience
- A designated Verrazano student lounge for meetings, studying, and get-togethers
- The Verrazano distinction noted on your final transcript and recognition at Commencement-related events, including the Verrazano Senior Convocation and Honors Convocation

The Verrazano School Contact Information

**Director**
Dr. Charles Liu

**Coordinator**
Katie Geschwendt  
Phone: (718) 982.4219  
e-mail: katie.geschwendt@csi.cuny.edu or verrazano@csi.cuny.edu

**Assistant**
Cynthia Palumbo  
Phone: (718) 982.4171  
Fax: (718) 982.3476  
e-mail: cynthia.palumbo@csi.cuny.edu

**Address**
The Verrazano School  
College of Staten Island  
2800 Victory Blvd, 5N-113  
Staten Island, NY 10314
Admission Requirements:

Incoming Freshmen –

Who is eligible?

Students with high overall high school averages and high SAT scores are encouraged to apply. Students must pass, or be exempt from, all three CUNY Skills Assessment Tests and be baccalaureate eligible.

We look for students who demonstrate strong academic abilities, and we also consider personal characteristics such as leadership, community service, creativity, talent, and enthusiasm that will contribute to The Verrazano School Community.

The admission profile for the most recently admitted Verrazano freshman class can be found on the Verrazano website (http://www.csi.cuny.edu/verrazanoschool/incoming.html).

How do students apply?

1. Apply for admission to CSI by completing a CUNY application online at www.cuny.edu/apply. We encourage students to indicate the College of Staten Island as their first choice on the CUNY application.

2. Submit the Verrazano Supplemental Application for Incoming Freshmen, including two typed letters of recommendation, to The Verrazano School Office. Applications must be typed, and the Verrazano Supplemental Application PDF can be edited.

The priority deadline for fall is February 1. Applications received or postmarked by that date will be reviewed first, and other applications will be reviewed on a space-available basis.

Current CSI Students and Transfer Students -

Who is eligible?

Current CSI or transfer students with high cumulative GPAs are encouraged to apply.

Students may be eligible for admission into The Verrazano School at CSI if they meet the following criteria:

- Minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 at CSI or another accredited institution
- Full-time enrollment in a baccalaureate program at CSI
- Passed or exempt from all three CUNY Assessment Tests
- Completion of 36 or fewer credits

Summer 2012
Important Notes:

- Students that will have completed 36 or more credit hours at CSI or another accredited institution by the end of the current semester are eligible for admission into The Verrazano School only on a case-by-case basis, with the Director's approval. Students accepted into the program with over 36 credits are required to fulfill the same requirements that a student transferring in with under 36 credits must fulfill. Please inquire with The Verrazano School for additional information.

- Students with 11 or fewer credits completed must have earned a minimum 87 average in high school or score a minimum score of 1000 on the SAT and have a 3.0 GPA at CSI or another accredited institution.

- Students should be able to enroll in at least one Verrazano-designated course section during their first semester in the program unless alternative arrangements are discussed with the Verrazano staff.

How do students apply?

1. Apply for admission to CSI by completing a CUNY application online at www.cuny.edu/apply. We encourage students to indicate the College of Staten Island as their first choice on the CUNY application. Current CSI students do not need to complete the CUNY application again.

2. Submit the Verrazano Supplemental Application, including two typed letters of recommendation, to The Verrazano School Office. Applications must be typed, and the Verrazano Supplemental Application PDF can be edited.

The deadline for fall is May 15. Applications from current CSI students and transfer students must be submitted by this deadline, and the review of applications will not be completed until spring semester grades are official. Upon receipt of spring semester grades a final evaluation of applications will be conducted, and decision letters will be mailed soon thereafter.

Note: On a case-by-case basis, eligible students who apply before the spring semester may be accepted conditionally for the following fall semester. The conditions of their acceptance are outlined in the conditional acceptance letter for transfer students. Transfer students are eligible to take Verrazano/3.0 courses in the spring semester if their final transcript from their previous institution or from CSI reflects a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher after the fall semester.
The Verrazano School Requirements:

All Verrazano students must fulfill general CSI requirements as well as requirements set by their major departments. In order to graduate with the Verrazano distinction, students must also fulfill The Verrazano School requirements in various categories including GPA and full-time status, Verrazano-designated courses, Capstone Project and Presentation, Verrazano Experiential Learning Activities (VELAs), Career Academy, Community Service, and Communication.

Verrazano requirements vary by class year, and Student Guidebooks are available on the Verrazano website. For information about program benefits, program requirements, a checklist of requirements for each academic year, and appeal processes, students should review the guidebook for the Verrazano class year into which they were accepted.

Verrazano Course Information

What makes a Verrazano course unique?

For several years, what has set Verrazano-designated course sections apart from general sections is the smaller caps and the commitment to them being taught by full-time faculty or experienced part-time faculty. The Verrazano Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) has carefully considered, in addition to these features, what could or should distinguish Verrazano courses from general sections so students have an understanding that there is something different and unique about the Verrazano courses they take.

The Verrazano Advisory Committee understands that no single set of guidelines will apply to every discipline, so the following examples of components for Verrazano courses are intended as general guidelines. The general principle is that Verrazano courses should be, in some way, qualitatively different from general courses. The difference in the courses should not be manifested by simply assigning more work (extra pages written or problems assigned) to students. The hope is that Verrazano courses may be more valuable for students because of the intellectual and academic experience offered.

The Verrazano Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) has developed syllabus templates for Verrazano sections which will provide information to students about the relationship of the course to the Verrazano program goals.

The syllabus templates - one for Verrazano/3.0 sections and one for Verrazano freshman learning community sections – are on the Verrazano website under Faculty Resources. Faculty teaching Verrazano sections are asked to design their syllabus using the appropriate template. These templates include highlighted sections that draw attention to the Verrazano program goals. This highlighting can be removed by the instructor.

Additionally, we will be collecting the syllabi for the Verrazano-designated sections offered each semester. In addition to submitting a syllabus to the academic department, each professor will submit the syllabus to the Verrazano office so we can compile a record of the courses and special projects involving our students.

As you plan for the upcoming semester, please consider ways in which one or more of the following components, or components of your choosing, can be incorporated to create a unique Verrazano course experience.

Summer 2012
Examples of Verrazano Components:

- Active learning (e.g. students presenting course material or leading class discussions)
- Presentation or publication of students’ work
- Guest speakers
- Working closely with the instructor through small group sessions or individual conferences
- Learning outside the classroom (e.g. field trips, service projects, field research, conducting interviews, etc.)
- Exploration of interdisciplinary connections between the course content and other fields of study
- Emphasis on written and oral communication skills
- Critical thinking in reading, writing, and/or discussion
- Independent research

A small amount of funding may be available to support Verrazano component activities.

If a general section of the course already has one or more components built in, please consider adding a different component; for example, a course that usually has student presentations might add a special written component or poster project.

This is an opportunity for you to be creative and do things you’ve been thinking about implementing but haven’t had the opportunity to try! We look forward to hearing about the unique components of your Verrazano course, and please call us at 718-982-4219 if you have any questions or would like to share ideas.

Learning Communities:

Verrazano Learning Communities (LCs) are offered for incoming freshmen, and they consist of linked courses in which the same cohort of students is enrolled. LCs are taught primarily by full-time faculty and offer smaller section sizes than the average introductory courses at CSI. Incoming freshmen enroll in one LC and one or two classes in addition to the LC for a total of 12-18 credits. Courses in Verrazano LCs help fulfill general education requirements, and schedules for these LCs are available on the Verrazano website.

Per the policy established by the Verrazano Faculty Advisory Committee, overtallies for courses within Verrazano learning communities should not be given to students who are not in The Verrazano School. No overtallies are to be given to Verrazano students for Verrazano learning communities without written permission from The Verrazano School Office.

Verrazano-designated Courses:

Verrazano-designated course sections can be taken by any Verrazano student from freshman through senior year. The majority of Verrazano-designated course sections fulfill general education requirements, and students are encouraged to take these courses while they still have unfulfilled general education requirements. Students can also take these Verrazano courses to fulfill pre-major or major requirements where applicable, and the courses can also serve as electives. Verrazano students must take a minimum of three Verrazano courses during their four years at CSI.

Summer 2012
Verrazano course sections are smaller than the average section and are taught primarily by full-time faculty members or experienced part-time faculty. Most Verrazano course sections are made available to both Verrazano students and students with a 3.0 GPA or higher. Some designated Verrazano course sections are shared only with Macaulay Honors College and/or Teacher Education Honor Academy or at the discretion of the department.

Verrazano course sections are open to Verrazano students on the first day of priority registration, and these courses are noted on eSIMS. For spring registration (November), the sections are opened to students with a 3.0 GPA or higher one week after priority registration begins. For fall registration (April), the 200-level sections are opened to students with a 3.0 GPA or higher one week after priority registration begins. The 100-level courses are opened to students with a 3.0 GPA in June after Verrazano freshmen have registered for classes. Alternate arrangements may be made with individual departments. Each semester a small number of seats in each section are reserved for students who transfer into The Verrazano School.

After registration has closed for the semester, overtallies in non-LC Verrazano courses may be granted at the discretion of the professor up to the determined Verrazano cap. If a student who does not meet the GPA requirement of 3.0 or higher seeks permission to enroll in a non-LC Verrazano course, it is the discretion of the professor to grant permission to the student. To confirm that being in a Verrazano course is appropriate for a student in this situation, and for Verrazano recordkeeping purposes, we ask the professor to contact us.

Permission process for students with below a 3.0 GPA to take a Verrazano-designated course:

1. After a student has made the request to the professor, the professor decides whether or not to approve the request.
2. If the request is approved, the professor contacts the Verrazano office to ensure that it is okay based on the student’s academic record.
3. Electronic permission is granted to the student if the professor and Verrazano office have determined that it is appropriate.

Verrazano courses are planned up to one year in advance in collaboration with departments and through the Verrazano Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) representatives. If faculty members are interested in teaching courses with The Verrazano School they should contact their departmental representative on the Verrazano committee or their department chairs. The Verrazano Office is also interested in hearing course ideas from faculty, and the office can be contacted directly regarding these matters.

**Enrollment Appeal Processes for Unmet Requirements**

**GPA** - Students who do not meet the GPA requirement will receive a letter indicating that they are no longer enrolled in The Verrazano School but are still enrolled as a student at CSI.

Students can appeal for readmission after they have achieved a 3.0 cumulative GPA by writing a one page letter highlighting: 1) the factor(s) that caused their cumulative GPA to fall below 3.0, and 2) why they would like to be readmitted to The Verrazano School. In addition to this letter, students must include one letter of support from a CSI professor. The letter of support from a professor must be accompanied by the Letter of Support Information Form which can be obtained...
Students can appeal for readmission by writing a one page letter highlighting: 1) the factor(s) that caused them to become a part-time student, 2) their plan for making up those credits in future semesters, and 3) why they would like to be readmitted to The Verrazano School. In addition to this letter, students must include one letter of support from a CSI professor. The letter of support from a professor must be accompanied by the Letter of Support Information Form which can be obtained at The Verrazano School office in 5N-113. The appeal documents are reviewed by the Director and the Coordinator of The Verrazano School.

**Unfulfilled VELAs** – Students who do not meet the VELA requirement by the end of the academic year will receive a letter indicating that they are no longer enrolled in The Verrazano School but are still enrolled as a student at CSI.

Students can appeal for readmission after they have fulfilled the VELA requirement for the previous academic year as well as the current academic year. The student appeal letter must highlight: 1) how and when the student fulfilled the requirement, and 2) why they would like to be readmitted to The Verrazano School.

**Community Service** – Students who do not meet the community service requirement by the end of the academic year will receive a letter indicating that they are no longer enrolled in The Verrazano School but are still enrolled as a student at CSI.

Students can appeal for readmission after they have fulfilled the community service requirement for the previous academic year as well as the current academic year. The student appeal letter must highlight: 1) how and when the student fulfilled the requirement, and 2) why they would like to be readmitted to The Verrazano School. The student must also submit documentation of all completed community service hours.

**Professional Development** – Students who do not meet the professional development requirements by the end of the academic year will receive a letter indicating that they are no longer enrolled in The Verrazano School but are still enrolled as a student at CSI.

Students can appeal for readmission after they have fulfilled all of the professional development requirements during the subsequent year. The student appeal letter must highlight: 1) how and when the student fulfilled the requirement, and 2) why they would like to be readmitted to The Verrazano School.