Gift to John Jay College Seeks to Expand Its Mission

By V.L. Hendrickson
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When Andrew Shiva was looking at colleges, a family friend suggested the City University of New York's John Jay College of Criminal Justice. "The cop school?" he asked. But, more than 20 years since Mr. Shiva started in 1990, the school has evolved into more of a liberal-arts institution and he wants to ensure it continues to move in that direction.

Mr. Shiva, a psychologist, has donated $5 million to the school, the largest gift from an alumni in the college's history. The gift is earmarked for the doctoral program in forensic and clinical psychology. A new art gallery at the college will be named for Mr. Shiva and his wife, Anya, in honor of the gift.

On Mr. Shiva's first day at John Jay, the first thing he noticed was he was one of the only students who wasn't carrying a gun. "On the first day, it was a hot day, and as one man took his coat off, I noticed there was a revolver in his pants. Others had shoulder holsters, hip holsters...I was inadequately armed for class. It was still a cop school in 1990; it's changed since then."

When Mr. Shiva, who is 42 years old, graduated with his B.A./M.A. in forensic psychology in 1997, he wanted to continue his study at John Jay. At the time, there wasn't a doctoral program, however, and he ended up getting his doctorate in clinical psychology from Columbia University. But he's hoping his gift will help get the program off the ground.

"I want to make sure they have the resources and the freedom to do things the CUNY system and administration might not want to invest in," he said. He hopes his initial gift will help the program grow into something greater.

"The gift will hopefully fund continued research, start a psychology research center and facilitate student-faculty partnerships," added Mr. Shiva, who was the chief psychologist of the Division of Psychiatry at the NYU/Bellevue Hospital Center until 2009. One "drawing board idea" is to invest in a clinic that would be a "benefit to the students in their training, but also be open to the community."

Mr. Shiva teaches in the psychology department at John Jay, as well as at New York and Fordham universities. He serves on the board of the New York Public Theater, for which his father was a trustee for many years and is a member of the honorary council. He is also the president and founder of the National Currency Foundation, which promotes the collection of paper currencies and is an educational resource for the general public.

"I'm interested in the history behind [money], who's on it, who signed it," he said. "Part of what I am doing is providing other ways to think about money and the history attached to it."
Mr. Shiva's interest in psychology and his interest in currency may seem divergent, but he insists they are part of the same desire to teach people. He hopes his gift to John Jay will help the school become a more diverse institution.

"It's all about education and teaching, both at John Jay and with the currency," he said. "I'm thrilled to be associated with John Jay...I hope it will continue to grow in the direction it's been going."