A Statewide Compact for Public Higher Education

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S THE DETAILS of Governor Spitzer’s 2008-2009 State Executive Budget land on the cluttered desks of Albany lawmakers, the recent preliminary report of the New York State Commission on Higher Education is expected to continue to be a subject of budgetary hearings by the Assembly and Senate Higher Education Committees and impact on budgetary negotiations.

Appointed last May by the governor, the statewide panel issued major findings and recommendations in its Dec. 17, 2007 report (visit www.cuny.edu) – including a new Statewide Compact for Public Higher Education, based on the CUNY model. Its final report is expected in June 2008.

The commission’s preliminary report was blunt in its concern over the state’s continuing ability to compete educationally and economically. “If we’re going to rebuild New York, we have to invest in New York and tighten our belts in other areas,” Gov. Spitzer said as the report was released. Referring to the need for more full-time faculty – one of the City University’s top priorities – and to the importance of higher education to the state’s economic development prospects, he noted, “Where the great universities are, there the jobs have migrated.”

Kenneth Adams, president of the Business Council of New York State, which has been urging a focus on research to draw jobs to the state, said the Commission’s report should “attract people across party lines. The Commission strongly endorsed extending the successful CUNY Compact to SUNY as well. Under the “New York State Compact for Public Higher Education,” the State and City would link their two universities’ mandated costs – such as labor contracts, benefits and energy – and at least 20 percent of each university’s master investment plan. The universities, in turn, would commit to raising private funds as a permanent source of financing for programs, to increasing enrollment and to reshapings their budgets both to achieve greater efficiencies and to redeploy saved funds to meet classroom goals.

There would be modest, predictable tuition increases instead of the sudden, large hikes of past years. Students who were unable to afford the tuition increases would be protected: full Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) aid for needy students would be maintained.

The Compact has been hailed by business and education leaders as critical to ensuring the stable funding needed for educational quality. CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein said: “As The City University of New York has affirmed since introducing the CUNY Compact two years ago, a partnership among stakeholders is critical to generating the resources necessary for true investment. New York must take strong, uncompromising steps to foster excellence within its public higher education institutions.”

The Chancellor noted that the commission’s “recommendation to rebuild the CUNY and SUNY faculty ranks through the hiring of a minimum of 2,000 additional full-time faculty over the next five years is crucial to achieving genuine progress.

“In 1975, CUNY employed more than 11,000 full-time faculty,” he said. “Today, 6,500 full-time faculty work at the University. This is a decrease of more than 40%, although our student enrollment has grown to its highest level in over three decades. The commission’s recommendation would help to reverse this pronounced decline.”

Sy Sternberg, the chair of the CUNY Business Leadership Council added, “A strong network of public colleges and universities, a vibrant, competitive research base and a diverse, well-educated citizenry will establish New York State as a global leader in innovation.” CUNY’s budget request for the 2008-09 fiscal year calls for the hiring of 500 full-time faculty, including 100 linked to the Decade of Science initiative. The City University seeks a total of $2,364 billion, including $184.9 million in new funds – $83 million for baseline needs and $81.9 million of programmatic increases.

The increased costs will be funded under the Compact for the third year. Of those, CUNY is seeking $114.3 million in State/City aid ($101.1 million from the State and $13.2 million from the City) to fully fund mandator costs and 30 percent of programmatic costs. The remainder will be financed through an unprecedented focus on philanthropic support, budget restructuring and efficiencies, and revenues from enrollment growth and a modest tuition increase.

The Commission report also outlined these proposals:

• Hire 2,000 new full-time faculty, including 250 “eminent scholars,” at CUNY and SUNY to rebuild depleted teaching ranks.
• Create a $3 billion Empire State Innovation Fund to support meritorious scientific research important to New York’s future.
• Establish the New York State Compact for Public Higher Education to clearly delineate shared public-private responsibility for delivering and accessing public higher education funds.
• Create a low-cost student loan program for residents attending college in the state.
• Develop Educational Partnership Zones in high-need school districts to encourage collaboration from pre-kindergarten to graduate school.
• Clear the $5 billion backlog of critical maintenance at CUNY and SUNY through a 10-year program of capital reinvestment.

The Legislature will conduct hearings into the budget requests of CUNY, SUNY and other state agencies ahead of final budget negotiations between the governor and Legislature. State Senator Kenneth LaValle, R-Port Jefferson, called hearings in January on student aid issues. Assemblywoman Deborah Glick, D-Manhattan, a commission member and chair of the Assembly’s Higher Education Committee, said, that her commission would hold its own hearings on the 85-page report.
Statewide Plan Based on CUNY’s

On DEC 17, 2007, the New York State Commission on Higher Education released its preliminary recommendations to Governor Eliot Spitzer. My colleagues on the commission and I worked diligently to propose bold ideas to reinvigorate serious investment in the state’s public universities. New York’s citizens, students, and faculty deserve public universities that are recognized, whose programs are highly valued, and whose graduates are deeply respected. This is increasingly essential in today’s competitive global environment. Quite simply, new and enhanced investment in CUNY and SUNY is a necessity for New York State.

A cornerstone of the commission’s report is the call for a New York State Compact for Public Higher Education. Modeled after the CUNY Compact, the statewide compact delineates shared responsibility for public higher education resources in order to reverse chronic under-investment in CUNY and SUNY. As the University has affirmed since introducing its compact two years ago, a partnership among stakeholders is critical to generating the resources necessary for true investment.

Prior to the CUNY Compact, funding for public higher education in New York was determined on a year-to-year basis. This discouraged long-term investment and made public universities vulnerable to economic downturns. Students were hurt when, large, unexpected tuition increases were used to cover operating expenses incurred by insufficient public funding.

The New York State Compact for Public Higher Education would require government to cover CUNY’s and SUNY’s mandatory costs, providing long-term energy and capital investment contracts, and at least 20 percent of the academic initiatives in the systems’ state-approved master plans. The remainder of the funding for investments comes from the universities, in the form of increased philanthropic gifts, internal restructuring and efficiency measures, managed enrollment growth and tuition increases. Tuition increases during the life of the compact would not need to be increased an amount informed by a basket of economic indicators (such as the Consumer Price Index or the Higher Education Price Index), and full financial aid for needy students is a key part of the compact. Revenues from tuition increases would go exclusively toward funding investment initiatives, determined in consultation with students, faculty, and elected representatives.

As CUNY’s experience with the compact model indicates, such a partnership stimulates renewed investment. In its first year, CUNY Compact funding allowed the University’s senior and community colleges to hire additional faculty. It helped the University to launch its Graduate School of Journalism and its School of Professional Studies. Millions of dollars were invested to expand technology in teaching, including science instrumentation and electronic library acquisitions, and to augment student services, including additional counseling staff, child care, veterans’ support, and student fellowships. We upgraded information management systems and purchased new computer hardware and software. A statewide compact based on the CUNY model is an important step in realizing public higher education’s plans to build universities of national renown.

The commission also recognizes the key role that faculty play in creating academic distinctiveness. It recommendations to rebuild the CUNY and SUNY faculty ranks through the hiring of a minimum of 2,000 additional full-time faculty over the next five years is crucial to achieving genuine progress. In 1975, CUNY employed more than 11,000 full-time faculty. Today, 6,500 full-time faculty work at the University. This is a decrease of more than 40%—even though CUNY’s student enrollment has grown to its highest level in over three decades. The commission’s recommendation would help to reverse this pronounced decline.

Indeed, the top priority of the University’s FY 2008-09 budget request, recently approved by the Board of Trustees, is the hiring of additional full-time faculty and providing support for research, academic enhancements and student services. The University seeks a major infusion of investment funds through a continuation of the CUNY Compact, funds that are essential to our ability to foster national prominence and ensure greater opportunities for students and faculty.

The commission’s recommendations—focused on serious investment, increased faculty, student access and preparation, innovative research and economic development—are an urgent call to enable CUNY and SUNY and their students to remain nationally competitive and to contribute to the state’s well-being. We owe the students and people of New York nothing less.

I urge you to visit www.supportcuny.org to find out how to contact public officials and become involved in Universitywide advocacy efforts. This critical opportunity to invest in CUNY must not be missed.
power and air-conditioning capabilities. “We still have clusters, but it makes sense to have one major facility,” Small said. Less expansive computational clusters already exist at the Graduate Center and at City College. Eventually, the goal is to link the University’s computer network to enable campuses in all the boroughs to take advantage of parallel computing facilities via desktop computers.

In the meantime, dozens of faculty and doctoral students use computational clusters at Staten Island, the Graduate Center and City College, in departments including chemistry, structural biology, economics, physics, engineering and applied math. What links many of these projects is the use of computation-based methods to imitate experimental conditions without having to recreate them in a lab.

At Staten Island, for example, Assistant Professor of Mathematics Andrew Poje is developing complex ocean models to determine where masses of particles—for example, oil spills—go when they drop in the ocean.

“Ocean models are 15 to 20 years behind weather prediction,” Poje said. Conditions that may influence particle dispersion, such as rain, salinity, temperature and current velocity, generate “so much model data, it can take many days to figure out where many particles are going.”

Supercomputing speeds the research. Instead of using one processor at a time to trace the dispersion of 100,000 particles over several days, Poje can use dozens of Athena’s 384 processors simultaneously, with each performing one of his computations. “The whole thing could be done in a day,” he said.

Poje acknowledges that the world’s oceans offer a vast arena for his simulations, but he hopes that in the next five years he can complete a more modest goal: creation of a good model of ocean dispersion for local coastal areas, such as New York Bay or Raritan Bay.

At John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Associate Professor Robert Till has been working on computer simulations of fire dynamics, examining combustion patterns and smoke production as fires break out in buildings or large public spaces. “Smoke is usually what kills people, so you want to run a lot of models to know where the smoke is going,” Till said. Such modeling is being used in the design and ventilation systems of new buildings and subway stations in New York City, he says. Because Till’s work requires tracking dozens of variables and scenarios for each case study, CUNY’s high-performance computing facilities have made a critical difference. “Being able to run the model...on a certain processor in a couple of days—that’s an incredible resource,” he said. “It’s the difference between being able to do a project or not.”

Other researchers, like Anatoly Kuklov, use supercomputing to explore the microscopic world. Kuklov, a theoretical physicist at CSI, focuses on quantum mechanics, particularly “superfluidity” and “super solid” states. With HPC simulations, he has shown that if Helium-4 is cooled to extremely low temperatures, these isotopes can concentrate properties of a solid, but appear to act simultaneously like liquid under certain conditions—for example, if a defect is introduced into its crystalline structure.

These “virtual experiments” require large-scale calculations that researchers cannot perform on a simple desktop computer, Kuklov said. “It’s 100 times faster [with a high-performance computer]. Calculations that used to take a couple of years now take a couple of weeks.”

Besides speed and processing power, CUNY’s simulation center offers another important service: strong tech support. Much of that comes through Florian Lengel, assistant director for research computing at the Graduate Center, who has three technology fellows working with him to keep the network running and help faculty configure their software. “Florian is a huge asset,” Till said.

CUNY aims to expand utilization of the center throughout the university, while increasing computing capacity and storage. Faculty can visit www.csi.cuny.edu/cuny-hpc or http://research.gc.cuny.edu for details on how to start up. Said Kress: “We have a sweeping vision to develop a system to solve world-class problems in modeling and simulation and give the CUNY community at large this resource.”

CUNY School Of Law Joins Elite U.S. Team

THE VERDICT is unanimous: CUNY School of Law keeps outdoing itself. Two recent achievements brought accolades to the 25-year-old school, whose clinical programs are routinely cited in the country’s top 10. CUNY Law—led by Dean Michelle J. Anderson—has posted the highest New York State Bar Exam pass rate in its history (82.75 percent) and has been selected to join an elite group of law schools nationwide to analyze and shape future legal education.

The panel of representatives from 10 law schools—including prestigious Georgetown, Harvard and NYU—is being organized by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Stanford Law School. The invitation to participate in the three-year study follows the release of several glowing public reports from the Carnegie Foundation as well as U.S. News & World Report’s annual law school rankings.

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg has called CUNY School of Law “a institution of incomparable value” and has praised the school’s leadership for “innovations and tireless advancement of public interest law.” The request to join the current small working group came from Larry Kramer, dean of the Stanford Law School, and Lee Shulman, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Their creation of the group flows out of an earlier report issued by the Carnegie Foundation that cited CUNY School of Law for its groundbreaking approach to merging instruction in the clinical practice of law with the traditional law school curricula covering such subjects as torts, criminal procedure, and constitutional law. Students in all three years of study at CUNY School of Law practice law in actual court cases under the supervision of faculty members.

“Each of the schools we are inviting to participate have been in the vanguard of assessing their own curricula in recent years,” Shulman and Kramer wrote in their letter to CUNY School of Law Dean Michelle J. Anderson inviting her participation in the evaluative project.

Dean Anderson said CUNY Law is delighted to join the working group. “It’s a nice coup for the school,” she said. “The Carnegie Foundation recognized the innovative pedagogy that melds theory and practice instituted at CUNY School of Law’s founding, and now the school is being called upon for its expertise in that area.”

CUNY MATTERS — February 2008 | 3
Out of Africa, Into Queens

THE ART OF “A CAMEROON WORLD”

In Cameroon, as is much of Africa, art is where you find it: in the engraved calabashes used for carrying milk, in tiny snuff bottles; in the pictorial game chips carved from the pits of a local tree. Players of the once-popular game, called Abbia, could lose a bag of salt, or win a palm oil plantation, depending on how the chips fell that night.

Such everyday objects, along with ceremonial masks and other special items, offer a window into “A Cameroon World,” an exhibit celebrating the art of the west-central African nation at Queensborough Community College’s QCC Gallery. “A Cameroon World,” which runs through February 2008, features 240 pieces from the Marshall and Caroline Mount Collection. Marshall Mount first traveled to Africa in 1961 and has returned often, visiting Cameroon five times. He teaches African art at New York University and at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

The fruit of his travels fills the sunny main room of the gallery. Curator Leonard Kahan has organized the masks, figures, costumes, and other objects into discrete groups connected by a common origin and aesthetic.

There are pipes—lots of pipes. Made from brass or terra cotta, they fill two display cases in the back room of the show. The larger brass pipes are strictly for ceremonial purposes, the smaller ones for smoking tobacco. Some are decorated with graceful animals; others geometric patterns, floral or seashell motifs. One standout has a bowl shaped like two German colonials, accurate from their caps to their buttoned shirts. At that point, things get a little sketchy: The two have only one pair of feet. Visitors entering the exhibit’s main room are greeted by a colorful collection of prestige headdresses constructed from materials including dyed feathers and raffia. Some are small and contained; others burst forth like feathered fireworks.

Further along, powerful face and helmet masks, worn on special occasions by Cameroon elite, show an equally wide range of styles and materials. Wall texts explain their origins and use in secret societies; accompanying photographs by the Mounts show some of the items in use in dances and festivals.

One mask in particular, a five-foot-long cloth elephant mask from the Grassfields area, captures the imagination. Its round elephant ears and long trunk belie a curiously human face. Worn by Kuosi society members, elephant masks symbolize royalty. A close look at the mask’s intricately-beaded surface reveals other symbols such as leopard spots (also royalty) and a spider (wisdom).

Much has been made of the influence of African art on Modernism (before the 20th century, African cultural objects were considered less art, more artifact). A stunning buffalo mask, all angular forms and flattened lines, illustrates the point perfectly. It looks like it could have leapt off of a Picasso painting.

The show’s largest display recreates the reed-covered façade of a Kwifoy community secret society house. Two large wooden totem poles stand guard on either side of a door frame carved with grinning heads, male and female figures, and lizards. It also manages to incorporate a clever bit of multitasking: the high threshold not only keeps out flood waters and small animals, but also ensures that anyone entering must do so in the bent-over position of a supplicant.

Although many items in the show are linked to rank or religion, QCC Gallery Director Faustino Quintanilla explained that “A Cameroon World” makes a point of celebrating the art in everyday objects.

“While there have been exhibits of Cameroon masks and figures, things like that have never been put together with a more global exhibit including practical things like beds and hats,” he said.

Cameroon was a German colony from 1884 until the end of World War I, so there’s no surprise in finding references to its colonial days. Still, one can’t help but wonder about the curious seven-foot-long model canoe made by the coastal Duala people. A crew of German sailors manned the oars, led by a flag man. A European-style heraldic crest flies up front. But what of the animals sharing the prow with the crest? What imaginary army or navy do they belong to, or are they just hitching a ride? ‘A Cameroon World’ is one of three African art shows to open in New York City this past October. ‘Spirit and Power in African Art,’ which ran through Dec. 15, at the Godwin-Ternbach Museum at Queens College (CUNY), also included pieces from the QCC permanent collection of African art.

‘Eternal Ancestors: The Art of the Central African Reliquary’ will be at the Metropolitan Museum of Art through March 2.

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FACULTY HONORS

Chemists’ Invention Featured

Dr. Michael Markin and his team of chemists at Queens College recently were featured in Chemistry World for their development of an electrochemical synringe that delivers solutions via a tip so small it can easily be inserted into living cells without damaging the membrane. Their findings also were recently published in the prestigious Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Award to Lehman’s President

President Ricardo R. Fernández of Lehman received the President’s Award of Excellence from the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities for expanding educational opportunities for Hispanic students and advancing HACU’s mission. Dr. Fernández, who is Chair of the American Council on Education, was recently named one of America’s “100 Most Influential Hispanics” by Hispanic Business magazine.

Linking Geography and Evolution

CUNY’s Professor Robert Anderson received $135,000 from the NSF to use computer mapping and DNA sequencing to study the distribution and evolutionary relationships among species of the squirrel monkey genus Heteromys in northwestern South America. He’ll travel to Venezuela with graduate student Ali Raza and undergrad Marly Chcheglovitova to collect animals and DNA sequences. Ph.D. student Eliecer Gutierrez will conduct taxonomy research with Dr. Anderson that is expected to identify at least two new species within the genus.

Fulbright for Nurse-Researcher

Professor Patricia Cholewka of CityTech, a nurse-researcher of Lithuanian ancestry, spent the fall semester at Vilnius University, Lithuania, on a Fulbright Award. Dr. Cholewka lectured and conducted research on the application of information technology to nursing education and clinical practice, and gathered information about its impact on nursing practice there. She also exchanged ideas about nursing practice standards and the effective use of IT in nursing education and patient care.

Management Scholar Honored

Prakash Sethi, University Distinguished Professor of Management at Baruch, has been elected to the International Academy of Management, the highest honor for an international management scholar. Renowned for originating corporate codes of conduct, Professor Sethi’s research and writing in business ethics and corporate social responsibility span more than three decades. He is president of Baruch’s International Center for Corporate Accountability, an independent nonprofit think tank.

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What Is Leadership? It’s “Not All About You”

Women Worldwide are gaining more respect personally and professionally—notably exemplified by their achievements at CUNY. Two recent events presented advice and role models to CUNY women students and honored administrators in top positions at the University.

At “Women’s Leadership for Change: Building a Better New York,” the third CUNY Women’s Leadership Conference held to inspire student interest in public service and women’s issues everywhere, co-keynote speaker Sheryl McCarthy set the stage for discussion. Although women are “making great strides,” she said, all over the world they still are brutalized, barred from controlling where they want to hone their skills in nonfiction writing. “I realized that over the years I have learned the most from editors . . .” said Mr. Aciman. “So, I wanted to offer a faculty that features famous writers’ editors, rather than famous writers.”

At Hunter, filmmaker Charles C. Stuart is teaching advanced documentary filmmaking for television and the Internet as the college’s third Jack Newfield Visiting Professor. Stuart co-produced documentaries with Newfield, the crusading investigative reporter whose legacy is honored by the professorship at his alma mater. Newfield “gave voice to the disenfranchised, and it is in keeping with Jack’s spirit that all the stories produced by the students in this course will have an element of social justice at their core,” Stuart said.

Defying gravity in 1953 Lindy contest at Harlem’s Savoy Ballroom, from the AP exhibit.

AP’s “Lost New York” Photo Exhibit Found a Home at the Graduate Center

New Vice Chancellors Appointed by Trustees

Two NEW Vice Chancellors, with responsibilities in the areas of human resources and labor relations, have been appointed by the CUNY Board of Trustees. Vice Chancellor Gloriana B. Waters, who has been serving as Interim Vice Chancellor of CUNY’s Office of Faculty and Staff Relations, will be responsible for developing, coordinating and implementing Universitywide Human Resources policies. Vice Chancellor Pamela S. Silverblatt, who has served as First Deputy Commissioner at the Mayor’s Office of Labor Relations for the last six years, will have responsibility for CUNY instructional staff and classified staff labor relations, including negotiation of collective bargaining agreements, labor hearings and appeals.

Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, who recommended the appointments after a nationwide search, said: “Vice Chancellors Waters and Silverblatt each bring an impressive array of talent, experience and commitment to their respective positions. As the integrated university continues to develop and grow, their leadership will be essential to our progress.”

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At the second event—the 37th anniversary gala of The Feminist Press, the world’s oldest continuing women’s publisher—nine women Presidents and Deans of CUNY colleges and professional schools received the Sue Rosenberg Zalk Award, given for dedication and service to The City University of New York. The Feminist Press also honored Philip Alfonso Berry, Vice Chairperson of the CUNY Board of Trustees.

CUNY administrators honored by The Feminist Press, from left: Dean Michelle Anderson (Law School), President Dolores M. Fernandez (Hostos), President Kermit V. Kelz (York), Dean Ann Kirchner (Macaulay Honors College), President Gail O. Mellow (LaGuardia), President Jennifer J. Raub (Hunter), President Regina P. Peruggia (Kingborough), President Kathleen M. Waldron (Sarah). President Carolyn G. Williams (Bronx).
The University is slashing its energy use, planning efficient new campus buildings and finding innovative solutions to the environmental crisis worldwide.

With concerns deepening over climate change, shrinking natural resources and rising energy costs, CUNY is moving to slash its greenhouse gas emissions by a third through conservation, green construction and upgrading of heating and cooling plants. And in research laboratories, University scientists are seeking ways to help rescue the environment, including building better batteries for electric cars, purifying sewage sludge and turning algae into biofuel.

Chancellor Matthew Goldstein has named a Task Force on Sustainability* to drive this initiative. It dovetails with Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s call for municipal and University scientists are seeking ways to help rescue the environment, including building better batteries for electric cars, purifying sewage sludge and turning algae into biofuel.

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Plants at Heart of CUNY’s 1st Green Building

The science building slated to rise at Lehman College starting this summer relies partly on plants for its anticipated silver LEED® certification. It’s a natural, considering that the Plant Sciences doctoral subprogram, along with undergraduate sciences, will have expanded facilities. Faculty Tony Alfieri of Perkins+Will describes “a comprehensive system of water management and study:

1. A rooftop system will collect rainwater.
2. A separate system will collect “greywater” from drinking fountains, lavatory sinks and eventually gym showers.
3. Water will be held in separate tanks, where solid materials will settle.
4. Plant scientists can nourish a 4,000-square-foot wetland in three planting beds with water from either source, or both. The plants and microbes in their roots will filter the water, which then...
5. ...will return to the building for “blackwater” use in toilets and janitors’ sinks.

Reducing packaging of goods. Needless packaging carries hidden costs, besides posing disposal problems for the city. Dining halls will reduce reliance on plastic utensils, Styrofoam cups and disposable trays, Spalter said.

Energy-saving innovation is also bubbling up from the colleges. For example, Queens College is pushing recycling, installed motion sensors on classroom and office lights, swapped incandescent for fluorescent bulbs, and upgraded motors for fans, pumps, compressors and generators to energy-efficient models. It also bought hybrid-electric and off-road electric vehicles for security patrols, maintenance and moving people around campus. And it works with WWE to reduce energy consumption during peak summer hours.

“Perhaps through new courses, every student should understand that the global environment will have some impact on their lives,” Paaswell said. “That’s happening across the system. New York City College of Technology developed a course called ‘Sustainability Through Architecture,’ which introduces sustainability fundamentals against the larger picture of climate change. City Tech and Bronx and LaGuardia Community Colleges offer training for solar equipment installers, and the classes are fully subscribed.

Paaswell added, “CUNY has a world-class faculty who are expanding the envelope of research on the environment and disseminating the products of their research.” Paaswell himself oversees the federally funded Transportation Research Center and CUNY’s Institute for Urban Systems (CIUS), where engineering and social science illuminate urban infrastructure. CIUS also sponsors the state-funded Building Performance Laboratory, which offers green operations and technology instruction to workers who run energy systems in commercial and residential buildings; building owners; property managers; major tenants; energy regulators and government representatives. Paaswell has studied ways to improve transit operations; freight movement; bus travel; truck routes and their impact on asthma, and pedestrian safety. Examining how students and staff get to campus—and getting them out of cars—is also on his agenda.

That’s also a keen interest of Robert Bell, Economics Department chair at Brooklyn College. He suggests CUNY consider partnering with a vendor to install a system on its campuses akin to the new Velib system in Paris and Lyon, which provides easy and cheap bicycle rentals. “Students traditionally have ridden bicycles, so it’s not a far-out idea, and it works spectacularly in Paris,” he said.

Bell, whose new book, “The Green Bubble: Waste into Wealth: The New Energy Revolution,” examines the coming “after-oil” scenario, believes, “We can fight and win this war [against climate change] with the weapons we have today. Insulation, double glazing, hybrid cars like the Prius, wind turbines and solar photovoltaics work now, but we better get on the stick. We can’t wait for another new invention.”

Creating Power from Sludge

Sewage and industrial sludge may seem toxic to you, but to City College Chemistry Professor Teresa J. Bandosz it’s pure environmental gold. Using probits (heating at high temperatures in an inert atmosphere), she converts sludge into adsorbent materials that clean fuel gases of hydrogen sulfide, a first step leading to pure hydrogen, an environmentally friendly power source. Along the way, hazardous heavy metals get embedded in carbon, rendering them nontoxic. “Copper and dyes are adsorbed in significant quantities,” she said. “We haven’t started with mercury yet, but we expect a good adsorption capacity.” CUNY holds a patent on some of her research.

Turning Algae into Jet Fuel

Half the nation’s 2008 corn crop will be diverted to make ethanol, the U.S. Agriculture Department estimates. The resulting corn scarcity will drive up the cost of eggs, milk and steaks. Microalgal algae, like that found in ponds, could be better and cheaper, says Juergen Polle, an associate professor of biology at Brooklyn College. Per acre, microalgae “can produce much higher levels of biofuels than other plants” and unlike corn, they can grow in salty or brackish water, without pesticides. “Harvesting is the real problem, because you’re dealing with microscopic organisms, rather than being able to send a tractor through a cornfield,” said Polle, who is working, under an Air Force contract, to isolate new microalgal strains for making jet fuel.

Designing Better Batteries

Hunter College Physics Professor Steven Greenbaum believes his research into improving batteries for NASA projects and implantable cardiac defibrillators will extend the range and life cycle of electric cars—when equally powerful but cheaper battery materials are identified. “When you’re designing for aerospace and medical uses, you don’t care about cost,” he said. “But you’ll never sell an electric car if the battery pack costs $25,000.” Greenbaum received a U.S. Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics, Science and Engineering Mentoring in 2002.

CUNY MATTERS — February 2008 | 7
Baruch Student a Winner Of Design Competition

ARUCH SENIOR Branko Ristic won fourth place in Creative Quarterly’s national graphic design student competition, which included students from the nation’s most prestigious art and design schools. His winning entry was based on a conceptualized advertising campaign for Rome, Italy, as host of the 2016 Olympics. Ristic, who studied medicine and forestry while living in Serbia, says he found his passion for graphic design at Baruch after taking a class with Professor Jerry Berkowitz of the Weissman School’s Department of Fine and Performing Arts.

Graduate Fellowships to Hunter Geography Students

HUNTER STUDENTS Erin Araujo and Rhoda Quan have each won $5,000 Graduate Fellowships from The Society of American Geographers. Over the course of the next year, Ms. Araujo will investigate the political ecology of water privatization and decentralization in the central highlands of Mexico, while Ms. Quan will demonstrate how geospatial techniques can be used to understand spatial access to healthcare.

Microsoft MVP Award To Honors College Student

JONATHAN MALITZ, a sophomore computer science major at the Macaulay Honors College who attends the CUNY City Tech campus, won the Microsoft MVP Award in the “Windows — Virtual Machine” category for the fifth straight year. Last summer he worked on parallel processing as a research assistant for Dr. Andrew Poje of the Math Department. This involves taking a task that might take one computer two hours to process and utilizing four computers to reduce the processing time to a half-hour. Malitz has also received a Goldsmith Fellowship.

Hostos Students Honored At Radiology Conference

FOUR HOSTOS CC radiology students won third place for their presentations at the New York State Society of Radiologic Sciences Conference Student Bowl. They are: Dania Alonzo, Luis Garcia, Diana Montoya and Hector Ely Burgos. The presentation was on public assistance, COPE (College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment) and POISED (Perfect Opportunity for Individual Skills Development) for Success. These programs prepare eligible students to enter or re-enter the work force by offering course-eligible students to enter or re-enter the work force by offering course-

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At Edith’s Place at LaGuardia Community College, founder Carolyn Everett and her mother—for whom the shop is named—help students look their best at job interviews

FIRST IMPRESSIONS count at Edith’s Place, a cost-free clothing and accessories shop created to help some of CUNY’s neediest students look their best at job interviews. Medgar Evers College freshman Onica Clarke certainly thinks so. Decked out at Edith’s Place, she received four job offers at a job fair and signed on as a seasonal salesperson at Macy’s. “It went to my interviews, and I nailed it!” she recalled after joyously bouncing back into the shop located at LaGuardia Community College.

This dream closet is the brainchild of Carolyn Everett, director of the CUNY Economic Development Corporation, whose personal donation of more than $100,000 packed the room with new, brand-name clothing and accessories from the likes of Elie Tahari, Eddie Bauer, Land’s End and Ralph Lauren.

In the past year, scores of male and female students from many CUNY campuses have gotten their feet in the employment door not only with new brand-name suits, dresses and shoes, but also with sweaters, scarves, jewelry and handbags supplied by Edith’s Place. It is named for Everett’s mother, former CUNY Vice Chair Edith B. Everett.

In addition to one interview outfit, CUNY students who land a job are given enough clothing to last until the first paycheck. “We felt it was important to offer new clothing,” Carolyn Everett said. “We do not want them to feel they are second-class citizens with second-hand clothing. We want them to be well-prepared candidates who are ready to take on the world.”

“CUNY is all about people sustaining themselves, and if we can promote and make it easier, that’s wonderful,” her mother added, as she helped Clarke select a scarf for the black suit she was trying on.

Clarke placed a red and black plaid scarf around her neck, while the Everetts gave her an informal fashion consultation. They finally decided that the scarf was too wintry and substituted a red floral one. “Edith is everyone’s mom,” said Carolyn Everett, as her mother adjusted Clarke’s scarf one final time.

The Everetts have long supported the University. Mrs. Everett served as a trustee for 23 years. Her late husband, Henry, was a board member of the CUNY Graduate Center’s Humanities Center and previously a member of the Board of Visitors. Carolyn Everett is executive director of the CUNY Economic Development Corporation. The family has encouraged the aspirations of young people in other ways, including sponsorship of a national internship program in public service.

LaGuardia Community College junior Ely Burgos, who just got a job as a teacher’s assistant in a Bronx elementary school.

Burgos, a 33-year-old Bronx resident, traded her denim shirt, causal long-sleeved top and tall black buckle boots for a conservative ensemble perfect for professional meetings and parent-teacher conferences. They selected a chocolate velveteen suit jacket that accented her long hair; a sedate, soft green turtleneck; a brown and green plaid A-line skirt; and brown pumps. Pink pearl earrings, a pretty pink-stone costume brooch and a brown leather handbag that doubles as a briefcase completed her new look.

Clarke, meanwhile, had traded her black slacks, black sneakers and red blouse for a black power suit and black pumps. She selected the outfit with the red and black silk scarf that the Everetts had selected and gold button-style costume earrings. She said that shopping at Edith’s Place has transformed her. “This has made me feel important,” she said. “It has made me feel good about myself. I would love to volunteer my time here for women like me who don’t have a lot of stuff, because Edith’s Place doesn’t make you feel poor.”

Her new wardrobe hasn’t gone unnoticed. “The women who come into my department at Macy’s compliment me on my outfit,” she said, beaming. As she modeled her new outfit, Clarke said, “I feel like a celebrity.” A smiling Burgos, clutching her brown leather bag, agreed, adding that in her eyes they both looked “wonderful.”
Rescuing the Constitution from Civic Illiteracy

By Gary Schmidgall

Weary of the Constitution’s current state of Constitutional under-saving and its longevity for permanence, we take for granted the existence of what not so long ago was remarkable and revolutionary.

Because Lane and Oreskes are so concerned about the Constitution’s future (that place on which the Framers were so focused), the lion’s share of their 220-page text is devoted to the Constitution’s past.

In very compact fashion they devote Part One of the book to the “Invention” of the Constitution in Philadelphia. The emphasis here on process, debate, and, most importantly, compromise is heavy. The spirit of compromise solved the two big problems the Framers struggled over: how to arrange representation in the legislature for large and small states (a House and Senate) and how to elect a President (Electoral College).

Then in Part Two the authors take a few prominent crises in history that challenged the Constitution’s integrity, notably the passing of the infamous Sedition Act of 1798, outrageous to the First Amendment, and Judge John Sirica’s opinion dealing with the subpoena for Nixon’s secret tapes during Watergate.

As their narrative unfolds, the authors develop a set of core Constitutional-inspired values that they hope will “become part of the political conscience of each American.” This “Constitutional Conscience” primarily consists of the notions of “conflict within consensus, compromise, representation, checks and balances, tolerance of debate.” In cliffhanger fashion, the authors explain, the Constitutional Conscience has happily and often re-asserted itself to save the day in moments of Constitutional crisis. But sometimes just barely. Will it “work the next time? Lane and Oreskes want us to think about this, and to aid us they include the entire Constitution as an appendix.

The story of the long hot summer of Constitution-making is highly abbreviated but deftly told, with some amusing asides and factoids. Rhode Island never showed up at all, and New York had only one delegate present, Hamilton (he voted aye). On the hire of the newly arrived Tom Paine (later author of Common Sense) as a writer by the Pennsylvania Magazine, the authors remark that it was “probably the most important hire of a freelance writer in the history of America.”

It is also bracing to learn that our Constitution was conceived largely in response to a “cold-eyed” and dim view of man’s nature. As Washington wrote to John Jay in 1786, “Experience has taught us, that men will not adopt & carry into execution, measures the best calculated for their own good without intervention of a coercive power.” Fascinating, too, to learn the Frampers paid almost no attention to the specific functions of the Supreme Court. John Marshall, a Federalist, was left to sort that matter out on his own.

This stroll through our Constitutional past also has much current interest. The authors, for example, observe, “in very much the way the Federalists were tossed out in 1800, after President Adams failed to stop a Federalist Congress from plunging forward with the reviled Sedition Act, the Republicans were tossed out of Congress in 2006 for failing to check a Republican president’s plunge into an unpopular war.” Speaking of that war, the authors have occasion to quote this thought of James Madison uttered in 1789: “It is a universal truth that the loss of liberty at home is to be charged to provisions against dangers real or pretended from abroad.”

Among foes noires of the authors are Howard Jarvis, the Californian whose Proposition 13 revived a long-dormant fashion for initiative/referendum government. They dislike the way it skirks the deliberative legislative process—like the one that produced the Constitution itself. For Lane and Oreskes the whole Oliver North/Iran Contra affair captured how easily a renegade can throw a wrench into Constitutional checks and balances. The authors quote from a Congressional inquiry report on the affair that sided with North and the Executive Branch. "The Chief Executive will on occasion feel duty bound to assert monarchical notions of prerogative that will permit him to exceed the laws.” The guiding hand in writing that minority report? A Congressman named Dick Cheney.
CUNY assures New York City’s newest immigrants—the Mexican community—that a college degree is within reach

LIKE COUNTLESS immigrants in New York City’s fast-growing Mexican community, Virginia Ramirez and Israel Garcia arrived as teenagers not knowing English. But they quickly found work and soon were building lives here, far from their rural homes. Their path to the future ran through CUNY. It’s a path that the University—in an unprecedented partnership with Mexico’s Consulate General—intends to widen. CUNY’s goal is its historical one: helping Mexicans and Mexican-Americans move into the American mainstream, just as it has helped so many previous waves of immigration.

Ms. Ramirez, 25, arrived when she was 16. “I realized that in order to do what I wanted to do, I had to get an education,” she said. She found work in a deli as a cashier, started in ESL at LaGuardia Community College and moved to a GED. Then I enrolled at LaGuardia,” studying theater. She founded the college’s first club for Mexicans, joined the student government and was the class representative at last spring’s commencement. Now at Brooklyn College, she expects to graduate with a television and radio degree in 2009.

Mr. Garcia, 37, came illegally at 19. He worked in restaurants, starting as a $25-a-day cook trainee, studied English at a library and, at church, heard that he could enroll at bilingual Hostos Community College. (Ruling in Plyler v. Doe in 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court barred states from denying education funding to undocumented children.) He had lived here long enough to qualify for in-state tuition, but, being illegal, was ineligible for financial aid. He kept working, eventually becoming a chef, waiter, host and manager. After a year at Hostos, Mr. Garcia transferred to City College, took remedial English and graduated with a B.A. in psychology 5½ years later, in 1999. “I think I was the only Mexican in college; I never met another.” He legalized his status, earned a master’s in social work from Columbia University in 2005, and is now a planner at the city Department for the Aging. He said his CUNY degree “allowed me to be a contributor to this country.”

The difference between now and when Ms. Ramirez and Mr. Garcia came to New York is the numbers. The 2005 census counted 264,000 city residents of Mexican birth or heritage, nearly 44% more than in 2000. Between 2005 and 2006, their community grew by 1%.

Jay Hershenson, CUNY’s Senior Vice Chancellor for University Relations and Secretary to the Board of Trustees, said this influx of often unskilled migrants, with their general lack of education, poses a short- and long-term “educational catastrophe.” In response, Chancellor Goldstein asked him to chair a Task Force on Strengthening Educational Opportunities for Mexicans and Mexican-Americans. Its mission is to devise and deliver educational, leadership and outreach services to that community. It met for the first time in October after CUNY negotiated a memorandum of understanding with then-Consul General Arturo Sarukhan, who is now Mexico’s ambassador to the United States.

Over the long term, children born here will likely enter the school system and go on to college, like previous groups. But Hershenson worries about today. The 2005 census found that just 49% of New York City’s Mexicans and Mexican-Americans aged 25 or older had earned a diploma or degree: 28% had a high school diploma, 12% an associates’ degree or higher and 9% a BA or higher.

And, says Baruch Associate Professor Robert Smith, the high school dropout rate—and never-dropped-in rate among school-aged migrants—are high. The city’s public schools do not track students by national origin, but Dr. Smith estimates that nearly half of the Mexicans aged 16 to 19 are neither in school nor high school graduates. At age 14, about 95% of Mexican boys are in school, but by age 18 or 19, only 26% are. —Baruch Associate Professor Robert Smith

IN ENGLISH, the Big Apple slogan “I Love New York” is simple. But in Spanish, there are two choices: “Yo amo a Nueva York” or “Amo a Nueva York.”

Researchers say the presence or absence of one little personal pronoun—“ya” or “I”—may say plenty about the Spanish-speaking New Yorker declaring his or her admiration for the city. Those who have been in New York a long time tend to use more personal pronouns than do more recent Latino arrivals, researchers say. So do those coming from the Caribbean, as compared with those from mainland countries such as Mexico, Colombia and Ecuador.

Ricardo Otheguy, a linguistics professor at The Graduate Center and director of the Research Institute for the Study of Language in Urban Society, and Prof. Ana Celia Zentella of the University of California, San Diego, have studied the use of these subject personal pronouns. What they have discovered that Spanish usage is becoming more like English usage,” says Otheguy, “and that in addition, Spanish in New York City is under clear dialect leveling pressures, meaning that the different ways of speaking that immigrants from different places bring to New York tend to become more similar over time.” This may reflect “the growth of a new New York Latino identity,” he said.

Otheguy and Zentella conducted 300 hours of oral interviews with 142 people and extracted 60,000 conjugated verbs, tallying the subject personal pronouns, which are used far more extensively in English than Spanish and are heard more in some Spanish-speaking countries than others.

The study, funded by the National Science Foundation, established that the New York City speakers could be divided into Caribbean and those from mainland countries, and that while pronoun use increased for both, Caribbean—particularly Dominicans—used significantly more overt pronouns.

“In the course of one generation,” Otheguy says, “the pronoun rate increased significantly. Those classified as New Yorkers—they were either born in the city or came here on or before age 3—use more pronouns than those who are classified as newcomers—they were either born in Latin America, came to the city or before age 17 and have lived here for five or fewer years.”

The Otheguy/Zentella study is one of several that analyze aspects of Spanish as it is spoken in the city. The data also is being used to study words that Spanish speakers in New York City borrow from English. “Every language has these loanwords,” Otheguy says. “In English, for example, fiance is a loanword from French, patio is a loanword from Spanish and frankfurter is a loanword from German.”

In New York City Spanish, there are many loanwords from English, but they do not conform to the usual V/SO masculine/feminine balance, he says. “What is interesting is that while the regular Spanish words continue to be about half masculine and half feminine as they are in Spain and Latin America, the loanwords tend to enter the Spanish language as masculine, particularly Dominicans—used significantly more often.”
Los Mexicanos

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HE MEXICAN INFLUX into the city is studied by scholars throughout CUNY, but a nerve center for such research is the Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies at the Graduate Center. Its director, history professor Laird Bergad, believes Mexicans will follow the “typical pattern among migrant groups,” with many eventually entering educational programs and their children flowing through public schools and into CUNY. “Mexicans in New York City, 1990-2005,” one of Bergad’s studies, helped spark creation of CUNY’s task force to improve educational opportunities for New Yorkers of Mexican descent. In Mexicans in New York City, released last June, Bergad sifted census data and found:

• Only 9% of Mexicans over age 25 had attained a B.A. degree or higher in 2005—the lowest rate among Latino nationalities.
• Mexicans were the city’s fastest-growing Latino group and became the third largest in 2005, after Puerto Ricans and Dominicans.
• If current growth rates continue, Mexicans will become the city’s largest Latino nationality by 2035.
• The Mexican community is growing due to migration and extraordinarily high birth rates, compared to other Latino groups.
• Mexican households are highly stratified: 21% earned more than $75,000 in 2005, while 22% earned less than $20,000.

For the complete report and research on other Latino groups visit http://web.gc.cuny.edu/lastudies.

Q&A: BARRY COMMONER

Clean Energy = Solar Power, Ecology Pioneer Says

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ECADES BEFORE AL GORE was honored with the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in spreading awareness of man-made climate change, there was Barry Commoner. An early prophet in the green movement, Dr. Commoner was dubbed “the Paul Revere of the environmental movement” in a 1970 Time magazine cover story. His groundbreaking books, including The Closing Circle and The Politics of Energy, along with 30-plus years in the classroom, have influenced a generation of scientists. The Founding director of the Center for the Biology of Natural Systems at Queens College, Dr. Commoner officially stepped down in 2000, but, at age 90, continues to make daily visits to the campus. He recently spoke with CUNY Radio’s Richard Yeh. Edited excerpts follow.

Q: Your work in the field of ecology has influenced over a generation of scientists. How did your interest in ecology come about?

DR. COMMONER: When I first taught at Queens College in 1940 I gave a course in Ecology because that was required. I’m not an ecologist. I’m a biologist. But it was very clear to me after my service in the Navy that there were very serious problems that arose out of the development of modern technology, such as nuclear power and nuclear weapons. I decided that just as we have a responsibility to teach and do research, we have a responsibility to help educate the general public about issues in science that affect their lives. For example, immediately after the war the public was clearly being misled by the government about the biological effects of radiation. We began to take on the Atomic Energy Commission and began to get stuff declassified. That was extremely important to give people the knowledge to make judgments about fallout shelters, atomic bomb tests that were polluting the environment, the whole question of nuclear war.

Q: What in your opinion is the most pressing environmental issue we face today?

DR. COMMONER: Global warming encompasses our entire system of industrial, agricultural production, communication. You can’t do anything without expending energy. And the second thing is that all of these things that we have been doing on the earth have been made possible only because of a single source of energy—the sun. All of it including oil, coal and natural gas, which are remnants of fossil plants. In other words, global warming was inevitable the moment we began to burn the organic material that the sun produces. There is no way that that can continue, no way. And the fact that that heating up begins to trigger weather changes and the threat of flooding, which is inevitable, is a trigger that finally can remind everybody if they understand these connections, how serious this is.

Q: Is it possible to live a sustainable lifestyle in today’s world?

DR. COMMONER: I think so. What is needed is to understand what we need to do politically. What has to happen is that we switch from the use of coal, oil, and other forms. If we are given vehicles that burn inefficiently, but even burn inefficiently non-renewable oil, we’re doomed. The same is true of every single thing that is done by the industrial, agricultural system, by communication. What we don’t have is a national policy, and no one is willing to talk about it. Eventually the truth will prevail.

Q: But is eventually going to come soon enough before the damage becomes irreparable?

DR. COMMONER: I don’t know. Is having [Hurricane] Katrina soon enough?

Q: In 1980, when you ran for President on an environmentalist platform, a reporter asked you the following question: “Dr. Commoner, are you a serious candidate or are you just running on the issues?”

DR. COMMONER: When I ran, nothing happened with the television people. Towards the end of the campaign, we visited all of the major networks and only one, I think it was ABC, one of the vice presidents said Dr. Commoner is right. We really ought to have a program about the issues right after the campaign. That was the low point.
Liberal New York: How It Got That Way
Cambridge University History Professor Joshua M. Zeitz shares with a CUNY Graduate Center audience the arguments he makes in his new book: *White Ethnic New York: Jews, Catholics and the Shaping of Postwar Politics.*

Avishai Margalit on Sectarianism
Political theorist and social critic Avishai Margalit discusses how his own sectarian experience during the 1973 Yom Kippur War formed his controversial view on separate Israeli and Palestinian states.

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Do poll-centric pundits unduly influence election outcomes? Hear some answers from three pollsters and a political strategist for former President Bill Clinton’s 1996 re-election campaign.

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MARCH

sunday  |  Monday  |  Tuesday  |  Wednesday  |  Thursday  |  Friday  |  Saturday
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CUNYAC Men’s and Women’s Indoor Track and Field Championships
169th St. Armory
5 PM Free
Kingsborough C.C.
Author Series: David Baldacci
7:30 PM Free
Kingsborough C.C.
Women’s Art Exhibit: Exhibition: Less Than 1-6 PM Free
York College
Trevor Rhone in Concert
8 PM $20, $10
Lehman College
Willie Rosario Salsa and Tropical Music
8 PM $50, $50, $45, $40
Borough of Manhattan C.C.
Snow White and the 7 Dwarfs. Puppet Show
1:30-2:45 PM, $25, $15
Brooklyn College
3 Mo’ Divas 8 PM $25-$75

For more, visit www.cuny.edu and click ‘events’

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