Spotlight on Faculty

At the core of any college or university is a vigorous, productive and committed faculty. As the City University works to strengthen its faculty amid economically difficult times, CUNY Matters spotlights throughout this issue several remarkable examples of our faculty in innovative, inspiring and award-winning action. Three of them are featured below.

1 Biomedical Program Opens Research Horizon for Minorities in Bronx

John Davis and his colleagues at Bronx Community College have worked with nearly 300 students like Balori Paulino to nurture careers in research under the Minorities Biomedical Research Program. See page 10.

2 Hunter Anthropologist Returns to South Africa to Fight Against AIDS

Anthropologist Ida Susser, also based at the Graduate Center, has won several awards and major grants, notably a MacArthur, to continue her studies of women and AIDS in Namibia and Botswana. See page 6.

3 City College Physicist Applies String Theory to Mysteries of Universe

Appointed also to the Graduate Center, Michio Kaku is applying “string theory” to the study of the universe, hoping to unite reality and quantum theories, a goal that included Albert Einstein. See page 10.

Chancellor Proposes New Academic Initiatives

In a keynote speech to the Center for Educational Innovation — Public Education Association at the Harvard Club, Chancellor Matthew Goldstein set forth an ambitious array of proposals for enhancing both City University academic offerings and financial support, while meeting new fiscal challenges and building on past successes.

“Our challenge now is to maintain momentum — and it’s a very big challenge,” said Goldstein to a large audience of educators, business, civic, and community leaders. “The City and State of New York are facing the most serious financial crisis in recent memory.” Among the proposals were:

- Strengthening CUNY’s academic environment by renewing and rebuilding full time faculty
- Indexing tuition to economic indicators while protecting financial aid to help the University and its students plan intelligently to meet the costs of higher education
- Integrating University-wide resources to create new schools of journalism and professional studies, a new scientific research facility and a computer simulation center on Governors Island
- Centralizing administrative functions such as purchasing, contracting and human resources, while generating revenue through entrepreneurial activities and fund-raising
- Leveraging capital funds by working, where appropriate, with private developers to create mixed academic-commercial facilities

Underscoring the strides made in the last three years, when freshmen enrollment increased 10.5% as higher admissions standards were implemented, Goldstein noted that “the University now systematically reaches into high school,” notably with the College Now program and competitive high schools sited on several CUNY campuses. This, Goldstein said, “gives students a running jump to clear the University’s higher academic bar.” College Now, which permits high school seniors to take college courses, has almost quadrupled its enrollment, from 11,000 students in 1999 to 40,000 in 2002.

“Prospective CUNY students are well aware that we now expect more from them,” Goldstein said. “They also know we have more to give.” He cited the Honors College, now entering its third year, as an example: This year 2,500 applied for admission to its 340 spots, compared to 1,400 last year. He noted also that the average SAT score for successful applicants was 1340.

The Chancellor invoked both the old and the new in speaking of the University’s relationships with the private sector. Referring to a long-standing collaboration, he pointed to CUNY’s “close relationship with the New York City Central Labor Council, which helps tailor CUNY programs for working students.” Goldstein

Highlights from Analysis of State, City Budgets

On January 30, Chancellor Matthew Goldstein presented a preliminary analysis of the 2003-2004 proposed State and City budgets to the Board of Trustees and college presidents. As widely expected, the proposed budgets call for reduced funding in several areas. On February 11, the Chancellor testified in Albany on the impact of the State Budget before a joint hearing of the Senate Finance Committee and the Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

Senior Colleges. For the University’s senior colleges, the State Executive Budget recommends a total of $1.12 billion, an increase of $31 million over the current year. However, this figure includes a reduction in State aid from $663 million to $581 million (a decrease of more than 12%) and a proposed rise in student tuition. Reduced pension costs, from $392 million to $350 million (a rise of nearly 29%). The Executive Budget also proposes a $7.3 million decrease in SEEK student financial aid and a $1 million decrease in funding for new faculty.

The Executive Budget also recommends amending the State Education Law to allow the University to impose differential tuition rates for graduate and professional programs. The Budget will also permit the University’s Board of Trustees to adopt annual incremental adjustments to tuition.

Community Colleges. State funding for CUNY’s community colleges will be subjected to a $23 million reduction (nearly 18%) in several areas (enrollment calculations are being reviewed by the State, which may decrease the size of this reduction). Child care funding remains unchanged. The City’s Preliminary Budget for fiscal year 2003 rises by $1.3 million because of pension costs, but the fiscal year 2004 budget recommends a net decrease of $5.6 million, mainly with the loss of $5.5 million in funding for Valloonee Scholarships. City support remains the same as last year, at $124 million.

Capital Budget. The State’s capital budget calls for a total multi-year capital investment program of $1.03 billion for CUNY. Reappropriation of $172 million for prior years’ funding, not yet bonded, brings the capital budget to a total of $1.203 billion. When the City matches State support for the community colleges and Medgar Evers College, the total five-year capital plan will reach a record sum of $1.328 billion. As the University proceeds with initiatives to monetize the real estate values of its portfolio through public-private collaboration (realizing the entire construction costs of some projects), the total five-year capital plan increases to $1.58 billion.

Financial Aid. The Executive Budget allocates $508 million for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). It also recommends significant restructuring of TAP, notably separating TAP awards into two components — a “base” award equal to two-thirds of the current award and a “performance” award of one-third, payable upon attainment of a degree. Students will be expected to finance study prior to receiving the performance award through Federal loan programs, to be administered by the Higher Education Services Corporation.

For an array of budget data, testimony, and analysis visit www.cuny.edu and click on News or CUNY Budget Watch.
Adapted and expanded here is a story from a new second-season edition of "Study With The Best," a regularly scheduled 30 minute TV news magazine highlighting CUNY's wide array of outstanding faculty, remarkable students and alumni, and major University academic initiatives. The lively, fast-paced series (CUNYTV Channel 75, Sundays at 8) is aimed particularly at prospective CUNY students in local high schools.

If you live in Brooklyn, Queens or Staten Island, you're doubtlessly familiar with the KeySpan Corporation. The company is the largest distributor of natural gas in the Northeast, serving 2.5 million customers in those boroughs, on Long Island, in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Robert Catell is the chairman and chief executive officer of KeySpan, formerly Brooklyn Union. In addition, Catell's enormous palette of extracurricular activities could well qualify him as a master of ceremonies for economic development in New York City. He is also one of the most active and supportive CUNY alumni. As the Class of 1958 yearbook Microcosm shows, Catell was in the same City College class as Secretary of State Colin Powell, and he joined Brooklyn Union the same year he received his Bachelor's in Mechanical Engineering. He subsequently earned a M.M.E. at CCNY as well. "A Brooklyn kid, I had the benefit of an excellent elementary and high school education," Catell recalls, "and I was fortunate to be able to get into City College. That educational foundation was really what gave me the ability to achieve what I have in the business world."

Catell's experience at a public college clearly gave him a taste for wide-ranging public service. It is not only the former chairman of the New York City Partnership and Chamber of Commerce, but is now chairman of the Business Council of New York State. He has also served as a director of the NYC Investment Fund and is a founding member of the NYC Public Private Partnership. Catell received his bachelor's and master's degrees in mechanical engineering from City College. How did he get from City to the top of the corporate ladder? Catell stresses the importance of his education at CUNY.

The City University's recent initiative to raise academic standards accords with Catell's CCNY experience. "I remember it as a very demanding place to go to school. They had very high standards," he recalls. "I had to work really hard to achieve my goals. A number of my engineering professors impressed on me the importance of working hard and learning the fundamentals, which really provided the basis for everything I accomplished later on in my career."

"From a business standpoint, it's really important to support City College and the City University, because this is the major educational institution in which our city's young people can get the kind of education that I think will be essential to their future. If we as alumni can be helpful in moving them forward, then I for one am very grateful to be a part of the effort."

Public education and community service has been a theme of Catell's tenure at KeySpan. "Much of what Brooklyn Union, then KeySpan, has been able to achieve is due to the fact that we get a lot of support from the community we serve. So we truly believe in giving something back. Everything I have achieved has been due to a wonderful education, and I think young people today should have the same resources I had. It's a more complicated, more competitive world today, so it's probably even more important for them."

Summing up, Catell alludes to the post-Enron crisis as an opportunity. "Assuming his own strong commitment to education prevails, Catell admits to optimism. "I am a person who looks at the glass as half full. I see young people who are growing up today and the educational opportunities we afford them, and I think that's going to be the answer. I think fine educated graduates who can contribute to society are the future of this country — and the world. If we keep our eye on this particular prize, Catell (the father of five) predicts, the city will be "a wonderful place for my grandchildren to grow up in."

FROM THE "CHANCELLOR'S DESK"

Spreading the Knowledge about Paying for College

In New York State and across the nation, we are facing the most serious student financial crisis in recent memory. During this time of personal and collective belt-tightening, it is more important than ever to ensure continued access to a top-quality higher education. Colleges and universities offer opportunities for education, job training and retraining that make students competitive. In return, students become wage-earners and taxpayers who contribute to the economic vitality of our community.

We in the City University are more committed than ever to help our current and prospective students find out how they can afford to pay for college. Financial aid and student jobs are two key resources for students and families who are seeking to meet the costs of a college education.

February was Financial Aid Awareness Month at the campuses of the City University. Throughout the month, the University sponsored free financial aid seminars in every borough, open to the public (including students deciding whether to apply to college). Current and prospective students were able to learn about and take advantage of the wide range of city, state, federal and private financial assistance programs and scholarships available to them. Parents and students obtained advice and assistance from experts in the CUNY Office of Financial Aid, on topics ranging from completing financial aid applications to monitoring the status of their application after submission. Many seminars were offered in Spanish, Chinese and Russian, in addition to English. Students unable to attend who would like further information may visit the CUNY web site at www.cuny.edu/financialaid or call 1-800-CUNY-YES.

Student employment is another important strategy in paying for college tuition. CUNY is putting technology to work as part of our ongoing effort to alert our students about employment opportunities. As the centerpiece of this effort, we are establishing a central, one-stop web site on the CUNY home page (www.cuny.edu) where current and prospective students can obtain a comprehensive description of jobs and internships available at individual campuses and elsewhere in the University.

The web site will feature links to information on State Department of Labor offices throughout the City, College Work-Study, and CUNY job fairs (including the CUNY Big Apple Job Fair, and on-campus Career Days). Students will be able to access information on programs for public assistance recipients, career services offices at specific colleges, opportunities for employment as a poll worker in City elections, valuable internship programs such as the Edward T. Ruggles Internship Program in Government and Public Affairs, and services for students with disabilities. I urge students enrolled at one of our colleges, or just interested in pursuing higher education opportunities, to find out what programs and opportunities are available. The time and effort they invest can pay valuable dividends in meeting the cost of a college education.
April—the Kindest Month for City Poetry Lovers

T
S. Eliot famously observed in the opening line of The Waste Land that “April is the cruellest month,” but in 2003 this month is shaping up to be extraordinarily kind, at least for New Yorkers who are into metaphors and similes, verse and villanelles, caesuras and slant rhymes. April, after all, is National Poetry Month.

Poets and poems will be as ubiquitous as the yellow and white daffodils of spring, to judge from plans being made by Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Louise Mirrer and her colleagues as part of the year-long CUNY is Reading... initiative. It was kicked off in the fall with a reading by the nation’s — and CUNY’s — Poet Laureate Billy Collins at Grace Rainey Rogers auditorium in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The choice of literary genre for the inaugural year of “CUNY is Reading...” was auspicious, for poetry has been on an extraordinary roll lately. Def Poetry Jam enjoyed a rousing premiere on Broadway, pharmaceutical heiress Ruth Lilly promised the venerable journal Poetry $100 million, and the poet Dana Gioia was recently tapped by the President to be the new Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Seeking to emphasize the importance of poetry in the life of the city, “CUNY is Reading...” will say goodbye to March with a pride of poetic lions at a festive reading at the Bowery Poetry Club on April 1 (308 Bowery). The nine CUNY poets who have promised to read their poems are Julie Aago (Brooklyn College), Louis Asekoff (Brooklyn), Elena Georgiu (Hunter), Isaac Goldberg (Hostos), Kimiko Hahn (Queens), Donna Masini (Hunter), Grace Schuman (Baruch), Tracy Smith (Medgar Evers), and Barry Wallenstein (City). Given the day, with any luck the audience will hear some poems on the theme announced by Shakespeare’s Puck: “Lord, what fools these mortals be!”

Later in the month, a unique special event will capture the poetic attention of the entire city, “A Poem in Your Pocket.” The idea for this city-wide initiative, in which Mayor Michael Bloomberg has agreed to be a leading participant, was sparked last fall when, in an October review of Nine Homes, Billy Collins’s latest collection, in the New York Times, Mary Jo Salter remarked that “Thousands of Americans are walking around right now with Billy Collins poems in their heads.” Planners in the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs wondered: Why not put those poems in our pockets, so that we can take them out and read them to someone with whom we want to share a special moment?

Why not take the advice of John Adams, who wrote in 1781 to his 14-year-old son John Quincy, “You will never be alone, with a Poet in your Pocket. You will never have an idle Hour.”

And why not expand the possibilities to all poets writing now or who have ever written? After all, there is the same breadth of choice in Poet Laureate Collins’s Library of Congress “Poetry 180” website, which offers a new poem for every day of the school year.

Inspired by Collins’s assertion that “poetry belongs to everybody,” the City University community of poets and poetry-lovers will join Mayor Bloomberg on April 14 to encourage New Yorkers to carry in their pockets or purses, book bags or briefcases, a poem that carries special meaning or gives unique pleasure for them. They will then be asked, at some time during the day, to take it out and share it with another — someone in the office, in the home, on a school playground, perhaps a stranger on the street or in the subway. You might get lucky and hear the Mayor recite his poem on his subway commute to City Hall.

When word of “A Poem in Your Pocket” began to spread, the City’s Department of Education eagerly joined the initiative with plans for formal participation by students in the public schools.

All the iambics, trochees, and dactyls of April will not be settled for long, either. On May 13 comes the 31st annual Spring Poetry Festival at City College, masterminded by CCNY’s panjandrum of poetry, Barry Wallenstein. Seen here is the cover of Poetry in Performance, which contains a hefty 225 pages of poems performed at last year’s gala 30th-anniversary Festival by public school students from ages 6 to 18, CUNY students, faculty and alumnus, and Featured Guests Marilyn Hacker and Philip Levine. Lest there be doubt about the keen interest in poetry in the city, there were 3,000 entries in the competition to be chosen to read at the Festival’s full day of poetry reading.

For more information on the April 1 reading, contact Brenda Vercesi, 212-794-5481; for more information on CCNY’s Spring Poetry Festival, contact Prof. Wallenstein, 212-650-6343.

REBUILDING

God
make a green path
through the debris of memories
that pulls the blanket over my head
every night after.

Resoften
my pillow
that now feels like it’s filled with cinder blocks.

Let me taste
the sweetness of butter pecan ice cream
on my tongue
while enjoying the South Street Seaport.

Let me help to make New York’s heart
start pumping again.

— Amnah Bashier, P.S.11, 5th grade
From Poetry in Performance 30

A Spanish Crossroads at 34th and Fifth

R
ecently, Lia Schwartz came upon a remarkable acronym in a leading scholarly journal: LOTS.

It stood for Languages Other Than Spanish, and it signaled to the Distinguished Professor of Spanish and Comparative Literature how much the linguistic landscape has changed since she arrived in the U.S. more than 30 years ago from her native Argentina. “Things have changed radically from that time,” she said on a recent afternoon in her office in the Graduate Center. “Then French was strong, and Hispanic was just beginning to move.”

Now, she says, “Everybody wants to study Spanish,” the language spoken by 400 million souls around the world. “Interest in the language is growing all over the world. In the United States, in addition, we have this tremendous number of people who come from Hispanic backgrounds.” All of which means that Schwartz, the executive officer of CUNY’s Ph.D. Program in Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures, is riding the crest of an academic and social wave.

She joined CUNY in 2000, after 11 years at Dartmouth University, where she held an endowed chair and was chair of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Before that, she taught Spanish literature at Fordham University, and she has also been a visiting professor at Princeton University.

One measure of the growing interest in Spanish and Portuguese studies of both the Old World and the New is to be found on the shelves in Schwartz’s office. There are about 200 bound theses there, the output of the doctoral program since 1972. At the moment, there are about 80 candidates in the program, enough to fill several new shelves.

Schwartz hopes to expand and deepen the program in important ways. She wants to make it truly international, with strong contacts in the countries where the literature and language are Spanish. “I want to make a department that is a real crossroads for international studies,” she declares.

CUNY Matters — March 2003 | 3
Business Leadership Council Looks to the Future

The business of education and the education of business was on the agenda when CUNY’s Business Leadership Council met on January 15. The Council, established by Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, brings together captains of commerce and top executives of the University.

Under discussion were the possible effects of a weak economy and fiscal crises at the state and city level. The principal focus, however, was on opportunities for CUNY graduates and startups in the metropolitan area. Among the ideas considered was the establishment of campus training programs to help private-sector managers work with diverse workforces, the development of a database to help firms tap into CUNY’s richly diverse student body, and the creation of corporate internships for soon-to-be-graduating Honors College students.

Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Louise Mirrer noted that some of the startups have already been set up, adding that CUNY might also provide focus groups from the student body to assist the private sector in evaluating new products and marketing campaigns. Vice Chancellor for Facilities, Construction and Planning Emma Macari addressed the possibilities of public-private development on sites in the University’s real estate portfolio.

The Council’s committee on business incubators also reported progress in setting up space for new businesses at three community colleges — Borough of Manhattan, Hostos, and LaGuardia. Business members of the Council are working to assist in identifying worthy companies for the incubators, and are establishing a network of experts to advise and guide these start-up ventures.

Chancellor Goldstein indicated the next Council meeting would focus on the development of Governors Island.

Business Leaders with CUNY Degrees Rank First in Standard and Poor’s

The City University continues to be the leading producer of undergraduates whose success in business has brought them into the executive suites of the nation’s major corporations.

A recent analysis of the October 2002 Standard and Poor’s Register of Corporations, Executives and Directors, which is published quarterly, has revealed that well over 1,000 CUNY graduates currently hold top-level corporate positions, including numerous CEO’s, COO’s, Chairmen, Presidents, CFO’s, Senior and Group Vice Presidents, Directors, Treasurers, and Controllers. Ranking first in the nation, CUNY boasts 917 holders of undergraduate degrees who now hold business leadership posts. This compares with totals of 724 for Harvard, 667 for Yale, 560 for Princeton, and 490 for Stanford.

In addition to the 917 CUNY undergraduate alumni, there are 170 holders of CUNY graduate degrees listed in Standard and Poor’s. Among this cohort are 72 “two-fer’s”—executives who earned both their undergraduate and graduate degrees at colleges within the University. The most productive campus has been City College (276 undergraduates; 30 graduates; 16 two-fer’s), followed by Brooklyn College (206; 18; 6), Baruch College (138; 84; 34), Queens College (129; 5; 3), and Hunter College (62; 4; 4). About 10% of the executives listed in the Register did not specify their CUNY alma maters.

The most striking revelation of the analysis, in terms of local economic impact, is the fact that, though they have risen high, these CUNY graduates have not traveled far. An overwhelming majority of them — 71% — can be found in corporate headquarters in the tri-state area. Almost half of them work in the five boroughs or Nassau and Suffolk Counties. Thirty-one percent are located in Manhattan. Their contribution to the workforce and the tax base is direct and very strong within close proximity to the city.

A tiny sampling gives a sense of the influence CUNY graduates have on the business and corporate life in the metropolitan area: Frank Borelli, Senior VP, CFO and Director at Marsh & McLennan; Leonard Yahlon, Executive VP and CFO at Forbes Inc.; Roseanne Klein, VP and Chief Counsel at TIAA-CREF; William Feraudo, Executive VP at KeySpan; Karen Figlis, West Coast Manager at Conde Nast; Donald Marron, Chairman at UBS PaineWebber; Matthew Blank, Chairman and CEO at Shovetime; Richard Kassar, COO at Rock & Roll O’Nuts Corp.; Linda Livornese, Managing Director at N.Y. Life Investment Mgmt. Co.; Richard Randall, CFO at Coach, Inc. And oh yes, Arnold Kaufman, VP and Publisher (of Oosten) at Standard and Poor’s.

Physics Up Close and Personal – From a Distance

Unusually asked to take over a SUNY-Stony Brook physics class of 70 upperclassmen, David Lieberman almost instantly learned something: “teaching is fun.” The Queensborough Community College professor of physics was a mere 20 years old when he experienced that pedagogical epiphany. Since then, he has achieved renown for making sure the fun rolls on even when teacher and students are not in the same room.

Students from anywhere in the world are now able to conduct experiments in laser and fiber-optic technology through remote control, thanks to Lieberman’s pioneering development of virtual and distance learning laboratories. His expertise in the field has garnered more than $800,000 in National Science Foundation grants for the College, one for “Advanced Technological Education” and three for “Improvements in Laboratory Instrumentation.”

The Queensborough physics department is now nationally recognized as a pioneer in distance laboratory instruction, which allows students to perform experiments from remote sites. Students from all over the world also have access to the College’s labs. In remote experiments, apparatus is controlled and data are collected and interpreted via phone-linked computers. Among experiments already in operation are Michaelson interferometry, Fabry Perot interferometry, an experiment on polarization, and one on electro-optic modulation. Work is in progress on optical time domain reflectometry.

Lieberman particularly enjoys the reward of teaching community college students. “It is a wonderful thing to be able to teach Physics 201 to students who don’t think they have a chance to succeed,” he says, adding that success in physics also gives students “tremendous self-confidence.”

The QCC Laser and Fiber Optics program, with $1 million in state-of-the-art equipment at the students’ disposal, prepares graduates for jobs in such diverse industries as telecommunications, computer networking, laser manufacturing, medical technology, aerospace, and optics manufacturing. Each course includes a laboratory component in which students, in small groups, learn to build and operate optical instruments, lasers, and fiber-optic networks. Lieberman and his colleagues also reach out to local high schools with a Laser Academy.
University Counsel Honored by PILA

Frederick P. Schaffer, CUNY general counsel and vice chancellor for legal affairs, will receive the Public Interest Achievement Award given by the Public Interest Law Association (PILA) at the Association’s 10th annual auction, to be held March 6 at Baruch College. The award honors Schaffer for his “commitment to public service and the CUNY community.” Prior recipients include former Mayor David Dinkins and Ira Glasser, former executive director of the ACLU. Schaffer was elected a year ago to a two-year term as chairman of the Legal Aid Society. He is a former chief litigating assistant corporation counsel of New York City and a former partner of the law firm of Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP.

CUNY’s PILA, based at the School of Law at Queens College, is a chapter of Equal Justice Works, a national group founded in 1986 by law students “dedicated to surmounting barriers to equal justice.” In recognition of this dedication, the group names an honor named after President George W. Bush returned the 172-acre island — for about 200 years accessible only to military or government personnel — to the public domain. In addition to

Schomburg Trove Honors Hostos Teacher

English professor Vermell Blanding, a specialist in reading at Hostos Community College, has good reason to smile when the NYPL’s Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture is mentioned. This fall John Scarry, her colleague of more than 25 years, donated with giants of 20th-century African-American literature — James Baldwin, Lorraine Hansberry, and Langston Hughes. Notable among these treasures new to the Center’s holdings was an autographed copy of Baldwin’s Just Above My Head, a postcard obtained in Austria of

Governors Island: In a New York State of Mind

With those words, spoken on January 31, President George W. Bush formally returned the 172-acre island — for about 200 years accessible only to military or government personnel — to the public domain. In addition to

Lehman Provost – and Ironman

If your notion of recreation doesn’t extend to 2.4-mile swims, 112-mile bike rides, and 26-mile marathons—all on the same day—hanging out with Anthony Garro would not be a good idea. The Lehman College microbiologist, who is also the College’s provost, has been competing as a triathlete for 20 years, and last fall he faced one of the ultimate challenges in extreme sport, the Ironman World Triathlon Championships. Having made the cut in his age group (60-64) at a preliminary competition at Lake Placid, Garro headed for the October 19 final round at Kona, on Hawaii’s big island. Garro faced a swim course that, according to observers, was made the toughest in the Ironman’s 25-year history by torrential rain and wave swells. “The swells were so high that with every stroke you took, you faced a wall of water,” he recalls.

LaGuardia CC Signs on for Sign Language

LaGuardia Community College recently arrived at an articulation agreement with SUNY/Empire State to establish the tri-state area’s first-ever Bachelor of Arts in Cultural Studies ASL/English Interpretation. The program will train those already fluent in ASL who desire to gain expertise in the art and science of interpretation, filling a long-standing need. Jo Ann Krans, project director of LaGuardia’s nationally recognized Interpreter Education Program, observes that “the city’s large deaf community has had to deal with a shortage of qualified interpreters for too long.”

Krans adds, “Since legislation has codified the rights of deaf and hard-of-hearing people to qualified interpreters, and deaf people have moved into all fields of endeavor, the demand for more highly educated interpreters has increased exponentially.” And the field is also becoming more and more sophisticated. The field is recognizing, and research shows, that interpreters “need to have a keen understanding of interpretation theory and the cultural and linguistic dynamics between English and ASL,” says Krans.

Students wishing to gain entry into the program must pass a rigorous admission process. At LaGuardia, their 37-credit concentration will consist of courses in ASL discourse, how languages function, personal and professional ethics, and five levels of interpreting theory and practice. This will be followed by fieldwork internships.

Planning for the program and creation of a state-of-the-art, 12-station interpreting lab has taken eight years, this gestation period being supported by nearly $1 million from the U.S. and N.Y. Departments of Education.

Then (as seen here) he cycled through the lava field of the big Hawaiian island in weather that reached into the 90s. Then came the marathon. Garro’s times (1:22, 6:34, 5:17) gave him a top-10 showing of the 40 early-sixtyish competitors. 

Triathlete Garro
A Cornucopia of Faculty Fellowships and Awards

list on the facing page is a selection from among the thousands of available prizes, grants, fellowships, and awards that the University offers to its faculty. During the current academic year, hundreds of awards have been given to University faculty members. These awards have been made by the University and by outside agencies such as the National Science Foundation, the National Geographic Society, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Ford Foundation, among others.

Schoodic Institute of Environmental Studies (SIES)

The Schoodic Institute of Environmental Studies (SIES), located in Maine, is a research and teaching facility of the University of Maine. SIES provides a unique opportunity for faculty to conduct research in a natural and undisturbed environment. The Institute is home to a number of research projects, including studies of climate change, marine ecosystems, and coastal ecology. In addition, SIES offers a variety of educational programs, including courses in environmental science and conservation. This year, the Institute awarded several fellowships to faculty members, including a grant for research on the impact of climate change on coastal ecosystems.

Institute for Research in Education and Social Science (IRES)

The Institute for Research in Education and Social Science (IRES) is a research institute that focuses on the social and educational issues facing society. IRES conducts research on topics such as education, poverty, and social inequality, and works to develop policies that address these issues. This year, the Institute awarded several fellowships to faculty members, including a grant for research on the impact of social media on youth.

Spotlight on an Faculty

Engineering the Talent for Biomedical Research

by Dr. Edward S. Weinbaum

The highest professional pleasure for Sheldon Weinbaum, director of the School of Biomedical Engineering at City College, comes from the day his Ph.D. students, "his" Ph.D. students, "his Ph.D. students," Weinbaum said. "I get to share that moment when you feel you've really understood the science and that you've been able to contribute something new to the field."

Weinbaum received the highest professional pleasure when he discovered that his students were indeed capable of making important contributions to the field of biomedical engineering. This was a critical moment in his career, as he realized that his students were capable of achieving great things in the field.

"It's not just about the science," Weinbaum said. "It's about the people too. And I love watching them grow and develop as professionals."

Weinbaum is proud of the many accomplishments of his students, including the discovery of new treatments for diseases such as cancer and diabetes. "I am proud of all my students," he said. "They are like children to me, and I love seeing them succeed."
No man who succeeded in amusing Oscar Wilde as much as Oscar amused himself could be called uninteresting, and Max Beerbohm certainly was in the same witty league. Perhaps this was because they were both intensely private men who loved to play with masks — hence the famous woe-rack Oscar made about Beerbohm one day to a mutual friend: “Tell me, when you are alone with Max, does he take off his face and reveal his mask?”

On the other hand, it was Wilde who encouraged the very young Beerbohm to publish in 1893 his very first piece of work to support their education. “I tell them, ‘Wear your struggle as a badge of honor.’”

SPOTLIGHT ON FACULTY

Offering an Islamic Perspective on the Great African Diaspora

The first plane to strike the World Trade Center flew over Amir Al-Islam’s Greenwich Village apartment. “I heard it fly over,” said Al-Islam, a recent addition to the Medgar Evers College faculty. “I saw people running. It was really a traumatic experience” — particularly traumatic for an orthodox Muslim like Al-Islam, who has spent years working for peace as an administrator in various non-governmental organizations, many under U. N. auspices. He recalled a Vatican peace meeting three years ago. “I had a chance to say a few words and I observed, ‘If we solve the problems in all their complexity.’”

Lehman the Man (125th) and College (35th) Celebrated

H e was elected governor of New York four times; he supervised the largest international relief effort in history during and after World War II; next he served for seven years in the U.S. Senate. Disinclined to rest on his laurels in retirement, he then worked with Eleanor Roosevelt and others to drive the bosses of Tammany Hall out of the state’s Democratic party. A decade later, in 1968, Herbert H. Lehman became a college.

Thirty-five years ago, when the Bronx campus of Hunter College became an independent senior college within the City University, several names were suggested for the new campus. As Lehman College’s current president, Ricardo Fernandez, has written in an op-ed piece that appeared in several Bronx and Westchester County papers, “Herbert Lehman was chosen because of what he represented: integrity in public service, international idealism, love of country, commitment to equal opportunity for all Americans and a willingness to work hard. Citizens of the world — including the 10,000 students of Lehman College who include immigrants from 90 countries — are inspired by the Lehman legacy.”

This spring the College is mounting a semester-long series of events celebrating the 125th anniversary of its name-sake’s birth and its own 35th anniversary. A highlight will be a stellar symposium, “Herbert Lehman: A Historical Perspective,” on February 25. The speakers on Lehman the Family Man, Senator, Humanitarian, Governor, and Reformer will be June Bingham Birgy, Julius C.C. Edelstein, William vanden Heuvel, Henry Morgenthau III, and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. Everyone on the panel personally knew Lehman, who died in 1963.

One of Lehman’s political stands as a U.S. senator made him a perfect choice for a campus of a University noted for serving immigrants. As Fernandez noted, Lehman “voted in 1950 against the McCarran Walter Act, which raised barriers not only against immigrants but also against writers, scientists, and students from abroad who might have expressed liberal thoughts or ideas.”

He also was one of few in the Senate who, at the risk of his office, stood up to McCarthy’s anti-Communist zealotry: “I will not compromise with my conscience. I will vote to protect the liberties of our people.” New York’s voters returned him to office at the next election.

The man captured by President Lehman personifies not only the spirit of the Bronx campus but all of CUNY: “Herbert H. Lehman believed the role and responsibility of government is to look after those who desperately need help and cannot help themselves: the poor, the handicapped, children, the elderly and victims of discrimination and oppression. He was a humble, uncharacteristic leader who knew how to define and approach problems in all their complexity.”

For more information on the anniversary celebrations on the Bronx campus, visit the Lehman web site (www.lehman.cuny.edu).

“Max Beerbohm by Max Beerbohm” by N. John Hall

Max Beerbohm: A Kind of a Life

And yet...the brilliant caricaturist (whether with words or an artist’s pencil) spoke of his life as “uneventful” and of “whether with words or an artist’s pencil” essay titled “Oscar Wilde by an essayist.”

One of Max Beerbohm’s Caricatures, which gathers more than 200 of the dead-on skewerings, and the recently reissued Illustrated Zuleika Dobson, Beerbohm’s claim to novelist fame. Clearly, what attracted Wilde then and now is Beerbohm’s “delicious cheek.” It was full display when, as Hall writes, “in May 1898 Max embarked on the only regular job he ever held. He did so with trepidation, telling [his close friend] Will Rothenstein that he was going on the streets of journalism...an intellectual prostitute.”

Beerbohm was getting ready to succeed George Bernard Shaw as the drama reviewer for the Saturday Review, and he wrote his editor asking for a raise beyond the £6 a week Shaw had been receiving. With breathtaking effrontery, he explained, “I have less experience of the theatre and so will find the work more difficult.” As Hall tells us, “The Saturday, understandably, did not see it this way and raised his salary to £5 a week.”

Hall also reveals an appropriately subversive flare in his introduction, titled “A Little Book.” He promises he will do two things almost unheard-of among contemporaneous biographers, to judge from the many forlorn memories that one sees in the Biography section at Barnes & Noble: “I shall keep this book relatively short, and I shall not attempt to ferret out the inner man.”

Hall explains, “The inner man of Max Beerbohm” sounds oxymoronic. He was very self-aware, but he was not a self-reflective introspection or soul-searching. If he did look deeply into himself — and I don’t think he did so very often — he did not tell us about it. Instead, he points us to his art, his writings and caricatures, all of it highly personal, unmistakably his own. For Max — as he is always called — peers out at us from everything he wrote or drew. Then, for good measure, Hall introduces Virginia Woolf to drive the point home: “What Mr. Beerbohm gave us was, of course, himself...He was affected by private joys and sorrows, and had no gospel to preach, and no learning to impart. He was himself simply and directly, and himself he has remained...The triumph is the triumph of style.”

The real challenge of a “Max” life lies elsewhere, as Hall acknowledges: “He had the most amusing mind of his generation, and how is one to keep his biography amusing?” I shall adopt the obvious and safest strategy, that of quoting him when ever possible, either in small bits or fairly large chunks...What should emerge here in a biography, not quite ‘Max Beerbohm by Max Beerbohm,’ but close to it.”

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John Jay Hosts Criminal Justice Job Fair

I

at the hurly-burly of Graduate and Professional Day, as recruiters and job-hunting students filled the North Hall lobby and cafeteria at John Jay College of Criminal Justice to bustling, Carina Quintian greeted an old acquaintance from the U.S. Navy’s criminal investiga-
tive service. “You’re getting a little grey,” she said with a smile. “I ought to be,” was the reply. “This is the thirteenth year I’ve been here for this fair.”

Quintian, associate director of career advisement and pre-law adviser at John Jay, has been running these job fairs for 19 years. The two-day career and professional gathering takes place in December, a job fair followed in April.

The December gathering is casual and open to all; several East Coast colleges brought busses of their students to the fair and many CUNY campuses were represented in the crowd. The April fair is for John Jay students and alumni only, and jobseekers must wear business attire and bring copies of a professional resume. “They’ve come a long way, by word of mouth among the police departments,” Quintian said of the job fairs. “They’ve found out this is a good place to recruit. We have recruiters here from as far away as Los Angeles and Las Vegas.”

For recruiters, the career days offered a chance to fish in a teeming pool of qualified candidates. “For human resources person was here yesterday and she was stuffed,” said Rafael J. Heredia of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs police. “We’ve taken over a hundred applications and resumes.”

Although some agencies are operating under temporary job freezes, others were ready to hire. Barbara Bertorelli, assistant district manager of the Social Security Administration’s Manhattan office, noted that she was expecting a wave of retire-
ments. “We’ll be doing a tremendous amount of hiring of people with management potential,” she predicted.

Recruiters and school officials stressed that the fair wasn’t only about hiring. The agencies here may not only be seek-
ing applications, but also evaluating their job requirements,” said Richard Saulnier, Dean for Admissions and Registration at John Jay. “Students get some timely reality checks — like, for example, the specific requirements to be an FBI agent.”

Some students knew exactly what they needed to reach what they wanted in a career. “My plan is to study forensic psychology,” said Uniquik Bostic, who lives in East New York, as she filled out an appli-
cation for the Suffolk County, NY police department. “I want to join a police department and continue my studies.”

Other students use the day to winnow down their options. “It’s very informative,” said Raul Reyes of Riverdale. “You can see what the same job offers in different states.” After looking into police departments in several states and into several federal agen-
cies, Reyes thought that the Fort Lauderdale police force looked like a good fit.

Sometimes an interview turns into John Jay family business. Steven Burdier, a May 2002 graduate, says he was greeted by recruiter Gregory Tranchina, a 1992 gradu-
ate now in IRS criminal investigation. John Jay alumna Carlos Ramirez, of the U.S. Pretrial Services, the bail agency for New York’s Southern District federal court, said, “I push John Jay every chance I get. I want to make sure students who graduate from CUNY get jobs in the courts.”

Chancellor Proposes Academic Initiatives

Continued from page 1

then praised a more recently established organization chaired by New York Life’s Chair and CEO, Seymour Steinberg: “The businessmen and women of CUNY’s Business Leadership Council identify workforce trends and opportunities for the University.” (For more on the Council see story on page 4.)

CUNY is also adopting new business practices to “work smarter and use shared strategies to reduce administrative costs,” Goldstein said, adding that such measures are already “achieving millions of dollars in savings” on several campuses. Further, “CUNY should be working, where appropriate, with private developers to more effectively use our existing physical assets, and seek to build new mixed-use facilities, as we leverage up the capital budget the state provides.” This could turn the $1.3 billion allocated by the state for building in the next five years into $1.6 billion, the Chancellor said.

Noting that SUNY’s trustees recently proposed a 41% increase in undergraduate tuition, Goldstein said state leaders should strive for a rational tuition policy, perhaps by linking increases to changes in econom-
ic indicators. Michigan State University, he said, resolved some years ago to limit tuition hikes to changes in the Consumer Price Index. The state university systems in Florida, California, and North Carolina have similar indexing policies.

Goldstein also noted that CUNY is developing plans for a New York Simulation Center on Governors Island, where mathema-
ticians and computer scientists from CUNY and other leading local universities would create a cutting-edge research facility. “Computer simu-
tation is a powerful analytical tool,” Goldstein said. “It enables us to investigate and experiment with potential scenarios in fields ranging from changing traffic patterns to prevent-
ing bio-terrorism, from the longevity of pension plans to stresses on the city’s buildings and bridges.” Teacher training and related activities are envisioned as the uses of the facility are explored.

Finally, the Chancellor revealed that, “since New York is a media capital,” CUNY is beginning to plan a new School of Journalism “with a special focus on urban studies.” Thus, Goldstein believes, will “utilize the extraordinary resource of CUNY/TV and the University’s other Internet-based technologies.”

Concluding his speech, Goldstein said, “we are changing the conversation about CUNY. Today, this University is rightly perceived by stakeholders as being in the mainstream of higher education practice. Our challenge now is to maintain our momentum here in New York City through these times of extraordinary financial crisis. I pledge you...we will meet the challenge. We will stay the course.”

The Chancellor’s full speech can be accessed on the University web site, www.cuny.edu.
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From Flinging Pizza to Neuroscience, Thanks to a BCC Biomedical Program

In the seven years since its founding, the Minority Biomedical Research Support (MBRS) program has become an essential resource for many of the students who participate in it. "It was made possible by Bronx Community College and the National Institutes of Health," said Dr. Charles Davis, assistant professor of neurology at Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, an associate professor of chemistry at BCC, and an attending neurologist at the U.S. Veterans Affairs Hospital in the Bronx. "This remarkable segue was made possible by Bronx Community College’s longstanding Minority Biomedical Research Support Program (MBRS), which has raised about $300,000."

MBRS students like Leonardo Santana are an example of what the REAP program can accomplish. He came to the United States at age 17, dropped out of high school, learned English, and went on to college. He says, "I want to be in medical research. I want to apply to the M.D./Ph.D. program and laboratory research." Santana is an example of what the REAP program can accomplish. He came to the United States at age 17, dropped out of high school, learned English, and went on to college. He says, "I want to be in medical research. I want to apply to the M.D./Ph.D. program and laboratory research."

Jürgen Polle, a postdoctoral fellow at Brooklyn College, is shown in the well-equipped laboratory the College provided him, and expects to start teaching in the fall. He has nonetheless had enough contact with students to form a favorable impression. "The students, too," he said, "are above my expectations." Cornelius Johannes Polle has begun research in the Brooklyn College's Aquatic Research and Environmental Assessment Center — "was a major factor in my decision to come here," Polle said. "I work with Brooklyn College's Biology Department, and the College’s REAP program, which we call REAP, offered me a realistic chance to conduct research in which students could collaborate on," Davis said. "I was surprised to find students — minority students — into your lab and team them."

These students are expected to attend several national scientific meetings, at which they will present their research findings. About ten years ago, the students at BCC realized their faculty had to overcome an additional barrier: inadequate communication skills. Some students from four-year colleges were encouraged to take on her work, "I spent a whole year out of my life writing high school."

The universe, with all its history, contents, laws, and destiny. Kaku thinks he has co-invented a tool to bring everything that was, is and shall be into that single short equation. This is what is called “string theory,” an brave and brilliant constuct that one observer has described as “a 21st-century physics that fills in the 21st-century puzzle.” String theory, Kaku among them, postulates that the universe is made of strings of energy that form the quarks and leptons that make up everything in the universe. The key to this theory is that it predicts a new type of particle, the so-called “string.” The universe is an infinite number of dimensions, most of which are concealed (or hidden) from our senses. Therefore, it is not surprising that a number of scientists are working to uncover the secrets of the universe. The universe is an infinite number of dimensions, most of which are concealed (or hidden) from our senses. Therefore, it is not surprising that a number of scientists are working to uncover the secrets of the universe.
Lisa Amowitz remembers September 11, 2001. She had just begun teaching a new course at Bronx Community College and felt the class was coming together nicely. “I remember the blue sky of that day,” she recalled. “I just looked up at it and thought: What a beautiful day. I was in the best possible mood.”

Within moments, that sunny mood was crushed by first word of the World Trade Center atrocity. Amowitz, an assistant professor of advertising art and computer graphics, turned to her métier to deal with the horror. “I was freaked out, frozen, numb,” she said. “The only way to get the juices flowing again was to do something. So I did a poster.”

That poster, with an image of the Statue of Liberty as a “silent witness” to the attack, will shortly become part of a more elaborate Amowitz project, a web site that has turned to her métier to establish an appropriate memorial to the lost.

“An advisory committee set up a competition to ‘create a unique and lasting tribute to those who were lost and to the spirit of renewal that sustains those who survive.’ A web site seemed appropriate,” said Louise Mirrer, executive vice chancellor of academic affairs. “The University wanted something that would transcend college boundaries, but that would allow each college to do what it wished,” she said. “It seemed obvious to use technology to link all of our campuses in this.”

The competition drew about 50 entries from CUNY faculty, students and staff. The panel of judges included prominent artists, web and graphics designers, civic leaders and relatives of those at CUNY who died in the attack. Amowitz’s site will allow visitors to post or view written or multimedia notices honoring them.

The memorial site is viewable at cuny.edu/911memorial. It opens with a sky-blue background upon which a pair of blood-red towers appear. The towers descend into place in a Manhattan skyline as the sky turns dark, then black. The time elapsing between the two moments of impact is counted down in a corner of the screen.

Moving from the home page, visitors can read about CUNY’s losses and its role in the aftermath. They can also append either written or multimedia memorials of their own. Amowitz found music for the site on the web and purchased the rights; it is called “Ethereal” and is, she said, “hopeful but solemn.”

Indeed, after the somber introduction, the site leads into “a more hopeful opening page which highlights the spirit of giving and patriotism that followed the attack,” Amowitz explains. “Never did I more clearly understand what this country is about and what CUNY represents.”

Lisa Amowitz

Two Architects with CUNY Ties on WTC Finalist THINK Team

When the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation winnowed design proposals down to just two in early February, one was the “World Culture” center conceived by the THINK team, which includes two architects with City University ties: Rafael Viñoly, whose graduate training was at Harvard, has previously worked on the CUNY School of Architecture. His stake in the project is not only professional but personal: both his home and his landscape architecture firm are within six blocks of Ground Zero.

Smith, whose graduate training was at Harvard, has previously worked on the reconstruction of the Harlem Gateway project on 110th Street and designed its Malcolm X. Plaza. Smith finds the public’s interest in the design challenges impressive. At the display of all the design proposals at the Winter Garden, he recalls, “I saw a whole troop of firemen debating about urban design.” He adds that his email from kibitzers has seriously increased.

Rafael Viñoly, Architects PC, has designed several major projects on CUNY campuses, beginning with Haaren Hall at John Jay College, a major multiple-use edifice that opened in 1988. Often referred to as the Tenth Avenue Building, it houses administrative offices, the College library, a performing arts theater, classrooms, and a complete physical education/sports facility.

Also by Viñoly is the soaring stainless-steel Apex sports complex at Lehman College, which New York Times architecture critic Herbert Muschamp hailed as “exhilarating.” Its façade, Muschamp observed, “recedes toward the horizon with the graceful curve of a discuss—or better yet, a Frisbee—hurled through space.” The Apex opened in 1994.

Viñoly has also devised the transformation of City College’s former library building into the new home for CUNY’s School of Architecture, and he is also at work planning the West Quad Building, a major multiple-use structure at Brooklyn College.

Focusing on the landscape architecture component of the THINK plan is Ken Smith, since 1992 a full-time and, most recently, an adjunct professor in the CUNY School of Architecture. His stake in the project is not only professional but personal: both his home and his landscape architecture firm are within six blocks of Ground Zero.

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