FROM RECORD ENROLLMENT growth at Brooklyn College to faculty excellence at John Jay, from 90 percent debt-free graduation at Queensborough to more than 70 percent receiving financial aid at Medgar Evers, CUNY colleges are celebrating their own value to students and New York communities in an unprecedented University-wide program to inform the public about the great value and importance of CUNY.

The “Support the CUNY Value” program, available at cuny.edu/support, brings home the quality, affordability, and impact on New York provided by the City University of New York and each of its schools for students, families and communities. The website includes fact-rich, school-specific Value publications issued by CUNY’s 11 senior colleges, seven community colleges, the Graduate Center and the CUNY School of Law.

The school publications, each uniquely designed and filled with campus-specific facts, photos and stories, illustrate the sweep of the opportunities and resources offered by CUNY to New York’s people and neighborhoods. Baruch College’s brochure touts the statistic that 88.4 percent of its alumni currently live in New York State. Kingsborough

Recognizing Faculty Achievement

The University’s renowned faculty members continually win professional achievement awards from prestigious organizations as well as research grants from government agencies, farsighted foundations and leading corporations. Pictured are just a few of the recent honorees. Brief summaries of many ongoing research projects start here and continue inside.

Vinod Menon of City College has received two grants from the National Science Foundation: $1,999,994 for a project entitled “EFRI-2-DARE: Excitons and Polaritons Using 2D Materials (ExPo2D),” and $299,281 for “Polaritons Using Two-Dimensional Atomic Crystals.” Andrew Delamater of Brooklyn College has been awarded a $392,500 grant from the National Institutes of Health for “A Multi-Component Approach to Extinction in Pavlovian Learning.” Clare Carroll of the CUNY Graduate Center has received a $214,947 grant from the Renaissance Society of America Inc. for “Support for the Renaissance Studies.”

Rebecca Bratspies of the CUNY School of Law has been honored by the Eastern Queens Alliance for her long-standing work educating New Yorkers about urban sustainability and environmental justice. She heads the School’s Center for Urban Environmental Reform.

Allan Frei of Hunter College has been awarded $2,479,886 from the NYC Department of Environmental Protection for a “Climate Change Integrated

Maritza Lopez makes clear how important the University is to the lives of its students in her City Tech ’14 valedictorian address.

CUNY Colleges Tout Their Quality, Affordability, Opportunity

96% of City Tech’s 2014-2015 graduates were either employed or obtaining their education within six months of graduating.

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As we undertake this important work, I think it’s useful to recall our unique mandate and special responsibilities, not just to the future prosperity of the city and state, but to expanding opportunities to the many underrepresented communities CUNY has always served with enthusiasm and distinction.”

— James B. Milliken, Chancellor

Successes, Challenges in

Chancellor James B. Milliken’s report to the University’s Board of Trustees on January 26, 2016, the Board’s first meeting of the year. His comments follow:

When the legislature established the current structure for the governance and financing of The City University of New York, it used clear and unequivocal language to set apart CUNY’s special mission. The law provides that the university will be “an independent system of higher education” that must be “responsive to the needs of its urban setting” and operate as “an integrated system,” with close collaboration between the community colleges and senior colleges. It adds that CUNY must maintain its traditional commitments to both academic excellence and equal access to students, faculty and staff, continuing its history as a highly diverse institution.

In perhaps its most important mandate, the legislature said, “The City University is of vital importance as a vehicle for the upward mobility of the disadvantaged in the City of New York.”

As we begin the new year, we’re focused on developing a new university-wide strategic plan, a new university master plan, opening new schools and programs and finding new ways to ensure our students’ success and better serve New York. As we undertake this important work, I think it’s useful to recall our unique mandate and special responsibilities, not just to the future prosperity of the city and state, but to expanding opportunities to the many underrepresented communities CUNY has always served with enthusiasm and distinction.

Much depends on our success in continuing to raise our academic profile, to bring to scale our highly successful programs for supporting New York City students who arrive with big dreams but also remedial needs, and to attract and retain the finest faculty. Succeeding at these tasks, with the support and guidance of this Board, will ensure that the hope among our student body, one of the largest, most diverse and hard-working anywhere, gets translated into prosperity and fulfillment, as it has for more than 160 years. CUNY is highly regarded around the world for its mission and the success it enjoys in fulfilling its essential work, and our faculty and students continue to earn important recognition. Within the last few weeks, CUNY’s online bachelor’s degree program, provided by our School of Professional Studies, was ranked number 11 in the country by U.S. News & World Report. That is gratifying recognition of our efforts to expand the availability and increase the quality of our online offerings. CUNY Law continues to gain recognition nationally, and a few days ago was cited as the number one public interest law program in the country, moving ahead of Berkeley. The new medical school we’re opening in the fall will similarly have a distinctive mission in line with CUNY’s values: its students will in many instances come from underrepresented communities and many of its graduates are expected to return to underserved neighborhoods to contribute to improvements in health care.

We have also earned recognition for our efforts to ensure that our colleges are increasingly accessible to veterans and offer support tailored to their needs. I am very pleased that the number of military-friendly campuses at CUNY has expanded from 7 last year to 17 this year. CUNY colleges are working hard to give these deserving men and women the education and skills they need to follow their service in the military with rewarding careers. We are proud to have them at CUNY.

Students clearly recognize the value
CUNY Seeks Mediation to Reach Settlement on PSC Contract

The University stated that negotiations are irresolvable, and asked for PERB’s assistance. The parties are now in their sixth year without a collective bargaining agreement, which expired on Oct. 19, 2010. The petition further stated: “CUNY is desirous of reaching a prompt and equitable resolution of the outstanding issues. With a CUNY collective bargaining agreement, the parties have been able to fund a new contract for its faculty and staff. The wage increases total 6 percent as follows: 1 percent on April 20, 2014; 1 percent on April 20, 2015; 3 percent on April 20, 2016; and an additional 1 percent on Oct. 19, 2016. Since the expiration of the last contract, annual salary step increments were maintained and a historic agreement was reached on adjunct health insurance. The salary offer has been rejected by the union. The PSC has proposed a 14 percent wage increase over the same six-year period, a workload reduction and approximately several hundred million dollars in retroactive pay. Additionally, both sides remain far apart on a variety of non-salary issues.

The salary offer has been rejected by the union. The PSC has proposed a 14 percent wage increase over the same six-year period, a workload reduction and approximately several hundred million dollars in retroactive pay. Additionally, both sides remain far apart on a variety of non-salary issues. In its filing to the board, the University cited 13 outstanding issues. The union has presented more than 30 issues that remain unresolved.

The petition also noted that on Oct. 20, 2015, the PSC announced its intention to hold a strike authorization vote. PSC President Barbara Bowen on Dec. 16, 2015, announced to members an opportunity to sign a public statement of commitment to vote ‘yes’ on the upcoming strike authorization vote. The University petition quoted Bowen’s announcement in which she stated: “That’s why I am asking you today to pledge your commitment to vote ‘yes’ on strike authorization. Please consider the pledge carefully and add your name. Give the union the power we need. By signing, you pledge that you will vote ‘yes’ – and indicate that you are prepared, if necessary, to join a strike or other job action.” The University petition further noted: “The parties’ inability to agree to terms of a successor agreement after several years and many bargaining sessions and the PSC’s publicized campaign strategy to seek a strike authorization vote and a public commitment by its members that they will, in fact, strike, demonstrate that the parties have reached an impasse which they cannot resolve without the assistance of the Public Employment Relations Board.”

A strike vote under the New York State Taylor Law and would have serious negative consequences for the University and its students as well as the union and participating members. General Counsel and Senior Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs Schaffer indicated that CUNY’s leadership has consistently emphasized that a collective bargaining agreement with the union was the University’s “highest priority,” and that the University strongly recognized the importance of obtaining a fair labor settlement.

Serving Our Students

of a CUNY education. We are graduating record numbers of students, giving them the capabilities and credentials they need to realize their dreams, raise families and contribute to the region’s prosperity. This is a result of very purposeful attention to student success and progress, not only access. This focus on success — particularly graduation — is part of a national movement, but in many ways, particularly with our ASAP initiative, CUNY has been leading the way.

We are keenly aware that it isn’t sufficient to be successful, but that we must do it as efficiently as possible. We are entrusted with public funds and we have a responsibility to be the best stewards possible. We have an impressive record of consolidating back office operations and sharing services among all colleges, perhaps more extensively than any other university system in the nation. And while we have had success with a number of productivity initiatives, the University will pursue opportunities for further savings. Much of this has been possible because while CUNY is one of the largest university systems in the country, its natural advantage is that it is in one city. This allows us to do things no other similarly large institution can do, combining functions that generally have to be done in many locations in other large systems. The functions almost always performed at the campus level in other systems — but that are performed at one administrative site at CUNY — include admissions, financial aid, payroll, benefits, testing, security, information technology and capital construction. This extensive shared services model allows us to reduce redundancies and keep total University administrative costs down.

As we reported to the Board of Trustees in the fall, we have also realized substantial savings at our central administration for the current fiscal year. We put in place a hiring freeze along with reductions of 10% to the purchasing and temporary personnel budgets. We project that these actions will result in year-to-year savings in the system office of at least 6% for Fiscal Year 2016, and probably significantly greater.

This is work that will never be done and we will never be satisfied. In an era of limited investment in public higher education, a more cost effective operation allows us to reallocate resources to the classroom, and that must always be our goal.

On January 12th, the Governor outlined the Executive Budget, and I want to comment briefly on some positive aspects of the proposed budget. These include the performance funding initiative, which Governor Cuomo has made a priority and which is already making a difference at CUNY colleges. The Governor’s leadership with the predictable tuition policy provides an important opportunity to supplement state investment in the university. We’re also pleased to play a key role in the Governor’s plan for education in and after transition from prison. And we enthusiastically support his renewed effort to pass a Dream Act for New York which would benefit so many CUNY students.

The Governor also proposed a major shift in funding from the state to the city, which would trigger a significant investment toward settling our labor contracts. It would appear there is to be more discussion on this proposal, but our position remains clear: our interest is the financial stability and adequate investment that will allow us to continue to serve over 500,000 students and the people of New York.

In the City Preliminary Budget, which the Mayor issued on Thursday, there was also important support for CUNY. This included additional funding for scaling up our immensely successful ASAP Program, of which the Mayor has been a great champion. He also announced funding for two collaborative programs with the city’s schools, as well as continued funding for the Civic Justice Corps Program at John Jay College. We are grateful for this support.

In the coming months we will work with the state and the city on CUNY’s budget and seek to conclude fair contracts with our faculty and staff. We will not lose sight of the real interests at stake, the education and the futures of the over 500,000 students served every day by The City University of New York. That is the reason why the effort to maintain a financially strong CUNY and to support a talented faculty matter so much. CUNY’s success is essential to the vitality of New York and the opportunities for its people.
H A V E  Y O U  H E A R D ?  Q u e e n s  C o l l e g e has won a federal environmental grant to study to aid in the survival of the monarch butterfly . . .

Brooklyn College graduate Shirley Chisholm was awarded the Medal of Freedom posthumously by President Barack Obama . . .

C U N Y has launched a major voter registration and education campaign.

In anticipation for the upcoming election year, The City University of New York is launching “Vote For A Change,” a major voter registration initiative aimed at registering thousands of students across 24 campuses to participate in city, state and presidential elections. The non-partisan CUNY campaign will utilize the University’s website (www. cuny.edu/vote), CUNY-TV, email messages, and social media platforms, as well as the efforts of nearly 30 voter registration coordinators that will be organizing college activities to register students by March 25—the deadline for the April 19 Presidential Primary. CUNY Citizenship Now, a University-based immigrant assistance program, is also redeploying efforts to help as many students as possible to become naturalized citizens in time to register for the 2016 elections. Additional support for CUNY’s campaign will be provided by partner organizations including The New York Public Interest Research Group, The New York City Campaign Finance Board, and Common Cause. “Voter registration is the first step towards a more engaged, active citizenry,” said Chancellor James B. Milliken. “We encourage all members of the University community to participate in the electoral process during this presidential election year.” According to the New York City Campaign Finance Board, New York State currently faces a voter participation crisis. Nearly 2 million voting age citizens are not registered to vote. However, CUNY’s efforts have proven successful in getting students to vote and participate in past elections. In the 2012 Presidential election, CUNY registered 123,658 students to vote, representing 51.8% of those who were eligible. More recently, for the 2014 midterm elections, CUNY registered 107,130 students, 53.8% of those who were eligible. . . .

C U N Y Launches Major Voter Registration, Education Campaign

Shirley Chisholm, Brooklyn College ’46, the first African American woman elected to Congress, is best known for being the first major-party black candidate for president of the U.S.

P resident Barack Obama posthumously awarded Shirley Chisholm the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country’s highest civilian honor, in a ceremony at the White House on Nov. 24, 2015. “Huck to President Obama for recognizing Shirley Chisholm and what she represents,” said Brooklyn College President Karen L. Gold. At the 2015 Shirley Chisholm Day program, held on Nov. 17 in the Brooklyn College Student Center. “The college has a very long history of graduating students who go on to serve in public office and do amazing things. We say in our mission statement that one of the things we want our students to acquire is the ability to think critically, a quality exemplified in the work and continuing significance of Shirley Chisholm,” added President Gold. Chisholm ’46, the first African American woman elected to Congress, representing Brooklyn’s 12th congressional district, is best known for being the first major-party black candidate for president of the United States and the first woman to run for the Democratic presidential nomination. She was instrumental in the creation of SEED, codrafting the National Political Congress of Black Women, and also helping to found the National Organization of Women. Zinga A. Franiz, the new director of the Shirley Chisholm Project on Brooklyn Women’s Activism, said the award was: “a testament to Chisholm’s enduring legacy and lasting impact.” “At Brooklyn College and the Shirley Chisholm Project, we’re already aware of how great Chisholm was,” said Zinga. “We’re very pleased that President Obama and the White House have also acknowledged that greatness — and with one of the highest honors in the land.”

Studying Tropical Ecology in Cuba.

Students from Macaulay Honors College at CUNY, along with Baruch College associate professor David Gruber, are taking part in a unique experience in Cuba — studying tropical ecology at the Peninsula de Zapata National Park. The site is one of the Caribbean’s most important wetland areas, and at nearly 700,000 acres, one of the largest biosphere reserves in Cuba. The students are exploring the diversity of flora and fauna in this remote part of the country in a January trip. Co-teaching the course are two noted ornithologists from the University of Havana, Lourdes Mugica Valdes and Martin Acosta Cruz. It is a rare chance for the students and scientists to explore a site that is relatively untouched by coastal development. “I am very excited for our students to experience a site that has been exposed to few toxicants and is nearly pristine, making it rich for biological discovery,” said Mary Pearl, provost of Macaulay, who is also a wildlife expert and has done much work in Cuba. “My hope is that the trip will lead to a greater relationship between CUNY and the University of Havana for other areas of study. We are grateful that this trip has been made possible through funds from the Chancellor’s Strategic Investments.” The trip is a part of a study abroad course called Cuban Tropical Forests and Reefs, with marine and terrestrial fieldwork conducted collecting data, analyzing it and then presenting their results and conclusions.
Baruch Poet Schulman Wins Robert Frost Medal

Grace Schulman, distinguished professor of English at Baruch College and one of America’s most acclaimed poets, has been awarded the 2016 Robert Frost Medal of the Poetry Society of America. The award includes a $5,000 prize. Chancellor James B. Milliken stated: “Professor Schulman joins an extraordinary list of distinguished American poets who have won the Frost Medal. I wish to extend my sincere congratulations to Professor Schulman on behalf of a grateful University.” Schulman was born in New York City in 1936. Her mother, also a writer, nurtured her affinity for the craft. “We played with words,” Schulman said, describing a joint notebook in which mother and young daughter pooled their pieces. At age 14, Schulman was introduced to the poet Marianne Moore, beginning a formative friendship. The poet attended Bard College before earning her undergraduate degree from American University in 1958. She completed graduate study at New York University, where she received her doctorate in 1971 and wrote a dissertation on Moore’s poetry that was later published as Marianne Moore: The Poetry of Engagement. Schulman usually writes of her beloved New York City, where she has lived and worked as a dedicated poetry advocate all her life. She is committed to Baruch College and CUNY. “I love doing things for Baruch,” Schulman says, expressing a sense of being “privileged” to teach her undergraduates (“they are unspoiled”). Schulman is not CUNY’s only heavyweight poet. Lehman College Professor Emeritus Joseph Tischi has been named New York State Poet Laureate Emeritus by Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

A project on monarch butterflies earned New York City’s Queens College a $91,000 federal environmental grant to improve environmental conditions and prevent the species from becoming extinct. Monarch butterflies rely on nectar-producing plants, especially milkweed, throughout their life cycle but “way stations” of these plants in the New York City area are reportedly shrinking. Monarch butterflies are vulnerable to “climate change, the deleterious effects of pesticides, the destruction of natural habitats, and the dangers posed by our biodiversity crisis,” according to the Environmental Protection Agency. With the grant to its Metropolitan Monarch Alliance Project, Queens College will conduct workshops for 150 elementary school teachers and 110 community members with a goal of establishing monarch butterfly way stations at five environmental education centers in Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx. Queens College will also help teachers from 25 schools establish their own monarch butterfly way stations to give students hands-on experience in caring for monarchs, according to the EPA. Queens College was one of three recipients, chosen from more than 400 applications, to receive this round of grants from EPA Region 2, which is responsible for New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and eight tribal nations.

Queens College has earned a $91,000 federal environmental grant to improve environmental conditions and prevent the species from becoming extinct.

“The mystery of glowing, neon green eels spotted by scientists in the Caribbean five years ago has been solved with research led by David Gruber, an associate professor of biology at Baruch College. The researchers found that the fluorescent proteins in the eels’ muscle and skin tissues had originated in vertebrate brains 300 million years ago. “It started as a brain protein and then became this fluorescent protein in muscle,” said study Gruber. After the protein moved from a neural to a fluorescent protein, it spread throughout the eel population. Natural selection favored it so much, it’s likely fluorescence plays a crucial role in the eel world, Gruber said. For instance, maybe it helps them spawn the next generation, he said. One anecdotal report of such spawning describes a “big, green fluorescent mating event” with a dozens of eels getting it on under a full moon in Indonesia. Typically, these eels are reclusive and shy, spending most of their lives hiding in the holes and crevasses around coral reefs and sea grass beds. But maybe the moonlight stimulates their fluorescent proteins, making them more visible to potential mates, he said. “We’re hoping to witness one of these spawning events to see what they’re doing.”

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Colleges Put Quality, Affordability and Opportunity on Display

Support the CUNY Value

“CUNY, in fact, is indispensable to New York and New Yorkers and to the mission of public higher education, offering a pathway to the middle class and exceptional opportunities for students to study and learn in New York and to contribute to the state and city as future professionals, business owners, employees and leaders.”

— Chancellor James B. Milliken

Continued from Page 1

Community College spotlights some of its more unique offerings, among them a Maritime Technology degree, a student- and staff-managed Urban Farm, and its Sleep Technology program, making it the only college in the city to offer an A.A.S. degree in Polysomnographic Technology.

City Tech sums up the opportunity offered by CUNY by publishing an excerpt from the graduation speech of 2014 valedictorian Maritza Lopez, who earned degrees in radiologic technology and health services administration:

“2,674 miles. By foot, by boat, by train, hungry and thirsty, hidden and in silence. 2,674 miles is the heroic journey my mother took with my sister in her arms in search of a better life … Being poor or homeless are not things that define who I am, but they are what made me self-reliant, hardworking and resilient …

“The greatest gift I take away from being a student at City Tech is the luxury of understanding that I am not a product of my circumstances. Instead, I can pave my own path.”

The University has experienced record enrollments in recent years, further strengthening its vital role in educating New York’s next generation of professionals including nurses and doctors, entrepreneurs and teachers, scientists and musicians, lawyers and social workers, computer technologists and writers, among the hundreds of thousands enrolled in CUNY schools. More than 275,000 degree-credit students are in attendance and an additional 275,000 adult- and continuing-education students are enrolled annually at CUNY campuses.

More than 90 percent of the University’s baccalaureate graduates are employed or pursuing advanced higher education three years after graduation, and more than 80 percent of all CUNY graduates live or work in New York State 10 years after earning their degrees, according to data released by Chancellor James B. Milliken on the University’s critical role as an economic engine for the state.

The Chancellor said the Support the CUNY Value program “program reflects our unwavering, historic commitment to provide high-quality, affordable public higher education for all, regardless of background or means.

“CUNY, in fact, is indispensable to New York and New Yorkers and to the mission of public higher education, offering a pathway to the middle class and exceptional opportunities for students to study and learn in New York and to contribute to the state and city as future professionals, business owners, employees and leaders.”

Through text, data, charts and photographs presented at cuny.edu/support, Support the CUNY Value details the many ways in which the University offers students a high-value college experience, from remarkably affordable tuition to the low federal education debt incurred by graduates, from award-winning professors to a low-cost path to higher earning power in New York than they would have had with only a high school diploma.

Key data at cuny.edu/support and in the Support the CUNY Value publication, which is available in shareable, printable form on the website, include comparisons between CUNY’s strikingly low four-year tuition and fees with the cost of other metropolitan-area public and private institutions, as well as nationwide averages for public, private and for-profit colleges and universities.

Sixty-six percent of CUNY undergraduates attend college tuition-free due to a combination of low tuition, financial aid and other factors. More than 80 percent graduate from CUNY colleges with zero federal education loan debt. This data is particularly relevant at a time when high college costs and skyrocketing student debt trouble many households in New York and across the nation.

On the new cuny.edu/support website are the customized Value publications for the University’s campuses, prepared by the schools as part of the unprecedented CUNY-wide informational program. Accessible through the Support homepage tab “CUNY Value by College,” the number and variety of brochures convey CUNY's citywide presence as well as the importance of each college to its community.

The Lehman Value, for example, identifies the prestigious scholarships Lehman College students have received, including Fulbrights, National Science Foundation fellowship and scholarships to Harvard and Stanford Law Schools. Fifty-five percent of its students reside in Lehman’s borough, the Bronx, according to the publication, which lists the number of students coming from each state Assembly, state Senate and City Council district, along with countries many Lehman students come from, and photographs of prominent alumni.

The College of Staten Island Value publication, under “Support and Service,” notes, “CSI students also participate in a wide range of public service opportunities … giving back to the Island and City in return for a high quality, affordable education.” From 2010 through 2015, 5,111 CSI students had paid internships with 2,607 organizations in all five boroughs. The section also features student Irma Cruz Velez, CSI ’16, a first-generation immigrant majoring in Spanish Adolescent Education who has interned for social service programs concerned with violence, substance abuse and immigrant and gender rights.

“My number one priority has been getting an education and contributing to my community any way I can,” says Cruz Velez, who won an Aramis Gonzalo Rios Memorial Scholarship and aspires to become a teacher.

The University-wide Support the CUNY Value program
reports that CUNY student enrollments are at record levels while 66 percent of full-time undergraduates attend CUNY colleges tuition-free due to the availability of financial aid from multiple sources, including federal Pell grants; the State’s Tuition Assistance Program (TAP); the New York City Council merit scholarship program; private scholarship support raised from alumni, foundations and other philanthropic organizations, and federal tax credits. At the same time, more CUNY students and faculty are winning highly competitive national awards than ever before.

Support the CUNY Value features charts that underscore the important role that affordable, predictable tuition plays in maintaining value. One chart compares average tuition and fees at CUNY’s four-year colleges, $6,782 for fall 2015, with that of other metropolitan-area institutions such as public Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J., $14,131; $47,750 at private New York University, and $38,680 at St. John’s University in Queens, also private.

Another chart illustrates the recent history, size and frequency of tuition increases at CUNY, showing that before the predictable tuition policy was started in 2011, tuition increases between 1990 and 2010 were large and intermittent, an unpredictable situation that made it difficult for students and families to anticipate costs.

Statistics showing the impact of CUNY graduates on New York are also included in Support the CUNY Value. With their earning power significantly enhanced by their college degrees, an overwhelming majority remain in the state to live and work after graduation, strengthening communities and the economy.
Continued from page 5

the University of Florida and Yale University in the project.

Queens College has been awarded a $1,242,022 grant from the NYS Education Department for the "Development of Lesson Modules and Online Support for New York State English as a New Language instruction," directed by Robert Vago.

Ricardo Otheguy of the CUNY Graduate Center has been awarded a $355,500 grant from the NYS Education Department for the "New York State Bridges to Academic Success Initiative." The New York Community Trust has extended $427,000 in grant support to Jennifer Tuten and Sherry Graves of Hunter College for "Assistance to 2nd Grade Teachers to Provide High Quality Reading Instruction in 3 East Harlem Schools with ELL." Jeffrey Butts of John Jay College has received two grants: $150,000 from the Annie E. Casey Foundation for "Evidence Generation for Youth Services," and $100,000 from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene for "Assessing Infrastructure of Behavioral Health Services in NYC.

Andrew Poje of the College of Staten Island has received $235,736 in grant support from the University of Miami for "The Consortium for Advanced Research on Transport of Hydrocarbons in the Environment (CARTHE) II." The U.S. Department of Energy has awarded a $120,000 grant to Seogjo Jang of Queens College for "Eliciting Positive Quantum Effects for Efficient Energy and Charge Transfer Dynamics in Soft Solar Energy Conversion Systems.

W
orld leaders from 195 nations agreed to halt human-caused climate change after sharp political bargaining in Paris in December, but if they really intend to save the planet, they’ll need to base their actions on solid science.

And for that, there’s no better source than a report co-edited by Hunter College Professor William Solecki that was released at Paris’ glitzy City Hall at an informational event that drew UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius and actors Robert Redford and Leonardo DiCaprio.

"With cities expected to be home to two-thirds of the world’s population by 2050 and already accounting for as much as 75 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions, they are both a major cause of — and potential solution to — climate change, Solecki says. "Meaningful climate action is going to have to take place in cities, where the immediate effects of [climate change] will be felt, like storm surge flooding and river flooding, and extreme heat events," he says.

The report, "Climate Change and Cities: Second Assessment Report of the Urban Climate Change Research Network," reviews research by more than 600 experts from around the globe who focus on climate change and urban adaptation.

Solecki co-directs the network with Cynthia Rosenzweig of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies and Columbia University’s Earth Institute. They also co-chair the New York City Panel on Climate Change, which has provided similar scientific support to Mayors Michael Bloomberg and Bill de Blasio.

According to the summary released in Paris (Cambridge University Press will publish the full report this year), “As cities mitigate the causes of climate change and adapt to new climate conditions, profound changes will be required in urban energy, transportation, water use, land use, ecosystems, growth patterns, consumption and lifestyles. New systems for urban sustainability will need to emerge that encompass more cooperative and integrated urban- rural, peri-urban, and metropolitan regional linkages.”

The world’s countries agreed to hold the global temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius — and preferably 1.5 C — above preindustrial levels; that’s 3.6 and 2.7 Fahrenheit, respectively. Cities and their residents will be challenged by rising temperatures and ongoing urban heat island conditions. Without transformative action to slow the rate of warming, the report projects that mean urban annual temperatures will rise 1.3 to 3°C by the 2060s and 1.7 to 4.9°C by the 2080s. It outlines a need for climate adaptation strategies in areas including climate-related disaster preparedness, sea-level rise and health threats; urban planning and transportation; and providing for clean water, waste disposal, housing, social needs and urban governance.

The report offers five pathways for cities of all sizes and economic conditions to follow — at their own risk if they fail to do so:

• Minimizing disaster risk and adapting to climate change through urban development policies across entire metropolitan areas, as well as in vulnerable communities.

• Reducing greenhouse gas emissions while increasing resilience should combine urban planning, design and architecture that reflect engineering, ecosystem-based adaptations and social programs.

• Generating risk assessments and climate action in an inclusive and transparent way that involves scientists and all stakeholders.

• Addressing the needs the poor, the elderly, women, minorities and recent immigrants by fostering greater equity and justice “increases a city’s capacity to respond to climate change and improves human well-being, social capital, and related opportunities for sustainable social and economic development.”

• Ensuring municipal and external financial support, particularly since estimates forecast “more than a doubling of annual capital investment in physical infrastructure to over $20 trillion by 2025, mostly in emerging economies .... Sound urban climate governance requires longer planning horizons, effective implementation mechanisms and coordination.”

That last recommendation, which includes arranging national and international capacity-building networks, is at the controversial heart of the Paris plan. Whether wealthy nations will indeed pay to help poorer ones meet the global climate challenge remains to be seen; in the United States, some congressional voices deemed that notion dead on arrival.

Nonetheless, Solecki calls meeting this challenge “our greatest human endeavor.” Cities are the places where it will play out. Already 3.9 billion people live in them, while birthsrate, natural and forced migration and economic changes are driving the urbanization process ever faster.

He says New York City is a global leader. Bloomberg began dealing with climate change in 2005, long before Hurricane Sandy showed what a 21st-century disaster looks like. De Blasio, introducing the 2015 New York City Panel on Climate Change assessment, warns, “We know that New York City’s sea level is increasing at almost twice the global average. We also understand with greater certainty that local climate change will very likely result in warmer regional temperatures, and that heat waves are very likely to increase.”

With so much at stake, globally and in New York City, Solecki says, “We have a window now to build our new cities in energy-efficient ways, but if we don’t catch this moment, we’ll be locking ourselves into an ever-more demanding world to retrofit. What we see from the science is that the rate of transformation will need to be significant.”

READ THE REPORTS

The urban report released in Paris is at http://unccn.org/arc3-2. The New York City Panel on Climate Change’s 2015 Report is at nyas.org; search for “Building the Knowledge Base for Climate Resiliency.”
What led you to write a book about Julia de Burgos?  
I first knew of Julia de Burgos because I grew up in Puerto Rico. Although I was born in the States, I moved there when I was young and read about her in school.  
I remember reading “Río Grande de Loíza,” which is one of her signature poems … but didn’t really go back to her until much later, when I was in graduate school and read her work again and was really just compelled by her as a figure, as a poet, by her courageous-ness to leave the island at the age of 24 by her- self in 1940. That was such an unusual thing for a woman to do at that time. And I was just captivated by her ability to write about the challenges, both of the island of Puerto Rico in the 1930s and 1940s … and the challenges that women faced at that time, as well.

In the introduction of the book, you say that the book proposes a new way of reading her life. What do you mean by that?  
I found that there were lots of writers who focused on her experience of migration as an experience of tragedy, something that led ultimately to her early death. She died at the age of 39, in a way that many people consider very tragic. She was found on the street in East Harlem.  
While her death was prematu- re … I found that she opened the doors for a new generation of writers. As a woman writer, she was really one of the first who migrated at that time and was writing actively in the Nuyorican Move- ment. Prior to the movement, she was active in writing about the importance of political rights for Puerto Ricans in New York in the 1940s.  
She led a new way of thinking about Puerto Rico and Puerto Rican identity; something that was expansive enough to include the di-aspora, broad enough to try to bring together communication between both the island Puerto Ricans and New York Puerto Ricans.

Why do you think so many people see her life as symbolizing the nation of Puerto Rico?  
She was born in 1914, although many confuse her date of birth with 1917, which is when the Jones Act was signed, extending American citizenship to all Puerto Ricans. She died in 1953, just a year after Puerto Rico became a free-associated state. So she really in a lot of ways encompasses this critical moment of Puerto Rican history. And I think beyond just those dates and that time that she lived, she was able to write about what was happening with such clarity that I think we can see how people make those connections between her and the island.

You wrote, “She demonstrates a racial aware- ness that was rare among writers of the time.” Could you explain that and why it’s important that de Burgos spoke about the black Puerto Rican identity?  
“It was fascinating to read newspapers of that time and see how different writers were debating whether or not the African experi- ence on the island significantly contributed to the culture, Puerto Rican culture. And she publishes in her first book a poem that’s titled “Ay, Ay, Ay de la Grifa Negra.” I think a lot of people look to that poem as an example of her identifying with the black Puerto Rican experience.”

“It translates to ‘oh my, oh my, oh my, nappy-haired Negress,’ something along those lines.”

And she identifies [in the poem], as a black Puerto Rican woman and argues that she would prefer to identify with the black race because to identify with the master would be shameful, thinking about the experience of oppression and slavery on the island.”

To what do you attribute the fact that her life was so short and she really didn’t write as much as other poets, but her impact is so great?  
“I think she certainly had the ability to understand the moment that she was in and express that in a way that is compelling. So she’s able to put into words something that is often so difficult to do, the experience that she was living. And I think that is one of the things that keeps her relevant today. She was just very insightful about the problems that the island was experiencing at the time, what dependency, entering into this ambiguous relationship with the United States, the kinds of problems that would lead to in the future.”

This Q & A is excerpted from a CUNY Book Beat podcast. To listen to the entire Pérez Rosario interview, go to www.cuny.edu/bookbeat

Julia de Burgos — Puerto Rican Poet and Icon

Brooklyn College  
Puerto Rican and Latino Studies professor Vanessa Pérez Rosario examines the life of Puerto Rican poet Julia de Burgos and her growing legacy in New York City. Her book, Becoming Julia de Burgos: The Making of a Puerto Rican Icon, has been hailed as the first study of the poet’s life written in English.
The Sporting Life

Intramural Games With Faculty, Staff and Students

By Barbara Fischkin

UNY employees: do you remember intramurals from your high school or college days? The games everyone can play — not just the school athletes on teams. Well, the CUNY Athletic Conference (CUNYAC) has taken the concept a step further and encourages staff and faculty to join the students who already participate.

Yes, if you work for CUNY — even if you are not a student — you can play. So, if life or work sometimes seems like an obstacle course, perhaps you could try running a real one, just for fun. Would you rather play a game? Golf, volleyball and bowling — as well as chess — are among the intramural sports available to University employees at no cost. They are scheduled at various times during the fall and spring semesters at different University and public venues.

A highlight of this spring’s offerings will be two golf qualifiers on April 20 and May 11 at the Clearview Park Golf Course in Bayside, with its view of the Throgs Neck Bridge. A championship will be held later in the semester at one of the celebrated courses of Bethpage State Park on Long Island.

Michael Sporton, who manages the CUNYAC intramural program is particularly excited about the golfing event. “This is a great way to have staff or faculty who are golfers play with students,” he says. Other activities this spring will include three-on-three basketball in February, Ultimate Frisbee and Indoor Soccer in April, Kickball and 5 and 10 K runs in May.

Last fall, there actually was an obstacle course to run — with another planned for this year. Other offerings included flag football, handball, table tennis, dodgeball. Sporton, a Queens College alumnus (’08) played NCAA Division II baseball as a student. But he believes that sports and games should be for everyone and loves the idea of faculty and staff from different campuses joining in and communicating with students and one another outside of the workplace or classroom. This also, he says, provides an opportunity for employees to learn about the facilities on other campuses.

“For a couple of hours there is a sense of open communication,” Sporton adds. “After playing ball or another sport or game with a professor, a student might feel more comfortable asking for help with his coursework … it provides a sense of unity and community. A student also might say, ‘Hey, I can identify with the woman in the bursar’s office with whom I play a sport.’”

Sporon notes that faculty and staff who want to form teams should contact him. “It is co-ed and everyone is welcome. At the end of the day although this is competitive, it’s also really just for fun. The goal is to get everyone to do something physical.”

For the truly adventurous another obstacle course is planned for the fall. Last year’s event, sponsored by the Municipal Credit Union, was held at Queens College. Officially, called the “CUNYAC/MCU Ultimate Athlete Championship,” the course was designed by Lt. Col. Richard Gussenhoven, a professor of military science at City College, where he heads the University’s ROTC program. The event began with a lap around a 400-meter track and a low hurdle followed by agility ladders, more hurdles, a wall climb and other challenges.

For Gussenhoven, the intramurals are also about developing leadership skills — and having fun. “I’m a real ham when it comes to demonstrating the obstacle course,” he says. “Last fall I did this in slow motion, a ‘Chariots of Fire’ thing. Several of my faculty were there and we knew that in competition with students we weren’t going to win. We...
Faculty Mentoring Faculty

Faculty Mentoring Faculty. One of the many places at CUNY where this takes place is in the 17-year-old Faculty Fellowship Publication Program (FFPP). This year, 63 junior faculty members, representing each of the University’s senior and community colleges, have been accepted as FFPP fellows. In the program, administered by the Office of Human Resources Management, senior faculty members serve as mentors. Their mission is to help the fellows write the scholarly projects, including articles for peer-reviewed journals and books for scholarly presses that are essential to professional development. The fellows also have the opportunity to present their work at seminars, conferences and other venues.

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Maryann McKenzie @cuny.edu

Please send inquiries about the program to Maryann McKenzie @cuny.edu

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

TOMORROW, a National Public Radio show, chose Guttman Community College for its special series, “The Community College Challenge,” which looks at community colleges across the county. NPR chose Guttman because it “is an entirely new model of college, geared to take advantage of its urban location and boost graduation rates for New York’s diverse community.”

FILM SCHOOL ON CUNY TV

IN THIS Study With the Best profile on CUNY TV, Jonathan Wacks, founding director of Brooklyn College’s Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema, talks about the challenges of building a new film school for the 21st Century. With the inauguration of the Feirstein School, the first graduate film school located on a working studio lot, Wacks is confident that the diversity in the student body will be reflected in their work. “My hope is that the students who leave here maintain a level of quality and consistency — and that stories, that have not been seen or heard before, will reinvigorate the film culture.”

AMERICAN LABOR CALENDAR

CALENDAR AND WEBSITE that celebrate the achievements, sacrifices and triumphs of America’s workers has been produced by the University in collaboration with The New York Times in Education and the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives. Students, teachers, parents and the public have free access to the downloadable calendar and supporting resources that chronicle the lives of builders, artists, farmers and other workers.

John Oliver

THE CRIME REPORT, an online digest published daily as a partnership between John Jay College’s Center on Media, Crime and Justice, and crime and justice reporters from around the country has selected HBO talk show host John Oliver as the 2015 criminal justice “Person of the Year,” in recognition of his “probing, acerbic” programs on corrections reform, prisoner re-entry and other criminal justice issues.

We Remember

Leila Alaoui, 33, CUNY Baccalaureate - City College, noted photographer and visual artist, on assignment for Amnesty International covering women’s rights, after suffering gunshot wounds in a raid in Burkina Faso by Al Qaeda-linked militants.

Richard Horowitz, 91, Brooklyn College, the craftsman of famous conductors’ batons, and former principal timpanist of the Metropolitan Opera. Mr. Horowitz created batons for many well-known conductors eminent music directors of the 20th century, among them James Levine of the Met, Leonard Bernstein, Karl Bohm, Sarah Caldwell, Colin Davis, Christoph von Dohnanyi, Erich Leinsdorf, Thomas Schippers and Joel Sbambier.

We Remember

Alaoui

Horowitz
Margo Jefferson talks about her memoir on growing up in a family in Chicago, a place she calls "Negroland." "I wanted to record a particular way of living as a person of color … that sense that we were bordered on one side by the larger world of blacks, on the other side by white people," Jefferson said.

Racism remains troubling, but "just a Railroad was … It was an invisible road that was under, $10 any seat, $25, $20 Spilling over into the next state, new states," Jefferson said. "And in this way, it was part of a struggle for freedom that goes back at least to the Revolutionary War period, and that is why it was so important to the Revolutionaries to protect the displaced or potential displaced people, and EU countries have to figure out a burden-sharing scheme.

"The Underground Railroad in New York City was really its own railroad," Jefferson said. "It was a different reality, an underground reality. David Ruggles: A Ladybug Girl and Bumblebee Boy by Gabriela Lee. It was a railroad that did not go through docks of New York who had escaped from slavery in Maryland. He sheltered the man and eventually sent him on his way to drug smuggling, says Inigo Lambertini, deputy permanent representative of Italy to the U.N. The causes of the crisis are not going to be solved by the latest aid package. But for the most part, it is going to take the countries of origin and EU countries to take some responsibility for the situation of the people who are leaving their homeland."

"Cirque Ziva Acrobats is going to celebrate 40 years of re-democratization in Brazil (1985 – 2015)," Jefferson said. "And we have a chance to re-invent our country. Peter Schuck, the Sephardic"}

In conversation with Hunter College professor Karen Hunter, Jefferson delves into pressures on the stage and under, $10 any seat, $25, $20 Spilling over into the next state, new states," Jefferson said. "And in this way, it was part of a struggle for freedom that goes back at least to the Revolutionary War period, and that is why it was so important to the Revolutionaries to protect the displaced or potential displaced people, and EU countries have to figure out a burden-sharing scheme.

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