Dean Kenneth Olden of the proposed CUNY School of Public Health

Protecting Our Future
One Glass at a Time

Adding It Up At CUNY
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Colin Powell’s New Mission
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CUNY Rates Five Stars!

DON GOMEZ, Colin Powell Fellow at The City College of New York, is the 5th CUNY student in 5 years to win up to $30,000 for graduate study from the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation. In the last 6 years, CUNY students have also won ten $7,500 Barry M. Goldwater Scholarships in undergraduate mathematics, natural sciences and engineering.

CUNY students continue to win the nation’s most prestigious awards, including Rhodes and Marshall Scholarships, Fulbrights and National Science Foundation grants.

World Class Students + World Class Faculty = Success

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THE FIRST WORD

Maintaining the Momentum

In 2004, The City University of New York launched the first CUNY-wide fund-raising campaign with a goal of raising $1.2 billion by 2012.

When Chairman Benno Schmidt and I announced the “Invest in CUNY” plan, we were met with some skepticism. A billion-dollar campaign at a university not well known for its strong tradition of giving was considered audacious at best.

Now, of course, it is well known that we did reach our goal — four years earlier than expected. What we have found is that there is a hunger among our alumni and friends to contribute to the institution that has made such a difference in their lives.

For example, in the 1950s Andrew Grove fled Hungary in such a hurry that he didn’t have school transcripts or any proof of his education when he came to the United States. Yet someone in the admissions office at City College saw his talent. He was admitted and ended up graduating first in his class. Later, he helped found Intel Corporation. And in 2005, he gave the City College School of Engineering a $26 million gift, saying, “This institution is a veritable American-dream machine. I hope to keep it that way.”

Bernard and Anne Spitzer recently gave City College an extraordinary gift of $25 million for the School of Architecture. Anne went to Brooklyn College and Bernard attended City College—and they attribute much of their success to their CUNY education. Transformative gifts such as Bill and Linda Macaulay’s $30 million donation to the Honors College and Larry and Carol Zicklin’s numerous contributions to Baruch College are indicative of the generosity of our alumni and their strong ties to the University where they got their start.

These and many other gifts are enabling CUNY to ensure that faculty are positioned to do their best work and that students have the tools they need to compete in an economy that demands a high level of skill, creativity and talent. The support of our alumni and friends allows the University to leverage state support and invest in scholarships, academic programs and facilities. We are tremendously grateful for every contribution.

Today we are expanding the Invest in CUNY campaign, with a goal of raising $3 billion by 2015. We are emboldened by the great strides that have been made at the University over the last decade.

In the last few years, we have established the Macaulay Honors College, the School of Professional Studies and a new Graduate School of Journalism. You will read in these pages about the development of a new School of Public Health and a new community college. We are also planning a school of pharmacy.

Our enrollment is expected to reach record levels this fall, with more than 250,000 degree-seeking students. CUNY faculty and students continue to be nationally recognized for their outstanding work. Most recently, six CUNY faculty members were selected as 2009 Guggenheim Fellows. This spring, another CUNY student won a Truman Scholarship — the fifth CUNY Truman winner in five consecutive years — and three students won Goldwater Scholarships.

We must maintain this momentum. We have an obligation to make sure that future generations of students who come to CUNY with the will and tenacity to learn will find every opportunity to succeed in their academic goals.

I deeply appreciate your partnership in building a University of great academic distinction, accessible to every deserving student. I look forward to continuing to work with you to help our students achieve their own version of the American dream.

— Matthew Goldstein, Chancellor
Investing in Success

With enrollment soaring and philanthropic support at record levels, the University is embarking on the next phase of its capital campaign whose new goal is to raise $3 billion by 2015.

The Invest in CUNY campaign, launched in 2004 by CUNY Board Chairperson Benno C. Schmidt Jr. and Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, had aimed to raise $1.2 billion by 2012.

That goal was surpassed four years early with the raising of $1.436 billion, an unprecedented amount for a public urban university. The funds largely support scholarships, investments in full-time faculty, research and modern facilities.

The campaign’s expansion was detailed March 25 at a news conference at the CUNY Graduate School and University Center. It coincided with the announcement of a $25 million gift from philanthropist and developer Bernard Spitzer for the School of Architecture at City College, to be named The Anne and Bernard Spitzer School of Architecture.

“The theme of this day is making investments to ensure, to the degree that we can, that the greatness of this University will continue its momentum in giving opportunities to young people, to really change their lives,” Goldstein said.

Investments such as Spitzer’s reflect CUNY’s “hard work” in building greater accountability and its reputation for academic excellence, the Chancellor said. Other gifts include Samuel J. and Lois Silberman’s $40 million to construct a $135 million Harlem building for Hunter College’s School of Social Work; William E. Macaulay’s $30 million to purchase a building for the Macaulay Honors College; Andrew Grove’s $26 million for The City College’s School of Engineering; Lawrence and Carol Zicklin’s $18 million to name and endow the Zicklin School of Business at Baruch College; and William and Anita Newman’s $25 million toward Baruch College’s Vertical Campus.

Continued giving is critical as CUNY faces shrinking state and local government support, an expected record enrollment in fall 2009, including 250,000 who are seeking degrees, and the need to hire more full-time faculty.

“We have to move forward and we have to compete ... to get the very best people in classroom for our students,” Goldstein said. “To do less would be an injustice.”

Army service in Iraq inspired Truman Scholar Don Gomez to pursue a City College degree in international relations. Here he speaks at an “Invest in CUNY” event.

Winning Run Continues
With 2009 Truman, Goldwater Grants

University undergraduates continue their impressive wins of two prestigious nationwide awards: the Harry S. Truman Foundation Scholarship and the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship. In the past six years, five students have won Truman grants and 10 have received Goldwaters.

Don Gomez, a City College international studies major, is among 60 students in the nation cited this year by the Truman Foundation, which recognizes college juniors committed to careers in government or other public service and demonstrate “exceptional leadership potential.” His $30,000 award is for graduate study.

Three 2009 Goldwater scholarships, named for the late Arizona senator, were won by Alena Leitman of Hunter College, and Yitzchak Lockerman and Jamar Whaley, both of Queens College. The awards of $7,500 per year for one or two years go to students pursuing math, science or engineering to cover various college costs.

Gomez, who attended Queensborough Community College, enrolled in CCNY after serving two tours of U.S. Army duty in Iraq; he hopes to return to the Mideast as a State Department officer. Leitman intends to conduct biomedical research in her own lab at a hospital or university. Lockerman, a computer science major, plans to conduct research in algorithm design. Whaley, a neuroscience/psychology major, will apply her research to a clinical setting.
As a member of the New York City Police Department’s Harbor Unit, Det. Robert Rodriguez is used to saving lives. But who expects to save people from a commercial plane that plops out of the sky into the Hudson River?

On Jan. 15, 2009, with 155 people aboard, US Airways Flight 1549 made an emergency landing in the icy waters of the Hudson after both engines lost power following a collision with birds.

Rodriguez, 37, was at the harbor unit’s Floyd Bennett Field headquarters in Brooklyn when the rescue bell went off around 3:35 p.m. He dashed towards the unit’s helicopters.

“They said it was a plane in the river so I knew that we had a big job ahead of us,” Rodriguez, a graduate of Kingsborough Community College, says. “All I kept thinking was, ‘We need to get to the plane, we need to get to the plane.’”

Seven minutes later, Rodriguez and his partner, Det. Michael Delaney, spotted people on and near the wing of the plane, who were trying to get to the ferries that had sped to the scene along with U.S. Coast Guard, and police and fire department boats.

One woman was clinging to the side of a ferry. Rodriguez and Delaney jumped out of the helicopter and swam toward her. After rescuing her, they spotted a woman who had fallen off a rescue raft.

“The two women were in the water for five to 10 minutes at that point and not aware of their settings,” Rodriguez says. “They both screamed, ‘Please help me!’ and the one hanging on to the ferry was afraid that she was going to get run over by the ferries. But we assured her and helped both of them out of the freezing water.”

Rodriguez says it was the biggest and most satisfying job he’s had in his eight years with the NYPD.

A native New Yorker, Rodriguez always loved the water. “My playground was basically the beach,” he says. Yet despite that pull, initially he wasn’t sure what he wanted to do with his life. But he knew he needed an education.

“My mother always stressed that education is important,” Rodriguez says. “She used to take me to her alma mater, LaGuardia Community College, so that I could get into the college environment.”

Rodriguez went to LaGuardia and Baruch College to study finance before he realized his love for the water was too great. He set his sights on the NYPD, with the goal of getting into its elite harbor unit. He enrolled at KCC to earn a degree in Maritime Technology.

Rodriguez wasn’t the only KCC graduate on the job that day. Police Officer Brian Brody was distributing rescue equipment and John Kedetsky worked security at the aircraft the next day.

Following KCC, Rodriguez graduated from the New York City Police Academy and spent four years as a street cop in East Harlem’s 23rd Precinct, before finally joining the NYPD’s scuba team.

As part of the team he does regular security dives, including counter-terrorist bomb sweeps, when he’s not on rescue missions.

“The work can be dangerous but, Rodriguez says, “I don’t think of myself as a hero. This is my job and I know I’m the only one that can do it.”

Study Links TV Food Ads, Obese Kids

Television commercials for fast food restaurants have contributed to the staggering obesity rate among American children, according to a groundbreaking study co-authored by a CUNY professor.

“We combined data on kids’ weight with both the number of hours they spent watching TV in a week and the number of fast-food restaurant ads that were aired in their area,” says Michael Grossman, distinguished professor of economics at the Graduate Center. “The kids who watched these ads were more likely to be overweight.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that one-third of America’s children are obese or overweight. They spend more time than normal-weight children watching TV and playing video games instead of getting physical exercise, according to the centers.

Grossman has been a research associate and program director of health economics research for the National Bureau of Economic Research at the Graduate Center since 1972. His study “Fast Food Restaurant Advertising on Television and its Influence on Childhood Obesity” was funded by a federal grant and published in the November 2008 issue of The Journal of Law & Economics.

Although it has long been suspected that too much television contributes to childhood obesity, Grossman’s is the first national study to show...
Iraqi Journalist’s Base Now NY

It was only two years ago that journalist Alaa Majeed was one of five women who were dodging bullets and gingerly navigating around land mines to report on the Iraq war for the McClatchy newspaper company’s Baghdad bureau.

Covering a war is never easy. Majeed recalls a demonstration by Mahdi Army supporters during the 2004 Battle of Najaf, where many were killed in the crossfire. Witnessing countless such shootings made it hard for her to do her job. “These are people that look like your brother, your sister, yet you watch their blood being shed,” says Majeed, who is a student at CUNY’s Graduate School of Journalism. “A journalist’s duty is to report objectively — it was impossible.”

But Majeed persevered, and she and her colleagues received the International Women’s Media Foundation Courage in Journalism Award in 2007.

Born and raised in Baghdad, Majeed came from a middle-class family and is the oldest of seven children. She earned a degree in English at Al-Mustansiriya University in 1998.

“I wanted to use English to travel, not to become a journalist. Journalism was not on my agenda,” Majeed says. But a few months after the United States invaded Iraq in 2003, she found herself covering the war.

It began when she volunteered for a group that sheltered children who had lost their parents or had become disabled during the war. There she met a European journalist who was writing about the group. “I was translating for the journalist and became very interested in the field.”

Majeed spent a year translating for the McClatchy newspapers, and when it became too difficult for foreign journalists to move around in Iraq, she was promoted to reporter.

Now living in the Bronx in a one-bedroom apartment with her husband and two young sons, Majeed is the graduate school’s second International Journalist in Residence. The fellowship was created by the CUNY Journalism School and the Committee to Protect Journalists to establish links between the American journalism community and international journalists forced to leave their countries.

“I am getting a lot of experience here and a lot of skills that I’m very proud of,” she says. “The courses and the professors are really some of the greatest.”

She also loves the freedom of being able to socialize with friends without worrying about the dangers of war. With all that she’s accomplished, Majeed doesn’t know what her future holds. But she does have one hope that is common to many New Yorkers: “I just want a two bedroom apartment,” she says.

The study was based on several years of government data dating from the late 1990s that included in-person interviews with thousands of families. It also found that a ban on fast-food ads would reduce the number of obese children by 18 percent and decrease the number of obese older children by 15 percent.

It’s the Look, Not Taste that Counts

In the world of culinary art — emphasis on art — the Marc Sarrazin Trophy is akin to a Pulitzer Prize or perhaps an Oscar. The award is bestowed on the best overall entry at the Salon of Culinary Art, conducted annually by the Société Culinaire Philanthropique, an organization started by French chefs in America in 1865.

In this culinary competition, it’s not about how the food tastes but how it looks. And over the last half-dozen years, it has boiled down to a duel between The Culinary Institute of America and the less celebrated but perhaps hungrier New York City College of Technology. City Tech took the trophy in 2008, its third triumph over the CIA in five years, with a table of visually arresting culinary offerings.

At one end was the savory: dishes such as a duck leg galantine with orange parfumé pistachios and dry cherries. At the other end was the sweet: an abstract sugar sculpture based on Alfred Eisenstaedt’s famous photograph of a sailor kissing a nurse in Times Square on V-J Day. It was “a complete buffet where you kind of go back to the old rules, the way it was in the 1800s,” says Louise Hoffman, one of the City Tech faculty coaches (and an individual winner for a piece of “dough sculpture.”)

“It doesn’t matter if it tastes bland,” says Jean Claude, another City Tech faculty coach. “The focus is on the appearance. It needs to be presented as a showpiece.”

The entries must be as creative and elaborate as possible while also paying serious respect to the classical French techniques that the Société Culinaire is pledged to preserve. So the prep work starts before anyone enters the kitchen — with research. “It has to be a technique that was used 150 years ago,” says Claude. “To win over the judges, ‘you must make the case for authenticity.’”

After deciding on Times Square as their theme for the 2008 competition, the City Tech pastry arts students took photographs and made sketches then went back to Brooklyn and dreamed up pieces such as a New Year’s Eve cake featuring a top hat made from sugar that they heated and pulled as if blowing glass.

Traditionally, decorative presentations are the work of a garde manger, “keeper of the food” or pantry manager. For the students, though, today’s world will not be so elegant: a modern garde manger usually is in charge of the salad. “They’ll never do any of this again,” says Hoffman, but they will be better chefs for the experience. “Garde manger is all about exactitude and orientation to detail.”

In kitchens of every level, that will never go out of style.
Finding Harmony in Dual Careers

DANIEL PHILLIPS was 2 years old when he received his first violin. It was a wooden toy made by his grandfather, a luthier. For Phillips, professor of violin at the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College, it marked the beginning of a successful career in classical music.

“Until I went to nursery school, everyone I knew played an instrument,” says Phillips, who in 1987, along with his brother Todd Phillips founded the Orion String Quartet, one of the most sought-after ensembles in the United States. “Our home was a music conservatory.”

Over the years, the Orion earned an enviable reputation for its interpretations of Beethoven’s string quartets and recently recorded the complete quartets, a collection of eight CDs, for KOCH International Classics. The final installment of the Beethoven quartets is slated for release this year.

“Beethoven’s quartets are the backbone of our repertoire,” says Phillips, who also has performed as a soloist with many of the country’s leading symphonies and toured and recorded in a string quartet for SONY, with Yo-Yo Ma, Gidon Kremer and Kim Kashkashian. “It’s a culminating goal for a quartet,” he says.

This season, the group will perform in England, Taiwan, South Korea and Norway. Phillips hopes the Orion will be able to record the quartets of Bela Bartok, one of the greatest composers of the 20th century.

Each year the Orion spends nearly 80 days on the road, and serves as Quartet-in-Residence at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and New York’s Mannes College. As does Phillips, the other members of the Orion also enjoy careers in teaching.

“When you’ve amassed what you know, it’s a great responsibility to pass it on,” says Phillips, who’s been teaching at Queens College since 1989. “When you teach, you tend to be more clear to yourself because you have to be clear to your students.”

Phillips is particularly clear when it comes to advising his students about music. “You should only pursue it in a serious way if you really don’t want to do anything [else],” he says. “If you are interested, for instance, in medicine, keep music as your cherished part of life. If you choose music as your career, the work itself needs to consume your interests. It’s a hobby, it’s your professional career, it even engages you on a physical level, like being an athlete.”

CUNY Reaches Out to Mexican Immigrants

Quietly, as if tiptoeing into a new home, Mexicans have been establishing themselves as a presence in New York City.

Today, in a population explosion that has occurred largely off the radar, there are some 290,000 Mexicans living in New York City. If demographic trends continue Mexicans will surpass Puerto Ricans to become the second largest Latin national group behind Dominicans in 2022, according to the University’s Latino Data Project.

The University has distinguished itself among public institutions by reaching out early to the Mexican community.

Four years ago, Senior Vice Chancellor for University Relations and Secretary to the Board of Trustees Jay Hershenson chaired a task force aimed at finding ways to strengthen the educational opportunities for the new immigrants. Since many move to the U.S. as unskilled migrants with little education, Hershenson worried their growing numbers would result in an “educational catastrophe.”

In collaboration with the Consulate General of Mexico, the task force created several initiatives. These include dropout prevention sessions, community leadership programs designed for Baruch College students to assist staff and volunteers in community-based Mexican organizations and CUNY College fairs co-sponsored by prominent community organizations where potential students also learn about financial aid, scholarships and citizenship services.

The University has created a Spanish website with information about the colleges and sent mobile Mexican Consulate units to some campuses. And for a large number of immigrants working in the food service industry, the New York City College of Technology is encouraging study of management and business ownership in the hospitality fields.
The Little Company that Could

It’s not easy to find an internship in the corporate world right now so Haider Mehmood, a business major at Baruch College, feels pretty lucky he landed a spot at the Park Bench Marketing Group.

At Park Bench, he’s promoting Helix, a new sport fashion watch made by a subsidiary of Timex. And he didn’t have to go to an office building for the experience.

Park Bench is a Baruch-based marketing group created and led by professor Michael Lissauer, former executive vice president of marketing and business strategy for Business Wire. Mehmood’s office is a computer workspace in the marketing lab at the college library.

“I’m getting real-world experience,” says Mehmood, who along with four other students is designing a low-cost viral marketing and Web campaign that would draw potential customers to the Helix website. “It’s a multimillion-dollar corporation and we’re learning a lot by working in a corporate environment. I’m making lots of contacts and I’ll know which channels to take when I’m ready to promote my own business.”

Nine undergraduate and three graduate students make up Park Bench, and they work closely with Lissauer and Kapil Bawa, professor and chair of the marketing and international business department at Baruch, and David Luna, associate professor of marketing, on a variety of marketing campaigns.

Lissauer, who retired from Business Wire in 2007, established Park Bench last year to help students get real-world marketing experience. He picked the name to honor Bernard Baruch, financier, statesman and the college’s alumnus, who spent a lot of time thinking and discussing government affairs on benches in parks in Washington and New York. Lissauer is also a member of the Executives on Campus program at Baruch, and says he’s doing it all because he wants to give back.

“The interaction with students keeps you young,” says Lissauer. “They are hard working, focused and they don’t think the world is given to them.”

The group’s next big project focuses on creating a public relations campaign for “We are New York,” a half-hour TV show aimed at immigrant families. The nine-episode series, scheduled to premiere on Channel 25 in late 2009, was designed by Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s office and CUNY. It demonstrates how viewers can access vital city services and other helpful resources. The group plans to get the word out through the city’s ethnic newspapers and during ethnic parades and local street fairs.

“This is a little company and the key is to sustain it by getting more projects and by attracting new students,” says Lissauer. “We’re doing a big push at the school to get more students. It’s a real thing.”

A New Spin on Local Reporting

It’s no secret that the business of journalism is in turmoil. Newspapers are closing across the country, and news executives are brainstorming to try to figure out how to provide information on the Web and still make money.

Now CUNY, partnered with The New York Times, is trying out a new Web-based model for community coverage.

The pilot program — The Local — will have Times reporters and students from the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism covering local news while also teaching residents the basics of reporting and the use of interactive media.

Residents will be able to post news stories and contribute community information including creative work, real estate information, restaurant reviews and volunteer opportunities.

Jeff Jarvis, associate professor and director of interactive journalism program at CUNY’s Journalism School, says the ‘hyperlocal’ model is the future.

“News will be created through collaborative networks that are part of their communities, with journalists and community members working together and possibly expanding the reach of news,” he says.

The program has launched in Brooklyn’s Fort Greene neighborhood with plans to expand to Clinton Hill in Brooklyn and three communities in New Jersey — Maplewood, Millburn and South Orange.

The Local brings together the journalism school’s ongoing New York Hyperlocal News Project and reporters and editors at the Times who are trying to engage their readers in new ways.

“We thought it would be an interesting idea and that it would be a good challenge for both the Times and CUNY to figure out how to work together” said Jim Schachter, editor for digital initiatives at the Times.

The reporters will be covering the everyday life of the communities, including crime, school issues, government services and transportation. “At CUNY, we are training every student in the skills of all media and are also preparing them for new roles as journalists — aggregators, curators, organizers, even educators,” says Jarvis, who blogs about media and news at Buzzmachine.com.

He also hopes to get students from Baruch College’s Zicklin School of Business partnered with the Times to figure out how to make The Local sustainable with ad revenue.
MAYBE IT WAS BECAUSE he grew up during World War II and came of age during the Korean conflict, times when a blue star in the window meant that someone was in the military and a gold star meant that someone had been killed. Or because war movies made indelible impressions during his youth. Or his conclusion that if he were to get drafted, he might as well go in as an officer. Or just seeing so many young men in uniform stride across the City College campus.

Whatever the reason (and his autobiography mentions all of those), in 1954 Colin Powell signed up for City College’s Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) — a decision that set him on the path toward becoming chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, U.S. secretary of state and a philanthropist who supports a City College public policy center that’s named after him. “I found my career and my life’s work at CCNY,” Powell said. “When I finished my military career and went out into private life, I wanted to try to give back to young people who are like me, coming up in modest or disadvantaged circumstances.”

His involvement with students began in earnest in 1997 after he had retired from the Army. Presidents Carter, Clinton, Ford and George H.W. Bush, as well as former first lady Nancy Reagan, asked him to chair the Presidents’ Summit for America’s Future, then to create America’s Promise — The Alliance for Youth, a foundation that works with companies, nonprofits and governments across the country to help children and youth. That prompted him to make his first City College endowment, the Maud and Luther Powell America’s Promise Scholarship, which is aimed at City College students who perform community or public service.

Also that year, New York City’s Rudin Family Foundation paid tribute to the general by launching the Colin Powell Center for Policy Studies at City College. Its goals are to develop leaders from underrepresented groups and to bridge the academic and policy-making spheres through research and programs.

Because of his work with America’s Promise and his later return to government, Powell at first did not have time to engage with the Powell Center. But after his four-year hitch as secretary of state ended in January 2005, “I
went up to see what was going on at this center that had my name at my alma mater. I met with 10 or 12 youngsters in the president’s conference room, and they told me what they were doing and what the center was doing for them. They were from everywhere imaginable in the world. I said to them, “You kids look like I was 50 years ago.” That is when I decided I wanted to get more actively involved.”

He hopes that the Powell Fellows emerge with an expansive vision of society: “We want to get young people involved in serving others. We send them around the world on fellowships and programs to learn what is happening and to expand the base of knowledge and experience of inner-city kids so that they understand the broader world,” he said.

For example, Renee Rolston spent last summer at a district health office in Malawi, working on HIV/AIDS and malaria. She expects to graduate this spring from the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education as part of a seven-year BS-MD program, which she intends to finish at New York Medical College.

Powell uses his personal connections to further the fellows’ education. “We send students to sit and talk with Henry Kissinger [the former secretary of state who is on the center’s advisory council] in his office about foreign policy. I sent a bunch of youngsters down to Leonard Lauder [the chair of Estée Lauder Inc.] and I said, ‘Leonard, I do not want you to give them all of that Horatio Alger stuff [about how his mother started the company]. They can tell you your Horatio Alger stories. What I want you to tell them is: How do you make money in business?’”

If Powell has one regret about City College, it might be that it ended the ROTC program in June 1972, at the height of anti-war sentiment on American campuses. From a high of 1,500 cadets during the Korean War, enrollment had plunged to 81 in its last year. In a country where civilian control of the military is fundamental, I found it unfortunate to have this source of citizen officers reduced,” Powell wrote in his 1995 autobiography, My American Journey.

“Friendships that I formed there are still alive and well 55 years later,” he told Salute to Scholars. He was a geology major, but ROTC “showed me a way of moving forward and something to do with my life and something that was great at.” ROTC “led me to hang around, even though my grades were not great. Then they sent me out to the Army and said good luck.”

Powell is helping to assure good luck for today’s students by putting $1 million into the center while helping with fund-raising.

Other grants include $10 million from the New York Life Foundation in 2006 to endow scholarships and programs related to African-American issues and, most recently, $1 million from the Korea Foundation for policy and service lessons rooted in the Korean experience.

“Townsend Harris [the founder of The Free Academy that became City College] said that the children of the poor and the children of the rich should sit together in brotherhood and learning,” Powell said. “To keep that spirit alive takes money. It is wonderful that the taxpayers of New York State and New York City are willing to fund such a system of public higher education, but we need to get more private philanthropy involved. Those of us who have been successful in life have an obligation to reach down to those who wonder whether or not they can be successful.”

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Powell on Immigration

The NONPARTISAN Colin Powell Center for Policy Studies chooses its fellows through a competitive process. Scholarships and fellowships offer up to $12,000 for undergraduates for each of two years and one-time grants of $15,000 for graduate students to support scholarship, research and internships.

Students participate in service learning, in which they volunteer or intern in a public service setting. The Powell Center also has shown City College faculty members how to weave service learning into courses ranging from architecture to public relations writing.

Students receive professional mentoring and participate in the center’s policy programs. Its core initiatives are urban issues in New York City; leadership and philanthropy; democracy assistance; and multilateral diplomacy and international organizations.

The students focus on a different theme each year. This year it was immigration, the subject of a February conference where experts in immigration policy and advocates for immigrant rights discussed the challenges and opportunities facing both immigrants and the society they are joining.

At the conference, Powell spoke of his immigrant heritage — his parents were Jamaican — and the importance of public higher education.

“Few experiences bind people to the life of their society more than the process of getting an education,” he said. If you didn’t succeed, he added with humor, “There was no greater curse … than for one of your relatives … to say, ‘What, you have shamed the family.’

“Hit me, beat me, do anything you want, but don’t give me that shame, because they had dreams, they had expectations for you.”

Immigrants are often portrayed as posing threats to safety and American jobs while the reality is that most work hard, succeed and contribute to the economy.

Yes, Powell argued, strengthen the borders, but also devise policies to develop the economies of neighboring countries and make “a sensible decision” about who should be allowed into this country and under what circumstances. “We can neither throw open our borders entirely nor can we shut them down completely. We must rather think about the rights and roles of new Americans and temporary residents in relationship to our broader interests of security, prosperity and democracy,” he said.

Master’s student and Powell Fellow Easter Wood found the conference and the focus on immigration stimulating.

“I have been a student of African-American studies, but I had not thought as much about the inter-twining between immigrant populations and the African-American population,” she said. She particularly appreciated “the opportunities to meet with dynamic people and get to talk to those who are out there on the front lines in the policy field and doing the work that I hope to be doing.”
Art historian Joachim Pissarro, scion of the famous Impressionist, says creativity can open many different doors.

Joachim Pissarro, Bershad Professor of Art History and director of the Hunter College Art Galleries, didn’t intend to make art his career even though he grew up in a family of artists. You’d never guess that from his resume: adjunct curator at the Museum of Modern Art, and a former curator at the Kimbell Art Museum in Texas, the Yale University Art Gallery and director of the Musée de la Fondation de l’Hermitage in Switzerland. He’s also written several books on Impressionist painters, including his great-grandfather, Camille Pissarro, and was one of three curators of MoMA’s “Van Gogh and the Colors of the Night,” which opened last fall.

Salute to Scholars caught up with Pissarro recently to find out more about Van Gogh and Pissarro’s own artistic path.

**WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST SURPRISE YOU FOUND WHEN RESEARCHING “COLORS OF THE NIGHT”**?

None of us expected to find more than a half-dozen works related to the night. But we were able to find enough to cover two, three, four, five rooms and could have brought in much more. Van Gogh was deeply in touch with this reflection… Over 12 years he constantly thought of the night, and this show gives you a sense of that.

**YOUR GREAT-GRANDFATHER WAS FRENCH IMPRESSIONIST CAMILLE PISSARRO AND YOUR FATHER AND SISTER ARE PAINTERS. BUT YOU DIDN’T WANT A LIFE IN ART. WHY IS THAT?**

I wanted to become a professor of philosophy and at that time, all students in France had to take philosophy. But in 1979, a law passed cutting philosophy from high schools, which meant thousands of jobs were out. So suddenly, the horizon became a little bleak.

**SO CAMILLE PISSARRO DIDN’T COME TO YOU IN YOUR DREAMS AND ORDER YOU TO THE EASEL?**

No, it was an accident, really. I had to recycle my philosophical mind into something semi-productive and thought art history was quite close.

**SO HOW HARD IS IT TO BE CURATOR? DID YOU EVER GET A SHOW THAT JUST SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE?**

Almost every single one. I specialize in those, I think.

**EVEN THE RECENT SHOW? DIDN’T YOU JUST ASK THE VAN GOGH MUSEUM IN AMSTERDAM TO LEND YOU SOME PAINTINGS?**

The Van Gogh was very generous, and we were able to get a core of work through them. But many times, the show was dead because we couldn’t get the loans.

**SO IT’S NOT LIKE YOU CAN JUST CALL SOMEONE UP WHO HAS A PAINTING ON THE WALL AND ASK TO BORROW IT?**

Well, the value of one Van Gogh can be nine figures. Over $100 million, so quite often it is hard to get people to loan them.

**WHAT SURPRISED YOU WHEN YOU STARTED TEACHING AT HUNTER?**

I had never had almost as many M.F.A.s as M.A.s in my classes before and the M.F.A.s were absolutely brilliant. Typically [studio] art students are not well versed in Heidegger or in Cantor or Romantic theory, but they are here. Now I like to have classes that have equal numbers of both because it creates very interesting discussions, as you can imagine.

**WHAT DO YOU TELL PARENTS WHO QUESTION THE VALUE OF AN M.F.A. IN THESE HARD ECONOMIC TIMES?**

Creativity, the notion of thinking big outside the box, is extremely important, and at the end of the day, it doesn’t matter if an artist ends up using the M.F.A. to become the next Picasso or Damien Hirst because there are so many doors that can open up to him if he has creativity. You can use creativity in so many situations.

**DO YOU HAVE ANY OF YOUR GREAT GRANDFATHER’S PAINTINGS?**

I have a drawing, something he did as a student, I think. It is a beautiful work.

**OK, AGAIN, WITH ALL THE ARTISTS IN YOUR FAMILY, YOU NEVER WERE TEMPTED TO GET BEHIND THE EASEL?**

No, it’s like being brought up in the circus and figuring out very early that the trapeze was not something you wanted to do for the rest of your life.

**PROFILE:** Art Curator Joachim Pissarro

Hunter College

Master of the Impossible

10 SPRING 2009
The National Science Foundation, and far-sighted private foundations know the value of quality public higher education. They are financing schools and programs, supporting scholarly research by world-class faculty, and endowing student scholarships at every college of The City University of New York. They are answering CUNY’s call for a Compact for Public Higher Education that unites all stakeholders — government, donors, students and the University itself to ensure that our city, state and nation will continue to have well-educated leaders. They are investing in CUNY, investing in New York, and investing in futures.”

— Chancellor Matthew Goldstein
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Starting from Scratch

By Ron Howell

CUNY plans an innovative new community college to help students cross the finish line.
ONLY A QUARTER of the nation’s community college students earn an associate degree or go on to a four-year college within six years.

Some educators have come to accept these outcomes as intractable, but now an emerging model at CUNY for a new type of community college — with its primary focus to keep students in school and on track — may offer a pathway to improvement.

“We need bold and new approaches,” Chancellor Matthew Goldstein said in testimony recently before the State Assembly’s Committee on Higher Education. “Our students will face increasingly competitive pressures in an unforgiving economy and getting a degree matters,” he said. “It is therefore in their interest to attend community colleges where the focus is on high standards and degree completion.”

The plan for a new community college comes at a time when enrollment across CUNY’s system is soaring. This fall, the total number of students is expected to top 250,000 — the highest level in the University’s history. Community college enrollment is up 20 percent — from 68,044 to 81,538 since 2002.

The new community college — CUNY’s first new two-year school in 37 years — is outlined in a 120-page “concept paper” that was produced for the chancellor by a team of educators led by John Mogulescu, senior University dean for academic affairs, and Tracy Meade, University director for collaborative programs.

The paper envisages a school with approximately 3,000 students, a much smaller enrollment than at other community colleges. The real difference, however, would be in the college’s ethos: Students would be interviewed before admission, they would be required to enroll full-time in their first year, and their choice of majors would be limited to a handful of fields with the best job prospects.

The concept paper proposes a number of new strategies:

- Use of interviews in the admissions process. Mogulescu stresses that the interviews, not used at existing community colleges, are to help administrators assess students’ needs, not to weed them out.
- Required attendance at a summer “bridge” program. This is based on an awareness that many students have been poorly prepared for college.
- Division of the semester into three blocks of roughly five weeks each, with case-study based seminars introducing students to issues central to the vitality of New York City and its people. These include health services delivery, business and technology needs and elements of a green economy.
- A reduced selection of about a dozen majors. “We’re limiting the choices, trying to pick majors that seem to be more in tune with the economy,” Mogulescu says. Possible majors include nursing, energy services management and urban education.

The plan for the new college joins a host of community college initiatives at the University aimed at supporting student success and timely graduation. A noteworthy example is that of the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs, (ASAP) a joint undertaking of CUNY and Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s administration, in which selected students study full time and receive focused assistance, including tuition support, with the goal of dramatically increasing the number of students who graduate in three years.

The work ahead for the new community college involves moving the concept paper from a description of key educational features and practices into a detailed and comprehensive plan for implementation of the school.

University faculty and staff will be actively involved in all levels of planning, from serving on the project’s steering committee to chairing and serving on the many committees charged with developing a final plan and hiring inaugural faculty and staff to open the college.

As CUNY moves its plan for the new school forward, it is taking heart from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which is spending hundreds of millions to help boost college graduation rates around the country, especially among low-income and minority groups.

In November, Hilary Pennington, director of special initiatives for the Gates Foundation in the United States, praised CUNY’s blueprint. She lauded the idea of creating “new institutions to show what is possible when a college is designed from the start with completion as the focus.”

Early this year, the Gates Foundation gave CUNY a $560,000 grant for the planning phase of the new college.

Bill Gates has said the time is right for iconoclastic approaches. He’s mentioned the “dynamic new president” who has put education and innovation at the top of the domestic agenda.

In a systemwide effort to improve degree attainment for its community college students, the University is designing new programs and pathways that face up to the challenge of raising graduation rates. With the national spotlight illuminating the accomplishments of and challenges faced by community colleges, CUNY’s effort to develop and implement a new model will be closely watched for what it can contribute to the larger conversation about innovation in higher education.
“Disease occurs when you have a genetic predisposition and are exposed to an environmental trigger.”

— Kenneth Olden
A Visionary Man — And Plan

By Neill S. Rosenfeld

AS A BLACK YOUTH IN 1959, Kenneth Olden knew it would be dangerous to integrate the legally all-white University of Tennessee, yet he volunteered. And there he not only made history but also saw his first research laboratory and found his future — as a geneticist, cancer researcher, the first African-American director at the National Institutes of Health and now founding dean of CUNY’s proposed graduate School of Public Health.

Why did he risk injury and possibly death to walk onto that segregated campus when the South was a tinderbox of racial intolerance?

“It occurred to me that the only way this is ever going to change is that one of us must make it, not forget from whence we came, and change things,” Olden says. “I can communicate about issues now in a way that most of my colleagues just have no connection with.”

And communicate he does in rivers of words that are intense, engaging and passionate. As he describes it, the stakes are high not only for the University’s proposed School of Public Health, which is set to open in 2010-2011, but also for the city and, indeed, the world.

Olden cites a modern adage: Genetics loads the gun, and environment pulls the trigger. “Something like 85 to 90 percent of chronic diseases like Alzheimer’s, Parkinson, asthma and cancers are caused by the interaction of genetics, environmental agents and behavior, not by any one factor alone,” he says. “Disease occurs when you have a genetic predisposition and are exposed to an environmental trigger.” That explains why some smokers — those lacking the genetic predisposition — don’t get lung cancer.

Chancellor Matthew Goldstein believes the new school will be an important addition to the University. “Urban health problems, like diabetes and obesity, are on the rise,” he says. “As the largest urban public university in America, we hope to be able to work against these scourges.”

Olden joined the University in September 2008 after having led the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and the National Toxicology Program from 1991 to 2005; he later taught at the Harvard School of Public Health.

“Dr. Olden is a distinguished scientific leader and cancer researcher who displayed an unwavering commitment to which traditionally keep their distance from one another. Take the rising tide of pharmaceuticals that’s washing into waste water and being recycled into drinking water — a tide that is bound to grow as urbanized, aging populations treat chronic diseases, discard pills and flush away their residues.

“We don’t know what the health consequences are of all these pharmaceuticals in drinking water, but we know they’re not good,” Olden says.

What is known is that human sperm count can plummet and the sex of fish can change in environments laced with estrogens (such as from discarded birth control pills) and products that act like them (like the breakdown products of plastics, pesticides and livestock growth hormones). Interference with organ and gene functioning is why this March, several attorneys general forced six manufacturers to stop selling hard-plastic baby bottles made with bisphenol A, an estrogen-like chemical that can leach into formula; studies show it can damage reproductive systems and cause heart disease, obesity and diabetes later in life.

“Drugs in the water [not to mention baby formula] could represent a threat to us in a short period of time. That’s one consequence of urbanization that I want us to research,” Olden says.

Children younger than 6 and adults older than 65 are most vulnerable, particularly in cities, because urban environmental exposures tend to be intense and of long duration due to the sheer concentration of people and the way cities are built and operate. The very young are at risk because of undeveloped immune systems, while the elderly face deteriorating immune systems from a lifetime accumulation of DNA mutations and aging.

Decades can pass between exposure and the onset of disease, which underlines the importance of protecting the environment in which children live. Most critical are the first two years of life, when babies grow and change rapidly. For breast cancer, the most dangerous time is puberty, when ducts, the site of most breast cancers, are developing.

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“Dr. Olden is a distinguished scientific leader and cancer researcher who displayed an unwavering commitment to
public health at the National Institutes of Health," says CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein. "He brings an impressive combination of internationally recognized experience and service to the country to this vitally important and new initiative."

Hunter President Jennifer Raab notes that Olden is recruiting a dynamic faculty while involving professors from the public health master’s programs at Brooklyn, Hunter, Lehman and the Graduate Center, as well as from elsewhere in the University. She added that CUNY has rich programs in allied fields in the natural and social sciences, like Hunter’s School of Social Work, which will host the school in a new building in East Harlem. "Under Dr. Olden’s leadership, CUNY and Hunter College will be well positioned to establish a world-class School of Public Health," Raab says.

Olden calls the decision to place the school in a lower-income area “a stroke of genius,” because schools of public health and social work “ought to be out in the community where the public health problems are. The location speaks volumes for the commitment of this institution.”

The third of six children, Olden grew up in poverty in the 1940s and 1950s in Parrottsville, a small, segregated farm town in Appalachian Tennessee. His parents, Mack and Augusta Olden, were sharecroppers until his father and uncle scraped together money to buy a farm to grow tobacco, raise hogs and plant vegetables; they also sold milk, leaving it at the road for pickup.

"There were no opportunities for any kids, black or white, in Parrottsville. People couldn’t get out and they didn’t dream big. You were going to become a farmer and, if you were lucky, get some sort of menial job eking out minimum wage," he says.

Grade-school education was poor, a one-room schoolhouse. There was no bus service for black children, so from age 6, each day he and a brother walked 12 miles round-trip. "The winter months were very difficult, yet often we had a perfect attendance record," he says.

The farm lacked electricity through his high school years, "so we did our homework by the light of a kerosene lamp." But at least bus service was available by the time he reached high school. Olden liked reading and went through "everything in our house that I could put my hands on. Mostly, we didn’t have any books," he says, "but the Bible was one of them and I read it cover to cover more times than once."

A pivotal figure was the Rev. Isaac K. Rakestraw, his principal at the all-black Tanner High School in neighboring Newport. Olden says that Rakestraw continually exhorted students: "By golly, you country bumpkins can be anything you want to be!"

The message clicked. Olden regularly walked past Newport’s First Baptist Church, a middle-class white congregation, on his way to school. "I knew I wanted to be on that side of the tracks, but I wanted to make sure that I built bridges so other people could also cross over, and I’ve done that." Not long ago he stepped inside that church to speak about his life.

Rakestraw also told him "that there was something called college and I could go. He helped me get a scholarship and find a job in the summer to earn my keep. I shined shoes on the weekend and saved enough money at 15 cents per pair to put myself through college the first year," he says. Olden enrolled at the historically black Knoxville College and worked summers at Wildwood on the Jersey Shore.

And then came the courageous decision that quite by chance propelled him into a life of science. In the fall of 1959, while a senior biology major, he volunteered to be one of two students to informally integrate the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

"Integration in the South always had a girl and a boy, and they needed people who could take the harassment and wouldn’t embarrass the black population," says Olden, "So I was the guy. I couldn’t officially take classes because it was against the law, but I could participate in research programs, go to seminars and be visible. I couldn’t get credit, so I would go back across town and take courses at my college.”

His parents worried, for integration attempts often led to reprisals against students and their families. They doubtless feared the kind of violence that would erupt in neighboring Mississippi three years later, when Gov. Ross Barnett physically blocked Air Force veteran James Meredith from enrolling at the state university.

But Knoxville was not Oxford, Mississippi, and Olden says he experienced no problems. The university officially integrated with 150 black students the following fall without protest.

It was during his unofficial year at the University of Tennessee that he experienced “an epiphany” about science.

"I had been in a laboratory as a class, but I’d never seen a person in a lab doing real experiments and trying to solve problems," he says. As part of a grant from the Atomic Energy Commission, "I was able to work in this lab conducting research into genetic mutations in tapeworms; they had treated them with X-rays at Oak Ridge National Laboratory and you could see changes in the chromosomes. That excited me and I recognized that this is brain power. Faculty from other universities would come and give seminars, and I wanted to be one of those people.”

Gone were his plans to become a physician, “because I knew black physicians in Knoxville and in my little hometown, but I didn’t know any black person who was nationally competitive in biomedical research. Science changed my life.”

The satisfying postscript to this story came in 2004, when Olden was asked to apply for the presidency of the multi-campus University of Tennessee, a position like the CUNY chancellorship. He hesitated, for he was 65 and unsure about tackling such a demanding job. "I thought about my parents, who were deceased. If they knew that I had just one iota of a chance to become president of the University of Tennessee and I said no, they would turn over in their graves, so I couldn’t say no.” He was the only Tennessean and nonwhite among the six finalists, but someone else was selected.

Olden earned a master’s in genetics at the University of Michigan and a doctorate in cell biology and biochemistry at Temple University. While doing postdoctoral work and teaching at Harvard Medical School, he and his wife, Sandra White, ran a dormitory at Radcliffe College for four years. White, who has a doctorate in immunology, and Olden would co-author some 30 cancer-related papers over the years, among their many publications. She now directs a program at historically black North Carolina Central University in Durham that encourages minority high school students to go into math, science and technology. They have two
Olden’s research focused on preventing metastasis, which occurs when cancer cells break off from a primary tumor and establish new tumors elsewhere in the body. A 1978 paper he wrote in the prestigious journal Cell about glycoproteins (proteins that contain sugar polymers and serve many functions in the body) is among the 100 most-cited scientific research reports. A 1985 paper in The Journal of Biological Chemistry reversed the 15-year conventional wisdom that secretory proteins are transported via a “conveyor belt.” And in the 1980s, he caused a sensation with an article in Science describing how he had prevented metastasis in mice, but that approach later proved too toxic for human use.

His research continued until just before coming to CUNY. He pursued it at Harvard, NIH, Howard University, where he directed the cancer center and chaired the department of Oncology, and then at NIEHS, where besides being director, he also was chief of the metastasis section of its environmental carcinogenesis program.

Olden has never forgotten the lessons of his youth. As NIH’s first African-American director, “I had a perspective on issues that others didn’t. It never occurred to anybody that certain people weren’t at the table — and it wasn’t just blacks and Hispanics and Asians, but poor white folks weren’t around the table, either.” When he arrived, the directors of the 17 institutes and centers then in existence were white; one was female; all were middle-class.

He says that part of the lure of helping to launch the CUNY School of Public Health was that “there is a lot of poverty and pain and suffering, and somebody has got to communicate that.”

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From the beginning, CUNY wanted its School of Public Health to target urban issues. Twenty years from now, two-thirds of the anticipated world population of 8.1 billion are expected to live in cities. And cities are where many contemporary health problems — from HIV infection to variants of chronic diseases like asthma and diabetes — have emerged. Cities also are where medical researchers are turning cancers that once spelled certain death into chronic conditions.

CUNY is taking a different approach than traditional schools, which separate the disciplines. “Complex problems cannot be solved by one discipline working in its own silo,” Olden says. “You need epidemiologists working with biostatisticians, toxicologists, environmental health scientists, social workers, nurses, behavioral scientists, life scientists and community groups. They don’t necessarily speak the same language, or have the same way of thinking, or use the same tools, so collectively they can see a large slice of the problem, rather than just a little sliver of it.”

Olden says previous public health efforts were spectacularly successful. “At the turn of the 20th century, average life span was about 50 years. That’s increased to about 78. That’s huge, and it had to do with sanitation practices as simple as washing your hands, eliminating death from infectious diseases, food and drug safety, environmental regulation, cleaning up the air, cleaning up the water.

“What’s going to happen over the next hundred years? We’re already seeing people living longer. How much more? I don’t know. Now we have improved medical technology. We could increase lifespan another 10 to 15 years, which would have a huge impact on our way of life. We’ve got to anticipate that,” he says. But how long you live depends in part upon where you live. Olden cites 2006 research by health economist Christopher Murray, who found “eight Americas” divided by race, counties of residence, income, and a few other social factors.

Thirty-three years separated Asian women in Bergen County, N.J., from Native American males in some South Dakota counties—91 versus 58 years.

“You can’t account for this by differences in access to health care, because across the eight Americas the differences were small,” Olden says, “but Murray mentioned disproportionate exposure to risk factors, which tend to be environmental.” Nevertheless, Olden sees the need to ensure that the approximately 50 million Americans who lack health care get it. He advocates an emphasis on wellness and prevention — which in part means cleaning up and safeguarding the environment — because “we don’t have enough resources in the U.S. Treasury to handle the health-care problems of chronic diseases” if every elderly person gets sick.

“We’ve got to promote healthy aging, so you can live to 85 and be active and independent, and that can happen,” says Olden. “That’s where the excitement is.”

Olden stresses the “founding” in his role of being the school’s founding dean. He’s hiring core faculty at the rate of two or three a year, recruiting the first students and working out logistics with the college master’s programs. He intends to shepherd the school through accreditation in 2011, then “hand it off to someone else. Hopefully, I will have some say in helping them identify somebody who can take it the rest of the way,” he says. “That’s the legacy I want.”
SCOTT STERNBACH, director of the Commercial Photography Program at LaGuardia Community College, doesn’t compromise his craft. During his 10-week trip to Antarctica in late 2008, Sternbach lugged around a bulky 8x10-inch Wisner camera, which he used to photograph a team of 30 scientists, researchers and support staff at the Palmer Research Station. A throwback in both size and design to cameras used 100 years ago, the vintage Wisner doesn’t work well in harsh climate and it’s much heavier and slower than digital cameras. But when it comes to portrait photography, Sternbach believes a Wisner camera is without equal. It produces images of the highest resolution that capture individuals in candid, relaxed and natural poses.

“By the time I got to making an exposure, people have almost forgotten they were having their picture taken,” said Sternbach, whose project, “Antarctica in Black and White,” was funded by an Antarctic Artists and Writers grant from the National Science Foundation. “I tried to create a window on these people and show them as they are.”

Initially Sternbach wanted to document the work of biologists, divers and sea captains, but he quickly realized that the Palmer station couldn’t function without the cooks, mechanics,

"Turn to next page"
carpenters, waste managers and other support hands.

“They’re essentially heroes,” said Sternbach, who photographed almost everyone at the station. “They sacrifice their personal life to support a great cause. I was impressed with how no one really complained about the harsh conditions they work in. They’re all heroic.”

It’s not the first time Sternbach worked with a Wisner camera. He used it to capture the declining lifestyle of dairy farmers in upstate New York and to document the desolate sites of pre-war industrial ruins in New York City. He hopes to use his “Antarctic Souls” environmental portraits to raise awareness about global warming.

“I photograph things that are disappearing, that are important to me; that’s what I’m about,” said Sternbach, who had his own darkroom by the age of 11 with equipment used by his grandfather.
ERIC COOPER
Cook
“He’s a funny guy. When you first meet him he comes off as a bit threatening but beneath that is a very smart, politically active guy. We always talked about Obama and the upcoming election. He’d help you out any way he could. He was very proud of the food he cooked. He made great Indian food and on Rosh Hashanah he made a traditional Jewish dinner.”

MICHAEL BRETT
Chief Engineer NSF LM Gould Research Ship
“You would just see him emerge, pop out of nowhere. He looked like he didn’t see much light because he worked in the engine room on the ship. I never thought we’d have a problem on the open seas because of the way he maintained the ship. He made sure everything was tight, no leaks.”

CHRIS CHENG-DEVRIES
Scientist
“She is a relentless worker. She almost never went to sleep. She does research on Antarctic ice fish, which have anti-freeze in their blood. They live in 28-degree water, no other fish can do that. She’s so knowledgeable, so passionate. She’s been doing this for over 20 years with her husband Art.”

CHRIS SELIGA
Lab Supervisor
“At 12 midnight everyone would be relaxing or sleeping and he would be making sure the labs were in perfect shape. He’s very dedicated to the labs. I asked him to wear his firefighter uniform because he was a member of the fire brigade at the station. He was very proud to be there to protect station personnel.”

KRISTEN GORMAN and JEN BLUM
Birders
“The idea behind this photograph was to show the women in their working environment. They were difficult to photograph because they were so busy. We met them on one of the islands this day. Nothing else much mattered to them except learning what was happening to the birds. I went out with them one time and it was some of the worst weather they had encountered. It made me realize how they risk their lives each day to continue the research. They’re very brave. I felt they were an excellent representation of what Palmer station is all about.”
Adding Gravitas

Math can be a challenge, an art form, or “really cool stuff.” It’s also a University cornerstone — and a key to life itself.

By Neill S. Rosenfeld

S

OAP BUBBLES. Candle flames. War games. Financial engineering. Neurons. Gravity. Elections. These are some of the passions that drove — and are driving — the stellar mathematicians who have taught and studied at the City University of New York over the past 150 years. They have won Nobel Prizes, Fields Medals and the National Medal of Science. They helped lay the groundwork for computers, contemporary cryptography and machine vision.

Today’s mathematicians veer in directions that were never imagined in 1853, when The Free Academy awarded one of its first 17 four-year baccalaureate degrees to Alfred George Compton, who would become City College’s preeminent math instructor until his retirement in 1911. His modern successors study stars and brains, Shakespeare and Wall Street, set theory, number theory and geometric constructs in multiple dimensions that twist in ways that would give a pretzel-maker headaches.

City University “is plastered with people who are extraordinary” in mathematics, number theory, analysis topology and geometry, said Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, a mathematician and graduate of City College who has published extensively on mathematics and statistics.

Reflecting the University’s Decade of Science, which Goldstein conceived, CUNY is hiring many junior professors in the math-heavy STEM fields — science, technology, engineering and math, itself. Pushing the frontiers of pure and applied mathematics, they are predicting the flow of ocean waves, forecasting the movement of the stock market and invoking string theory to explain particle physics.

And they’re inspiring interest among a new generation of students. More than 2,700 undergraduates signed up for the University’s first Math Challenge this winter. In recent years one undergraduate, Jan Siwanowicz (City College 2008), won the nation’s toughest math competition, the Mathematical Association of America’s William Lowell Putnam Competition; another, Joseph Hirsch (Macaulay Honors College at Queens College, 2008), captured a National Science Foundation graduate scholarship for pure mathematics and is pursuing a doctorate at the CUNY Graduate Center.

The mathematical ferment attracts students like Eugene Krel, who graduated summa cum laude from the Macaulay Honors College at Baruch College in 2008 and is pursuing a master’s in financial engineering at Baruch. “I was always into mathematics. It was always better for me to solve problems than ponder something in my philosophy class,” said Krel, who nonetheless majored in math, philosophy and New York City studies. “I figured that if mathematics could be so nice in theory, it could be even more so in practice.”

A LOOK INTO THE PAST

The accomplishments of today’s math faculty and students stand on a foundation of scholarship and instruction that stretches back to The Free Academy, the precursor of The City College of New York and CUNY. Alfred George Compton laid the first stones of that foundation. After earning his bachelor’s degree at The Free Academy in 1853, he became a leading teacher of math, physics and technical/mechanical studies. More practical than theoretic, Compton was committed to students. In 1878, when transcontinental travel was arduous, he led a group to the Rocky Mountains to make observations of a solar eclipse.

When he retired in 1911, mathematicians were roaming another frontier — the great unsolved theoretical problems of the new century. At the Second International Congress of Mathematicians in Paris in 1900, German mathematician David Hilbert had unleashed 23 puzzling problems that set much of the mathematical agenda for nine decades.

Those who solved them won renown. One studied at Brooklyn College, Paul J. Cohen. Another taught at Queens College, Leo Zippin. And a third, Martin Davis, graduated from City College.

Cohen, a prodigy, attended Brooklyn College from 1950 to 1953, until the University of Chicago invited him to pursue graduate studies without bothering with a B.A. He was best known for solving Hilbert’s first problem, which concerns set theory (the continuum hypothesis or, as Ben Yandell phrased it in The Honors Class: Hilbert’s Problems and their Solvers: “Is there any size bigger than the counting numbers but too small to be matched up one-to-one with the reals [real numbers]?”) Cohen showed that the continuum hypothesis could be neither proved nor disproved. He held two of mathematics’ highest honors, the Bôcher Prize
Andrew Poje, a mathematician at the College of Staten Island and physicist at the Graduate Center, collaborates with oceanographers.

(for analysis) and the Fields Medal (for logic) and he was working on Hilbert’s unsolved eighth problem, about number theory, when he died in 2007.

During the Depression, Zippin studied with a founder of the field of topology at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton, where he met Deane Montgomery. Zippin, who moved to the year-old Queens College in 1938, and Montgomery produced a series of papers, including the 1952 solution to Hilbert’s fifth problem (“Are continuous groups automatically differential groups?”). Joseph Malkevitch, Zippin’s young student at Queens and now professor emeritus of mathematics from York College, recalled “a special excitement in taking a course with someone who had solved one of the world-famous Hilbert problems.”

Davis’ pioneering work at NYU in automated deduction helped set the stage for contemporary computer science. He told Salute to Scholars that one of the most renowned City College professors, Emil Post, in essence challenged him to attack Hilbert’s 10th problem (“Is there a general algorithm to solve Diophantine equations, that is, polynomial equations whose solutions must be integers?”).

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Post contributed to pure mathematics and helped pave the way for computer science years before the first computers were built. When he graduated from City College in 1917, he had “already done much of the work for a paper on generalized differentiation that was eventually published in 1930,” according to the American Philosophical Society, which houses his papers. His 1920 doctoral dissertation at Columbia “involved the mathematical study of systems of logic, specifically the application of the truth table method to the propositional calculus of Whitehead and Russell’s Principia Mathematica.” He showed “that the axioms of propositional calculus were both complete and consistent with respect to the truth table method. This dissertation was to help form the foundation of modern proof theory.”

And yet, Post would realize, there is a fundamental incompleteness to any formal logic — in other words, certain things can’t be proved. This was revolutionary, for it contradicted Plato’s contention that
there is a reason for everything that is true, as well as Euclid’s millennia-old structure for proving mathematical hypotheses using axioms and reason.

Unfortunately, Post could not whip this insight into a publishable form before the Austrian Kurt Gödel announced his groundbreaking Incompleteness Theorems in 1931. Post later graciously wrote to him that “for fifteen years I carried around the thought of astounding the mathematical world with my unorthodox ideas … As for any claims I might make[,] perhaps the best I can say is that I would have proved Gödel’s Theorem in 1921 — had I been Gödel.”

Paul Chessin, once chief mathematician at Westinghouse and an IBM analyst/programmer on NASA’s Project Mercury, studied with Post, who had lost an arm in a childhood accident. “Invariably dressed in a three piece suit, empty sleeve carefully tucked into the side suitcoat pocket,” Post would pace, lecture and write vigorously on the blackboard, his sleeve pulling loose and flapping like a cape, Chessin once recalled. “That freedom of motion seemed to us to liberate his thinking.”

Nobel Laureate Robert Aumann, who studied real variable theory under Post, recalled that the class consisted almost completely of problems; Post assigned them as homework and students would present their solutions at the blackboard. “He made us figure things out for ourselves, never giving answers, only suggesting the next problem, the next place to go,” Aumann told Salute to Scholars from his office at the Center for Rationality at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. “You never really understand something until you figure it out yourself.”

Post’s career overlapped that of Jesse Douglas, who had graduated a year earlier from City College and eventually returned to teach there. Douglas won the first Fields Medal in 1936 for solving a problem in differential geometry first posed in 1760 by Joseph-Louis Lagrange. Douglas proved that a minimal surface exists for a given boundary, such as a circle having the least perimeter to enclose a given area or a sphere having the least surface to enclose a specified volume. Soap films and soap bubbles are nature’s handiest examples, and a blind 19th-century physicist who studied their properties, Joseph Plateau, bequeathed his name to the problem.

Bennington Pearson Gill, Post’s CCNY classmate, made his mark as a teacher and mentor in the tradition of Compton, the beloved teacher, during 47 years at the college. A testimonial statement found in the City College Archives deemed him “our department’s leader on curricular matters” who “continuously … broadened and deepened” the curriculum. “So many of our students have gone on to distinguished careers in mathematics” because of him, they wrote. Among them was Aumann, who said Gill gave him “a feeling of excitement about mathematics. He encouraged me and oversaw the progress of my education.”

Kenneth Arrow, another Nobel laureate and National Medal of Science winner, was also a student of Gill. “The word ‘great’ is only one I can apply to him as a teacher.” Arrow told Salute to Scholars that Gill’s two-term course in advanced calculus was “original, very thorough and rigor-
The underpinnings of graduate-level mathematics at CUNY today can be traced to three people: Gov. Nelson Rockefeller, who in 1961 forged the city’s disconnected public colleges into the City University of New York and granted CUNY the power to award doctoral degrees; Albert Bowker, a pioneering statistician who was recruited as CUNY’s second chancellor (1963-1971) partly because of his success in fostering graduate education at Stanford; and mathematician Mina Rees (Hunter 1923), whom Bowker picked as the Graduate Center’s first president.

(Bowker’s influence continued after he stepped down as chancellor, for he mentored Goldstein, like him a statistician who would go on to become chancellor.)

Rees was a pioneer, a woman in a male-dominated field who had to fight for her doctorate. Columbia admitted her to a master’s program, but let her know it “was really not interested in having women candidates for Ph.D.s,” she said. She earned her doctorate at the University of Chicago.

In the pivotal event of her life, during World War II she became deputy to the chief of the Applied Mathematics Panel (AMP), a federal civilian agency that contracted with mathematicians to solve military problems, such as understanding gas dynamics in air and water explosions. She defined the mathematical essence of all requests for research, found the best-suited talent and flew around the country ensuring that jobs got done.

After the war, AMP disbanded and the Office of Naval Research (ONR) became Washington’s prime source for funding basic scientific research until the National Science Foundation opened shop in 1950. In 1946 ONR pulled Rees from Hunter to run its Mathematical Sciences Branch; in 1949 she became deputy science director. She saw to it that ONR financed almost all of the early development of computer hardware and software, demanding faster machines, greater memory and visual display. In 1954 she rightly predicted that, with the right mathematics, computers would model experiments in areas like nuclear physics, where direct observation is impossible.

“The decisions that Rees and her staff made about what research and researchers to fund, and how to implement that funding, inaugurred the era of university research that continues today,” wrote her biographer, mathematician Amy Shell-Gellasch. In 1949 alone, ONR awarded contracts for applied and pure mathematical research worth $247 million in today’s dollars; that supported 1,200 projects and 5,000 researchers at more than 200 universities.

Rees returned to Hunter in 1953 as a math professor and dean of faculty. She was appointed the University’s dean of graduate studies in 1961 — the first woman to head a coeducational graduate school in the country — and Bowker named her founding president of the Graduate Center. Rees turned to Leo Zippin, the Hilbert problem solver at Queens College, to establish the mathematics doctoral program.

Rees had funded Bowker’s research when he was a graduate student at Columbia during the war, working on bomb-sights and how ships could avoid aerial torpedoes. “I have always thought that Mina and ONR have not been given enough credit for the development of mathematical statistics in this country. In most major universities it is the only new discipline (until the recent addition of
computer science) added to the Arts and Science area since World War II,” Bowker said in a 1987 interview.

With ONR’s financial support — and before he had even received his doctorate — Stanford hired Bowker to launch its statistics department. He scored a major coup by recruiting Arrow, who, he said “came in with a joint appointment between statistics and economics … With Ken Arrow as a nucleus, we had really a very interesting and stellar group of mathematical economists,” including other members of the City College Math Club. For many years, the Statistics Department at Stanford displayed a 1940 photograph of the club, “because half were faculty members there,” Arrow noted.

In 1972 the Nobel committee cited Arrow’s work in equilibrium theory, which says there are prices for goods that balance supply and demand in a complex economy with numerous markets, and the related area of welfare theory. The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences wrote: “As perhaps the most important of Arrow’s many contributions to welfare theory appears his ‘impossibility theorem,’ according to which it is impossible to construct a social welfare function out of individual preference functions.”

What does that mean? Consider, as Arrow did, an election with more than two candidates. The winner may not be the person whom the majority of voters really want, as in many primary elections, not to mention the 2000 presidential contest, when Al Gore and Ralph Nader together received far more votes than George W. Bush.

In 2005, Aumann shared the Nobel Prize with Thomas Schelling of the University of Maryland “for having enhanced our understanding of conflict and cooperation through game-theory analysis,” the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences wrote. “Why do some groups of individuals, organizations and countries succeed in promoting cooperation while others suffer from conflict?” Their work “established game theory — or interactive decision theory — as the dominant approach to this age-old question … The repeated-games approach clarifies the raison d’être of many institutions, ranging from merchant guilds and organized crime to wage negotiations and international trade agreements.”

Game theory helps explain countries’ decisions to go to war — or to strive for peace. Aumann sees war as an infinitely repeated game. When both sides in a conflict refuse to compromise, neither gets anything. For example, he has said, Israeli Prime Minister Rabin’s negotiations with the Syrians in the 1990s “blew up over a few meters [of land].”

Some of the University’s leading mathematicians have come in through joint appointments at the Graduate Center and CUNY colleges, like Dennis Sullivan, who was named the Graduate Center’s Albert Einstein Chair in Science in 1981, initially with Queens College. The winner of top mathematics prizes, the 2004 National Medal of Science, Sullivan leads a Graduate Center seminar on the relationship between algebraic topology and quantum field theory.

Linda Keen, recruited by Zippin and accomplished in a variety of mathematical fields, has developed a devoted following among both faculty and students. Each year since about 2000, she and associate professor Katherine St. John have run a National Science Foundation-funded scholarship program for 30 to 40 undergraduate and graduate students in math, computer science and computer graphics. She also partners with IBM, which offers paid internships in computer science. In both programs, she said, “We have gotten a lot to go to grad school. I feel I’ve made a real difference.”

Other renowned faculty members include Lehman distinguished professor Victor Pan, who fled Soviet oppression for American freedom in 1976, already dubbed as ‘polynomial Pan’ for his work on polynomial computations.

CUNY named the Graduate Center’s library in Rees’ honor in 1985, and when she died in 1997 at age 95, she left $1.7 million to endow a graduate chair in mathematics and pay for a fellowship. In 2002 the University appointed Victor A. Kolyvagin, a Soviet-born mathematician whose research fundamentally changed number theory, as the first Mina Rees Chair and as a distinguished professor.

**CALCULATING THE FUTURE**

Today’s junior faculty, recent alumni and students at CUNY are engaged across the spectrum of mathematical investigation. Here’s a brief look at a few of them:

First, try to understand this: There is an infinity of infinites. Think of all the whole numbers from one up. That’s your first infinity; call it a set. Then think of all of the numbers you didn’t include, like the real numbers, or endless decimals, between zero and one. That’s another and bigger infinity; call it another set.

Second, realize that you need a way to count even infinite things in a set. This is called cardinality. Third, recognize that cardinality involves concepts that would take a book or three to explain.

This is the world of Grigor Sargsyan, who received his CUNY Baccalaureate in 2003 and a U.C. Berkeley Ph.D. this year. Sargsyan explores an aspect of cardinality known as inner model theory. Sufficient to say that includes Kurt Gödel’s model of the constructible universe, the continuum hypothesis of Georg Cantor and Zemelo-Fraenkel set theory. Call it really big numbers.

“Set theory may be epsilon more abstract than other areas of math,” said Sargsyan,
using a mathematical term for infinitesimally small. “The mathematics of infinity is so mysterious that sometimes even fundamental questions — such as what constitutes an answer to a given question — need to be addressed. On the other hand, infinities are just as concrete mathematical objects as anything, and the combinatorial structures existing on them are just as beautiful as they are on finite sets.”

After emigrating from Armenia, he enrolled at Baruch College in part to take a graduate-level independent-study course with Arthur W. Apter, a set theorist specializing in large cardinals. They co-authored six papers and Apter co-directed his Ph.D. with John Steel of Berkeley. Sargsyan switched to the CUNY Baccalaureate Program in order to study with professors at Queens and Lehman Colleges and the Graduate Center.

Through the CUNY Baccalaureate, he qualified for a Thomas W. Smith academic fellowship. With doctorate in hand, Sargsyan is heading to National Science Foundation-supported postdoctoral study at UCLA.

Take logic, mix with geometry and stir in algebra. Specifically, use the logic of model theory to create an “ultraproduct,” a structure that combines an infinite number of smaller structures in a way that allows you to simultaneously manipulate all of them when you manipulate the overall structure.

Then suppose you are curious about singularities — the points on geometric objects where something extraordinary happens, like self-intersection or sharp cusps — and suppose that algebraic rings describe the geometric objects. With the right operations, you could draw conclusions about the rings, the singularities and the ultraproduct’s parts and whole.

If this sounds like Winston Churchill’s description of the Soviet Union — a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma — you’re not far wrong, but it makes perfect sense to Hans Schoutens, co-founder of the CUNY Logic Workshop at the Graduate Center. The workshop has become an East Coast magnet for logic, which is to mathematics what linguistics is to English.

It started in 1996, when Schoutens arrived in New York from his native Belgium with impressive credentials, no job, but a CUNY connection — logician Roman Kossak, then an adjunct at Brooklyn College and now a professor there. They teamed up with Joel Hamkins, then a fresh recruit to the College of Staten Island and now also a professor, to launch an ongoing seminar.

“Young people kept joining and becoming logicians because of our little group, and that has contributed to CUNY becoming one of the leading logic centers in the U.S.,” said Schoutens, now an associate professor at New York City College of Technology (City Tech). “Once you have a critical mass, you get all of these students, and now we even have model theory and set theory divisions. It’s led to a renaissance of logic at CUNY.”

Katrina was an ordinary Category 3 hurricane as it entered the Gulf of Mexico from the Caribbean. There it passed over a vast, powerful eddy that rushed unseen beneath the waves. Far warmer than the surrounding water, this eddy quickly stoked Katrina into the raging Category 5 storm that drowned New Orleans.

Associate professor Andrew Poje, a mathematician at the College of Staten Island and a physicist at the Graduate Center, collaborates with oceanographers to study fluid dynamics. He has focused...
Poje uses nonlinear dynamics and chaos theory to understand the rings’ geometry. “If you plotted tracer trajectories driven by these eddies you’d get a spaghetti plot. I try to make sense of the spaghetti.” Constantly moving, frequently splitting, the eddies get squashed and ripped apart. “I want to know what factors are responsible for the disintegration, as well as the most dangerous place to crash your oil tanker. Can a model predict where the oil will go if I dump a million gallons to the left of some line you can’t see?”

Think of the shape of a candle flame as it flickers, with constantly changing corners, surface, tips and curvature. Knowing a flame’s dimensions can be important in a factory or spacecraft, where its position and shape are critical.

The same notion of curved surfaces applies to the universe. Near the Earth, explained Lehman College associate professor Christina Sormani, the universe looks like everyday, three-dimensional Euclidean space. Forward-backward, left-right and up-down are the familiar directions.

But near heavy stars and black holes, space curves in a phenomenon called gravitational lensing. Direction isn’t quite what it seems to be and, due to curvature, there is more than one shortest distance between two points. The universe becomes what mathematicians call a Riemannian manifold that can exist in far more than three dimensions.

Sormani studies the Ricci curvature of Riemannian manifolds, that is, how the volume of a multidimensional manifold differs from the volume of a comparable region in Euclidean space. (Einstein popularized Ricci curvature in his theory of general relativity.) She is also interested in mirror symmetry and string theory, which help explain particle physics and cosmology, as well as manifolds. “It is very abstract,” Sormani said.

More comprehensible is her work as principal investigator of Lehman’s new Math Teacher Transformation Institute. Funded by the National Science Foundation, it focuses on better equipping Bronx junior high and high school teachers to teach algebra, geometry and other areas of mathematics. The institute also seeks to assess the best instructional practices, as measured by New York State Regents Exams.

Sormani teaches geometry to the first cohort of 40 state-certified math teachers. Geometry had faded from the classroom when many of them were in high school themselves, because the Regents kept changing the curriculum. With the state now reverting to a more traditional approach to algebra, geometry and trigonometry, the teachers have turned to the institute to expand their knowledge and skills.

Does the shape of a neuron, or nerve cell, determine how it functions in the brain? Queens College neurobiologist Joshua C. Brumberg can learn only so much by examining tissue. But with mathematical models, “We can test hypotheses that we might not be able to do in a living system.”

“Computational neuroscience gives us a leg up,” said Brumberg, an associate professor and director of the Graduate Center’s neuropsychology Ph.D. subprogram. And for mathematics he turns to talented undergraduates.

“Biology is the new discipline driving innovations in mathematics. It used to be physics,” said Michael Schwemmer (Macaulay Honors College at Queens College 2005), who expects to earn his doctorate in applied mathematics from the University of California-Davis in 2010). Examining brain activity to discover how cognition works “is really cool stuff.” His doctoral research probes the relationship
between neurons’ synchronized electrical activity and sensory information processing, motor skills and associative learning. “What are the fundamental biophysical mechanisms that make them synchronize their activity?”

Schwemmer, a guitarist, was first attracted to Queens College’s Aaron Copeland School of Music, which he attended in high school. But math won out, thanks to a graduate-level class in number theory with assistant math chair Steven J. Kahan. “That made me appreciate how mathematics can be an art form.”

With Brumberg, Schwemmer examined action potentials, or electrical discharges, in neurons, looking at how cell geometry affects firing. “It was amazing to use math to understand biology,” he said. Upon graduation, he received the Claire and Samuel Jacobs Award for excellence in mathematics.

Brumberg is now working with Harold Levine (Queens 2009), an honors student majoring in math and physics. He started at Queensborough Community College and his studies are supported by the National Institutes of Health Minority Access to Research Careers program. He wondered whether the shape and size of a neuron affect physiology and signal processing. “We showed that the geometry of the cell matters,” said Gomes.

Or as Brumberg put it, “Neurons involved in one pathway have different properties than neurons in another pathway. That’s what Harold’s data is showing you.” The next step will be to see whether those mathematical findings bear out in the laboratory.

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What if Romeo had fallen for Juliet at first sight and then discovered that she smelled bad? “The play would have gone in a complete opposite direction, into extreme hatred or apathy to one another,” said Shari Levine (Hunter 2008), who is studying for a math Ph.D. at Oxford. “The only way the story could explode into intense romance is if both were attracted from the start.”

How does she know that? Differential equations tell her so.

Cornell mathematician Steven Strogatz first seized upon “Romeo and Juliet” in 1988 to inject drama into his teaching of differential equations. Levine gave “Romeo” her own spin in undergraduate research supported by the National Science Foundation and then wrote equations to explain “Hamlet,” “Henry V” and “Midsummer Night’s Dream.” Graphing the equations shows how the play will end, but change the conditions and the graphs and endings will differ wildly.

“It surprised me how surprised people are that you could do this,” she said. She presented her work at the 2007 Einsteins in the City International Student Research Conference, which alternates between CCNY and The Technical University of Vienna.

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As the financial world imploded this year, critics vilified financial engineers — the once-vaunted quantitative analysts, or “quants,” who use mathematics to study and manage the market. Weren’t they responsible for creating those toxic mortgage derivatives?

Partly, but there’s plenty of blame to go around, and more should be heaped upon salespeople and rating agencies. Had the raters fairly valued those derivatives from the beginning, things might have turned out differently, most commentators agree.

“The field is bound to continue growing,” said Dan Stefanica, director of Baruch College’s Master’s of Financial Engineering (MFE) Program since it started in 2002. “With the advent of electronic trading, all transactions are recorded electronically. There are terabytes of information. You need models to sift through and process that information, which you can use to hedge your positions and invest more efficiently. You can’t go back to pencil and paper.”

Since the advent of financial engineers in the last decade, quants primarily determined exposure to risk and analyzed structured products. But today their algorithms also drive trading decisions, particularly at hedge funds.

The three pillars of financial engineering get equal emphasis in Baruch’s highly competitive program — mathematics, which creates a model; finance, which employs the model; and computer programming, which runs the model.

Baruch’s strategy of admitting only the most qualified candidates, not a predetermined number, appears to be paying off. Most students earn their degrees and quickly find work, if they aren’t in the financial industry already. Consider the 22 graduates of December 2008: Five worked in the sector; by February 2009, 11 others had landed jobs guaranteed to pay an average of $94,000 in the first year — an impressive record, especially in these nail-biting times.

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2005
Robert Aumann
(CCNY 1950, math major)
receives Nobel Prize in economics.

2005
Goldstein announces CUNY’s Decade of Science (2005-2015), resulting in hiring of many mathematicians and emphasizing math-heavy STEM fields — science, technology, engineering and math.

2008
Joseph Hirsch (Macaulay Honors College at Queens College 2008) wins National Science Foundation graduate research fellowship; now pursuing Ph.D. in math at CUNY Graduate Center.

2009
More than 2,700 undergraduates register for first CUNY Math Challenge.

2009
Six students in Baruch’s Masters of Financial Engineering Program place in 2009 Interactive Brokers Trading Olympiad, 10% of winners in this international graduate student competition.
Brevity’s Also the Soul of Lit

IT’S BEEN MORE THAN 20 YEARS since the American short story was at the height of its popularity, but pity not Amy Hempel, who burst on the scene in 1985 and remains one of the form’s brighter lights and more committed practitioners.

“Some people in publishing will still ask, ‘Hey, great story, but have you got a novel?’” says Hempel, the coordinator of Brooklyn College’s M.F.A. program in fiction. “I don’t have any interest in writing a novel. You can’t write to the marketplace. You just do what you do.”

What Hempel does, what she’s been doing for nearly three decades, is write some of the more luminous short fiction to be penned — minimalist, unsentimental, painfully observant — while teaching younger writers to find their own voices. She taught at Sarah Lawrence, Bennington and Princeton before taking over the graduate fiction program at Brooklyn last fall, succeeding Michael Cunningham, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of The Hours. No sooner had she settled into her new office in Boylan Hall than did Hempel find herself the recipient of the 2008 Rea Award for the Short Story, an annual $30,000 prize whose prior winners have included John Updike, Eudora Welty, Cynthia Ozick and Tobias Wolff.

Since her first collection, Reasons to Live, Hempel has published three more, followed by a volume of all her work that The New York Times Book Review named one of the 10 best books of 2006. “Hempel, I’d argue, knows as much as anyone since Kafka about the tendency of human beings to do much better at dreaming than living,” the novelist Rick Moody wrote in an introduction to that collection.

The Rea Award jurors went Moody one better, comparing Hempel’s work to Chekhov’s. “Amy Hempel,” they wrote, “is one of our masters of the dire emotional state rendered with an off-handedness that, combined with tenderness, results in fiction that’s at once dispassionate and compassionate.”

Hempel says her writing comes from the thing that’s always interested her: “How do people get through things? How do you get through your life? I look for the same things, moments of great beauty, moments of great sadness that stick in your memory. And I’m inter-
The game was called on account of dogs—Hunter in the infield, Tucker in the infield, Bosco and Boone at first base. First-grader Donald sat down on second base, and Kirsten grabbed her brother’s arm and wouldn’t let him have third to make his first run.

“Unfair!” her brother screamed, and the dogs, roving umpires, ran to third.

“Good power!” their uncle yelled, and the dogs, roving umpires, ran to third.

And when she did, Joy, in a leg cast, swung the bat and missed. “Now put some wood to it.”

And when Kelly broke free from Kirsten and this time came in to make the run, members of the Kelly team made Tucker in the infield dance on his hind legs.

“It’s not who wins—” their coach began, and was shouted down by one of the boys, “There’s first and there’s forget it.”

Then Hunter retrieved a foul ball and carried it off in the direction of the river.

The other dogs followed—barking, mutinous.

Dinner was a simple picnic on the porch, paper plates in laps, the only conversation a debate as to which was the better grip for throwing shoes.

After dinner, the horseshoes were handed out, the post pounded in, the rules reviewed with a new rule added due to falling-down shorts. The new rule: Have attire.

The women smoked on the porch, the smoke repelling mosquitoes, and the men and children played on even after dusk when it got so dark that a candle was rigged to balance on top of the post, and was knocked off and blown out by every single almost-ringer.

Then the children went to bed, or at least went upstairs, and the men joined the women for a cigarette on the porch, absently picking ticks engorged like grapes off the sleeping dogs. And when the men kissed the women good night, and their weekend whiskers scratched the women’s cheeks, the women did not think shave, they thought: stay.
ON NEW YEAR’S DAY 2001, Jay Salpeter, a private investigator and former New York City police detective, was going through his mail when an envelope caught his eye because of its return address: the maximum security state prison in Dannemora.

The letter was from Martin Tankleff — Inmate 90T 3844. He was serving a 50-year sentence for the 1988 murders of his parents which happened when he was 17. But he wrote that he was innocent. And after 10 years of failed appeals, his only hope was to find out who really killed his parents and reopen the case with evidence that proved it. Tankleff had heard that Salpeter had a knack for finding new evidence in old cases. But his family didn’t have much money to pay him. “I wonder if you would be willing to work on my case on a pro bono or primarily pro bono basis,” he wrote.

Salpeter took the case and worked it for seven years. He made $10,000 but the real payoff was far bigger. On Dec. 21, 2007 — seven years almost to the day Tankleff sent his first letter to Salpeter from prison — a state appeals court vacated his conviction. The reversal was based on evidence Salpeter turned up over the course of a methodical, lonely and often agonizing investigation that he sometimes thought would never end. “Once I was convinced that Marty was innocent, how could I not do it? How could I stop?” Salpeter says. “But in my wildest imagination, I didn’t think I would wind up working the case for seven years.”

Salpeter had similar thoughts once before — as a student at CUNY’s John Jay College of Criminal Justice during his early years as a police officer: “It took me nine years to graduate,” he says, “I stuck with it, going at night, stopping, starting up again. I just wanted to have a college degree. All my friends did. I graduated the same year as my closest friend growing up. I got my bachelor’s he got his M.D.”

Salpeter’s persistent nature paid off for Tankleff, a young man who found himself in the most Kafkaesque of circumstances. He was a typical Long Island teenager until that day, in September 1988 — the first day of his senior year in high school — he woke up to find his parents stabbed and bludgeoned. Arlene Tankleff was dead. Seymour Tankleff was dead. Seymour was barely alive. By the end of that day, he was under arrest, the police saying he confessed. He was convicted two years later and sentenced to the maximum. Tankleff, 19, wouldn’t be eligible for parole until he was 69.

A decade later, Salpeter became his unlikely savior. He grew up in Queens and joined the New York Police Department after high school. He worked as a patrolman in Brooklyn and then as an undercover decoy on the department’s street crimes unit. Meanwhile, he spent whatever spare time he could find pursuing his B.A. in criminal justice at John Jay. He began while in the police academy in 1972 and earned his degree just before his 30th birthday. “I saw the school grow,” he says. “When I started, it was on Park Avenue South near Baruch College. It was mostly cops and law enforcement then. By the time I graduated, they moved to Tenth Avenue and it wasn’t just cops.”

Salpeter became a detective about the same time he became a college graduate. After 10 years, he tired of the murder and mayhem and retired. A year later, he became a private investigator and instead of arresting suspects he was working for their lawyers. Along the way, he found himself with a few cases in which it seemed that his former brethren had locked up innocent people. So when he received Tankleff’s letter from prison, Salpeter was open to the possibility that Tankleff was, as he claimed, an innocent man, wrongly convicted.

“What I saw right away was that the Suffolk County police never investigated the case,” Salpeter said. “If they did, they would have made Jerry Steuer- man the prime suspect, not Marty.”

Jerry Steuer- man was Tankleff’s estranged business partner. He owed Seymour Tankleff a half million dollars, and the two had been at war for months. Salpeter came to believe that the lead detective, James McCready, might have framed Tankleff by fabricating his confession — a scenario suggested by its inconsistency with the physical evidence. Salpeter eventually developed evidence that McCready had a prior relationship with Steuer- man but lied about it at the trial. McCready has denied...
FALSE CONFESSIONS have come a long way as a recognized phenomenon since the days when Jay Salpeter was a student at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. A good deal of the credit goes to another man with a connection to John Jay who has an abiding professional interest in the Martin Tankleff case.

Saul Kassin, distinguished professor of psychology at John Jay, is one of the country's leading authorities on interrogations and confessions. And like other top experts who have studied the case, he concluded long ago that Tankleff was the victim of psychological manipulation and outright fabrication by the Suffolk County police that cost him 17 years of his life.

Kassin is a pioneer in the field of false confessions, an area of interest he came upon after spending his early career researching juries and how they make judgments. “My fascination with confessions started with the question, ‘Can you pry juries away from confessions?’ ” The answer, generally, was no. The next question was: Is confession evidence necessarily reliable? And the answer to that was troubling.

In 1985, Kassin and colleague, Lawrence S. Wrightsman, were the first to raise questions about confession evidence. They called on others in the fields of criminology and psychology to join them in making it the subject of scientific study. They were particularly interested in exploring false confessions — how often they occurred, under what circumstances, and how jurors might distinguish them.

Kassin began looking at the Tankleff case in 1992, not long after Tankleff’s conviction. He found that the lead detective told Tankleff several manipulative lies in the interrogation room; the pivotal one was that his father had regained consciousness and identified him as his assailant. It led the dazed teenager to think he might have committed the attacks, as the police were insisting, and then blacked out. But he was unable to supply the details. According to Salpeter and Kassin, the detective did that for him.

“There was no evidence of Marty's involvement in these murders,” Kassin said. In fact, he said, the physical evidence of the case disproved virtually every element of the confession that the police attributed to their teenage suspect. It led the dazed teenager to think he might have committed the attacks, as the police were insisting, and then blacked out. But he was unable to supply the details. According to Salpeter and Kassin, the detective did that for him.

In 1985, Kassin and colleague, Lawrence S. Wrightsman, were the first to raise questions about confession evidence. They called on others in the fields of criminology and psychology to join them in making it the subject of scientific study. They were particularly interested in exploring false confessions — how often they occurred, under what circumstances, and how jurors might distinguish them.

Kassin began looking at the Tankleff case in 1992, not long after Tankleff’s conviction. He found that the lead detective told Tankleff several manipulative lies in the interrogation room; the pivotal one was that his father had regained consciousness and identified him as his assailant. It led the dazed teenager to think he might have committed the attacks, as the police were insisting, and then blacked out. But he was unable to supply the details. According to Salpeter and Kassin, the detective did that for him.

“There was no evidence of Marty's involvement in these murders,” Kassin said. In fact, he said, the physical evidence of the case disproved virtually every element of the confession that the police attributed to their teenage suspect. But the jury convicted him nonetheless. They couldn’t imagine the police making up a confession. And they couldn’t imagine someone confessing to crimes he didn’t commit. Kassin has been writing and lecturing about the Tankleff case ever since. It's now a staple of the graduate-level course he teaches in confession evidence.

Any wrongdoing.

In the criminal justice system, reversing a murder conviction with new evidence is one of the hardest things to do. Harder still, nowadays, without DNA evidence. But Salpeter did, using old-fashioned gumshoe work to slowly unravel the case. The big break came when Salpeter tracked down a man who eventually admitted he had driven the killers — two men allegedly hired by Steuerman — to the Tankleff home on the night of the murders.

Salpeter continued to find people who knew pieces of the puzzle, while still others came forward on their own. One was the teenage son of one of the alleged hit men. He testified in appeals court that his father admitted to him that he committed the murders — and said that his father claimed that McCready was paid off to protect him and his coconspirators. The teenager's story along with other evidence Salpeter found led the court to overturn Tankleff’s convictions.

The Tankleff case became a cause célèbre and made Salpeter one of the country's most high-profile private investigators. "Jay Salpeter is the best investigator I’ve ever known," Tankleff’s lead attorney, Stephen Braga of Washington, declared at a news conference following Tankleff’s release. Tankleff himself hailed Salpeter as his savior. "...You gave me my life back," he wrote to him on his last day in prison, a poignant bookend to his first letter seven years earlier.

Last December, Salpeter and author Richard Firstman published A Criminal Injustice, a book that both deconstructed the wrongful prosecution of Tankleff and reconstructed the investigation that reversed it. The book also revealed new details exposing the corruption by Suffolk County authorities that the authors allege was at the root of Tankleff’s 17-year imprisonment.
ONE AFTERNOON in the fall of 1950, a City College sophomore named Maury Allen dropped by the football coach’s office and asked to interview him for an article he was writing for the college paper, The Campus.

“But you’re on the team,” said the coach.

“Well, I’m on the paper, too,” Allen replied.

The coach granted the interview, perhaps figuring the scrappy defensive back and third-string quarterback had a more promising future in journalism than football. It was a good call. The CCNY Beavers went 1-7 that year and never took the field again: A few months later came the notorious basketball point-shaving scandal that shut down most of City’s athletic teams. Maury Allen, meanwhile, went on to become an institution on the New York sportswriting scene. Last fall, the Society of The Silurians, New York’s oldest journalism organization, honored Allen with its annual Lifetime Achievement Award, a tribute whose past recipients have included the likes of Walter Cronkite, Bill Moyers and Pete Hamill.

Lifetime achievement notwithstanding, Allen is hardly finished. At 76, he still writes every day — whether his weekly piece for thecolumnists.com, a website that features sportswriters retired from daily journalism, or his annual book. He has written more than three dozen, most on the subject of baseball. There have been books about the glorious and futile seasons of the Yankees and Mets, biographies of Joe DiMaggio and Jackie Robinson and Mickey Mantle and even one about Bo Belinsky, a pitcher best remembered for leading the league in carousing.

“The writing has always been easy to me,” says Allen. “It’s always been fun. Some guys write one page and think that’s a lot. I write 2 or 3,000 words a day.”

Allen’s been pounding out copy since his days at City College, where he learned the craft from Irving Rosenthal, a professor in the English Department who taught the college’s one and only journalism course. Rosenthal had a simple philosophy: You want to learn how to write? Then write. That’s how you learn how to write. Allen learned fast and loved the payoff. “What a thrill to be in the Great Hall at City College and watch a kid sitting there reading my story in The Campus.”

Allen graduated in 1953 and went into the Army, but kept writing — for Stars and Stripes in Japan and Korea. Back home in Brooklyn two years later, he took the subway up to CCNY to ask Rosenthal for his advice: Should he go to Columbia for a graduate degree in journalism, or get a job? “He said, ‘You’ll learn more in two weeks on a paper than you’ll learn in two years at Columbia.’ ”

Allen worked at a couple of small papers, in Indiana and Pennsylvania, before returning to New York in 1959 to cover baseball for a new magazine called Sports Illustrated. The job had cachet and a handsome salary, and it was at SI that Allen met his wife, Janet. But he didn’t like the slower pace of a weekly — and he really didn’t like it when the editors reduced his stories to captions for the photographs that the magazine treasured. What Allen really wanted to do was write for the great sports section of the New York Post. He finally got his chance when the paper’s baseball writer died in a fire in St. Louis. “He was smoking and drinking in his hotel room,” Allen said. “I called up the sports editor, like
Gellis. I went in the next day. He says, ‘Do you smoke?’ I said no. ‘You’re hired.’"

Allen quickly made his mark as a baseball writer who didn’t take the games, or the players, so seriously. He was at the forefront of a new breed of New York sportswriters — “chipmunks,” they famously dubbed themselves—who wrote with an irreverence that ultimately changed the way all the media covered sports.

The chipmunks turned the press box into a chattering clubhouse, which prompted the legendary Jimmy Cannon to bellow, “Shut up and keep typing!” When Maury Allen typed, it was often with a touch of the face-tious. In 1963, Mickey Mantle spent most of the season on the disabled list, even as Yankee management kept telling the press he’d be back in the lineup any day.

“There is no Mickey Mantle,” Allen wrote finally. “No blond-haired, blue-eyed slugger from Oklahoma. He’s a fictional character created by the Yankees.” Allen was behind the batting cage the next day when he saw Mantle approaching. “You piss me off just standing there,” Mantle told him. It became a classic line, repeated for years by other players to other writers, although Allen became good friends with Mantle, as he did with many of the players he covered.

“The fun of covering baseball in the ’50s and ’60s was you could get to know a guy personally, you could go to his house.” — Maury Allen

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MAURY’S PICKS
For Best Players Ever

Willie Mays — He had the famous five skills (hit, hit with power, run, field and throw) to a degree no one ever equaled.

Mickey Mantle — Would have been the best ever if he wasn’t injured so much. He was the game’s power icon.

Hank Aaron — Stylish star who could do it all when few people really noticed.

Joe DiMaggio — Only a relatively short career keeps him from being considered the best the game ever saw.

Jackie Robinson — Playing that way under that pressure makes him an immortal of the game.

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Allen still lives the old world every day, in his head and on the page.
Guiding a Future Researcher

By Cathy Jedruczek

It took a village to mentor Cindy Puente, Hunter College senior and aspiring cancer researcher. Several professors in the Department of Biological Sciences recognized Puente’s potential early on and took turns advising her until she got accepted to Yale, Harvard, Sloan-Kettering and other top graduate research programs.

“Without my professors, I wouldn’t have gone as far as I’ve gone,” says Puente, 22, who chose to pursue a Ph.D. in cancer biology at the Gerstner Sloan-Kettering Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences this fall. “I don’t think I would have gone into science,” Puente explained. “It takes a community to build a young scientist. You need people to tell you that it’s okay to make mistakes and that you have to shake it off and move on.”

Every professor in Hunter’s Biological Sciences department allots two hours per week to advise students. Students are also required to seek permission from department professors to enroll in advanced biology courses. It’s all part of an effort to help steer students like Puente in the right direction.

“We just want to make sure our students have an idea what they want to do,” said Dr. Shirley Raps, biological sciences chair. “It’s amazing how they don’t know what opportunities are there for them. Sometimes we miss some students because they don’t come to see us.”

Puente, who was born in the United States but spent most of her childhood in Colombia, thought about becoming a medical lab technician while in her first year at Hunter. But her biology and precalculus professor, Dr. Ezra Shah, told her she had the ability to reach higher.

“I was a good student in high school but I had no interests,” Puente says. “I wanted to major in medical laboratory technology because I had an idea that you go to college to get a job after graduation.”

Puente listened to Shah’s advice and volunteered at Dr. Peter Lipke’s biology lab. Lipke recommended her for the Minority Access to Research Careers program, which he headed at that time. She got accepted and joined Dr. Jill Bargonetti’s lab.

“She has the ability to ask very thoughtful questions,” says Bargonetti, who does cancer research. “That’s a sign of somebody who has the ability to think deeply. She’s an incredible student.”

Although Puente was an outstanding student, she needed special attention in the lab. “Doctor Bargonetti has been very patient and she’s a good mentor,” says Puente, who has made tremendous leaps in doing lab research that focuses on understanding the cellular and molecular mechanisms that underlie disease. “She’s the one person who sees all of my flaws,” says Puente. “She’s very tough, and she didn’t allow me to slack.”

Puente also thought of becoming a doctor, but after a summer at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in New York, at Raps’ recommendation she set her mind on science research. That experience was sponsored by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, which has funded summer research opportunities for Hunter biology students for several years.

“At Cold Spring Harbor lab, I worked on an independent project,” says Puente. “It exposed me to a lot of new techniques and I interacted with people from across the country, including Nobel Prize winner James Watson, [one of the co-discoverers of DNA].”

Puente’s work at Cold Spring Harbor and her progress in Bargonetti’s lab convinced Raps to nominate her for the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s Exceptional Research Opportunities Program. As a result, Puente spent last summer in Dr. Robert Tjian’s lab at the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology at the University of California at Berkeley.

Puente says she wouldn’t have accomplished nearly as much without her mentors. “I see them all the time,” she says. “They’re genuinely concerned and they want to make sure I’m doing okay. So it’s motivating to know that people care.”

“It takes a community to build a young scientist.”

— Cindy Puente

Dr. Shirley Raps, left, and Dr. Jill Bargonetti mentor aspiring scientist Cindy Puente.
JAMES OAKES got the idea to write the book that won him the Lincoln Prize more than 15 years ago after reading an 1876 speech by abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

"I thought it was brilliant," says Oakes, distinguished professor of history and humanities chair at the Graduate Center. "It was his big summation speech of everything he had come to terms with about Lincoln. I thought about doing a general history of slavery, but I couldn’t get [the speech] out of my mind and though I thought I understood Lincoln, I didn’t understand Douglass very well, so I thought, ‘let me put the slavery book aside and work on these guys.’"

The Lincoln Prize, which recognizes the year’s best book on Lincoln and the Civil War, was awarded to Oakes in 2008 for The Radical and the Republican: Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln and the Triumph of Antislavery Politics.

It came as no surprise to Oakes that President Barack Obama has an interest in Lincoln. "I think what he admires about Lincoln, and it’s a good thing to admire, is the way Lincoln balanced the need to be flexible and pragmatic at critical points in order to achieve victory and to get things done while holding fast to his principles and refusing to compromise on the most fundamental and moral commitments he made," says Oakes. "He likes the way Lincoln was able to articulate in a very plain and beautiful language the basic principles, the ideals upon which the United States is grounded."

Published in 2007, The Radical and the Republican is among a new round of books celebrating the bicentennial of Lincoln’s birth. Reviewers have praised it for advancing the study of Lincoln and emancipation by making Douglass an equal protagonist.

Oakes grew up in Staten Island and entered Baruch College in 1970 intending to become an international banker. But he became inspired by the writings of historian Kenneth Stampp, who was known for his scholarship on slavery, the Civil War and Reconstruction. Oakes was accepted to a graduate program at the University of California Berkeley, where Stampp became his advisor. After Berkeley, he taught history at Princeton and Northwestern Universities and in 1997 he joined the Graduate Center faculty.

That same year, one of Oakes’ students at Princeton, John Matteson, joined the faculty at John Jay College of Criminal Justice to teach English. The two men had lost touch years ago and didn’t meet again until last year when Matteson won a Pulitzer Prize for his biography of Louisa May Alcott and her father. “He gave me useful and mature advice as I moved forward with the most important work of my undergraduate life,” Matteson says of his time as a student with Oakes. Now they hope to teach a class together at the Graduate Center on literature written about the Civil War.

“I came back to CUNY because I wasn’t getting my writing done,” says Oakes. “The Graduate Center creates an environment very conducive to writing. And the proof is in the results. My productivity has gone way up since I came back to CUNY, plus I’m from New York, so coming back to New York was like putting on a comfortable pair of shoes.”
'Tagger' Fan Draws Flack

RIDING HIS BICYCLE across the Williamsburg Bridge one day in 1995, Gregory Snyder encountered something that nearly knocked him off his seat and into the East River. He stopped to admire a sprawl of graffiti — SEntO, the writer’s "tag," in bold shades of green, blue, orange and yellow — on a concrete support at the crest of the bridge.

Snyder was a graduate student in sociology whose master’s thesis explored the conversion of early slaves to Christianity. But the graffiti changed all that. “I was fascinated by the color, the size — and the fact that it could be done,” recalls Snyder, who is now an assistant professor of sociology at Baruch College. “There was a bit of danger in hanging on the ledge to write it. I was just, ‘Wow.’ It unleashed this onslaught of curiosity that I couldn’t stifle. I went straight to my advisor and said, ‘I’m not going to study Christianity any more. I’m going to study graffiti writing.”

Over the next 10 years, Snyder immersed himself in one of New York City’s more disreputable subcultures. “It’s as complex as any,” Snyder says. “The idea of writing your name throughout the city, in as many ways as possible, in as many dangerous ways as possible, for the purpose of becoming famous.

“Who were these young men? Why did they do what they did? Was it art or vandalism — or both? To find the answers, Snyder interviewed and hung out with scores of graffiti writers — or “taggers” and “bombers,” as they’re known — and befriended many. He accompanied them into underground train tunnels and dark alleyways — sometimes serving as a lookout and, on a few occasions, partaking with a can of spray paint.

Snyder’s book Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York’s Urban Underground, (New York University Press, 2009) has stirred spirited reactions by reviewers. Said Publisher’s Weekly: “Snyder’s ‘the kids are all right’ assessment, buttressed by many examples of thrill-seeking taggers finding successful careers in art, design, publishing, and commissioned mural painting, is well-articulated, convincing, and quite possibly reassuring for the urbanites living among (or perhaps raising) today’s writers and bombers.”

A Wall Street Journal critic, meanwhile, expressed equal contempt for Snyder’s book and a famous 1974 essay in which Norman Mailer celebrated graffiti as artistic expression. The Journal published Snyder’s response. His objective was to explore and understand a particular subculture in all its “complexity and confusion,” he wrote, and in the process discovered “an empirical reality that flies in the face of conventional wisdom. Graffiti writers for the most part are not immoral, crime-addled imps.”

On the other hand, says Snyder, “to be mentioned in the same paragraph as Norman Mailer — that’s pretty good company.”
Here is a collection of new books written by CUNY authors.

**Gastropolis: Food & New York City**
Edited by associate professor of foods and nutrition Annie Hauck-Lawson (Brooklyn College) and assistant professor of tourism and hospitality Jonathan Deutsch (Kingsborough Community College)
Columbia University Press

_Gastropolis_ explores the personal and historical relationship between New Yorkers and food. Beginning with the origins of cuisine combinations, such as Mt. Olympus bagels and Puerto Rican lasagna, the book describes the nature of food and drink before the arrival of Europeans in 1624 and offers a history of early farming practices. Essays trace the function of place and memory in Asian cuisine, the rise of Jewish food icons, the evolution of food enterprises in Harlem, the relationship between restaurant dining and identity and the role of peddlers and markets in guiding the ingredients of our meals.

**The Other Side of Terror**
Edited by John Jay College assistant professor of English Nivedita Majumdar
Oxford University Press

The book offers insights on terrorism from the literatures of India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The Nepali writings concern the Maoist insurgency; those from Sri Lanka, the Tamil militancy. The Indian selections engage with manifestations ranging from the militant wing of the Independence movement to the various post-Independence terrorist movements, such as separatism in Punjab, the insurgency in Assam and the Naxalite movement in Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

**Alain L. Locke: The Biography of a Philosopher**
Queens College professor of English Charles Molesworth and Purdue University professor of philosophy Leonard Harris
University of Chicago Press

Molesworth and Harris trace Locke’s Philadelphia upbringing, his undergraduate years at Harvard and his tenure as the first African American Rhodes Scholar. The heart of their narrative illuminates Locke’s heady years in 1920s New York City and his 40 year career at Howard University, where he helped spearhead the adult education movement of the 1930s and wrote on topics ranging from the philosophy of value to the theory of democracy.

**American Therapy: The Rise of Psychotherapy in the United States**
Baruch College professor of health care policy Jonathan Engel
Penguin Group (Canada)

Fifty percent of Americans will undergo some form of psychotherapy in their lifetimes, but the origins of the field rarely are known to patients. Yet the story of psychotherapy in America brims with colorful characters, intriguing experimental treat-ments and intense debates within this community of healers. The book begins, as psychotherapy itself does, with the monumental figure of Sigmund Freud; it outlines the basics of Freudian theory and discusses the peculiarly powerful influence of Freud on the world of American mental health.

**How Does It Feel To Be A Problem? Being Young and Arab in America**
Brooklyn College associate professor of English Moustafa Bayoumi
The Penguin Press (USA)

Bayoumi tells a story of seven men and women in their 20s living in Brooklyn, home to the largest number of Arab-Americans in the United States. He jettisons the stereotypes and clichés that surround Arabs and Muslims and allows the reader instead to enter their worlds and experience their lives. Through them, Bayoumi exposes the often-unseen entanglements wrought by our age: government surveillance, workplace discrimination, warfare in their countries of origin, threats of vigilante violence, the infiltration of spies and informants into their midst and the disappearance of friends or family.

**Lincoln: The Biography of a Writer**
Queens College and CUNY Graduate Center distinguished professor emeritus of English Fred Kaplan
HarperCollins Publishers

An acclaimed biographer, Kaplan explores the life of America’s 16th president through his use of language as a vehicle to express complex ideas and feelings and as an instrument of persuasion and empowerment. An admirer and avid reader of Burns, Byron, Shakespeare and the Old Testament, Lincoln was the most literary of our presidents. Since Lincoln, no president has written his own words and addressed his audience with equal and enduring effectiveness. Kaplan focuses on the elements that shaped Lincoln’s mental and imaginative world; how his writings molded his identity, relationships, and career; and how they simultaneously generated the distinctive political figure he became and the public discourse of the nation.

**Listening Well: On Beethoven, Berlioz, and Other Music Criticism in Paris, Boston, and New York, 1764-1890**
Baruch College and CUNY Graduate Center professor of music Ora Frishberg Saloman
Peter Lang Publishing

Saloman’s 12 essays illuminate aesthetic, educative and evaluative strategies utilized by writers in Paris, Boston and New York to guide listeners in confronting the challenges of musical modernity between 1764 and 1890. The essays explore contrasting responses to new operas and symphonies by composers, librettists, authors, critics and conductors that include Chabanon, Lacépède, Berlioz, Urban, D’Ortigue, Dwight, Fuller, Watson and Hassard.
In a highly technical world that increasingly demands specialists in every field, is it possible for a humanities major to become a good doctor?

Officials at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine’s Humanities and Medicine Program think it is.

The program, established in 1989, has shown that success in medical school does not depend on a traditional pre-med science curriculum. And Dr. Mary Rifkin, director of the program, says humanities and social science majors are often better doctors than pre-med majors.

“They look at patients as a whole person rather than something that can be scientifically engineered,” says Rifkin. “They tend to be excellent communicators and treat the whole patient.”

Nick Copeli, a Queens College anthropology major and Macaulay Honors College senior is one of a select few who will be heading off to Mount Sinai in the fall with hopes of becoming an epidemiologist. Copeli and Temitope Ademuwagun, a 2008 Honors College graduate, are the only two Queens College students to be accepted by the program.

“This program is very progressive,” says Copeli. “Doctors who majored in humanities in college are more in touch with patients. They have more compassion. I wanted to be a humanities major because it’s relevant to my perspective on medicine. Medicine is a study of humans and I’m interested in how illness and disease affect how someone lives.”

The program, which accepts students in their sophomore or junior year, allows them to explore their interests in humanities and social sciences as undergraduates. They are required to complete only one year of college biology and chemistry and they must attend an eight-week summer program of physics and organic chemistry along with an introduction to various clinical disciplines.

“We think it’s a better way to spend your time in college,” says Rifkin. “They are better rounded and they’re passionate about something they’ve pursued.”

Without the traditional pre-med classes the students might struggle at the beginning, Rifkin says. “It’s a little bit of a cultural shock, but they eventually catch up.” So far, Copeli isn’t worried about keeping up. “The first semester will be a little difficult, but I am not new to hard work,” he says.

Copeli, 22 was born in the United States to parents of Ukrainian and Uzbek heritage. Raised by a single mother, he started working at 13 as a stock boy at a pharmacy, and as a private tutor to help support his family. Later he became a lifeguard and for the past five years he’s been a swimming teacher. He also volunteers at a nursing home.

Copeli attended the Hebrew Academy of West Queens in Richmond Hill and then Francis Lewis High School. He had been offered full scholarships to a number of private universities, but family commitments kept him closer to home. As a Macaulay Honors College student he received full tuition and an opportunity to study abroad. He’s also a recipient of several scholarships.

A Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship allowed Copeli, a proficient Russian language speaker to spend a semester in Russia where he worked at St. Petersburg State University as an English teacher and translator. A grant from Macaulay Honors College let him travel to Peru, where he volunteered at a remote orphanage in Lima.

Copeli is also the recipient of the Jeanette K. Watson Fellowship, which granted him three, eight-to-ten-week paid summer internships in non-profit, government services and private enterprise sectors. Copeli interned at Global Kids, an organization that prepares urban youth for global citizenship and at Donors Choose, an organization that brings together donors with projects to improve public education. For his third internship, Copeli, a budding photographer, will travel to Santiago, Chile, where he will teach photography at a community center supported by VE Global, a nonprofit international volunteer organization.
By Miriam Smith

ACROSS
1. Honors College donor
14. Age
15. Number of CUNY law schools
16. ______ Reader
17. Objective case of we
19. Street urchin
21. Leased
23. First infallible imam
24. Nay
25. University town in Maine
27. PSAT examiner
29. Bachelor's degree
32. "Shortcut" Roman numeral 99
34. Greek theaters
35. Opposite SW
36. Action figure
38. ______ but no cigar
40. Trademark
43. Note between la and do
45. Dept. of Higher
47. Tramp
49. Home of 240-acre college
50. Internet address
51. First issuance of shares
52. Queensborough or Kingsborough
56. Small 4-stringed guitar
57. Soak
58. Raised NY railway
59. Dash
61. Ratio of circle's circumference to its diameter
63. Perpendicular to NS
64. Flyers since 1947: Abbr.
66. Derriere muscle
67. Undercover drug cop
70. Chinese word for love
72. Queen's Irish Rose
74. Rd.
75. Funny Queens College grad
76. Climax
82. Upbeat part of a measure
83. ______-fi
85. Numbered compartment for mail
86. Dummkopf
88. Emergency news: CUNY ______
92. 1994 Nobelist Kenzaburo
93. Puerto
94. Roman goddess of night
96. Noah's Ark resting place
98. CUNY chancellor

DOWN
1. ______ bist du? Ger.
2. Word add-on
3. NY airport
4. Refreshing summer drink
5. ______ Amin
6. State between KS and IL
7. Sign up for class: Var.
8. Poet ______ Alexander, Graduate Center prof.
9. Miss class
10. Tel-______
11. Zombie
12. French the
13. Christmas season
14. Hold down
15. Title
16. Fat-free
17. Person, place, or thing
18. Fits you to ______
19. Sun god
20. Conclude
21. Bust
23. Old-fashioned
24. Fish disease
25. Begin work
26. Undergoes again
27. Woodwind instrument
28. Scram
29. Trouble
30. Accomplish
31. Caliope or Clio
32. Westwood campus: Abbr.
33. Inuit house: Var.
34. Absolutely not
35. Absolutely affirmative
36. Fished for Lamprey
37. Out of bed
38. After deductions
39. Get ____!
40.Acknowledgment of learning
41. I came, ______ ...  
42. Exist
43. Puerto Rican volcano
44. Rhymed verse
45. First NYC subway
46. Oldie Martha
47. Numerical prefix
48. Between L and XXL
49. Iraqi state
50. Outer Pentagon corridors
51. How much ______ much?
Graduation Day At the Beach

Three newly-minted Kingsborough Community College grads, bearing fresh diplomas and mixed emotions, say so long to the campus waterfront on Graduation Day. Courses over, they can savor the 70-acre Manhattan Beach location on Brooklyn’s southern tip as a treasured urban oasis for quietly pondering the future or joyfully kicking up their heels.
Diversity Personified

It’s known as the “Jewel of the South Bronx,” and it’s easy to see why. For the last 40 years, Hostos Community College has been a leading bilingual and multicultural higher-education institution in the South Bronx. It was named in 1969 in honor of Eugenio María de Hostos, abolitionist, educator and lawyer.

At the busy intersection of Grand Concourse and 149th Street, Hostos is only 15 minutes by the 2, 4 and 5 subways from midtown Manhattan. At 5.3 acres, Hostos is CUNY’s smallest community college. (The largest community college is Kingsborough with 69.7 acres and the largest four-year college is College of Staten Island with 204 acres).

Hostos offers a warm, friendly and academically rich atmosphere to over 5,000 students of diverse backgrounds, mainly Dominican, Puerto Rican, or of Central or South American descent.

Students have a lot to choose from. They can get associate degrees in radiology technology, nursing, dental hygiene, digital design and animation, accounting and public interest paralegal studies, among others. Joint programs with CUNY’s senior colleges including chemical engineering science with City College or forensic science with John Jay College.

The campus is home to CUNY’s first Immigration Center. The library, which boasts a multi-level integrated information literacy program, received the 2007 Excellence in Academic Libraries Award for Community Colleges from the Association of College and Research Libraries.

But the centerpiece of the campus is the Hostos Center of the Arts & Culture, which includes a museum-grade gallery nicknamed the “Chelsea of the Bronx” by the neighborhood; a 367-seat theater; and a 907-seat concert hall. Each year more than 80,000 people visit the center, which is in the East Academic Complex. This is where “The Immortal Plena,” a mixed-media artwork by Puerto Rican artist Antonio Martorelli hangs from the ceiling, and the cafeteria walls display art donated by Spanish artist Angelo Romano.
Soar with CUNY!

“The American Dream Machine.”
– THE ECONOMIST

“An elite program helps CUNY take another step to restoring its luster.”
– THE NEW YORK TIMES

Brilliant students. World-class faculty. Modern facilities. Growing philanthropic support. This is The City University of New York today. Join us. Visit cuny.edu/invest