New Mission Statement Points Lehman Toward a New Era, While College Remembers Two Lives That Shaped Its Growth

Our new academic year begins with a spirit of promise and anticipation and also with a moment of reflection and remembrance. Our programs, enrollment, and facilities are growing, new students, faculty, and staff are joining our community, and preparations are underway for the College’s 40th anniversary celebration, which will begin in March 2008.

At the same time, we feel the loss of two persons whose leadership and support shaped our College’s history. Founding President Leonard Lief, who died July 30, and former Lehman College Foundation board member June Bingham Birge, who died August 21, each left a lasting imprint on our institution and community. Dr. Lief served as President for 22 years, expanding many areas of the College, most especially the arts. A staunch proponent of academic freedom, he believed that people from all backgrounds could improve their lives through education, if only given the opportunity. Likewise, Mrs. Bingham-Birge was a tireless friend and patron, dedicated to helping our students and enriching their college experiences.

The vision and dedication of another long-time member of the College community, Prof. Dorothy Brodin, Professor Emerita of Romance Languages, will also support the College for many years to come. Prof. Brodin, who taught French to hundreds of Lehman students, is helping another generation of students complete their education. Although she retired in 1980, Prof. Brodin maintained a strong connection with Lehman, and in her will made a generous bequest—the largest gift (more than $850,000) in Lehman’s history. In honor of her and her husband, “The Pierre and Dorothy Brodin Scholarship” will support deserving students in the humanities.

The ideals and commitment of President Lief, Mrs. Bingham-Birge, Prof. Brodin, and of Governor Lehman himself, resound in the College’s recently revised Mission Statement, which had not been modified since May 18, 1994, and in our first Vision and Values Statement. Both documents were approved by the College Senate at its May 2007 meeting and will guide us through a new era in the College’s history. Once the minutes of the May meeting are ratified by the Senate at its next meeting, the documents will be available at www.lehman.edu/president.

A New Era Takes Shape

In line with the changes taking place in higher education across the nation, this new era will emphasize measurable outcomes and institutional accountability. It will be defined, in part, by a more academically prepared student body, increasingly competitive programs, and the building of new facilities—physical as well as technological—to support both the growth of those programs and a strong campus community. As indicated in the Vision and Values Statement, coming years will also see an expansion of online courses; greater off-campus access to library resources; residential facilities for students; and new academic opportunities, including programs in international business, conservation, and environmental studies.

We can see some of these elements already taking shape:

• Preliminary registration figures indicate that total enrollment this semester will remain strong—about the same as our record enrollment in Fall 2006 (approximately 10,800 students).

• CUNY has announced that it will implement higher admissions standards for the senior colleges, specifically in regard to math. The acceptable score for incoming freshmen on the math S.A.T. will be set 20 to 30 points higher than previously allowed. Lehman anticipates that this change will increase our ability to attract more high-achieving students.

• Last spring, the Division of Education had a successful NCATE continuing accreditation visit and now awaits final action by the Unit Accreditation Board, which will meet this fall. NCATE (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education) is the professional accrediting body for colleges that prepare teachers and other professionals for work in elementary and secondary schools. Lehman was the first college within CUNY to earn NCATE accreditation.
New Initiatives Underway

To capture the concept of a traditional liberal arts college turned toward the future, the College last year launched a new identity: a silhouette of the Music Building enclosed within a shield shape. All College publications and correspondence will reflect this new identity, and a graphic standards manual explaining its appropriate uses will be available on the Lehman website early this semester.

There is no doubt that the future will also involve technology. Lehman is joining the rest of CUNY in implementing a major overhaul of its data management systems that will enable the College to better serve students and faculty across a number of departments. Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) is an effort to reengineer business processes from a legacy system with disparate programs that do not communicate well to a single computing architecture. A naming contest last spring produced a new name for the project: CUNY FIRST, an acronym for “Fully Integrated Resources Services Tool.”

For Lehman, this will mean replacement of our current Human Resources applications system (CUPS), our general ledger, the student finance systems, and the student information system (SIMS). To ensure a smooth transition, this change will occur over a period of five years. A “CUNY FIRST” newsletter designed to keep the CUNY community up-to-date on this project will be posted on the Lehman website as new issues become available.

To affect the future, we must develop the potential of all Americans. A disturbing trend in recent years points to a decrease in the number of men from urban backgrounds completing their baccalaureate degrees. In an effort to provide encouragement and support for this segment of our residents, Lehman has welcomed the Center for Urban Male Leadership, which is designed to help newly admitted first-time, full-time, under-represented students transition from high school to college. Directing the center is Rasheem-Ameid Rooke (Shuster 206; ext. 2247).

As a partnership between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, this initiative is designed to involve faculty, staff, administrators, students, alumni, and community members in the lives of self-selected participants. Students will take part in leadership workshops, a graduate school fair, a lecture series, and community service activities and events. Special attention is being given to the challenges facing black and Latino male students in regard to enrollment, retention, and overall academic success. Lehman joins Medgar Evers and other CUNY colleges in implementing this program.

New Administrative Appointments

Helping to manage and guide Lehman through the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead are two new administrators who joined the College over the summer.

The College’s new provost, Dr. Mary A. Papazian, began her tenure in July. Many of you had the opportunity to meet her at the faculty meeting last spring. An author and distinguished scholar, Dr. Papazian has taught English literature and worked as a college administrator since 1988. Most recently, she was Dean of Montclair State University’s College of Humanities and Social Sciences. She holds a B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. in English literature from the University of California, Los Angeles and has published widely in her field of expertise—early modern British literature.

In August, Lehman welcomed the arrival of a new chief librarian, Kenneth Schlesinger, who comes to the College with ten years of experience in the CUNY system, first at Hostos Community College and most recently at LaGuardia Community College. A graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, he earned his master’s degree in dramaturgy and dramatic criticism from Yale University and his master’s in information and library science from Pratt Institute.

The Division of Education experienced a number of transitions over the summer. Dean Annette Digby left the College in July to become Vice President of Academic Affairs at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. Associate Dean
Research Grants Continue to Grow

Lehman College has placed a high value on faculty research, dating back to its earliest days. We expect that this work will grow in importance in future years, particularly as the boundaries of medical and scientific knowledge expand.

While they dedicate themselves, first and foremost, to their students and their teaching responsibilities, most Lehman faculty members are also involved in some form of research or creative expression within their various fields. The grants they receive from external agencies and organizations provide another source of funding for the College, in addition to prestigious recognition, and give students the opportunity to learn valuable research skills by working in a “team” approach on specific projects. Congratulations to the following faculty who recently secured competitive grants for research:

- Haiping Cheng (Biological Sciences): a three-year National Institutes of Health (N.I.H.) SCORE grant totaling $366,750;
- Mira Goral (Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences): a four-year N.I.H.-SCORE grant for $1,181,750;
- Nancy Griffeth (Mathematics and Computer Science): a grant from Cisco Systems for $95,000;
- Michael Handel (Mathematics and Computer Science): a National Science Foundation (N.S.F.) grant for $154,134;
- Edward Kennelly (Biological Sciences): a $161,474 N.I.H. grant;
- Nikola Lakic (Mathematics and Computer Science): an N.S.F. grant for $128,678; and
- Eleanor Wurtzel (Biological Sciences): a four-year N.I.H.-SCORE grant for $1,334,541.

In addition to faculty research grants, departments and divisions, as well as centers and institutes, have succeeded in obtaining major grants for their programs. One of the largest was secured by the Bronx Institute/GEAR UP program, which has been awarded a second grant of $1.6 million per year.

Convocation Signals a Full Schedule of Events

To officially start this new academic year, the College’s Convocation will be held on Wednesday, September 19, at 11 a.m. in the Lovinger Theatre, and feature Dr. Spencer Foreman, president of Montefiore Medical Center, who will receive an honorary degree. Dr. Foreman is a fellow of the American College of Physicians, a member of the National Academy of Science’s Institute of Medicine, and a professor of medicine, epidemiology, and urban health at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

Throughout the semester, the College can look forward to a full schedule of academic and cultural events, such as lectures, plays, concerts, and exhibits. Please encourage your students and colleagues to attend as many of these free events as possible. They add immeasurably to the fullness of our lives.

The Lehman College Art Gallery, for example, has two new exhibitions this fall: “Néotrice Coron: The Secret Life of Cities” and “Bits and Pieces: The Collage Impulse.” Coron’s exhibit features large-scale paper-cutouts of urban environments, while “Bits and Pieces” showcases collage techniques by various artists. More information on these and other events is contained in Lehman E-News as well as in the Campus Events Calendar. Both are on the College homepage, at www.lehman.edu.

If you have not had the opportunity in the past few months to visit Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, this is the time to stop by and pick up tickets for the new season, which will feature artists like Smokey Robinson, Nathalie Cole, and the Moscow Classical Ballet. Over the summer, the lobby was outfitted with new carpets, colorful murals, a new curtain on the main stage, and a new rigging system. A brand new sound system will be added in the coming months.

Strategic Plan Achieves Its Goals

As we look ahead to a new year, and welcome new students, faculty, and staff, there is no better time to reassess our gains.
as well. The Lehman College Strategic Plan for 2006-2008 set forth Lehman’s institutional goals and objectives for the coming years. To date, most have been accomplished, including:

- New technology, like a web-grading system and Degree Works, is being implemented to support academic planning and student success.
- A push to increase student aptitude in math and science has led to new science and education faculty teaching in the Freshman Year Initiative blocks and LEH courses.
- New academic programs, like the M.S.W and M.P.H., have enrolled strong cohorts of students.
- Collaborations with community organizations remain strong, and several new programs with long-term partners like Montefiore Medical Center and Jacobi Hospital have been launched.

Let us be proud of what we have accomplished together and continue to work toward significant achievements in the months ahead. May this be an exciting, productive, and memorable year for each of you, both professionally and personally, and may your dedication be rewarded by your own sense of satisfaction and by the gratitude of your students.

Ricardo R. Fernández, President
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