LETTER FROM THE PROVOST

Dear Colleagues,

A wise person once said, “however difficult it might be, we must not sacrifice the future for the present.” Despite the uncertainty in the state budget for the coming year, we at Lehman continue to focus on our core missions of teaching, scholarship and service to our community and to plan for the future.

In this spirit, we continue our efforts to “achieve the vision,” through our development of the Lehman Center for Human Rights and Peace Studies, which is hosting several inaugural events this semester, and continue work on the Foundations of Excellence (FoE) transfer project. I especially want to thank all of our faculty and staff who participated in the nine FoE dimensions committees, from whose reports will emerge our implementation plan and recommendations for change. Additionally, I am pleased to announce that all four of our academic units will become schools in July, an important first step in realizing the structure of the future that will better support Lehman faculty and students.

Our real investment in the future comes through our continued hiring of new faculty. We look forward to welcoming over twenty outstanding colleagues to our campus in the coming year, even as we say goodbye to over ten longtime members of our community who have elected to participate in the Early Retirement Initiative. We will miss them, but we wish them all well in the next, well-deserved phase of their lives.

Finally, we continue to celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of our current faculty through our annual Celebration of Scholarship and Publications event as well as our annual Faculty Recognition Awards. I am especially pleased to introduce the new Faculty Distinguished Service Award to recognize outstanding service, just as we recognize each year outstanding teaching and research.

And so as winter turns to spring we continue to look forward, even as we build on eighty years of contributions of our campus to the Bronx and surrounding community.

With best wishes for a successful semester,

Provost Mary Papazian
UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

Research by undergraduate students at Lehman is increasing and is an important goal for the Division of Academic Affairs. The mentoring relationship developed by faculty and the independent research abilities developed by students are among the highest forms of teaching and learning at the College. To recognize the achievement of our undergraduate researchers and scholars, we have designated a special day to celebrate their work.

This year’s Undergraduate Scholarship & Research Day will be on Thursday, May 5, 2011, in the East Dining Room of the Music Building. As was the practice for the last two years, we will have both oral and poster presentations. Students from all disciplines are welcome to present their work.

The definition of scholarship and research we are using is any work that makes an original contribution to the student’s discipline and includes both scientific inquiry and creative activities.

Planning for this year’s event is being led by Lehman’s chapter of Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology, which invites other honor societies, as well as the Honors College and the Lehman Scholars Program, to join in planning this year’s event. If you are the faculty advisor of an honor society and your society would like to help, please contact Professor Vincent Prohaska, Faculty Advisor to the Lehman College Chapter of Psi Chi (vincent.prohaska@lehman.cuny.edu). Faculty who are working with students on research or scholarly projects should encourage these students to submit proposals to present their work.

The Call for Presentations will be available shortly. To allow time for the review process, the deadline for submissions is April 8, 2011. Submissions for poster presentations will require a 75-word abstract and those for oral presentations will require a 150-word abstract.

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NEW SPEAKER SERIES IN ARTS & HUMANITIES

The Division of Arts and Humanities is proud to announce a new speaker series featuring artists, writers, dancers, activists, and historians from around the country. This is an initiative of a new divisional Arts Committee, which aims to integrate the learning done on campus and in the classroom with the surrounding art worlds of New York City. The Committee will aid in communication among departments, help faculty take their students to exhibits and performances off campus, and support arts-related events at the College. For more information about the Committee and the series, visit the Division of Arts and Humanities home page.

The Division also continues to promote scholarship and teaching for its faculty through regular work-in-progress talks and professional development workshops. This spring, tenure-track faculty from the Department of Music, Art, and Latin American and Puerto Rican Studies are discussing work ranging from collaborative musicals to Mexican-American schools. Also, expert teachers are sharing their views with colleagues across disciplines on topics such as critical thinking, close reading, and online teaching. As always, the Program in Women’s Studies also provides opportunities for Lehman faculty to exchange views—this semester, on topics ranging from post-conflict enslavement to Greek women and goddesses.

FOUNDATIONS OF EXCELLENCE TRANSFER FOCUS

Lehman College has been working with the Gardner Institute on a self-study and planning project to study the experience of our transfer students. Over one hundred faculty and staff have worked both as liaisons and as committee co-chairs and members to study “transfers” and the transfer process. Nine committees studied a variety of aspects, or dimensions, of the transfer experience. These include our philosophy on transfer students, organizational support, learning by transfer, faculty involvement, the transition process itself, the students’ experience, diversity, the students’ roles and purposes, and possible improvements. The transfer focus process also includes a survey of students, faculty, and staff to provide baseline information.

During the last two months, from December 23 to February 22, the committees have each produced a self-study report that evaluated the situation from their particular dimension and made recommendations on how we might improve the transfer experience at Lehman. A number of suggestions were common to most of the reports, such as the creation of a Transfer Office with an individual responsible for overseeing the “transfer process,” a Transfer Student Center to provide services to the students themselves, an online Virtual Transfer Center, where prospective and current transfer students can receive all the information they need for a successful transfer experience, and the creation of a focused advising structure whereby transfer students receive more effective pre-major and major advising.

This spring the Transfer Focus Steering Committee, comprised of the project liaisons and co-chairs of the Dimensions Committees, will meet to evaluate the committee reports and develop a plan to address the identified needs and suggested remedies. This self-study and planning project is being shared with our fellow CUNY colleges in the Bronx, Hostos and Bronx Community College, which also are working with the Gardner Institute. Finally, it should be noted that CUNY itself has embarked on a major project to improve the efficiency of the transfer process within the University.

Lehman’s self-study is now moving to an analysis and plan-building phase. The nine committees that have submitted reports are: Philosophy (Laurie Austin, Rosalind Carey), Roles-Purposes (Nancy Cintron, Barbara Jacobson), Diversity (Richard Finger, Alyshia Galvez), Improvement (Nancy Dubetz, Raymond Galinski), Transitions (Stephen Wyckoff, David Badillo), Faculty (Stephen Cavallo, Sharon Freedberg), Learning (Vincent Prohaska, Liliana Calvet), All Students (John Holloway, Terrence Cheng), Organization (Andrea Boyar, Althea Forde).
CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND PEACE STUDIES

A Human Rights Framework for Understanding the Immigration Debate was the theme for the inaugural conference of Lehman’s new Center for Human Rights and Peace Studies, held on February 24. Several hundred students, faculty, and staff attended the day-long conference, which included Dr. Linda Green from the University of Arizona as the keynote speaker. The conference, which was simultaneously run on the Lehman homepage via livefeed on UStream, attracted community members and local press, including the Riverdale Press and the Bronx Free Press.

The Center’s next event will be a conference on gender violence in Central America, which will include a wide range of speakers from Central America as well as U.S. forensic experts. A generous grant from the Open Society Institute has made it possible for the Center to host judges, prosecutors, and human rights activists from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. April 7, 9:30 - 5:00 in the East Dining Hall, Music Building. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, contact human.rights@lehman.cuny.edu.

LEHMAN LIFE’S FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR THE PROJECT CAMBIANDO VIDAS

A celebration of the 167th anniversary of the proclamation of the Dominican Republic’s independence was held on February 22, 2011 in the Faculty Dining Room. Deputy Victor Bisono Haza was the keynote speaker of the evening, presenting his book Las bases de la nación: fuente de virtudes ciudadanas. Deputy Bisono is a member of the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic, representing the Second Circumscription of the National District since 2002, and is also a member of the Social Christian Reformist Party.

This event raises funds for the project Cambiando Vidas, sponsored through Lehman LIFE. Lehman LIFE is a program within the Lehman Office of Community Engagement and New Student Programs that takes students to communities outside of the New York City area during spring and summer breaks to complete community service projects. Lehman LIFE supports service opportunities for students by creating an awareness of the need in communities around the world and fostering action through volunteer work. The main goal is to increase awareness of issues affecting humanity from our campus to the global society. The organization builds small, safe, affordable, concrete-block homes that are strong enough to survive hurricane-force storms. In addition to providing capital and labor, international build teams work hand in hand with the recipient families and community volunteers who provide much of the sweat equity.

Cambiando Vidas will travel to the Dominican Republic during April 17 -26 to build a home. As a support to the program, Deputy Bisono donated his book rights to Lehman LIFE, and the book is being sold in support of this great cause. This event was coordinated by Yini Rodriguez and Julissa Alvarez-Diaz. For purchase of books, call 718-960-8292 or 718-960-8426.