

From the Podium | And Beyond

By Carol Olechowski
Photos by Mark Schmidt

Susan D. Phillips Is Interim Provost



School of Education Dean Susan D. Phillips was named interim provost of the University at Albany in January. The appointment was announced by Interim President George M. Philip.

Phillips, who has a background in human biology and psychology, has served as professor, program director and department chair since joining the UAlbany faculty in 1979. A recipient of both the University at Albany and Chancellor's awards for Excellence in Teaching, she has headed the School of Education for six years.

UAlbany Celebrates Winter Commencement

Thousands gathered at SEFCU Arena Dec. 9 to celebrate with the students honored at Winter Commencement 2007.

A total of 550 bachelor's and 457 graduate degrees were awarded at the ceremony, which featured a keynote address by Albany Mayor Gerald D. Jennings, M.S.'76. Jennings himself received the Medallion of the University as a tribute to his years of public service and support for education.

The undergraduate commencement class included students from eight states and 26 foreign nations, as well as seven military veterans and 12 Presidential Scholars. The youngest member of the class was 20; the eldest, 58.

McNutt, Howell Receive Fulbrights

Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics Louise-Anne McNutt and Professor of Philosophy Robert C. Howell are among 800 recipients nationwide of Fulbright Grants for 2007-08.

McNutt left in February for a five-month stay at Tbilisi State Medical University in Tbilisi, Georgia. There, she is lecturing on blood-borne pathogen transmission prevention and offering insight into the development of the School of Public Health.

Howell, an expert on the history of modern philosophy, analytical metaphysics and aesthetics, is teaching about Kantian objects and the metaphysics of art at Moscow State University in Russia. He will return to the United States in July.

The Fulbright Scholar program, which provides resources to faculty wishing to teach and conduct research abroad, seeks to promote mutual understanding between the people of the U.S. and other countries.

Three Education Programs Rank Among Top 10

The School of Education's doctoral programs in reading, curriculum and instruction, and educational psychology rate among the top 10 in the United States, according to the firm Academic Analytics, which conducts data collection and reporting for higher education.

The rankings were based on Academic Analytics' Faculty Scholarship Productivity Index, which evaluates more than 7,400 doctoral programs in 172 disciplines at 375 institutions. In addition, the index ranks institutions in such broader categories as the humanities and biological sciences, and institutions as a whole.



NHGRI Awards \$2.2 Million Grant to Tenenbaum

The National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) has awarded Assistant Professor of Biomedical Sciences Scott Tenenbaum of the School of Public Health and the University's Gen*NY*Sis Center for Excellence in Cancer Genomics a three-year, \$2.2 million grant to study the organization and function of human genes.

As part of a consortium of researchers participating in ENCODE – NHGRI's ENCyclopedia Of DNA Elements – Tenenbaum is conducting in-depth research with colleagues from MIT, Harvard, Duke, Stanford and Yale on the human genome in an attempt to discover "all of its parts and how they function together, so we can use this information to improve people's health. It can have a direct impact on the future of understanding cancer and other diseases, and has the potential to positively affect many people's lives," explained Tenenbaum, a pioneer in ribonomics, which uses RNA-binding proteins to pinpoint sets of genes identified in specific diseases.

In late 2007, NHGRI, which is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), announced grants totaling more than \$78 million over the next four years to expand the ENCODE project.

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The University at Albany's broad mission of excellence in undergraduate and graduate education, research and public service engages more than 17,000 diverse students in 10 schools and colleges. For more information about this internationally ranked institution, please visit www.albany.edu.

Cover: Broadway star Carolee Carmello, B.S.'83, lights up the stage as Donna Sheridan in *Mamma Mia!* The long-running musical is playing at New York's Cadillac Winter Garden Theatre. Photo: Joan Marcus



The University at Albany Foundation's 28th annual Citizen Laureate Dinner Nov. 8 honored (left to right) 2007 Academic Laureates Paul A. Leonard, Ph.D., B.S.'75, M.B.A.'76, and Leonard A. Slade Jr., Ph.D.; and Community Laureates Neil and Jane Golub and George M. Philip, B.A.'69, M.A.'73.

School of Public Health Launches New Major

A new major introduced last fall by the School of Public Health is preparing students for careers in public health and in such related fields as medicine, nursing, law and journalism.

Through the public health major, students will explore scientific methods used by public health professionals to determine the causes of various infectious and chronic diseases, as well as the methods utilized in developing effective disease prevention programs. In addition, they will be exposed to disciplines – including epidemiology, biostatistics, environmental and biomedical health sciences, health policy analysis and behavioral studies – that contribute to public health research and practice.

The school also offers a minor in public health, as well as graduate-level programs in the field.

Association Lauds Toseland for Career Achievement



The Association for Gerontology Education in Social Work (AGE-SW) recently honored Institute of Gerontology Director Ron Toseland with its Career Achievement Award.

Toseland, a School of Social Welfare professor since 1979, has worked in the field of gerontology for more than 30 years. Throughout his career, he has sustained and developed his interests in social group interventions and social services to the elderly and their families, and consistently produced research relevant to the delivery of social services and to clinical work with older adults.

NRC Presents Fellowship to Awo-Affouda

The National Research Council has awarded Chaffra Awo-Affouda, Ph.D.'07, a postdoctoral fellowship.

Awo-Affouda, a College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (CNSE) graduate, works in the Materials Science and Technology Division of the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C. His research focuses on the emerging field of spintronics, or harnessing the spin of the electron, which is responsible for magnetism and magnetic storage technology.



Spencer Foundation Supports Writing Instruction Study

Department of Educational Theory and Practice Distinguished Professors Judith Langer and Arthur Applebee have received a Spencer Foundation grant totaling nearly \$500,000 to support the next phase of the National Study of Writing Instruction. This stage of the three-year project will focus on writing instruction in 20 middle and high schools in five states.

The study – a collaboration of the National Writing Project; the Education Trust; the College Board; and UAlbany’s Center on English Learning & Achievement (CELA), which Langer and Applebee co-direct – focuses on grades 6 through 12.

Naming Recognizes Capital Region Philanthropists

Morris and Esther Massry are well known throughout the Capital Region for their support of such philanthropic interests as the University at Albany’s cancer research efforts. Last October, to thank the Loudonville, N.Y., couple for their generosity, the University bestowed the Massry name on the conference facility at its Gen*NY*Sis Center for Excellence in Cancer Genomics.

Seminars, colloquia, and larger classes taught by the faculty of both the Cancer Research Center and the School of Public Health are hosted at the Massry Conference Center.

Morris Massry, vice president of The University at Albany Foundation, is also a Foundation director. He was instrumental in helping the University to acquire the former Sterling Winthrop property in East Greenbush, N.Y., where the University’s School of Public Health and the Cancer Research Center are located. The Massrys have donated \$500,000 to further cancer research at UAlbany.

Mara, Tisch Are Honored

UAlbany recognized Wellington T. Mara and Preston Robert Tisch for their contributions to the University by naming the football practice field used by their team each summer since 1996 in honor of the late co-owners of the New York Giants.

Mara and Tisch, both of whom passed away in 2005, established the Giants’ summer camp on UAlbany’s uptown campus nearly a dozen years ago. In addition to supporting the monthlong camp, the men were instrumental in creating the New York Giants Scholarship, which has benefited 11 Capital Region students to date.



John Mara (left) and Steve Tisch, sons of the late New York Giants owners Wellington Mara and Preston Robert Tisch

“60 Minutes” Correspondent Attains 15 More Minutes of Fame

Peabody and Emmy award-winning newsman Steve Kroft, a correspondent for CBS’ “60 Minutes,” received the Medallion of the University at a Sept. 17 ceremony that also honored the first year of UAlbany’s journalism program.

The time he spent at the University, Kroft noted, “provided me an opportunity to spend some time with college students, which is always invigorating.” His visit to Andy Rooney’s hometown also prompted a good-natured jibe at Kroft’s “60 Minutes” colleague: “I’m relieved to report that the current residents aren’t nearly as grumpy as he is.”

Belfort and Schell Are AAAS Fellows

Professors Marlene Belfort and Lawrence Schell have been named Fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.



Belfort, who joined the University’s Department of Biomedical Sciences more than two decades ago, also directs the Division of Genetic Disorders at the New York State Department of Health’s Wadsworth Center.



Schell, director of the Center for the Elimination of Minority Health Disparities, is well known for his studies of pollutants and their effects on the physical and mental growth of children, especially youngsters from disadvantaged groups.

NSF Funds Strait’s Research

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded a \$940,000 grant to Professor of Anthropology David Strait for the study of how the facial skeletons of human ancestors and some primates are adapted to withstand the forces of chewing.



Researchers from the University of Chicago; Baylor College of Dentistry of Texas A&M; Arizona State; George Washington University; Emory; Mercer; the University of Massachusetts at Amherst; Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences; and the University of Vienna in Austria will also participate in the project, “Integrative Analysis of Hominid Feeding Biomechanics.”

For more information about UAlbany people, programs and initiatives, please visit the University’s Web site: www.albany.edu.