Volunteer Now! For Winter Commencement!

We need 75 volunteers to help with Winter Commencement Sunday, Dec. 11, at 1 p.m. Many assignments are available. The time commitment is four to five hours, plus a one-hour rehearsal, with compensatory time off. To volunteer, go to www.albany.edu/commencement and click on the “Volunteer Now!” button.

Student Accomplishments

Brianne Myers, Zakhar Berkovich, and Jason Zogg are all undergraduates who recently had the opportunity to be President for a Day. Myers, a senior from Fredonia, N.Y., said, “One of the things that left a big impression on me was how much listening the President does. Not only would he listen to administrators and faculty, he also truly listened to me.” Berkovich, originally from Belarus, a second-year student with junior standing, took part in a press conference and testified with President Hall in front of the New York State Senate and Assembly committees on higher education. Zogg, a junior from Delmar, N.Y., said he learned, “No one moves faster than Kermit Hall. He is always thinking and has a sense of urgency that has been transferred to all of the staff around him.”

Rockefeller College graduate student Devendra Potnis was selected as a student intern this summer by the United Nations’ Asia Pacific Center for Transfer of Technology. He traveled to India, where he worked on a few of the e-governance projects being carried out by the state government of Karnataka, one of the southernmost states in India. Potnis, a second-year graduate student pursuing his master’s degree in public administration from Rockefeller College, is a graduate assistant in the Division for Research.

Campus Highlights

President Kermit L. Hall called for a greater investment in public higher education in his testimony Oct. 17 at a public hearing before the New York State Senate and Assembly committees on higher education. Hall asked for stable yet modest growth in operating funds. “At the University at Albany, the state once accounted for 30 percent of our operating expenses, but that has dropped to 14 percent this year,” he said. Hall concluded, “We need a continuation of the effort made this year to help universities by paying their fixed costs in areas such as collective bargaining, energy consumption, inflation, and enrollment. More important, we need it to make strategic investments in the full-time faculty who will drive our innovation, our research, and our education program. We urge you to consider operating support as we work in partnership, on our compact for the future of public higher education.”

Just for the Kids was unveiled at the University at Albany by New York education and business leaders Nov. 16. The new Web-based system of tools is designed to help schools improve. Just for the Kids-New York (JFTK-NY) is an affiliate of the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA). The purpose of the toolkit is to help educators use data to raise student achievement. Supported by UAlbany, the State University of New York, the Business Council of New York, IBM, State Farm Insurance, the Broad Foundation, and AT&T, JFTK-NY offers accurate, easy-to-understand student assessment data from all elementary and middle schools in the state. In addition, it has completed a study of high-performing elementary schools and provides best practices that these schools have used in raising student achievement.

Athletics

University at Albany Picked to Win America East Conference Basketball Crown The University at Albany returns four of five starters from last season’s fourth-place team and has been selected as the preseason favorite to win the 2006 America East Men’s Basketball Championship.
Middle Earth Peer Assistance Program celebrated its 35th anniversary Nov. 16 with the presentation of a $15,000 donation from the Dominion Foundation. The donation ceremony was followed by a reception attended by students, alumni, staff, and individuals who founded, participated in, and supported the University’s award-winning alcohol and drug education and prevention programs since 1970. Over the past 35 years, Middle Earth has trained 1,500 student volunteers, provided hotline assistance to more than 77,000 students in crisis, and presented outreach education programs to more than 100,000 individuals in need. The program received nearly $1 million in federal grants and private support during the past year, contributing to the overall total of $2.8 million awarded to the University Counseling Center.

Fair hiring practices were the topic of a presentation for faculty, staff, and administrators Nov. 1 at the UAlbany Campus Center Ballroom by Joanne Woodard of North Carolina University. President Hall, the University at Albany’s Commission for Diversity & Affirmative Action, and United University Professions welcomed Woodard for a presentation of Winning in the Workplace: Equal Opportunity Institute. Woodard is North Carolina State University’s vice provost for equal opportunity and equity, affirmative action and equal opportunity officer, and she directs the Office for Equal Opportunity.

Inaugural Scholarship Fund

Established by President Kermit L. Hall when he took office, the Inaugural Scholarship Fund provides need-based undergraduate student scholarships. The fund was jump-started with $100,000 that the campus could have spent on a presidential inauguration. Instead, Hall chose to forego a formal inauguration, and he and his wife, Phyllis, personally pledged an additional $10,000 toward the fund. The goal is to build an endowed fund of at least $1 million.

As of today, gifts and pledges to the Inaugural Scholarship Fund total $511,875.

Staff Appointment

President Hall has announced the appointment of Miriam Trementozzi as assistant to the president for strategic initiatives. Over her five years in the Office of the President, she has developed the University’s engagement in regional arenas as varied as economic development, health care, and heritage programming. In her new position, she will help catalyze and advance opportunities of strategic importance to the University, connecting us with a wider array of constituencies ranging from regional to international levels.

Promising Inventors

The SUNY-wide patent/inventors recognition dinner was held Nov. 3 at the Desmond Hotel. President Hall was the keynote speaker and the following UAlbany faculty were recognized as “promising inventors.”

Julio Aguirre-Ghiso, Department of Biological Sciences and Center for Excellence in Cancer Genomics

Sridar Chittur, Department of Biomedical Science and Center for Excellence in Cancer Genomics

Sanjay Goel, Information Technology Management Department

Mengbing Huang, College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering

Vincent LaBella, College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering

Slavic and Eurasian Studies Associate Professor Charles Rougle has been named a Fulbright Scholar. Rougle is teaching courses in Russian-English translation to students in Moscow at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Moscow State University. He also serves as co-director of the State University of New York Center on Russia and the United States, a SUNY-wide institution dedicated to developing scholarly and cultural contacts and exchanges.

Sue Faerman has been appointed as vice provost for undergraduate education for a three-year term, effective immediately.

In her new role, Faerman is responsible for coordination of the academic experience of undergraduate students at the University. She works closely with the vice presidents, deans, and faculty of the individual schools and colleges and with the Undergraduate Academic Council in developing, coordinating, and implementing undergraduate academic policy and curricula. She is responsible for University-wide undergraduate academic programs.

School of Social Welfare faculty member Mary L. McCarthy was elected president-elect of the New York State Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. She will serve a two-year term.

Hany Shawky, professor of finance and director of the Center for Institutional Investment Management at the School of Business was interviewed by Forbes magazine for the Oct. 25 issue on the impact of the rising cost of energy on the U.S. economy and where investments are being made in the article, “Where’s the Money?”