

# THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

LEHMAN COLLEGE • THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK • SPRING 2005

## Pattern of Growth Continues in Fund-Raising, Programs and Facilities

*Dear Students, Colleagues, Alumni and Friends:*

The academic year that began with such promise in the fall is fulfilling our expectations.

- **Both external funding and private support continue to break institutional records.**

In terms of private support, the College has also broken new ground. In 2002, we announced the first million-dollar fund-raising drive in our history, named in honor of Lehman's founding president, Leonard Lief. The drive was aimed at increasing the College's endowment, with the income earned from these new contributions generating more of the scholarship dollars our students so critically need. The campaign reached a successful conclusion in December 2004; by mid-January, the College had received over \$1.06 million in gifts.

On behalf of the College and all the many students who will benefit from these funds, I thank the members of the Lehman community, including faculty, staff, alumni and friends, whose generosity made this drive a success. All of us are grateful, in particular, to President Emeritus Lief, whose vision of Lehman College and high standards of academic excellence are not only honored through this drive but also perpetuated.

- **Plans for new programs and facilities are moving ahead.**

Seven architectural firms have submitted proposals for the College's new science building, which will bring together faculty from across the scientific disciplines, and a firm will be selected early in this semester. The new science building will go up in phases; the first phase will house the doctoral program in the plant sciences and what we hope will become a CUNY-wide Plant Sciences Institute.

Lehman's planned new master's programs are also moving closer to reality. Following its recent approval by the CUNY Board of Trustees, the master's program in social work will now be sent to the State for approval. We anticipate admitting the first class into the program in Fall 2005. The College has also received approval from the University to develop the full proposal for a master's program in public health, which we hope to have ready in time to submit to the Trustees for consideration at their April meeting. The target date to begin offering courses in this program is Spring 2006.

Both these programs will help us address the shortage of highly trained professionals needed in these critical areas. The College is also working to develop programs in the field of nursing, which is facing a similar situation. Last January, we began a partnership with the Seoul National Medical Center in which we are providing training in English-language skills and American nursing practices to South Korean nurses who already hold New York State licenses. Building on the success of that initiative, the



College is beginning a new program in conjunction with 1199/SEIU of the health-care union and the city's Health and Hospitals Corporation. Foreign-trained physicians, admitted to Lehman as second-degree students, will study in our undergraduate nursing program, earn their nursing degree in 18 months, and then be able to sit for the NCLEX (National Council of Licensing Examination).

- **Students, faculty and the College itself continue to win recognition.**

Garnering what is rapidly becoming an impressive series of awards, the student-produced video magazine "Inside Lehman" begins the new year with an Award of Distinction from The Communicator Awards, an international awards competition that recognizes outstanding work in the communication field. Entries are judged by industry professionals who look for companies and individuals whose talent exceeds a high standard of excellence and whose work serves as a benchmark for the industry.

The GEAR-UP program run by the Bronx Institute is also in the spotlight this semester. This federally sponsored program helps middle and high-school students in the Bronx aim for, and prepare for, higher education and is one of many such efforts around the country. In 2004, Bronx GEAR-UP was selected by the staff of the Washington Center for Best Practices as an example of "a proven and successful program" and is featured on the Center's website ([www.washingtoncenter-bestpractices.org](http://www.washingtoncenter-bestpractices.org)). The Center, created by Congressman Chaka Fattah (D-PA), is a non-profit organization that was established to improve public school education in the United States.

Lehman as a whole can take a bow for its exceptional performance, as registered on the CUNY 2004 Student Experience Survey. Every year, the University conducts this survey in each of its colleges, seeking to gauge our success in providing the various components that contribute to a student's educational experience, from the quality of instruction to the level of student services available on each campus. In the 2004 study, Lehman often led the way, achieving higher scores than other CUNY senior colleges in several categories. This was particularly notable in the area of administrative and student services, such as registration, testing, financial aid, counseling, billing services and student health services. Staff members in these vital areas deserve our gratitude for their strong commitment to our students. They are contributing in important ways to the spirit of excellence at Lehman.

The College looks forward to building on this record. The Registrar's Office has developed an online mechanism through the E-SIMS system to gather feedback from students who are closed out of courses. Those students are now able to tell us which courses they would like the College to offer during the following semester(s). Data gathered from the registration period just ending,

as well as from future registration periods, will provide invaluable information as we seek to improve the course-scheduling process.

- **The strategic planning process is proceeding on schedule.**

The process of creating the College's new Strategic Plan will be completed by the end of the Spring 2005 semester. Only by establishing long-term institutional goals—and determining the steps needed to reach those goals—can we continue the remarkable growth of the past few years and ensure that Lehman is ready to take advantage of new emerging opportunities.

Our success to date is significant and recognized by others. Last year, for instance, the College submitted its PRR (Periodic Review Report) to the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the regional agency that accredits our undergraduate and graduate programs. The normal reaccreditation process takes place every ten years and includes a visit by a team of educators. In-between those visits, the institution files a PRR to indicate how it has addressed any areas of concern noted by the team.

A Middle States team last visited Lehman in 1999 for the College's regular review. At that time, we were facing a number of challenges, including the end of remediation in the CUNY senior colleges as well as a projected shortfall in operational funding. In 2004, after analyzing our PRR, the Middle States reviewers commended the College for showing "how it has survived a very difficult time and has still managed to set and achieve very high standards." The reviewers described Lehman College as "an institution on the move."

Completing and implementing our strategic plan will keep Lehman on this upward track. It will crystallize the direction in which Lehman should head and the measures that will keep us on that path. Last fall, 30 faculty members and administrators contributed to the initial development of this plan and articulated five broad goals along with a number of key objectives within each goal. These goals were later expanded to six in order to incorporate the goals and objectives created in an earlier planning process by the Academic Affairs Division.

To complete the overall College plan, "goal teams" of faculty, staff and students are now working to develop strategies, timelines, accountabilities and methods of implementation for the key objectives within the initial five goals. The committees will conclude their work and submit their reports to me by the end of the spring term.

- **Major events are planned for the months ahead.**

Like every semester at Lehman College, the months ahead will be filled with many academic and cultural events, including lectures, exhibits and concerts. Here are just a few of the highlights:

In February, we begin the semester with the "State of the Borough" address by Borough President Adolfo Carrión on February 3 at noon in the Performing Arts Center, followed just a few days later with remarks by former Borough President Fernando Ferrer, who will deliver the College's annual Martin Luther King Lecture

on February 8 at 11 a.m. in the Lovinger Theatre. I encourage everyone on campus to attend these talks, if at all possible. They both promise to be lively, informative and timely.

In March, the College will welcome a large group of special guests: over 600 high school students from the Dominican Republic who will visit the campus, along with their teachers, as part of a "Model United Nations" program that introduces the students to concepts of international law and international relations. The opening session of the program will be held in the Performing Arts Center on the evening of March 17 and will feature dignitaries from the Dominican Republic, as well as the U.N. The entire campus is invited to attend, and I urge each of you to take a few moments that evening to stop by the PAC and hear for yourself some of the important issues being discussed. The next day, the students will reconvene at Lehman and work in smaller groups on different aspects of their topic. Their sessions will conclude the following day at the U.N.

Another major event will take place on Wednesday, April 13, when Dr. Fritz Stern, University Professor Emeritus of Columbia University, will deliver the annual Lehman Lecture. Dr. Stern, the former provost at Columbia as well as the former Seth Low Professor of History, will speak on the theme of "Democracies in Danger: Lessons from Past and Present." Some of you may have read the profile of him that appeared in *The New York Times* a few weeks ago. A highly regarded scholar, Dr. Stern has focused his research on trying to uncover the factors that cause democracies to disintegrate. We can look forward to a thought-provoking address that will help us better understand both the events of history and those of today.

As more details about these and other events become available, they will be posted on the web in the College's newest publication, "Lehman E-News," a bimonthly online newsletter that will carry news and announcements from throughout the College and help us keep track of the many different events and programs taking place on the campus. Built into the newsletter is an easy form to enable you to submit timely announcements that would be of campus-wide interest, perhaps about scholarship or internship opportunities, progress on various programs and projects, or news about your research or alumni achievements.

As we receive information about enrollment figures for the spring term, once late registration ends on February 2, it will be included in "Lehman E-News" as well.

I look forward to the energy and productivity of a new semester, to the many new opportunities to advance our mission and serve our community, to meeting the new students who are just beginning their careers at Lehman and to congratulating those who will receive their degrees at our next Commencement. Let us keep our students' goals and ambitions in the forefront, as we continue to support one another and work together with mutual respect, dedication and determination.

— Ricardo R. Fernández, Ph.D.  
President, Herbert H. Lehman College  
The City University of New York