Conference Examines Governance of Scientific and Technological Change

BY SUZANNE TIRREL

Columbia’s “Washington-based Center for Science, Policy and Outcomes” will host an international gathering of opinion leaders, scientists, technologists and experts in business and finance on campus March 5-7 to discuss how science can best fit well with a transformed world resulting from scientific and technological change.

The conference, “Livin’ with the Genie: Governing the Science, Technology and Transformation of Society in the 21st Century,” will focus on the complex interactions between society’s own aspirations and the accelerated pace of technological and scientific change.

Among other topics, the 300 invited participants from the academic, government, nonprofit foundation and business worlds of world finance and health sciences campuses will participate.

The conference will discuss how, as advanced technologies pro-life and become routine, the distinctions between life and death and costs remain uneven, both within and between them. The conference will explore the culture of discovery and innovation has been transformed as private funding outpaces public research investments, patent proliferation leads to emerging research into new forms of knowledge and ownership of knowledge becomes a critical issue in the global economy.

A key issue will be the fact that institutions created to safeguard the public interest cannot be kept up with in the emerging knowledge and innovation.

“The face of these challenges, we want to stimulate a broad commitment to discussions on how the pursuit of knowledge and innovation can best fulfill human needs and advance fundamental goals such as equity, justice and freedom,” said Daniel Sarewitz, executive director of the Solar Foundation.

Organizers plan an atmosphere that, while necessarily a bit disadvantageous, will have some of the trappings of a conference, will also have the look and feel of a salon.

The conference will include technology and art installations that will be integral to the discussions as well as performances, including one by Jaron Lanier, a composer, computer scientist, and the artist who is credited with the term “virtual reality.”

The conference will take place in the Rotunda of Low Memorial Library. Details are available online at: http://www.columbia.edu.

In addition to Columbia, support for the conference has been received from the National Foundation Center, the Mountain Center, Foundation, Heinz Boll Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the New York City Planning Department, and the New York City Planning Commission.

The conference theme is “Living with the Genie: Governing the Science, Technology and Transformation of Society in the 21st Century.”

Urban Planning Alumna Selected to Chair NYC Planning Commission

BY LORALIE NOLETTI

A Columbia urban planning alumna was selected to lead the New York City Planning Commission. Amanda Burden, currently a member of the New York City Planning Commission and a graduate of Columbia’s School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, was named Chair of the Commission by Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

“The City Planning Commission plays a critical role in the rebuilding of our city,” Bloomberg said. “Amanda Burden has the experience to energize efforts in order to bolster the physical vitality and economy of our city. When we plan our city, we plan our future and Amanda will help set the right course for New York.”

As the head of the Commission, Burden also becomes the director of the Department of City Planning.

New York City Planning Commission and Department are responsible for the City’s physical and social development, including land use and environmental review, preparation of plans and policies, provision of technical assistance and planning information for governments and agencies, the public, charitable foundations, and community boards.

Prior to her appointment and in her work on behalf of the Planning Commission, Burden was director of planning at the Central Park Conservancy, which is responsible for the park’s physical development, capital projects, maintenance, and interpretation.

Burden received a B.A from Sarah Lawrence College and her professional degree in Urban Planning at Columbia’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation.

As a Columbia student, Burden won the 1992 prize for best thesis in urban planning. “She was an outstanding student and has an outstanding professional,” said Elliott Sclar, director of Columbia’s Urban Planning Program.

Bloomberg has extended three other Columbiaians to posts in his administration: Benjamin K. Chu, M.D., senior associate dean at Columbia’s College of Physicians and Surgeons, affiliation with Harlem Hospital Center, nominated to become president of the New York City Health & Hospitals Corporations; Ester R. Fuchs, director of the Center for Budget & Policy Studies at Columbia’s School of International and Public Affairs, a graduate of Barnard College and Columbia, to be special advisor for government relations; and Thomas R. Frieden, a joint MD/Master of Public Health graduate of Columbia University and Mailman School of Public Health in the Department of Epidemiology, appointed as commissioner of the Department of Health.