Janow to Chair Committee on Socially Responsible Investing

President Lee C. Bollinger has selected SIPA and Law School Alumna Janow to chair the University’s Advisory Committee on Socially Responsible Investing (SCI).

The Committee was established in 2000 to deliberate upon issues of corporate social responsibility confronting the University as an investor and to advise the University Trustees. The final recommendations of the Committee rest with the University Trustees.

Janow replaces Law Professor Harvey Goldschmid, CC ’62, Law ’65, who was named a commissioner of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) over the summer.

Bollinger named four other new members to the Committee: SCI Committee Faculties, Business School Professor Enrique Azar and Jeffrey A. Felt, and Law Professors W. Bressler Professor of Law, one alumnus, James Harden, Business ’78, Public Health ’83, and one student representative. Lance Langston, a graduate student in GSAS. The 12-person committee is comprised of four faculty, four students and four alumni.

Janow’s career includes work in academia, government and business, and her legal background combines international trade and antitrust law and policy with extensive international experience, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

A professor at the School of International and Public Affairs since 1994, Janow teaches a course called US Foreign Economic Policy and is also director of the master's program in International Economic Policy and co-director of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Study Center, which she co-founded in 1995.

At the law school, Janow chairs the Source Comparative & International Antitrust and International Trade Law.

Fitch Legacy Honored by School of Architecture

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was created, and by 1972 Fitch succeeded in his quest to establish the first Master of Science degree in historic preservation in the United States, a program that has become the prototype for more than 50 programs that exist today nationwide.

Fitch was also a respected author in the field, with several books to his credit, including: Architect: A Profession of Understanding; American Building: The Historical Forces that Shaped It, and The Environmental Forces that Shaped It.

In 1976, after the preservation and redevelopment of South Street Seaport, the first phase of the renovation of Ellis Island and the design of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, he also broadened the notion of what constituted important historical resources to include structures like the 19th-century cast-iron lofts of SoHo.

Without question, Fitch left his mark on the city and on trends in architecture. In fact, at the time of his death in 2000, in the architectural publication Oculus, Jayne Merkel wrote, “Without James Marston Fitch, New York and the city that it is today; Others added that without the cadre of devoted preservationists that Fitch inspired, cities and towns across the United States might today be characterized by monotonous architectural mediocrity without any distinguishing historic features.

The programs that are enrolled in the two-year Master of Science program in Historic Preservation at the School include design, history, conservation and preservation planning. The curriculum is taught by a faculty of scholars and working professionals—architects, conservators, laboratory scientists and experts in preservation law it also incorporates largest public values in older buildings, landscapes and other works, and studies a broad array of contemporary techniques to protect these buildings and manage change. Columbia continues to enjoy the benefit of the nation’s first full-time program, fully equipped for contemporary analytical work.

After his retirement from Columbia in 1978, Fitch retained an interest in the school and his former students including Adele Chatfield-Taylor, president of the American Institute of Architects; Franck Sanich, executive director of the Municipal Art Society, and John H. Stubbs, vice president of the World Monuments Fund. “He came to feel it was important to strengthen the program by adding a full-time faculty position,” says his widow Martica Sawin Fitch. “This [professorship] seemed to be the best way to carry on his ideas and the things he worked for.”

“Starting with Jim, the Columbia program’s stock in trade has always been innovation and leadership,” says Hislop-Piccolo Preservation Program Director Paul Spencer Byard. “The professorship in his name comes at a wonderful time, when we are renewing our capacity to provide them.”

The Program is made possible through a gift from Fitch, himself, before his death, a generous commitment with donations from his charitable foundation and wife, his firm—Beyer, Blinder, Belle, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, Brown Foundation, Vinmont Foundation, Paul MetcalF/Felicia Fund and alumni leadership and support.

“Preservation is about the meaning of old architecture,” says Byard. “We protect it so that as a society we can continue to learn from it every day and make our lives around it. Our work is creative, not prevent, protecting and maximizing the means by which people of all buildings to our ability to understand our lives and live them well. If we are to manage change, not prevent it, to spur, not stop, a process of innovation builds appropriately on our architectural work.”

A recent innovation in the curriculum is the new Joint Third Year Advanced Architectural Design/Preservation Design Workshop, the first in its kind in the nation, where preservationists are directly involved in a process of innovation, working with design students designing additions to modern monuments like the University of Mexico and Chandigarh, in India. This year the studio traveled to Brasilia to work on the addition to the monumental Brazilian capitol of a headquarters for the World Social Forum.

According to Byard, the history of the Program is being renewed by a major effort to clarify its basic purposes. Through this process, the curriculum, enhance and new faculty including the James Marston Fitch Professor, the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, like Fitch, continues to bring vision and leadership to the field of historic preservation, extending his legacy to new generations of preservationists.

Still Time to Prepare for El Niño, IRI Scientists Say

A s this year’s El Niño gains strength over the tropical Pacific, climatologists from the Earth Institute at Columbia gathered in Washington, D.C. last week to call for international funding organizations to prepare for El Niño-related disasters.

“It is our goal to make the best climatological lessons available to the policymakers in communities before vulnerable countries face humanitarian crises,” Earth Institute Director Jeffrey Sachs.

As hazards expert Max Diley of the International Research Institute on Climate Prediction (IRI) at Columbia explains, an El Niño-related disaster starts with a drought or flood but is magnified by existing hunger, vulnerability and social fragility and economic and political situation that impairs a region’s ability to prepare and respond. Those regions already experiencing climate stresses (drought or flood) are at greatest risk, he says. For this reason, an El Niño in the coming months could mean that strength may spell big trouble in parts of Brazil, Peru, Indonesia, southern Africa, and other vulnerable locations around the world.

Southern Africa, for instance, has already been experiencing drought conditions. This year’s El Niño could cause a failure of the region’s limited rainy season, extending the drought for another year. At the Washington briefing, IRI climate forecasting experts Steve Zebiak and Tony Barnston explained how recent advances in climate modeling now enable scientists to identify an El Niño phenomenon in its early development stages, clarify risks in affected areas, and give regions and international aid agencies time to prepare.

The Washington briefing was co-sponsored by the Earth Institute, Columbia University’s Companero Andino de Fomento (CAF), which helps Andean nations cope with El Niño. Antino J. Jao Sosa, Vice President for Infrastructure of CAF, presented some success stories, such as a man-made lagoon in Peru that captures excess rain in El Niño years and used it for irrigation as well as flood control.

Officials from the World Bank and USAID applauded Columbia’s Washington event. “For financial institutions to understand the scientists is key,” said Alicia Kreimer of the World Bank’s disaster management facility. “You have to deal with these issues as a matter of development.”

“This has been a very timely and important event,” said William Whalen of USAID, “especially in relation to Southern Africa, where 14.4 million people are extremely food insecure.”

Dilleh hopes planners will learn to treat climate threats from a perspective of “risk management, not disaster management.” During the last El Niño in 1997-98, droughts, floods, and other impacts are estimated to have cost between US$32-96 billion worldwide.

Sachs added that humanitarian aid, especially in Southern Africa, is so far below the level needed that aid agencies don’t need a threat of El Niño to show them that more aid is needed.

Lamont-Doherty Observatory Hosts Annual Open House

More than 3,000 people turned out for the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory’s Annual Open House, including many Columbia students. Since 1949, Lamont, a research unit of the Earth Institute, has been at the forefront of research that has and is changing our understanding of the Earth. Each year, Lamont presents exhibits, lectures, and demonstrations to illustrate research projects worldwide, from glacial change, to earthquakes, to marine geology, volcanoes, tree ring research and much more.

More information available online.

Earth Institute Jeffrey Sachs speaks at a briefing in Washington, D.C., on preparing for El Niño-related disasters.