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\$18M Gift for New Geochemistry Building

Thanks to Lands' End founder Gary Comer and the Comer Science and Education Foundation, Columbia will soon be constructing a state-of-the-art geochemistry research building at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory's 157-acre campus in Palisades, New York. Comer's generous \$18 million gift will help to replace the existing geochemistry facility, which dates from the early 1950s and can no longer support the leading-edge research needed to investigate topics such as global warming and climate change.

Groundbreaking is expected to take place in September 2006, with ribbon cutting and occupancy scheduled for November 2007. Columbia has committed to raising the additional funds necessary to complete the new facility.

An avid sailor, Comer was puzzled by his success in crossing from the Atlantic to the Pacific without the assistance of an icebreaker. This compelled him to delve further into the impact of human activity on the environment. By engaging in discussions with leading scientists, he became well versed in the issues of global warming and climate change.

"I am proud to be a part of this project," Comer said. "This new facility will support great scientific research on some of the most crucial questions of our time, ranging from the formation of the Earth itself to the future of our climate. The research conducted at this new facility will lay the groundwork for

continued on page 8

Leaving Home, Moving In, Getting Oriented

The Class of '09 Arrives for a Week of Activities on Campus and Around Town



A parade of 142 flags ushers in the new year, and the new class, at Convocation.

By Robert Hornsby

On Monday, August 29, more than 1,000 first-years and their parents took a break from their move-in tasks to attend convocation on the South Lawn. Against the backdrop of 142 flags (50 states plus the 90 countries represented in this year's group), President Lee C. Bollinger urged the class of 2009 to make full use of the "tools" available to them at Columbia, beginning with its "outstanding faculty." Students, he said, should open their minds to complexities, which sometimes entails "allowing yourself to believe another view for the sake of fully considering it." Such qualities "define the scholarly temperament and sustain the whole academic enterprise."

Constantino Colombo, dean of Student Affairs, and Courtney Wilkins, CC'07, chair of the New Student Orientation Program (NSOP), also delivered welcoming remarks, as did Austin E. Quigley, dean of Columbia College. Quigley wished the students well on their journey to understand the world's "mystery, magic and madness." Zvi Galil,

continued on page 12

Columbia Accelerates Efforts to Diversify Faculty

Campus Dedicates \$15M to Be Used in Arts and Sciences

Columbia University will add from 15 to 20 outstanding female and minority scholars to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences within three to five years. This new recruitment campaign is part of a \$15 million commitment by the University to step up efforts to diversify faculty.

The University Trustees unanimously approved the funding at their June meeting.

"These funds allow us to bring on board a critical cluster of new talent in the Arts and Sciences that in turn may help us recruit other scholars from under-represented groups," said Jean Howard, vice provost for diversity initiatives since September 2004.

The \$15 million investment is in response to recommendations made by a faculty committee that worked with Howard on ways to achieve a more diverse community of scholars.

The funds are intended to change the process and culture surrounding faculty searches, retention, and promotion by more successfully identifying and recruiting outstanding scholars from his-

torically under-represented groups; addressing the work-life issues of an increasingly diverse faculty and the dearth of women and minority faculty in natural sciences and engineering; and furthering the University's dialogue on this critical need.

"Building a diverse university community requires sustained commitment, concerted effort and the attention of us all," said President Lee C. Bollinger. "With this investment we are reaffirming Columbia's commitment to our core values of inclusion and academic excellence."

Specific goals include:

- **Improving the search, selection and recruitment process.** The new resources will help underwrite promising efforts in various departments to widen the pools from which search committees select faculty; lengthen search time and expand recruitment efforts; experiment with strategies such as cluster hiring and coordinated appointments; create dual-career and partner-placement policies; undertake more interdisciplinary

hiring; centrally organize information about how to access existing networks of outstanding minority and female candidates; and sponsor workshops related to successful identification and recruitment of these candidates.

- **Meeting the work-life needs of faculty.** Recognizing the relationship between providing child-care and recruiting and retaining excellent faculty, the University has begun a needs assessment and feasibility study for the Morningside and uptown campuses. A report from Bright Horizons Child Care Corporation is expected in January 2006. Bright Horizons manages Columbia's Lamont-Doherty Child Care Center and provides child-care services to Duke, MIT, Princeton, and Yale, among other leading universities.

- **Opening and expanding career paths in the natural sciences and engineering for women and minorities.** The vice provost for diversity, working with the New York Academy of Sciences, is establishing a consortium of area universi-

ties, medical schools and industries to create a high-end job bank for science positions in the New York area. At the same time, the vice provost's Task Force on Diversity in Science and Engineering has been charged with finding ways to strengthen the channels for bringing female and minority students into the University's undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral programs.

- **Deepening and extending the dialogue with other universities facing similar issues.** The new funding also provides for more opportunities to hear from representatives of other universities on diversity topics. Last year's guest speakers included Princeton President Shirley Tilghman, who spoke about the hurdles of recruiting and retaining women in science; MIT biology professor Nancy Hopkins, who described the institutional changes related to gender issues at MIT; and Georgetown University law professor Chuck Lawrence, who stressed the continuing need for affirmative action.

INSIDE

4

David Helfand Muses on the Fate of the Universe



7

Progress Report on the Millennium Villages



Columbia Community Extends Sympathy and Aid to Hurricane Victims

Columbia University joins the nation in mourning the victims of Hurricane Katrina and in extending sympathy to other individuals who are suffering its devastating effects. For information about Columbia's hurricane relief efforts, go to www.columbia.edu/cu/news/05/09/columbia_katrina.html