$2 Million Gift to Support Arts Scholarship

By Madeleine Perez

The School of the Arts has announced a $2 million gift to endow the Andrew Fisher Fellowship Fund to support distinction in the visual arts. The Fund will provide fellowships to graduate students enrolled in the school’s master of fine arts program who display excellence in their discipline. The gift from Emily Fisher Landau and Richard L. Fisher, Law’60, honors Andrew Fisher, their grandson and son respectively, who died at the age of 22 in a car accident in 2003.

Andrew was on his way to becoming an accomplished artist,” said Richard L. Fisher, “so it is entirely appropriate that we remember Andrew and honor the spirit of his artistic ambitions through this gift to Columbia.

The donation, one of the largest ever to the School, will help build momentum toward the launching of a university-wide fundraising campaign in support of scholarships, professorships and other arts initiatives. Once the endowment reaches maturity, it will support approximately $100,000 worth of scholarships each year.

“At Columbia, one of our main focuses is the creation of new ideas, and our arts students are vital contributors to this important mission,” said University president Lee C. Bollinger. “This generous gift from the Fisher family will help us further support these students and their creative contributions to our community and the City.”

Each spring, a committee of faculty members continued on page 10

The Art of Building in a Relentlessly Urban Landscape

Celebrated architect and architecture school professor Steven Holl explains his concept for a new condo development in Beijing while delivering the fall University Lecture, an annual event sponsored by the Offices of the President and Provost. Full article on page 6.

Saltzman Forum

Democracy Promotion Dos and Don’ts

By Ernest Beck

A t the first annual Saltzman Forum, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said that, while the United States should not impose democracy, it “should not be shy about promoting it.” It’s no accident, she maintained, that terrorists are most present where democracy is most absent.

“That’s because terrorists cannot flourish in any society where leaders are held accountable and the rule of law is applied,” Albright said. Albright was the keynote speaker at a daylong symposium, “Promoting Democracy: Opportunities and Challenges in a Complex World,” sponsored by the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies at the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA). Recently renamed for distinguished alumnus Arnold Saltzman (CC’56), the institute was started more than 50 years ago by Dwight D. Eisenhower (then president of CU) and is devoted to developing methods of waging peace. Albright was recently named the first Saltzman Fellow.

Teachers College Launches Campaign for Educational Equity

A s has long been documented, when young people fail to graduate from high school, the entire nation suffers along with the individuals themselves. As a result of high school dropouts, the government loses hundreds of billions of dollars each year in reduced earnings, productivity and tax revenues, as well as costs associated with public assistance, health problems and crime.

On Oct. 24 and 25, a group of leading educational researchers gathered in Lerner Hall for a symposium to address the disparities that have led to so much dysfunction within America’s education system. The symposium was the inaugural event for the Campaign for Educational Equity at Teachers College. The campaign was launched in June to help close the gap in opportunities and achievements between advantaged and disadvantaged students.

Congressman Charles Rangel of New York’s 15th District opened the discussions by citing his own personal experience. “I know what it’s like not to have an education,” he said, revealing that he’d dropped out of high school in the 1940s and enlisted in the army, serving in Korea for four years.

Though he’d performed well as a soldier, he felt like “a nobody” upon returning to civilian life—which led him to finish high school, attend New York University and ultimately graduate from St. John’s University School of Law.

Rangel emphasized that failed education policies, not terrorism or Iraq, pose the greatest threat to America’s national security. “You can’t be hopeless and patriotic,” he told the Columbia audience, noting “that half of our youth are unable to volunteer and serve because of a lack of high school education.”

Henry M. Levin, the William Heard Kilpatrick Professor of Economics and Education at Teachers College and the symposium chair, said that while educational inequity is first and foremost an issue of justice and fairness, current research findings “show that it is also an issue that affects all of us in our daily lives—and will affect our children even more so.”

For Michael Rebell, the executive director of the Campaign for Educational Equity, the wealth of statistics presented at the conference left no doubt that policymakers should be placing greater priority on issues outside the classroom that undermine educational success. “If we don’t deal with issues like student health, mobility and family dysfunction,” said Rebell, “we won’t close the learning gap.”

On Oct. 26, Rebell, who has been running the Campaign for Educational Equity since June along with board chair Laurie M. Tisch, convened a smaller group of leaders from business, state legislatures, academia, advocacy and nonprofit groups, and the media to discuss the symposium findings and to begin work on a research and action agenda.

He announced that the campaign plans to establish links within Columbia, including the journalism and law schools, as well as with “sister institutions” nationwide. “We need to make this a national movement,” he said.

Editor’s note: For a summary of key conference findings and recommendations, see Henry Levin’s Faculty Perspective on page 8.