Ten Arts and Sciences Faculty Recognized with New Award

On December 15, 2005, ten faculty members had the honor of becoming the first recipients of the Distinguished Columbia Faculty Awards. Established with a $12 million donation from University Trustee Gerry Lenfest (Law ’58), the new program recognizes faculty who have demonstrated unusual merit across a range of professional activities—including scholarship, University citizenship and professional involvement—and who are noted for their exceptional teaching and mentoring of undergraduates and graduates. Each awardee receives annual awards of $25,000 for a three-year period.

“The recipients of the Distinguished Columbia Faculty Awards have achieved great distinction as teachers, scholars and citizens, and serve as excellent role models for our students,” said University president Lee C. Bollinger. “We are grateful to Gerry Lenfest for his continued support of Columbia and for this most generous gift, which gives us another way to recognize our faculty for the important work they do.”

The honorees were selected by a committee of six senior Columbia faculty, overseen by the Vice President of Arts and Sciences, Nicholas Dirks. “The 2005 Distinguished Faculty honorees are all inspirational teachers as well as distinguished scholars,” said Dirks. “They span a full spectrum of disciplines—from particle physics to art history to sociology—which represent both the quality and diversity of the academic experience offered to Columbia’s students.”

A longtime supporter of the University, Lenfest donated $15 million to the Earth Institute in May 2004, having previously contributed $15 million toward the construction of Lenfest Hall, a residence for students at Columbia Law School.

Profiles of the 10 Distinguished Columbia Faculty awardees are on page 12.

President Bollinger Forms Committee on Global Thought

University president Lee C. Bollinger has announced the formation of the Committee on Global Thought. Led by University Professor of Economics Joseph Stiglitz, the new faculty committee has been charged with building a world-class program for the study of globalization in consultation with faculty and students throughout the University.

The creation of the new committee reflects Bollinger’s long-held belief that universities need to think more deeply about their place in the world, their power to contribute to broader society and the most effective methods for harnessing that power. Promoting Columbia’s continued development as a global university has been an important priority for Bollinger and the thrust of several major University initiatives since he became president in 2002.

The committee has met twice this year with Bollinger and other senior University leaders and will continue to convene throughout the semester. In addition to Stiglitz, the founding committee members are: Akeel Bilgrami, Johnnsonian Professor of Philosophy and director of the Heyman Center for the Humanities; Partha Chatterjee, professor of anthropology; Michael Doyle, Harold Brown Professor of U. S. Foreign and Security Policy and professor of law, political science and international affairs; Carol Gluck, George Sansom Professor of History and professor of East Asian languages and cultures; and Katharina Pistor, professor of law. Additional faculty members will be invited to join the committee over time.

“Columbia has a strong tradition of being a university with acutely global sensibilities,” said Bollinger. “The Committee on Global Thought will serve as a new vehicle for thinking about how we as a university confront the many challenges stemming from globalization and build upon our institutional commitment to serve as a center for learning and discussion on the world’s most important economic, policy and social issues.”

Bollinger and Stiglitz plan to share the news about the formation of the Committee on Global Thought at the World Economic Forum’s annual meeting on January 25–29, before an audience of distinguished Columbia alumni and other forum attendees. The meeting, convened each year in Davos, Switzerland, to address the most pressing global challenges, provides a unique opportunity to discuss the new committee’s goals with heads of state, business leaders and key members of civil society organizations, along with academics, scientists, policymakers and the media.

The Committee on Global Thought is the latest in a series of initiatives undertaken by Bollinger to transform Columbia into a truly global university.

Two years ago, he created the Task Force on the University and Globalization to better define Columbia’s international role by revisiting areas such as teaching and research, student and faculty recruitment, collaboration with overseas institutions, and engagements with scholars outside the United States.

His other initiatives include the World Leaders Forum, now in its third year, and the Global Colloquium of University Presidents, convened in response to the UN’s call for increased involvement of the academic community in addressing global problems.