Leaving Home, Moving In, Getting Oriented
The Class of ’09 Arrives for a Week of Activities on Campus and Around Town
By Robert Hornsby

O
n 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 entail “allow-
ing yourself to believe another view for the sake of
fully considering it.” Such qualities define the
scholarly temperament and sustain the whole aca-
demic enterprise.

Constantino Colombo, dean of Student Affairs,
and Courtney Wilkins, CC’07, chair of the New
Student Orientation Program (NSOP) also declin-
ed welcoming remarks, as did Austin E. Quigley,
dean of Columbia College. Quigley wished the stu-
dents 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 mil-
lion commitment by the University to step up efforts to
diversify faculty. The University Trustees unanimously approved the
funding at their June meeting.

“The 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 recommenda-
tions made by a faculty commit-
tee that worked with Howard
on ways to achieve a more diverse community of scholars.

The funds are intended to
change the process and cul-
ture surrounding faculty
searches, retention, and pro-
motion by more successfully
identifying and recruiting out-
standing scholars from his-
torically under-represented
groups, addressing the work-
life issues of an increasingly
diverse faculty and the dearth of women and minority facul-
ty in natural sciences and
engineering; and furthering the University’s dialogue on
this critical need.

Building a diverse universi-
ty community requires sus-
tained commitment, concerted
effort, and the attention of us
all,” said President Lee C.
Bollinger. “With this invest-
ment we are reaffirming
Columbia’s commitment to
our core values of inclusion
and academic excellence.

Specific goals include:
• Improving the search,
selection and recruit-
ment process. The new
resources will help under-
write promising efforts in var-
ious 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 part-
ner-placement policies under-
take more interdisciplinary
hiring; centrally organize
information about how to
access existing networks of
outstanding minority and
female candidates; and sponsor workshops related to success-
ful identification and recruit-
ment of these candidates.

• Meeting the work-life
needs of faculty. Recogn-
ing the relationship be-
tween providing child-care and
recruiting and retaining excel-
lent faculty, the University has
begun a needs assessment and
feasibility study for the
Morningside and up-town cam-
puses. A report from Bright
Horizons Child Care Corp-
oration is expected in January
2006. Bright Horizons manages
Columbia’s Lamont-Doherty
Child Care Center and provides
care services to Duke, MIT,
Princeton, and Yale, among
other leading universities.

• Opening and expand-
ing 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 tasked with finding ways to strengthen the chan-
nels for bringing female and
minority students into the
University’s undergraduate,
graduate and postdoctoral
programs. Deepening and extend-
ing the dialogue with other universities facing
similar issues. The new
funding also provides for more opportunities to hear from rep-
resentatives of other universi-
ties on diversity topics. Last
year’s guest speakers included
President President Shirley
Tilghman, Zvi Galil, 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.

$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 gen-
erous $18 million gift will help to replace the existing geochemistry
facility, which dates from the early 1950s and can no longer sup-
port the leading-edge research needed to investigate topics such as
global warming and climate change.

Groundbreaking is ex-
pected to take place in
September 2006, with
ribbon cutting and occu-
pancy scheduled for
November 2007. Colum-
bia has committed to rais-
ing the additional funds
necessary to complete the
new facility.

An avid sailor, Comer
was puzzled by his suc-
cess in crossing from the
Atlantic to the Pacific
without the assistance of an
icebreaker. This compul-
ted him to delve fur-
nier into the impact of human activity on the
nenvironment. By engaging in discussions with lead-
ing scientists, he became
well versed in the issues
of global warming and cli-
mate 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 forma-

tion of the Earth itself to
the future of our climate.

The research conducted at this new facility will
lay the groundwork
continued on page 8

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

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