The Rising of Rutgers University In Newark: A Growing Reputation For Excellence
by Carla Capizzi

Rutgers University in Newark is a rising star. From a “best kept secret” in academia, Rutgers-Newark is now increasingly well known as a top environment for scholars, as a nationally ranked institution in a number of disciplines, and as a national example for some of the best practices in promoting diversity and community engagement. Here are some recent highlights.

THE RANKINGS
Rutgers-Newark’s growing reputation for academic excellence, civic engagement, diversity and accessibility is confirmed by recent rankings from U.S. News & World Report. The publication lists Rutgers-Newark among the Best National Universities, ranks R-N as the nation’s Most Diverse national university for the 14th consecutive year, and in a new category, lists R-N as one of the A-Plus Colleges for B Students among national universities.

Washington Monthly’s recent college assessments take a different slant, with rankings of institutions based on their “contributions to public good.” Rutgers-Newark came out in this recently as #18 among national universities.

Programs in business, law, criminal justice, nursing, public administration and psychology continue to receive high rankings, along with the Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program.
RESEARCH SURGES

by Ferlanda Fox Nixon

Faculty researchers at Rutgers University in Newark have been extremely productive of late, and the dollars are there to prove it. This past year research funding reached an all-time high, with a two-year growth of 54% in sponsored funding.

Many Rutgers-Newark schools, departments, research centers and institutes deserve credit for achieving the record-breaking success. The Faculty of Arts and Sciences garnered 41% of the external funding pie during fiscal year 2010 ($12 million), the Center for Molecular and Behavioral Neuroscience captured 19% ($5.5 million), the Small Business Development Center at Rutgers Business School (RBS) received 14% ($4 million), and RBS won 12% ($3.7 million).

Within the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences generated the most dollars ($2.6 million). Honorables mentions include the College of Nursing ($1.2 million), the School of Public Affairs and Administration ($0.9 million), the School of Criminal Justice ($0.87 million), the School of Law ($0.56 million), the Chancellor’s Office ($0.43 million), and the Graduate School ($0.25 million).

While many factors contributed to the increase in external funding, most of the accolades go to the Rutgers-Newark faculty and staff involved in writing the 217 proposals submitted to the various sources. Faculty won awards to further research on global climate change, prison recidivism, the desert landscape’s effect on fire frequency and intensity, and the neural basis of continued illicit drug use by addicts, among many other projects. Staff engaged in the proposal submission process received funding for the Future Business Computing Institute, the RU Ready for Work program, the Paul Robeson Galleries, the New Jersey Small Business Development Center/New Jersey Schools Development Authority collaboration, and more.

The majority of the funding comes from federal sources. The National Institutes of Health, the primary federal agency for conducting and supporting medical research, was the largest single contributor at $9 million. The second largest single funder, the National Science Foundation (NSF), awarded $5.5 million to various Rutgers-Newark projects. NSF is the funding source for approximately 20 percent of all federally supported basic research conducted by America’s colleges and universities. Rutgers-Newark also received funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (“stimulus” funds) during fiscal year 2010 totaling $2.8 million.

AWARD WINNERS

The following faculty and staff members were the top 10 in securing external grants for fiscal year 2010.

Brenda Hopper, state director, New Jersey Small Business Development Centers, Rutgers Business School (RBS), $4,079,526.
Alex Plinio, co-founder, Institute for Ethical Leadership, RBS, $2,322,500.
Mauricio Delgado, assistant professor, psychology, Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FASN), $1,429,014.
Gyorgy Buzsaki, Board of Governors Professor, Center for Molecular and Behavioral Neuroscience (CMBN), $1,124,531.
James Tepper, professor, CMBN, $996,042.
Adam Kustka, assistant professor, earth and environmental sciences, FASN, $906,484.
Daniel Murnick, professor, physics, FASN, $895,450.
Denis Paré, associate professor, CMBN, $817,843.
Deborah Walker-McCall, associate dean, Dept. of Academic Foundations, FASN, $746,863.
Piotr Plotrowiak, professor, chemistry, FASN, $710,000.

Source: Research Office, Rutgers-Newark

Rutgers University Brain Imaging Center

Thanks to a $1.82 million grant from the National Science Foundation, scholars at Rutgers will have direct access to the latest functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) technology to aid their research. Functional MRI scans measure the change in blood flow related to neural activity in the brain. Minimally invasive, fMRIs allow for precise measurement of the source and destination of major neural pathways and provide insight into how the brain learns.

Rutgers-Newark will acquire the Siemens Trio 3T MRI scanner, which will be housed at the newly formed Rutgers University Brain Imaging Center (RUBIC) in the Center for Molecular and Behavioral Neuroscience (CMBN) building in Newark. The scanner will be available for research throughout all three Rutgers campuses.

Scholars at Rutgers-Newark using an fMRI scanner in their research include: Mauricio Delgado, Stephen Hanson, Kent Harber, Barry Komisaruk, Vanessa LeBlue, Maggie Shiffrar, and Elizabeth Tricomi of the Dept. of Psychology; and April Benasich, Gyorgy Buzsaki, Mark Gluck, Bart Krexelberg, and Paula Tannah of CMBN. Representative projects include: research on early neural mechanisms necessary for normal cognitive and language development; human motion perception and its deficits in autism; and control/regulation of human emotions to facilitate learning and decision-making.

To learn more about RUBIC, visit http://rubic.rutgers.edu.
Academia is all in the family
by Carla Capizzi

Like father, like son. That expression isn’t always accurate, but it is with Don and Tom McCabe. They’re two men with the same professional calling, although they work in different disciplines: Don McCabe teaches at the Rutgers Business School, while his son Tom McCabe teaches history for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

Don McCabe came to Rutgers from the corporate world 21 years ago; Tom McCabe started teaching at Rutgers in 2007, after completing his master’s and doctoral degrees in history; one at Rutgers-Newark, the other at Rutgers-New Brunswick. He was invited to teach the popular History of Newark course by Dr. Clement Price – the professor that Tom calls his “other hero,” second only to his father. Since that day, there have been two Dr. McCabes at Rutgers in Newark.

Don and Tom have little in common academically. Don is a world-renowned expert on student cheating and academic integrity who has been invited to lecture on his specialty at universities in locales such as Australia, Egypt, Canada, Mexico, Singapore, Hong Kong, Greece and Dubai.

Tom’s expertise spans two diverse subjects: Newark history and the world history of soccer. The excitement over the recent World Cup tournament led to him being featured in sports magazines and a popular YouTube video concerning the history of soccer course he taught at R-N this past summer. And his Newark history expertise led to his appearance in an NBC program, “Who Do You Think You Are?”, where he escorted actress Brooke Shields through Newark’s Ironbound, while he helped her trace her Newark roots.

Working on the same campus has its perks, say father and son. Occasionally they drive in together, since they live near each other in South Orange. Tom gets lots of free lunches whenever he dines with dad, who likes to pick up the tab.

The downsides are few – and humorous; on occasion Don has gone online to review the teaching evaluations his students have posted, and found himself reading Tom’s reviews, which according to Don, are “notably better than” his own. Phone calls are sometimes misdirected. And because the family resemblance is so strong, Tom has been mistaken for his father, whom he laughingly calls “the ghost of Christmas future.”

Can a dancer also be an activist and a force for change? Spend a few minutes watching a performance of the Newark-based BlackLight Project, and you’ll know the answer.

The BlackLight Project is the brainchild of Aimee Cox, an urban anthropologist and an assistant professor in the African American and African Studies Department. Cox, holder of a doctoral degree in cultural anthropology, is a former dancer and choreographer who toured extensively with the Alvin Alley Repertory Ensemble/Ailey II.

Cox’s BlackLight Project transforms young dancers aged 14-21 into instruments of change and community activists who combine spoken word and dance moves into performances that educate, inform and connect to the audience.

The BlackLight Project evolved from Cox’s work with women living in a Detroit homeless shelter. “Many of them used music and dance to tell their stories, but only amongst themselves,” she explains. Armed with a Kellogg Foundation grant, Cox helped them write down their personal experiences and develop public performances, combining words and dance to “tell their stories to larger audiences and to connect their personal stories to larger issues beyond the shelter,” such as violence. “They used performance as a way to understand their encounters with systems and processes that made them feel invisible, such as dealing with social service agencies, and how to change that.”

When Cox came to Rutgers in fall 2008, she began working in the local community with young people, and quickly realized the need for a Newark version of BlackLight. It became a reality in spring 2009, with 15 young female leaders facilitating weekly dialogue sessions on topics ranging from street violence to the need for safe places for Newark’s young women.

This fall BlackLight became part of the curriculum reform underway at Central High School, as a key educational component in a $5 million federal grant to Central High, says Cox. She developed a social justice dance curriculum which is part of an extended Central school day three days a week. “This program connects social justice philosophy with exposure to and skill development in the performing arts, with a specific focus on dance and writing.

Cox envisions the BlackLight Project as “an integral part of my activism, research and cultural commitment” to Newark, the city where she plans to “live, work, conduct research, teach and stay engaged for the long haul.”
A Visit to the Oval Office
In August, Marcia Brown, vice chancellor of Rutgers-Newark and an alumna of the Rutgers School of Law – Newark, experienced a once-in-a-lifetime moment. She met, talked, and shook hands with President Barack Obama in the Oval Office. Brown served as the adult delegate from the Jersey Urban Debate League (JUDL) who accompanied Shagun Kukreja, a senior at University High School in Newark, on her visit to the White House. Kukreja was part of a four-student high school debate delegation invited to the White House to celebrate the top competitors in the 2010 Chase Urban Debate National Championship tournament. Involved in Newark debate for nearly three decades, Brown currently serves as a board member of JUDL and has been instrumental in founding and guiding the Rutgers-Newark Debate Team, which has met competitive success beginning with its first outing in 2008, winning the collegiate tournament at the State University of New York – Binghamton.

Extraordinary Gifts
Rutgers-Newark alumnus Raymond G. Chambers is known worldwide for his extraordinary track record of charitable giving. The retired financier dedicates his time to vast philanthropic projects under the auspices of the MCJ Amelior Foundation and America’s Promise Alliance, and also serves as the United Nation’s secretary general’s special envoy for malaria. Despite his international engagements, he claims that the most special event of his year happens when he visits with a group of students at Rutgers-Newark who are the recipients of the MCJ Student Residential Housing Scholarships, a program he founded in 2008. In his recent visit to campus he listened intently to the students’ stories of how meaningful these scholarships are in changing their lives. Yet he urged the students to “pay it forward” by taking up the cause of civic engagement now, and philanthropy in their professional careers.

A New Home on Bleeker Street
For the Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience, relocating to 49 Bleeker Street was more than a move from one building to another. It was, in the words of IECME founding director Professor Clement A. Price, “a giant step forward for public scholarship in Newark and will enrich the University’s commitment to meaningful engagement with the civic life of the city and the metropolitan area of which it is the center.” The two-story brownstone building allows for continued expansion of IECME’s lectures, films, performances, and exhibitions, all aimed at enhancing public understanding of urban life, the social construction of difference, race relations, local history, urban youth culture, and education. The building also houses the new Center for Migration and the Global City, headed by Professor Timothy Raphael. More than 200 guests celebrated the move on Sept. 23 and applauded presentation of a $10,000 gift from the Verizon Foundation to support IECME’s Gus Heningburg Civic Fellows Program.
The Rutgers campus in downtown Newark offers entertaining and enlightening public programs year round. Following are some highlights of upcoming events; a complete schedule is at www.newark.rutgers.edu/events.

### THE 28TH ANNUAL CHIEF JUSTICE JOSEPH WEINTRAUB LECTURE

Nov. 30, 6 p.m., Center for Law & Justice


### CROSSING THE BLVD: STRANGERS, NEIGHBORS, ALIENS IN A NEW AMERICA

Feb. 10 – April 6, 2011, Paul Robeson Gallery

A cross-media project that documents and portrays the largely invisible lives, images, sounds and stories of new immigrants and refugees. Viewers can record their own immigrant stories, which will be incorporated into the exhibition.

### BEAUTY AND THE BLACK BODY: HISTORY, AESTHETICS, AND POLITICS

THE MARION THOMPSON WRIGHT LECTURE SERIES

Feb. 19, 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m., Paul Robeson Campus Center

The 31st annual MTW explores the contested ways in which African and African American beauty has been represented in historical and contemporary contexts. Speakers: Deborah Willis, New York University; Maxine Craig, University of California at Davis; Tiffany GRI, University of Texas, Austin; and Okwui Enwezor, scholar, art critic and curator of African art.

### CAMPUSWIDE OPEN HOUSE

April 16, 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

R-N’s annual open house is designed for prospective undergraduate or graduate students, families and friends. Open House includes campus tours, information sessions and opportunities to speak with representatives from admissions, financial aid, housing and many departments and schools.

### WRITERS AT NEWARK READING SERIES PRESENTS AUTHOR TONI MORRISON

April 26, 5:30 p.m.

Essex Room, The Paul Robeson Campus Center

Morrison, winner of both the Nobel and Pulitzer prizes in literature, will read from and discuss her works. Presented by the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Program.

### SHAKESPEARE’S TWELFTH NIGHT

April 27 – May 1

Bradley Hall Theatre

Rutgers-NJIT Theatre program presents The Bard’s classic comedy. Directed by Louis Wells.
which was recently cited by Poets & Writers magazine among the top 50 MFA programs in the nation.

ENROLLMENT GROWTH

Fall 2010 enrollment figures are the highest since the Newark campus of Rutgers University was established in 1946. This semester's total of 11,798 undergraduates and graduate students broke the previous record of 11,500 set just last fall, a 21% increase in the last 10 years.

ENERGIZING SCHOLARSHIP

This academic year’s 52 new faculty appointments are bringing energizing scholarship to the campus, often with significant impacts on the university’s long-standing tradition of civic engagement. School of Criminal Justice faculty hired in the last year, notes Dean Todd Clear, were chosen because they are nationally recognized scholars in their particular fields as well as urban specialists eager to work in Newark and conduct research here.

High-quality appointees “dramatically impact the reputation of the campus,” says College of Nursing (CON) Dean William Holzemer, and also affect a school’s culture. He notes that CON has brought in new faculty whose research is widely published and disseminated and who have received support through prestigious sources such as the National Institutes of Health.

At the same time, says Faculty of Arts and Sciences-Newark (FAS-N) Dean Philip Yeagle, new appointees are attracted “by the strong scholarly communities in their fields, the strength of the Rutgers name, and the incredible diversity of our community.” These observations are echoed by one new assistant professor, Aldo Civico, sociology and anthropology, a regular blogger on The Huffington Post, and a frequently cited media expert in the topics of terrorism, insurgency and counter-insurgency. Rutgers is “a very exciting and attractive place” for a scholar, he explains, but Newark itself is “a city with a very interesting and innovative political leadership... this is something very attractive to me also as a scholar interested in civic participation and in strategies to deal with youth violence.”

PASSPORT TO THE ARTS

Pick up PASSPORT TO THE ARTS and experience a full season of mostly free events in the visual and performing arts at Rutgers University in Newark. To receive your passport contact occ@andromeda.rutgers.edu.

“Rutgers is a very exciting and attractive place for a scholar”

-Aldo Civico, sociology and anthropology

RUTGERS-NEWARK AS A ROLE MODEL

The Fall 2010 issue of The Presidency magazine, published by the American Council on Education (ACE), featured an article by Chancellor Steve Diner, describing the experience of having Rutgers-Newark used as a “learning lab.” ACE recently completed a two-year case study of R-N by representatives of the nation’s higher learning institutions through its Fellows Program – the first time ACE Fellows studied an actual higher education institution, in a non-hypothetical leadership experience.