Interim Chancellor Philip Yeagle: Let’s “Seize This Moment” of “Incredible Possibility” for Rutgers-Newark by Carla Capizzi

Philip Yeagle assumed the responsibilities of interim chancellor of Rutgers-Newark in December 2011. In early February, he described his vision for Rutgers-Newark during his first campuswide address. Here are some highlights of his talk.

Who We Are
Yeagle reiterated the strengths that define the Newark campus: excellence in scholarship, in education, and in opportunity for students, as well as in diversity and community engagement, noting "We are second to none within Rutgers. We are proud of who we are and of what we represent." What’s more, "Let us not forget that we are a proud and an integral part of a larger whole, a national university, one of the oldest in the country and an international leader in many fields: Rutgers University, a member of the AAU and one of the leading public research universities in the U.S."

Setting Priorities
Noting that "We need first-class facilities for research on our campus," Yeagle announced that all non-essential property acquisitions are on hold, and those resources will be reallocated for improvements to the physical campus, buildings and labs. Deferred maintenance of facilities interferes with teaching and research, he explained. Enhancing and improving campus services also are a priority since they are integral to the campus’s ability to educate students and foster research.

The campus needs to develop new, more effective ways for teaching our students, and incorporate the best practices of pedagogy in the classroom, Yeagle stated. R-N also must improve retention and graduation rates, and must more actively engage alumni and donors.

R-N must establish itself as a campus that offers extensive opportunities for undergraduates to conduct research. To emphasize the importance of undergraduate research, Yeagle will fund a summer research scholarship...
That time resolution, using synchronized laser pulses, is achieved by an ultrafast microscope created through the research of Dr. Piotr Piotrowiak, a physical chemist and professor in the Department of Chemistry at Rutgers-Newark. On Dec. 14, the Rutgers Board of Governors awarded Piotrowiak the Donald H. Jacobs Chair in Applied Physics, citing him as "an internationally recognized leader in the field of femtosecond imaging." (A femtosecond is one thousandth of a trillionth of a second.)

The three-year award, named for a Rutgers alumnus and donor, recognizes senior faculty who have made distinguished accomplishments in the branch of physics that forms the basis for modern technology. "I moved from branch of physics that forms the basis for a Rutgers alumnus and donor," the Board noted that Piotrowiak says. "This is exactly what our instrument is capable of." He describes the research as a combination of materials physics, chemistry, and nonlinear optics. "Build new collaborations based on his work at Rutgers, Piotrowiak spent February at the Tokyo Institute of Technology on a fellowship from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science."

In nominating him for the award, Dr. Frank Jordan, chairman of the chemistry department, cited Piotrowiak's "deep and thorough understanding of chemistry and nonlinear optics."

Three Decades of Success: R-N’s Minority Biomedical Research Support Program

by Ferlanda Fox Nixon

"It has been extremely rewarding to play an integral role in a program that has been a catalyst in transforming negative attitudes toward underrepresented minority doctoral students and their ability to succeed as scientists in the behavioral and/or biomedical research field," comments Barry Komisaruk when asked why the Minority Biomedical Research Support (MBRS) Program is so special to him. Komisaruk, associate dean of the Graduate School—Newark and Rutgers University Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor of Psychology, is the founder and director of the MBRS Program at Rutgers-Newark, which he established in 1984 to aid the advancement of students of African-American, Hispanic, and Native-American descent in the biomedical sciences. To date, more than 150 students have graduated from the program, and some are employed by such prestigious institutions as Yale University, Harvard University, the University of Puerto Rico, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Rockefeller University, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Mayo Clinic, and Rutgers-Newark. Assistant Professor Alex Rodriguez’s R-N’s Department of Biological Sciences is the first alumnus of the program to receive a Rutgers-Newark faculty appointment. Funded primarily by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences of the NIH, the MBRS Program provides financial support to 10 doctoral students and five undergraduate students (usually juniors and seniors) matriculated fulltime in one of R-N’s behavioral/biomedical-related departments: biological sciences, chemistry, molecular/behavioral neuroscience, physics, psychology, nursing, and environmental science. In July 2011, the MBRS Program received more than $3.1 million from the NIH for five years of funding. From the NIH grant each doctoral student in the MBRS Program receives (for a two-year period) an annual stipend of $28,456, full tuition remission, a $1,000 research allowance, and defrayment of all expenses associated with attending one scientific conference annually. (R-N sponsors the balance of each doctoral student’s financial needs.) For each undergraduate student, the NIH award covers an annual salary of $7,134 for a 15-hour work week.

For his part, Piotrowiak was surprised and honored to be named to the Jacobs chair. "It is a tremendous incentive and stimulation to continue working in this direction," he says. The award also gives him "a wonderful opportunity to explore venues that otherwise would be difficult to try." At the top of his list of research subjects the award may enable him to pursue is plasmonics, the study of interactions between molecules and semiconductors with metals. Piotrowiak calls it "a very exciting new field," still in early exploration. "One can shape and direct light by allowing it to interact with nanostructured metals," he explains. "Our technique is ideally suited to study some of these interactions in real time. He plans to collaborate with junior faculty members at Rutgers who are building research programs in plasmonics. In this way, the appointment lets him investigate concepts that might be considered too high-risk to support. "It is certainly an encouragement to work harder and to keep testing new territories instead of always following the predictable path. Sometimes, the high-risk ideas pay off," Piotrowiak says. 
Fed Challenge Team Captain:
Victor Castaneda by Carla Capizzi

Numbers play a major role in Victor Castaneda’s life, but that doesn’t mean the senior economics and mathematics major has lived his life by the numbers. In fact his life has been anything but mechanical or predictable.

Castaneda was born in Colombia, but his family came to New Jersey to take advantage of the greater educational opportunities in the U.S. After high school, Victor spent four years in the U.S. Marines Corps Reserve. His first years at Rutgers-Newark were both exhausting and fortuitous. A full-time student, he worked nights at a package delivery service, some 35 hours a week, a grueling schedule only tempered in the past year when implementation of the new GI Bill eased the financial burdens of tuition. But his first year was also marked by the good luck of finding himself in a class taught by R-N economics department chair John Graham.

Not only did Graham’s class supercharge Castaneda’s interest in economics and mathematics, it was Graham who invited Castaneda to take part in the annual College Federal Reserve Challenge competition. The Fed Challenge is a nationwide competition, sponsored by the Federal Reserve Board, which tests college students’ understanding of the workings of the “Fed” and the numerous economic factors and policies that impact its decisions concerning interest rates. For three years Castaneda was a key team member, including serving as captain, and for each of those years, he and the team won the regional competition and finished near the top of the national finals in Washington, D.C. Each year, he and the team spent months, and scores of hours, doing research and working with Graham to analyze vast amounts of economic data. Based on their findings, they would propose what position the Fed should make on the prime interest rate – lower or raise it, or maintain the status quo – and then prepare an in-depth presentation to argue their case. The team then had to present their findings – and be grilled by members of the Fed – as they progressed through the rounds of the challenge. Along the way team members learned to think fast on their feet and handle the stress of competition, and gained valuable public speaking skills. “It was the most rewarding experience of my undergraduate years,” Castaneda notes.

Coaching to Win: Kevin East

by Farlenda Fox Nixon

“Success comes easily when you’re doing something you love,” exclaims Kevin East, the director of soccer operations and the head coach of men’s soccer at Rutgers-Newark.

East, a former professional and all-star collegiate and high school soccer goalkeeper, joined the R-N athletic program in November 2006 with much fanfare and anticipation. Immediately prior to coming aboard, he had served a nine-year stint as the head coach of men’s soccer at New Jersey City University during which time he posted a 123-66-11 record and led the Gothic Knights to New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) Championship berths in 2001 and 2006 and an Eastern Collegiate Atlantic Conference (ECAC) Metro Men’s Soccer title in 2004. But could East continue his winning ways at Rutgers-Newark?

At Rutgers-Newark, East immediately hit the ground running and quickly proved he still had the golden touch. For starters, commencing in 2008 the Scarlet Raiders clinched four consecutive ECAC Metro Championship playoff berths and made their first-ever appearance in the NJAC Men’s Soccer Championship Tournament in 2009, with a second showing in 2011. Most recently, the team closed the 2011 season in dramatic fashion during the ECAC Metro Championship finals. In a heart-thumping shootout against the second-seeded Pioneers of William Paterson University (WPU), the fourth-seeded Scarlet Raiders outperformed WPU three to one to capture the team’s first post-season championship trophy in program history. Under East’s leadership, the Scarlet Raiders’ 56-41-11 record is the best on Rutgers-Newark’s books, making East the most successful men’s soccer coach in New Jersey history. “Our success has been the direct result of a lot of hard work by the coaching staff and the Scarlet Raiders,” remarks East.

Castaneda, who graduates in May 2012, has applied to work in research at the Federal Reserve, gaining experience that will help him in graduate school. These days, Castaneda also is learning some new skills, such as preparing bottles, as new dad to son Noah, born during fall semester.
The Harlem Book Fair/Newark: A Celebration of Literature and the Arts

The premiere African American literary event in the United States, the Harlem Book Fair (HBF), is coming to Newark April 27–28, and Rutgers-Newark will be in the thick of things. Public programs on campus and other sites in Newark will bring writers and poets for readings, talks and panel discussions, as well as exhibitors and book sellers. Highlights include a children’s pavilion—including story-tellers, face-painters and children’s literature—and a hip hop book festival, as well as outdoor activities. Most events will be free.

The Harlem Book Fair/Newark is expected to attract 16,000 people and showcase up to 200 exhibitors, with programs and events in several city locations. Newark will join New York; Philadelphia; Washington, DC; Houston; Los Angeles; Hempstead, NY; and Atlanta in producing Harlem Book Fair events. First established in 1998, the fair has three major components: the sale of books in print and electronic formats; public programs, workshops, seminars, and exhibitions focused on reading, education, and literacy; and a day-long series of nationally televised programs about various aspects of African-American life.

Newark Public Library Director Wilma Gry and Rutgers Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor Clement A. Price are co-directors of the event, along with Max Rodriguez, the HBF’s founder. Information will be available at http://www.qbr.com.

A Safe and Supportive Space

The campus’s lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community now has its own on-campus resource center, a safe zone for students with diverse gender and sexual orientations. The LGBTQ+ and Diversity Resource Center, which opened in fall 2011 in Courland Hall, Room 232, is available primarily for students, but faculty and staff are welcome to attend events and use its resources. The creation of the center flowed from the work of the LGBTQ Task Force at Rutgers-Newark.

The center aims to create a safe and supportive academic environment through educational opportunities and by advocating for LGBTQ+ students, explains Director Maren Greathouse. “We encourage LGBTQ+ students to feel a sense of pride and belonging, through leadership development, educational programming, and by connecting our campus with our communities,” she says.

The center also uses educational programming, along with training and consultation, to “engage the entire campus in meaningful conversations about gender and sexuality, in hopes of increasing awareness among all students, faculty and staff, regardless of orientation, and enhancing an affirming campus climate.”

Several ideas being explored include a peer-to-peer mentoring program that teams students with mentors trained to help them access campus resources and connect with LGBTQ+ peers, a speakers bureau so that students can share their coming out stories and experiences; internships at the center; and a resource area where LGBTQ+ students can mingle and build community as well as access additional information.

A Partnership for Healthy Living

Osteoporosis, diabetes, poor diet and lack of exercise—all are problems that can plague minority and poor populations. This year the fair’s health component focuses on reading, education, and literacy.

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Have you met the new Rutgers-Newark on line?

In February, an 18-month project of re-designing and rebuilding the Rutgers-Newark core website was completed. The goals for the new site were to make it easier to use, easier to maintain, and better able to tell the Rutgers-Newark story. Check out a few highlights here, and make sure to visit us at www.newark.rutgers.edu

#### Preparing For The Future

Yeagle announced his intention to develop a two-year academic plan to "generate campus solutions for our most pressing needs." Toward that end, he has created a new Chancellor’s advisory committee consisting of the academic deans and four members of the chancellor’s office, which will serve as a “nimble body for wrestling with the major challenges of the campus and generate solutions for them.”

Yeagle also has asked the Faculty Council for recommendations on the most pressing deferred maintenance needs as well as the most serious fixes to campus operations, and to help revise a formal statement of campus goals that will be posted online.

The demand for housing continues, so 15 Washington St. will be redeveloped as graduate housing. This transformation of the former Rutgers law and criminal justice building will expand residence space by about 25 percent. The projected completion date is 2014.

Yeagle will create three new Chancellor’s Excellence awards recognizing scholarship and creative activity, teaching, and service.

#### The Challenge Ahead

"Let us seize this moment and make the next generation of students and faculty proud of what we did for them."

Interim Chancellor Yeagle  . from cover page

for an undergraduate student this coming summer.

Yeagle wants to maintain small class sizes, especially in writing programs or in classes requiring team learning, such as supply chain and management courses.

R-N’s external funding through grants and gifts lags other Rutgers campuses, according to Yeagle, who challenged faculty to “double external funding to approach equity with the rest of Rutgers” within the next five years.

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2012 Commencement-At-A-Glance

Newark College of Arts and Sciences and University College
Monday, May 14, 10 a.m.
New Jersey Performing Arts Center
Speaker: The Honorable Thomas H. Kean, former governor of the State of New Jersey

Rutgers Business School – Newark and New Brunswick (undergraduate)
Monday, May 14, 2 p.m.
New Jersey Performing Arts Center
Speaker: Linda Bowden, regional president for Northern New Jersey of PNC Financial Services Group

Rutgers Business School – Newark and New Brunswick (graduate)
Monday, May 14, 6 p.m.
New Jersey Performing Arts Center
Speaker: Dr. Rana Kapoor, managing director, and chief executive officer of YES Bank, and Rutgers-Newark alumnus (BBS ’80)

School of Criminal Justice
Wednesday, May 16, 10 a.m.
Golden Dome Athletic Center
Speaker: Ralph L. Godbee Jr., chief of police, Detroit, Michigan

College of Nursing
Thursday, May 17, 10 a.m.
Golden Dome Athletic Center
Speaker: Dr. Andrea Highham, director, Johnson & Johnson Campaign for Nursing’s Future

Graduate School-Newark and School of Public Affairs and Administration
Thursday, May 17, 2 p.m.
Golden Dome Athletic Center
Speaker: to be announced

Rutgers School of Law—Newark
Friday, May 25, 10 a.m.
New Jersey Performing Arts Center
Speaker: Paul J. Fishman, United States attorney for the District of New Jersey

Winning in the Academic Arena
by Ferlanda Fox Nixon
For some college students, academic achievement can be a competitive sport. Meet these two winning teams from Rutgers-Newark.

College Fed Challenge Team
For the fourth time in six years Rutgers-Newark has excelled in the national finals of the prestigious College Fed Challenge competition. The impressive efforts of five R-N undergraduates have earned a second place showing in Washington, D.C., on November 29, 2011, making this the third time Rutgers-Newark has finished among the nation’s top three contenders.

Bested only by the team from Harvard University, the Rutgers-Newark team, coached by Economics Department Chair John Graham, consisted of seniors Victor Castaneda, Gaurav Pendse and Sher Singh and juniors Michael Jen and Bryan Myers. The national finals are the culminating event of five district competitions held throughout the United States. The R-N team successfully advanced at the qualifying level to represent the Federal Reserve Bank of New York’s district at the national finals. An initiative of the Federal Reserve Board, the College Fed Challenge is intended to spur students’ interest in economics and finance as subjects for advanced study and the basis for a career.

Rutgers-Newark Debate Team
With Coach Kurt Shelton at the helm and support from Christopher Kozak, a School of Public Affairs and Administration graduate assistant, the Rutgers-Newark Debate Team continually proves that words are mightier than the sword. At the 2011 Northeast Regional Opener Tournament hosted by Binghamton University, the Rutgers-Newark junior varsity team of Carlos Astarita and Keven Haughton defeated the team from Cornell University to win the division contest. Also at Binghamton, the varsity team of Elijah Smith and Chris Powers and the junior varsity team of Devan Murphy and Aaron Kraut advanced to the semifinals of each of their divisions. To complement their team efforts, Astacio, Haughton, Kraut, Murphy, Powers and Smith have garnered individual top speaker awards at various events.

And in November 2011, the Rutgers-Newark Debate Team added another feather to its cap when it hosted the first collegiate debate tournament ever held at Rutgers-Newark. More than 130 undergraduate students from 13 colleges and universities competed.

Prof. John Graham (right) with members of the 2011 Fed Challenge Team