A Running Start - Track and Field Programs Launch at R-N
By Kathleen Brunet Eagan

Students at Rutgers-Newark now have several new ways to prove their mettle on their feet. This year, the athletic department has launched a total of six new men's and women's teams in cross country and indoor and outdoor track and field.

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The role of a dean is to guide a school’s academics, its research and scholarly efforts, and to build internal and external support. This academic year, Rutgers-Newark welcomes three strong leaders to perform that role for the Rutgers Business School, the School of Criminal Justice and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

Michael R. Cooper, Dean of Rutgers Business School-Newark and New Brunswick

A distinguished business leader, Michael R. Cooper has joined Rutgers Business School (RBS) as its new dean, bringing with him a wealth of experience in building successful organizations.

One of his chief goals as dean is to increase RBS’s national reputation. Toward that end, RBS has instituted a new administrative model with Cooper focusing on building support in the business community as well as throughout Rutgers, along with guiding the future direction of the school, while Rosa Oppenheim, who had been serving as acting dean, concentrates on academic, faculty and research matters in her new role as executive vice dean.

Cooper comes to Rutgers with 25 years of leadership experience in senior executive positions in international market research, marketing services, management consulting and technology companies. His previous positions include serving as chair and managing partner of
Providing a Map of How We See

Krekelberg, assistant professor in the Center for Molecular and Behavioral Neuroscience (CMBN), knows that it’s not only what we perceive, but also what we ignore that allows us to function with ease.

Central to his research is the process of seeing and our related ability to ignore certain information, most specifically of which is the movement of our own eyes. If the brain failed to suppress that movement, seeing would be like looking through a video camera held by an unsteady hand jerking from spot to spot every few seconds. It also would lead to a barrage of information that would prevent us from seeing anything at all.

Named one of 20 Pew Scholars in the U.S. for 2007, one of the nation’s most prestigious scholarly awards, Krekelberg has received a $250,000 grant to map the neural activity involved in visual processing during eye movements. Such knowledge could provide a better understanding of the visual perception dysfunctions involved in dyslexia and the hallucinations experienced by those who suffer from schizophrenia.

The human eye is designed with the most sensitive photoreceptors at the center of the retina to see clearly, the eye needs to move so light can hit that area, which also is the only area that sees color, and pass that information to the brain. In the process of seeing, the brain also instructs itself to ignore that movement. "You know your eye is going to move before you move it, and the brain tells you, ‘It’s just your eye moving; it’s nothing to worry about; ignore it,’” explains Krekelberg. It’s what allows us to see fixed objects as stationary and to determine the correct motion of moving objects.

Traditionally, research into visual processing has focused on the function of specific cells in individual areas of the brain, but not on the connections between cellular activity and global neural networks. The failure to integrate the two, says Krekelberg, is like “10 blindfolded wise men trying to identify an elephant by touching its different parts.” Krekelberg plans to connect both methods to reveal the neural networks involved in visual processing, how they influence each other, and how individual cells affect the whole.

More information on Krekelberg’s research can be found at http://vision.rutgers.edu/klab.

A Scholar for All Seasons

Bruce Franklin was a factory worker, deckhand on a tugboat and a navigator and intelligence officer in the Strategic Air Command before finding his niche as a college professor, author and cultural historian. Since the early 1960s he has researched, written about and lectured on such far-ranging topics as the writings of Herman Melville, the history and literature of the Vietnam war, science fiction, the writings of prison inmates and, most recently, the threat of overfishing “the most important fish in the sea,” menhaden.

Franklin’s decades of work have established him as an internationally recognized interdisciplinary expert in several fields — and led to his selection as the 2006/2007 Provost’s Distinguished Research Scholar.

The John Cotton Dana Professor of English and American Studies, he has taught American literature, science fiction and American studies at Rutgers since 1975. He will present a lecture on his research during the fall program on Oct. 18.

He is author or editor of hundreds of articles and reviews that have appeared in publications such as the New York Times, Science, Discover, Atlantic Monthly, and The Nation. He also is the author or editor of 19 books; his latest, The Most Important Fish in the Sea: Menhaden and America (Island Press, 2007) is garnering critical acclaim while drawing attention to a potential ecological disaster.

Philip L. Yeagle, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Most recently head of the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology at the University of Connecticut, Philip L. Yeagle brings a strong knowledge of the critical role the arts and sciences play in the strength of a university to his new position as dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS). Prior to joining the University of Connecticut, Yeagle was a faculty member at the University at Buffalo. He also has held visiting professorships at the University of Oxford, England. He is the author of six books and 145 articles on biochemistry published in leading journals. He is former executive editor of the journal Biochimica et Biophysica Acta Biomedical, and currently serves on the editorial board of the Journal of Biological Chemistry.

He received his B.A. in chemistry, magna cum laude, from St. Olaf College, and his Ph.D. from Duke University.

Jan Ellen Lewis, who had been serving as acting dean, has been named associate dean of FAS and remains on the faculty as professor of history.

Adam Graycar, Dean of the School of Criminal Justice

An internationally respected academic and public servant, Adam Graycar has joined the School of Criminal Justice as its new dean after serving as head of the Cabinet Office for the Government of South Australia, where he was responsible for overseeing and advising on government policies and implementation.

During the course of his career, Graycar has held a variety of posts in public service and academia. He served as director of the Australian Institute of Criminology, as chief executive director of the Ministry of Higher Education; as executive director of the Department of Employment, Training and Further Education for the Government of South Australia; and as Australian Commissioner for the Aging. In academia, he has held positions in the fields of social policy and political science at universities in Australia.

Graycar is a widely published expert on criminal justice and social issues. His recent books include Crime and Justice in Australia, How Australians Live: Social Policy in Theory and Practice, and Look After Yourself: The Health Handbook for Older People. He also is the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including election as a fellow in the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia.

He received his bachelor’s degree, with honors, in political science from the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia, and a Ph.D. in public policy and D.Litt. in social policy from the same institution.

Leslie Kennedy, who served as dean for nine years, remains as a member of the faculty.
A Rutgers-Newark Homecoming

"Who says you can't go home?" Lots of alumni and their families — along with students, faculty and staff — took that Bon Jovi song to heart and flocked to Rutgers-Newark in late September for Homecoming 2007.

This year’s four-day celebration of R-N spirit included a fall fest BBQ and interactive games, Mr. and Ms. Newark, a talent showcase, a student-alumni basketball game and alumni social, live entertainment, campus tours and athletic events. It ended with a Sunday Brunch featuring remarks from two distinguished alumni on the importance of opportunity in higher education, the Honorable Virginia A. Long, associate justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court (NLAW ’66), and Alan D. Bowman (NLAW ’76), a prominent trial lawyer.

“Homecoming Weekend has been so much fun on campus,” notes Marcia W. Brown, vice provost for student and community affairs. “Rides for the kids. Campus tours. Alumni class reunions. ‘Rides for the older’ alums. On-your-seat entertainment.”

New MFA Program Already Winning Plaudits

It's only in its first semester but the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program is being hailed as one of the “Five Up-and-Coming Programs in Creative Writing” in the U.S. by The Atlantic magazine (2007 “Fiction/Summer Reading” issue).

Award-winning author Jayne Anne Phillips came to Rutgers with definite ideas for developing the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program. The program accepted 36 graduate students for its first classes in fiction, poetry and non-fiction, which began in September. The MFA features the Writers at Newark Reading Series (http://www.mfa.newark.rutgers.edu/internatrwrit.htm), as well as a wide range of electives and workshops. Students must complete an “electives concentration” in either literature/book arts, performance/media studies or in cultural/political studies to complement their writing work.

In addition to Phillips, Rutgers-Newark faculty members teaching in the program include novelist Tayari Jones; short story writer Alice Elliott Dark; poet Rachel Hadas; M.F. Steinhardt Visiting Writers Rigoberto González and D. Nurkse; Pulitzer Prize finalist James Goodeman; Vietnam and science fiction specialist H. Bruce Franklin; and jazz pianist and author Lewis Porter.

Outsmarting the Terrorists

If the U.S. wants to protect itself from terrorism, then security officials need to start thinking more like terrorists, according to Ronald V. Clarke, professor in the School of Criminal Justice.

In their new book, Outsmarting the Terrorists, Clarke and co-author Graeme Newman, professor of criminal justice at the State University of New York at Albany, point out that, like terrorists, security forces need to devote significant time and resources to identifying potential targets. Too often, the authors note, terrorism is fought after the fact, with security forces reacting to attacks. What they need to do instead is to do what terrorists do: identify vulnerable targets, determine points of access and areas of weakness, and ascertain the weapons and actions needed to attack. Once that is done, the authors say, the country then can take appropriate steps to protect those targets.

Street Law

The year-old Street Law Program at the School of Law-Newark, directed by Alicia Guichard, is expanding its outreach. The program sends Rutgers law students to teach high school students about the legal system, while its mentoring project pairs at-risk youth with law school mentors. This fall, about 25 Rutgers students not only are working in Newark schools, but also are teaching at Montclair High School, the Essex County Juvenile Detention Center and Isaiah House, a community center. Courses at the schools include criminal law and procedures, teen date rape, individual rights, and constitutional, consumer, housing, family and employment law. Detention Center topics include criminal activity and consequences, expungement and community involvement, while topics at Isaiah House cover police issues, sexual assault, pregnancy and homelessness.

Learning by Living On Campus

Time and again, studies at various colleges have proven it: Residential students do better academically than commuters, and usually complete college in less time than commuters. They also feel more connected to their classmates and their college, and enjoy a richer college experience, notes Tim Johnson, associate dean, Housing and Residence Life. Unfortunately, the added expense of room and board, coupled with tuition, often prices the residential experience out of the range of many students of limited financial means.

But that is not the case for 12 students this academic year who have both their housing and their meals financed by a new Student Residential Housing Scholarship Program. The needs-based scholarships, provided by the generosity of the MCI Foundation, provide support for students in the READY program and the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) program. The READY program at R-N provides support services and access to economic and educational opportunities for students from Newark, while EOF-Academic Foundations Center and EOF-Nursing offer financial aid, supplemental instruction and support services for low-income New Jersey residents.

The following are this year’s scholarship recipients: READY program: Jasmine Jackson, Ivemi Johnson, Stephanie Lopes and Christopher Balogen; EOF-AFC: Barbara Alolabi, Mabel Frimpong, Sean Crawford, Rafael Fernandez and Shantae Kemp; EOF-Nursing: Troyette Cheatham, Mayleen Lopez and Juan Plaza.
R-N Students Making an Impact Around the Globe

The Rutgers University Chorus in Wales

In May, the Rutgers University Chorus toured Wales performing in a variety of venues, including a mid-day concert at Millennium Centre in Cardiff that was broadcast live over BBC Wales Radio. Interviewed during the session were Rebekah Gale and Marc Seidenstein (closest to the clock).

Time to Explore

Students from Newark’s Central and Shabazz high schools and recent Rutgers-Newark graduates took part this summer in the United States- South Africa Young Leaders Summit, founded by Professor Kyle Farmbry of the School of Public Affairs and Administration. Here the group takes a tour through Nelson Mandela Township as part of learning about community development issues in the country.

Up on the Roof

A group of Rutgers-Newark students and staff spent their spring break in Louisiana working with Habitat for Humanity’s "Collegiate Challenge" helping to build homes for Hurricane Katrina victims. Pictured here with their site manager (far left) are (l-r) Amber Pennington, John Mathis, and Chris Giunta (standing), and Samantha Bone, Kevin Stensberg, Lynnette Diaz and Arlene Cabrera (sitting).

A World Beyond Rocks and Dinosaurs: The Newark Geoscience Scholars Program

By Kathleen Brunet Eagan

Sure, there are the rocks and the dinosaurs, but what few know is that the world of geoscience also is a far reaching one where the jobs are plentiful and the pay is good.

Launched this fall in three Newark high schools with a $1.7 million grant from the National Science Foundation, the Newark Geoscience Scholars program is changing that.

“We want to show students that there are careers to be made in geoscience. That it’s not just about dinosaurs and stratification in the Grand Canyon, but that it’s something viable, current and useful to society,” explains Alexander Gates, chair of the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences and developer of the high school program.

Launched at Newark’s Barringer, Science Park and Technology high schools, the Geoscience program consists of classroom exercises conducted by Rutgers-Newark graduate students, a Geoscientists Explorer program in conjunction with The Newark Museum, after-school sessions focused on career opportunities, and a “Summer Institute” to be held at R-N. The program also is making use of several educational resources Gates has helped to develop to increase awareness about the geological richness of the New Jersey-New York region, including the Dynamic Earth exhibit at The Newark Museum, and the Highlands Environmental Research Institute at Harriman State Park in New York.

One special resource Gates is designing is an “Oil Game.” In that game, students will be challenged to succeed at,” says Gates.

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Newly-appointed head coach Juan Edney, who helped to build Pennsylvania’s Lincoln University into an NCAA Division III powerhouse in track and field, and Mark Griffin, director of athletics, spent the summer putting together the schedules, travel arrangements and budgets for the new teams. Now that the teams are in action, the number of varsity programs at R-N has reached 16. That number puts the campus significantly ahead of NCAA requirements that call for Division III members to carry at least 12 sports by 2009.

With New Jersey being a “hot bed” for track and field and the state’s strong high school programs, it was a natural for R-N to add the indoor and outdoor teams along with cross-country, says Griffin, who developed a nationally recognized track and field program at New Jersey City University before becoming R-N’s director of athletics.

Edney and Griffin say they are enjoying the process of building the R-N teams from the ground up and working with students who are up for a challenge. More than just about running, they explain, track and field requires a real team effort, encompassing everything from sprinting, to pole vaulting, to hammer, javelin and discus throwing.

The teams currently are training at a variety of venues ranging from area high schools to county parks while competing in a full slate of events on the road. More information about the new programs, as well as the other R-N teams, can be found at www.rutgersnewarkathletics.com.

Keep Connected

Connections and Connections: News Digest are published by the Office of Communications. Your comments are welcome.

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