With more than 10,550 students studying on campus this academic year, enrollment at Rutgers-Newark is at the highest level in its history.

Provost Steven J. Diner credits the record-high enrollments to “students who value the Rutgers name but prefer our small, manageable campus and also like our urban location and our

Rutgers-Newark Enrollments Climb to the Top
By Carla Capizzi

He may not be real, but he can breathe, blink, speak and respond to drugs and other medical treatment just like a human.

Known as “Standard Man,” he is a high-fidelity patient simulator (HFPS), a high-tech tool that allows Rutgers College of Nursing students to gain the hands-on proficiency of more practiced nurses.

“With the simulator, they can make mistakes and learn from what they are doing without doing any harm,” notes Wendy Nehring, associate dean for academic affairs.

At Rutgers, he is called “Russ” for Rutgers University Simulator the Second, being the second of three HFPSs at the college. A computerized simulator, Russ can be programmed to exhibit a wide range of medical conditions. When treated, he reacts with responses so lifelike it’s easy to forget he’s only a model. Puncture his body, he bleeds. Provide him with medication, he responds in real time. Hook him up to a defibrillator, his heart rate steadies. He also can simulate a male or female patient of any age from 11 to 100.

Initially used by the medical community to provide anesthesiologists with “hands-on” training, the HFPS “is the closest you can get to a real person,” says Nehring.

Standard Man: A High-Tech Training Tool
By Kathleen Brunet Eagan

Nursing students (l-r) Amy Honican, Lisa Crycar and Sierra Brittingham put their training into practice with “Russ,” a high-fidelity, computerized patient simulator.

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Measuring Public School Effectiveness
By Kathleen Brunet Eagan

For many years, determining a public school's effectiveness in educating students in New Jersey meant working through a patchwork course of multiple regulations and sometimes confusing guidelines. At the same time, the Newark, Jersey City and Paterson school districts had been placed under state control. Hoping to bring more order to the process of measuring effectiveness and determining when to return districts to local control, the State Legislature adopted the Quality Single Accountability Continuum (QSAC), which became effective this year.

The Institute on Education Law and Policy (IELP) at Rutgers-Newark was an instrumental player in initiating development of a unified standard. And while the new regulations fall short of its recommendations, Paul Tractenberg, IELP founding director, is hopeful the state eventually will adopt more of its measures.

In the meantime, IELP has developed a handbook to inform school officials, parents and the public about the new process, titled QSAC New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum: A Guide for School Officials and the Public. The handbook details both the requirements that need to be met and the actions that should be taken should a district fail to meet certain standards.

Under QSAC, public school districts are required to assess their performance every three years in five key areas: instruction and programs, personnel, fiscal management, operations management, and governance.

Areas where the regulations still need to be modified, says Tractenberg, are the way in which districts are scored and the exact role the Department of Education should play in assisting low-scoring districts.

The Play’s the Thing — for Students Reaching Out to Other Students
By Carla Capizzi

Merge the power of live performance with the impact of students educating other students about critical health issues, and you have UNITY Theatre. The program, which brings together students and trained staff, was founded in 2003 by Theresa Tantay-Wilson, director of health promotions, a division of the Rutgers-Newark Student Health Services, to fill the need for peer education for students.

Tantay-Wilson, along with Marie Attis, coordinator, collaborates with the theater’s three students leaders — senior Rashida Clark, graduate student Stephanie Carter and senior Vanessa Ramalho — to create scripts depicting real-life health and social justice issues students are likely to encounter, such as a party involving drugs. The student leaders direct the productions and 15 student performers act out the scripts during new student orientation programs and training sessions, as well as for campus organizations, high schools and conferences — some 40 performances each calendar year. The first part of each is the actual play; the actors stay in character and Tantay-Wilson or Attis facilitate a discussion between the characters and the audience about what students might do or say in real life.

“Awareness is a big issue,” says Clark, and these non-traditional health promotions expose students to “issues they might not have ever experienced but need to be aware of.”

Students can earn CASE (Citizenship and Service Education program) independent study credits or a stipend by devoting four hours a week to the theater. The amount of work is worth it, says Carter, because “at the end of the day, we make a difference.”

For more information, visit http://health.newark.rutgers.edu/healthpromotion.

Conversations with Schwann Cells
By Kathleen Brunet Eagan

Uncover the conversations that take place between Schwann cells and axons in the nervous system, and it may become possible to reverse the neurological damage associated with such disorders as multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injuries and diabetes.

With $697,065 in grants from the New Jersey Commission on Spinal Cord Injury and New Jersey Commission on Brain Injury Research, Haesun Kim, assistant professor of biological sciences, is working to reveal the pattern of that conversation.

The reason such knowledge is critical is that Schwann cells produce the myelin that enwrap and insulate axons within the peripheral nervous system. A fatty substance, myelin allows for the fast conduction of the nerve’s electrical signals. Once that myelin is lost, however, the electrical signal breaks down and eventually the neurons die. The result is like speaking on a cell phone whose signal suddenly becomes choppy and then is lost.

Determining how Schwann cells and axons talk to one another could lead to an understanding of how to promote rebuilding of the myelin and restoration of that signal.

One unique aspect of the conversation that takes place among Schwann cells and axons is that they mutually rely on that communication for their existence.

“When Schwann cells are generated during development, axons send out signals to the Schwann cells and tell them, ‘You are going to become myelin cells and you are going to myelinate me,’” explains Kim. “The Schwann cells in turn guide the axons to where they need to go and direct the axons to grow.”

By pinpointing the sequence and nuances of that conversation, targeted genetic and pharmacological interventions possibly could be developed to restore the process of myelination. Such an understanding additionally may allow for the effective transplanting of Schwann cells into the central nervous system to promote remyelination and the correction of neurological disorders at that level also.
Viewing an Ancient Landscape Through Modern Art Forms

Whatever preconceived notions you may have of India and Indian art, Paul Sternberger has spent much of the last five years working to shatter them. The associate professor in the visual and performing arts department is co-curator of “INDIA: Public Places, Private Spaces—Contemporary Photography and Video Arts,” on view at The Newark Museum through Jan. 6, 2008.

“Nothing like this, and on this scale, has ever been seen in the US,” he says, explaining that the exhibition’s more than 100 pieces – by 28 photographers and video artists – present “more culturally savvy and sophisticated, and more culturally complete, views of India” than any previous display of Indian contemporary photography and video.

He and co-curator Gayatri Sinha developed the exhibition over the last five years, selecting high-quality works that provide unexpected and revealing insights into today’s India. Sternberger and Sinha coauthored the exhibition catalog, published jointly by The Newark Museum and the prestigious Indian publisher Marg.

Sternberger became exposed to traditional Indian art through his wife, Joan Cummins, the Lisa and Bernard Selz Curator of Asian Art at the Brooklyn Museum. But viewing an exhibition of modern Indian art at the Robeson Art Gallery several years ago, he says, helped reignite a long-standing interest in contemporary Indian photography.

R-N Welcomes New Board of Governors Chair Rev. Dr. M. William Howard Jr.

Rev. Dr. M. William Howard Jr. (l), pastor of Newark’s Bethany Baptist Church and chair of the Rutgers Board of Governors, speaks with Professor Paul Trautenberg, of the School of Law, at a reception hosted by Office of the Provost to celebrate Howard’s election as chair of the board.

Maria Denopoulos

Maria Denopoulos was one of only two female law students, but encountered little sexism. Because so many male students were off fighting in World War II, her graduating class totaled all of 10 students — including Maria.

• Maria worked in her dad’s luncheonette during the day, then took the train from Iselin for night classes. Newark’s Penn Station was the favored place for Maria and her classmates to study together after classes.

Decades Of Memories

Second in a series of alumni profiles

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Favorite Teacher

Dean George Harris, who was especially supportive when Maria’s fiancé, a military pilot in training, was killed in a crash in 1943.

Rutgers-Northampton Community College, a liberal arts institution committed to service and building strong communities. Faculty, students and staff are involved in myriad initiatives within Newark and across the state to improve the lives of residents.

The campus is home to a score of pre-college programs, four conservation and preservation partnerships, at least three programs dedicated to helping businesses in the state, more than a half dozen arts initiatives, and five law clinics. But that’s not all. There also are workforce preparation programs, institutes and centers focused on topics ranging from education to public policy, and numerous joint city and community ventures. And that’s still not all of it.

If fact, there are so many programs keeping track of them has been a formidable task. That is until the Office of Campus and Community Relations (OCCR) put together the Community Partnerships: Building Community Together brochure and accompanying website at http://occr.newark.rutgers.edu.

“Before, there was no place to see everything we have here at Rutgers-Newark that helps to make a difference in the world around us,” says Diane Hill, OCCR director. “What we have now is a way to showcase all our programs that reflect our commitment to the community.”

The brochures have been distributed to various community groups and city agencies to educate residents, businesses and organizations about the resources available to them. The website also will be updated regularly as new programs and initiatives are launched at R-N.

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Consulting work for the governments of Angola and Brazil. But it’s not just a global perspective and relationship building that he brings to his students. One Saturday each semester, he also conducts the “Sopranzetti Boot Camp,” a professional development session covering topics from resume writing, to interviewing, to business etiquette.

A Campus Without Borders

Rutgers-Newark not only is one of the nation’s leading urban research universities, it’s an institution committed to service and building strong communities. Faculty, students and staff are involved in myriad initiatives within Newark and across the state to improve the lives of residents.

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Dining Out and Around Campus

Wander over to Halsey Street, one block from the R-N campus, and you’ll feel a buzz emanating from the restaurant 27 Mix. Once inside, you’ll have to remind yourself this is not some chic establishment in New York or D.C. “The Mix” on any night of the week will give you a temperature of the new Newark — so we used it as our stepping off point for a round-up review of dining establishments both old and new near Rutgers-Newark, just in time for holiday party planning.

27 Mix
Once one of Newark’s most elegant streets, Halsey Street again is the place to be seen at 27 Mix. Stop in for lunch or dinner and you never know who you might meet — local politicians, campus colleagues or a neighborhood resident who will rave to you about the changing Newark. Sit at the bar, and conversations start easily. It’s a vibrant, energetic atmosphere. The dining area can be a bit noisy, but the ambiance is pure New York: long, narrow spaces, red brick walls, edgy paintings and full-length windowed doors opening out to a patio.

The menu is an eclectic mix of traditional, ethnic and gourmet dishes. Prices are moderate to higher up on the scale with sandwiches ranging from $7 for the Vegetarian Wrap to $9.50 for the 27’s Shrimp Po’ Boy. Entrees run from $13 and up. On our recent visit, we started with the Fresh Mozzarella Tower with grilled portobello, roasted red peppers and pesto sauce. For dinner, we tried the Seared Salmon with polenta and creamy crab sauce and balsamic reduction. Both were delicious and portions were plentiful. Dessert was just as good, an apple crumb cheesecake. Given its small dining area, the Mix is best suited for smaller gatherings (there is no private party room), and reservations are strongly recommended for groups of four and more. For more information, www.27mix.com.

The Priory
The Priory, less than a mile west from campus, just off Warren Street, has got to be one of the most unusual dining venues in the country, and it’s a perennial favorite for many locals as well as out-of-towners. Take a wonderful old church in a historic old city, and convert the inside into a restaurant and jazz club, mix in southern homestyle cooking, and you have the Priory. The $7.95 buffet lunch is one of the best deals for good fresh food in Newark. On our recent visit, the spread included baked fish, delectable roast chicken, fresh mushrooms, broccoli, beets and other vegetables, fresh and unusual salads, soup and more. We made a note to save room for the bread pudding, which did not disappoint. Next time we’ll order off the menu which features specialties such as seafood jambalaya, crawfish-and-lobster bisque, Creole crab cakes, fried chicken, sweet potato pie and lots more, with entrees ranging from $10 – $16. But what happens on Friday nights at the Priory is truly special — the cavernous but inviting main room converts at 7 pm into a live jazz supper club. The Priory is also a comfortable establishment for meetings and parties, with attractive side rooms where natural light filters in through stained glass, accommodating large and small groups. For more information, www.newcommunity.org/busops_priory.htm.

Kilkenny’s
What’s a college town without a good Irish pub? If you know anything about Rutgers University in Newark, you surely know about McGovern’s on New Street, which has attained near shrine status over the decades. But in the last few years McGovern’s has some competition. Within a stone’s throw from campus, on the corner of Halsey and Central, is Kilkenny’s. It’s an attractively furnished, spacious and airy pub, with a very nice menu.

We set out for a good pub lunch, but passed on the brew due to heavy workloads that afternoon. The tasty fish and chips platter offered appropriately crispy fish on the outside and flaky on the inside, but we can’t say the same for the chips which were a tad soggy. The home-baked turkey with cranberry sauce sandwich, and the fresh mozzarella and grilled vegetable wrap were both excellent, as was the accompanying Caesar salad, although it came to the table dressed, despite our instructions for dressing on the side. We can’t report on the burgers as we decided to save that pub staple for an evening visit along with samples of the beer on tap. Kilkenny’s features music on Thursday nights and weekends ranging from contemporary rock to traditional Celtic music, and another bonus is a complete second floor bar and party room which can be used for private parties. For more information, www.kilkennyirelandhouse.net.

University Club
Our final stop was Rutgers’ own University Club on the second floor of the Paul Robeson Campus Center. The lunch crowd seems to have thinned over the past few years, due we suppose to increasingly good alternatives on and around campus, including Starbucks and Quizno’s downstirs.

As institutional fare goes, the University Club offers reasonably good and fresh food, served cafeteria style, with a constantly varying menu. The day we visited General Tso’s chicken was in the offering, accompanied by broccoli, snow peas, a veggie spring roll, and rice, all decent if not exciting. The salad bar had good fresh selections, but the dessert menu cried out for an immediate overhaul. The only available dessert items the day we visited were standard issue institutional cookies, and a tired looking and tasting fruit salad. Among the most positive attributes of the U Club are the pleasant high ceilings and sunny room, with opportunities for a quiet and peaceful lunch (only lunch is served, 11:30 – 1:30). The room is available for private parties, and can accommodate a good size group; and from these reviewers’ experience the catered food provided by the campus food service, Aramark, can be excellent. We hear via the grapevine that a major overhaul is planned for the University Club – a development eagerly anticipated.