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A newsletter for the Rutgers-Newark community and neighbors

COMMUNITATIONS



Illustration: Brainworks

Bringing Diverse Perspectives to the Mechanics of the Mind

by Michael Sutton

A \$1 million, three-year grant from the renowned Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) to Rutgers-Newark – as well as two other Newark-based research universities – will be used to develop a novel doctoral program designed to integrate diverse disciplines and encourage new insights into the most complex organ in the world – the human brain.

The funding will train future neuroscientists who can integrate ways of thinking used in mathematics, biomedical sciences and computation as they investigate emerging questions in the neural sciences. The consortium of Rutgers-Newark, the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT), and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ)–New Jersey Medical School was among only 10 awardees selected from 132 applicants.

The inter-institutional quantitative neurosciences doctoral training program will be co-directed by James Tepper, professor of neuroscience at Rutgers-Newark's Center for Molecular and Biological Neuroscience; Robert Miura, professor and acting chair of mathematical sciences at NJIT; and Joshua Berlin, professor of pharmacology and physiology at UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School and co-director of the Joint Program in Biomedical Engineering between UMDNJ and NJIT.

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Business is Booming in Mini-MBA Program

by Michael Sutton

When a group of Chinese officials and CEOs recently traveled to the United States, they had a special request: design a version of Rutgers' Mini-MBA program and teach it in Mandarin Chinese. Rutgers was happy to oblige.

The request isn't surprising, given the program's strong reputation. In fact, the Rutgers Center for Management Development (CMD) – which operates out of Rutgers Business School-Newark and New Brunswick (RBS) – celebrated a milestone last semester: the graduation of more than 1,000 participants from its Mini-MBA program, which it introduced as a pilot program at Rutgers-Newark in 2002. The program has since spread with classes also in Piscataway, Freehold and Morristown, while two versions of a fast-track Mini-MBA are offered during the summer.

"I am really fired up about this program," said Abe Weiss, director of the CMD, who administers the Mini-MBA with Claudia Meer, program director at CMD, associate professor and associate extension

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MARCH 29

Rutgers Night at NJPAC presents the musical *Chicago* with a free post-performance reception with the cast. FOR MORE INFO, SEE R-N CALENDAR ON PAGE 3.

Photo: Courtesy New Jersey Performing Arts Center



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Corzine Turns to R-N Community to Fill Top Posts

Chen Nominated as New Jersey Public Advocate

By Janet Donohue

Ronald Chen, associate dean for academic affairs at Rutgers School of Law-Newark, has been nominated by New Jersey Gov. Jon Corzine as public advocate of New Jersey.



“Ron has long been a leader in public interest advocacy in New Jersey,” said Dean Stuart Deutsch of the law school. “In the position of public advocate, he will have the tremendous opportunity to rebuild the Department of Public Advocate and, thereby, help ensure that all people of the state are given full and equal access to the law.”

Deutsch noted that Chen, a well-known constitutional scholar, has been a tremendous asset to the law school. “For more than 18 years, he has been an inspiring teacher, a first-rate administrator and a wonderful colleague.”

Chen, who participated in the Minority Student Program while a student at the law school, received his J.D. degree with high honors in 1983. As a law school student, he was editor-in-chief of the *Rutgers Law Review* and the Saul Tischler Scholar. After graduation, he clerked for Judge Leonard Garth of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. Before joining the law school’s faculty in 1987, he was associated with the law firm of Cravath, Swaine & Moore. Chen has been associate dean since 1995.

Menendez’s Rise to Senate Is Another Minority Student Program Success Story

By Michael Sutton

When Sen. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), a 1979 alumnus of Rutgers School of Law-Newark, accepted an offer last December by newly elected New Jersey Gov. Jon Corzine to serve out the remaining year on Corzine’s Senate term, it was more than a triumph for Menendez – it also reflected how successful the law school’s **Minority Student Program (MSP)** has been since 1968 at providing invaluable mentoring, internships and academic support for minorities and disadvantaged students of all races.

Menendez, who had previously served in Congress as the representative from New Jersey’s 13th District, is the state’s first Hispanic member of the Senate and one of only three Hispanic senators in Congress.

Many of the more than 2,000 MSP participants who have graduated from the law school have gone on to become judges, members of the U.S. Congress and New Jersey Legislature, presidential and gubernatorial appointees, and mayors of cities.

Menendez has credited the MSP for contributing both to his own professional success and for opening doors for others.

“The MSP gave me the opportunity to help bring others closer to achieving the American dream,” he said. “The success of MSP graduates makes clear that it is in our country’s best interest to offer opportunities for those at a disadvantage and to provide a means to overcome many of the educational barriers that still exist in America.”

Photo: Shelley Kusnetz



Provost Steve Diner greets alumnus Robert Menendez at the Rutgers-Newark Homecoming held last fall.

School of Law-Newark Graduates Fill Top State Positions

Sen. Robert Menendez and Ronald Chen, Rutgers School of Law-Newark associate dean, aren’t the only law school graduates whose sterling achievements have drawn New Jersey Gov. Jon Corzine’s attention. To fill the position of state attorney general, he turned to another law school graduate and Minority Student Program participant, Zulima Farber, a 1974 graduate.

The state’s former public advocate and public defender under former Gov. James Florio’s administration, Farber was the first Hispanic woman to serve as a New Jersey cabinet officer. She then went on to become a partner at Lowenstein Sandler, one of New Jersey’s largest law firms.

Corzine also has not been alone in turning to the law school community for top talent. Last December, Acting Gov. Richard Codey appointed Fred M. Jacobs, a 1990 law school graduate, to serve as Commissioner of the Department of Health and Senior Services. Corzine now has asked Jacobs to continue on in that position.

R-N Faculty and Alumni Serve on State Transition Team

Prior to being nominated as the state’s next attorney general, Zulima Farber (N-LAW 74) was selected, with several others from the Rutgers-Newark community, to serve on Gov. Jon Corzine’s gubernatorial transition team.

The Corzine transition team draws on such faculty talent as School of Law-Newark Professor David Troutt, who was asked to serve on the Revitalizing and Investing in Communities Policy Group, and Adjunct Professor Marilyn Askin, a 1970 law school graduate, who was asked to co-chair the Advisory Task Force on Property Tax Reforms. In addition, Michael Wagers, director of the Police Institute at the School of Criminal Justice (SCJ), and SCJ Professor Johnna Christian were named to Corzine’s Corrections Policy Group. And Rosemary McFadden, a 1973 MBA graduate of Rutgers Business School-Newark and New Brunswick, was asked by Corzine to co-chair his Economic Development Policy Group.

Bringing Diverse Perspectives... from page 1

“Although tremendous progress has been made in the neurosciences, daunting challenges remain,” Tepper said. “The solutions to these problems are likely to be found by bringing together the tools and approaches from many different disciplines.

“The HHMI award will allow us to train a new generation of scientists who can work at the interface of quantitative, computational and biological science to address these problems.”

Berlin agreed. “The HHMI program will serve as a catalyst to bring together students and faculty from many neuroscience-related disciplines into a single entity devoted to studying complex questions posed by present-day and future medical science,” he said.

“This effort will lead to a much greater degree of collaboration among the many universities and biomedical research institutes in Newark.”

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute, which made this important collaboration possible, grounds its research programs on the conviction that scientists of exceptional talent and imagination will make fundamental contributions that benefit mankind when given the resources, time and freedom to pursue challenging questions.

On The Plaza

Portrait of Marion Anderson, the first African-American to perform at the Metropolitan Opera, one of the pioneering black Americans being celebrated at this year MTW lecture.

MTW LECTURE

Each February, the Newark campus is fortunate to be the gathering place for some of the nation's foremost scholars in African-American and African history and culture, brought together for the annual Marion Thompson Wright (MTW) Lecture Series. The series takes an in-depth, thought-provoking look at issues with a deep impact on the past, present and future of New Jersey and its Afro-American population in particular, and black Americans in general.

On Feb. 18, Cheryl Wall will deliver the keynote address at the 26th annual MTW lecture, discussing "Black Creativity and Modern American Life." Wall, an English professor at Rutgers-New Brunswick, is an expert on black women's writing, the Harlem Renaissance and writer Zora Neale Hurston. She has written and edited several books, including *Worrying the Line* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God: A Casebook*. Other speakers include: Robert O'Meally, the Zora Neale Hurston professor of English, Columbia University; Brenda Dixon-Gottschild, professor emerita of Dance Studies, Temple University; and A.B. Spellman, former deputy director of the National Endowment for the Arts.

One of New Jersey's oldest and most highly esteemed Black History Month events, the conference is named in honor of East Orange native Marion Thompson Wright, who was the first professionally trained black female historian.

The free public program is sponsored by the Rutgers Institute on Ethnicity, Culture and the Modern Experience; the Federated Department of History, Rutgers-Newark and the New Jersey Institute of Technology; and the New Jersey Historical Commission/Department of State.

INFLUENCING GOVERNMENT POLICY SYMPOSIUM

Who shapes public policies? For the answers, participate in Feb. 24's "Influencing Government Policy Symposium," in Conklin Hall. The free annual program, which takes place from 8:15 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., will open with a panel presenting ways to influence government policy, ranging from political processes, to

student activism, to academic involvement. The symposium will include workshops on political activism, education, children's and women's issues, and prisoners and their families, as well as student presentations.

The symposium is co-sponsored by the R-N Social Work Department, the Social Work Student Organization and the New Jersey Baccalaureate Social Work Education Association.

For more information, contact event organizer Paul Shane, Social Work, pshane@andromeda.rutgers.edu.

RIGHTS NIGHT

Once again, members of the campus and community will celebrate human rights and civil liberties – while also alerting the public to threats to rights and human dignity both in the United States and abroad – at Rutgers-Newark's second annual RightsNight.

This year's RightsNight on March 1 will include a marathon two-and-a-half hour reading of testimony on civil and human rights, past and present, by dozens of volunteers, as well as speakers, musical performances, poetry readings and other activities during the week.

The dates were chosen to bridge Black History Month and Women's History Month. English Professor Janet Larson, one of the organizers, describes RightsNight as a "high-participation, grassroots-style extravaganza that will honor the defenders of our civil and human rights, deepen appreciation of these fundamentals, and raise awareness about their precariousness at various moments in U.S. history, up to today."

Larson says the hope is to make RightsNight a bi-annual tradition at R-N.

"It's not quite like anything else we do on this campus," she notes.

For more information, go to www.newark.rutgers.edu/events, or contact Larson at jl Larson@andromeda.rutgers.edu.

RUTGERS BUSINESS SCHOOL HOSTS USA TODAY CEO FORUM

Rutgers Business School–Newark and New Brunswick was chosen by *USA TODAY* to host its first-ever CEO Forum. The event, which took place Feb. 9 at Rutgers-Newark, featured Henry Juskiewicz, chairman and CEO of Gibson Guitar, the famed instrument maker, in conversation with Kevin Maney, *USA TODAY*'s technology columnist and senior technology reporter.

The "USA TODAY CEO" Forum is a series of four programs to be held throughout the 2006 academic year on the campuses of four select major universities—Rutgers, UCLA, MIT and Chicago. The host schools were selected based on their academic excellence in the field of business. Each CEO Forum features a distinguished CEO of a corporation heralded for its achievements and advancements in the arena of technology.

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ALSTON PERFORMS MUSIC BY COMPOSERS OF AFRICAN DESCENT

By Carla Capizzi

Pianist Richard Alston has played hundreds of concerts since his first public performance at the age of 5. But perhaps none is more memorable to him than the one he gave on his Eminee toy organ for his stuffed animals. The animals were mute critics, but within months members of his church were enthusiastically embracing the 7-year-old organist at Sunday services. Alston went on to win the Young Artist Competition at the Brevard Festival in North Carolina three times, then made his New York debut at Avery Fisher Hall at the age of 17, and earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees at Juilliard. Since then, Alston has played as both a soloist and in orchestral performances in the United States and Europe, made appearances on radio and television programs, and recorded CDs.

On Feb. 15, Alston will perform in the John Cotton Dana Library, playing works for piano solo by composers of African descent, including Pulitzer Prize-winner George Walker, a retired Rutgers-Newark music professor. The free performance begins at 12:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Ackerson Hall, 180 University Avenue, 9 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Free admission. **INFO:** Pheroze Wadia, 201/902-9525.

MARCH 29

Rutgers Night at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center presents the musical *Chicago* with a free post-performance reception with the cast. **LOCATION:** New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street. **ADMISSION:** \$16 - \$45. **INFO:** Group sales, 888/GO-NJPAC.

APRIL 26–30

Road, a new drama by Jim Cartwright, directed by Timothy Raphael. **LOCATION:** Bradley Hall Theater, 110 Warren St., 7–9 p.m. **ADMISSION:** \$5 students/seniors, \$7 general. **INFO:** Michele Rittenhouse, 973/596-3457; Reservations, 973/353-5119 x. 17.

R-N Calendar

What's Going On at R-N? www.newark.rutgers.edu/events

MARCH 25

Perfect Minds in Perfect Bodies: The Ethics of Biomedical Enhancement, the Seventh Annual Applied and Urban Ethics Conference will examine the issues surrounding enhancing sports performance, gene-based enhancement therapies, and the implications of major life extension through biomedical advances.

Photo: Courtesy New Jersey Performing Arts Center



CHARLES CUMMINGS: A REMEMBRANCE

By Clement Alexander Price

Charles Cummings, adjunct professor of history at Rutgers-Newark, passed away in December 2005. Clement Alexander Price, Board of Governors Distinguished Professor of History, and a trustee of the Newark Public Library, offers his reflections on Cummings' life and contributions to the city.



Charles Cummings, keeper of Newark's collective memory, helped others to connect to the city and its rich history.

Charles Cummings' illustrious work as a librarian, archivist, teacher and historian places him among the most favored citizens in twentieth-century Newark.

More than any other Newarker, Charles Cummings helped the city to remember itself – the way it once looked, the pioneers who laid out Newark's physical and cultural landscape, and those who helped the city survive. He was the keeper of Newark's collective memory.

In over four decades of service to the Newark Public Library, he made the New Jersey Reference Division into the state's premier archive for historical matters relating to Newark and the state. He gave more talks, more tours, more hours of civic service, and more care to Newark's story than anyone on the planet. Virtually every dissertation, thesis, book, article and treatise on Newark is indebted to Charles' considerable assistance. Every exhibition, documentary film, and every cohort of old Newarkers seeking to reconnect with the town relied upon Charles' encyclopedic knowledge and archival expertise. His weekly column in *The Star-Ledger* is arguably one of the nation's longest running historical series to focus on a single city. It is indispensable reading for those interested in the nook and cranny of Newark's long and fascinating life.

During Newark's lean years – that long period from the 1960s to the 1980s when Newark was a metaphor for all that could go wrong with an urban community – Charles kept his poise. Never one to bemoan the city, he was a beacon of optimism in the face of our past bouts with fear and foreboding. In that sense, many who knew him relied upon Charles, and his upbeat dutifulness, to keep the city moving forward with their heads held high.

Business is Booming... from page 1

specialist at the Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations, which co-sponsors the CMD.

The 12-week program targets business professionals, managers and executives who wish to become better "business partners" with clients and co-workers by developing a broader and deeper understanding of how the business world operates. For example, executives who work for companies that specialize in technology come to understand and utilize terminology and concepts that business clients can better grasp.

The CMD also specially tailors the program for companies that request it, teaching classes on-site at the companies themselves, such as Prudential. At the same time, the Mini-MBA acts as a way to draw professionals back to Rutgers for additional business education by showcasing RBS faculty, Weiss noted. "We bring Rutgers to the public, but we also bring the public to Rutgers."

Executives from the business world outside of Rutgers aren't the only ones who find the Mini-MBA a "profitable" experience. Lisa English, senior alumni relations officer for RBS, discovered that the course opened up new channels of communications with RBS grads.

"I wanted an even better connection to alumni who have gone through the regular MBA program here, and I wanted to update my own business education," English said.

She praised how the program both provides the big picture and addresses each student's individual career needs.

"The course gives you a broad overview of business, but at the same time the professors give you enough specific information to apply to the job you're in now," she said.

On the Plaza... from page 3

New Director of Undergraduate and Graduate Admissions

Jason Hand has joined the Rutgers-Newark community as director of Undergraduate and Graduate Admissions.

Hand comes to R-N following a successful stint as director of admissions at New Jersey City University, where he was responsible for a growth in enrollments as well as an elevated academic profile for entering students. While there, he also oversaw the introduction of new technology into the admissions process and was responsible for outreach and advertising to target audiences. Prior to joining New Jersey City University, Hand served as a project coordinator at Cook College where he was responsible for marketing and recruitment of students and employers for the Cooperative Education Program. He earned his bachelor's degree in finance from Ithaca College and Master's of Art in teaching from Monmouth University.

LINKING THE SENSES AND SENSIBILITY

by Peter Haigney

How does one human being interpret and predict both his or her own or another's actions and motives when they interact? The answer may be perception of body posture and motion as much as words, and his groundbreaking insights in this area have earned Guenther Knoblich, associate professor of psychology, the prestigious 2005 American Psychological Association Award for Early Career Contributions to Psychology.

Knoblich's cutting-edge work in the relatively new area of social cognitive neuroscience – begun at the Max Planck Institute in Germany – is helping to establish the existence of a critical link between the body's senses and a person's ability to correctly understand the actions and expectations of other people. His results have been published in important journals such as *Nature Neuroscience*, and he has been profiled as a wunderkind researcher in *American Psychologist*.

His current research focuses on perception and action, action and understanding, body perception and insight problem-solving. In one experiment, Knoblich – using 12 pianists as experimental subjects – noted that his research indicated that the performers recognized recordings of their own playing by internally simulating their actions. He has conducted similar research focusing on individuals' handwriting and on how people recognize their communications online.

He noted that in the future, this work may be applied to better understand disorders such as schizophrenia, where patients will frequently attribute their own motions – such as a hand movement – to an outside agent.

"For instance, they may say, 'Someone else made my hand move or made me go there,'" he observed. "This may provide us with clues to better understand the condition."

KEEP CONNECTED

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

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