Grants office expands its mission under new director

In the hypercompetitive, high-stakes world of scientific research grants, Rockefeller’s faculty has a new leg up. This fall, Gila Budescu, most recently from Northwestern University, has joined the university as director of the Office of Sponsored Research and Program Development. The office, which previously focused on grant submissions and compliance, is now taking a broader view of the grant-seeking process, aiming to also explore emerging opportunities at the formative phase and to enable large-scale collaborative initiatives.

“My initial plans are to build on the expertise and talents of the dedicated staff, to work closely with the researchers, to collaborate with other university offices involved with the research enterprise and to create and streamline tools and services to facilitate joint research and team science in an integrated and dynamic fashion,” says Dr. Budescu.

Dr. Budescu, who grew up in Israel, studied philosophy, psychology and anthropology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She then received her Ph.D. in organizational behavior — the study of organizations through economic, sociological, psychological, political science and anthropology.
City to making York Avenue one-way

by ZACH VEILLEUX

The New York City Department of Transportation is studying a series of proposals, introduced by three of Rockefeller University's neighboring institutions, to recoup traffic, parking and bus routes serving Rockefeller and possibly converting York Avenue to one-way traffic, dramatically changing the routes by which both access the university's campus from the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Drive. The issue first came up in 2005 in response to traffic congestion along York Avenue between 68th and 71st Streets where the three institutions — New York Presbyterian, Weill Cornell Medical College of Cornell University and the Hospital for Special Surgery — are located. In those blocks, vehicles making left turns from York Avenue must fight for space with cars exiting the FDR at 71st Street and vans and trucks loading and unloading passengers and goods.

The three institutions commissioned a traffic engineering firm, Sam Schwartz PLLC, to study the traffic congestion and recommend solutions. The result was four proposals. The most sweeping option is to convert York Avenue to one-way southbound traffic for either nine, 19 or 26 blocks, including along Rockefeller's five-block frontage with York Avenue. Though it would increase traffic flow, this proposal would require rerouting the northbound M31 bus and would likely also increase traffic volume through a largely residential neighborhood.

Other options proposed by Schwartz are to make York Avenue one-way southbound but with a northbound "contra-flow" bus lane; to reverse or close the 71st and 73rd Street access points to the FDR; and to restring York Avenue to eliminate parking and create dedicated left-turn lanes at key intersections.

"Like the other three institutions, we’re concerned about traffic congestion on York Avenue. But we believe that a one-way York Avenue would not be a positive development for the university," says George Candler, associate vice president for planning and construction. "The university’s administration is primarily troubled by the prospect of increased traffic at the 63rd Street inter

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ological methods — from the Technion (Israel Institute of Technology) in Haifa. In her doctoral dissertation, she examined the impact of organizational culture on service quality in the service industry, analyzing the encounter between service providers and their clients. Organizations are often "bedded in their environment," Dr. Budescu says. “Functioning as open systems, organizations benefit from the constant value and knowledge exchange (or transactions) with their constituencies and from the evolution of common understandings and aspirations. I believe that sharing among different universities in the forefront of the field of bionanomedicine. "In both of our projects, the funding landscape is changing and with it, at least to some extent, the nature of doing science. While the office has been effective in working with the researchers, the proliferation of collaborative research across disciplines and institutions, and the physical distance that entails, requires a continuous reexamination of processes," Dr. Budescu hopes to more effectively navigate this changing landscape by designing and implementing new support tools and, as importantly, engaging closely with researchers to assist them in adjusting to the new realities.

"I believe Gila’s plans to meet with every lab head to understand their individual research interests, to keep each investigator informed about relevant funding and to offer her department’s support for new collaborative projects reflect important new directions for this office," says Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Young. "Faculty have been asking for help as funding has tightened, and we need to be able to compete more broadly for external funds."

To kick-start what she plans to make a regular discourse between the office and the laboratories it supports, Dr. Budescu is already meeting with lab heads and administrators. She has also begun revamping the office’s Web site, working with Information Technology to make it easier for researchers to access resources and to simplify electronic submissions. "It is important to me and to this office to help advance the wonderful and critical work that is being done by our investigato"., she concludes. "We must be respon-

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LARC Annex (continued from page 1)

"LARC," which has been used since the original building was constructed some 30 years ago, will be phased out.

“We’ve chosen a name that more accurately reflects the sophisticated research going on in the facility in recent years and our center’s continued role to facilitate and contribute to the research programs of many laboratories,” says the center’s director, Ravi Tumbas.

The annex will rise on the space currently used as LARC’s loading dock, between LARC and the Weiss Research Building, and will have a frosted glass façade to contrast with the heavier limestone used on both those buildings. Three floors will be devoted to animal research and offices for administration and support staff. A fourth floor will house mechanical equipment and will contain shell space that can be built out in the future. The existing loading dock will be preserved underneath.

“The challenges in designing this building were in fitting it into the tight space between two existing structures, and in working the foundation around existing utilities that are buried throughout the entire site,” says George Candler, associate vice president for planning and construction. “In choosing construction methods, we have also considered how to best reduce noise and minimize disturbances to those who work in the adjacent buildings.”

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sions benefit from the constant value and knowledge exchange (or transactions) with their constituencies and from the evolution of common understandings and aspirations. I believe that sharing among all university members and with their stakeholders is a key ingredient to our success.

Since moving to the United States in 1992, Dr. Budescu’s work has involved the application of this approach within the context of research institutions. She became managing director of a National Institutes of Health resource for computational biology at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign's Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology. There, among other things, she was a co-convigator on the development of an NIH-funded online research collaboratory for computational biology, and was a member of the development team creating molecular dynamics and graphics software applications. The project sought to provide a comprehensive online framework for facilitating collaborative research and training in macromolecular modeling and bioinformatics. “Working with physicists, chemists, biochemists, computer scientists, software developers, communication scholars and other experts has taught me that success relies on willingness to listen and work together toward shared goals,” she says.

In 2003, Dr. Budescu moved to Northwestern University’s newly established Institute for BioNanotechnology in Medicine, where she developed the administrative infrastructure for collaborative research in the field of bionanomedicine. “In both of these institutions,” she says, “the main thing was to be informed by researchers coming from different fields, and then build our operations in a way that would truly respond to and anticipate their heterogeneous needs, taking maximum advantage of available resources to push their work forward. In creating the Program Development Office and revitalizing our present services we want to similarly support Rockefeller researchers in their pursuit of excellence.”

Dr. Budescu will bring many of the ideas and solutions she developed at Urbana-Champaign and Northwestern to Rocke-

From the ground up. Floor plans for two of the LARC Annex’s four floors — the ground floor, at left, and the second floor, at right — show how the loading dock will be preserved beneath the new structure. The building will fit snugly between LARC and Weiss.
Old spaces give way to new laboratories

As demolition work on the north campus kicks into full gear, several relocated laboratories are settling into newly renovated digs further south. Plant Operations personnel, in conjunction with Planning and Construction, spent months refitting several spaces with new fixtures to accommodate specific labs.

Callling all personnel

Rockefeller University expands its electronic alert notification system to include all members of the campus community

by TALLEY HENNING BROWN

Send Word Now, an emergency alert system first implemented in 2003 to quickly communicate with “first responders” on campus during a disaster, has been expanded to cover all Rockefeller University e-mail addresses, phone extensions and university-issued cell phones. Starting this winter, Telecommunications will allow members of the university community to enroll their home and personal mobile device numbers as well.

WNW Alert Service, the core product offered by telecommunications software provider Send Word Now, is an on-demand voice and electronic messaging Web portal designed to get information to all members of a large, widespread organization in real time. At Rockefeller, the service is used to announce and conduct follow-ups on fire drills, alarm tests and false alarms; for communications drills among patient-care personnel at The Rockefeller University Hospital; and, in case of a campus- or city-wide emergency, to alert first responders and communicate while emergency procedures are in play. The service, which is run by Telecommunications in concert with Security and administrative heads, integrates with the university’s existing telephone and e-mail systems.

As part of the ongoing effort to evaluate and strengthen the university’s disaster plan, the Emergency Preparedness and Response Committee joined forces with Security about three years ago to evaluate several third-party alert notification services, and eventually purchased a service contract with Send Word Now. Initially, about 300 members of the Rockefeller community who play first responder roles — loosely including members of Security, Plant Operations, Laboratory Safety and Environmental Health, LARC and the hospital — were enrolled. When an alert needs to be sent, authorized personnel access Rockefeller’s account on the Send Word Now server and choose which contacts on its list will receive the alert. Then the activation, usually the security officer on duty at the front desk of Founder’s Hall, types in a message and hits send. Within seconds, all contacts receive a phone call and an e-mail.

In May, the university announced plans to expand its contract to be able to add all members of the Rockefeller community to the contact list. Early this fiscal year, Telecommunications added all campus phone extensions as well as the e-mail addresses and mobile device numbers associated with those extensions. Now they’re working on adding the contact information of personnel who don’t have individual phone extensions on campus, and on November 14, the Dean’s Office sent a letter requesting contact information of all students who live in Rockefeller housing — which is outside the campus phone tree. Enrollment will open this winter for those who wish to add personal contact information, including home and cell phone numbers and personal e-mail addresses. “Expectations
Awards:

Dirk Albrecht, Maria Neimark Geffen and Jan Skotheim, 2012 Searle Scholars and Career Awards at the Scientific Interface. The grants, which come with $500,000 each over five years, are intended to foster career advancement of researchers with back- grounds in the physical and/or computational sciences whose work addresses biological questions. Dr. Albrecht is a postdoc in the Bargmann lab. Dr. Geffen is a fellow at the Center for Studies in Physics and Biology, and Dr. Skotheim is a postdoc in the Siggia lab.

Sean F. Brady, a 2007 Searle Scholar, for innovation regarding the chemical and medical sciences. Dr. Brady, head of the Laboratory of Neurogenetics and Behavior, has developed very cost-effective augmentation to our existing systems, providing wider coverage and contact...