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Changes in campus computing planned; Ferentz retires

Academic Council learns of major restructuring

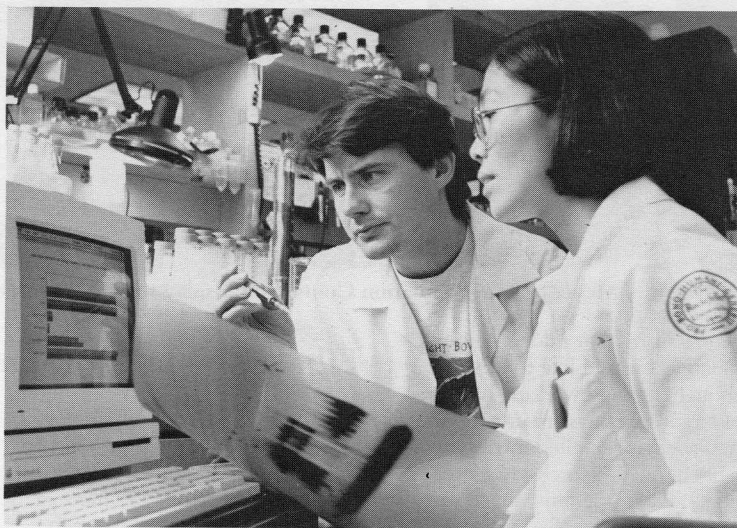
A major restructuring of the university's computing and communications services has begun, President David Baltimore told the Academic Council Tuesday. A national search for a chief information services officer will start soon.

Vice President Fred Bohen explained to Council members that restructuring, additional financial support, and new leadership were required to exploit information technology fully in the service of the university's research and administrative functions. He said the administration would undertake these changes to:

- Assure the proper merging of central services with desk-top computing functions;
- Find the means to overcome embedded organizational obstacles to university-wide assessment of computing and communications needs;
- Provide better management of the university's limited resources to provide consistent, reliable services in the context of those needs.

Bohen told the Council that Melvin Ferentz, the director of University Computing Services, had agreed to continue his service to the university while the search for a new chief information officer proceeds, but would step down from administrative responsibilities when a new appointment is made.

"For more than a decade, Mel Ferentz has stretched very limited



Kalle Saksela and Hsiou-chi Liou, postdocs in the Baltimore lab, use a computer to study the mechanisms of gene regulation.

resources to meet the computing needs and problems of many on this campus. He has built from scratch a technically competent, exceedingly dedicated staff around which the larger organization we plan will be centered. He has graciously accepted my decision that the university's interests are now best served through a search for new leadership from outside for the years ahead. The university is fortunate to have had the service of a person of Mel Ferentz' quality for so long."

Bohen said he planned quickly to organize and chair a small committee of faculty members familiar with the university's computing and communications challenges to conduct the search

for a new chief information officer this fall and to advise the new appointee on a continuing basis. He will also be working with Ferentz and others during this time to sustain existing computing capabilities, and to move ahead as much as possible with the intended changes in organizing and financing these services.

A faculty committee chaired by Professor Jules Hirsch studied university computing and issued a major report last summer. That report was presented to Baltimore, along with reports from two university computing consultants retained to assist in the study. These reports provided the impetus for the planning that led to this week's announcement.

Ferentz to serve until successor is chosen

Melvin Ferentz, who has guided the university's computer fortunes for 13 years as director of Computing Services, announced this week that he is retiring. A search is being initiated for his successor. Ferentz has agreed to continue in his position until that successor is chosen.

"I'm going to take the first extended vacation since I was in high school," he says. "First, I'm going to wear out a new pair of skis. After the snow melts, I'm going to wear out a pair of hiking boots and several sets of bicycle tires touring the national parks."

"After that fantasy is accomplished, my wife and I expect to repair to a university campus, where I can pursue my interests in computer networking and massively parallel computers, without operational responsibilities, or even a pager." Ferentz explained that he carried the pager to warn him of crises in the computer system.

Ferentz is a native of Brooklyn, raised in the great public schools of Brooklyn and The Bronx. ("Yes, they really were great in those days," he says.) He graduated from the Bronx High School of Science and Brooklyn College before going abroad to earn a Ph.D. in Physics—from the University of Pennsylvania—in 1953.

After he completed his university training, he worked as a physicist at

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2 RU artists show talent

3 RU scientist battles genetic disease



4 Ethics course starts Tuesday

Tri-Institutions adopt landmark M.D.-Ph.D. program

A landmark agreement was signed this week by the heads of the "Tri-Institutions" that share the corner of 68th & York.

The agreement merges three previous M.D.-Ph.D. programs between Cornell University Medical College and the other institutions: Rockefeller, Sloan-Kettering, and Cornell's Graduate School of Medical Sciences.

The purposes of the new program, in the words of the agreement, are to:

- Maximize opportunities for student research.
- Enhance teaching.
- Spearhead increased cooperation among the neighboring institutions.

The comprehensive agreement documents all of the details for the training, education, housing, and administering of all of the students

accepted into the Tri-Institutional Medical Scientists Training Program, as well as for their recruiting and financing. The six- or seven-year program includes three years of medical education at Cornell leading to the M.D. degree, and three or four years of graduate study at Rockefeller, Sloan-Kettering, or Cornell leading to the Ph.D. degree.

"This was a big step for all three institutions," said Rockefeller President David Baltimore. "But it was only a first step in what I envision as an era of vigorous cooperation among us, and with other nearby institutions. This neighborhood is rich in academic, clinical, and research resources, and we all will gain enormously through such mutually beneficial arrangements."

Signing the agreement with Baltimore were Robert Michels, provost for medical affairs at Cornell, and Richard A. Rifkind, chairman of Sloan-Kettering.

Baltimore paid tribute to Professor Ralph Steinman, who represented Rockefeller University in the lengthy deliberations that resulted in the agreement. "The ten to 15 students who will enter the program each year can thank Ralph and his counterparts for a superb job," Baltimore said. "This was very complicated, blending myriad rules and procedures from each institution into a robust document that will provide an enduring program."

Carl Nathan of Cornell (and formerly of Rockefeller) is director of the program, which has offices at 1300 York Ave., Room F104.

Rockefeller artists display talent

Rockefeller University may be more renowned for its science than its art. Nonetheless, seven Rockefeller artists contributed work to the 126-piece "First Medical Complex Art Show" currently on display in the Cornell University Medical College Library.

The pieces in the exhibit, interspersed throughout the three floors of Cornell's medical library, range from the whimsical to the surreal, from the wildly expressionistic to the minimalistic and conceptual. The 64 artists participating in the show are all members of the biomedical complex comprising The Rockefeller University, The New York Hospital and Cornell University Medical College, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, and The Hospital for Special Surgery.

Vibrant 70-year-old Dorothy Meyer, administrative secretary at The Population Council, is one of the Rockefeller artists displaying their work at the show.

"Cityscape," Meyer's oil on canvas painting depicting the New York skyline, uses muted tones and geometric shapes to set a quiet mood. Since Meyer began painting in 1974, she has worked on nature scenes, abstracts, and city landscapes. Last year she exhibited her work at Manhattan Savings Bank at Third Avenue and 86th St.

"I love to paint," Meyer said. "But now I am spending so much



Dorothy Meyer of The Population Council on display with "Cityscape."

time writing that I don't paint as much as I would like to. Even though I started working half-time last year, the days are just too short."

Other Rockefeller entries include paintings by research associate Helen Field (Cerami lab), Barbara Sutphin (Medical Records), and Harold Nash (Population Council); photographs by Taj Carson (RU Press) and Laurent Fasano (Desplan lab); and a poster collage by hospital volunteer Irwin Gittleman.

A reception (open to all Rockefeller personnel) celebrating the exhibit will be held at the Cornell library, 1300 York Ave. (at 69th St.) Oct. 6 from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. The show will run through Dec. 31.

The pieces in the exhibit are for sale; a portion of the proceeds supports AIDS research.

Films raise pressing environmental questions

Hundreds attended the first of a three-part lunchtime film series on the rain forest in Caspary Auditorium Tues., Sept. 17. "Amazonia," a 20-minute documentary set in Peru, introduced the diversity of fauna and flora in the Amazon. "Jungle Pharmacy," a 53-minute documentary, emphasized the importance of the rain forest as a resource for obtaining medical compounds.

"Saving the rain forest is an important goal," said Pierre Gonczy, a graduate student in the DiNardo lab who organized the film series with Christine Neyt, a postdoctoral fellow in the

Geliebter lab. "Depleting the forest contributes to global warming and destroys a priceless reservoir of plant life forever. Yet taking action presents a complex problem: how can we—speaking from a country that was once entirely woodlands—set environmental priorities for Brazil, a separate country which is at a different stage of economic development?"

Next Tuesday's films, "The spirit of Kuna Yala" and "Contacts: the Yanomani Indians of Brazil," will focus on the peoples inhabiting the rain forest. They will play in Caspary Auditorium at noon. Admission is free.

Ferentz retires (continued from page 1)

the Argonne National Laboratory and as a mathematician-analyst for IBM before rejoining academia as a professor at St. John's University, where he became chairman of the physics department. He served as a faculty member and administrator at a number of area colleges and universities, including Columbia University, New York University, the State University of New York at Binghamton, the City University of New York, and Brooklyn College. At Brooklyn, he established a Computer Science Department.

In 1978 he joined Rockefeller University and established the central Computing Services facility and data networks. He also developed and maintained computing systems for the library, Development, and faculty records.

Along the way, Ferentz took his knowledge of computing into unusual corners: In the 1950s he was responsible for a "joint Princeton-IBM project to solve the Einstein Field Equations for a two-body 'wormhole' system on the IBM 7090"; in the 1960s, pondered how high-speed digital computers could

aid in the printing of music.

Now he's waiting for the search committee to do its work so he can hone the edges on his new skis, empty long-forgotten files from his office, and retire his pager.

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Corners

Robert Reichert



The atrium in Smith Hall Annex brings a breath of fresh air indoors.

Auerbach probes mysteries of Fanconi anemia

by Susan Blum

Leaf through a typical issue of *National Geographic* and you're likely to see an article or two about kinship relationships in far-away worlds. This month, the magazine explores family ties in a realm notable not for its setting, but for its stakes—the world in which one family member can save another from a fatal illness by donating tissue. Rockefeller scientist Arleen Auerbach, a member of the Carter laboratory, is part of this world, and the families she works with are part of the story the magazine tells.

Auerbach's research focuses on Fanconi anemia (FA), a rare genetic disease that manifests itself in a baffling array of symptoms. Some of them—such as birth defects and mental retardation—vary from person to person. But one set of problems is tragically common: blood cell abnormalities that lead to aplastic anemia and acute myelogenous leukemia. These fatal consequences of the disease usually develop in childhood or adolescence.

"Until recently, bone marrow transplantation was often the best way to treat the anemia and leukemia resulting from FA," Auerbach reports. The bone marrow—a rich source of blood cell precursors known as stem cells—is collected from an appropriate donor and transfused into the patient, whose own bone marrow has been destroyed by drugs and irradiation. The donor's stem cells multiply and develop into all the blood cells the recipient needs.

A healthy sibling with a compatible tissue type is the best potential donor for people with FA. In 1981 Auerbach and her colleagues developed a blood test to determine whether asymptomatic individuals have FA—a prerequisite in order to identify healthy siblings as potential donors. But because existing siblings may not have the right tissue type (only one in four does), many FA parents conceive additional children in the hope of producing a compatible donor. The test Auerbach and her colleagues developed can also be used to test fetal tissue and determine if the baby will be able to serve as a donor.

Even under the best of conditions, bone marrow transplantation for FA still carries risks. For the donor—especially a baby—the risks include general anesthesia and the removal of a great deal of bone marrow. For the recipient, there is the risk of waiting until the donor is old enough to undergo the procedure, and the possibility of graft-versus-host disease, a reaction in

Robert Reichert



Arleen Auerbach

which immune cells in the donor's tissue attack the recipient's organs.

Fortunately, there is now a way to bypass the need for bone marrow transplantation. Auerbach and her colleagues have shown that the blood from a newborn's umbilical cord is at least as good a source of stem cells as bone marrow. "You can collect the cord blood at birth, freeze it, and use it when needed at a later time," Auerbach explains. Easier on the baby, the procedure is better for the recipient, too, since it lets the transplant take place sooner and may elicit less graft-versus-host response.

In addition to FA, umbilical cord blood transfusion holds promise for many other diseases that destroy bone marrow function, including anemias, leukemias, and certain immune deficiencies and genetic disorders. But, like other advances in transplantation, the new

approach has engendered controversy as well as hope.

The highly-publicized story of the Ayala family in California is a case in point. When 43-year-old Mary Ayala conceived Marissa in the hope of saving 19-year-old Anyssa, who has leukemia, ethicists raised the issue of "willful conception," wondering if it is right to conceive one child to save the life of another.

Auerbach, more familiar than most with the complex web of emotions endured by families with a fatally ill child, acknowledges that the issue is complex. But, she responds, "Most conceptions are willful conceptions"—undertaken for any number of reasons, most of them very complicated, indeed. "Besides," she continues, "the babies conceived for this reason are tremendously loved, whether or not they turn out to be suitable donors."

As compelling as the work on

transplantation is, it is just a part of a multifaceted research program on Fanconi anemia at Rockefeller. For example, FA patients are evaluated at the Rockefeller University Hospital in order to understand the wide range of clinical manifestations of the disease.

Another facet of the work is mapping the gene that causes FA by studying DNA obtained from FA families in a genetic linkage study. "We want to find out where the gene 'lives' on the chromosome," Auerbach says. She and her team have already tracked the gene to a region on chromosome 20. By sharing their findings with others researchers, they hope to pinpoint its exact location within the next year or two. Their hunt for the gene is facilitated by the fact that Rockefeller is the site of the International Fanconi Anemia Registry, a source of referral for molecular and clinical studies. Patients in the registry provide the blood samples needed for the painstaking genetic work involved in gene mapping.

Finding the gene—and then pinpointing critical mutations—will be a crucial first step in determining the cause of the disease. Because FA has so many manifestations, including anemia, cancer, and birth defects, the researchers believe the gene helps control an essential function, probably related to DNA processing or repair. But though the hints are tantalizing, "at the moment, we don't have a clue about the basic defect," Auerbach says.

Finding the gene will also make it possible to develop a test to identify carriers of the disease—people who have one faulty copy of the gene and one normal copy. Currently, carriers cannot be identified, and such a test would be a boon to FA families.

It would also be a boon to scientists. Auerbach believes that FA carriers may carry some clues to a wide range of conditions. If two faulty copies of the FA genes clearly lead to cancer, birth defects, and blood disorders, perhaps one faulty gene leads to an increased susceptibility to these conditions. "Why does one smoker get cancer, while another does not? Why are some children born with birth defects?" Auerbach asks. "FA carriers may have innate predispositions to these diseases. Once we can identify them, we can follow them epidemiologically. As a result, we may be able to learn more about diseases that are much more common than Fanconi anemia."

Course mandated by NIH examines research ethics

To encourage responsible research practices, the National Institute of Health now requires that postdoctoral fellows and graduate students supported by National Research Service Award (NRSA) Institutional Training Grants receive formal instruction in scientific integrity. A new "Ethics in Research" course, organized by all three of the Tri-Institutions—Cornell University Medical College, Rockefeller University, and Sloan-Kettering Institute—enables trainees to meet the NIH requirement. The first of three sessions will take place Tues., Sept. 24, from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

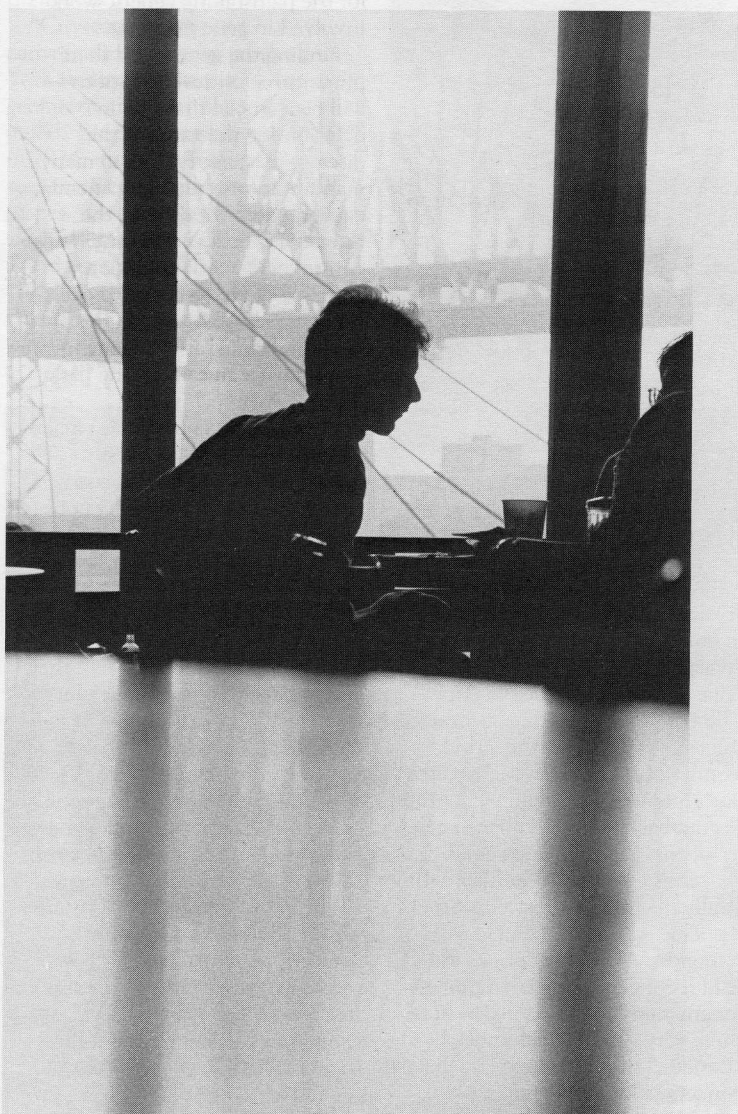
All first-year students and newly-funded students and postdocs on these training grants are required to attend all three

sessions of the course. All other students and postdoctoral fellows are encouraged to attend the lecture sessions on Sept. 24 and Oct. 8.

At the first session, Robert Michels, medical dean at Cornell, will speak on misrepresentation of data. Gregory Siskind, associate dean, will present an overview of the program. At the session on Oct. 1, publication practices and data sharing will be discussed in small workshops led by faculty from all three institutions. At the final session on Oct. 8, David Myers, director of the Research Animal Resource Center at Sloan-Kettering, and Eric Cassell, clinical professor of public health at Cornell, will lecture on ethical considerations in the use of animal and human subjects.

Feasting on a view of the Queensborough Bridge. . .

Robert Reichert



Lunch in the cafeteria offers a spectacular view of the East River, and leaves diners feeling groovy.



Angela Cheng, pianist, will perform at a noon recital.

Lincoln Center musician plays closer to home

Tri-Institutional Noon Recitals opens its sixth season Fri., Oct. 4 when pianist Angela Cheng will play a program at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center that she will repeat Sunday at Lincoln Center.

The late Alexander Mauro, professor of biophysics at Rockefeller, founded the series to enrich the community and give young musicians opportunities to perform. Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, The New York Hospital-Cornell University Medical College, and The Rockefeller University support the concerts with the help of enthusiastic individuals and organizations.

Noon Recitals is working to increase the frequency of concerts

and the variety of ensembles. Almost half of the 101 concerts presented to date were performed during the last two seasons. Musicians have included cellists, violinists, pianists, wind soloists, string quartets, piano trios, chamber orchestras, choirs, jazz bands, a spiritual ensemble, a Chinese music ensemble, and an Andean music ensemble.

Members of the three institutions and their guests are invited. The concerts, which begin at noon and run one hour, are held either in Sloan House at Sloan-Kettering, York Avenue between 66th and 67th Streets, or in Caspary Auditorium here; both are accessible to people in wheel chairs. Admission is free.

Potpourri

Minority Open House

The Personnel Office will sponsor a Minority Open House for college seniors Thurs., Nov. 21. A similar event last spring led to several placements.

Prospective research assistants are invited for an afternoon of conversation with current and former research assistants, informational visits with laboratories, a complete campus tour, and an overview of the application process.

The Personnel Department welcomes assistance from faculty members, research assistants, and graduate students. Those willing

to answer questions from prospective employees, give a tour of campus, or sponsor a lab visit should contact Brenda Wilks or Mary Ann George at X8300.

Electronics course

Electronic Techniques, a course in analog and digital circuits, will begin Wed., Oct. 9, at 3:00 p.m. in Caspary 1B. Laboratory experiments will supplement the lectures.

Those wishing to register for the course can contact Lawrence Eisenberg, X7896, on Wednesdays between 11:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., or mail a reservation to Box 297.