Horizons

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Horizons is published by The Sage Colleges Office of Communications for alumnae/i and friends of The Sage Colleges. Horizons provides an on-going review of the institution, featuring news and articles on the faculty, students, alumnae/i, programs, and activities of Russell Sage College, Sage College of Albany, and Sage Graduate School.

Stories do not necessarily reflect policies or positions of The Sage Colleges. The editor welcomes comments and story ideas from all members of The Sage Colleges community.

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To the Sage Community, Graduates and Friends,

I am pleased to greet you as the new chair of the Board of Trustees of The Sage Colleges. There is so much important work to do in this time of transformation and you need to know who we are, where we are, and where we are going.

We are The Sage Colleges, a comprehensive university which includes Russell Sage College (RSC), a women’s liberal arts college in Troy, N.Y.; Sage College of Albany (SCA), a four-year coed applied arts and sciences college in the capital of New York state; Sage Graduate School (SGS), offering master’s and doctoral degrees; and Sage After Work (SAW), a continuing education college. These colleges are under one umbrella we lovingly call “Sage.” Or, if you’ve been in the area and seen the billboards and decals, “Sage.edu.”

Before she retired in June 2008, the vision of Sage as a model for today’s comprehensive university was the driving passion of President Emerita Jeanne H. Neff. Under her leadership, Sage launched three doctoral programs (the number of doctorates needed to qualify as a university in New York state), in Nursing, Education and Physical Therapy. In addition to expanding academic programs, President Neff invested in Sage’s infrastructure, arts and athletic programs (see “Campuses Come Alive with Expanded Opportunities for Student Athletes” on Page 7 and “Leadership: Capital Campaign Initiatives” in the Honor Roll of Donors, beginning on Page 19.) Her vision for athletics at Sage prompted the Board of Trustees to dedicate the new athletics center in Troy as the Jeanne H. Neff Athletic Center.

Not only did President Neff leave lasting impressions on Sage’s campuses, but also on the cities in which they reside, and in the national higher education arena. She was a champion of homeowner incentive programs in Troy and Albany and a founding college president of the Association of New American Colleges, to name just a few of her achievements. President Neff carried the standard for The Sage Colleges with dignity and integrity. We will miss her and her husband, Ed Neff, whose warm smile and witty repartee welcomed all to Vail House and Sage.

Jeanne and Ed Neff have relocated to western Maryland where they will spend time with family and grandchildren. She will continue to consult in the educational arena, and she will have the time to return to another of her passions—writing poetry. We look forward to seeing your name in print again, Jeanne.

Which brings Sage to this transitional, transformational point. We are honored to have as Interim President, Susan Scrimshaw, Ph.D., an internationally respected public health leader who has served in administrative and academic roles at UCLA’s School of Public Health, the University of Illinois at Chicago’s School of Public Health, and Simmons College, where she served as president before coming to Sage.

President Scrimshaw’s international reputation brings her in contact with national and world leaders who know and respect her. Her frame of reference is not Troy, the Capital District, New York state, nor the United States. It is indeed global. Therefore it comes as no surprise that the Board of Trustees charged Interim President Scrimshaw to act with full presidential authority until the next president is named. We are so pleased and honored to have Susan Scrimshaw with us at this pivotal time.

You can read more about her professional accomplishments in “Global Public Health Expert to Lead Sage During Transition,” on Page 5. But that is just one side of Susan Scrimshaw. Her husband of two years, Allan Stern, a retired educator, introduced her to his passion—riding his Ducati motorcycle. She is the mother of one grown daughter and Allan has a son and a daughter. Susan enjoys singing, skiing, biking and most of all, she and Allan love meeting new people and are thrilled to join the Sage community.

This transitional time for Sage is exciting. It began in February as the Board of Trustees laid the groundwork for the presidential search process (See “National Presidential Search Underway” on the adjacent page.) The individual members of The Sage Colleges Board of Trustees each made an extraordinary, personal contribution to Sage’s momentum under the auspices of the Trustee Transformation Fund (See “$600,000 Trustee Transformation Fund Heralds New Era at Sage” on the adjacent page), and a new visibility campaign is spreading the word about the College (See “The Power of Sage.edu” on Page 12.)

Here’s to Sage!

Donna Esteves RSC ’70
The Sage Colleges Board of Trustees reasserted its commitment to Sage by establishing the Trustee Transformation Fund. One hundred percent of the trustees participated, pledging in excess of $600,000. The Fund is underwriting everything from the Presidential Practice consulting group, which has provided continuity at Sage during the leadership transition, to promotional campaigns and other investments that are crucial to recruiting and retaining students.

“The Board in its entirety put a stake in the ground and said ‘We are Sage,’” said Trustee Chair Donna Esteves. “The Trustee Transformation Fund is a sign of our faith in the direction of the College, and in the dedicated, talented faculty and administration with whom we are working to set the stage for Sage’s future.”

The extraordinary philanthropy on the part of the Trustees inspired administrators, staff and vendors to contribute nearly $40,000 to the Fund, which is ongoing for the next two “transitional” years at Sage.

“The Trustee Transformation Fund is a tremendous demonstration of the commitment of the trustees to Sage, both now and for the future,” said Mary Bayly, vice president for Institutional Advancement. “It’s a sign to the alumni how invested the trustees are, as Sage prepares for its centennial celebration in 2016.”

The Sage Colleges Board of Trustees has initiated a national search for the next president of The Sage Colleges by appointing a search committee. Trustee Lynn E. Abraham RSC ’73 will lead the committee of 18, comprised of the different constituencies that make up the Sage world: trustees, faculty, students, deans, cabinet, staff, graduates and community members.

“It is the role of the Search Committee to conduct a procedurally transparent search, with the candidates’ confidentiality guaranteed,” said Donna Esteves, trustee chair.

The committee, in conjunction with a search firm will develop a prospectus that presents Sage’s opportunities and challenges to potential presidential candidates.

In spring 2009, after review of the candidate pool and screening interviews, the search committee will invite leading candidates to campus interviews. After any remaining due diligence, the search committee will recommend one or more names to the Board. It is expected that the Board will appoint a new president to take office prior to the start of the fall 2009 semester.

Updates on the search will be provided at sage.edu/president/search.
Board of Trustees Names Donna Esteves as New Chair

The Sage Colleges Board of Trustees has named Donna Robinson Esteves RSC ’70 to succeed Michele Vennard SCA ’68 as chair. Esteves’ term began in June.

Vennard, president and CEO of the Albany County Convention & Visitors Bureau, served three four-year terms on the Board of Trustees, which included five years as chair.

“Michele Vennard was on the Board of Trustees the entire time Jeanne Neff was president and played a pivotal role in Sage’s achievements in academics, athletics and infrastructure during that time,” said Esteves. “Michele has been a leader, a superb arbitrator and mediator, and has taught me much. She represents the best of the best.”

Esteves, of Lake Hopatcong, N.J., is a former teacher turned energy entrepreneur. She founded Free Lighting Corporation, the nation’s largest residential energy efficient lighting installation contractor, and has also served as chief financial officer for SESCO, Inc., another national energy conservation firm.

She joined the Board of Trustees in 2005 and has served as trustee chair of the INVEST fundraising initiative.

Leading Developer Joins Board of Trustees

Kevin M. Bette, founder, owner and president of the Latham-based development company First Columbia, LLC and its subsidiary, First Columbia International Group, has joined The Sage Colleges Board of Trustees.

First Columbia, LLC is an international real estate development and construction firm that specializes in large-scale master planned developments. It has developed residential, commercial, and health care complexes from Maine to Texas. It also provides feasibility, planning, design, marketing and asset management services. The company is a member of the Bette Family of Companies, which includes Bette & Cring Construction Group.

Bette founded the New York International Plaza, a 260-acre site across from Newburgh’s Stewart International Airport that includes the Hudson Valley World Trade Center.

He is an advisory board member of the Albany-based Priority Access, Inc., an investor-network of venture capitalists, institutional, and individual investors. He was a member of Sage’s President’s Council from 2000-2005, a member of the Corporate Connections Steering Committee, and from 1999-2002 he was an annual giving volunteer working on the business campaign. Kevin is married to Kathy Nelson Bette RSC ’83.

Steering Policy, Stewarding Resources: The Board of Trustees

The Sage Colleges Board of Trustees is responsible for the policy direction of Sage and for its educational and administrative organization.

In this capacity, the Board hires and supports the President as chief executive officer; through the President, guides the work of strategic planning and assessment; through the President and the faculty, insures an educational program of high quality and effectiveness; exercises appropriate fiduciary and policy oversight; and gives generously and assists in fundraising for the greatest needs of The Sage Colleges.

The number of trustees is limited to 30. Trustees serve a four-year term and are limited to a maximum of three terms.

In Brief

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The Sage Colleges Board of Trustees | 2008-2009

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Global Public Health Expert to Lead Sage During Transition

The Board of Trustees of The Sage Colleges has named Susan C. Scrimshaw, Ph.D., interim president. She assumed the post July 1, replacing retired president Jeanne H. Neff.

“We are so pleased and honored to have Susan Scrimshaw with us,” said Donna Esteves, chair of The Sage Colleges Board of Trustees. “Her frame of reference is global, yet her efforts are focused on the enrichment of the Sage community.”

Scrimshaw, who most recently served as president of Simmons College in Boston, has also served as dean of the School of Public Health at the University of Illinois at Chicago and associate dean for academic programs at the University of California, Los Angeles School of Public Health. Scrimshaw will be joined at Sage by her husband, Allan Stern, a retired educator.

The author of dozens of publications and articles, Scrimshaw holds a doctorate and Master of Arts in Anthropology from Columbia University, as well as a bachelor’s degree from Barnard College. She has appeared numerous times on national media providing insight and commentary on topics ranging from bioterrorism to various public health issues. In addition, she has testified before Congressional subcommittees on behalf of the Association of Schools of Public Health.

Scrimshaw is a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences (IOM) and currently serves on the IOM Governing Council. She is an AAAS Fellow, and a Fellow of the American Anthropological Association and of the Society for Applied Anthropology. Her awards include the Margaret Mead Award, and a Hero of Public Health Gold Medal presented by former President Vicente Fox of Mexico.

“The Sage Colleges have a well-deserved reputation for commitment to excellence, and I look forward to working with the Sage community during this transition period to build a society of diverse, thoughtful and competent citizen leaders who will continue to be engaged in the pursuit of lifelong learning. The breadth of program offerings at Sage, together with a truly impressive faculty, create an exciting academic environment,” said Scrimshaw.

from left to right, mingling with students at the Opalka Gallery; with Founders Convocation speaker Becca Robison, founder of Astrotots science camps for girls, and RSC Dean Sharon Robinson; with husband Allan Stern at the Founders Day Picnic; meeting the Sage community at the Opalka Gallery; and with Kathryn Merrick Diamond ’60 and Marsha Downing Felton ’64 at the President’s alumnae roundtable in Palo Alto, Calif.
Sage’s Athletics Department moved into its new headquarters at the Jeanne H. Neff Athletic Center in Troy’s Little Italy neighborhood over the summer. The Board of Trustees dedicated the Center in October, in recognition of Neff’s vision for athletics during her tenure as president of Sage. The Athletic Center is an important part of Sage’s sports expansion, adding softball and lacrosse fields, two gymnasiums and a strength and conditioning facility to the existing Kahl Campus Center gymnasium at SCA and the Robison Athletics Center at RSC.

Sage athletes and local dignitaries broke ground for the Robison softball field in 2007. Early in the fall, the softball team began practicing on the Robison Field, the first of two fields that will allow Sage to host softball and eventually soccer and lacrosse games at the Athletic Center. Competition will begin on the Robison Field in the spring.

Sports returned to the Sage College of Albany campus with the Sage Women’s basketball game against Southern Vermont in February. The festivities began with a Tail Gator Party at the Kahl Campus Center and continued with the Gators’ win!

The Gators volleyball team concluded its 2007-2008 regular season as conference champions in its first season of play in the Skyline Conference, and was the first RSC team to participate in an NCAA Division III tournament. The team won the Skyline title for the second consecutive year in November.
Athletics

Campuses Come Alive with Expanded Opportunities for Student Athletes

Both men and women interested in intercollegiate athletics now have the option of competing in Division III varsity sports at The Sage Colleges.

Under the plan approved by the NCAA, women students at Sage College of Albany can join Russell Sage College students to form Sage Colleges women’s basketball, softball, tennis, soccer, volleyball and lacrosse teams. Men from SCA will be eligible to play on six men’s teams to be established over a three-year period: tennis and golf in 2008-2009; basketball and volleyball in 2009-2010; and soccer and cross-country in 2010-2011. Sage Gators will continue to compete in the Skyline Conference.

The athletics expansion is especially important to SCA physical education majors, as SCA is the only regional institution offering a bachelor’s degree in physical education. The upper two years of study are delivered in partnership with Hudson Valley Community College’s associate degree in physical education studies; students from other community college physical education programs may also transfer to the SCA bachelor’s degree.

Both the physical education degree and the athletics expansion respond to the growing number of students participating in sports at the high school level. For the 18th consecutive year, the number of high school athletes increased in 2006-2007, according to the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). In 2006-2007, the NFHS reported that more than 7 million students (or 44.2 percent) participated in high school athletics.

“In order to meet the needs of today’s college students, sports and fitness activities have to be an integral part of a college program,” said Sage Athletic Director Dani Drews. “We felt it was important that we offered all of our Sage students the opportunity to be participants or fans of intercollegiate athletics, enjoying all the physical, educational and social benefits it brings to campus.”

Division III rules prohibit athletic scholarships, but many athletes qualify for academic scholarships (RSC’s student athletes have posted an average GPA of 3.2 over the last several semesters.)

Sage’s Gator has a new look! The Gator redesign was part of a project from Professor Jean Dahlgren’s graphic design class. Sage College of Albany grad Crystal Powell’s design was chosen by a campus wide committee, out of eight submissions from students.

President Neff Speaks of the Promise of a Sage Education

Outgoing President Jeanne H. Neff gave the commencement address as a farewell to Sage graduates on May 10, 2008, just one month before her 13-year distinguished tenure leading Sage came to a close.

“Those who gather to celebrate the centennial year in 2016 will look back with pride on this history and also on the accomplishments of Sage graduates as women and men whose lives have made a difference in their communities and in the larger world as well. I want to invite you today to think about why that may be so, by spending some time deconstructing the motto adopted originally for Russell Sage College that now underlies the mission of the entire university: To Be, To Know, To Do.”

Her commencement address analyzed each component of that educational mission, from the meaning of the Latin words, to the spirit in which they were intended by Sage’s founders, to their practical application for students today.

“From the first time they were spoken and inscribed by the founders of a new college, each phrase in the Sage motto has been a call to action. ‘To Be, To Know, To Do’ is also a promise – from your College to you, that you will grow in character, understanding and competence, that your education will go with you into your future life and that it will become more valuable over time. At the same time, the motto represents a promise from you, as individuals privileged by a college education – a Sage education – that you will give back as you have been given to. If you don’t make a difference, who will?”

In retirement, former President Neff intends to expand her national activities in higher education, devote serious time to writing, and deepen relationships with family and friends. “I will remain an ardent champion for Sage and expect to have opportunities in the months ahead to thank all those who have made this such a rewarding place to live and work,” she said.

The gratitude is indeed reciprocal: Sage has much to thank Jeanne Neff for. During her tenure, she led the charge to raise the level and breadth of academic programs; expand campus facilities with landmarks such as the Opalka Gallery in Albany and the new Athletics Center in Troy; contribute to the revitalization of the neighborhoods surrounding both campuses; strengthen Sage’s reputation in the region and beyond; and unite the Colleges into a model for today’s comprehensive university. She truly created a Legacy for the Future, this year’s theme for the 2008 Annual Recognition Dinner for donors, partners and friends of Sage (See the inside back cover for photos from the gala event.)
In a recent poll by ELLEgir of 10,000 readers, 30 percent said they would rather be thin than healthy. Eating disorders affect more than 7 million American girls and women, and up to 70 million people worldwide. In 1995, 34 percent of high-school age girls in the U.S. thought they were overweight; today that number has jumped to 90 percent.

Against a backdrop of disturbing statistics such as these, Russell Sage students, led by director Leigh Strimbeck, developed Mirror Mirror, an original theatre production about beauty and body image.

Class discussions fueled the script as did interviews that students conducted with the women in their own lives. The result is a production that reflects the personal concerns of college women and their wider view of the objectification of the women’s bodies. The production received attention in the local media and inspired “Body Reflections,” a collaboration of Russell Sage’s Creative Arts in Therapy, Drama, Nutrition, Psychology, Sociology and Women’s Studies programs, which brought mothers and daughters to campus for a morning of interactive class sessions and a matinee performance of Mirror Mirror.

In the spring, Strimbeck, who joined Sage this year as Artist in Residence in the Creative and Performing Arts Department, will bring the show to audiences around the Northeast. “We are rehearsing and putting the show on the road because the response to the show was so enthusiastic. Over and over I heard, ‘You have got to bring this show to high schools,’” said Strimbeck. “I believe the response is such because these young women were empowered through theatre to speak their truth about various pressures they’ve faced to conform, to comply, to fit in. When audiences saw this show, they saw a group of young women whose voices were coming across loud and clear. The show will travel to high schools and other colleges, spreading the word that Russell Sage is about vibrant young women being educated in innovative ways.”

As Artist in Residence, Strimbeck plans to expand upon the Mirror Mirror model, spending a semester in research with students, and then a semester developing original work, creating work each year about issues that women face.

“The presentation on stage I think should be taken to younger people,” said Sandy Richardson of Glenville, N.Y., who attended Body Reflections day with her daughter. “I think it also needs to be taken to people who work with people with eating disorders...it needs to be taken to the people in the public health fields as well because it’s an issue we need to know about.”
Summer in Color at Sage College of Albany

Art fans flowed between SCA’s Art & Design Building and the Opalka Gallery in August, for simultaneous shows featuring work by artists in Sage’s Summer High School Art & Design program and past recipients of the “Paris Art Scholarship.” The event was the capstone on a colorful season on campus. Sage’s summer programs for youth grew by 28 percent in 2008.

Sage.edu Webinars Give Voice to Curriculum

Sage.edu is the platform for a new series of interactive web seminars—or webinars—offering potential students and other interested parties a taste of the dynamic learning environment they will find on the Sage campuses.

Nearly 200 young women, educators, and health professionals are expected to log on for the series premiere, “Mirror Mirror: Beauty and Body Image,” featuring Sage’s professors from the Creative and Performing Arts, Nutrition, Psychology, Sociology and Women’s Studies programs.

Sage’s nutrition experts will share the latest research from their field in the upcoming “Feeding the Winning Team,” a webinar for high school and community college athletes and coaches, and education and applied behavioral analysis professors will answer parents’ and teachers’ questions about autism during an “ABA & Autism” webinar, also in the works. Watch sage.edu for details.

These webinars, strategically advertised and delivered to potential students, parents and others who influence students’ college decisions, will increase the national and regional visibility of Sage’s programs and faculty expertise.

Mirror Mirror on the Web

The webinar feature “Mirror Mirror: Beauty and Body Image,” has its origins in the eponymous Russell Sage theatre production and in “Body Reflections,” a morning of on-campus workshops for mothers and daughters followed by a matinee performance of Mirror Mirror.

The webinar is set to footage from “Body Reflections”—participants collaborating on workshop projects; professors from the Creative and Performing Arts, Nutrition, Psychology, Sociology and Women’s Studies programs sharing their research and answering questions; and mothers, daughters and Mirror Mirror cast members reflecting on how the production influenced the way they look at the issues of beauty and body image.

“Mirror Mirror is an educational theatrical experience. Along with director Leigh Strimbeck, Mirror Mirror was researched, written and performed by students at Russell Sage College. The ensemble surveyed friends and family to mine original stories on beauty and body image; that raw material was then shaped into a series of scenes and monologues that resulted in a one-act play. Rather than being a piece about eating disorders and illness, Mirror Mirror covered the ‘gray area’ of uncertainty, self-hatred and familial pressures.”

—DAVID BAECKER, Assistant Professor of Theatre

“We are alternating humor with some very serious stuff because when your mouth is open and you’re laughing and you’re breathing, you’re going to be more receptive to the more serious aspects of any issue.”

—LEIGH STRIMBECK, Artist in Residence, Creative and Performing Arts Department
Sculptor and Installation Artist Named Chair of Visual Arts Department

The Sage Colleges has named artist Sally Packard as the new chair of the Visual Arts department. Prior to joining Sage, Packard was an associate professor at the University of North Texas for nine years, where she also coordinated UNT’s design foundations program for first and second year students.

A New Yorker before she moved to Texas, Packard learned about Sage’s visual arts program through friends in the local art community, and was attracted by the small class size and intimate campus. “It is a luxury to do something on a human scale,” said Packard upon joining Sage from the 35,000-student UNT.

Working with the visual arts faculty, Packard is looking forward to making Sage stand out from other art schools by building enrollment while keeping individual art classes small; developing interdisciplinary programs; and promoting the many professional opportunities available to art graduates.

“Art making is creative problem solving,” she said, emphasizing that artists have opportunities in every profession, and using her own role as a professor, department chair, and artist as an example. “I draw on creative skills working with faculty and students and working alone in my studio.”

Packard began her career as a costume and set designer in New York City. After leaving New York City for Cooperstown, N.Y., she began taking, then teaching, art classes at the Munson Williams Proctor Arts Institute. That experience encouraged her to pursue her Master of Fine Arts degree, and she moved to Texas in 1995 to attend Texas Christian University.

She earned her MFA in painting before emerging as a sculptor. “Before I knew it, I had turned my studio into a black box theatre space that I filled up with art.” (Installation artists create art to fill a space, rather than to sit on a pedestal or hang on a wall.) Other aspects of her work also hint at her costume design and theatre background: She uses a lot of cloth in her sculpture, and creates projects with elements of interactivity.

The environment and the human footprint is another recurring theme in her art, she said. A recent piece involved 264 inflatable globes, and required viewers to calculate their global footprint, and inflate the number of planets that would be used up if the entire population lived like him or her.

Outside of Sage, Packard is excited to participate in the burgeoning arts scene in Troy and Albany. “It is important for artists who are teachers to have time when they are not ‘feeding the kids,’” she said. “If I don’t create art, I have nothing to give the students. I also want to honor that in my own faculty, and support that as chair.”

She sees the roles of teacher and artist as complementary, however. “The biggest part of making art is quiet time alone. Being social, being a teacher is part of my balance as a person. Teaching is a blend and I’ve fallen into it.”

Sage Announces New Faculty Appointments

Daniel Alemu, Assistant Professor of Education
Ph.D., Educational Administration, Illinois State University
M.S., Educational Administration, Eastern Illinois University
B.A., Education, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Lisa Brainard, Assistant Professor, The Libraries
M.L.S., Simmons College
B.A., Biology, Mount Holyoke College

Madeline Cafiero, Assistant Professor of Nursing
M.S., Nursing, The Sage Colleges
B.S., Nursing, Pace University

Stephanie DiBacco, Assistant Professor of Nutrition
M.B.A., The College of Saint Rose
B.S., Human Nutrition and Foods, Virginia Polytechnic Institute

Carrie Foeller, Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy
DScPT candidate, Physical Therapy, University of Maryland
M.S., Physical Therapy, Boston University
B.S., Health Studies, Boston University

Kim Fredericks, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Management
Ph.D., Public Administration and Policy, University at Albany
M.P.A., Public Administration, University at Albany
B.S., Nutrition and Management Science, The Sage Colleges

Michelle Hayward, Assistant Professor of Nursing
M.S., Nursing, The Sage Colleges
B.S., Nursing, The Sage Colleges
Daniel Robeson, Ph.D., worked for years in industry—domestically and abroad—as a supervisor, manager and consultant. He then turned his attention to researching and publishing about innovation in large firms. In 2006, he began teaching business, strategy, and entrepreneurship at Sage and completed his Ph.D. in Management at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI). Now he is tackling a new challenge: leading the Management Department to new levels of success as the recently appointed chair.

“This department has great potential for growth,” Robeson said. “We offer a very good value, and with the economy in a down-cycle, value-oriented programs like the MBA do very well.”

Plans for the department include pursuing accreditation and encouraging increased faculty development and research. “We’re not going to turn the department into a research boutique, because that’s not the type of institution Sage is. But we can be a balanced department which supports teaching excellence as well as being involved in research and professional organizations.”

The department is also hiring additional talent: Kim Fredericks, Ph.D., assistant professor of management, joined Sage this fall as the new program coordinator for the M.S. in Health Services Administration, and Robeson will hire two more faculty members for fall 2009.

“We’re very excited to have Kim Fredericks on board. She is the ‘complete player’. She has a terminal degree, is strong in the classroom, truly values interaction with the students, and is also a researcher who publishes regularly,” Robeson said. “That’s my idea of what a professor should be: someone who not only transmits knowledge, but has a hand in generating new knowledge in their field.”

Robeson began his career as a stockbroker, until the market crash of 1987 precipitated a career change. He had a stint in banking as an investment advisor, then went into manufacturing. He started as a production supervisor for American National Can, which supplied packaging to Coca Cola, and learned a great deal about process engineering.

The company sent him to open a plant in Mexico and provide quality assurance. “That was probably the most important job of my career,” Robeson said. “I was dealing with a new language, new culture, and a new facility. Everything that could have gone wrong – did. It was a growing experience, and it changed my life.”

He was then sent to start a plant in Brazil and once again oversee the quality department. Two years later, the Brazilian currency crashed and the plant was in peril. Robeson, who was by then working on corporate benchmarking and continuous improvement efforts, returned to the Brazil plant to turn it around. “It was a bittersweet experience,” he recalls. “I had helped start the plant and trained the entire workforce, and we had to go through some very drastic measures, including layoffs, to save the plant.”

When he returned stateside, he noticed that the company was bringing in consultants with MBAs for much of the strategic work, so he decided to get an MBA himself. He enrolled at RPI, but while there, got an offer he couldn’t refuse—from Eastman Kodak Company, to work in their System Concepts Center, exploring “billionable” (high potential) business ideas for commercialization.

He finished his MBA remotely while working in the cross-disciplinary hub with chemists, product development engineers, ethnographers, and artists. “I learned a tremendous amount about new product development, and found I loved the innovation environment. Unlike cost-cutting, it isn’t about tearing down, it’s about building up, and looking for new streams of income. It’s incredibly creative.”

The experience prompted him to focus further research on innovation in large firms. He returned to RPI to pursue his Ph.D. His dissertation explored the relationship between boards of directors’ behavior at Fortune 1000 firms and the performance of innovation centers within the firms. Robeson, who has published in the Journal of Engineering and Technology Management, Research Technology Management Journal, and the Journal of High-Tech Management Research, plans to use some of his dissertation research for a book on innovation and governance.

The Gift That Keeps on Giving

The Management Department received an unexpected gift from the late Hazel Sieber Bode RSC ’39 of Johnsville, N.Y. She left her entire residual estate—of at least $1.45 million—to Sage, to support the Management Department and the Libraries. A portion of the funds have been used to create an endowment for the Management Department, which will provide funding each year for faculty development.

The first faculty member to take advantage of the gift will be Eileen Brownell, assistant professor and coordinator of the Business and Organizational Management program at Russell Sage College. She has been accepted to the Doctor of Business Administration program in Organizational Leadership at Northcentral University, and will pursue her studies online while teaching a reduced course load.
A Shared Sense of Sageness
By Dan Lundquist
Vice President of Marketing and Enrollment Management

In anticipation of its change in status to university, Jeanne Neff invited me to come to Sage and work with the Sage family to help raise the institution’s visibility. Jeanne said, “Go out and get around, talk to as many people as you can — as many different people — and see what you discover about Sage’s identity.”

My arrival last February coincided with the introduction of a revamped web presence, and a great deal of thought had gone into rolling out the site. As we planned e-mail blasts, press releases, and events on both the Albany and Troy campuses, someone said “Hey, if we were going to buy the best education URL possible it would be SAGE.EDU.” It was a eureka moment as the hidden-in-plain-sight power of our name dawned on people:

sage

noun:
1. a profoundly wise person; a person famed for wisdom.
2. someone venerated for the possession of wisdom, judgment, and experience.

adjective:
3. wise, judicious, or prudent: sage advice.

At the same time my meetings with faculty, students, staff, alumni, guidance counselors, and others (local waiters, newspaper editors, stockbrokers, writers) continued. And it was clear that Sage’s “DNA” went beyond the dictionary meaning. My quest to help define a Sage identity really became focused on one question: “What is Sageness?”

My findings surprised me. First of all I discovered that virtually everyone in the Capital District has somewhere between zero to three degrees of separation from Sage, whether Russell Sage, Sage College of Albany, JCA, Sage After Work, or Sage Graduate School. Sage is connected.

For most, Sage is viewed as a high-quality private college. Some viewed it as elite and inaccessible, while others viewed it as a “good college,” either appreciatively or dismissively.

The closer people’s connection to Sage — to any part of Sage — the stronger and more positive their views. Faculty, students, staff, and many alumni speak of the place with passion. Faculty come to Sage to change lives. Students say Sage changed their lives. The theme of “lift” and enrichment never varied. It was almost as if people would hold their hand up and say “I started here” and then raise their arm up and say “and Sage helped me get here.”

Sage helps change lives. The faculty — to a person — say Sage students own their success. Faculty see themselves as mentors, friends, helpers, facilitators. Sage is about growth, experimenting, risk-taking, and surprises.

Of course I have heard much of this about many colleges. But in 30 years — at large Ivy League universities and small liberal arts colleges — I have never, ever heard the same themes echoed by so many people. Many stories and unique experiences; one sense of Sageness: a very personal place with a genuine, time-proven record of changing lives.

It doesn’t take much to ignite the passion of Sageness, and this period of transition that is engaging so many in the Sage family is a testimony to the potential power of Sageness.
The Power of Sage.edu

New website and visibility campaign elevate Sage’s stature in region

to-the-minute news. The front page sports a clean, modern look with more useful resources (including links to Campus Cruiser and Sage Advisor, the College’s e-mail and online registration sites) and an admission portal where prospective students can create an online profile, browse, build and share their “My Sage” page of classes and clubs they’re interested in.

The site was developed by Albany marketing and communications design firm Zone 5, in collaboration with Sage’s Office of Communications. “Historically, University web sites have been static, much less dynamic than competitive commercial sites,” said Paul Fahey, COO/director of marketing strategy for Zone 5. “We’ve cross-pollinated ideas that work for our commercial clients in a way that really captures the friendly and academically rewarding atmosphere at Sage. I am certain the new site will help Sage connect with new students, new friendships and new opportunities.”

The website has also grown as a resource for alumni looking to reconnect with beloved professors, former classmates, even the intellectual energy that permeates college campuses – physical and virtual.

A new blog site, blogs.sage.edu, encourages faculty, staff, students and alumni to showcase the community’s diverse interests and expertise.

“The goal of the new website was to offer members of the Sage community more ways to interact, and for people outside our campuses to learn more about Sage – and want to come join Sage,” said Kevin Hanselman, webmaster for The Sage Colleges.

Tactics for “giving the curriculum a voice” via interactive elements that feature faculty experts on specific topics for targeted audiences (e.g., a web seminar on sports nutrition for high school coaches) are in the works. Well-conceived and strategically delivered, “webinars” can build Sage’s reputation outside the immediate region while promoting Sage’s strongest academic programs.

Making a Splash

The visibility campaign is already helping to attract a larger student body, and is building pride among alumni, students, faculty and employees. That pride was caught on camera at a casting call for a television commercial last spring. The result was Sage in its most authentic form – rather than paid actors, special effects, and a stuffy script read off a teleprompter, real students, faculty and staff, lined up to share what they love about Sage with the world. Nearly 1.4 million viewers caught these commercials during prime time television shows. (Check them out now by visiting http://youtube.com and searching for “Sage Casting Call” and “The New Sage.edu Professors.”)

In April, as the “Spring Splash” campaign’s television commercials were hitting the air, print ads in regional media and billboards flanking the most traveled highways in New York’s Capital Region reinforced the buzz about Sage. The timing was deliberate. April is when prospective undergraduate students are making their final decisions about where to enroll, and when high school juniors are gearing up for senior year and considering which colleges to apply to. A second, more focused campaign this fall, when those high school seniors were narrowing down their college options, helped Sage remain on the top of their minds.

Engaged Community

“The Sage Colleges is a learning community where everyone is giving their all to stay ahead in their field,” said Dan Lundquist, interim vice president for marketing and enrollment management. “The community needed to communicate its message about people at their best quickly, dramatically, everywhere.”

That message — “Smart. Dynamic. Engaged.” — gets to the heart of Sage and was captured in vibrant images by nationally ranked professional photographer Jason Jones during a photo shoot on both campuses. The pictures pop off the pages of the recruitment literature produced by Robert Rytter and Associates, complement materials designed by Sage’s Office of Communications, and brighten the screen at Sage.edu.

You can see for yourself by visiting the new Sage.edu today. Watch the video clips, post a comment on a blog, and then help spread the word about Sage, a well-kept secret no more.
Keeping It New

Sage’s distinctive combination of innovation and practicality marks new academic programs
By addressing workforce needs in the Capital Region and beyond; responding to employers’ demands for employees who can work creatively and collaboratively, and communicate effectively; and offering scheduling options that allow students to meet their personal goals while balancing professional and family responsibilities, these academic programs—and others like them—are making a Sage degree even more attractive to college and graduate school-bound students, and their employers.

Science-Based Strategies for Educating Children with Autism

Rising numbers of autism and autism spectrum disorders show there is a need for teachers with training in autism in general, and especially in one of its most lauded treatment plans, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Sage is answering that need with a new program in the Graduate School that leads to a Master of Science in Autism and ABA.

“ABA is a branch of psychology that has a particular frame of reference, which is that of science,” according to Professor Thomas Zane. We use the scientific method to understand human behavior. What that means practically speaking is that all behavior is influenced by the environmental variables that come immediately before and immediately after. ABA, in looking at behavior and how to change behavior, looks at antecedents and consequences.”

Dean of Continuing and Professional Studies Connell Frazer, formerly Dean of Sage’s School of Education, is very excited about the program. “It gives parents, teachers, direct care staff, and many others an effective option for helping children with autism and autism spectrum disorders,” she said.

Frazer is familiar with the territory. She has been involved in special education for 35 years, has adopted three children with special needs, and has an autistic nephew.

“It is clear to me from the research base and from personal experience, that knowledge of ABA principles and practices are a critical element in serving families and children who are affected by autism or autism spectrum disorders.”

Zane is largely responsible for the new program, which has its roots in courses he has been offering to train people as behavior analysts. Alicia Brennan’s education (BS 2004, MS in Literacy/Special Education 2006) included this coursework. In her first teaching job out of college, she worked primarily with students with autism classifications of varying degrees.

“During this time I was able to utilize some of my knowledge of Applied Behavior Analysis and special education modifications,” she said.

Brennan believes that these skills picked up at Sage make her particularly marketable. That marketability is bound to increase, as New York state moves toward requiring special education teachers to have training in autism.

The Sage master’s is the only totally online master’s degree that combines a master’s degree in ABA plus intense training in autism. Candidates for the degree will take five courses in ABA training, and four classes in autism, plus a clinical practicum.

The logistics of observing distance learning students working in clinical settings are easily maneuvered. If a board certified behavior analyst who is approved to do training can be located near the student, this person will be contracted to observe and supervise the student. Distance supervision, using either a webcam or videotapes of clinical sessions, can be used if no one is available to observe the student face to face. All methods will involve feedback from Zane.

Another advantage of the program is that students become scientific practitioners.

Thomas Zane, Associate Professor of Education
“A scientific practitioner has some criteria to judge what should be tried,” Zane said, “and then has the means of analyzing whether or not it’s working.”

Accelerated Honors Program Links Learning Across Disciplines
Russell Sage College is looking forward to greeting its first round of candidates for The Renaissance Baccalaureate. This accelerated honors program, which features a community that lives and learns together, begins in fall 2009.

More than 20 faculty members have been involved in building the program, which grew from a conversation led by Michael Dolence SCA ’71, ’77 a former trustee of The Sage Colleges.

“We put our heads together to imagine some new curricular paths that would highlight the liberal arts and Margaret Olivia Slocum Sage’s emphasis on the practical arts while, at the same time, appealing to prospective students,” said Professor Sybillyn Jennings of the Psychology Department.

Eventually, this conversation expanded to embrace interdisciplinary studies, and present them in a condensed fashion, which many students are choosing.

“A lot of what we do here at RSC is trying to show students the interconnectedness of learning,” said Sharon Robinson, dean of Russell Sage College, describing how the summer reading for entering students in 2008 is March, the Geraldine Brooks novel that shows the father’s perspective in the classic, Little Women. The book ties in with the Creative and Performing Arts Department’s fall theatre production of Little Women.

The Renaissance Baccalaureate is, in a sense, a concentration of school-wide efforts to link learning across disciplines. Professors Jennings and David Baecker echoed this thought. The two collaborated with other faculty on a semester long series of classes and events, including the play Mirror Mirror, which studied women’s body images and culminated in “Body Reflections,” a day of interdisciplinary workshops for mothers and daughters.

Renaissance Baccalaureate students will begin their schooling two weeks prior to the start of their first semester with a one-credit
introduction to interdisciplinary study. The interdisciplinary nature of the program will not be confined to a traditional academic day, as students will live together for at least the first year and a half of their education.

“Lots of experiences will spill over outside of the classroom,” said Dean Sharon Robinson. “The summer after their first year will be a 15-credit general education experience called Sage on the Hudson, and all the work will revolve around the Hudson River. They’ll use the primary sources at the Rensselaer County Historical Society, and there will be trips to literary places, and to look at Hudson River School paintings. That sounds to me like one of the most exciting aspects of this. We’ll stop to sleep, but otherwise they’ll be doing things that contribute to this interdisciplinary experience.”

At least five instructors will teach the singular, multi-faceted and integrated course, including English, History, Biology, Theatre and Art. Baecker, Jennings and Robinson are all excited to teach in the program.

“It’s a new look at general education,” said Professor David Salomon, chair of English & Modern Languages. “The real signature part is the summers.”

The summer after the second year is an opportunity to do an internship or a research project. Right now, majors in Environmental Sciences and Policy and American Studies are offered in the program, but this three-year funnel will accommodate other majors as well. “A number of us have long thought about using the Hudson River as the centerpiece for a general education experience,” said Dean Robinson.

The Renaissance Baccalaureate seems the perfect table for this flower of learning to bloom.

Technology Centered Writing Degree Blends Classroom, Online Instruction

Sage’s new Professional Writing Program kicks off with some significant firsts. Although many colleges in the region offer degrees in communications and English, this is the first undergraduate degree program in professional writing in the Capital District. This is also groundbreaking for The Sage Colleges, in that it is the first program developed exclusively for working adults looking to continue their education beyond a two-year degree.

“We found our students are really interested in having the classroom experience and complementing it with online learning,” said Kevin Stoner, dean of Sage College of Albany, offering a window on the research that went into the program’s development.

“We tried to take the temperature of the prospective audience by talking to the folks who do this, looking at what jobs show up in ads, and seeing what kind of skills were being sought,” said Professor David Salomon, chair of English & Modern Languages.

Early in the process, an advisory group was assembled to consult on the curriculum design. “As a local professional writer and Sage alumna,” said Barbara Russell, who got her B.A. in English from Russell Sage and her M.S. from RPI in Technical Writing, “I was invited to attend a meeting in November 2006 to provide advice about what major competencies the program should cover, what types of classes should be offered, what professional writing opportunities are available regionally, and how

and to whom to market such a program. It was an exciting and productive brainstorming session for all involved, I believe.”

Russell has taught English at Hudson Valley Community College, and worked as a writer, editor and manager in the pharmaceutical and contract research industries for 20 years. Her many layers of experience means that she is well versed in what is expected of working writers.

The Professional Writing Program will offer a bachelor of science degree and a certificate in professional writing. The certificate should be appealing for professional writers who want to brush up on the basics, and study technology centered coursework. Students who begin the program with 60 college credits could complete it in a year and a half, thanks to an accelerated format, in which all of the core requirements are taught in 7-week modules. Courses are offered in a blended fashion that combines classroom and online learning opportunities.

A survey course called Writing in the Profession will examine the role of a professional writer within different disciplines. Writing and Presentations covers how to think about the writing process to suit tools such as PowerPoint and web-based multimedia, and how to articulate ideas in front of large groups. Other topics include grant writing, and beginning and advanced editing and technical writing. By presenting theories, and opportunities to put such thoughts into action, the program will build a strong toolbox for writers.

Multidisciplinary Learning Prepares Students for Creative, Collaborative Work

Sage College of Albany is introducing a new backbone to its curriculum, called Innovation Thinking.

“Innovative thinking could mean just mere cleverness, but what we’re talking about is innovation, something brand new and a commitment to adaptability and nimbleness,” said SCA’s Dean Kevin Stoner.

Innovation Thinking was inspired by Stanford University’s concept called Design Thinking. Design Thinking, a term now trademarked by Stanford, is used in a variety of professional and academic environments, and refers to applying the principles of design to any

that they have to make to focus them on the team process,” Bienkowski said.

Students have worked in small groups to make a newspaper chair that would support Bienkowski, and balloons that fly over the administration building. While the projects themselves are challenging, Bienkowski also demands an unconventional approach to problem solving.

“When I started having people in teams,” Bienkowski said, “I didn’t want to create a tiny little top-down structure. I had the idea of saying, I don’t want to have a leader. It started out as kind of an experiment, and it has worked consistently very well. The teams have been surprised that the four of them were coming up with solutions that any one of them would never be able to do.”

Both Stoner and Bienkowski reported that one student had a dramatic response to the process. A manager in a field that is very hierarchical, this student tried to behave within her group as she did at her workplace. When she saw that the group functioned better without a leader, she brought this idea to her staff, and asked them for solutions.

“What the workplace demands,” said Dean Stoner, “is an understanding of the deep commitment that community brings with it, that it’s not just taking, it’s giving too. These are components that if they are not taught intentionally, we know students emerge from college without them.”

With such thinking behind it, Innovation Thinking could grow to be the hallmark of a Sage education.
Jeanne and Ed Neff receive the Trustees Community Leadership Award from Board Chair Donna Robinson Esteves RSC ’70

The Sage Colleges Board of Trustees join Jeanne Neff

Jeanne and Ed Neff receive the Trustees Community Leadership Award from Board Chair Donna Robinson Esteves RSC ’70

The Sagettes

Chet Opalka, Walter Robb, Anne Gruver Robb RSC ’51

Alumnae Andrea Langford ’97, Ronnye Berg Shamam ’64, Helen Rodriguez Burmaster ’78, Mary Ann Oppenheimer ’67, Paula Bentley, June Price ’43, Dean Connell Frazer, Hollis Dorman ’74

Joan Coomes Gicca RSC ’54, Susan C. Scrimshaw, Donna Robinson Esteves RSC ’70, Carolyn Stevenson Bedford ’51, Richard Esteves, Francis Gicca, Sarah Slingerland, Frank Slingerland, Pat Bedford

Scenes from the Annual Recognition Dinner

Celebrating the generosity of Sage’s donors, honoring Jeanne Neff’s legacy at Sage and Jeanne and Ed Neff’s contributions to the community, and welcoming Susan Scrimshaw’s leadership for the future.
Think you know Sage? Think again.

Smart. Dynamic. Engaged.

Meet the new Sage.
There’s something exciting happening at Sage. Bold programs. Diverse opportunities. Close-knit communities. It’s who we’ve always been, just better.

Whether you’re a high school senior unsure about your future or a junior just getting started on your college search, we think you should take a look at Sage. Already have? Well, maybe it’s time to look again.

Sage programs.
Providing great opportunities and outcomes.

Sage offers a tremendous variety of academic programs. We prepare our graduates for careers in education, business, health care, the arts, and public service.

Sage has a number of accelerated programs that allow students to graduate in three years, often leading right to graduate/professional studies. We encourage all students to study at their own pace.

Our extracurricular offerings include a growing number of intercollegiate sports, available to both women and men.

Affordable education.
Without having to sacrifice quality.

Sage is committed to making a high-quality private education affordable. We provide strong financial aid options, including our new Vision Grants, so that college can be a reality for more students.

Additionally, we work as partners with our students and families to insure sustained affordability. To learn more about this program, we encourage you to schedule a free “Sage Sense” meeting at either our Albany or Troy campuses.

Go away to college.
And stay close to home.

Living away from home can be an exciting part of the college experience – one that many Sage students enjoy. The residences at our Russell Sage campus are located in the picturesque brownstone section of Troy and offer a variety of comfortable and affordable living options. In fact, many Sage students find going away to college doesn’t mean traveling far... or paying a lot extra.

Call 518-244-2217 (Troy) or 518-292-1730 (Albany) or visit us on the web at sage.edu