To the Science Division Faculty and Staff:

The Fall 2006 semester came to a close with the usual end-of-the-year fanfare and celebration. The Science Division was among the last to hold its Holiday Party on December 21, 2006. It was well attended and filled with music, food and good cheer, as we recalled some of the year’s accomplishments and toasted to even more successes in the coming year. As we return to the classroom, I would like to wish everyone a healthy and Happy 2007 and a very successful new Spring Semester.

Middle States Update

Preparation for the Middle States accreditation visit dominated the intersession period, and it will continue to dominate our efforts during the spring semester. We officially welcomed Ms. A.E. Dreyfuss as our Science Division Assessment Coordinator. Many of you know A.E. already from her tireless and dedicated involvement in the Peer Led Team Learning Project, her Workshop leader training courses, and most recently, her participation in the CCNY/MSKCC Partnership program. A.E. is now fully on board to work with the Division in its preparation for Middle States. Please stop by to greet her if you have not yet done so.

The Spring 2007 semester will be our opportunity to perform a full Learning Outcomes Assessment cycle before the Middle States visit in spring of 2008. The Departments have prepared their Mission Statements, their goals and objectives, and their learning outcomes. They have also proposed assessment tools that they will implement in their courses. The course syllabi have been written with the assessment process in mind. As the semester begins the departments will collect data to establish whether their learning goals are being met, whether they are appropriate, and whether the assessment tools are effective. At the end of the year, they will make adjustments as suggested by the results, and repeat the cycle once more in the fall of 2007, before the external team’s visit. Meanwhile, we continue to examine all these documents and adjust them to reflect who we are, and how we best serve our students.

Building News

We are also preparing for a semester of construction and renewal in Marshak and on the South Campus.

The new Animal Care facility is expected to be ready for occupancy in mid-March. At this time, housing of animals will be moved out of Marshak, and the planned renovations of Marshak involving the façade will begin. Actual work on the façade’s concrete will probably start in late May or early June. Although some disruptions will undoubtedly arise, much care by CUNY, DASNY and the City College administration is being spent on planning to minimize any harmful effects on the research and instructional activities in our building.

Discussions and preparations for the South Campus construction of the new CCNY and CUNY science buildings are also progressing. Vibration tests were recently conducted to
evaluate the impact that excavation will have on the research activities of the New York Structural Biology Center. The results will be available in March. Modifications to the current plans may then be considered. Meetings of the contractors with researchers will re-start this spring as we embark on the design Phase.

New PC Lab in Marshak

Located in the lower level of Marshak, in rooms MR 044/045, the new Science computer lab boasts 40 PC’s, two projection screens, two wireless LCD projectors, and a wired lectern. It will be used for PC-based instructional classes, such as SCI20000, but will also be open to students everyday from 9 AM to 7 PM for general computer use. The new facility replaces the cramped PC lab in room 602A, which will be converted to a research lab for a Homeland Security project.

MR-2 is ‘Smart’

Installation of a new Audio Visual system in the large amphitheater MR-2 (formerly J-2) has been completed. The 300-seat auditorium is now a “smart” classroom, with two large projection screens, two wireless projectors and speakers, all of them controlled from a lectern equipped with computer, document camera, and microphone. Instructors can either project the same image on both screens or project two different images simultaneously (e.g., a PowerPoint slide on one screen and handwritten notes on the other).

Research News

Two research conferences were held this past week on our campus, organized by Science Division faculty:

- The “2nd Annual New York Structural Biology Discussion Group Winter Meeting”, arranged to take place on our campus by Professor Tom Haines of the Chemistry department, was held on January 24 in the Aronow Theater and the Faculty Dining Room. This was one of two biannual meetings held by the New York-based research consortium. The increased involvement of our campus faculty in this community was evident by our being able to host this event on our facilities. Over 200 scientists and students convened to discuss the most recent advances in the field of structural biology. Professor Ron Koder of our Physics department was one of the invited speakers.

- A Mini-Workshop entitled “Yang-Mills Theories Nonperturbative Aspects,” organized by Professors VP Nair and Alexios Polychronakos of our Physics department, with colleagues in other CUNY campuses and institutions, took place on January 25-27 in MR 418. Physicists and Mathematicians from around the world convened to discuss the recent progress in the solution of this “Millennium Problem” in Mathematics known as the Yang-Mills Theories. Professor VP Nair’s recent contributions to this research were among the important results presented.

Maria Tamargo, Dean