Diemand-Yauman selected to receive Pyne Honor Prize

Ruth Stevens

Princeton senior Connor Diemand-Yauman has been named the winner of the University’s 2010 Moses Taylor Pyne Honor Prize, the highest general distinction conferred on an undergraduate.

He will be recognized at a luncheon during Alumni Day on campus Saturday, Feb. 20.

The Pyne Honor Prize, established in 1921, is awarded to the senior who has most clearly manifested excellent scholarship, strength of character and effective leadership. Previous recipients include the late Princeton President Emeritus Robert F. Goheen ’40, former U.S. Sen. Paul Sarbanes ’54 and current U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor ’76.

Diemand-Yauman, who is from Chesterland, Ohio, is majoring in psychology. He is writing a senior thesis that his adviser expects will be published in a top-tier journal. He has been accepted for presentation at the fourth annual International Conference on Psychology to be held in May in Athens, Greece.

“Connor’s independent work is among the upper echelon of theses that Princeton students produce,” said Danny Oppenheimer, associate professor of psychology and public affairs, who is his adviser. “It is a legitimate piece of scholarship in its own right that has the potential to be very influential in both psychology and education, and has both theoretical and real-world importance.”

Faculty members have described Diemand-Yauman’s contributions to their classes as “insightful, sensitive and probing.” In a letter of support, Ronald Comer, lecturer on continuing appointment in psychology, wrote that he is “friendly, engaging, remarkably energetic, caring of others and truly committed to helping others” and that he “listens carefully and sensitively and, at the same time, presents his own points in a very articulate and caring manner.”

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A broader palette
Steward pictures museum that ‘sets the standard’

Jennifer Greenstein Altman

On a warm Thursday night in September, crowds of students, staff and community members filled the Princeton University Art Museum. There were Indian samosas and chocolate-covered strawberries to snack on, lattes made to order and several of the University’s a cappella groups on hand to crown soulful melodies while visitors roamed through the museum’s galleries. In all 2,400 people visited the museum that evening to celebrate the new extended hours on Thursdays, delighting James Steward, the new director of the museum.

“It was unparalleled in the history of this museum,” Steward said. His next challenge, he said, is “making sure they come back.”

Steward, who took over as head of the museum last April, is embracing a host of strategies to enhance the museum’s visibility and accessibility — not just on and around campus, but within wider art circles.

“We have one of the greatest but perhaps lesser known art collections in the nation,” he said. “We have an exceptional opportunity to make the museum an essential part of the lives of our students and broader community.”

Steward, a specialist in 18th- and 19th-century European art and culture, came to Princeton from the University of Michigan, where he served for 11 years as director of the Museum of Art and a faculty member. Before that he was chief curator at the Berkeley Art Museum at the University of California. At Princeton, Steward is a lecturer with the rank of professor in the Department of Art and Archaeology, an Old Dominion Faculty Fellow of the Council of the Humanities and co-chair of the Campus Art Commission, which oversees public art at the University.

“James Steward arrived at a challenging time, in the midst of a budgetary crunch, but he has been tremendously creative about designing

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What’s inside?

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Evergreen beauty of campus gardens thrives year round 8
New South to be renovated for inclusion of arts programs

Ruth Stevens

ew South, the location of adminis-
tative offices over the past 40 years, will be renovated in 2010 to also become the home of some academic functions associated with the Lewis Center for the Arts. Scheduled to begin this month, the project will include the relocation of the Program in Creative Writing from 185 Nassau St. to New South as well as the creation of facilities for the pro-
grams in theater and dance. The first-floor space was made available when Princeton’s finance and treasury operations moved from 701 Carnegie Cen-
ter in fall of 2009.

New South, built in 1963, was designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes, who went on to design the Walker Art Center in Min-
neapolis, the Dallas Museum of Art and the IBM corporate headquarters in Manhattan. One of the University’s first high-
rise buildings, it has two stories below ground and seven above. The modern structure, made of glass and concrete, originally was open on the first floor except for the main entrance. The space was enclosed in 1982 and turned into additional offices.

The first-floor open design originally had high ceilings, which make the area well-suited to the gallery-like spaces and warmup stations that will be constructed, according to Jean Crider, project manager in the Office of Design and Construction. The first-floor lobby also will be renovated to provide a larger and more attrac-
tive entrance to the building.

The Program in Creative Writing will occupy the sixth floor. The space will include offices, three classrooms and a library.

Between the beginning of construc-
tion and fall 2010, several other moves will take place in the building. The Office of Human Resources will relo-
 cate from the first floor to the second and third floors, with the reception area stationed on the second floor. The TigerCard Office will move from the A level to the third floor, which also will contain storage space for staff members from the Office of Information Technol-
ogy who need temporary offices while on campus from 701 Carnegie Center.

The Office of Research and Project Administration and the Office of Technol-
ogy Licensing will remain where they are, but will be relocating some personnel on the fourth floor. On the fifth floor, the housing depart-
ment will take up residence, moving from its current space in the MacMillan Building. The seventh floor will remain

as it is with human resources training rooms and a conference room.

Transportation and Parking Ser-
vices will remain on the A level, and will be joined by the former baggage area and renovations at Ivy Club on Prospect Avenue.

C r i d e r s a i d t h e p l a n i s t o r e s e a u t h e r f u r n i t u r e i n a d d i t i o n t o g l o w i n g t o p o r t s u s t a i n a b i l i t y e f f o r t s.

The renovation and move will put the arts facilities in close proxim-
it y to the proposed Arts and Transit Neighborhood on the western edge of the campus. The neighborhood would be the home of the Lewis Center administrative offices as well as the requisite new teaching, rehearsal, and performance spaces. New public plazas and improved traffic circulation would complement these new facilities with a new New Jersey Transit Dinky station. The University currently is seeking zoning approvals and funding to move ahead with the project.

Lewis Center programs will con-
tinue to occupy the space vacated by the Program in Creative Writing at 185 Nassau St., which will remain an active creative and performing arts building with facilities including the Hagan Dance Studio, the Matthews Acting Studio and the Lucas Gallery.

This architect’s rendering shows the renovated first-floor lobby that will provide a larger and more attractive entrance to New South.

Board approves two new faculty appointments

David Bell, who most recently served as dean of the faculty of the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences and the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Johns Hopkins University, has been named a professor of history at Princeton. The Board of Trustees recently approved Bell’s appointment, which was effective Feb. 1, 2010, along with the appointment of Stephen F. Fueglistaler as an assistant professor of geosciences for a term of three and one half years, effective March 1, 2010.

Bell, a graduate of Harvard University, earned his Ph.D. from Princeton in 1991. A historian of early modern France, he has written the award-winning books “The First Total War: Napoleon’s Europe and the Birth of War As We Know It,” “The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800” and “Lawyers and Citizens: The Making of a Political Elite in Old Regime France.” He also writes fre-
quent ly for general-interest publications including The New Republic.

Bell has earned fellowships from the American Council for Learned Soci-
eties, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Woodward Wilson International Center for scholars, among others.

Bell became a faculty member at Johns Hopkins in 1996 and was the director of the faculty of the Krieger School in 2007. He previ-
ously spent five years on the faculty at Yale University.
Three faculty transfer to emeritus status

Three faculty members were transferred to emeritus status in recent action by the Board of Trustees. They are: David P. Billington, the Gordon Y.S. Wu Professor of Engineering and professor of civil and environmental engineering, effective Feb. 1, 2010; and James Wel, professor of chemical engineering, effective Feb. 1, 2010.

Billington joined the Princeton faculty in 1960. His courses combining the study of engineering with an exploration of aesthetic and social values — including “Structures and the Urban Environment” and “Engineering in the Modern World” — have been some of the most popular among engineering and non-engineering students for decades.

Billington earned his BSE from Princeton in 1950 and then spent the following two years in Belgium on a Fulbright Fellowship, studying postwar engineering innovations. Upon returning to the United States, he worked as a structural designer of bridges and buildings for Robert & Schaedler Co. in New York from 1952 to 1960. His research at Princeton has focused on the engineering of large structures, including the design and rehabilitation of bridges, thin shell concrete structures, tall buildings and concrete dams; often with an emphasis on the intersection of efficiency and beauty in structural design and the transformative influence engineers have had on American society.

He served as director of Princeton’s Program in Architecture and Engineering from 1990 to 2008 and was named the first Gordon Y.S. Wu Professor of Engineering in 1996.

Billington has earned numerous honors for his scholarship and teaching, including three Engineering Council honors for his scholarship and teaching, professor of Engineering in 1996.

Wel earned his PhD from the University of Wisconsin—Madison in 1987, then returned to Princeton as a research scholar in civil engineering in 1988. He joined the faculty in 1989 and is now professor of chemical engineering, with a joint appointment in the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering. He is also the faculty director of BioSolarH2 and the director of the Princeton flows for the production of biofuels from renewable sources. He is the principal investigator of BioSolarH2, a multi-institutional research center focusing on microorganisms on solar fuels. He has served as an advisor to the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering and federal agencies on solar-based renewable energy conversion.

Wel’s research involves the design of highly efficient biofuel conversion systems from algae to biohydrogen to biofuel. His research has been funded by the Department of Energy, the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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UPcoming

Lecture: “Beyond the Books: A Conversation With Professor Cornel West About His Faith”
4:30 p.m. Feb. 16
McCosh 10

Concert: “Tale-Telling”
Composers’ Ensemble
8 p.m. Feb. 16
Taplin Auditorium, Fine Hall

Lecture: “Reflections on the Evolution of Morality”
Christine Korsgaard, Harvard University
4:30 p.m. Feb. 18
101 McCormick Hall

Lecture: “The Hippocampus and Memory”
Lynn Nadel, University of Arizona
12:30 p.m. Feb. 26
0-5-6 Green Hall

Concert: “Phases”
Triple B Dance Company
8 p.m. Feb 26-27
Frist Campus Center theater

Concert: “Stolen Moments: The Music of Oliver Nelson”
University Concert Jazz Ensemble
8 p.m. Feb. 27
Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

For more, visit <www.princeton.edu/main/news/events>

The Lewis Center for the Arts will present its 2010 Spring Dance Festival Friday through Sunday, Feb. 19-21, at the Berlind Theatre. This year’s dance festival marks internationally renowned choreographer Susan Marshall’s first season at Princeton as director of the Program In Dance. The concert features more than 50 students from a range of academic departments performing in new student work, three world premieres by guests and faculty, Twyla Tharp’s historic “The Fugue” and Mark Morris’ signature “Polka” from “Grand Duo.” At right, senior Katrina Wong performs “Grand Duo.”

Republican Party head Steele to hold dialogue with Glaude

Michael Steele, chair of the Republican National Committee (RNC), will participate in a conversation with Eddie Glaude, chair of Princeton’s Center for African American Studies, at 4:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 22, in McCosh 50.

Steele was elected the first African American leader of the Republican Party in January 2009. The discussion will cover topics such as his vision for the nation, his understanding of race in the 21st century, the complex intersection of race and poverty, and the role of partisanship in Washington. “Whether one agrees with Michael Steele or not, his chairmanship of the RNC is historic, and his voice is shaping the course of our nation in these challenging times,” Glaude said.

Blogger, author Sullivan to speak

Andrew Sullivan, the “Daily Dish” blogger and a senior editor at The Atlantic, will present a lecture on “The Politics of Homosexuality” at 8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 18, in McCosh 50.


The talk is designated as a Stafford Little Lecture sponsored by the University Public Lecture Series.

‘Uncreative writing’ is lecture topic

“Uncreative Writing: Unoriginal Genius in the Age of the Internet” is the title of a talk by poet Kenneth Goldsmith scheduled for 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 15, in the Stewart Theater, 185 Nassau St.

In his lecture, Goldsmith will argue that writing needs to redefine itself to adapt to a new environment in which an unprecedented amount of text is digitally available.

Goldsmith is the 2009-10 Anschnitt Distinguished Fellow in the Program in American Studies, which is sponsoring the lecture. He is teaching an undergraduate seminar on “Uncreative Writing” this spring.


Publishers Weekly has described his writing as “some of the most exhaustive and beautiful collage work yet produced in poetry.” Goldsmith is a lecturer in English at the University of Pennsylvania, where he is a senior editor of PennSound, an online poetry archive.
Alumni Day features lectures, awards and family events

Alumni and parents of current undergraduates will converge on campus for a day of lectures, award ceremonies and other events Saturday, Feb. 20.

Highlights of the annual Alumni Day and Parents’ Program, coordinated by the Office of the Alumni Association, include:

- A lecture at 9:15 a.m. by U.S. Army Gen. David Petraeus, the James Madison Medalist. Petraeus, who earned his master’s in public affairs and a Ph.D. from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs in 1985 and 1987, respectively, oversees the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as commander of the U.S. Central Command. He will provide an “Update From the U.S. Central Command” in Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall.
- An event at 10:30 a.m. by Jim Leach, the Woodrow Wilson Award recipient. Leach, a member of Princeton’s class of 1964, was a long-time U.S. congressman and now chairs the National Endowment for the Humanities. He will speak in Richardson Auditorium on “ Civility in a Fractured Society.”
- A 12:15 p.m. Alumni Association luncheon and awards ceremony in Jadwin Gymnasium.
- A 3 p.m. service of remembrance in the University Chapel to honor deceased Princeton alumni, students and University faculty and staff members.
- A 5:30 p.m. reception in Procter Hall of the Graduate College with Petraeus hosted by the Association of Princeton Graduate Alumni and the Wilson School.

The Alumni Day and Parents’ Program is not open to the general public. Faculty, staff and students are invited to attend the lectures, panels, workshops, luncheon and service of remembrance. Registration is required.

During the day, a variety of presentations are planned, ranging from retiring engineering professor David Billington’s recollections of 50 years of teaching at Princeton to University provost and legal scholar Christopher Eisgruber speaking on “How to Pick a Supreme Court Justice.”

For a complete schedule and registration information, visit alumni.princeton.edu/main/go/back/alumni_day/ or call the Office of the Alumni Association at 258-1900.

Registrants must bring event confirmation forms and identification for admittance to events at Richardson Auditorium and Jadwin Gymnasium and for other Alumni Day programming. Seating will be on a first-come, first-served basis. No backpacks, large bags or umbrellas will be allowed in Richardson. Bag check will be available in Maclean House. Photography and audio recording are prohibited in Richardson.

The Princeton University Art Museum is hosting a Feb. 25-28 exhibition produced by Artistic Realization Technologies (A.R.T.), showcasing paintings by artists with physical disabilities. A.R.T. utilizes innovative techniques to help individuals express their creativity despite physical restrictions. Titled “A New Way of Seeing,” the exhibition will include works such as “X-Plosion” by Raphael Garcia.

ONLINE: More information www.artrealization.org

The 20th anniversary of the end of apartheid in South Africa and Nelson Mandela’s release from prison is the focus of an exhibition through Feb. 28 at the Fields Center for Equality and Cultural Understanding, 58 Prospect Ave. Titled “A Personal Account of Cape Town in 1990,” the exhibition features photographs and newspapers from the private collection of Hugh Price, a lecturer in the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.

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new initiatives that will bring exciting exhibitions and more visitors to the museum,” said Princeton Provost Christopher Eisgruber.

Steward believes that, because it is based at a university, the museum can — and must — take more risks. “We don’t have to simply show contemporary artists taken up by the marketplace,” he said. “We can be more issues-driven, cross-disciplinary and global in our reach. I expect us to set the standard, to be audacious and to develop new approaches to installation and interpretation.”

The museum is embarking on an effort to transform the way it arranges and displays its collections; to involve more faculty and prominent figures in the art world; and to partner with the broader arts community, including international partnerships. Steward would like to double the museum’s number of visitors in the next few years.

Mixing things up

The museum’s diverse and encyclopedic collections comprise 72,000 objects, reaching from ancient civilizations to contemporary art, housed at McCormick Hall on campus. Its art of the ancient Americas — frequently assessed as the best such collection in the United States — has thousands of exceptional objects not currently on display that will be rotated more actively through the galleries in the coming years, Steward said. The museum’s collection of Chinese scroll paintings is one of the richest in North America, with works dating from many centuries, some very fragile. The University’s Charles Willson Peale portrait of George Washington — known as the Princeton portrait — is one of the iconic images of American art and is often on view at the art museum.

The museum’s 27,000 fine art photographs make it one of the leading repositories for photography in the world, Steward said. Another treasure is the personal archive of photographer Minor White, which was donated to the museum in 1976. The collection has 10,000 pieces and includes works by many of the most important photographers of the first half of the 20th century. To bring heightened visibility to the museum’s assets, Steward is planning a multiyear project is complete, anyone will be able to search the collections online — enhancing research access as well as the collections’ visibility. Steward also will add year-round programming, beginning this summer with a groundbreaking exhibition called “Starburst” that looks at color photography from the 1970s. In the past exhibitions only changed during the academic year. “I want there to be something compelling in our temporary exhibition.

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—James Steward

The museum’s Medieval, Byzantine and Islamic galleries, closed for several years for renovations, will reopen this month with new interpretive tools to greatly expand the museum’s approach to explaining objects. Here, Steward surveyed the galleries’ reconstructions.

By the numbers

- Number of pieces in the museum’s collections: 72,000.
- Number of fine art photographs in the collection: 27,000.
- Square footage of the galleries: 29,000.
- Average number of exhibitions featured annually: 12.
- Pieces loaned annually to other museums: 100.
- Projected number of visitors from July 2009 to June 2010: 108,000.
- Number of schoolchildren who visit yearly: 8,500.
- Visits by Princeton University students annually for precepts: 29,000.
- Docents who volunteer to give tours, teach children and great visitors: 90.
- Visitors to the museum’s website at <artmuseum.princeton.edu> each month: 10,000.
- Recipients of the museum’s biweekly e-newsletter, which is archived at <artmuseum.princeton.edu/news/e-news-archive>: 2,000.
Embracing the community
galleries no matter what time of year a
Continued from page 6

Pyne
Continued from page 1
Those characteristics have been vital to his efforts outside of the classroom. In 2007, he and classmate Jenni Newbury codirected Disability Awareness, a group that organizes annual large-scale events to bring disabled children and their families to campus. They have trained hundreds of student volunteers to work one-on-one with the children while their parents engage with Down syndrome-related exhibitors. The full-length play he organized the Own What You Think Campaign against online gossip and anonymous char-
acters. This campaign has spread to 10 other campuses and was featured in national media, including ABC-TV’s “20/20,” PBS’s “Frontline” and Glamour magazine.
As the leader of Princeton’s 5,000 student advisory board to plan events and public prominence while updating its approach.
He also has created a 12-member student advisory board to plan events geared to students and to advise the museum on how it can play a bigger role in students’ lives.
“One of my goals is to serve every student here,” Steward said. “We want to create a sense that the museum is a place for everyone — not just an art or art history student, but an engineer or a student from another discipline.”
The museum now has a student outreach coordinator, Princeton alumna Elizabeth Lemoine, who has recruited 150 student volunteers to bring disabled children and their parents to the museum for whom this could be a destination,” he said.
Free food and beverages at some Late Thursday events draw people who may have never visited the museum before. “We have one of the greatest but perhaps lesser known art collections in the nation,” Steward said. “We have an exceptional opportunity to make the museum an essential part of the lives of our students and broader community.”

Steward
Continued from page 6
galleries no matter what time of year a visitor comes to us,” he said.
Embracing the community
One of Steward’s first priorities has been reaching out broadly to the University community, particularly to students. His first step was to keep the doors open until 10 p.m. every Thursday, launching the new hours in September with a night of live music, free food and beverages from 20 Princeton eateries. Subsequent Thursday nights have featured free screenings, musical performances and free food and coffee. Other changes already under way or being planned share the goal of the Thursday night events: boost the museum’s openness and public prominence while updating its approach.
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(panel on the treatment of indigenous art and a family day held on the plaza adjacent to the Princeton Public Library. Concerts jointly organized with the Princeton Symphony Orchestra and the Princeton Singers are planned for the spring.
Such partnerships and others cur-
rently being explored with a range of international museums, universities and research centers mean the museum can enrich its programming even in the current challenging fiscal environ-
ment, Steward said.
And he is reaching out to a variety of other audiences beyond the Univer-
sity and immediate neighbors. Each year about 100,000 people visit the museum, which charges no entrance fee. He said he would like to double the number of visitors in the next few years, noting that with 14 million resi-
dents within a 45-mile radius and an estimated 750,000 annual visitors to the Princeton campus, even that goal might be conservative.
“We want the museum to matter to a broader public, whether that is people living in the region or visitors to the community for whom this could become a destination,” he said.
Events targeting young professional-
alumni are in the works, and Steward hopes to expand an existing program that brings Trenton schoolchildren to the museum multiple times during a single year.
“Our work with third-graders in the Trenton public schools — each of whom comes to us seven times a year — offers exposure to children growing with creativity who might not otherwise come into contact with mas-
terpieces of world art, and we’d love to replicate that program for other school districts,” he said. “But first we’d have to find the funding.”
The museum has boosted its out-
reach to the public with the recent launch of an electronic newsletter as well as a Facebook page, where some 800 current fans read posts about new exhibitions, participate in identify-
the-art contests, blog about issues in the wider art world and specu-
late about the new public art to be

February 15, 2010

Photo: Carol Rigolot
Evergreen beauty of campus gardens thrives year round

Ushma Patel

The winter season brings a subdued beauty to Princeton’s campus. As the fall foliage fades, Princeton’s evergreens take on a more prominent role in coloring the landscape and adding vitality to the grounds. According to Jim Consolloy, who retired Feb. 1 after nearly 21 years as grounds manager, some of the University’s most well-traveled spaces are spectacular in winter as well as summer.

• Along the north side of the University Chapel near Firestone Library, a bench commemorates Beatrice Farrand, who served as the University’s first consulting landscaping architect from 1915 to 1943. The bench’s inscription reads, “Her love of beauty and order is everywhere visible in what she planted for our delight.” The final stanzas of Henry Wotton’s poem “The Character of a Happy Life” is carved into the stone at the foot of the bench. Three types of evergreens — American holly and Nellie Stevens holly trees, as well as spreading English yew shrubs — serve as a backdrop.

• Tucked away at the northeast corner of the chapel, the Hibben Garden features several examples of winter foliage. The garden honors John G. Hibben, who was Princeton’s president from 1912 to 1932, during the chapel’s construction. A sculpture marks the center of the garden’s red gravel, cross-shaped paths, and a limestone bench bears the inscription, “Come ye yourselves apart into a lonely place and rest a while.” The foliage includes English boxwood, Japanese little leaf holly and rhododendron trees, with sweetbox shrubs as ground cover.

• Prospect Garden maintains its beauty through the winter months. More than 30 species of conifers (some evergreens and some deciduous) exist on the property. Among the trees that line the front walkway are American elms; Carolina, Japanese and Canadian hemlock; Adcock’s and Norway spruces; Blue Atlas cedar; and a dawn redwood that is nearly 125 feet high. Some of the pines, spruce and hemlock trees enclosing the garden behind Prospect House are more than 150 years old. The plantings include boxwood hedges and symmetrical arbor vitae trees, with approximately 8,000 flower bulbs underground waiting to bloom in the spring and summer.

• The Sept. 11 memorial garden, on the west side of Chancellor Green and East Pyne Hall, was dedicated in 2003 to the 13 Princeton alumni who died in the terrorist attacks. On the blue-stone pavers, 13 bronze stars laid in a circle bear the alumni’s names and class years, and a bronze bell by artist Toshiko Takezue marks the entrance to the garden. Three evergreen trees — a towering Kashmir (deodar) cedar, a fernleaf cypress and a Rein’s dwarf bamboo with red berries.

Emeriti

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Transforming the role of the dean of Princeton’s engineering school, securing resources to grow the school and broadening the vision for engineering at the University.

Wei is a graduate of the Georgia Institute of Technology and earned his doctorate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After working for 15 years for Mobil Oil Research, he joined the faculty at the University of Delaware from 1971 to 1977. He was department head of chemical engineering at MIT from 1977 until 1991, when he was appointed dean of Princeton’s engineering school. When Wei stepped down as dean in 2002, President Tilghman lauded him for bringing a “new level of excellence” to engineering at Princeton. Since then, he has continued teaching classes on chemical reaction engineering and freshman seminars. His research has focused on chemical kinetics, catalysis, the conversion of raw materials to useful products and fuels, and chemotherapy of cancer. He has served on a number of government panels as an expert on the environmental impact of the chemical industry.

Wei’s awards and honors include the Founder’s Award, Warren K. Lewis Award and Professional Progress Award from the American Institute of Chemical Engineers and the Petroleum Chemistry Award from the American Chemical Society. He is a member of the National Academy of Engineering and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was president of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers and served as editor-in-chief of Advances in Chemical Engineering, a journal devoted to informing a general audience of major developments taking place in the field. He is the author of the books “The Structure of Chemical Processing Industries” and “Product Engineering: Molecular Structure and Properties.”

Brian Wilson