Valerie Smith named Princeton’s dean of the college

Valerie Smith, a distinguished scholar of literature who led a major expansion of Princeton’s interdisciplinary Center for African American Studies, has been named the University’s next dean of the college.

Smith’s appointment as the senior officer responsible for Princeton’s undergraduate academic program is effective July 1. She will succeed Nancy Weiss Malkiel, the longest-serving dean of the college, who will step down from that position after 24 years at the end of this academic year.

Smith is Princeton’s Woodrow Wilson Professor of Literature and a professor of English and African American studies. A specialist in African American literature who has been honored for excellence in teaching, she has spent 19 years on the Princeton faculty. From 2006 to 2009 she served as the founding director of the University’s Center for African American Studies, building on the former Program in African American Studies and carrying out the center’s mission to diffuse the study of race issues throughout Princeton’s liberal arts education by expanding the center’s curriculum and incorporating faculty from across the disciplines.

“As an eminent scholar, exceptional teacher and experienced leader, Valerie Smith is ideally suited to serve as the next dean of the college and to enrich Princeton’s commitment to undergraduate education,” said President Tilghman. “During her tenure as director of the Center for African American Studies, she forged successful collaborations with departments campuswide. In that position and in her roles as scholar and teacher, she has impressed colleagues and students with her collegial and collaborative attitude, her personal warmth and her deep understanding of Princeton’s animating values. I am delighted that she has agreed to take on the enormously important responsibilities of her new office.”

As part of its oversight of Princeton’s undergraduate curriculum, the Office of the Dean of the College is responsible for supervising the residential college system and other services and agencies designed to promote the intellectual development of undergraduates, including study abroad and fellowships. The dean of the college also oversees the administration and financial aid offices.

Provost Christopher Eisgruber, to whom Smith will report, said, “Val is just what Princeton needs: a visionary and empathetic leader who will build on the great strengths of this University’s undergraduate program and cooperate enthusiastically with faculty members, students and administrators to develop new initiatives and respond to emerging needs. She resonates with the unique synthesis of a research university and a teaching college that we have here at Princeton. I expect that she will be eager to listen to viewpoints from throughout the Princeton community and to work collaboratively with students and colleagues to define priorities for the college.”

“I am honored to have been selected to be the next dean of the college,” Smith said. “Princeton occupies a unique role as a premier research institution with a profound commitment to undergraduate education. I look forward to building on Nancy Weiss Malkiel’s distinguished legacy as dean. Both within and beyond the world of higher education we face myriad rapid and profound changes, including the impact of globalization, the rise of new media and the uncertain economic climate. I am committed to working with students, faculty, administrators and alumni both to maintain the college’s historic excellence and distinctive role within the University and to respond to these challenges thoughtfully and creatively.”

Smith was a faculty member at Princeton from 1980 to 1989; then returned to the University in 2001 after 11 years at the University of California, Los Angeles. She became director of the Program in African American Studies in 2002 and oversaw its expansion into an academic center beginning in 2006.

Continued on page 6

Football standout Culbreath inspires by overcoming disease

Jordan Culbreath, “they broke the mold.”

A senior in mechanical and aerospace engineering and a two-time All-Ivy League running back, Culbreath has fought a battle with life-threatening aplastic anemia that has become for those who know him on and off the field an inspiring story of a student-athlete’s dedication.

“Not only has he stayed positive through it all, but he’s somehow managed to be there for other people while dealing with his own issues,” said junior Arianna D’Angelo, who has been close friends with Culbreath since 2007. “As much as I try to help him, I think he’s the one helping me — helping me to realize the effect a positive attitude can have on a troubling situation.”

Culbreath has made national news headlines for a five-year journey that has been punctuated by early triumphs on the football field, a painful process of unraveling the mystery behind his rare blood disorder, and questions about how the disease would sideline both his athletic and academic careers when he had to withdraw from the University in 2009.

Continued on page 6

What’s inside?

- Keller, first tenured female professor, dies
- Board approves three faculty appointments
- Perspective on: The life of Mumbai
- New synthetic proteins can sustain life
Sociologist Suzanne Keller, who conducted pioneering research on the community in America, and was the first woman to earn a tenured faculty position at Princeton, died at age 91 on March 11 at Mercy Hospital in Miami. She was 83.

Keller, a professor emeritus of sociology, retired in 1998 after 38 years at Princeton. A dedicated teacher and mentor with an extensive range of scholarly interests, she was the author of several books, including two — published 40 years apart — that are regarded as path-breaking works in her field: “Beyond the Ruling Class: Strategic Elites in Modern Society” (1965), which is an examination of the elite power structure in America, and “Community: Pursuing the Dream, Living the Reality” (2003), an account of her three decades of close observation of a New Jersey housing community.

“Suzanne Keller leaves behind an exceptional professional and personal legacy,” said Viviana Zelizer, Princeton’s Lloyd Cotsen ’50 Professor of Sociology. “Brilliant, charismatic, generous, she was not only an expert in the study of social networks but a gifted builder of social ties. She forged enduring connections with colleagues, students and friends.

“As a scholar, Professor Keller is considered one of sociology’s most distinguished students of elites, inequality, gender and community life in the United States,” Zelizer added. “She was deeply devoted to the highest standards of scholarship. Her intellectual range was exceptionally broad; she refused the confinement of a single discipline and was at ease not only with sociology but with a variety of social science and humanities ideas.”

Zelizer said that Keller’s friend for more than 35 years, “Suzanne was a generous colleague, her intellectual influence on me was significant. Suzanne was a trailblazer throughout her career. She had the capacious intellect — she was interested in everything from architecture to housing communities to elite ties to sociology of the family to education to politics. She was knowledgeable on thousands of different subjects.”

In fall 2002, Lindsay served as a preceptor for Keller’s popular undergraduate course on “Elites, Leadership and Society,” which enrolled hundreds of Princeton students over the years.

“I loved everything about her and I loved that she was a whole person — that she was free to do things as she saw fit,” Zelizer said.

“Keller’s research and teaching topics included social stratification, social architecture, the family, community, and elites and leadership. In addition to her diverse interests within the sociology department, she played a major role in promoting women’s studies first as an academic subject and then, in 1981, as a formally constituted program. She taught the University’s first course on gender and society during the early 1970s.

“Like ‘The Man Who Came to Dinner’ was the book that came to Princeton,” she said in a 1990 interview with The Daily Princetonian student newspaper.

Nancy Weiss Malkiel, Princeton’s dean of the college and a professor of history, said, “As the first woman appointed to a tenured professorship at Princeton, Suzanne Keller holds a unique position in the history of the University. As a remarkable scholar, teacher and mentor, and a wise and generous colleague, she holds a special place in the lives and hearts of generations of Princetonians. After I joined the faculty in 1969 as one of Princeton’s first two women assistant professors, I turned to Suzanne often for guidance and support. For 40 years, I have looked up to her, learned from her and cherished her friendship.”

Undergraduate coeducation was introduced at Princeton in 1969, a year after Keller received tenure. Interviewed for a 1986 book titled “Conversations on the Character of Princeton,” she reflected upon the changes at the University during her time on the faculty: “Now there is a freer spirit, which I like better,” she said. “There is more wit, humor, less pretentiousness. It’s more improvisational.

That same spirit, colleagues and former students noted, could be attributed to Keller. She “was elegant, stylish, sophisticated, cosmopolitan and worldly,” according to Malkiel. D. Michael Lindsay, an associate professor of sociology at Rice University who earned his Ph.D. at Princeton in 2006 under Keller’s guidance, said, “I had a very deep love for her, and her intellectual influence on me was significant. Suzanne was a trailblazer throughout her career. She had the capacious intellect — she was interested in everything from architecture to housing communities to elite ties to sociology of the family to education to politics. She was knowledgeable on thousands of different subjects.”

In fall 2002, Lindsay served as a preceptor for Keller’s popular undergraduate course on “Elites, Leadership and Society,” which enrolled hundreds of Princeton students over the years.

“I loved everything about her and I loved that she was a whole person — that she was free to do things as she saw fit,” Zelizer said.

“I felt that my presence as a woman student was just as important, if not more important, than any work I did in the lab,” Keller said in an interview with The Daily Princetonian in 1990.

“Keller holds a unique position in the history of the University. As a remarkable scholar, teacher and mentor, and a wise and generous colleague, she holds a special place in the lives and hearts of generations of Princetonians.”

— Nancy Weiss Malkiel

Dean of the college

Employee retirements

Effective Nov. 1, 2010: in the plasma physics lab, machine technician Jerry Gething, after 30 years.


Effective Jan. 1, 2011: in the plasma physics lab, machine technician Jerry Gething, after 30 years; in the library, special collections assistant Ivy Chang, after 27 years; in the plasma physics lab, materiel and environmental services, technician Bennevich, after 30 years; in the plasma physics lab, machine technician Eric Quiñones, after 17 years; in the plasma physics lab, machine technician Sara Flohr, after 30 years.

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Postmaster: Send address changes to Princeton University Bulletin, Office of Communications, Princeton, New Jersey, 08544.

Subscriptions: The Bulletin is distributed free to faculty, staff and students. University employees can manage their delivery options at www.princeton.edu/main/news/share/. Effective June 1, 2011: in molecular biology, associate professional specialist Fang Li, after 13 years.

Deadline

In general, the copy deadline for each issue is the Friday 10 days in advance of the Monday cover date. The deadline for the next issue, which covers Feb. 14–March 20, is Friday, Feb. 4. A complete publication schedule can be found at www.princeton.edu/bulletin. Call 258-5001 with questions.


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Board approves three faculty appointments

The Board of Trustees has approved the appointments of three new faculty members. The new appointments are: Bruce Koel, professor of chemical and biological engineering, effective Jan. 1, 2011; Benjamin Moll, assistant professor of economics and international affairs, for a 3 1/2-year term, effective Feb. 1, 2011; and Gabriel Crouch, senior lecturer in music, for a three-year term, effective July 1, 2010.

Koel joined the Princeton faculty from Lehigh University, where he had been a professor of chemistry since 2005 and served for two years as interim vice president and associate provost for research and graduate studies. He previously spent 15 years as a faculty member at the University of Southern California and six years at the University of Colorado-Boulder. Koel specializes in catalysis and surface science, areas of research that are at the heart of technologies associated with the chemical and petroleum industries, functioning of batteries and fuel cells, production of micro-electronic devices, and design and fabrication of sensors and diagnostic devices. The author of some 250 published articles, Koel is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Physical Society and a member of the American Chemical Society. He holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Emporia State University and a Ph.D. from the University of Texas-Austin. Moll has been an associate research scholar since 2008 in Princeton’s Department of Economics and will hold a joint faculty appointment in that department and the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. His research focuses on macroeconomics, growth theory, development and financial economics. A graduate of University College London, Moll holds a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. Crouch, who also serves as director of choirs at the University, came to Princeton in 2006 from DePauw University, where he was an assistant professor of music and director of choral activities. He earned bachelor and master of arts degrees from the University of Cambridge and a master of music degree from Butler University.

Samira Bernard, the Coton Professor of the Humanities and professor of comparative literature, will be appointed a new master of Whitman College and will begin her four-year term on July 1. Bernard joined the Princeton faculty in 2008 and specializes in literary theory, poetry and poetics, and translation theory and practice. She was named Classi Distinguished Lecturer at Princeton in 2010 and was also appointed the chair of the Department of Comparative Literature from 1998 to 2010. She is a past president of the American Comparative Literature Association.

Building on a long record of University service, Bernard chaired the working group appointed in the spring of 2008 to investigate the creation of the Bridge Year Program that launched in the fall of 2009. In the 2008-09 academic year, she was a member of the President’s Task Force on the Creative and Performing Arts and she is a co-founder and current member of the executive committee of the Program in Translation and Inter-Cultural Communication.

Bernard has been deeply involved in undergraduate campus life. She served from 1984 to 1992 as master of Stevenson Hall, a non-residential, University-managed dining facility located on Prospect Avenue. She also served during the 1999-2000 academic year on the Sixth Committee, offering advice on the constitution, organization and mission of the sixth residential college. Since Whitman College opened, Bernard has been one of its faculty leaders.

‘Gently used’ clothing needed for annual drive

The University is conducting its annual clothing drive Jan. 19-26 to benefit HomeFront’s Suitably dressed and the Mercer County Community College Career Training Institute, two organizations that collect “gently used” business attire for men and women.

The clothing goes to individuals who are entering or re-entering the work force, and all types of business and business-casual clothing in good condition are needed. These include suits, dress slacks, khakis, dress shirts, collared casual shirts, blazers, skirts, sweaters, dresses, jackets, coats, and ties, shoes, belts, jewelry, handbags and other accessories.

Donations of used eyeglasses also are being collected for Lions Club International.

Donations can be brought to the side entrance of 151 Alexander St. weekdays between 8 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. Volunteers are needed during collection hours. For more information or to volunteer to assist with the clothing drive, contact Erin Metro in the Office of Community and Regional Affairs at 258-3144. Volunteers will be sent to PIIRS Acting Director in the Office of Community and Regional Affairs, Building Services, the Office of Design and Construction, and the Office of the Provost.

Eleven named to endowed professorships

Eleven faculty members have been named to endowed professorships. All are effective Jan. 1, 2011, except where noted. They are: David Bell, the Sidney and Ruth Lapidus Professor in the Era of North Atlantic Revolutions; Charles Baix, the Robert Garrett Professor in Politics; Thomas Christensen, the William P. Boswell Professor of World Politics and War; Jill Dolan, the Annan Professor in English; Mitchell Duneier, the Maurice P. Duing Professor of Sociology, effective Sept. 1, 2010; Benjamin Elman, the Gordon Wu ’58 Professor of Chinese Studies; Sarah Kay, the Meredith Howland Professor of French Literature; Igor Rodnianski, the Henry Burchard Fowler Professor of Mathematics, from Feb. 1, 2011, to Jan. 1, 2016; Nigel Smith, the William and Annie S. Paton Foundation Professor of Ancient and Modern Literature; Susan Stewart, the Avalon Foundation Professor in the Humanities; Sean Wilentz, the George Henry Davis 1886 Professor of American History.

Board approves two promotions

The Board of Trustees has approved the promotions of two faculty members, effective July 1, 2010. The faculty members and their departments, by the academic rank to which they are being promoted, are: Professor — Michael Renals, physics; Assistant professor (with continuing tenure) — Anet Singer, mathematics and applied computational mathematics.

Grant proposals sought for new PIIRS Research Communities

The Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies (PIIRS) is seeking pre-proposals from University faculty interested in forming interdisciplinary research communities. A PIIRS Research Community will support activities of broad comparative or global significance, and develop-communities/

The faculty members and their departments, by the academic rank to which they are being promoted, are: Professor — Michael Renals, physics; Assistant professor (with continuing tenure) — Anet Singer, mathematics and applied computational mathematics.

More news on the Web

Visit the News at Princeton Web page at <www.princeton.edu/main/news> for other recent stories, including the following:

• Princeton senior Khamere Kidia, a French major from Harare, Zimbabwe, has been selected as one of Zimbabwe’s Rhodes Scholars. The Rhodes Trust awards fellowships for graduate study at the University of Oxford to approximately 80 scholars from 34 regions around the world each year. Kidia intends to study medical anthropology at Oxford and then pursue a career as a physician focusing on global health.

• Senior Veronica Shi has been awarded the 2011 Daniel M. Sachs Class of 1960 Graduating Scholarship, one of the highest awards given to Princeton undergraduates. Shi, a native of West Covina, Calif., is a classics major. She plans to use the Sachs funds to pursue postgraduate studies in Greek and Latin language and literature at Worcester College at Oxford.

• The annual “Celebrate Princeton” event honored the accomplishments of more than 200 Princeton scientists and engineers who participated in the technology transfer process in 2010. Additionally, the Dec. 3 celebration recognized the importance of collaboration between the University research community and industry to develop fundamental discoveries into beneficial technologies and applications.
Princeton scientists create synthetic proteins that sustain life

Kitta MacPherson

In a groundbreaking achievement that could help scientists “build” biological functions, Princeton scientists have constructed for the first time artificial proteins that enable the growth of living cells. The team of researchers created genetic sequences never before seen in nature, and used these sequences to show that they can produce substances that sustain life in cells as almost as readily as proteins produced by nature’s own tools.

“What we have here are molecular machines that function quite well within a living organism even though they were designed from scratch and expressed from artificial genetic materials,” said Michael Hecht, a Princeton professor of chemistry who led the research. “This tells us that the molecular parts kit for life need not be limited to — genes and proteins — that already exist in nature.”

The work, Hecht said, represents a significant advance in synthetic biology, an emerging area of research in which chemists, physicists, biologists, and engineers create genetic sequences and fabricate biological components and systems that do not already exist in the natural world. One of the main goals is to develop an entire artificial genome composed of unique patterns of chemicals.

“Our work suggests,” Hecht said, “that the construction of artificial genetic materials capable of sustaining cell life may be within reach.”

Nearly all previous work in synthetic biology has focused on reorganizing parts drawn from natural organisms. In contrast, Hecht said, the results described here show that biological functions can be provided by macromolecules that were not borrowed from nature, but designed in the laboratory.

Although scientists have shown previous that proteins that can be designed to fold and, in some cases, catalyze reactions, the Princeton team’s work represents a new frontier in creating these synthetic proteins.

The research, which Hecht conducted with three former Princeton students and a former postdoctoral fellow, is described in a report published online Jan. 4 by the National Library of Science ONE.

Hecht and his research team in his lab study the relationship between biological processes on the molecular scale and processes at work on a larger magnitude. For example, they are studying how the errant folding of proteins in the brain can lead to Alzheimer’s disease, and is involved in a search for compounds that thwart that process. In work that relates to this paper, Hecht and his students also are interested in learning what processes drive the routine folding of proteins on a basic level — as proteins need to fold in order to function — and why certain key sequences have evolved to lead to specific functions.

Proteins are the workhorses of organisms, produced from instructions encoded into cellular DNA. The identity of any given protein is dictated by a unique sequence of 20 chemicals known as amino acids. If the different amino acids can be viewed as letters of an alphabet, each protein sequence constitutes its own unique “sentence.” And, if a protein is 100 amino acids long (most proteins are even longer), there are an astronomically large number of possibilities of different protein sequences, Hecht said. At the heart of this research was to question how there are only about 100,000 different proteins produced in the human body when compared to the 20 different amino acids. So many more. Wondered, are these particular proteins somehow special? Or might other work equally well, even though evolution has not yet had a chance to sample them?

Hecht and his research group set about to create artificial proteins encoded by genetic sequences not seen in nature. They introduced about 1 million amino acid sequences that were designed to fold into stable three-dimensional structures.

“What I believe is most intriguing about our work is that the information encoded in these artificial genes is completely novel — it does not come from, nor is it significantly related to, information encoded by natural genes, and yet the end result is a living, functional microbe,” said Michael Fisher, a co-author of the paper who earned his Ph.D. at Princeton in 2010 and is now a postdoctoral fellow at the University of California-Berkeley. “It is perhaps analogous to taking a sentence, composed up with brand new words, testing if any of our new words can take the place of any of the original words in the sentence, and finding that in some cases the sentence retains virtually the same meaning while incorporating brand new words.”

Once the scientists had created this new library of artificial proteins, they inserted those proteins into various mutant strains of bacteria in which certain natural genes previously had been deleted. The deleted natural genes are required for survival under a given set of conditions, including a limited food supply. Under these harsh conditions, the mutant strains of bacteria died — unless they acquired a life-sustaining novel protein from Hecht’s collection. This was significant because formation of a bacterial colony under these selective conditions could occur only if a protein in the collection designed in the laboratory. “These artificial proteins bear no relation to any known biological sequences, yet they sustained life,” Hecht said.

Added Kara McKinley, also a co-author and a 2010 Princeton graduate who is now a Ph.D. student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology: “This is an exciting result, because it shows that unnatural proteins can sustain a natural system, and that such proteins can be found at relatively high frequency in a library designed only for structure.”

Other authors on the paper include Luke Bradley, a former postdoctoral fellow in Hecht’s lab who is now an assistant professor at the University of Kentucky, and Sara Viola, a 2008 Princeton graduate who is now a medical student at Columbia University.

The research was funded by the National Science Foundation.

Schmidt Fund awards enableable research in sensors, electronics

A project that could enable the development of revolutionary electronics and a separate project that could dramatically improve diabetes monitoring and treatment are the first two research efforts to be supported at Princeton from the Eric and Wendy Schmidt Transformative Technology Fund.

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Princeton Center for Complex Materials and Complex Systems

134 Computer Science Building

University Avenue

Princeton, NJ 08544

Kitta MacPherson

Young scientists will graduate with product-oriented skills that will help them pursue diverse societal goals.

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University to celebrate King’s legacy at MLK Day ceremony

Princeton will commemorate the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. with its annual King Day celebration Monday, Jan. 17, in Richardson Auditorium of Alexander Hall.” Doors open at 1 p.m. The keynote address will be delivered by Van Jones, an environmental activist, social entrepreneur and former White House adviser who is a visiting fellow at the University.

The event, which is free and open to the public, will begin at 1:15 p.m. with musical selections from One Voice-Trenton Children’s Chorus and Westminster Conservatory Cantus and from soloist Rochelle Ellis.

The ceremony will include the presentation of awards to student winners in grades 4 through 12 from area schools who entered an annual Martin Luther King Day-themed contest in literary arts, visual arts and video categories. This year’s contest focuses on the environmental impact of Hurricane Katrina or the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf Coast region.

While considering these environmental issues and King’s vision for equality, as well as his concern for the poor and oppressed, students were asked to use a journalistic format to raise awareness, to encourage civic engagement, or to highlight issues about a related social, financial or political topic.

During the program the University also will present the MLK Day Journey Award, which recognizes a member of the Princeton faculty, staff or student body who best represents King’s continued journey.

Jones, the keynote speaker, holds a joint appointment at Princeton as a distinguished visiting fellow in the Center for African American Studies and as a visiting lecturer in the Program in Science, Technology and Environmental Policy at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. He will teach a course this spring focusing on environmental policies, with a special emphasis on policies that create “green” economic opportunity for the disadvantaged.

ONLINE: More information at www.princeton.edu/mlk
The head football coach at Princeton, Bob Surace, described Culbreath as “an inspiration to our entire program.” Culbreath is on a path to graduate in May and hopes to play football at Princeton, but after a suggestion from his mother, he decided to “walk on” to the team. He worked his way from the bottom and onto the national scene his sophomore year during a televised home game against Cornell University.

He rushed for 145 yards and two touchdowns, including a Knights-record 58-yard score that anchored the “Top Plays” that night on ESPN’s “SportsCenter.”

At the same time, he was excelling in the classroom. Before he could focus on the Cornell game, Culbreath spent time off the field preparing for a midterm exam in his “Mathematical Methods for Engineering Analysis” class taught by Associate Professor of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Luigi Martelli. Culbreath, who went on to play for both the New York Giants and Indianapolis Colts, rushed for 1,206 yards and was a unanimous first-team All-Ivy League selection.

He rushed for 276 yards and two touchdowns in the season finale, a 28-10 victory over Dartmouth College, during which Culbreath carried the ball for 158 yards and two touchdowns, including a 58-yard run that anchored the “Top Plays” that night on ESPN’s “SportsCenter.”

“This was the best midterm in the class,” Martelli said, “and then he went out and had his best game yet.” He added, “That’s the best athlete person that Jordan is.”

In his junior year, Culbreath put together a season unmatched at Princeton since the glory days of 1994 graduate with Ellis, who went on to play for both the New York Giants and Indianapolis Colts. Culbreath rushed for 1,206 yards and was a unanimous first-team All-Ivy League selection.

In 2009 Smith received the President’s Award for Distinguished Teaching, which recognizes excellence in undergraduate and graduate teaching by Princeton faculty members. Students who nominated Smith for the award noted that she inspired them to think critically, encouraged them to speak their minds and listened carefully to their ideas.

Eisgruber, who chaired the search committee for the position, said, “Val emerged from an exceptionally strong field of candidates for this deanship. The position of dean of the college at Princeton is one of higher education’s most attractive leadership roles, and the opening drew talented applicants from both inside and outside the University!”

In addition to Eisgruber, the search committee consisted of six faculty members and two undergraduates. Vice Provost Katherine Rohrer staffed the committee.

“I’m personally very happy and excited about Professor Smith’s appointment,” said senior Veronica Sha, a search committee member. “She deeply impressed me with her graceful and methodical grasp of the important issues and challenges facing Princeton’s undergraduate program. In particular, she showed a deep understanding of the importance of a liberal education, and was able to articulate its necessity in a way that inspired the listener while translating into a well-thought-out set of policies. She has everything it takes to be a valuable and persuasive spokesperson for liberal education both within Princeton for the undergraduate body and outside of Princeton on a national stage.

“Another strength the committee saw in her was a good balance of gravitas and approachability: She has the quiet dignity of an effective and well-regarded dean but the warmth of an esteemed mentor,” Shi added. “I think students will find her a compassionate and understanding dean who will listen carefully to their concerns, and whom they will see much outside of West College.”

Senior Michael Weinberg, a search committee member, said, “Professor Smith is an extraordinary scholar, teacher and mentor who has a deep commitment to liberal arts education. She is an inspiringleader who will think creatively and consult widely in order to improve an already outstanding undergraduate program. Professor Smith is intellectually stimulated by interactions with students and she will engage the student body as a part of her decision-making process.”

Smith’s research and teaching interests include African American literature and culture, black feminist theory, autobiography, black film, and 20th- and 21st-century U.S. literature. Smith has taught undergraduate courses on topics including “Religion and Resistance in Narratives of Slavery,” “Literature and Culture of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement,” “African American Literature: Harlem Renaissance to the Present,” and “Novels of Toni Morrison,” as well as graduate courses on “African American Short Fiction” and “African American Autobiography.”

Outside the classroom, she has directed study and enrollment programs, served on many university committees and been a mentor of students, alumni and administrators on tours of civil rights movement sites in Alabama and Georgia.

Smith is the author of “Not Just Race, Not Just Gender: Black Feminist Readings,” “Self-Discovery and Authority in Afro American Narrative” and the forthcoming “Toni Morrison: Writing the Moral Imagination.” She has edited “Letters to American Writers,” “New Essays on Song of Solomon” and “Representing Blackness: Issues in Film and Video.” She has also published more than 50 articles, essays and reviews. Smith currently is working on a book about memory and the civil rights movement.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Bates College, Smith holds a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia.

By the numbers

Valerie Smith will become Princeton’s 14th dean of the college, an office that was created by University President Woodrow Wilson in the spring of 1909.

Wilson originally called the position the dean of discipline, as it was created to assume disciplinary oversight that had been held by the dean of the faculty. However, by the fall of 1909 the position had become renamed dean of the college, and the office has assumed increasing responsibility since its creation.

Princeton’s deans of the college, listed with their faculty affiliations and their years of service as dean, have been:

• Edward Elliott (politics), 1909-12
• Howard McClenahan (physics), 1912-25
• Christian Gauss (modern languages), 1923-45
• Francis Godolphin (classics), 1945-65
• Jeremiah Finch (English), 1955-61
• J. Merrill Knapp (music), 1961-66
• Edward Sullivan (French), 1966-72
• Neil Rudenstine (English), 1972-77
• Jean Girgis (psychology), 1977-87
• Nancy Weiss Malkiel (history), 1987-2011

Source: “A Princeton Companion”
An influential scholar
"Being able to be on campus with friends and not isolated in my house helped me get normal again," said Lindsay. "In June, Schoder and Culbreath earned the 2010 Enoch J. Durbin Prize for six papers from the University’s School of Engineering and Applied Science. Two years at the end of a triumphant journey With his thesis complete, the hydrotherapist’s work and that of his father, only in use by the universities and public, Culbreath started to get the football itch. The treatment had proved successful with aplastic anemia. Although his status was not given an official medical term, Culbreath refers to it as being "in remission." Having done the preparation to finish his academic year, he began getting back to physical shape. Culbreath consulted with his doctors about required weekly blood tests, and consulted with Surace, a class of 1998 alumnus who was hired following the 2009 football season, ultimately deciding to return to the field. "We became a better team when he brought his leadership and work ethic back into our locker room," said Surace when announcing Culbreath’s return this past August. "Jordan, a sprint football player, said, "Watching Jordan go through this terrible ordeal then see him continue on the other side of the field return to normalcy both as a student and a football player, as if it hadn’t been a big deal, as if hardly anything had happened, gave me a sense of his enormous willpower." Culbreath made his debut at the game at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pa., on Sept. 18, but he scored his first through the air against Lafayette College. In overtime, the Lafayette Leopards had three times to keep the game alive, but Culbreath earned a 3rd-and-goal at the two-yard line. Culbreath’s minute, like it had been so often before, was one to celebrate. "I was telling myself while I was lined up," he said, "This is why you come to Princeton. This is what you call being in the right sports for. I honestly was saying that in my head. It was blocked really well, but it was there. I left it there." He scored the touchdown, and it was the highlight of the football season.

While Culbreath’s season later ended after a leg injury in the November game against the University of Pennsylvania — and while the two yards at Lafayette were a tiny fraction of the 1,935 he rushed for in his career — they were the two yards that truly shared a piece of Culbreath’s journey will never forget. "For personally, Jordan’s case was extremely hopeful and served, I think, as a reminder for us to take advantage of the gifts and talents we have today because we never know what’s just past the corner," Schoder said. Culbreath said, "I needed to get back on that field for myself to show myself that this won’t stop me from doing what I want to do; I want to play football. He scored himself to show myself that this won’t stop me from doing what I want to do; I want to play football. He scored himself; it was an accomplished walk. "To go out far beyond your dreams and attain your goals is a dream worth sharing." And Culbreath certainly wants to share his dreams with the world and show that anything is possible through dedication, determination and hard work.

Culbreath is on a path to graduate in June in what some have described as a near storybook ending to a difficult five-year journey. Here, he attends a "Fluid Dynamics" class this fall as part of his concentration in mechanical and aerospace engineering.

Keller
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she was this amazing scholar who had advanced sociology on many different fronts before her career, but she got to know her students in a very personal way. It was important to her, for example, that when I was teaching 120 undergraduates, to know those students by name. I remember us practicing those phone calls when I was prepping for her so she could remember them," he said. In addition, "she befriended her graduate students like they were family. I had dinner with Suzanne countless times," Lindsey said. "It’s a tremendous loss. She was a wonderful person." An influential scholar A defining aspect of Keller’s scholarly career was her research on elites and leadership, most notably her book "Beyond the Ruling Class," which helped inspire serious inquiry on the topics of wealth and power. "She was one of the few people who attempted to look at the history of elites and how they developed as a group. She was a great leader," said Robert Wuthnow, Princeton’s Gerhard R. Andlinger ’52 Professor of the Sociology of Science and chair of the sociology department. Keller "tried against the prevailing idea that power was held by a very small group of people who were united by class cohesion and similar background," Lindsey said. She is currently conducting a systematic survey of top American leaders. "She challenged that whole interpretation, and said actually it’s far more complicated, that we live in a society that has a number of different sectors. It was a pathbreaking book because it helped set the agenda of elite interpretation throughout the 1960s and 1970s." Pursuing another major area of interest, in the 1970s Keller embarked on an ambitious project to study Twin Rivers, a housing complex with 10,000 residents in nearby East Windsor, N.J. For her book "Community," Keller monitored how residents forged the political and social institutions to meet the diverse needs of a middle-class population. By observing town meetings and recreational sites, conducting hundreds of interviews and studying records, Keller revealed how the residents learned to share, relate to neighbors, cope with social conflict and develop ideas for the common good. The study was important, Keller noted in a 2004 interview with the Princeton Alumni Bulletin, in showing "that each of us needs to transcend our own lives because all of our lives depend on other people all the time. At Twin Rivers, people learned that they need to transcend community and that they needed to have a sense of connection to a larger framework." Alberto Moreiras, the Frank Backus Williams Professor of Urban Planning and Design at Harvard University, said, "The book combined the empirical and the theoretical to produce a very important work that offered us new insights into how we create this contested word ‘community.’" Keller’s other books included "The Urban Neighborhood" (1958), "The Social Origins and Career Lines of Three Generations of the American Business Elite" (1980), "Building and Women" (1980) and "The American Dream of Family" (1991), as well as a widely taught textbook, "Sociology" (1983). Keller worked during various phases of her career in departments of psychiatry, architecture and planning, as well as sociology. At Princeton, she taught in the School of Architecture for 10 years. She also served as a consultant to industry and government agencies in areas such as housing and new communities, and family and gender issues. A worldly view Keller was born Suzanne Infeld on April 16, 1927, in Vienna, Austria. She moved to New York City and became an American citizen at a child. A graduate of Hunter College, she earned her Ph.D. in sociology in 1953 from Columbia University. In 1994, in her 60s, she earned a master of social work degree from Rutgers University. Before joining the Department of Sociology, she held research and teaching positions at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, City University of New York, Brandeis University, New York University, New York Medical College, Vassar College and the Athens Institute. During her graduate studies, Keller conducted public opinion research in China and a political survey and researcher for a U.S. Air Force project in Munich. In the 1960s, she conducted public opinion and market research in several European countries, analyzing public opinion and market research in several European countries, analyzing survey attitudes of American and European elites and studying intelligence measurement among children of different social classes and racial backgrounds, among other topics. Keller spoke several languages and traveled widely in Europe and in the Middle East. She lectured frequently throughout the United States and Europe. “Suzanne’s glowing community extends from the small world of a Princeton seminar to the cosmopolitan world of two continents,” said Zelizer, who organized a retirement ceremony for her colleague in 2004 that Keller instead dubbed a “graduation ceremony.” After her retirement, Keller traveled frequently with her husband of 30 years, a retired New York Times foreign correspondent. In June, Schoder and Culbreath traveled widely in Europe and the Middle East. She lectured frequently throughout the United States and Europe.
Published this fall by Princeton University Press, “Mumbai Fables” tells the story of this great Indian city, which before 1995 had the colonial name of Bombay. What inspired you to write the book?

An obsession. Since childhood, I have always had a relationship to Mumbai. Though it is not my hometown, I grew up in a town nearly a thousand miles away from Mumbai, a city with which I’ve had a love-hate relationship. Bombay was never just another big city, but an idea, a figure of myth and desire.

What is your relationship to Mumbai?

I have always had a relationship to the idea of Mumbai. Ten years ago when I began my research, and even after writing the book, I still find the city’s myth compelling — all the more so because I now understand and am able better to appreciate its rich texture. This made my relationship to the city more intense. My wife and I even bought an apartment in the city. I wanted to get a sense of what it was like to deal with the routine challenges, as well as the pleasures of everyday life. I wrote the book in Mumbai during my 2008-09 sabbatical year. I regarded the talk about the death of the city as its glory days are behind it due to its over-expanding population, the vast gap between rich and poor, and ongoing traumas such as natural disasters and violence. Is this your view of the future of Mumbai?

I regard the talk about the death of the city as critical comments on the challenges of current urban life. To be sure, Mumbai today is not what it was 20 years ago, and it is true that its current urban form is that of a megalopolis, and not a classic city. But this only means that the choices are different today. They are more formidable than those any time earlier. Mumbai’s problems are caused by growth and dynamism, not decay and stagnation. The city, urban violence, environmental degradation and other such problems are intense. But Mumbai’s residents have tremendous survival skills, and there are many thoughtful urban activists who continue to struggle for a better future.

Do you bring your experiences of Mumbai back to the Princeton classroom? How does this material inform your teaching?

I taught a course on modern cities, I always draw on my research on Mumbai. Anecdotes, books, current events and episodes — I bring them all in. These often help to clarify what is unique to Mumbai, while also shining light on other urban experiences. I tell my students to stop me if I go on and on about Mumbai. They are very indulgent, and appreciate my enthusiasm for the city. I think enthusiasm for your subject has good pedagogic value.

Published in 2010 by Princeton University Press, “Mumbai Fables” was written by Prakash during his 2008-09 sabbatical year that he spent in Mumbai, where he was “negotiated the real and imaginary life as well as the pleasures of everyday life.”

Schmidt

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the global epidemic caused more than 1 million deaths in 2005, and this figure is projected to double by 2030. What is your relationship to Mumbai?

Always. In my graduate seminar on Mumbai during my 2008-09 sabbatical year, I regarded the talk about the death of the city as its glory days are behind it due to its over-expanding population, the vast gap between rich and poor, and ongoing traumas such as natural disasters and violence. Is this your view of the future of Mumbai?

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Mumbai has a huge film industry — Bollywood — in which you seem to be playing a major role. What is that role, and what is it like to be part of this larger-than-life endeavor?

You cannot write on the city, engage with its imaginative life, and not encounter the film industry. And I did. While doing my research I came to know a number of people in Bollywood, many of whom became dear friends. It also turned out that my research material lent itself to cinematic storytelling. So, encouraged by a friend, I wrote a dark story. A film director, Anurag Kashyap, liked it. So I went on to write a script, about which I knew next to nothing. I wrote version after version — nearly 15 before I could come up with something that was acceptable. The director loved the idea, and so did a production company. It has been a great learning experience, but I don’t seek a major role in the film industry. I like my day job at Princeton! [The film, titled “Bombay Velvet,” will be in production later this year.]

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Schmidt

Continued from page 4

the global epidemic caused more than 1 million deaths in 2005, and this figure is projected to double by 2030. The effective management and treatment of the disease hinges on the careful monitoring of blood glucose, or blood sugar, with the frequency of glucose measurement being higher in those who have successful management of the condition.

Efforts to develop non-invasive laser sensors for glucose testing have been stymied to date because glucose does not have distinguishing optical features in the visible and near-infrared ranges of the spectrum, the region in which light passes through human tissue easily and for which sensitive photo-detectors have already been developed. With a $300,000 award from the Schmidt Fund, Gmachl and Wysocki will build on Gmachl’s pioneering work on the development of quantum cascade lasers, which emit light in the mid-infrared region of the spectrum, where glucose has characteristic spectroscopic features that distinguish it from other major tissue components, including water, urea and albumin. Additionally, due to Wysocki’s expertise in the development of highly sensitive, compact optical sensor systems, their research plans include the development of quantum cascade lasers that emit light at the precise wave-lengths needed for glucose testing as well as the creation of photon detectors, electronic and software that can be incorporated into a clip-on sensor for the fingertip or earlobe that can serve as a prototype for commercialization.

Gmachl and Yazdani’s projects were selected through a campuswide competition under the auspices of the University’s dean for research. “Based on the experience gained in the inaugural competition, early in the new year we will be holding our next call for proposals to the Schmidt Fund,” said Dean for Research A.J. Stewart Smith. “After a detailed internal review, we also consulted external experts to advise us how they would place the promising potential and risk of these efforts on the world scene. The ideas and plans put forth by these physicists, chemists and engineers have enormous potential and I am very positive about their future.”

It is wonderful that the generosity and insight of the Schmidts has given the University the capacity to invest in projects of this nature, and it is inspiring to imagine the breakthroughs that may result from these endeavors.

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