Arts and Transit Project approved, construction to start

Ushma Patel

The Regional Planning Board of Princeton has approved Princeton University’s proposed Arts and Transit Project plan, clearing the way for the University to break ground in early 2013. The approval was granted at a meeting Tuesday, Dec. 18, by a vote of 9-1.

The plan, for an area along University Place and Alexander Street just south of the McCarter Theatre Center and just east of Forbes College, includes three new arts buildings, which are being designed by the world-renowned architect Steven Holl, to house the Lewis Center for the Arts and some functions of the Department of Music. The plan also includes designs by the award-winning architect Rick Joy for a new train station servicing the New Jersey Transit Dinky train and Wawa convenience store, and renovation of the existing rail station buildings for a restaurant and café. Infrastructure improvements to the site and adjacent roadways, a multimodal transit center and extensive landscaping are also part of the project.

In fall 2011, Princeton Borough and Princeton Township granted zoning approval for the plan. The planning board’s vote Dec. 18 provided the final site plan approval needed for the Arts and Transit Project, which was a major component of the University’s 10-year comprehensive Campus Plan, announced in 2006. The project furthers University President Shirley M. Tilghman’s initiative to make the arts a central feature of the academic experience at Princeton.

“I want to express my appreciation to the Planning Board members and staff for all of the time they devoted to this project and for giving us the green light to proceed with a project that I am convinced will have a transformative impact on the arts at the University and in the community,” Tilghman said. “I believe the project will create an attractive new gateway into the community and will meet a broad range of goals related to transit issues and sustainability that are important to both the community and the University.”

The Lewis Center for the Arts, established in 2007, will have office space, classrooms, galleries and performance venues within the new complex, which is expected to be completed in 2017.

“I’m delighted that we have moved on to the next stage of this project — one that will bring new artistic energy and excitement to our community as a whole,” said Michael Cadden, chair of the Lewis Center for the Arts and a senior lecturer in theater. “Along with my colleagues at the Lewis Center and in the Department of Music, I look forward to collaborating with our students, our friends at the McCarter, and the greater Princeton community in making this neighborhood a site for the making and enjoyment of art that will be the envy of the world!”

The plan builds upon the neighborhood’s existing arts and transit elements, the McCarter Theatre Center and the Dinky train that runs between Princeton and Princeton Junction.

“Over the past six years we have had numerous opportunities to discuss our plan with members of the Planning Board, municipal officials, and other members of the public in connection with the community’s review of its master plan, in obtaining zoning that permitted the development of this site to support the arts, and in seeking approval for a plan that fully conforms to the zoning and integrates infrastructure improvements, exceptional landscape design, and buildings designed by two of the country’s leading architects,” said Vice President and Secretary Robert Durkee. “We will now do our best to keep the community fully informed about the construction schedule and to minimize disruption as much as possible as we now proceed with the development of the site.”

The arts buildings, totaling 139,000 square feet, will be the Wallace Dance Building and Theater, a music building, and a building with multiple uses such as administrative space, a box office and a gallery. In addition, the Arts and Transit Project will provide community spaces such as a broad public walkway, an Arts Plaza, a Transit Plaza and a large forum space that opens on to the Transit Plaza as well as each of the buildings on the Arts Plaza.

Transit Plaza and a large forum space that opens on to the Transit Plaza as well as each of the buildings on the Arts Plaza.

The transit portion of the project will include a new roundabout at the intersection of University Place and Alexander Street; a new pedestrian crossing at Forbes College; and a Transit Plaza featuring the new station, the new Wawa store, stops for buses, taxis and shuttles, bicycle rental and storage facilities, permit and meter parking, and a new access road to the University’s West Garage. Sustainability — in the form of reduced carbon emissions and improved stormwater management — is a key consideration in the traffic flow improvements to the area and the design of the new buildings and spaces.

Catherine Zandonella

In 2010, Edgar Lemos, a retired bus driver in Porto Alegre, Brazil, sued his government for failing to provide medication to treat his neurological disorder. It was his privilege to do so. Brazil and more than 100 other nations grant the right to health, which in Brazil has given rise to numerous lawsuits against the government for access to medicines of all kinds.

Princeton University anthropology professor João Biehl has documented the emergence of right-to-health litigation in that country over the past decade. Through visits to courtrooms and clinics to meet patients and record their stories, combined with rigorous evaluation of medical and legal data, Biehl, a native of Brazil, and his research team have created a detailed picture of who sues for treatment and why in this country of about 200 million people and an economy on the rise.

Biehl’s work has helped dispel myths that Brazil’s universal health care and judicial system are being largely misused by well-off individuals to gain access to expensive and unnecessary medications, and has led to a broader debate about social justice and access to medical technologies.

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Princeton trustees approve financial aid increase in 2013-14 budget

Martin Mbugua

Princeton University trustees Jan. 26 approved a 4.6 percent increase in undergraduate financial aid in the operating budget for 2013-14, which includes a 3.9 percent increase in graduate tuition.

Students who are receiving financial aid will not see an increase in the amount of aid they receive. Financial aid packages are automatically adjusted to compensate for changes in fees. The average aid package for a student admitted to the Class of 2016 is $39,700.

“Once again Princeton’s financial aid expenditures will rise faster than its fee package,” Provost Christopher Eisgruber said. “The growth of the scholarship budget to $121.4 million will maintain Princeton’s commitment to making its education affordable to any student, regardless of ability to pay and without the need for loans.”

The University’s pioneering no-loan financial aid program, which enables Princeton students to graduate with the lowest net cost among the nation’s national universities, meets the full need of students on aid, and extends to some families making more than $250,000 per year. Sixty percent of the student body receives financial aid.

Lower net cost

For the past 16 years, Princeton’s average annual increase for package aid has been among the lowest in the nation while its scholarship spending has grown steadily by a modest base pool that reflects the University’s retention and retain the best faculty and staff in the face of external competitive pressures.

Eisgruber pointed out that while the University was able to absorb some of the inflation from steadily rising labor costs because of exceptionally healthy growth in the endowment in recent years, it is favorable investments are not likely to recur in the near future, so the University needs to manage for a lower net cost.

The University now has more accurate models for projecting the long-term budgetary impact of new academic initiatives and faculty searches; the vice president of human resources is focused on trends in the growth of the number of employees; and a review of the staff compensation structure is under way, Eisgruber said.

Eisgruber lauded all members of the University community for their contributions toward helping the University operate more efficiently and eliminate deficits that developed during the economic recession. As a result, the University balanced the budget in the last financial year without laying off one-time reserves as expected.

“Every academic and administrative unit repeatedly hit the targets that we established at the time of the downturn,” Eisgruber said. “We will need to sustain that financial discipline in the years ahead. The University must continue to replenish the rainy day fund as we drew upon to weather the financial crisis.”

Eisgruber said that since its inception three years ago, SUMAR (“Strengthening University Management and Resources”), a committee that meets regularly to design and implement cost-saving strategies, has tracked about 60 proposed initiatives that are expected to save the University more than $15 million annually.

SUMAR’s five priorities are multi-year energy and utility savings, reengineering the human resources compensation programs to maximize efficiency, financial management tools, and managing health care costs.

Summer camp sign-up available

Registration for the Office of Campus Recreations annual summer day camp began Feb. 1 for faculty and staff, and will open to the general public March 1.

The day camp runs weekdays from June 24 through Aug. 16. The Junior camp serves ages 6 to 10, and the Senior Camp is for ages 11 to 13. For more information, call 609-258-0880 or visit the camp’s website at www.princeton.edu/campuscres/summer-camp.

Summer camp sign-up available

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Newsmakers

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Psychologist Treisman wins National Medal of Science

When was the National Medal of Science first awarded? The National Medal of Science was first awarded in 1965.

Who was awarded the National Medal of Science in 2013? The National Medal of Science was awarded to Treisman for her contributions to the understanding of attention and perception.

What is the significance of the National Medal of Science? The National Medal of Science is one of the highest honors given to scientists in the United States. It is awarded by the President of the United States to recognize outstanding contributions to the advancement of knowledge in the natural sciences.
University celebrates King’s legacy

Princeton celebrates the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. on Jan. 21 at its annual King Day ceremony, which focused on the 50th anniversary of King’s “I Have a Dream Speech” and King’s life, legacy and charge to Americans to help humanity evolve. LEFT: President Shirley M. Tilghman presents Karen Jackson-Weaver, Princeton’s associate dean for academics and diversity in the Graduate School, with the Journey Award for Special Achievement for her advocacy for underrepresented minorities in the Graduate School. CENTER: The gospel choir from Arts High School in Newark, N.J., performs in the ceremony. RIGHT: Anne Cheng, Princeton professor of English and African American studies and a 1985 alumna, delivers the keynote address.

Princeton committee will examine college access for lower-income students

EMILY ARONSON

A new Princeton University committee will examine strategies to help low-income students overcome barriers to college readiness and access. The group will build on the University’s success in increasing the socioeconomic diversity of undergraduates and reducing financial obstacles for students to apply and attend Princeton.

The Trustee Ad Hoc Committee on College Access began meeting in January and includes trustees, alumni, faculty, staff and students. The group is considering a range of factors, beyond just financial means, that may impede talented low-income students from pursuing an education at selective universities and colleges.

“While the financial aid enhancements at Princeton and many of our peer institutions have lowered the financial obstacles for our low-income students, other factors have come to the fore as powerful barriers to access, such as inadequate college counseling about the range of college options, culturally constrained aspirations, and inadequate academic preparation,” Princeton President Shirley M. Tilghman wrote in her charge to the committee.

The trustee committee’s work is part of broader University efforts to promote a vibrant campus community of faculty, staff and students from diverse socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds.

In 2001, Princeton became the first university to adopt a no-loan financial aid program, replacing loans with grants that financial aid recipients do not pay back. The University also offers full financial aid eligibility to international students. Sixty percent of the Class of 2016 receives financial aid, compared with 38 percent of the Class of 2001.

Despite these substantial gains, students whose families are in the top 3 percent of the U.S. income scale remain significantly overrepresented in our applicant pools, with a concomitant deficit of talented low-income students—a demographic profile that is shared with other selective colleges and universities,” wrote Tilghman, who also will chair the committee.

The main questions the committee will address are:

• What do data about Princeton applicants and undergraduate students reveal about successful strategies to recruit an economically diverse student body?
• What can be learned from practices at other selective colleges, universities and nonprofit organizations focused on college access?
• What innovative steps could Princeton take to further reduce the barriers faced by low-income students in obtaining a rigorous college education?

As part of its analysis, the group plans to review applicant pool data from Princeton and other selective universities, as well as scholarly research that identifies high-achieving, low-income students nationally. The committee also will speak with scholars who study related issues, leaders of college access programs and Princeton students to learn directly about the experiences of low-income students on campus.

In addition to Tilghman, the committee includes trustees Thomas Barron, Class of 1974; Peper Davis, Class of 1987; Angela Groves, Class of 2012; Heidi Miller, Class of 1974; David Offensend, Class of 1975; Ruth Simmons, president emerita of Brown University; and John Wynne, Class of 1987.

Faculty committee members are Cecilia Rouse, dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, and Douglas Massey, the Henry G. Bryant Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs and director of the Office of Population Research.

Staff members are Carolyn Ainalie, vice president for finance and treasurer, and Janet Rapelye, dean of admission. Also on the committee: former trustee Katherine Brittain Bradley, Class of 1986; Andrew Blumenfeld, Class of 2013; John Fisher, Class of 1983; and Jonathan Schuer, Class of 1989.

Michele Minter, vice provost for institutional equity and diversity, will serve as secretary.

Minter said the committee expects to issue its interim report in May that proposes options Princeton should further explore to support the successful admission of high-achieving, low-income students at selective institutions. She said the Board of Trustees will review the report and may choose to have the committee continue its work through the end of 2013.

Committee part of broader context

While the trustee committee is focused on improving access to higher education, a separate working group led by Dean of the College Valerie Smith is looking at the undergraduate experience of students once they have enrolled at Princeton.

The Working Group on Undergraduate Socioeconomic Diversity seeks to learn more about ways in which students from socioeconomically diverse backgrounds experience academic and extracurricular life at the University. The group is collecting student survey data, reviewing best practices at peer institutions and seeking feedback from constituents across campus, including hosting student focus groups.

“It’s not only important to admit socioeconomically diverse students to the University; it’s also imperative to ensure that all students are in a position to take full advantage of a Princeton education. Our group is assessing the support systems, programs and policies that are in place to help them succeed at the highest levels,” said Associate Dean of the College Diane McKay, secretary to the working group.

Smith said the group also wants “to learn as much as we can about practices and assumptions on campus that may be unspoken, but that exclude first-generation students or those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.”

The group’s focus on students from socioeconomically diverse backgrounds includes students who are the first in their families to attend college, who are low-income in comparison to the student population as a whole, or who attended high schools that do not typically send graduates to highly selective colleges and universities.

The working group members are: Alison Boden, dean of religious life and the chapel; Miguel Centeno, professor of sociology and international affairs; Alison Gammie, senior lecturer in molecular biology; Maria Garlock; associate professor of civil and environmental engineering; Angel Harris, associate professor of sociology and African American studies; Jason Kugman, director of the Princeton University Preparatory Program; Justin Lorts, director of studies in Whitman College; McKay; Carol Porter, director of the McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning; Logan Powell, director of admission; Ann Marie Russell, postdoctoral research associate; Nicole Shelford, professor of psychology and master of Butler College; and Smith. The group expects to present its report to Tilghman before the end of the academic year.

In addition, the separate Trustee Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity is currently meeting to identify ways to enhance the diversity of Princeton’s faculty, graduate student body and senior administration. That committee was appointed last January and expects to issue a final report in spring 2013.

“These groups all share the goal of making Princeton an inclusive place where everyone can thrive and bring their whole life experience,” Minter said.
Emily Aronson

When the local fire department responded to Princeton University’s Frick Chemistry Laboratory last spring, they found Michael Kervan on scene ready to help. Kervan is both a member of the University’s volunteer firefighter program and a senior maintenance mechanic in Frick Laboratory.

“I was able to help other firefighters quickly navigate the lab’s mechanical systems using my knowledge from working inside Frick every day. If I wasn’t part of the Princeton Fire Department, I would have had to evacuate the building with everyone else,” said Kervan, who also is chief of his hometown volunteer department in Cranbury, N.J.

Though the incident involving a broken chemical container turned out to be minor, Kervan’s story is just one example of how the Princeton Fire Department Associate Member Program has benefited the campus and greater community during the past three-plus years.

The program allows University employees to volunteer with the Princeton Fire Department during their work shifts, augmenting the municipality’s volunteer ranks during critical daytime hours. The University also provides release time for staff to attend certification classes and trainings during business hours, with approval from supervisors.

“The University’s partnership with our department has been a godsend,” Princeton Fire Chief Dan Tomalin said. “Our membership has been on the decline for the past 10 years and it’s always hard for volunteer departments to rally firefighters during the day because people are busy working.”

Launched as a pilot in 2009, the associate firefighter program became permanent in 2011 and has grown from 24 to 30 University volunteers.

The majority of members work in Facilities, Public Safety, and Environmental Health and Safety. While most participants had experience, eight employees were certified through the program. Eight new members will join the ranks after going through the training process this spring.

While University faculty, staff and students have long volunteered on their own with the fire department, as well as the Princeton First Aid and Rescue Squad, this is the first formal partnership of its kind between the University and the Princeton Fire Department.

“It is unusual for a town the size of Princeton to still be protected by an all-volunteer fire department,” Director of Community and Regional Affairs Kristin Appelget said. “Our University staff can have a hands-on, immediate impact on the greater community by supporting a critical emergency service.”

Princeton Administrator Robert Bruschi said he knows of no other community where a university and municipal fire department “have come together in the way we have in Princeton.”

“Throughout many areas of the country, fire companies are facing extinction because of the shortage of volunteers,” Bruschi said. “Our collaboration has proven to be nothing short of an extremely successful program that benefits not only the community but the University.”

More firefighters to help ‘town’ and ‘gown’

University volunteers have an on-call day Monday through Friday, ensuring at least six firefighters from campus are usually available during the workday.

“As soon as that pager goes off, we are members of the Princeton Fire Department,” said Assistant Vice President for Facilities Roger Demareski, who helped launch the program and also is a member.

Demareski said the volunteer squad received a welcome benefit over the summer when the fire department provided the University members with a reserve fire engine. Before, employees would meet on campus, drive to the Witherspoon Street fire station and then get on a fire truck. Now, they gather their gear, hop on the engine stored at 306 Alexander St., and head directly to a call.

“The engine has cut our response time by five minutes or so, which is huge when you are talking about a possible fire,” said Craig Stapfer, operations and safety coordinator for Facilities’ Site Protection department.

Stapfer, Kervan and Thomas Hewitt, also of the Site Protection department, are experienced firefighters and help coordinate the University program.

Established in 1788, the Princeton Fire Department is one of the country’s oldest fire departments. Municipal officials said maintaining a volunteer force, rather than having to pay firefighters, means considerable savings for taxpayers.

“The partnership with the University has pretty much solidified our daytime response. It’s been incredibly beneficial,” said Bob Gregory, director of emergency and safety services for Princeton, a municipal position supported by funding from the University and a federal grant.

Garth Walters, director of the University’s Office of Environmental Health and Safety, said the program has been a win-win for emergency officials on campus and in town.

“Providing the fire department with personnel puts us all in a better place to get a quicker and more robust response,” he said. “When there is a call on campus, the University firefighters also can approach the situation with some familiarity of the building and its operations.”

Paying it forward

The program also has proved valuable beyond Princeton. Many of the University employees who became first-time firefighters also volunteer in their hometowns on nights and weekends.

“I would have never become a firefighter without the University because of the time commitment involved,” said Chris Shannon, a Site Protection mechanic and member of the Chews Landing Fire Department in Gloucester Township, N.J. “It takes a lot of dedication and a lot of training.”

Case in point: Shannon recently spent the morning at the Mercer County Fire Academy participating in a fire drill with University volunteers and other members of the Princeton Fire Department.

Teams of fire approached a thick gray smoke with flames shooting from its hood and trunk. Firefighters briefly planned their approach before one methodically opened the back hood and doors with a metal tool so other firefighters could spray the car down with a hose from a nearby fire engine.

“The object of the exercise is to watch for all the hazards that may be in the car. It also gives everyone a chance to build teamwork and camaraderie,” said firefighter Sandra Kearney, an administrative assistant in Facilities and member of the Cranbury fire department.

As a longtime firefighter, Robert Allen said it’s great to see new people join the ranks through the University program.

“When you are depending on another firefighter to protect your life, it’s a strong bond,” said Allen, an architect and code analyst in the Office of Design and Construction.

When asked to recall a particularly memorable incident that firefighters handled since they joined the associate program, most volunteers had the same answer.

“It’s any call — from something as small as a carbon monoxide detector alarm to a house fire,” Shannon said.

“As soon as we arrive, you can see the person who called start to feel at ease because firefighters are on scene.”

University volunteer firefighters help campus and town

Members of the University’s volunteer firefighter program, shown here at Cannon Green, received a welcome benefit this past summer when the Princeton Fire Department provided volunteers with a reserve fire engine. The engine allows University volunteers to respond to calls in town and on campus more quickly.
Princeton establishes strategic partnership with Humboldt University in Berlin

**Karin Dienst**

Princeton University has established a strategic partnership with Humboldt University in Berlin to support research and teaching collaboration spanning the disciplines.

The proposals must be reciprocal and include undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty from both institutions will sustain undergraduate, graduate student and faculty exchanges across the two institutions and involving all disciplines. He noted that the fund will be used to fund undergraduate, graduate student and faculty exchanges across the two institutions and involving all disciplines. He noted that the fund will be used to fund.

"German, philosophy and the history of science are already in place in the German department. The department also includes Professor Mathias Vogl, who teaches both at Humboldt and at Princeton, and, is, said Jennings, "one of the cornerstones of the broader Princeton-Humboldt cooperation."

A.J. Stewart Smith, dean for research and the Class of 1913 Professor of Mathematics, pointed to shared work in condensed-matter and polymer science and theoretical and computer-based mathematical physicists. "We are delighted to partner with Humboldt, an institution that shares Princeton's research strengths broadly and where we already enjoy strong collaborations in the physical and mathematical sciences," he said.

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**Two seniors named Sachs Scholars**

**Michael Hotchkiss**

Two seniors with track records of achievement in academics and research are among recipients of the Daniel M. Sachs Class of 1960 Graduating Scholarship, one of the most prestigious awards given to Princeton undergraduates.

Kaitlin Stouffer, a computer science major, will work at the K-RITH Institute in the South African coastal city of Durban, building a computerized prediction mechanism that will use machine-learning algorithms and other tools to help determine which medicines a strain of tuberculosis is resistant to. The goal is to allow for tuberculosis patients to be treated more effectively at an earlier point in the disease.

"I also hope to immerse myself in the local culture and engage with the patients at the nearby King George V Hospital — particularly those who are suffering from the cases of TB I'm hoping to help prevent."

Stouffer, who is planning a career as a bioanalytical chemist, said she was inspired to pursue her work beyond the lab because of her parents’ work as doctors. "My dad is a medical doctor, and my mom is a nurse. I have always been interested in science and medicine."

"It is both intellectually and geographically exciting to work in Durban, and I'm looking forward to developing new collaborations and working with medical specialists in the lab."

Stouffer is a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society, the Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society and the Kappa Delta Pi Education Honor Society. She has held internships at Google and Microsoft and was awarded the Accenture Prize in Computer Science. She is also a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the Class of 1870 Sophomore English Prize. She has held internships at Google and Microsoft and was awarded the Accenture Prize in Computer Science. She is also a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the Class of 1870 Sophomore English Prize. She has held internships at Google and Microsoft and was awarded the Accenture Prize in Computer Science. She is also a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the Class of 1870 Sophomore English Prize.

**Student exchanges**

The partnership with Humboldt University will allow us to take the relationships we already have to the next level, and encourage further exchanges of faculty and students," said Garber.

For all scholars, and especially those immersed in cross-cultural work, the partnerships also provide a window that gives them a chance to travel beyond their department.

"Humboldt University is particularly appropriate for this partnership because it is both intellectually and geographically cosmopolitan; and with its strong track record of graduate and multidisciplinary studies, it dovetails beautifully with what many of us think is the future of the world," Garber said.

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University receives state environmental award

Princeton University has been recognized by the state of New Jersey for its ongoing sustainability efforts, in particular its work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and conserve energy across campus.

The annual Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards were presented Nov. 28 at an awards ceremony in Trenton on Jan. 28, recognizing environmental, academic, business, science and civic leaders from across New Jersey for protecting and enhancing the state's environment. Princeton was one of 11 protecting and enhancing the state's environment. Princeton was one of 11 protecting and enhancing the state's environment.

Effective Jan. 1 in the library, librarian Mark Farrell, after 39 years, in Bibliographic Services, was named associate director, a position created several years ago. He succeeds Susan Foster, who retired in July 2012. At the Princeton Library, where he has served in various capacities, he is a leader in the field of electronic resources. Before joining the Princeton Library, Mr. Farrell served as assistant director in the University of Rochester Library. A native of New York City, he earned his bachelor's degree in history and economics at the University of Rochester, N.Y., and attended Yale University. As a doctoral student at Princeton, Wightman was particularly interested in quantum field theory before earning his Ph.D. in physics in 1949. Wightman joined the University's physics faculty in 2009, bringing with him an accomplished career in physics and an internationally recognized reputation for his work in quantum field theory.

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Biehl
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“Our goal was to produce a genuine understanding of the judicialization of the right to health,” said Biehl, the Susan Dod Brown Professor of Anthropology and faculty associate at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. He is also co-director of the Program in Global Health and Health Policy at Princeton.

“Database analysis is crucial,” Biehl added, “but we also need to engage people’s trajectories and life stories, and find ways of creatively bringing the complex evidence that we gather on the entanglement of biology, social environment and medicine to the public and to policymakers.”

Exploring entanglements and finding the connections between life stories and the underpinnings of society are fundamental to Biehl’s work. His methods include not only ethnogra- phy — the written field studies or case reports that arise from anthropological research — but also visual storytelling through photography.

Biehl’s education and career have emphasized a multidisciplinary approach. He received undergraduate degrees in theology and journalism and a master’s degree in theology from academic institutions in Brazil. He earned a doctorate in religion from the Graduate Theologi- cal Union in 1996 and a doctorate in anthropology from the University of California-Berkeley in 1999. Before joining the Princeton faculty in 2001, he was a National Institute of Mental Health postdoctoral fellow at Har- vard University in the Department of Anthropology and the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine.

Biehl’s far-reaching training is a boon for his students, who learn the importance of weaving together disciplines and developing research skills in the field. Often, he enlists his students as assistant researchers, even as early as freshman year.

Applying an interdisciplinary approach

In studying right-to-health issues in Brazil, Biehl used a mixture of research methods, including health-related lawsuits in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul. Using ethnographic methods and his fellowship, Biehl and his fellow researchers determined that health-related lawsuits against the state increased from roughly 1,000 in 2002 to more than 17,000 in 2009. Seventy-two percent of the lawsuits in 2009 were for access to medicines; the rest were for health-related items such as baby formula to surgeries.

“Patients in growing num- bers are not waiting for medical technologies to trickle down, but are demanding access now, if only in small amounts of disease and one court case at a time,” Biehl said.

Of 1,080 lawsuits the research- ers chose randomly for closer scrutiny, the majority were brought by poor individuals who depended on the public system for obtaining both health care and legal representation. Most plaintiffs were older than 45 years, retired or unemployed, and rep- resented by public defenders. They were, for the most part, chroni- cally ill, Biehl stated.

Nearly two-thirds of the requested drugs were already on government formularies and should have been available to the plaintiffs, belying the miscon- ception that the lawsuits were for pricey brand-name specialty drugs, Biehl said. He noted that this situation indicated significant problems at all administrative levels in the country’s innovative yet struggling universal health care system. Almost all of the lawsuits were decided in favor of the plaintiff, Biehl said, with the judges citing the government’s obligation under the constitution’s provision of the right to health.

Biehl conducted the study with epidemiologist Joseph Amon, director of the Health and Human Rights Division of Human Rights Watch and a lecturer in Princeton’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and Inter- national Affairs; physician Mariana Socal, a 2010 graduate of the Master in Public Policy Program at the Wil- son School and a doctoral student in health systems at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health; and Adriana Petryna, the Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn Term Professor in Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania and Biehl’s wife. The study was published in the June 2012 issue of the Journal of Health and Human Rights.

“The paper is part of the active debate about what the right to health means in Brazil and elsewhere,” Amon said. “The whole question of whether social and economic rights can be decided in the courts — it hasn’t been studied in this way.”

In addition to coming through medical and judicial records, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews with physicians, public defenders, judges, policymakers and patients. From these interviews, Biehl and his colleagues gained under- standing of the complex and varied experiences of the plaintiffs, under- scoring Biehl’s conviction that social policies cannot be evaluated solely on technical and statistical approaches. Biehl and Petryna explore these insights further as co-editors of the forthcoming book “When People Come First: Critical Studies in Global Health” (Princeton University Press, 2013). In it, they find fault with the trend toward evidence-based public health with its focus on randomized evaluations, statistical significance of results, cost-effectiveness, and a growing disregard for people-centered case studies and reflections.

“The focus on numbers should not come at the expense of the unpredict- able social and non-numerical unanticipated outcomes,” Biehl said. “We have to use interdisciplinary and ethnographic ways of assessing the design as well as the value of interventions for patients, for families, for communities.”

To help emphasize the human story, Biehl enlisted Danish artist Torben Eskerod to capture images of the patient-plaintiffs engaged in access-to-medications litigation. Eskerod documented Biehl’s previous ethnog- raphic work on Brazil’s pioneering universal AIDS treatment policy in the award-winning book “Will to Live: AIDS Therapies and the Politics of Survival” (Princeton University Press, 2007) and Biehl’s ethnography of what it is like to be mentally ill and abandoned by family and society in Brazil’s big cities in “Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment” (Uni- versity of California Press, 2003).

Engaging with students by integrating teaching and research

As co-director of Princeton’s Pro- gram in Global Health and Health Policy, Biehl oversees the education of juniors and seniors interested in exploring the causes and pat- terns of disease and impact of health interventions across societies. The interdisciplinary program weaves experiential learning and fieldwork into the curriculum, offering oppor- tunities to conduct research in health policy, care and laboratory settings both in the United States and abroad.

Through Princeton’s Grand Chal- lenges Initiative, which tackles complex global problems through the integration of research and teaching, Biehl mentors undergraduates work- ing on their senior theses in a variety of global and domestic settings. To date, 28 undergraduates in anthropo- logy and other majors have conducted research through Biehl’s project, the Future of Global AIDS Treatment and the Social Determinants of Health, in countries including Guatemala, Sierra Leone and South Africa.

Senior Courtney Crampler has been working with Biehl since her freshman year. “With Professor Biehl’s guid- ance, I was able to explore my own interests as well as participate in a team of researchers,” said Crampler, who is writing her thesis on nutritional aspects of the public health policy in Brazil.

“He is a professor that really has the interests of undergraduates in mind.”

Biehl is a dynamic classroom teacher, said senior Raphael Frankfurter, who is writing his thesis on the use of traditional healers in Sierra Leone. “He has this incredible ability to give a 60-person lecture the feeling of a small seminar,” Frankfurter said. “He gets to know the personalities and interests and strengths of his students, even in large classes, and he integrates lectures with discussions.”

In addition to teaching undergradu- ates, Biehl also mentors graduate and postdoctoral researchers and is involved in the newly launched project on global health and medical anthro- pology that is being developed in partnership with the University of São Paulo and is funded by Prince- ton’s Council for International Teaching and Research.

“Biehl has been an incred- ible mentor and supporter,” said Joshua Franklin, a 2011 alumnus who worked with Biehl on the right-to-health litigation project and wrote his senior thesis on the topic. Franklin spent the past year as a Fulbright scholar in southern Brazil and has returned to Princeton to help organize the Princeton-U of São Paulo partnership.

“Working with Professor Biehl enabled me to learn firsthand the research methods that are essential to career development as an anthropologist,” Franklin said.

In developing academic and research projects, Biehl gains new insights that inspire fresh think- ing.

“Social fields are in flux and that puts the pulse in academic disciplines too,” Biehl said. “We must abandon the naive orthodoxy of all kinds and seek original ways to communicate the categories that are significant in human experience to the worlds of science, policy, jurisprudence and caregiving.”