On Campus

In Brief: Fall 2012

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A sample of David Hollenbach's award-winning artwork from the Summer 2011 article "A Message for the World" about Manning Marable.

Columbia wins design awards

Columbia Magazine recently won several national awards for illustration and design. The Council for Advancement and Support of Education awarded the magazine, and art director Eson Chan, a silver medal for the illustrations by David Hollenbach that accompanied the Summer 2011 article “A Message for the World,” about historian Manning Marable; a silver medal for the illustrations by Keith Negley in the Winter 2011–12 article “The Long Shot,” about the cancer researcher Brent Stockwell, and a silver medal for the design of the same story; and a bronze medal for the design of the Summer 2011 article “The Untouchables,” which featured original photos by Lois Greenfield, a celebrated dance photographer, showing former Lion fencers sparring.

Stories in numbers

Mark Hansen, a statistician, installation artist, and news-industry consultant who for the past three years was a UCLA statistics professor, has been named East Coast director of the new David and Helen Gurley Brown Institute for Media Innovation.

The Brown Institute is a joint venture between Columbia's journalism school and Stanford's engineering school. The goal is for journalists in New York, working remotely with engineers in California, to develop novel ways of gathering, presenting, and disseminating news online.

Hansen, in addition to codirecting the institute, will teach Columbia journalism courses on how to incorporate methods of statistical analysis into reporting.

"Mark Hansen has about as wide a range of interests, talents, and accomplishments as anybody I have ever met," says journalism dean Nicholas Lemann. "It is wonderful for the school, and for journalism, that he has decided to make the work he has been doing on the frontiers of journalists' digital revolution into his life's work."

Bernd Girod, a Stanford engineering professor, has been named the Brown Institute's West Coast director.

The institute was established with a $30 million gift from the late *Cosmopolitan* editor Helen Gurley Brown in January in honor of her and her late husband, David Brown '37JRN. Helen Gurley Brown, who was also the author of the 1962 bestseller *Sex and the Single Girl*, died on August 13.

Cheap digs for good plans

Dozens of recent B-school graduates starting their own businesses now have a low-rent home in New York City's Soho neighborhood, where the Columbia Business Lab opened this summer.

The lab, run by the business school's Eugene Lang Entrepreneurship Center, is now home to about twenty new ventures, including an artisanal-sandwich brand, an

indie-music website, fashion companies, and app developers. It also hosts training sessions and networking events for alumni.

“We’ve always wanted to have an incubator space where the students could have a soft landing and affordable office space,” says Lang Center director Murray Low. “But it was the students who really took it upon themselves to find us the space and pull this thing together.”

A bad inheritance?

Students at the law school’s Sexuality and Gender Law Clinic joined the fight against the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in September, filing a brief with the US Court of Appeals in the case of a New York City woman who says she should be able to inherit the estate of her deceased female partner tax-free, just as someone who had lost a legal spouse would. The plaintiff, Edie Windsor, lost her partner of forty-six years, Thea Speyer, in 2009. She subsequently received a $363,000 tax bill from the IRS for receiving Speyer’s property, although the two were married in Toronto in 2007.

In this case, as in other suits now challenging DOMA, the Obama administration has agreed with many of the plaintiffs’ legal arguments and has taken the position that DOMA is unconstitutional.

“One of the Constitution’s most significant promises is that government will not single out certain groups for disfavor unless there is a legitimate reason for doing so,” said Suzanne B. Goldberg, the director of the Sexuality and Gender Law Clinic. “Here, there was simply no good reason for the government to refuse to give Edie and Thea’s marriage the same tax treatment it would have given if Edie had been married to a man.”

Goldfarb named SEAS interim dean

Donald Goldfarb was named interim dean of the engineering school this summer, following the resignation of dean Feniosky Peña-Mora on July 2.

Goldfarb, a professor at the engineering school since 1982, chaired its Department of Industrial Engineering and Operations Research from 1984 to 2002.

Peña-Mora stepped down after a tumultuous academic year in which engineering faculty members formally expressed their dissatisfaction with his management style to the University's administration several times. Last fall, the administration, in response to these complaints, appointed Goldfarb to the newly created position of executive vice dean, in which he assisted Peña-Mora with many of his duties that involved communicating with faculty. But the school year ended with tenured professors voting no confidence in the dean.

This September, provost John Coatsworth announced the formation of a search committee, which he is chairing, to find the school's next dean.

Peña-Mora, who designs computer systems that enable multiple organizations to collaborate on complex tasks such as responding to natural disasters, is remaining on the school's faculty as a professor of civil and environmental engineering.



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