

Interdisciplinary

The School of Arts and Sciences is pleased to welcome **John Jackson Jr.**, the first Penn Integrates Knowledge Professor, to its faculty ranks. Jackson comes to Penn from Duke University and will share a joint appointment in SAS and the Annenberg School for Communication. He also will be affiliated with the Center for Africana Studies.

Jackson is at the vanguard of a new type of professorship that seeks to bring top thinkers to Penn whose research and teaching emphasize the integration of knowledge across disciplinary boundaries. Jackson is a leading scholar of cultural anthropology and a documentary filmmaker. His chair will be the Richard Perry University Associate Professor of Communication and Anthropology.



John Jackson Jr.

“It is quite a privilege to be offered such an expansive academic appointment,” he says. “Penn is the perfect institution for intellectual pursuits that methodologically and thematically traverse the boundaries of traditional fields.

I look forward to my intellectual exchanges

with colleagues in the Annenberg School for Communication, the Department of Anthropology and all across the University.”

Jackson spent much of last summer researching and writing his next book, *Racial Paranoia: The Paradox and the Heart of Black and White*, which will be published by Basic Books. He also spent several weeks conducting ethnographic research in Israel for a forthcoming book on black Judaism. The book will focus on a network of African Americans that live communally in southern Israel’s Negev region.



John Jackson Jr.

Chaucer Reimagined

Geoffrey Chaucer wasn’t thinking of Sigmund Freud when he wrote the *Canterbury Tales*. Nor was he pondering Jane Austen’s *Emma* or Virginia Woolf. But that didn’t stop **Wendy Steiner** from including those characters in an operatic adaptation of “The Wife of Bath’s Tale.” Steiner, the Richard L. Fisher Professor of English, has worked for eight years to create “The Loathly Lady,” a fanciful animated version of the tale that includes characters from throughout history. By her own account, it will be the first new opera to premier as an animated film. Visitors to the Institute of Contemporary Art on July 19 were treated to a seven-minute short that will eventually grow into the full-length feature.

International Excellence

Four international centers in the School of Arts and Sciences will receive \$1.5 million in federal grants this year from the U.S. Department of Education to serve as National Resource Centers for their regions.

The four-year grants are part of a program that recognizes academic institutions for their outstanding commitment to the world’s key areas. While SAS has received these grants since 1959, this is only the second time that these four centers — African Studies, Middle East, South Asia and East Asian Studies — have held the designation simultaneously.

“We are especially pleased that our centers received this prestigious distinction,” says **Rebecca Bushnell**, dean of the School. “It shows our continued strength in area studies and reaffirms the primacy of the arts and sciences in tying Penn to the global community. By engaging key world regions, these centers answer the call of the Penn Compact at the highest level.”

National Resource Centers are called on to foster international expertise for national security purposes and enhance

citizens’ knowledge and skills for the global workplace. To receive the designation, an applicant must

- Teach at least one modern foreign language;
- Provide comprehensive instruction on an area where the language is commonly used;
- Employ scholars engaged in training and research relating to the region;
- Provide opportunities for graduate student research;
- Offer outreach and consultation on a local or national level;
- Maintain a specialized library collection.

In addition to the NRC grants, three of the centers (East Asia, Middle East and South Asia) received \$590,000 in Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships for this academic year to support graduate training. Federal FLAS fellowships provide opportunities for intensive study of less commonly taught languages and world areas during the academic year or the summer. They are also renewed annually until 2010.

60 x 4

What began as an experiment in guerrilla teaching has grown into a campus staple and a favorite stop for students traversing Locust Walk's leafy pathway. The 60-Second Lecture series celebrated its fourth year of showering kernels of knowledge on the eager ears of the Penn populace.

SAS premiered its incarnation of the series on September 3, 2003, when **Bruce Kuklick**, the Jeannette P. and Roy F. Nichols Professor of History, delivered a talk on "John F. Kennedy's Sex Life." The title, Kuklick acknowledged, was a bait and switch.

"Kennedy treated women like pieces of meat, but it is of minor historical interest," he explained. "What is of interest is another expression of that view, that in matters of public policy, he was much more dispassionate and impartial and detached than those around him."

Each season has drawn speakers from the upper levels of SAS faculty and from diverse departments from English to philosophy to physics. This fall's lineup opened with Professor **Philip Rea** from the biology department, who discussed

"Intracellular Landfills." The following week, **Bill Labov**, the John H. and Margaret B. Fassitt Professor of Linguistics, gave a brief analysis of "Language Change in Philadelphia."

The series finished with **Kathy Peiss**, the Roy F. and Jeannette P. Nichols Professor of History, who took the audience "Beyond the Founding Fathers" and **Samuel Preston**, the Fredrick J. Warren Professor of Demography, who gave numbers on "U.S. Military Mortality in Iraq." Go to http://www.sas.upenn.edu/home/news/sixtysec_lectures_archive.html to review these and past 60-Second Lectures.

City Security

Eighteen students were recently given a chance to address their homeland security concerns in a very real way, thanks to the Fels Institute of Government. As part of a special course given through Fels, they became members of a Philadelphia task force assigned to deconstruct, analyze and refine the city's emergency preparedness.

The students were charged with assessing how well the city is prepared for catastrophic threats, both natural and deliberate. To accomplish this, they examined planning and evacuation procedures as well as the strategy for ensuring continuity of the city's government and businesses.

College Dean Dennis DeTurck hosts the 60-Second Lectures



Arthur Copeland



"The course represents the 21st-century application of the University's historic commitment to pragmatic problem solving," says College dean **Dennis DeTurck**. "Future leaders will need cutting-edge skills, and this course helps bring some of the nation's most important issues into the classroom — and uses the classroom to help solve them."

With the students' help, the task force found communication gaps between the city government and the hospital sector, inconsistent documentation of city-wide emergency plans, a lack of preparedness for disasters outside the city limits and insufficient planning in most areas of Philadelphia government. A final report was submitted to Mayor John Street's office in May.

"We have learned from recent events, including Hurricane Katrina, that we will not have done our best job if we cannot secure our most vulnerable. We have to do our best to secure our critical infrastructure," explains **Harvey Rubin**, director of Penn's Institute for Strategic Threat Analysis and Response, who co-chaired the task force and taught the course.