Dean’s comments

Congratulations are in order. We’ve nearly made it through another semester. I’d like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the College for all that you do to make this a great place for students.

The semester has been momentous in several regards. Construction began on the Microbial and Plant Genomics Building and the regents approved plans for the Biotechnology Precinct. We welcomed many new faculty recruited to serve on teams of faculty who share common interests in emerging areas of biology. I believe this strategy will give us a competitive edge as we move ahead.

But there have been challenges as well, and there are more to come. Like the rest of the country, we are feeling the reverberations of the September 11 attacks, which have presented many kinds of challenges. With the gloomy national economic forecast and the State’s recent announcement of a $1.9 billion deficit, we need to anticipate being asked to develop plans for a potential biennial budget recession. And if economic trends do not improve, we may also be forced to delay implementing some of our plans and initiatives.

In spite of these short-term challenges however, I continue to believe that in the longer term the College has a strong future. We are still on the threshold of a golden era for biology. And we are poised to use this opportunity to make scientific gains and strengthen the State’s economy.

I wish you a very happy holiday season, and look forward to beginning a new semester with you in January.

Bob Elde

College and University news

The Annual All-College Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 18 from 12 noon to 1:30 p.m. in 239 Gortner. Dean Elde will present a progress report on 2001-02 goals and objectives. A special program on security issues will include a faculty panel discussion on research with infectious agents and a U of M Police Department report on lab and building security and personal safety. All faculty, staff, and students are invited to attend.

Ann Hamilton, who will create public art for the Molecular and Cellular Biology Building, will speak at the Weisman Art Museum on Thursday, Jan. 10 at 7 p.m. Hamilton was selected from more than 400 applicants nationwide to receive the largest public art commission in U of M history. Her numerous honors include a National Endowment for the Arts Visual Arts Fellowship, the Skowhegan Medal for Sculpture, a Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship and, in 1999, the only MacArthur Fellowship awarded to a visual artist. Her work has been reviewed by Time Magazine, The New York Times, Art in America, and Sculpture Magazine. For more information, contact Shelly Willis at 625-9686.

Faculty, staff, students, and retirees are encouraged to learn more about the University’s capital request at the 2002 Legislative Briefing on Tuesday, Jan. 22, 2002 at Memorial Hall in the McNamara Alumni Center. Buffet dinner and presentation of displays begin at 5:30 p.m.; the program starts at 6:30 p.m. For details and reservation information refer to the UMAA Web site, www.umaa.umn.edu, and scroll down to Upcoming Events, or contact Nicole Bennett at benne069@umn.edu.
The University is asking the Legislature for $239 million for 12 construction and renovation projects. This includes $18.7 million for plant growth facilities on the St. Paul campus and $80 million for maintenance and remodeling, including a project at Lake Itasca Forestry and Biological Station, and a $37 million facility to translate basic research into new therapies. Also included in the request is money for restoration of two historic buildings and funds to plan renovation of Northrop Auditorium.

The CBS community is encouraged to participate in the UMAA phone call campaign for the Legislative request. UMAA has scheduled Jan. 21, Feb. 18, and March 13 for making calls to promote the request. Please put these dates on your calendars. Watch CBS News and e-mail alerts for further information about time and location.

There is still time to make a contribution to CBS in 2001. Gifts must be processed on/or before Dec. 28 to reflect a 2001 contribution. To make a gift to CBS, or to a specific fund in the College, contact Paul Germscheid at 624-3752 or pgermsch@cbs.umn.edu, or Janene Connelly at 624-7496 or connelly@cbs.umn.edu.

A graduate scholarship fund honoring Frank McKinney has been created in the Bell Museum. McKinney served ecology, evolution & behavior and the Bell Museum for 33 years. To date over $10,000 has been raised. The goal is to reach $25,000 at which point the University will match the amount. Send your contribution to: The McKinney Fund, Bell M museum of Natural History. For further information call 626-9603.

Emily Johnston will join CBS as the Alumni Relations Coordinator on Dec. 17. Her position will involve staffing BSAS, working closely with UMAA, and coordinating alumni relations activities.

Know of a family with members from three generations who attended the U? University of Minnesota Alumni Association is writing a story that needs a three-generation perspective and has asked for our suggestions. Contact Janene Connelly at 624-7496.

Faculty Single Semester Leaves and Sabbatical Supplement Requests
Faculty requesting a single-semester leave for the 2002-03 academic year must complete the Faculty Single Semester Leave Request Form. Faculty who have submitted a request for sabbatical leave during the 2002-03 academic year and would like to request centrally allocated funds to supplement pay must complete the CBS Sabbatical Supplement Request Form. Contact your department administrator or Andrea Pedersen at apederse@cbs.umn.edu. Request forms must be received in the Dean's office by Jan. 11, 2002 for consideration.

The CBS Laboratory Safety Plan (LSP) can be found at www.cbs.umn.edu/instr_labs/CBS_LSP_2001/homepg.html or accessed via the CBS home page under “Resources for Teaching and Research.” LSP is the new name of the chemical hygiene plan required by OSHA. With approval from the University's occupational health and safety officer and department research safety officers, department plans have been eliminated. PIs are responsible for having general and specific operating procedures in their labs and available for inspection by OSHA. Contact Jane Phillips at 624-2789 or janep@umn.edu if you have questions.

The Department of Environmental Health & Safety will offer laboratory employee training sessions on the St. Paul Campus on Feb. 5, June 4, and Oct. 1, 2002. All sessions will be held in Seminar Room 280, Veterinary Diagnostics Lab. Register at www.dehs.umn.edu/training/labtraining.html. Contact Rich Straumann at 626-6216 or strau003@tc.umn.edu if you have questions.

Thanks to all in CBS who contributed to the 2001 Community Fund Drive! The University raised $879,202 – the largest contribution since 1990. Both CBS and University participation was at 24 percent.

Kudos
Lawrence Wackett, biochemistry, molecular biology, and biophysics, and Lynda Ellis, lab medicine and pathology, have been awarded $314,541 from the U.S. Department of Energy for “Functional Analysis and Discovery of Microbial Genes Transforming Metallic and Organic Pollutants: Database and Experimental Tools.”

Karen Oberhauser, ecology, evolution, and behavior, has received $83,866 from the Minnesota Higher Education Services office for the “Monarchs in the Classroom Summer Workshop.”

Tom Soulen, plant biology, has received $35,175 from the Minnesota Higher Education Services office for “Investigative Plant Biology for Elementary Teachers.”

Robert Elde, dean, has been awarded $15,000 from the Minnesota Medical Foundation for “Stimulus-Dependent Insertion of Opioid Receptors into Plasma Membrane.”

Events, seminars, and conferences

December 13  "Stem Cells, Cloning, and Genetic Choice," 12:15-1:15 p.m., Weisman Art Museum. John A. Robertson, JD, University of Texas School of Law, will explore ethical, legal, and social issues. Box lunches provided to those who RSVP by 9 a.m., Wednesday, Dec. 5. RSVP to 625-0055 or lawvalue@umn.edu.

December 14  Last day of class, fall semester

December 24-25  Winter holiday; no classes; offices closed

December 31-January 1  New Year's holiday; no classes; offices closed

January 21  Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday; no classes; offices closed

January 22  U Legislative Request Briefing, Memorial Hall, McNamara Alumni Center, 5:30–7:30 p.m. Buffet dinner and free parking. Refer to www.umaas.umn.edu for details.

February 21  David Tilman Lecture, Bell Museum, 3:30 p.m., reception at 5 p.m. David Tilman will present a special lecture in recognition of being named McKnight Presidential Endowed Chair in Ecology.

March 1  CBS Career and Internship Fair, Memorial Hall, McNamara Alumni Center, 11 a.m.–3 p.m.

May 1  Life Sciences Undergraduate Research Symposium, Earle Brown Center, 2–6 p.m.

Go to www.cbs.umn.edu/college_info/seminar.html for links to department seminar lists.