ExCollege Board, 2008-2009

The main activities of the Experimental College Board this year were:

- Election Night Extravaganza, followed by a somewhat smaller celebration of the inauguration
- Faculty-Student Trivia Challenge
- selection of courses taught by visiting lecturers and peer-taught courses offered by undergraduate lecturers
- election of new student board members for next year

The election night program was a resounding success. We estimate that nearly 1,000 people visited the Campus Center. Students (board members and others) provided commentary and facilitated discussion, and the celebration lasted until after midnight. WFXT TV (channel 25) sent a team and showed our event on their 10 PM newscast. As a pendant, the ExCollege organized a less elaborate gathering, once again in the Campus Center, to view the inauguration in January. The ExCollege staff and the board, particularly the student board members, worked hard on this event, and we also thank the Campus Center staff for assistance.

In March we hosted a Faculty-Student Trivia Challenge, organized like a pub trivia night. The original idea was that teams would include both students and faculty members, but this proved difficult in practice; Prof. Judith Haber (English) and Prof. Kent Portney (Political Science) joined teams, but the remaining four teams were all students. This event was intended to promote student-faculty interaction, as the Opening Up the Classroom dinners have done in past years. It therefore did not accomplish what it set out to do, though the attendees enjoyed it and members of the winning team have been seen wearing their prize T-shirts around campus.

The board selected courses for the spring 2009 term in December, and for fall 2009 in April. As always, we tried to provide a balance among different topics and styles of class. We had 145 applications for visiting lecturer positions for fall, a larger number than usual. Many faculty members reviewed these proposals, and 29 faculty served on subcommittees to interview the lecturers. We are grateful for their help in selecting rigorous, engaging courses.

Peer teaching is one of the signature programs of the ExCollege, in independent courses and in the Explorations and Perspectives programs for first-year advising. In spring 2009, we offered four courses taught by undergraduates, each carrying one credit and graded pass/fail. These are:

- Marxist Ideology, Kimberly Chuang
- A Practical Guide to Environmentalism, Kristin Babick and Warren Wertheim
- History of Geography, Benjamin Sacks
- Counterinsurgency, Toby Bonthrone and Chas Morrison

The ExCollege also works with other groups on campus to offer courses: the Institute for Global Learning, the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service, the Tisch Library, the Academic Resource Center, the Communications and Media Studies Program, and the University Police. We appreciate these continuing partnerships.

Next year's five student board members are a diverse group: four men and one woman; three seniors and two juniors; one international student, two from the Boston area; majoring in English, biology, history, and economics.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Mahoney
lecturer, classics
chair, ExCollege Board, 2008-2009