It’s too easy to lobby for this kind of thing with Massachu- setts representatives,” Masiusa says, “because if they’re going to fund research like mine, I feel like for students from other states, it would’ve been more of a challenge.” Though Masiusa’ investment in lobbying for research funding may be small, she is optimistic about student

A Smithie goes to Washington

Lauren "lazy" Masiusa first Washington lobbying effort turned out to be a bit of a cakewalk. The junior astronomy major from Smith traveled to Washington, D.C., with Rob Gutermuth—a Five College Astra- nomy Fellow and her research advisor—and Tom Littel, the director of Smith’s Clark Science Center, to meet with staffers from Sen. John Kerry’s and Rep. John Olver’s offices.

Masiusa joined 74 under- graduates from campuses across the country to discuss their research in Washington as part of Posters on the Hill, an event highlighting the importance of investing in academic research. She reports that the staffers were quite receptive to her presenta- tion on her research about star formation in the nearby region AFG1 496, and assured her they would continue to support the federal funding that made it possible.

"I was quite happy with their response," Masiusa said. "Their interest kind of thing with Massachu- setts representatives,” Masiusa says, “because if they’re going to fund research like mine, I feel like for students from other states, it would’ve been more of a challenge.” Though Masiusa’ investment in lobbying for research funding may be small, she is optimistic about student

Students add design skills to library renovation

Ilda Dule and Yvette Elfaraw from Smith and Diana Lee Pun from Hampshire—worked on the project. They decided to have it function an Alice in Wonderland theme, blending together looking- glasses, vine like designs and bright colors. Pun said that working for clients rather than an academic assignment meant that students had to address real-world ques- tions such as What are the needs of the staff? What are the inter- ests of children? What can the library afford? The result, says McGowan, are “whimsical and fun. It’s a beautiful marriage of function and the artwork.”

—Elisabeth Sweeney AC ’11

more milestones reached in carrying out strategic plan

I t’s not uncommon for an orga- nization to put itself through the efforts of strategic planning only to end up with a report that is placed on a shelf to gather dust. Optimizing the Consortial Advantage by 2020, the Five College strategic plan, does not appear to be headed toward that fate, with more than 50 strategic initiatives under way. What fol- lows are those initiatives that are complete or have reached a milestone toward completion.

Within the planning category of academic excellence, a pro- gram review of the Five College astronomy department is under way. A self study has just been completed and an external re- view team will visit in mid-May. This is the first in a series of pro- gram reviews that will continue next year with the Five College science departments.

—Elisabeth Sweeney AC ’11

Sarah Vasquez is first recipient of annual Five College Lorna Peterson Prize

Sarah Vasquez, a Mount Holyoke student who helped lead community-service efforts in the city of Holyoke, has been chosen as the first recipient of the Five College Lorna Peterson Prize.

The award is named for Lorna Peterson, who worked at Five Col- leges for 29 years, 19 of them as the consortium’s director. It honors Peterson’s commitment to col- laboration as a means of advancing understanding and expanding op- portunities, especially for students. The $500 prize is awarded annually based on nominations from Five College programs.

A West Springfield native, Vasquez tutored and mentored predominantly Spanish-speaking community-service efforts in the city of Holyoke, has been chosen as the first recipient of the Five College Lorna Peterson Prize.

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improving mathematics education and preparing new teachers. In addition, participants will take part in a four-day summer institute to determine where lie the best opportunities for improvement. The heart of the WMMP will be five working groups, organized around curriculum, equity and diversity, instruction and professional development, teacher preparation and innovation. Each group will collect and analyze information in its area over the first year. In the second year, the working groups will develop an evidence-based project design for improving middle and white students in western Massachusetts, the number of certified math teachers coming out of local college programs is stuck in the single digits. The WMMP will look at all aspects of the problem, from teacher preparation and classroom instruction to professional development, to determine where lie the best opportunities for improvement.

While math scores among schoolchildren from poor and minority backgrounds continue to lag behind those of middle-class and white students in western Massachusetts, the number of certified math teachers coming out of local college programs is stuck in the single digits. The WMMP will look at all aspects of the problem, from teacher preparation and classroom instruction to professional development, to determine where lie the best opportunities for improvement.

A new, Five College-led collaboration of 12 school districts, higher education institutions and nonprofit organizations has received a $300,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to improve mathematics teaching in kindergarten through college in Massachusetts’ Pioneer Valley.

The Western Massachusetts Mathematics Project (WMMM) is the latest project of the 27-year-old Five College Schools Partnership. It comprises public schools from Springfield to Greenfield, the member institutions of Five Colleges, Springfield College, Holyoke Community College, Greenfield Community College and Western New England and Westfield State universities. The SummerMath program at Mount Holyoke, sponsored by the Five Colleges, and Hampshire College, is also participating.

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Five College Dance

Peterson prize — continued

students at Holyoke’s Peck School during her first year at Mount Holyoke. Her accomplishments also include the creation of a health and nutrition fair at the Peck School and a student-run energy and resource audit of the school. Students found through the audit that by replacing broken thermostats in classrooms, the school could save $30,000 to $40,000 a year in energy costs. Vazquez will use her prize money to continue this project—not to buy thermostats, but to purchase new ones. She says, “I discovered a diverse population of students who have a similar ethic of service.”

The other nominees for the Peterson Prize were Holly Sprague, of Mount Holyoke—nominated by the Five College Native American Indian Program; Michael Meo, of Hampshire—nominated by the Five College Architecture program; Emma Smith, of Mount Holyoke—nominated by the Five College Film Program. Three of the four nominees—Vazquez, Sprague and Wikloski—are enrolled in Mount Holyoke’s Frances Perkins Program for women of nontraditional college age. For information about nominating a student for this award, contact Nate Therien, ntherien@fivecolleges.edu or (413) 256-8366.

Kevin Kennedy

Five College intern moves on

U Mass Amherst to host 2011 Berkshire Conference on the History of Women

In the 1920s, members of the American Historical Association justified the exclusion of women from Weekend Retreats by claiming that they didn’t need to be there since they only taught at women’s colleges. In response, women historians created a conference of their own. From its first gathering in 1930, the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians has fostered women’s scholarship, and strengthened the one in the academy. In the 1970s, as women’s history began to emerge as a field, the women of the Berkshire conferences decided to organize a meeting dedicated to the history of women—the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women. Held every three years, the Berkshires, as it’s affectionately called, initially met at women’s colleges in the Northeast. In 1978 Lorna Peterson (who later became executive director of Five Colleges) hired Susan Tracy (now a history professor at Hampshire) to help her and other Five College scholars organize the 50th anniversary Berkshire Conference at Mount Holyoke, with Smith and Mount Holyoke (later Amherst) as host institutions. Since then, the Berkshire Conference has moved beyond the hills of New England with meetings in North Carolina, California and Minnesota.

This year, from June 9 to 12, the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women returns to the Five Colleges, and will bring more than 1,000 scholars to what is now the largest and most prestigious gathering of historians of women, gender and sexuality in the world. The University of Massachusetts Amherst campus will host the 2011 conference, with participation and sponsorship from Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, and Smith colleges as well. Berkshires participants will present their research in more than 190 panels and at poster sessions and special workshops. Local organizers have also arranged an array of historical tours, performances, film screenings, book readings and even a softball game. The Pioneer Valley is a natural area to host this international meeting. The Five Colleges have more than 350 scholars engaged in original research on women, gender and sexuality studies. In addition, the archives and special collections here in the valley contain unparalleled historical sources that will entice many of the participants to linger long after the conference is over. We’re delighted to be able to bring home the Berkshires. A dedicated group of Five College faculty members, staff members and students have been working diligently to make this a remarkable event.

For more information about the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, including a digital copy of the program, please visit http://blogs.umass.edu/berkshires.

Laura Lovett

Laura Lovett is an associate professor of history at UMass. Since 2008 she has been director of the Five College Women’s Studies Research Center, which is based at Mount Holyoke. She is also secretary of the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians and co-chair of the Local Arrangements Committee for the 2011 Berkshire Conference on the History of Women.

From Chinese speeches to geology posters, Five College symposia offer a little of everything

The following Five College student symposia took place during the 2010–11 academic year:

• Africa Day, at Hampshire College
• Anthropology Symposium, at UMass Amherst
• Asian/Asian American Studies Conference, at UMass Amherst
• Chinese Speech Contest, at Amherst College
• Ethiomusicology, at Amherst College
• Geology Symposium, at Amherst College
• Indigenous Peoples Symposium and Powwow, at UMass Amherst
• Middle East and South Asian Studies Conference, at Amherst College
• Physics Symposium, at Amherst College
• Peer Education, at Hampshire College
• Student Film and Video Festival, at Hampshire College
• Word!: Multicultural Theater, at Hampshire College

This little symposium has been going for years, and it’s a good opportunity for us to meet our colleagues in the other regional meetings and present our work in front of academic and educational institutions and local organizations in the area to host this international meeting. The Five Colleges have more than 350 scholars engaged in original research on women, gender and sexuality studies. In addition, the archives and special collections here in the valley contain unparalleled historical sources that will entice many of the participants to linger long after the conference is over. We’re delighted to be able to bring home the Berkshires. A dedicated group of Five College faculty members, staff members and students have been working diligently to make this a remarkable event.

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Five College intern moves on

Elisabeth Sweeney spent her four years as an Amherst College student withering in the Five Colleges, and during three of those years she was researching and writing articles for Newsbreaks and Ink. She’s graduating this month. Thank you, Elisabeth—good luck out there!

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