School of Engineering Receives $41.3 Million in Support

School to be renamed the John A. Swanson School of Engineering

Acclaimed inventor, business founder, and University of Pittsburgh engineering alumnus and trustee John A. Swanson has been honored for the greatest generosity by an individual donor in Pitt’s 220-year history—$41.3 million to the University’s School of Engineering as part of the $2 billion Building Our Future Together Campaign. In recognition of this extraordinary generosity, the University will rename the school the John A. Swanson School of Engineering.

“We are exceedingly fortunate that John Swanson—who not only is recognized as one of the world’s leading engineers but also is one of our most loyal and generous supporters—has chosen to make an extraordinary investment in the future of engineering education at Pitt,” said Pitt Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg. “His remarkable generosity will add immeasurably to the long and distinguished record of engineering excellence at Pitt by helping us attract more of the nation’s most talented students. It also will help us recruit some of America’s most accomplished faculty members to engage in top-echelon engineering research within state-of-the-art facilities.”

A portion of Swanson’s support will be used for the transformation of Benedum Hall, the academic home of Pitt’s School of Engineering, which will begin an extensive renovation and expansion starting in 2008. Other portions will be used to establish an endowed fund that will provide a dedicated revenue source to be used at the discretion of the school’s dean in consultation with the University’s senior administration. The uses of this fund will include faculty support, a student fund that will provide undergraduate scholarships and graduate student fellowships, discretionary funds for the Swanson Institute for Technical Excellence, and unrestricted income to help the school keep ahead of the rapid pace of change in engineering education and research.

Swanson, who earned his PhD degree at Pitt in 1966 in applied mechanics, was named a Pitt School of Engineering Distinguished Alumnus in 1998. He has served on Pitt’s Board of Trustees since 2006. In 2002, Swanson was inducted into the Cathedral of Learning Society, which recognizes individuals who have donated $1 million or more to the University. Through his earlier investments in Pitt’s Building Our Future Together Campaign, Swanson created the John A. Swanson Institute for Technical Excellence, which houses the John A. Swanson Center for Micro and Nano Systems; the John A. Swanson Center for Product Innovation; and the RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) Center of Excellence. He also has established the John A. Swanson Embedded Computing Laboratory in Computer Engineering.

“As one of the oldest engineering schools in the nation, Pitt has a long tradition of producing great engineers and advanced researchers,” said Gerald Holder, the U.S. Steel Dean of Engineering at Pitt. “Thanks to John, the Swanson School of Engineering will be even better positioned to advance engineering research and education.” He added that the school has benefited greatly by a recent trend in increased giving. “With John’s support, and the increasing support of many other alumni and friends, the school has received more than $90 million in outright cash gifts over the past decade. By comparison, the prior decade saw slightly more than $18 million in total support. These resources have been invaluable in lifting our academic reputation and positioning us as a leading national engineering school.”

Swanson is recognized internationally as an authority and innovator in the application of finite-element methods to engineering. In 1970—only four years after he graduated from the Pitt School of Engineering with his PhD—Swanson founded ANSYS, Inc., a Canonsburg company that markets the ANSYS software code that Swanson created for use by the aerospace, automotive, biomedical, manufacturing, and electronics industries to simulate how product design will behave in real-world environments.

Swanson served ANSYS as president, chief executive officer, and director; at his retirement from ANSYS in March 1999, he was the company’s chief technologist. Headquartered in Canonsburg, Pa., with more than 40 sales locations worldwide, ANSYS and its subsidiaries today employ approximately 1,400 people and distribute products through a network of channel partners in more than 40 countries. He still teaches ANSYS training classes and serves the company in an advisory capacity.

Continued on Page 4
University Library System and the University Press.

The D-Scribe Digital Publishing Program includes digitized materials drawn from Pitt collections and from other libraries and cultural institutions in the region, presenting collections in several disciplines, the University’s mandatory electronic theses and dissertations program, and electronic journals. Sixty separate collections have been digitized and made accessible on the Internet. Many of these projects have been carried out with content partners such as Pitt faculty members, other libraries and museums in the area, professional associations, and, most recently, the University of Pittsburgh Press. The D-Scribe collections are accessible free of charge at www.library.pitt.edu/dscribe/

The University of Pittsburgh is recognized as one of the country’s major centers for teaching and research on Latin America. The Pitt Latin American Series began in 1968 in cooperation with Pitt’s Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) and the Latin American studies program. The series has grown to include a wide array of distinguished books on Latin American history, politics, society, economics, and culture. The inclusion of the series in D-Scribe complements the University’s Edwards Leonzo Latin American Collections, one of the largest collections of Latin American material in the world.

Robinet Named Editor of the Pitt Chronicle

Jane-Ellen Robinet has been named editor of the Pitt Chronicle. Robinet has an extensive editing and writing background, both locally and abroad. She worked for The Wall Street Journal overseas—first as a copy editor in Brussels and then as the news editor in Tokyo, where she assigned and edited reporters’ stories and worked closely with editors at the Journal’s U.S. and Asian editions.

Locally, she was the health care reporter for the Pittsburgh Business Times and the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette’s correspondent and general assignment reporter for the Pittsburgh Press.

Robinet’s freelance work has included writing a health care column and features for Pittsburgh Magazine and the Carnegie Magazine. She also served as a senior writer for LongLifeClub.com and a health care web site.

She is the recipient of a Knight Center for Specialized Journalism Fellowship at the University of Maryland and received two Golden Quill Awards and a first place Society of Professional Journalists Keystone State Professional Chapter’s Spotlight Award—all for health-related stories.

Robinet earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism from the Wabell School of Journalism at Northwestern University.

She succeeds Jason Yanger, who has rejoined the Web team in Pitt’s University Marketing Communications.

—Sharon S. Blake

UPG Student’s Story Featured on ESPN

Cross-country runner fought back after being diagnosed with a brain tumor

By Wendy Mackall

A 2004 car accident was a classic blessing-in-disguise for Aaron Slafka. Now a senior majoring in political science at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, he wasn’t seriously hurt, but he also didn’t ignore the dizzy spells he started to experience in the days following the incident.

That’s when he was sent for an MRI, which revealed a benign brain tumor growing near his pituitary gland that would need to be removed.

For Slafka, a runner on the UPG cross country team, the news became much worse when doctors informed him that he’d have to stop training altogether if he could recover from the procedure.

“I was in the best shape of my life,” Slafka said. “I was running 10 miles a day. Running was always something I did to relieve all my stress and to leave all my problems behind.”

But he never lost his optimism and determination, which proved to be an inspiration to his teammates, coaches, and classmates.

His story was the focus of a recent segment of ESPN’s “NCAA on Campus.”

The initial surgery was performed through his nose, and the tumor was removed. But a second surgery was required to repair damage caused to his nose by the first procedure.

Afterward, he developed infections, began to have seizures, and experienced paralysis in his left arm and leg. Two more surgeries were required to treat the infection. Slafka spent almost a month and a half in a hospital intensive care unit, and he still experiences seizures.

UPG cross-country coach Joyce Brobeck recalled some of the other runners telling her of Slafka’s determination to keep training both before and after his medical ordeal.

“The other runners were telling me, ‘Coach, Aaron’s still running. We see him at 11 at night, running around campus.’”

He rejoined the cross-country team in 2005, despite running much slower than before his tumor was discovered.

“I didn’t think to me that it took longer to finish a race,” Slafka said. “I was determined to finish.”

Because of his recurring seizures, Slafka is not running this season. But he’s as busy as ever with duties as president of UPG’s Student Government Association. After graduation in April, Slafka plans to run for public office.

Slafka says he hopes others facing difficult circumstances are inspired by his story. “No matter what, you have to live each day to the fullest,” he said.

To see video of Slafka’s story as it appeared on ESPN, go to www.ncaaconline.com, click on “Video,” then scroll to “On Campus TV Show.”

Chronicles

An ongoing series highlighting University of Pittsburgh history

Dec. 1, 1976—Pitt celebrates Tony Dorsett’s winning the 1976 Heisman Trophy for being the outstanding college player in the nation. “The 22-year-old native of Aliquippa, Pa., who led the Panthers through an undefeated and untied regular season and to the No. 1 national ranking, easily defeated his primary rival for the award—Kickey Bell of Southern California,” reported The New York Times.

Dorsett, a fullback, won the Heisman by a 1,011-point margin, one of the largest in the 42-year history of the award.

Pitt Coach Johnny Majors, who was hired in 1973 to reverse the team’s losing streak, recruited Dorsett. The combination was a powerful one: Pitt had its first winning season in 10 years, and the team went to the 1973 Fiesta Bowl. More Bowl games would follow.

“Majors described Dorsett as ‘just like a man possessed. He goes after something with such an intense attitude toward work. He is all seriousness at practice, not joking around. I don’t see how a gay man can be so serious at practice. He would have achieved all of this without that intensity but he maybe would not have gotten so many big records and won this by so wide a margin that devoted,’” the newspaper said.

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Pitt Chronicle

Newspaper of the University of Pittsburgh

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The University of Pittsburgh is an affirmative action, equal opportunity institution that does not discriminate upon any basis prohibited by law.
Pitt Has Impressive History in Graduate Research

This is the launch of a yearlong series about the University of Pittsburgh's programs in graduate and professional education.

By James V. Moliterno
Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor

As one of the nation's best public research universities, the University of Pittsburgh takes very seriously its mission to offer educational programs that will prepare its students for a world where the nation's institutions and for the practice of its professions, to provide high-quality undergraduate and graduate programs that will drive the development of human understanding and the economy. In all of these endeavors, graduate— and graduate-level professional—education plays a very important role. The complexity of graduate education makes it difficult to talk about this critical endeavor in easy sound bites. Through this opening article and through subsequent articles in this series on Graduate and Professional Education at the University of Pittsburgh, I hope that the readers will discover the value of those programs become apparent.

By winning advanced eduction at Pitt is designed to provide innovators for all future sciences and humanities lays the foundation for greater understanding across cultural, economic, and political boundaries. Leadership in business, health sciences, public affairs, law, and government—along with leadership in academia—strengthens the institutional framework of both private and public sectors of our country and our world.

Graduate and Professional Education at Pitt

The students in our graduate programs are educated by faculty in 14 schools of the University, with the largest number of those students in the School of Arts and Sciences. [see accompanying graph] As is true of most of the best graduate and professional programs in this country, admissions, curriculum, and other programmatic decisions are determined by the faculty of the graduate programs themselves. That lack of centralization and standard means that our graduate education can be both highly specialized and multidimensional, always directed toward the perceived needs of the discipline or profession.

Describing such a multidimensional educational program as a challenge is a challenge. Future stories in this series will delve into specifics of some interesting examples of graduate and professional education programs for now, while acknowledging the inherent falsability of any imposed taxonomy for categorizing graduate education, let me propose two very broad groupings to describe the numerous specific programs in which students at the University pursue graduate education.

- Master's and professional education
- PhD education

Through master's and professional education, we develop highly skilled professionals operating at the frontiers of academic and professional practice. Throughout Pennsylvania, alumni of Pitt's master's and professional education programs serve as doctors, lawyers, engineers, librarians and information science specialists, teachers, pharmacists, social workers, occupational therapists... The list goes on and on. We meet the region's, the country's, and the world's needs through these specifically designed programs. Two of the three Pitt alumni honored as Nobel Laureates received their advanced degrees in these programs: Philip Showalter Hench, who won the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1950, earned his Doctor of Medicine degree at our School of Medicine; and Wangari Matathi, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004, earned her Master of Science in biological sciences in the School of Arts and Sciences.

On the whole, then, we have very competitive raw material to work with as we develop graduate programs: strong students and exceptional faculty. We match that raw material with significant University investments. And so how do we know if the investments are worth it? What are we— and by ‘we’ I am referring not so much to the University as to our broader communities—getting in return?

First of all, as noted earlier, we are producing students with degrees demonstrating advanced skills. The largest proportion of our graduate and professional students graduate with master's degrees (67 percent in 2007), and many of those students with advanced degrees are settling across Pennsylvania, providing exactly the kind of professional needs the Commonwealth demands for growth and development. In addition to our master’s-level graduates, graduates of our professional programs that are not called master’s degree programs (such as those in law, medicine, and pharmacy, among others) have a strong impact on the region’s health and infrastructure.

A majority of our PhD graduates go on to become faculty and researchers. Some who graduate and move directly into post-doctoral positions will move into faculty positions, while others will move on to industry or other positions. In addition to working in research and academia, graduates of Pitt’s PhD programs become business and civic leaders, corporate and nonprofit CEOs, and assume other positions of leadership. Our collection of placement data at the graduate level is a work in progress, but the picture that emerges is one of which to be very proud.

For instance, five members of Harvard’s faculty are recent graduates of Pitt’s graduate programs in Arts and Sciences. These five faculty members graduated with PhDs in philosophy. [See page 6 for more on the impact of Pitt’s philosophy programs.]

And if we look not just at recent graduate and professional alumni, but those who...
School of Engineering Receives $41.3 Million in Support

The School of Engineering endowment has nearly tripled during the campaign, growing from $27 million in 1998 to its present value of $97.5 million. The number of funds comprising the endowment grew from 78 to 168, including funds for scholarship support, facilities needs, endowed chairs and professorships for faculty, and unrestricted endowments. The number of donors giving $1,000 or more annually has more than doubled over the past five years, growing from just 65 in fiscal year 2003 to 148 in fiscal year 2007.

Nearly $1 million in donor-funded scholarships and fellowships were awarded directly to engineering students during the past academic year. Nearly $1.25 million was generated during the past academic year through endowed chairs, professorships, and fellowships in support of the school’s faculty. During the campaign, the number of endowed chairs has grown from two to five and the number of endowed professorships has grown from nine to 19.

University’s Building Our Future Together Campaign Raises More Than $1.185 Billion in Gifts, Pledges

With a goal of $2 billion, the University of Pittsburgh’s capital campaign is the largest and most successful fundraising campaign in the history of Southwestern Pennsylvania. To meet the challenges of the 21st century and to continue Pitt’s progress and momentum, the capital campaign will help the University attract more high-achieving students and faculty to its campus, retain and support outstanding faculty, and provide a nurturing learning environment that inspires discovery in all of the University’s many disciplines.

Focus areas for the campaign include student scholarship support and financial assistance, faculty recruitment and retention, preserving campus architectural treasures, and strategic research investments.

Pitt’s capital campaign has raised in excess of $1.185 billion in gifts and pledges as of Dec. 5, 2007, with a number of noteworthy statistics that mark substantial progress since 1997.

Some highlights:

• 370 new endowed scholarship funds for a total of 787, an increase of 88 percent in the number of such funds;

• 32 new endowed fellowships for a total of 90, an increase of 55 percent in the number of such funds;

• 370 new endowed scholarship funds for a total of 787, an increase of 88 percent in the number of such funds;

• 76 new endowed chairs for a total of 116, an increase of 190 percent in the number of such funds; and

• 528 new named miscellaneous faculty and student resource endowments used to support such activities and programs as research projects, research travel, book purchases, and student academic projects for a total of $68 of these endowments, representing an increase of 155 percent in the number of such funds.

The campaign has enjoyed broad support, attracting its current total of more than $1.185 billion from 127,174 donors. Of those donors, 71,665, or 56 percent, are alumni.

Continued from Page 1

Prior to founding ANSYS, Swanson was employed at Westinghouse Astronuclear Laboratory in the stress analysis group in reactor design, the core analysis and methods group, and the structural analysis group. It was at Westinghouse that Swanson realized the significant resources companies could save by using integrated general-purpose finite-element software code to do the complex calculations engineers were then doing manually.

In May 2004, Swanson was given what is considered to be the highest award in the engineering profession, the American Association of Engineering Societies’ John Fritz Medal. Prior awardees of the Fritz Medal include Orville Wright, Alexander Graham Bell, Alfred Nobel, Thomas Edison, Guglielmo Marconi, and George Westinghouse. In 2006, Swanson received the American Society of Mechanical Engineers’ President’s Award.

Swanson has received many other prestigious honors throughout his career, among them being named in 1986-87 Pittsburgh Engineer of the Year by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), winning in 1990 the Computers in Engineering award for outstanding contributions to the engineering and computing industries, selection by Industry Week as one of the Top 5 of the Top 50 R&D Stars in the United States in 1994, election as an ASME Fellow in 1994, and receipt of the ASME Applied Mechanics Award in 1998 and ASME Honorary Membership in 2003.
Big Renovations Are Planned for Benedum Hall

Transformation plan to begin in 2008

The Michael L. Benedum Hall of Engineering will undergo a major transformation over the next few years.

Formally dedicated in 1971, Benedum Hall had periodic classroom and laboratory upgrades. In 2006, the school began planning for a complete renovation of the entire building and the construction of an additional building. The University is committing approximately $60 million toward the transformation plan, and an additional $30 million will be raised in private support. The plan will be carried out in two major phases.

Phase one begins in spring 2008 with the most visible external feature of the overall plan—the construction of a new building connecting the Benedum Hall tower to the auditorium building across the plaza. This entire two-story structure and the second floor of the tower will be dedicated to the Masco Sustainability Initiative (MSI). Pitt’s center for sustainable design and engineering. Reconstruction of the auditorium interior will begin in 2009. The current 500-seat open space converted into five individual classrooms.

A new mezzanine will be constructed in the tower’s sub-basement level in late 2008, creating an entirely new floor. By early 2009, construction will begin on the complete restructuring of the tower’s basement level into a new Lower Plaza Level with 10 new classrooms, a new home for the Bevier Engineering Library, a cafe, offices for student organizations and clubs, and a 3,600-square-foot student computer lab.

In mid-2009, the first floor of Benedum Hall tower will be transformed into the school’s new administrative center, housing the dean’s office, freshman programs, and student affairs, and the offices of diversity, research, and development and alumni relations. By early 2010, construction will begin on the restructuring of the fourth and fifth floors, with one becoming a complex of research labs and offices dedicated to bioengineering research, and the other devoted to nanoeengineering.

The second phase, to commence after 2010, involves the renovation of the tower floors 6 through 12, which house the school’s academic departments.

Historical Highlights/Swanson School of Engineering

In its early years, beginning more than 160 years ago, Pitt’s engineering school played an integral role in bolstering the industry that built Pittsburgh, trained American soldiers, and was a font for technology—from the radio to the airplane—that changed the world. Today’s John A. Swanson School of Engineering builds on that historic tradition through a wide range of research, from breakthroughs in biomedical procedures to becoming a trailblazer in the emerging field of nanotechnology. Below are highlights from the school’s distinguished history.

First engineering professor at Pitt, 1844

Lennel Stephens joins the Western University of Pennsylvania (now Pitt) as its first engineering professor, teaching civil engineering and mechanical drawing. The first two engineering students graduate in 1846.

Engineering department and four-year degree established, Feb. 8, 1867

The University’s trustees create an engineering department offering a four-year engineering degree. That same year, the University hires Samuel Pierpont Langley, who will uncover the basic laws of flight and develop a single-passenger, steam-powered aircraft. In 1896, his unmanned plane flies approximately a half-mile to become the first aircraft to fly on its own power. Orville and Wilbur Wright work from Langley’s research on wing design to accomplish the first manned flight in 1903.

Engineering expenses, 1880s and ’90s

The percentage of University students studying engineering increases from 30 percent to as high as 80 percent and, in 1895, the University opens the Western Pennsylvania School of Mines and Mining Engineering. In 1893, William Hunter Dammann is the first African American to graduate from the University, earning a degree in engineering (with honors). Dammann went on to become a noted engineer, professor, and inventor.

First radio broadcast, Dec. 24, 1906

Reginald A. Fessenden, chair of electrical engineering from 1893 to 1900, reportedly sends the first voice transmission across radio waves, earning him the nickname “Father of Radio.”

Engineering expenses course list to train military engineers for World War II, 1942

The engineering department began preparing students to train military engineers in mid-2008 with the current 500-seat open space converted into five individual classrooms.

The engineering and mining schools are merged into a single School of Engineering, allowing for better academic organization and growth. Benedum Hall is dedicated March 18, 1971, consolidating engineering students and faculty into one building.

Development of specialized engineering centers of excellence begins, April 1993

Pitt establishes the Center for Bioengineering (CBB), among the first of numerous specialized labs and centers of excellence that will be established in the School of Engineering. These facilities feature expert faculty working in a variety of areas, from building materials and nanoscience, to studying how to prevent injuries from falls in elderly adult populations.

Engineering student wins Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, April 2004

Margaret Bennewitz (ENGR ’07), a University of Pittsburgh Honors College student and bioengineering major, receives the Goldwater Scholarship for her independent research in science and engineering.

School of Engineering receives unprecedented support from John A. Swanson, Dec. 5, 2007

Acclaimed inventor, business founder, and University of Pittsburgh engineering alumnus and trustee John A. Swanson is honored in recognition of the greatest generosity by an individual donor in Pitt’s 220-year history—$41.3 million to the University’s School of Engineering as part of the $2 billion Building Our Future Together Campaign. Pitt to rename the school the John A. Swanson School of Engineering.

For a more complete history of the Swanson School of Engineering, visit www.pitt.edu/news/071205swwason5.html

—By Morgan Kelly
have had more time to make an impact, we note the Nobel Prize winners mentioned earlier, U.S. Congress members, a governor, scholars, and researchers who have received the highest acclaim in their fields by being elected to the Academies, and faculty who are awarded named professorships or who have served as college deans or presidents.

For example:

• General Roscoe Robinson Jr., who earned his master’s degree in international affairs at GSPIA, was the first African American to achieve the rank of 4-star general in the U.S. Army.

• John A. Swanson, who received his PhD from Pitt’s School of Engineering, is an acclaimed inventor, the founder of ANSYS, Inc., and a philanthropist. His $41.3 million contribution to the University of Pittsburgh’s School of Engineering, announced last week, is the largest individual contribution made in the history of Pitt.

• Sung-Hou Kim, a prominent graduate of our Department of Chemistry in Arts and Sciences, heads the structural biology group in the University of California, Berkeley, and led the team that mapped the protein universe.

• Herb Boyer, of our biological sciences department in the Arts and Sciences, is the founder of Genentech.

• Graduates of our law school have been in very prominent government positions: U.S. Senator Orin Hatch; former Congresswoman Melissa Hart; Allegheny County Chief Executive Dan Onorato; Pennsylvania Chief Justice Ralph Cappy; former Speaker of the House K. Leroy Irvis; and former Governor Dick Thornburgh, who also served as U.S. Attorney General.

These are just a few examples of leaders who received their graduate and professional education at the University of Pittsburgh. Many more examples can be seen by visiting the Legacy Gallery kiosks in the lobby of Alumni Hall.

The University’s commitment to and success in graduate and professional education are worth celebrating. I hope that this brief overview of some of the factors underlying graduate education here helps to lay the groundwork for the more in-depth considerations you will read in the coming months regarding this very complex endeavor.
Concerts


Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh, 8 p.m. Dec. 18, Heinz Hall, 600 Penn Ave., Downtown, 412-441-9000, www.pittsburghsymphony.org.


Exhibitions


Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center, Soldiers 75th Season Celebration, through Feb. 10, Pittsburgh Recast, through March 31; The Darkest Month, through June 8; 1212 Smallman St., Strip District, 412-454-6000, www.pghhistory.org.


Lectures/Seminars/Readings


“Myths and trendy hair: How to study the futures of ritual and religion,” 1:30 p.m. Dec. 12, 200 North Common, University of Pittsburgh, 412-392-4646, MythsCon4.org.


Bach and the Baroque Series Comes to a Close

Christmas Oratorio Dec. 15 and 16 will be final

A piece of Pitt’s musical history comes to an end this month with the final performance of Bach and the Baroque Series.

The ensemble will perform Bach’s Christmas Oratorio with Cantatas 1-3 at 8 p.m. Dec. 15 and Cantatas 4-6 at 3 p.m. Dec. 16. Both performances are in Heinz Chapel, the venue that has been home to the Bach and the Baroque ensemble for more than 20 years. The event is cosponsored by Renaissance and Baroque Society, a Pittsburgh organization.

Mark Peters, a Bach scholar and assistant professor of music at Trinity College, Palos Heights, Ill., will deliver a preconcert lecture one hour before each performance in Pitt’s Music Building, Room 132.

Bach and the Baroque ensemble was founded in 1991 by Pitt music professor Don Franklin and one of the music department’s senior lecturers, John Goldsmith. The ensemble comprises musicians from Pitt and the regional community, and frequently uses guest soloists and instrumentalists from across the East Coast.

Franklin conceived the idea for the ensemble more than two decades ago while he was on research leave in Leipzig, Germany.

Franklin was my hope and dream to bring together instrumentailists and singers to form a Concert Musicus that breathed the same manner that Bach did with the university students in Leipzig during his tenure as cantor at the Thomaskirche.

Goldsmith agreed to work with the Bach Baroque Singers, and other vocalists were recruited along the way. With the support of the University Library foundations, Franklin eventually purchased period instruments with the proceeds to ensure each year’s musical exploration of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Over the years, the ensemble has performed more than 30 of Bach’s church cantatas and a number of his major vocal-instrumental works, including the St. Matthew Passion, St. John Passion, and portions of the Mass in B Minor. The ensemble performed Antonio Bertalli’s Missa Nova Requiem in 2005 and 2006, with a large corps of Bach’s contemporaries.

Bach’s Christmas Oratorio is based on a biblical narrative, Lutheran chorales, and choruses and arias with poetic texts. It is typically performed usually in Germany and throughout northern Europe, much like the Messiah is in the United States.

Over the years, the ensemble has performed at various locations throughout the United States. The final two performances are scheduled for Dec. 15 and 16 at 8 p.m. in Heinz Chapel, with tickets available at $30, $25, and $15. For full-time students, there are $10 tickets available for the Dec. 16 performance only. All tickets can be purchased through the Renaissance and Baroque Society website, www.ensemble.org, or by phone at 412-361-2048.
Grant Funds Music Ed Program for Teachers

"Voices Across Time" last held at Pitt in 2006

By Sharon S. Blake

Educators from across the United States will once again convene at the Pittsburgh campus to learn how to teach American history, literature, and other subjects to young people by incorporating American music into the curriculum.

Pitt’s Center for American Music, part of the University Library System, has received a $193,117 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to hold a "Voices Across Time" Institute, from July 7 to Aug. 8, 2008, on the Pitt campus.

The last "Voices" institute was held at Pitt in 2006. It attracted participants from every corner of the country … from Chicago to Phoenix … from Staten Island to Honolulu. The series of workshops, field trips, and seminars will train teachers to educate young people in history, literature, civics, economics, and other subjects by using popular American songs of a particular era. The faculty will include national education specialists, historians, and songwriters.

"The sound of history is missing from our classrooms," says institute codirector Deane Root, who is also director and Fletcher Hodges Jr. Curator of Pitt’s Center for American Music. "Over the years, songs have allowed everyday people to voice their attitudes, opinions, and beliefs. Music provides a very real soundtrack to events throughout history."

Root says it’s all about helping teachers provide the meaning behind the facts they’re teaching. "Music is a wonderful bridge to incorporating historical knowledge, language, quantitative reasoning, and physical performance in the same classroom," he added.

For example, students may listen to the spiritual "Go Down, Moses" to help them better understand slavery. They may hear Woody Guthrie’s "This Land Is Your Land" as a representation of the American populist movement of the mid-20th century.

John Lennon’s "Imagine" may help them explore the idealism of the 1960s, and Bruce Springsteen’s "Streets of Philadelphia" may enlighten them about poverty and AIDS in urban centers.

Other tunes may include songs written by soldiers in war zones, including those written by U.S. soldiers in Iraq.

One teacher who participated in the 2006 institute later reported using the songs "Ballad of the Green Beret" and Edwin Starr’s "War" in a citizenship class. "I gave them the song lyrics, and they wrote about whether they thought a person could be a good citizen and yet protest that country’s actions in a war," the unidentified teacher reported on a survey distributed after the event. "Those were some very interesting papers and very stimulating classroom discussions—a good experience overall."

While the institute is designed for teachers of grades seven through 12, it can be adapted for younger grades.

Another teacher reported that he continues to use what he learned at the last "Voices" institute almost every day. "The kids in Special Ed love this program," he said. "I just finished a unit on pre-Revolutionary times, and we discussed the Salem Witch Trials and the Puritans. We used many songs and then read the book The Witch of Blackbird Pond. It was phenomenal how much the kids remembered."

Teachers interested in more information or wishing to apply, should write to amerimus@pitt.edu, call 412-624-4100, or visit www.voicesacrosstime.org.

"The sound of history is missing from our classrooms. Over the years, songs have allowed everyday people to voice their attitudes, opinions, and beliefs. Music provides a very real soundtrack to events throughout history."

—Deane Root

Members of the Baltimore-based Federal City Brass Band perform music from the Civil War era for participants of the 2006 Voices Across Time Institute.