September 26, 2016

Dear members of the Hajim School community:

Here's a call to all Hajim School students: Help us celebrate the dedication of the new Edmund A. Hajim Science & Engineering Quad on Oct. 7 during Meliora Weekend. We're even handing out cool t-shirts you can wear to the event to show our pride — and to demonstrate our appreciation to Ed Hajim, whose transformative gift has meant so much to our school. You can pick up your free t-shirt in Wilson Commons between 3 and 6 p.m. on Oct. 6. The dedication at 11:30 a.m. the next day will be followed by a barbecue — open to all — and music by Don't Know Jack, a band that includes Rob Clark, our former dean, now provost. As I'm sure you've noticed in recent days, the new Wegmans Hall and the quad are coming together nicely. Especially pleasing is the curved walkway and retaining wall (bearing our school's name) at the base of the large sycamore tree.

In recent issues of Hajim Highlights we've given examples of Hajim students taking advantage of the "full spectrum" of opportunities here to expand their interests outside the classroom. Here's another example: Seniors Vito Martino of chemical engineering and Lance Floto of computer science and financial economics are president and vice president, respectively, of the Students' Association. Click here to read an interesting Q&A about them and their goals for this year.

The Turing Award is considered the Nobel Prize of computing, so it is an honor to have Professor Leslie Valiant of Harvard University, one of its recipients, speaking here this week in conjunction with the 29th International Workshop on Languages and Compilers of Parallel Computing. The workshop is being held Wednesday through Friday at the Hilton Garden Inn at College Town. Valiant, who revolutionized machine learning, will speak at 1 p.m. Wednesday on the need to design algorithms to address the difficulty of writing efficient parallel programs, especially in light of the increasing complexity of computing architectures. Professors Chen Ding and John Criswell of computer science are co-organizers of this workshop, being held in Rochester for the first time. You can read more about the conference here, and register here to attend Valiant's talk.

The collaboration of Danielle Benoit, associate professor of biomedical engineering, with Hyun Koo at the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine, has resulted in a $1,923,792, four-year grant from the National Institutes of Health to further refine their novel approach to fighting dental plaque and tooth decay. Danielle and Hyun have designed nanoparticle carriers that encapsulate anti-bacterial drugs and exhibit affinity to the surface of teeth. When exposed to acidic pH levels that occur due to dietary sugars that cause tooth decay, the nanoparticles destabilize, releasing anti-bacterial drugs exactly when they are most needed. The funding will enable further development of the approach, including coencapsulation and delivery of synergistic anti-biofilm drugs and testing the effectiveness of the approach in rodent models.

I am very excited about the NSF grant we have received, in collaboration with the Kearns Center, which will bring a dozen female and underrepresented minority students from
other universities to our campus each of the next three summers for a **hands-on research experience** (REU). The program will be modeled after the very successful **Xerox Engineering Research Fellows Program** offered to our own undergrads. Unlike most REU programs, which involve a single department, this one will allow students to match up with mentors across the entire school, while also benefiting from professional development and GRE preparation through the Kearns Center. **Our hope is that several of these students will decide to apply here for graduate school.**

Thanks to all the **Hajim School faculty who have participated over the years in the Upward Bound summer sessions** offered by the Kearns Center to encourage and prepare Rochester City School District students to attend college. The **direct involvement of faculty** in teaching the courses is **one reason the program here is considered exemplary**, resulting in another NSF grant from the INCLUDES program to extend the Rochester model to three sister institutions in upstate New York — and perhaps nationwide eventually. Read more about both the REU and INCLUDES grants [here](https://example.com).

Have a great week!

Your dean,
Wendi Heinzelman