Provisor Set to Speak to C.U.

State of Univ. address part of Martin’s widening role

BY THERESE LAHLOUH
Sun Contributor

For the first time in Cornell’s history, the provost will give a State of the University address. Provost Biddy Martin will speak about the current academic status of the University today.

Martin is the first woman to serve as provost, and, since her appointment in July 2000, her job has become increasingly important.

“This is the latest in a series of steps in recognizing the importance of the provost’s role,” said President David Skorton.

Dean of Faculty Charles Walcott, Ph.D ’59 explained what he believed to be the reason for this new address.

“This is an effort by the president to emphasize the role of the provost,” Walcott said. “It makes a great deal of sense, because in terms of academics, she is the person responsible.”

The provost, as the chief academic officer of the University, is well placed to give this address, according to Walcott.

“She has a perspective which few others have — of the entire University, not just one college,” he said.

“It’s my first year as president, and I think it’s a good idea,” Skorton said. He also stated that he had two main underlying motivations behind creating this new address.

“I wanted to provide an opportunity to listen to the chief academic officer of the University, the provost, and get her perspective on the academic state of the University,” Skorton said. “I have a deep respect for her vision of what the University is and could become.”

The role of the provost has been considered an ambiguous one. Although it was originally created to assist the president in matters of “secondary importance” according to Morris Bishop, author of A History of Cornell, it has changed many times since its creation. It has evolved from a more financially centered role to its current position focusing on academics.

The role has expanded in recent years.

“As Cornell grew in size and complexity, the provost found himself stretched trying to keep track of all the bits and pieces,” Walcott said. “This is where the provost comes in.”

“Skorton handles the overall strategy. He has a group of lieutenants who he works with, trusts and delegates tasks to,” Walcott said.

Skorton is forthright in his respect for Martin and her administrative role.

“I believe that the provost has a very important role in the vision and management of the University,” Skorton said. “The heart and soul of the University is the academic mission of education and discovery.”

The subject matter of Martin’s address is nearly as ambiguous as the role itself. The only thing certain is that the academic status of the University will be discussed.

“My guess is the state of the University is good,” Walcott said. “I would be astonished if anyone were to declare otherwise.”

Unfortunately, Martin was unavailable for comment.

Not everyone, however, is as excited about the speech as Skorton and Walcott.

“I have no idea about any of that,” Dan Butterfly ’08 said regarding the address.

“I have prelims coming up,” said Natalie Ramirez ’10. “I’m not too wise.”

“I am thinking about economic determinism in orthodox Marxism for my government class, not some speech the provost is giving,” Dan Butterfly ’08 said regarding the address.

Regardless, both Skorton and Walcott are looking forward to the address.

“I hope the community turns out in large numbers and that people enjoy the talk and talking about whatever points are raised afterwards,” Skorton said.

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Guerrilla campaigning

A car parked in a loading zone in front of Collegetown Bagels displays a slogan for a Class of 2008 Council candidate. The car was reportedly parked there for two days over the weekend.
Martin to Talk Academics

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said. "It's important for people to come and lis-
ten and pay attention to it. I have no idea what she's going to talk about. I think this University is an extraordinary University in the diversity of our concerns and interests. My hope is that she is going to emphasize the riches that are available there and encourage students to take advantage of them," Walcott said.
Can the Cornell community expect to see this speech again next year? According to Skorton, most definitely. "I hope this will become a new tradition for the University." Skorton said.
The address will be held in Kennedy Hall Call Auditorium at 4:30 p.m.

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3-D Printer Has Many Functions

PRINTER
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three operational models, or ‘fabbers.’
A group at Rockefeller University has used a Fab@Home fabber to study slime mold organisms and a family in Kentucky has cus-
tomized its device to print chocolate from a heated syringe, said Evan Malone, grad., designer of the Fab@Home kit.
"This is a quick and easy solution for [custom] parts in labs," Malone said. Rather than contracting outside companies to make small parts, they can be easily manufactured with Fab@Home.
"We’ve also had a lot of interest in artistic applications," he said.
The fabbers are designed to work with any soft material that can be squeezed out of a syringe. “EZ-Cheese and peanut butter are pretty nice,” Periard said. “You can use, say, cheese to bang out a prototype model in five minutes.”
"The only limitation is if you build up high, the material needs to hold itself up," Periard said.
"Fab@Home is really an outreach project for us," Malone said. The goal of his research is "to prove the principle that you can 3-D print complete electromechanical devices without human intervention."
"We’ve already printed a working battery," Malone said. Eventually, he hopes to print a complete functioning robot that will walk out of the fabber.
Malone said that in the future, fabbers could have appli-
cations in space exploration, where delicate technology has always lagged behind the state-of-the-art because it must be able to withstand high radiation levels. Instead, by placing a fully automated fabber on the surface of the moon or Mars, cutting-edge technology could be manu-
factured in-situ and would not need to be radiation hardened. If it fails, a new one can be printed.
Closer to home, Lipson believes that fabbers will “change the way we consume things, just as MP3s have changed how people buy music.”
Rather than purchasing products, people will download blueprints and manufacture their own. “You could even build a big version and print out furniture,” Lipson added.
“IT’S a lot of fun to sit at your desktop and think of what you can make,” Malone said.