IN NYC

Lesson Plan

STUDENTS SKETCH A STRATEGY FOR REBUILDING CONEY ISLAND

by Alyson Krueger / GSAS ‘12

A SKECH OF CONEY ISLAND’S INFRASTRUCTURE AND POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS FOLLOWING HURRICANE SANDY’S IMPACT.

STUDENTS FROM THE SCHACK INSTITUTE OF REAL ESTATE LEAD A WORKSHOP WITH CONEY ISLAND LOCALS ON PRACTICAL STEPS FOR REBUILDING THEIR COASTAL NEIGHBORHOOD.

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In the October night that Hurricane Sandy rushed into New York City, Paul Schwabacher, the senior vice president of facilities management for NYU Langone Medical Center, was hunkered down with his team in a makeshift command center on First Avenue and 30th Street. In the preceding days, the facilities team had prepared for the storm much like they did for Hurricane Irene, bringing in water pumps and additional fuel oil, and sealing up low-lying areas with plywood, plastic, and sandbags. As a 14-foot surge pushed in way up the East River, Schwabacher was monitoring the campus’s perimeter and basements via security cameras.

“The Phoenix on First
NOT EVEN A HISTORIC STORM COULD SHUTTER NYU LANGONE MEDICAL CENTER FOR LONG
by Nicole Pezold / GSAS '04

It felt like a movie set,” he says. All the world (or at least those with power) watched what happened next: An orderly, if surreal, evacuation of patients to 14 area hospitals on higher ground, including the delicate transfer of 20 infants from the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit by a team of heroic nurses. More than 300 patients were safely evacuated over the course of 13 hours.

In the light of the next days, NYU Langone surveyed the destruction: Its mechanical, plumb- ing, and electrical systems had suffered extensive damage; some state-of-the-art equipment—such as MRs—a gamma knife used for brain surgery, and a linear accelerator used for the treatment of cancer—was also destroyed. But more than just equipment was lost. Thousands of laboratory mice were rescued and have been outfitted with a new above-ground colony, which is only a recent innovation for these types of facilities. “Traditional wisdom dictates that you put colonies in the basement,” explains neuroscientist, physiologist, and cell biologist Gordon Fishell, because of the heavy machinery and copious flow of water required to keep the space pathogen free, among other factors. So the mice, which are genetically pathogen free, among other factors, have access to new energy, hospital, and science development program to construct new energy, hospital, and science buildings, Skirball Institute, and a more than seven feet above Sandy’s record surge.

Schwabacher says, “to reopen the building as fast as possible.”

When Sandy hit, NYU Langone’s complex was already in the midst of a major capital development program to construct new energy, hospital, and science buildings, as well as an overhaul of the Emergency Department. The ED remains closed until the renova- tion is complete in early 2014; in the meantime, the medical center has opened an urgent-care center to serve the public. “The buildings, which include a co-generation power plant, were already designed with an eye toward ris- ing sea levels and the more vora- mante storms predicted with climate change by locating all critical systems above the 500-year flood lev- el. Here was an opportunity to go even further. The goal now is to protect the campus to two feet be- yond that—and critical infrastruc- ture to at least six feet higher—to a level seven to 11 feet higher than Sandy. Buildings surrounding the main campus will also be outfitted with barriers that can flip into place and act as bulwarks.”

There’s good news for Sandy’s tiniest survivors, too. Some 54 cag- es of mice were rescued and have been outfitted with a new above-ground colony, which is only a recent innovation for these types of facilities. “Traditional wisdom dictates that you put colonies in the basement,” explains neuro- scientitist, physiologist, and cell biolo- gist Gordon Fishell, because of the heavy machinery and copious flow of water required to keep the space pathogen free, among other factors. So the mice, which are genetically altered to help doctors better un- derstand everything from cancer to heart disease, are making their own home again, right, alongside the students, post-docs, and colleagues who study them.

Fishell’s lab focuses on seizures, heart disease, are making their own
understand everything from cancer to heart disease, are making their own home again, right, alongside the students, post-docs, and colleagues who study them. Fishell’s lab focuses on seizures, heart disease, and he says their work never truly slowed, and predicts the same for the university. “If you look at NYU Langone’s output and performance in five years, by any measures, you’d be hard-pressed to know this hit us,” Fishell explains. “And that really speaks to the strength of the comeback, the dedication of every- one here.”

With an eye towards climate change and rising seas, NYU Langone will protect its East River campus to more than seven feet above Sandy’s record surge.

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Sip some one-of-a-kind cocoa or dare to visit a haunted house
during the 12th and 13th centuries, so the setting itself is part of the collection. “When you visit the Cloisters, you get a vivid sense of medieval European culture in a way that is not possible anywhere else in the country,” explains Kathryn A. Smith, an associate professor of medieval art and chair of the art history department. Opened to the public in 1938, the Cloisters features around 2,000 works ranging from sculpture and stained glass to rare frescoes and manuscript illuminations. Smith (IFA ’91, ’96) particularly loves the Treasury with its array of jewelry and precious objects in gold, silver, ivory, and enamel. The museum’s most renowned pieces are The Unicorn Tapestries, which she says are “wonderfully crafted among the most beautiful of surviving sets of medieval tapestries.” Outside, the “absolutely gorgeous” monastic cloister gardens showcase more than 250 species of plants and herbs that were cultivated in the Middle Ages. Overlooking the Hudson River, the Cloisters offers majestic views and a rare sense of serenity that make it hard to believe that you are, as Smith notes, “in the midst of one of the world’s busiest and noisiest cities.”