“Information Commons: Are We All Things to All People?” was the theme of the 2006 LACUNY Institute, held May 19 at Baruch’s Conference Center. With two keynote speakers, one panel discussion, six breakout sessions, and five vendor sponsors, the Institute was an informative day.

The program began at 9 am with a welcome by Arthur Downing, Baruch Chief Librarian, and by LaRoi Lawton, LACUNY President, of Bronx Community College. They were followed by the morning’s keynote address by Professor Daniel Singer, Information Technology Librarian at Pine Manor College in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. He spoke about the Information Commons which he runs at Pine Manor’s Annenberg Library: www.pmc.edu/Library/ic/index.html.

Following his presentation, three CUNY Chief Librarians, Jane Devine, LaGuardia Community College, Barbara Higginbotham, Brooklyn College, and Downing spoke about how they are developing an information commons (LaGuardia) or have already developed one (Brooklyn).

This panel discussion was followed by three simultaneous breakout sessions about various information commons. Participants could choose between sessions about the information commons at Borough of Manhattan Community College, conducted by Amanda Bielskas and Sidney Eng, the one at Brooklyn, conducted by Howard Spivak, and the Center for Information Management at Ohio’s Miami University (www.lib.muohio.edu/computing/cim.php), presented by Lisa Santucci. During a vendor-supplied lunch, which consisting of baked chicken and salmon, Elsevier, ExLibris, H.W. Wilson, and Serials Solutions gave presentations on their latest products.

Matthew Simon, president of pre-DESIGN Planning Associates, offered the afternoon keynote on “Beyond Computers: The Impact of Information Commons on Library Design in Academic Institutions.” Simon, formerly chief librarian at Queens College, has planned over thirty libraries of varying types over the past twenty years.

After a coffee break, the final three breakout sessions were presented. Dr. Sara Marcus, Touro University International, spoke about information commons and distance learning, Kenneth Schlesinger and Dawn Amsberry of LaGuardia discussed how to campaign for an information commons, and Beth Evans of Brooklyn, along with Queens library science student Jonathan Cope and Brooklyn undergraduate Frances Keiser, discussed using MySpace to promote library services: www.myspace.com/brooklyncollegelibrary.

The day concluded with remarks by Curtis Kendrick, University Librarian, followed by a wine-and-cheese reception. The general consensus about the day seemed to be that it was informative, very well planned, and effectively executed. We all look forward to next year’s Institute.—Scott Sheidlower (York)
Attendees at LACUNY Institute visit the vendors.
Attendees at the Institute at one of the Panels.
Professor LaRoi Lawton, President of LACUNY, opens the LACUNY Institute 2006.