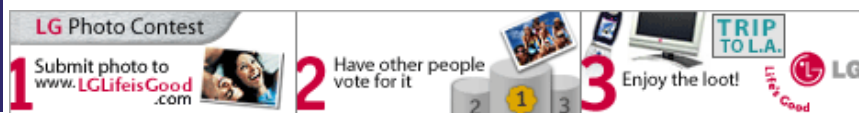




February 19, 2004



## SECTIONS

Front Page

News

Sports

Opinion

Arts &amp; Entertainment

Urbanities

Columbia 250

Spring Arts Preview

Sex Column Contest

## SEARCH



SPECTATOR

Google

[advanced search](#)

## COMMUNITY

Classifieds

Advertising

Subscribe

About Us

Archive

## FEATURE SECTIONS

## C250 COVERAGE

[>> Top 250 Columbians](#)

## WEST HARLEM EXPANSION

[>> An interactive guide to Columbia's plan to expand its campus northward.](#)

## News

## Electrical Engineering Students Celebrate Project Lab Opening

By Maxwell Foxman  
Spectator Staff Writer  
February 16, 2004

Batchelor Memorial Professor of Electrical Engineering Yannis Tsividis stood outside a classroom in the Seeley W. Mudd building on Friday and proudly declared to a group of graduate students, undergraduates, and professors, "You wanted this and you got it. Do your own thing in here, because this lab is yours."

Tsividis announced the opening of the Columbia Electrical Engineering Student Projects Laboratory, which was created through cooperative efforts among students and faculty. The lab's opening marks the first creation of a lab for electrical engineers to work on independent projects.

Stephen Tarzia, SEAS '05, explained that "Students often work on their own projects outside of class: guitar pedals, spectrum analyzers, even the occasional synthesizer and Theremin, but all labs were specialized, for specific electrical degrees and departments. It was impossible to get in those; only a lot of persistence would get you a swipe pass."

As a result, a group of students--many of whom were transfer students to the School of Engineering and Applied Science that had participated in the Columbia 2-3 program, began agitating for a lab of their own.

Guy Sivan, SEAS '05, was one of the students who led the charge. Sivan originally came from Brandeis University. "There we had complete freedom," he said. "We could just walk into any lab, and usually nobody cared if we were there all night. Then when I came to Columbia, I was shocked that there was nothing like that here."

Sivan and his peers' complaints eventually found the ear of Professor Tsividis and Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering Peter Kinget, who agreed to help. First, a questionnaire was given to electrical engineering classes. According to Tsividis, the response was encouraging. "The amount of students that responded wasn't as important as the enthusiasm of those that did," Tsividis said.

With approval from their deans, the students were able to isolate a lab with the help of Laboratory Manager John Kazana, the "god" of undergraduate labs, according to teaching assistants and other professors. Along with Departmental Administrator John Baldi, Kazana constructed the lab and designed procedural rules and times.

Both Baldi and Kazana emphasized their desire to make the new space an open undergraduate lab environment. The lab will stay open as late as 9 p.m., when most other labs on campus are closed.

Finally, equipment was isolated for the lab. "Most of the equipment isn't new," Kinget said. "We took parts from here and there--different labs around campus--and simply added the rest, keeping the level of investment low, but it has all the basics for undergraduate projects.

All the work was completed in less than a semester, and students like Sivan say they are thrilled with the result. "It gives you a real sense of school pride," Sivan said, "to see

everyone working for the students' desires--and now we all have a place to work on things."

Indeed, many undergraduate projects--from basic circuitry to automobile design--were waiting for the lab's opening. Laxmikan Joshi, SEAS '04 and a member of the Society of Automotive Engineers, is planning on using the lab immediately to run tests on the formula racecar he is designing for a racecar design competition this summer. "These days, everything in cars obviously runs on computers," Joshi explained, "and usually if the car doesn't run well, it's a problem of electronics, but that sort of thing you can't check on the road. [This] is the perfect place to run tests on all my equipment."

As another way of encouraging student projects, the Columbia Integrated Systems Laboratory has set up a self-powered radio contest, which will give many students reason to use the electronics labs. "We want to emphasize this 'do your own thing' atmosphere," Tsivdis said. "The students have worked hard to have this place as their own; as long as it's safe, we want them to try it here."

### Electrical Engineering Students Celebrate Project Lab Opening

[Post your feedback on this topic here](#)

*No feedback has been posted yet. Please post yours!*

*(Feedback requires a Javascript-compatible browser)*

---

#### paid advertising

[Diet Pills](#)

[Net Shopping Store](#)

[Payday Loans](#)

[Concert tickets : Football tickets](#)

[Online pharmacy](#)

[Debt Consolidation](#)

[Biz-stay.com Extended Stay](#)

[Word - Shopping](#)

[Druckerpatronen Toner: HP Toner](#)

[Condos Homes Chicago](#)

[Fundraisers & Fundraising Ideas](#)

[free cell phones : cell phone](#)

[Government Grant](#)

[Shop](#)

[Insurance Made Easy](#)

---

[Back to Top](#)

[Front Page](#) | [News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Arts & Entertainment : Theater](#) | [Arts & Entertainment : Art](#) | [Arts & Entertainment : Books](#) | [Arts & Entertainment : Film](#) | [Arts & Entertainment : Food](#) | [Arts & Entertainment : Music](#) | [Urbanities](#) | [Columbia 250](#) | [Resources](#) | [Spring Arts Preview](#) | [Sex Column Contest](#) | [Archives](#)

© 2004 The Columbia Spectator