Despite a challenging economy, we ended another year of groundbreaking work at the Earth Institute having raised more than $177 million in gifts from individuals, corporations and foundations. We are now more than 77 percent toward our campaign goal of $200 million.

In March 2009 the Earth Institute launched the Columbia Climate Center to build upon the many climate-related activities and world-class research efforts conducted throughout the University. We welcomed entrepreneur and philanthropist Ted Turner, whose United Nations Foundation works with the Earth Institute on several projects on the environment and on malaria control, as our guest.

This year also marked the end of five years of the Global Roundtable on Climate Change (GROCC), funded by benefactor Gerry Lenfest. GROCC brought together high-level, critical stakeholders from all regions of the world to discuss and explore areas of potential consensus regarding core scientific, technological and economic issues critical to shaping sound public policies on climate change. Continuing this important work, some companies are now looking to engage with us on climate, energy, water and other key Earth Institute cross-cutting initiatives.

At the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory we celebrated the University Senate’s approval in February 2009 of the “Lamont Research Professor,” a new title within the Office of Research track at Columbia. This prestigious position will enable the Observatory to boost its competitive edge in attracting high-caliber senior researchers into tenured faculty positions. No other Ivy League university plays such a prominent role in earth and environmental research and in training the field’s future leaders. In the final phase of our campaign, we will seek to endow these new positions and ensure our continued legacy as a world leader in research and education.

As this report goes to print, we are more than halfway through a $20 million Millennium Development Goals grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that supports the core of the Earth Institute’s applied research efforts in the Millennium Villages project. Substantial progress has been made in the areas of policy, health, energy/ICT/transport, agriculture, monitoring and evaluation. Our Millennium Development Goals Centers have provided support to national governments and other key stakeholders to finalize more than 12 national-level plans for an African Green Revolution. These plans will facilitate increased agricultural production and promote improved nutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Our Capital Campaign Committee was launched in October 2008 and is comprised of leaders who provide strategic fundraising advice, support, participation, leadership gifts and connections to peers for our $200 million campaign. These individuals serve as “ambassadors” for the Earth Institute’s work. This year, they helped us reach out to several new donors and friends through targeted events in the tri-state area. We remain grateful for their advice and support.

We continue to secure endowment funds to provide scholarships and fellowships to students, and we work to support programs like the innovative undergraduate special concentration in sustainable development, soon to be offered as a full major. We are also working to establish professorships in sustainable development that will attract visionary scholars to help forge the sustainable solutions of tomorrow.

From our work developing new carbon sequestration technologies, to our educational programming, to our research on sustainable water issues in countries including Brazil and India, the commitment and generosity of all our donors allows us to continue to be the world’s leading academic center confronting the practical challenges of sustainable development.

The fundraising teams from the Earth Institute’s Office of Funding Initiatives, the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory and the Lenfest Center for Sustainable Energy joined, Top row, left to right: Gregory Friedman, Teresa S. Karamanos, Megan E. Morytko, Cinnamon Coe, Barbara Charbonnet, Dove Pedlosky. Second row, left to right: Uma Parikh, Jeanine Melpas, Lisa Phillips, Urania Mylonas, Jennifer Swift-Morgan, Ivy S. Morgan. Hanah Berryquist of the International Research Institute for Climate and Society is not shown.