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Opinion Geniuses at work: New York City's Rockefeller University is

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Geniuses at work: New York City's Rockefeller University is the nation's braintrust



EDITORIALS

Sunday, April 5th 2009, 7:01 PM

Far on [Manhattan's](#) East Side is a quiet campus that is unknown to most New Yorkers - yet is likely home to more geniuses per square foot than anywhere else on the planet.

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[Rockefeller University](#) is a jewel in a city filled with superlative people and institutions that we take for granted. There are plenty of them. This one is a remarkable exemplar of a remarkable scientific community.

It is also part of an economic engine that is vital to [New York's](#) future. With the weakening of [Wall Street](#), industries built on brainpower will be increasingly important to creating jobs and business activity. The state and city must do all in their power to nurture our research dynamos and draw new ones.

Overlooking the East River at 66th St., Rockefeller was founded in 1901 as the first [U.S.](#) institution dedicated to biomedical research. As you might have guessed, the money came from [John D. Rockefeller](#).

The core of the institution is 70 professors - scientists at the top of their games who are free to follow their curiosity. They direct their own labs and teach about 200 students, who will take their places among the great scientists of tomorrow.

On a visit, we chatted with three of the 70. [Jeffrey Friedman](#) isolated the "obesity gene" and is unpuzzling the workings of the human appetite. [Nathaniel Heintz](#) is analyzing brain cells with the goal of attacking diseases such as Parkinson's. [Eric Stebbins](#) is studying the mechanics of how deadly bacteria infect humans in hopes of developing drugs to render the bugs harmless.

We also met with [Sarah Schlesinger](#), a physician who runs a research-only hospital, one of only two in America. She oversees delicate clinical trials for AIDS vaccines.

The discussions were altogether mind-boggling, as might be expected at an institution that has produced 23 Nobel laureates. And the conclusion was plain: New York will become a stronger city by growing top-flight research centers like Rockefeller.

It's not brain science.

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Yikes! Celebs like Snooki and Pam don't look so hot after one too many.

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2:44:40 PM Isn't the plural of 'genius' 'genii'?? Masters or Doctorate in Mass
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