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**DEBERA JOHNSON NAMED FIRST ACADEMIC DIRECTOR OF SUSTAINABILITY
AT PRATT INSTITUTE**

**Johnson will lead efforts to establish the Institute as a leader in sustainability among
colleges of art and design worldwide**

BROOKLYN, N.Y., September 26, 2007 – Debera Johnson, who has taught industrial design at Pratt Institute for nearly 20 years, has been named the Institute’s first Academic Director of Sustainability. She will lead Pratt’s academic sustainability initiatives; develop and operate an interdisciplinary center for sustainable design studies; and support Pratt’s faculty in identifying and solving environmental problems in order to place the Institute at the academic forefront among colleges of art, design, and architecture worldwide for its sustainability efforts.

“Debera brings significant teaching and administrative experience to her position along with immense energy and an informed global perspective,” said Pratt Provost Peter Barna. “I’m pleased to have one of Pratt’s most experienced and respected educators in this crucial role.”

Johnson also currently serves as the Director of the Pratt Design Incubator for Sustainable Innovation. As the new Academic Director of Sustainability, Johnson will make the incubator a primary component of the Institute’s broader sustainability initiative. As head of the incubator since 2002, Johnson has created a place where eco-entrepreneurs can develop concepts that originated in the classroom and turn them into start-up businesses. The incubator (<http://incubator.pratt.edu/>) links recent Pratt graduates with manufacturing, design engineering, and business mentors and its participants support each other’s efforts by sharing information, ideas, and contacts. The incubator has a consultancy side as well and creates collaborative teams to design socially responsible products.

“I’m excited to lead the Institute in this effort and to ensure that each student leaves Pratt with a clear foundation in sustainability and the knowledge of how to bring sustainable best practices to his or her profession,” said Johnson. “Beyond creating comprehensive coursework that focuses on the environment, we will be creating interdisciplinary studios that bring together students and faculty Institute-wide making the campus a living laboratory for sustainable solutions.” Johnson plans to create research opportunities for Pratt’s faculty and collaborative partnerships with other educational institutions as well.

Johnson, a Pratt alumna and former chairperson of its Department of Industrial Design, will collaborate closely with Anthony Gelber, Director of Facilities for Pratt’s Manhattan Campus, who was named the Coordinator of Administrative Sustainability earlier this year. Gelber is responsible for leading programs and campaigns to reduce Pratt’s carbon footprint and “greening” Pratt’s Brooklyn and Manhattan campuses. Johnson and Gelber will work to position Pratt as a leader in sustainable practice.

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Johnson currently serves as the Chair of the Industrial Designers Society of America's New York City chapter and as the president of Greenmatter, a collaborative environment for design professionals and entrepreneurs with a focus on sustainable enterprise. She graduated from Pratt with a bachelor's degree in industrial design in 1986. She served as the chair of the Department of Industrial Design at Pratt from 1998 to 2005 and has been a professor in the department since 1988.

Johnson, a resident of Brooklyn and Marbletown, N.Y., is widely considered an expert in the design industry and has organized and participated in dozens of tours, conferences, and exhibitions worldwide. Last year, she planned two major design conferences in New York: "Design With India" in partnership with the Asia Society and "Developing Global Collaboration," which examined the role of designers in sustainable business development.

Exhibitions Johnson has organized include "Corvettes to Cuisinart," a show of product, furniture, medical, consumer electronics and transportation designs at Pratt Manhattan Gallery in 2004 and "Design at Pratt: Bridging Disciplines" in conjunction with the opening of the Institute's new Juliana Curran Terian Design Center earlier this year. Before joining Pratt's faculty, she worked as an exhibition designer with Ralph Appelbaum and Associates and Blumlein Design Associates.

The announcement of Johnson's appointment is one of many steps administrators at Pratt Institute have taken over the last several years toward making sustainability a priority in its overall strategic plan.

In June of this year, Pratt Institute hosted a press conference on its campus in Brooklyn during which New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg challenged the city's colleges and universities to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent by 2017.

Also earlier this year, Pratt Institute President Thomas F. Schutte joined the Leadership Circle of the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment – a national initiative to help address global warming – and signed a commitment pledge along with 120 college and university presidents agreeing to take steps to neutralize greenhouse gas emissions over time and to accelerate research and educational efforts to help stabilize the earth's climate.

Most recently, Pratt announced plans to build a new administrative and academic building at 524 Myrtle Avenue in Brooklyn that aims to achieve a LEED Gold certification as determined by The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™, which is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings. Green features currently being considered for Pratt's new building include a landscaped roof to help insulate the building and prevent water runoff, photovoltaic solar panels, and a geothermal climate control system. Pratt received a Green Planning Grant in the amount of \$75,000 from the Kresge Foundation for the project and plans to break ground in spring of 2008 with an anticipated completion date in summer of 2009.

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About Pratt Institute:

Founded in 1887, Pratt Institute (www.pratt.edu) is the largest independent college of art and design in the northeastern United States, offering undergraduate and graduate degree programs in the schools of architecture, art and design, information and library science, and liberal arts and sciences. Pratt is located on 25 landscaped acres in the Clinton Hill section of Brooklyn and has a Manhattan campus in a renovated eight-story building on West 14th Street in Chelsea.