Colby-Sawyer College will celebrate its 2008 Commencement by graduating 198 students and recognizing numerous individuals for academic excellence, outstanding contributions to society, and service to the college and community.

Commencement will be held on Saturday, May 10, 2008, at 11 a.m., under a tent on Colby-Sawyer’s front lawn. A reception will follow at the Dan and Kathleen Hogan Sports Center.

Barbara Johnson Stearns, who graduated from Colby Academy in 1930 and received her A.A. in liberal arts from Colby School for Girls in 1932, will receive the college’s highest award, the Susan Colgate Cleveland Medal for Distinguished Service. Mrs. Stearns, a New London, N.H., resident, has demonstrated exemplary leadership, generosity and dedication to the college and the New London area throughout her life. Mrs. Stearns was the 1999 recipient of the college’s Town Award, which recognizes town residents’ extraordinary involvement in the college. She was also a founding member of the Friends of the Marian Graves Mugar Art Gallery and served as a member of the Board of Trustees from 1957 to 1973.

“Barbara is a truly special person who has been a symbol of the college and New London since her graduation in 1932. She is beloved by the college, the town, and beyond,” said President Tom Galligan. The Commencement Keynote Speaker, Assistant Professor of Natural Sciences Nicholas Baer, will receive the 2008 Jack Jensen Award for Excellence in Teaching. A resident of New London, N.H., Professor Baer is a biologist who teaches courses in ecology, freshwater biology, conservation biology and environmental issues. Students describe him as a passionate and creative educator who incorporates the outdoors into his classroom and engages them in his ongoing environmental research.

Professor Baer’s classroom extends to the outdoors, incorporating the campus, as well as the region’s rivers, lakes, mountains and woods. One student said that his professor is “what a teacher should be: enthusiastic about his courses, great to work with, and challenging yet accessible.” His faculty colleagues say Professor Baer gives students “excellent experience in using the scientific method” and has brought a “renewed level of energy and enthusiasm to the Natural Sciences and Community and Environmental Studies programs.” Jennifer Austin, assistant professor of Exercise and Sport Sciences (ESS), will receive the Nancy Beyer Opler Award for Excellence in Advising. A resident of Springfield, N.H., Professor Austin advises 20 students in the ESS major and teaches courses in personal health and wellness, athletic training and kinesiology. She also serves as director for the Emerging Leaders Program. Students describe Professor Austin as a “friend, mentor and true source of strength” who respects them and responds effectively to their concerns.

Seniors Adnan Mansoor Azodi-Kazerouny of Newbury, N.H., and Aleshia Beth Carlsen of Rochester, Mass., will address the graduating class as the 2008 Student Commencement Speakers. Azodi-Kazerouny, a Business Administration major with a minor in Psychology, and Carlsen, a Biology major with a minor in Psychology, will address the theme of “Making your Mark” in their speeches. Azodi-Kazerouny is a member of the Psi Chi Honor Society in Psychology and the Sigma Beta International Honor Society in Business Management and Administration. He has been a student leader on campus, serving as a senator in the Student Government Association for two years. He also participated in the Wesson Honors Program, the Key Association, the Students in Free Enterprise club, and the Emerging Leaders Program. Carlsen is an engaged and active student. She served as a resident assistant for several years and was involved in many projects through the Community Service Club, including an Alternative Spring Break project. She is a member of the Chargers tennis team, the Biology Majors Club, and the Key Association. A recipient of the Barbara J. Stearns Award, she has also appeared on the Athletic Academic Honor Roll and participated in the Emerging and Exploring Leaders Programs.

JoAnn Franke Overfield, recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award, received her A.S. and B.S. degrees from Colby-Sawyer College in 1968 and 1969. She has been a leader in the art industry for nearly 25 years as a partner and owner of a prominent Seattle gallery. Mrs. Overfield has also served as a board member of the Seattle Children’s Home and as a member of the Colby-Sawyer Board of Trustees and Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Information: (603) 526-3000, www.colby-sawyer.edu
The Town and Gown Awards, which recognize successful collaboration between the college and local communities, will honor New London Hospital and Academic Dean Elizabeth Crockford. Colby-Sawyer honors New London Hospital with the Town Award in recognition of its ongoing commitment to educational and service-oriented partnerships with the college community.

Dean Crockford will be recognized with the Gown Award for her service to many organizations in the New London area community, including the Kearsarge/Sunapee Area Habitat for Humanity and Lake Sunapee Region Visiting Nurses Association.

Tarren Mackenzie Bailey ’06 of Sunapee, N.H., is this year’s recipient of the Graduate Award. This award recognizes a member of the preceding class whose character and influence benefited this year’s senior class. Bailey, assistant director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving at Colby-Sawyer, often works with students on community service projects.

For more information about the award recipients and student speakers, visit www.colby-sawyer.edu/campus-life/commencement/awardrecipients.html and www.colby-sawyer.edu/campus-life/commencement/studentawards.html.

Student Achievement Awards
Colby-Sawyer will recognize the following members of the Class of 2008 for outstanding achievement as scholars, campus leaders and student athletes.

Ashlee Michelle Willis of Derry, N.H., and John Norman Bryan of Windham, N.H., are the recipients of the Senior Achievement Awards, which recognize students who have distinguished themselves through active leadership in co-curricular activities. An Exercise and Sport Sciences major, Willis was a campus leader who was a truly influential role model as a resident assistant, an active member of the Community Service Club, and an inspirational captain of the tennis team. Bryan, an Exercise and Sport Sciences major, is a former president of the Community Service Club who has participated in many important service projects. He has also been active in the Exercise and Sport Sciences Club and as a highly respected and reliable resident assistant in the residence halls.

The Alpha Chi Award recipient, Sarah Helen Heaney of Merrimack, N.H., was chosen as the student who best exemplifies the Alpha Chi National College Honor Society’s ideals of truth and character. Heaney, a Studio Arts major, holds herself to high academic and ethical standards. A member of the Wesson Honors Program, she was involved in the Community Service Club and the Christian Fellowship Club.

The Colby-Sawyer Award, presented by the faculty to a student whose intellectual growth and contributions to campus life have positively influenced his or her fellow students, will be presented to Zachary Thomas Irish of Exeter, N.H. Zack was a positive role model in the classroom, where he was a valuable teaching assistant. He also served as president of the Student Government Association, a Community Council member, a resident assistant and president of the History, Society and Culture Club.

The Wynne Jesser McGrew Scholar-Athlete Award recipient is Lisa Giordano of Londonderry, N.H., a Psychology major and captain of the Chargers lacrosse team. This award recognizes the female graduate who has made significant contributions to the college’s scholastic and varsity athletic programs. The Scholar-Athlete Award, honoring a male student who contributed significantly to the college’s scholastic and varsity athletic programs, will be presented to Justin M. Tardif of Biddeford, Maine, a History, Society and Culture major and captain of the Chargers tennis team.

The David H. Winton Baccalaureate Awards will be presented to the following students: Allison Jane Hatch of Londonderry, N.H. (Studio Art); Elisabeth Grimshaw Novak of Parkton, Md. (Biological Studies); Christine Kamaliza of New London, N.H. (Business Administration: Dr. Margaret “Marnie” Kurtz Award); Kyra Dulmage of Londonderry, N.H. (Child Development); and Jessica Dorgai of Winslow, Maine (Communication Studies).

Baccalaureate Awards will also be presented to the following students: Kristopher S. Ramsay of South Gardiner, Maine (Community and Environmental Studies); Angela Lynn Eastman of Charlton, Mass. (English: Carl M. Cochran Award); John David Bossé of Lewiston, Maine (Exercise and Sport Sciences); Jessica C. Hentz of North Haven, Conn. (Graphic Design); Justin M. Tardif of Biddeford, Maine (History, Society and Culture); Jennifer Marie Kiely of Oxford, Mass. (Nursing: The Grace Adella Sheldon Graves Award); and Evelina Simanonyte of New London, N.H. (Psychology).

For more information about the student award recipients, visit www.colby-sawyer.edu/campus-life/commencement/studentawards.html.

To learn more about Commencement 2008 at Colby-Sawyer College, visit the Web site at www.colby-sawyer.edu/campus-life/commencement/index.html.