A former student at the School of General Studies garnered national attention in February when his discovery of an experimental drug compound that destroys the AIDS virus in test-tube grown human cells was documented in Nature, a British scientific journal.

After graduating from Rutgers University, Yng-Kang Chow studied biology and biochemistry from 1984 to 1987 at the School of General Studies in the post-baccalaureate pre-medical program the school offers.

Chow currently studies at Harvard Medical School.

Chow’s AIDS-fighting compound combines AZT and ddl, two
drugs currently used by AIDS patients, and the experimental drugs pyridinone and ngravapine.

Ani Atamiam Bournoutian, a former assistant dean at the School of General Studies who was Chow’s pre-med adviser, said she knew Chow would be a pioneer researcher.

“I would say it was clear to me that he was going to be very good at what he did,” Bournoutian said. “He is the most relaxed, sweetest, well-rounded person that you can imagine. There was no trace of arrogance even though he was extremely bright.”

Acting Dean of the School of General Studies Frank Wolf said he wasn’t surprised by Chow’s success because of his talent and the program he attended.

“He was one of the stars that year,” Wolf said, adding that approximately 526 students are currently enrolled in the pre-medical program at the school.

“The program has grown tremendously. It is the granddaddy of them all,” Wolf said.

While Chow’s research may lead to a cure for AIDS, researchers and health officials are quick to point out that it may be years before Chow’s discovery could be implemented as a cure.

Bournoutian said Chow’s work exemplifies the typical student at the School of General Studies.

“What he did went against traditional medical theory. That makes him such a typical General Studies student. General Studies students always go against tradition,” Bournoutian said.

Chow could not be reached for comment.