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Upstate Institute at Colgate University

2008: Number One

Upstate Institute launches Lifelong Learning Program

The Upstate Institute has launched the Lifelong Learning Program, which is an opportunity for community members to pursue continued education in a diversity of fields for the enrichment of their lives. Under the guidance of a steering team of community members, the Upstate Institute has developed a series of courses, discussions and special events for members of the program. In its first year, the group numbers over 100!



Among the course offered in the Lifelong Learning Program was a panel discussion, called "Things the Doctor Can Tell You," as part of the Wellness Series. The panelists were Community Memorial Hospital Cardiologist Dr. Carina Alfaro-Franco, Orthopedic Surgeon Dr. Ivan Gowan, and Hospitalist Dr. Bob Delorme. Photo by John Hubbard.

Since its launch, members have participated in lectures such as, "French Impressionism"; "Does God Exist?"; "Windows into Your Brain and Behavior"; and "Myth and Reality of the American West", all taught by members of the Colgate faculty. They have also taken part in lectures by community members, such as a

discussion of *La Traviata* by Dr. John Bowen and "Law and Literature" by Hugh Humphreys. The group is currently planning a substantial list of similar course offerings for the fall of 2008. The Lifelong Learning Program is open to any adult interested in continuing to learn and spend time with like-minded individuals—the desire to learn is the sole criterion for membership. For more information about the LLP, please visit the Lifelong Learning section of the Upstate Institute website at <http://upstate.colgate.edu>

Student Philanthropy Council completes second year

Twelve sophomores took part in this year's Student Philanthropy Council, which gives students the opportunity to study and practice philanthropy at the same time. In the fall, the students studied the history of philanthropy and considered the factors that contribute to the success of a non-profit organization. They met with Colgate alumni Jim Smith, '70, Waldemar A. Nielsen Chair in Philanthropy at Georgetown University; Dorrie Ackerman, '81, Senior

Mission Statement

The mission of the Upstate Institute is to create linkages between Colgate University and the regional community to engage students, faculty, staff and residents in research and a reciprocal transfer of knowledge that will enhance the economic, social and cultural capacity of the area and sustain the environment. These projects provide a model of community collaboration and civic engagement for our students and within higher education. The Institute values scholarly collaboration as a way to support the region.

Regional Advancement Director at Colgate; Sarah Lange, '87, Principal of Legacy Consulting; and Yee Ann Cho, '90, Senior Program Officer for Education at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The group also joined former SPC students in conducting site visits to the non-profit organizations that received funding through the SPC program last year.

In the spring semester, the students began the hands-on work of a small regional foundation. They identified the focus of their grant-making efforts, drafted a request for proposals, reviewed applications and made site visits before selecting the recipients of the \$10,000.

The award recipients are:

- The *Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School* in Utica, New York, which received a grant of \$2,555 to grow their character development program through the purchase of supplemental teacher kits. These additional resources provide new tool sets for MLK's faculty to teach and reinforce values and behavioral skills in their students.
- *It's About Childhood and Family, Inc.* in

Cazenovia, New York, which received a grant of \$3,550 to expand their mental health services program into Madison County and surrounding rural areas. It's About Childhood and Family program provides parent, family and teacher education/training seminars to low-income and underserved populations "in return" for volunteer efforts within the community.

- *The Neighborhood Center* in Utica, New York which received a grant of \$3,895 in support of the Somalia Bantu Project. This project provides ESL lessons as well as culture transition and community knowledge classes to Somali refugee women. The classes help clients to receive healthcare and understand the school system.

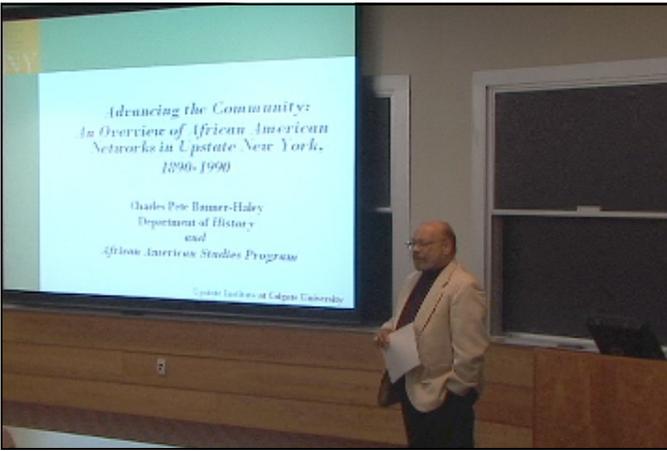
UI presents Research Symposium on Upstate New York

On April 26th, the five recipients of the Upstate Institute Faculty Research Awards presented their projects at a symposium open to the public and hosted in the new Robert H.N. Ho Science Center on the Colgate campus. The recipients were named in the spring of 2007 and have been conducting their projects for one year's time. The presentations included:

- Pete Banner-Haley, associate professor of history and African American Studies, who presented his research on African American social networks in the upstate region, particularly in the Bath, NY and Chemung county area.
- Frank Frey, assistant professor of biology, who introduced the work that he and his colleague Tim McKay have done on redefining Colgate's biological collections to become the Natural History Museum of the Chenango Valley. The Upstate Institute funding allowed for just the initial phase of this comprehensive project.



Melissa Roys and Patrice VanNortwick of the Neighborhood Center accept a grant from Jenna Weber, '10, a member of the Student Philanthropy Council, at the awards ceremony held for grant recipients on April 24, 2008.



Pete Banner-Haley, associate professor of history and African American Studies, presents his research on African American social networks as part of the Upstate Institute research symposium.

- Meika Loe, professor of sociology and anthropology and Women’s Studies, who discussed the differences in the community-based efforts around aging in her two homes, Albany and Hamilton, NY.
- William Meyer, visiting lecturer in geography, who discussed the politically tied death of the Onondaga Lake salt mining industry and the rise and fall of “natural resources” in association with economics, politics and society at large.
- William Peck, associate professor of geology, who discussed his findings on maple tree health and syrup production and the effects of a changing environment on the maple syrup industry.

Upstate Institute and COVE host VISTA through AmeriCorps

Jason Beck is working with the Upstate Institute and the COVE (Center for Outreach, Volunteerism and Education) this year as an AmeriCorps*VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), a program through which volunteers work to create and expand programs that ultimately bring low-income individuals and communities out of poverty. While at Colgate, he will assist faculty in developing service-learning courses that work with impoverished

communities in Utica, and will advise student groups volunteering in the city.

Jason attended Miami University, where he majored in political science and creative writing. He co-wrote an honors thesis on service-learning and worked for an affordable housing agency in Cincinnati before enrolling in the AmeriCorps VISTA program.



Field School Project Updates

Several students contributed research for non-profit organizations throughout the year as Field School fellows:

Utica College Young Scholars Liberty Partnership Program

The Young Scholars LPP is a collaborative project between Utica College and the Utica City School District that meets the challenge of motivating teenage students to stay in school, earn a New York State Regents Diploma with the Advanced Designation, and pursue post-secondary education. Katie Lodes worked with the program throughout the spring semester to create a database of grant opportunities for which the program may be eligible to apply.

Consumer Bankruptcy Project

This spring, Ruben Leavitt, '08, Ali Wolter, '09 and Carrie Wagner, '09, assisted the staff of the Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York, Inc., in interviewing, investigating and drafting Chapter 7 bankruptcy legal documents for low income clients. Consumer bankruptcy gives individuals who have incurred substantial debt an opportunity to reorder their finances and obtain a fresh start. The program is unaffordable for low income workers who are unable to hire a lawyer or complete the lengthy

and often confusing documents necessary to represent themselves in court. As a result of the fellows' work, three bankruptcy cases were prepared on behalf of the clients who had accumulated a significant portion of their debt due to medical costs, job loss and/or inappropriate financial activity by an abusive ex-spouse. Legal Aid staff has referred the cases to local attorneys who are representing the clients on a pro bono basis. The students were directly trained and supervised by Susan M. Conn, Esq, '79.

MAD Art, Inc.

MADArt, Inc., is a new not-for-profit operating in the village of Hamilton which offers both exhibit space for locally crafted fine art and artisan crafts and workshop space for various studio art series and workshops. Julia Heymans, '08, worked with the organization in the spring to develop a membership database and a series of workshops. The workshops included figure drawing, clay potting, creative writing classes for adults, and instrument building for children. She also helped the organization coordinate publicity efforts and increase awareness about space and services of the organization both in the community and on campus.

Foreign Language Program at Hamilton Central School

Brandon Grabowski, '08, organized the Foreign Language Program for children in first through third grade at Hamilton Central School. Several students served as tutors to children in French, Spanish and German, both during class time and during an after school program. The students focused on increasing their vocabulary and practicing speaking and listening with the tutors.

New York State Council on the Arts Empire State Partnership Grant

Through the Empire State Partnership Grant, Hamilton Central School is creating an arts-in-education program that will focus on developing the interpersonal and intrapersonal skills that students need to communicate successfully. This spring, Ben Shope, Sam Obenhaus and Natasha Trombley worked with the arts-in-education

program at Hamilton Central to help their students become competent, effective and savvy consumers and producers of communications.

Community Research and Service in the Community

The Upstate Institute supports the link between students, faculty and the Upstate region through several service learning courses offered each semester. Colgate University prides itself in the fact that many of its professors use service community research to enhance their courses. The handful of courses that partner with the Upstate Institute to do so are just a sampling of what the University as a whole has to offer. The following community based research courses were taught over the past academic year in association with the Upstate Institute and the Center for Outreach, Volunteerism, and Education (COVE):

Community Based Research in the Core Curriculum

Students in the Core Distinction course *Thinking about the Arts in the 21st Century*, engaged in several research projects to benefit the staff and community board of Lorenzo State Historic Site in Cazenovia. Lorenzo's director, Barbara Bartlett, worked with professors Ellen Kraly and Mary Ann Calo to develop several projects that would directly contribute to programming and planning for the Historic Site, including preparation of an interactive display of ornamental molds for the bicentennial of Lorenzo, an evaluation of the site's website and of proposals the site receives to conduct their tours by cell phone, interviews with boards members concerning their vision for Lorenzo, and comparative analysis of New York State visitation surveys to Lorenzo and Green Lakes State Park.

Computers in the Arts and Science

Students from Professor Alexander Nakhimosvsky's introductory Computer Science course designed a website for the Johnson Park Center (JPC), complete with a YouTube documentary detailing the history and successes of the Center. The JPC provides housing for women

recovering from substance abuse, transitional housing for families, and youth mentoring programs in the Corn Hill section of Utica.

Social Justice and Social Change

Professor Margaret Wehrer's course placed students at various not-for-profits of their choosing to examine local social movements. Partners included AIDS Community Resources, English as Second Language at Proctor High School, programming for inmates, and others. Each student provided fifteen hours of her/his time at these agencies.

Dispossession, Dislocation and Disease: Geographies of Population Vulnerability

Students in this course served in the English as Second Language classrooms of Utica's Adult Learning Program (a program of the Utica School System and housed above the Resource Center for Refugees). Another group of students worked on conducting a family photography project, compiling the photographs they took of refugee families into a photo album for the Center. Isaac Padiet, a former Sudanese refugee working towards building schools in Southern Sudan, received help from two students who created a fundraising packet for his budding not-for-profit.

Health Geography and Disease Ecology

In this course, Professor Ellen Kraly had students partner with the Mohawk Valley Perinatal Network (MVPN) a non-profit that seeks to improve birth outcomes and maternal, child and family health. Students in this course conducted focus group sessions that were to be used for the MVPN's tri-annual assessment. In collaboration with the Potsdam Institute, students were trained in focus group facilitation. Students provided summary reports and transcriptions that were then analyzed by the Potsdam Institute.

Seminar on High Needs Schools

This Seminar on High Needs Schools, taught by Professor John Palmer, provided the Utica College based Young Scholar Liberty Partnership Program (YSLPP) with an analysis of the program's strengths, weaknesses, and ways to improve. The

YSLPP works with "at-risk" youth in the Utica School system. The program provides mentoring, tutoring, and college preparation to middle and high school students as a means to prevent economic inequalities from becoming educational. Students in this seminar interviewed YSLPP staff, compiled a database of graduated Scholars, and organized for a group of Scholars to tour the Colgate campus and partake in social activities while visiting the University. In addition, students interviewed Colgate staff and faculty for ways in which they could supplement the YSLPP.

The Upstate Law Project: Social Security Benefits for Disabled Children

In this course, taught by attorney Susan M. Conn, '79, students learned about the Social Security system, discussed the barriers that low-income and disabled families face in accessing social services, and were taught legal analysis, legal ethics, Social Security disability law, and legal writing. In addition to this coursework, students engaged in a practicum experience in which they worked with the instructor and Conn in her *pro bono* work of helping low-income children and their mothers in securing SSI benefits. Students were involved in interviewing disabled adults and children, reading medical files, drafting a persuasive legal argument to the administrative law judge, preparing clients for hearings, and attending administrative hearings. Students wrote policy papers relevant to the course and their academic interests including healthcare, housing and special education public policies. The paper of one student, Avery Blank, entitled "How Hispanics in the U.S. Fare Under the Privatization of Social Security" was published in the Colgate Academic Review, the bi-annual publication of the University's best undergraduate writing and presented by her to the University's President and Board of Trustees.

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