

## Upstate Institute Undertakes Planning Effort

During the summer of 2004, the Upstate Institute Board met to create a plan that would outline a vision for the future of the Institute. Board members focused on short and long term goals as well as ways to include a growing number of staff, faculty and community groups who are interested in the work of the Institute. At the end of the process, the board had created an updated mission and vision that will guide the future of the Institute.

## Mission and Vision of the Upstate Institute

The Upstate Institute creates 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.

The Institute recognizes the broad Upstate region that stretches north and west of the Hudson River Valley. Priority for partnerships with non-profit organizations will be in Madison, Chenango and Oneida counties. Given its broad reach, the Upstate Institute's vision is as follows:

- The Upstate Institute supports a community of scholars through conferences, publications and grant writing assistance.
- Colgate University students have an opportunity to test their knowledge in real world settings, become engaged in the community and develop an awareness and appreciation for something larger than themselves.
- Colgate University faculty members have the means and support to integrate community based research into the classroom.
- The Upstate Institute is a model of community collaboration and civic engagement within higher education and to governments at all levels.
- Regional residents feel at home on Colgate's campus and make use of the many facilities and programs offered by the University.
- With the support of the Upstate Institute, economic development organizations in the region work on collaborative projects and share best practices in their field.
- School districts have an abundance of well-qualified, well-educated teachers. Plentiful enrichment programs are offered through local school districts in conjunction with the resources of the Upstate Institute.
- Arts events in the Upstate Region reflect our local heritage, culture and skills.
- The Upstate Institute provides opportunities for collaboration and group facilitation among grassroots groups, non-profit organizations, citizens and governments. The Institute helps these groups make connections for shared knowledge and joint projects.
- Non-profit organizations are more self-sufficient and successful due to training and support from the Institute.
- Faculty from other colleges and universities recognize the Upstate Institute as a place for resources on regional issues, as well as a successful model that combines service learning and classroom pedagogy.

### *Director's Column*

The Upstate Institute was launched last spring with a wonderful conference, organized by Jane Pinchin, that brought Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton to campus to engage the community in a "Dialogue on Higher Education and Upstate New York." Since the conference, there has been a surge of interest in the Institute. I have spent the first months of my tenure as director working to build a structure of support for the Upstate Institute on campus and in the local community. This support now includes the Upstate Executive Board, which meets monthly to advise the director on ongoing operations of the Institute. Members also act as representatives of the Institute. The Community Board members advise the Directors of the COVE and the Upstate Institute on community needs and act as ambassadors of both organizations in the regional community. The backbone of the Upstate Institute is the Upstate Fellows program. Twenty-six Upstate Fellows help fulfill the mission of the Institute through their own research on the region, community collaborations, service learning courses, or supervision of student community-based research projects. Fellows receive support on logistics, grant writing and research, and forming and sustaining relationships in the regional community. In addition, 15 Upstate Student Fellows are engaged in community-based research projects with local organizations. I am energized by the commitment and ideas of my colleagues at the COVE, both Boards, and our Fellows and look forward to working together to make the Upstate Institute a vibrant intellectual community for student, faculty, and area residents, and a resource for the region.

*Jill Tiefenthaler  
Director, Upstate Institute  
Professor of Economics*

# Upstate Field School Kicks off Projects

An outgrowth of the successful Utica Field School, the Upstate Field School places Colgate student fellows in regional community groups. During their fellowship, student fellows work with the organization to create and complete a project that will provide insight into the Upstate region, while providing the community group with some useful outcomes. The projects underway this semester include:

## Department of Health Assessment

Professor Jill Tiefenthaler and Senior Sabah Rabbi are working with the Madison County Department of Health to complete a state mandated Community Health Assessment. The final assessment will include information on various health measures in the county and will help guide the Department of Health as they develop future programs.

## Bridges Teen Institute

Psychology Professor Doug Johnson and seniors Meghan VanHorn, Kristin Coomber and Allison Yelton are working on an evaluation of Bridges Teen Institute Program. The Teen Institute is targeted at 16 – 18 year olds who are identified as leaders in their community. The goal of the Institute is to develop skills of high school students to educate younger students about issues related to substance abuse and making healthy choices.

## *The Center for Outreach, Volunteerism and Education*

The Center for Outreach, Volunteerism and Education or the COVE, as it is commonly known, is flourishing under its new partnership with the Upstate Institute. Together, the COVE and the Upstate Institute are engaged in the full spectrum of possible college-community partnerships, ranging from student-initiated community-based service to service learning classes to independent faculty research.

The COVE encourages civic work and provides extensive training for students leading community teams. This fall, nearly 50 students lead groups of their peers in creating and sustaining partnerships with more than 20 local schools, not-for-profit agencies and grass-roots organizations.

Community groups with interest in forging on-going or short-term partnerships now have additional avenues to explore and the reassurance that the COVE and the UI programs work in concert and with the same aims.

*Marnie Terhune  
Director, COVE*

## Smithfield Community Association – Abolitionist Hall of Fame

ALANA Cultural Center Director Jaime Nolan, Professor Jill Tiefenthaler and sophomore Kia King are working with the Smithfield Community Association to launch the nation's only Abolitionist Hall of Fame and Museum. Several members of the Colgate community will serve on the board. Together, they are developing a PowerPoint presentation and a website on the Abolitionist Hall of Fame for fundraising and information.

## Oneida Indian Nation Economic Impact Study

Professor Jill Tiefenthaler and Senior Chris Brown are working with the Oneida Indian Nation to assess the long term economic impact of their far reaching business ventures. The Nation was looking for a quantifiable way to evaluate not only



*The Shako:wi Cultural Center of the Oneida Indian Nation. (Photo by Tim Sofranko)*

the jobs they have created over the past ten years, but the farther reaching economic impacts they have had on the region.

## Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

Working with the Madison County CAP and the Madison County of Social Services, COVE Director Marnie Terhune, Professor Jill Tiefenthaler and junior Carlee Leraris are working to run the third year of this successful project. In the past two years, VITA has served over 250 low income families complete their tax returns and, if they qualify, gain access to the Earned Income Tax Credit.

## Chenango United Way Needs Assessment

Senior Kevin McAvey is working with Professor Jill Tiefenthaler to complete a county wide needs assessment for the Chenango County United Way. The assessment will be used to help prioritize grant funding and needs for the county.

## Windpower Regulations – Town of Lebanon

Professor Bruce Selleck is working with the Town of Lebanon to develop windpower regulations which will become local land management law, in anticipation of further windfarm development in the town. Selleck has also worked with the town to develop maps illustrating gas well distribution and production in the town to insure that appropriate taxes are levied.

# Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Helps Madison County Working Poor

Now entering its third year, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) provides free tax preparation to low-income families in Madison County. Aside from helping working families file their taxes, VITA also offers unique access to the Earned Income Credit. EIC is a generous tax credit issued to low-income, working households by the Federal government and New York State. In the last decade, the EIC has become the centerpiece of our national anti-poverty programs.

EIC allows a low-income working family with two children to receive as much as \$4,000 back from their return. For many families, this return allows them to do things that many of us would take for granted—pay bills on time, purchase or repair a vehicle that allows them to find or keep a stable job or buy new clothes or shoes for their children.

The Upstate Institute recruits and trains student volunteers to be tax preparers for the project. Madison County's VITA program is the first student-led VITA program in the state of New York. The Madison County Department of Social Services, the Community Action Program for Madison County, and the Internal Revenue Service work together to provide location, clients and other resources for the project. These partners are a model of private-public collaboration working together to meet the needs of the community.

In addition, the program provides a unique experience for our student volunteers. Not only do they have an opportunity to use the skills they develop at Colgate, but they also see how their time and talents can positively impact members of their community.

"I am excited to be a returning volunteer for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, said Colgate student Carlee Leraris, '06. "VITA is a great way for students to learn how to file household income tax returns. But most importantly, the program has afforded its student volunteers the opportunity to



*VITA volunteers receive training on tax preparation software. (Photo by Tim Sofranko)*

step outside of the Colgate "bubble" and see the realities that are faced by families throughout Madison County." VITA has a successful track record. In 2003, VITA filed 121 tax returns. In 2004, 180 low-income wage earners had their taxes prepared and e-filed at no cost by the program, saving each taxpayer about \$135 in preparation fees. The state Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance estimated the dollar impact of the program in our county to be \$396,000—money that is eventually spent in our community.

# Colgate Faculty Begin Work with Saquoit Creek Drainage Basin

Professor of Biology Randy Fuller and Assistant Professor of Geography Peter Klepeis are beginning work with the Saquoit Creek Intermunicipal Commission on a variety of issues surrounding the Saquoit Creek Drainage Basin. The Basin flows from its headwaters near Paris Hill to its confluence with the



*A view of Saquoit Creek. (Photo by Peter Klepeis)*

Mohawk River, just north of Whitesboro, near Utica. The Upstate Institute has provided support for field work and other components of the project. This initiative combines faculty research, community involvement and hands on opportunities for students in several fields.

The Saquoit Creek Intermunicipal Commission is working with these two faculty members to gather preliminary data on various aspects of the Saquoit Creek Drainage basin, including the effects of urbanization on the stream.

This information is critical in the industrial development of the basin area as well as flood management. In the long term, the various aspects of the project will have both local and regional impacts. From a recreational perspective, the project will help locate possible walking trails and perhaps produce educational materials on environmental history. By characterizing water quality and analyzing land-use change processes, the project could also influence land use decision making in the region.

Students will be involved through their work in ENST 480 as well as several other classes in the geology and geography departments. Working with the Commission is going to give students a true hands-on experience that could include characterizing the ecology of the stream, writing the basin's



*Professor Fuller with students near the creek. (Photo by Tim Sofranko)*

environmental history and identifying possible measures to ameliorate the downstream flooding that often takes place during snowmelt events. Participating students will not only develop a deeper understanding of the natural workings of the basin, but they will also gain a larger appreciation for the impacts of development and recreational use.

## Upstate Institute Staff

**Jill Tiefenthaler**, Director

**Diane Beach**, Administrative Assistant

**Caryn Tomljanovich**, Project Consultant

## Upstate Institute Executive Board

- **Mary Ann Calo**, Associate Professor of Art and Art History
- **Randy Fuller**, Professor of Biology
- **Laura Klugherz**, Professor of Music
- **Ellen Kraly**, Professor of Geography
- **Jim Leach**, Vice President for Communications and Public Relations
- **Ruth Ann Loveless**, Vice President for Alumni Affairs
- **Bruce Selleck**, Professor of Geology
- **Marnie Terhune**, Director, COVE
- **Adam Weinberg**, Vice President and Dean of the College

## Upstate Institute Community Board

- **Stacy Alvord**, Director, Community Action Program
- **Donna Anderson**, Executive Director, The Exhibition Alliance
- **Susan Bauman**, Madison Lane Apartments
- **Diane Bialczak**, Community Memorial Hospital
- **Peter Cann**, Director Madison County Industrial Development Agency
- **Ben Eberhardt**, Inn Keeper, Colgate Inn
- **Glenn Gaslin**, Morrisville Auxiliary Corporation
- **Carolyn Gherardi**, Owner, Parkside Deli
- **Beverly Glen**, Executive Director, Opportunities for Chenango
- **Chris Olds**, Partnership for Community Development
- **Greg Owens**, Southern Madison Heritage Trust
- **Peter Vogelaar**, Executive Director of Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees

## Upstate Institute Faculty Fellows

- **David Baird**, Director, Innovative Technology Solutions for Learning
- **Josh Baker**, Co-Director of the Outdoor Education
- **Molly Baker**, Co-Director of the Outdoor Education
- **Pete Banner-Haley**, Associate Professor of History
- **Sarah Bay-Cheng**, Assistant Professor of English/Theater
- **Raj Bellani**, Dean of the Sophomore Year Experience
- **Jackie Brooks**, Visiting Assistant Professor in Sociology
- **Adam Burnett**, Associate Professor of Geography
- **Don Duggan-Haas**, Assistant Professor of Educational Studies
- **Rob Figueroa**, Assistant Professor of Educational Studies
- **John Galluci**, Associate Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures
- **Karen Harpp**, Associate Professor of Geology
- **Doug Johnson**, Associate Professor of Psychology
- **Takao Kato**, Professor of Economics and Presidential Scholar
- **Jordy Kerber**, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Native American Studies
- **Carolyn Kissane**, Visiting Assistant Professor of Educational Studies
- **Peter Klepeis**, Assistant Professor of Geography
- **Meika Loe**, Assistant Professor of Sociology & Anthropology and Women's Studies
- **Bill Meyer**, A. Lindsay O'Connor Associate Professor of Geography
- **Sasha Nakhimovsky**, Associate Professor of Computer Science
- **Jaime Nolan**, Director of ALANA Cultural Center
- **Jo Anne Pagano**, Professor of Educational Studies
- **John Palmer**, Assistant Professor of Educational Studies
- **Beth Parks**, Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy
- **Peter Scull**, Assistant Professor of Geography