Summer: For Many a Time for Learning

If you think all Williams students take a vacation from learning during the summer, you are mistaken. Indeed, learning has broken through the traditional barriers of the academic calendar.

Here on campus, more than 200 Williams students were in residence this past summer to work on research projects with professors. Most of them were engaged with well-established programs in the sciences and math; the rest pursued more recent opportunities in the humanities and social sciences. Twenty students were Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellows or Williams College Undergraduate Research Fellows, which, in the words of the Mellon Mays program description, are designed to increase "the number of highly qualified candidates for PhDs in core fields within the arts and sciences who come from historically underrepresented groups."

Further afield, 22 students used Williams summer travel fellowships, most of them sponsored by alumni, to pursue intellectual interests around the globe.

For instance, Timothy Crawley ’05 says the Tibetan thangka paintings he studied in Dharamsala were "incredible," but even more powerful were his experiences with the people of India. "India is a land that breaks your heart and renews it again every minute you are there," he says. "It left me changed forever in the way I see humanity."

Ila Sheren ’05 spent the summer analyzing contemporary architecture in Poland and the Czech Republic and how it reflects those countries’ emergence from their recent history in the Soviet Bloc and into their future in the European Union.

An untold number of students each year pursue summer internships to explore fields in which their intellectual passions and job skills might intersect. More than 90 of them benefited last summer from College programs, funded by alumni, that support experiences in fields where paid internships don’t exist: the arts, government and journalism, along with community service and other nonprofit organizations. This Alumni Review’s Faculty in Focus describes one such opportunity in South Africa.

One student, Thomas Zimmerman ’06, got to plan, film and edit a documentary on the Estonian National Song Festival. "This project," he says, "gave me an unprecedented opportunity to explore both my interest in filmmaking and [a] culture that is different from our own in many ways."

Rachel Berlin ’05 interned at the American Foreign Policy Council Asia-Pacific Initiative in Washington, D.C., using her "language skills, travel experience and personal interests" to monitor daily events in Asia "with a focus on democracy movements and humanitarian issues," she says. "My summer has intensified my desire to continue to focus my studies and my career in Asia."

Meanwhile, Rosemary Kendrick ’05 was in Washington, D.C., conducting research at the American Enterprise Institute. "I loved working on educational policy," she says. "For many years I have worked in education on a smaller scale … so this summer presented an excellent opportunity to learn more about the larger framework of educational issues as well as the government’s role in educational reform."

Alan Cordova ’06 found work at Newsweek’s Mexico City bureau. His take: "The internship … complemented my Williams education. I could directly apply concepts I learned in political science … to explain the political and cultural issues that currently face Mexicans. My work allowed me to explore the interactions between politics and culture (specifically religion and other sources of values), which is my primary academic interest."

Alumni and parents made envious by these stories, as I am, can share in them vicariously by helping students locate internships that fit their academic and personal needs. If you think you may be able to help a student find the right opportunity, please contact Fatma Kassamali, director of career counseling, at 413.597.2311 or fkassamali@williams.edu.

—Morty Schapiro
NEWS BRIEFS

MCC Celebrates 15 Years

A keynote address by Carol Moseley Braun and a performance by violinist Daniel Bernard Roumain were among the events celebrating the Multicultural Center’s 15th anniversary Nov. 3-6.

Moseley Braun, the first black woman to serve in the U.S. Senate, ran for the 2004 Democratic presidential nomination. She was only the fourth African American elected to the Senate, where she served from 1992-98, and she was U.S. ambassador to New Zealand under President Bill Clinton.

Roumain is a multi-instrumentalist and composer whose repertoire ranges from classical to hip hop. He has collaborated on new work with artists such as John Fleck, Philip Glass and DJ Spooky.

Other MCC activities included panels on multiculturalism on campus and in the curriculum, performances by Kusika and Zambezi and a reunion for Mellon Mays Undergraduate and Williams Undergraduate fellows.

For more information on MCC and its anniversary, visit www.williams.edu/MCC.

Fall Guest Speaker Roster Shines

The fall semester brought a series of timely talks and debates that included a roster of speakers considered by many to be the most impressive group to visit the College in years.

A conversation with Howard Dean, former Vermont governor and Democratic presidential hopeful, moderated by Stephen Frazier ’74 of CNN’s Headline News, drew a standing-room-only crowd to Chapin Hall. Other speakers included Paul Krugman, a Princeton economist and New York Times columnist, who discussed “What’s the Matter with America?”; Dinesh D’Souza, the Robert and Karen Rishwain Scholar at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, who squared off against Williams political science professor George Marcus in the debate “Bush or Kerry?”; Thomas Kean, chairman of the 9-11 Commission, president of Drew University and former New Jersey governor, who discussed “Lessons Learned: September 11 and the War on Terrorism”; and Salman Rushdie, author and public intellectual, who lectured on “Security or Freedom?”

Dick Morris, former adviser to President Bill Clinton, and Jeb Magruder ’58, a former special assistant to Richard Nixon, were scheduled for talks in late November and early December, respectively.

The fall events were organized and sponsored by a variety of College departments, programs and organizations, including the Class of ’71 Public Affairs Forum, Gaudino Forum and the Lecture Committee. For more information on guest speakers and events on campus, visit www.williams.edu/admin/news/calendars.php, and click on the link for Williams Weekly Calendar.

1954 Sets Fund-Raising Record, “Passes the Baton”

Having set a 50th reunion gift record last June, the Class of 1954 “passed the baton” to the Class of 1955 in October at a celebratory dinner with Williams President Morty Schapiro, continuing a tradition started in 1967 by the 50th reunion class of 1917.

Last summer, the Class of 1954 announced its record-breaking $17.4 million commitment during Reunion Weekend. The 50th Reunion Fund Committee—determined to set a record under the leadership of 1954’s Allan Fullkerson and Joe Rice—concentrated its efforts on creating an endowment to support Williams’ signature tutorial program. More than 90 percent of the class contributed to the 50th Reunion Fund.

The Class of 1955, meanwhile, spent a week in the Cotswolds last summer, marking another tradition leading up to the 50th. Pass-the-Baton weekend, in which the previous year’s 50th class “hands off” a baton to the class about to celebrate its 50th, was 1955’s last milestone before Reunion Weekend this June.
Four Alumni Join Board of Trustees

The Williams College Board of Trustees welcomed four new members at its October meeting: Barbara A. Austell ’75, Stephen Harty ’73, Michael E. Reed ’75 and Robert G. Scott ’68.

Austell retired in January after seven years as senior VP of finance and treasurer of ARAMARK Corp., a leading provider of outsourced services to business, educational, health care and governmental institutions and a major concessionaire at convention centers, stadiums and parks. She began her career in investment banking with J.P. Morgan in 1975 and was managing director there for seven years.

As Williams volunteers, Austell and her husband Rhett ’75 were vice chairs of the Bergen County (N.J.) Special Gifts Committee during the Third Century Campaign and were admission regional assistant chairs. Austell served on the Executive Committee of the Society of Alumni from 2000-03 and is a class secretary.

The Villanova, Pa., resident is a vice chair of the Pennsylvania Ballet and a director of the Mann Center for the Performing Arts. She and Rhett have two children, Katy ’03 and Rhett. Austell will serve a five-year term as trustee.

Harty has more than 20 years of experience in advertising, most recently with The Plus Consulting Group. He was president and co-founder of Merkley Newman Harty agency and previously was executive VP and director of client services for Ogilvy & Mather. In 1983 he was a White House Fellow, serving as special assistant to then FBI Director William Webster. Harty has a master’s in public and private management from Yale.

He has served Williams as president and VP of the Society of Alumni, chairman of the Alumni Fund, class agent and president of his class. He was involved with the Third Century Campaign as a member of the Bicentennial Commission and as a vice chair of the Manhattan II Special Gifts Committee.

Harty is a former board member of the Williamstown Theatre Festival. He chaired the Yale School of Management Alumni Fund from 1981-87 and won its Chairman’s Award. He has been a director of Childhope USA, Photographers + Friends United Against AIDS, the Metropolitan New York Rugby Union and Eisner Interactive. He and his wife Cate live in Irvington, N.Y., and have four daughters: Alice, Julia, Elizabeth and Caroline. Harty has a master’s in public and private management from Yale.

In 2002, Reed of Silver Spring, Md., founded a private consulting firm that creates more inclusive work environments through leadership training and executive coaching. He previously was a partner and VP at Cook Ross Inc., where he advised on promoting diversity recruitment in the workforce. From 1989-99, he was managing director, area manager and regional VP of INROADS, forging internship opportunities for African American, Latino and Native American youth. In October 1993, Reed received a Williams Bicentennial Medal.

Reed is a member of the College’s Executive Committee of the Society of Alumni, co-chairman of the Williams Black Alumni Network Steering Committee, a regional admission representative, associate class agent and member of the Sterling Brown Endowment Committee. He has been class VP and 25th reunion co-chair for the DC region. He was Williams’ assistant director of admission and alumni relations after receiving a graduate degree in education psychology from Howard University. He and his wife Pamela have two children, Michael and Lauren. Reed will serve a five-year term as alumni trustee.

Scott was named managing director of Morgan Stanley in 1979 and later headed its worldwide banking division. He was executive VP and chief financial officer of Morgan Stanley Dean Witter in 1997 and was instrumental in the merger of the two companies that year. He retired as president and chief operating officer of Morgan Stanley & Co. in November 2003. He has an MBA from Stanford and is a member of its graduate school’s advisory council. Stanford presented him with an Excellence in Leadership award earlier this year.

At Williams, Scott has been his class’s treasurer, associate agent and a member of the 25th Reunion Fund Committee. He endowed the Robert G. Scott Professorship, held by Stephen Fix, professor of English.

Scott and his wife Karen live in New York and have five children: Matthew ’94, Jessica, Megan, Jason and Laura. Scott will serve a five-year term as Williams trustee.

WCMA WANTS YOUR ART!

The Williams College Museum of Art is seeking artwork for its fourth ever Williams Alumni Loan Exhibition, celebrating the museum’s 80th anniversary in 2006. The museum plans to exhibit works in all media from all periods of art history from alumni, family members and friends of the College. For more information, contact curator Vivian Patterson ’77, MA ’80, at 413.597.2457 or vivian.l.patterson@williams.edu.
Members of the Williams community gathered in Chapin Hall Sept. 11 to celebrate five alumni who received Bicentennial Medals for 2004. Pictured here with Jill Stephens ’77, president of the Society of Alumni (front row, second from left) and Williams President Morty Schapiro (to her left) are: (clockwise, from back row, left) Clarence Otis Jr. ’77, who, after successful careers in law and finance, was named CEO of the $5 billion Darden Restaurants, the world’s largest casual dining company (he attended Williams at the encouragement of fellow medalist Felix T. Grossman ’56); Kevin H. White ’52, mayor of Boston from 1968 to 1983, credited with revitalizing the struggling city and setting a national example of how cities could be reborn; Richard C. Repp ’57, prominent scholar of the history of Turkey during the Ottoman period and a leading administrator at the University of Oxford; Sonia L. Nazario ’82, award-winning journalist with the Los Angeles Times who won a Pulitzer Prize in 2003; and Felix T. Grossman ’56, world champion master diver, lawyer and founder of Felix Ventures, which provides leadership training and wilderness experiences for inner-city Los Angeles high school students. Established in 1993 on the College’s 200th anniversary, Bicentennial Medals are presented each year to members of the Williams community for distinguished achievement in any field of endeavor.

James McAllister, associate professor of political science and chair of the Leadership Studies Program, will be Gaudino Scholar for 2004-06. He succeeds sociologist Robert Jackall.

Since coming to Williams in 1997, McAllister has taught courses including “American Hegemony and the Future of the International System,” “America and the Cold War,” “The Causes of War,” and “America and the World after September 11.”

He is the recipient of numerous fellowships and grants, including an Oakley Fellowship, Lyndon Baines Johnson Travel Grant, John Olin Fellowship and Columbia University President’s Fellowship. His scholarly writings on American foreign policy include, most recently, “The Lost Revolution: Edward Lansdale and the American Defeat in Vietnam, 1964-1968,” and “A Fiasco of Noble Proportions: The Johnson Administration and the South Vietnamese elections of 1967.”

The author of No Exit: America and the German Problem, 1943-54 (Cornell, 2002), McAllister is currently researching American foreign policy during the Vietnam War. He is active in public lectures, debates and forums on topics ranging from “Adolph Hitler and the Struggle for World Domination” to “National Security and the 2004 Presidential Election.”

McAllister received a bachelor’s degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1988 and a Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1999.

The Robert L. Gaudino Memorial Fund, established in memory of Professor Gaudino’s profound impact on his students, has made a distinctive contribution to Williams and complements the primary objectives of the College’s educational mission: promoting active learning, combating fragmentation of knowledge and assembling an open community of learning characterized by integrity, mutual respect and rigorous intellectual endeavor. Michael Morfit ’68 and John Neikirk ’73 are co-chairmen of the Gaudino Fund trustees.

McAllister Named Gaudino Scholar

Williams and the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute each have received a major gift from the estates of Elizabeth H. and H. Morris Burrows ’31.

The College’s $4.7 million share will support the H. Morris Burrows ’31 Memorial Fund, an endowment providing perpetual support for faculty salaries. The Clark received an $8.4 million monetary gift—the largest private donation it has received since its founding in 1955—as well as the Burrows’ $4.8 million collection of American silver, which has been on loan to the institute since 1975.

“We are delighted and humbled by the Burrows family’s generosity,” says Williams President Morty Schapiro. “This gift spans several generations in their relationships with Williams, and their contribution will support the people at the heart of the Williams enterprise—our faculty—generations into the future.”

Henry Morris Burrows was a machinist with Fellows Gear Shaper Co. in Springfield, Vt. He was an authority and collector of early automobiles and shared his wife’s interest in American silver. The couple often passed through Williamstown en route between their apartment in Summit, N.J., and their country home in Springfield. Mr. Burrows died in 1988; Mrs. Burrows died in 2003.

College, Clark Receive Major Gifts from Burrows Estates
NEWS BRIEFS

WCMA’s Rothschild Receives Getty Grant

Deborah Rothschild, senior curator of modern and contemporary art at the Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA), has been awarded a Curatorial Research Fellowship from the Getty Grant Program to pursue the project “Gerald and Sarah Murphy and their Circle.”

Rothschild’s exhibition and catalog will examine how the Murphys inspired creative friends who produced some of the most noteworthy literature, music and art of the 20th century. The couple was the model for Dick and Nicole Diver in Fitzgerald’s Tender is the Night, as well as for books and short stories by Hemingway, MacLeish and others.

In addition to paintings by Gerald Murphy on loan from the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Dallas Museum of Art, the exhibition will include works by Pablo Picasso, Fernand Léger and Man Ray that were done for or of the Murphys.

Rothschild has curated several multimedia exhibitions for WCMA, including 2002’s Prelude to a Nightmare: Art, Politics, and Hitler’s Early Years. In 2000, her Introjection: Tony Oursler, Mid-career Survey, 1976-1999 received first-place from the International Association of Art Critics.

Campus-wide Initiatives on Diversity Launched

President Morty Schapiro has called on the Williams community to focus on issues of diversity in the coming academic year.

Beginning with a meeting of campus administrators, faculty members and students at Mount Hope Farm, Schapiro set in motion what the College hopes will be an intensive, yearlong “self study” on diversity, coordinated by a committee headed by the president. The committee is based on the successful model of the College’s 2000-01 strategic planning exercise, which brought together members of standing faculty and student committees with senior staff to evaluate and recommend improvements to the curriculum and campus life.

Schapiro hopes an evaluation similar to the kind prepared for the decennial reaccreditation process can be completed before the end of the academic year. Issues emerging at the Mount Hope gathering included faculty retention, grievance procedures and education about diversity.

“The bottom line is that this is a chance … to face problems head on and to move forward in concrete ways,” he told The Williams Record.

The effort was launched in light of data on student satisfaction at Williams (and how the data differ by race) as well as a number of incidents in recent years that, Schapiro says, “show that Williams can do a better job of welcoming our community members of historically underrepresented groups.”

Reinhardt to Direct Oakley Center

As the new director of the Oakley Center for the Humanities and Social Sciences, political scientist Mark Reinhardt is charged with advancing its mission as a forum for inter- and multidisciplinary research for faculty and students. He succeeds psychology professor Robert Kavanaugh.

Reinhardt says he hopes to invigorate the center’s offerings this year and next and to re-evaluate how its programming is structured.

In addition to courses in political and democratic theory, public space, slavery and American political thought, he has been central in developing the American studies program.

In 1999, he was named Robert L. Gaudino Scholar. A year later, he was appointed chair of the American Studies concentration. He is author of The Art of Being Free: Taking Liberties with Tocqueville, Marx (Cornell, 1997). He co-edited and contributed an essay to the catalog Kara Walker: Narratives of a Negress, a New York Times Notable Art Book for 2003. He has published in the journals Critical Inquiry, Political Theory, Theory & Event and The Nation, among others. He graduated from Wesleyan in 1983 and received a Ph.D. from University of California, Santa Cruz, in 1991.

The Oakley Center was founded in 1985 and hosts Williams students, faculty members on leave, emeritus faculty and visiting professors as fellows. For more information on this year’s fellows, visit www.williams.edu/admin/news/releases.php?id=778.


Faculty in Focus

Nation Building 101

South Africa has "one of the most sophisticated finance industries in the world and, alongside that, because of apartheid ... the worst poverty and HIV/AIDS," says Samuel Amponsah '05, a native of Ghana who has spent two summers as an intern with the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) in Cape Town. "The question is, what can be done to bridge the gap without weakening the economic infrastructure?"

It's a question Williams students have been helping to answer under the guidance of the College's visiting economics professor Michael Samson. With South African economists Ingrid van Niekerk and Kenneth Mac Quene, Samson founded EPRI in Cape Town in 1994 to support the development of policy options aimed at social investment, job creation, economic growth and poverty reduction in South Africa. During the summer, Williams students assist in the research EPRI conducts for governmental and non-governmental organizations. They also can take a Winter Study course that begins in a Williams classroom and ends in a series of meetings in South Africa with policymakers, businesspeople, union officials, doctors, activists, teachers and health care workers.

As an intern, Jason Stanley '00, researched equity and efficiency aspects of instituting a capital gains tax—a reform the South African government implemented a few years later. (Stanley went on to win a Rhodes scholarship.) Oliver Babson '07 worked on social security reform. Last summer, Amponsah, a math and economics major, helped run simulations to determine how increases in government spending to improve the quality of life for most South Africans would affect the nation's economic growth.

For the past four years, EPRI, along with Williams' Center for Development Economics, has also offered an annual economic policy course in the Cape Town region to parliamentarians from Southern Africa, most of whom, as black Africans, were denied such training under apartheid. Williams professors teach the course, and Williams students serve as assistants, handling logistics and teaching workshops that provide parliamentarians with technology skills and research support. "Cabinet ministers have invited the students to their homes for dinner and discuss policy problems with a frankness that would vaporize American politicians," Samson says.

Interacting with elected officials who choose to spend the time between parliamentary sessions taking courses in economic policy clearly has an effect on the interns. "Growing up in Jamaica, my assumption was that government officials are corrupt," says economics and political science major Fran Fredena-Fraser '05. "But the parliamentarians who attended the policy course have shown me that politics is not all 'politricking.' For them, this is not just a job—this is a way to help the people they have been chosen to represent. I may one day have to go back and do the same thing in my country."

—Zelda Stern

Science is Fun ... Really

With a $1.6 million, four-year grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Williams science faculty and students are transforming pedagogy in Berkshire area schools and fostering "interest and excitement about scientific discovery" by bringing "a little bit of our daily lives as scientists to the community at large," says biology professor and project director Wendy Raymond.

Learning Labs: Elementary and high school teachers generally are "not comfortable and not trained" in science education, which is a barrier to engaging students in the field, Raymond says. Building on a 12-year-old program at Williamstown Elementary School, the grant pairs 40 Williams students with teachers from three area elementary schools to develop and implement interactive science curricula. Stipends are available for teachers to attend summer training institutes at Williams, and high school teachers will have more opportunities to use biology, chemistry and physics labs on campus. The College also will host two AP chemistry classes.

A Collaborative Process: Meanwhile, Williams students will benefit from research and networking opportunities supported by the grant, including summer stipends, a program at
Inside the Town Green

It’s “one of the premier public art projects in the United States for 2004,” says Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts, of Town Green, an award-winning work by Williams art department chair Michael Glier ’75.

Commissioned by the Cambridge (Mass.) Arts Council to decorate the city hall annex, Town Green consists of 15 wall murals drawn with charcoal and painted in acrylic in the building’s two-story atrium. In addition there are two large paintings in public reception rooms on the upper floors. The murals create a garden courtyard of outdoor urban scenes—people mowing lawns, rowing on the Charles River, taking a coffee break. “The idea,” Glier says, “was to turn the interior into a friendly, park-like setting in which community members can pay their traffic tickets and complain about their neighbor’s dog.”

The themes reflect the varied missions of the city agencies that occupy the building. The mural nearest the public meeting rooms, for example, echoes democracy in action, which Glier says should be “loud, contentious and beautiful, at least in concept. In response, I designed … Congregation, which features very large roses, with very large thorns, and a myriad of birds, each screeching its own song.”

The project also celebrated the “green” nature of the building’s renovation. Originally a 19th century schoolhouse, the annex now meets the American Institute of Architects’ gold standard for energy efficiency.

Glier created Town Green with help from former students Ellie Carothers ’01, Molly Frost ’02, and Miguel Payano ’03. The three, who are now pursuing careers in art, were “terrific” collaborators, says Glier. “I’d advised all three on honors projects, and Molly had worked with me as a summer studio assistant. I felt fine asking their opinion on things, and they gave me great advice.”

Installation itself was a challenge. Scheduling snafus meant construction and artwork took place side by side. “At one point,” Glier says, “I was up painting on scaffold while a jackhammer operator removed concrete at my feet, a staple gunner lay flooring a few yards away and a backhoe worked its way through a hole in the outside wall.”

Yet Town Green triumphed in the end. The project was one of 39 chosen from 189 to be featured in Americans for the Arts’ Year in Review. Art in America magazine also selected the project for its own Year in Review. And Cambridge City TV made a video of the work in progress that aired last spring.

In addition to Town Green (his largest public art project to date), Glier has had solo exhibitions in New York’s Museum of Modern Art and the Drawing Center and Boston’s Barbara Krakow Gallery. He was included in the Whitney Biennial and shows at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and the Dia Art Foundation in New York. He’s received a Guggenheim Fellowship and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts. He spent last spring on a painting fellowship at the Liguria Study Center in Bogliasco, Italy.

Glier’s new outdoor tile mural, Travel Light, graces the east corner of Porches Inn in North Adams, Mass. Its main panel features a grackle large enough to be seen from the window of MASS MoCA’s Spencer Gallery, across the street.

To see more of Michael Glier’s artwork, visit www.williams.edu/Art/glier/

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the Marine Biological Laboratories in Woods Hole, Mass., and a postdoctoral position at Williams in the field of genomics. Through summer research labs at the College, the grant also creates a forum for collaboration among students and faculty from Williams, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Bennett College (a historically black women’s college in Greensboro, S.C.) and University of Texas at San Antonio (which is largely Latino). Like science education at the college level, K-12 programs can benefit from the synergies between scholarship and teaching, Raymond says, adding, “If you’re not a scholar or researcher, you’re not as good a teacher,” and vice versa.

**New Faces:** In the end, although the public tends to see scientists as “a little wacky,” Raymond says, she hopes sharing “the fun we have on a daily basis doing what we do” will alter young students’ and teachers’ points of view. Student-teachers working in the schools, she says, will bring a younger face—one that includes more women and people of color—to elementary and high school science.

**A Strong Relationship:** Williams and Hughes have collaborated on science education initiatives since 1991. In addition to this most recent grant, Williams has received $2.3 million from the institute to fund summer undergraduate research, K-12 outreach, teacher training, summer science and technology camps and equipment purchases.

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**Katy Wagner**
Award-winning journalist Sonia Nazario '82 on her desire to write about social issues and to take herself, and others, to places they might not otherwise go—

For me, a girl raised in Kansas and Argentina, Williams was a big adjustment. Back then it was pretty homogenous; there were a handful of Hispanics. I was here on a need-based scholarship. I was sure I was among the 10 percent Williams used to admit based on something other than academic credentials. I never wrote a paper before my first semester here.

Still, Williams was magical. The students were whip-smart. The professors (or the whole) loved teaching. Classes were small. Professors turned back papers with gobs of notes in the margins, detailing how, exactly, you had screwed up. You could read thick books and think big. Williams’ isolation allowed me and others to safely find ourselves, to focus on learning.

I appreciated this calm berth perhaps more than most. When I was 14, after my father died, my mother decided to return our family to Argentina. It was the mid-1970s, during the so-called Dirty War, when tens of thousands of Argentines were arrested and “disappeared” by the military regime. Some of my friends were tortured to death. One had the bones in his face broken.

We burned the family’s books in the backyard—anything the military might deem radical. Freud. Alice in Wonderland. I locked in on a career in journalism when I saw bloodstains on the sidewalk in my Buenos Aires neighborhood. There, two neighbors—journalists—had been killed. They were trying to tell the truth about the atrocities being committed.

Williams town was wonderfully removed from all that.

Although I appreciated and enjoyed life at Williams, I was always struck by how many aspects of life were absent here. There was little opportunity to understand how most Americans—much less most people in the world—live.

It seemed a strange dichotomy: people came to this place to open their minds, for a liberal arts education. Yet their time here, and lives afterwards, were spent in a comfortable bubble, often so apart and unaware of the rest. In that way, Williams fueled my desire to write about
13-year-old told her, bowing his head.

Amelia Esposito’s office and confessed to an ailment. They are hungry. This mostly middle-class bedroom community, where victimized children grow up, is a long line outside the nurse’s door at the suburban West Covina, Calif., Edgewood Middle School.

It can be seen quite publicly in places like Los Angeles, others thousands of miles away.

In 1994, I journeyed into the world of Los Angeles classrooms. There are 30 million people—12 million children—in America who do not get enough to eat. To many, their plight is invisible. But it can be seen quite publicly in places like Edgewood Middle School.

By 10 o’clock many mornings there is a long line outside the nurse’s door at the suburban West Covina, Calif., school. Some children clutch their stomachs. Others grasp their heads. In this mostly middle-class bedroom community, these children share a common ailment. They are hungry.

One boy came into assistant principal Sanchez’s office and confessed to stealing food from a 7-Eleven store. “Every night I go to bed hungry,” the 13-year-old told her, bowing his head. “There isn’t enough food.” One in four children at Edgewood comes to class undernourished. A quarter of all low-income children in America are anemic.

Parents, most of them with full-time jobs but poverty wages, talked about choosing between paying for rent or buying food. Children talked about eating once a day, about going to friends’ houses to play in the hopes they might be fed.

Teachers like Ernie Sanchez were left to pick up the slack. Sanchez spent the first period each morning as a second-grade teacher making cheese sandwiches for every student. Once, he brought apples to his school, where 99 percent of the children qualify for free or reduced-price meals. “All these little hands reached out toward me,” says Sanchez, who—faced with the crush of children—struggled to regain control of his class. “I’ll take that image to my grave. I didn’t think I would ever see that in America.”

In 1997, I delved into the world of children who are raised by parents addicted to drugs or alcohol. Federal surveys show at least one in five children will spend some part of their youth being raised by a parent who is an alcoholic or drug addict. They, too, grow up in a world most people never see.

For weeks, I tagged along with 3-year-old Tamika Triggs. One day, her mother, Theodora, took Tamika into the drenching heat of a clapboard shed. There, her mother and a friend smoked crack. Theodora slammed heroin into an arm marble with track marks. Then, intent on smoking the last crumbs of crack, she gently lowered her sleeping girl onto a mattress moist with urine and semen. As her mother inhaled, Tamika slept, her pink and white sundress absorbing the fluids of unknown grown-ups.

Like most children of addicts, Tamika had become her own best playmate, how she would play patty cake alone, how she would score drugs. I saw how she adapted to a world devoid of lasting affection and friendship. I watched how she lived in a world devoid of lasting affection and friendship. I watched how she would play patty cake alone, how she would play patty cake alone, how she had become her own best playmate, how she watched the person dearest to her self-destruc. It is here, in millions of homes, where victimized children grow up to victimize others—a generational cycle that costs taxpayers $200 billion annually in criminal justice costs, health care and social programs.

In 2002, I explored the world of immigrant children through one boy named Enrique. Enrique was part of a small army of children—48,000 each year—who head north alone, without either parent, from Central America and Mexico to the United States. Some come to work, others to escape abusive families; most come to reunify with a mother. Their mothers faced a choice. They could stay in their country—Honduras, El Salvador or Guatemala—and only feed their children once or twice a day, maybe only a glass of sugar water for dinner, and see them forced to quit their studies after the third grade. Or they could go north, leave their children behind, and make money to ensure their children had a better future.

The mothers thought they would be separated from their children for one or two years. Typically, the separations last five or 10 years.

Many of these children despair of ever seeing their mother again. They set out on their own to find them. With little money, they traverse Mexico on top of freight trains. It is an epic journey. They brave armed gangsters, who control the tops of the trains. They must elude bandits, who hunt down migrants along the tracks. Corrupt cops all along the way are out to rob and then deport them. The children must get on and off the trains when they are moving, to avoid the police. Often, they fall and the wheels tear them apart. They call the train El Tren de la Muerte. The Train of Death. The youngest on the trains are 7 years old.

Enrique set out from Tegucigalpa, Honduras, when he was 16. He had not seen his mother in 11 years. To retrace Enrique’s journey, I rode the length of Mexico on top of these trains. There was a world unknown to me on top of those trains, one of great cruelty and of amazing acts of human kindness.

Enrique left Honduras with $57 in his pocket, a slip of paper with his mother’s phone number and the hope of reaching her in North Carolina someday. Seven times, he was deported by Mexico back to Guatemala. Each time, he started again.

One night he was nearly beaten to death by six men on top of a train in southern Mexico. He saved himself by hurling himself off the train.
Eventually people along the tracks, particularly in the state of Veracruz, began to bring food out to the trains, often where they slowed for curves or bad tracks. Those who had no food brought plastic bottles of tap water. These are unlikely places for people to be giving food to strangers. Roughly 43 percent of Mexico’s 100 million people live on $2 or less a day. In rural areas, 30 percent of children 5 and younger eat so little that their growth is stunted, and the people who live in humble houses along the rails are often the poorest. Yet in many places where the train slows 20 or 30 people stream out of their homes along the rails and toward the train. They wave. They smile, they shout “God,” they tell desperate migrants, “He left your eyes open,” she says. “You will learn to live—in a different way.”

In Mexico’s southernmost state, Chiapas, Olga Sanchez Martinez helps the many immigrants left deeply wounded by the train. Some have lost nearly half their bodies. One 20-year-old Salvadoran woman lost both legs and both buttocks. Olga buys blood and medicine so immigrants won’t die. At her shelter of Jesus the Good Shepherd she nurses them until they can be taken back home. Olga says, “No one tells me something can’t be done. Everything can be cured. Nothing is impossible.”

At the local public hospital, almost all the wounded migrants tell Olga they wish the train would have killed them rather than leave them like this. They see the. They curse God. They curse Olga and push her away. Some try to hang themselves.

She perches on a corner of their hospital bed, stroke’s their hair, and tells them God has spared them for a reason. “If he wanted, he could have killed you. But he didn’t. He left your eyes open,” she says. “God has a plan for you.” She says, “You will learn to live—in a different way.”

She tells them how she was sick most of her life. How at 18, she temporarily went blind and mute, had boils on her arms and spent 38 days in a coma—66 pounds of skin and bones. How a year later, when she was well enough to work at a tortilla factory, a machine tore two fingertips off her left hand. She tells them she tried to slit her wrists.

Then, a doctor told her she had cancer in her eyes. One year later, she saw a 13-year-old Salvadoran boy who had lost both legs trying to board a train. The hospital pushed the penniless migrant out before he was healed. Olga brought the boy to recuperate at her humble home. Three days later, there was another young Salvadoran at the hospital who had lost both arms. “Don’t feel alone. I will help you,” she told him. She brought him home, too.

Soon, she had 24 migrants at home, so many she could barely open her front door. Olga begged money for food, medicine, wheelchair and to get migrants home. In 1999, she opened a shelter for injured migrants in a tiny former tortilla factory someone lent her. She works for free, seven days a week, from dawn until late at night. She sells donated clothes, pork rinds, tacos and bread in front of the hospital. She begs for money, car to car, in traffic lines, all to pay for medicines, blood and prostheses. Every day, she goes to the shelter and cleanses the migrants’ stumps and wounds. Slowly, they heal. She has treated 1,500 migrants since the shelter opened.

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What Williams tradition recently zipped past its 75th anniversary?

by Des Devlin

It was 16 years before Trivial Pursuit and 33 years before Who Wants to Be a Millionaire. It was the spring of 1966, and Williams students were enjoying the peculiar satisfaction that comes from knowing what the “G” in Maynard G. Krebs stands for (answer: “Walter”) and the birth of the biannual Williams Trivia contest, broadcast into the wee hours on WCFM.

Founder Franklyn Ferry ’69 took a page from the College Bowl handbook, announcing that a new, eight-hour phone-in radio contest would coincide with the end of term. His game would focus on nigglingly memorable details from sports, film, TV, ads and comics. Says Ferry, quoting the 1960 movie The Magnificent Seven: “It seemed like a good idea at the time.”

During the first-ever Trivia, Ferry ran out of questions. He called an impromptu time-out, returning a few hours later with two more hours of hot-off-the-grill material. (Example: “What was the slogan of Cott Quality Beverages before ‘It’s Cott to Be Good’?” Answer: “Life is great when you carbonate.”) Alas, by the time the host was ready to resume the game, Williams D, the contest leaders, had fallen asleep. And thus the team from Garfield House roared past their opponents to victory.

Ferry’s format was soon tweaked. In 1967, Cliff Low ’69 added “Name That Tune.” The year 1968 saw the debut of hourly “Bonus Questions”—trivia considered so cruelly arcane that teams had 60 minutes to unearth the answer. Then came multi-question “Hour
Bonuses" and four-hour-long "Super Bonuses."

But the spine of the game has remained intact over the course of 76—soon to be 77—contests. For eight hours, the DJ reads a question, then plays a song. Teams scramble to call in the answer for credit. Whoever scores the most points wins.

Simple enough, but why has Williams Trivia survived from generation to generation? And why do participants of all ages continue to play long after they’ve left the Purple Valley?

“We as a species owe our survival to recognizing patterns and figuring out what those patterns mean, whether they are faces, antelope herd movements, cloudy weather or stock market fluctuations," says Robert Kent ’84, a California Web designer and martial arts instructor who has played Trivia with the same teammates for more than 20 years. “One of the special joys of Trivia is the opportunity to take pieces of data all jumbled up and out of their familiar contexts and put them back where they belong.”

Chris Roosenraad ’94 of Virginia, son of a Williams professor, cites “the wildness, the craziness, the insanity of having one’s brain turn to tapioca, then being asked to remember mediocre baseball players from when you were in middle school.”
New Yorker Stephen Gardner ’75, a key member of BOMO, the preeminent team of the 1970s, wrote an essay then about the lure of the game, observing: “An important anti-structural element of the Trivia Contest is that one should NOT be able to study or prepare for it. The quantity and nature of the information that one is ‘tested’ on is literally everything that one never learns at Williams.”

Adds Virginian Arielle Kagan Masters ’92, “Trivia provides an endorphin rush from the creation of new neural pathways, as our standardized testing-drilled minds delight in the freedom of making blindly insightful connections between heretofore totally unrelated tidbits of sometimes long-buried data. Of course.”

But perhaps we should go to the source. Ferry described his creation as “a tremendous emotional experience. We don’t deal in minutia, which may be defined as useless facts with no emotional value. Trivia concerns something you know but can’t quite remember.”

Ferry and Co. were hosting their fifth game in a row when they added a vital twist: Whichever team won Trivia would create and host the next one, ensuring the contest’s longevity.

The first decade’s dramatic peak came in 1972, when the Bayonettes finished tied with the Grand Duchy of Fenwick. Trivia overtime ensued. The tiebreaker was a movie question: “What was the last line of The Time Machine?” The Bayonettes had among their members senior and future Oscar nominee John Sayles, described by a teammate as having “b itselfally seen every movie ever.” Game over.

Two notable teams debuted around this time. BOMO, known as the U.S. Steel of Trivia, allegedly peaked at 90-plus players. They boasted a massive comic book collection, plus an alphabetized list of songs on index cards. The team also awarded commendations to players who went beyond the norm—for instance, by breaking into the library to rifle through back issues of Sports Illustrated. Small wonder that BOMO would finish in either first or second place for 13 consecutive semesters. Such flamboyant efforts were referred to as “gusto,” a trait not limited to BOMO. 1975 champs General Bumble reportedly claimed an all-important bonus by telephoning a librarian in Honolulu.

Much smaller, but equally legendary, are the Manhattan Skyliners. At the age of 14, Berkshires resident Jim Cohen first heard of the contest by chance and started playing. And playing. In fact, he’s still playing. Solo or with cohorts, the Skyliners have been competing for more than 30 years. As part of the 75th contest, the Skyliners finally got to do a guest Hour Bonus; it was the first time they’d ever written questions for Williams Trivia.

Among the memorable moments was the debut of “Action Trivia,” in which a scenario is announced and teams have an hour to whip up and rehearse a vignette and hurry to WCFM to perform it for judges. Early “actions” were simple acts: Make a Cootie Catcher or walk like a “Wild and Crazy Guy.” Now, teams are expected to do life-size versions of the board game Mousetrap, demonstrate how the Red Sox can beat the Yankees, or re-enact the history of the British Empire in three minutes or less.

In 1976, General Bumble’s Mike Ryan, then a senior, assembled a crisply edited montage of
doo-wops, nah-nahs and other nonsensical syllables from popular songs. After a time, the “Audio Bonus” stuck. Today's contests typically feature two sonic sequences that have ranged from guitar solos to classical music, from musical laughter (i.e., "Wipe Out" or "Thriller") to the repeated word "monkey," and from movie dialogue to the opening sentence of *The Catcher In the Rye*, reconstructed in song clips. The spring 2000 game offered "100 Years of Song," in which each of 100 chronological excerpts represented a different year spanning 1900-99. Most recently, the team Click Here to Get Huge contrived the biggest production yet, a colossal 250-snippet montage of lyrics recreating the complete plotline of *The Wizard of Oz*.

1970s competition was fierce, and not always gentlemanly. "Phone jamming" occurred whenever a large team would tie up multiple operators, a procedural no-no. Some teams continued to call in after getting an answer, to deprive their competition of an open line. Even more devious was when somebody spliced their way into the College's phone system, actually fielding competitors' calls meant for the radio station and assuring their victims they'd gotten the answers.

Tom Gardner '79 of Bedford, N.Y., who joined the BOMO team as a high-school junior, played for seven years and then returned to competition via the Web in 2000, recalls that "being a 'phone person' in the 'ring dial' era was masochistic. The reward for eight hours of dialing was a purplish-black ring around the tip of your index finger from having dialed about 1,000 times over the course of the evening (no AOL Instant Messenger, no Touch-Tone, no redial). This was a mark worn with great pride and distinction for one's travails."

Molecular biologist and North Carolinian Ted Benson '85, who has been competing since 1981, recalls phone cords being stretched onto the staircase landings in the vertical entries in Prospect House, "so that we had to coordinate up and down four floors simultaneously. 'Dial! Dial!' we would cry. When a caller got through, the person with the answer would have to lunge up or down several sets of stairs, rasp out the response, and then collapse with a point or two to show for it. Song after song after song."

In 1978, Alphabet Soup was the first team to specifically select songs to thematically complement its questions. (For a question about the Ford-Carter debates, they chose the Knickerbockers' "Lies.") Music matching offered a vast new area for creativity, crassness and witty hints. In 1981, Grape Nehi became the first all-alumni team—as well as the smallest, with only eight core players—to win. A year later, sophomore team Smidley Terrace (named after the parapet next to Driscoll Dining

In Product Placement (above), contestants identify movies by products appearing in them.

Lit Sifts (opposite page) are sizers of text extracted from literary works.

Product Placement: (from top) Zoolander, Wayne's World, Ghostbusters

Lit Sifts: (from left) Jack Kerouac's On the Road, Peter Shaffer's Amadeus, The Guinness Book of World Records, Joseph Heller's Catch-22
Hall] became the only group ever to win Trivia in both of its first two tries. (They’d won in 1981 as The Singleman Party.) The “Smedley-Singleman” switch reflected another change in Trivia: For the contest’s first 15 years, teams such as Knights of Ni, Buda Bear, Wham-O, 12 O’Clock High, P.T.G. and Hold the Anchovies chose one name and stuck with it. Since then, teams have concocted fresh names for each game.

Arguably, the contest’s heyday was 1986-87. More viable all-night teams competed than in any other period. Three of the four games were decided by two points, one point, and one-fifteenth of one point. The story behind that last absurd margin would ripple for the next 17 years. During the December ‘86 contest, the teams We Begin Bombing in Five Minutes and All the Sugar, Twice the Caffeine were tied for first. In overtime, both teams answered the same three questions correctly and missed the fourth. It all came down to number five: “Name the three monarchies in Africa.” We Begin Bombing did so. Twice the Caffeine correctly named two but guessed “Tonga” as the third and lost by 0.06 points.

The team made a comeback two years later, trouncing the field by 65 points, the largest margin ever. For the next three contests Twice the Caffeine would host, the team always included questions about the tiny island nation that had cost them everything. Virtually every team since has followed suit, asking Tonga-related trivia as an enduring tribute.

Alumni began joining teams as early as 1970, but the practice accelerated in the late 1980s. Phasers on Stun played for a decade. “The Python team” has finished in first or second place 15 times over a 22-year stretch, frequently naming themselves after some Monty Python reference. “The Ballroom team” competed from Currier Ballroom until graduation forced them to other pastures.

Non-Williams “ringers” also started competing alongside Eph friends and relatives in 1970. But the winter 1994 broadcast was unique. In a one-time circumstance, the host team, How Dare They Challenge Me With Their Primitive Skills?, included no Williams students or alumni.

Powerhouse undergraduate teams—such as “the Tupperware team” (don’t ask), which in 1995 earned a reputation as the “win-host-coast” team with five titles in 10 tries but no back-to-back wins—have gone on to become top alumni teams.

In 1993, listeners heard an unusual halftime break, when Chris Aylott ’91 proposed over the air to Deb Tomaselli ’92. (The answer to the most romantic Trivia question ever? “Yes.”) The third and final tie game to date came in 1996. That contest also hinged on a single overtime question, as We Make Holes in Teeth! was able to identify the only U.S. library devoted to vanity press editions.
A year later, one team nailed a perfect score on the “Autobiography Titles” bonus by using a previously unexploited research tool called the Internet. Search engines would forever transform the contest, instantly rendering huge areas of well-loved trivia useless for competitive purposes. Many of the very best hour bonuses from the first quarter-century of Williams Trivia would be shredded in 10 minutes today.

When WCFM started broadcasting over the Web, teams began playing from afar, sending answers via instant messages or e-mail. Previous Trivia generations returned, notably a mini-BOMO that hadn’t missed a game since 2000. Contests are accessible online in real time, with downloadable bonuses and updated scores. Ambitious long-distance teams have even managed to compete in Action Trivia by recording their performances and sending video attachments via e-mail to the radio station. The Web site wso.williams.edu/orgs/trivia/ serves as a contest archive.

A mix of generations was highlighted by the contests in 2000. In May, Make Way for Ducklings, MF, became the oldest team to win Trivia, with several of its players having graduated 15 years earlier. That winter, Holy Sack and the Resident Vomit Specialist were just the second first-year team to win its very first attempt.

Trivia celebrated its 75th contest in November 2003, attracting greater than usual frosh turnout, with two first-time teams finishing in the Top 5. Listeners also heard the voice of founder Ferry, returning to the airwaves for the first time since 1969. Besides guest-reading a question, Ferry thanked many of his 1960s Carter House colleagues by name and said, “I’ll admit that having attended at the birth of something which has been pursued with such foolhardy fervor by so many, for so long, is the source of some bewilderment. And not a little satisfaction.” Following the game, a two-CD collection of audio clips from 40 of the previous 74 broadcasts was distributed to the groggy crowd.

With Trivia 77 already under our belts by the time you read this, it’s clear that this strange and marvelous tradition will continue—as long as there are Ephs who consider the ability to speak Klingon almost as important as fluency in Latin, as long as students are as familiar with the works of Bill Watterson as Bill Shakespeare and as long as a crazed minority wants to study classic paintings not merely for their rare beauty but as items meant to be disassembled and presented in tiny little pieces. Long may Trivia perplex.

Des Dedin, husband of a Williams alumna, has participated in 40 consecutive Trivia contests. His teams have won 12 times and, he says, God willing, shall never do so again. Squandering his brain on useless activity comes naturally to him, as he is a writer for MAD magazine.
Francis Oakley explains how, when it comes to governance and accountability, the Catholic Church may have mislaid its own rich history.

The Politics of Oblivion

“IF I WERE PREACHING A HOMILY instead of trying to make a historical case, I would be strongly tempted to choose as my text the Party slogan which George Orwell adduces in his terrifying novel 1984. Namely, ‘Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past.’”

So begins historian and Williams President Emeritus Francis Oakley’s assessment of the challenges facing the Roman Catholic Church today. In his two most recent books, *The Conciliarist Tradition: Constitutionalism in the Catholic Church, 1300-1870*, and *Governance, Accountability and the Future of the Catholic Church*, which he co-edited with Yale political scientist Bruce Russett ’56 (and from which the Orwell quotation comes), Oakley argues that the future of the church may lie in its willingness to pay renewed attention to missing, overlooked or repressed pieces of its own history.

Both books, Oakley writes, seek to “draw out from the historiographic shadows and return to the bright lights of centre stage the robust if persistently underacknowledged tradition of constitutionalist thinking and aspiration that for long centuries tugged uneasily at the adamantly monarchical consciousness of that ancient and hallowed institution.” Though rooted in the 15th century, his research is particularly relevant, given questions about accountability raised by the church’s ongoing sexual abuse scandals.

Oakley begins *The Conciliarist Tradition* with the Great Schism (1378-1417), when competing claimants to the papal throne held court in both Rome and Avignon. The Council of Constance (1414-18) succeeded in putting an end to the crisis, he writes, by judging and deposing the rival contenders and by “electing a new pope whose legacy came to be universally accepted.”

The bishops at Constance supported the legitimacy of their decision by legislating for the future that “under certain circumstances” a “general council representing the entire community of the faithful … could exercise a jurisdictional or governmental authority superior to [the pope’s],” Oakley writes. Moreover, the bishops argued that
such a council could impose “constitutional limits on the exercise of [papal] prerogatives or serve as a [means] to prevent their abuse.”

In reconstructing the history and historiography surrounding the Council of Constance, Oakley details how this conciliar tradition—with authority for bishops (ecclasiastical advisory councils) to participate in the governance of the church, came up against severe limits. As one example, although synods of bishops (ecclasiastical advisory councils) were instituted after Vatican II, they have fallen short of any true form of collaboration, Oakley says. Their agendas, he argues, are generally established by the administrative body of the Vatican, and their conclusions almost always conform to papal formulations.

FAST-FORWARD TO 2002, WHEN accusations of past instances of sexual abuse by clergy were made public for the first time. The initial response in many quarters was incredulity, as the issue of abuse seemed to have been settled in the late 1980s and early 1990s, after a few sensational trials in which priests were found guilty and imprisoned.

The guidelines were not binding on bishops, however, and only about half the U.S. dioceses implemented a sexual abuse policy at the time, according to a 2004 report by the conference’s National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People. Dioceses that did draft policies didn’t always follow them consistently, the report states.

Furthermore, the regular practice of sealing agreements with victims and their lawyers hid the financial consequences of civil settlements, leaving even bishops unsure of the number of victims and perpetrators or the financial ramifications of the settlements.

To some, the issues surrounding the 2002 revelations appeared to be rooted in a “crisis of fidelity,” as scholar and papal biographer George Weigel—among others—puts it. Genuine reform, he has argued, lies in faithfulness to “the teaching of Vatican II as authoritatively interpreted by Pope John Paul II.”

And, as the pope has said: “The church is not a democracy,” which, to scholars such as Weigel and Mary Ann Glendon, the Learned Hand Professor of Law at Harvard and president of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, rules out a failure of leadership or authority as the cause of the church’s problems.

Oakley counters that, when it comes to matters of governance, the church seems to have erred, mistaken or forgotten much of its own rich history, including the vision of Constance. Moreover, he says, the church suffers dearly for what he considers to be “a bold exercise in the politics of oblivion.”

Oxley and Russett’s Governance, Accountability and the Future of the Catholic Church, a collection of presentations made during a three-day conference at Yale’s Saint Thomas More Chapel and law school in 2003, seems to convey a consensus to that effect among conference participants.
to organize the conference with Fay Vincent '60 (a trustee of Yale's Catholic Center) and Father Robert Beloin (Yale's Catholic chaplain).

In the essay collection, medievalist Marcia Colish, a visiting fellow in history and visiting professor of history and religious studies at Yale, argues that there is no theological or historical reason for the church to be "trapped in the absolute monarchy" of the early modern period, an era when many of the justifications and symbols of papal authority were first adopted.

Oakley concurs, noting that the papacy as we know it is "very much the product of the second thousand years of Christian history. Indeed, in the degree to which it is able on a daily basis to impose its sovereignty will on the provincial churches of Roman Catholic Christianity — via effectively centralized governmental agencies, bureaucratic mechanisms, juridical procedures and instrumentality of rapid communication — the papacy is the achievement of the past 200 years at most."

His point is underlined by Gerald Fogarty, S.J., the William R. Keenan Jr. Professor of Religious Studies and History at University of Virginia, who in his essay traces the history of episcopal governance in the United States. In 1783, John Carroll, the first U.S. Catholic bishop, was elected to that office by his fellow clergy — a right they had petitioned the Vatican to exercise. Thereafter, Carroll regularly consulted with his clergy through a senate of priests.

Russett argues that these kinds of checks and balances are necessary in the church today. "The religious world is not immune," he says, to the issues facing the corporate and political worlds. In the case of the church, he adds, "mechanisms for accountability and transparency have been corrupted or paralyzed."

Russett adds that although there is "no perfect balance [of power] for all time for any institution ... the present mix, heavily tilted toward monomy, is so badly out of balance as to endanger the institution itself and all its members."

Making the case for the relevance of the Council of Constance to the challenges facing the Catholic Church in the United States centuries later is no easy task. Indeed, Oakley expresses disquiet at how difficult it remains to get theologians to pay attention to the strands of forgotten church history resurrected over the past several decades by Catholic and non-Catholic historians in Europe and North America.

He adds that there would be "enormous theological implications" for the question of authority in the church if a return were made to a more collegial form of governance.

Reviewers nevertheless laud Oakley's and Russett's books for their depth and their combination of "solid historical scholarship and practical pastoral insight," as Notre Dame theologian Richard McBrien writes. The Conciliarist Tradition has received the Sixteenth-Century Society and Conference's 2004 Roland H. Bainton Prize for best book dealing with early modern history. In reviewing the book for Commonweal magazine, Eamon Duffy, professor of the history of Christianity at University of Cambridge, says it is "a shining example of what real learning can do to ... encourage a more nuanced and three-dimensional grip on what our tradition actually contains."

Catholicism, Duffy adds, "has always appealed to tradition as a vehicle of truth. Oakley here reminds us that the tradition is more complex, more conflicted and incomparably more challenging than we are prone to imagine."

Margaret O'Brien Steinfels is co-director of Fordham University's Center for Religion and Culture and is Fordham's journalist in residence. She was editor-in-chief of Commonweal magazine from 1998 to 2002 and has recently published two volumes for the series "American Catholics in the Public Square."
Every undergraduate enrolled at Williams this year is a member of a tiny, highly select minority—the 3 percent of all college students in the United States who have chosen a liberal arts education over early professional training. By Zelda Stern

Aside from a brief surge after World War II, the proportion of undergraduate degrees awarded each year in the liberal arts has been declining for 100 years. At an American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Conference on Liberal Arts Colleges in American Higher Education, held at Williams last November, Williams President Emeritus Francis Oakley outlined the downward trajectory. As recently as the mid-1950s, approximately 50 percent of all institutions of higher education in the United States were liberal arts. By the early 1970s, that share had fallen to 25 percent. The decline in the share of student enrollments was even greater, from 25 percent in the mid-1950s to 8 percent by the early 1970s.

To some extent, the decline has not simply been proportionate. Between 1967 and 1990, some 167 private, four-year colleges disappeared, either by closure or by merger. By 1994, of the 3,941 institutions of higher education in the United States, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching classified only 202, or about 5 percent, as liberal arts colleges—that is, institutions awarding at least half their degrees in the liberal arts.

As the higher education pie grows larger, serving more and more people, the liberal arts slice shrinks in proportion to the whole. Today, the most popular undergraduate major in the United States—accounting for 20 percent of all bachelor’s degrees awarded annually—is business. Another 10 percent of degrees are conferred in education; 7 percent in one of the health professions. Almost twice as many degrees are awarded each year in social work as in all foreign languages and literatures combined.

Noted author, scholar and New Yorker contributing Louis Menand, in “After the Liberal Arts,” a talk he delivered at Williams in February, summed up the extent to which American higher education has changed in recent decades with two observations: 1) Half of all Americans now have some exposure to higher education at one time or another in the course of their lives; 2) For most of these people, the word “college” does not connote the liberal arts.

In the face of this movement toward greater specialization in American higher education, an uncertain economy, a tougher job market for college graduates and the increasing costs of providing and pursuing an education in the liberal arts, some critics have charged that the broad general education provided by a liberal arts college is an anachronism—a luxury individuals and society no longer can afford.

What is the graduate of a liberal arts college like Williams (not to mention the parents who have paid for this education) to make of such charges? Given current economic realities, of what use is a liberal arts education in today’s world—to the individual, to society, to prospective employers?

College: A Recent Phenomenon

A little more than a century ago in the United States, it was possible to become a doctor, lawyer or scientist without ever going to college. In the
1869-70 academic year, for example, half the students at Harvard Law School and nearly three-quarters of the students at Harvard Medical School did not have undergraduate degrees. In 1868, 19 of the 411 medical students at the University of Michigan and none of the 372 law students then held prior degrees of any kind. Dartmouth’s Choate Scientific School, founded in 1851, admitted students as young as 14; by 1868, the school had 104 graduates, none of whom had been to college. Until 1860, Yale’s Sheffield Scientific School had no admission requirements at all.

This state of affairs continued until the turn of the century, when educational reformer and Harvard President Charles William Eliot, appalled at what he perceived to be a lack of uniform standards in American higher education, succeeded in making an undergraduate degree a prerequisite for attending Harvard’s professional schools. Morand said, “Eliot saw that in an expanding nation, social and economic power was passing to people who, regardless of birth, possessed technical expertise. If a liberal arts education remained an optional luxury for these people, the college would wither away; and, in fact, there was evidence in the 1860s, cited with alarm by educators, that the proportion of Americans attending college was in steep decline. By making college the gateway to the professions, Eliot not only linked the college to the rising fortunes of this new class, he enabled it to preserve its anti-utilitarian ethos in an increasingly secular and utilitarian age. ‘The practical spirit and the literary or scholastic spirit are both good, but they are incompatible,’” [Eliot] explained in his Atlantic Monthly article. ‘If commingled, they are both spoiled.’ Liberalization is the prerequisite for specialization. It has been the pattern in American education ever since.”

While a liberal arts education is still the gateway to certain professions, pursuit of a liberal arts degree is now far from the norm. This fact often surprises the parents and grandparents of current Williams students—those generations who came of age during the golden era of higher education between the end of World War II and the end of the Vietnam War. Between 1945 and 1973, three phenomena—the baby boom, a long period of domestic economic growth and government support of higher education as part of the Cold War competition for scientific supremacy—increased the number of American undergraduates by nearly 500 percent. In the 1960s alone, college enrollments more than doubled. At the peak of this expansion, new community college campuses were opening in the United States at the rate of one per week. In this climate of growth and prosperity, the liberal arts flourished. The proportion of degrees awarded annually in the liberal arts rose for the first time in a century.

This brief flowering of the liberal arts, however, turned out to be an anomaly. In the 1970s a sharp decline in college-age youths and an economic recession brought higher education expansion to a halt. Faced with falling enrollments, many colleges began to offer more courses with a direct application to work. Since then, while paying lip service to the liberal arts, American higher education has become more and more professionally oriented. Anthony P. Carnevale, a labor economist and vice president at the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, N.J., observed in an Aug. 3, 2003, New York Times article, “Careers: The Undecided”: “The American higher education system has become the work force training system. It doesn’t like to see itself that way. It perceives itself as ... providing a liberal education. It doesn’t.”

What does the increasing prevalence of early specialization mean for undergraduate institutions like Williams that still provide a liberal education? As it turns out, not much. While the percentage share of liberal arts enrollments in relation to the growing number of total student enrollments in institutions of higher learning has fallen, it is not at all clear that the actual number of students pursuing the liberal arts has declined.

The institutions that have been able to survive the financial pressures brought on by the leveling off of the college-age population and the increased costs of higher education have been those whose facilities, faculty, and resources are still attracting large numbers of students—in other words, the strongest, best-endowed, most selective private liberal arts colleges and universities in the country. In the hierarchy of American higher education, liberal arts institutions like Williams remain at the top.

Philosopher or Engineer? If the shift toward greater specialization in American higher education has had little impact on the selective liberal arts college, what are

Origin of the “Liberal Arts”

Although the business of trying to define what purpose higher education should serve dates at least to Plato and Aristotle, the term “liberal arts” derives from the Medieval Latin artes liberales—after meaning “subjects of study,” and liberales meaning “proper to free persons.” In the medieval European university, “liberal arts” referred to the seven branches of learning considered suitable for freemen: grammar, logic and rhetoric (the trivium), leading to a Bachelor of Arts; and arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music (the quadrivium), leading to the Master of Arts. During the Renaissance, people began to use “liberal arts” more broadly to describe studies aimed at imparting a general rather than a vocational or professional education. Although the liberal arts curriculum has changed, this Renaissance usage holds today. Liberal arts in modern colleges and universities include the study of literature, languages, philosophy, history, mathematics and the sciences (both the "hard" sciences and the social sciences).
the implications for the liberal arts graduate? Does this trend and a tougher job market mean that a liberal arts education is less useful than it used to be? What real-life skills, if any, does a liberal arts degree confer upon its graduates? Or, as Williams Professor of English Stephen Fix wrote in a response paper for a panel on the mission of liberal arts colleges at the ACLS conference at Williams last November, “If we, as liberal arts educators, aren’t offering our students specialized or professional training, what exactly are we offering them?”

The classic response to this question is that a liberal arts education develops general intellectual skills—the ability to think critically, communicate clearly and pose and test illuminating hypotheses—that can be applied to any situation. The liberal arts educator argues that the value of such education lies precisely in its emphasis on breadth over specialization, on moral ambitions over practical results, on the development of the whole person over the honing of specific abilities for a specific slot. Explains Fix, “The liberal arts claim is that the broadly educated person will be at least as capable—and maybe more capable—of adapting later to the particular needs of the professions and of public life, than would a person more narrowly trained—at an early age—in specific subjects.”

From the point of view of the prospective employer, a liberal arts degree from a selective college still signals that you are among the most able of your generation and that you are more likely to be a person who has broad interests, good analytical skills, flexibility, the ability to communicate and the ability to learn. Such attributes are essential to success in many professions and are often worth more to an employer than the possession of specific technical skills.

Professor Fix often tells this story to his students: “I once asked the personnel director for a major aerospace company what kind of student he is most eager to recruit. ‘I’ll always go for the philosophy major,’ the personnel director said. ‘They know nothing about aerospace, but they know everything about complexity—and that’s what I need.’”

In the end, of course, the usefulness of a liberal arts education is not just about getting a job. Professor Fix, in answer to his own question, “If we, as liberal arts educators, aren’t offering our students specialized or professional training, what exactly are we offering them?” gave this answer at the conference: “We’re offering them the past. The present and future too, of course: the latest economic theory, the cutting-edge technique in genetics and so forth. But above all, we are offering the past—the story of where human beings have been, what we have achieved, how we have failed. If anything is at the core of our mission, I’d say that’s it.”

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Note too that a faithful study of the liberal arts humanizes character and permits it not to be cruel.
— Ovid, Ex Ponto, II, ix, 47
**Just Different, Educationally**

Though I have lived in Italy for more than 20 years, many aspects of daily life there still contain an element of mystery for me—but not for my teenage sons. They attend an Italian public classical studies secondary school (liceo classico), located in the center of Rome. There they are learning not only the culture of ancient civilizations—remnants of which lie just outside their window—but also the cultural subtleties of 21st century Italy.

While American friends widen their eyes in disbelief when they learn that my children each have one teacher who covers five of their seven subjects, no choice in their individual program of study and no lockers, I attempt to suspend judgment on the profound differences in educational systems and simply observe the process in which a new generation of Italians, including my bicultural children, is being formed.

The public liceo classico, which my sons chose, once formed the elite classes and remains at the upper end of the educational spectrum. It covers the equivalent of ninth to 13th grade. In the first two years, all students follow the same program of Italian, Greek, Latin, history, geography, math, English, religion (optional) and phys ed. Sciences and philosophy are added in the next three years.

An Italian mother recently asked me, "Why do American students choose their courses, when the Ministry of Education would know best how to put together a coherent, comprehensive program?" In her opinion, and that of most Italians, one should choose a school with a certain orientation and follow its program.

The United States is one of the few countries in which each high school student follows an individualized program of study within an umbrella structure that encompasses a wide range of backgrounds and with different capabilities, interests and aspirations. Representing a nation of individualists, the U.S. education system both reflects and nourishes this individualistic culture.

In the Italian system, a culture that values close-knit relationships, starting with the family, is reinforced at school. My sons’ school does not have lockers. Students are divided into six sections, and each section remains in the same classroom all day with backpacks on the floor while teachers rotate, carrying their wares on their backs. Although students don’t have a cafeteria or lockers to socialize around, they spend five years with the same classmates following the same program of study and forming deep friendships and important lifetime connections.

Four hours with one teacher can be intolerable in the time frame of my 14-year-old, but within these long stretches his teacher can exercise and teach another important Italian cultural value: flexibility. She can carry an exercise or an argument to its conclusion, give more time to one subject or another as she sees the need and integrate subjects in a multidisciplinary fashion while also allowing breaks to fall naturally, not necessarily on the hour.

In contrast, I remember from my high school days that classes started on time and finished on time, even if the teacher or student was mid-phase. Most Americans live time in a sequential, linear fashion, and school reinforces this cultural norm—individual classes of differing lengths, breaks, study halls and lunch all fit into an elaborate web. When the bell rings, students jump.

My sons occasionally arrive in class to find that an announced test or assignment has been postponed or modified. Teachers expect their students to study the material every day in a cumulative fashion and to be prepared at all times, not necessarily according to clear deadlines.

At my American high school I had clear guidelines as to where I stood with respect to my classmates and clear expectations on grading, test dates and grading curves that reinforced important aspects of my culture. My children, meanwhile, are learning to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty, to be flexible and assess risk.

At the end of the five years, Italian liceo students take a final Maturità exam that includes both written and oral sections on the subjects they have covered. The oral exam of the Maturità, which takes place in front of a commission of teachers, is the culmination of a tradition of oral exams throughout the liceo years. As one teacher explained to me, "Multiple-choice tests do not assess the actual preparation of a student, which can only be done properly through individual interrogations."

On interrogation day the teacher randomly calls out the names of four or five students to come to the front of the class. Although the students know in advance that an interrogation will take place, they do not know when they’ll be called upon. Thus Italian liceo students learn to think on their feet and express themselves orally, an essential skill for university study where nearly all exams are oral, in front of a commission and for life in this animated and oral society.

Twice per year, students are allowed to back out of an interrogation with no penalty by saying, "I am not prepared today." What stress, I think, terrified at the thought of having an interrogation. But it doesn’t seem to faze my children. Then again, they are Italian.

Elizabeth (Larc) Abbot ’80 is writing a book about cultural learning. Contact her at eabbot2001@yahoo.com to share your experiences raising bicultural children in the United States or abroad.