How’re We Doin’?

Former New York City Mayor Ed Koch famously asked almost everyone he met: “How’m I doin’?”

Colleges, it seems, are being encouraged these days to adopt a similar habit of continually assessing their effectiveness. State legislatures press public colleges for further proof of student learning. The recent Commission on the Future of Higher Education formed by Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings issued the latest federal call for common measurements of student progress. Pressure to quantify such assessment comes also through the accreditation process. At Williams we’re currently going through this decennial procedure; you can follow it at www.williams.edu/go/selfstudy.

Public debate of these issues often pits those who believe that nothing meaningful about student learning can be measured against those who believe that all of it can.

Reality is in the middle. No one will ever completely measure the degree to which students’ lives are affected by art or literature, by engagement with our beautiful natural surroundings, or by the loyalty and affection of college friendships. All of these are essential parts of a Williams education.

But we assess student learning here all the time. It happens most directly whenever a faculty member gives feedback to a student, which becomes quantified through grades. Faculty naturally adapt their teaching to increase the learning they assess through the grading process. Faculty also get direct feedback from an anonymous survey—given to every student after every course—that combines open-ended critique with quantifiable questions. Thus every professor is engaged in a continuing cycle of assessment and adjustment.

Our departments and programs hold frequent group discussions about the effectiveness of curricular design and core courses. Most also get input from students in formal interviews, student advisory groups and the informal conversations with students that are so common here.

The College as a whole also uses data to guide planning, especially the allocating of resources. Much of the curricular innovation in our strategic plan grew from data analysis. For instance, surveys of seniors and young alumni showed that not enough believed their experience here had greatly improved their ability to write or to relate to people different from them. These findings helped lead to our new intensive writing requirements and our recent diversity initiatives.

The most significant resource allocation in the strategic plan, as supported by The Williams Campaign (see page 12), may be investment in tutorials, the cornerstone of a more general shrinking of average class size. Student surveys informed our decision to triple the number of tutorial courses and to open them to students earlier in their time at the College.

The continuous feedback loop shows this investment to have been wise. Students consistently rate tutorial courses significantly higher in terms of “quality of instruction” and “overall value.” That is true even in comparison with courses of similar size and those taught by professors with similar years of experience. And it is the case despite students also reporting that tutorials require significantly more work. These results jibe with faculty reports on the increased satisfaction of teaching tutorial courses and our intuitive sense that they do indeed result in exceptional learning.

As an economist, I believe there are other measures of how we are doing. They are the markets we operate in—those for prospective students, for prospective faculty and staff, and for donor funds. Students, faculty and staff have 4,000 colleges to choose from in this country alone. Donors have countless places to give. Many of those colleges are wonderful and those causes worthy.

That Williams does so extremely well in all three of these markets represents another continuous assessment of institutional effectiveness. That success results from many factors. They include the hard and effective work of many people over time and the exceptional dedication the College inspires in its graduates. They also include our use of a variety of measures of student learning, from the instinctive to the quantitative, to guide our planning and allocation of resources.

—Morty Schapiro
I read with interest Morty Schapiro's "Sustaining Change" (June 2007) about the College's efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. I also read "Making the Leap" by Jennifer Weeks '83.

I believe there is a general hysteria and indoctrination (in the primary and secondary schools) taking place about man-made global warming. The agenda is being promulgated by people like Al Gore, who do not want to be persuaded by facts or ordinary common sense. In the common-sense category, what happened to the glaciers that formed the Finger Lakes of upstate New York? Did they melt due to human activity or to the natural rhythms of the earth and solar system? As far as facts, visit www.oism.org/projectc to read the scientific arguments that don't make the nightly news or cable TV programs.

I'm for any and all efforts to reduce energy consumption for geopolitical as well as common-sense reasons, and I applaud the College's efforts from that perspective. Fossil fuel is the cheapest form of energy, and we should harvest it in its many forms around the U.S. Nuclear energy is also a very cheap source of energy and, as in France, should be in widespread use here. Lastly, U.S. manufacturing is waning, leading to the loss of good, middle-class jobs that will be difficult to replace. "Environmentalists" seek to put more pressure on domestic companies that produce abundant products and jobs by limiting carbon output—pressure that is driven by ideology.

I would hope the College fosters debate on both sides about "global warming." I find it ironic that we don't debate "gravity," as it's a scientific certainty. Until global warming becomes analogous to gravity, I think it a disservice to proceed as if the debate is over.

—Bruce K. Entwistle '76, Lower Gwynedd, Pa.

As outlined by President Schapiro in "Sustaining Change," the College has a responsibility to evaluate all potential changes that can reduce our environmental footprint, conserve valuable and limited natural resources and promote sustainable development. However, the costs and benefits of potential changes must be understood before they are pursued. Sustainability should be thought of from many perspectives—scientific, environmental, social and economic. The College has an excellent opportunity to practice what it preaches on this issue, and I don't believe this was communicated well in the Alumni Review.

I was particularly dismayed by the article "Making the Leap." There is still debate regarding the exact causes of global warming—issues that are still rightly being researched by the scientific community. An Inconvenient Truth, which was cited in the article, is a politically motivated movie that contains a number of well-documented factual inaccuracies. The referenced IPCC report, too, is believed by many scientists to contain conclusions not supported by the facts. I found "Making the Leap" to be poorly researched and a blatant attempt to discourage debate on global warming in order to promote certain environmental policies.

Arbitrary goals, such as reducing emissions by 10 percent, are far less meaningful than the multi-faceted process, much like the academic process, that should be used to come up with ways to promote sustainability. The College's approach to teaching and to dealing with real-world issues such as the environment should not be influenced by popular opinion or political factions. I am hopeful that the discussion will evolve into one that is more open, inclusive, accepting and encouraging of different points of view, more broad in its scope of study and more reflective of the principles that have historically made Williams one of the best academic institutions in the country.

—Kenneth Settles '96, San Francisco, Calif.
What Just Happened?

by Auyon Mukharji ’07

In sixth grade, I played baseball. I got on base once; the rest of my time I spent deep in the outfield, investigating the contents of my belly button and eating dandelions. In seventh- and eighth-grade basketball, I scored two points. Everyone stood up and cheered.

I came to understand that sports would not be making a significant contribution to my college application.

With this in mind, my mother told me three things the day before I entered high school. She told me, “Auyon, don’t drink alcohol. It will rot your brain, and we both know that’s about all you have going for you.”

The second thing she told me was not to speak to girls. She described them as a distraction. She was right.

Finally, she told me, “Auyon, these next eight years are going to determine the course of the rest of your career. . . If you want to succeed, you are going to have to work harder and smarter than everyone around you.”

In high school I worked hard. My teachers liked me. My parents liked me. I liked me. My baby brother hated me. I’m told you can’t win them all.

But upon my arrival at Williams, something happened. Any sense of logic or rhetoric that I may have possessed was turned on its head and spanked until it died a glorious purple and gold death. We attend a school where the most scandalous parties are thrown in a renovated church. In a town where the residents vehemently oppose even the idea of fast-food restaurants, while everyone’s favorite eatery was Subway.

Nothing makes sense, and by the time we reach our senior year we view the world through a strange lens colored by our shared experiences in the Berkshires. This, I believe, explains why our alumni are such a tightly knit bunch—no one else understands us. Love it or hate it, Williams is now an inherent part of the way we all will interact with the world; and in me, at least, that discovery has manifested itself as a pronounced inability to take anything too seriously.

I certainly don’t mean to downplay the extraordinary academic program we’ve all enjoyed. Some of us are entering the real world as well-adjusted, mature individuals. I, however, am not one of those people—I have grown from a studious, well-mannered and respectable young freshman into the irreverent, ruggedly handsome senior you see today. My mother recently described me as “an embarrassment and a hooligan.” Thanks, Williams.

I am clearly unfit to enter the workforce at any point in the near future. Yet, somehow, I feel ready. The enthusiasm to venture off into the unknown is entirely a result of my education at Williams. I’m excited to enter the real world, because I am confident that no matter how little sense it makes out there, I know I’ll feel right at home.

I would like to leave you with the story of my last exam. I had been performing rather poorly in field botany but had studied extraordinarily hard for this test. The last part of the exam consisted of flower identifications. I had expected five, maybe seven different flower families. As I walked into the last room of that exam and realized that there were 35 different families of flowers to identify, I started laughing. I laughed not because I knew I was going to fail my last exam at Williams. I laughed because if I had to fail that last exam, there was no place I would rather do it than in a room filled with flowers.

“I wish there had been some sort of warning... ‘Attending Williams will warp your mind. We also have club sports.’”

Adapted from class speaker Auyon Mukharji’s ’07 commencement address. Read the full text at www.williams.edu/home/commencement2007/mukharji.php.
**SCENE AND HERD**

**CHANGES TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES ANNOUNCED**

Gregory M. Avis '80 will become chairman of the Executive Committee of the Williams College Board of Trustees starting in July 2008, following the retirement of Robert I. Lipp '60 from the board.

Lipp, a senior adviser of JPMorgan Chase, has served on the board for eight years, five of them as Executive Committee chair. Avis, a founding managing partner of Summit Partners private equity and venture capital firm, joined the board in 2002.

In June Lucienne S. Sanchez '79 and Peter M. Wege '71 retired from the board after serving 15 years. Meanwhile, three alumni will each begin five-year terms on the Board of Trustees. Michael R. Eisenson '77 is CEO of Charlesbank Capital Partners in Boston. Previously he was president of Harvard Private Capital Group and before that was with The Boston Consulting Group. Eisenson serves on the boards of several public and private portfolio companies. He is an executive committee member and chairman of the trustee science committee for the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, an executive committee member of the Berklee College of Music Board of Trustees and a founding member of Horizons for Homeless Children. He has a law degree from Yale Law School and an MBA from the Yale School of Management.

Eisenson has served Williams as a non-trustee member of the board's finance committee.

For more information on any of these stories, visit www.williams.edu and enter the topic into the search field.

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**They Said:**

"Here I am, not even a junior yet, and I’m handling prehistoric teeth." —Leah Shoer ’09, a classics and chemistry major, on working in an archeology lab as one of 195 students in the Summer Science Research Program. www.williams.edu/home/focus/summer_science, summer 2007

"The strength of this response reflects a vote of confidence in the continuing mission of the College to provide the best liberal arts education in the land and in the direction and stewardship provided by the College’s trustees, its president, the faculty and staff in pursuing that mission." —Sey Zimmerman ’71, on the 2007 Alumni Fund, to which 62.7 percent of alumni made a record $11.4 million in gifts. www.williams.edu/alumni/campaign/afreport, June 2007

"I want to write novels, and I was looking for something that was also creative to support myself. I happened to find the perfect opportunity." —Aaron Redfern ’07, on securing a post-graduation apprenticeship in a Great Barrington, Mass., studio specializing in the design, restoration and preservation of stained glass. Record, 5.9.07

"Since I am a draftsman, I like the idea of making a journey that inscribes a very long line. I wish that the line could be straighter, but logistics demand that I choose sites with the adequate infrastructure and the political stability to support the project." —Mike Glis, art professor, on his trip from the Arctic Circle through New York City to the equator to paint in the landscape. illustrated ngắn line.blogspot.com, July 2007
CLASS ACTION

Williams recently completed a multi-year effort to increase the faculty by 30 professors, or 15 percent. As a result, we now offer more tutorials and small seminar classes to students. We've also increased the number of interdisciplinary courses and created new cross-departmental programs, including international studies, maritime studies and bioinformatics, genomics and proteomics. These extra hires bring the College's student-faculty ratio from 8:1 a few years ago to 7:1 today.

Helping students work more closely with professors is a goal of The Williams Campaign. To learn more visit www.williams.edu/alumni/campaign/about/faculty.

continued from page 5

committee—which he will now chair—and as chairman of the private equity subcommittee. He belongs to the New England regional committee for The Williams Campaign and was a regional special gifts vice chairman for the Third Century Campaign, an associate class agent and a member of his class's 25th reunion fund committee.

Frederick M. Lawrence '77 is dean and Robert Kramer Research Professor of Law at The George Washington University Law School in Washington, D.C. Previously he was a clerk to Judge Amalya L. Kearse of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit, an assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York (where he became chief of the civil rights unit) and a professor and associate dean of academic affairs at Boston University School of Law. Among his professional activities, Lawrence has been a senior visiting research fellow with the University College London Faculty of Law and has studied bias crimes law in the United Kingdom through a Ford Foundation grant. He is the author of Punishing Hate: Bias Crimes Under American Law, in addition to several amicus curiae briefs.

Lawrence has served Williams as an associate class agent, vice chairman of the Boston special gifts committee, member of the Executive Committee of the Society of Alumni and member of his class's 25th reunion fund committee.

Glenn D. Lowry '76 is director of The Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan. Among his professional activities, he is a board member of the Comité International de l'ICOM pour les Musées et les Collections d'Art Moderne, a member of the advisory council for the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University and an author and lecturer in support of contemporary art and artists and the role of museums in society. Previously he was a curator of the Muscarelle Museum of Art at the College of William and Mary, curator of Middle Eastern art for the Smithsonian Institution and director of the Art Gallery of Toronto. He has a doctorate in the history of art from Harvard University.

Lowry has served on the Williams College Museum of Art Visiting Committee. He received a Bicentennial Medal from the College in 2005.

FULL FALL SCHEDULE FOR ALUMNI

October and November football weekends are packed with activities for alumni returning to campus. Among the highlights: a reunion for teachers, Oct. 5-7; the 25th anniversary of Career Mentor Weekend, Oct. 19-21; and a reunion for football players during homecoming against Amherst, Nov. 10. For information, contact the Alumni Relations Office at alumni.relations@williams.edu or 413.597.4151.
HOPKINS TO RETIRE AS ALUMNI RELATIONS CHIEF

Wendy W. Hopkins ’72 will retire from Williams in March after serving for nearly two decades in the alumni relations office, nine of them as director and secretary to the Society of Alumni.

Hopkins, a transfer student from Connecticut College, was named Williams’ housing director in 1980. Six years later she became assistant director of alumni relations. She became director in 1998.

“Wendy’s warm, welcoming presence has made her immensely popular with alumni,” says Stephen R. Birrell ’64, VP for Alumni Relations and Development. “Her service to the College has been extraordinary, and as a result of her steady stewardship, the alumni relations program is stronger than it has ever been.”

The College is searching for a new director, whose job it will be to provide leadership and strategic direction for the alumni relations program and to play a highly visible public role representing the College to its 25,000-plus alumni. For information, contact human resources at 413.597.2681 or hr@williams.edu.

EPHS CAPTURE 11TH DIRECTORS’ CUP

In June the Ephs received their ninth consecutive—and 11th overall—U.S. Sports Academy Directors’ Cup for Div. III, presented annually for the last 12 years to the most successful collegiate athletics program in the NCAA and NAIA.

Despite trailing NESCAC rival Middlebury by 91 points at the end of the spring season, Williams went on to score in four championship events and finished with a 71-point lead. National championships from women’s crew and women’s indoor track and field, in addition to solid finishes by men’s swimming (fourth) and men’s and women’s tennis (fifth and fourth), boosted the Ephs to first place. In all, six Williams teams finished in the top five nationally this year.

ALUMNI GOLFERS HIT W’TOWN GREENS

Golfers took to the links in June for the Dick and Denise Baxter Reunion Golf Trophy Competition. Nine alumni classes and 112 players participated, with 12 members of the Class of 1972 taking first place with a score of 67; 11 from 2002 finishing second with 68; and 18 from 1987 coming in third with 69.

In July, the 47th Annual Alumni Golf Tournament attracted 240 Ephs from the classes of 1949 to 2005 and their friends. All rounds were played despite rain on Saturday, July 28. For results visit www.williams.edu/alumni and click on the Golf Tournament link beneath “Of Note.” To receive an invitation for next year, e-mail alumni.relations@williams.edu or call 413.597.4151.

2007 DIRECTORS’ CUP STANDINGS

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GREEN GRADUATION

Have you ever wondered what it costs—environmentally speaking, that is—to receive a diploma from Williams? This year, the College took a look at its commencement ceremonies and decided to do its part to save a little “green” with measures including:

Providing finger sandwiches at the commencement reception to eliminate the need for cutlery and servingware

Offering local, organically grown foods—including 150 pounds of sausage from Flying Pigs Farm, which also converts the College’s used frying oil into biodiesel fuel for its delivery truck—to cut down on emissions

Donating unused food to Berkshire County shelters, and composting food waste

Printing the commencement/reunion edition of the On Campus newspaper on 15 percent recycled newprint and cutting its press run in half

Providing a large number of clearly marked recycling bins for guests to dispose of their plastic water bottles and paper

Purchasing $8,600 in global carbon offsets from the Owl Feather War Bonnet Wind Farm in South Dakota and the Wanner Family Dairy Farm Methane Project in Pennsylvania to offset the estimated 818 tons of carbon dioxide created by operating the campus and by families and friends flocking to Williamstown by car and plane for the festivities

For more information about Williams’ sustainability initiatives, visit www.williams.edu/resources/sustainability/index.php

SHAW TURNS 100

Legendary head basketball coach Al Shaw (left) celebrates his 100th birthday in July with his wife, Marion (right), and Williams women’s lacrosse coach Chris Larson Mason outside the Congregational Church on Main Street. In honor of the occasion, the church bells were rung 100 times by a relay team including several Williamsfolk. After racking up numerous records and successes in his 24 years as coach, Shaw received the Merit Award from the National Association of Basketball Coaches and was inducted into the New England Hoops Hall of Fame.

STANT RETIRES AS TRAINER

After nearly four decades as head athletic trainer at Williams, Ron Stant retired in June to spend more time with his family. Stant came to Williams in 1968, when he was the only athletic trainer and Lasell Gym the only indoor athletic facility on campus. When the number of student athletes and sports injuries grew too large for him to manage single-handedly, he involved several pre-med undergraduates in a student trainer program that still exists today.

SKI SUN VALLEY

Plans are under way for the fourth Alumni Ski Week in Sun Valley, Idaho, March 15-22, 2008. As always, alumni, family and friends of all ages and abilities are welcome—with free skiing and lodging for children. New for 2008 is the Williams Roadscholars in the Rockies program, with geosciences professor Bud Wolus and chemistry professor Chip Lovett leading lectures and discussions. For information, contact 413.597.4575 or smason@williams.edu.
The rain held off just long enough for 525 undergraduates and 34 graduate students to accept their diplomas during Williams’ 218th Commencement on June 3.

Among the Class of 2007, 12 students graduated summa cum laude, 69 magna cum laude, 105 cum laude, 56 with highest departmental honors and 86 with departmental honors. There were 64 members of Phi Beta Kappa and 53 members of Sigma Xi. Also honored that day were retiring faculty members Samuel Y. Edgerton, the Amos Lawrence Professor of Art; and Douglas B. Moore, the Mary A. and William Wirt Warren Professor of Music. Honorary degree recipients were CBS news anchor Katie Couric, who gave the Commencement Address; Sri Lanka Supreme Court Justice Shiranee Tilakwardane, who gave the Baccalaureate Address; educator Douglas J. Bennet; economist Robert Engle ’64; astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson; and biologist Edward O. Wilson.

For the complete text of speeches and citations, visit www.williams.edu/home/commencement/2007.
We must aspire to a society where equality is not only an ideal but also a global constitutional norm. This is how we can build bridges, rather than erect walls, in the pursuit of justice for all in a multicultural and multi-racial society. We need a culture of respect in place of a culture of contempt, a culture of human rights in place of a culture of hate. The tragedies that define our times can be prevented if we truly believe in the dignity of all men, women and children. There can be no peace without justice, no freedom without human rights, and no sustainable development without the rule of law based on substantive equality.

—Shiranee Tilakawardane, in her Baccalaureate Address “Equality and Globalization”
1. A little humility will serve you well—and help you to focus on doing your best in the job you’ve got, rather than plotting to get the job you think you deserve.

2. Don’t choose a career that makes you say, “My job, Mylanta.”

3. Persistence is critical. Being creative and persistent is even better.

4. Be prepared to reach down deep and find the inner fortitude you’ll need after disappointments big and small and the painful losses that are an inevitable part of life.

5. Go where there are no guarantees.

6. You should never stop caring. In fact, give a damn.

7. Find the joy.

—Katie Couric’s “Seven suggestions for the Class of 2007,” from her Commencement Address
Climbing Farther

Not many things in life proceed ahead of schedule—so it’s worth celebrating those that do. On that basis alone, it’s impressive that in June The Williams Campaign met its $400 million goal 18 months before deadline. In announcing that achievement, President Morty Schapiro outlined a plan to press forward with the campaign until its original end date of December 2008.

We sat down with him to explore this decision and to find out more about the results of the campaign so far.

with President Schapiro
Alumni Review: Obviously, it’s wonderful for Williams that the campaign has done so well. Did you know going into it that the College would charge past the goal this way?

Morty Schapiro: Four years ago, when we settled on a campaign goal of $400 million, it felt very ambitious—realistic, but a stretch. We were still recovering from two down years in the stock market. If someone had told me then that we’d hit that goal so early, I would have been shocked. Williams has always had a lot of friends, but the intense energy they’ve brought to this campaign has been a great surprise, in both senses of the word.

AR: For a small liberal arts college, $400 million already seems like a lot of money. Couldn’t we just stop there?

MS: Not if we’re serious about our strategic plan. The inspiration for the campaign was a very thoughtful, very demanding set of goals, developed over several years with input from the entire community. At the start we estimated the cost at about $400 million. Needless to say, an initiative on that scale never goes exactly the way you plan it. It’s a work in progress. We haven’t yet funded all the initiatives; if we still believe they’re important, we need to press forward to the end.

Moreover, when you’re creating change, you have to respond to evolving ideas. For example, when we started, we needed to expand the library, so we were going to add a new floor to Sawyer and then literally plant trees because the building would still be so ugly! Now—thanks to the transformative vision of our architects Botlín Cywinski Jackson—the Stetson-Sawyer project is going to replace the library entirely, without shutting it for more than a few days, and create a whole new academic quad with offices for faculty in the humanities and social sciences. It’s a much bigger and better project—and it’s going to cost more.

AR: But still—with so many other good causes out there—why should we keep giving to Williams?

MS: In two minutes every one of us could make a daunting list of outstanding causes that deserve support—and I would bet you that a gratifying number of them would have Williams graduates among their volunteers, at the helm or on their boards. I would never try to talk anyone out of contributing to a cause he or she feels is meaningful.

At the same time, it is not a sentimental exaggeration to say that Williams is what it is today only because of our extraordinary tradition of support from alumni, parents and friends—in terms of the campus we’ve built, the faculty we can attract and the students we can afford to educate. And it’s not just students on financial aid who are here because of philanthropy. Williams spends more than $90,000 a year to educate each student. Full student charges in 2007 stood at around $45,000. That means that for every single student, even those paying the full fare, Williams spends at least $45,000 more than it receives. That’s an incredible subsidy! In addition, almost half of our students receive significant financial aid grants, lowering the amount they pay to a level their parents can reasonably afford. That we can open our doors to students from every background is true only because of giving, past and present.

In a real sense, a gift to the College is a gift to the future: to the young people who will be educated here, to all the people whose lives they will go on to touch and to the world whose problems they will go on to address. Williams may be small—but our impact is disproportionately large.

AR: Financial aid is a big priority in the campaign. Where do we stand on that?

MS: Because of visionary giving in this campaign, we’ve made impressive progress on financial aid.

First, we have become much more generous in terms of the aid we give in the form of grants, so we aren’t saddling students with decades of debt. And we’ve been able to do that while maintaining our commitment to “need-blind” admissions.
In the 30 years I’ve spent in higher education, one of the saddest changes is the dwindling number of need-blind schools. The U.S. has more than 1,500 four-year private colleges and universities. How many are still need-blind? Maybe 30 to 40.

The difference between Williams and all those other schools isn’t that we’re somehow morally superior or have a greater institutional will. It’s that we have the money. Our restricted endowment for financial aid gives us the vital luxury of admitting students based on how much they can contribute to the life of the campus—not how much they can pay.

Today, we’re doing a much better job of bringing in young people from families with modest financial means—and we have the power to do that because of generations of generosity from our alumni and friends and especially because of gifts to this campaign.

The second notable advance is that we’re also offering aid to families substantially farther up the income scale, some with household incomes as high as $190,000. And the third—and the most unusual—is that we’ve extended need-blind admissions to international students.

AR: Not to put too fine a point on it, but why should we use any financial aid to help families making that kind of money?

MS: Since families who earn more than $130,000 a year don’t get a tax break for their tuition, you’re asking them to pay in after-tax income; if they’ve got two kids in college, for example, it can be prohibitively expensive. Unless you make it possible for students in this middle range to come to Williams, you get a terrible distortion—a campus of the demonstrably poor and the unusually rich. In terms of building a community, it just doesn’t work.

AR: Why subsidize students from other countries?

MS: Today, if we didn’t give students the chance to work and study with their peers from other countries, we would be failing them, period.

Of 6,440 Williams applications last year, 1,100 were international students. Until recently, we only had the resources to give aid to about six per year out of a total of about 20 students from abroad in each class. Now, thanks to the campaign, we enroll around 40 new international students per class—from Africa, China, Latin America, Nepal, Bulgaria and elsewhere. More than 80 percent of these students are here because we can offer them very significant financial aid.

Our international enrollment is now high enough to make a real difference in what students learn from one another. International students will make up 8 percent of the Class of 2011. In a typical entry of around 20, that means two students will be from outside the U.S.

It makes a difference in the classroom, too—I hear it from my faculty colleagues all the time. For example, I teach microeconomic principles. We talk about alternatives to capitalism, and one year I had a student from Vietnam. For students who no longer have a reference point like the Soviet Union, that’s incredibly powerful.

AR: So are we “done” funding financial aid?

MS: Absolutely not. Actually, because we’re now able to be more generous, we get the predictable result: Where we used to have one of every 2.8 students on aid, now it’s one of every two. So even though the campaign has raised $64 million for financial aid, the percentage of our aid that’s covered by restricted endowment has actually gone down—from 60 percent in 2002 to 55 percent now. To get us back to the 60 percent level would take more than $25 million. To cover the cost of need-blind admissions entirely by endowment would take more than $250 million. So there’s always room for progress!

AR: The student life initiatives were another big part of the campaign. What gains have we made there?

MS: We’ve substantially improved the quality of dorm life, through redoing many residence halls, strengthening our support system and providing an extensive new residential program all across campus.

But by far the biggest gain has been Paresky—the new student center. It’s just beautiful. Students now hang out together as they never did. We’ll get 1,200 students there on a Friday or Saturday night—and we only have 2,000 students! In the main lounge area, Baxter Hall, you’re bound to bump into someone you know.
Students swipe in with their ID cards, 24/7. We serve food from 7 a.m. until 2 a.m.

Every night we serve 600 dinners there. The food is spectacular, and it’s a great deal for faculty and staff, so—and I’ve never seen this before, even at Williams—you’ll see faculty members and their kids eating among the students. It’s a whole new level of connection.

The proof of how much people love it is that it’s been treated extremely well—the whole community has a real sense of ownership.

AR: Academically, what are the most important things we’ve used campaign gifts for?

MS: Two things top that list. First, we’ve reduced the average class size. With intro classes in fields like economics, biology or psychology, there’s little need for small seminars. But for most of what we teach, small classes make a huge educational difference. Before, a little more than 50 percent of our classes were small seminars with fewer than 20 students. Now that percentage is up in the mid 70s—which means that we have room for first-year students to take them.

Second, we’ve nearly tripled the number of tutorials. We used to offer only around 20 a year. Now we offer around 60. Before the campaign, about 180 students a year enrolled in tutorials, and only 10 sophomores. Now the total is more than 500—and many of them are sophomores.

This year, I handed out 525 undergraduate diplomas. Thirty-two percent of the latest class took one tutorial, and 24 percent had taken two or more. We expect those numbers to continue to rise over the next few years.

Tutorials have a double value. Through this very intense intellectual experience, students develop new skills in speaking, writing and critical thinking. At the same time, they build a lifelong bond with a professor and with their tutorial partner. It’s impossible to overestimate the value of that.

Having personally taught tutorials seven times since I have been back as president, I can tell you that our students are quite good at writing papers. They are less good at rewriting them. And when it comes to writing a critique of another student’s work, they’re kind of clueless. (Usually, they’re too complimentary.)

But a lot of life is about giving feedback to others in an honest, respectful way, whether you’re a doctor, a lawyer, a faculty member, a boss, a spouse, a parent—almost any role you can name. So having them critique each other’s work actually helps both students grow.

AR: The campus has seen a lot of new construction since the start of the campaign—and we’re not done yet. In fact, the new Stetson-Sawyer project broke ground in March. What difference will that complex make?

MS: We have around 180 students here for the summer working with professors in our science labs, because those labs are great. The Science Center refocused our efforts in the sciences. These departments are more popular than ever, and we’re getting more applications from students interested in pursuing science majors. The Science Center is serving us now in ways we never anticipated. In the same way, we attracted all these great artists and performers when we built the WLS Spencer Studio Arts Building and the ’62 Center for Theatre and Dance.

Stetson-Sawyer is going to do the same great things for the two-thirds of our professors who are not in the sciences or the arts. They’ll be united in a cluster of terrific buildings for the first time ever. They’ll get wonderful offices that you can actually find without bumping your head or using a flashlight. They’ll have room to sit down with their tutorial students—with classrooms and lounges nearby—to encourage casual interactions. And of course, we’ll get a whole new, state-of-the-art library and a new academic quad.

With changes that big, it’s hard to predict all the positive effects.

AR: How have the Alumni Fund and Parents Fund figured into the campaign?

MS: The cornerstone of The Williams Campaign has been the incredibly generous and sustained support of our Alumni Fund and Parents Fund. Collectively these gifts—large and small—have given Williams the financial resilience and, frankly, the nerve to take on the ongoing costs of new strategic initiatives.

The Class of 2007, for example, is already close to achieving 70 percent participation in the Alumni Fund. That’s staggering. How do you pull that off? Because people know we’ve got a great model—and we’re sticking to it.
When Dave Boyer began transforming a pile of rusted metal into a gleaming piece of rolling sculpture, he never dreamed the project would take him on the emotional ride of a lifetime.

Motorcycle memories

A love of motorcycles runs in Boyer blood, and Dave Boyer is no exception. It’s something he inherited from his father, Donald, whose first motorcycle was an Indian Chief that was shared with a friend and kept hidden in the woods. Only 14 at the time, Donald earned the nickname Chief, something he’d be called for the rest of his life.

More than half a century later, Chief, by then in his early 70s and retired, had given up his passion for being up on two wheels. Dave watched his father age, wondering how he might rekindle that spirit and get him back on the road.

“He was just sitting around the house, and I really wanted him to be more active,” says Dave, who is associate director of campus security at Williams. “I began sending him magazines, literature, buyer’s guides. Then I thought a good way of getting him back into it was with a sidecar.”

So Dave found a sidecar on eBay, and in 2001 he and Chief made it roadworthy. Father and son then took turns learning the perils and joys of muscling the handlebars of the three-wheeled bike, which seemed to have a mind of its own. In Dave’s words, “If it’s a right-hand turn with camber, she really wants to fly.”

Their success led Dave to embark on a much bigger project—restoring a postwar Indian Chief, a showy motorcycle that had once rolled off the assembly line in Springfield, Mass. He found himself dreaming that he and his father would soon ride together down the same highways and byways Chief had plied as a teenager, catching sight of his memories in the rearview mirror.

With a limited budget, Dave began to search. He learned that an elderly man in Adams had left “a bunch of parts for an Indian” at the time of his death. While the leftover bits and pieces of the bike had languished in a basement for years, Dave recognized them as treasure.

“I picked the stuff up, drove it home and put the six boxes in the garage up against the wall,” he says. “Laurie, my wife, took one look and asked, ‘Where’s the motorcycle?’ I pointed to the boxes and said, ‘It’s there!’ I showed her the rims and hubs and the frame and the transmission and said that someday this would be a motorcycle.”

But when Laurie asked about the fenders—and the gas tank—Dave realized there was no sheet metal. “It was just a rolling frame and engine,” he says. Laurie was right—the bike wasn’t there.

BY JULIUS ROSENWALD ’69
PHOTOS BY KEVIN KENNEFICK
UNLESS NOTED
Dave and his father took an inventory of the boxes, with a parts catalog in hand. “We began to realize there were hundreds of things missing,” he says.

He tried to be disciplined, strategizing every expenditure. But then he forgot himself in Oley, Pa., at a meeting of antique motorcycle enthusiasts. “I saw a set of chrome rims, and my emotions took over,” Dave says. “I started shelling out $100 bills as fast as I could. That went completely against my plan.”

He knew he had overspent and felt the need to rationalize his purchase. He also knew Chief would help. “One of the first projects my father did on the Indian was the wheels. He laced and unlaced those rims three times to make sure they were just right.”

The hunt for parts led Dave down countless miles of interstate highways and back roads. He took as many trips through cyberspace. All of this sleuthing led to an unexpected revelation that buoyed his spirits. “I found several people who deal in Indian parts in a big way. They’ll send stuff on a handshake,” he says, more than a little amazed. “There’s trust in the historic motorcycle community, a sense of honor that goes back to the ’40s. It’s a different breed.”

Chief was there to share the experience with his son. Bit by bit they collected the missing pieces. A rear fender and chain guard were located on Long Island. They came home from a swap meet in Chester, Mass., with the front fender, and an enthusiast from Alabama sold them the gas tank.

In the very early stages of the project, Chief’s brother Bernie—who had taught Dave to ride—passed away. Father and son found themselves growing closer as they spent hours talking about Bernie and his time flying in World War II. “My father was a great storyteller,” says Dave. “It seemed like he knew everything about Williamstown—the background of family homesteads, famous residents. He was a voracious reader and knew so much about World War II and military history.

“My father would come over once or twice a week,” Dave says. “We did as much talking and visiting as we did working. When he didn’t come over, we spoke on the phone constantly. The whole thing gave us an excuse to get together.”

Then, in the spring of 2005, Chief’s health began to fail. His evident frailty had a surprising effect. The generous spirit of the local Indian “fraternity” emerged, and Dave’s friends stepped up and offered to work together to get the motorcycle done so Chief could see it finished.

Dave could not think about motorcycles. He focused on his
father, who never saw
the Indian in all its glory. After battling
cancer, Donald Boyer died of a heart attack on June 12, 2005.

"After my father passed away, I didn't touch the bike for a long
time," Dave says. "It was like I'd lost interest. I almost felt like
the Indian was haunted. It was so emotional to be out there in the
shop alone with it."

While Chief was still alive and progress on the Indian was
steady, Dave had a fantasy: nothing elaborate, simply a
trip to a well-known motorcycle shop in Pittsburgh
was a group of guys my father knew," he says. "
would meet there, go for a short ride and then
g for breakfast. I was really looking forward to us
into Ronnie's on a warm Saturday morning. I could ima
looks on their faces seeing him driving the Indian and m
sidecar."

In the months after his father's death, Dave gradually
returned to work on the Indian with its brawny twin-cylinder
1200cc engine and hand-operated gear shift. Soon the
stool poised on a workbench as if eagerly waiting to be
started for the first time. The chrome of the exhaust pipes
 twinkled under the fluorescent lights, and the pale yellow
white gas tank shone.

"This had never been about the bike," Dave says he is
never had a dream of restoring an antique Indian, but it
natural thing for a father and son to do together."

At about the time of the first anniversary of his father's
death, Dave was having dinner with his mother. Knowingly,
Indian was close to being finished, she looked at him and
"It's too bad he didn't get a chance to see it all finished."

Dave paused for a beat and then said, "You know why
really feel he is seeing it."

Today Dave recognizes he had a compelling desire to
pay tribute to the memories of his father and uncle. The
leather solo seat is emblazoned with "Air Apaches," the
name of the bomber group with which Bernie Boyer flew.
During the months of cleaning, sandblasting, polishing and
painting, Dave decided on a way to acknowledge his fat
too, using a rubric borrowed from a movie, _Men of Hor_
I think: I will send Ibrahim a book. It is the least I can do; it is the only thing I can do. In the end, I discover, it is only something I think I can do.

To pass the time, I tell the father of my daughter the story of the mouse killed by our cat. It was the cat’s first mouse. First the cat was surprised; he had never seen a mouse before.

They were both rearing up at each other. Then the cat struck. Each time I looked, the mouse was leaning closer to the floor. It was dying. The scene was like a cartoon.

I wanted to save the mouse, but for what?

If I had a funny story I would tell it, because it would make Ibrahim laugh. Each day I rack my brain for such a story. It is not always easy.

I try to send books. The chaplain tells me I may not send books to Ibrahim Parlak or to any other prisoner. We can send books to the jail library, and they might make their way to him.

I send a pile of books, but Ibrahim does not get them. When I call, the chaplain says, Oh, they are on my shelf. I didn’t know who they were for.

I ask if Ibrahim may receive magazines. We were thinking maybe National Geographic or Newsweek.
The chaplain laughs as if to an inside joke. You cannot believe what these guys here can do with magazines. I have in my office a pair of nunchucks made from National Geographic. Some guy stuck the pages together, rolled 'em up with glue from the spine and tied two magazine cylinders together with braided elastic from his underwear. That's the thing here: You're not dealing with the regular population. You're dealing with criminals, and the criminal mind is endlessly inventive.

I bring up the books again with the chaplain. It's like I've never asked the question: Surely they're allowed to read books?

We have lots of books here, he says. Every kind of book. Any book he wants, he could find it here.

They have a small cart, says Ibrahim. There is nothing there I want to read.

Just to be certain, I call the chaplain back and ask: Do you have the Constitution? The Federalist Papers? The Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson?

I can't say, he tells me. We might.

Ibrahim says to drop the book idea. They are making comments about it, and when they start making comments it means you might have trouble. He won't say any more than this, and I am left to wonder.

One day he is strip searched. The warden tells him as long as he doesn't make trouble, things will go well for him.

But you should be able to read whatever you want to read, I say. In particular, you should be able to read about our country.

He tells me to stop talking about it.

We photocopy sections of books to send to him. A book on detention from the Center for Constitutional Rights. Passages from Epictetus the Stoic, Confucius, Rumi and the New Testament. And jokes. He shares the jokes we have printed from the Internet with the guards, and pretty soon the guards start bringing in jokes, too.

Then Ibrahim tells us to slow down—sending paper—the guards are complaining about it. They tell him to clean out his cell; the papers might attract vermin.

One time we are lucky: we send Seabiscuit, and somehow it reaches him. He reads it. He feels like we are speaking in code. We could win. I am saying. Like the horse. No one thought he would win, but he did. Seabiscuit is the last book he reads before a writ of habeas corpus secures his release after 10 months in jail.

Ibrahim does not share my passion for reading. This is something I ask him at the outset, when we first meet. Does he like poetry? Does he love to read? He skitters the question.

When I persist, he says that books have disappointed him. He speaks as if they were a person.

He tells me the story of losing his books. When he was 9, following a military coup in Turkey, soldiers came to his village and started confiscating books.

His family, who were farmers, had many books. I try to picture his living room, where the books may have sat and who may have read them.

His parents started burning their own books before the soldiers could get to them. Ibrahim buried an armful of books in a field and slept there.

I am obsessed with the details: What books did he carry? How long did they sit, and what became of them? I ask if he ever went back to find the books. He didn't.

Later he read the same books and others. Political theory, philosophy, more literature, more history. It did not seem to get him anywhere.

I begin to see why books have disappointed him.

I read more about his people, the Kurds. Specifically, the Kurds in Turkey. I learn of Mehmet Emin Bozarslan, who wrote the first Kurd alphabet book when it was illegal to speak the language.

"I wrote and published it in 1968 in Istanbul," Bozarslan told an interviewer in 1993. "With the help of my friends I distributed it throughout Kurdistan, Istanbul and Ankara. It was banned immediately. When I went to Diyarbakir, they arrested me. They took me to trial, and
the court asked me, ‘Why did you write this?’ I said, ‘This language is a live language, and people are speaking this language, and as a person in this area, I wanted to help people learn to read and write.’ But [the judge] sent me to prison, and on the paper he signed he wrote that my crime was to try to divide Turkey through this book, which is only 64 pages.”

Bozarslan was in prison for four months; his trial lasted for six years, and he now lives in exile. His is the only alphabet book in the world that is banned.

I think of the books the soldiers stole from Ibrahim’s family, only to burn them.

I read about Leyla Zana, the first Kurdish woman elected to the Turkish Parliament, who was jailed in 1994 as a separatist. After taking her oath as a minister, she identified herself as a Kurd. According to Amnesty International, “She took the oath of loyalty in Turkish, as required by law, then added in Kurdish, ‘I shall struggle so that the Kurdish and Turkish peoples may live together in a democratic framework.’ Parliament erupted with shouts of ‘Separatist!’ ‘Terrorist!’ and ‘Arrest her!’”

While in jail, Zana was nominated 18 times for the Nobel Peace Prize.

I read that Orhan Pamuk, the Nobel Prize-winning Turkish writer, was brought to trial in 2005 for “insulting Turkishness” by alluding to certain historical events in one of his books.

I think of the words they and others are not allowed to say, as if by speaking they could make the whole world tremble.

While in jail in America, there are other reasons Ibrahim cannot have books. He and other criminals might make them into weapons.

I argue: The detainees with whom he shares this section of the jail are immigrants jailed for a small or large infraction, awaiting deportation.

The warden says, You can’t be too careful. I think what he means is: Why should they need to read?

To pass the time, they mostly play cards.

In Turkey, in 1988, Ibrahim was jailed as a separatist. This was his only conviction—the one for which he is jailed again, in my country, and for which he may be deported. He came to the States in 1991 and was granted asylum a year later, when we met. In 1994 he opened a Kurdish restaurant on the Red Arrow Highway in Harbert, Mich. Our daughter, Livia, was just 7 when he was arrested, nearly 8 when he was released. She visited him every week in jail, pressing her hand to his against the glass.

Now out of jail, Ibrahim awaits for the federal Court of Appeals to decide whether he may stay in this country or not, with his daughter or not. The possibility that he might be killed in another country is argued back and forth by lawyers in measured language, weighing the benefit to the U.S. of deporting him against the possible risks to him. The government’s language is chilling as they carefully parse the meaning of torture.

I read of a case in which a justice department brief argues for the first time on appeal that assassination is not torture, claiming that there is such a thing as a painless death.

The words take brutality and render it civil. I marvel that such an argument could exist.

Since I am only reading it, I wonder if it is actually happening. I hold that question and soon forget it. I am interrupted by other concerns. Will our daughter take violin or piano? Who will take care of the lawn? I think of how the life to which I was born has collided with another life, that neither of them makes sense, even with all the reading. And beyond writing, reading and speaking, what can one do who is half-prisoner in a civilized world?

Orhan Pamuk writes: “At least once in a lifetime, self-reflection leads us to examine the circumstances of our birth. Why were we born in this particular corner of the world, on this particular date? These families into which we were born, these countries and cities to which the lottery of life has assigned us.” So this is what I am doing.

I do not bury them, but I put down the books. They are piercing my heart open and getting me nowhere. I think of Ibrahim, why he loved and was disappointed by reading, and why he fell in love with the idea of my country. Without warning, the two of us, our daughter and everyone around us seem to have drifted into another, borderless, place: Together, we are in the land of the cat and the mouse.

—Ike Gazzolo ’82 and her daughter, Livia, 10, live in Michigan. The story of Ibrahim Parlak, his family and community is being developed into a feature film, The Land of Roses.
LASER FOCUS

People sometimes ask physics professor Protik K.
Majumder why he's studying atoms when they were long ago
discovered and explained. "It's not always the sexiest thing to do," he
admits. But his modest observations of the properties of atomic particles are
actually quite useful and important—not just to scientific study but also to his
students.

While Majumder can't replicate the experiments performed with billion-
dollar super colliders at places like Fermilab and Brookhaven National
Laboratory, he's able to obtain precision measurements of atomic activity
that other scientists can then use to refine their understanding of quantum
theory. All it requires are some fairly basic, easily accessible and relatively
inexpensive materials: a metal such as thallium, indium or lead and colored
lasers of the sort that can be found inside any newer-model DVD player.

The scale of the work fits nicely at Williams, says Majumder, who taught at
the University of Washington in Seattle before joining the Williams faculty 13
years ago. "Students can see the whole experiment," he explains. "At much
bigger facilities, students might become experts only in one small aspect."

In his lab at the Bronfman Science Center, Majumder is joined by
undergraduate physics majors as he stages a variety of tabletop experiments.
The metals he uses—thallium, in particular—are encapsulated in a quartz
tube or vacuum chamber and heated to a gas, through which a colored laser
is shone. The various wavelengths of light then cause the subatomic particles
to react in ways that you may or may not remember from Intro to Physics.

For instance, the electrons might jump from one orbital to another or spin in a
particular direction.

Though Majumder and his students can't actually see many of the more
unusual effects they are producing, they are able to record evidence of them
with computers that collect and analyze the data from the experiments. It is
the precision of these recordings that theoretical physicists can then use to
advance their hypotheses. Majumder and others in his field often refer to it as "the
romance of the next decimal place."

"YOU CAN STUDY ... EXOTIC PHYSICS IN AN ORDINARY LAB LIKE MINE ... AT A HIGH LEVEL OF PRECISION."
For students, however, the hands-on aspect is as important as any of their findings. Charlie Doret '02, a dual major in mathematics and physics who wrote his senior thesis under Majumder's guidance, says the work he performed in the lab definitely gave him a leg up on his fellow Harvard University Ph.D. candidates, some of whom only had a "pencil-and-paper" understanding of physics. "It makes me a more attractive student to a graduate adviser because he doesn't have to spend a year training me in the lab," says Doret, who was one of seven students over the past seven years to co-author with Majumder a paper published in the field's major archival research journal, The Physical Review.

For Majumder, one of the most rewarding aspects of his work has been to watch students parlay this early experience into research-related careers. He is known for an almost fatherly demeanor as a teacher and adviser, and he takes a special interest in helping students from backgrounds that are underrepresented in the field. In particular, Majumder tries to encourage those students who are unsure of themselves and tend to fall behind early—perhaps because they weren't adequately prepared in high school—and often invites them to study groups or informal problem-solving sessions. "The best way to learn science," as he likes to say, "is not necessarily with somebody standing in front of a class."

A sampling of appearances by Williams professors outside the College's local news area, compiled by the Office of Public Affairs. For a complete list, visit www.williams.edu/admin/news/inthenews.php.

A July 15 Washington Post column on whether Earth will be able to handle a "mega-surge of people pouring into the cities of Africa, Asia and Latin America" cites the research of Stephen Sheppard, Robert F. White Class of 1952 Professor of Economics and department chair, who, with his students, matched Landsat satellite images of 120 world cities with census data to estimate actual population and per capita income.

"Precision with the ingredients and methods and artistry with the aesthetics are both necessary to make something really extraordinary," says Danna Goldstein, Francis Christopher Oakley Third Century Professor of Russian, in a July 11 Boston Globe article on her latest book, Baking Boot Camp: Five Days of Basic Training at the Culinary Institute of America.

A report in the June 26 Ghanaian Chronicle discussing the quality of universities in Ghana mentions the library systems of Harvard, University of British Columbia and Williams—which, with its "enrollment of 2,000 students, contains about 1 million volumes"—and states, "There is no university in Ghana whose library system has about 1 million volumes."

"When you look at the images of them, they have this real kind of glitter-rock-meets-pachuco look. They are so seductive in their pose and in their fashion sense and in their relationship to the camera," says art professor C. Ondine Chavoya in a June 6 LA Weekly article about the East L.A. avant-garde performance art group Asco.

A May 13 Boston Globe Magazine cover story about the founding of a school for girls in Afghanistan cited the assistance given by David Edwards, Carl W. Vogt '58 Professor of Anthropology.
"Are we Ethiopian, ferenji"—Westerners—"or something else altogether?" Rebecca Haile '86 asks about herself and others who were born in but came of age outside of Ethiopia. It's also a question she ponders in *Held at a Distance*, a memoir in which she seeks to understand her own identity and that of the land of her birth.

Ribika Getatchew, as she was named, was born into a kingdom facing pressure to reform. A military junta known as the Derg "hijacked my country's future," she says, "and upended our life in an instant." After the emperor was deposed, her father, a professor of Ethiopian languages, was shot while resisting arrest. The bullet left him partially paralyzed, and the family fled abroad.

At the age of 11, Haile found herself in a Minnesota classroom—a dark countenance amid a sea of largely Scandinavian faces, her Amharic name anglicized. Nevertheless she thrived in America, graduating from Williams and Harvard Law, clerking for a judge and working for a New York law firm. She began to see herself as more American than Ethiopian. A quarter of a century would pass before she returned to her native country.

To many Americans, mention of Ethiopia evokes civil war, famine and poverty. But Haile sought a deeper appreciation of a land once central to a powerful and prosperous black civilization. On her return in 2001, she visited her maternal grandmother, whose "way of being," Haile says, "predates the events that defined my Addis Ababa childhood." She traveled to the countryside and toured bridges and mountain roads built by her uncle, an engineer determined to modernize his nation. She visited the ancient city of Axum, once the center of an empire.

Haile could speak her native tongue well enough to communicate about quotidian matters, but she worried about fitting in. "My vocabulary is that of an 11-year-old," she says. "I knew I couldn't carry on a sophisticated conversation."

While the words weren't there, the curiosity was. Throughout her journey—and in the book that evolved from the notes she kept—she looked in particular for "the sense of comforting community that I'd always felt the revolution had taken away from us."

To some degree she found it among her extended family there. Yet, she says, "Ours is a maturing diaspora, and people who left aren't going back to live in Ethiopia."

Within the vignettes of her highly readable memoir, published this year by Academy Chicago Publishers, Haile offers a panoramic view of Ethiopia; we learn it is a place in which a rich history informs a difficult present before which immense challenges loom.

Haile also has painted, as if in watercolor, flashes of her own identity—as an African and an American, as a woman and the mother of two young children. "I am most at ease," she says, "in environments where you can be who you are yet not have the categories define you."
MORE FROM THE BOOKSHELF


The Rising Star of Rusty Nail. By Lesley M.M. Blume ’98. Knopf, 2007. The story of a 10-year-old piano prodigy who believes that her small town’s newest neighbor—despite being labeled as a “Commie”—could be her ticket out.


Presidents, Diplomats, and Other Mortals. Edited by J. Garry Clifford ’64 et al. University of Missouri Press, 2007. Essays by prominent historians track the decisions of American and world leaders that have influenced U.S. foreign policy from 1860 to the present.


WIDE WORLD

Since 2003 the international studies department has sponsored a yearlong colloquium series designed to energize the Williams community about world affairs. Speakers strive to break down barriers due to regional or disciplinary blinders as well as to provide information about resources at the College. The colloquia meets Tuesday afternoons throughout the academic year. Featured lectures last spring included:


Reassessing the Standard of Living in the Soviet Union, Elizabeth Brainerd, associate professor of economics.


What Would It Take to Save Darfur?, Joshua Rovner, Stanley Kaplan Visiting Postdoctoral Fellow in political science and leadership studies.

The "New" New Left in Latin America, James Mahon, Woodrow Wilson Professor of Political Science and chair of political economy.


The Persistence of Poverty: Why the Economics of the Well-Off Can’t Help the Poor. By Charles H. Karelis ’67. Yale University Press, 2007. An illustration of how the current understanding of poverty is mistaken suggests that a new perspective can help to develop effective anti-poverty policies.


Tea Party: 20 Themed Tea Parties with Recipes for Every Occasion, from Fabulous Showers to Intimate Gatherings. By Christie Matheson ’97 et al. Clarkson Potter, 2007. An up-to-date perspective on the art of hosting tea parties, including more than 75 recipes and 20 themed tea party ideas.


Send: The Essential Guide to Email for Office and Home. By David Shipley ’85 et al. Knopf, 2007. A book that shows readers how to write the perfect e-mail and suggests when to forego the method altogether.

Mystic Bones. By Mark C. Taylor, Cluett Professor of Humanities, University of Chicago Press, 2007. Photographs of bones collected in the deserts of the American West and an accompanying essay on the place of these bones and the desert in an understanding of art, philosophy, and life.


Forgive Me. By Amanda Eyre Ward ’94. Random House, 2007. A novel about a journalist struggling with both personal and political turmoil in Cape Town during the last days of apartheid.