Daring Change...On Williams and the future p.22 + cover
3 Conversations...Seniors talk with those who shaped their lives p.12
A World of Study...Destinations for fellowship recipients p.20
The Celestials...Fact and fiction in 1870s North Adams p.28
Mysterious Mummy Hand...Questions answered p.36
Class Speaker Jay Mehta ’13 captured the excitement of Williams’ 224th Commencement when he told his classmates, “I’m hopeful for life after graduation, because I don’t think I’ll ever cease finding energy to create, learn and make better when I see you, my family, doing what you do.” Mehta was one of 527 seniors to receive BAs. Another 12 art history program students received MAs, and 28 fellows from the Center for Development Economics received MAs in policy economics. For speeches, citations, photos and videos, visit http://bit.ly/Ephs2013.
features

12 Three from 2013
Seniors engage in conversations with members of the campus community who played a role in their time at Williams and in their future plans.

20 A World of Study
See where some of this year’s fellowship recipients are headed.

22 Daring Change
Excerpts from 12 thought-provoking talks about the future and about the college.

28 The Celestials
The strange story—in fact and fiction—of how 75 Chinese workers came to live and work in 19th-century North Adams.

departments

6 Report
President Adam Falk on daring conversations.

7 Comment
Readers respond to our coverage of Jack Sawyer ’39, the pope and fraternities.

8 Notice
A look at our Bicentennial Medalists, commencement, athletic success, the Class of 2017 and more…

32 Study
Varieties of understanding, 25 years of computer science, being 18 in America, a mysterious mummified hand and more…

38 Muse
Pacifique Irankunda’s ’13 season of war.
More important than finding answers is asking the right questions. That’s true not only in the individual disciplines we teach but in how we think about the college as a whole.

We’ve recently been working at imagining the future of Williams through the lens of its past. That might seem an odd approach, but I’ve found it highly meaningful. We’ve been prompted in part by the fact that the college is passing the 50-year anniversaries of many key moments in the development of the Williams that we know today. Most of these occurred during the presidency of John Sawyer ’39.

The late Fred Rudolph ’42, a leading historian of higher education and Williams professor of history, emeritus, described the college of that time, despite its virtues, as having become sleepy until it arose in the Sawyer era. Historical developments, in hindsight, often seem to have been inevitable, but on closer examination they clearly resulted from decisions and actions taken by individuals and communities based on their values and on changing circumstances.

In Williams’ case, this was made clear at the panel discussion that was part of this spring’s Daring Change weekend, in which people who’d lived through the Sawyer era and its immediate aftermath told how the changes back then came about and what effects they’ve had on Williams and on higher education more broadly. You can watch that illuminating discussion at http://www.williams.edu/daring-change/.

In a nutshell, the changes that seemed daring at the time, and that have served Williams so well since, came about through inclusive planning processes that applied the college’s core values…”

“…the changes that seemed daring at the time, and that have served Williams so well since, came about through inclusive planning processes that applied the college’s core values…”

Daring Conversations

for women and the increasing movement around the globe of people and ideas.

It was through this historical lens that I experienced over the rest of that weekend 12 TED-like talks given by a wide-ranging group of faculty, staff, students and alumni. We asked them to think, in turns playfully and provocatively, about some aspect of the future and its possible intersection with Williams.

The speakers poured themselves into these presentations, for which I’m so grateful. They make for compelling viewing and reading. (Excerpts are featured beginning on p. 22 of this magazine.)

Taken together they affirm the college’s core values (that we should not train students for a job but educate them to be creative, committed and interdisciplinary problem solvers), and they highlight the evolving circumstances with which Williams must engage (including demographic trends, the expansion of technology, climate change and the growing role of internationalism).

To shape the discussion, we’d asked our speakers to respond to one of four questions:

- Who will we be?
- What will we learn?
- How will we learn?
- What difference will we make?

These were the questions faced by the Williams of the 1960s, and they’re the questions we face at Williams today. They’re the basic questions of any educational community. They’ve provided a useful framework not only for the conversations of that day but also for discussions I’ve had since in a variety of settings.

I think they’re the right questions to frame the important conversations that will now spread ever more widely through the college community—exciting conversations that I very much look forward to having with you all.
A reporter covering the competitive world seems more like a mountain climber in the competitive world. The treadmill of grades and tests and grading systems which fail to uncover certain traits of excellence, he announced “an experiment on Oct. 8, 1961. Two years out of Williams and as a North Adams Transcript reporter covering the experience I had witnessed close to home. In December Director of Admission Fred Copeland ’35 interviewed me in Kansas City, winning me over not only with Polaroid snapshots of campus but the chance to be involved in the transition from fraternities to a yet-to-be-formulated residential housing system. (OK, I wasn’t likely going to play sports in the Big Ten…) Perhaps a unique perspective but a compelling one, and I came to Williams in 1963 in large part because of the change set in motion by Seidman, et al. (and got to play baseball for four years with Coach Bobby Coombs).

—Ron Bodinson ’67, Madison, Conn.

Regardless of Robert Seidman’s ’63 impressive credentials, an attack on Alpha Delta Phi is an attack on my friends. I pledged Alpha Delta Phi at Stanford, Class of 1958, a chapter in which I served in several capacities, including president. I transferred to Williams and to the Alpha Delta Phi fraternity, Class of 1961. I lived in an apartment rented to me by President Sawyer during my junior year. In my senior year, I moved into the fraternity. Joe Low ’61 and Bill Penny ’61 accepted me as a roommate. To dismiss these fine men out of hand because they belonged to a cruel, discriminatory fraternity is intellectually dishonest. I personally liked Bruce Grinnell ’62. I did not share (Seidman’s view) fraternity is intellectually dishonest. I believe that Benedict XVI’s resignation may in fact add to “the mystification of the papacy.” By stepping aside, he sends a clear message to his successors: “You’d better be ready to travel the world (several times over), post, tweet and be followed, as well as entertain and worship with 3.5 million young adults at a time.” The current pope seems to be only adding to this mystification and super-priest status of the office. Taking the name of the Church’s most beloved saint and being the first ethnically Italian pope in 34 years, he has set the Eternal City into a frenzy. His preferences and servile nature annoy him to be the one to obey the words of Christ, “Rebuild my Church,” as St. Francis did. But the most important contribution of this papacy might actually contradict the final point President Oakley makes. Far from making it a more administrative job, Pope Francis seeks to further the evangelizing role of the papacy. In an interview, the then-Cardinal Bergoglio said it is a temptation to view the pastoral care of souls as an administrative post. He wants to form, from the most senior of prelates to us newly ordained priests, into “real agents of the New Evangelization.” Look for this goal to be a positive outcome of his new eight-cardinal commission to reform the Roman Curia.

—Father Mike Sheahean ’03, Roxbury, Mass.

I read with interest Robert Seidman’s ’63 article “Band of Brothers” (spring 2013) and reflected on the ripple effect of his actions in 1961, one washing over me in 1962 as a high school senior. I had my heart set on Northwestern but found off-putting the dominance of the Greek system during a visit in November. A few years before, the Kansas City public schools had banned entrenched fraternities and sororities partly because of the harmful effect on those excluded, an experience I had witnessed close to home.
LIVING WITH ART
Beginning this January, Williams students may have artwork by masters including Paul Cézanne, Jim Dine (whose work is pictured) and Winslow Homer gracing the walls of their dorm rooms. The Williams College Museum of Art will debut the student art loan initiative, a key component of the Fulkerson Arts Leadership Program, established by Allan Fulkerson ’54 to provide opportunities to help develop the next generation of Williams leaders in the arts. For more information, visit http://bit.ly/artloan.

Williams Directs $450K to Local School District
In June, the Mt. Greylock School Committee accepted $450,000 from donors to Williams to support innovative projects at the high school over the next two academic years. The funding is in addition to the $285,000 received for use over the last two academic years.

The majority of the $735,000 given to the Williams College Fund for Mt. Greylock has come from 20 Williams-related members of the family of Joseph A. Jeffrey, a founding partner in the 19th-century business that became The Jeffrey Manufacturing Co. of Columbus, Ohio. Their contributions have been complemented by $27,500 raised from local donors, some of whom are affiliated with the college.

The fund in its first two years has supported projects such as instructional development in math and science, an expansion of experiential and independent learning opportunities and a significant addition to learning technology.

“The entire community, including the college, is the beneficiary as Mt. Greylock works toward reclaiming its historic legacy as a model school,” stated Williams President Adam Falk in announcing the funding. “We’re grateful to all … who are partnering to bring this about.”

Changes Announced to College Bd. of Trustees
The Williams College Board of Trustees welcomed three new members on July 1: Elizabeth A. Andersen ’87, William C. Foote ’73 and Richard R. Pickard ’75. Pickard was appointed by the Society of Alumni at its annual meeting in June.

Kate L. Queeney ’92 was reappointed for another term on the board. And Fred Nathan Jr. ’83 and Sarah Keohane Williamson ’84 stepped down when their terms ended in June.
Ephs Win 16th Directors’ Cup

For the 16th time in 18 years, Williams has taken home the Learfield Sports Directors’ Cup, awarded annually by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics to the best all-around athletics program for team performance in 18 sports.

“This award celebrates the culmination of a year’s worth of work by our coaches and our athletes, their dedication and pursuit of excellence,” said Williams Athletic Director Lisa Melendy, who accepted the cup at the NACDA Convention in Orlando, Fla., on June 14. “I am proud of the work of our student-athletes and my colleagues.”

The Ephs claimed victory with nine of their 18 teams placing in the top five in the nation and 12 placing in the top 10. Women’s crew and men’s and women’s tennis all earned first-place finishes in Div. III, crew for the eighth straight year—the longest streak in NCAA rowing—and women’s tennis for the sixth straight year, a record shared with only one other NCAA school, Stanford. Men’s soccer and women’s basketball placed third overall.

The Ephs earned points in all 18 sports (nine men’s and nine women’s) over three seasons, amassing 1,273.75 points—the second-highest total in the history of the cup. (Three years ago the Ephs set the NCAA Div. III Directors’ Cup points record by scoring 1,292.) Emory took second place this year with 986.50 points. And last year’s winner, Middlebury, came in third this year with 941.75 points.


Six Alumni to Receive Bicentennial Medals

During Fall Convocation on Sept. 7, the college will award six alumni with Bicentennial Medals for “significant achievement in any field of endeavor.” This year’s recipients are: Bill Moomaw ’59, founding director of the Williams Environmental Studies Program and a policy scientist working to address global warming and climate change through international environmental policy; John Sayles ’72 and Maggie Renzi ’73, creative partners and pioneers in independent film; Michael Weiner ’83, executive director of the Major League Baseball Players Association; Doug Shulman ’89, until recently the commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service and now a Brookings Institution scholar; and Mariam Naficy ’91, Internet entrepreneur, e-commerce pioneer and founder and president of Minted.com. The honorees will participate in a panel discussion on Sept. 6 at the ’62 Center MainStage.

Williams Welcomes the Class of 2017

| TOTAL APPLICANTS | 6,853 |
| TOTAL ADMITTED | 1,200 |
| ADMIT RATE | 17.5% |
| ENROLLING | 552 |
| WOMEN | 275 |
| MEN | 277 |
| FIRST GENERATION TO ATTEND COLLEGE | 72 |
| AWARDED FINANCIAL AID | 49.46% |
| AVG FINANCIAL AID AWARD | $45,375 |
| INTERNATIONAL | 39 |
| WHITE | 295 |
| STUDENTS OF COLOR | 206 |
| ASIAN AMERICAN | 77 |
| HISPANIC/LATINO | 59 |
| BLACK | 66 |
| NATIVE AMERICAN | 4 |

Source: Office of Admission, Office of Financial Aid, as of June 19, 2013

*32 students declined to indicate race
In Memoriam

Williams noted the passing of professors Robert Suderburg, John Eusden, Bill DeWitt ’61 and Fred Rudolph ’42 in the spring.

Suderburg, the Class of 1924 Professor of Music, Emeritus, died on April 22. A member of the faculty for 16 years, he helped advance the performance of new music at the college. His composed works were performed around the world, and he won multiple ASCAP awards as well as fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Eusden, the Nathan Jackson Professor of Christian Theology, Emeritus, died on April 27. In his 50 years at Williams, he served as chaplain, led the college into engagement with the civil rights movement and international studies and was involved in developing the Center for Environmental Studies.

DeWitt, the C. Carlisle and Margaret Tippit Professor of Biology, died on May 3. After earning a doctorate from Princeton, he returned to the Purple Valley in 1967 and quickly became a mainstay of the biology department and the college, serving five times as department chair.

Rudolph died on June 3. In a half century on the history faculty, he enhanced the curriculum in countless ways, including developing the American studies and African-American history programs. Twice a Guggenheim fellow and a member of numerous historical associations, he’s the author of several influential texts. Williams honored him with a Bicentennial Medal, and the Class of 1965 established a professorship of American culture in his name.

“The college, and in fact higher education, lost this morning an important, even historic, figure: Fred Rudolph ’42. … Few faculty in the past half century have had more of a hand in the development of the Williams curriculum than did Fred after joining the history department in 1951.”

President Adam Falk in a letter to the Williams community about the passing of Fred Rudolph ’42, whose Ph.D. thesis at Yale became the book Mark Hopkins and The Log, just the first of his influential texts.
Three things one notices about Carrie Greene during commencement weekend: 1. She moves quickly. 2. She stays cool in the face of unrelenting heat, literal or figurative. 3. She knows exactly how to get 4,000 commencement attendees, students and staff where they’re supposed to be, on time, in order and according to plan.

Together with physics professor and college marshal Jeff Strait, Greene, the college’s academic program coordinator, orchestrates the campus’ biggest annual event. With the assistance of Erica Maker and 40 student ushers, she serves as the commencement point person for nearly a dozen operations, including dining services, facilities and security.

Planning begins in January, when Greene and Strait meet with seniors to discuss class officer elections and the selection of students to serve at commencement as bell ringers, speakers, musicians and marshals, as well as class artist, gardener, historian and poet.

Five months, 25 meetings, 120 phone calls and 750 emails later, Greene arrives on campus at 10 a.m. on June 1 for Class Day, a full schedule of (often overlapping) events that begins with a Phi Beta Kappa induction and ends with a Baccalaureate service. In between, three seniors become Marine Corps officers, athletes are celebrated, graduates receive college and national awards, and singer/songwriter and honorary degree recipient Annie Lennox sits for a special conversation with seniors and their families.

Dashing between events, Greene carries a smartphone, a bottle of water and a small backpack containing a thick folder of information she hardly references. Before Baccalaureate, she’s in and out of Chapin Hall, attending to sound checks, stage preparations and seating assignments. The day goes flawlessly, and Greene heads home at 7 p.m. to get some rest before returning at 6:45 a.m. the next day to do it all again.

On Sunday Greene situates herself near the stage so she can answer questions and keep things moving. Several times she’s overheard genuinely apologizing to folks for the strong sun. A senior shows up late, and Greene dives into the sea of caps and gowns to place her in the right seat mid-ceremony. Later, when commencement speaker and sports legend Billie Jean King emerges from behind the podium with a tennis racket in hand, Greene is again in motion. She’s made sure Elton John’s “Philadelphia Freedom” is cued up, per King’s request, and she sends the head ushers over with two bins of 100 tennis balls. King lob the balls into the surprised, cheering crowd while Greene ducks and moves quickly out of the way.

“Hold. Top step. Go,” she’ll soon say 527 times, directing graduating seniors up the stairs and onto the stage to receive their diplomas. Later, after the crowd has dispersed, she’ll take a lap around campus to thank every staff member she sees. But right now, she’s busy untangling the Class of 2013 banner, which, once again, has spun around in the breeze.
Williams people aren’t always at ease talking about themselves; they’re far more comfortable singing the praises of others at Williams—their professors, fellow students and staff members. So as graduation neared and we asked seniors about their plans for the future, they were happy to talk about members of the campus community who had played some role in those plans and in their lives at Williams.

For Emmanuel Whyte ’13, a studio art and psychology major who’s headed overseas on a Watson fellowship to paint portraits and explore his identity as a black American man, that person was his art professor, Mike Glie ’75, whose own work painting landscapes has taken him around the globe. Carrie Tribble ’13, a biology major with a concentration in environmental studies who will be studying medicinal plant populations in rural Peru on a Fulbright grant, says Lili Rodriguez ’01, director of the college’s Davis Center, was a role model for her own activism on campus. And twin brothers and history majors Hill Hamrick ’13, newly commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps, and Ladd Hamrick ’13, who has a job on Wall Street with J.P. Morgan, each cited the other as a significant influence on his life. We listened in on conversations between each pair, excerpts of which we share on the following pages.
MIKE: Did you get any interesting feedback from your senior exhibition at WCMA (the Williams College Museum of Art)?

What did people say to you about the drawings?

Emmanuel: This is what my mother told me, because her husband was going around listening to people and taking pictures. They said, “Everyone really likes your hand.” My hand, my style, becomes a thing, and what I create with my hand—it becomes recognizable, you know? It was good feedback, and it made me realize that I’m actually doing something worthwhile.

MIKE: Yeah, I understand. As an artist, when you’re doing a portrait you feel obliged to represent the person and make it look like them. But you also have to leave something of yourself there, right? Sometimes I’m in a place that’s so beautiful and special, and I feel I have to render the landscape exactly, with respect and awe for the thing. But then I have to loosen up and become more abstract and put my own mark on it.

Emmanuel: One thing that was especially hard for me was the subject matter of my portraits. I’m trying to represent black men—me, the guys who sat for me. I’m stripping them of their agency to place them in a particular way. I feel like it goes against what I’m trying to accomplish. The more control I have as an artist, the more I’m reinforcing these things that I’m trying to examine in terms of black male identity.

MIKE: Which is something you’ll continue looking at during your Watson fellowship. You’ll be traveling—

Emmanuel: I’m going to France, Italy, Ghana and Japan for a year to situate myself in the art communities and be surrounded by artists. I’m going to be doing a lot of portraits and also see how I’m viewed as a black male within these environments. France is very complex in terms of race. Ghana—that’s going to be the first place that I’ve ever been that’s predominantly black, so I want to see what happens when my skin color is erased and I’m in a place where the only way I’ll be recognized as being different is my walk, the way I talk, the way I dress. In Japan, I’m going to be black. Big.

MIKE: You and I have this traveling/drawing project thing in common. I’ve traveled to many locations around the globe doing landscapes, and I started a blog to keep in touch with family and friends. I found it to be such a great way to integrate language and image for an artist, and then the blog took off and wound up having a life of its own and became a book. Maybe you should think about starting a blog. For me it was a way to deal with loneliness I felt when I was traveling.

Emmanuel: I’m not worried so much about loneliness. I’m inviting it. Here at Williams, I’ve never been challenged socially to go out and make friends, because even when you’re hiding, people know where you are. I don’t want to thrive on loneliness; I just want to see how I respond to it. My Watson project’s about being seen; in situating myself in places where I’ll be seen, whether it’s drawing in public or going to an artist’s workshop, I’m going to meet a lot of people who are either interested in my work or are artists themselves.

MIKE: You’re going to have such a great time! Our lives overlap in another way. I was also a psych major and an art studio major at Williams. What about you as a psychologist?

Emmanuel: Right now I’m thinking about art history, as strange as that sounds. You know where I came from—as public as a school can get, and a lot was against me. I learned how to ask questions here. And what I want to do in the future is be an educator and make things more accessible. I’m talking about children in under-resourced environments not being able to have art training or never thinking that art is something that can take them far or be a means to express themselves—which I think is probably the most important thing I got out of Williams.

MIKE: I love the idea of you being a teacher. Really good teachers have emotional intelligence, and I’ve always thought that about you. You’ll run a dynamic classroom, but you’ll have that kind of sensitivity to individuals that really makes the difference.

Emmanuel: When I took your class “Creating Bodies” four years ago, it took so much for me to speak in front of the class the first time. I was just shaking, holding that paper and reading it aloud. Teaching other black children like me, or kids who come from poor backgrounds, is something that’s very, very special. I want to teach them to ask questions, to be curious and constantly scrutinize their environment and their place and these power dynamics. They don’t have to do anything crazy but just ask questions and don’t be oblivious.

Emmanuel Whyte ’13 of Bennington, Vt., graduated with honors in art and psychology. He is a member of the scientific research society Sigma Xi and a Thomas J. Watson Fellow. Mike Glier ’75 has taught at Williams for 25 years and is the recipient of a National Endowment grant for drawing and a Guggenheim Fellowship for painting. Information about his blogs, books and art work is available at www.mikeglier.net.
“Teaching other black children like me, or kids who come from poor backgrounds, is something that’s very, very special. I want to teach them to ask questions, to be curious and constantly scrutinize their environment and their place and these power dynamics.”
LILI: What was it like transitioning to Williams from Hawaii as a first-year student?
Carrie: My entry was a great support system. I also had the support of the Queer Student Union (QSU). I went to meetings regularly my first semester and at the end of the semester ended up moving into Hardy House—
LILI: That’s right! Was the takeover of Hardy House the first activist movement you participated in at Williams? (QSU members occupied Hardy in 2009 in response to homophobic graffiti found in a residence hall.)
Carrie: Absolutely. It allowed me to really get to know people in the QSU and feel as if that was our space; we belonged there and had a support system and knew the administration wanted to make things better. That was a really good first-semester introduction to Williams.
LILI: So you were initiated.
Carrie: It was all a big initiation rite into the Williams activist culture.
LILI: Science majors here at Williams don’t usually become heavy student activists. Part of that has to do with time—with so many lab requirements. How do you manage?
Carrie: Especially this year, trying to figure out how to divvy up my time between two very prominent projects that I care about deeply was very, very difficult. I had my biology thesis (on the effect of climate change on a population of arctic plants in Lake Superior), and I was co-chair of the Minority Coalition.
LILI: Do you feel your courses gave you perspective on social issues that scientists need to engage in?
Carrie: I took biology classes that were focused on populations and the relationships between populations, which lends itself to a type of thinking that’s more in line with the work I’ve done with community building.
LILI: And you’re fascinated by cultures. Your study abroad experience with the School for International Training in Peru was clearly transformative.
Carrie: One of the memories that stands out is when I was working on my final research project for the program and went to live with a community in a very remote part of Peru—a 700-person town at 4,000 meters elevation. My host family, except for my host father, spoke entirely Quechua. I was fluent in Spanish, but Quechua was definitely something I had to work on. I was only there for 10 days, and I remember the first couple of days feeling so isolated, not being able to communicate with anyone, not being able to talk. Then I developed a connection with my host mother and was able to sit down with her in the field while we were grazing the animals and point to a plant and say the plant’s name in Quechua. And she’d say yes and then point to another plant and say its name and half mime, half talk in Quechua the medicinal uses of that plant. I felt as if I had broken through a communication barrier and was able to really relate to her and to the family.
LILI: So when you went abroad it all started to come together for you—blending your sense of social activism with your major in biology and concentration in environmental studies. How do you see that continuing, and which—I don’t want to dichotomize it because I think both of them can coexist—but which of those fields are you most compelled by?
Carrie: It’s interesting that you use the word “dichotomize,” because I dichotomized the two until senior year, when I started having to think about what I want to prioritize after graduation. I felt really resistant to having to choose one area over the other. I think that’s why the Fulbright was appealing to me.

Lilli: You just learned today that you were chosen for a Fulbright. You’ll be going back to Peru, right?

Carrie: Yes, to study wild medicinal plant populations, looking for effects of climate change. I’m interested in how conservation biology can work alongside indigenous knowledge preservation to protect vulnerable species—part of the larger question of how science can best be used for the good of the people that need it, and how the needs of the people can direct the research that science does. I’ve always thought science should be used for the benefit of people. Whether that’s in environmental advocacy work—looking at environmental racism or justice—or I take a public health approach, I’m not sure yet. But I want to continue asking those questions, critically analyzing science and what science can be used for.

Carrie Tribble ’13 of Honolulu, Hawaii, is interning at the Genetic Alliance in Washington, D.C., before beginning her Fulbright-funded research in the fall. A member of Phi Beta Kappa and the scientific research society Sigma Xi, she graduated magna cum laude and with highest honors and several prizes in biology and botany.

Lili Rodriguez ’01 served as director of the Davis Center at Williams until July, when she was named associate dean for diversity, inclusion and community development at Swarthmore.
HILL: I don’t think it was really until sophomore year that our paths seriously started diverging. I started taking Arabic, and we both made our separate decisions on what we were going to do that summer. I went to Quantico, Va., for Officer Candidate School (OCS) with the Marines for six weeks—

Ladd: And I did an internship in finance, just to see if I liked it. But we were still spending a lot of time together. We ended up living together during fall of junior year, playing football, so it wasn’t until the middle of junior year that I think our relationship changed fundamentally.

HILL: You think our relationship changed fundamentally?

Ladd: I mean that you went abroad for Winter Study our junior year, and by the time you came back from Jordan, I'd already left for my semester in Istanbul. Then you were gone to Quantico for your second session of OCS before I got back to New York for the summer, so we spent half a year apart from each other. It was the first time we had been physically separated for a period of time. And I think it changed our relationship. But it gave me confidence that as we moved along our separate career paths—

HILL: You weren’t in my life in such a direct, tangible way then. But I don’t think it changed the way we think about each other or the fundamentals of our relationships as people who spent the past 21 years of our lives together. Though on the surface we look very similar, do similar activities, we’ve maintained our independence. Our close friends and family would say we have very distinct personalities.

Ladd: But our paths are diverging now, and we laid the groundwork for that when I accepted my internship at J.P. Morgan (doing investment banking) and you graduated from OCS. There haven’t been many people who have come out of Williams and gone into the Marine Corps. And the Marine Corps offered me—

HILL: Talk about how your study of history and Arabic influenced your decision to join the Marines.

Ladd: I learned a lot about investment banking, but even more about pushing myself, being accountable.
HILL: Well, my interest in the military was first inspired by our involvement with Iraq and Afghanistan over the past decade. That’s how I got interested in the Middle East, as well, because I saw our supposedly all-powerful military getting bogged down in two countries that I didn’t know much about. So I started doing more intensive reading on both wars and the regions and the history, and it became more fascinating, complex and more interesting to me. That’s why I pursued history at Williams as a major and the Middle East as a concentration, which helped me focus on a wider range of topics, including Arabic language, not just the military. The social, economic, political and cultural factors play a large role in military operations in the region. And if we’d had a better understanding of all those factors when we went into Iraq and Afghanistan, we would have been better equipped to perform there. So my education at Williams prepared me to think critically and have a broader perspective in the Marines.

Ladd: That’s pretty much the same reason I decided to study history, which I extended by studying political science, as America, especially its foreign policy, became bogged down. We grew up in the financial crisis at a time when bankers—investment bankers—were vilified as corrupt, greedy and even immoral. So I wasn’t entirely confident initially that I wanted to join that profession. It made me uncomfortable to tell people that my twin brother was going into the Marine Corps while I was going to Wall Street. But my internship convinced me of a lot of the things your summer in Quantico convinced you of, in that I knew this was an environment where I would be challenged. I would be able to maintain my morals and work with very smart people. I would be given a lot of responsibility. I learned a lot about investment banking but even more about pushing myself, being accountable. I’ll always fit time for serving others into my career no matter what I do or where I am. We have a certain set of principles and a desire and determination to work hard.

HILL: That’s one thing we both want to do—fulfill our potential. That’s a way of repaying everybody who’s helped us along the way and for all the opportunities we’ve been given.

Thomas Hilliard Hamrick ’13 and William Ladd Hamrick ’13 of Charlotte, N.C., graduated magna cum laude and are members of Phi Beta Kappa. Hill won second place in the Erastus C. Benedict, Class of 1821, Prize in History. Ladd won the 2013 Ephmanship Award.
A World of Study
See where some of this year’s fellowship recipients are headed

LAUREN AGOUBI ’13
is the college’s first Fulbright recipient to travel to Ireland, where she’ll study public advocacy and activism at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

LAYE SAMOURA ’15
has a Class of 1945 Student World Fellowship to travel to Guinea to study ethnic and political tensions.

JENNY TANG ’13
received a DAAD Graduate Scholarship to research the legacy of the 1972 “Documenta 5” at Humboldt University of Berlin’s art and new media department.

JARED HALLETT ’14,
a math and Chinese major,
is studying Cantonese in Hong Kong over the summer as the recipient of Williams’ Robert G. Wilmers Jr. 1990 Memorial Student Travel Abroad Fellowship. He also received a national Barry Goldwater Scholarship for mathematics, awarded to young scientists who expect to pursue a career in science research.

JOSÉ MARTINEZ ’10
won the Watson and Williams’ Dr. Herchel Smith fellowships his senior year and this year won a Gates-Cambridge Scholarship to complete a doctorate in politics at the University of Cambridge—studies that he’ll postpone for a year to conduct Fulbright-funded research in Amman, Jordan, on the historiography of the Arab Revolt, the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and the Black September developments of 1970.
A Truman Scholar. Two Watson Fellows. A Goldwater, a Gates-Cambridge, a DAAD, and 16 Fulbright winners. These are just some of the honors bestowed on Williams students and alumni this year—28 national fellowship winners in all. Nineteen seniors and 48 sophomores and juniors also received Williams-funded fellowships for travel, research and language study through the Office of Fellowships. The awards make it possible for students to pursue projects and graduate study in areas as diverse as they are—Middle Eastern politics; exile, queerness and art; number theory; religious pilgrimages; law; and tax policy—in destinations close to home and around the world.

**BRIAN MCGRAIL ’14**, who’ll head to Washington, D.C., received a Harry S. Truman Scholarship, intended to empower future leaders who plan to devote their careers to the public good.

**MADELYN LABELLA ’09** will study psychology at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities with a National Science Foundation Fellowship.

**BELLE BAXLEY ’13** received a Hubbard Hutchison Class of 1917 Memorial Fellowship to study writing in Haleiwa, Hawaii.

**ZOE GRUESKIN ’14** has a summer Russell Bostert Fellowship to conduct an interdisciplinary study of the environment and society in New Orleans, La.

**ABDULLAH AWAD ’13** plans to use his Thomas J. Watson Fellowship to travel to Chile, Brazil, Morocco, France, Jordan and India to conduct a project titled “Exile, Queerness and the Transformative Power of Art.” He’ll then spend two years at the University of Cambridge on a Williams Dr. Herchel Smith Fellowship.

On this map, pinpoints show the variety of fellowship destinations this year, while flags highlight some recipients’ plans. For an interactive map of all winners from 2013, visit www.williams.edu/fellowships.
On the first Saturday in April, members of the campus community came together to participate in Daring Change, a series of 12 thought-provoking talks about the future and about Williams. Throughout the TED-like program, the presenters—faculty, staff, students and alumni—pondered four questions: What will we learn? How will we learn? Who will we be? What difference will we make? Excerpts of all 12 talks are shared on the following pages. To see the presentations in their entirety and to offer your thoughts on Williams’ past, present and future, visit http://www.williams.edu/daring-change/.
What Will We Learn?

IT’S NOT EASY BEING GREEN (YET)  Jeannie Albrecht, assistant professor of computer science
Sustainability is the ultimate liberal art. It really does take this interdisciplinary knowledge. You have to know a little about the sciences—physics, chemistry, geosciences, computer science, math. But you also need to understand social interactions—political science, history, psychology, sociology, economics. … And then, of course, these are really hard problems. So we also need to have some appreciation for the way people think and human inquiry and moral reflection. And that’s what we can get from the humanities and the arts. … A liberal arts education is going to be key to solving these problems because [it] focuses on this interdisciplinary learning style, the breadth and the depth that you need to solve these problems. I think Jack Sawyer would agree—at Williams we’re really good at creating problem solvers. That’s really what we do best. … We need people who can solve these problems in a holistic way and look at all aspects, not just the little area of expertise that they’ve focused on. … While it isn’t easy being green yet, I think it will be in the not-too-distant future, and it’s our students who are going to take us to that sustainable future.

EMBRACING CONFLICT AND CHANGE  Leslie Brown, associate professor of history
The process of change engenders conflict, and we don’t like conflict. … We like calm. We like people to get along with each other. We don’t like yelling, we like rationality, we want things to go smoothly, but the process of change not only engenders conflict but it also engenders resistance and backlash. … Institutions in general, and institutions of higher education, then, change only very slowly. We creep forward because we don’t want to leave anybody behind. We creep forward because we want to see if anybody else is doing the same thing that we are doing. We creep forward—or not. … Our politeness, our fear of pissing people off allows us to make only small adjustments. … But the flash points of change in American history and in Williams history tell us that this doesn’t really help us to accomplish much. … Fifty years from now some historian will stand here and tell us that our embrace of politeness and civility has caused us to shun discontent. We have traded disorder for calm, and we’ve lost our sense of adventure. … Fifty years from now some historian, and our students and our alumni and our trustees and our faculty, will look back and … assess what we do now. They will assess whether we have encouraged, created and engaged conflict, because that’s what daring change is really all about.

SIX IMPOSSIBLE THINGS BEFORE BREAKFAST  Rick Spalding, college chaplain
To make you a little more comfortable with the idea of proposing beliefs, I’m going to invite an iconoclast into the conversation in the person of the poet laureate of New England—of a century or a century and a half ago—Emily Dickinson, who wrote in a letter to a dear friend: “…we both believe and disbelieve a hundred times an hour, which keeps believing nimble.” I like the idea of there being compelling disbelief. That’s some part of what we’re about here, isn’t it? And I like the idea that whatever believing we do should be nimble, our knees should be bent all the time. And I especially like, and I recognize, too, the truth that these things change by the hour. Except sometimes, to me anyway, the wavelength seems to shorten quite a bit—a hundred times a minute, perhaps. … Sometimes we think of beliefs as things that you have to sign on to in order to get your token, in order to belong in the room. But let’s think of them instead as things that we try on, just to see how they work, for a few minutes, remembering that we may disbelieve them a few times, even within the next few minutes.
THE DECLINE OF DISCIPLINES AND THE RENAISSANCE REVIVAL

**Satyan Devadoss**, Associate Professor of Mathematics

This is a snapshot of an image that my students and I developed in our course on phylogenetics. … On the left side of the circle it shows all the things you can major in, in roughly 15 categories. On the right side it shows all the careers you can be in, roughly 15 categories. And there's a line for every alum at Williams from the left side to the right side, from what you majored in to what you are doing now or had been doing before. … And here's the good news: No matter what you study, you can do anything you want. The disciplines are already broken down at Williams. … If you majored in English or literature, [the line] splits evenly into almost every possible career there is. If you look at history, it shatters into almost every possible career there is. … Here's economics. There's a little bit more bent to banking and finance. … Still, every field is open to you. … At Williams, we are not training you to go so deep that you’re only obsessed in that field, that you’re only equipped in that field. We’re asking you to ask general, big questions. How do you write clearly? How do you communicate your ideas well? Can you break down arguments? Can you work with others? These kinds of general tools that you learn from a Williams education apply across the fields.

THE POROUS CUBE

**Christina Olsen, Class of ‘56 Director of the Williams College Museum of Art**

Museums are looking and will look very different … over the next decade or two. They will become increasingly porous and increasingly transparent. They are becoming a space and a concept that is permeable and fluid … with objects, ideas and the mess of real life moving into them and out of them as never before. … People’s relationships to objects and to institutions are shifting. They’re becoming more mobile, more dispersed, more global and more multidirectional, which means of course that institutions have to as well. … Museum objects, both the physical object and its surrogate, will have increasingly complex lives, both inside the institution and outside of it on museum websites and on all kinds of other sites online. … Museums will have vastly larger publics, vastly more diverse publics than they ever have before. … And it won’t just be digital images that will flow out of the museum—it will also be museum objects. And these will be shared and exchanged between museums as never before. … What does any of this mean for the college or university art museum? Many are ideally suited to grapple with the implications of the museum’s new and growing porosity, to experiment with the possibilities, to rethink things and turn them around, turn them upside down.

LIVING AS LEARNING: THE FUTURE OF EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION AT WILLIAMS

**Sophia Rosenfeld ’15**

The value of experiential education … is not about doing community service or conducting an anthropological study. … Rather, the goal is to meld the personal with the intellectual. … Before [spending Winter Study on a homestay in] Portland, I never thought about fluency. … It wasn’t until Portland, where I helped to teach English to the newest of newcomers at Portland High School, that I realized how precious this ability of mine is. … I can read and write and speak English fluently. … I am fluent in the knowledge of navigating life in America. I know how to use public transportation, how to send an email, how to tell a doctor that I’m feeling sick. My time in Portland taught me there is a lot that I know, but it also taught me there are certain experiences that I can never know, certain feelings that I can only imagine. I have never fled my town because of war. I don’t know what it’s like to be a newcomer in an unknown country. I have never not been able to return home.
Who Will We Be?

THE FUTURE OF THE PAST  CHARLES B. DREW ’58, EPHRAIM WILLIAMS PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN HISTORY  We have got to be able to recruit and hold an absolutely first-class faculty at Williams College. And this is not easy. We’re an undergraduate institution, and people come out of graduate school hell-bent on being a scholar, of replicating the career of their mentors in graduate school. But what we are able to do here, because we have the resources to do it, is to approach these candidates and say, “If you want to teach, and particularly if you want to teach undergraduates at a place where it doesn’t get any better, Williams College is the place to do that.” We can also tell them that we will support their scholarship, that we have the means for sabbaticals and for research grants and for travel to professional meetings. You can be both a teacher and a scholar here, and we want you to be a teacher and a scholar. We want you to be engaged with your profession, and we want you to teach at a very high level.

CHANGING COUNTRY, CHANGING CAMPUS  CHRIS WINTERS ’95, ASSOCIATE PROVOST  For the past 20 years it has been relatively easy for colleges to get more selective every year, because every year there have been more kids to choose from than the year before. But we’ve peaked. That pool of high school students is leveling off, and a lot of colleges are going to feel acute pain as a result. Why? Because the underlying demographic changes will not be evenly distributed. Up until now every region has experienced year-over-year growth, but now the only growth area is in the South, and all the others will be basically flat or in decline. Schools that have geographic strengths in growing markets will benefit, and schools in declining markets will lose as this demographic wave crashes over them. … We know one more thing about the pipeline of high school grads, and that is that these high schoolers are getting more racially diverse. By 2027, total U.S. high school grads are expected to be almost 57 percent minority, driven by growth in the Hispanic and, to a lesser extent, Asian populations. To those U.S. demographic data we can apply another set of data, this time internal. We know that our popularity, or market penetration, if you will, varies by region and also by race and thus by race within region.

50 SHADES OF BEIGE  OLIVIA POLK ’16  We know so intimately the ways in which students have served as activists in claiming their racial, sexual and gender identities. But … we are now so diverse as a campus that our tent need not be widened in terms of inherent identities like color and orientation. … Perhaps instead the tent that describes this Williams community is made of patches or swaths of cloth, all representing the different colors of the identities that we now feel empowered to claim. … We look more diverse, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that we’re thinking more diversely or that we’re really analyzing and claiming the fact that we have these different identities. … What are the next set of identities that students will feel that they need to claim on this campus through activism that will change the shape of our tent and not just its color? … I’m mixed-race. I’m read as black, socialized white. I’m a political socialist. I come from a place of economic privilege. I’m queer, I’m identified as pansexual, but I was educated in a very strong Catholic tradition. My identity is as disparate and incongruous as they come. But maybe that’s the point: that my identity is disparate and incongruous, and I am aware of it. … As students on this campus we’re beginning to make that transition to the deeper awareness of the fluidity of our identities.
CHALLENGING GAME CHANGERS  
Ifok Inyang ’11, Senior Consultant, Booz Allen Hamilton, Washington, D.C.  
The future of Williams College is your responsibility. You shouldn’t take this as some four-year experiment where you get a degree and that’s that, but you are actually the driving force behind this ecosystem that we call the purple bubble. Alumni, faculty, staff, trustees, administrators—we all play our part. But at the end of the day the greatness of this institution depends on the battles you fight as students, and it always has. … The goal is that students should be game-changers, not afraid to speak up when necessary regardless of who the audience is. … The goal for Williams must be not just to produce students who are smarter after their four years, but who are better husbands and wives, mothers and daughters, better citizens, because what difference can we make if we’re not game-changers? And that doesn’t happen unless we’re given that opportunity to … speak up when necessary. If we’re not given the opportunity to achieve what we want with the real possibility to fail… It is in those moments that we learn something so valuable that you won’t find in a textbook, that you won’t pick up on the field, on a court or even in a theater. It is that confidence, that agency, that you learn over time by being given that opportunity to be a game-changer.

REACHING THE PURPLE MOUNTAINTOP: INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY AT WILLIAMS AND BEYOND  
Meg Bossing ’05, Manager of Community Engagement, Boston Area Rape Crisis Center  
For community work to really work, it has to be related to a shared identity, and that goes two ways. One is that … we have to feel like our identity is shaped by being a part of that community. … The other piece of this is that we have to feel that the community is shaped by our being a part of it, that it’s responsive to and aware of and flexible about changing because of our impact on it and our impact in it. And that is part of the difference that we’ll make. We are all very familiar with this image—Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a student on the other. … I have an idea of what it means. … Faculty are not up on a pedestal, they’re not stuck behind a podium in a huge lecture hall … and they’re not on a computer screen. They’re with us, engaged in the learning process. We’re holding one another accountable for our teaching and for our learning. And that’s at the very core of the liberal arts experience.

CITIZEN WILLIAMS: COLLEGE AS COMMUNITY MEMBER  
Kairav Sinha ’15, Founding Director, Williams Speaks  
Whether you’re teaching public speaking or science, tutoring or mentoring, volunteering at the nursing home or the food bank, doing this work means being exposed to a broader variety of perspectives than you could ever get staying on campus, and it means taking what you learn at Williams and applying it to the real world. … The types of engagement that the college should be working to foster are the ones that encourage this two-way exchange, matching a student talent to a community need. Part of being a good citizen is for Williams and its students to keep an eye out for our neighbors, not just because the college is a large employer, but because at the end of the day we’re all just sharing this little piece of the planet, and the issues that affect our neighbors in North Adams affect us as well, even if we’re just here for four years. … “The presence of the college in a New England town offers a range of opportunities for the college and its students to relate to the town and county, which adds a good deal of meaning to their common existence. … These situations add a dimension of contact with reality that enlarges and deepens the lives of many.” That [is what Jack Sawyer said] 50 years ago, and I think it’s still incredibly relevant today.
The strange story—in fact and fiction—of how 75 Chinese workers came to live and work in 19th century North Adams. By Denise DiFulco
It was a chaotic scene on the afternoon of June 13, 1870, at the North Adams train depot. Thousands of people stood at the platform awaiting the 4:15 from Troy, N.Y., an arrival that would transform the bustling manufacturing town. The incoming locomotive carried 75 Chinese workers from California, their passage paid for by local shoe manufacturer Calvin Sampson. Among the young men, only the foreman, Charlie Sing, spoke English. Unaware that they’d been hired as strikebreakers to foil the local shoemakers’ union, the workers were about to encounter a mob of agitators and curiosity seekers. It’s no exaggeration to say that the entire nation was paying attention to the arrival of the “Celestials” in Western Massachusetts.
characters, many of them taken directly from the history and landscape of 19th century North Adams.

“I was fascinated with the effect on a relatively insulated, small community of the injection of a very strange thing for that community—these Chinese workers,” Shepard says.

Most major newspapers sent reporters to meet the train in North Adams and published editorials decrying the effects of the Chinese on the American labor force. “On the West Coast, the Chinese already were seen as a labor threat,” says Scott Wong, the James Phinney Baxter III Professor of History and Public Affairs at Williams, who assisted Shepard with her research. “They came in [to Sampson’s factory] to work as strike breakers, so it was bad for the Chinese as far as their reputation. But it sped the dispersal of the Chinese from the West Coast to the East Coast.”

During their time in North Adams, Wong says, the 75 men, ages 14 to 22, constituted the largest concentration of Chinese living east of the Mississippi. Initially they were regarded with suspicion. Certain of a confrontation the day they came to town, Sampson, the factory owner, had boarded the locomotive at an earlier stop, reportedly with several guns on his belt and a small army of private police to fend off any attacks. But once the train arrived at its destination and its passengers disembarked, the crowd appeared more awe-struck than agitated.

Shepard describes the scene and the encounter with the striking union workers, members of the Order of the Knights of St. Crispin, in a passage partly fictionalized and partly reconstructed from newspaper accounts: “Two rocks were thrown, one landing without damage on the shoulder of the smallest boy, and the two guilty French Canadians were put in the lockup at once, nothing more to transpire from them. Although the Crispins wished all kinds of bad luck to Sampson, their hands remained in their pockets, fingerling the small few coins left from their last pay, and the crowd parted, a mix of curiosity and disappointment already washing away the dangerous anticipation like river water receding from a floodplain.”

The novel is centrally focused on the relationship between Sampson and his wife Julia—who were childless—and the factory foreman, Charlie Sing. At a time when most married couples had children, the fact that the Sampsons had none opened up a rich vein of emotions for Shepard to tap into.

Herself the child of a Chinese mother and a white, Jewish father, Shepard says one of the most important moments in writing the book was when she decided that Julia, after several miscarriages, would give birth to a mixed-race baby.

“That’s where I began taking everything factual I had learned and building something invented out of those facts,” Shepard says. “It’s when I began to think, I’m not interested in exactly what did or didn’t happen. I’m interested in what’s most useful fictionally to explore what I’m most interested in factually.”

Before she even began writing, Shepard conducted extensive research over the course of several years, creating a solid foundation of truth upon which to build her fiction. With the help of several Williams students, she combed through the archives at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts library and the North Adams Historical Society, which had a small section on shoe manufacturing and some records of the Chinese workers. Another important primary source of information she encountered were old North Adams maps, some of which listed every street and the names and occupants of each home.

“That was extremely helpful, visually,” Shepard says. Some of the maps were redrawn almost every year, so she could tell if someone had moved, if a street name had changed or if a house had burned down.

Shepard roamed the neighborhoods of North Adams, trying to associate the two-dimensional maps with real, physical spaces to recreate where her characters lived and how they moved about their lives. She also made extensive use of the photographs she first encountered at Lee’s lecture—one of the few physical remnants of the 10 years the Chinese spent in North Adams. Sampson had commissioned a group photograph of the men outside the factory when they first arrived and in subsequent years. But over time the workers also had individual portraits done in one of the three photography studios in town.
Some men chose to be photographed as Mandarin intellectuals in traditional garb. Others wore Western suits. The photos were sent home to China or used as calling cards that were given to the local church volunteers who tutored them in English. Some of the prints had the men’s names written on the back; all of them helped bring the workers to life.

“What I try to do and what Karen tries to do is to suggest the emotional affects of the sitters,” says Lee, a former fellow at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute. The group and individual photographs were the basis of his 2008 nonfiction book *A Shoemaker’s Story: Being Chiefly about French Canadian Immigrants, Enterprising Photographers, Rascal Yankees and Chinese Cobblers in a Nineteenth-Century Factory Town*.

Seeing the photographs, Shepard says, “gave me a sense of what the men wanted. And when you’re writing fiction, a basic place that you’re starting from and going back to all the time is: What do my characters want, and what are they willing to do to get it?”

The Chinese workers were hardly the first immigrants to land in North Adams. As Shepard writes in the opening pages of *The Celestials*, “One-third of the town’s inhabitants were foreigners—largely Irish, French Canadian and Welsh—at work in the textile mills and tanneries, the paper factories and on the formidable Hoosac Tunnel. … Five languages were preached from the town’s pulpits. And now another headed toward town: Cantonese, the language of the 75 Chinese male workers, most of whom had barely attained their majority, on the late train from Troy, and Omaha before that, and all the way back to their start, 13 days prior, in Oakland, California. *The Celestials* were coming.”

But unlike their immigrant predecessors, the Chinese lived in North Adams for only 10 years. Though it’s not known for certain what happened when their contracts expired, Wong says, some probably returned to California, while others flocked to Chinatowns in Boston and New York.

Meanwhile, countless attempts were being made to prevent the Chinese from working legally in the U.S. In 1882, President Chester A. Arthur finally signed into law the Chinese Exclusion Act, which restricted Chinese immigration to the U.S. and prevented Chinese from becoming citizens. It remained in effect until 1943.

Of the 75 workers, only two remained in North Adams. One was Lue Gim Gong, who was adopted by Fannie Burlingame, daughter of a wealthy merchant and farmer. He tended the family’s gardens in Massachusetts and Florida. His life was recounted in the novel *Wooden Fish Songs* by Ruthanne Lum McCunn and the biography *Gift of the Unicorn: The Story of Lue Gim Gong, Florida’s Citrus Wizard*, by Virginia Aronson.

The other who stayed in town for a time was Sing, who later married Ida Wilburn, a Virginia native. Ida is a character in *The Celestials*, though Shepard changed the details of how she and Sing met.

Late in the writing process, Shepard located two of Sing’s relatives and spoke with them—a risky proposition, she says. For one, it turned out that in some ways she knew more about Sing’s past than they did. Plus she’d had some reservations about fictionalizing aspects of his life. Ultimately, she says, it was a necessary, even worthwhile risk.

“It’s like if you wrote a memoir about your mom and let her read it,” she says. “Of course you’re not trying to make your mom suffer, but you are trying to tell a story. I guess the guiding principle in retrospect was I hoped every reader would read this book and feel I had treated all of the characters, fictional or not, the way we would all like to be treated: with a little bit of briskness and a lot of honesty and generosity.”

Denise DiFulco is a freelance writer based in Cranford, N.J. She currently is writing a 20th-century historical novel and is a member of the Historical Novel Society.

*Photos: title page courtesy of North Adams Public Library; Karen Shepard ’87 by Roman Iwasiwka; illustrations by Theodore Davis from Harper’s Weekly; Charlie Sing and Ida Wilburn courtesy of Erica Mae Peterson and Barbara Lane.*

OTHER BOOKS BY KAREN SHEPARD  www.karen-shepard.com


*An Empire of Women* (2000) A portrayal of the prickly bond between three generations of women with a rich family history.
Our smartphones are always within reach. Any question we have can be Googled in seconds from almost anywhere—the car, the kitchen, the classroom. We have access to more information than ever before, and that access is only becoming more immediate as devices become smaller. But what do we do with all this knowledge, and does it help—or hinder—our understanding of the world?

Stephen Grimm ’93, associate professor of philosophy at Fordham University in New York City, intends to find out. With $3.85 million in grants, he’s undertaking a wide-ranging, three-year project to examine human understanding—including the various ways human beings understand the world, how these types of understanding might be improved, and how they might be combined to produce a more sophisticated, integrated sense of understanding.

Grimm’s project, “Varieties of Understanding,” combines philosophy, psychology and theology. With his collaborators—University of California, Berkeley, psychologist Tania Lombrozo, New York University philosopher Michael Strevens and Princeton Theological Seminary theologian Gordon Graham—he’ll distribute nearly $2 million in funding to other researchers and convene two conferences on the Fordham campus—one halfway through the project and one at the end—to showcase the results of the research.

Funded by a grant from the John Templeton Foundation and additional support from the Henry Luce Foundation, Fordham and UC-Berkeley, “Varieties of Understanding” is a natural extension of the work Grimm has been doing for years. He’s an epistemologist who, like others in his field, has long asked questions about what makes our beliefs rational or irrational, justified or unjustified, well-supported or not. “In focusing on whether we can know humdrum things, such as that we have two hands, epistemologists have lost sight of more prized intellectual goods, such as understanding,” he says.

Grimm hopes the research will ask and answer a wide range of questions, including how understanding differs from knowledge. “I speak about understanding involving ‘seeing’ or ‘grasping’ connections among a range of facts, but what exactly does that amount to?” he asks. “How does it differ from the more straightforward attitude of just believing something, without ‘seeing’ how that thing is connected with others?”

He also hopes to gain insight into how understanding differs between students of science and those of literature, history or philosophy. “For example, the methods of science seem so different from the methods of philosophy that it’s natural to think they each help us to understand the world in distinct ways,” he says. “But how is that possible, exactly?”

Grimm’s interest in the study of understanding was sparked during an epistemology course he took at Williams his sophomore year. Speaking of his own “Mark Hopkins and the log” experience and how it relates to this project, Grimm says there is another goal he hopes to reach: “I would like to figure out which educational strategies are the most conducive to understanding, because I think that is the fundamental goal of education, rather than merely gaining knowledge.”

Visit www.varietiesofunderstanding.com for more information about Grimm’s project.

—Julia Munemo
An Award-Winning Exhibition

The Williams College Museum of Art has won the 2012 award for Outstanding Exhibition in a University Museum for Sol LeWitt: The Well-Tempered Grid. The prize was presented by the Association of Art Museum Curators (AAMC) at its Annual Awards for Excellence in May.

The Well-Tempered Grid, curated by Charles “Mark” Haxthausen, professor of art history, was the first exhibition to focus on the centrality of the grid in LeWitt's art. The exhibition was organized in conjunction with Haxthausen’s seminar on Sol LeWitt’s wall drawings.

“My goal was to use the exhibition as a means to give my students insights into the nature of the mind that conceived the wall drawings,” he says. “An examination of LeWitt’s evolving use of the grid across the media of drawings, gouaches, prints, artist’s books, structures and wall drawings proved to be the ideal vehicle for that purpose.”

AAMC aims to support and promote the work of museum curators as well as heighten public understanding of the curator’s role in art museums.

Celebrating CS:25

In 1993, five years after Williams first established its computer science program, a new faculty member named Andrea Danyluk was asked what equipment she’d need to do her work. Her request—a SPARCstation 20 with four 50 MHz processors, 512 MB of memory and 1.05 GB of disk space, plus a separate 10 GB external hard drive—was unprecedented. The computer itself cost $18,000.

Much has changed since then. In terms of equipment alone, today’s inexpensive laptops have as much memory as Danyluk’s first external hard drive. Still, says fellow computer science professor Duane Bailey, “Computer scientists are less concerned with the details of technology du jour and more with the core questions we’ve been asking for years.”

That sentiment was repeated often during a weekend-long celebration of the department’s 25th anniversary in April.

Williams first began offering courses in introductory computer science, algorithms and programming language as part of the mathematics curriculum in the mid-1970s. But core questions, such as what is a computer, what is information, and how can information be structured efficiently, increasingly demanded a dedicated faculty that could ask and answer them through research and in the classroom. When a small group of math professors created the computer science department, “The split was natural,” says Kim Bruce, its first chair.

Over time, the department has grown to eight faculty members who offer some two dozen courses including “Artificial Intelligence,” “Digital Designs and Modern Architecture” and “The Socio-Techno Web.” The course offerings draw from and reach into nearly every discipline. “Our faculty believe in the liberal arts, enjoy teaching and actively involve students in research,” Bailey says. “While few students come here thinking of themselves as computer scientists, 15 to 20 graduate each year sharing our passion.”

And because many students major in a second subject, their understanding of computer science—and everything that grows out of it—is that much broader. Bailey calls it “the softer sensibility” that Williams alumni bring to the careers they choose. “It’s hard to imagine what a computer will look like in another 25 years, but our students will be able to contribute in meaningful ways when that time comes.”

—J.M.
On Being 18 in America

Two months before enrolling in Williams College, where he’d been accepted early decision, Williamstown native Dylan Dethier ’14 found himself feeling like he hadn’t really done anything with his life.

So he deferred admission, loaded up his Subaru with golf clubs, collared shirts and granola bars, and set out to drive solo across the country. His goal: to play a round of golf in all 48 contiguous states.

Dethier first learned to play golf on a shoes-optional par-30 course near his grandparents’ house on the coast of Maine. He came to love the game “more than just about anything,” he says. But as he spent the next 10 months driving 35,000 miles and playing on some of the country’s most celebrated greens as well as on $10 municipal courses, he realized something. Though “golf is famous for dividing people by skin color, by age, by wallet size,” he says, “there’s a surprising equality to the game.”

His experiences became the seeds for 18 in America: A Young Golfer’s Epic Journey to Find the Essence of the Game. Playing alongside war veterans, autoworkers and pros alike, he learned more about the universality of golf, how he was changed by each round and how he more than succeeded at capturing “a cross-section of America using golf as a lens.”

I walked with Randy toward our balls until he broke the silence. “Haven’t seen you around here.” I couldn’t tell if he was curious or just didn’t like the awkward quiet.

“No, I’m not even from Michigan, actually,” I told him. “I’m from Massachusetts, just traveling through the area.”

He raised an eyebrow. “Traveling through?” Again the skepticism—suspicion, even—same tone as the fireman. I was guessing people didn’t “travel through” Flint very often.

“Well, sort of. I’m trying to go to every state this year, playing golf and talking to people. I finished high school this spring and—”

“What?”

“Congratulations. Graduation, that’s a fine accomplishment.”

“Oh—thanks.” I was taken aback. In Williamstown, graduating high school was just something you did. I didn’t expect to be really, genuinely congratulated for it any more than I did for brushing my teeth. But then this really wasn’t Williamstown.

“So you’re going everywhere?” he continued. “For how long?”

“Until next June. That’s the plan, at least.”

He gave a low whistle. “Damn. Now that’s pretty cool.”

—from 18 in America (Scribner, 2013), by Dylan Dethier ’14

Other books


Heroic Leadership: An Influence Taxonomy of 100 Exceptional Individuals. By George R. Goethals, Williams’ Dennis A. Meenan ’54 Professor of Leadership Studies, Emeritus, and Scott T. Allison. Routledge, 2013. The authors group leaders into 10 categories and demonstrate how heroism and leadership are intertwined.


Visit ephbookshelf.williams.edu to see more works by members of the Williams community and to learn how to submit new publications.
In much of basic science, mice serve as important models of human conditions. Researchers can manipulate their genes, linking them with specific functions, and can translate the findings to humans. But the many ways in which mice differ from humans can present challenges to that research—and to the mice themselves.

“There was a pretty steep initial learning curve in taking care of the mice,” says Rebecca Maher ’13, who, with classmates Uttara Partap and Christine Schindler, was honored in the spring by the American Physiological Society. The trio won three out of 13 David S. Bruce Excellence in Undergraduate Research awards presented at the association’s Experimental Biology conference—the first time three students from Williams have won in the same year.

Lab mice are usually housed in temperatures of around 20 degrees Celsius (68 degrees Fahrenheit), which is comfortable for humans but too cold for mice, causing them to suffer “cold stress.” Maher’s research examines ways to alleviate that stress. Simply housing mice together or in nests could do the trick, she found after testing different conditions and monitoring the mice’s heart rates, blood pressure and metabolic rates.

Partap and Schindler worked together on two sides of an important finding related to the drug rapamycin, which has caught the attention of many researchers as a potential longevity drug. The two students found that rapamycin can cause insulin resistance, pancreatic damage and diabetes in mice. They also found that the effects of rapamycin were different for male and female mice and were, to varying degrees, reversible.

Both Maher and Partap have previous research experience. Maher was a research assistant at the Yale Cancer Center. Partap, meanwhile, worked with Steven Swoap, Williams professor and chair of biology, for two years and, with David Hill ’73, director of Quinnipiac University’s Global Public Health Program, co-authored two published papers on public health that grew out of a 2010 Winter Study course at Williams.

Working on a thesis was a much different experience for the students. “It allowed me to more independently think about, design and work on a project that really interests me,” Partap says.

As impressive as their results were, Swoap says a thesis project is less about getting the right answers than it is about learning to design experiments and develop and test hypotheses. Even if students fail to get the results they initially expect, it doesn’t constitute a failed experiment, he says.

“Students at Williams own their projects, becoming intellectually engaged and invested in them,” Swoap says. “They emotionally and intellectually understand the project. They know it in and out.”

—Joon Hun Seong ’14

History Professor Pursues “New Directions”

Two new research projects are taking Williams history professor Sara Dubow ’91, the recipient of an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation New Directions Fellowship, back to school in the fall.

While finishing her Bancroft Prize-winning book Ourselves Unborn: A History of the Fetus in Modern America (Oxford University Press, 2010), Dubow became interested in how law, social movements and politics intersect. She continued to pursue the question in her ongoing research as well as in the classroom, teaching courses such as “The 14th Amendment and the Meanings of Equality,” “Gender, Law and Politics in U.S. History” and “The Abortion Debate: The Politics of Abortion in the U.S., 1973-Present.”

But her next two projects—one on the history and politics of “conscience clauses” that allow individual health care providers and institutions with religious or moral objections to refuse to provide abortions or other reproductive health services, and another on gender, sexuality and the 14th Amendment—require deeper knowledge of and training in constitutional and administrative law and legal history. The $188,000 New Directions Fellowship will allow Dubow to work on the projects while taking classes as a visiting researcher at Yale Law School and traveling to archives and libraries, including the newly opened papers of the American Civil Liberties Union (from 1970 to 2000) at Princeton University.

The first project, tentatively titled “From Conscience Clauses to Conscience Wars,” explores the origins, development and consequences of conscience clauses from 1973 to 2012. The second project, tentatively titled “At the Heart of Liberty,” seeks to trace the social and political history of arguments about the meanings of gender difference and equality through a series of 14th Amendment cases.

New Directions Fellowships are intended to enable “established scholar-teachers to pursue formal substantive and methodological training in addition to the Ph.D.,” according to the Mellon Foundation. “[They] are meant to be viewed as longer-term investments in scholars’ intellectual range and productivity.”
Each semester, Antonia Foias' anthropology students visit the Rose Study Gallery at the Williams College Museum of Art to view ancient artifacts. And, each semester, her students have the same reaction to one object in particular—a mummified hand.

“They are horrified,” Foias says. “Shocked.”

There are no records of how the hand came into the museum’s collection, and for years there was no background or date to place it in any specific time period.

Until now.

Last fall Foias and Elizabeth Hart '14, an anthropology and biology major doing an independent study project on Egyptian religion, proposed DNA and radiocarbon testing of the mummy hand, presumed to be of Egyptian origin. The first step was having it X-rayed at the Williamstown Art Conservation Center to see if it would be possible to remove a piece of bone for testing.

“The hand is no longer lost on the time line of history. It can be reclassified as a living reminder of an ancient civilization.”

Elizabeth Hart ’14, anthropology and biology major

Mystery of the Mummified Hand
"I placed my hand over the X-ray photograph," says Foias, who found that the mummy hand was larger than her own. She recalls asking, "Was it a man? A tall woman?"

A colleague at Texas A&M University determined that the hand definitely belonged to an adult—and that it was in fact possible to remove a sample of bone from the wrist to send out for analysis.

Testing done at the Paleo-DNA Laboratory at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, confirmed the hand’s Egyptian origins. Its DNA profile was from haplotype L3, one of the oldest mitochondrial branches that diverged directly from the line of the mitochondrial Eve, the most recent common matrilineal ancestor of all currently living, anatomically modern humans.

Subsequent testing at Beta Analytic, one of the world’s largest radiocarbon dating labs, placed the hand between 70 and 230 C.E., the Roman period in Egypt. “During this time, mummification was on the decline,” says Hart, “which leads me to believe that this individual lived in a small settlement that hadn’t undergone extensive Romanization.”

The hand, Hart adds, “is no longer lost on the time line of history. It can be reclassified as a living reminder of an ancient civilization.”

But the answers Foias and Hart discovered raise even more questions. “The end of the story,” Foias says, “is when we find out who he or she was and we can reunite the hand with the rest of the body.”
Broken Silence
By Pacifique Irankunda ’13

On a fall afternoon a few years ago, inside my dorm room at Deerfield Academy, I started hearing gunshots. The sounds brought back images from my home village in Burundi. This disturbed me. Finally, I covered my ears. From time to time, I would uncover them, hoping the sounds had ended, but the gunshots went on and on.

As dinnertime approached, students started coming out of their rooms, and I joined them in the hallway.

“Were you just watching a movie in your room?” I asked one of my dorm mates.

“Oh, I’m sorry! Was it loud?” he said.

“No, no!” I said. “I just was curious to know what movie you were watching.”

“It wasn’t actually a movie,” he said. “I was playing video games.”

“Huh,” I thought. I did not ask for an explanation.

At the time, I didn’t know what video games were, only that they made noises that sounded like gunfire.

There was a time when silence reigned all over my village. Rivers were loud, but their rhythmic sounds were part of the silence. People worked in their fields with hoes. There were no cars, no factories. I imagine that to Westerners that time and place would have resembled the Stone Age. Planes flew over the village, but never more than once a week.

There was a season that broke this silence. The time of crops growing. From the early stage of the seeds’ sprouting, parents would send their kids into the fields to make noise and chase away the birds that ate the seedlings. This went on for a month, and after that the silence would come again.

I liked it to be quiet, and enjoyed the silence, but this silence did not last. Another season erupted and broke all the silence. It was the season of war. It came in the fall when I was 4, and it lasted for more than a decade.

In this new season, just as in any other, some things died and others were born. Everything was transformed. People moved from their houses to live in the forests. New words appeared—ibinywamaraso ("the blood drinkers") and ivyamfurambi ("deeds of the wrong first born")—and new expressions: kamwe kamwe ku ruyeye ku rwembe ("one after another, gently on a razor"). This slogan and others like it said not to worry if you did not kill many people. The secret was only to keep killing.

This new season made children my age wish they had been born blind and deaf so they couldn’t see their houses being burned and their mothers being raped before being killed, or hear the sounds of bombs or their parents screaming and crying. But at other times, you wished you had the eyes of a hawk and the ears of a deer. These were times when you needed to distinguish, in the dark, a black stump with branches from a man dressed in black pointing a gun, or a thin string tied to a mine from a long blade of grass lying across your path. Times when you needed to know that the sound of raindrops falling on leaves wasn’t that of militiamen approaching on tiptoes. For a while you wished for something, and after another while you wished for the opposite. You learned to cover your eyes in the day; you learned to see in the dark.

In the hallway at Deerfield, the boy, whom I’ll call Luke, went on talking about video games as we waited for our classmates to come out of their rooms so we could go to dinner together, as we often did. Almost everything Luke said was so confusing that I asked him:

“What do you mean by saying you killed so-and-so?”

“Well, my enemies. Paci, how often do you play video games?”

“Actually, what are they?”

The other students looked at each other and smiled.

“Come on, Paci!” Luke led me to his room. He took up a little device in his hands and turned on his computer.

“These are my enemies.” He pointed at the computer screen, at images of people with guns. “Once you press this button, they start moving and you hunt them, see?” Out of the computer’s speakers came the sound of shooting, the sound of war.
“But at other times, you wished you had the eyes of a hawk and the ears of a deer.”
—Pacifique Irankunda ’13

Ears of a Deer

The Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA) owns 83 prints from Eadweard Muybridge’s massive portfolio of nearly 800 photographic studies of the movement of men, women, children and animals. Published in 1887, the set, called Animal Locomotion, is the capstone of Muybridge’s career as a photographer.

Born Edward James Muggeridge in England in 1830, Muybridge established a photographic practice in San Francisco in 1860. Twelve years later, he attempted studies of the moving horse under the patronage of the industrialist and politician Leland Stanford. The studies brought him international recognition and the commission to carry out the Animal Locomotion project at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1879 he debuted his invention, the zoopraxiscope, a primitive version of later motion picture devices that showed a sequence of still photos in rapid succession.

The prints, including Plate #681, pictured above, a collotype of eating and running deer, became part of WCMA’s collection in the 1960s. The prints are featured on the syllabi of several art history and studio art classes. But faculty in biology, chemistry, comparative literature, geosciences and history also regularly use the Muybridge works in their teaching.