YESTERDAY, TODAY
Seeing our history
A BELOVED CLASS DAY CEREMONY, in which a senior drops a watch from the 80-foot spire of Thompson Memorial Chapel, turned 100 in June. Tradition holds that if the watch breaks—which it did this year—the entire class will be lucky. For more from Commencement Weekend, visit commencement.williams.edu.
2016 Class President Ryan Farley drops a watch donated by Goodman's Jewelers.
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If you’ve picked up a newspaper or read your Facebook feed recently, you’ve probably seen colleges maligned for being politically correct and for not preparing students for “the real world,” instead bending to pressures to create safe spaces, erase difficult history and shield students from opinions and perspectives that might offend them.

But as Davis Center Director Ferentz Lafargue wrote in these pages (“Welcome to the ‘Real World,’” spring 2016), such criticisms are gross oversimplifications and distortions—caricatures—of what’s actually going on. This is an incredibly interesting time to be on a college campus. There’s no place I’d rather be, and I’m proud and inspired by the work our students are doing, as individuals and as a community, to push for necessary change and greater understanding at Williams and in the world. A crucial element of our role as teachers is helping them learn to do that important work effectively.

A recent case in point: our campus’ consideration of a mural in the Black Room of the newly renovated Log. The mural depicts Col. Ephraim Williams and Mohawk leader Theyanoguin preparing for the “Bloody Morning Scout,” which, later that day, would cost them their lives. In the fall I asked that the mural, the subject of growing debate within our community, be covered temporarily to allow the conversation to proceed as thoughtfully as possible. The mural raised some important issues: How do we think about such a depiction of our history—what did it mean when it was created in the 1940s, what does it represent today, and what does it say about how far we’ve come and about the distance we still have to go to become the truly inclusive community we aspire to be?

Where better than a college campus to ask such essential questions, and who better than Ephs to examine them?

That’s what we did throughout the spring semester, led admirably by the Committee on Campus Space and Institutional History, chaired by History Department Chair Karen Merrill, the Frederick Rudolph ’42 Class of 1965 Professor of American Culture. The committee invited input from the community, and the group’s six student members convened a public forum in Goodrich Hall in April. I found the forum to be the epitome of informed, respectful discourse. Strong opinions of many sorts were expressed, and that evening Goodrich was a space that was safe for disagreement, not safe from it. Our faculty are deeply engaged in this issue as well, as you’ll see in our cover story, a conversation led by Michael Beschloss ’77 with history professors Leslie Brown and Charles Dew ’58 and Annie Valk, associate director for public humanities.

And so the mural of Ephraim Williams and Theyanoguin will remain in the Log. We’ll add important context about the history it depicts and the campus-wide conversation about it. You can read the committee’s report and recommendations at sites.williams.edu/csih. The committee’s work will continue through the fall, as it considers other places on campus in which the history of our college is represented.

Historical memory is critical. So, too, is the evolution of knowledge. We’re not in the business of expunging history, shying away from debate or standing still. We’ve seen this year a wonderful demonstration of the intellectual enterprise applied to questions about Williams itself, and we’ve heard voices from all parts of our community, whose perspectives are incredibly diverse and deeply valued. That’s how we engage in complicated conversations. That is Williams.

—Adam Falk, president
TRUTHS ABOUT FINANCIAL AID

The article “Financial Aid at Williams” (spring 2016) states: “The sticker price of a Williams education has doubled in the last 30 years.” It should have read “in the last 18 years.” I am looking at my daughter’s tuition advice letter dated April 17, 1997. Total charges for the 1997-1998 academic year were $29,350. Today, they are $63,290. The compound growth rate of total charges during that time was 4.4 percent, while the consumer price index was up 2.2 percent. The article could have done more to address the increase in the sticker price that makes financial aid so important. One clue to this increase can be found on p. 10 of the same edition of Williams Magazine (“Four Faculty Receive Tenure”). I don’t recall from my years at Williams any faculty hired with tenure to teach Latina/o Identities, Constructions, Contestations.

—Tom Lockhart ’75, Golden Valley, Minn.

HOW THE REAL WORLD WORKS

I read the essays by Mr. Lafargue in both Williams Magazine (“Welcome to the ‘Real’ World,” spring 2016) and, later, in the Washington Post (March 28, 2016). It was an interesting opinion of criticism to the “coddling” referred to by Mr. Lafargue. However, I think the author is misinterpreting the criticism. Mr. Lafargue states, “The real culprits—on campuses and in the real world—are the persistent effects of homophobia, income inequality, misogyny, poverty, racism, sexism, white supremacy and xenophobia.” On this we agree. However, earlier in the article he states, “The purpose of a college experience isn’t to make students feel as if they’re in a well-insulated bubble.” If that is the case, then I would ask how is isolating people into safe spaces where only one view is tolerated effective at breaking down the “well-insulated bubble”? If we want students to become effective leaders and citizens, we should be advocating for them to confront hurtful or offensive ideas with discussion, discourse and effective argument, not separating them into their own cordoned-off area where different ideas cannot exist. We need to challenge students (and each other) to be able to articulate their ideas and thoughts and teach them how to convince someone to change, instead of yelling over others who have differing thoughts and ideas. If not, we will end up with a society with highly entrenched groups of differing viewpoints that are unwilling to work with each other to solve social and economic problems. (Sound familiar?) I challenge Mr. Lafargue to think about his approach to shaping the future citizens and leaders of our nation. Instead of telling them to toughen up or coddling them, suggest that if they have a different opinion or if they are offended culturally or socially, they should engage that person and effectively articulate their argument on why that person should think or act differently and how their actions were perceived. That is how the real world works.

—Garry Sanders ’02, Redmond, Ore.

VAN RENSSELAER REMAINS

In his letter in the fall 2015 issue, my friend Dan Tritter ’54 correctly traces the checkered history of the Albany, N.Y., Van Rensselaer mansion, which was made into a fraternity house at Williams and then taken down to make room for the Sawyer Library. There is another chapter to the story. According to Warren Roberts, author of A Place in History: Albany in the Age of Revolution, 1775-1825 (SUNY Press, 2010), the house still exists—in pieces and in packing cases. It rose from the dust once. Might it not again?

—Mac Nelson ’55, Brocton, N.Y.

FROM DREAM TO DESIGN

The students developed a most interesting, creative yet practical series of alternatives for the North Branch of our inaccessible, unhealthy, unattractive, concrete-channelized river. In keeping with Williams’ commitment to involve students in experiential learning (as promoted so long ago by the late Professor Robert Gaudino), I would like to publicly thank other Williams students/grads for what they have done to help our young organization move from “dream to design”: Brian Cole ’11, Mike Drzyzga ’10, Andrew Gaidus ’11 and Clint Robins ’11 from Professor Gardner’s 2008 Environmental Planning class for their thoughtful plan to restore a section of the South Branch of the Hoosic River; Tom Gaidus ’13 for working with our board to design our first Historical Walking Brochure (recently updated); Ellie Wachtel ’17, who interned with us in summer 2015 and modeled a historical, interactive map of 1940 North Adams on the similarly designed map of the Williams campus; and Sam Park ’17, who also interned with us in summer 2015 and worked with local filmmaker Bill Matthiessen ’70 to create a short video highlighting the historical role of the river in North Adams and HRR proposals to transform the river from an eyesore to an asset. Most recently, the project manager for our $500,000 conceptual plan for the South Branch and design for the Phase One restoration was Nick Nelson ’03, fluvial geomorphologist with Inter-Fluve Inc. All of this work can be found on our website: www.HoosicRiverRevival.org.

—Judy Grinnell, founder and president of the Hoosic River Revival and wife of Bruce Grinnell ’62
CLASS OF 2016: DO SOMETHING UNCOMFORTABLE

Though the skies threatened rain, the weather held out for Williams’ 227th Commencement on June 5. During the ceremony, President Adam Falk (top left, in purple) gave honorary degrees to (same photo, from left) Dean of the College Sarah Bolton, who on July 1 became president of the College of Wooster; author and illustrator Eric Carle; commencement speaker and Equal Justice Initiative founder Bryan Stevenson; writer and commentator Frank Deford; baccalaureate speaker and Pulitzer Prize-winning author and journalist Elizabeth Kolbert; Tony Award-winning playwright and screenwriter David Henry Hwang; Peace Corps director Carrie Hessler-Radelet; and singer-songwriter, producer and actor Leehom Wang ’98. Stevenson (also top, center) told the Class of ’16: “To change the world, you’re going to have to do uncomfortable things. ... When you get proximate to those who are disabled and disempowered, you find your power.”

College Announces Changes to Board of Trustees

On July 1, the college welcomed Thomas M. Belk ’77, Noriko Honda Chen ’89, Cooper Campbell Jackson ’89, Jonathan D. Sokoloff ’79 and Mark R. Tercek ’79 to its Board of Trustees.

Belk is the chairman and CEO of Belk Inc., the largest family-owned department store business in the U.S. He’s served as president of the Williams Regional Association of Charlotte, N.C., as a member of the Charlotte Special Gifts Committee during the Third Century Campaign (1993) and as an admissions representative.

Chen is a portfolio manager and partner at Capital Group. She currently serves on the college’s Marketable Assets Advisory Committee. She is an honorary trustee and former vice chair of The Women’s Foundation, a Hong Kong-based nonprofit that funds research, education and advocacy to improve the lives of women and girls.

Jackson, who was elected by the Society of Alumni and appointed by the trustees, is the senior vice president for worldwide business affairs in the home entertainment division of Twentieth Century Fox, where she negotiates licenses, acquisitions and strategic partnerships related to the distribution of films in digital media. She is president of the Class of 1989 and has served as a Williams class agent and associate agent, Alumni Fund vice chair, and chair of her class’s 25th Reunion Fund Committee.

Sokoloff is a managing partner of Leonard Green & Partners, one of the nation’s leading private equity firms. He has served on the college’s Trustee Non-Marketable Assets Advisory Committee since 2001 and was a member of the Los Angeles Regional Fund Committee during Climb Far: The Williams Campaign (2004-2008), a class associate agent and a member of his class’s 25th Reunion Fund Committee.

Tercek is the CEO of The Nature Conservancy, the biggest environmental non-governmental organization in the world. He is also the author of the best-selling book Nature’s Fortune: How Business and Society Thrive by Investing in Nature. He has served as a class associate agent and on his class’s 25th Reunion Fund Committee.

Reappointed to the board were O. Andreas Halvorsen ’86 and Liz Robinson ’90. Stephen Harty ’73, Barbara A. Austell ’75, Robert G. Scott ’68 and Brian D. Carpenter ’86 stepped down from the board when their terms ended on June 30.
Shifts in Senior Staff
Professor of Economics David Love has been named college provost, effective Sept. 1. Love, who is known to the Williams community as “Dukes,” joined the faculty in 2003. Since then he has served as chair of the Faculty Compensation Committee and as a member of the Faculty Steering Committee and Committee on Priorities and Resources, among others. He is an editor of the *Journal of Pension Economics and Finance*, and his research focuses on household savings, portfolio allocation, macroeconomics, public finance and private pensions. He succeeds Will Dudley ’89, who will assume the presidency of Washington and Lee University in January. The college also said goodbye to vice president of college relations John M. Malcolm ’86, who on July 1 began his new role as chief development officer of the Boston-based Partners in Health. Malcolm spent six years at Williams, during which time the college launched Teach It Forward, its $650 million campaign.

Convocation to Focus on Climate Change
During Convocation on Sept. 17, six alumni will receive Williams Bicentennial Medals. This year’s honorees were selected for distinguished achievement in fields relevant to the college’s yearlong program Confronting Climate Change. The medal recipients are: Eliot Coleman Jr. ’61, a pioneer in the organic farming movement whose innovative tool design and cold-weather growing techniques have enabled farmers throughout the Northeast to be productive year round; Bruce Beehler ’74, naturalist and conservationist, who has studied birds and their forest habitats—in an effort to preserve them—in the Asia-Pacific region and North America; Jeff Speck ’85, a city planner and urban designer who, through writing, lectures and built work, advocates internationally for more walkable cities; Sharon Burke ’88, an international security and energy security specialist whose work in the U.S. government and with New America examines security, prosperity and natural resources; and Maxine Burkett ’98, professor of law at the University of Hawaii, whose scholarship and activism focus on international climate justice, policy change and adaptation for island peoples and the most vulnerable.

For information about Convocation and Bicentennial Medals, visit convocation.williams.edu

Next Steps for the Class of 2016
The Senior Survey, conducted by the provost’s office in the spring, offers a wealth of information about the graduating class. Here’s what the 508 respondents out of the Class of 2016’s 538 members had to say about their future plans—and about how well Williams prepared them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you expect to be doing this fall? *</th>
<th>What degrees do you plan to pursue in the future? *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80% Working</td>
<td>13% Master’s Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7% Part-time</td>
<td>11% Law Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2% Starting a company</td>
<td>38% Doctorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17% Attending graduate or professional school</td>
<td>15% Other Degrees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15% Full-time</td>
<td>10% Master of Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13% Other (internships, freelancing, performing, etc.)</td>
<td>13% Master of Science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16% of respondents have already accepted a position

*Respondents selected multiple answers

354 respondents say they talked to alumni to plan next steps after Williams

How helpful has advice and assistance from alumni been as you make plans for next year?

61% Very helpful

2% Not very helpful

37% Somewhat helpful

33 members of the Class of 2016 are the recipients of national and Williams fellowships for study, travel and/or work

BY THE NUMBERS

SOURCE: WILLIAMS COLLEGE PROVOST

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Barrett Wins Rea Award

Andrea Barrett, senior lecturer in English, has been named winner of the Rea Award for the Short Story for 2015. The $30,000 prize recognizes “a living U.S. or Canadian writer … who has made a significant contribution to the discipline of the short story as an art form.”

Barrett’s most recent work, the short story collection Archangel (W.W. Norton & Co., 2013), was a finalist for The Story Prize. Ship Fever (Norton, 1996) won the National Book Award, and Servants of the Map (Norton, 2002) was a finalist for the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. She’s also written six novels.

Ephs Win 19th Directors’ Cup

With women’s teams advancing to nine NCAA Div. III tournaments and men’s teams advancing to seven, Williams captured its fourth straight Learfield Sports Directors’ Cup. The Ephs have won the cup 19 times in the 21-year history of the award, presented by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA) to the best all-around sports program based on team performance.

Overall, Williams scored 1,098.25 points in 16 sports, besting second-place Washington University in St. Louis by 85 points to win. The cup was presented in June at NACDA’s annual convention in Dallas, Texas.

In Memoriam

“I am told she was the heart and soul of those labs, and while her no-nonsense approach made students think she was reverting back to her Army days, it also helped ensure their success.”

President Adam Falk, in a letter to the Williams community about the May 2 passing of Eleanor R. Brown, lecturer in the biology department.

Eleanor Brown graduated from Middlebury College in 1943 and served as a medical department dietician for the U.S. Army. She came to Williams in 1960 and worked as a lab assistant in the psychology department while pursuing her master’s in biology here. She then became manager of and taught the college’s introductory biology, physiology and genetics laboratories. Among her survivors are her husband Fielding Brown ’45, who retired from Williams in 1989 as professor of physics, emeritus, and four daughters.

Echo of Williams

The college has a new song to be performed along with “The Mountains.” “Echo of Williams,” by Kevin Weist ’81 and Bruce Leddy ’83, won the Williams Song Competition in the spring. The song was one of 20 submitted by alumni, and it was selected by the Williams community from three finalists. Eight of the submitted songs will be included in the next Williams Songbook, to be published in the fall. Listen to “Echo of Williams” at http://bit.ly/1VOTYR3.
The doors to the Log are flung open, and a line of people snakes onto the sidewalk. Inside, utensils scrape against metal pans as students and faculty dish up a vegan lunch of black bean burgers, sweet-potato fries and spinach salad. Amid the buzz of voices and obvious camaraderie, Sarah Gardner, associate director of the Center for Environmental Studies, greets guests one by one. “You made it!” she cries, hugging one student. “Make sure you get a burger,” she tells another. “The green sauce is arugula pesto.”

It’s the last Environmental Studies Log Lunch of the spring semester. The weekly tradition dates back to 1972, five years after the college established its environmental studies program. Every Friday during the academic year there’s a home-cooked meal—the food comes from local farms whenever possible—and a presentation on a current environmental issue.

Gardner organizes the weekly one-hour lunches, which take place in the Log. Sometimes the speakers are students sharing research, Winter Study projects or thesis work. Academics, activists and politicians, including many Williams alumni, also make presentations.

At a lunch last semester, Georgette Yakman, founder and CEO of STEAM Education, spoke about Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) in Hoosick Falls, N.Y. With her was Michael Hickey, a former member of the Hoosick Falls Village Board who is credited with discovering the toxic chemical in the water system and who filed a federal class action lawsuit against the plastics plant in the town.

“Log Lunch typifies the friendly, welcoming and traditional side of Williams,” Gardner says. “Students rub elbows with a professor on one side and a community activist on the other, and they might sit across from the person who runs the renewable energy program at the U.S. Department of Energy. They find their compatriots there, eating homemade soup and strategizing to save the world.”

The soup, or whatever is on the menu that week, is made by students. This year, seniors Hannah Levin ’16 and Laura Stamp ’16 supervised food production and presentation. They met with local farmers, planned menus and spent Friday mornings cooking with other students. “The event brings together a community of people interested in the same types of issues,” says Stamp. “It’s rewarding to see a room full of people eating the food you worked so hard on.”

For the last Log Lunch of the year, Gardner plans a ceremony to honor the graduating class. Guests fill their plates at the Log and head across Spring Street for a family-style picnic on the lawn. After a short speech, Gardner presents each of the 19 seniors in the program with copies of *The Sixth Extinction*, by Pulitzer Prize-winner Elizabeth Kolbert, the Class of 1946 Environmental Fellow.

Says Gardner, “My goal is that every student becomes concerned about the environment. The variety of our talks means there are new faces every week. Log Lunches are a catalyst for getting people involved with issues they may never have heard of otherwise.”

—Natalie DiNenno ’18
Yazmine Nichols ‘15 was just beginning her first year at Williams the day her mother called with news that would shape her time in college and beyond. One of Nichols’ childhood friends, Mateek, had been sentenced to prison.

Her mother didn’t have many details, and Nichols, who’d seen many arrests in her low-income, high-crime neighborhood in Brooklyn, N.Y., didn’t need them. She just wanted to support a friend who, in his own way, was adjusting to a new environment away from home and loved ones.

She wrote to Mateek in prison, telling him about her academic struggles, her hopes for the future and her desire to remain close to her roots. Mateek wrote back about his daily life and his aspirations, the books he was reading and the religious practice he was developing.

How had they ended up in such vastly different places in their lives? It’s a question that gnawed at Nichols, who in 2013 started Converging Worlds, a pen-pal exchange between Williams students and people imprisoned throughout the Northeast. The group has since grown to 33 students and expanded its role to include tutoring at-risk teens at the Juvenile Resource Center in Pittsfield, Mass., and raising awareness on campus about mass incarceration.

“Converging Worlds isn’t here to save people,” says Nichols, an English and religion major who’s now studying ethics at Union Theological Seminary. “We’re trying to reciprocate the learning experience so that people challenge their ideas about what they believe and why they believe it.”

That’s the driving force behind two other initiatives that connect Williams students with people who have been arrested. One, the Learning Intervention for Teens (LIFT) program, brings juvenile offenders to campus during Winter Study to work on a research project with Williams student mentors. The other is a course, now in its fourth year, that’s held in the Berkshire County Jail and House of Corrections and enrolls nine students from Williams plus nine students who are incarcerated and nearing the ends of their sentences.

Converging Worlds, LIFT and the “Inside-Out” course, inspired by a program at Temple University, offer students “a slice of experience they’re not going to get otherwise,” says Paula Consolini, director of Williams’ Center for Learning in Action. “It goes beyond volunteering to real community engagement and learning, both on the part of our students and the people they’re connecting with.”

examining the good life

Keith McPartland was working on his doctorate at Cornell University when he signed up to teach philosophy to people imprisoned at the state correctional facility in Auburn, N.Y. There he met a man who’d been convicted of being an accessory to a murder. The man was tried as an adult, even though he was 16 years old at the time of the crime.

“We were almost exactly the same age, within a week of each other,” McPartland says of the inmate. “I thought about myself at the age of 16. Even if something had gone sideways, there were so many
barriers between me and jail. It really got me thinking.”

The questions he kept turning over in his head were philosophical ones. How much control do people truly have over the circumstances of their lives? How much does the luck of where one is born, and to whom and when, influence whether he or she ends up in prison or a Ph.D. program?

For the past two years, McPartland, now a philosophy professor, and his students have addressed these questions and others in Williams’ Inside-Out class. In a course called The Good Life in Greek and Roman Ethics, taught on Monday nights in the library of the jail in Pittsfield, they explore central texts in ancient Greek and Roman moral philosophy and look at the ways thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle and Cicero characterize happiness, virtue and the relation between the two. Often the discussion turns to what it means to live a good life.

Each week, McPartland and the nine Williams students, known as “outside” students in Inside-Out parlance, board a van to make the 30-minute trip from campus to Pittsfield, a city of 44,000 that’s seen increasing problems with heroin, gang activity and youth violence.

The jail itself might resemble a community college were it not for the razor wire atop the perimeter fencing. In a lobby filled with visitors, many of whom are young women and children, McPartland and the students lock up their belongings; they’re allowed to take only their textbooks, notebooks and pens beyond the front desk. A corrections officer waves a hand-held metal detector over each of the Williams visitors, and they’re led down a hallway to the jail’s library.

There they join nine “inside” students clad in blue uniform shirts with the letters “BCHC” on the back. Most of them are in their 20s or 30s. Almost all have undergone treatment for substance abuse (some 88 percent of the 270 incarcerated there struggle with addiction, according to Berkshire County Sheriff Thomas Bowler). Many are enrolled in programs offered by the jail, including addiction recovery and life skills. At least one inside student took college classes before his arrest. And, like the Williams students, they’ll receive four college credits after completing Inside-Out.

Each three-hour class session alternates between discussions and small-group work. During one class close to the end of the semester, McPartland led off with a question for the entire group: If you could live in a box that would give you the illusion of the life you want, would you choose to do it? Or would you remain in the physical world, with all of its problems and disappointments?

“I might choose the box if I could come and go when I please,” said classics major Chris Siemer ’16. James, an inside student and former U.S. Marine, shook his head. “I don’t want limits. Once you are in the box, you are cut off from the ability to experience something greater.”

A younger inside student, Jason, who served in Iraq, nodded in agreement. He described the joy he felt when he got married and had children and then the pain of getting divorced shortly after his service ended. “But as long as I continue growing and learning,” he said, “I can make choices that improve my situation.”

The stories of how some of the inside students came to be incarcerated and what their lives were like beforehand came out slowly over the course of the semester. But the focus was the material and the students’ ideas, McPartland says, and the exchanges enriched both groups.

“There’s a really nice passage in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* where he says that ethics is not a proper area of study for young people, because proper study of ethics requires life experience,” McPartland says. “I think there is some truth in that. The inside students bring a different set of experiences to the table, and they soon realize that they have a lot to say about the issues we are talking about and that their peers take what they have to say seriously.”

Yazmine Nichols ’15 (above) started Converging Worlds, a pen-pal exchange between Williams students and incarcerated people, after corresponding with a childhood friend who went to prison. She is now studying ethics at Union Theological Seminary.
“THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT WRITING TO A PERSON BEHIND BARS THAT CHANGES YOUR PERSPECTIVE. IT IS A CONSTANT REMINDER THAT ... INJUSTICE EXISTS.” YAZMINE NICHOLS ’15
INCARCERATED STUDENTS “TAKE PRIDE IN COMPLETING A WILLIAMS COLLEGE COURSE BECAUSE IT SHOWS THEY CAN ACCOMPLISH ANY TASK. ... THIS HELPS BUILD THEIR SELF-ESTEEM AND CONFIDENCE.” SHERIFF THOMAS BOWLER
The teenager was noticeably uncomfortable as he stood before a crowd in Griffin 3 one evening in January. Swallowing hard, he launched into a PowerPoint presentation about the career of comedian and actor Kevin Hart, who overcame his own troubled background to find success. When the teenager finished, the classroom filled with applause and cheers.

It was the final gathering of this year’s LIFT group, 15 teenagers who spent three afternoons per week on campus in January, working one-on-one with 15 Williams students enrolled in a Winter Study course of the same name. A unique partnership between the college and the Berkshire County Juvenile Court in Pittsfield, the program provides an alternative for teens who would otherwise be sentenced to probationary terms.

“I THOUGHT ABOUT MYSELF AT THE AGE OF 16. EVEN IF SOMETHING HAD GONE SIDEWAYS, THERE WERE SO MANY BARRIERS BETWEEN ME AND JAIL. IT REALLY GOT ME THINKING.”

PROFESSOR KEITH MCPARTLAND

“These kids are on the brink of success, and they really benefit from seeing what college is and that they can do something beyond high school,” says Nancy Macauley, the juvenile probation officer involved with LIFT.

The goal of the seven-year-old program is to give teens “the experience that learning can be fun, can center on topics that matter to them and can be empowering,” according to the Winter Study course’s description. “If the teens see school as something other than a form of incarceration, they will be motivated to stay there and to succeed.”

With the help of Williams students, the teens investigate, develop a report on and present their conclusions about a topic of their choosing. One of this year’s participants wants to be a songwriter, so her mentor found a music professor she could work with and helped her compose an original song. Another teen wants to be an architect, so her partner connected her to the art department and spent the month helping her construct a scale model of a house. Past projects have included exploring the causes of teen methamphetamine use, examining teen pregnancy rates and determining whether Michael Jordan or Kobe Bryant should be deemed the best all-time shooting guard in basketball.

At the end of the program, the teens present their projects to an audience that includes the Berkshire County Juvenile Court judges and probation officers, the county district attorney and assistant district attorneys, Pittsfield Police Chief Michael Wynn ’93, Williams faculty and community members, and their own peers and families. By the time the closing remarks are made, hugs abound and tears of joy—and relief—are flowing.

“Getting up in front of a room full of people to present their projects is terrifying for many of the teens and for the Williams students,” says Hannah Levin ’16, who for the past three years led the team of student organizers who run LIFT. “But they are really proud of themselves when they hear everyone cheering for them.”

The Williams students also benefit greatly from the connections they make. “They’re changed by the experience,” says political science professor Cheryl Shanks, who serves with Wynn as the faculty advisers for the course. “They remember it for the rest of their lives.”

Says Macauley, who works part time in the college’s Campus Safety and Security Department, “The Williams students have an opportunity to go beyond the purple bubble. They get a brief jolt of reality, and it opens them up.”

That was the case for Audrey Thomas ’17, who is also part of LIFT’s student organizing team. “I realized the world isn’t always like where I grew up,” says the economics and women’s, gender and sexuality studies major. “The connection I made with my LIFT student gave me confidence in my ability to navigate other complex relationships in the future.”

Says Levin, a political economy major who will teach kindergarten at a charter school in St. Louis this fall, “LIFT definitely influenced my choice to become a teacher. Hearing how much most of the teens hated school was heartbreaking for me. I know that learning can be fun, and I know how powerful a positive school experience can be for a child.”

LIFT also taught Levin something else. “The program has given me a lot of faith in people and their ability to change and grow,” she says. “It has also been an incredible reminder that one mistake should not define a person.”
addressing inequities

Shortly before her childhood friend Mateek was released from prison, Nichols received a letter from him. “My intentions for now is education and gettin a better living condition and my first ever job,” he wrote. “I’m not the same person. … I use to live for the day. Now I’d like to get by for life.”

The letter is one of dozens that Nichols has saved over the years. “There is something about writing to a person behind bars that changes your perspective,” she says. “It is a constant reminder that not everyone is free, and that systematic injustice exists.”

That injustice, she says, is reflected by the fact that the United States has the highest incarceration rate of any nation. The number ranges from 1.6 million people in state and federal prisons, according to the Department of Justice, to more than 2.3 million when local jails, juvenile detention centers and other facilities are counted, based on a report by the Prison Policy Initiative. Latinos and African-Americans are disproportionately imprisoned, with the latter constituting 44 percent of people incarcerated in the U.S. According to the Brookings Institute, there’s a nearly 70 percent chance that an African-American man without a high school diploma will be imprisoned by his mid-30s.

Nichols says many young people in her Brooklyn neighborhood struggled in public school classrooms. She herself acted out for several years because she didn’t know how to deal with the abuse she’d suffered at the hands of a trusted adult.

“I got in trouble a lot and was in special education until ninth grade,” she says. “I could have easily ended up in prison if not for my mom, who constantly encouraged me to be my best self. She told me over and over that I didn’t have to be defined by my circumstances.”

In high school, Nichols focused on her goal of college and excelled academically. The experience fueled her desire to help those who hadn’t had the unwavering support she’d received. But how?

Thinking about her early exchanges with Mateek, the answer seemed clear. In the spring of her sophomore year, she started Converging Worlds. With co-chair Kiyana Hanley ’17, whose brother is in a mental health facility at Rikers Island, she began recruiting Williams students to write to inmates in New York State who were serving time for nonviolent offenses.

“We can learn so much from people on the inside,” says Nichols, who says the letter-writing process is a chance to “connect with someone who is not like you.”

The group started with two students in addition to Nichols and Hanley writing one to two letters per month. The co-chairs suggested topics to write about: sports, books and academic pursuits rather than personal information.

“Students found the experience eye-opening, because it forced them to reconsider their ideas about people who are marginalized,” Nichols says. “Once people are incarcerated, they become just numbers behind cell doors. They are no longer real people to the public.”

By 2014, the students were writing to people in several prisons throughout the Northeast, and the program had begun an annual book drive to help augment the libraries in those institutions. With

THE WISDOM OF CROWDS

At Williams’ commencement in June, Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Institute, urged the Class of 2018 to look for ways to help at-risk teens as well as men and women who are incarcerated.

“I talk with 12- and 13-year-old children who often tell me that they don’t think they’re going to be free by the time they’re 21,” Stevenson stated in his commencement address. “They say, ‘Mr. Stevenson, I’ve got to go out there and get mine while I can.’ And that despair requires a kind of intervention. So I hope you will do something greater when you leave here today.”

Williams is certainly broadening and deepening its interventions. Converging Worlds, the pen-pal exchange program between Williams students and incarcerated people, has expanded its scope to include book drives for prison libraries, tutoring teens at the Juvenile Resource Center in Pittsfield, Mass., and raising awareness of criminal justice issues on campus.

Learning Intervention for Teens (LIFT), the Winter Study program founded in 2009 and aimed at partnering Williams mentors with Pittsfield teenagers in the juvenile court system, is also growing. “For the first time this year we had more Williams students sign up than we could accommodate,” says Hannah Levin ’16, who led the student organizers until her graduation in June.

And each year about 100 Williams students apply for nine spots in the Inside-Out course taught by faculty members in the Berkshire County Jail and House of Corrections with nine incarcerated students. History professor Magnus Bernhardsson developed Inside-Out while serving as Gaudino Scholar. In that role, he was charged with shaping opportunities for experiential education and uncomfortable learning embraced by the late and much-beloved political science professor Robert Gaudino.

Bernhardsson “sent around a message asking if any Williams professor would like to go to jail,” says English professor Christian Thorne, who taught a course called Happiness for the first two Inside-Out classes, in 2013 and 2014. “All I had to do was raise my hand.”

Thorne was drawn by the chance to teach in a truly diverse classroom. “The last people you expect to see in a Williams classroom—the people permanently left out of the conversation—are the ones who were never marked out for college,” he says. “It is their intelligence that we are most likely to overlook, that we have, in
funding from the college, the group brought to campus criminal justice activists Hector “Benny” Custodio, Theo Harris and Ernest Henry—formerly incarcerated, all of whom now have master's degrees—as part of Claiming Williams day in 2015. The event drew more than 300 students.

Nichols says her interest in mass incarceration led her to Union Theological Seminary, and this summer she's working with the New York City-based group Release Aging People in Prison. More than 9,000 people over the age of 50 are imprisoned statewide, and advocates say many of them have transformed their lives and could be released with no threat to public safety. The grassroots organizing and policy project also has chapters in Maryland and Washington, D.C.

Says Nichols, who plans to finish her master's and then study law with the aim of addressing the inequities that underserved communities face, “When you challenge your ideas, it allows for a human connection, and that is one of the most fundamental needs we have.”

making a difference

At the last Inside-Out class of the year, McPartland and the students were joined by Sheriff Bowler and Alan Bianchi, the assistant deputy superintendent of the Berkshire County Sheriff’s Office. Also present were Williams English professor Christian Thorne, who taught an Inside-Out course called Happiness, and Denise Buell, dean of the faculty and Cluett Professor of Religion.

Bowler presented each of the inside students with a diploma and reminded the men, who will soon be released from jail, that they can have a better life if they continue the good work they started inside.

The students reflected on the course and how it changed their expectations for the future. Jason, the inside student who served in Iraq, says he’ll go to a veterans’ treatment facility. He then hopes to take classes in information technology. John, who had taken college classes prior to his arrest, wants to sign up for more and will look for a job.

“They take pride in completing a Williams College course because it shows they can accomplish any task put before them,” Bowler says of the incarcerated students. “This helps build their self-esteem and confidence for any future endeavors.”

The Williams students, too, have learned important lessons.

“I used to think that all someone had to do to succeed is work hard and play by the rules,” says Jack Greenberg ’18, a political science major. “Some of these guys just can’t get past their childhood. They know they made the wrong choices, but they don’t know what the other choices were.”

Says Rebecca Lewis ’16, an economics major who will work at the Federal Reserve Bank in the fall, “Our classmates really want to do better, and they are quick to take responsibility for their actions. The course made me realize that I can and should take responsibility for the community I live in and ask what the specific need is and how I can make a difference.”

Elizabeth Lund is an award-winning magazine writer. She volunteered in a women’s prison for several years.
A Marvelous Order

The opera *A Marvelous Order*, which had a sold-out “pre-premiere” at the ’62 Center for Theatre and Dance in March, brings together the creative talents of composer Judd Greenstein ’01, director/animator Joshua Frankel ’02 and choreographer Will Rawls ’00. With a libretto written by Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Tracy K. Smith, the opera weaves together the stories of urban planner Robert Moses, activist Jane Jacobs and the city of New York in the 1960s. The creative team spent the spring semester on campus, teaching courses and leading workshops and discussions related to the opera, which is expected to open in New York City sometime in 2018. Learn more at http://mosesjacobsopera.com.
Activist Jane Jacobs (depicted at left, in the March production of A Marvelous Order) fought a plan by Robert Moses (above) that would ease congestion in Lower Manhattan but displace roughly 2,000 families and 400 businesses.
What is it? That was the deceptively simple question guiding the Committee on Campus Space and Institutional History as it carried out its charge from President Adam Falk last spring to consider the fate of a newly controversial mural in the Black Room of the Log.

Painted during World War II to adorn what was, at the time, a gathering space for alumni unaffiliated with any fraternity house, the mural depicts Col. Ephraim Williams and Mohawk leader Theyanoguin on Sept. 8, 1755, the day they and their troops were ambushed and killed in “The Bloody Morning Scout.” The battle, which took place near Lake George at the very start of the Seven Years War, set in motion the founding of the college that today bears Williams’ name.

Over time, the mural faded into the background. Even alumni who frequented the Log as students during its heyday in the 1970s and 1980s struggle to remember it today. So it’s no surprise that many Ephs removed from campus by time and distance were puzzled when the mural grabbed the spotlight after the renovated Log reopened in the fall.

Many on campus raised concerns about the painting’s portrayal of Native Americans, which in turn led to questions about whether the Log and other spaces on campus felt inclusive to our increasingly diverse community. Similar questions about historical representations were being raised at colleges and universities around the world. On many campuses, including Harvard, Oxford, Princeton and Yale, protracted protests were making headlines on a daily basis.

In this context, Falk decided to cover the Log mural temporarily to give the Williams committee the time and space to complete its spring-semester assignment. Led by professor of history and department chair Karen Merrill, students, faculty and staff conducted an in-depth consideration of the mural and its place on campus. In so doing they created a model for informed, engaged and respectful discourse that they’ll use when they continue their work in the fall, taking on other questions of historical representation on campus.

In late spring, the committee recommended that the mural remain in place and be contextualized with information about both the scene depicted as well as the work undertaken to understand it. Falk accepted
the recommendations, and the additional context is expected to be in place by the end of the summer. A few weeks before the committee’s report was released, Williams Magazine convened a group of faculty to discuss historical representation broadly. Leading the conversation was noted presidential historian Michael Beschloss ’77, who has written nine books on American presidents, including the New York Times best-sellers Presidential Courage (2007) and The Conquerors (2002).

Beschloss, whose two sons are members of the Classes of ’16 and ’19, was joined by Leslie Brown, associate professor of history, who has published extensively on African-American history, gender and race relations, and oral and documentary history; Charles Dew ’58, the Ephraim Williams Professor of American History, whose interest in Southern history, the Civil War and Reconstruction was awakened at Williams; and Annie Valk, associate director for public humanities and lecturer in history, who is a specialist in oral history, public history and the social history of the 20th century United States. An excerpt of their conversation follows.

Michael Beschloss ’77: I’ve read the coverage of the Log mural, and I’ve watched how the broader issue of historical representation has been playing out around the country. But it would be helpful to know more about how the issue has evolved at Williams over the years. Can we talk about earlier moments in the history of the college that have elicited similar discussion about historical symbols and names here on campus?

Charles Dew ’58: I don’t recall, either as a student or a faculty member, historical representation being at the center of the campus conversation the way it is now. What we’re witnessing is a heightened sensitivity on the part of our students, faculty and staff to historical memory. That’s enormously healthy, because historical memory determines a lot of action and policy. The students have been very constructive and positive in their approach to these things. I don’t feel that we’re being overwhelmed by either political correctness or nonchalance. We are behaving the way an educational institution should. We’re using this as an educational moment. And if educational institutions can’t do this the right way, who can?

Annie Valk: I was at a conference at Emory University, maybe five years ago, that brought together people from 20 different universities and colleges that have initiatives under way to think about, research or deal with historical representation and the legacy of slavery on their campuses. It’s a national movement that’s being expressed in lots of different ways at different places.

Dew: There’s a growing awareness of “ebony and ivy,” which grew out of the work of former Williams history professor Craig Steven Wilder. He wrote about how educational institutions have profited from slavery and racism. [Wilder’s book Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery and the Troubled History of America’s Universities was published in 2013 by Bloomsbury Press.]

Leslie Brown: A history of slavery needs to be done at Williams, too. We know Ephraim Williams had a slave or two.

Beschloss: How much more do we know about this dimension of Eph Williams?

Dew: Not much. He was a prominent New Englander of his place and time, which meant he had a handful of slaves. The study of the history of the institution that comes from this sort of awareness can be incredibly valuable. What happened with Ephraim Williams’ slaves when he died? Were they sold as part of his estate, and did those resources go into the founding of the college?

Brown: Or did his slaves create the wealth Eph already had?

Beschloss: In the past, people haven’t always paid close attention to information about where the money comes from.

Brown: In a book called Complicity, written by two journalists from the Hartford Courant, there is a reference to the New England Manufacturer’s Association in the early 19th century giving money to Williams. They made their money on cotton coming out of the South. And with their profits from textile manufacturing, they gave a lot of money to New England colleges. That would be a good thing to follow up on. Who else donated money to Williams in the early 19th century, and where did that money come from?

Beschloss: So should you do a full vetting of every name on every building, every endowed chair, and then have that conversation?

Dew: Yes. Let’s get at it and do it right. Amos Lawrence—of Lawrence Hall, our art museum—was one of the Boston Associates. They were mill owners, the “lords of the loom,” the Cotton Whigs in Massachusetts, who were intimately involved in the cotton trade. Northern insurance companies and banks facilitated the financing of the slave trade. The money was flowing south and north, and the amount of money that fueled the slave trade is staggering.

Beschloss: It would be interesting—and it might help us to have an impact on the larger national discussion—to think about what gets considered in such vetting. Is it just the name of a big slave owner on one of our buildings? Or that of a Northern mill owner who didn’t own slaves but treated his workers horribly? What about companies that dealt with Hitler in the 1930s? In the past, for colleges and universities, the premise has so often been that these questions are so horrible, and possible culpability so immense, that the subject had better not be raised, because it might be too destructive.

Valk: It’s important to ask these questions and more. Asking them is not a way of tearing down the institution but rather opening it up.

Dew: There’s an educational component that’s very valuable, which is to illustrate to students the changing definition of social justice. There’s enough investment in this place by the people who are a part of it that this could be done constructively and honestly, and it would benefit a lot of stakeholders in Williams.

Brown: One thing that should come to us in these conversations about historical representation is that these were not up/down decisions that were made, or yes/no, positive/negative. So, yes, there’s the money from the slave trade. Meanwhile, Williams had the first abolition society on any campus.

Dew: An alumnus recently acquired and gave to the Chapin Library a pamphlet that came out of a Williams abolition society from the mid-1820s. That’s well before William Lloyd Garrison started The Liberator [a weekly
newspaper denouncing slavery]. It’s important to be aware of the religious and moral heritage of the school and to understand how evangelical this place was in the 19th century.

Brown: Southern students might have brought their slaves with them to campus. But this area was also an Underground Railroad site. The fact that the abolitionist society was having public debates means there was an exchange of ideas, a discourse. Students in that era dealt with these issues among themselves and developed their own politics. When you move into the Civil War era, you note the number of students who left the college to go to war and who did Freedmen’s Bureau work after that. The founder of the Hampton Institute was a Williams graduate.

Dew: Samuel Chapman Armstrong [Class of 1862], the product of a Hawaiian missionary family. He came to Williams with his Christian beliefs as part of his world view. He joined the Union Army and after the war founded Hampton Institute, which included not only freedmen but also Native Americans as a portion of the country’s population that had been dispossessed and treated unfairly. Did his Williams experience have anything to do with that? Did his Hawaiian experience have anything to do with that? There are ways in which these things link up that are positive as well as negative.

Brown: My civil rights class did a history of civil rights at Williams since the 1940s. It was fabulous for the students to find there was activism around so many issues. People were going to Mississippi and coming back and talking about it. Martin Luther King Jr. was here at a time that would have been very controversial.

Valk: A few courses are using the college archives to better understand institutional history. Dorothy Wang in American studies taught one this year. David Edwards in anthropology and Christopher Marciez, a local journalist, did a class on town-gown relations. But more classes need to look into the history of Williams and how it relates to the broader history.

Dew: If you look in the nave of Thompson Memorial Chapel, you’ll see the names of Union veterans who died to destroy slavery. There’s a moment when we could bring a class in and say, “Here is something that was remembered on the Williams campus when Thompson Chapel was built in 1904, the same era that Jim Crow was being written into law in the South, that Confederate monuments were going up across the South.” Whit Stoddard ’35, when he was an art professor here, used to teach a wonderful lecture for the incoming class called “A Sense of Where You Are.” [The extremely popular talk offered a wry look at the architecture of the college.] Something like that, during First Days, would be so helpful for incoming students. A sense not only in terms of whose name is on what building and why, but the things we’ve been talking about today.

Beschloss: Let’s talk about Williams’ relationship with the indigenous population. For thousands of years, the land that the college is sitting on belonged to Native Americans. Williams’ and white Europeans’ history here is just a tiny sliver of the whole.

Valk: This is an area where there’s almost total invisibility. The mural in the Log is one of the few places in which there is any depiction of Native Americans on campus. What does it mean when the only—or almost the only—representation is this representation?

Beschloss: From the standpoint of 2016, many people will find this mural a cartoon, but not such a benign cartoon. Quite frankly, for all the time I spent in the Log as a student in the mid-1970s, with a large crowd of fellow students present and loud noise, I am not sure many people even noticed that there was a mural.

Valk: I’ve thought a lot about the invisibility of the mural. It was up there for 60 years, and nobody noticed. Now it’s getting attention because the Log has reopened as a certain kind of space—a gathering space for students—and because now there are four or five indigenous students on campus.

Dew: I sat in on committee meetings about the mural in the spring. I was enormously impressed with the caliber of the discussion students carried out. It was informed and deeply felt. There was passion in the air.

Brown: At the community-wide forum in April, the students on the committee talked about things that didn’t even occur to me. I thought the image depicted in the mural was insulting. But then one student said, “It’s fall. Native American soldiers wouldn’t have been out there in just a loin cloth.” They talked about the relationship depicted, of two
captains of war planning together, that we don't know if that would have been true. Knowing the history of how those images in the Log, all of them, came into being is really important. Then putting them into historical context to say, well, in the 1940s, when this mural was painted, people thought this was how Native Americans were. Or maybe the alumni who commissioned it thought it was college humor—1940s college humor.

**Valk:** Or they thought it was honorific.

**Beschloss:** The fact that it’s one of the few prominent references to Native Americans on the campus just turns up the volume.

**Dew:** We should use this moment for both consciousness raising and conscience raising. We are going to be entering what I hope will be a historical review of the questions we’re talking about today. Historical representation is critical. There has to be extensive contextualization done with accuracy and sensitivity. There’s an opportunity for us to educate ourselves and do some balancing of historical memory in ways that would be constructive. We need to know the institutional history, and we need, in the case of the murals and the Log, for them to be interpreted.

**Valk:** It’s more than just writing a label. Art offers really interesting ways to respond. Think about the possibility of inviting a contemporary Native artist to do a piece that’s a response to the mural.

**Beschloss:** Or have a Native artist approach almost exactly the same subject and moment from his or her own point of view. This would represent the present speaking to the past.

**Valk:** There should be opportunities for people to engage with each other by engaging with invisibility. Symbolism and symbolic responses matter. But tangible responses also matter tremendously. How can this be a place that really embraces talking about, exploring and examining local history, Native history, institutional history? I don’t think it’s possible to have one definitive response.

**Beschloss:** Do you mean in general or on the specific issue of the mural?

**Valk:** Both. In the case of the mural, as the students showed us in their presentations at the community forum, there are lots of different ways to understand it. There’s military history, institutional history, the history of how the Log was built, the history of the painter. There’s indigenous history. The danger, once we’ve figured all this out, is suggesting that now we know the truth.

**Brown:** Change is the only thing we can count on. It’s interesting to me what’s happening at other places. I understand wanting to take down Calhoun’s name. [John C. Calhoun was a 19th-century politician and white supremacist for whom a residential college at Yale University is named.] But then we’d have to take down a whole bunch of other people’s names. We’d have to rename Brown. We’d have to rename Williams.

**Beschloss:** And Mount Washington.

**Brown:** Washington, D.C., and Lincoln, Neb.

**Beschloss:** I live in D.C., and I keep having to drive down Jefferson Davis Highway.

**Brown:** How many [Thomas] Jefferson Boulevards around the country would have to be changed? It’s awful to have to walk by these names, but students need to learn to do that and say, “You didn’t want me here, and I’m here. All you are is a sign on a building.”

We need to teach the history around those names and encourage students to understand that attitude in that time was defeated by the Civil War. There are still racists, there’s still structural racism, and maybe Calhoun is part of that problem. But there’s so much more to say and to teach around the building than just sandblasting the name.

**Beschloss:** So you’re saying that you might be more likely to have that discussion if you keep Jefferson Davis’ name on a highway?

**Brown:** Yes, exactly. That’s the kind of honesty I’d like to see out of the Ivies and the elite schools in particular, because they can lead on that. There’s a way for institutions to move past this and not simply say yes or no, black or white, name up or name down.

**Dew:** A perfect example is the Haystack Monument [commemorating the start of the Protestant mission movement in 1806 by five Williams students]. Today the missionary impulse has a decidedly imperialistic cast to it. We see it as more of a mixed bag than we did in earlier decades. But in the summer, busloads of people from all over the world arrive on campus and park all around the monument. They make a pilgrimage to see it because it’s so much a part of their lives.

**Valk:** Work needs to be done to help students, and everyone, understand the historical enterprise. It isn’t just uncovering facts that are true with a capital T. It’s a process of new understandings and new interpretations.

**Brown:** Williams has been involved in major political moments that have been part of important discussions on campus. Students today shouldn’t feel like they can’t have those discussions. It’s the tradition of the college to have them. That’s how students learn. Perceptions change. Teaching changes. Pedagogy changes. We’re constantly seeking new knowledge, and new knowledge changes what we can present. We’re not teaching now what we would have in the 1940s. That’s important for students, alumni and faculty.

“When knowledge changes, our conclusions have to change.”  *Leslie Brown*
How do we interact with history as it is represented on campus? This question is not just a “fall of 2015” issue or a “Williams” issue. At the time our committee was appointed, institutions across America were having very public controversies regarding the issue. The Log mural, if left uncovered, could have brought parts of that public firestorm to Williams, and the committee would have struggled to do its work. We all needed to take a step back, take a breath, collect ourselves and begin to think more broadly. Early in our work as a committee, we became aware that the mural exists in relationship to a dense web of stories. We want to put these stories into dialogue with each other for the sake of a deeper and wider understanding of their interconnections, disconnections and implications. —Matthew Hennessy ’17

When examining the mural, many people instinctively fixate on the authenticity of the depicted Mohawk men, especially their style of dress, and classify the mural as a breach of historical accuracy. Although Hendrick actually favored the European style of dress, it is limiting to assume that the discomfort surrounding the mural stems solely from this fact. Instead, this uneasiness derives from an issue of context. If you look at Williams today, there is a very evident lack of Native American representation within the student body. I am one of five federally recognized Native American students on campus. There is also a lack of Indigenous imagery. This mural is the most prominent display, and presenting a critical object that illustrates only positive colonial-Indigenous relations to a population that is wholly uneducated in Native American history whitewashes the broader history of the area. The Mohawk are no longer here, and this region carries with it a history of great violence and forced displacement that many have forgotten about. —Ariana Romeo ’19, enrolled member of the Tohono O’odham Nation

Ephraim Williams was born into a powerful religious family in the British colony of Massachusetts and spent much of his young life surveying portions of Massachusetts that his family controlled. In 1754, he was instated as commander of Fort Massachusetts. Having spent much of his life prior to the war shaping the lives of colonists and Native Americans, he died leaving behind a sizable portion of his estate with the intention of chartering a new academic institution, a “Free School,” in this land he once controlled. As part of his will, he required that both the school and town be named after him. The signing of this will is portrayed in another mural in the Log, directly across from the one of Mohawk King Hendrick and Col. Ephraim Williams. —Elizabeth Poulos ’19

This painting is of the morning of “The Bloody Morning Scout” on Sept. 8, 1755. Chief Hendrick and Col. Ephraim Williams were allies fighting on the British side of the French and Indian War. They were ordered to reinforce the garrison of Fort Edward, 14 miles away, and were ambushed along the way. Both leaders died that day, as did the majority of their command. In the mural I see two distinctive units working together, going over the maps with their respective commanders. It looks to me like Chief Hendrick and Col. Williams are equals. The Mohawks are presented as willing allies, but what is the real nature of their alliance? What is the real military context? Is it World War II—the mural was painted in 1942—or is it the French and Indian War? —Jake Bingaman ’19, former U.S. Navy SEAL

Many of the decorations in the Log, but especially the mural, aid in telling a common story about the college’s founding. The beginning of the college came with the death of Ephraim Williams. This myth is undeniably important as it has even informed our school motto E liberalitate E. Williams, armigeri: “Through the generosity of E. Williams, soldier.” But alumni and students understand the Log—and the more abstract mythos of the college—differently. To alumni, the Log was an amazing student space that defined people’s weekends and weeknights as well as an environment to revel in the mythos of Williams College. For current students, it’s that place with the covered up mural, duck-fat fries and the occasional trivia night. The overly simplistic story becomes offensive, as it doesn’t fully address the relationship between Native Americans and Europeans at the time or ever. The story is in many ways incomplete. —Tom Riley ’18
Three years ago, documentary filmmaker Karin Muller ’87 was traveling solo through Egypt. With her Sony PMW-200 camcorder in hand and 60 pounds of equipment and supplies on her back, she spent three months living among Nile fishermen, Bedouin nomads and garbage collectors, capturing their everyday lives.

That summer she visited Cairo, where she gathered in Tahrir Square with half a million people calling for the resignation of President Mohamed Morsi. Then she traveled to a small community that hadn’t seen an outsider in 20 years. There, as she walked through the village center wearing a hijab, a man yelled out a single word that almost ended her life.

“Spy!”
Within moments, dozens of villagers surrounded Muller, shoving, kicking and hitting her. She took shelter under the back fender of a parked car, knowing she wouldn't be able to survive the onslaught much longer. That's when she spotted a woman standing nearby in an open doorway. Muller emerged from her hiding place and scrambled past the woman, who locked the door behind them once they were safely inside.

In nearly three decades making films, Muller has logged some perilous and impressive journeys. She hiked the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Vietnam and trekked 4,000 miles of the Inca Road between Quito, Ecuador, and Santiago, Chile. She lived with pre-Buddhist mountain ascetics in Japan, traced her family heritage through Tanzania and hitchhiked through Cuba. Viewers of her many PBS and National Geographic Channel series and readers of her books and articles have joined her on these expeditions from the safety of their homes.

Her most recent adventures are documented in *Egypt: Beyond the Pyramids*, which began airing on PBS stations in May. The series follows on the heels of *Cuba’s Secret Side* and *Sudan’s Secret Side*, which premiered on PBS in 2013 and 2014, respectively, and are now available on DVD.

“The secret side,” Muller says, “is the human side.” She’s captivated by the gritty reality of a place and its inhabitants, whose lives go mostly unnoticed. And she’s driven by an insatiable desire for learning sparked at Williams.

Born in Switzerland, Muller traveled frequently as a child. Her father was Swiss, and his work with the pharmaceutical company Hoffmann-La Roche took them around the globe. Her mother, an African-born doctor, had a passion for language and culture.

The family lived in the U.S. and Puerto Rico for a time and then moved to Australia, where Muller attended high school and enrolled in veterinary school. Then her father was offered an opportunity to relocate to the company’s U.S. offices, and he returned from a business trip with a suitcase full of college and university brochures. One application was for Williams.

Muller visited the campus and made her decision almost instantly. “Williams was so beautiful,” she says. “Those buildings said learning and knowledge. We cut the college tour short.”

Muller, who now lives in California, likens her Williams education to standing in front of a fire hose of knowledge. The economics major often audited courses in addition to her major and general requirements.

“When I look at my career now, there isn’t a single course I haven’t used,” she says. “I absolutely could not do what I do without that broad liberal arts education, which essentially prepares you for everything because it prepares you to think.”

Muller joined the Peace Corps right out of college, spending two years on a remote island in the Philippines. She returned home to a management-consulting job and immediately regretted being tied to an office. She started a small company of her own, sold it not long afterward, and used her savings to follow her dream of becoming a travel writer. Muller chose Vietnam as her first assignment, writing a book for National Geographic. It gave her the confidence and experience to begin doing them on her own.

Today, what sets Muller’s documentaries apart is her deep immersion into completely foreign communities and cultures.

“She’s not the kind of person who will fly into a land and book into the Hilton,” says her agent, Lewis Williams. “She’d rather get off the plane and make her way right into the slums of Cairo.”

Her intimate storytelling—often from the point of view of the subject—also distinguishes her work.

“You can see on the screen that people really trust her,” says Tracy Beckett, director of program and media acquisitions for PBS International. “At first, the locals are at arms’ length, but then they’re closer to her and warming to the camera.”

In part, that’s because Muller speaks their language. She’s fluent in French, German, Spanish and Tagalog. She says her Arabic, Japanese, Swahili and Vietnamese would improve with more regular use.

She’s also set out to learn what she calls “barterable skills” that can connect her to the people she covers. When she’s not traveling, Muller regularly takes automotive technician classes. Not only is she prepared when the vehicle she’s driving in inevitably breaks down miles from nowhere, but her auto repair abilities also have helped her out of some sticky situations.

“She’s not the kind of person who will fly into a land and book into the Hilton. She’d rather get off the plane and make her way right into the slums of Cairo.” Lewis Williams, Muller’s agent

Karin Muller in Sudan (below), Egypt (at right) and at home in California (opposite page, bottom).
“If you’re stopped at a roadblock, or if there’s a chance that you might be taken hostage, there’s that moment when you realize you’re in serious trouble,” she says. But as she’s found in countries in the Middle East, “I just say in Arabic, ‘Allah sent me to fix your trucks.’ They always have broken-down trucks.”

She also took break-dancing lessons after learning that North African teenage boys, in particular, love rap music and break dancing—or their versions of them.

“My goal,” Muller says, “was to develop a 20-second routine I could do on sand so if I ran into that situation I could turn ‘Let’s shoot her’ into ‘Wow, that’s really cool.’” Luckily, she’s never had to demonstrate her skills.

Muller also has two black belts in martial arts and knows how to box. But when overwhelmed by the mob in Egypt, she relied on instinct. “If it’s you against three people and they have you surrounded, you’re done,” she says. “Within 20 seconds, there were 20 people. And at that point, nothing you have prepared can help, really.”

To this day, she’s not sure why the woman in the doorway let her go by, but Muller remembers feeling overwhelmed with gratitude. She hid in the woman’s home for several hours before the police took her into custody. They held her for 10 hours, releasing her only after the family she was staying with in the village intervened on her behalf.

“I had broken ribs, I had internal injuries, I was throwing up and losing my vision from a blow to the head,” she says. She called her mother, a retired general practitioner, who arranged for her to have surgery. About two weeks later Muller was back home in California to undergo an operation to repair her damaged spinal cord. After six months of rehabilitation, she is almost fully recovered.

“I’m biking, surfing, playing on a water polo team,” she says. “I have just enough permanent damage to remind me I’m mortal.”

In spite of what happened in Egypt, Muller says absolutely she would do it again, though she’s promised to stay out of the Middle East while her mother is still alive. She’s already planning her next project—one that will keep her in North America, with a population unlike any she’s studied before: domestically raised wolves that she plans to trek with in the wild.

Thousands of captive wolves and wolf-dog hybrids are abandoned, rescued or euthanized each year when people who raise them as pets realize they’re unable to provide for their needs. Few facilities in the U.S. and Canada can accommodate the unwanted animals, and those that can are overcrowded.

The logistics of the project boggle the mind. How do you provide for wolves’ dietary needs—five to seven pounds of meat a day—when they don’t know how to hunt? How do you teach them to be wary of humans? And how do you know they won’t run away at the first taste of freedom?

“The project itself has an awful lot of unanswered questions,” Muller says. “But solving these problems and issues is no different from going to China and saying, ‘I’m going to try to get inside families. I’m going to get up in the Tibetan Himalayas. I’m going to try to figure out the difference between coastal Chinese culture, modern and traditional.’”

The many issues associated with the wolf project have inspired a new chapter in Muller’s career. She’s developing a crowdsourcing platform that might help her find answers to her questions. She’s already secured the funding for the site, CrowdSolveIt.org, which is due to go live in the fall and will allow anyone with a humanitarian project to seek information and expert advice to support his or her work.

“It’s a Kickstarter for ideas,” Muller says. “So I, as an innovator, would put the wolf trek on this platform and lay out all the issues I had not yet resolved.”

Instead of donating money, as people do for Kickstarter or GoFundMe projects, the public would answer her questions and offer expertise. “They are crowd solvers,” Muller says. “Our goal is to give social entrepreneurs access to the collective intelligence and experience of a vast number of users in order to solve complex problems.”

The platform is a natural extension of the nonprofit she already operates called Take 2: The Student’s Point of View, which helps elementary- through college-aged students develop global citizenship and leadership skills. Through the website take2videos.org, Muller shares the raw footage from her documentaries, which the students can edit to create their own documentaries and presentations on subjects including politics, environmental science and social justice.

The goal of Take 2—and of all her work—is to share insight into how other people live and cultivate “global citizenship, empathy, compassion, understanding,” Muller says.

“I’m the happiest person I know,” she says. “I will do this for the rest of my life.”

Denise DiFulco is a freelance writer based in New Jersey.

“YOU CAN SEE ON THE SCREEN THAT PEOPLE REALLY TRUST HER. AT FIRST, THE LOCALS ARE AT ARMS’ LENGTH, BUT THEN THEY’RE CLOSER TO HER AND WARMING TO THE CAMERA.” Tracy Beckett, PBS International
A spring semester production of the play Waxworks, about the early life of wax sculptor Marie Tussaud, presented an opportunity for students taking Costume Design to learn the art of “life casting.”

The play opens in 1789, just before the French Revolution, when a young Marie Grosholz (Tussaud’s birth name) leaves her post at the Palace of Versailles to work in the Paris wax salon of her mentor, Dr. Philippe Curtius. There she meets some of the city’s most influential people while making casts of their heads, a custom among aristocrats and intellectuals. As the revolution becomes more violent, her work turns to making death masks of people, some of whom were her friends, who were beheaded by guillotine, and then labeling their waxen images to identify them as “patriots” or “enemies.”

“It’s a play with big themes that demanded a big set, big costumes and big props,” says costume director and lecturer in theater Deborah Brothers, who each year modifies her costume design course to fit the needs of the productions taking place.

For Waxworks, which premiered at the ’62 Center for Theatre and Dance in May, Brothers invited Beckie Kravetz ’81 to lead several workshops in life casting. Kravetz spent 20 years with LA Opera as the assistant wig master, mask maker and principal makeup artist. She now has a studio in Cummington, Mass., where she builds original and commissioned sculpture and masks.

A theater major at Williams, Kravetz taught Brothers’ students how to take castings and make molds of hands, faces and heads. She then brought the molds back to her studio and sculpted the heads for the play. Because this was the first staging of Waxworks, the group encountered some challenges along the way.

“It was a work in progress,” Kravetz says. “The play originally called for a bust of one character, but as the cast started running through the scenes, they realized it should just be a head. I had to decapitate one of my sculptures, which was actually right in the spirit of the play.”

The heads of characters were used as props in Waxworks, so student actors served as models during the casting workshops. Says Harold E. Theurer ’17, who played Maximillien de Robespierre, an influential figure in the revolution who ultimately was beheaded: “Once the mixture was applied over my eyes, ears and mouth, I sat still for more than an hour, unable to speak, see, hear or move my upper body. Yet I found the process surprisingly tranquil.”

Omar Gouda ’16, who was enrolled in Brothers’ class and also played the role of Curtius, says the workshops not only gave him practical experience in life casting but also enhanced his acting.

“The majority of my dialogue was about teaching Marie about wax,” says Gouda, a Japanese and theater double major. “It would have felt disingenuous to have no experience with that myself.”

Waxworks was written by Canadian playwright Trina Davies and won the Alberta Playwrights Network Award for best new play in 2007. It came to Williams via visiting lecturer in theater Kristen van Ginhoven, founder of WAM Theatre in Lee, Mass., which hosted a reading of the play in 2014.

—Julia Munemo
Behind the Supreme Court Standoff

The stalemate between the U.S. Senate and President Barack Obama over the Supreme Court nomination of Merrick Garland is without precedent. And while the standoff dominated the news cycle in March, there’s much more to the story, says Justin Crowe ’03, associate professor of political science and author of Building the Judiciary: Law, Courts and the Politics of Institutional Development (Princeton University Press, 2007). Here are some of his insights.

We’ve been building to this moment for some time. “When Reagan nominated the conservative Robert Bork to the court, the Democratically controlled Senate blocked him 58-42,” Crowe says of the 1987 appointment that became a pivotal moment in the development of recent Supreme Court politics. “Since then we’ve seen more justices strategically timing their retirements, a move toward appointing younger and younger nominees and the level of obstruction rising.”

March 2017 is the soonest a new justice will be confirmed. “That’s how long it will take for the next president to nominate someone and for hearings to be completed,” Crowe says.

Still, nine is not a magic number. Crowe says the number of justices on the Supreme Court has ranged from as few as five to as many as 10 (for a brief time in the 1860s). The number is set by statute, not by the Constitution.

And Garland himself is a complicated nominee. “He’s not as liberal as many expected for an Obama nominee,” Crowe says. “But if the Senate says Garland is too liberal, they can argue they won’t accept anyone more liberal than him in the future. At the same time, there’s an argument that Obama should have nominated the most liberal justice he could find”—in part to mobilize voters. “A nomination like Sri Srinivasan of the D.C. Circuit, for example, might have mobilized the Asian-American vote. Furthermore, voters who don’t tend to consider the Supreme Court a crucial campaign issue might have taken up this cause and voted some of the obstructionists in the Senate out of office.”

—Julia Munemo
For Alan Hirsch, a trained attorney who teaches law, moonlights as an expert witness on interrogations and false confessions and became an art historian in midlife, the mystery surrounding the 1961 theft of Francisco Goya’s “Portrait of the Duke of Wellington” from London’s National Gallery seemed almost made to order.

Hirsch, a lecturer in humanities, chair of justice and law studies, and author of The Duke of Wellington, Kidnapped!: The Incredible True Story of the Art Heist that Shocked a Nation (Counterpoint, 2016), says the book—his fourth—“checks quite a few boxes where my background and interests are concerned.” The book, which starts with the painting’s disappearance and evolves into a legal drama centered on a false confession, also happens to solve the crime.

Sparked by a conversation with art crime writer Noah Charney, Hirsch’s investigation took him to London, where he interviewed participants in the case and reviewed transcripts of the trial of Kempton Bunton, the man who originally confessed. After Hirsch and Charney coauthored articles questioning Bunton’s guilt, Hirsch received an email from someone who claimed he knew the real thief. In a coffee shop in New York’s Penn Station, Hirsch met with a secretive intermediary he wryly nicknamed “Deep Throat.”

“There was a time when I knew the identity of the actual culprit but could not, for various reasons, name him in the book,” Hirsch says. The event that changed this circumstance is the near-final piece in an elegant puzzle that lays to rest a decades-old mystery, corrects the historical record and transcends the “true crime” genre.

“Human folly plays an important role,” Hirsch says, “but there’s something redeeming that peeks through, some display of greatness or at least goodness. … The British justice system doesn’t come off well, but an improbable hero emerges.”

—Abe Loomis

On July 19, 1965, at roughly 8 p.m., a large bespectacled man with a round face and a gray crew cut, appearing to be roughly sixty years of age, showed up at the visitor’s room on the ground floor at Back Hall, New Scotland Yard. The man, who wore a gray suit and top hat, claimed to have information about the Goya stolen from the National Gallery four years earlier and returned two months earlier.

Summoned to deal with the visitor, Detective Sergeant Frank Andrews said to him, “I understand you have information to give police respecting the theft of the Goya portrait from the National Gallery in London.”

“You don’t have to look any further, I am the man who took it,” the man calmly replied.

“Can you give me some more information which will enable me to decide that what you are saying is the truth?” Andrews asked.

“I am the man who took it and I am the man who sent it back. I can tell you exactly how it was packed. Will that do?”

“Tell me first how you came to take the picture,” Andrews said.

“I am not saying anything more. Is the reward of £5,000 still available if I’m turned in by someone?”

Andrews said he did not know and again asked the man how he took the picture. The man again declined to respond but pulled from his pocket a small writing pad and said, “This is the actual pad I wrote the ransom notes on.”

Andrews gave the man a piece of paper and requested that he “write me some words in the same manner in which you wrote the ransom notes.” The man removed a pencil from his pocket and wrote, “I have decided to turn myself in as I have reason to believe that somebody else is about to do so.”

Other books


Dreamology. By Lucy Keating ’08. HarperTeen, 2016. A debut novel about what happens when a girl meets the real-life version of the boy that, until now, she’s only known in her dreams.


The Far West. By Zachary Wadsworth, Williams assistant professor of music. Bridge Records, 2016. The title track of this CD is a cantata featuring the poetry of Tim Dlugos, a New York poet who died of AIDS in 1990 while studying to become a priest.
Baja California Sur: Up Close

Spending two weeks in Baja California Sur, Mexico, brought into focus many of the things Christina Seeger ’16 was learning about in a spring semester tutorial on coastal ecosystems.

“I stood on a cliff and looked down at the island we’d spent the day exploring, and suddenly I could see everything we learned about so clearly,” says Seeger, a geosciences and astronomy double major.

“The island was formed by a giant volcano, and I was able to construct the whole story about the eruption, the marine response and how the wind direction and what’s being swept in interacts with it all.”

The trip, which took place during spring break, was part of the tutorial Gulf of California Tectonics and Coastal Ecosystems, taught by Markes Johnson, the Charles L. MacMillan Professor of Natural Science, emeritus. In tutorials, pairs of students, guided by their professor, take turns developing their own independent work and critiquing their partner’s.

The 10 sophomores, juniors and seniors in Johnson’s class learned about the tectonics of the region and how the gulf formed. They also studied the region’s ecosystems, such as coral reefs and clam flats, both of which result in massive limestone formations along the coast.

During spring break, the students spent four nights camping on two of the islands in Loreto Bay National Park, where they encountered coral reef deposits on top of volcanic rock. The formation indicates that sea level is lower today than it was 125,000 years ago and that the island is rising over time.

The group then traveled 45 kilometers up the coast to study on foot and by kayak a span of coastline encompassing two bays that open onto the gulf from different directions. “No detailed geological map has ever been done on the area enclosed by the two bays,” says Johnson, adding that the students “made some fresh observations that clarified certain geological relationships in the area.”

Johnson has studied the ecology and tectonics of shorelines for many years. Earlier this year, he published his fourth book on the region: Gulf of California Coastal Ecology: Insights from the Present and Patterns from the Past (Sunbelt Publications).

On Sacred Ground

Marissa L. Shapiro ’18 felt a swelling in her heart as she listened to a sermon at the Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Philadelphia, Pa. Though she’d read sermons and studied religion from an academic perspective, this experience was different. “It didn’t matter that it wasn’t my religious tradition,” says the history and Jewish studies major. “It was about the connection I felt with the people around me.”

That connection was possible thanks to VaNatta Ford, visiting assistant professor of Africana studies. She and students in her course The Rhetoric(s) of Black Religious Traditions spent a weekend in Philadelphia, where they met with an imam and members of the Masjidullah mosque, visited a museum and attended Sunday morning services at Mother Bethel, which sits on the oldest parcel of land owned by blacks in the U.S.

Ford, an ordained AME minister, says, “Philadelphia is robust with black religiosity, so it’s the perfect place to experience how rhetoric—that is, how messages impact and influence people—is communicated in black religious traditions.”

The course explored the religious expressions of black Americans. Students read sermons and other forms of public address and listened to spirituals and gospel music.

Ford says of her 16 students, “For many of them, this was their first experience in a black religious community,” Ford says of her 16 students.

The course “exemplifies the best of what the Africana studies program offers at Williams,” says Africana studies chair James Manigault-Bryant. “By incorporating experiential learning into her class, Professor Ford demonstrates how to use ethnographic methods to bridge theory and the real world.”

Next year, Ford, who has a Ph.D. in rhetoric and intercultural communication from Howard University, will teach Giving God a Backbeat: Rap Music, Religion & Spirituality. The course, she says, will “examine the ways earlier black musical traditions have contributed to religious and spiritual rhetoric in hip hop music.”

—Julia Munemo
This may lead us to new comparative molecular relationships between immunity and behavior in both humans and flies.”

Tim Lebestky, Assistant Professor of Biology

Humans may not have much in common with fruit flies. But there’s one important similarity: Both have nervous systems that respond to dopamine, a neurotransmitter present in the brain that helps to regulate movement and emotion.

Assistant biology professor Tim Lebestky has been studying dopamine in *Drosophila melanogaster*, the fruit fly, since he was a postdoctoral fellow at Caltech. Dopamine requires the presence of proteins called dopamine receptors to transmit its messages. “Without dopamine receptors, the animal can’t ‘hear’ the dopamine signal and behaves as if dopamine were absent,” Lebestky says. “That allows for a kind of functional brain mapping—finding out what behaviors dopamine affects by observing their absences and then selectively restoring dopamine function in small parts of the brain. The final outcome is the identification of small subsets of neurons that specify different behaviors through dopamine function.”

Lebestky, who earned his Ph.D. at UCLA and has taught at Williams since 2011, has mapped several behaviors in fruit flies. “Because *Drosophila* are so easy to maintain and keep, they provide something of a playground in which to test out different ideas that may eventually affect humans and pharmacological interventions for disease states in the brain,” he says.

That’s because the fruit fly brain has molecular similarities with the human brain.

**Fruit Fly Grooming**

Three years ago students in biology professor Tim Lebestky’s Neural Development and Plasticity course asked to look into dopamine’s effect on grooming in fruit flies. They designed an experiment and built a grooming chamber (above) to compare typical fruit flies (top row) to genetically altered, or “mutant” ones that lack the dopamine receptor gene (bottom row).

**mutant**

Mutant *D. melanogaster*. The fly lacks the dopamine receptor gene, thus blocking its ability to “hear” the dopamine signal. Dopamine is a chemical in the brain that has been shown to affect various *D. melanogaster* behaviors, including arousal, sleep, learning, memory, courtship and copulation.

**What Can We Learn from Fly Brains?**
If scientists can determine which types of molecules match up and affect one another in the fruit fly brain, they may be one step closer to understanding which types of molecules should be targeted with medications for humans that could affect mood and behavior.

Lebestky and his students researched dopamine’s effect on arousal, sleep and memory in fruit flies. Then, three years ago, a group of students in his Neural Development and Plasticity course asked to look into its effects on grooming. With Lebestky they designed an experiment to compare typical fruit flies to genetically altered, or “mutant,” ones that lack the dopamine receptor gene.

“I had an inkling we might see something interesting,” says Lebestky. He was right: Mutant flies groom themselves less effectively than their unaltered counterparts. After seeing clear results in his students’ experiments, Lebestky ran more thorough tests and demonstrated that mutant flies are 28 percent less effective groomers. His work was published earlier this year in *Genes, Brains and Behavior.*

Lebestky will continue to study the dopamine receptor and whether the grooming defect increases fruit flies’ susceptibility to infection. “Grooming is an important response for animals to keep their bodies clear of microbes and parasites,” he says. “If that is misregulated, there can be dire consequences for the animal.”

The investigation will help him understand if and how the brain knows when the body’s immune system is under attack and where on the body the attack is occurring. “This may lead us to new comparative molecular relationships between immunity and behavior in both humans and flies,” he says.

In the conclusion of his paper, Lebestky writes: “More evidence and investigation into evolutionary relationships between molecules, neural networks and the systems of organization within the invertebrate and mammalian brain suggest many similarities, and future comparative investigations will allow a richer, reciprocal understanding of brain circuitry and its regulation.” Meaning: We’re not so different from flies as we may think.

—Julia Munemo
The Jewelry Stand

By Evelyn Rojas ‘16

The recipient of a 2006/2009 International Service Fellowship, Evelyn Rojas traveled on her own for the first time the summer after her sophomore year at Williams to Córdoba, Spain, as a volunteer for the Red Cross. The experience in part inspired her poem “The Jewelry Stand,” which won a Dunbar Student Life Prize in April. She was also inspired by “having conversations with many different students who wanted their voices, their struggles, to be heard,” she says. “This is where this poem steps in.”

I stare
At the jewelry stand
The jewelry stand with the brass-like plump little bird that serves as decoration
The jewelry stand that holds all my earrings and bracelets—
My treasures from far, far away
And as I do
Memories of traveling
To Spain, Uganda, Chile, Argentina, and Nicaragua
Appear in my head
And I begin to think
How lucky, How grateful, How blessed I am
For having the opportunity to travel
To 5 countries during
My 4-year stay
At Williams

But sometimes
When life gets to you
When you compare yourself to others
Compare, compare, compare
When your mind begins to cloud with thoughts
Negative thoughts that make you feel in knots
You think how
5 countries is nothing
And all of a sudden you feel a slight sting
For there are those who have traveled the whole world
Maybe even twice around
For there are those who began to travel as a child
For there are those who think of traveling as second nature
Not as a rare opportunity
Like for me
Like for others on campus
Like for us who never saw traveling as an option
Not even as a dream
Before coming to Williams

But just when I begin to lose hope
Just when I feel like my slump will never end
I remember
If there is one thing Williams taught me
It’s that the definition of success isn’t
Merriam-Webster’s definition
“Achieving wealth, respect, or fame”
Success can mean a million different things
People at Williams come from all realms of life
All types of circumstances, circumstances, circumstances
All types of realities, realities, realities
And that is why success is a little word
that to allocate it with one definition would be absurd
Success has many meanings
That involve many feelings
To a single student
To a small group
To the whole campus

Success is getting through Family Days when your parents can’t come
And you start feeling anything but numb
Because they’re 18 hours away
Or because they’re 2 hours away and can’t afford the ticket
Success is passing a Division 3 class
Success is being able to fight depression—
to have the willpower to go to class in the first place
Success is being able to fall into a deep sleep
without anxiety taking over the hours of the night
Success is getting into the Ph.D. program of your dreams
Success is getting the job of your dreams
Success is being able to graduate in the first place
Success is learning a completely new language
Success is not losing your Spanish proficiency because you read and write in English 24/7
Success is being proud of dressing differently, eating differently, speaking differently
Success is chasing after your goals ambitiously
Success is coming out to your friends and conservative parents
Success is juggling with classes + a sport + work-study
And trying your best to keep your head from getting muddy
Success is admitting that you need to talk to someone
Because you no longer find anything fun
Success is finding a way to bring at least one family member to your graduation
Because you’ve worked hard for your education
Success is what YOU make of it
What makes you satisfied
What makes you feel pride
Let this poem be a guide
Success is creating a poem that can express how many students feel
Listen up! This is the deal:
We are all unique
Therefore, to compare is just not fair.

———

I stare
At the jewelry stand
The jewelry stand with the brass-like plump little bird that serves as decoration
The jewelry stand that holds all my earrings and bracelets—
My treasures from far, far away
The brass-like plump little bird guards my treasures and my memories of traveling
Just like this poem guards my hope from straying

Evelyn Rojas ’16 is working as a social services caseworker for the nonprofit Heartland Alliance in her hometown of Chicago, where she’s assisting immigrant children and teens from Central America.

Mapping a Territory

When psychology professor Mariko Moher wanted her students to consider how cognitive development influences the ways humans create and interpret art, she turned to the Williams College Museum of Art. With the help of Elizabeth Gallerani, curator of academic programs, Moher identified works that would speak to her class’s inquiry.

One piece in particular, a Lordy Rodriguez watercolor called Territory, caught students’ attention. In exploring the work, Moher’s students focused on how memory shapes representations of the world—an idea that might resonate for Rodriguez.

In an interview with Williams Magazine, Rodriguez says: “This body of work started from feeling nostalgic for home.” Born in the Philippines, he grew up in Texas but attended the School of Visual Arts in New York. He felt homesick one night and drew in his journal a map depicting Houston and New York “all mixed up and combined.” With that first map, and those that followed, he imagined “that I still went to my college but was close enough to live at home and see my old friends.”

As his horizons expanded, the maps did, too. In the America Series, of which Territory is a part, Rodriguez reconstructs the United States based on his own history and heritage, charting a critique of American policy and culture. Territory includes the names of towns, cities and regions derived from places the U.S. has occupied.

“American identity … is heavily influenced by the introduction and sharing of cultural memes with immigrant identities,” he says. “This implies a voluntary commingling. But when a country or culture is occupied by a sovereign nation like the U.S., the appropriation of an occupied culture has a different aspect to it, which this piece tries to address.”

For Moher and her class, Territory also helped illuminate the inner landscape. “Just as two people who experienced the same event may remember things differently, that may also impact our representations of space,” Moher says. “You can see how somebody’s experiences can and do change their memories or representations of the world.”

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