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Acclaimed Radio Host Ashbrook Examines China

By Jessica Seminelli, A&S '12

On Tuesday, September 30, the Presidential Scholars Program welcomed Tom Ashbrook, host of National Public Radio's talk show "On Point," to speak to Scholars on the topic "Impressions From The New China." With an impressive résumé encompassing twenty years as a foreign correspondent, newspaper editor, and author, including ten years in India, Hong Kong, and Japan, and a current position as host of the fastest growing talk show in the country, Mr. Ashbrook spoke easily and insightfully about foreign matters after having witnessed the conditions in China and India firsthand. In his rich voice and matter-of-fact tone, he shared his observations with Scholars and then opened the floor to questions, fostering an interesting discussion about the global future.

The focus of Ashbrook's talk was on China, which, as he put it, is "as big as it gets." During the 1970s, he spent four years living outside of Hong Kong, as the main city was closed to outsiders; in the eighties he returned as a correspondent for *The Boston Globe* just as China, still a rigid, poor society, was beginning to loosen up and experiment with free markets. This past April, he returned to the mainland for a week of On Point programs and witnessed a people "on fire with optimism," as their affluence and wealth is enough to surpass many Americans'. Compared to his visits only three and four decades earlier, this most recent Chinese adventure revealed a country poised to



Ola Jachtorowicz, A&S '12, approaches Tom Ashbrook to discuss China and request an autograph.

amass an enormous amount of wealth and power in the upcoming years.

Ashbrook expressed great confidence, however, that the United States and China, while rivals, need not be polar enemies, and have much to gain from one another and the potential for a positive, symbiotic relationship. He emphasized his point that Americans need to "reexamine China," replacing our old-fashioned image of a backward Communist entity with a modern one of success and wealth. Overcoming the ingrained sense that democracy justly leads to wealth, and a self-image as the primary world power, will not be an easy step for Americans. He explained that it will be necessary to "grapple with the waves of apprehension about our democracy when we realize we are not necessarily number one in the world." However, he stressed that we must not reject our democratic values in this new global setting.

"It's my hope that we can build around our democratic values and assess our

commitment to democracy," Ashbrook said. True, China still handles matters covertly, often relying on threats, bugging, and "goons" to deal with opposition quietly, but its disregard for the rights of citizens to protest is overshadowed by the widespread, popular support the government receives. Politically, China and the U.S. may not see eye to eye, but culturally, there are more similarities than differences.

As Ashbrook observed, "China is culturally compatible to the United States—they value education, hard work, communal effort, and even our body language and sense of humor is compatible." It would be wise for Americans to accept Chinese dominance. With 1.3 billion people and constantly increasing financial capital, dominance may be inevitable and instead of fearing or hating China, we ought to learn to coexist with, and relate to, one another.

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Brian Gray

A Tribute by Dr. Sardella

Although we ordinarily take pride and pleasure in sharing Presidential Scholars Program “firsts” with our readers, it is with great sorrow that I write to inform you of the death of Brian Gray on January 2, 2009. Brian, a member of the PSP Class of 2001, died of natural causes after a long struggle with a serious illness.

Since most of you will not have known Brian, I would like to tell you a bit about him. A Chemistry major, Brian, a native of Garden City, New York, became involved in research almost from the beginning of his undergraduate career, working in the Chemistry Department laboratory of Professor Amir Hoveyda, where he not only became a co-author on two papers, but shared in two patents as well – remarkable achievements for an undergraduate. In addition to having been named a Goldwater Science Scholar in his sophomore year, Brian had the distinction of being the first Presidential Scholar to win a Marshall Scholarship. He was described on the Marshall website in the following words: “Brian Gray of Boston College is an accomplished biochemist who seeks to pursue the control and eradication of infectious disease. He will be studying chemistry at [Cambridge University]. A Goldwater Scholar and intellectual superstar, Brian already has a major journal paper and two patents to his credit. He has been awarded a Pfizer Undergraduate Research Fellowship. He is also socially committed, participating in a 500-mile AIDS vaccine bicycle ride in Alaska, the Boston Marathon in support of autistic children, and HIV-prevention lecture courses for prison inmates.”

After returning from his studies in England, Brian began working toward his Ph.D. in chemistry in the laboratory of Stuart Schreiber at Harvard University, supported by a National Science Foundation pre-doctoral fellowship. Until poor health forced him to interrupt his studies, Brian had already published three additional papers. We learned of his struggles only second-hand, and after the fact, of the bravery and determination with which he fought the disease, of his optimism and hopefulness and his passion for science almost until the end.

Beyond the list of Brian’s intellectual achievements, though, perhaps the best way to remember him was for the energy and passion that he invested in all his pursuits, whether in science or in service to others less fortunate, and his ever-present sense of humor. My own image of him is as he was when I last saw him during his undergraduate years and at graduation, and my memories are happy ones – like Brian in France sporting his outrageous red beret (“so everyone will know I’m a tourist”) and lugging around his chess set, playing whenever he found a few minutes’ leisure. Brian’s was a life cut tragically short, but nonetheless well lived.

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China’s seemingly endless supply of human capital is what will potentially most amaze and alarm us, according to Ashbrook, because were war to break out, we would be shocked at their ability to “muster giant armies and throw them away.” Because its population is so enormous, poverty still persists in China, especially in rural areas. But even the most impoverished Chinese are now propelled by the hope of entering the upper levels of society and capitalizing on the country’s recent economic boom.

This spirit of nationalism grows from the memories of European and American exploitation of China in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This horrible cycle of self-punishment has ceased, and China now has enough money, power, and pride not to return to that position. Ashbrook warned that we must cater to the Chinese nationalism and learn to respect them and to understand their political and cultural DNA.

Shifting focus to discuss his career history, Ashbrook also explained how he worked in the newspaper industry for many years before realizing that the Internet was quickly going to displace his job market, so he left the newspaper industry to begin a short-lived internet company. After writing a memoir on his experiences in the dot com startup world, he was on his

way to opening another company when he received a call from WBUR-FM, one of the Boston NPR stations, three days after the 9/11 tragedy asking if he would be willing to do a short-term radio talk show, as the station was desperate for fresh people to cover the seemingly endless news in light of the attacks.

Though he had never done a live broadcast before, the need for his service as host was urgent, and as a result, Ashbrook discovered something he “enjoyed more than print journalism.” What was envisaged as a temporary program quickly morphed into a permanent feature on WBUR, and for the past seven years he has hosted “On Point,” a show dedicated to analyzing news and encouraging lively intellectual discussion about issues that matter most in our modern society. From his experience, he offered the advice to Scholars that “when you are thrown into something in an emergency, you should embrace that.”

His final remarks told students to “go out, compete hard, and help lead, not just to make your own fortune, but to pull a whole country together and pull with China.” Tom Ashbrook was a lively, enriching speaker who shared invaluable knowledge and experience about the world in which we live and offered students a wealth of advice and information during the discussion session.

Prospective Scholars Visit Boston

Largest PSP Weekend in Program's History

By Hope Sullivan, A&S '11

At the start of each spring semester, the Presidential Scholars Program welcomes a group of talented high school seniors to Boston College to interview for the Presidential Scholarship. This year, 63 students made the trip to Chestnut Hill, coming from as far away as Los Angeles, Miami, and South Korea, making this the largest class of prospective students ever assembled. Each year, current Scholars volunteer to host the prospective students in their rooms during the five-day process.

Upon their arrival on Wednesday, February 4, the prospective students met their hosts and enjoyed a pizza dinner in the Admissions Office at Devlin Hall. After moving into their temporary dormitory residences, prospective and current Scholars gathered at Lawrence House for an evening of desserts and games organized by the students involved in the PSP Weekend committee. The evening provided an opportunity for the prospective students to get acquainted with each other and the Scholars before the intensive schedule of the following days.

Over the next two days, each student completed two interviews, one with a BC faculty member, the other with an admissions officer. Prospective Scholars learned about the Presidential Scholars Program through a presentation by Dr. Dennis Sardella along with three current Scholars and one Scholar alumnus. They also wrote a timed essay on a topic relating to contemporary global leadership, as a

test of their writing skills and their ability to form a coherent argument. During their unscheduled time, prospective students were encouraged to visit Honors Program classes and to explore the campus as much as possible.

On Thursday, a special afternoon session of the PSP Evening Speaker series featured Professor Seth Jacobs of the History Department, who critiqued historian Samuel Huntington's controversial article, "The Clash of Civilizations," which offers a realist perspective on international relations. Following an enthusiastic question-and-answer session, prospective and current Scholars, PSP alumni, and Boston College faculty members gathered for dinner in the Murray Room of the Yawkey Center. Fr. William Neenan, S.J., Vice President and Special Assistant to the President, was the featured speaker, offering the prospectives guidance on the weighty decision of choosing the right college, and on the Jesuit method of reflection. Fr. Neenan's reflections were preceded by his trademark humor and trivia session, in which he posed questions to the prospective Scholars, awarding some of his favorite books as prizes for correct answers.

Friday afternoon featured a trip into the city for a trolley tour of Boston, highlights including the Massachusetts State House, the Public Garden, Fenway Park, and Trinity Church, narrated by senior Scholars. The tour was followed by dinner at the Hard Rock Café and a showing at Boston's Colonial Theater of Peter Morgan's play *Frost/Nixon*, which was recently adapted



Photo: Marjorie Sardella

Seth Jacobs captivates prospective and current Scholars alike with his analysis of civilizations.

into an award-winning movie.

Prospective Scholars and their parents attended Saturday's Honors Admitted Eagle Day to gain an inside look at the workings of the Honors Program, as well as other BC departments. Later that night, Boston College's jazz band, BC bOp!, performed for prospective and current Scholars. In keeping with the tradition of recent years' PSP Weekends, the prospective students danced along with the music, even forming a conga line around the upstairs of Corcoran Commons as current Scholars, and the diners below, watched.

On Sunday morning, students and their families were invited to attend a closing Mass at St. Mary's Chapel, celebrated by Fr. Jack Butler, S.J., a favorite among BC students. After the service, students, families, and faculty joined one last time for brunch and closing remarks from Susan Migliorisi, Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admissions and the co-organizer of PSP Weekend along with PSP Assistant Director Jennie Thomas. The weekend was deemed a great success by all involved, and the prospective students departed for their homes to await news of who would be offered a place in the Presidential Scholars Program Class of 2013.



Photo: Marjorie Sardella

Devlin 101 was standing room only for PSP Weekend as current and prospective Scholars listened to Professor Jacobs' presentation.

Alumni Spotlight: Mikaela Boyd



Photo Courtesy of Mikaela Boyd

Mikaela Boyd, A&S '02

By Sam Hocking, A&S '12

In discussing with freshman Presidential Scholars their upcoming summer Community Service Program, Boston College PULSE Program Director Professor David McMenamin stressed that the objective of summer of service is not simply to provide two more internships to tack onto their resumes, but rather, to teach them how to incorporate the ideals of a Jesuit education steeped in the notion of service learning into their everyday lives. He suggested that society suffers from the problem of compartmentalization, with service often being isolated from careers and personal affairs.

Despite this common pitfall, most Presidential Scholars are able to successfully incorporate some degree of service into every element of their lives. No better example of this fusion exists than Mikaela Boyd, A&S '02. Mikaela has lived in a fashion that exemplifies the

Jesuit tradition of men and women for others. She is currently an Associate Program Officer at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle, supported on a fellowship from Harvard, working on “innovation regarding education in the United States.”

Mikaela Boyd grew up in Seattle. Attending many different schools, she reports that her parents were “very focused on education, individual learning, and creativity.” Reflecting upon her upbringing and the values they imparted to her, Mikaela tells of how she was always very involved in her community and strongly encouraged to volunteer. This, she says, had a significant impact on her, causing her to “feel the need to give back.” Additionally, Mikaela attended a Jesuit high school and describes that

she always “felt strongly about the Jesuit ideal of servant leadership.”

During her time at Boston College, Mikaela, who majored in Sociology, immersed herself in campus life and extracurricular activities. Describing herself as an “activity-crazy person,” Mikaela served as a Residential Manager for O’Connell house and was heavily involved in activity programming, including the organizing of the scavenger hunt for BC’s nationally renowned Middle March Ball. She also held positions on the Student Judicial Board and many other academic councils. Mikaela looks back most proudly, however, on her relationship with the Jenks Leadership Program where she served as Director during both her junior and senior years. The Program, a two-year intensive “club” with a rigorous application process, draws upon candidates in their sophomore and junior years and is limited to 30 new students per year. Grounded in the Jesuit ideals of service, the student-led program centers around

members’ carrying out individual service projects, in which the “students would put forth the proposal [for their project] and fundraise all by themselves.” It aspired to “greater social aims and often involved a component for the BC community as well,” one example being students hosting a “week long awareness project about homelessness,” during which they “camped out for a week in January as a demonstration and conducted a series of seminars to raise awareness.”

As for the Presidential Scholars Program, Mikaela remembers that many of her most worthwhile experiences at BC occurred through this medium, commenting that “The summer programs were incredibly valuable.” Offering a piece of wisdom to current Scholars, she advises, “Think critically about both testing and furthering your own individual interest but also really push the boundaries of exploration. [The programs are] so invaluable to think about, distill, and test your individual abilities and passions.” In this same vein, Mikaela recalls one pivotal moment in her undergraduate life. She had already worked one summer for Microsoft, and after spending time in France before her junior year, Mikaela prepared herself to return to the company for her final summer. However, in a conversation about the opportunities before her, Dr. Sardella cautioned her against returning to the safe and familiar. She recounts how he encouraged her to “really look for what she was passionate about and find an experience that would stretch her personally.” Ruminating upon this, Mikaela, “looked at South Africa” as she was “interested in examining how countries undergo transitions to democracy.” Ultimately, she “ended up going to Turkey and working with a human and women’s rights organization.” During her time in Asia Minor, Mikaela observed hunger strikes in Turkish prisons and recalls briefing the BBC and US news stations about the situation. Mikaela credits her amazing experience to Dr. Sardella’s sage advice, as she never would have taken that same path without it.

During her senior year, Mikaela received yet another accolade: her thesis was selected for the “Scholar of the College Project.” An investigation into venture philanthropy and high-impact grant making, Mikaela

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PSP Investigates Politics with John Carroll

By Aditya Ashok, A&S '12

The 2008 presidential election has been at the forefront of most Americans' minds. Knowing that this election would make history, either by electing the first African American president or the first female vice-president, students paid close attention to the news in its various forms throughout the primaries as well as the general election.

John Carroll, a senior media Analyst for WBUR-FM and Assistant Professor of Mass Communication at Boston University, discussed the media's role in the 2008 Presidential Election with Scholars on October 14. In his presentation, aptly titled "Truth is the First Casualty of Politics," Carroll discussed how candidates employed election narratives to shape the image they present to the voting public. He emphasized how candidates manipulate the overall narratives to exclude some aspects of their candidacy while highlighting others, and to respond to issues or problems that arise during the campaign. For instance, an election narrative has been constructed about Barack Obama, which to some degree excludes the improbability of his nomination. Sarah Palin is another example of a candidate constructing a story. In a debate against her Vice Presidential opponent Joseph Biden, Palin mistook the name of a notable Civil War general for the name of a current general. However, when

later confronted about this, she claimed that she had merely mispronounced the name.

Carroll also made the important observation that while the news media has had a greater presence in the 2008 election than ever before, at the same time, it has been less of a factor. He attributed this lack of the media's efficacy to the "preaching to the choir" effect, which has resulted from the decline of print journalism and the internet-based phenomenon of "narrowcasting."

Additionally, Carroll described the news media as a "self cleaning oven," making the news, then quickly moving on to another topic, thereby effectively obscuring the previous story. He noted how print journalism, in particular, has become too sporadic in its coverage. The editors rank their stories based on impact rather than on inherent importance, with issues being constantly shuffled in and out of the coveted front-page spot.

One of the most interesting parts of Carroll's presentation highlighted how campaigns consistently make claims that range from misleading to outright false. Moreover, fact checking has no effect. Even when the media attempts to draw attention to a lie, people's opinions most often remain unchanged. The media is clearly losing its political influence on the public, giving campaigns freedom to manipulate stories to achieve the ends that they seek, and those ends seem to justify the means.

Carroll concluded with a series of video clips exemplifying the duplicitous nature of campaign ads. In the spirit of bipartisanship, he featured ads run by both the Republican and Democratic parties and fairly demonstrated that false campaign ads are not restricted to one political party.

During the lively question and answer session that followed Carroll's presentation, Scholars inquired about the media and its diminishing role in American politics. Carroll's riveting presentation on the media, appropriately given the month before the monumental election, definitely challenged the Scholars to examine their view of the media and how they themselves are affected by campaigns.



John Carroll cautions students against political naiveté.

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notes that her report "put me on a different course in terms of what I did immediately following BC." To this end, after graduating summa cum laude and election to Phi Beta Kappa, she applied to the University of Indiana's Center on Philanthropy and was chosen as one of six Jane Addams-Andrew Carnegie Fellows for advanced master's level studies in philanthropy.

After concluding her studies at Indiana, Mikaela began working for City Year, a subsidiary of the Clinton Democracy Fellowship. First working as an officer in program development, and later as director of the same initiatives, Mikaela pioneered the development of programs in South Africa to create responsible citizen

leadership and social entrepreneurs. Under her supervision, the South African Youth Corps was formed. Furthermore, Mikaela managed to exact significant budget reductions while expanding the quality and breadth of services. Commenting on the success of her endeavors, Mikaela remains humble and purposeful; stating that she believes her work is "really changing the lives of the students in the program."

Rounding out her illustrious resume, Mikaela recently graduated with an MBA from Harvard. While she jokes that her classmates at Boston College would have probably voted her least likely to attend business school, she admits that in her line of work she "needed help

with business skills," and chose Harvard specifically because she was looking for "business schools with strong social enterprise programs." Now that she has completed her studies, Mikaela states, "I see my life's work being at the leadership level of a large nonprofit or foundation." Vocationally, Mikaela offers a glimpse of what her future might hold, noting that she sees her life's work at the intersections of the private and interdependent sectors, coordinating logistics for worthwhile and socially beneficial projects. "That's part of why I got an MBA," she tells, "to be able to talk the talk and walk the walk." Yet Mikaela sells herself short. It's clear that she's been living this creed her entire life.

Advanced Study Grant Presentations

By Sarah Collier, A&S '12

The Presidential Scholars Program's Evening Speaker Series periodically features presentations not only from outside professionals but also from Scholars whose experiences inform and inspire undergraduates to pursue their own internships and undergraduate research. At the November 4 Evening Speaker Meeting, five Scholars described the Advanced Study Grant (ASG) projects they undertook during the summer of 2008. In amounts ranging from \$500 to \$2,000, these awards aim to prepare freshmen and sophomores for higher-level research as upperclassmen. The five Scholars who presented shared their intentions for future research as well as their advice for undergraduates interested in applying for ASGs.

The evening began with a presentation from Kathryn Goettl, A&S '11, whose project titled "Material Expressions of French and Mexican-American Catholicism," began immediately after the post-sophomore study trip to France. By studying and photographing a variety of "material expressions" of Catholicism both in France and in her hometown of Tucson, AZ, Kathryn compared French and Mexican-American expressions of faith. She found in France a more reserved piety than in Tucson.

Kathryn noted that one unanticipated surprise was her discovery that some representations of French Catholicism that she had originally planned to study turned out not to be present in the regions she explored, teaching her the valuable lesson that modifying one's research in response to such surprises is a necessary part of a successful project.

Scott Jelinek, A&S '10, shifted the evening's focus from Europe to Africa. Scott's project, "Micro-Economics, Institutional Policies, and HIV/AIDS in Mozambique," took him to Mozambique, where he developed Opportunity International's pilot program for HIV/AIDS education, which the organization offers in conjunction with its microfinance loans. Scott described his work as studying the "impact of standard of living and cultural attitudes on healthcare delivery." He worked closely with loan officers from the organization, interviewing clients to analyze the impact of economic development on the rate of HIV infection.

Colleen Maher, A&S '11, described her experiences working in a neuroscience laboratory at University College in Dublin, Ireland. She explained that her choice of Ireland as the site of her research stemmed from the fact that neuropsychology is a newly emerging field there, as well as her family's Irish heritage. Colleen stressed to her peers that her project, "The Things

We Know Best: To support research into memory and attention functions in electroconvulsive therapy patients in Dublin," not only gave her the opportunity to work abroad, but taught her a great deal about the importance of taking into account practical needs, such as lodging and transportation, in preparing proposals.

Jonathan Pike, A&S '10 traveled to Rwanda to work with the One Acre Fund, an organization that specializes in microfinance, providing local farmers with agricultural loans and teaching them "improved agricultural methods" in order to improve their level of productivity and provide a more secure life. Jonathan's project, titled "The Eco-village Development Concept", involved both fieldwork and research on subjects such as loan repayment rates, and provided him with valuable insights into both aspects of the One Acre Fund's work.

Leon Ratz, A&S '11, used his ASG to travel to London, where he worked for Amnesty International, the world's largest grassroots human rights organization. His project, "The Effect of Global Trade in Conventional Weapons on Human Rights Violations," was to investigate irresponsible arms transfers and to help make a case for an international arms trade treaty. Leon investigated why arms embargoes fail in the context of crises such as the genocide in Darfur. As a result of his project, Leon received an invitation to join lobbyists at the United Nations in October, where for a week he was part of an intensive effort to bring the proposed treaty to the attention of all the UN national delegations, which proved to be exhausting but rewarding work. Leon advised Scholars to consider future research interests as they plan their own grant proposals; he hopes to incorporate his work with Amnesty International into his senior thesis.

The Advanced Study Grant presentations provided younger Scholars with both inspiration and practical advice. "Hearing how far other Scholars traveled and how much they accomplished this summer made me consider applying for an Advanced Study Grant and exploring more than I had previously thought I could during the summer after my freshman year," said Mike Cuttler, A&S '12.



Kathryn Goettl, A&S '11, vivifies traditions in Mexican-American Catholicism.

Father Paris, S.J., Evokes Bioethical Dilemmas

By *Brian Tracz, A&S '12*

One of the cornerstones of contemporary Catholicism is the belief that a sensible anticipation of the future is founded upon a thorough examination of the past. On October 21, Scholars had the opportunity to meet Father John Paris, SJ, Walsh Chair of Bioethics in Boston College's theology department. Fr. Paris, a nationally-recognized authority on bioethics who is considered a pioneer in bioethics, has served as a consultant to the President's Commission on the Study of Ethics in Medicine, the US Senate Committee on Aging, and the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, and has been a consultant and expert witness in many of the landmark biomedical cases.

In his presentation titled "Emerging Issues in Bioethics," Fr. Paris immediately engaged the Scholars (whether they were expecting it or not) by challenging them to consider critically the case of a mentally retarded man diagnosed with leukemia. If the man, mentally incapable of making his own decision, is sure to die, Fr. Paris asked, should the family or anyone else persist in administering chemotherapy? The answer to the question seemed straightforward enough until Fr. Paris noted that the very administration of this treatment would cause great suffering to the man without improving his quality of life. Scholars were thus confronted with the question of whether or not the man's last months of life ought to be months of pain or whether the fatal disease ought to be allowed to take its course. Strikingly, Fr. Paris suggested that the chemotherapy should not be administered.

In a similar fashion, Fr. Paris asked the audience to consider whether a doctor should petition the courts to allow him to give a Jehovah's Witness a blood transfusion against her wishes in order to save her life or whether the doctor should observe the woman's religious prerogative not to receive blood transfusions. Once again, Fr. Paris, using the Socratic method, brought the group to the somewhat startling conclusion that, if the Jehovah's Witness believes a blood transfusion prevents salvation, then such a belief should be honored, despite the fact that medical knowledge might seem to dictate otherwise.

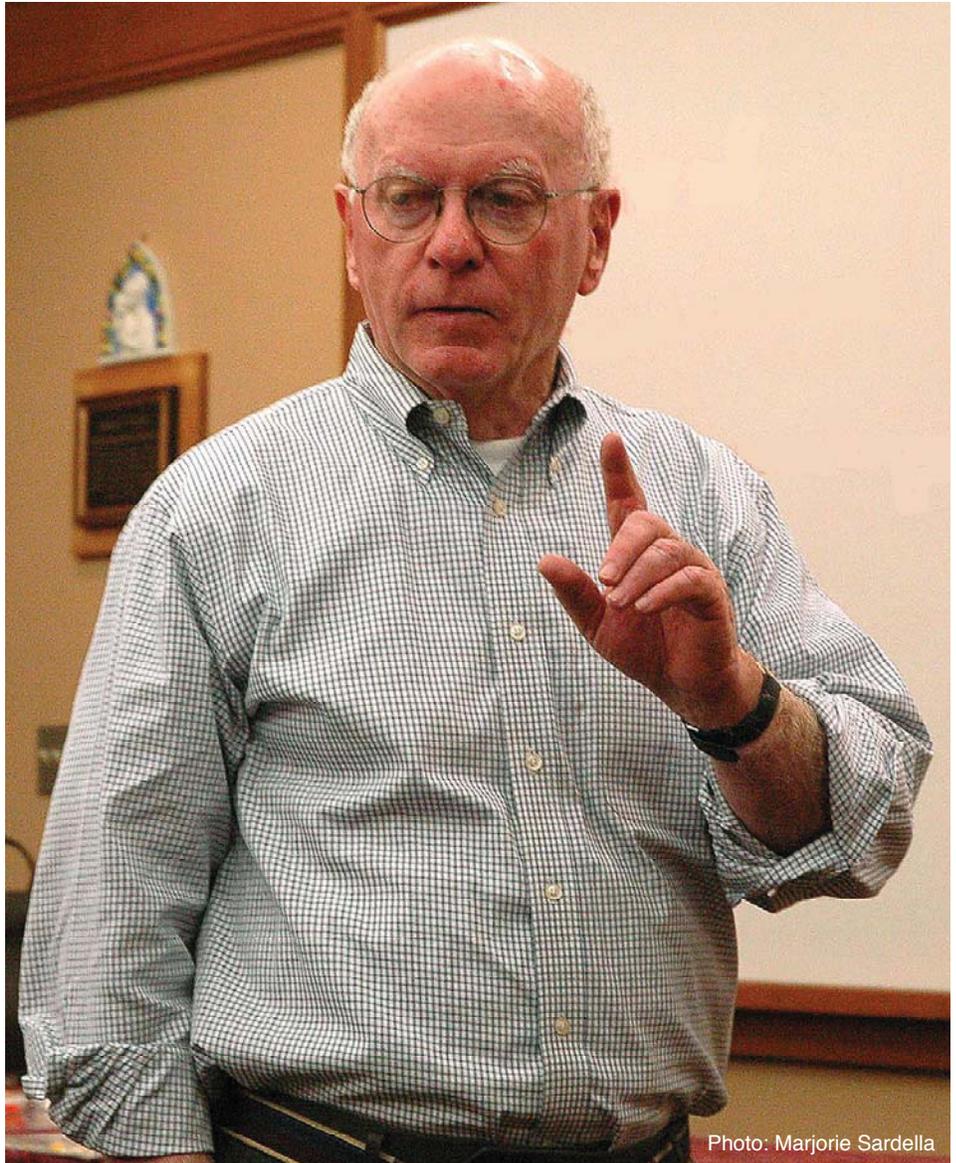


Photo: Marjorie Sardella

Father Paris offered profound insights on a difficult subject.

The love of the family, the intentions of the patient, the power of the law, and the knowledge of the doctor proved to be critical aspects needing to be taken into account in these and other cases that Fr. Paris brought up during the course of his presentation. In looking toward the future, he seemed pessimistic that legislative action would ever be able to clarify these ethical issues. Fr. Paris thought that the family's wishes should be the least influential factor when determining care for the patient, since the family generally has little knowledge of the state of the individual patient. Instead, he stressed the importance of preparing doctors to make ethical decisions because they have the greatest knowledge of the physical pains

and prospects of the patient.

After outlining the history of medicine, which he divided into three parts: Hippocrates to 1960, 1960 to 1990, and 1990 to the present day, Fr. Paris took a brief look at the future. Previewing bioethical issues that lie on the horizon, Fr. Paris thought that those involving the various forms of human reproduction are likely to be the most pressing. Who is the father of a test tube baby? Can a baby have two fathers? Here, Fr. Paris left the Scholars with many open and emerging questions that, as of yet, have no definite answers. Moreover, he made it clear that the actual force of ethics, in truth, lies not with the ethicists, but rather with the professionals who must make ethical decisions every day.

Study Abroad Presenters Span Four Continents

By Brian Tracz, A&S '12

A semester or a year spent studying abroad is often the defining experience in a college undergraduate's education. On January 20, six Presidential Scholars recounted their personal junior year study abroad experiences at an Evening Speaker Meeting.

Caroline Beimford, an English major and Economics minor, spent her semester at King's College in London studying English and Classics. While many find that studying abroad allows them to solidify their skills in a foreign language, Caroline found that the common language allowed her to notice subtle cultural differences between America and England. At King's, she was exposed to a curriculum with a focus on greater "depth" than "breadth," similar to that of a graduate program in the States.

John Flowers, with majors in both English and Human Development, also studied in England at the Advanced Studies in England program in Bath. John found that lecturers in his Creative Writing and English classes assumed that the students had a broad and deep base of knowledge in their fields than normally expected in his Boston College classes. He enjoyed this challenge and likewise enjoyed the change in the social atmosphere in England. He recommended the program to underclassmen.

Meanwhile, halfway around the world, Erin Groden, a Biology major, was researching chimp and gorilla behavior at the University of South Wales, Sydney, Australia. While she noted that she only had one final exam, she had to give a few presentations and write a research paper on chimps and gorillas. She enjoyed Sydney as a multicultural city with pleasant people, and also took the opportunity to travel widely outside of Australia, to Fiji, New Zealand, and Thailand, which proved to be some of her most memorable experiences.

Kelly McConnaughey, majoring in Philosophy and Studio Art, had an altogether different experience in Quito, Ecuador. With her interest in studio art, Kelly found time to paint and draw. She encouraged the underclassmen to volunteer and to take

courses abroad not available to them at Boston College. Kelly reminded Scholars that going abroad for a semester is ideal for all students and that they should carefully consider their decision to go abroad.

At Beijing's Peking University, Cecilia (Cece) McDonald, an Economics major and International Studies minor, spent time solidifying her Chinese skills. Cece called Peking University "China's Harvard," noting her language acquisition classes were the most challenging. She was able to stay with a host family and recommended it highly, not only for the unparalleled opportunity for language acquisition, but also because her host family provided her with insight on other's views.

Chiara Rivas-Morello, majoring in Biology, attended the Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona, Spain. This program was smaller than a similar program in Madrid,

but there were still many Boston College students in Barcelona. While Chiara found this occasionally disconcerting—she felt like she might have lost out on some of the more diverse social interactions—she also found that her overall experience was perfectly balanced with a moderate course load, enlightening faculty, and the wonderful architecture and culture in the cities of Spain.

Studying abroad is an experience that varies from person to person. While some are straightforward, structured programs, others are adventurous and unpredictable.

By learning through cultural exchange and intellectual commerce abroad, Boston College students, and Presidential Scholars especially, are able to become people of the globalized twenty-first century world, gaining invaluable knowledge of other cultures and societies.



Photo: Marjorie Sardella

Kelly McConnaughey, A&S '10, recalls an entertaining memory from Ecuador.

A Child Soldier Addresses Scholars

By Steven Liu, CSOM '11

For the final evening speaker of 2008, the Presidential Scholars Program, in conjunction with numerous other campus organizations, heard from Grace Akallo, a former child soldier from northern Uganda. Scholars listened in rapt silence as Akallo shared her story.

Akallo's nightmare began on the night of October 9, 1996, Uganda's Independence Day. "It was actually the very day our independence was taken away," she said. Ordinarily, the girls at Akallo's school would run and hide at night, but they chose to stay in their dormitories on that fateful evening.

Members of the rebel group The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) attacked the school and captured 139 girls. Akallo's abductors were actually even younger than her, but they had guns, leaving the girls with no choice but to obey them.

Sister Rachel Frassera, a nun from Akallo's school, followed the rebels and pleaded for the girls' release. They allowed 109 girls to go but kept Akallo and 29 others in captivity. From there, Akallo and her captors made their way toward Sudan.

"The road to Sudan itself was like the road to the grave," she said.

The captured children faced the constant threat of their captors' guns as well as attacks from the government's soldiers. Along the way, some of the children decided to kill themselves rather than to be killed by others.

Once in Sudan, which Akallo referred to as the "last stop in life," she witnessed even more horrors. She described dying children, some as young as seven years old, as "not being human beings" with their eyes still open and lungs still breathing,

but no flesh on their bodies. She recalled young women who were forced to fight while their children were strapped to their backs. She spoke of children who had been desensitized "like animals" to enjoy killing. During all of this, Akallo knew that no one could help her.

Even after finally being freed, the children have still faced challenges since returning to their homes. They are often discriminated against within their own communities because of the atrocities that they committed as soldiers. Five of Akallo's friends were killed. Two are still being held in captivity. The phenomenon is not limited to Uganda either. According to Akallo, there are child soldiers in 28 countries today.

"This is the world that we live in today. If we don't deal with it now, the future is very very bleak," she said.

Akallo appealed to members of the audience, whom she labeled as the leaders of the future, to work to restore justice, peace, and dignity for human life. She said that in any leadership role, students will face the same question Uganda faces today: how are you going to be able to lead people who are divided?

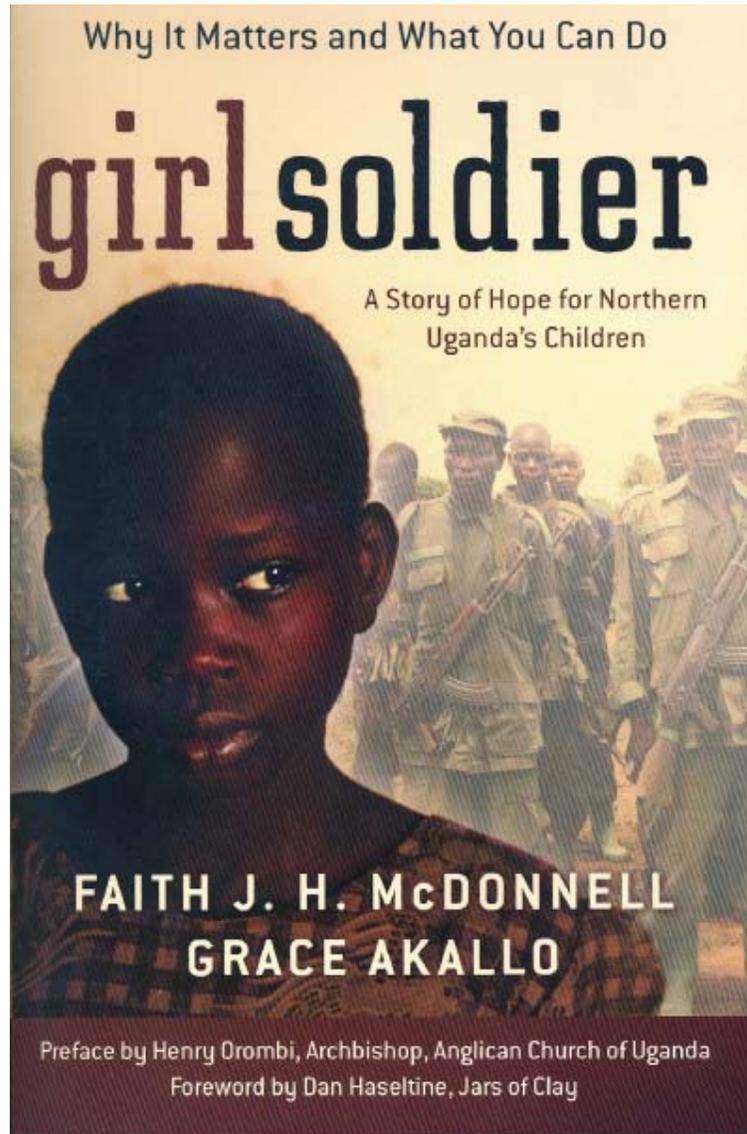
Akallo's speech elicited awareness of the plight of child soldiers and those whom they traumatize, prompting many questions from Scholars.

"It was enlightening; I didn't know any of it was going on," said Kathryn Fox, A&S '11.

Christopher Griesedieck, A&S '11, questioned whether the use of child soldiers in Uganda would ultimately require force to bring peace. "I wonder if she thinks it can

be resolved without military intervention?" he asked.

"I think she is a very strong person. It can't be easy for her to come here and tell her story, so I really respect her, and I'm really glad she came," said Kari O'Neil, CSOM '11.



Akallo's presentation paralleled her poignant book: *Girl Soldier*

"The only thing I turned to was prayer," she said.

Akallo spent seven months in Sudan training to be a soldier until her village was attacked by the government army. She used the opportunity to flee and spent three days hiding in the bushes. She and several other children were eventually recaptured and handed back to Ugandan soldiers.



Bread for the Journey

The Ideal of Perfection

Your mission is proving that a love for the earth, and for things of the earth, is possible without materialism, a love without greed...I entreat you not to be turned by the call of vulgar strength, of stupendous size, by the spirit of storage, by the multiplication of millions, without meaning and without end. Cherish the ideal of perfection, and to that, relate all your work and all your movements. Though you love the material things of the earth, they will not hurt you and you will bring heaven to earth and soul into them.

- Rabindranath Tagore