

Ex Libris

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Prospective Scholars visit Boston College

By Rachel Newmiller, A&S '13
& Kevin Morris

This year's Presidential Scholars Weekend brought 53 talented high school seniors to Boston College. These prospective Scholars were hand selected from a pool of over 5,700 Early Action applicants and hailed from 23 different states, representing all areas of the country. Amid the whirlwind of interviews, mock seminars and social events, they were given the wonderful and unique opportunity to obtain a better understanding of BC's academic offerings and educational philosophy.

The Weekend began on Wednesday, February 3rd, narrowly missing the snow storms that pummeled the Northeast. Current Scholars, some of whom would be hosting the prospective students during their stay, welcomed the new arrivals in the Devlin Hall admissions office. That evening, the Undergraduate Admissions and Presidential Scholars staff joined prospective and current students for pizza while sharing laughs and lively conversation. Visiting students then headed to the PSP's Lawrence House where they became better acquainted with current Scholars and one another. The desserts and board games ensured a good time for all. The evening did not conclude too late, however, as the prospective students had a long, busy weekend in store.

Thursday began with a presentation by Dr. Sardella about the Presidential Scholars Program. The prospective students learned about



Photo: Marjorie Sardella

Dr. Eric Strauss, professor of Biology, addresses prospective and current students about the Jesuit ideals at Boston College.

the Program's dedication to servant leadership, as well as the community service, international experience, and professional development opportunities it provides. The day continued with individual interviews with faculty and admissions staff members. Professor Eric Strauss, BC Biology department member and Head of the Urban Ecology Institute, addressed students during an afternoon session of the PSP Speaker Series, highlighting how Jesuit ideals are embedded in every field of study at BC. He also noted that, though not every student would walk away with a scholarship offer, everyone ought to be proud for receiving an invitation to the weekend.

The prospective students then joined staff and Scholars for dinner in the Yawkey Center, featuring Ari Daniel Shapiro (PSP '01), independent radio producer. He discussed the many ways in which the Program had opened

doors for him both during his time at BC and post-graduation. Dr. Shapiro explained to the students that, though PSP would certainly be helpful in launching a career, the most treasured part of the Program is the opportunity to form enduring relationships with both fellow Scholars and faculty members. He reminded students that the rest of their lives would not be determined by where they went to school but rather by how they chose to live.

The biggest change to the PSP Weekend came Friday morning, as the traditional essay-writing evaluations were replaced by mock honors seminars. The PSP Weekend directors decided that they would be able to more effectively assess the strengths of the prospective students if they were allowed to observe them articulating their ideas and opinions in an Honors class seminar setting. All involved with

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Evening Speaker Series

Alumnus addresses issues in immigration regulation

By Chris Griesdick, A&S '11

On November 3, Mark Noferi, a Public Interest Fellow at Seton Hall University School of Law and a member of the second class of Presidential Scholars, lectured current Program members about recent litigation involving immigrants to the United States. Noferi, who graduated in 1996, gave the students remarkable insight into the issues surrounding the US Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE), an agency with the task of maintaining national security primarily through domestic investigations.

Noferi began his presentation by introducing himself, using his career path to illustrate how one can address the demands of social justice through the legal profession. Having worked as a speechwriter both at the US Environmental Protection Agency and in the Mayoral office of Washington, DC, he then attended Stanford Law School and clerked in the Southern District of New York. He then joined the law firm Dewey & LeBoeuf, LLP, well known for its dedication to *pro bono* service. It was here that he began litigating on behalf of immigrants to the US, a commitment that carried over into his current position at Seton Hall.

Specifically, Noferi is a fellow at the Center for Social Justice at Seton Hall, which allows law students to work on real cases in a learning environment akin to clinicals in medical school. The Center has also involved Noferi in *pro bono* litigation on behalf of US immigrants, some of whom have had less than pleasant run-ins with a branch of ICE known as the Fugitive Operations Program.

While the Fugitive Operations Program, which is under the authority of the Department of Homeland Security, is charged with the deportation of undocumented aliens from the country, its objective is to root out national security and criminal threats throughout the country, often through collaboration with



Mark Noferi discussed legal issues involved in immigration, a major component of his work at Seton Hall.

local authorities. But as Noferi explained, the Fugitive Operations Program's operating techniques have led to lawsuits across the country from those who felt that their rights had been violated. Typically, the ICE Fugitive Operations Program conducts raids to arrest suspects. It has been asserted that these raids have often been done in an atmosphere in which respectful treatment of the targets is a low priority. Homes are allegedly invaded by SWAT teams in the early morning, children herded around at gunpoint, and U.S. citizens are sometimes arrested, all without judicial warrants. The Fugitive Operations Program has argued that it needs no warrant, as it gains consent upon entry, yet a fearful family is unlikely to deny access to such a forceful and intimidating set of officials in this setting. Noferi expressed concern for the dehumanizing aspect of the raids, which deny the dignity that should be accorded all people, whether citizens or not.

Other concerns with the Fugitive Operations Program consist of problems within ICE's structural policies. These include accusations that ICE officers

are poorly trained, that ICE sometimes chooses not to inform local authorities of their actions, that the agency is often and unapologetically inaccurate in identifying correct targets, and that ICE does not keep records of when it raids an innocent person's home, increasing chances of future errors. In addition, ICE's threatening manner discourages cooperation between the communities affected and the local law enforcement that remains after the raids.

Noferi explained that these issues stem in large part from a policy change within the Fugitive Operations Program in 2006, when its arrest quota was increased eight-fold. (There were over 34,000 arrests from these raids last year alone). This effectively deemphasized the objective of arresting actual targets, and encouraged collateral arrests of individuals of whom nothing was suspected. Some have

even claimed that the Fugitive Operations Program unfairly targets minority neighborhoods in its investigations, discriminating on the basis of race.

Finally, Noferi raised the question of whether there might not be a better way for them to operate. He suggested that the goals of the lawsuits filed by his clients and others across the US go beyond compensation for the victims. They are seeking to enact government policy changes, such as requiring warrants, better training for Fugitive Operations Program officers, and improved data collection practices. But Noferi readily admitted that lawsuits are a somewhat ineffective way to address these problems, given the length of time and amount of money involved in the process. For the time being, it is clear that work like Noferi's is critical to protecting the rights of the people involved and to ensuring that significant and necessary change is made in the future, and his presentation was an opportunity to open Scholars' eyes to the importance of helping those who are otherwise oppressed and unheard.

Evening Speaker Series

Holocaust survivor and poet shares her story

By Joseph Baron, A&S '13

On the evening of Tuesday, November 17, Presidential Scholars, students in the Emerging Leaders Program, and faculty of Boston College gathered to hear from poet and Holocaust survivor Sonia Weitz. Ms. Weitz, the Education Director of the Holocaust Center North, Inc., is the author of the memoir, "I Promised I Would Tell", which includes poems she wrote during the Second World War. The event was divided roughly into three sections. Ms. Weitz began by showing a short film in which she both recited some of her poetry and spoke about her experiences of surviving World War II. She then spoke directly to the audience and finished the event by opening the floor to questions.

In the video, Ms. Weitz recalled how she survived the horrors of five different German camps, as well as the Krakow, Poland ghetto. She said that her first memory of the Krakow ghetto was of seeing the wall that surrounded the small area of the city, and of Jews being herded into it like animals. She recalled how there were three, or even four, families being forced to live crammed together in a single room, and that there was a prevailing feeling of being trapped with no way out. In addition to recounting some of her experiences in prose form, she

read excerpts from several of her poems that she wrote while in the ghetto as well as in other German camps. Particularly powerful was her reading of "The Black Messiah", which tells of the day that the Allies liberated the Mauthausen concentration camp in which she was held, and her memory of the horrified look on the face of an African-American soldier who found her, emaciated and weakened by typhus and fever. She recalled,

*"And then he simply froze in place
The shock, the horror on his face,
He didn't weep, he didn't cry
But deep within his gentle eyes
...a flood of
devastating pain,
His innocence forever
slain."*

Ms. Weitz then took the floor and talked for a bit about some topics that the film had not been able to cover. The tone of her remarks ranged from uplifting, as Ms. Weitz talked about how her sister was reunited with her husband soon

after the end of the war, to somber as she talked about how she and her sister discovered the papers documenting their father's death. When she had finished, the floor was opened to questions from the audience. Questions ranged over a variety of topics such as whether or not Ms. Weitz returned to Poland after the war, if she was still religious, and whether she thought the United States should be involved with the current situation in Israel. Overall, the talk was an eye-opening experience, and Ms. Weitz ended the evening with the idea that the best way to fight current and future genocides is through awareness of past and current events.



Leon Ratz, A&S '11, poses with poet Sonia Weitz.

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this new project walked away feeling that it was a success!

The students then attended the Undergraduate Research Symposium in Fulton Hall, where they spoke with members of the Boston College community about past research experiences and the Advanced Study Grant program. From here, they headed downtown for a night in Boston, beginning with a trolley tour of the historic city. The visiting students then joined current Scholars for a dinner at the Hard Rock Café and proceeded to the Colonial Theater to see the smash hit musical *Dream Girls*.

Many parents arrived on campus on Saturday morning as the Honors Day Program commenced. The prospective students joined other students admitted into the general Honors Program as

they learned more about intellectual and spiritual life at Boston College. Saturday evening featured the newly added "Off the Record Dinner," an opportunity for students to talk to current Scholars in a completely relaxed, informal atmosphere. Students then attended the annual BC bOp! performance, where they danced, laughed, and enjoyed ice cream sundaes while listening to some of Boston College's best jazz musicians.

The weekend concluded Sunday morning with a Mass celebrated by Father Tony Penna in St. Mary's

Chapel and a brunch in the Heights Room for prospective students and their families. Following brunch, the students departed for home, eagerly awaiting an offer to enter the program.



Photo: Marjorie Sardella

Alumnus Ari Daniel Shapiro addresses the queries of prospective scholars at the PSP Weekend dinner.

Evening Speaker Series

Scholars present on summer study grant experiences

By Brendan Kelly, A&S '13

Since 1996, Boston College has offered students the chance to apply for an Advanced Study Grant (ASG) that would allow them to pursue their intellectual passions during the summer following their freshman or sophomore year, an experience that can be one of the most rewarding aspects of an undergraduate's academic formation. On two evenings of the Program's Tuesday Evening Speaker Series, six Scholars described the process of applying for and utilizing an Advanced Study Grant. While their areas of interest varied, all six speakers described their experiences very positively, detailing the personal and intellectual growth that accompanied their ASG.

Caroline Beyer (A&S '12), an International Studies major, filmed a documentary about human trafficking in the United States. Though not a film major, and without prior experience in the field, she knew of the abominations of human trafficking through her work with the Boston Police Department's Human Trafficking Unit, and felt compelled to study the issue more deeply, calling attention to this substantial violation of human rights. Caroline soon realized that a sizeable audience could be reached via a documentary production. Focusing on the port cities of New York and San Francisco (supplemented by some local research in Boston), Caroline explored the abuse that trafficking victims face in both their

forced journey and new lives in the U.S., including prostitution. She completed over twenty interviews as part of her research, hearing from those fighting against human trafficking through both the government and advocacy groups. In the course of her research, Caroline discovered sometimes bothersome complexities in the war against trafficking, such as varying attitudes towards prostitution and legal nuances regarding the jurisdiction of state and federal governments. The project as a whole invigorated Caroline's interest in understanding the issue and in contributing to anti-trafficking efforts. Her introduction to filmmaking was an enjoyable part of the experience as well, and she urged underclassmen that were considering applying for an ASG to be open to approaching familiar interests in innovative ways.

Lindsey Hennawi, A&S '11, traveled to the Middle East this past summer to study Arabic and the dynamics of conflict resolution between Israel and Palestine. As an International Studies major with a Faith, Peace and Justice minor, she was particularly interested in learning how neighboring nations such as Lebanon perceived this tension. She studied at the Lebanese American University in Beirut for six weeks, taking intensive Arabic classes and listening to lectures on Palestinian-Israeli strife. Lindsey lived in Beirut—the culturally-vibrant “Paris of the East”—and she also fit in time for excursions to other popular

destinations in the region, such as Tripoli, Tyre, and Syria. Lindsey noted that her visit to the impoverished Shatila Refugee Camp for Palestinians in Beirut was particularly moving. The entire trip provided her with a more sophisticated understanding

of both the language and sociopolitical problems in the Middle East. Lindsey also benefited from “meeting the kind of person I want to become,” referring to individuals working with organizations such as the Peace Corps, which aid those directly affected by the conflict.

Conservation in Ecuador's Napo Valley was the focus of the presentation by Biology major Ola Jachtorowicz, A&S '12. Ola hoped “to see the ‘green movement’” in a developing country by working with a grassroots environmental association, the *Jatun Sacha* (“Big Forest”) Foundation, a private Ecuadorian nongovernmental organization founded in 1985. It manages the Jatun Sacha Biological Station, an ecological preserve that consists of 2,500 hectares and is a biodiversity hotspot, with thousands of different species of flora and fauna. Since the major cause of deforestation and loss of this diversity is the slash-and-burn practices of local farmers, the organization works to educate them about sustainable methods of farming. Ola joined other volunteers in maintaining a botanical garden full of useful local plants, patrolling the perimeter of the preserve, and participating in making traditional handicrafts to preserve indigenous practices. Ola was impressed by the good intentions of the foundation, but she noticed that the project was plagued by a lack of funds and subsequent loss of many qualified conservationists. Yet Ola believes that there is plenty of “untapped potential” for the preserve, and she was glad to have acquired an “incredible amount of knowledge” about the Ecuadorian rainforest.

Linguistics major Kelly McCartney, A&S '11, spoke of her presentation entitled “The Way of Words,” describing her travels on foot on the famed pilgrimage route known as the *Camino Frances*, to the shrine of Saint James in Santiago de Compostela, Spain known as. As they have done since the Middle Ages, pilgrims from all over Europe walk the route, traveling in groups for extended periods walking, eating and staying together. Because a pilgrimage is often traveled by people who speak many different languages,

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Photo: Marjorie Sardella

Ola Jachtorowicz, A&S '12, Kelly McCartney, and Lindsey Hennawi (both A&S '11) pose after speaking to fellow scholars about their interesting ASG projects.

Evening Speaker Series

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Kelly explained, “it creates situations of extended multilingual conversation.” Being part of the pilgrim community fosters camaraderie and allows individuals to less awkwardly strike up conversation with strangers. No one in this diverse group had to worry about being ridiculed for not knowing a language well. Kelly conversed with a variety of interesting people and kept a journal about the linguistic mechanics of these interactions. The absence of “language shock” and the presence of subtle linguistic variations, or shibboleths, among the pilgrims created a rich atmosphere for Kelly to explore the nuances of linguistics firsthand.

Jessica Seminelli (A&S '12), a Linguistics major, was able to attend the 2009 Linguistic Society of America Summer Institute through her ASG, which primarily entailed classes in linguistic theory at the University of California at Berkeley. Jess has been intrigued by the vast field of linguistics – the scientific study of languages – because it “provides key insight as to how the mind works.” One project that Jess completed, for example, presented evidence for languages’ reflection of psychosocial cognition by comparing the structural typology of verbs of perception (i.e., think, regret, and believe) in the Czech, Spanish, and Italian languages. Furthermore, linguistics as an academic discipline is evolving alongside the languages it studies, particularly as new thinkers emerge and challenge the ideas of the pioneering linguist Noam Chomsky. The relevance and dynamism of linguistics was particularly clear at UC Berkeley, which has a large and research-intensive linguistics department. Jess actively took advantage of the opportunity to converse with graduate and post-graduate linguists, which not only expanded her knowledge but allowed her to see what a life in academia would entail. The courses of the program were challenging in how they truly forced students to not simply memorize structures or facts but to identify problems and attempt to resolve them by searching for patterns or a new perspective. As Jess succinctly put it, delving into advanced linguistic work showed her that “every argument has a counter-argument.” In offering suggestions to freshmen looking for similar intellectually-



Photo: Marjorie Sardella

Jessica Seminelli, Zach Zimmermann, and Caroline Beyer, all A&S '12, presented their diverse Advanced Study Grant experiences.

engaging ASG experiences, Jess stressed the importance of connecting with a faculty mentor, who can be an excellent gateway to the academic world.

Zachary Zimmermann (A&S '12), a History and English double major, traveled to the Goethe Institute in Hamburg, Germany, intending to apply his German language skills to the critical analysis of a play. He saw a performance of *Kabale und Liebe* (*Intrigue & Love*), by 18th-century playwright Friedrich Schiller. Zach planned to spend the summer completing additional research and writing an extended essay on the historical and literary significance of this play, which, at the time of its initial release, was representative of a new genre called bourgeois tragedy. Reflecting the increasing influence of the bourgeois middle class in France during the Enlightenment, the protagonists were more often common folk than aristocrats. After seeing the play, however, Zach realized that he was more intrigued by the prospect of translating the work into English. Though this was an ambitious undertaking, he felt that it would be an excellent way to put his present knowledge of German grammar and vocabulary to the test, while also allowing him to hone his translation skills, which requires close attention to subtle details in the wording of the play in order to produce a coherent translation. Zach reminded underclassmen that

even a relatively late “discovery” of the most interesting way to utilize an ASG is not necessarily problematic. His openness to refining his summer plan contributed to a memorable experience that he described both as “immensely demanding and immensely rewarding.”

The presenting Scholars emphasized to underclassmen the importance of investigating a topic that truly interests them if they choose to apply for an ASG. They underscored the importance of starting the proposal-writing process early to allow time for identifying an organization that is a “good fit.” Kelly, in particular, stressed that freshmen Scholars need not be distressed if they need more time to discern their academic interests and would like to apply for an ASG after sophomore year. Also, finding a faculty mentor who can provide direction to a student’s ideas is incredibly helpful. All scholars were urged to take advantage of the opportunity to immerse themselves in their intellectual passions almost anywhere in the world. The evening certainly won the interest of underclassmen Scholars. As Helen Jiang, A&S '13, said, “The presentations really make me consider applying for an ASG so I can continue my studies outside of the classroom.” Indeed, it is likely that another eager group of Scholars will be looking to embark on ASG experiences in the upcoming summer.

Evening Speaker Series

Preserving a baseball legend: author Larry Tye discussed his work on Satchel Paige

By Jessica Seminelli, A&S '12

On December 1st, author Larry Tye spoke in front of the Presidential Scholars as well as several members of Boston College's McNair Scholars Program. Tye, a former reporter for the Boston Globe, whose journalistic career ranged from reporting on medicine, to the environment, to sports, now directs the Health Coverage Fellowship, a Boston-based organization whose goal is to train reporters to more effectively cover critical health care issues. He has also authored a variety of books, and several years ago spoke to Scholars about his work *Rising from the Rails: Pullman Porters and the Making of the Black Middle Class*. Once again, his discussion focused on issues in African-American history, this time speaking about the life of legendary baseball player Satchel Paige, the subject of his latest best-selling book.

Tye began his talk by asking Scholars what they knew about Satchel Paige, to which only Elizabeth Fair, A&S '12, responded by saying that she shared a hometown with the baseball legend. He then explained that his presentation would center around three games central to Paige's career, which provided a framework for tracing the history and struggles of the segregated South.

The first game he discussed was the first of Paige's professional career, occurring in 1926 in Chattanooga, Tennessee when Paige was 20-years-old and playing for the Chattanooga White Sox, at the lowest level of the Negro Professional Leagues.

As Tye explained, "Jim Crow laws separated blacks and whites in everything ... including the baseball world."

In that first game, Paige threw his impressively fast, but also impressively wild, pitches, hitting just about every member of the opposing team. But

Paige was not discouraged and trained himself with the utmost discipline; before and after every game he would practice throwing a baseball at a grapefruit-sized knot in a wooden fence near the field.

After two years, he could hit 8 out of 10 baseballs perfectly on that knot from a distance almost equivalent to that of the pitcher's mound, or 60 feet 6 inches.

Satchel Paige learned to pitch after being sent to Alabama Reform School for Juvenile Negro Lawbreakers at the age of 12, where he spent five years strengthening his throw so that his "arm was like a catapult." However, it was not until 1948, when he was 42 years old, that Paige broke into the Major Leagues when Cleveland Indians' owner Bill Veeck saw in Paige the potential for a victory over the Red Sox and Yankees. Veeck's

faith in him was not misplaced, as Paige went on to have the second lowest earned-run average in the entire American League during his first season, helping to bring the Indians to the World Series.

The final game Tye discussed was set in 1965 when Kansas City A's owner Charlie Finley, an outrageous character who would do anything to fill a

stadium, invited Paige to pitch for three innings at an end-of-season game. The entire affair was carefully choreographed, including having Paige – considered ancient by baseball standards – sitting in



Photo: Marjorie Sardella

With baseball in hand, Larry Tye engaged Scholars with his lively narrative about Satchel Paige.

an enormous rocking chair outside the bullpen with a nurse in a white uniform tending to him, which had the intended effect of capturing the attention of the entire nation. During the three innings he pitched, Paige allowed only one hit and no runs, despite his being 30 years older than his catcher, and he set a baseball record that will never be broken as the oldest

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Evening Speaker Series

Iranian Activist visits Boston College

By Marty Long, CSOM '13

Dr. Fatemeh Haghighatjoo, a faculty member at the University of Massachusetts at Boston's Center for Women in Politics and Policy, spoke before a large and appreciative audience of Presidential Scholars, members of the Emerging Leaders Program, and other interested faculty and students on Tuesday, October 20, 2009.

Dr. Haghighatjoo was elected a member of Iran's reform parliament – one of its youngest members at the age of only 31. She became known as an outspoken champion of human rights, eventually resigning in protest to human rights violations by the government. As a former member of the Iranian Parliament, Dr. Haghighatjoo gave a fascinating lecture on the challenges and opportunities of women, as well as the present political situation in Iran, a nation divided by the fraud of the June 12, 2009 presidential election. Original results of the election showed that the incumbent president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, had defeated his opponent, Mir-Hossein Mousavi, but the days following showed that there had been fraud in the voting process.

Many Iranians took to the streets in order to demonstrate their frustration with the country. The conflict continues to divide the country even months later, and many wear green to symbolize support of presidential candidate Mousavi, a color that has also come to represent peace, life, and happiness, all rights that the people of Iran hope to protect.

Dr. Haghighatjoo emphasized that even with the gender inequality in Iran, women have taken a very active role in the Iranian post-election conflict. Outnumbering men at universities and being very involved in political issues, women have been at the forefront of this conflict.

These women believe that they are justified in protesting for the



Photo: Marjorie Sardella

Dr. Haghighatjoo addressed a large crowd of students and faculty about women's issues in Iran.

fraudulent voting that infringes on life itself. They see a peaceful future for Iran, and therefore their protests are well planned and nonviolent in order to prevent bloodshed in these efforts to better society.

Many women hope to present the injustice not only to fellow Iranians, but also to others outside the country as well. For example, Dr. Haghighatjoo showed a young female Iranian director's documentary that was in Farsi without subtitles. Though the words were foreign and incomprehensible, the emotion of the people transcended language. The passion and frustration of the people

came across clearly and powerfully in each interview and rally. The tears shed when the director herself speaks about the issue showed just how important the post-electoral movement is within Iran.

As Dr. Haghighatjoo's lecture came to an end, the audience was able to understand not only the frustration she felt for her beloved country, but also her hope. Through her speech and powerful video, Iran's protests became more than an abstract issue in a distant country. The issue became much more tangible and real, and the audience left with a greater appreciation of their own liberties.

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player in the history of baseball: 59 years, 2 months, and 8 days old. Following the game, the entire stadium was lit up with cigarette lighters as the organ played "That Old Gray Mare" in honor of the man whose incredible career spanned 40 years.

Tye concluded the evening by noting how most people are aware of Jackie Robinson's historical breaking of the color barrier in baseball, but pointing out that Satchel Paige was the true hero who brought the white press, white fans, and white owners to realize the talent

within the Negro Leagues. He set the stage for the potential for integration with his dedication and talent. As an old Negro Leaguer said, "It was Jackie Robinson who opened the door to the new racial reality in baseball, but it was Satchel Paige who inserted the key."

With his captivating story-telling ability and fascinating material, Larry Tye left Scholars with a newfound respect for a baseball legend as well as a greater understanding of the history of segregation and the importance of preserving the stories of figures as influential as Satchel Paige.

Alumni Spotlight: Alumni launch innovative company

By Jessica Seminelli, A&S '12

One of the greatest features of the Presidential Scholars Program is that it brings into close proximity a group of bright, energetic, innovative individuals, often resulting in long-lasting friendships as well as, in some instances, lucrative partnerships. Such is the case with alumni Rich Aberman and Bill Clerico, both members of the class of 2006, who have teamed up to launch their own business venture: WePay.com, a website designed to ease the collection and sharing of funds among groups. Unlike PayPal, which deals exclusively with transactions from one person to another, WePay allows you to have separate accounts for different things all managed in one place and with varying levels of privacy preferences.

During their undergraduate time at BC, Rich, who came to Boston College from Parkland, Florida, and Bill, from Lincroft, New Jersey, connected through the Presidential Scholars Program, and roomed together during their freshman year.

Bill and Rich took their initial steps into the world of entrepreneurship during their post-junior year internship program. Rich, who was interning at PCCW Limited, a major telecommunications firm in Hong Kong, noted a recently passed law allowing advertisement on taxis, and sensed a

potentially lucrative business opportunity. He contacted Bill, who was then interning at Goldman Sachs in New York, and the pair decided to start a company, and were successful in raising money and forging contacts with the largest taxi company in Hong Kong to stake an early claim in a hitherto untapped market. However, the difficulties of managing a Hong Kong-based company from Boston while completing their senior year made it impossible to continue, and they decided to suspend operations and dissolve the company several months later.

Bill, who graduated with a degree in Computer Science and a minor in Mathematics, continued to hone his entrepreneurial skills as one of the founders of the Boston College Venture Capital Competition, and through his participation in the Carroll School of Management's award-winning TechTrek course. He rounded out his experience with an internship at the Massachusetts State House. On graduating, he reentered the business world as an investment banker for Jefferies Broadview in Waltham, MA.

Rich, whose undergraduate study entailed a triple major in Political Science, Economics, and Philosophy, received a full scholarship in the NYU leadership program in law and business. In August 2008, however, his plans changed completely when the pair once again joined

forces to recognize the difficulty of handling such funds, and Rich, after organizing his brother's bachelor party and collecting money from 15 different people, realized the opportunity before them to create a better method. Thus, WePay emerged, an idea that then became a company in May 2009 when they were accepted by Y Combinator, an incubator-style venture capital firm that specializes in funding early start-up companies. With this funding, Bill and Rich headed west to Silicon Valley to procure more support and develop their idea more fully.

WePay's first transaction took place in June 2009, and Rich and Bill have been processing feedback from their earliest users, which have ranged from roommates to fraternities to fantasy leagues, and even young couples in need of a joint bank account. Based on the responses from these first test users, along with an additional \$1.6 million raised in December, they have been revising their website and expanding their team, which now consists of five people. Nine months after that first transaction, they are nearly ready to launch a private beta with a completely new design and additional features, allowing users to "create a free group bank account in just a few clicks and start collecting money for anything, almost instantly," according to Rich.



Alumni Bill Clerico and Rich Aberman were visited by BC's TechTrek class.

for various clubs and activities, and

forces to "solve a problem we experienced in our everyday lives," according to Rich, the problem of collecting a n d managing money for groups. At BC both had been involved in treasurer positions

Both alumni expressed similar sentiments and gratitude for the Presidential Scholars Program, which has enabled them to enter into a risky business venture without the worries of college loans and has created a network of "like-minded people," as Bill remarked, an invaluable community that fosters support and creativity. Bill and Rich have been able to call upon a support network of other PSP alumni, who have all offered feedback and connections to the business world of the West Coast. In addition, Rich discussed how invaluable the France experience following his sophomore year was, which provided "confidence to do things on an international level," leading directly to his internship in Hong Kong.

Additionally, they have continued to foster a connection to BC. They repeatedly draw on the skills

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First Annual PSP Retreat a great success



Photo: Dennis Sardella

Senior Chiara Rivas-Morello entertains Scholars with an original composition about her favorite memories of the Presidential Scholars Program and her time at BC.

By Ola Jachtowicz, A&S '12

Sunday November 8, 2009 marked the momentous occasion of the first annual Presidential Scholars Program Retreat. Scholars met on Brighton Campus for six hours of reflection and inter-class unification. The retreat was organized in response to a sense that the diversity of Scholars' interests and the richness of their involvements, while a source of great richness and value, could remain an untapped resource unless members of different classes came to know one another better.

The morning began with activities designed to set the Scholars at ease with each other, accompanied by coffee and bagels. The attendees were broken into several groups, and played games such as a rhythmic name introduction

and "Fish'N'Chips," in which a pattern controlled by various hand motions is passed around a circle at increasing speed, eliminating mistake-makers until only two participants are left standing. This light-hearted beginning set a mood of relaxed dynamism that would last for the rest of the day.

Once the ice was broken, the guest speaker, Father Chris Collins, S.J., guided the Scholars through the Examination of Conscience, referencing the life of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order. Father Collins recommended that Scholars continue this reflective technique in their lives each day to assess and evaluate their personal situation. He believes it to be a vital exercise that would lead Scholars to find fulfillment in serving others, as it did for St. Ignatius.

Scholars broke into smaller groups once more to reflect on Father Collins' advice and discuss its relevance to their lives. They were encouraged to share personal experiences on a more intimate level. One group drew "life maps," plotting age on the X-axis and relative happiness/fulfillment on the Y-axis. Scholars were astonished to see

similar crests and troughs across maps, with the most profound oscillations in their college years, especially for students in their third and fourth years.

After lunch, the Scholars ventured out of doors to enjoy their break, taking advantage of the surprisingly bright and sun-filled November day. A game of Ultimate Frisbee was started by some, while others opted to remain lounging on the grass, engaged in informal conversation.

A highlight was the advice of Senior Scholars to underclassmen. All expressed their gratitude to the program, citing in particular the personal connections that enabled them to make over any other benefit. Scholar Chiara Rivas-Morello, A&S '10, was able to capture her sentiments in song, performing an original composition accompanied by guitar. Joseph Zabinski, A&S '10, called the talks "a good chance to share." He enjoyed seeing the classes come together and said, "Initially, I was afraid it would be artificial, but we really became comfortable with each other."

A freshman Scholar noted, "It's a great initiative and I hope it continues. I didn't get to meet everyone this time, but hopefully we'll have another chance next year!" Pat Passarelli, A&S '10, who spearheaded and coordinated the retreat from its inception, dubbed it an "overwhelming success," despite doubts going in. The success of the retreat proves it a great addition to annual Scholar events, fostering cross-class unity and support.

WEPAY cont. from p. 8 developed through Liberal Arts education – writing, in particular, since knowing how to communicate a message is essential to the success of an enterprise. Moreover, they conducted a brainstorming session with students participating in the TechTrek class offered in the Carroll School of Management during their spring break excursion to Silicon Valley.

Starting a company from scratch is a daring enterprise, requiring the innovation to recognize a problem and devise a practical means of solving it and then the perseverance, dedication, and patience to continue seeking more

success. Bill's advice to young people considering venturing into the business world is, "Don't be afraid to go for it. Seek out smart people to mentor you and help you through the process, and it'll work out over time."

Bill and Rich exemplify the innovative, proactive spirit of Presidential Scholars, who are not merely passive scholars but active *leaders*, and the Presidential Scholars Program wishes them all the best as WePay continues to expand and develop.



Photo: Rich Aberman

Bill Clerico and Rich Aberman pose in front of their new office space.



Bread for the Journey

Truth-telling and Silence

[W]e (I, at least, and most others, I suppose) are not anything like the biblical prophets. Ours is a different assignment. But we are charged with the responsibility of telling the truth, and I don't see how this can possibly be done without opening our eyes to see and our ears to hear. There must, there simply must, be time and space allowed for silence and for solitude if what we see and hear is to be "processed."

Antoine de Saint-Exupery, author of *Wind, Sand, and Stars*, said in a conversation with Anne Morrow Lindbergh, "The great of the earth are those who leave silence and solitude around themselves, their work and their life, and let it ripen of its own accord."

-Elisabeth Elliot