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THE CROSSROADS PROJECT  
AT HOPE COLLEGE  
A Program for the Theological  
Exploration of Vocation  
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Lindsey Boeve '12 presents the research she has worked on with Dr. Deborah Sturtevant, professor of Sociology and Social Work. The two women are analyzing data from Milk and Medicine, a program in Zambia that provides nutritional supplements and medicine for infants.  
Photo: Greg Olgers

## Luncheons Expose Collaborative Researchers to Other Disciplines

Every summer, students and faculty across campus team up and do research together. Hope College has an exceptional reputation for its collaborative research in the natural sciences and has a growing program in the humanities and social sciences. Some of this research is funded by CrossRoads, which offers grants to research projects in which, according to the terms of the grant, "students and faculty would consider the wider significance of their projects in terms of vocation."

To supplement these grants, CrossRoads also helps support weekly luncheons for participants of collaborative summer research in the humanities and social sciences. These luncheons bring together students and faculty across disciplines—on any given Wednesday,

psychologists, historians, librarians, and theologians eat together and listen to a short presentation. The teams of researchers usually give these presentations, explaining their research process or relating the results of their work.

Involving students in research offers them an introduction to scholarly life in their academic field and gives them a chance to test it and decide whether they might want to become professors. But as Curtis Gruenler, Acting Co-director for the CrossRoads Project and Associate Professor of English, observes, "[Research] is kind of solitary stuff. What makes it flourish in the natural sciences is the social-collegial aspect of it." So he organizes the luncheons as a way to interact with other

(Continued on page 8)



## DE COLLEGIALITATE



Dr. Curtis Gruenler

During the 2009-10 academic year, while Dr. David Cunningham, Director of the CrossRoads Project, has been on sabbatical, Dr. Steven Bouma-Prediger, Chairperson of the Department of Religion, and I have done our best to fill in for him. It has been a tall order, but relying on each other, on the CrossRoads Advisory Board, on all the other people that have a hand in making the Project's programs work—and especially on Shelly Arnold, CrossRoads' ace administrative assistant—has been the most enjoyable part of it. Indeed, it has given me a new appreciation for one of the watchwords of academic life, collegiality, and its importance for the theological exploration of vocation.

I am a word guy, and I often approach ideas through etymology. Collegiality is related, of course, to "college" and "colleague." Both come from Latin, where the ancestor of "colleague" came first. It is formed from the roots *col-*, meaning "together," and *legere*, meaning to "choose" (the root, through a different form, of other English words like "election"). One might think the combination refers to people who have made the same choice, but that would reflect a more modern sense of individualism and vocational mobility. In fact the original idea is the reverse: those who have been chosen for the same office together. My sense of vocation is often dominated by anxiety about the choices I have made to do one thing instead of another, but focusing instead on how my vocation is shaped by having been chosen to share the same college with a wonderful group of colleagues helps me relax into more hopeful freedom.

Though "colleague" came first in Latin, "college" appears first in English, and one of its first appearances (according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*) is a medieval reference to "Criste and his colage," meaning the Apostles. This sense survives most directly in references to the Roman Catholic college of cardinals, and the meaning of a group of colleagues sharing functions and privileges also appears with a secular sense in "electoral college." Shared rights and responsibilities among groups of scholars gave rise to the complex institutions that administer the rite of passage Americans call "going to college." From this vantage, referring to the Apostles as a college looks archaic, but I take two challenges from it.

The first is the challenge to see how my vocation is part of Christ's continuing work in the world. There is no end to this understanding, and we need each other's help to see even the small pieces of the picture that are granted to us. The academic vocation is one of the four categories of vocation under which the CrossRoads Project organizes its programs, and I find that faculty colleagues who participate in any of these programs gain new perspective on their calling.

Most recently I got to lead a workshop for faculty about how to incorporate theological reflection on vocation into First-Year Seminars (the topic of another article in this newsletter). Our discussion focused on a book that all first-year students have been asked to read before arriving in the fall, *Hunger and Happiness: Feeding the Hungry, Nour-*

*ishing Our Souls* by L. Shannon Jung, which draws on social science, theology, and philosophy to address a wide range of topics related to food. An interdisciplinary group of faculty and staff brought different perspectives and trained habits of thought to the issues raised by the text and to our work with students. In the process, I hope, each received a renewed sense of their own vocation as part of the college's larger mission.

The second challenge has to do with how we relate to each other as colleagues. Christ implies a contrast between two kinds of community when he says to the Apostles in John 15:15, "I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father" (NRSV). One place to start understanding what this means for Christian collegiality is to ask why humans so often organize ourselves in ways that make some be servants (or even slaves, another translation of the Greek word here). I would suggest this has to do with competitive rivalries that lead to hierarchies of winners and losers.

Colleges, like all institutions, are prone to rivalries at every level: within departments, between departments, between divisions, between other administrative units, between faculty and administration, between colleges. Too often solidarity in one part arises from blaming another. St. Paul's analysis through the image of the body in 1 Corinthians 12 fits this diagnosis and suggests some places to start in turning toward a different way of being colleagues. We need to appreciate our

different contributions to and ways of living out our common calling, try especially to honor the members considered inferior (i.e. blamed), and choose to suffer and rejoice together.

There are many signs of such collegial life at Hope. One I would like to mention is a series of three dinners CrossRoads helped sponsor last fall involving President Bultman, Provost Boelkins, and a dozen faculty colleagues chosen to include a broad range of discipline and experience, including a wider variety of Christian faith. Conversation focused our callings, as academics and as colleagues at Hope, and our concerns and outlooks for our common future here. I found it a moving opportunity to hear what being part of our community is like for other members, and could not help but empathize and admire.

Finally, I want to close by offering, on behalf of all those involved with the CrossRoads Project, a belated but no less deep thanks to Provost James Boelkins, who retired at the end of June. One of the highlights of last fall's dinners was to hear him tell the story of his own vocation as an academic and, from early in his career, an administrator. His leadership (like that of President Bultman) was evident in these conversations through example, appreciation, exhortation (just a little), and vulnerability. He has been a good friend to CrossRoads, as to the rest of the college. ■



Students study in Graves Hall.

Photo: Joint Archives

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*Dr. Curtis Gruenler is Associate Professor of English at Hope College and has been co-directing the CrossRoads Project along with Dr. Steve Bouma-Prediger while Dr. David Cunningham is on sabbatical.*

# Students Worship with RCA's Asian-American Council

This year, two Hope students were invited to be representatives at the annual consultation of the Reformed Church in America's Council for Pacific and Asian American Ministries (CPAAM). CrossRoads sponsored Yui Hamada '11, an international student from Japan, and Gabrielle Russell '13, a Japanese major who interned at a church in Japan this summer. Both students flew to New Brunswick Theological Seminary in New Jersey in May for the consultation, whose theme was "Thy Kingdom Come."

CPAAM meets yearly, according to its RCA website, "to discuss the needs and concerns of Pacific and Asian Americans and to support and encourage one another." For Hamada, the consultation did encourage her, especially when she discovered that it wouldn't be a typical annual meeting. "I assumed the meeting would be very formal," she laughs, "where everybody sits down and says, 'I agree,' but it was not like that. It was full of prayer and worship throughout the entire consultation. Everything was a form of worship, from talking about the budget to sharing our concerns or struggles."

Attending the consultation prompted Hamada to reflect on her identity as a Japanese citizen: "It reminded me of the fact that I am Japanese, and that God has a specific plan for me since I was born in Japan. He could've made me born from the U.S. or China, but instead he did it from Japan." She feels a quiet tug toward serving in Japan, although it makes her a little bit nervous. "I'm always ready to be sent to any other countries, but you know how it's hard to minister to your own family. Especially when I think about my hometown, I get afraid. But as I realize that God has prepared me, I'm excited to see where he will lead me. I didn't receive a new vision [at the consultation], but it affirmed for



Yui Hamada '11 and Gabrielle Russell '13 give a presentation for other participants at the consultation for the Council for Pacific and Asian American Ministries.

Photo: CPAAM

me who I am."

For Russell, the power of the consultation came in the conviction and the energy of the pastors and lay people who attended: "I was really surprised at just how much conviction these believers had. After talking with them, I just kept thinking, 'Other people need to see this. It makes it seem like other parts of the Christian world are at a standstill—and these churches know how to fix it.'"

Unlike Hamada, Russell hadn't previously considered ministry, but the consultation prompted her to acknowledge it as a possibility. "At the very least," she says, "I want to find a church in Japan that I can go to while I'm there. I want to help people, and maybe this will be another way I can do that." ■

## CrossRoads Funds Teaching Assistant for May Term



Teaching Assistant Bekah Bush '12 (left) works alongside Kaily Gumper '12 on a housing rehab project in Wanblee, Pine Ridge Reservation.

Photo: Steve Hoogerwerf

From May 14 to 29, Dr. Steve Hoogerwerf, Associate Professor of Religion, led a group of Hope students on his Pine Ridge May Term, a service-learning course on the Lakota Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. While this was the third year he taught the course, it was the first time he had the benefit of a teaching assistant. Bekah Bush '12, a Religion major, had taken the course the previous May and then continued to work on the reservation as an intern with Re-Member, a non-profit organization that hosted Hoogerwerf's course in the past. Throughout the year leading up to the trip, Bush worked with Hoogerwerf on course development and recruitment, planning and arranging on-site activities, and participating in an on-campus intensive course with the other students.

This summer, after the May Term

ended, Bush remained on the reservation to work as a Program Manager for Re-Member. Says Hoogerwerf, "She wrote to me, saying that the staff has noticed her maturity and leadership skills, and those who worked with her last summer have noticed considerable growth. Bekah has attributed some of that growth and those changes to our working together."

While expenses for the students and



Dr. Steve Hoogerwerf

Dr. Hoogerwerf were paid for by the students' tuition, a mini-grant from CrossRoads paid for Bush to work as TA as she takes further steps in exploring her vocational interest in experiential education. ■

# Senior Seminars Promote Vocation via Community

Two years ago, Dr. Beth Trembley and Dr. Jesse Montaña, both Associate Professors of English, each applied for a CrossRoads grant to develop a Senior Seminar. Dr. Montaña's grant was featured in the Fall 2008 issue of the *Signal*. This past spring was the second time he and Dr. Trembley each taught their Senior Seminars, "Routes and Roots" and "Writing Everyday Sacred," respectively.

## Writing as Vocation

After years of thinking about a spiritual writing course, Dr. Trembley finally taught it as a senior seminar, where the stakes are lower for people who don't have previous creative writing experience. She believes that part of her own vocation is offering students a chance to experiment with creative writing. "It's that definition of vocation that [Frederick] Buechner gives," says Trembley, "where your greatest love meets the world's greatest need. Mine is helping other people get in touch with the creator part of themselves."

Her class is a multi-genre writing course in which students compose a lifeview paper from various course assignments, including poetry, fiction, memoir, and nonfiction. They also read other spiritual writers, including David James Duncan, Frederick Buechner, and Annie Dillard, whose works encourage the students to make connections between faith and vocation.

For Trembley, creative writing highlights questions of identity and vocation. "Who you are is all over every page you write," she

says. "Inevitably, students doing creative writing face those issues—who you are, how you got to where you are, how you're going to take your next steps

**"You're asked as part of a community to help someone else articulate their values in a way that communicates their truth to you, regardless of whether you agree with them. It's an incredibly complex, compassionate, generous thing to do for another human being."**

Dr. Beth Trembley

forward in the world."

Creative writing courses include a workshop component: students bring their work to class to be read and commented on by other students, after which each student takes his or her work home for revisions. Luciana Vandort '10, an English major, comments on the sense of community that the writing course provided: "We were all very comfortable sharing our lives with each other and that safe environment contributed to the amazing work that we came up with as the term went on."

Joanne Gabl '10, a nursing major, agrees that the interpersonal, workshop style of the class allows for individual discovery. "Hearing other people's beliefs and values allowed me to redefine my own," she says.

It's this community that Trembley so values and believes has a vocational end: "You're asked as part of a community to help someone else articulate their values in a way that communicates their truth to you, regardless of whether you agree with them. It's an in-

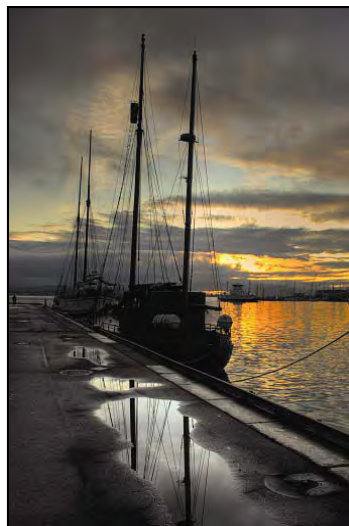
credibly complex, compassionate, generous thing to do for another human being."

## Communicating across Genders

In the summer of 2008, Dr. Montaña received a grant from CrossRoads to develop a senior seminar that would focus on travel and writing. He selected books and traveled to New Mexico and South Dakota to prepare for the course. Around that time, he also par-



Dr. Beth Trembley



Included in Dr. Jesse Montaña's Senior Seminar, "Routes and Roots," was a photography element, for which students submitted photos of their journeys.

Photo: Kevin Raley



One of Dr. Montaña's students studied abroad in Seville, Spain, where she photographed La Giralda, the bell tower atop this cathedral.

Photo: Casey Splinter

ticipated in a faculty seminar put on by CrossRoads, which emphasized the learning styles of men and women and influenced Montaña's vision for teaching.

He became obsessed with the notion that men and women learn differently and tried to tailor his course to their respective learning styles. "Most women are verbally-process oriented," Montaña says. "But young men will think about it, let it percolate, and then they'll talk about it. Verbally is how classes work, but mentally is how men work." To try to correct for the discrepancy, he occasionally split the class according to gender and met separately.

Interestingly, though, when the genders met independently, they voiced a desire to have the other half of

(Continued on page 5)

# Ugandan School Receives Computer Training

In the spring of 2009, Dr. Mike Jipping, Professor of Computer Science, and two Hope College students, Gary Benson '10 and Alayna Ruberg '11, prepared to travel to Mukono, Uganda, along with seven pre-med students and Dr. David DeVisser, Clinical Professor of Health Sciences and Associate Health Professions. DeVisser had taken a team of pre-med students in May of each of the previous two years, but in 2009, CrossRoads sponsored the travel expenses and computer equipment for the Computer Science Department.

At the request of teachers from Kingsway Christian High School, Jipping, Benson, and Ruberg planned to install computers and to train both the teachers and students at the school. They also hoped to set up an internet connection.

When they arrived, their host said, "T.I.A. This Is Africa. You never know what's going to happen." Jipping was prepared to work with fewer resources, so even when they lost electricity for an afternoon, they managed to charge the computers, run them on batteries, and train teachers for a couple hours.

"The teachers brought in education software," he says. "And now they use the computers to prepare their lessons." Because of the limited electricity, Jipping, Benson, and Ru-



*Dr. Mike Jipping, Professor of Computer Science and Chairperson of the Department at Hope College, teaches students in Mukono, Uganda, how to use a computer while Gary Benson '10 looks on. Photo: Alayna Ruberg*

berg trained only a few students, but the results were disproportionately successful. "It's amazing how fast the students there took to the computers," Jipping says.

For Ruberg, the trip to Uganda was the first event in a series that prompted her to start considering missions as a possibility for her future. "Although the work we did was good for them," she says, "Uganda helped me realize I didn't want to do computer science." She has since shifted her majors to International Studies and Spanish. "I want to do something that's not just for money. And Uganda started that."

Jipping, too, has been influenced by the trip. "I often try to think about how God's going to use me as an academic and as a computer person," he says. "Here's a great example: this summer, we're developing software for Optical Character Recognition through the use of cell phone cameras. Sixty percent of people with low vision are in developing countries, and many people in those countries have a cell phone. If they had this free software, it'd be helpful. This is a great way for me to mix my skills and to think about how God is going to use me with what I do." ■



*A group of pre-med and computer science students travel to Uganda. In the back row, Dr. Mike Jipping is second from right and Gary Benson '10 is third from left; in the front row, Alayna Ruberg '11 is on the right.*

*Photo: Alayna Ruberg*

*(Continued from page 4)*

the class present to hear the conversation and to answer their questions. Montaña laughs: "The women kept saying, 'I wish the men were here to hear this,' and the men kept saying, 'I wish the women were here to know this stuff.'"

Dividing the group opened up a comfortable space for students to say things that might be regarded as sexist but are simply curious and honest. Sometimes, though, Montaña would love for the groups to eavesdrop on one another to discover things that seem

mysterious and foreign about the other gender.

Montaña has noticed the current generation's eagerness for interaction with the other gender. "In class, I'll say, 'Women think this and men think this,' and they'll say, 'No, we don't. We really want to learn from each other.'" This openness is refreshing to him: "One of the pleasures of teaching this class is that I'm constantly reevaluating my long-held presuppositions

and prejudices."

As the class wrote and conversed about their journeys, Montaña prompted them with questions. To get at the heart of an issue, he posed those questions differently to the men than to the women, but the resulting answers demonstrated similar values across genders, values that reflect a deep concern for interacting with people who have different life experiences. ■



*Dr. Jesse Montaña*

# Students Invert Leadership Models with LdOut<sup>3</sup>

Inside the doors of the Warm Friend, an independent senior living community in downtown Holland, a group of 7th and 11th graders are playing radio hits from the 30s and 40s and inviting residents to participate in *The Price is Right*. When the students arrived an hour ago, one of the residents was already on his way to greet them. While the students certainly bring their brand of enthusiasm, he has some enthusiasm of his own. "He was talking to everybody," says Ana Patchin, a 7th grader from Fellowship Reformed Church. "He was just a friendly person and excited to see others."

## Envisioning a Leadership Program for Youth

Why are nine 7th graders, six 11th graders, and ten senior citizens playing *Name that Tune* and *The Price is Right* together?

A year and a half ago, Dr. Steve VanderVeen, director of the Center for Faithful Leadership, met Virgil Gulker, founder of Love INC and Kids Hope USA, among others. At the time, VanderVeen and his leadership students were just launching a student consulting business, in which college students would define problems and create solutions for local organizations, as a way for the students to collaborate with the community and to hone their leadership skills.

Gulker, now Servant Leader-in Residence at the Center for Faithful Leadership, is acutely aware of the tendency to proclaim youth as the hope of the future while failing to provide opportunities for young people to exercise leadership. When Gulker, whom VanderVeen describes as an "idea machine," first talked with VanderVeen, he immediately began devising ways for the college students to teach leadership principles to high school or middle school students.

## Launching LdOut<sup>3</sup>

They called the model LdOut<sup>3</sup>, and the plan was this: students from VanderVeen's Leadership 401 class would meet five times with a group of 11th-



Students pose for a photo during a session of LdOut<sup>3</sup>, a program in which students from Hope College taught leadership principles to 11th-grade students, who then taught 7th-grade students. The 7th graders demonstrated their leadership savvy by planning and executing a game show at a retirement community. Photo: Leslie Russell

grade students to teach them basic leadership principles, according to a team-oriented, servant-leadership model. After those sessions, the 11th graders would meet with a group of 7th-grade students, passing on what they knew. Once the 7th graders learned the principles, they would implement them by organizing a service project in the community. LdOut<sup>3</sup> challenged the college students by asking them to involve the 7th graders by working with them indirectly through others rather than directly. The three levels of the program are reflected in the "3" of LdOut<sup>3</sup>.

**"If you tell a child who's having difficulties that they're the solution rather than the problem, you're going to transform their view of themselves and who they are."**

Dr. Steve VanderVeen

The Hope students tried out the model at Hamilton High School. Although they felt like they engaged the 11th graders and effectively conveyed the concepts, they knew their model could use refining. Crossroads supported this process with a grant that formed the Hope students into a team so that together they could revise and improve the model and teaching strategies.

After working out a few of the kinks, they initiated the program at Fellowship Reformed Church, a local Holland congregation. Here, five Hope students worked alongside two youth leaders, Aaron Clark and Leslie Russell, and taught the principles to 11th graders whom Clark and Russell had recommended. To facilitate the relations between the Hope

students and Fellowship, Crossroads also subsidized a stipend for Reed Swift '11, who observed each session.

Over the course of the weekly sessions, they covered a variety of themes: trust, vulnerability, buy-in, accountability, and results. Each session was part-lesson and part-activity, an interactive method that Clark champions: "LdOut<sup>3</sup> works because the students involved don't just learn about leadership. They are intentionally placed into situations where they put their leadership gifts and knowledge into practice."

He noticed the ease with which the 11th graders turned around and led the 7th graders. "Once the college students handed the project over to the high school students, the high schoolers really took ownership and became more serious when the middle schoolers were around." Alyson Kellner, one of the 11th graders, says, "We enjoyed teaching the 7th graders more than listening to the Hope students because we could see the abilities we have to teach others."

The final phase of the project involved the service project that the 7th

graders designed for the Warm Friend. Additionally, the students agree that LdOut<sup>3</sup> also gave them the tools to resolve conflicts and work cooperatively outside of the program. "LdOut<sup>3</sup> helped us realize that we can do that," says Patchin. "It helped us learn that we can work with other people and can figure it out."

### Identifying Capacities for Leadership

While the 7th and 11th graders were picked because of their prior involvement in the youth group or because of their interest in leadership, Gulker envisions reaching students on the margins, students who normally are overlooked or considered to be "problem students." Because of his experience with kids, Gulker recognizes that such students have the potential for extraordinary leadership, assuming they are encouraged in healthy directions. "You have to engage youth with the simple understanding you believe they have the potential to be leaders," he says. "You're not debating the issue. You simply believe it. And as they begin to understand that you flat-out think they are leaders, they begin to exhibit qualities of leaders. You're investing in their sense of value and purpose."

VanderVeen says, "If you tell a child who's having difficulties that they're the solution rather than the problem, you're going to transform their view of themselves and who they are. Virgil's dream is to present an issue in the community and to ask students who are normally thought of as being the problem to come up with a solution. That's the essence of empowering somebody, and it's consistent with what we do here in the Leadership Center. We tell college students that they *can* solve the problem. We're giving them an opportunity and holding them accountable to it."

As liaison between the host church and the Hope students, Swift is playing a role in the next phase of the program, as it moves across town to St. Francis de Sales. The LdOut<sup>3</sup> method will remain the same, but the students will change,

and the demographic of the 7th- and 11th-grade students will include a larger number of Hispanics. Swift has been a Big Brother with Big Brothers Big Sisters for several years, and has a particular passion for underprivileged

**"The biggest challenge is the dreadful grown-up tendency to do things for others. If at any point, we give young people the impression that we are talking about leadership but never trusting them to lead, it will never work."**

Dr. Virgil Gulker



7th graders play The Price Is Right with residents at the Warm Friend, a local retirement community, while 11th graders supervise. Photo: Leslie Russell

children. To be part of the implementation of LdOut<sup>3</sup> at St. Francis is exciting for him: "Although there's a huge Hispanic population in Holland," he says, "there are few leadership positions for Hispanics."

**"It helped us learn that we can work with other people and can figure it out."**

Ana Patchin, 7th grader

Like Gulker and VanderVeen, Swift sees the leadership capacity of the students. "Those kids are leaders, although they haven't learned how to channel it properly," he says of the group of 11th graders. "It's because

they haven't been shown a positive option. Any kid is going to pick a positive thing over a negative one, but they just have no positive options. It's on our society to give them that option."

### Looking toward the Future

As the program moves into the future and takes on bigger proportions, Gulker wants to painstakingly avoid too much adult involvement. "The biggest challenge is the dreadful grown-up tendency to do things for others," he confides. "If at any point, we give young people the impression that we are talking about leadership but never trusting them to lead, it will never work."

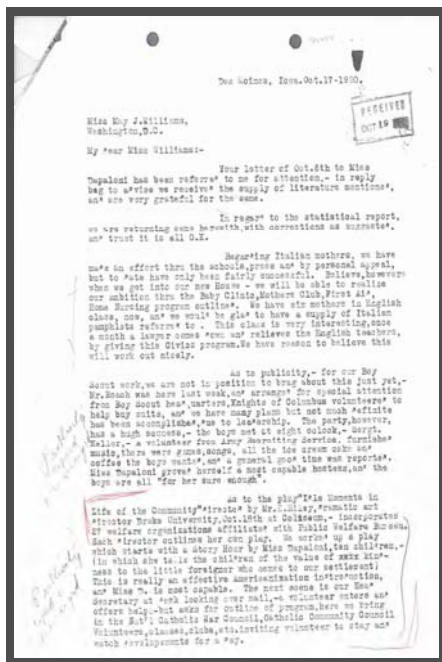
What excites Gulker, though, are the implications of LdOut<sup>3</sup>. Now that the 7th graders have been trained to lead, is the church prepared to appoint them to leadership boards? Might they teach the LdOut<sup>3</sup> principles to a group of adults? Here the program overturns our assumptions about leadership: in LdOut<sup>3</sup>, leading is rooted in serving, the younger people are engaged in the process, and the skills for leadership are not taught but rather drawn out of the participants.

Gulker explains that most instructional models imply a deficit, where the teacher believes that the students lack knowledge and therefore reminds them of what they don't know. LdOut<sup>3</sup>, on the other hand, assumes an asset model, where the teacher builds on what the students already possess. For Gulker, this inversion of conventional leadership is tied up in the way the Biblical narratives portray Jesus Christ leading. "One of the things about the New Testament is its counterintuitive nature," he says. "If you want to save your life, you lose it."

How can the program be sustained? For one, through prayer. "I have got to believe God is in this," says Gulker. And second, as he is quick to remind anyone involved in LdOut<sup>3</sup>, by asking rather than legislating: "I have to engage the next person in the hierarchy in the process of finding the answer. I can't give the answer." ■

(Continued from page 1)  
 researchers and to help students reflect on their own research experience. "Maybe that's the most important thing," he says, "making it a more enjoyable experience by connecting with each other, by having the research experience happen with a sense of the larger academic community around it."

And the results are tangible. According to Provost Richard Ray, research in the arts, humanities, and so-



This letter is one of many documents that Julie Oosterink '13 has carefully studied for her research project with Dr. Jeanne Petit, Associate Professor of History.

cial sciences represented only nine percent of all the projects at the Celebration of Undergraduate Research in 2001, the first year that Hope hosted it. In 2009, that percentage was 44.

Amanda Bieri '11, a student working with Dr. Mark Husbands, Leonard and Majorie Maas Associate Professor of Reformed Theology to create a reading guide to Karl Barth's slim book, *Evangelical Theology*, says that she appreciates the interdisciplinary feel of the luncheons: "This diversity helps us as students understand how to use our own studies to interpret and interact with each other. My research in theology this summer has helped shape how I engage in dialogue with students from other disciplines."

Another student, Julie Oosterink '13, who is doing archival research with Dr. Jeanne Petit, Associate Professor of History, on WWII-era National Catholic War Council documents, says that the research itself has developed her sense of vocation. "As I look for my own purpose as a citizen and scholar," she says, "I hope to learn from their [the document writers'] example."

Deborah Sturtevant, Professor of Sociology and Social Work, commends

Hope College for its intentionality in helping students consider the meaning of their work. Sturtevant began to consider her own vocation more thoroughly when she read *The Call*, a book



Students talk before a presentation at the research luncheon.

Photo: Greg Olgers

addressing the preparation required for vocation, with one of her "research partners," as she calls her student researchers. "It helped me to reexamine my purpose in life," she says. "I'd be going in a different direction altogether if I hadn't thought about my vocation. That preparation helps us to be in the place to receive a call, whatever it is."

Lindsey Boeve '12, Sturtevant's summer research partner, has also expressed a shift in interest from gerontology to international work, largely due to their collaborative research, which involves analyzing data from Milk and Medicine, an infant health program in Zambia. ■

### 2009-2010 Lilly Scholars



**Back row (L-R):** Stephen Shaffer '10, Dan Claus '10, Jeff Skaff '10, Amanda Bieri '11, Ashley Carter '10 Youngblood; **Middle row:** Marie Irvin '10 Kotenko, Kristen Johnson '10, Angie Griffore '11; **Front Row:** Megan Sweet '10, Emily Van Til '11, Ali Wolfe '11; **Not pictured:** Maggie Almdale '11, Caleb Schudt '11.

### 2009-2010 CrossRoads Scholars



**From L-R:** Gabriela Olaguibel '13, Hana Ogawa '13, Jonathan Vanderbeck '13, Ilar Edun '13

Each year, CrossRoads awards scholarships to two sets of students. Lilly Scholarships are awarded to students considering a seminary education. Incoming first-year students contemplating ministry in a multicultural context are given CrossRoads Scholarships. Here are the 2009 - 2010 scholars.

# Hope Women Help Empower Children in Uganda

Through an anonymous donation designated for Cross-Roads, two Hope students, Sarah Fisher '10 and Blair Riddle '12, traveled to Kampala, Uganda in May 2010 to serve with the non-profit organization Empower a Child. Riddle returned at the end of June; Fisher will remain through September.

Both women desired to work with children in Uganda, a nation whose population is more than half composed of children under 15. "Uganda is a country of children raising children," says Fisher. "Child-headed homes are everywhere and, without an adult provider, these children suffer to get food on the table, let alone receive an education."

According to its mission statement, "Empower a Child seeks to bring confidence and self-sustainability to orphaned and vulnerable children of East Africa by teaching modern

skills, giving the opportunity of education, and enlightening through the word of God." Each day, Fisher and Riddle visited schools, hospitals, orphanages, and homes, partnering with different groups to provide education for Ugandan children, in an effort to prepare the Ugandans for future leadership.

**"We spend so much time worrying about our 'calling' when in fact we all have the same one. The Bible is clear that we are called to live for God's Kingdom, we are called to live in a way that God's glory is shown through our actions."**

Sarah Fisher '10

as they have contributed. "I underestimated the impact of the people I worked with and the conversations we had," says Riddle. "I learned a lot from the various backgrounds people came from and have seen God more clearly through them."

For Fisher, the realization of the limits of her power hit her hard: "To be honest it is hard to realize or learn, but there is no way that you can help everyone meet these needs. I felt so broken up because all these people had needs that I couldn't meet." But as she acknowledged her limited abilities, she began to recognize the boundlessness of God. "Meeting someone's physical needs does not even compare to meeting someone's spiritual needs," she says. "Sharing the gospel with them and let-



*Blair Riddle '12 plays with children at Empower a Child in Kampala, Uganda, during a summer program for which she received internship credit at Hope College.*

*Photo: Blair Riddle*

ting them know that there is hope and a God who provides is the best thing that I can offer."

The time with Empower a Child also gave each of them a vision for the future. "I am a Social Work major with a Social Witness ministry minor," says Riddle. "This trip showed me what fusing those together could look like."

Fisher, who has spent considerable time contemplating her vocation, says that the past few months refashioned her notion of vocation. "I always thought that vocation meant finding the perfect job in the perfect location and that if I

didn't find this job I would be missing out on my calling," she says. "Through the time I have spent here I have been reminded of my passions, that I love working with kids who are in need and showing them God's love. There is no job title for this, yet I know that this is my vocation. It hit me that we spend so much time worrying about our 'calling' when in fact we all have the same one. The Bible is clear that we are called to live for God's Kingdom, we are called to live in a way that God's glory is shown through our actions." ■



*Blair Riddle '12, left, visits a family during her time in Kampala, Uganda.*

*Photo: Blair Riddle*

# First-Year Seminar Trips Illuminate Students' Vocations

As part of their mission to help students think about vocation, some First-Year Seminar professors have taken their classes off campus to consider vocation within a wider context. First-Year Seminars are topical, interdisciplinary courses required of first-year students, and CrossRoads offers grants to professors to encourage theological reflection on vocation within those courses. Last fall, with funding from CrossRoads, the First-Year Seminar (FYS) trips included a joint retreat to Camp Geneva with Dr. Jenny Everts and Dr. Virginia Beard, a joint day-trip to Chicago with Dr. Chuck Green and Dr. Carol Simon, and a weekend trip to Grand Rapids with Dr. Jane Dickie.

Three weeks into first semester, Dr. Everts, Associate Professor of Religion, and Dr. Beard, Assistant Professor of Political Science, took their classes to Camp Geneva, a camp and retreat center just north of



*Dr. Jenny Everts*

Holland, for an overnight writing intensive that focused on vocation. Everts gave a talk on 1 Kings 17, in which, at the word of God, Elijah leaves the place where the Lord has sustained him because his brook has dried up. Everts told the students that they must let go of the old in order for God to usher in their futures. Beard spoke about choices, emphasizing that choosing one good thing often rules out the possibility of choosing another. Both professors wanted their freshmen to reflect on what God might be calling them to choose—either to choose to pursue or to choose to leave behind—in order for God to work in their lives.

Toward this end, the students were asked to spend an hour writing a two-page essay on the subject of their vocation, after which they peer-reviewed each other's work. Following that, they had time to revise their work with their classmates' feedback in mind and then were given an opportunity to read aloud to the entire group.

Not only did the retreat, in particu-



*Dr. Jane Dickie, Professor of Psychology, and her FYS students discuss lectures over lunch at the Room for All Conference in Grand Rapids.*  
*Photo: Cindi Bloertje*

lar the peer-reviewing, strengthen the students' writing, but it also jump-started the attention they paid to vocation. In the words of one student: "Using my gifts of listening, patience, and the desire to share the Gospel with [other people] through love, I hope to be like the disciples and follow God's calling for me. I realize that I, like the disciples, will have to give up every-



*Dr. Virginia Beard*

thing I value." In another reflection paper, a student writes: "I have gained quite a bit of insight that I had either overlooked or just didn't want to think about. God called me to Hope College to find my faith. Now I must continue to keep my eyes and ears open to all that he can show me. I know now that I am still searching for my calling and that God will show me the right path."

Dr. Green, Professor of Psychology, heads the Phelps Scholars Program, a multi-cultural program for Hope freshmen, whose participants are enrolled in

an FYS intended specifically for Phelps Scholars. In September of 2009, the four FYS sections of Phelps Scholars were reading Barack Obama's *Dreams from My Father*, and Dr. Green thought it would be appropriate to visit Trinity United Church of Christ, which featured prominently in Obama's development as a community organizer. Simultaneously, Dr. Simon, John and Jeanne Jacobson Professor of Philosophy and interim Dean of Social Sciences, had asked her FYS, entitled "Called to Hope," to read Obama's book on account of the book's connections to the theme of hope.

On September 20th, Green and Simon took their FYS classes to a Sunday service at Trinity Church, a large African-American congregation in Chicago. "A number of our African American students were clearly at home in worship," says Green.



*Dr. Chuck Green*

Simon's students, on the other hand, were predominantly white and never been the minority. "Because of

this," she says, "many of them felt both welcomed and disoriented. They saw examples of cultural adaptations of Christianity that made them more aware of how much of the Christian worship they had experienced was adapted to their home culture—the culture of white, mid-class Americans."

Not only were the students exposed to another form of Christian worship, but they also encountered people who were living out a Christian vocation in different



Dr. Carol Simon

yet very tangible ways. Annalise Larson '13, who intends to teach K-12 Spanish internationally, recognizes the importance of this cross-cultural learning: "It is incredibly important to have a good understanding and an open mind to cultures and the way different people express and apply their culture in different settings. This was just one more learning experience to broaden my understanding of African Americans and their relation to their history, and how they have come to terms with it and are embracing it."

Another student, Emily Van Til '11, says the trip helped her focus her sense of calling. "It reaffirmed my calling to ministry in the urban setting. Personally, I realized that I feel more comfortable and have the gifts for working with the Hispanic population rather than the African-American population."

Dr. Jane Dickie, Professor of Psychology, asked the students in her FYS to attend several sessions of the Making Room for All conference, held on October 29 - 31 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Dickie frames the course, entitled "Who am I? The Struggle with Contradictions," in terms of contemporary philosopher Martha Nussbaum's three capacities: "First the capacity for critical examination of oneself and one's traditions...[Second] the ability to see themselves as human beings bound to other human beings...[Third] the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself."

It was this third capacity in particular that Dickie wanted to encourage at Making Room for All, hosted by Room for All, an organization that is advocating the full welcome and inclusion of LGBT persons within the congregations and clergy of the RCA.

"I wanted [my students] to look at and walk with people who were living what seemed to be a contradiction, people who were both gay and Christian," says Dickie. "I wanted them to hear from gay Christians about the ways in which they envisioned their own lives."

The students came away from the conference with a deepened and more complex understanding of human personhood, which showed up in the response essays that Dickie asked her students to write in the voice of an LGBT person. "It has everything to do with vocabularies of calling and vocation," says Dickie. "For those of us who are people of faith, we must un-



Dr. Jane Dickie

**"For those of us who are people of faith, we must understand ways in which our faith informs our understandings of ourselves and others."**

Dr. Jane Dickie

derstand the ways in which our faith informs our understandings of ourselves and others."

For one of Dickie's students, Mike Bass '13, the trip certainly helped him articulate his own values. "I found it interesting to hear the perspective of these individuals straight up," says Bass. "I held an educated perspective but I entered the room with an 'open mind.'...There were so many lovely people, but some of the thoughts and doctrinal ideas (in addition to the main topic) did not seem right according to my understanding of Scripture." The event also offered a chance to consider his own vocation, confirming his interest in theology. ■

## CrossRoads Awards Grants for Research, Internships, Other Projects

### Student - Faculty Research

**Jonathan Hagood**, Assistant Professor of History, & **Stephen Pedersen** '11  
*The History of Field Research Stations in Costa Rica*

**Mark Husbands**, The Leonard & Marjorie Maas Associate Professor of Reformed Theology, & **Amanda Bieri** '11  
*Reading Barth: A Guide to Evangelical Theology*

**Jack Mulder**, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, & **Andrew Peterson**, '12  
*Understanding the Catholic Mind*

### Alternative Placement Internship

**Steven Hoogerwerf**, Associate Professor of Religion, & **Rebekah Bush** '12  
*Teaching Assistant/Program Assistant, Pine Ridge May Term*

### Mini-Grants

**Annie Dandavati**, Professor of Political Science & Director of Women's Studies, & **Joel Toppen**, Associate Professor of Political Science  
*Human Rights and Human Wrongs, May Term Senior Seminar in Rwanda*

**Steven VanderVeen**, Professor of Management and Director of the Center for Faithful Leadership  
*Toward Co-Creative Communities: Team-Building Workshops*

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# SIGNAL

*A Newsletter of the CrossRoads Project at Hope College*

## ***In This Issue . . .***



### ***Research Luncheons***

Students and faculty doing research in the arts and humanities met weekly for lunch and a presentation. Read the story on the front page to see what they learned.



### ***Computer Training***

One Computer Science professor and two students offered computer training to teachers and students in Mukono, Uganda. Turn to page 5 for their reflections on the trip.



### ***LdOut<sup>3</sup> Program***

Hope students taught leadership skills to 11th graders, who taught those skills to 7th graders. Read the story on page 6 to see how this program alters our expectations.