Students Gain Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Experience

Over the last five years, I have been part of a collaborative effort with Professors Jeffrey Pfaffmann (Computer Science) and Christopher Ruebeck (Economics) at Lafayette and Professor Sharon Jones (Civil Engineering) at the University of Portland, as well as 32 students on a project funded by the National Science Foundation through its Human and Social Dynamics program.

This interdisciplinary project has applied a computational modeling approach (called agent-based modeling) to investigate the often unforeseen consequences of environmental policies related to three different markets—shipping pallets, cell phones, and water systems. For example, wooden shipping pallets can be discarded, re-used, or mulched, and policies such as fees for landfilling the pallets can affect what those shipping and receiving goods choose to do. Such policies influence behaviors and affect the sustainability of the markets and the systems themselves.

The students working on the project have majored in a variety of fields, including computer science, economics, and civil engineering of course, but also engineering studies, electrical and computer engineering, international commerce, mathematics, policy studies, and psychology. The students contributed to all aspects of the project, including developing conceptual models, writing specifications, programming the models, writing an interface to allow non-experts to manipulate the models, and field data collection. These students worked as EXCEL Scholars, and several leveraged their interests related to the project to complete an honors thesis.

(continued on page 4)
FROM THE PRESIDENT •

A Fall of Many Firsts

Although it is already late October, it still feels in many ways like the start of the year! This has been a fall of many firsts for me and for the College. One of the things I have always loved about being part of a college environment is the sense of renewal that comes with the influx of new students every fall. It was terrific to meet so many students and families in September, and set a sense of the many different pathways and aspirations that have led your sons and daughters to Lafayette.

It has also been a lot of fun to be something of a new student myself. I have been busy learning about the College—not just about its operations and policies, but more importantly, about its traditions and its people. In my opening Convocation speech, I talked about the rich traditions of the College, focusing on one prized artifact in our collection, a sword that belonged to the Marquis de Lafayette. I think students enjoyed seeing this tangible link to the College’s historic past. In my Inaugural Address just two weeks ago, I spoke of the many changes the College has seen over the years—such as the addition of engineering, and the admission of women—as it reshaped its identity to meet changing times. I believe one of Lafayette’s greatest strengths has been, and will continue to be, its capacity to embrace change.

One thing that is already clear to me is that its people are really the core of what makes Lafayette Lafayette. I have enjoyed getting to know students in a variety of venues: not just through formal meetings with student leaders and organizations, but by eating in Farinon, going to games, working out at the Fitness Center, chatting with students as I walk across the Quad from my home to my office every morning. I have already been struck by how deeply their love of the place is rooted in the bonds they have formed with the faculty and staff who teach them, and the friends who support them.

I hope to see you on campus for Family Weekend on Nov. 8-10. In the meantime, many thanks for the good wishes and warm welcome many of you have expressed, and for allowing your students to be part of the growth and evolution of Lafayette. The College will be changed by their presence here.

Alison Byerly

New Center for Community Engagement

The new Center for Community Engagement signals the College’s commitment to sustaining, expanding, and more effectively coordinating the numerous community partnerships in which students, faculty, and staff work with nonprofits, governmental agencies, and businesses to address complex issues. The partnerships provide rich, high-impact experiential learning opportunities for students, especially when the applied learning is grounded in reflection and subjected to critical scrutiny.

“Those who engage in community partnerships quickly learn that solving complex socio-economic, technological, and environmental problems entails synthesizing knowledge from many disciplines and carefully considering such variables as race, class, and gender,” says Center Director Debbie Byrd, professor of English and women’s and gender studies. “In a tangible, high-impact way, students come to understand why Lafayette stresses the importance of interdisciplinarity, multiculturalism, and strong critical thinking skills.”

Byrd’s primary responsibility is to support faculty who engage in community-based research projects and teach courses, direct honors theses, or supervise for-credit internships that have a community-based learning component. Bonnie Winfield, the center’s director of community partnerships, establishes new and strengthens existing collaborations between the College and various communities. She also provides support to student organizations and to College departments and programs that are interested in presenting students with civic engagement opportunities. Winfield will continue to serve as director of the Landis Community Outreach Center, working closely with Amber Zuber, the Landis Center’s associate director. The Landis Center provides students with rich co-curricular learning opportunities not only in the Lehigh Valley, but also through community partnerships in Honduras, Haiti, Madagascar, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, and several locations in the United States, from rural Appalachia and the Gulf Coast to neighborhoods in large cities like Chicago and Camden.

“The Center for Community Engagement brings all community-based learning and research under one umbrella,” notes Hannah Stewart-Gambino, dean of the College. “Community-based learning tends to be transformational, and this center creates a greater visibility and coordination among all of those opportunities.”

Parents, if you have questions or would like more information on a topic, please feel free to contact the person whose name appears at the end of each article. Please send address changes, comments, or suggestions to me at the address or number below. I look forward to hearing from you!

—Donna Krivoski, Director, Parent Relations

Hill to Home brings news from College Hill to families at home.

It is published twice yearly by the Division of Communications for Lafayette College Parent Relations. Editor: Donna Krivoski. Principal photographer: Chuck Zovko.

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www.lafayette.edu
Undergraduate research is a high-impact practice that is particularly effective at making a college education a transformative experience.

EXCEL Scholars Program

Lafayette has a long history of nurturing student-faculty research. As you can read in Professor Sanford Bernhard’s article in this newsletter, our students work on projects that engage them with actively contested questions and give them direct and practical exposure to cutting-edge technologies and methodologies. Because the questions are of real interest and the projects are guided by faculty who are experts in their fields, dozens of students present their findings at national meetings each year, and Lafayette’s annual listing of scholarly publications is packed with articles that have Lafayette students as coauthors.

Most of these student-faculty projects are supported either by Lafayette’s EXCEL Scholars program, which provides wages and housing for students working on research projects, or in the context of a student’s honors thesis.

Lafayette’s first honors theses were submitted in 1924 and became a consistent feature of a Lafayette education shortly thereafter. Leading what would become a national trend, the EXCEL program began in 1986. That summer, there were 14 students participating, working primarily with faculty from the chemistry department. This past summer, over 140 EXCEL Scholars participated in research with faculty members representing more than three-quarters of the departments at Lafayette. We have been leading such efforts for decades.

Working with faculty mentors on research projects fits with the nature of a Lafayette education. Doing such research is an intense experience with sustained interactions between the student and professor, and it is but one example of the ways in which we transition students from passive learning to independent and creative work. Undergraduate research is known as a “high-impact practice” that is particularly effective at making a college education a transformative experience.

As I write this brief recounting of our history and describe some of the impact of student-faculty research, there is a small voice telling me that I have skipped the main point. There is an article in the latest volume of Homology, Homotopy and Applications that I co-authored with Liang Zhang ’13, a student who started with me as an EXCEL Scholar in Summer 2012. Liang presented this work at two national conferences, and I am delighted that it is now published in a highly regarded venue. I value the contribution we made to mathematics. Yet it is the time we spent on this project, exchanging and refining ideas, which I honestly treasure and will always remember. And the fact that this sort of student faculty interaction is occurring for hundreds of Lafayette students and their faculty mentors every year is nothing short of marvelous.

John Meier
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Lafayette Regional Events

Parents are encouraged to attend Lafayette regional events to meet alumni and other parents. Contact the Office of Alumni Relations Office (alumni@lafayette.edu) to learn about upcoming events. Watch your email for invitations to events in your area.

Parents and Families Website

Visit www.lafayette.edu/parentsfamilies.

Parent Email Addresses Requested

To receive College publications, news flashes, special invitations, announcements, and Commencement information, send your email address to parents@lafayette.edu. Include your student’s name and class year. Remember to send any address change. We have email addresses for 89% of current parents. Are you in the missing 11%?

Get the POINT?

Watch for these important email messages.

Stay Connected!

Stay connected to Lafayette with free subscriptions to the College’s electronic newsletters, From the Hill and the Marquis Mailer. Visit wwwsubscriptions.lafayette.edu for information.

Parent Volunteer Day 2014

Members of the Communications and Family Weekend Parent Committees will have their annual luncheon and meeting on Saturday, January 25, 2014, the day students return for second semester.
For example, as an EXCEL Scholar, Kelsey Lantz ’13 (Engineering Studies) scoured the existing literature for data relating improved water sources to health outcomes and post-implementation cost data for water systems in rural parts of the developing world. For the water model, health outcomes are critical to determining system success, and systems often fail because of lack of income and/or financial investment in maintaining the system. Kelsey (who has just begun graduate school at Clemson University) was intrigued by a foundation that works in Uganda that requires the communities with which it works to keep detailed financial records. Unfortunately, the data existed only on paper, and the foundation was not able to digitize it. Undaunted, Kelsey applied for the Grand Challenges Scholars Program and the Jeffrey B. Havens Memorial Award, both of which provided funds that enabled her to spend the summer in Uganda gathering the data and interviewing members of the communities. This work formed the basis for her honors thesis, and we are using her work in development of the water systems model.

This project has contributed to a campus-wide effort to build computational literacy, and we have strongly encouraged students working on the project to enroll in computer science classes both because of its importance for this project and because of the long-term benefits for these students in their intellectual and professional lives. We also worked to develop an understanding of trade-offs involved in sustainability among a wider group of students on campus through engineering and economics classes. As part of that effort, we adopted and assessed the efficacy of an existing sustainability game with the goal of increasing student understanding of the interactions between economic, environmental, and social choices, and also demonstrating the importance of computational literacy.

This month marks the conclusion of the project, although writing and disseminating results will continue. The interdisciplinary collaboration among students and faculty members who brought different ideas and skills was crucial to the project. The most pressing problems facing our world can only be solved by interdisciplinary teams; the students who worked with us have a real understanding of what this means. Kristen L. Sanford Bernhardt
Associate Professor, Civil and Environmental Engineering Chair, Engineering Studies Program sanfordk@lafayette.edu (610) 330-5584

Students Gain Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Experience
(continued from page 1)

Parents Fund Update

Thank you for your support! In 2012-13, the Parents Fund exceeded $1 million for the second straight year. Nearly 1,000 families contributed $1,018,428. Technology in the classroom, guest speakers, academic projects, Career Services programming, athletic training trips, and many other enhancements not covered by tuition are made possible thanks to the generosity of those who support the Parents Fund.

The Parents Fund is on the way to another record year. Please consider making a contribution of any size to support the program that means the most to you and your child. To give, visit www.development.lafayette.edu/give or call (610) 330-5034. All gifts received by June 30, 2014, will count in the Parents Fund total for 2013-14.

Joe Samaritano ’91
Director of the Parents Fund
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(610) 330-5047

Student and Parent Loan Rates

The 2013-14 interest rates for all Direct Loans disbursed between July 1, 2013, and June 30, 2014, are fixed as follows:
• 3.86% for Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans for undergraduate students
• 6.41% for Direct Parent (PLUS) Loans

The Office of Financial Aid is happy to help you decide if borrowing is the best way to finance part of your student’s education. Our loan counselor can answer questions about existing loans or guide you through the borrowing process should you decide these loans are right for you and your family.

Office of Financial Aid
financialaid@lafayette.edu
(610) 330-5055
Empowering Students to Find Solutions

Students differ in their ability to cope with normal development stressors, such as dealing with relationship conflicts, making decisions about majors and careers, and managing their time. Families hold varying opinions about how much influence parents should have on their children’s decisions. The College’s goal is to empower students to make well-informed decisions about their educational and personal lives so they can become engaged citizens and life-long learners. Parents can help by encouraging their sons and daughters to develop their own strategies for making good decisions.

Many students turn to their parents for assistance before seeking help on campus. The next time you get a “distress call” from your young adult asking you to help solve a problem, listen closely to both what they say and how they say it. Their tone of voice can tell you just as much about how they are really feeling as their words. Express empathy and support and let them know that, as much as you are tempted to “fix” the problem, you believe in their ability to come up with good solutions on their own.

In stressful situations students may find themselves temporarily unable to think clearly about next steps and may express that they feel overwhelmed. One of the first questions to ask is how much sleep they are getting. Most young adults still require 8-9 hours of sleep a night. Research on sleep’s effects on memory has found that sleep helps us reinforce newly-acquired knowledge while culling information that we no longer need.

The effects of sleep deficits can be subtle, and students may not realize that losing their temper, feeling depressed and anxious, eating poorly, failing to keep appointments, and getting frequent colds may be related to poor sleep habits. Good sleep hygiene includes going to bed and getting up at the same time each day, having a room that is dark and cool, avoiding alcohol and caffeine before bedtime, and refraining from studying in bed.

When students feel calm enough to focus on solutions, encourage them to think about the answers to these questions:

- What are they hoping to accomplish?
- What is the very first step they need to take to make that happen?
- Are there barriers to taking that first step and how could they be overcome?
- What resources are available on campus or off-campus to help?
- Have they ever done something similar that can help them with this decision or task?
- How will they be able to tell if the plan or solution is working?

Although it’s tempting to provide the answers to alleviate their distress in the short-term, it can be even more rewarding for both of you to hear the pride in their voice when they tell you how they found a long-term solution on their own.

Karen Forbes
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Celebrate Lafayette vs. Lehigh Nov. 23

View the 149th meeting of college football’s most-played rivalry with alumni, parents, families, and friends at a telecast party in your area. Events are hosted by alumni and parents across the country and around the world. Visit www.alumni.lafayette.edu/telecast.

Commencement Dates
May 24, 2014  May 21, 2016
May 23, 2015  May 20, 2017

Skillman Library: Celebrating 50 Years

In the fall of 1963, the new, state-of-the-art Skillman Library welcomed students with such modern conveniences as telephones, typing booths, and air-conditioning. An award-winning expansion and renovation in 2004 made Skillman the spacious and light-filled place it is today, with ample room for learning, collaboration, collections, exhibits, and technology.

This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Friends of Skillman Library, an organization supporting the educational mission of the library. The Friends are major sponsors of this year’s special anniversary programming. Learn more on the website at www.lafayette.edu/friendsofskillman.
Downtown Easton App and Gift Card

Downtown Easton: now there's an app for that! Find the wonderful downtown businesses at your fingertips with the free Downtown Easton Smartphone App for both iPhone and Android. It's in the App Store under Easton, Pa.

Check out a full listing of restaurants to satisfy cravings from Columbian hotdogs to frog legs. Check out the events section for things to do any day of the week. From music to food specials to full-day events, you'll find them.

Ready to shop? The app has a listing of over 40 retail locations. You'll find directions and information on parking locations, overnight accommodations, must-see attractions, and more.

Looking for a perfect gift? The first-ever Downtown Easton Gift Card has been announced by the Easton Main Street Initiative, in partnership with the Easton Business Association and the Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce. Accepted at 60 downtown businesses—retail shops, restaurants, salons and more—gift cards in amounts from $5 to $500 can be purchased at the Easton Main Street office (35 S. Third St.), the Sigal Museum (342 Northampton St.), or online (eastonmainstreet.org). Why guess what your son or daughter would like? Give Downtown Easton!

Amy Boccadoro
Assistant Main Street Manager
amy@eastonpartnership.org
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Orientation Leaders Reflect with Pride

This year was the most exciting, rewarding, and memorable of our three years as Orientation Leaders for incoming first-year students. The Welcoming Ceremony with President Alison Byerly was unforgettable, and we loved sharing what being an Orientation Leader entails with the first-year parents before we welcomed their sons and daughters into our community. The ceremony was the perfect way for the first-year students to start the Orientation program, and we were able to watch them transition from exchanging goodbyes with their parents to forming strong friendships and finding their place on campus.

As OLs we have a responsibility to teach first-year students about what it means to be a Lafayette student, share our values with them, and prepare them for their college career in four short days. This may seem daunting, but OLs want nothing more than to share our love for the school and our experiences. Throughout Orientation Week, the OLs guide first-year students as they make friends, meet advisers, and learn their way around, so that when classes start they already feel comfortable on campus.

There is no greater sense of pride than watching the members of your group bond with one another and gain confidence. OLs are highly enthusiastic because we feel strongly about what Lafayette has given us. We share this excitement with the first-year students to inspire them to find their own path and make their mark in our community. We are a blend of athletes, fraternity and sorority members, Marquis Scholars, Landis Center program directors, actors, singers, and—most important—natural-born leaders.

Each year OLs add new members and build new relationships with each other while the first-year students do the same with their peers. This year was the closest our OL family has ever been. We were left with a great feeling of accomplishment. Only two years ago we were new OLs. It was rewarding to know that we helped to prepare the OLs for the success they had this year.

We owe many thanks to Pam Brewer, Director of Student Leadership; Lauren Ibbotson, Orientation Logistics Coordinator; and the Class of 2017 Orientation Committee. We will miss being a part of this extraordinary program next year, but we hope that your sons and daughters feel inspired by their experiences to become an OL and share their own story with the Class of 2018.

Lauren Berry ’14 and Jake Hulbert ’14
First-Year Orientation Executive Co-Chairs
Insure Your Health at Lafayette

As a parent, I have experienced many of the emotions you may feel when your child is sick or injured while away at school. My colleagues at Bailey Health Center and I believe that good health is essential in the education process, and we specialize in college health because we genuinely enjoy caring for students.

The health center provides high-quality primary care and urgent care geared to the needs of young adults who are learning independence and responsibility. Our staff includes providers specializing in emergency medicine, family practice, adolescent medicine, psychiatry, and sports medicine. We want your student’s experience at the health center to be as easy and friendly as possible.

Parents play an important role. Engage your student in a conversation about the importance of seeking health care before a minor problem becomes more urgent. We also encourage students to learn how to self-care for minor problems such as the common cold.

Selecting a health insurance plan is one of the most important ways to support students’ well-being. We encourage you to be an informed consumer and understand exactly how your health insurance provides access to care in the Easton community.

Students’ academic success and achievement are significantly correlated with health, healthy behaviors, and access to health care; unhealthy students have difficulty learning. For students who are uninsured or underinsured, the consequences of lacking access to care are profound. Research has proven that insured students who have access to health care have more positive college experiences and better academic performance compared to students who are uninsured or underinsured.

Lafayette joined hundreds of other colleges and universities this year in requiring health insurance as a condition of enrollment through a “hard waiver” system. Full-time students are required to show evidence of adequate coverage by an acceptable health insurance plan. If no evidence is provided, the student is automatically enrolled in the student health insurance plan. Lafayette selected a plan underwritten by United Healthcare with a maximum benefit of $500,000, which includes a prescription drug benefit at an extremely competitive rate.

The health center provides care to our students seven days a week without utilizing health insurance to bill for provider services. The insurance requirement reinforces our commitment to protect our students by ensuring access to health care in the community. The new policy is already helping many students that have never been adequately covered. Removing barriers to academic success by creating access to healthcare empowers students and is fundamental to the mission of health services.

Jeffrey Goldstein
Director of Health Services
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(610) 330-5001

LCAT Shuttle Service

LCAT (Lafayette College Area Transportation), the free campus shuttle bus service, provides safe, reliable transportation connecting the College Hill campus with the Metzgar Fields Athletic Complex, downtown Easton, shopping areas, cinemas, primary off-campus student parking areas, and Lehigh Valley International Airport. A link to the schedule is on the Parent website.

Emergency Alert Service

The Lafayette e2Campus Emergency Alert Service permits College administrators to send alerts via text message and email to students, faculty, staff, and parents who have signed up to receive these alerts. The Alert Service delivers time-sensitive information during unforeseen events or emergency situations on or near campus. Please encourage your son or daughter to sign up for this free service and please enroll yourself—it is quick and easy. Visit www.publicsafety.lafayette.edu to view FAQs and to enroll.
Student Grades and FERPA Regulations (continued from page 1)

When a midterm grade is reported, the student is informed and these grades are shared with the students’ faculty adviser and their class dean. The class deans often meet in person or communicate with students and direct them to the appropriate resources on campus.

Permanent course grades are submitted by the professor and recorded at the end of each semester. Final grades are available online at the end of each semester, generally within 48 hours of the time grades are due. Students can request a printed copy from the Office of the Registrar prior to the end of the term or a copy of their complete transcript at any time. Students may also request that a copy of their transcript be sent to their family at any time.

Frank Benginia
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