

April 17, 2008

Investment group's experiments in finance contribute valuable experience, funds for campus improvements

In many ways, the Owl Investment Group resembles any other student organization. Although there are 60 official members, the number of students that shows up on any given Wednesday night to learn about finance and business while enjoying a little socializing is usually closer to 25, and there's a smaller core group that's most involved.

However, there is one thing—well, actually about 100,000 things—that make the group unique.

In the 1970s an anonymous alumna donated \$100,000 to Bryn Mawr with the express purpose of creating a student group that would introduce its members to the world of high finance by allowing them to invest the money in the stock market.

In the years since, the group, which was originally known as the Student Investment Committee, has funded everything from concerts to treadmills for the gym with the returns on its investments.

OIG's investments have seen annual returns of around 11 percent for the last several years. However, the group hasn't been immune to the recent economic downturn and has seen the value of its portfolio drop from around \$130,000 to closer to \$120,000 since the summer.

Executive Director June Lee is typical of many students involved with the group. She came to Bryn Mawr with no plans of a career in finance. But after a few economics courses and her experience with the group, she's now on her way to a job with Morgan Stanley.

Other recent graduates from the group have gone on to be associates and analysts at a number of finance powerhouses, including Moody's, Janney Montgomery Scott, and Citigroup.

OIG Executive board member Jill Settlemyer '10 is a political science major but is considering going on to get her MBA, something she said probably wouldn't have happened had she not gone to a place like Bryn Mawr.

"A liberal-arts college gives you the flexibility to explore all sorts of academic interests and Bryn Mawr's so small that I could join a group like this and not feel intimidated," she said.

Settlemyer also pointed to Bryn Mawr's all-women environment as a huge plus for a group dedicated to finance, a predominantly male field.

Last year's OIG president Danny Tang '07, who now works as an analyst at KKR Financial, and Alyssa Martin '10, current co-chair along with Anna Mathew '10 of the Personal Finance Planning Committee, saw the work they were doing with the group's personal finance committee as so important that they've managed to get the College to offer a pilot personal-finance course that will debut in fall 2008.

In 2007 Tang and Lee also approached Bryn Mawr CFO John Griffith to see if he'd be interested in advising the group and helping with outreach to alumnae and business professionals.

"I think just about everyone who works at a place like Bryn Mawr does it in part because they value education, so it's always great when you can work with students," said Griffith.

Among the alumnae Griffith has arranged for the group to meet is Alexandra Kaufmann of Pershing Square Capital Management.

Kaufmann and Griffith planned a meeting for Feb. 15 and invited OIG students to come meet with her on what turned out to be the year's only snow day.

"She was stunned that 20 students made their way out in the middle of a snowstorm to talk to her. In fact, I think they'd still be in the conference room if we didn't put an end to it," said Griffith.

"I was extremely impressed with the caliber of the students and their knowledge of finance," said Kaufmann. "They were very engaging and certainly not shy about asking questions. It ended up being more of a two-hour Q-and-A session and less of a lecture, which was great."

As the economy tightens, Griffith says, groups like OIG will be invaluable to liberal-arts students interested in business and finance careers.

"When the economy tightens up, recruiters tend to stick with the business schools so it becomes harder to get your foot in the door. So if a student is lucky enough to get an interview, she's going to be expected to have a certain level of financial literacy. And while our students have the problem solving and communications skills these firms are looking for, it's very hard to do well in an interview if you don't know what the people are talking about," said Griffith.

OIG will be holding its annual [Senior Career Panel](#) from 9-10 p.m. on Wednesday, April 23, in Carpenter B21. The event features graduating seniors talking about the ups and downs of their job searches, and all Bryn Mawr and Haverford students are welcome to attend.

Bryn Mawr College welcomes the Solomon Asch Center for the Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict

The [Solomon Asch Center](#) for the Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict, which was established a decade ago at the University of Pennsylvania, has moved to Bryn Mawr.

Co-directors Clark McCauley and Marc Ross will host a reception to celebrate the Center's official Bryn Mawr opening on Monday, April 21, at 5:30 p.m., following a [lecture by Haverford political scientist Barak Mendelsohn](#) at 4 p.m. in Bettws-y-Coed 239.

McCauley, a professor of psychology, and Ross, the William Rand Kenan Jr. Professor of political science and the director of the Bryn Mawr-Haverford Peace and Conflict Studies Program, have long been associated with the Asch Center. McCauley, along with Penn psychologist Paul Rozin, founded the Center; he has served as one of two co-directors since its creation in 1998. Ross has served on the faculty of each of four summer institutes at which the Asch Center brought together social scientists and practitioners from around the world to study the origins and consequences of ethnopolitical conflict.

The center's summer institutes have been critical in developing its international network of scores of scholars, policy makers, clinical psychologists, and representatives of humanitarian and relief programs that serve survivors of violent conflict. McCauley and Ross are eager to develop relationships between members of the Bryn Mawr community and the Asch Center's far-flung circle of friends.

"We're hoping to put our people power to work for Bryn Mawr students by establishing internships and mentoring opportunities of various kinds," says McCauley.

According to Ross, interest in such opportunities is strong among Bryn Mawr students.

"When I see how committed students in my classes are to learning about and finding solutions to violent conflict, it restores my hopes for the future," Ross says. "It can be dispiriting to research longstanding conflicts that appear to be intractable. But the fact that so many students want to study Rwanda or the conflicts in the Middle East stops me from getting discouraged."

During its years at Penn, the center was independently funded—the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Atlantic Philanthropies, the MacArthur Foundation, the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Science Foundation, and individual donors have underwritten its efforts—and McCauley and Ross are now seeking similar funding for its work at Bryn Mawr.

In addition to its summer institutes, the center has funded research, including sponsoring postdoctoral fellowships; hosted a series of research talks; developed initiatives to help refugee communities; and established cooperative research arrangements with sites in Northern Ireland, South Africa, Israel/Palestine, and Sri Lanka. It counts scholars from a number of Delaware Valley colleges and universities among its affiliated faculty.

McCauley and Ross hope to continue many of the activities the center has pursued in the past. The speaker series, including Monday's lecture by Mendelsohn, is under way. Beginning in May, the center will host Muhammad Ishaque Fani, an associate professor of international relations at Bahauddin Zakariya University in Pakistan, as a visiting scholar. Fani is at work on a book that traces the emergence of religious radicalism in madrassahs and mosques in Pakistan since the 1990s.

Other [research projects](#) sponsored by the center include computer modeling of several political phenomena involving ethnic conflict and group identification as well as studies of the future of Arab-Israeli relations, the influence of core beliefs on individuals and groups, the powerful attachment of ethnic groups to national lands, cultural essentialism, and ethnic aversion.

McCauley is planning two new Asch-sponsored research projects, one focusing on humiliation and another, to be conducted with assistance from an incoming graduate student in clinical developmental psychology, on how certain kinds of death are socially constructed as martyrdoms.

But their first priority, McCauley and Ross say, is developing new programs that are consonant with the College's undergraduate focus. A summer-internship program drawing on the center's international network is one such proposal.

Another will bring postdoctoral fellows who have personal experience in conflict zones to the Bryn Mawr campus to teach and lead faculty workshops as they engage in writing projects based on their work in the field.

The center also plans to develop a summer program for high-school students, modeled on Bryn Mawr's successful [Writing for College and Science for College](#) programs.

"I think it's terrific that the center is moving to Bryn Mawr," Ross says. "It has been very important to me for a decade. The contacts I've made through the center have helped me reach a much deeper and more complex understanding of ethnic conflict around the world."

In a world in which conflicts involving non-state actors are becoming more common, McCauley says, such understanding is becoming more and more necessary: "Understanding non-state conflicts around the world, and the flows of people that are often consequences of such conflicts, is an important part of a globalized education."

BMC students, faculty present their work to science educators and legislators in D.C.

An interdisciplinary contingent of three faculty members and three students who all have personal experience with new approaches to science education at Bryn Mawr visited Washington, D.C., early this week to compare notes with other innovative educators and present their work to legislators on Capitol Hill.

Professors of Biology Paul Grobstein and Peter Brodfuehrer, Senior Lecturer in English Anne Dalke, Bryn Mawr biology major Laura Cyckowski '08, Bryn Mawr physics major Ashley Dawkins '08, and Ian Morton, a Haverford senior majoring in biology at Bryn Mawr, presented their work at the annual Washington, D.C., Symposium and Capitol Hill Poster Session sponsored by SENCER, or Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities. Biology Laboratory Coordinator Wilfred Franklin and [Serendip](#) Web master Ann Dixon also contributed material to the presentation.

SENCER is a faculty-development and science-education-reform program supported by the National Science Foundation. The signature program of the National Center for Science and Civic Engagement, a research center affiliated with the Harrisburg University of Science and Technology, SENCER's goal is to spark students' interest in science and mathematics by focusing coursework on real-world problems.

The Bryn Mawr group gave its presentation at an afternoon session of the conference on Monday, April 14. Grobstein and the students stayed on through Tuesday morning to meet with U.S. Rep. Jim Gerlach, who represents Pennsylvania's Sixth District. After the morning meeting with Gerlach, the team presented its poster, titled "Science Education as Interactive Conversation," in the Rayburn House Office Building.

The [poster and presentation](#) reviewed several Bryn Mawr courses, including a freshman seminar course co-taught by Dalke and Grobstein, two biology courses, a 200-level seminar, "The Story of Evolution and the Evolution of Stories," that is cross-listed in English and Biology, a course on gender and science, a course on the philosophy of science, the senior seminar in neural and behavioral sciences, and summer institutes for K-12 science teachers in the Philadelphia area.

"These are interdisciplinary science courses, but what's important is that they all reconceptualize science as an interactive conversation, rather than content that's being delivered to students," Dalke explained. Many of the courses use the Serendip Web site to publish student papers and host online discussions. "When students post their papers online, they see themselves as contributors to the fund of knowledge, not empty receptacles for information," said Dalke.

According to Dalke, many of the courses described in the presentation emerged from conversations sponsored by Bryn Mawr's [Center for Science in Society](#), which has successfully engaged many nonscientists, including Dalke, in discussions of scientific issues and their implications for the world outside the academy.

"It wasn't until we started preparing this presentation that we realized that we have now established courses at all levels that rely on this understanding of science as conversation," Dalke says.

Grobstein notes that while SENCER focuses specifically on civic engagement, the courses the Bryn Mawr group discussed at the conference were not the product of a conscious or explicit effort to create a curriculum of civically engaged or socially responsible science.

"The common thread in these courses is a pedagogical model that rejects the notion that the faculty knows what students should learn and instead lets students' own interests guide the curriculum. These courses begin and end with questions that students ask. So the civic-engagement aspect arises from the fact that civic engagement interests our students," Grobstein says.

Representatives of 27 institutions, ranging from two-year community colleges to highly selective liberal-arts institutions, gave presentations at the conference.

"I was impressed by SENCER's commitment to finding ways to effectively engage more students with science, not only as a professional activity but as an essential component of becoming effective and empowered participants in society regardless of one's professional identity," Grobstein observed in a [Serendip post](#) after the meeting. "SENCER's impact on a wide array of institutions, including two-year colleges, is a valuable reminder that prestige institutions are not the only players in town and may in fact in important ways be behind in some significant innovations rather than leading them."

Dalke responded: "What was most remarkable about these discussions was that they were cross-generational; the greatest delight for me—what really distinguished this conference from others I've attended—was the incorporation of student perspectives in all the presentations."

Cyckowski agreed, citing in particular an informal discussion at which all the student participants in the symposium "commented on SENCER, good experiences with science courses, bad experiences with science courses, what makes up a good science curriculum, and so on, while the professors and other participants listened. I particularly enjoyed this and think it reflects one of SENCER's ideals, which is to encourage educators to learn from their students just as much as students learn from them," she wrote in an e-mail.

"I've taken a number of the courses that were presented on our poster," she continued, "and this engagement between faculty and students is one of the things that made the courses so great."

And, Brodfuehrer noted, such exchange is far from burdensome to create. "I learned that it does not take much to transform one of my courses (SENCERize) to incorporate civic engagement, make it relevant to students, and allow them opportunities for 'conversation'—their thoughts and perspectives on a given topic. My guess is that any course could be SENCERized and in the end, both faculty and students will benefit."

Opinion sampler: six Bryn Mawrers discuss their voting decisions (or lack thereof)

As the hotly contested Pennsylvania Democratic primary approaches, the candidates are, in the words of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, "jostling for youth votes in a fashion that has never been seen here before."

High-profile visitors to the Bryn Mawr campus so far include *Ugly Betty* star America Ferrera (stumping for Clinton), *Grey's Anatomy* actress Kate Walsh (for Obama), former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright (for Clinton), and Obama policy chief Karen Kornbluh '85 (although her talk was cast as a career-development event rather than a campaign rally, almost all of the audience's question's dealt with Obama's policy positions). Campaigners at Haverford have included Obama's wife Michelle and Clinton herself.

Bryn Mawr Now asked six Bryn Mawr students whom they favor in the upcoming primary. Their answers:

Elise Marraro '10

Major: Art History

Obama

I agree with his policies more than the other candidate and his view on the war in Iraq has been the most consistent.

Jane Morris '10

Major: Sociology/Biology

Obama

He's got a better chance of winning the general election and he's very inspirational. After the last eight years, people need to be inspired.

Rebecca Woodruff '08

Major: Biology

Undecided

I like both of the candidates for very different reasons. I'm having a hard time deciding between two very good candidates.

Nafisa Misawa '10

Major: Biology/Pre-med

Undecided

I was really following the campaign over winter break but lost track of the race over the semester. I think it will probably be Hillary because I think she's got a better chance in the general election.

Joanne Bunch '09

Major: Sociology

Obama

There's something about him that transcends the issues. He reminds me of Kennedy in the way that he's inspired young people to get involved. Unfortunately, I don't think this country will elect either a black man or white woman as president.

Zaineb Tambawalla '08

Major: Political Science

Undecided

I see potential in both candidates. I see Hillary as a really strong leader with lots of experience. Obama doesn't have the experience but he seems to offer a strong vision for renewing America.

Former Hepburn Fellow Karen Stephenson to discuss social-network analysis as a tool for social change

On Thursday, April 24, at 8 p.m. in Wyndham House's Ely Room, the Katharine Houghton Hepburn Center will present "Social Network Analysis as a Tool for Social Change," a talk by 2006-07 Hepburn Fellow Karen Stephenson, who has continued to work with Bryn Mawr students and faculty members since her [tenure as a fellow last year](#).

Stephenson, the president and CEO of the management-consulting firm Netform, Inc., is a corporate anthropologist who is internationally recognized for her pioneering work in detecting, diagnosing, and designing human networks to solve a variety of complex organizational, business, economic, and social problems.

She has taught at several universities, including Erasmus University's Rotterdam School of Management, Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, Imperial College's Graduate School of Management, MIT's Sloan School of Management and UCLA's Anderson School of Management. She received a Ph.D. at Harvard University, an M.A. at the University of Utah, and a B.A. at Austin College.

Stephenson worked with Leadership Philadelphia to identify the top 100 "Connectors" in the Philadelphia region—the people to whom colleagues go when they want to get things done. By connecting these Connectors, social capital in the region is increased in ways that should lead to more successful innovation.

As a Hepburn Fellow last year, Stephenson worked with Bryn Mawr students and Professor of Mathematics Victor Donnay, an active member of the [Math and Science Partnership of Greater Philadelphia](#), to apply her methods in an analysis of social networks in a Philadelphia-area school district. Stephenson and Donnay have continued that work with a new set of student researchers this academic year.

On campus this week: Working out whiteness; Perspectives on blackness; A musical exploration of hybridity and heritage; The role of religion in international relations; Owl Investment Group senior career panel

Working out whiteness. What does it mean to be white? How does whiteness affect us? How can white people be better allies to people of color? These issues, along with pizza, will be on the table at the Office of Intercultural Affairs' biweekly Diversity Conversation this Friday, April 18, from noon to 1 p.m. at the Multicultural Center. All are invited.

Perspectives on blackness. This Friday, April 18, and Saturday, April 19, the Africana Studies Program will explore the complexities of black identity in the United States at a conference titled "[The Changing Meaning of Black Identity in the United States.](#)" The program begins with a keynote address by noted critic, memoirist and documentarian Manthia Diawara, an African expatriate who chairs the Africana Studies Program at New York University, on Friday at 7:30 p.m. A panel discussion the following morning at 10:30 will feature scholars who draw on the experiences and perspectives of the black American, black West Indian, black Hispanic, and black African communities residing in the United States. Both events will take place in Thomas 110 and are free and open to the public.

"Just Social" to explore cultural hybridity in music. What happens when white artists adopt cultural forms that are closely associated with Black Nationalism and black political consciousness? When black artists practice in fields dominated by whites? When women claim a place in a genre often criticized for misogyny? On Saturday, April 19, from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Bryn Mawr's Social Justice Pilot Program will explore the answers to those questions at "Just Social," a music festival focusing on issues of hybridity, heritage, and authenticity in popular culture.

Performers—including a white reggae band, an African-American folk singer, an all-female rap crew composed of Bryn Mawr students, and a solo rapper who is a member of the Bryn Mawr staff, will offer their ideas about the relationship of race, ethnicity, and cultural heritage to musical form. Several popular Bi-College dance groups will also perform. The festival will take place on Merion Green (rain location: Campus Center). A suggested donation of \$5 will benefit Parkway Northwest High School, Philadelphia's first college-preparatory public high school committed to the principles of peace, social justice, and conflict resolution.

The role of religion in international relations. On Monday, April 21, at 4 p.m. in Bettws-y-Coed 239, the Solomon Asch Center for the Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict will host a lecture by Haverford political scientist Barak Mendelsohn titled "Westphalia versus God: The Longer World War."

Mendelsohn will discuss the role of religion in international relations. Two contemporary entities—the jihadi movement and Hizb al Tahrir—illustrate different manifestations of religion's challenge to state sovereignty. Following the lecture, a reception will celebrate the opening of the [Solomon Asch Center](#) at Bryn Mawr College, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Seniors on getting a job. On Wednesday, April 23, at 9 p.m. in Carpenter B21, the Owl Investment Group will offer insight into searching, applying and interviewing for a job from six seniors who have successfully completed the process. The panelists:

- In research/government:
Jenny Chan '08, Associate Economist, Federal Reserve Bank of NY
- In the not-for-profit world:
Rebecca Woodruff '08, Fellow, Philly Fellows
- In education:
Emily Glick '08, Teacher, Germantown Academy
- In finance:
Leslie Warren '08, Analyst, JP Morgan
- In consulting:
Zana Hadziomerovic '08, Business Analyst, McKinsey
Alex Ionescu '08, Research Analyst, BASES