Colgate’s Institutes: Propelling the University Forward

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FUNDING INNOVATIVE RESEARCH THAT HAS PRACTICAL APPLICATION
Curiosity and critical thinking lie at the heart of a Colgate education. New knowledge is created through collaboration and the collision of ideas. The world’s most pressing problems will only be solved through interdisciplinary approaches. While much of the world is rapidly changing, these facts appear immutable—at least for now.

Colgate has an important responsibility. To produce the next generation of leaders, we must educate students to think in new ways, to be citizens of the world as well as of their nations, to understand the philosophy and arts of other countries, to respect the politics and cultures of different peoples, and to be critical, creative thinkers and doers. We also must provide our faculty with the resources and environment they need in order to explore and create new knowledge.

Our beautiful new Robert H.N. Ho Science Center now serves as the anchor for our undergraduate research program, through which students work side by side with faculty members to produce professional-level research. Our institutes of advanced study will concentrate research and discovery on opportunities and problems that require focused scholarly attention.

On the following pages, you will learn more about our four fledgling institutes: the Institute for the Creative and Performing Arts; the Institute for Politics, Philosophy, and Economics (PPE); the Upstate Institute; and the Harvey Picker Institute for Interdisciplinary Study in the Sciences and Mathematics.

As we consider Colgate’s many strengths, it is so very exciting to think about the impact these new institutes will have on our trajectory. I urge you to join our many leadership donors in supporting these important enterprises.

Thank you.

Rebecca S. Chopp
President
PASSION FOR THE CLIMB

If global warming and sustainability are vexing world issues that require an interdisciplinary approach, then artists—as well as scientists, economists, historians, and others—must be part of the conversation.

This spring, the Forum on the Arts will cosponsor Creative Solutions for Sustainable Futures: Art and Global Warming. There will be exhibitions of digital art and photography, as well as multimedia performances and two academic symposia, all merging the sciences with new media art technologies.

Institute for the Creative and Performing Arts

CHAMPIONING THE ARTS IN THE LIBERAL ARTS

Although fundraising for the Institute for the Creative and Performing Arts is still in its early stages, programming has already begun to transform Colgate. Now in its third year, the institute has brought nationally known artists to campus and enhanced the teaching of the arts as an interdisciplinary priority.

Three initiatives—the Cathy MacNeil Hollinger ’83 and Mark Hollinger ’81 Artist-in-Residence in Theater, ArtsMix, and the Forum on the Arts—have shown students that the arts not only feed their aesthetic sensibilities, but also are a necessary component of leadership in the 21st century.

ArtsMix: short visits bring variety and quality

Last fall, students were duly impressed when the renowned Susan Marshall & Company held two master classes for dance and theater students, and gave a memorable performance of Cloudless. This rare visit by an internationally celebrated dance company was thanks to the ArtsMix initiative, which brings five or six important guest artists to campus each year.

“The performance and the master classes together make a powerful statement about how the arts are taught at Colgate—and how important they are,” said Mary Ann Calo, professor of art and art history and director of the Institute for the Creative and Performing Arts.

“This is such an amazing opportunity because I’m not only able to watch the dancers perform, but also to interact with them—a once-in-a-lifetime experience,” said Emily Rawdon ’10, a dual theater and studio art major.

Russians in residence: art that needs no translation

When the Russian performance artist Dmitry Krymov and 12 members of his acclaimed School of Dramatic Art spent 10 days in residence at Colgate, what might have been a language barrier disappeared into the rarified studio air. More than 50 students and faculty members of the theater and art departments collaborated on an innovative kind of performance art that relies less on the spoken word, and more on drawn images, staging, and spontaneity. The Moscow-based performers also staged the play Sir Vantes Donky Khot at Brehmer Theater, an unconventional performance loosely based on Cervantes’s Don Quixote.

Forum on the Arts: collaboration between art and the environment

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“Anything that breaks down academic silos for a more comprehensive look is very valuable, and so is drilling down into an issue,” said Edgar A. Lampert ’62, P’10. “It’s meaningful for students—whether they’re seeking government service or going into the private sector—to realize that there are public policy implications to what they will be doing.”

Institute for Politics, Philosophy, and Economics (PPE)

Providing Forum, Focus, and Resource Where Public Affairs and the Liberal Arts Meet

As a member of the Washington Study Group in January 1961, Ed Lampert ’62, P’10 witnessed John F. Kennedy’s inauguration and was moved by the young president’s call to service. Four decades later, Lampert and his wife, Robin, hope their leadership gift to Colgate’s endowed PPE institute will inspire students seeking careers in the public sphere.

The concept of PPE, as a program of studies, was launched at Oxford University in the 1920s with the recognition that problems of the modern world demand multidisciplinary solutions. Colgate hopes to advance this model by developing not simply a program of studies but a full-fledged institute, and one not limited to philosophy, politics, and economics, but embracing all disciplines concerned with public affairs.

Colgate’s PPE institute was proposed two years ago by professors Stanley Brubaker, Michael Johnston, David McCabe, and Jyoti Khanna, of the political science, philosophy, and economics departments. Many faculty members now support the PPE—including those who teach classics, English, Russian, computer science, and music—because they agree that it furthers Colgate’s core mission of equipping students with the practical wisdom necessary for reflective leadership.

Forum

The PPE’s Forum of Democracy is a series of monthly debates with leading policy makers and scholars. One such speaker was Richard Lindzen, the global warming critic and Alfred P. Sloan Professor of meteorology at MIT, whose visit was cosponsored by the Center for Freedom and Western Civilization and the Center for Ethics and World Societies. His visit followed one by Tim Flannery, the climate change activist and author of The Weather Makers.

Stanley Brubaker, professor of political science and one of the founders (and now director) of the PPE, couldn’t have been happier to see students grappling with divergent points of view. “There are difficult tradeoffs involved in any important public policy issue. Students need to hear different political perspectives and make connections to the real world.”

Also last fall, students and faculty debated racial equality under the U.S. Constitution, and the foreign policy of President George W. Bush.

Focus

Through the PPE, Colgate aims to focus faculty and student attention on fundamental questions of public affairs. The institute will bring together a series of speakers, workshops, core distinction courses, and faculty reading groups focusing on an annual theme. Next year’s theme will be Liberal Democracy and its Limits.

Last semester, professors of geography, economics, international relations, and political science met several times to discuss epistemic communities as part of the PPE’s first faculty reading group. They brought in Peter Haas, the pioneer in the field from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, to answer the many questions they had pondered. “We approached the literature from our own perspectives, and we were pleasantly surprised to find that the others had different interpretations,” said Mai’a Cross, assistant professor of political science, who organized the group. “During the last meeting, we each discussed how we would incorporate our new understanding into the classroom or our research.”

Students, too, will have ample opportunities for discussion and reflection: they may join the reading groups, share dinner with speakers at Forum of Democracy events, and participate in the many happenings connected with the year’s annual theme.

Resource

This spring, students will compete for the first Lampert Fellowship, which will award a rising senior with the resources to devote a summer to exploring a topic concerning public affairs. With faculty guidance and supervision, the student’s work will culminate in his or her senior honors thesis, a public presentation, and possible publication.

The fellowship, which covers living, travel, conference participation, and summer wage replacement expenses, is modeled after a formative experience Lampert had during his Colgate years.
PASSION FOR THE CLIMB

Typically, Colgate students leave Hamilton at the end of the academic year. But now, thanks to the Upstate Field School, summer is the best time to gain valuable skills and make a lasting difference in the region. During summer 2007, 18 field school fellows worked more than 600 hours for 23 different organizations in three counties. Here are three of the innovative projects they completed.

• Sam Torrey ’09 supported the Southern Madison Heritage Trust, Inc., in its efforts to educate the public about conserving and appreciating local scenic, recreational, and historic sites. He mapped out a new trail for public access to the 18-acre Leland Reserve in Hamilton, and designed a self-guided tour for visitors. He also wrote a series of articles about land conservation trends in the community, which were published in local newspapers.

• David McKenzie ’08 used Geographic Information System technology to create digital maps of the Town of Cazenovia in Madison County. His work will provide residents and town planners with a point of reference for decisions about land use, development projects, environmental protection, and future development that will not sacrifice valuable views and resources.

• Liz Harkins ’09 worked with BRiDGES: Madison County Council on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Inc., to help market the group’s intervention training program for alcohol vendors. She created informational brochures, developed a safe selling packet, met with shopkeepers, and educated local high school students about alcohol advertising.

Other field school fellows engaged in research and planning projects for organizations including Upstate Cerebral Palsy, The Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York, Inc., the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees, and The National Abolition Hall of Fame.

Remembering the Underground Railroad

Upon entering Colgate, few students may know that upstate New York was one of the most important centers of abolitionist activity and an important route of the Underground Railroad. For the past three years, the Upstate Institute has worked closely with scholars of abolitionism and the residents of the Town of Smithfield to establish The National Abolition Hall of Fame in Peterboro, N.Y., and, through it, to honor the historic figures who dedicated their lives to securing equal rights for all.

This July, Graham Russell Gao Hodges, George Dorland Langdon Jr. Professor of history and Africana and Latin American studies, will advance the cause even further. Hodges, a renowned scholar on slavery and its aftermath in the eastern United States, will direct a three-week-long institute at Colgate to educate schoolteachers in the region. His goal is to enhance their understanding and teaching of the subject, and to sustain awareness of discrimination and racial isolation to young people. The seminar will be funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and hosted by the Upstate Institute.

“This institute is part of a career-long effort to restore to memory the heroic lives and deeds of the man and woman, white and black, of New York City and State,” Hodges said. “They shouldered the burdens of battling slavery in antebellum America. They enabled hundreds of African Americans to secure freedom from slavery.”

Colgate students portrayed National Abolition Hall of Fame inductees in a theatrical performance.

The New York Times, the Syracuse Post-Standard, the Chronicle of Philanthropy, and the Wall Street Journal. Since 2003, these news organizations and many others have covered the Upstate Institute’s innovative programs.

Grant-making groups including the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Fred L. Emerson Foundation—as well as generous alumni—have shown their support. And now, universities and community groups across the state are looking at the Upstate Institute as a model for how university resources can be harnessed to expand the capacity of social, economic, and cultural organizations in the region.

Last November, New York’s first lady, Silda Wall Spitzer, visited Colgate to learn firsthand what makes the Upstate Institute so successful.

“We don’t want redundancy,” said Ellen Kraly, William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of geography, who became the institute’s director last year. “There should be no competition. This is about sharing our human and creative capital and getting the work done.”

Upstate Field School fellows roll up their sleeves

Colgate Wall Spitzer, first lady of New York, greets Liz Harkins ’09.

Upstate Institute

A MODEL OF COMMUNITY COLLABORATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

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After just one year, the Picker Institute is already achieving many of its goals. Interdisciplinary research based at Colgate is attracting international attention while also drawing top students to the sciences. For example, Grace Baik ’10 declared her neuroscience major after working on the language project, and Jason Demakakos ’07, a neuroscience major and Japanese minor, has set his sights on medical school.

Future teaching and learning are also virtually ensured. The two professors plan to propose a new jointly taught scientific perspectives core course, From Tongue to Brain: The Neuroscience of Second Language Learning, and their joint humanities colloquium presentation generated excitement about new interdisciplinary opportunities open to students and faculty. Pilot data collected at Colgate will likely give Kelly and Hirata a leg up when they appeal to the National Science Foundation to fund the next phase of their research.

Finally, and perhaps most important, two excellent, young scholar-teachers who could do their work anywhere in the world, are especially grateful to Colgate.

**First grant is a success by all measures**

The idea to join with a linguist to study the way non-native speakers learn Japanese came to Kelly three years ago, at a science colloquium in which Yukari Hirata, associate professor of Japanese, presented her work on Japanese speech sounds, or phonemes. “After that day, we talked many times over coffee,” Kelly recalled. “We wondered if aural instruction, combined with videotaped hand gestures, could help English speakers discern the length of certain syllables that make learning Japanese so difficult.”

A year later, the Picker Institute for Interdisciplinary Science issued its first call for proposals, and Kelly and Hirata’s unusual neurolinguistic collaboration was chosen for funding. “The project was a great first project for the Picker Institute to fund, because it will likely have a broader impact on academic environments beyond the field of cognition and language acquisition,” said Bruce Selleck ’71, Harold Orville Whitnall Professor of geology and director of the Picker Institute. “It also truly required an interdisciplinary approach, applying Spencer’s multimodal communication expertise and Yukari’s phonetic theories to practical, real language learning on the one hand, and evaluating those theories from adults’ actual learning and behavior on the other.”

Over the past 18 months, the $82,000 grant has supported some 110 hours of data collection by six students, related equipment, travel to conferences, and partial sabbaticals for Kelly and Hirata. The professors and students are now writing abstracts they hope to present this summer at conferences in Japan, Paris, and the Netherlands.

For Hirata, who has always wanted to find a scientific answer to whether adults can learn to speak a second language without a foreign accent, the grant has been a dream come true. “Our current project investigates ‘perception’ of a second language, which will ultimately help answer this question. It is truly fascinating for me to pursue a common scientific question with a psychologist when the two of us have different, yet almost complementary, academic training and knowledge.”
Begin with the gifts and pledges made during the silent phase, and continuing through December 31, 2007, we have received many important leadership commitments of $50,000 during the silent phase, and continuing through December 31, 2007, we have received many important leadership commitments of $50,000 or more. The alumni, families, and friends who have so much to show for our collective efforts. As we move forward, to support your campus.
The Campaign for Colgate

Campaign News in Brief

Endowed chair announced for men’s ice hockey

At the annual Silver Puck luncheon on November 3, William Johnston ’73 stepped up as the lead donor for the Donald F. Vaughan Endowed Chair for Men’s Hockey. “I was shocked,” Vaughan said after the event. “It was completely overwhelming.”

Read more at http://www.colgate.edu/hockeychair

Passion for science

As part of Passion for the Climb celebration in Washington, D.C., about 100 alumni and friends visited with members of the National Institutes of Health Study Group. “Colgate, as you can see, is the same and different,” said President Rebecca Chopp. “Though we are still preparing leaders for the future, the future is changing.”

Read more at http://www.colgate.edu/campaigncelebration

Singing Griffith’s praises

The Colgate Thirteen has been singing the praises of Dean William Griffith ’33 for decades. With his passing on November 19 at the age of 95, alumni of the a cappella group expressed their love by starting an endowed memorial scholarship in his name.

Read more at http://www.colgate.edu/griffithscholarship