

providence summer 2007



## TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

*PC students venture beyond the classroom.*



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T E R M S   O F   E N G A G E M E N T

{ *PC students venture beyond the classroom.* }





Each academic term at Providence College, students are engaged in learning experiences that take them beyond the confines of the traditional classroom.

For many students, this experience is an integral complement to a semester-long course. Students in Dr. John Scanlan's Law and Literature class, for example, traveled to Washington, D.C., and the august environs of the U.S. Supreme Court to engage in discussion with Justice Stephen G. Breyer and observe court proceedings, while Rev. John Alexander, O.P.'s seminar class saw the culmination of its course in the publication of *American POW Memoirs from the Revolutionary War through the Vietnam War*. On a more regular basis, Tropical Biology students venture into the rainforests and dive among the coral reefs of Central America for an unforgettable field experience.

For many PC students, engaged learning takes the form of applying their course work through required field work that constitutes an internship experience. In this issue of *providence*, we read about three social work students who have made their mark on pressing social issues in Rhode Island.

And for a select few students, the experience transcends the boundaries of academic terms as they engage in in-depth research with faculty mentors for two or even three years of their college experience, such as the biology and political science students featured in this issue.

#### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

In another example of engaged learning, eight PC faculty members came together last semester as each others' students and teachers in the College's first Interdisciplinary Faculty Seminar (IFS). In their exploration of the topic of "Being Human," these faculty members discovered new paths to cross their individual disciplines and look at new ways in perceiving knowledge.

In addition to celebrating our students' and faculty members' engaged learning experiences, *providence* captures some of the special moments when members of the 1987 Final Four men's basketball team returned to Providence in May to mark their team's historic 20th anniversary. And we salute the Class of 2007 by incorporating a few "last words" to these graduates.

Paula L. Keogh, Editor

*Homework* FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE







by Dr. J.T. Scanlan, Associate Professor of English



There's a special verve to the classroom conversation in my new upper-level English course, Law and Literature. I suspect any course on legal issues taps into something deep in the American grain. Law permeates everyday life now, for better or worse, and regardless of our real knowledge of law, we love to opine on an arresting range of legal topics—from affirmative action in higher education to the simple prison life of Paris Hilton. Americans crave the law, and because of my students' excitement for the subject, Law and Literature is a thrill to teach.

But even I, a shameless enthusiast for legal-literary art of all kinds, was taken aback when one student, Rob D'Alfonso '08 (No. Kingstown, R.I.), confidently asserted that the Supreme Court merits briefs on an obscure case, 06-8120, *Brendlin v. California*, were among the most interesting reading assignments of his entire career at Providence College.

Rob said this early one morning, shortly after he and the rest of us in the Law and Literature class boarded an Amtrak train this spring and began our trip to Washington, D.C., where we would visit the Supreme Court of the United States and meet privately with Justice Stephen G. Breyer. As we pored over page after page of perhaps the most demanding and exacting reading of the term, "The Providence

Law Group"—as one high-spirited Amtrak conductor styled us—transformed half a train car into a legal-literary seminar on rails. Four hours later, as we sped past New Brunswick, N.J., we had become poster children for engaged learning.

But what were the fundamentals of our version of engaged learning? Why go to the Supreme Court in the first place?

Years ago, Associate Professor of Biology Carol B. Crafts came up with the brilliant idea of conducting a class in Tropical Biology in the turquoise waters of the Caribbean. [See related story on page 8.] But English courses focus on books and language. Can't we do our work in the library, at our desks, or beneath shady old trees? What, specifically, did our trip have to do with Rob's inspiring intellectual exhilaration?

#### The law in literature

By this point in the course, we had spent weeks immersing ourselves in literary works with legal themes. At the outset, we'd dissected the legal dimensions of such classics as Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, and Dickens's writings on judges, lawyers, legal stationers, and prisoners. From the relative safety of august Harkins Hall, we'd also studied the often violent situations of military law, as presented in Herman Melville's *Billy Budd*,

Herman Wouk's *The Caine Mutiny*, and Hollywood's *A Few Good Men*, all of which arose from grim legal actualities.

We'd spent a good deal of time on race, too. We'd considered not only *To Kill a Mockingbird*, but also Stephen Carter's controversial memoir, *Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby*. In part to prepare for our trip, we'd spent considerable time talking and writing about each Supreme Court justice's thinking in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, the landmark case on affirmative action, as that policy was handled at the University of Michigan Law School.

Because I took my Ph.D. at the University of Michigan, where I had the great good fortune to work with James Boyd White, the founder of the so-called Law and Literature Movement, the justices' writings on affirmative action have always had a special hold on me. I know most of the places and the people involved. For me, re-reading those concurring and dissenting views was like going to a movie filmed in my hometown. Accordingly, I'd been delighted to see students' infectious energy for the full range of ideas in those still eminently readable opinions.

The case we studied on the train, however, would never be labeled "landmark." *Brendlin v. California* addresses whether a passenger in a

car is himself actually seized by the government when a police officer pulls over a car for a routine traffic stop. And although I had relished my students' undeniable zest for legal topics (many were considering law school, after all), I still somehow wasn't prepared for their palpable excitement about prose like this:

Despite Respondent's protestations to the contrary, see Resp. Br. 37-39; see also *Amicus Br. in Supp. of Resp.*, Wayne County, Michigan at 3-10, because the Deputy exploited an unlawful detention that directly led to the seizure of evidence that otherwise would have gone undiscovered, the evidence must be suppressed. The result follows from this Court's analysis in *Hudson v. Michigan*, 126 S. Ct. 2159 (2006), which examined two factors in determining whether evidence obtained during an unlawful search or seizure should be suppressed. First is "the requirement of unattenuated causation," *id.* at 2165, under which the Court examines . . . (Petitioner's Reply Brief at 14, *Brendlin v. California* 551 U.S. \_\_\_\_ (2007).)



Law and Literature students visit the U.S. Supreme Court.

*This* was the reading that so engaged Rob—and others? Rob preferred *this* over the great books of Western Civ, not to mention any number of books *I* usually teach in other classes, from Cervantes' comic masterpiece, *Don Quixote*, to John Kennedy Toole's raucous, low, and wildly funny novel, *Confederacy of Dunces*? Really, how could *anyone*—much less a whole group of bright PC students—actually prefer *Brendlin v. California* to all the other great literature, great philosophy, great theology, and great everything else they read at Providence College?

Long ago, however, I realized that meaningful teaching depends much more on context than content.

Teaching has never been a top-down activity for me and surely tomorrow's context, the intimate courtroom of the Supreme Court building, had much to do with why we read *Brendlin v. California* with such . . . pleasure!

#### The court as classroom

When we arrived the next morning at the well-known steps of the Supreme Court, we responded with giddy high-mindedness. Like thousands of others who have made the pilgrimage to one of our country's most revered institutions, we posed on the steps of the Supreme Court plaza for the standard photograph, with broad smiles on our faces and with those mighty marble columns in the background. We're actually doing this!, our faces say.

But as guests of Justice Breyer, we also understood the special opportunity we had that day. And those words on the building's architrave, "Equal Justice Under Law," which at this point in the term had a complicated resonance for us, cooled whatever touristic impulses we brought to the Court. Moments later, when two guards ushered us past the usual gates and lines, we recognized that we were doing something much more substantial than the usual "class trip."

Various guards—all of whom somehow knew we were coming—asked us to wait on the bottom floor, before the imposing statue of Chief Justice John Marshall. Shortly thereafter, another series of guards



led us to the large East Conference Room, where over the room's fireplace hung an oil portrait of Justice John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the United States. A modest table with a large chair behind it stood in front of the fireplace, at the head of the room. Then the guards left us to ourselves, to wait for "the Justice."

This time, nobody reached for a camera. Our faces were more serious. Like everyone else in the room, I was glad I had carefully done the reading for *today's* class.

And then Justice Breyer gracefully charged into the room. A former professor himself—who had a reputation among students for making administrative law come alive—Justice Breyer chose to sit on the table.

For the better part of an hour, he talked with us, not at us. We talked about his daily routines, the two cases we would hear later, and about his recent book, *Active Liberty: Interpreting Our Democratic Constitution*, which my students had read. He was "the most down-to-earth person," Andréa Lynch '08 (No. Attleboro, Mass.) later said to a reporter for the *Cowl*. "You could tell he was a professor and was excited for us being there."

Other students reacted similarly. Colleen Flynn '07 (Pembroke, Mass.) observed, "It is not often you get to talk to the author whose book you read—let alone a Supreme Court justice."

As these remarks hint, the to-and-fro between Justice Breyer and the students meant the world to the young people from Providence

College who had the guts to sign up for a new class. And because of their hard work throughout the term (and on the train!), they understood fully what he was saying. Indeed, one student asked a detailed question about the degree to which specific principles of *Active Liberty* directed his reasoning in a recent decision.

"That's a wonderful question," Justice Breyer responded enthusiastically.

Maybe one or more of the students in my class will someday argue before the Supreme Court. If so, it's unlikely a justice will react to him or her so generously. In fact, as Justice Breyer answered the student's question, I wondered: How many people have ever heard such words from a justice of the Supreme Court? It was a moment, I suspected, that the student would treasure for a lifetime.

But the student—Rob, needless to say—didn't see it that way, he later told me. He was much more interested in developing further his own thinking about the reading and about Justice Breyer's writing. Rob spoke as if he had already graduated from college.

#### Writing with learning

And that, I think, encapsulated what our trip meant, as we all talked it over during the long train ride home. The Supreme Court is devoted, fundamentally, to reading closely and actively, and to writing—to writing with learning, with precision, and with the aspiration to change, if only slightly sometimes, the way others think. Yes, we do all that in college, but we do it in col-

lege so that we can continue to do it long after we leave our college days behind.


Inevitably, when the students wrote their final papers after returning to campus, they wrote with much more seriousness and intensity, or so it seemed to me. Assigning grades to the final papers seemed a frivolous requirement. Our "class trip," finally, was not a trip to a historical-political shrine so much as it was a journey to another sphere of learning, where all the symbols and signs reminded us of the importance, in everyday life, of the off-campus significance of the essentials of the academic enterprise.

And the trick, Justice Breyer hinted to us artfully just before he left the East Conference Room, is to keep that academic enterprise alive, throughout one's life. Only minutes before we watched Justice Breyer and his fellow justices ask heady and precise legal questions of the lawyers involved in *Brendlin v. California*, he told us a story he likes to tell often. When his son, Michael, was growing up, he said, he told him that "if you do your homework very well, you'll get a job where you can do homework for the rest of your life."

And, he added with a big smile, "It's true!"

As our class prepared to enter the intimate courtroom of the Supreme Court Building, it was hard not to realize that in reading so energetically those detailed merits briefs on *Brendlin v. California* on the train to D.C., we were already well on our way to proving him right.





*Students' research comes to fruition in*

# Belize

*by Dea Antonelli Carcieri '78*



Tropical Biology students explore the rainforest at the International Zoological Expedition location at Blue Creek in the southwest corner of Belize.

"We had learned about the structure of the different levels of plants in the rainforest in class, but it gives an entirely new dimension to the lesson when you are standing in the midst of it."

That telling statement by biology major Emily Sylvain '07 of North Berwick, Maine, just about sums up what it meant to her, 13 fellow students, and their professor—all from Providence College's Tropical Biology course—to live in, study, and explore the rainforest and barrier reef of Belize in Central America this spring.

The Tropical Biology course explores tropical marine and terrestrial biology and focuses on coral reef, seashore, mangrove swamp, and rainforest ecology. It features a nine-day trip during Spring Break to a tropical location where students search out a particular plant or animal they have already studied in class, and present a research paper on it.

Past trip destinations have included Costa Rica and Jamaica, as well as Belize. This year's trip to Belize was coordinated by International Zoological Expedition, a company that specializes in ecotourism adventures, including college trips.

#### **The Belize experience**

Upon their return to PC, several students noted what it meant to them to continue the research they had done at PC in Belize, while their teacher, Dr. Patrick J. Ewanchuk, assistant professor of biology, described his pleasure in seeing the students bring their classroom work to fruition there.

Sylvain researched the Flamingo Tongue snail, *Cyphoma gibbosum*, before leaving for Belize. "It was a unique experience to be able to see the organism I researched in its natural habitat," said Sylvain. "Snorkeling in general was the most amazing aspect of the trip. We had the opportunity to see so many interesting creatures, including nurse sharks, squid, and moray eels."

Sylvain said she—and the class—also faced several challenges.

"The rainforest experience definitely pushed me in a lot of ways," Sylvain explained. "We had two activities with guides. In the morning we went on an ethnobotany hike, which was pretty interesting. It essentially consisted of the guide telling us which plants could harm us and then which barks to boil to use as a cure. The most unexpected part of this hike was when the guide would hand us pieces off of plants and instruct us all to eat, while he notably abstained."





Ronald Strohsahl '07, left, and Richard Ramondetta '07 hold a long-spined black urchin (*Diadema antillarum*) at South Water Caye.

## JUST BEING ABLE TO SEE IN REAL LIFE ALL THE THINGS YOU READ AND HEAR ABOUT WAS MOST *important*.

"In the afternoon," she continued, "we did a cave hike, which had been described to us as a 20-minute hike through the rainforest followed by climbing to the cave mouth using vines. We had to scale what appeared to be a vertical slope of mud with the assistance of a single vine. The descent made the initial climb seem simple in comparison!" exclaimed Sylvain, who plans to work for a year and then apply to graduate schools to pursue a master's degree in genetic counseling.

Another biology major, Karla E. Feitl '07 of Coram, N.Y., took the Tropical Biology course because she is "much more interested in organismal biology and ecology than molecular biology," she said, "and this course is a sort of senior capstone for that at PC."

Happily, Feitl saw the mangrove jellyfish, *Cassiopea xamachana*, which she had researched at PC for her first presentation.

"It was really cool to see them out in their natural habitat down in Belize. When we went snorkeling at the mangrove islands they were literally almost carpeting the bottom—but they are pretty well camouflaged and hard to recognize if you don't know what to look for," noted Feitl, who will pursue a master's degree in evolutionary and comparative physiology at the University of California, Irvine, this fall.

Another student enrolled in the Tropical Biology course because of his career interest in doing marine biology research in Central America. Ronald H. Strohsahl '07 of Nesconset, N.Y., said the course—and the on-site experiences in Belize—provided "the opportunity to experience a glimpse of what life will be like for me in the future."

Before the trip, Strohsahl researched the green moray eel, which he saw in Belize along with other eels. While snorkeling was "definitely" the trip's highlight for him, he said, "Just being able to see in real life all the things you read and hear about" was most important. "It's completely different when you're actu-

ally there seeing it in person,” added Strohsahl, who is now working in Barbados for six months on the Barbados Sea Turtle Project, in which he researches, tags, and monitors nesting sea turtles during breeding season.

### **Tropical laboratory**

A marine biologist, Ewanchuk teaches the Tropical Biology class on alternating years with Dr. Elisabeth Arévalo, associate professor of biology, who helped make PC part of the Organization of Tropical Studies' Research Experience for Undergraduates Program in 2003. While he visited Belize previously, this was the first time he taught there as part of the course. In many ways, he said, the trip was as enlightening an experience for him as it was for his students.

“For those who are into biology,” explained Ewanchuk, “the tropics are a sort of mecca. For an organismal biologist, that's where everything is. Teaching part of the Tropical Biology course in the tropics is definitely an amazing opportunity to have.”

The professor enthused about his students' high level of interest in their projects, crediting it to their opportunity to engage in Belize in what they had studied in the classroom.

“There is a different motivation for students when they are immersed in something like that,” Ewanchuk explained. “It is not the same as doing something in the lab at PC. We spent two days in the rainforest and then six on the barrier reef in Belize, which is the second-largest barrier reef in the world, next to the Great Barrier Reef in Australia.”

Another plus, he said, was the fact that the students were next door to the Smithsonian Tropical Research

Station, where they were able to see the world's top scientists in action.

Ewanchuk said that in addition to the research papers students prepared at PC, they had to pick an organism or habitat and execute a research project on it while in Belize. The questions students asked—and the energy and interest they put into their research—were, he added, “enlightening” for him as a professor.

One example he cited was when he noticed bioluminescence—a flashing green color—in the water. He called a couple of students over to see it and before he knew it, the whole class had arrived.

“For the next two hours—from 9:00 - 11:00 p.m.—we watched these organisms,” he said.

About 75 percent of the students saw the organisms they had chosen for their papers in their natural settings in Belize, said Ewanchuk, who added that one of the organisms they found—but did not choose to study—was a tarantula.

### **Back at PC**

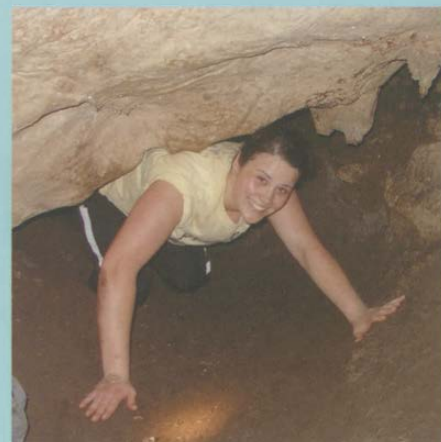
This year's Tropical Biology students—and professor—won't soon forget their experiences at PC or in Belize. A CD with everyone's photos was compiled and copied for each participant, and their papers and reports have been bound in a 76-page journal for all involved.

For their professor, the most gratifying outcome of the trip came at graduation. He spoke with some of the students' parents, who told him the trip was a valuable learning experience for their son or daughter.

“One father told me his daughter remarked that it was the best thing she did at PC,” said Ewanchuk. “That sure made me smile!”

### **EDITOR'S NOTE**

*Providence College is a member of the Organization of Tropical Studies (OTS), a worldwide education and research consortium through which students do research in the world's rainforest. The Tropical Biology course alternates its trips between Belize and the OTS location in Costa Rica.*



*Top: Kelly Albright '07 crawls on hands and knees during a cave hike that took students one-half mile into the side of a mountain.*

*Bottom: Stephanie Jarem '07, right, and classmates await their turn to climb a hill, using roots and vines to pull them up.*





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# Field work:

*Students make their mark on the “real world”*

*by Trisha A. Rojewicz '00*

Howley Hall. This building on Providence College's East Campus houses the departments of political science and social work, among others. The building's non-descript façade, situated among the towering Suites Hall, the impressive Smith Center for the Arts, and the freshly face-lifted St. Catherine of Siena Hall, gives little indication of the extraordinary happenings inside—and beyond—its walls.

In one office, four political scientists gathered each week. They discussed research strategies, exchanged family stories, analyzed data, and comforted each other during stress meltdowns. They produced ground-breaking research findings and forged lasting bonds. One professor, three undergraduates. Four academics.

In another corner of the building, a social work professor kept tabs on her students using PC's ANGEL online platform. The students—in fulfilling their internship requirements—were not stashed in a corner of some office performing busy-work. They were out in the field, serving as full-fledged social workers, passionately advocating for the well-being of those who are vulnerable and oppressed.

Still undergraduates, each of these students learned beyond the classroom—gaining “real-life” experience that strengthened their skills, allowed them to make significant academic contributions to their fields, and carved the paths for their future careers.





Dr. Mark S. Hyde with recent graduates, left to right, Rebecca Hatch, Jaclyn Scholl, and Amanda Dillon.

## Undergraduate political scientists:

### REAL EXPERIENCE, REAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Rebecca Hatch '07 of Chatham, Mass., met Dr. Mark S. Hyde, professor of political science, during her freshman year at PC and began her first research project as part of a class he taught when she was a junior. Jaclyn Scholl '07, a math major from Richboro, Pa., began taking Hyde's classes for their empirical emphasis and had so many of his classes under her belt that she was able to declare a minor in political science. Amanda Dillon '07 who is from Chatham, N.J., served as Hyde's research assistant for three years.

Hyde felt these students' ability and interest set them apart. He invited the three members of PC's Class of 2007 to participate in his research through independent studies, providing them with the opportunity to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty in the world of political science.

As the semester progressed, Hyde realized that the findings they had discovered through their research needed to be shared in an academic forum. He set that as their mutual goal.

Hatch's project, "Presidential Coattails and State Legislative Elections," examined the presidential elections from 1988 through 2004 to understand how the votes received by a presidential candidate might influence the election of other candidates of the same party running lower on the ballot. Hatch's research updated and expanded upon past scholarship, which looked at the elections from 1944 through 1984.

Dillon and Scholl worked jointly to investigate whether changes in lobbying regulations affected the techniques lobbyists used. The students

used a database of survey responses compiled by Hyde and Dr. John J. Carroll, adjunct professor of political science at PC, in which lobbyists had answered questions about their job techniques, strategies, and personal beliefs. In particular, they examined surveys conducted in 1994 (before lobbying regulations changed) and in 2004 (after the changes had been implemented).

Using her math background, Scholl provided the statistical analysis of the data on the lobbyist survey project.

"My work on this project allowed me to apply my love of numbers to a real-life example," she said. "It took me out of the pages of a mathematics text and opened my eyes to the many different things that I could pursue . . . It was a great experience."



All three of the students' hard work paid off when they were invited to be panelists on comparative state politics at the New England Political Science Association's annual meeting in April 2007—the culmination of what the students and Hyde regard as an extraordinary educational experience. Hyde noted that the panel discussant touted the three undergraduate students as better than any graduate students—and even some faculty—that he had seen.

#### Along for the ride

The students each credited Hyde's mentorship as the driving-force behind their academic achievements.

"Because of Dr. Hyde," Hatch said, "I was fortunate to have experiences that many people do not have until they are in graduate school, such as presenting a paper at a professional meeting and preparing and submitting a manuscript to a scholarly journal."

Scholl highlighted the way Hyde treats his students as colleagues, open to their perspectives and drawing on their skills.

"With his political science background and my mathematics skills, we each brought different abilities to the table," Scholl said. "We worked through problems together, each offering a different viewpoint, theory, or formula. We complemented each other."

Hyde echoed Scholl's sentiments. "It was a wonderful experience for me because of these students. I felt like I was just along for the ride. It was a mutually-rewarding experience. This type of learning keeps

you excited as a college professor because you're constantly developing new questions and searching for those answers."

At times, the search for those answers reached beyond the PC campus into the extended Providence College community. Hyde realized that Scholl's in-depth statistical analysis at times required outside expertise. He connected her with a PC alumnus—Stephen Walsh '78, a biostatistician at the University of Connecticut Medical School—who guided her throughout the course of the project. In addition, Dr. Jennifer Lucas '99, a faculty member at St. Anselm College, served as a member on the panel on which Scholl and Dillon presented.

#### Beyond PC

*Duke. Columbia. Yale.* These are the three universities to which these students will springboard from PC.

"To get into graduate schools, it's not enough to do well on entrance exams or to have high GPAs," Hyde said. "Students need to show initiative and separate themselves from the competition, which is exactly what these students did."

When Hyde met Hatch as a freshman, he immediately saw in her ability the potential to be an academic and advised her to engage in a research project in order to pursue that path.

And four years later, what are Hatch's plans?

"In the fall of 2007, I'll begin pursuing my Ph.D. in political science at Duke University," she said. "My ultimate goal is to teach at the college level."

"They were recruiting her like a basketball player," Hyde said, "flying her in, offering her a job, health insurance, and a large stipend. Providence College is sending political science students to outstanding schools. These students are examples of where a PC education can take you," he noted.

"In most cases, first-hand experience is the best experience," Hatch said. "And after participating in this project, I believe that my skills in writing, research, and data analysis have become much stronger. Overall, participating in this independent study and presenting at the conference were some of the best experiences of my college career."

The work Dillon did with Hyde inspired her to pursue a career in secondary education. In the fall, Dillon will attend Teacher's College at Columbia University.

"I hope that as a teacher I will be able to develop the same strong relationships with my students and engage them in active learning. Based on my experiences at PC, I believe this is the type of education that has a lasting impact," Dillon said.

Scholl will further pursue her love of math at Yale University, in the applied statistics program.

"The value of engaged learning is that it allows students to ask serious academic questions and to pursue the answers to those questions," Hyde said. "It satisfies their curiosities and presents them with a challenge. This is what good students want."





Recent social work graduates at the Rhode Island State House: left to right, Victoria Picinich, Jessica Loss, and Giselle Routhier.

## Undergraduate social workers:

### TRANSFORMATION IN THE FIELD

Transforming society. Social work majors at PC don't wait for graduation to make their mark on the world. Their positive impact on the community outside of the confines of campus is a daily occurrence. Jessica Loss, Victoria Picinich, and Giselle Routhier, members of the Class of 2007, were transformed through their internships—from students learning about social work to social workers changing society.

All social work majors are required to perform a three-semester practicum in the field. On a day-to-day basis, Loss, of East Lyme, Conn., worked with five of Rhode Island's Department of Children, Youth and Families' (DCYF) client families and was responsible for developing family assessments, mobilizing resources, and coordinating services for these families.

In addition, Loss—along with Jamielynn Salisbury '07 of Providence, R.I., and Dr. Michael

L. Hayes, assistant professor of social work—conducted research on recidivism of abuse/neglect within Child Protective Services (CPS) that had a major impact on the development of service strategies to families at the point of DCYF Intake. She presented this research at a national conference in Los Angeles in November 2006 and at a high-level community forum of child welfare executives in Providence in May 2007.

Working at the Rhode Island Foster Parents' Association, Picinich, of Bloomfield, N.J., studied the proposed state budget cuts to youth in DCYF care. Picinich contacted hundreds of individuals—foster parents, youth-in-care, provider agencies, and community partners—to rally them against the cuts and secure their participation at formal rallies, press conferences and Rhode Island State House hearings.

She engaged legislators and impart-

ed critical and compelling information regarding the proposed budget cuts. She also developed and disseminated press releases and worked with members of the media to ensure event coverage.

Routhier, from Cumberland, R.I., served as the lead National Association of Social Workers-Rhode Island Chapter (NASW-RI) representative on the One Rhode Island Coalition and the R.I. Coalition Against Human Trafficking, where she chaired the research committee. Her research investigated the reasons for the high demand for human sex trafficking, focusing mainly on the young adult population in and around Rhode Island and the way social workers can use their skills to address these problems.

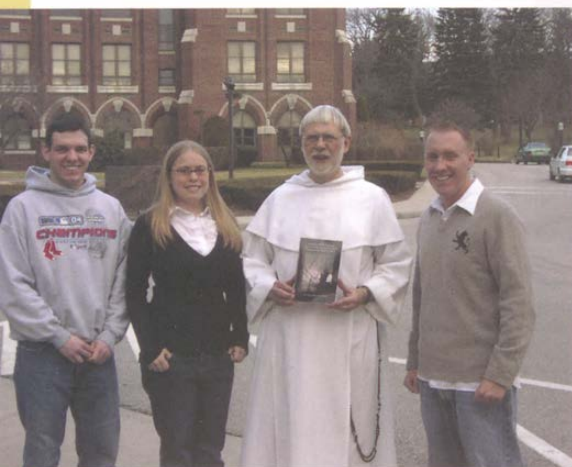
Routhier also was a major contributor to the 300-bill NASW-RI 2007 Legislative Agenda—researching over 1,000 pieces of legislation and

*Continued on page 17.*





## POW MEMOIRS



THE SCHOLARSHIP AND WRITING  
ARE IMPRESSIVE. BUT TO HAVE  
FATHER ALEXANDER (AS THE EDITOR)  
AND HIS STUDENTS COME  
OUT WITH AN ATTRACTIVE BOOK  
... IS MEMORABLE INDEED.

*The Providence Journal*  
EDITORIAL, MARCH 30, 2007

For undergraduate students, writing a paper often can seem like just another assignment on a long syllabus. But for 14 Providence College students, writing a paper meant much more; it led to an historic achievement.

In February 2007, the collection of papers from students in a course taught by Rev. Jon Alexander, O.P., associate professor of history at Providence College, was published as the text, *American POW Memoirs from the Revolutionary War through the Vietnam War* (Wipf and Stock). According to Father Alexander, this is the first time that papers written by students in a humanities undergraduate seminar have been published collectively as a book.

The goal of the special topics class, American Veterans' Autobiographies from the Revolutionary War through the Vietnamese War (1775-1975) with Special Emphasis on POW Autobiographies and Life Writings, was to produce a book-length manuscript ready for publication.

In the class, students examined individual narratives written by American internment camp prisoners of various wars. The students' focus was to dissect the construction of the narratives themselves, including plot development, characterization, the authors' self-presentation, and narration style. The papers reveal how the context in which each autobiography was written influences the nature of the memoirs.

Noting that it is "very difficult to find out what really happened to these POWs," Father Alexander said that the students used original, historical sources to write an historical study, much like "putting together the pieces of a puzzle."

The seminar was designed to provide students with first-hand experiences as practitioners in the field of historical research, according to Father Alexander. "History can be overwhelming memorization, and content is forgettable. I want to encourage faculty and students to try something more."

Remarking that the majority of publishable undergraduate research is done in the sciences, he emphasized that students across all subject areas can experience the same kind of hands-on learning experience.

"The book illustrates how a college seminar might move beyond training students in scholarly practice to giving students a first experience as scholarly practitioners," he said.

—Trisha A. Rojewicz '00

writing "mini" policy analyses on about 100 of these bills. She also was the lead student intern in developing the 2007 Annual Social Work Legislative Education Day at the Rhode Island State House.

#### **A good mentor makes the difference**

Internships have the potential to be either mundane or life-changing. All three of the students agreed that their internships transformed them in large part because of their agency advisors. These mentors, two of whom are PC alumni, viewed the students as colleagues in the field. Though the tasks often seemed daunting at first, the mentors provided just the right amount of guidance to give the students the confidence to handle their responsibilities.

Loss's supervisor was Stephanie Folgi-Terry '86, associate director of Child Protective Services, DCYF. "Stephanie was instrumental in my success," Loss said. "I dove in, head-first, and learned by doing. She gave me the freedom to develop my skills and perspectives. She saw me as a colleague. I became a social worker."

Rick Harris, LICSW, executive director of NASW-RI, served as Routhier's mentor. "I asked for Giselle's opinions, and I meant it," Harris said. "She helped me make ethical decisions regarding policies. I saw her as an equal."

Ironically, Harris also had mentored Folgi-Terry approximately 20 years prior. Three "generations" of social workers were now united, pondering the same issues as colleagues.

Picinich's supervisor at the Rhode Island Foster Parents' Association was Lisa Guillette '93, executive director of RIFPA. "This internship was the best thing I could have

done," Picinich said. "I was challenged every day. I had a supervisor who believed in me enough to throw me in and allow me to hit the ground running, while guiding me along my way."

Guillette noted, "I was amazed at how quickly Victoria digested the issues and was able to develop points and speak eloquently to senators and representatives. I watched her blossom into a tireless advocate for kids."

"This social work engaged learning experience is invaluable," Guillette continued. "Students are directed with specific learning goals: the practice, ethics, and values of the profession. You get on-the-job experience before even starting day one of your first job after graduation. My junior year at PC, I knew that this is exactly what I wanted to do for my career."

Routhier agreed. "You learn the theory in class and then get out there. You become an advocate, a policy-maker. You have a piece of the real world while still in school. I didn't just study about it; I did it."

Dr. Margaret Roderick, associate professor and director of field education for social work, noted the reason that these experiences were so successful was the way the mentors treated the interns as colleagues using "faith coupled with supervision."

Roderick, the students, and their advisors communicated using the College's online ANGEL forum. The advisors saw this tool as very important, because they could see how the students were functioning in class and also learn how they could reinforce the classroom education in the field.

#### **Beyond PC**

Before she walked across the stage at Providence's Dunkin' Donuts Center this May to receive her diploma, Picinich had three job offers. She accepted employment with Ocean State Action, a Rhode Island social policy advocacy organization, as an organizer.

When Guillette heard of Picinich's offers she said, "I couldn't have been more proud if it happened to me. I immediately called my own parents to tell them the news!"

Loss and Routhier will pursue graduate degrees. Loss will attend the University of Connecticut and will focus on clinical practice, while Routhier will be at Columbia University specializing in international practice.

"When Columbia heard that I came from PC's social work program, they were immediately impressed," Routhier said. "PC's internship experience is well-known and well-regarded there."

Loss noted that her internship taught her the practices of the field, helped her establish contacts, and laid the foundation for her graduate studies. However, one of the greatest benefits was being able to see the way families were being transformed through initiatives that were boosted through her research efforts at DYCF.

"I was able to see that by doing more on the front end to give families support, there was a great decrease in cases re-entering the system. I witnessed, first-hand, the transformation being played-out," she said.

"As social workers, 'transforming society' is our unofficial theme," Guillette said.







# pc

## students engage in faculty research

*Program cultivates next generation of biomedical researchers*

*by Paula L. Keogh*

The next generation of biomedical researchers is being cultivated in the science laboratories of Providence College, thanks, in part, to funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Since 2004, several dozen undergraduate students at PC have benefited from research opportunities made possible by their faculty mentors' participation in Rhode Island's IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (RI-INBRE). A grant to the faculty participants from the National Center for Research Resources of the NIH supports PC science faculty members in their biomedical research projects.

The goal of the network—which is based at the University of Rhode Island and also includes investigators from Brown, Rhode Island College, Roger Williams University, and Salve Regina University—is “to build the biomedical research capacities of Rhode Island institutions that have historically received little NIH funding.”

INBRE funding supports the research of faculty investigators in the areas of molecular toxicology, environmental health, and cell biology, with the intent to position them to successfully compete for direct NIH funding in the future. The program also funds Undergraduate Student Training Projects designed to engage students on each campus in the research of their faculty mentors, as well as provide for interaction with their student counterparts at the other RI-INBRE schools through annual retreats and poster presentations.

SCIENCE IS A CULTURE,  
A WAY OF THINKING,  
OF DOING,  
AND A WAY OF BEING.

Since FY05, PC has been awarded more than \$1.3 million to underwrite the salaries of faculty and student researchers, purchase equipment and supplies, and support research-related travel expenses. The grants benefit other PC science faculty and students as well, since some of the funding is used to purchase scientific equipment also used in laboratory classes, such as the fume hoods recently installed as part of major laboratory renovations in Hickey Hall.

Five faculty members have received INBRE grants: biology professors Rev. Nicanor Austriaco, O.P., Dr. Joseph Bartoe, Dr. Charles Toth, and Dr. Yinsheng Wan, and chemistry professor Dr. Jay Pike. They agree that assisting with this kind of research is a prerequisite for PC students who hope to get into the most prestigious graduate and medical schools.



Rev. Nicanor Austriaco, O.P., center, with biology lab assistants, rear, left to right, Brett Roussell '09, Jared Sheehan '08, Jay Pietrantonio '08, Eric Feeley '09, and Shawn Davidson '10, and front, Catherine Pilsmaier '09 and Dan Gittings '10.

#### The research mindset

Another benefit for these students is developing the mind of a researcher.

"The one thing that undergraduate students benefit from most through this program," said Father Austriaco, "is seeing that science is a culture, a way of thinking, of doing, and a way of being. They become part of a community where they learn the behavior and thinking patterns of others within this culture. It's a mindset. You have to train them to look at things that nonscientists would not see. It's a mentorship/apprenticeship relationship more than anything else.

"Science can be very frustrating because 99 out of 100 times, experiments don't work. If you get depressed every time an experiment doesn't work, science will be very difficult for you. A scientist is shaped by the life he or she lives in the lab," he added.

"They get to *do* science; they don't just learn about it," said Toth, who with Wan has been involved with RI-INBRE since its inception. "This is the best way to teach

them," he added, "to get them interested and curious about science in the world. Hopefully, this is setting them up for a career, getting them excited about clinical and disease research, and getting them into the research pipeline," said Toth. He noted that the first priority of his INBRE award contract is to "engage talented students in research and engage them to choose graduate education."

One student, Laura Beveridge '08 (Berlin, Conn.), has had the experience of working with both Toth and Wan and describes this as "an amazing opportunity. It gives you the ability to gain experience in research while working along with and getting to know great people, peers and professors alike. You gain knowledge that you cannot take from a book and skills that you can use later in all different types of research. It teaches you proper research methods you might not get elsewhere," she said.

Jay Pietrantonio '08 (Manchester, Conn.), who is part of Father Austriaco's research team, agrees. "The research allows us to apply the



knowledge we learn in the classroom in a laboratory environment and more importantly as a research team."

### Studying "antizymes"

Dr. Charles Toth, associate professor of biology, has most recently held INBRE grants for a Faculty Development Project (2004-05) and an Undergraduate Student Training Project (2005-present). The focus of his research is the "Role of the Antizyme Family During *Xenopus* Development."

*Xenopus*, he explained, is an African clawed frog. Using developing frog embryos grown and manipulated in a dish in the laboratory as a research model, Toth and his student assistants are looking at how cell growth is regulated. This type of investigation, he said, is directly applicable to cancer research.

"Antizyme is part of the metabolic pathway to regulate polyamine levels. Polyamines are required for all living cells, both normal and cancerous," said Toth, who explained that cancer requires a lot of polyamines when it is actively growing. Using the *Xenopus* model system, his laboratory team is investigating the requirements for polyamines during early embryo genesis.

Over the course of this research, Toth engages an average of eight students a year, between summer and school-year research assistants; all told, about 30 students will be involved. In addition to Beveridge, this summer's lab assistants are Claire Seguin '08 (Columbus, Ohio), and Terrence Sullivan '08 (Springfield, Va.).

Sullivan, who plans to go into dentistry, noted that his research incorporates material he learned in the Immunology course he took with

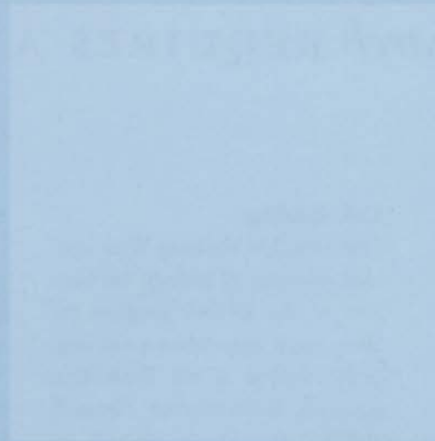
Toth last spring. "I've studied the textbooks for three years now. I am finally experiencing the hands-on aspects of biology that I have heard so much about from my professors. I have gained a new appreciation for the patience and diligence required to do research," he said.

He credits Toth with making "an extra effort to ensure that his students understand the nature of the research and how it fits in with the big picture, adding that "he knows when to guide us every step of the way and when to let us take over."

Seguin, who previously had declared as pre-med, may now go on to graduate school for a Ph.D. and pursue a research career—just as the NIH had hoped in funding this aspect of the program. Last summer, she had a research internship at the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center at Northwestern University. When she returned to PC after this experience and took Immunology with Toth, she decided that "research was the right path for me."

Beveridge, who hopes to become a nurse practitioner, described her experience with Toth: "He sends us papers to read up on the research we will be doing. Then he explains exactly what we will be doing, and gives us a protocol for our research. He guides us every step of the way . . . while at the same time letting us do everything on our own and learn as we go independently."

"He has always called his students to a high level of learning in the classroom. . . . So it is great to work with him in the lab. He is constantly teaching us—whether it be protocols for procedure, how to order antibodies and other supplies for experiments, or drawing all over the smart board about the long term focus of our work," added Seguin.



Dr. Charles Toth, right, with research assistants, left to right, Laura Beveridge, Claire Seguin, and Terry Sullivan, all Class of 2008.



Dr. Yinsheng Wan with Ashley Amaral '08, left, and Rebecca Kivlin '10.

## research REQUIRES A HIGHER ORDER OF THINKING

### Cell signaling

Like Toth, Dr. Yinsheng Wan, associate professor of biology, has been part of the INBRE program for about seven years, when it was originally funded as the Biomedical Research Infrastructure Network (BRIN). His current research on "Cell Signaling Leading to UV-Induced Cell Injury" has also received a Faculty Development Project grant (2004-2005) and an Undergraduate Student Training Project grant (2005-present).

This summer, Wan has two PC students working with him—Ashley Amaral '08 (Cumberland, R.I.) and Rebecca Kivlin '10 (East Hampton, Conn.). They are joined by a Brown University doctoral student, Cao Cong, and a recent graduate of Classical High School in Providence, Robert McConaghey, who is attending the University of Chicago.

Wan's research team is investigating the molecular mechanisms of UV-induced skin aging as well as studying the molecular mechanism of the invasiveness of ovarian cancer cells. His student lab assistants learn how

to design and execute experiments, interpret the results, and write papers for publication. They also spend a good deal of time, he said, reading professional journals.

Kivlin—who hopes to one day become a pediatrician—says that "doing research adds a different dimension to the typical classroom learning. Research requires a higher order of thinking and application of not only classroom knowledge but also common industrial practices."

"Rather than focusing on the big picture, research requires the application of acquired classroom knowledge in an interactive environment," said Kivlin, who noted that "Dr. Wan is an amazing mentor who not only supplements our experience with a superior level of knowledge, but also strives to help us achieve our own goals and aspirations."

### Apoptosis: cell death

Rev. Nicanor Austriaco, O.P., assistant professor of biology, has several students working with him this summer on his INBRE Faculty Development Project, "Genetic and

Molecular Analysis of Aging and Apoptosis in the Yeast, *Saccharomyces*." His team is looking at the genetic basis for aging, apoptosis (programmed cell death), and autophagy, which is how the cell recycles its parts.

"To study human biology, biologists choose other organisms related to us. In my lab, we study yeast as the simplest eukaryote related to humans. Both yeast and people are eukaryotes," said Father Austriaco, who explained that these organisms have several interconnected biological processes, including aging, apoptosis, and autophagy, which occur both in human beings and in yeast.

"The yeast cells commit suicide in a way similar to what human cells do in development and disease prevention. Cells that become cancerous, for example, commit suicide. In order for them to become malignant, however, cancer cells bypass this suicide process. In our lab, we are trying to figure out how they circumvent apoptosis. If we can understand this process well enough," he explained, "we may be



able to force the cancer cells to go into apoptosis, curing the cancer."

They are studying two genes found in both humans and in the yeast: the Bax inhibitor gene (BXI) and the Youth1 (UTH1), the aging gene. Both genes are associated with different cancers—including brain, breast, and kidney. "No one knows what these genes do," he explained, "so we are trying to determine their function by studying yeast mutants that lack these genes."

Over the course of his multiyear INBRE grant, Father Austriaco expects that he will have 20-30 students engaged in his research. This summer, eight PC students are involved, plus a Cumberland (R.I.) High School junior, Jennifer Malouin, who has followed her brother Josh '09 into the lab at PC. In addition to the Malouins and Pietrantonio, the PC summer lab team includes biology majors Shawn Davidson '10 (No. Attleboro, Mass.), Eric Feeley '09 (Northborough, Mass.) Catherine Pilsner '09 (Milton, Mass.), Brett Roussel '09 (Ivoryton, Conn.), and Jared Sheehan '08 (Milford, N.H.), and biochemistry major Dan Gittings '10 (Portsmouth, R.I.).

Each student is assigned to study a particular gene or biological process. "Everything is team work. Science is teamwork. You don't do it all by yourself," said Father Austriaco.

"I have learned a lot from Father Nic and he has taught me in such a way that I have to find the answers to my own problems," said Josh Malouin, who has been doing research with Father Austriaco since his freshman year. Malouin, who originally planned to pursue an

advanced degree in veterinary medicine, may now pursue a Ph.D. in veterinary research as well. In the meantime, he plans to continue to work on research in the labs at PC for the rest of his undergraduate experience.

"Father Nic is an amazing mentor," agreed Gittings, who plans to become an M.D. but may now also pursue medical research. "Father Nic showed me a new world of genetics that I would not have discovered without doing research with him. . . . He keeps us sharp and up to date on the current data out in the real world and helps us to relate it to our experiments."

Pietrantonio, who plans to become a biologist, noted that Father Austriaco "has inspired us with the desire to challenge ourselves and to never be complacent with only satisfactory."

"They learn that biology is much more than knowledge, than a set of facts. It's an exercise of the mind and the heart," said Father Austriaco.

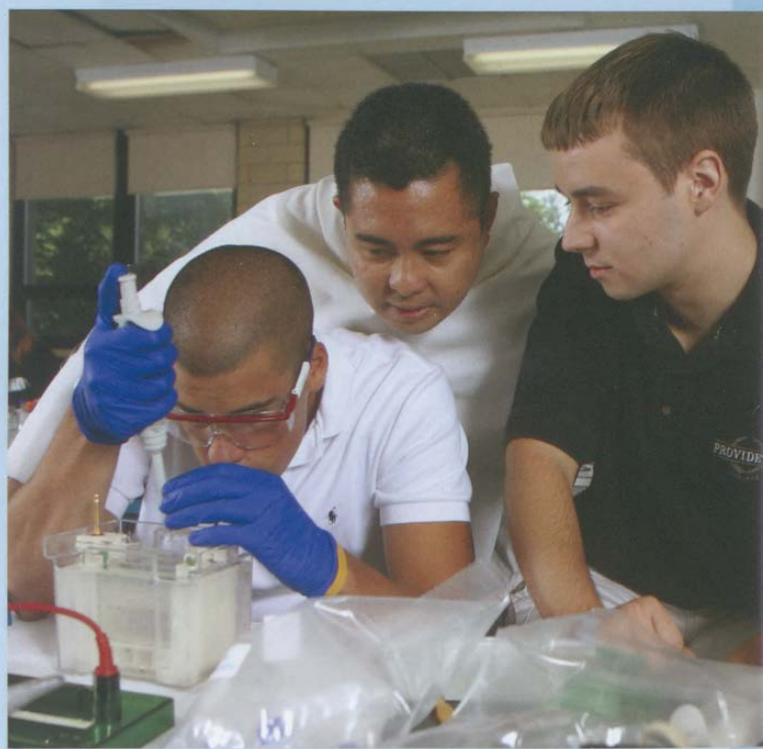
#### Cancer research implications

Dr. Jay Pike, assistant professor of chemistry, has completed his INBRE Pilot Undergraduate Student Training Project funded for the 2006-07 year. Working with students Timothy Bush '08 (Paramus, N.J.) and Katherine Mattaini '08 (Lancaster, Pa.), his research last summer and during the school year focused on "Promoting Apoptosis Using Small Molecule Inhibitors of Bcl-xL."

"Bcl-xL," he explained, is a protein involved in the regulation of cell death (apoptosis). "In cancer cells, this protein is over-expressed, meaning it is in a higher concentra-

tion than in normal cells, which inhibits the cell from undergoing apoptosis. So we are trying to make small molecules that will block the function of Bcl-xL, in effect promoting the apoptosis of the cancer cells."

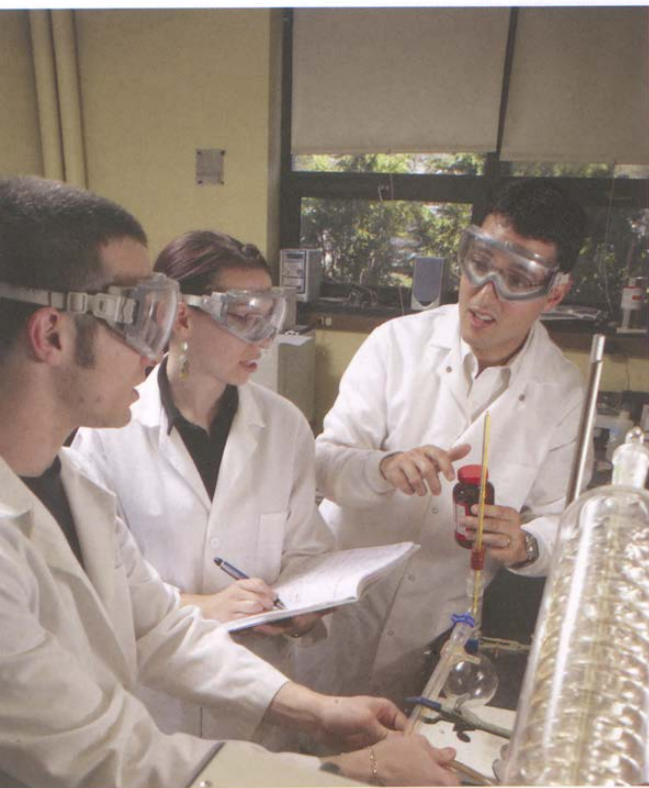
Pike said that the greatest benefit for students from the INBRE-funded program is the experience itself. "When you have labs associated with classes, your lab experiments are designed to work, so the students can see the results. In a research setting, it's very different. The students take their classroom knowledge, along with their creativ-



Rev. Nicanor Austriaco, O.P., center, with Brett Roussel '09, left, and Eric Feeley '09.



Dr. Jay Pike, right, with Timothy Bush '08 and Katherine Mattaini '08.



#### EDITOR'S NOTE

*Dr. Joseph Bartoe, the fifth RI-INBRE grant recipient, left PC this summer to return to California—where his wife is pursuing her career as a pediatrician—for a neuroscientist research position.*

*In addition to the faculty highlighted here, three other PC colleagues received research support from INBRE's predecessor, the Biomedical Research Infrastructure Network (BRIN), which dates back to 2001: associate professors Dr. Elisabeth Arévalo, biology; Dr. Mary K. O'Keeffe, psychology; and Dr. Kenneth R. Overly, chemistry.*

ity, to design their own experiments. Part of science is art—using this creativity to come up with something unique.”

And part of this experience is also failure. Noted Pike, “They fail many times, but when they succeed, it means so much more to them than if everything worked all the time. You cannot know what research is like unless you’ve experienced the highs and lows. Then you can decide if you like it or not.”

Pike’s students, however, did succeed in their organic synthesis to make a variety of the small molecule inhibitors of Bcl-xL. “Tim succeeded in creating six compounds and Katie made three—a huge feat because other students had already tried and not succeeded.”

Mattaini, who plans to earn a Ph.D. in biochemistry and pursue disease research, started working with Pike doing organic synthesis after taking Organic Chemistry last year. “I used a ton of the theory we learned in class and the techniques we learned in lab, although I definitely had to learn more as part of my research,” she said. “In the fall, I started doing protein purification at the same time that I was taking biochem, and there were so many ‘light bulb’ moments where I would connect something I had done during research with something I learned about in class. It was very cool!”

This summer, she is assisting with cancer research at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., through its highly competitive Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) Program.

#### Teachers first

Said Beveridge, one of Toth’s assistants, “The professors at Providence College really care about the research they are doing and want the students to take as much from it as they can. They truly care about teaching us about the aspects of research that they are interested in and giving us a good taste of what it might be like if we wanted to do research for a career.”

From his perspective as a teacher, Pike noted, “Working in the lab with the students, showing them how to do research, to evaluate, critique, set up, react; how to get excited about something; what to get excited about—this is of more value as a teacher than getting published. I came to PC to teach and I truly believe that is why I’m here. Research is a teaching tool.”

“A liberal arts college,” he added, “is very different from a research university where the focus of professors is on getting grants, doing research, and publishing it. Here the focus is to teach undergraduates how to do research, so they can go on to graduate school better prepared.”

“One of the strengths of the science departments here,” added Father Austriaco, “is that we get to know our students very well. . . . They are not working for me—we are working together.” These students, he said, become “independent, junior scientists” while still undergraduates at PC. “They wouldn’t be able to do this type of research at an institution with graduate students until their senior year,” he added, “if at all.”





## FACULTY BECOME STUDENTS AGAIN

*Inaugural Interdisciplinary Faculty Seminar looks at "Being Human."*

*By E. L. MacLean*

"Being Human"—and what it means from the unique perspectives of the liberal arts and sciences and beyond—was the focus this spring of eight Providence College faculty members who became each other's students through PC's first Interdisciplinary Faculty Seminar (IFS).

This faculty development opportunity, initiated by the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) under the auspices of the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, is a collaborative teaching and learning experience. It is designed to encourage faculty members to venture beyond their individual academic disciplines and collaborate with colleagues as mutual scholars, teachers, and students of the selected interdisciplinary topic.

The timing of this new initiative is propitious, since it converges with a college-wide dialogue on how best to incorporate interdisciplinary teaching and learning through an enhanced Core Curriculum.

"Interdisciplinary teaching and learning is a key factor of our new Core Curriculum proposal," said Dr. Hugh F. Lena, vice president for academic affairs, who is a strong supporter of the IFS. "It is my hope that just as our faculty members searched for common ground and a shared language with which to discuss 'Being Human,' they will apply those same skills to interdisciplinary teaching and learning in their classrooms."

Faculty members chosen for the first IFS came together once a week for a semester to approach the topic of "Being Human" from the perspectives of their particular academic disciplines: art history, biology, education, English, management, political science, philosophy, and theology. They were selected for the seminar following an application process overseen by the Committee for the Enhancement of Learning.

Each participant chose a subtopic on which to concentrate and led one seminar. Most important, the seminar format mandated that members engage in deep and reflective discussions about "Being Human" across individual ideologies and disciplines.

New ways of perceiving, new references to work outside one's discipline, new connections between materials that once were disparate, a commitment to question assumptions, and a stronger intellectual collegiality—those are just some of the results that faculty are expected to bring back to their classrooms this fall as a result of the seminar.

#### **Crossing disciplines, ideologies**

The eight IFS participants were recently asked how the interdisciplinary experience might translate into their classrooms for the benefit of PC students.

"I want to take this spirit of free inquiry back to the classroom," confirmed Rev. Joseph Torchia, O.P., associate professor of philosophy

and seminar coordinator, during an open forum last spring on the results of the first IFS. "The seminar underscored the fact that while dialectic is indeed disputational, it need not be adversarial. Rather, it can provide a segue to communication across disciplinary and ideological lines," said Father Torchia, whose topic was "Soul, Body, and Unity of Self: Exploring the Roots of Personhood."



IFS participants, rear, left to right, Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Hugh E. Lena, Rev. Nicanor Austriaco, O.P., Dr. Deborah P. Goessling, Rev. Joseph Torchia, O.P., then-CTE director Dr. Joan R. Branham, and Dr. Paul L. Gondreau, and front, Dr. Thomas F. Strasser, Dr. Tuire M. Valkeakari, Dr. Susan K. McCarthy, and Louis A. Beaubien.

He added, "It also offers a means of imaginatively inserting oneself in an alternative conceptual framework, and it opens opportunities for discovering fresh nuances in our own positions and exploring the limits of their persuasive power."

Dr. Tuire M. Valkeakari, assistant professor of English, who chose the topic "Race, Ethnicity and Globalization," said that throughout the IFS experience the undergraduate student was the invisible presence in the seminar room. "He or she may have been out of sight,

but not out of mind," Valkeakari said. "As faculty who became students together...we were constantly challenged, by the very nature of the process, to rethink our teaching.

"I now have a better understanding of how my teaching interests link with projects that are going on, or are being planned or launched, in other departments," Valkeakari continued. "For example, knowing that PC biologists are preparing to examine global warming with their students encourages me to explore how environmental issues could be addressed in my classroom through the study of literature," she concluded.

One participating faculty member who is also rethinking course content is Dr. Deborah P. Goessling, associate professor of education. Goessling, whose topic was "Using Disability Studies to Discover What is Human," said that the IFS has given her increased confidence to continue to make new

connections for her students in several courses. She has already intensified the interdisciplinary nature of her course on autism. She now incorporates film, memoir, biography, sexuality issues, and genetics into the course, which has attracted students from biology, psychology, and even American history and mathematics.

"The IFS taught me how many links we can make to other disciplines in our teaching," she concluded.



Like Goessling, Louis A. Beaubien, instructor of management, said that the IFS experience will probably alter the content of his courses. Beaubien, whose topic was "Humanizing the Organizational Machine," said that the IFS gave him greater conceptual resources. "Because of the seminar, I will probably use a broader range of materials, references, and perspectives in the classroom and the content of my courses will be even more integrated into the liberal arts," he said.

Rev. Nicanor Austriaco, O.P., assistant professor of biology, chose as his topic "What Does the Human Genome Project Tell us About What it is to be Human?" He plans to use the IFS experience as a springboard to develop an honors colloquium in 2008-2009 that will constitute a dialogue between science and religion.

"Knowledge today is fragmented—something that the IFS really showed me—so, it is important to keep searching for ways to bridge the language barrier between the sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities," Father Austriaco said. "My specific goal in the honors colloquium will be to examine the assumptions students bring to any discussion regarding the nature of science and the nature of theology. We will ask whether the two are friends, enemies, or strangers to each other," he concluded.

### Challenging assumptions

Many seminar participants had their views challenged by the IFS experience.

"My anthropological understanding of the human being was greatly enhanced by the perspectives of my seminar colleagues, many of

whom had opinions very different from my own," said Dr. Paul L. Gondreau, associate professor of theology, whose topic was "Human Sexuality in an Integrated Anthropology."

"Now, when I address the nature of the human person in the classroom—and I do this frequently—I draw on the wealth of knowledge I gained from my colleagues, including their objections to my own views on the nature of the human being," Gondreau said.

Dr. Susan K. McCarthy, associate professor of political science, whose topic was "Mao, Metta, and Muhammad: Faith-based Organizations in Contemporary China," said that the seminar made her think about how she frames certain issues in her courses.

"Several of the presentations made clear the need to question assumptions that are widespread in American society," she said. "For instance, Dr. Valkeakari's presentation on race showed the dangers of portraying race as 'natural' or as a 'fixed quality' because doing so obscures the dynamic role of power.

"Dr. Goessling's presentation on disability underscored the importance of effective public policy in creating opportunities for all Americans in education, health care, and employment. Obviously, these are all topics of interest to political science," McCarthy concluded.

Dr. Thomas E. Strasser, assistant professor of art and art history, who chose as his topic "*Homo Pictor: The Paleontology of Art and Its Uniqueness to Humans*," said that he had some "major learning moments" in the seminar. "I came

to understand that racism is a movement that came out of the Western Enlightenment. I'll never look at the Enlightenment in quite the same way again," he said.

"Also, Dr. Goessling taught me to think about ablism vs. disablism. Is one better than the other? If someone can't walk, are they less human? I had never thought about it in exactly that way before."

### IFS—a microcosm of the university

"Beyond the obvious intellectual objectives of the IFS, such as promoting scholarly research and publication, the IFS allows faculty members to be each others' students—as well as teachers—and it gives them an appreciation of the students' needs," noted Dr. Joan R. Branham, associate professor of art history, who served as director of the CTE and helped to develop the seminar concept.

"By examining the connections among disciplines, by looking at universal, interdisciplinary topics such as 'Being Human' and next year's topic, 'Color,' the seminar represents in palpable form a microcosm of the idea of the university."

### EDITOR'S NOTE

*Dr. Branham, who led the CTE for four years, will spend the 2007-08 academic year on leave from PC to serve as acting director and a research associate of the Women's Studies in Religion Program at the Harvard Divinity School, while Father Torchia will be on sabbatical leave, serving as a visiting scholar in the School of Philosophy at The Catholic University of America. His book, Exploring Personhood: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Human Nature, is scheduled to be published at the end of this year by Rowman and Littlefield.*

# Reliving THE IMPROBABLE

## 1987 FINAL FOUR TEAM SHARES 20TH ANNIVERSARY MEMORIES

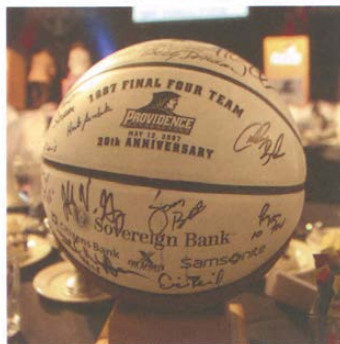
by Mike Scandura

The banners.

As much as anything, that's what caught the attention of 1,200 people who filled the Rhode Island Convention Center ballroom on May 12 for the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the 1986-87 Providence College NCAA Final Four men's basketball team.

Each banner was a life-sized reproduction of the Friars in action. They were like moments frozen in time and served as a bookend to the final part of the program—a 30-minute highlight video from the most improbable basketball season in school history.

Each person in attendance received a commemorative program; a basketball with the inscription "20th Anniversary, 1987 Final Four Team" with the Friar logo; and a mural that featured color portraits



of each coach and player, plus the 1987 Final Four logo.

Former PC head coach and athletic director Dave Gavitt '89Hon., who brought the Friars to their first Final Four in 1973, referred to a children's story that he felt best described the season.

"Everybody always said that Providence was like the little engine that could," said the 2006 Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame

inductee to the gala audience. "They did what they did because they willed themselves to win."

Leading the list of speakers from the College were President Rev. Brian J. Shanley, O.P. '80; Robert G. Driscoll, Jr., associate vice president for athletics and athletic director; and current men's basketball Head Coach Tim Welsh. In addition to Gavitt, remarks were offered by BIG EAST Conference Commissioner Mike Tranghese, former Friar basketball radio play-by-play man Eric Reid (the radio voice of the Miami Heat), and Syracuse University coach Jim Boeheim.

ESPN broadcasters Sean McDonough and Bill Raftery were the co-masters-of-ceremony.

"It's a very special time because I think 20 years ago, when we experi-



"THE VALUES THAT THE TEAM EMBODIED IN ITS IMPROBABLE RUN TO THE FINAL FOUR—OF SACRIFICE, OF TEAMWORK, OF EXTRA EFFORT, OVERCOMING ADVERSITY . . . INTELLIGENCE, ACHIEVEMENT—ALL OF THAT INSPIRES US IN OUR OWN LIVES TO WANT TO BE BETTER AT WHAT WE DO."

*College President  
Rev. Brian J. Shanley, O.P. '80*

enced the magic of the Final Four, none of us knew what was happening," said Ryan Ford '89. "To be able to reflect on that now, and having had many of our lives shaped by what happened on that team, it's a very special time just to see people and reminisce about the things that made that year special—and what's made our lives so special over the last 20 years."

#### **Anecdotes, memories flow freely**

No amount of embellishing was needed for the part of the program that made the gala special, a part where the Friars let the crowd visit their personal living room.

McDonough and Raftery—who have broadcast numerous Providence games for ESPN—sat on couches on a raised platform with then-Head Coach Rick Pitino and standout guard Billy Donovan '87 and guided the audience through a trip down memory lane.

Donovan related an anecdote that in retrospect showed how the foundation for the Final Four team was

laid the previous season—Pitino's first as Providence's coach.

"Dick Pennyfather, who was a senior, walked in 25 minutes late for a meeting and coach asked 'Where were you?,'" said Donovan, who has coached at Florida for the last 11 seasons and who has guided the Gators to two consecutive NCAA Championships. "He said he was finishing up a class and was walking across campus and talking with somebody. Coach said 'Now you have six days to run 25 miles.'"

"We never were late for a meeting again."

Donovan emphasized that what happened wasn't an accident—that it wasn't a fluke how a team that was flying below college basketball's radar screen went 25-9 and beat national powers like Alabama and Georgetown en route to the Final Four at the Superdome in New Orleans, La.

"We spent a lot of hours in the gym," he said. "We saw ourselves

getting better individually and as a team. Once we tasted success a little bit, it motivated us even more. We were going to put everything we had into the season."

Putting "everything we had into the season" revolved around a practice schedule implemented by Pitino that was a new concept for the Friars.

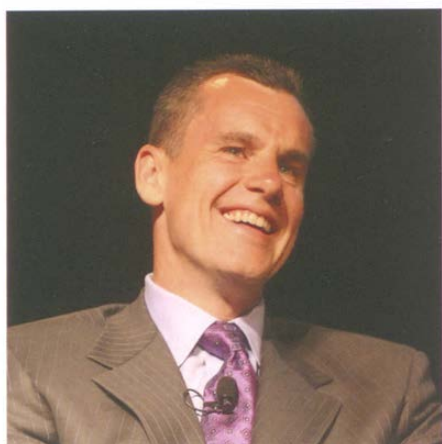
"We were in the gym at 6:00 a.m. to shoot free throws," said Donovan. "Then between classes, there would be individual instruction, like Marty Conlon '90 practicing up-and-under moves for one hour. Then, we would have a three-hour practice in the afternoon. But no one ever complained."

"And, as players, we were amazed at the time the coaches put in. From the time we got up in the morning to go to practice until the time we left practice, their cars always were in the parking lot. The staff would meet until 10 or 11 at night."

Conlon noted how, as a freshman,

"ONCE WE TASTED SUCCESS  
A LITTLE BIT, IT MOTIVATED  
US EVEN MORE."

*Billy Donovan '87*



Top: Billy Donovan '87  
Bottom: Rick Pitino

"... PROVIDENCE WAS LIKE THE  
LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULD."

*Dave Gavitt '89HON.*

there was a certain pressure for him to meet the standards adhered to by the veterans.

"As a freshman, coming in I couldn't think of a better bunch of guys to play under," he said. "But I had to emulate them and try to work as hard as they did—if not harder."

Pitino reflected on a key ingredient, something all coaches wish they could bottle and save for an appropriate occasion.

"The thing about this team was it wasn't the best," he said. "The players weren't a 'Who's Who' of basketball. But to this day, after coaching for 32 years, no team has come close in my coaching career to working as hard. They had the greatest work ethic of any team in my history of coaching.

"This team also had the greatest heart of any team I've coached," continued Pitino, who is now the head coach at Louisville. "Plus, they were just regular guys. There wasn't any ego on this basketball team. Nothing in my life has come close to the two years I spent with these guys."

#### Nostalgia on the links

The day got off to a nostalgic start with a morning golf outing at Warwick Country Club for team members.

"The whole gang was there," said Dave Kipfer '87, "and I can tell you we laughed for about two hours... just laughing about old stories. Most of it was true, but some of it was embellished a little bit."

As if on cue, former Assistant Coach Herb Sendek referred to a 3-point shot by Ernie "Pop" Lewis '87 that beat Georgetown, 82-79, on January 28.

"Pop was open in the corner," said Sendek, who is now the head coach at Arizona State. "But to hear him tell it now, he had two players hanging on him and he was fouled while shooting."

While the anecdotal tales and comments easily kept the audience's attention, the celebration also was highlighted by a video of the 1986-87 season. One scene in the video in particular was a microcosm of the Friars' season.

During the NCAA Tournament Sweet 16 game against Alabama, Providence was leading at halftime. ESPN broadcaster Dick Vitale, during the halftime show, predicted how the Friars "were toast" and would lose. Instead, Providence routed Alabama, 103-82, and advanced to the Elite Eight against Georgetown.

That segment also reflected Pitino's mantra.

"I always told the team that, if you leave practice every single day saying I could not have given any more than I gave, and nobody could outwork you, you were going to come away a winner," he said.

"The season also was magical because of the spirit of Providence College. It was something about the values of Providence that allowed us to share this dream."





“NOTHING IN MY LIFE HAS COME CLOSE TO THE TWO YEARS I SPENT WITH THESE GUYS.”  
*Rick Pitino*

## THE 1987 FINAL FOUR FRIARS

*Head Coach* Rick Pitino

*Associate Head Coaches* Gordie Chiesa, Stu Jackson

*Assistant Coach* Herb Sendek

*Graduate Assistant Coach* Jeff Van Gundy

*Volunteer Assistant Coach* Sean Kearney

### *Players*

Bryan Benham '89

James Best '88

Delray Brooks '88

Marty Conlon '90

Billy Donovan '87

Jacek Duda '87

Ryan Ford '89

David Kipfer '87

Ernie "Pop" Lewis '87

Carlton Screen '90

Abdul Shamsid-Deen '90

David Snedeker '87

Darryl Wright '89

Steve Wright '88

### *Team Records*

25-9 overall; 10-6 in BIG EAST Conference

### *NCAA Tournament Results*

defeated Alabama-Birmingham, 90-68

defeated Austin Peay, 90-87 (overtime)

defeated Alabama, 103-82

defeated Georgetown, 88-73

lost to Syracuse, 77-63 (national semifinals)



To purchase a commemorative DVD of the 20th anniversary celebration, contact Steve Napolillo at 401.865.2677 or [snapolil@providence.edu](mailto:snapolil@providence.edu).



# THE LAST WORD:

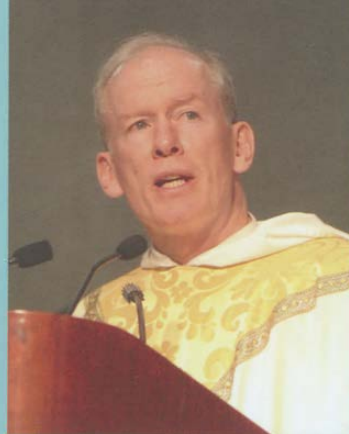
*Commencement 2007*

COMMENCEMENT 2007, A TIME OF BITTERSWEET EMOTIONS FOR MANY IN THE CLASS OF NEARLY 1,300, WAS ONE FINAL CLARION CALL FROM THE COLLEGE TO ITS GRADUATING STUDENTS. AMONG THE SERIES OF ELOQUENT ADDRESSES PRESENTED DURING THAT MAY WEEKEND WERE THREE THAT RANG WITH UNUSUALLY PERSONAL TONES.

ONE WAS A CALL BY PRESIDENT REV. BRIAN J. SHANLEY, O.P. TO MAKE PRAYER A WAY OF LIFE, WHILE *Veritas Medal* RECIPIENT DAVE GAVITT ENUNCIATED THE IMPORTANCE OF REFLECTING ON FRIENDSHIP, FAMILY, AND FAITH. NO LESS SIGNIFICANT WAS THE APPEAL BY DANIEL R. CULLINANE, SENIOR CLASS PRESIDENT, TO GO FORTH WITH A MINDSET OF SERVICE AND PURPOSE.

THE EXCERPTS THAT FOLLOW FROM EACH OF THESE SPEAKERS SERVE AS REMINDERS THAT WE, TOO, ARE CALLED TO REFLECT ON THE DIRECTION OF OUR OWN LIVES.





## THE ONLY *reunion* THAT MATTERS

*The following is excerpted from Father Shanley's Commencement Mass Homily.*

Prayer is an act of intimacy. When we pray authentically, we lay bare before God our deepest weaknesses, our deepest fears, our deepest hopes, and our deepest desires. We disclose our true selves to God in the act of praying. We make ourselves vulnerable.

In entering into this unity with God, we also become united with each other. One of the natural reactions at graduation time is anxiety and grieving because the community that we have known here is about to change. We wonder how we will stay connected and united. There are a lot of ways of doing this: phone calls, emails, reunions, letters. But our deepest bond is not in any of these, but in Christ's gift of his own life with us. It is by staying united with Christ that we will remain united with each other.

Nowhere is that unity more evident than when we pray together in the Eucharist. . . . When we celebrate the Eucharist together, we enter

into the priestly prayer of Christ. . . . This is where we realize our unity with God and with each other; wherever we are physically, we are spiritually united whenever we celebrate the Eucharist.

Graduation weekend is filled with advice about the future. Here is the most important thing that anyone is going to say to you this weekend: make sure that you pray. . . . Prayer is often the first thing that we cut out of our lives when we feel the press of time because it seems a dispensable luxury. Prayer is not a luxury. . . . If you do not pray, you will not remember who you really are in God. . . .

Prayer is a gift that God wants us to accept; is not something that we do, but rather something that God does in us. . . . When we enter into that union with God we are united with each other in a bond that can never be broken and that lasts for eternity. For in the end, the only reunion that really matters is heaven.

*by College President Rev. Brian J. Shanley, O.P. '80*



## { friendship, family, & faith }

by Dave Gavitt '89Hon

*Excerpts from the 2007 Commencement Address by Gavitt, a previous honorary degree recipient, who received the Veritas Medal—the highest honor the College can bestow—at this year's ceremony.*

I am reminded on this day . . . that you are looking at so many different roads, such a different world, so many different paths that my generation . . . could only imagine. . . . You're going to be so successful. You're going to make a difference because you've got . . . the roots, and you've got the education to get it done.

But along the way I want you to think about three things . . . friendship, family, and your faith.

Let me start with friendship. When you reflect back on the last four years, you will look upon them as four of the very best years of your life. You have made incredible friends and shared incredible experiences, and your relationships with friends that are here with you . . . need to remain front and center in what's important for you going forward.

Secondly, I want to speak briefly about family. You know and can appreciate the importance of your family today. . . . You need to understand that in addition to your immediate blood family, that as a member of the community, that community becomes your family as well.

And lastly, I want to speak to you about faith. I know that there are many, many faiths represented in this room today—Catholics and Protestants and Jews and Muslims and Buddhists and Hindu and so many others. . . . There is one thing, however, despite what the different faiths are, that they all have in common. At some point in their teachings they talk about taking care of, respecting, and loving our fellow man. And that, I would tell you, is a way for you to live your faith, whatever it might be.





## GOING FORTH WITH MISSION AND PURPOSE

*by Daniel R. Cullinane '07, Senior Class President*

*The following is excerpted from Cullinane's parting words to his classmates.*

The old adage reads, "You make a living by what you get, but a life by what you give."

If there is one thing we all can take away from Providence College together it is this—each of us sitting here today is called to a life of service. This does not mean that you have to pack your bags for a Third World country or join the priesthood, although for some it might. Rather, it means that each day, regardless of your pursuits, you have the ability to make a difference in the life of another. Embrace that opportunity.

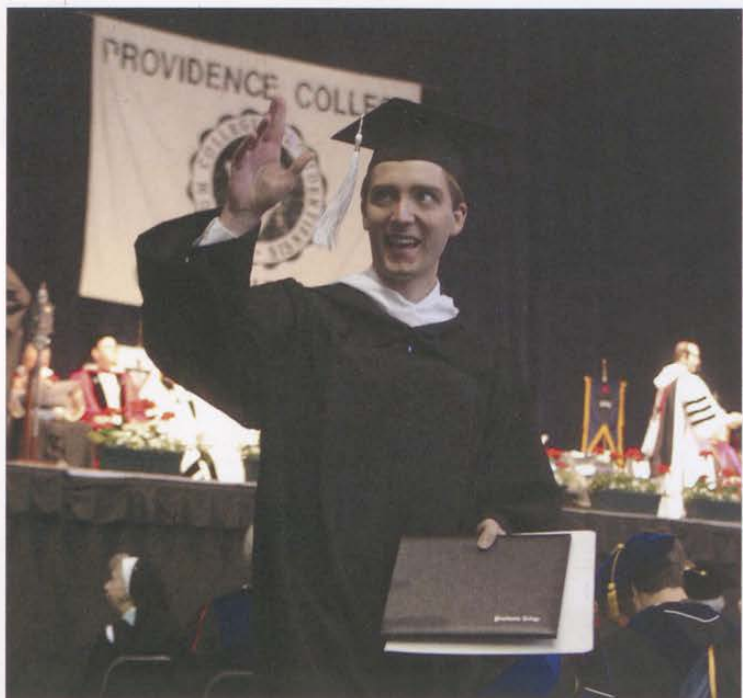
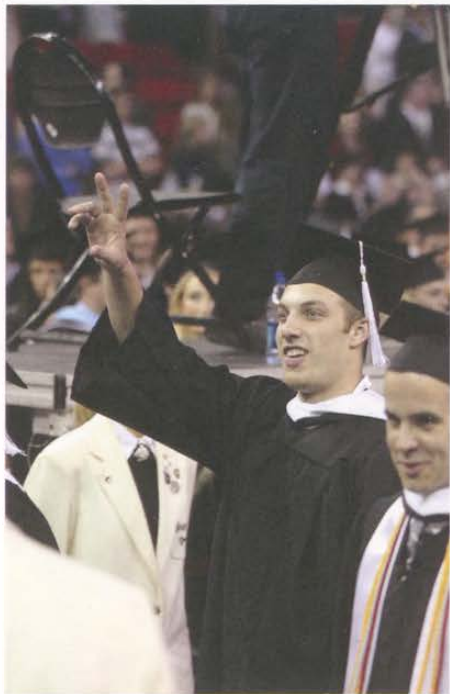
"Be the change you want to see in the world," Gandhi said. . . . You are called to use your skills and your vocation for the betterment of not only yourself, but your family, your community, and your world.

This commencement ceremony is a call to action, a call to go forth with mission and purpose using the education and relationships you have built under the guidance of Providence College to make this world a place that we will be comfortable handing to our children.

As we go forth into the world . . . let us embrace the true blessings in our life that allow us to be where we are today.











IN THIS ISSUE

Homework for the rest of your life  
Students' research comes to fruition in Belize  
Field work: students make their mark on the "real world"  
PC students engage in faculty research  
Faculty become students again

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Reliving the improbable: 1987 Final Four team shares 20TH anniversary memories  
The Last Word: Commencement 2007



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