

College of Arts & Sciences

By the time you read this we will have commemorated the 10th anniversary of the attacks of 9/11/2001. As I write, however, the airwaves are filled with anticipation of that grim anniversary. The newspapers, radio, television, blogs and magazines are featuring stories about survivors, lost loved ones, accounts of heroism, construction of the memorial at the site of the World Trade Center and changes to the way we live.

In particular we are seeing stories about how the attacks changed the United States: how our travel has become more restricted, how security lines at the airport have become longer, how our borders have tightened and how we have become less open to the world.

Interestingly — and appropriately — the legacy of 9/11 at Drake is different. We are an institution of higher learning whose purpose is to educate; a word that derives from the Latin *ducere* — to draw out or send, not to restrict or close down. Following 9/11, Drake University revised its mission statement to include in our core purpose the preparation of students for “responsible global citizenship.” To see the impact of 9/11 at Drake all you need to do is to look at our curriculum, our programs and our faculty. Ten years ago the Center for Global Citizenship, World Languages and Cultures program and Global Health Concentration were not yet in place. We have established an International Strategic Plan, created the position of vice-provost of international programs (Christa Olson joined us this summer) and established relationships with institutions around the world. This is my fifth year as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and in that time 10 teacher/scholars from countries like Russia, Japan, Romania, Columbia, Ecuador, Egypt and China have joined the college faculty. Our response to 9/11 has been to expand our knowledge of the world — not just by studying international affairs in the classroom or textbooks — but by traveling around the world and engaging with it.

OUT OF AFRICA

Last May you probably read about the Drake football team’s expedition to Tanzania (see story on page 29), where it played in the inaugural Global Kilimanjaro Bowl against an all-star team from Mexico, conducted a football clinic for Tanzanian youth and helped build an addition to the Kitaa Hope Orphanage in Moshi. With Drake President David Maxwell, the team also climbed Mount Kilimanjaro. Coincidentally, Rob Craig, professor of art and a sculptor, traveled in northern Tanzania, studying traditional forms of pottery, textile weaving and basketry, learning blacksmithing techniques and researching the place and function of such crafts and craftsmanship in Tanzanian spiritual and social culture.



Drake students meeting with local residents at a farm in Uganda.

Other Drake faculty and students populated the African continent as well. Mahmoud Hamad, assistant professor of politics, led a travel seminar with 28 students to Egypt and witnessed first-hand the post-Mubarak changes underway in that country. Glenn McKnight, associate professor of history, and two faculty members from the College of Business and Public Administration conducted another travel seminar to Uganda where they focused on economic and environmental sustainability. At the same time, I was also in Uganda, along with Darcie Vandegrift, associate professor of sociology, and Jennifer McCrickerd, associate professor of philosophy, exploring an exchange relationship with Makerere University similar to that which already exists between Drake’s College of Business and Public Administration and the Makerere University Business School.

Two Drake students, Carol Kim and Johanna Desprez, spent the summer of 2011 working in Rwanda as research assistants with the Great Ape Trust-Drake University Gishwati Conservation Initiative. The broad goals of the Gishwati project are to restore Albertine Rift forest systems in western Rwanda and to protect a small, but growing, population of native chimpanzees. This past year Drake environmental science students worked with scientists to plan different routing options for the corridor, using GPS and aerial photographs. Carol and Johanna created two original research projects while in Rwanda. First, the students worked to develop novel forestry methods to regrow a forested corridor between the Gishwati Conservation Area and a large national park (Nyungwe). Second, they created 70 small plots within the periphery of the Gishwati preserve and mapped all naturally growing trees. This latter project will provide important baseline data regarding how the forest grows and changes in response to future management.

This is what a Drake education is about — a classroom project that grew into an experiential learning opportunity that in turn



Drake students paint town hall as part of a community service effort in Uganda.

will contribute to the preservation of a species, the restoration of an environment and the sustainability of Rwandan agriculture, and will benefit the local Rwandan economy. Now that’s responsible global citizenship.

COME FLY WITH ME

As you can anticipate, the College of Arts and Sciences family did not concentrate on Africa alone. Like the old “ABC Wide World of Sports” program, we spanned the globe. A recent environmental science graduate, Colleen Nell, has spent the past year in north-central Argentina and parts of Brazil conducting experiments on habitat assessment and dietary analysis on a variety of species. Faculty members have traveled to remote (and not so remote) parts of the world to collect data, conduct research and give performances. An ethnobotanist, Nanci Ross, assistant professor of biology, spent her summer in China investigating the impacts of climate change on both alpine plant communities and the indigenous groups that depend on alpine ecosystems.

Ignatius Widiapradja, associate professor of art, traveled to Malaysia. While there, he served as a consultant to one of the largest gold jewelry manufactures in Indonesia, giving workshops and training designers. He also lectured at various

universities, conducted research for his own print, painting and video projects, and explored possibilities for a student travel seminar.

At the invitation of the French Ministry of Culture, the Drake Trio (Clarence Padilla, clarinet; Ashley Sidon, cello; Nicholas Roth, piano) conducted a series of five well-reviewed concerts from Paris to Poitiers. Nicholas Roth also performed at the World Piano Conference in Novi Sad, Serbia, where he received a “Diploma of Excellence” from the World Piano Teachers Association.

In June, four faculty members from music and theatre — Leann Freeman-Miller, Rika Uchida, Tom Sletto, and Karla Kash — led a group of 25 students on a tour of middle schools and universities in China, where they studied the cultural role of music in Chinese society and traditions of music and drama education. In addition, they attended recitals and presentations performed by Chinese students and music educators. They also represented Drake and the United States, performing concerts comprised of American art songs, arias and musical theater repertoire. As a consequence, Kirk Martin, the director of Drake’s Chinese Cultural Exchange program, is now exploring student and faculty exchanges with the Chinese universities. And speaking of the Chinese Cultural Exchange Program, 23 Drake alumni are currently in China for the year, teaching English in a variety of locations and institutions.

THE (GLOBAL) VILLAGE PEOPLE

I could go on with further examples — Sarah Plum (music, Germany), Natalie Bayer (history, Russia), David Skidmore (international relations, Thailand), Deb Christensen (biology, Mexico) — and I am sure there will be faculty who read this and feel slighted that I did not mention their globetrotting. But I think the point is made: Drake has gone global. We may be located in the Midwest at the intersection of two major interstate highways, but for our students, faculty and staff we are the portal to the world. And for many around the world we serve as a gateway into and about the United States. It is through such exchanges — of intellect, of knowledge, of culture, of art, of people — that the path to our future will be secured and the likelihood of a reoccurrence of the grim events we are commemorating this September will be minimized.

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THE **BLUESHEET** is published for alumni and friends of the Drake University College of Arts and Sciences.