

Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center

Programs 2007-2008

ARTHUR LEVITT PUBLIC AFFAIRS CENTER



Hamilton

This year, hundreds of Hamilton students were exposed to public affairs issues through Levitt Center programs. The Levitt Center funded a variety of student summer research projects that examined local, national, and international public policy questions. Students enhanced their academic studies by participating in service learning and community-based research projects such as tutoring refugees for citizenship tests and preparing income tax returns for low income families. Students had the opportunity to hear, and in some cases meet with, prominent speakers who visited campus as part of this year's speaker series on "The Age of Information."



Professor Steve Wu and Jeff Chen '08 discuss data from the 2007 Hamilton College Environmental Survey

The mission of the Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center is to strengthen and support the study of public affairs at Hamilton College. The goals of the Center are:

To encourage students to address public affairs in their classes and research.

To create opportunities for students to become involved in public affairs.

To encourage faculty, particularly in the social sciences, to address public affairs in their own research and in collaborative research with Hamilton students.

The Levitt Center's new Sustainability Program, directed by Associate Professor of Economics Ann Owen, completed its first year. The program sponsored service learning projects, student faculty collaborative research, and conducted a national survey of individuals on environmental attitudes, behaviors and values.

Levitt Center programs help students to connect their academic work with the local community and to examine public affairs issues in their classes and research. Details on the wide variety of student activities supported by the Levitt Center are provided in the following pages.

Jeff Pliskin
Director, Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center

Levitt Fellows Summer 2007

The Levitt Research Fellows Program supports student-collaborative research on issues related to public affairs. Students selected for the program currently receive a \$4,000 summer stipend and a research budget of up to \$500.

At the end of their projects, students write papers, create large-format posters outlining their research, and participate in a poster session. Several students continue their work during the academic year, incorporating it into their senior thesis. Some Fellows pursue their research further, developing formal papers for publication in scholarly journals.

During Family Weekend in November, the seventeen Summer 2007 Levitt Fellows had the opportunity to present their research at the Summer Research Poster Session, joining science research students for a hugely successful event, widely attended by family members, faculty, and other students.



Andrew Gumbiner (left) discusses his summer research with visitors at the Summer Research Poster Session.

Current Levitt Council

Jeff Pliskin, Director of the Levitt Center and Associate Professor of Economics

Douglas Ambrose, Sidney Wertimer, Jr. Associate Professor of History

Dennis Gilbert, Professor of Sociology

Todd Franklin, Associate Professor of Philosophy

Tara McKee, Assistant Professor of Psychology

Ann Owen, Associate Professor of Economics and Director of the Sustainability Program

Sharon Rivera, Assistant Professor of Government

Julio Videras, Assistant Professor of Economics

Paul Gary Wyckoff, Associate Professor of Government and Director of the Public Policy Program

ex officio

Judith Owens-Manley, Associate Director for Community Research

Sharon Topi, Levitt Center Administrator

Table of Contents

Levitt Summer Research Fellows and Civic Engagement Fellowships.....	2
Levitt Speakers.....	8
Sustainability Initiatives.....	10
Civic Engagement.....	14
Community-Based Research.....	18
Levitt Scholars.....	21
Student Conferences and Projects.....	23
Public Policy and Analysis Projects.....	26
Think Tank.....	27

Levitt Summer Research Fellows 2007



Steven Beale '09 (*left*), a World Politics major with a long-standing interest in international security, spent his summer researching Russia-U.S. relations. Working with Lecturer in Government David Rivera, Steven sought to understand Russia's changing reaction to the U.S.-led War on Terror. Specifically, his research focused on policy changes under Putin from strong public support for the U.S. in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 to a more distanced approach since 2003.

Francisco Blanco '08 worked with John Stewart Kennedy Professor of Philosophy Rick Werner (*both in photo, right*) on a summer research project investigating the science and political thought of happiness. Frankie began with various perceptions of happiness held by several renowned philosophers (Socrates, Plato, Epicurus, and Zeno), and how these approaches mesh with current understanding of the biological underpinnings of happiness as explained by Positive Psychology. According to Positive Psychology, our happiness is equal to our biological set-level in addition to external conditions of our lives and the voluntary activities we engage in. One key finding, consistent with the teachings of Socrates and Plato, is that the strengths of our social relationships contribute immensely to human happiness.



Giorgi Chavleishvili '08 returned to his home in the Republic of Georgia to examine the country's education system since the Rose Revolution in 2003. Soviet textbooks were used in Georgian schools until 2003, and the educational system in the country was in shambles under former leader Eduard Shevardnadze. On November 22, 2003, the Georgian government was overthrown by a peaceful movement headed by Nikheil Saakashvili, current president of Georgia. The new government declared the development of a new educational system to be one of its main prerogatives. However, Giorgi found from his interviews with teachers and visits to several schools that the education system in Georgia has not improved significantly in the past 5 years.



Allison Gaston-Enholm '09 (*left*) combined her interests in government and public health to study Nigerian and South African contingency plans for avian flu. While both countries are at risk for an avian flu epidemic, neither has a good contingency plan for dealing with a crisis. Both governments are particularly vulnerable to disaster, as they are already overburdened by HIV/AIDS. Allison focused her project on the lack of contingency measures, and details that are missing from outlines that are already in place. Allison, a government major who worked with Professor of Government Steve Orvis on her Fellowship research, used her summer as a chance to explore an area of study not readily available in the Hamilton curriculum, in this case, public health.

Andrew Gumbiner '08 examined Jordanian civil society and education to explore why certain social preconditions are essential in a country's transition to democracy, and how social preconditions are contributing to Jordanian democratization. Ultimately, Andrew found that the country of Jordan is establishing democratic social preconditions by reorienting their education system and vitalizing civic communities, which should facilitate a full democratic transition in the near future, once the majority of Jordanian citizens internalize the democratic process. Assistant Professor of Government Sharon Rivera served as Andrew's faculty advisor.



Andrew Gumbiner discusses his research with Professor David Rivera.

Levitt Summer Research Fellows

Matt House '08 (*right*) spent his summer investigating the figure of the citizen-soldier throughout American history, in order to address the question of how to encourage civic virtues in modern America. Working with Visiting Assistant Professor of Government Nick Tampio, Matt described his summer project as “a primarily quantitative study to determine whether Congressional veterans of World War II tended to be less partisan than non-veterans.”



Xiaobo Ma '09 (*left*) studied China's privatization program, and the impact of Chinese privatization of firm performance (productivity, profitability, employment, and wages). Xiaobo found that China's economic reforms and its privatization process display several characteristics that differ substantially from those of other transition economies. Derek Jones, the Irma M. and Robert D. Morris Professor of Economics, served as Xiaobo's faculty advisor.

Abhishek Maity '08, who worked with Professor of Economics Erol Balkan, focused his research on foreign exchange reserve holdings (the amount of foreign currency held by the central bank of a given country). Maity studied models of the optimal level of reserves that a country should hold. One surprising conclusion of his research is that it may be optimal for a nation not to hold foreign reserves.

Hilary Masuka '09 examined the migration of medical personnel from Zimbabwe to South Africa and the effects this movement has had on the health sector and the economy of both countries. Because of turmoil and difficult living conditions in Zimbabwe, many citizens, including numerous doctors, migrated to Europe or South Africa. Hilary found that migration created a loss of morale in medical workers who did stay, who were already overburdened with Zimbabwe's HIV/AIDS crisis and high levels of malaria and tuberculosis. Professor of Government Steve Orvis served as Hilary's faculty advisor.

Tamar Nobel '08 (*right*) spent her summer investigating the causal relationships among preventative care, private insurance coverage, and emergency department use for asthma patients. Her summer research combined interests in public policy (she is a Public Policy major) and medical emergency care issues (she is also a medical technician with the Central Oneida County Volunteer Ambulance Corps, and plans to pursue a career as an emergency department physician).



Tamar's research was conducted under advisement of Visiting Assistant Professor of Economics Selcuk Eren.



Harry Jerome Noel '09 (*left*) studied Abraham Lincoln's extraordinary gift with words and how this gift affected his standing as a president. Jerome is a History major and worked with Associate Professor of History Doug Ambrose on his summer project. He examined Lincoln's writings from a temporal point of view to investigate how the president's own views and abilities changed over his time in office. Jerome particularly enjoyed the opportunity to focus on complete speeches (rather than clips) in order to discover all possible shades of meaning.

Alex Tudor Seserman '09 spent his summer researching specifically schizophrenia and more broadly, madness. Working with Professor Rick Werner, Tudor examined the historical nosology of schizophrenia as a medical disease, as well as critiques and treatment of mental illness in general. He concluded that the current system for the diagnosis and treatment of the mentally ill is fraught with problems. A recent report from President Bush's new Freedom Commission on Mental Illness formed a cornerstone of Tudor's research.

Levitt Summer Research Fellows



Emily Pallin '08 (*left*) used her experience as a leader of Hamilton's Alternative Spring Break volunteer trip to hurricane-devastated New Orleans as the basis for her Levitt research. Emily also drew from her experience as an intern with New Visions for Public Schools, a large school reform organization, to examine the reconstruction of the New Orleans school system. She worked with the Recovery School District, the New Orleans public schools, and newly-opened charter schools in the city in order to better understand reasons for the failure of schools in New Orleans pre-Katrina, the effects of the storm, and the strategies being used to rebuild all aspects of the school system. Dan Chambliss, Eugene M. Tobin Distinguished Professor of Sociology, was the faculty advisor for Emily's project.

Emily Smith '09 used her Levitt Fellowship to investigate the role of the Western celebrity as a social entrepreneur, using as a case study the current celebrity involvement in African aid groups. Emily questioned whether philanthropic celebrities made contributions in the spirit of generosity, or became active in issues of African healthcare because it is currently "chic." Associate Professor of Government Rob Martin served as Emily's faculty advisor. Emily's research was the basis for her Levitt Scholars presentation (see page 21 for more information about the Scholars Program).



Julia Stahl '08 (*left*) was inspired by her grandfather's experience as a white soldier in a black munitions unit during World War II. After reading his memoir about his experiences on the battlefield and how his perceptions about race changed by working alongside black soldiers, Julia sought to investigate the effect of personal experience on race relations within the U.S. Army during World War II and its subsequent impact on official military policy. According to Julia, personal opinions on race did change as a result of wartime experience, as documented in military reports, studies, and memoirs, and likely influenced policy making. Julia worked with Assistant Professor of History Lisa Trivedi on her project. Her research served as the basis for her Levitt Scholars presentation.

Chris Sullivan '09 focused his research on community sustained agriculture (CSA), a small farm that is much like a food cooperative, and spent the summer traveling across the country by motorcycle to investigate CSAs first-hand. Chris' goal was to identify the social benefits communities receive from CSAs, such as the opportunity for subscribers to work on the farms and choose the produce that is grown. He found that people involved in CSAs are much more involved in the farm-to-table process, more connected to the farm and to the land, than other consumers. Chris' project, for which Visiting Assistant Professor of Government Peter Cannavo served as advisor, brought him from Amherst, Mass. to the West Coast and back before reaching his final destination of Old Path Farm in Sauquoit, N.Y.

Ethan Woods '09 (*right*) combined his interests in environmentalism and economics to investigate the viability of biofuels as a sustainable alternative to fossil fuels. Ethan, who is a Geology and Economics double major, is interested in the burgeoning biofuels sector because of its entrepreneurial possibilities and its potential solution to the greenhouse gas production and environmental destruction caused by the use of fossil fuels. His research led him to conclude that although biofuels are kinder to the environment than fossil fuels, they are considerably more expensive, inefficient, and limited in supply. Biofuels, Ethan concluded, might serve well as a short-term option, but will not provide an ideal long-term solution. Ethan collaborated with Professor of Economics Erol Balkan.



Lisbeth Redfield, Communications and Media Relations intern at Hamilton during the summer of 2007, contributed material for the Levitt Fellows articles in this publication. Her complete stories appeared on the Hamilton College website: <http://www.hamilton.edu/news/>.

Levitt Fellowships –Summer 2008

The following students were selected to receive Levitt Fellowships for Summer 2008. They will be working with their faculty advisors throughout the summer on these research projects:

- **Matt Arnold with Prof. Chaise LaDousa:** “Education and Democracy in India”
- **Kaitlin Britt with Prof. David Rivera:** “Public Opinion and Democracy: A Comparative Study of Russia and China”
- **William Cowles with Prof. Kevin Grant:** “Gandhi’s Political Community in South Africa”
- **Sam Dudley with Prof. Lisa Trivedi:** “In the Name of Our Fathers: The Historical Conditions and Lived Experience of Partition in South Asia”
- **Cameron Gaylord with Prof. Ted Lehmann:** “U.S. Foreign Policy and Oil: America, Democracy and the Global Oil Competition”
- **Blake Hulnick with Prof. Frank Anechiarico:** “Assessing Federal Election Administration at the State and Local Level”
- **Jennifer Karl with Prof. Lisa Trivedi:** “The Health of Women Textile Workers in Lancashire and Lowell”
- **Silin Li with Prof. Steve Orvis:** “From McDonald’s to Chinese Cultural Identity in a Globalization World”
- **Wenxi Li with Prof. Doug Ambrose:** “African Americans Vote Democrat: Trend or Here to Stay?”
- **Andrew B. Miller with Prof. Chris Georges:** “Agent Based Modeling of Firm Dynamics and Labor Turnover”
- **Kevin O’Connor with Prof. Peter Cannavo:** “Anacostia and the U-Street Corridor: Interactions between Class, Race, and Conceptions of Place in the Nation’s Capitol”
- **Lu Qi with Prof. Julio Videras:** “Lunar New Year of 2008 Encounters Big Snowstorm: How the Natural Disaster Reveals China’s Migration and Economic Structure Issues”
- **Li Qiu with Prof. Ann Owen:** “A Study of the Global Stock Markets Integration”
- **Stephen Rowe with Prof. Rob Martin:** “Globalization and Human Happiness: Findings from India”
- **Daniel Rudel with Prof. Dan Chambliss:** “Theories for Community Integration: Refugees in Utica, N.Y.”
- **Razeena Shrestha with Prof. Stephen Ellingson:** “Social Entrepreneurship: How It Has Transformed Sustainable Community Development in Nepal”
- **Xiaolu Xu with Prof. Peter Cannavo:** “The Challenge of Architectural Preservation in Booming Shanghai”
- **Cindy Zhu with Prof. Steve Wu:** “The Impact of China’s Housing Reform on Income Inequality”

Comments from Levitt Fellows about their summer research experience:

“The Levitt Grant is a wonderful opportunity for me to work closely with a professor and to improve my research and writing skills” –Stephen Beale

“When you’re passionate about something, it’s a great way to get an opportunity to work on it”
–Allison Gaston-Enholm

“The Levitt Fellowship is one of Hamilton’s phenomenal resources” --Chris Sullivan

Levitt Civic Engagement Fellowships –Summer 2007

Awards for Community-Based Research and Community Service Fellowships went to **Evan Torres '08** for work on the HOPE VI Project and **Jenney Stringer '08** (right) for work on the Utica Community Garden. Evan researched social and economic indicator data for the fourth year of the HOPE VI program evaluation. His focus was an investigation of how HOPE VI affected the quality of life and economic vitality of the Cornhill neighborhood. Working in partnership with the Utica Municipal Housing Authority, Evan examined mortgages, home sales, and property assessments; and produced a report at the end of the summer that has been incorporated into the overall evaluation performed by Hamilton College for the HOPE VI Project.



Jenney Stringer worked with 34 families in the Adrean Terrace/F.X. Matt/N.D. Peters housing complex in East Utica to develop the Utica Community Garden. The families came as refugees to Utica, some more than a decade ago, from the Ukraine, Belarus, Bosnia, and Somalia. Jenney worked with the Utica Municipal Housing Authority to establish a partnership, select an appropriate site, prepare the ground, enroll community volunteers and donations, and to coordinate the project throughout the summer. Judy Owens-Manley, Associate Director of Community Research for the Levitt Center, wrote a successful grant application to the Community Foundation of Herkimer-Oneida Counties, Inc. and supplied additional funds from a Learn & Serve grant for community-based research. (See Community Garden article on p.19)

Levitt Civic Engagement Fellowships –Summer 2008



Awards for this summer were given to **Stephanie Wong '10** for Community-Based Research to work on the final summer of the HOPE VI program evaluation grant and to **Rachel Bigelow '10** (left) for the Community Service Fellowship to work with the Utica Community Garden. Stephanie will work with Judy Owens-Manley in the Levitt Center and media specialists in Information Technology Services. She will produce a website documenting the history of the Washington Courts Housing Project, which was demolished as part of the HOPE VI grant. Stephanie is drawing on the work completed by students in Professor Owens-Manley's Seminar in Program Evaluation this spring for the content of the website. Rachel Bigelow started her summer continuing the work of

the Utica Community Garden with a major "Transplant Day" on June 5th. **Hillary Pitoniak**, Hamilton College Greenhouse Technician and plant tender for the past few months, assisted along with other Hamilton College volunteers. Rachel will continue to coordinate the development of the Utica Community Garden and work with former refugee families over the summer.

In addition, **Katie Mann '10** received funding this summer to research final social and economic indicator data to finish the fifth year of the HOPE VI Program Evaluation. **Emily Anderer '10** received funding from the Levitt Center to develop opportunities for community-based research with JCTOD Outreach, Inc., a non-profit agency in Utica that provides transitional programs for women and their children.

Levitt Speaker Series 2007-2008

“Age of Information”



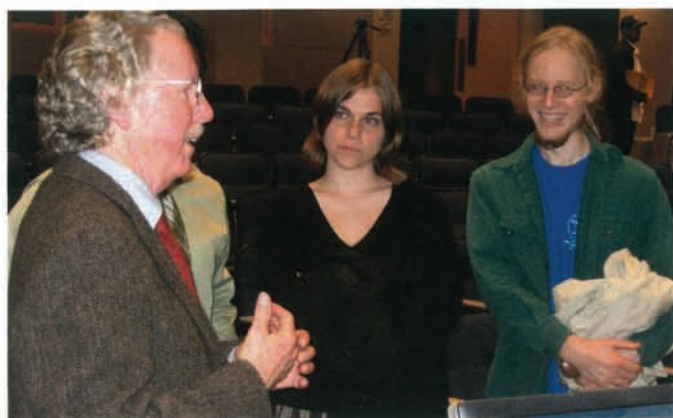
Barbie Zelizer, a former Guggenheim Fellow and currently the Raymond Williams Professor of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania’s Annenberg School for Communication, opened this year’s Levitt Speaker Series on August 31st with a lecture on the changing nature of war correspondence, “When War Reporting is More Imagined than Real.” Zelizer (*left*), a former journalist, argued that war reporting is no longer “an aspired-to high ground of journalism,” and many agencies believe the risk/yield ratio does not justify sending journalists into a danger zone. As a result, war reporting often occurs from the safety of the newsroom or from the protection and perspective of U.S. troops. Furthermore, when photo editors who are not familiar with the circumstances under which war photos were taken decide how certain images are to be used, stories can be skewed. Without multiple perspectives and sources of information, war stories lack impartiality.

On October 2nd, **Myles Brand**, President of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) spoke to a packed Chapel audience about the alignment of intercollegiate athletics and higher education. In his lecture, “The Place of Intercollegiate Athletics in American Culture,” Brand made a case for the continued link of the two institutions, stating that athletics is “connected to higher education because, and only because, it helps educate.” Brand’s experience with intercollegiate athletics comes from an administrative and academic perspective. After serving as president of the University of Oregon and the University of Indiana, he assumed the presidency of the NCAA in 2003. He also holds a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Rochester, with a research focus on human intentions and action that informed his remarks. Much of Brand’s talk was a response to criticisms that athletics are extraneous to a college system or that athletics even debase academics. He pointed to the values of athletic participation by comparing student athletes to students with other unique talents, such as musicians. In addition to rebutting specific criticisms of intercollegiate athletics, Brand discussed how to better integrate athletics into higher education. He concluded with the argument that athletics have enormous potential when they are integrated with



Myles Brand (left) speaking with faculty members.

the student body and the “high purpose” of college education.



Langdon Winner meets with Hamilton students Emily Anderer and Kye Lippold following his October 18th lecture.

Langdon Winner, the Thomas Phelan Chair of Humanities and Social Sciences and co-director of the Center of Cultural Design at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, spoke about “Information Technology and the Dream of Democratic Renewal” on October 18th. Winner focused on the conviction that new technology will revitalize democratic society, and highlighted such themes as the public disconnect created through the rise of technological advances, as well as the role the Internet plays in working toward a democratic society. He argued that although technologies have contributed to a better quality of life, technologies can also become the focus of inequality and oppressive social control. He encouraged his audience to think about strategies that could be used to forge a democratic culture and move our society forward.

Levitt Speaker Series

Eric Lane, the Eric J. Schmertz Distinguished Professor of Public Law and Public Service at Hofstra University School of Law, gave a lecture on November 8th, 2007 entitled “Can We Save Our Constitution through Love Alone?” In addition to teaching, Professor Lane is the Senior Fellow at the Brennan Center of Justice and the NYU School of Law. He serves on several boards, including the Vera Institute of Justice, and is the author of several books. His most recent book (with co-author Michael Oreskes), *The Genius of America: How the Constitution Saved Our Country -and Why It Can Again*, was published in September 2007.



Ramunas Rozgys '09 discusses globalization and economic issues with Catherine Mann.

On November 15th, **Catherine Mann**, professor of economics at Brandeis University, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, and former assistant director of the International Finance Division at the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, presented “Globalization, Technological Change, and the US Economy: Implications for Trade, Finance, and Labor.” In her lecture, she spoke about the “fear factor” surrounding globalization, such as U.S. job losses due to outsourcing. Mann questioned whether such fears of globalization are representative of the current trade system, and used trade statistics to suggest that the U.S. information technology (IT) sector has actually benefited from globalization. According to Mann, changes in IT technology increase opportunities for variation in products and commoditization of tasks. Although IT has a different

impact on different industries, technological advancements increase the productivity of many firms. Despite certain benefits to globalized technology, the codification of information (such as standardized software products) has led to an increased movement of service jobs to other countries. Mann proposed policies to solve issues of unstable “churn” in the labor force, skills that lose their usefulness in a changing economy, and “skill depreciation” caused by the rapid change of technological progress. In particular, she proposed that by providing investment in education and fixes to the current employment system, the U.S. can overcome many of the difficulties posed by the new globalized economy.

Dan Nye '88 returned to the Hill on February 7th to talk about LinkedIn, the online professional networking site for which he is CEO. Nye’s presentation “Social Networking: The Next Generation” provided valuable information about the past, current, and future state of social networking. According to Nye, social networking has quickly become a global phenomenon. LinkedIn, which was launched in 2003, has more than 18 million members in 150 industries from around the world, and continues to grow at the rate of 1.2 million new members per month. In addition to describing the benefits of online business networking, Nye provided a timeline of where the World Wide Web has been and where it is going, with an emphasis on the revolution in web design and usage referred to as Web 2.0 (the second generation of Web-based communities and hosted services, such as social networking sites, blog, and wikis).



Dan Nye '88 meets with current Hamilton students following his popular lecture on February 7th.

Levitt Speaker Series

Harris Miller, former president of the Information Technology Association of America and CEO of the Career College Association, discussed America's economic future in his February 19th lecture "Can America Still Cut It? Thoughts about the American Worker in the Age of Global Competition." According to Miller, America's status as the world's largest economy is in jeopardy, not only because our economy's closed nature has caused us to miss out on emerging global markets, but also due to a massive mismatch between low skilled workers and high skilled jobs. Government projections of the labor market show that 60 percent of the new jobs created in America --particularly those in health care, information technology and advanced manufacturing-- will require skills possessed by only 20 percent of the workforce. As a result, the U.S. middle class is currently shrinking, while in other emerging markets, such as India and China, the middle class is flourishing. Miller's solution to America's decline focuses on education, particularly the skills education for which he lobbies as head of the Career College Association. He argued for increased support for career colleges (for-profit institutions that provide training for specific careers), since a traditional liberal arts degree does not, in his mind, necessarily guarantee a good place in the economy.



Harris Miller speaks with Dave Riordan '09.



Strossen met with Hamilton students for an afternoon Q&A session before her lecture.

Nadine Strossen, president of the American Civil Liberties Union, professor of law at New York Law School, and twice named by the National Law Review as among "The 100 Most Influential Lawyers in America," spoke to a packed Chapel audience on February 28th. In her lecture "Sex, Censorship and the New Information Age," Strossen discussed the problems of government intervention to censor media and emphasized the need for individual liberty. She first referenced the recent restrictions on indecent speech installed by the FCC after the Janet Jackson "wardrobe malfunction" incident at the 2004 Super Bowl, which led to an increase in fines for broadcasting a single indecent act to \$325,000 per event. According to Strossen, the imposition of such

stiff penalties has had a "chilling effect" on new expression, as companies fear to air any material that could potentially bankrupt them.

Strossen went on to discuss the Child Online Protection Act (COPA), a law which suppresses online material that "any local community deems harmful to minors." The vague wording leaves the law open to misuse and arbitrary standards, Strossen argued, since it is "inherently impossible to come up with clear guidelines" for obscene conduct. She gave several examples of discrimination through censorship, which she said would disproportionately target "relatively marginalized groups" such as members of the Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender (LGBT) community, providers of sex education, contraceptive sellers, human rights defenders who seek to document cases of sexual abuse, and artists, all of whom represent plaintiffs in the ACLU's current case against the COPA law.

Levitt Speaker Series

Before opening up the evening to questions, Strossen wrapped up her lecture with the argument that online censorship is not necessary. She pointed to the recommendations of the two expert governmental commissions assigned to consider the topic of Internet content, both of which suggested that “social and educational strategies” to educate children about using the Internet would be most effective, while opposing “any legal restrictions on online sexual expression.” Furthermore, Strossen argued that families should decide what content their children should be allowed to view, rather than allowing the government to regulate content.

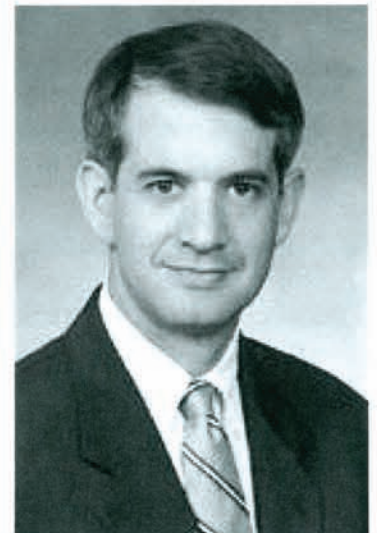


This year’s speaker series concluded with a lecture by **Jennifer Earl** (*left*) on April 15th. Earl, who is Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of the Center for Information Technology and Society at the University of California, Santa Barbara, spoke about her studies of online activism, a subject which she feels reflects significant changes in the structure and practice of activism. She began her lecture by presenting three types of online activism: “brochureware,” which simply provides information; content that seeks to inspire offline action; and online-only content.

While critics argue that online activism may not reflect the deep commitment necessary to inspire change, and that the technology tends to simplify issues unnecessarily, Earl argued that it has considerable potential. The Internet has both significantly reduced the costs of engaging in activism and has enabled people to act in concert without requiring they meet physically. Further, the anonymity of online events makes such activism especially attractive to

stigmatized groups. Overall, Earl noted that online activism has changed the causes, targets, and tactics of traditional activism, and is worthy of further scholarly attention.

Stuart Ingis '93 (*right*) gave a talk titled “The Policy of Privacy” concerning Internet law and privacy protection on April 24th. While not part of the Speaker Series, Ingis’ lecture was sponsored in part by the Levitt Center and Dean of Faculty, and hosted by the Government department. Ingis, a partner in the law firm Venable LLP, discussed current topics of debate around Internet policy and the possible implications that shaping Internet policy has for democracy in the near and distant future. Ingis began by describing his firm’s involvement in some of the most notable Internet policy laws, including the formulation of the Child Online Protection Act (COPA), the Health Insurance Portability Accountability (HIPA) as well as the Do-Not-Call Registry.



Hamilton students Kye Lippold '10, Kateri Whitebean '08, Danielle Raulli '10, and Mariam Ballout '10 contributed material for the speaker articles in this publication. Their complete stories appeared on the Hamilton College website: <http://www.hamilton.edu/news/> or in The Spectator, Hamilton College’s weekly student-written newspaper: <http://spec.hamilton.edu>.

Sustainability Initiatives

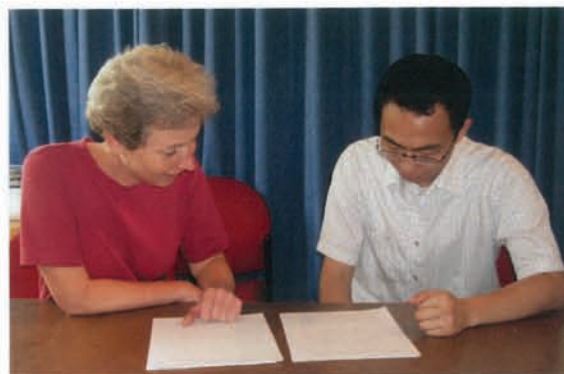
The Levitt Center's Sustainability Program had a successful first year, supporting faculty/student research, faculty research, academic support for courses, and opportunities for students to speak about their work to local high school students. There are several components to this interdisciplinary program designed to encourage a comprehensive engagement with issues related to sustainability.

Faculty/student research

The Sustainability Program enables students to engage in collaborative research with faculty either as part of the Levitt Fellows program or by working with affiliated faculty on senior theses. This year, two Levitt Fellows worked on sustainability issues and two additional students used data collected with support of the Sustainability Program in their senior theses.

Faculty research

With the assistance of the Blue Moon Fund, the Levitt Center's sustainability program has helped to fund national surveys by faculty researching issues related to sustainability policy. The sustainability program also maintains an active working paper series to facilitate the communication of faculty efforts. In addition, the Sustainability Program offers opportunities for faculty interested in sustainability research to gather and share ideas, including periodic lunch meetings.



Professor Ann Owen and Yejun Qian '08 discuss data from the 2007 Hamilton College Environmental Survey. More on the most recent survey is on page 13.)

Sustainability Service Learning

The Utica Community Garden Project provides students opportunities to observe and learn about community development at the grass roots level (literally!). Students in Bill Pfitch's Environment and Society class also helped to grow plants in the Hamilton greenhouse to get the garden started in the Spring.

Sustainability Scholars

Five of the Spring 2008 Levitt Scholars received the special designation of "Sustainability Scholar" because they went to local high schools present on a topic related to sustainability. Their topics ranged from the local issue of New York state geology to the more global issues associated with research in Antarctica.

1812 Heritage Garden

The Levitt Center's sustainability program also provided support to the 1812 Heritage Garden planted by students in the Food for Thought seminar. These students researched gardening practices that existed at the time of the founding of Hamilton College. The garden will be tended this summer by junior Melissa Balding, who will also create materials and programming so that local student groups in the area can visit the garden and benefit from the class' research. Subsequent groups of Hamilton students will continue to develop the garden for the 2012 bicentennial celebration.



L-R: Austin Deyo '08, Frank Sciacca, Brendan O'Malley '08 in the 1812 Heritage Garden

2007 Hamilton College Environmental Survey

With financial support from the Blue Moon Fund, economics professors Ann Owen, Julio Videras, and Stephen Wu conducted a nationally representative survey of 1,800 individuals in September and October of 2007. The survey, conducted using the survey research firm Knowledge Networks, contained questions that elicited attitudes, values, behaviors, and knowledge related to environmental quality in addition to general attitudes and behavior related to civic engagement.

The survey data has been used as the basis for several faculty research projects, student research projects, and classroom activities. In addition, the data will be released to the public so that researchers and policy analysts from other institutions can use the unique data set. This survey is the second survey sponsored by the Levitt Center's Sustainability Program.

The survey data will be used to help understand the factors that influence an individual's decision to engage in pro-environment behavior. Senior Economics majors Jeff Chen '08 and Yejun Qian '08 used the data in their senior honors theses. Chen investigated the pro-environment behaviors of self-proclaimed environmentalists, finding evidence that people who considered themselves to be environmentalists also engaged in more visible pro-environment behavior. Qian used the data to examine the determinants of socially responsible investment. He found that non-financial motives play an important role in the decision to invest in a socially responsible manner.

An on-going research project conducted by professors Owen, Videras, and Wu highlights the importance of understanding individual decision-making prior to making environmental policy. In "More information isn't always better: The case of the voluntary provision of environmental quality," the three economics professors show how beliefs about the impact of specific pro-environment behaviors affects the frequency of these behaviors. For example, the more effective people believe that recycling is in reducing carbon emissions, the more likely they are to engage in this behavior frequently. Unfortunately for policy makers, the study also documents the fact that individuals are misinformed about the environmental impact of their behaviors, often overestimating their contribution. This leads to an important conclusion of the study: the effect of more accurate information about environmental impact of behaviors is ambiguous. More accurate information could lead to more effective allocation of effort in engaging in pro-environment behaviors. However, it is also possible that if individuals learn the true impact of their behaviors, they may engage in them less often.

More survey results can be obtained from http://www.hamilton.edu/levitt/Sustainability/Environmental_survey_2008.html

Key findings of the 2007 Hamilton College Environmental Survey

- Thirty-one percent of the respondents agreed that it was too difficult for someone like them to do much about the environment.
- The most common pro-environment behavior is recycling, with 45% of the respondents indicating that they do it nearly all the time.
- The least common pro-environment behavior is altering food consumption, with only 13% of the respondents indicating that they alter food consumption out of concern for the environment nearly all the time.
- Fifty-eight percent of the respondents incorrectly agree that global warming is caused by a hole in the Earth's atmosphere.
- Eighty-five percent of the respondents overestimate the environmental impact of using compact fluorescent light bulbs
- Eighty-two percent of the respondents overestimate the environmental impact of using cold water instead of hot to do laundry
- Eighty-four percent of the respondents underestimate the environmental impact of eliminating meat from their diets.

Civic Engagement in the Levitt Center

"From perspectives as diverse as history, principle, and guilt, there is a convergence around a few key ideas of civic engagement: social action for a public purpose in a local community."

-- W.M. Plater, *Public Work and the Academy*

The Levitt Center engages students and faculty in the Greater Utica community to address public affairs on a local level and to connect academic learning to real life experiences. While co-curricular activities acquaint students with community-level issues, academic engagement in the community through service learning or community-based research uses the civic engagement as "text" for learning academic content as well as local issues.

The Levitt Center provides support through coordination and technical assistance to faculty who want to add service learning or community-based research components to their courses and transportation for students to their community sites.

Service Learning

The Levitt Center sponsored an Urban Service Experience for spring break in Utica, planned and coordinated by AmeriCorps VISTA Chrystal Pridemore with the assistance of the VISTA worker for Project SHINE, Stephanie Wolter. Four Hamilton students volunteered for the week at non-profit agencies in Utica: Thea Bowman House, JCTOD Outreach, the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees (MVRCR) and the YWCA.

The highlight of the week for Kidecia King, Emily Anderer, Leide Cabral, and Katie Qi (*in photo, right to left, with Chrystal Pridemore*) was conducting interviews at JCTOD Outreach with women in the transitional housing program. Four women described the trajectory of their lives before drugs, life on drugs, and regaining stability and custody of their children. It was an inspiring and moving experience for the Hamilton College students. The interview transcripts will be used by the agency to publicize what they do and how it makes a difference in women's and children's lives. Emily Anderer chose to spend the summer volunteering at JCTOD because of her spring break experience.



At other agencies, students provided extra hands to care for children, educated young women about the college application and admissions process, and prepared welcome baskets for refugee families being resettled. The students learned more about Utica as a community and appreciated their opportunity to make a difference. They now speak of going to Utica with their friends and enjoying more of what it has to offer.

This year for the first time, Hamilton was instrumental with the Genesis Group in drawing eight institutions of higher education together in what is being termed a "College Town" project. Former County Executive Ralph Eannace chaired the committee for Genesis, and AmeriCorps VISTA Chrystal Pridemore offered our Urban Service Experience week as a model for other schools. Each college created at least one volunteer activity along Hospitality Row, comprised of social service agencies along the Eagle Street-Park Avenue corridor in Utica. Hospitality Row includes Hope House, MVRCR (The Refugee Center), Thea Bowman Center, Abraham House, Faith Furniture, and Health Friends.

Civic Engagement

VITA Project

Spring 2008 marked the fourth year of the VITA (Voluntary Income Tax Assistance) project for Hamilton College volunteers. VITA is a program promoted by the Internal Revenue Service that offers low-income families who qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit free income tax preparation. Twenty-nine students and three employees (Paul Hagstrom, Jeff Pliskin, and Shirin Rashid) completed tax returns for low income families at Utica and Clinton sites, including GPO Federal Credit Union, Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School, Harding Nursing Home, The Mohawk Valley Perinatal Network, and the Resource Center for Independent Living (RCIL.) The College works with the Mohawk Valley Asset-Building Coalition as a group of community partners for the VITA project, which is funded by the United Way and coordinated by Danell Libby at RCIL in Utica.



Tamim Akiki '08 prepared a record number of tax returns as part of the VITA project. AmeriCorp VISTA Chrystal Pridemore had her tax return prepared by a VITA volunteer.

Students recruited in the fall semester registered for Economics 235: Policy, Poverty, & Practice, a quarter credit spring course that is jointly sponsored by the Economics Department and the Levitt Center. Students are required to spend at least 15 hours prior to April 15 completing free income tax returns for low-income families. In preparation, they must complete an IRS training program on tax law which can be done on-line over winter break, pass an IRS test, and complete a training session on the tax software. With Hamilton's help, the Mohawk Valley Asset-Building Coalition completed 1,408 tax returns, an increase from 829 returns completed last year. Total refunds (Federal and State) increased by more than \$500,000 to a total of \$1,747,928.00, and the total Earned Income Tax Credit refunded increased by nearly \$40,000 to \$787,176.

The class connected students' experiences in the field to academic study of policy with guest lecturers from the faculty on the demographics of Utica's residents, the EITC, health care policies for the poor, and the effect of environmental policy on low-income neighborhoods. Faculty guest lectures included Professors Ann Owen, Paul Hagstrom, Julio Videras, Stephen Wu, Gary Wyckoff, Andrew Nutting and Judy Owens-Manley. Hathaway Burden '10, a member of the class, was responsible for coordinating transportation and communication between the students and the sites. Judy Owens-Manley, Associate Director for Community Research, coordinated the project at Hamilton.

Outreach with Immigrants and Refugees

Project SHINE (Students Helping in the Naturalization of Elders) has offered students a meaningful service-learning experience for the past four years, and this year was no exception. During the 2007-2008 academic year, more than 100 students spent 20 hours each serving in an adult ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) or Citizenship Classroom. Students worked with adult refugees and immigrants from diverse countries including Afghanistan, Belarus, Bosnia, Dominican Republic, Moldova, Myanmar (Burma), Puerto Rico, Russia, Somalia, Sudan, Ukraine, Yemen, and Yugoslavia. The Levitt Center partners with Madison-Herkimer-Oneida BOCES, the Mohawk Valley Latino Association, and the Utica City School District Adult Learning Center. Classes for the latter two programs are offered at the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees.

During the fall semester, Professor Sharon Rivera's Politics of Russia class hosted six elder SHINE learners from the former Soviet Union for lunch on the Hamilton campus. Hamilton students had prepared questions to ask the guests but found they had to answer as many questions as they asked! Topics ranged from health care and government corruption to the education system. Following the luncheon, student tour guides from the Office of Admission provided tours of the campus.

Civic Engagement

Another exciting development for Hamilton College was the creation of two new ESOL courses in the Education Studies program taught by Professor Barbara Britt-Hysell. The Seminar on Teaching ESOL Students, a full credit course, and Methods of Tutoring ESOL Students, a partial credit course, both award certificates to students. The Adult Learning Center created a special classroom for the Hamilton students, who prepared and implemented lesson plans for immigrants and refugees ranging from beginner to advanced level English speakers. Project SHINE in the Levitt Center provided support for the service-learning components of the courses.

After the students left campus for the summer,



Ana Maria Diaz '10 (far left) and ESOL instructor Robert Schaffer (far right) work with adult learners at BOCES



Katherine Hails '10 (right) tutors an adult learner.

Research conducted the focus groups in May 2008 at the Utica Municipal Housing Authority and at the Refugee Center.

Inner City Youth Education Project

The Levitt Center created a new service learning project for the 2007-08, linking academic initiatives focused on youth education. The Inner City Youth Education Project took students who were enrolled in Hamilton College courses with a focus on education and placed them in Donovan Middle School and the Underground Café College Prep or Tutoring Programs for Safe Schools/Healthy Students Inc. located in Utica, NY. The program began during the spring semester with 3 classes and 23 student participants. Each student spent 20 hours over the course of the semester at their community sites. This year's participating classes were Government 375, Sociology 202S, and Women's Studies 385.

ESOL instructors both on and off campus were treated to an ESOL Workshop hosted by the Levitt Center.

Gail Weinstein, TESOL Professor from San Francisco State University and a graduate of Kirkland College, provided training on building "Learner's Lives Curriculum," using the everyday stories of refugee lives to build language lessons in a manner that is meaningful and relevant to the learner. Dr. Weinstein is the author of several publications on family and intergenerational literacy.

The Levitt Center also participated in a focus group study of older refugees in Utica sponsored by Temple University, the original site for Project SHINE. Hamilton was one of four college communities surveyed in a feasibility study for civic engagement of older immigrants. RMC

Civic Engagement



In addition, the Inner City Youth Education Project provides support for **Science Saturdays**, a very successful program for area high school students run by faculty and students in the Sciences. Science Saturdays is a year-long program designed to motivate and increase high school students' awareness of the sciences, with the long-term goal of fostering student plans to pursue careers in science-related fields. Students are transported to the college for morning workshops in Psychology, Biology, Geology, Chemistry, Physics, or Computer Science and have lunch with Hamilton students before returning home.

Hamilton students and youth from Utica investigate various rocks and minerals during a morning "Science Saturdays" Geology workshop.

The Levitt Center is beginning a new AmeriCorps VISTA project in 2008-09 focused on youth education and family literacy in West Utica at Kernan Elementary School and Donovan Middle School. **Jordan Fischetti '08** (right), will join the Levitt Center as the AmeriCorps VISTA coordinating the "West Side Project."



Service Learning Courses 2007-2008

American Studies 301: Intro to Asian American Studies- S. Yao
Economics 235: Poverty, Policy & Practice- J. Pliskin
Education 210: Methods of Tutoring ESOL Students- B. Britt-Hysell
Education 301: Seminar on Teaching English to ESOL Students- B. Britt-Hysell
English and Creative Writing 215: Intro to Creative Writing- D. Larson
English and Creative Writing 305: Intermediate Creative Writing/Fiction- T. Hall
Government 213: Politics of Russia- S. Rivera
Government 202: Immigrants and Refugees in the U.S.- J. Owens-Manley
Government 342: Seminar in Program Evaluation -J. Owens-Manley
Government 375: Politics of Public Education- D. Paris

Government Independent Study: Community Development through Gardening- J. Owens-Manley
Government Independent Study: Program Evaluation of HOPE VI- J. Owens-Manley
Sociology 202S: Sociology of Education- M. Arthur
Women's Studies 101W: Intro to Women's Studies- M. Gentry
Women's Studies 101W: Intro to Women's Studies- A. Lacsamana
Women's Studies 101W: Intro to Women's Studies- M. Jaksch
Women's Studies 314F Seminar: Feminist Perspectives of Class in the United States- M. Jaksch
Women's Studies 385: Seminar on Theory and Politics of Education- M. Jaksch
Women's Studies 402: Seminar on Global Feminism - A. Lacsamana

Community-Based Research

The Levitt Center is in its second year of a grant with the Learn and Serve America: Higher Education National Community-Based Research Networking Initiative, with Princeton University. Community-Based Research (CBR) projects differ in approach and application from some traditional forms of research – they are generated by needs that are articulated by community partners; designed so that the results of the faculty and/or student research have the highest potential to be used; and engage community partners throughout the research process. The Levitt Center incorporated community-based research in several projects this year.

The Utica Community Garden for refugee and immigrant families continued to be a setting for community-based learning throughout the academic year. Jenney Stringer interviewed refugee women and created a blog about community gardening (<http://refugeecommunitygarden.blogspot.com/>) as part of an Independent Study in Fall '07 with Professor Owens-Manley.

Biology 150: Society and the Environment, taught by Professor Bill Pfitsch, engaged students as volunteers in our Hamilton College greenhouse to continue work with the Utica Community Garden in the spring. Families who are former refugees from the Ukraine, Belarus, Bosnia, and Somalia, and now “owners” and tenders of 34 raised-bed garden plots located at the F.X. Matt Apartments, traveled to Hamilton’s greenhouse on April 5 to plant seedlings. They worked with Hamilton students to plant seeds, including some of their own heirloom seeds. Hillary Pitoniak, the Hamilton Greenhouse Technician, assisted with the project, and became the primary plant tender for the two months prior to transplanting time. Jenney Stringer planned the April 5th event as a way for residents to start the gardening process in advance of the outdoor growing season.



Hillary Pitoniak assists a refugee gardener on April 5th

Student reflections on service learning

“And I never could have known what light SHINE would, well, shine in and on my life. Four weeks into Project SHINE and I am every day both challenged and amazed, overwhelmed and impressed, a little bit saddened and renewed with hope.” --Jennifer Vano '09

“Deciding to participate in Project SHINE was the best decision for me this semester. From the first moment I entered my SHINE classroom, I was inspired by the learners with whom I worked. Their enthusiasm and determination to learn a language as challenging as English while balancing family and work really put my own life in perspective and made the privileges I take for granted apparent.” --Laurel Symonds '10

“People today take many things for granted because they do not realize that people in other countries may be struggling to obtain the same things. Project Shine helps to bring awareness to students and volunteers by giving them a chance to teach refugees English and allowing them to interact closely with them.” --Wendy Look '11

“Hamilton College’s Project SHINE program permitted me to learn the struggles and hardships refugees faced and experienced while leaving their country, adjusting to their new community, learning English, and finding a new job.” --Kumar Bhardwaj '09

Community-Based Research

Students in Professor Margaret Gentry's Seminar on Women and Aging course interviewed older female caregivers who provide care for someone in their homes, such as a spouse or parent. The Levitt Center arranged partnerships with Acacia Home Care and the Ava Dorfman Senior Center in Rome. This is the second year for the caregiver interviews project, which is being completed for the Women's Fund of Herkimer-Oneida Counties, Inc. The Women's Fund has worked with the Levitt Center for several years to obtain data at the local level on women and girls for planning and grant funding. Students focused on services that caregivers receive and gaps in services that would improve caregiving or caregiver support. Professor Gentry commented that the CBR project enhanced her course by giving the students an opportunity to personalize material that they had been reading about. Kari Arneson '10 completed a literature search for women and caregiving and wrote the background section for the report, which will go to each community agency.

Students in Judith Owens-Manley's Seminar in Program Evaluation course worked on a multi-media project for the final year of the HOPE VI evaluation this spring, assisted by Janet Simons, Instructional Technology Specialist. Tim Eisemeier '10, Tom Klassen '10, and Moises Toledano '10 filmed and audio-taped interviews of former residents of the Washington Courts Housing Project, administrators of the project, and key informants to document the dislocation and resettlement process, as well as the history of Washington Courts. Chris Rand '09 joined the class through a ½ credit Independent Study. The multimedia components incorporated logging and coding video footage, video recording of former and current neighborhoods, and finding a storyline through the themes emerging from the video images. The project will be completed over the summer by incorporating the student work into a website for the HOPE VI project and ultimately a site that shows the broader changes in Utica's neighborhoods over time.

Students reported that the course enhanced their "comfort beyond the campus bubble," increased awareness of diversity, promoted teamwork, and drew upon their creativity. One of the students concluded from the interviews that "While many of the residents may be better off now in terms of the diversity and location of their new residences . . . a sense of community may outweigh other factors in determining the overall quality of one's life."

East Utica Community Garden Project

The Utica Community Garden Project is flourishing this year. By the end of last summer, 34 families had prepared individual, raised-bed plots for planting this year. Patiently waiting over the winter, they added compost this spring to prepare the soil and put in onions and garlic just after the frost. A number of families also traveled to Hamilton College in April to plant seeds in the college greenhouse, under the direction of Hillary Pitoniak, Greenhouse Technician.

Jenney Stringer '08, who began the project last summer, and students from Professor Pfitsch's Biology 150 course assisted families in planting heirloom seeds that they brought with them and other garden seeds for peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, and herbs. Rachel Bigelow '10 and Hillary assisted the refugee families in transplanting the greenhouse plants to the Utica Community Garden in early June.



Residents prepare one of the 34 garden plots near the F.X. Matt Apartment complex in late Summer 2007.

(Garden Project story continued on page 20)

Community-Based Research



F.X. Matt resident transplants squash and tomato seedlings into her garden plot during late spring 2008.

The Community Garden expands a partnership that Hamilton has had for several years with the Utica Municipal Housing Authority through the HOPE VI Project. The Adrean Terrace/F.X. Matt/N.D. Peters Housing Projects provided some of the earliest public housing built in Utica, beginning in the early 1940s, and these residences have become home to people seeking refuge from wars and religious and political persecution. Most of the gardening families are from the former Soviet Union and are elders, with very poor English language skills after years in the U.S. They provide care for their grandchildren and function as a community for each other. They gardened in their home country and are excited to have plots of their own in which to garden.

As refugees and immigrants adjust to a new life in Utica, many individuals, particularly the elderly, find it difficult to become fully integrated members of the new community. Community gardening is one activity that helps refugees navigate this integration process. Initial funding for the Community Garden was provided by The Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, Inc. and the Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center through a Learn and Serve grant to promote community-based research. In addition, Home Depot supplied a team of workers for the original garden construction and donated garden seeds and gift cards, the Utica Rotary Club donated two garden benches, and the Utica Municipal Housing Authority supplied fencing for the garden and a sign.

The Community Garden Project is supported through an AmeriCorps VISTA year-round project and a Levitt Civic Engagement Fellowship. One goal this summer is to help the residents develop a resident committee with an agreed-upon structure and rules for gardening together.



This photo taken in October 2007 shows all 34 completed garden plots.

Levitt Scholars Topics 2007-2008

Every year since 1993, the Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center has sent Hamilton students to area high schools to speak on a wide variety of topics. These Levitt Scholars are typically juniors and seniors, selected by faculty members for their outstanding research and communication skills. This year, our scholars represented 14 different majors, including several double majors. Levitt Scholars first complete an Oral Communications course taught by Professor Susan Mason. During this class, they refine their public speaking skills and learn to tailor their presentation to a high school audience.



Levitt Scholar Mikhail Bell '08

This year, 18 students participated in the program, including one Scholar from last year. In addition to speaking to several area high schools, most of this year's Scholars brought their presentations to their home town high schools during Hamilton's Winter and Spring Breaks. Local educators participating in the program consistently commented on the high quality of the students' presentations, and Scholars embraced their task with enthusiasm and enjoyed the experience.



Levitt Scholar Annie Bowler '08 (left) with a practicing traditional healer in Wangu, South Africa.

Comments from Teachers about Scholars' Presentations

"Excellent speaker, primary source information, and role model for young students to emulate."

"[The Scholar] was very informed and had a great scope of knowledge on her subject."

"He was engaging –you could have heard a pin drop. The teenagers were actually leaning forward to catch every word (SO not like a lesson which I have prepared!)."

"He was the kind of motivational speaker seniors need in the spring as they prepare for their own college experience."

"[The Scholar] covered material that was pertinent to the curriculum and had a number of good examples and good web photos."

"I learned quite a bit from her presentation and will be contacting her for sources I can use in both my psychology and sociology classes."

Levitt Scholars Program

Kimberly Bauer: *Setting Stereotypes Straight: The Value of Travel*

Mikhail Bell: *Sex-Trafficking: How to Save a Life*

Annie Bowler: *Healing Tales: Understanding the Fluidity of Healing*

***Taylor Burt:** *Antarctic Field Research: A First-hand Look at Studying the Bottom of the Globe*

Mia Cakebread: *Shaping Classroom Experiences*

***Katherine Kenney:** *2008 Beijing Olympics and the Implications for China's Environmental Future*

Maura Kernan: *To the Ends of the Earth: Study Abroad in South Africa*

Katie Lafen: *Strange Tongues in a Strange Land: The Refugee Experience in Utica, N.Y.*

Participating High Schools, 2007-2008

Bishop Grimes High School (Syracuse, NY)
Cazenovia High School (Cazenovia, NY)
Cistercian Preparatory School (Dallas, TX)
Cooperstown High School (Cooperstown, NY)
Dolgeville Central School (Dolgeville, NY)
Highland Park High School (Dallas, TX)
Jamesville-DeWitt (DeWitt, NY)
Lancaster High School (Lancaster, NY)
Lincoln Academy (Utica, NY)
Maryville High School (Maryville, TN)
Niskayuna High School (Niskayuna, NY)
Notre Dame (Utica, NY)
Oneida High School (Oneida, NY)
Owego Free Academy (Owego, NY)
Rome Free Academy (Rome, NY)
Shenendehowa High School East (Clifton Park, NY)
Sherburne-Earlville High School (Sherburne, NY)
The Pingree School (South Hamilton, MA)
Vernon Verona Sherrill High School (Verona, NY)

***Mike Millar:** *New York State Geology*

Bridget Moore: *I Say Hot, You Say Cold? Social Psychology and the Implicit Association Task*

***Jonathan Peros:** *Rethinking Cape Wind: An Exploration of Place and Sustainability in the 21st Century*

Jack Prior: *The Truth behind the College Interview*

***Kimberly Roe:** *Fieldwork as an Avenue for Travel*

Emma Slane: *La corrida de toros: La expression de una cultura (The Bullfight: A Cultural Expression)*

Emily Smith: *Celebrities and African Aid: Does this Work?*

Julia Stahl: *Bonds Built in Combat: Changing Perceptions of Race in the U.S. Armed Forces*

Andy Steele: *Reform Policies in Communist States: Analysis of USSR and China*

Ethan Woods: *Preparing for the College Experience*

***Sustainability Scholars (see page 12)**

Student Conferences and Projects

Significant learning experiences can take place off campus. With Levitt Center support, a number of students had the opportunity this year to participate in regional and national conferences and other educational events. Students also received funding from other on-campus offices, such as the President's Office, the Dean of Students, and Student Activities. Highlights of this year's events included:

Model United Nations Group Participates in Security Council Simulation at Yale

Twelve Hamilton College students traveled to New Haven, CT, on Oct. 25-28 to participate in the 30th annual Security Council Simulation at Yale (SCSY). These students are members of Model United Nations, an organization that enables students to attend various Model U.N. conferences throughout the year. The purpose of the organization is to improve public speaking and writing skills while learning about official U.N. procedures. The following students participated in the Simulation: Rachel Horowitz '09, Henok Alemayo '10, Kari Arneson '10, Zeynep Harezi '10, Roman Kolosovsky '11, Melissa Kong '08, Kunter Kula '11, Oscar Lied '10, Maria Lozada '11, Ryan M. Murphy '08, Amanda Pooler '08 and Anna Zeng '11. The students served on small committees covering a range of topics, including historical and future simulations.

Students Participate in Model EU Conference in Germany

Eleven Hamilton students recently traveled to Germany to represent Romania and Slovakia at an international Model European Union (EuroSim) conference, hosted by the Universities of Trier and Saarbrücken. The participants Elena Filekova '08, Stephen Sallan '08, Tamim Akiki '08, Murtaza Jafri '08, Matt D'Amico '08, Henok Alemayo '10, Mariam Ballout '10, Zeynep Harezi '10, Kasey Hildonen '10, Reisa Asimovic '11 and Robert Eisenhart '11 prepared through weekly meetings and individual research in the preceding months. The four-day conference, which took place January 2-6, brought together students of varying levels of study (undergraduate through law school) to forge agreements about what the EU can and should do regarding Kosovo. Representing the views of EU member-states rather than their own opinions, students serving on simulated committees reached consensus concerning the specifics of joint-efforts, including a civilian mission to Kosovo. These agreements were possible despite the inclusion of skeptical nations, who do not support the seemingly inevitable independence for Kosovo.



All students left grateful for the opportunity to participate and learn from this incredibly positive experience, and gained varying observations and lessons. Reisa Asimovic '11, who represented the foreign minister of Slovakia, highlighted the international friendship aspect of the conference. "While being part of an amazing team, I had the opportunity to experience something different, interesting and challenging in more ways than one. We worked very hard, but we still had time to have fun with students from around the world." All agreed that it was a worthwhile trip, and Matt D'Amjco '08 summarized the experience. "Hamilton's participation in EuroSim is a unique opportunity for Hamilton students to visit Europe, many for the first time, broadening their knowledge of the European Union by participating in the simulation and meeting European university students. We are deeply grateful for the funding of the Levitt Center to allow for a variety of students to participate in the conference."

--article contributed by Miriam Ballout '10

Student Conferences and Projects

Model U.N. Students Travel to Harvard for Conference

Eleven Hamilton students participated in the Harvard National Model United Nations conference at the Boston Park Plaza on Feb. 14-17. The conference consisted of approximately 3,000 delegates from 30 different countries. Samantha Power, a 2003 Pulitzer Prize-winning author on the U.N. and the Rwandan genocide and professor at Harvard University, delivered a speech about leadership in international policy for the opening ceremony. Students attending from Hamilton College were Mikhail Bell '08, Amanda Pooler '08, Melissa Kong '08, Matt Arnold '09, Henok Alemayo '10, Sitanshu Mishra '10, Maria Del Pilar Lozada '11, Heather Parker '11, Anna Zeng '11, Kunter Kula '11, and Roman Kolosovsky '11. They represented the delegation of Fiji on the Model U.N.'s Legal Committee, Social Humanitarian and Cultural Committee, World Health Organization, World Summit on Children, Economic and Financial Committee, and the World Trade Organization.



In preparing for the conference, Hamilton students conducted extensive research and drafted position papers with Government Professor Ted Lehmann, the MUN faculty advisor, in order to accurately portray Fiji's foreign policy at the conference. Students practiced public speaking and writing skills while they acted as delegates of the United Nations, taking part in international negotiations and creating resolutions with other delegates for some of the world's most pressing issues. Debated topics ranged from the issues of child soldiers and transnational organized crime to water sanitation and the security of the Gaza strip.

--article contributed by Matt Arnold '09

Students Travel to Tanzania

This summer, students enrolled in Women's Studies 332: Field Study Tanzania will embark on a 5-week trip to work with grassroots organizations in Tanzania. Led by Assistant Visiting Professor of Women's Studies Marla Jaksch, the group will co-create and participate in various collaborative service oriented field projects in the rural Masaai and Hadzabe lands, in the Arusha area, along the coast in Dar es Salaam communities, and with Swahili groups on the island of Zanzibar.

Of the 16 students headed for Tanzania, all are currently enrolled in women's studies 331: Seminar on Women's Movements and Grassroots Organizing: Tanzania. In preparation for the field study in Tanzania, this interdisciplinary course focuses on the social, economic, cultural, and political issues that influence and determine the women's movement and grassroots organizing in Tanzania. Students are exploring topics such as colonialism, globalization, neo-liberalism, gendered violence, HIV/AIDS, education, reproductive rights, feminist-centered interventions to eradicate poverty, and more. In addition, Tanzanian native Ngoda Manongi '08 is teaching a weekly class in basic Kiswahili.

--article contributed by Mallory Reed '10

Public Policy and Analysis Projects



Levitt Center Sponsors Luncheon for *Insights* Journal

On May 12, 2008, the editors and authors of *Insights*, our undergraduate social science journal, met to celebrate the publication of the 2008 issue. Editing and refereeing for the journal is done anonymously, so until this lunch, editors and authors had never met, or even exchanged names. The luncheon gave everyone a chance to attach names and faces to the many comments, suggestions, and drafts exchanged over the year. Also, the gathering included the

announcement of the 2008 Levitt Prize for Social Science Writing, awarded by a vote of the editors to the top paper in this year's issue. The award was presented to **Elizabeth Herring '08** (right, with Professor Wyckoff) for her clever article "We're Going Streaking! The Theory of Sanctioned Deviance at Hamilton College." The full text of the issue can be found at www.hamilton.edu/levitt/insights.



Alumni Experts Critique Students' Health Care Plans

Under the Levitt Center's sponsorship, current students and alumni experts met on Sunday, May 4, 2008, to debate the future of health care in the United States. The students were members of Professor Paul Gary Wyckoff's Topics in Public Policy class, and had spent the semester working in groups to devise comprehensive, detailed reform plans to cover the uninsured and contain health care costs in the U.S. Three alumni experts traveled to campus to discuss the students' plans: David Duggan '75, Professor of Medicine at SUNY Health Science Center at Syracuse; Tim Finan '75, President and CEO of Olean General Hospital in Olean, New York; and Karen Volmar '94, Assistant Professor of Health Policy and Administration at Penn State University. The result was a unique exchange of perspectives on our health care problems -- a chance for students to supplement their academic training with the personal experiences of professionals working in the "trenches" of the health care field.



Tim Finan (center) with Public Policy students

Public Policy and Analysis Projects

Each summer, analysis projects are solicited from state and local agencies and government officials. The seniors in the Public Policy Program taught by Professor Paul Gary Wyckoff are offered the option of a traditional thesis on an academic subject, or a public contract thesis, in which the project has been suggested by a state or local government. In the case of a public contract thesis, the final report serves as both the student's thesis in public policy and an analysis and recommendation to the agency submitting the project. Senior projects may take one or two semesters, depending on the nature of the project. Students in this course work independently or in teams of two, and meet weekly with Professor Wyckoff.



Jonathan Peros (left) and **Joseph Rinaldo** (top, right), *Rome Parking Study: An Assessment of Parking in Rome's Main Street Corridors*
Client Agency: City of Rome

Jon and Joe examined parking problems in Rome's three downtown parking corridors -- East Dominick Street, West Dominick Street, and James Street -- and at Fort Stanwix National Monument. After meeting with community stakeholders, examining the literature on urban revitalization, and investigating parking innovations in other communities, the pair provided comprehensive recommendations to facilitate economic development through parking changes.



Ntokozo Xaba (bottom, right), *The Effects of Fire Safety Standards for Cigarettes on Cigarette Fires in New York State*

Client Agency: New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control

In 2000, New York State became the first state in the nation to require "fire safe" cigarettes. When left unattended, these cigarettes extinguish themselves, rather than continuing to burn. The law took effect in June 2004. Using data provided by the New York State of Fire Prevention and Control, Ntokozo examined whether cigarette fires have declined since the law was implemented.



Catrin Jones (left), *Uninsured Employers in the New York State Workers' Comp System: What Can Be Done to Close the Coverage Gap?*

Client Agency: New York State Workers' Compensation Board

New York State requires all employers to cover their employees for work-related injuries through the workers' compensation system, but approximately 20% of them fail to do so. Catrin examined reforms to address this problem that have been enacted in California, Colorado, and Florida, and the reform proposals that have been devised for New York State. She concluded her study by making comprehensive, cost-effective recommendations for changes in the New York State workers' compensation system.

Think Tanks combine stimulating topics, conversation and lunch

“Just bring an open mind and an empty stomach!”

With topics ranging from grade inflation to computer-human interface, this year’s Think Tank engaged many students and faculty in thoughtful and lively discourse. Think Tank is a student-directed organization sponsored by the Levitt Center that strives to increase dialogue between professors and students outside the classroom. On Fridays, students and other members of the Hamilton community gather for lunchtime discussions, which are facilitated by a faculty member.



Deanne Katz '08

This year **Deanne Katz** and **Katie Naughton**, both seniors, coordinated a fascinating and wide-ranging program of Think Tank lunches. Marianne Janack, Sidney Wertimer Professor of History, led the first lunchtime discussion with a thought-provoking look at grade inflation “Everyone Knows that C is the Average Grade.” The following week, Assistant Professor of Physics Natalia Connolly spoke about the recent discoveries regarding “Dark Matter,” that mysterious energy component that makes up 70% of the Universe. Visiting Associate Professor of Africana Studies Donald Carter’s led his October topic in a completely different direction with a provocative discussion about civil rights and The Jena 6, six African American students from Jena, LA, who were initially charged with attempted murder in the alleged beating of a white classmate.

In November, Robin Kinnel, Silas D. Childs Professor of Chemistry, brought his love of crossword puzzles to campus with “The Financial Times Crossword,” an appealing topic for anyone, but especially exciting for crossword enthusiasts. “Phenomenology” followed on November 9th, facilitated by Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy Alan Kim. Robert Simon, Marjorie and Robert W.

McEwen Professor of Philosophy, led the next Think Tank discussion with a timely look at “The Ethics of Sport and Performance Enhancing Drugs.”

The next lunchtime topic, led by Edgar B. Graves Professor of History Al Kelly, was a fun look into “The Joys of Collecting Quotations.” Dan Chambliss, Eugene M. Tobin Distinguished Professor of Sociology, concluded the fall semester with an engaging talk about an aggressive campaign that has been mounted outside academia to make higher educational more accountable, “Is College Worth this Price? Accountability and What it Might Do...”

Truax Postdoctoral Fellow of Philosophy Russell Marcus commenced the spring semester with an amusing and informative discussion about the variation in taste preferences from a philosophical perspective, “Why Do Pigs Eat ...Poop?” In the following Think Tank discussion, Assistant Professor of English Steve Yao talked about “Ethnic Studies’ at Hamilton.” Yao, who also serves as Assistant Dean of Faculty for Diversity Initiatives, discussed the origins, goals, and both epistemological and political significance of “ethnic studies” as a recently emergent academic field, and the relevance of this issue to a Hamilton education.

(continued on page 28)

Think Tanks combine stimulating topics, conversation and lunch

In another sobering February discussion, Jenny Irons, Assistant Professor of Sociology, asked “Can Whiteness be Dismantled?” Irons discussed “whiteness” as a system of racial power and privilege, often invisible to those under its mantle, and the difficulties and benefits to breaking down the power dynamics within this position. “Who Should Decide What Gets Taught in America’s Public Schools?” asked Susan Mason, Director of Education Studies as well as the Oral Communication Center, in her presentation on February 22nd.



Katie Naughton '08

Associate Professor of Philosophy Kathryn Doran led a discussion on “Trolleyology: What Is It and Why Does It Matter?” Trolleyology, or The Trolley Problem, is a classic example in the philosophy of ethics, in which people have to make decisions about switching the routes of runaway trolleys based on varying numbers of lives being at risk. Gordon Jones, Associate Professor of Physics, demonstrated to his rapt audience just how much fun physics can be with his presentation of “The Bed of Nails and Other Freaky Things about Pressure.”

After Spring Break, Sally Cockburn, Associate Professor of Mathematics, combined mathematics and philosophy by asking “Is mathematics only in our heads (i.e., a cognitive mechanism humans have developed to structure their experience of reality) , or does it exist ‘out there’ in the real world, independently of us?” Later that month, Kevin Kennedy Associate Professor of Art Katherine Kuharic brought Think Tank to her studio near the Glen to discuss her studio practice, and how her paintings, watercolors and drawings are made. Professor of Biology David Gapp and Associate Professor of German and Russian Languages Frank Sciacca co-hosted the following Think Tank lunch to talk about “The 1812 Garden: Recreating a Kitchen Garden in Celebration of Hamilton College’s Bicentennial.” Gapp and Sciacca initiated the creation of a garden as a “laboratory” project in conjunction with College Seminar 235 (Food for Thought), a long-term project that will continue to be developed throughout the summers and school years until at least 2012 (a complete story about Hamilton’s Community Garden can be found on page 12).

The next topic of discussion was “Why Read Marcel Proust?” led by Professor of Comparative Literature Peter Rabinowitz. Regarding Proust’s classic novel *In Search of Lost Time*, Rabinowitz sought to give his audience “some idea of the power, perversity, illumination, bewilderment, beauty, humor, and sheer originality of this endlessly fulfilling and endlessly frustrating novel.” Stu Hirshfield, Stephen Harper Kirner Professor of Computer Science, wrapped up the year with “The Changing Face of Interface,” a discussion of the history, evolution and future of computer-human interfaces.

Gail Corneau '10 and **Fallon Chipidza '10** will co-direct Think Tank for the 2008-2009 academic year.