

# The Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center

Hamilton College



2012-2013

## Annual Report

### From the Director

This academic year, the Levitt Center has organized lectures by distinguished speakers, funded student research and interdisciplinary research projects, supported the curriculum with classroom and experiential learning opportunities, and moved forward with new strategic initiatives to encourage a culture of social innovation and leadership. A group of highly motivated students have completed the second Levitt Leadership Institute and have been working on their commitment projects to apply the skills they have learned; for example, in collaboration with the Dean of Students Office, a group of students have designed a program for first-year students to help them attain “the tools necessary to develop their leadership potential and encourage a culture of leadership at Hamilton.” This is one example of how Levitt Center programs provide opportunities and a learning environment that allow students to follow their interests, gain valuable knowledge and skills, and make a positive difference in their community.

Julio Videras  
Director, Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center

*Ujjwal Pradhan '15 makes a point during Week 1 of the Levitt Leadership Institute. Photo by Nancy Ford.*

ARTHUR LEVITT PUBLIC AFFAIRS CENTER



# Hamilton

# The Levitt Center

## Levitt Council Members and Levitt Center Staff

- **Frank Anechiarico** is the **Director of the Security Program**, a member of the Levitt Council, and the Maynard-Knox Professor of Government and Law.
- **Peter Cannavò** is the **Director of the Sustainability Program**, a member of the Levitt Council, and Associate Professor of Government.
- **Haeng-Ja Chung** is a member of the Levitt Council and Assistant Professor of Anthropology.
- **Katheryn Doran** is a member of the Levitt Council and Associate Professor of Philosophy.
- **Paul Hagstrom** is the **Director of the Inequality and Equity Program**, a member of the Levitt Council, and Professor of Economics.
- **Shoshana Keller** is a member of the Levitt Council and Professor of History.
- **Madeleine La Coter** is the **Coordinator of Community-Based Learning**.
- **Herm Lehman** is the **Director of the Public Health and Well-Being Program**, a member of the Levitt Council, and Professor of Biology.
- **Sharon Topi** is the **Coordinator of Leadership Programming**.
- **Julio Videras** is the **Director of the Levitt Center**, a member of the Levitt Council, and Associate Professor of Economics.
- **Chris Willemsen** is the **Associate Director of the Levitt Center**.
- **Yvonne Zylan** is a member of the Levitt Council and Associate Professor of Sociology.

*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 enable students to engage in public affairs through research, service-learning, lectures, discussion, and practice.*
- *To foster creative, ethical, and informed responses to public issues by providing opportunities for students to engage with the local community, develop leadership skills, and explore careers in public service.*
- *To support interdisciplinary collaboration and discussion; and to encourage faculty to address public affairs in their own research and in collaborative research with Hamilton students.*



# Leadership

## Levitt Leadership Institute

The Levitt Leadership Institute is a two-week intensive leadership-training program administered by the Levitt Center. Its mission is to provide Hamilton students with the opportunity to develop and practice personal leadership skills in the context of their individual career interests with a focus on developing a global mindset, ethical behaviors, and regard for the public good. Former Ambassador Prudence Bushnell leads the Institute with assistance from Christine Powers. Ambassador Bushnell was responsible for providing leadership training to senior state department officials under Secretary of State Colin Powell; and Ms. Powers has managed senior leadership training at the State Department from 2007-2010 and continues to train senior embassy staff. The Levitt Leadership Institute is modeled on the programs used to train the senior Foreign Service staff in the U.S. government.

Below you'll find excerpts from articles written by Nick Solano '14 and Jack Cartwright '15 about the Institute:

Former United States Ambassador Prudence Bushnell believes passionately that we must train our leaders at an early age. While students at West Point, Annapolis and other military academies receive top-notch leadership training, most civilian students are not given these opportunities. To fill this void, Bushnell partnered with Hamilton's Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center to create the Levitt Leadership Institute (LLI).

"Hamilton students have much of what it takes to make a difference, and the Levitt Center team, Chris Powers, and I are committed to helping them do so – starting with personal leadership skills," Bushnell said of the program. In her second year at the helm, Bushnell provides a unique perspective on leadership through the lens of her experience overseas.

Students arrived for week one on January 13 and spent roughly eight hours per day refining their leadership skills. During this time, participants analyzed their Myers-Briggs personality types, Thomas-Kilmann conflict results, and individual leadership styles. Students then participated in team initiatives that tested their ability to function effectively within a group.

Sam Sherman '15, who plays varsity field hockey and serves on the HAVOC executive board – said of the exercises, "I have become significantly more self-aware and will apply the multiple lessons I have learned on leadership, followership, and conflict daily."

### ***Participants in the Levitt Leadership Institute, 2013***

***Kevin Anglim '15, Jack Boyle '15, Jack Cartwright '15, Kathrin Cieplicki '16, Sarah Larson '15, Erik Marks '15, Megan Murphy '15, Meghan O'Sullivan '15, Ujjwal Pradhan '15, Elizabeth Rodriguez '15, Samantha Sherman '15, Nick Solano '14, Brady Sprague '15, Don Stayner '15, Gretha Suarez '15, Tsion Tesfaye '16, Morolake Thompson '14, Kevin Tutasig '13, Dylan Wulderk '13***

# Leadership

## Levitt Leadership Institute

Dylan Wulderk '13 echoed Sherman's beliefs: "Self-awareness is absolutely critical in order to be successful, and by viewing myself on tape during interviews, leadership initiatives, and group activities, I was able to see myself through the eyes of others."

The second week of the Levitt Leadership Institute was filled with events including many speakers, leadership activities and sightseeing. During the first week of the Institute, participants were separated into groups tasked with arranging speakers during the week in Washington. Many students reached out to Hamilton alumni based in Washington, either to meet with them or to ask them for contacts in the Washington area.

The group met with Steve Culbertson '79, CEO of Youth Service America. Culbertson specifically spoke about the power youth has to change the world. The Levitt Leaders then had the opportunity to meet with Rep. Matt Cartwright '83 and his chief of staff, Hunter Ridgeway, before taking a guided tour of the U.S. Capitol Building. They also spoke with Jason Donavon, a Foreign Service Officer who served with Bushnell in Guatemala, and with Erik Wemple '86, a media opinion writer at The Washington Post. Other speakers included Frank Vlossak '89, a principal at Williams & Jensen LLP; Ralph Oman '62, the former United States Register of Copy Rights; Cory Crowley, founder of the government affairs firm Cory Crowley & Company, Ray Leki from the Department of State, and Ken Brown, former U.S. Ambassador to Ghana. The group also had a meet and greet with recent Hamilton alumni living in the Washington D.C. area.

The group also continued to work on developing their leadership skills and refined plans to use these skills to make a positive and measurable difference in their communities.



*Levitt Leaders Gretha Suarez '15, Erik Marks '15, Meghan O'Sullivan '15, and Tsion Tesfaye '16 participate in a Levitt Leadership Institute activity. Photo by Nancy Ford*

# Leadership

## The Commitment Projects

Students who participate in the Levitt Leadership Institute commit to undertaking a project that will make a measurable and positive difference to their community. This year's leaders are in the process of planning and implementing a diverse and ambitious set of projects.

**Kate Cieplicki '16:** is undertaking a project to increase mental health awareness on campus.

**Sarah Larson '15:** is creating the Hamilton Young Leaders Summit, a one-night leadership-training program aimed at middle school students.

**Erik Marks '15:** plans to establish a Greek Action Committee comprised of members of Hamilton College's Greek societies. Marks has noticed a decline in the relationship between Greek societies and other Hamilton communities.

**Megan Murphy '15:** plans to establish a chapter of the National Coalition Building Institute at Hamilton in order to foster a sense of cooperation and collaboration on campus.

**Ujjwal Pradhan '15:** intends to create a Savings and Investment Group for Hamilton College students. Pradhan's group will increase students' knowledge of investments and promote good saving habits.

**Elizabeth Rodriguez '15:** is working to raise awareness about the food students eat at college. Rodriguez aims to work with campus food providers to create a nutritional chart for the food they serve.

**Nick Solano '14** is the current Executive Director of Rebuilding Together Mohawk Valley, a local affiliate of a national non-profit. Solano is working to install a sustainable leadership structure to ensure that students continue to be involved in the organization.

**Brady Sprague '15** has restarted Hamilton MicroFinance, a micro-lending club with the aim of providing loans to refugee and other businesses in Utica. He is currently working on making the club sustainable, raising funds, and learning about best micro-finance practices.

### *The Commitment Projects:*

*"Now comes the more compelling part - getting measurable and positive results by using skills and passion on a meaningful project. What excites me...are the real life results Levitt leaders are going to produce over the next couple of years. Stay tuned."*

*-- Prudence Bushnell*

# Leadership

## The Commitment Projects

**Kevin Anglim '15, Jack Boyle '15, Meghan O'Sullivan '15, Gretha Suarez '15, and Dylan Wulderk '13** have created a first-year residential leadership program entitled the *Leadership Experience and Preparation Program* (LEAP).

Students in the **LEAP Program** will live in residence halls together, allowing them to develop into a close-knit community of leaders. Each first-year will be a part of a smaller group of 8-10 students and will work closely with two upper-class student mentors with extensive leadership experience. During the first semester of the program, students will spend two hours each week participating in leadership training. The participants will develop six skills necessary to become a highly effective leader: self-awareness, organization, negotiation, active listening, public speaking, and networking. In the second semester, students will complete a group leadership project to create positive change at Hamilton. By the end of their first year, L.E.A.P. students will have attained the tools necessary to develop their leadership potential and encourage a culture of leadership at Hamilton. 56 first-year students, more than 10% of the Class of 2017, have signed up to participate in the inaugural year of the program.

Meghan O'Sullivan '15: "I think having a program like LEAP for first-year students could be a tremendous asset for Hamilton. In my opinion, the transition from high school to college in one's first semester is almost always an extremely difficult one. Although there are some wonderful resources on campus . . . first years still lack someone *specifically* in the role as Mentor. LEAP will not only provide students with a small group experience that will last for the duration of an entire semester, but will also provide these students with two upperclass mentors who can become both role models and friends . . . Furthermore, by focusing on leadership skills in LEAP, such as public speaking, networking, teamwork, and encouraging students to get actively involved in things they feel passionate about on campus, LEAP will help first-years feel *proud* of their first semester at Hamilton."



*Participants in the Levitt  
Leadership Institute*

*Photo by Nancy Ford.*

# Leadership

## The Commitment Projects

**Don Stayner '15** will be creating a multi-platform system to improve the information flow between local schools and their students. Stayner's program will allow administrators and teachers to distribute homework assignments, sports schedules, cancellations, and other announcements directly to students' smart phones or to their computers.

**Tsion Tesfaye '16** is working to provide support to the Newcomers Classroom at the Utica Refugee Center. The class focuses on assisting young immigrants (ages 17 to 21) in their transition to the United States. She will be partnering with area colleges to design a curriculum, raise funds, and increase involvement in the classroom.

**Morolake Thompson '14** aims to increase social cohesion amongst diverse groups on campus. Thompson organized an event called "Beauty Who?" that included collaboration with many diverse groups on campus and received a large turnout and positive feedback. She plans on continuing to transcend divides and stereotypes by working with diverse groups to organize events each semester.

**Kevin Tutasig '13** worked to revitalize Hamilton College's Cooking Club. He envisions an environment where students and faculty can gather to discuss the dishes they have made and the culture that inspired them.

**Jack Cartwright '15** and **Samantha Sherman '15** collaborated to organize and promote HamTrek, an annual sprint-triathlon on the Hamilton campus. Cartwright and Sherman aim to increase student participation in campus-wide non-alcoholic events, and engage students who are not involved with athletics on campus.

## *Levitt Leaders Already Making a Difference*

*"Sam Sherman and Jack Cartwright provided a real spark for the planning and organization of Hamtrek this year. They brought innovative ideas and consistent energy to the planning process as well as race day implementation. The result was the the highest participation (by far) in the ten year history of the event."*

*- David Thompson, Director of the Blood Fitness Center and Campus Wellness*

*"There is no doubt that LEAP will be an unqualified success in its very first year. Conceived of and executed by Levitt Leaders, we believe that LEAP will foster a sense of purpose among first-year participants and introduce them to Hamilton's strong tradition of leadership, while also instilling an immediate sense of belonging. It's exactly the sort of program we like to support, and we're thrilled to partner with the Levitt Center in order to bring LEAP to fruition."*

*- Nancy Thompson, Vice President and Dean of Students*

*- Meredith Bonham, Senior Associate Dean of Students for Strategic Initiatives*



# Levitt Public Service Interns Summer 2012

## Levitt Public Service Interns

**Levitt Public Service Internship Awards** provide funding for students who have secured an unpaid summer internship that focuses on some aspect of public service. Thanks to this program, thirteen students were able to explore careers in public service by working with a government agency, a non-profit, or a non-governmental organization.

**Emily Anderson '13** interned at Journey Home, a non-profit that works to combat homelessness in the Greater Hartford, CT region. Anderson interviewed homeless individuals using a survey she created to determine the underlying issues of unemployment. She also helped to create a new Homelessness Prevention program. "With my internship funding," Anderson said, "I could afford to work full-time completely unpaid and learn much more than I ever could as a volunteer or part-time employee."

**Elly Field '13** interned at The Connecticut Coalition against Domestic Violence, an organization that works to implement policies that will improve Connecticut's response to domestic violence. Field conducted literature reviews on risk factors of experiencing domestic violence and created survey questions for member agencies. Field's internship solidified her interest in public service, and she hopes to conduct research that will "increase our knowledge and allow us to help problems such as domestic violence."

**Grace Fulop '13** interned at LIFT, a national non-profit organization that embraces holistic solutions to the issue of poverty in the United States. During her internship, Fulop developed a database of available housing programs in the Maryland counties surrounding Washington, DC and worked directly with clients to help them find employment, housing, and public assistance. "I have been unsure whether I would like to pursue a career in public service through non-profits or the government sector," Fulop said. "I am now planning on pursuing a masters degree in public policy after Hamilton."

**Catherine Gold '14** interned in the Patient Services Department of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, a voluntary health organization which aims to cure blood cancers and improve the lives of patients and their families. Gold worked to forge relationships between the organization and local elected officials and doctors. "I am learning so much and feel as though I am truly making a difference to help the department in their very important work," Gold said.

**Jasmina Hodzic '13** interned at the International Organization for Migrations, an organization that aims to assist individuals displaced during the period of "ethnic cleansing" which occurred during the 1990s in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As part of her internship, Hodzic researched migration issues and wrote a report on human trafficking for labor exploitation. She also attended a meeting with Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations. "The internship provided me with the essential non-academic experience that will help me translate classroom lessons into public service," Hodzic said.

# Levitt Public Service Interns Summer 2012

**Lauren Howe '13** interned at the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, a branch of the Massachusetts government that focuses on improving and sustaining the agricultural sector of the Commonwealth. Howe worked within the legal branch with a focus on the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, a law that regulates agricultural activities on private land. "The funding prevented me from having to compromise my personal interests simply for a paycheck, allowing me to experience work in a sector of great personal interest," Howe said.

**Stephanie Ingraham '13** interned at the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, a branch of the Connecticut state government tasked with conserving the natural resources of Connecticut and increasing access to renewable energy throughout the state. Ingraham's work focused on material and solid waste management, where she traveled to various sites and worked on permit issues concerning these sites. "This internship funding has helped me enormously," Ingraham said. "I can put my strongest foot forward when applying for jobs this coming year."

**Peter Maher '13** interned in the Atlanta Police Department's Criminal Investigation Division. Maher's work focused on assisting Investigators on case investigations of crimes including homicides, carjackings, shootings, stabbings, robberies, burglaries and domestic violence incidents. He also completed intelligence based work, compiling various documents to assist sworn Detectives and Officers in fugitive apprehension efforts. "In short," Maher wrote, "the experience I had was absolutely extraordinary."

**Erin Sullivan '13** interned at The Institute for Immigrant Concerns, an organization that serves the New York City refugee and immigrant population. The Institute provides ESOL instruction, referrals to social services and employment preparation and placement. Sullivan led a variety of ESOL classes, and with the support of staff members was able to modify the curriculum to fit the needs and interests of her students. "Leading a class for the first time has been challenging, but I'm also really enjoying it and hope to get another chance like this one soon."



*Jose Vazquez at work as an  
intern at the  
Heart of America Foundation*

# Levitt Public Service Interns

## Summer 2012

**Nicholas Solano '14** spent his summer working with Assistant District Attorney Charlie Bartoloni in the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office in Boston, Massachusetts. The office is New England's busiest district attorney's office, handling approximately 50,000 criminal cases each year. Solano, who intends to pursue a law degree, not only reported daily court proceedings to Bartoloni, but also researched prisoner histories and wrote parole summaries and memorandums that were used during parole hearings. "Before beginning this internship, I already felt a strong desire to pursue a career in public service. My work thus far has only emboldened this desire, exposing me to a crucial component of society: how the government strives to maintain order and provide a safe environment for its citizens."

**Emma Taylor '13** interned at Preble Street, an organization that strives to tackle the issues of hunger and homelessness in the Portland, Maine area. Taylor worked on a variety of projects, including overseeing daily Bag Lunch preparation at the Preble Street Day Shelter Kitchen and implementing a mini-grant from Healthy Maine Partnerships to provide computer access to pantry clients at multiple area food pantries. "I have volunteered and interned at many non-profits. I have known for quite a long time that this is what I would like to pursue as a career. Preble Street, however, has very quickly provided me with an end goal, a place that does exactly what its mission states in both the immediate and long-term assistance it provides."

**Jose Vazquez '15** interned at The Heart of America Foundation, a non-profit organization whose focus is to provide children the tools to read, succeed, and make a difference. Vazquez worked with READesign, a library makeover program that revitalizes school libraries in areas of high need. He researched potential schools and had the opportunity to lead a group of volunteers that painted a mural in one of the recipient schools. After witnessing the opening ceremony for a library that his team had designed and planned, Vazquez said, "It was an inspiring experience to watch the kids as they entered their new library and hear one child say that he wishes he could live in the library. That made me realize the importance of public service and what it means for a community to show that they care about children and their education."

**Maggie Whalen '14** interned at No Labels, a non-profit organization seeking to end hyper-partisanship in Congress. Whalen put her Hamilton education to work, writing and editing micro-targeted emails to constituents, op-eds and blog posts, and even co-authoring an op-ed that was published in The Hill, the Congressional newspaper. She also had the opportunity to observe hearings and events on behalf of the organization, evaluating and analyzing new methods for No Labels to further cooperation within Congress. "Seeing and being involved in the operational side of a small non-profit has been exciting, and has affirmed my desire to go into public service in the non-profit sector."

**Jacqueline Winter '14** interned at Horizons for Homeless Children, a non-profit organization based out of Boston, Massachusetts that provides direct service programs to families who are homeless. Winter spent her summer researching organizations doing similar work on the issue of childhood homelessness in an effort to coordinate advocacy efforts. She also focused on mapping out the regional political landscape as it relates to homelessness. "My experience so far has absolutely impacted my decision to pursue a career in public service."

# Levitt Student Research Summer 2012

## Levitt Summer Research Fellows

Every summer, the Levitt Center funds students who wish to pursue a research question of their choosing. The students work closely with a faculty advisor on their project which culminates in a 25-30 page paper and a poster session over Parents' Weekend where they publically share the results of their research. This summer nine students were selected to be Levitt Summer Research Fellows.

**Julian Aronowitz '14** spent his summer researching financial institutions in an attempt to determine the point at which they become "too big to fail." Such institutions have accounted for more than \$12 trillion in government bailout spending and have sparked controversy regarding lender responsibility. Aronowitz utilized empirical economic analysis, mathematical tools, and computer modeling in his research. Specifically, he wrote two programs in C++, a computer programming language, to further his work. Aronowitz was able to "teach [himself] about the financial crisis while using and improving [his] math and computer science skills". This experience allowed him to gain a deep insight into the 2008 financial crisis, and hone his economic analysis skills. Professor of Economics Elizabeth Jensen served as Aronowitz's faculty advisor.

**Beril Esen '13** spent her summer studying the issue of domestic violence in her native city of Istanbul, Turkey. Although Turkish laws no longer condone the physical abuse of women, domestic violence is still a prevalent occurrence. In addition to the physical abuse, Esen cited the psychological, sexual, verbal, and economic abuse as salient concerns. Esen visited various Turkish university libraries and interviewed key figures in the movement against domestic abuse. "This research helped me realize the Turkish government's huge impact on its community, and therefore its significance in developing the country," said Esen. Lecturer in Economics and Women's Studies Nescan Balkan served as Esen's faculty advisor.

**Martin Lavallee '14** spent his summer studying the plight of Honduran Campesino Farmers. Over the past four years, more than forty Campesino Farmers have been killed over land disputes. Lavallee interviewed campesinos, public officials, and land reform experts to gain insight into the situation. He discovered that campesinos face several barriers to economic mobility; however, campesinos have begun to establish agricultural cooperatives. Profits from these organizations are reinvested in agricultural equipment, wells, and schools. Lavallee is encouraged by this progress, although he realizes that the campesinos have a long road ahead. Professor of Government Stephen Orvis and Anibal Delgado-Fiallos, Lavallee's grandfather, served as advisors on this project.

**Melissa Mann '13** spent her summer conducting research with the Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corps, which utilizes federal and state grants to cleanup and redevelop brownfields. These plots of land, which result from urban decay, are often tarnished by chemical and industrial waste. Mann led a group of fellow researchers in the first step of applying for a grant from the Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program (BOA). Mann produced a survey for the remaining businesses, interviewed local community organizations, and consulted medical experts to gain a holistic perspective of the brownfields' effects. "It's certainly a lot of work, but it's very exciting," she said. Associate Professor of Government Peter Cannavo served as Mann's faculty advisor.

# Levitt Student Research Summer 2012

## Levitt Summer Research Fellows

**Jimmy Nguyen '14** spent his summer conducting a comparative study of prison systems across countries. In particular, he set out to examine the United States, Australia, Japan, England, and France. Most of his research, however, focused on the American prison system. Evidence suggests that the War on Drugs targets young African Americans disproportionately. Although white American youths have higher rates of drug usage than black American youths, police officers are more likely to arrest a young African American. Nguyen found similar results amongst Australia's aboriginal population. Identifying these trends now will help improve prison systems throughout the world. Professor of English Doran Larson served as Nguyen's faculty advisor.

**Ashley Perritt '14** spent her summer conducting a study on class profiling in hospital emergency rooms and how it affects patient care. Perritt observed how patients' physical appearance and class status affected their levels of care and treatment options. Perritt says that "profiling [in hospital emergency rooms] will never be completely eradicated, and that's not a problem, because accurate profiling can sometimes lead to more personalized care." Upon her return to Hamilton, Perritt plans to co-write a paper on the topic, and give a public presentation to the Hamilton community about her findings. Associate Professor of Women's Studies Vivyan Adair served as Perritt's faculty advisor.

**Pauline Wafula '13** spent her summer studying the correlation between AIDS and education in her native Kenya. Over the past decade, HIV/AIDS prevalence has fallen from thirteen percent to eight percent; however, women still suffer from the disease at a disproportionate rate. Wafula's research revealed that women with a secondary education have a 3.1 percent lower HIV/AIDS prevalence rate than women with no education; this number increased when considering women with higher education. Wafula believes that the expansion of free education could lead to a decrease in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. "The funding that I received in order to conduct my research has yielded results that will be a step in compelling policymakers to take action," Wafula said. Associate Professor of Economics Stephen Wu served as Wafula's faculty advisor.



*Photo taken by Nicholas  
Yepes '15 while researching  
in Paraguay.*



# Levitt Student Research Summer 2012

## Levitt Summer Research Fellows

**Joshua Yates '14** spent his summer studying the internal struggle between Israel's secular Jewish population and its ultra-orthodox population of Haredim. Today, Yates describes a "palpable hatred" of the Haredim by the secular Israeli majority because of their privileges. Conversely, the elder Haredim population frowns upon secular Israelis. Yates hopes that the Haredim will eventually merge with Israeli society. Yates claims, "Israel has never had a reformation as Christianity did. Is Israel a Jewish state, or a state of Jews? The difference is important, and until Israel answers this question, the conflict will remain." Professor of History Shoshana Keller served as Yates's faculty advisor.

**Nicholas Yepes '15** spent his summer studying how to best meet the basic needs of indigenous migrants in Paraguay. He interviewed indigenous migrants, tribal leaders, and government employees, revealing the struggles that indigenous immigrants face, including education and language barriers. These barriers often prevent indigenous children from attending school, where children learn to speak fluent Spanish. Yepes said, "I benefited by getting experience in research, learning about different cultures, and using Spanish as a tool in a professional setting." Assistant Professor of Economics Emily Conover and Associate Dean of Students for Off-Campus Study Carol Drogus served as Yepes's faculty advisors.



*Erika Marte discusses her summer research at the annual Levitt Center poster session. Photo by Nancy Ford*

# Levitt Student Research Summer 2012

## Levitt Summer Research Groups

Levitt Research Group Grants support groups of two to three Hamilton students completing summer research projects under the supervision of one faculty adviser. The research projects completed by each individual student in the group last for 8 to 10 weeks and help to answer an overarching research question. Students in research groups and their faculty advisers meet face-to-face regularly to coordinate and communicate research efforts. The grants are intended to encourage faculty publication as well as faculty-student publications. Projects that have output that will be useful for policy makers or other researchers are also encouraged.

The Levitt Center funded 5 Research Group projects during the summer of 2102:

**Chaise LaDousa, with Anna Zahm '13, Grace Parker Zielinski '14 and Melissa Segura '14,** spent the summer conducting a study on methods of language instruction and the relationship between language and citizenship. Their work included the classroom instruction (at BOCES) of adult students of all ages from many different countries, as well as recording of in-class field notes and conducting student interviews. One of the group's key goals was to investigate the relationship between citizenship and English as a Second Language (ESL) by learning why students at the BOCES center chose to pursue their studies. Based on their interviews and classroom interactions, the three student researchers found that the reasons immigrants choose to pursue English language studies are highly varied, ranging from pragmatic desires, such as better employment opportunities, to less tangible desires, such as the need to feel like part of the community. While the three found their research to be both compelling and interesting, their time spent teaching turned out to be the most rewarding element of their project.

**Chaise LaDousa also worked with Paige Cross '13, Trevor Howe '14, and Kara Vetrano '13** on a related research project, titled "Organizing to Teach Literacy, Reading Cultural Significance." Through interviews with teachers, administrators, and learners at various Literacy Centers in Utica, the students analyzed the concept of the "digital divide," exploring how broadband technology, the internet, and other digital technology act as both a resource and a detriment to low income populations. LaDousa hopes to integrate materials from these projects into his upcoming course Ethnography of Literacy and Visual Language, and to secure a grant from the Spencer Foundation to allow for a continuation of this summer's research.

In addition, Chaise LaDousa, Paige Cross, and Anna Zahm presented papers based on this research at the Northeastern Anthropological Association Conference at the University of Maryland on March 2. In a panel entitled "Constructing Success: Ethnographies of Teaching and Learning among Adults in the US," LaDousa presented a paper entitled "Narrating Adult Learning in the Shadow of the Digital Divide," Cross presented "An Investigation into the Assignment of Learning Disabilities in Elementary and Adult Education," and Zahm presented "A Discourse of Denial: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Immigrants and ESL in the Land of Opportunity."

LaDousa commented, "I could not foresee how valuable this experience would be for me... This sort of intensive field research has been amazing and I cannot think of how I could have done it otherwise."

# Levitt Student Research Summer 2012

## Levitt Summer Research Groups

**Andrew Holland, with Emily Delbridge '13 and Katherine Delesalle '14; and Carole Bellini-Sharp, with Victoria Harbour '14 and Erika Marte '15,** spent the summer conducting research on the first stage of a three-year project, "Bricks: An Intersection of Architecture and Community," which examines the history of the Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School in Utica. The students canvassed the community to determine how the school has influenced the surrounding area, and how the various renovations and transformations of the structure have been received by the community. The students noted that opinions within the community were often sharply polarized. Some individuals valued the building for its architectural ingenuity and historical significance and sought to preserve it, while others were eager to start a new chapter and revitalize the land for another purpose. One of the project's goals is to understand how public architecture influences the surrounding community.

Professor Holland noted "Working one-on-one (or two-on-one) with the students, in a non-classroom environment, provided the opportunity for students' personal learning and growth on many levels. These areas ranged from everyday organizational and time management skills to developing a deeper understanding of the relationship between a community, its architecture and the forces that shape it." Holland and Bellini-Sharp will build on the impressive amount of interview and archival data gathered this summer to create a theatrical piece with a focus on Theodore Roosevelt School. The second two phases of the project, to be carried out in the summers of 2013 and 2014, will involve the scripting, imagery and production of the play.



*Hamilton student Emily Delbridge '13, discusses her summer research project with Dean of Faculty, Patrick Reynolds, at the annual Levitt Center Summer Research poster session. Photo by Nancy Ford*

# Levitt Student Research Summer 2012

## Levitt Summer Research Groups

**Phil Klinkner, with Peter Adelfio '13 and Benjamin Anderson '14**, conducted a controlled field experiment analyzing methods of voter behavior, in an attempt to understand what factors might increase voter turnout. The first step of Adelfio and Anderson's project was to conduct research on the various field experiment methods available for analyzing voter behavior. Given their limited resources, the students decided to conduct a mass mailing field experiment using calls to civic duty and efficacy with a sample of Republican Senate primary voters taken from a list of the approximately 2,200 registered Republican voters in the town of Kirkland. The students divided the list into two experimental groups and a control group. The first experimental group was encouraged to vote with letters presenting a message of efficacy and while the second group was encouraged to vote with letters presenting a message of civic duty. After the June 26th New York Republican senate primary, the two students navigated further public information requests in order to obtain the primary voter list and then compiled their results. They found that both the recipients of the efficacy letters and the civic duty letters voted at a rate of nearly one third greater than their control group counterparts (letter recipients voted at an average rate of over 16 percent while non-recipient voted at a rate of less than 13 percent).

## Levitt Summer Research Groups for Summer 2013

The Levitt Center is funding five additional research projects this summer with nine faculty and sixteen students representing the Arts, the Humanities, the Sciences, and the Social Sciences.

**Professors Brent Rodriguez-Plate and Robert Knight with Hannah O'Connell '14 Alison Ritacco '14**  
"Religious Spaces in Transition"

**Professor Ann Owen with Samantha Sherman '15, Timothy Cowan '15, and Kelly Osterling '15**  
"Community Development Successes and Failures in Small Cities"

**Professors Andrew Holland and Carol Bellini-Sharp with Katherine Delesalle '14, Lizzie Buchanan '15, and Allison Schuette '16**  
"BRICKS: An Intersection of Community and Architecture"

**Professor Todd Rayne with Zachary Pilson '16, Andy Chen '16, and John McGuinnis '16**  
"Solar-powered Evaporation-condensation Device for Alternative Energy"

**Professors Herm Lehman, Phil Klinkner, Dave Bailey, and Todd Rayne with Shea Nagle '16, Ben Ligas '14, Nicole LaBarge '15, Scott Pillette '14, and Sally Bourdon '15**  
"Interdisciplinary Research on the Impact of Lead Exposure"



# Research in the Classroom

## Youth Poll

Hamilton students Nick Anastasi, Jack Cartwright, Matthew Creeden, Will Rusche, Jesse Stinebring, and Hashem Zikry, under the supervision of Professor Klinkner, conducted a national poll on partisan attitudes toward the Fall Presidential election results and President Obama. Going into the 2012 election, both Democrats and Republicans expressed concerns about the fairness of the election. Only 15 percent of Republicans and 19 percent of Democrats were very confident that the election would be decided fairly. After the election, fears about voter fraud abated among Democrats but skyrocketed among Republicans, with 58 percent of Republicans not confident at all about the fairness of the election.

	REPUBLICANS		DEMOCRATS	
	Pre-Election	Post-Election	Pre-Election	Post-Election
Very Confident	15	14	19	82
Somewhat Confident	52	29	53	16
Not Confident At All	33	58	28	2

Republicans are particularly concerned about voter fraud and intimidation in big urban areas, with 32 percent of them believing that it had a big impact on the election, 49 percent believing it had some impact, and only 19 percent believing it had no impact.

Since before he was elected, President Barack Obama has been dogged by rumors that he was born outside of the United States and, therefore, ineligible to serve as President. Despite releasing his long-form birth certificate in 2011, these rumors have persisted. In particular, between 40 and 70 percent of Republicans still believe that President Obama may have been born outside of the U.S.

Furthermore, most of those who question President Obama's place of birth are not just expressing negative views toward him without considering the implications. When asked in a follow-up question about whether they thought being born outside of the U.S. would make Barack Obama "ineligible under the U.S. Constitution to be president," 72 percent of those who thought the President might have been born outside of the U.S. believed that he would be ineligible to be president. These results suggest that a substantial portion of Republicans is inclined to accept the worst about President Obama, regardless of facts, and believe that he is not a legitimate president.

*Excerpted from a Hamilton College news article written by Vige Barrie*



# Levitt Center Speakers

## Speaker Series

The Levitt Center Speaker Series is committed to enhancing the academic experience of our students by introducing them to a wide array of intellectually challenging speakers. The Series features many speakers with substantial academic and policy experience, an invaluable asset in helping students make the connection between the classroom and policies enacted in the real world. Students and other audience members have the opportunity to engage speakers in thoughtful discussion following each lecture. Our three program areas, Inequality and Equity, Security, and Sustainability; as well as our Leadership and Social Entrepreneurship initiatives, provided a focus for our yearlong lecture series, as well as for our Faculty Lunch series and our student-run Think Tank. A new program, Public Health and Well-Being, has been approved and will begin sponsoring lectures this coming fall.

### Inequality and Equity Program

The Program on Inequality and Equity investigates the factors that affect the distribution of income, distribution of health outcomes, impact of policy on intergenerational equity, welfare analysis, discrimination, access to the legal system and the role of incentives, race, gender, and immigration. Paul Hagstrom, Professor of Economics, is the Director of the Inequality and Equity Program.

### Security Program

The Security Program centers on both domestic and international security. Security issues encompass the safety and protection of persons and property, food supply, market exchange, national security, banking and security regulation, cultural preservation, cyber security, local law enforcement, and public health among other public and private concerns across nations, and cultural values and institutions. Frank Anechiarico, Maynard-Knox Professor of Government and Law, is the Director of the Security Program.

### Sustainability Program

The Sustainability Program is an interdisciplinary program that supports research as well as programs that complement and enrich classroom learning. This broad-based, multi-faceted initiative promotes both academic research on sustainable practices, and policies to achieve them, as well as hands-on learning experiences for Hamilton students. Peter Cannavò, Associate Professor of Government, is the Director of the Sustainability Program.

### Public Health and Well-Being Program

The new Public Health and Well-Being Program is a broad-based interdisciplinary program that supports research on all dimensions of public health and wellbeing as well as programs that complement and enrich classroom learning. Herm Lehman, Professor of Biology, has been appointed the Director of the Public Health and Well-Being Program.

# Levitt Center Speakers

## Inequality and Equity Program

### Michelle Alexander: *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in an Age of Colorblindness*

Michelle Alexander, Associate Professor of Law at Ohio State University, presented a lecture to a packed house in the Hamilton College Chapel on her bestselling book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. Alexander argued that the War on Drugs has led to a self-perpetuating system of injustice and racism that has had a disproportionately detrimental effect on the lives of poor minorities. The process of mass incarceration has become so far reaching that Alexander sees it as a modern-day Jim Crow system. Alexander called for increased awareness of this issue, a grassroots movement to change the system, and a culture committed to helping formerly incarcerated persons re-establish themselves upon release from prison. Professor Alexander's talk attracted citizens from the College, the local community, and from across New York State.

### Annette Lareau: *Unequal Childhood, Unequal Adulthood: Class, Race, and Family Life*

Annette Lareau, the Stanley I. Shear Professor of Sociology at University of Pennsylvania, visited campus to give a lecture about her book, *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Lareau began the lecture by sharing her experiences conducting research for her book. Ten years ago she started shadowing twelve children of different class backgrounds, intending to observe the ways in which their socio-economic status affected their lives. The results were definitive: "The middle class kids seemed younger, livelier, were off in college... the working class and poor kids had hopes and dreams too, but were worn down." Lareau cited differences in child rearing methods as the critical variable that led to the widened gap between the children.



Michelle Alexander speaking at the Hamilton College Chapel.

# Levitt Center Speakers

## Security Program

### David Wisner: The Crisis of the European Union and the Future of Greece

David Wisner opened his lecture by joking that if the title of the lecture were reversed and became “The Crisis of Greece and the Future of the European Union,” he would be giving the same presentation. Wisner argued that the devaluation of the Euro has made it nearly impossible for Greece to stay in the European Union. However, he also argued that a departure from the EU would necessitate the reinstatement of the drachma, currently a valueless currency, which would further the economic and political instability of Greece. Wisner concluded that Greece can neither stay within nor leave the EU; its fate is to remain on the precipice of collapse.

### Earl Devaney: How to Provide Transparency and Accountability for Over \$832 Billion: Oversight of the Stimulus Package

Devaney, the former Inspector General of the Department of the Interior, oversaw a program that sought to drastically reduce fraud in the overseeing of the implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, more commonly known as the stimulus package. Devaney and his team were able to decrease the amount of fraud by instituting a computer program, the first of its kind built for a federal agency, which tracks the grants distributed by the government. This advance in technology allowed the department to reduce fraud to less than one percent of the grants under the stimulus package by allowing citizens to see where the funds are going and how they are being used in neighborhoods.

### Jim Jacobs: Can Gun Control Work?

Jacobs, the Warren E. Burger Professor of Law at the NYU School of Law, provided a historical survey of gun control efforts, so as to explain the political context of today's gun control debate. According to Jacobs, the current gun control debate is the most wide reaching and contentious since the 1993-1994 debate that resulted in the original assault weapons ban. Yet following Sandy Hook, only four states have passed their own new gun control measures while seventeen others have taken action to expand gun rights. Overall, Jacobs neither endorsed nor discredited gun control as a public policy response to the social ills associated with firearms.

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### **The Levitt Center is fortunate to have a large staff of dedicated and talented student workers**

Office workers: Bonnie Buis, Trang Nguyen, Barsha Baral, Grace Fulop, David Morgan, Cecelie Pikus, Anna Paikert, Ujjwal Pradhan, Lily Rothman, Marghuerta Scott, Matt Sherman, Dylan Wulderk, Evan Warnock, Tsion Tesfaye, Alexandra Nasto, Amy Song, Jose Mendez, Wenlu Weng, Ming Tang, Hunter Green, Jennifer Rougeux, Nick Solano, Brady Sprague

Drivers: Liz Amster, Athina Chartelain, Brendan Doherty, Peter Laciano, Grace Zielinski, Isabel Oskwarek, Joelle Baer, Isabel Dau, Anne Govern, Emma Hedley, Lindsey Luker, Karly Moore, Carter White, Stephanie Muller

Speaker article summaries are excerpted from articles written by Grace Fulop '13, Hunter Green '16, Marghuerita Scott '13, Nick Solano '14, Brady Sprague '15, and Dylan Wulderk '13

# Levitt Center Speakers

## Sustainability Program

### Michael Greenstone: Is Adaptation the Only Solution to Climate Change?

Michael Greenstone discussed the issue of climate change and its effect on the future. Greenstone, the 3M Professor of Environmental Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and director of the Hamilton Project, conducts extensive research on the cost and benefits of climate change as well as governments' roles in handling the issue. He has concluded that adaptation is not only the necessary, but also the inevitable solution to climate change. Greenstone believes that research into adaptation methods for both developed and developing countries is critical for the survival of future generations.

### Paul Cawood Hellmund: Greenways: Reconnecting the Social and Ecological Fabric of a Fragmented World

The greenway, as Paul Cawood Hellmund explained, is an ecological highway—a strip of land to serve both people and wildlife. A graduate of Harvard and Colorado State Universities and the President/Director and Professor of Design and Planning at Conway School, Hellmund spoke passionately about the importance of incorporating greenways into city planning in order to preserve biodiversity. Stressing the fact that as populations expand and cities develop, greenways go a long way in addressing the local environment, Hellmund pointed to the need for environmentally friendly transportation. He jokingly asked the audience to consider creating a bike path from Hamilton College to New York City, but, as he said, “why not?”



*Michael Greenstone speaks at the Hamilton College Chapel. Photo by David Morgan.*

# Levitt Center Speakers

## Sustainability Program, continued

### Laura Steinberg: Community, Infrastructure Resilience, and Disasters: Why Can't We Get it Right?

Laura Steinberg, Dean of the L.C. Smith college of Engineering and Computer Science at Syracuse University, began her talk with an overview of the lecture's four key areas: disaster management, the case of Hurricane Katrina, identifying vulnerability and resilience, and cascading disasters with an environmental focus. She then explained different approaches to disasters including mitigation, preparation, response, and recovery. On the whole, she argued that while expensive, people ought to focus more on mitigation because it would reduce the costs and improve the effectiveness of preparation, response, and recovery. Next, Dr. Steinberg gave a riveting explanation of why Hurricane Katrina turned into such an enormous disaster, from the levees breaking to the sludge that coated streets once the water was pumped out. Dr. Steinberg then used the example of Katrina to show how easily vulnerability and resiliencies can be identified in a community. If warnings about these vulnerabilities had been heeded, the impact of disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy could have been reduced substantially.

### Breena Holland: Public Health and Environmental Justice in an Era of De-Industrialization: A Role for Community-Engaged Academic Research

Holland, Associate Professor of Political Science at Lehigh University, used the case study of Bethlehem, PA to illustrate how environmental justice theory becomes more complicated in the context of deindustrialization, as environmental threats are often not visible to the eye. In the case of Bethlehem, Holland mobilized researchers and local community members around the issue of PM2 particulate pollution, which was unequally affecting the low-income areas surrounding the former Bethlehem Steel Mill and contributing to high asthma rates. Holland believes that academic research and local community involvement can work together to confront local policy makers with evidence, and have an influence on stopping the global and economic forces that are undermining local communities. The case study of Bethlehem shows how local citizens can take action and fight against larger industries and their seemingly unstoppable consequences. Raising awareness and organizing collective action are two ways that academic research can utilize its extensive resources and become engaged in the community and bring about positive change.

### Weiss: The Meat of the Global Food Crisis

The Levitt Center, the Arthur Coleman Tuggle Fund and Hamilton's Slow Food group hosted Tony Weis, Associate Professor at the University of Western Ontario and author of *The Global Food Economy: The Battle for the Future of Farming*. Weis, in covering the global food crisis, drew heavily from not only his first book, but also his future book, *The Ecological Hoofprint: The Global Burden of Industrial Livestock*. He explained in detail the "footprints" that the global food crisis leaves on land, atmosphere, water, public health, inter-species relations, and the degradation of work. While the global food crisis presents a dismal, present situation, Weis explained that he has hope. Soaring organic demand, rising concern about climate change, community resistance to large-scale farming, and much more give Weis hope that things can change. The ultimate challenge, as Weis notes, is to embrace our hope while taking initiative to "widen and connect."



# Levitt Center Speakers

## Leadership and Social Entrepreneurship Speakers

### Panel Discussion on Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship

The panelists, Steve Culbertson '79, Alon Hillel-Tuch '07, Haley Reimbold '06, Nancy Roob '87, and Mark Montgomery, began the discussion with advice for students hoping to become social entrepreneurs. Although the personal experience of each panelist was unique, a common thread connected all of his or her advice: "follow your passion." Culbertson defined innovation as a process of following your passion and using your skills to make improvements in the society. Roob spoke on the importance of "checking your ego at the door," explaining that investing in existing functional solutions is often more effective than reinventing to solve every problem. Hillel-Tuch cited the importance of confidence, because "you learn by trying, and keep in mind that inexperience can lead to new perspectives." Montgomery emphasized the need to take risks, reminding students that "comfort leads to complacency". The panelists recounted their own obstacles and challenges associated with social entrepreneurship and engaged in a lively discussion with the attending students, faculty and staff.

### A Weekend of Lectures and Workshops on Social and Commercial Entrepreneurship

Over the March Trustee weekend, the Levitt Center – in conjunction with the Career Center and the COOP – sponsored talks and information sessions to get students thinking about social innovation and spur discussion about Hamilton College's 3rd Annual Pitch Competition. The weekend began with a keynote speech by Chuck Harris P '13, Portfolio Manager and Director of Capital Aggregation at the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. Harris, who brings a wealth of knowledge from the financial and non-profit sectors, provided valuable insights into both industries. Last year's Pitch Competition winners, Kevin Bourque '05 and Joshua Kunkel '04, echoed many of Harris's points about making a successful pitch. Other weekend events included a social entrepreneurship workshop at Colgate; a discussion with Mark Kasdorf '06, Co-Founder of Intrepid Pursuits, and Founder of the Hamilton College Pitch Competition; and individual meetings with Harris, Bourque and Kunkel.



*Tsion Tesfaye '16, listens intently to a panel discussion on Social Entrepreneurship  
Photo by Nancy L. Ford.*

# Levitt Center Speakers

## Leadership and Social Entrepreneurship Speakers

### Jon Isham: Social Entrepreneurship and the Liberal Arts

Jon Isham, Professor of Economics and Director of the Center on Social Entrepreneurship at Middlebury College discussed the relationship between social entrepreneurship and a liberal arts education, detailing how students can study social change through their majors. He outlined Middlebury's newly designed social entrepreneurship program, which includes seminars, winter term classes, fellowships and summer grants. According to Isham, these opportunities allow students to reflect, connect, analyze, and engage in the community. Most importantly, the Center for Social Entrepreneurship seeks to say "yes" to students so that their enthusiasm can be harvested to create social value.

### Bushnell: Leadership: Lessons from Nairobi '98 and Benghazi '12

Prudence Bushnell, former U.S. ambassador to Kenya and Honduras and CEO of Sage Associates, grew up at a time when there were only a handful of female leaders, yet has successfully demonstrated leadership at the highest levels. She argues that leadership is not about holding any particular position of power; it is about having and utilizing a particular set of skills in order to get people involved and motivated. She shared the challenges she faced in terrorist attacks in Nairobi, Kenya. At the time, Bushnell utilized all her resources, collected her teams, took responsibility for every life lost, and successfully handled the situation. As the leader of the Levitt Leadership Institute, she is committed to developing these skills in rising leaders and will continue this work with the Levitt Leadership Institute.



*Former Ambassador  
Prudence Bushnell  
conversing with Hamilton  
students.  
Photo by Nancy Ford*

# Levitt Center Programs

## Levitt Scholars

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. 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.

This year, 13 students participated in the program. In addition to speaking to several area high schools, some 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 comment on the high quality of the students' presentations, and Scholars embraced their task with enthusiasm and enjoyed the experience.

### Participating Schools:

Simsbury H.S., Simsbury, CT  
Academy for Advanced Academics, Miami, FL  
Robert Lindblom Math & Science Academy, Chicago, IL  
Grafton H.S., Grafton, WI  
Kimball Union Academy, Meriden, NH  
Watkins Glen H.S., Watkins Glen, NY  
Geneseo H.S., Geneseo, NY  
Clinton H.S., Clinton, NY  
Camden H.S., Camden, NY  
Manlius Pebble Hill School, Dewitt, NY  
C.W. Baker H.S., Baldwinsville, NY  
Herkimer H.S., Herkimer, NY  
Waterville H.S., Waterville, NY  
Rome Free Academy, Rome, NY

### Levitt Scholars Spring 2012

**Emily Anderson:** "Gendered Political Socialization and the Underrepresentation of Women in U.S. Politics"

**Beril Esen:** "Domestic Violence against Women in Turkey"

**Rachel Sobel:** "Interests and Opportunity: How Taking A Risk Can Lead to A World of Possibilities"

**Ellen Doernberg:** "Commitment to Experience – Shaping our Futures through Risk Taking"

**Eleanor Fausold:** "Beyond High School: Turning Your Goals from Dreams into Reality"

**Liz DaBramo:** "The Secret Danger of Everyday Objects: Bisphenol A"

**Jose Vazquez:** "The Captive Audience: How advertisements shape our lives and learning"

**Richard "Mac" Blessen:** "Civic Engagement: Making Life Better for Other People and Ourselves"

**Ramya Ramnath:** "Language in the Brain"

**Virginia Savage:** "The Ripple Effect: Inspiring Empowerment in Students Against Intolerance"

**Peter Maher:** "City of Rome Police Department Crime Impact Unit"

**Alice Henry:** "Discovering places anew by seeing with new eyes: How interpreting appearances in nature can change your understanding"

**Kathleen Herlihy:** "Sign Language, Classical Artwork, and Anthropology: How I Navigated the Liberal Arts Experience"

# Levitt Center Programs

## Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation

Over the past year, the Levitt Center has been investigating and developing Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation programming. While a contested term, Social Entrepreneurship often refers to the use of entrepreneurial principles, including innovative and market based approaches, to address persistent social problems.

This past year, the Levitt Center has:

1. Hosted speakers and panels on Social Entrepreneurship (in conjunction with the COOP and Career Center)
2. Sent students, faculty, and staff to conferences and workshops on Social Entrepreneurship at Middlebury College, University of San Diego, Colgate University, and Harvard University (with additional financial support from the Dean of Faculty and Student Activities)
3. Received a grant for two AmeriCorps VISTA workers to help support Social Entrepreneurship programming on campus (jointly granted to and administered by Hamilton College, Colgate University, Mohawk Valley Community College and SUNY Institute of Technology)
4. Proposed and received approval to repurpose the back half of the Levitt Center as an Innovation Space to provide support and space for students interested in pursuing social entrepreneurial projects
5. Hired a team of students to help design and administer the Innovation Space, and to assist in outreach to students and in developing Social Entrepreneurial programs

## Other Programs

The Levitt Center supported a number of additional programs that encourage students to explore the world of public affairs either through funding, advising, or by providing office space and transportation.

- Model UN Program
- The Fed Challenge
- Young People's Project, a math tutoring program
- Friends Without Borders, an English for Speakers of Other Languages program aimed at teenagers and young adults
- Rebuilding Together Mohawk Valley
- Hamilton College Micro-finance Club
- Sent a Hamilton student to The Student Conference on US Affairs at West Point
- Provide funding and logistical support for the "I am a Refugee" film project in conjunction with the Digital Humanities Initiative

# Levitt Center Programs

## VITA

VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) is a service learning program that offers free tax help to low- and moderate-income families. Students in Policy, Poverty and Practice (Econ 235), taught by Lecturer in Economics Margaret Morgan-Davie, trained and then worked to assist local residents in applying for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Through their efforts, these Hamilton students are becoming more aware of their civic duties and increasingly proficient in the language of tax returns.

The VITA program was initiated by the Mohawk Valley Asset Building Coalition (MVABC), the United Way of the Mohawk Valley, and the IRS as a way to ensure that qualifying taxpayers would receive Earned Income Tax Credits. The Levitt Center coordinates with MVABC to enlist college students' help with the program. Students in Policy, Poverty and Practice attend IRS TaxWise training and obtain at least basic-level certification. Thereafter, they complete at least 15 hours of electronic tax filing as a part of their class requirement. This year, the students worked at the Resource Center for Independent Living (RCIL) in Utica to complete their hours.

## Think Tank

**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. **Trang Nguyen '14 and Ujjwal Pradhan '15** co-directed Think Tank this academic year.

- "Now what is the Fed doing?", Ann Owen, Henry Platt Bristol Professor of Economics
- "Social Entrepreneurship", Steve Culbertson, President and CEO of YSA (Youth Service America)
- "Discussing the Presidential Election", Phil Klinkner, James S. Sherman Professor of Government
- "First-Year Experience", Stephen W. Orvis, Professor of Government, and Dean Meredith Harper Bonham
- "Understanding Artists, Artworks, and Accusers behind Blasphemous Images", Brent Plate, Visiting Associate Professor of Religious Studies
- "Famous Finance Puzzles", Danny Barth, Assistant Professor of Economics
- "Is there any point to individual ethical action?", Katheryn Doran, Associate Professor of Philosophy
- "A Discussion of Social Entrepreneurship", Evan Warnock, Lia Parker-Belfer, Trang Nguyen, Leah Krause, Nick Solano, Students
- "The Crisis in Europe and the Future of the European Union", Alan Cafruny, Professor of International Affairs
- "Should Alexander Hamilton be your role model?", Frank Anechiarico, Professor of Government and Law
- "What are behind those equal profile pictures on Facebook?", Ada Horne, Louisa Root, and Peggy Piesche, Visiting Instructor of German & Russian Studies
- "Sequestration, Job Losses and the New Washington Economics", Gary Wyckoff, Professor of Government
- "The Economics of Networks: What types of goods exhibit network externalities?", Elizabeth Jensen, Christian A. Johnson Excellence in Teaching Professor of Economics
- "Ignorance is Bliss: The Phenomenon of White Privilege", Todd Franklin, Professor of Philosophy
- "Alcohol, Sex, and Surveys", Larry Knop, Professor of Mathematics



# The Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center



## Project SHINE

**Project SHINE** is a service-learning program that seeks to form intergenerational and intercultural ties between college students and immigrants and refugees. Participating Hamilton College students spend approximately 10-20 hours over the semester assisting adult immigrants and refugees in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and Citizenship Classrooms. This year, 64 students participated in Fall 2012 and 56 in the Spring 2013 term.

Each year students come back with stories of their broadened horizons and of people with different experiences, as well as an appreciation for a person's ability and commitment to learn without the numerous resources that many of their peers have had. When asked about their experiences this year, here are some of our student's responses:

**"Yes! It's life-changing and one semester should be required of every Hamilton student."**

**"I greatly enjoyed my experience working with the students. They come from all over the world with one common goal, and that is the most beautiful thing to me. Their dedication to learning makes me enjoy teaching. Although, I should mention that I learned a lot from them, too. I was not the only teacher. They all taught me the value of an education, how much a smile really helps (and is needed), and the importance of a positive attitude."**

**"You make a difference for these students and if you are having a bad day going to the Refugee Center completely changes your attitude and brightens your day. It is always worth it."**