

President's Update



NEWS FROM PRESIDENT NIRSCHEL

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IN OTHER NEWS...



It's Been a Busy Fall at Roger Williams

The past month Roger Williams has been abuzz with activities and celebrations: The elections in the town of Bristol, as well as across the U.S., have turned in some surprising results. As you know, Roger Williams alumni, students, staff and faculty were involved in several races at all levels of our political process. I'm pleased to mention that our own Ray Cordeiro, associate athletic director, won a seat on the town council, and alumna Diane Mederos handily won re-election as town administrator.

Our good friend, Sen. Linc Chafee, lost his seat to Democrat Sheldon Whitehouse. However, we look forward to welcoming Mr. Whitehouse to our campus again, this time as Senator, early in the New Year.

Over Homecoming and Family Weekend in October, we wrapped up our 50th Anniversary celebration with a dazzling gala at Marble House in Newport. The event helped us raise nearly \$300,000 in scholarship funding, too. Back on campus, nearly 400 guests turned out for our Homecoming Ball as dozens of alumni held a reception at DeWolf Tavern in Bristol.

We also welcomed as a Civil Discourse speaker Bob Geldof, the former punk rocker who has committed his life to bringing aid to the impoverished in Africa. Many of our students didn't know what to expect when they turned out to hear Sir Geldof. For most of our students, Live Aid was before their time. But Geldof's earthy and passionate talk about erasing misery in Africa left a deep impression on our students, faculty and staff. Since then, a number of faculty and students have e-mailed me saying they want to do something concrete to help the people of Africa—it's a classic example of our common commitment to community service—even at a global level. In the coming months, watch these pages for news of how Roger Williams responds to Geldof's challenge as we continue to live up to our motto of "Learning to Bridge the World."

Delegation of Russian Judges Visits Law School

On Wednesday, Nov. 15, the School of Law hosted five judges from Russia who were visiting Rhode Island under the auspices of the Open World Program, a professional and cultural exchange program. The U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island and the World Affairs Council coordinated the judges' weeklong visit, designed to highlight the differences between the American and Russian legal systems.

The groups conversed via a translator, but the judges especially enjoyed the chance to speak Russian with several bilingual students. "The visit exposed the judges to how lawyers are trained in the U.S.," says David A. Logan, dean of the law school. "They also had a chance to learn about the Roger Williams experience by speaking with faculty and students."



Rocker, Activist Bob Geldof Urges Students to Fight for Change

On Tuesday, Oct. 24, rocker, author and activist Bob Geldof brought his story to Roger Williams as part of the Civil Discourse Distinguished Lecture Series. The series title was ironic, Mr. Geldof said, because "People in Britain know me particularly well for the incivility of my discourse."

Sir Geldof (Queen Elizabeth knighted him in 1986) first found fame in the mid-1970s as the lead singer of the Boomtown Rats, an Irish punk band. But as the punk movement declined, Mr. Geldof turned his attention to Africa to decry the devastating famine gripping Ethiopia. He formed the Band Aid group, cut a charity single, raised millions of dollars for famine relief and has since devoted his life to the cause.

At times blatantly irreverent—much to the delight of the student population—Mr. Geldof chronicled his rise from a poor child on the streets of Dublin to the respected advocate for the African cause he is today. He thanked the audience for the U.S.'s contributions to the effort to eliminate hunger, yet implored the students to do more. "You should be very, very proud of yourselves," he said. "But there's still more to do."

UNIVERSITY CALENDAR

DECEMBER 6

Winter Illumination

DECEMBER 6

Socrates Café: Why Practice Tolerance?

DECEMBER 15

Faculty and Staff Holiday Party



“...even under inhumane conditions, the people of Bangladesh hold their heads up high.”

FARNAZ MAHBUB, *SOPHOMORE*

Student Photo Exhibit Showcases Faces of Bangladesh

Summer vacation—for most students, that means relaxing at the beach or working a summer job in their hometown. For Farnaz Mahbub, however, last summer meant a couple of months of hectic travel through her native Bangladesh, camera in hand to capture photos of the local villagers she encountered along the way.

Back at Roger Williams this fall, Farnaz transformed her images into a powerful exhibit that premiered in the University's new Global Gallery (in the lower level of the New Academic Building). “Footprints: The Lives of Local Bangladeshis” drew viewers throughout its monthlong showcase and even earned Mahbub some attention from local media outlets.

Farnaz, who grew up sheltered from the rampant poverty in Bangladesh, embraced the chance to explore her country via the camera lens. The result? More than 40 powerful images of hope. “I want the world to see that even under inhumane conditions,” she says, “the people of Bangladesh hold their heads up high.”

Marine Affairs Director Attends Senate Leadership Summit

Nominated by Sen. Lincoln Chafee, Kristen Fletcher, director of the Law School's Marine Affairs Institute, recently attended a two-day Senate Leadership Summit for Young Professionals in Washington. In a group of more than 300 professionals from across the nation, Ms. Fletcher was the only representative from Rhode Island.

At the forum, participants discussed a range of legislative issues with senior members of the Senate and other government agencies. Topics included financial security, health care, protecting America's competitive edge and homeland security.

Working with professionals from all sectors offers some great perspectives, Ms. Fletcher said. But what surprised her most was how rarely the topic of the environment came up.

“Because I work in the environmental sector, almost everyone I interact with understands the importance of environmental protection,” Ms. Fletcher said. “It was a good lesson for me, having to sell the idea that this is even worth discussing.”



University Debuts Forensic Psychology Master's Program

As part of a continuing effort to develop a wide range of engaging, practical academic programs at the graduate level, the University has created a full-time master's degree sequence in forensic psychology. Psychology professors Don Whitworth and Garrett Berman designed the 39-credit program for college graduates interested in working as forensic clinicians or earning a doctoral degree in psychology.

The program, launched this semester, integrates faculty expertise in mental health, psychology, law and criminal justice into coursework, practicum and research activities. Two tracks will be offered: thesis, for those likely to pursue a Ph.D., and practicum, for those who will enter the field as practicing clinicians.

The department, which expects to enroll 20 full-time students per year, has hired five new faculty members to ensure small class sizes and opportunities for student-faculty research collaborations.

IT Professor and Students Visit RWU Sister School in Vietnam

This September, a trio of Roger Williams delegates embarked on an expedition across the world to American Pacific University, the University's sister school in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. And while the journey offered Doug White, associate professor of computer information systems, and seniors Colin Van Alstine and Gary Autiello the chance to get to know another culture, it was not just a vacation. The group worked tirelessly to explore the possibility of offering Roger Williams courses at APU via the web, using technologies such as Blackboard and audio streaming.

In preparation for the visit, the group crammed on basic Vietnamese. Upon arrival, they immersed themselves in computer labs to talk with Vietnamese students about IT concerns. According to Professor White, their hard work paid off: “We accomplished our main goal—we discovered a definite opportunity for online course offerings in the future.”

Professor White hopes to visit again next year. “I want to expand this program to allow all students to submit proposals,” he says, “so they may complete community service opportunities or internships in Vietnam. It's very important and rewarding to gain international experiences.”

▼ The 50th Anniversary Gala, held at Newport's Marble House on Saturday, was a night to remember. The venue was pretty in pink prior to the arrival of roughly 475 guests. President Nirschel kicked off the evening by presenting 50th Anniversary medallions to former Roger Williams Presidents William Rizzini (left) and Anthony Santoro (center).



◀ Friday's Casino Night was a great way for students and parents to roll into the weekend.

▶ Keynote speaker Vince Papale, inspiration for Disney's film "Invincible," fires up the crowd on Saturday. At Locks of Love (far right), students and guests donated more than 220 inches of hair.



The 50th Anniversary Gala and Homecoming Events—One Wild Weekend

Once again, the University's annual Homecoming and Family Weekend proved a tremendous success with parents and alumni returning to campus in record numbers, especially for Saturday evening's simultaneous events. With a great party at the 50th Anniversary Gala raging in Newport, more than 400 guests kicked up their heels at the Homecoming Ball while dozens of alumni relaxed and reminisced across town at Bristol's DeWolf Tavern. The next morning, a crowd of more than 600 attended the President's Brunch. Kudos to the Homecoming and 50th Anniversary Gala committees for such a great weekend. And congratulations to seniors Al Borrelli and Bobbi-Lynn Anderson, who were voted the 2006 Homecoming King and Queen!



◀ President Nirschel posed with the 2006 Homecoming Court before crowning the King and Queen at half-time of the women's soccer game.

Later Saturday evening, students and parents danced the night away at the Homecoming Ball.



▲ The Roger Williams cheerleaders got the crowd going at Friday's Midnight Madness before the winter sports teams took center stage to launch another great season. The University's dining services staff decorated the weekend's meals with festive Homecoming-themed jack-o'-lanterns.

Opening comments from Maling Ebrahimpour and Sami Nacaroglu echoed the globalization theme of Earl Hesterberg's lecture on the automotive industry.



Car Talk: Auto Industry Guru Addresses Gabelli Business Students

Earl J. Hesterberg, a 31-year veteran of the auto industry and current president and CEO of Group 1 Automotive, shared his take on the "Globalization of the Automotive Industry" to a standing-room-only crowd at the Gabelli School of Business Distinguished Leader Lecture Series.

Mr. Hesterberg—who's led Nissan, Toyota and Ford at different points in his career—offered an insider's perspective on the global interdependence among major manufacturers. His lecture touched on a number of significant issues in the industry including Toyota's climb to the top of the market, the decline in the work force employed by American manufacturers ("It's all about the jobs," Hesterberg says), and the effects of overproduction by car companies worldwide.

Opening comments from Maling Ebrahimpour, dean of the Gabelli School, and Sami Nacaroglu, Roger Williams Board of Overseers member and also an auto industry veteran, echoed the globalization theme of Hesterberg's lecture.



Poll Positions—2006 Election Season Recap

The polls are closed, the ballots counted and the results reported—election season has officially closed. But in the weeks preceding Nov. 7, the Roger Williams campus was a prime destination for political candidates on the campaign trail.

Sheldon Whitehouse, Democratic candidate and eventual winner of Rhode Island's open Senate seat, answered questions from an overflow crowd of students in the Mary Tefft White center, and Republican incumbent Lincoln Chafee visited three days later. Prior to each visit, student supporters for both camps held good-natured demonstrations outside the library, then filed in to hear the candidates speak.

In the same week, the Roger Williams Student Senate hosted the nine candidates for the Bristol Town Council in a forum moderated by political science Professor Hans Schattle.

To help students exercise their responsibility to vote, the University hired a RIPTA shuttle for those who needed transportation to the polls. A group of students joined President Nirschel on the first bus, and the shuttle operated throughout Election Day.



▲ The week before Election Day saw a lot of politically themed action at Roger Williams. The Student Senate sponsored a forum of Bristol town council candidates in the Law School appellate courtroom (top). Supporters of incumbent Sen. Lincoln Chafee demonstrated opposite those in favor of challenger (and eventual winner) Sheldon Whitehouse (pictured) when each candidate visited campus.