EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION FORUM

Experiential education (EE) has been close to the core of the Robert L. Gaudino Memorial Fund (GMF) since its inception, yet until now no effort had ever been made to assess 13 years of work by Gaudino Scholars and others to learn from these varied initiatives. Gaudino Scholar Jennifer Bloxam remedied that “oversight” by organizing a one-day conference/workshop for faculty and staff in October 1995. “Experiential Education at Williams: Past, Present and Future.” This stock-taking made visible a surprisingly large and diverse “critical mass” of experiential educators and experiential learning initiatives.

Professor Bloxam opened the conference by challenging the 37 participants to think of a liberal arts education as one that awakens a passion for learning, and that is both personally and, ultimately, socially transformative. In meeting the threat of irony-tower aloofness, Bloxam asserted, EE can make a significant contribution to achieving core goals of a liberal arts college, especially the aim of preparing the next generation of responsible, public-spirited — indeed, “visionary” — citizens.

THE PAST

The morning session dealt with past and present EE efforts, while the afternoon was devoted to future possibilities. Naturally, Gaudino’s own EE experiments were first on the agenda. One of the 1969/70 participants in “Williams-in-India,” GMF Trustee Dale Riehl ’72, recalled that although Gaudino considered the experiment a failure, “his students, 25 years after the fact, do not share his conclusion. We all learned a great deal about India, about social and political change in a modernizing society, and about art and culture in a society very different from our own. The India program also enriched our self-knowledge and we came to know our individual strengths and weaknesses better. We grew to appreciate the different perspectives each of us and those we met could bring to a common issue of analysis. To most, Williams-in-India was a fulfillment of a true liberal arts education.”

GMF Trustee Paul Peterson ’73 remembered his decision to sign up for Gaudino’s second large-scale educational expedition, Williams-at-Home (WaH), as a reaction to the eerie distance of the academic enterprise on the campus from the turmoil in the country. After the course, Gaudino criticized him for having failed to integrate his experience with his formal education, “for not moving beyond the personal nature of [his] learning.” In Gaudino’s own words, Paul Peterson “was one of [Professor Gaudino’s] failures.” Or was he?

Paul never thought so. As an attorney with the Vermont Public Service Board, who functions as a judge much of the time, Paul is “asked to decide the disputes of people with different claims to authority and different values. I am certain that the unique challenges that I faced [as a WaH participant in 1972] are an essential component of the emotional and intellectual change that, for me, still continues today.” “My WaH experi-

INTERVIEW: THE EXPERIENCE OF ACTIVISM

by Martin Linsky ’61

Zachary Cook, a Williams senior, took a leading role in opposing the awarding of an honorary degree to Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong ’67 at the Fall 1995 Williams Convocation. The event and student and faculty protests of it received substantial media attention here and in Singapore. Several months afterwards, we asked Cook to reflect on his experience.

Dialogue: How did you happen to get involved?

Cook: Activism was fairly new for me. I was in Williams-town for the summer doing research for a professor. I had taken a course from Assistant Professor [George] Crane on the politics of contemporary China, tracing the history of socialism and the growing democracy movement. I was very much influenced by him. I heard rumors about the Convocation and then I read a column. [On July 10, William Safire devoted his New York Times column to the Goh event.] He cited two professors with whom I had taken classes and for whom I had the highest respect. That was the first moment when I said to myself that I had better study the issues.

Dialogue: What did you do then?

Cook: I began to research everything I could on Singapore. I joined an Internet discussion group that debated the whole sequence of events at Williams. I finally decided that I wanted to take a more active role.

Dialogue: What did you do?

Cook: I began to raise money for the counterconvocation from students, faculty, and alumni. College Council co-presidents Amy Whitaker ’96 and Dan Polasky ’96 called a meeting of the senior class at which I spoke briefly. I tried to stress that it was important to think hard on this issue, that there was a significant stake involved in terms of the media coverage, that the convocation was being used by the PAP, the ruling Party in Singapore, as a sign of Western vindication. Then I wrote an op-ed piece in the Williams Record in which I publicly urged students to boycott. I went on the radio. I thought of myself as second-in-command to John Kim ’97, the organizer of the counterconvocation. I realized most students didn’t have the time to research the matter and come to an educated decision. I had had more time. I didn’t try to be a prima donna.

On the day of Convocation, I got up early. I was told that some of the oppositional figures who were going to speak at the counterconvocation were having breakfast at the Williams Inn and so I rushed down there and had breakfast with them. That was a really wonderful experience. There’s nothing quite like being right up next to the people who make decisions and suffer the consequences. They wanted to know about the article I had written. They thought it was excellent. It was really exciting for me. After that I went down to where the senior class was getting their robes and got my robe too. When the seniors lined up at Morgan Hall, I let them know that the counterconvocation was taking place after the Convocation. Then I joined the no-go picket line. The local media came by. I had a protest sign. When Goh walked by we virtually turned around.

Dialogue: What were your thoughts in the days after the event?

Cook: It was something of a thrill. I discovered that activism can be a heady experience. I enjoyed it a great deal. I was disappointed that we hadn’t convinced more classmates to boycott. I did wonder whether or not I had done the right thing. After hearing Goh speak twice, I had

(Continued on page 5)
Scholar's Report, Spring 1996

My second year as Gaudino Scholar continues to be a wonderful opportunity both personally and professionally. While exploring ways in which Gaudino’s educational vision is best realized at Williams today, I have gained new perspectives on the College through contact with a wide range of faculty, staff, and students. In particular, I have had the pleasure of working closely with student Gaudino Interns who assisted with the projects I have initiated: Charlene Hildebrand ’95, Vicki Hsueh ’95, Mitchell Strippling ’98, and Amy Baughcum ’97.

Four projects have occupied me as Gaudino Scholar since the first issue of this Newsletter reached you last Spring.

First, the Gaudino Experiential Course Initiative took the form of an invitation to all faculty. It offered stipends to develop semester courses that “combine the abstract analysis and guided reflection that takes place in the classroom with a significant off-campus experiential component calculated to expose students to unfamiliar and possibly unsettling ways of seeing and experiencing the world outside Williams.”

Two courses are now under development. Over the summer, a team of three faculty members (Laurie Heatherington in Psychology, and Cathy Johnson in Political Science, and I), and four students concentrating in Women’s Studies collaborated to craft a syllabus and organize internships for a mid-level Women’s Studies course, “Feminism in Theory and Practice: Public Policy Issues and Women.” The design combines classroom discussion with internships in agencies that deal with the concerns of women and children. The course, scheduled for Spring of 1997, is crosslisted between Women’s Studies and Political Science and taught by Cathy Johnson.

Another course aims to involve students in the creation and performance of public art. Developed by Peggy Diggs in the Studio Art department, a nationally known proponent and practitioner of public art, and actor and director David Eppel of the Theater department, this course demands that creators, performers and audience alike engage, outside the safety of the museum or the theater, intellectually and emotionally with the most pressing cultural issues of our time. This course should be offered in 1997-98.

Other faculty expressed great interest in this course development initiative, but it became clear to me that most did not have a good sense of what an experiential approach to a liberal arts education might entail, either practically or philosophically. From this realization grew the idea of inviting faculty and staff to talk with each other, Gaudino alumni/ae, and outside experts about experiential education in higher education and at Williams in particular. The resulting one-day conference/workshop, “Experiential Education at Williams College: Past, Present, and Future,” took place in late October. (See the report on this conference beginning on p. 1.)

The third project undertaken this fall was the panel I organized on the Tuesday evening following Convocation entitled “Refections on the Convocation Weekend.” The award of an honorary degree to Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister of Singapore and a graduate of Williams College Center for Developmental Economics, generated considerable and passionate debate on and off campus in the weeks before Convocation. What was missing, and what I tried to provide with this panel, was a public opportunity for reflection afterward. An interesting variety of faculty, staff and students agreed to participate. The discussion was excellent, but attendance, especially by students, was disappointingly low. Several faculty ascribed this turnout to the relatively anti-climactic serenity of the convocation weekend itself. It also demonstrates, I believe, a regrettable tendency for the college community to lose interest in matters of continuing concern once their immediate impact on this campus is past.

The fourth project, the Gaudino Arts Initiative, is ongoing. A core group of faculty, staff and students met last fall to discuss ways the arts could be used to catalyze campus-wide discussion on aesthetic, ethical, social and political issues. As its first exploratory project, this group conceived and undertook the construction of an AIDS Day Memorial Wall, a large A-shaped wall structure that blocked sidewalks outside of Baxter (thereby insisting that a majority of students confront a tangible reminder of AIDS and its victims). The entire structure was painted in solid colors, and to encourage students to “say something” on the wall, colored chalk was distributed to every student’s SU box. The wall was erected on Monday, November 27, and by the following afternoon it was covered with an astonishing variety of student commentary/graffiti, most of which did not engage with the theme or purpose of the wall at all. On World Aids Day, Friday, December 1, two students, in utter silence, painted the entire structure black (recalling the Vietnam War Memorial). It stood until it was taken down in a snowstorm on Sunday. The initiating group continues to wrestle with the question of appropriate follow-up to such projects. The Arts Initiative group, as yet unnamed, will continue its discussions this spring and hopes to create a provocative performance art event focused on the presidential campaign.

I welcome reactions to these projects, and I would be delighted to entertain any ideas you might have for ways to continue Gaudino’s educational vision into the next millennium.

Interview, continued from page 1

I wanted to share Herb’s conviction that the mission of the College, Gaudino’s goals and, therefore, those of the Fund as well, were essentially congruent. Whether expressed by President Mark Hopkins in the 1850’s, or by President Sawyer in the 1960’s, the goals of a liberal arts education at Williams were as clearly present in Richard’s studying Plato with Gaudino in the 1950’s as they were in my trying to respond to Gaudino’s injunction to reflectsearchingly on my experience of living and working with two Black families in Georgia in the early 70’s.

Richard Herzog, in his 1981 meditation on the “Suitable Uses of the Gaudino Fund,” recognized that our efforts could not succeed unless Williams faculty and administrators became seriously interested in our efforts. Slowly, painstakingly, teachers who never knew Gaudino are today joining in dialogue with Gaudino Scholars and alumni who care — intensely — about Williams and its liberal arts mission.

When Richard Herzog calls himself the “Retiring Chair” the stress must be placed exclusively on the word “Chair.” For he — liberally educated by Williams and Mr. Gaudino — can never “retire” from thinking, questioning and doing. As your “reflection” proves, Richard, the flame, the passion of your mind still burns brightly: We know you will continue to nourish the vision, the legacy and the rigor of a program you have helped to shape.

Interview, continued from page 1

Dialogue: So we might not have seen the last of Cook as activist?

Cook: There’s not another burning issue out there right now, but there might be. You spend a tremendous amount of time, so you have to be very certain you care deeply about it and can make a difference.
A REFLECTION FROM THE RETIRING CHAIR

by Richard Hersog '60

"You can't read Plato on the plane to Geneva," Professor Gaudino once remarked. Nor on the plane to Albany. What then, do the alumni trustees of the Gaudino Memorial Fund think they are doing when, twice a year, they gather with faculty trustees of the Fund and, after conducting organizational business, discuss such subjects as the liberal arts, undergraduate education, and intellectual and social life at Williams? Is this not presumptuous for those alumni trustees who are not themselves engaged professionally in an academic discipline or undergraduate education?

Presumptuousness, of course, was a characteristic not entirely unknown to Professor Gaudino. But the alumni trustees, spanning more than 30 years of Williams education, in fact do speak with some authority on a question that is or should be central in the Williams community: what causes a life to be affected deeply and continuously by an education in the liberal arts? That question is not asked or answered by any academic discipline as such. Gaudino — seeking, I believe, an answer to that question — did not define himself by his discipline. He remarked, on more than one occasion, that he was a teacher first and a political scientist second, as David Booth has recalled.

For almost 20 years, the Gaudino Memorial Fund has addressed that central question within the context of the Gaudino legacy; in the words of the Fund's Mission Statement, the Fund seeks "renewed and contemporary expression of Professor Gaudino's educational vision." The enterprise is now past sentimentality or longing. It is open-ended and, at its best, is keenly aware of concrete circumstances on the campus and the changing intellectual and social preoccupations of students and faculty. The Gaudino Scholar, aided by the Trustees, gives expression to the legacy within an ever-changing milieu. The faculty trustees, original thinkers and important figures in their own right at the College, bring new meaning to the legacy. To be a trustee or the Scholar affords wide scope for creativity but also, perhaps paradoxically, requires a measure of what Gaudino called a "suppression of self," here, the discipline to recognize that some scholarly, educational, or political ideas of deep interest to individual trustees are not the work of the Fund.

Gaudino himself did not believe that there was only one answer to the central question. Toward the end of his life, Gaudino initiated ground-breaking experiential courses — Williams-in-India and Williams-at-Home. Gaudino had come to believe that students of that era could not understand or, at least, would not engage the great political texts and the enduring political issues without more experience, and that the personalities and opinions of students had to play a substantive role, like characters in a drama, in the encounter with teachers, texts, and other students.

Experience is not generic; it is specific. Specific individual experiences mattered in understanding the great political texts and the enduring issues. Gaudino saw further: if individual experiences began to matter inside the classroom, then the texts or the enduring issues might begin to matter outside the classroom. This insight drove Gaudino's final effort to integrate the intellectual into the lives of students, to operationalize, so to speak, his conviction that the personal stakes for students in rigorously examining the enduring political issues were large ones. That examination could lead, for example, to an uncomfortable distancing from one's own time and place, to a tough-minded appreciation of both the importance and the limits of theory, or to a better sense of one's own deepest sensibilities. I do not believe that, had he continued to live, experiential education would necessarily have been the culmination of Gaudino's pedagogy, or that he viewed it as an end rather than a means. The end remained for him the illumination of the enduring issues that are generated by the questions, how should we live, and, how should we live together? In different times, students may require or benefit from different means. Indeed, the very notion of enduring political issues may be problematic to many of today's students and faculty. I expect, nonetheless, that the approaches most likely to succeed will consciously seek the personal dimension that distinguished Gaudino's teaching, will view the goal as ultimately normative rather than descriptive, and will take seriously (but with humor always at the ready) seemingly personal opinions, and points of view from very different times and places.

Gaudino took opinions seriously by questioning, with the aim of understanding, the opinions on their own ground but, also, revealing their unargued premises and unexpected implications. The Fund does the same; engaging the opinions of the day in fruitful dialogue to identify what is distinctive about undergraduate education, and about each generation of undergraduates, with the goal of integrating the intellectual and the personal. You cannot read Plato on the plane to Albany. But alumni trustees, experts in what affected them most at Williams, play a distinct role in this dialogue.

(Continued on page 2, col. 3)

REFLECTIONS UPON RICHARD

by Jeffrey Thaler '74

I suspect that Richard Hersog has read Plato on the plane to Albany. He had plenty of opportunities during almost two decades of annual pilgrimages to Williamstown to keep the spirit and letter of the Gaudino Memorial Fund alive and lively.

Proceeding and now succeeding Richard as Chair of the Fund, I have had the privilege of watching him act as our leader and of learning how "Mr." Gaudino (as we all called him) transformed the lives of people who — unlike me — participated in Gaudino’s experiential learning experiences in the early 70’s in India, Georgia, Appalachia, Detroit. People like Richard Hersog '60.

In the early days of the Gaudino Fund, the handful of alumni overseeing the initial donations (about $60,000) struggled to create a meaningful program to buttress liberal arts education at Williams in a manner consistent with Gaudino’s educational visions. At our fall 1980 meeting we agreed to share our reflections on Gaudino’s methods and goals. So what did Richard, a busy DC lawyer, do?

He sat down (on planes?) and prepared a 51-page memorandum entitled “Suitable Uses of the Gaudino Fund.” In the true spirit of Gaudino/Socratic inquiry, Richard began by identifying his knowledge base: “As a student, I knew Mr. Gaudino at the end of the 1950s. He was then a teacher of political philosophy, who insisted that we read, closely, the original texts; that we suspend judgment in an effort to understand the authors as they understood themselves; and that we take each other seriously...”

In a Gaudino-like, self-effacing manner, Richard described his memo as a "preliminary draft" because, he claimed, "one cannot, quickly or on command, shift from the world of practice to the world of theory, or from realms of practice other than the education of undergraduates. The memorandum is not a full or necessarily accurate description, not a theory of education, not a solution out of which to crystallize guidelines for dispositions of the Fund. Rather, it is a first step toward definition, consciousness-raising and dialogue among Fund Committee members, the College Committee on Educational Policy and most importantly, the current generation of students, faculty members, and alumni."

Richard’s "first step," in April 1981, in fact was a giant leap for the Fund. For the next 14 years, he continually, passionately, challenged us all in rigorous and vigorous dialogue about the mission of the Fund and of the College and in so doing, he has done much more than ably share the burden of setting up the Fund’s Board of Trustees: he taught us "youngersters" a great deal about Williams and Gaudino. It was through Richard Hersog that I came to appreciate the effectiveness of Gaudino’s "pre-experiential" method of exposing students to the experience of otherwise, be it in the classical works of political philosophy, or on a police beat in North Adams. More...
NEW GAUDINO TRUSTEES

The Trustees of the Gaudino Fund welcomed four new members last fall, all students of Robert Gaudino. In separate telephone interviews, they commented on Gaudino’s impact on their lives, their memories of Gaudino, and their interest in fostering the kinds of inquiry and educational experiences at Williams that Gaudino embodied in his own teaching and interactions.

Martin Linsky ’61, a faculty member at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, teaches a course on “Governing in a Democracy” about leadership, the press, legislatures, and public management. Marty says that his interest in the Gaudino Fund combines several important aspects of Marty’s own life and work. He observes: “Gaudino had a huge effect on me personally — more than any other teacher I had. He made me understand that what I learned in school is connected to who I am as a person. Increasingly, I feel that my teaching style and pedagogy are derivative of Gaudino’s teaching. The Fund is a wonderful opportunity to stay connected to the college and to a man and set of ideas which have a continuing meaning in my own life.”

Richard Metzger, Jr. ’71, Deputy Chief of the Common Carrier Bureau of the FCC and an attorney, also observes that Gaudino’s classes were the “ones that I carried with me.” Following graduation from Williams, Richard taught at Mt. Greylock for a few years. During this period (1971-72), Mr. Gaudino was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig’s disease and Richard drove him to Boston for follow up tests and examinations. These periodic trips were memorable occasions for Richard. Richard hopes the Fund will promote the kind of education Gaudino practiced, in order to expand the borders of liberal arts education. Yet, Richard wonders if what Gaudino represented and accomplished had more to do with the man himself than with a particular kind of liberal arts endeavor.

To Paul R. Peterson ’73, Gaudino was one of the most remarkable people he has ever known. “In five or 10 minutes only, he could perceive the

uniqueness of a person. I first thought he could only do it with students but then I later saw him do it with professors,” he recalls. Part of the Williams-at-Home program in 1972, Paul pursued his interest in experiential education after graduation by working for programs that benefited young adults. Later he became an attorney and currently works as a utilities analyst for the Public Service Board. Married with two daughters and living in Montpelier, Vermont, Paul remains interested in how and why people change. The Gaudino Fund represents an opportunity for Paul to bring together many of his diverse experiences and reconsider some of the same questions Gaudino once asked, such as, “Are you sure you are right?” One of Gaudino’s legacies, according to Paul, was demonstrating the need to look from another person’s perspective.

Bruce W. Dunne ’71, is no stranger to different perspectives and diverse experiences. Currently a corporate and securities lawyer in Washington, D.C., Bruce is also studying for his Ph.D. in History at Georgetown University. He plans to become a Middle East historian concentrating on research on sexuality and colonialism in early modern Egypt. Bruce sees his interest in the Middle East as an extension of his experience with the first Williams-in-India program organized by Gaudino in 1969-70. “My current work and involvement on the Fund is a logical outgrowth of that experience,” he explains. “It has taken 20 years to get back into the direction that was inspired by that experience.” For these four new members, the Fund represents an opportunity to engage in the kind of Socratic discourse and questioning that Gaudino encouraged. They see the Fund as a way of honoring a man who profoundly touched many lives, and of giving something back to the institution that supported him. Three new Trustees were recently appointed to fill positions vacant on the Board as of the Spring 1996 meeting. They are Navjeet Bal ’84 and Devonya Havis ’87, both of Boston, and Robert Herzog ’68, of NYC. (Profiles on these newest members in next issue.)

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Among the steps taken to ensure the longevity of Bob Gaudino’s legacy at Williams was the deposition of his papers at the Williams College Archives and Special Collections. The Robert L. Gaudino Papers consist of 30 boxes of documents ranging from his writings, syllabi, and correspondence to program files from Williams-in-India and Williams-at-Home. The project of processing the collection, which included removing and placing in restricted files any sensitive or personal material relating to Gaudino’s students, was completed in December of 1995. A guide to the collection will be available soon.

The following excerpts offer DIALOGUE readers a glimpse into the Gaudino Papers. They come from Gaudino’s final report, dated 1966, of a Peace Corps training program he administered for volunteers scheduled to work in India.

“Flexibility, being able to bend without breaking, is a necessary [Peace Corps] ideal. This openness to change, this willingness to modify even oneself, is the starting point of action. And, profoundly, the beginning of a true education.”

“As a doer, one can be dispassionate, study the material cause of the problem, and apply the proper ‘outside’ techniques to solve it. But as one values understanding over simple doing, there is no possible dispassionate resolution. One starts with the conflict of assumption and reaction: one’s own and of the people one works with. Antagonisms are evident. There are real and fundamental disagreements.”

FRIENDS SURPRISE TRUSTEE LINSKY WITH $6,000 CONTRIBUTION TO THE FUND

As a fitting send off while honoring his years of service to Massachusetts Governor William Weld, friends of Fund Trustee Martin Linsky ’61 made the Gaudino Fund the recipient of a $6,000 contribution to a cause they knew is important to their colleague. Studying with Professor Gaudino at Williams helped shape Mr. Linsky’s passion for the political process, and he hopes to work with the Gaudino Scholar and the Fund Trustees to develop projects that will nurture Williams’ undergraduates’ interests in electoral politics.

Bob Gaudino in Peace Corps photo.
ence,” asserted Peterson in conclusion, “is the cornerstone of my personal foundation.”

Riehl’s and Peterson’s presentations were followed by comments on Gaudino’s flagship courses by two of his departmental colleagues. Vice-Provost David Booth remembered that the faculty, on the whole, was skeptical of Bob’s program proposals. They raised three objections: (1) High quality liberal arts colleges cannot, nor should they, give credit for experience; (2) Gaudino’s program monopolized almost 25% of a student’s undergraduate education, all of it with one instructor; (3) the length and intensity of association with one teacher, and a necessarily small number of students, would create disciples and groupies, not independent thinkers.

Kurt Tauber reported on Gaudino’s own critical reflections on WaH. For many of the alleged failures, Gaudino blamed himself. He thought he had not given students in the field enough free time to write reflective papers, nor provided adequate occasions for collaboration. However, the students also came in for criticism: in their “families” they had failed, by and large, to establish the kind of trust that would have allowed unblinded discussion of differences. They had proved incapable of linking the first semester’s class work with their field experience. Yet, as Riehl and Peterson attested, the participants of Gaudino’s programs persist in considering what Gaudino himself saw as flawed experiments as the most memorable, even transformative, learning experience of their Williams career.

**The Present**

The second session was devoted to reports from a panel of eight current or recent practitioners of experiential education. They were: Raymond Baker (Political Science) and William Darrow (Religion), reporting respectively on Williams-in-Cairo and “Gender Issues in Morocco,” both immersion experiences in a foreign culture; David Eppel (Theater), discussing “Cabaret” and “Invisible Theater,” artistic performances in non-traditional venues; Lawrence Kaplan (Chemistry) and Philip Smith (Admissions), describing intensive teaching experiences in local schools and in an urban public school, respectively; Amy Baughcum ’97, and Kurt Tauber (Political Science, Emeritus), reporting on their courses involving local social service agencies; and Laurie Heatherington (Psychology), speaking to her courses in “Clinical and Community Psychology.” Discussion was moderated by Jeremy Cohen, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education and Professor of Communications at Pennsylvania State University. Professor Cohen identified three reasons for including experiential learning in a Liberal Arts college: (1) to awaken in the student a sense of civic responsibility and activist citizenship; (2) to demonstrate and make real the connection of abstract knowledge and scholarship to the “real” world; (3) to heighten the student’s affective engagement with their/his own education.

These reasons had indeed prompted panelists to incorporate an experiential component into their academic program. However, some instructors recognized another — arguably more important — contribution EE could make. Confronted by challenging, unsettling real-life situations, students learn about themselves in powerful ways that penetrate commonly self-defensive defense mechanisms. In his summary Professor Cohen acknowledged the pedagogical challenges of EE, that far from being “self-monitoring” and able to dispense with the teacher, EE requires more work than other types of teaching.

**The Future**

The afternoon session considered future possibilities for EE at Williams. Can we learn from successful models at other institutions? The Gaudino Scholar had invited Benjamin Barber, Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University and Director of the Walt Whitman Center for the Culture and Politics of Democracy, to present one of these models. Appalled by what he called the erosion over the last 15 years of democratic civic culture and the concomitant orgy of greedy individualism and a “zany antipathy towards all government,” Barber pioneered at Rutgers a rigorous, multi-course program with a mandatory community service component. In his inspirational talk, entitled “Citizenship, Service and Democracy: A Vision for the Liberal Arts,” Professor Barber not only showed how “to integrate liberal teaching, experiential learning, critical reflection, community service and citizen education,” but argued persuasively for the centrality of democratic citizenship for a Liberal Arts education. Such citizenship, however, requires engaged, responsible citizens, i.e. broadly educated citizens.

In a genuinely liberal education, according to Barber, “community service,” embedded in rigorous academic work, is “an indispensable prerequisite of citizenship and thus a condition for democracy’s survival.” Not only does such service teach social responsibility and help recoup rights and responsibilities, but it can also drive home the lesson of heterogeneity and universality and promote the important civic skill of listening empathetically and with social imagination. Yet before public service can provide these crucial lessons, it is essential to construct “service” not in terms of “altruism or charity” but in terms of the “responsibility of citizenship.” Indeed, colleges must be absolutely clear that they are learning communities, not service agencies, and that therefore, the primary justification for a service program has to be pedagogical.

Responding to a direct question from Ben Barber, Jennifer Bloxam listed the three major concerns colleagues have expressed to her regarding EE: (1) They suspect that EE is not really rigorous, yet (2) think that creating experiential courses is too difficult, or at least, time-consuming, and (3) that EE is an approach appropriate only to the social sciences.

Professor Barber said that the Rutgers program massively proves how mistaken the last objection is. Barber suggested that proponents of EE have an obligation to help interested colleagues by organizing teaching seminars, providing teaching materials and helping with placements. There was general agreement that an institution’s support for EE was merely rhetorical as long as it didn’t find expression in promotion and tenure decisions.

The end of the conference, participants agreed that Gaudino Scholar Bloxam had done an exceptionally thoughtful job of structuring the day’s events and raising the right questions for discussion. The challenge now for the Gaudino Scholar, the GMF Trustees, and the college community as a whole remains that of finding the most effective ways to develop EE as an exciting and significant supplementary approach within the Williams curriculum.

**FINANCES AND FUNDRAISING REPORT**

The endowment of the Gaudino Memorial Fund is approximately $450,000. Spendable income for the current fiscal year is $23,390. Principal expenses include salaries for student interns and support for Fund projects and activities such as those described in this newsletter. For example, the approximate, respective costs of the October 1995 Conference on Experiential Education at Williams and the AIDS Memorial Project were $5,300 and $1,100.

While fundraising began some 20 years ago, over half of the Fund’s endowment — more than $230,000 — was raised during the College’s Third Century Campaign which ended in December 1993. The Fund Trustees hope to see the endowment grow to underwrite the release time of the Gaudino Scholar.

Continuing support is appreciated. Checks should be made payable to the Robert L. Gaudino Memorial Fund and sent to Williams College, P. O. Box 231, Williamstown, MA 01267.

**IN SEARCH OF PHOTOS**

We are looking for snapshots of Bob Gaudino to publish in DIALOGUE. We can use either prints or negatives. If you have any, please consider donating them. We will offer them to the Archives afterwards. Please indicate when and by whom the photo was taken and who else, if anyone, is in it. Mail to The Gaudino Fund, PO Box 677, Williamstown, MA 01267-0677.
The Trustees of the Gaudino Fund have adopted a Mission Statement which culminates several years’ discussion and reflection about the Fund’s direction in the face of increasing numbers of Trustees, alumni/ae, faculty and students who never knew Bob Gaudino. The Board felt the need to consider which particular aspects of the Gaudino legacy deserved ongoing attention and dedication. Drawing upon over two decades of meeting notes, fundraising records, and foundation documents, the Mission Statement provided the Trustees with an effective way to come to some common understanding of this enterprise, one that nevertheless leaves considerable scope for debate and growth. The Mission Statement aims to educate the College community, especially the friends of the Fund, about our goals as well as serve as a touchstone for new Trustees as they undertake the work of translating Gaudino’s legacy into the future.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Robert L. Gaudino Memorial Fund seeks renewed and contemporary expression of Professor Gaudino’s educational vision. By challenging the notion that public, intellectual engagement should or could be divorced from the private realm of students’ personal background and experience, Gaudino required his students to confront uncomfortable differences and learn through contrasts — for example, between their assumptions and their conclusions, between themselves and others of different social, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, between modern and ancient thought, between the values of public institutions and those of the private home, and even between the different liberal arts disciplines themselves. With insight, discipline, and humor, Gaudino facilitated student confrontation of these contrasts both inside the classroom and outside Williams, in places as diverse as Iowa, India, Appalachia, and Detroit.

Gaudino put the student at the center of this experience by requiring reflection on how personal opinions, judgments, and sensibilities derive not only from the curriculum, but from sources outside the curriculum. The teacher’s understanding of the subject matter serves only as a catalyst. Students must transform themselves by taking an active role in an open community of learners, assuming the risk inherent in a serious search for truth. Often an uncomfortable experience, confronting difference in rigorous dialogue can induce profound and lasting intellectual and affective change.

The mission of the Fund complements the primary objectives of the College’s educational mission: promoting active learning, combatting fragmentation of knowledge, and assembling an open community of learning characterized by integrity, mutual respect, and rigorous intellectual endeavor. The Fund’s distinctive contribution to Williams resides in the insistence that experiences on as well as off campus, on curricular as well as extracurricular levels, be continually transformed into occasions for growth in which the intellectual becomes personal.

The Fund’s role, therefore, like that of Gaudino during his two decades of teaching, is that of gadfly in the Socratic tradition at an extraordinarily successful institution, asking questions that help illuminate unexamined assumptions, prompted by a conviction that Williams is a place of unlimited possibilities for which no standard of excellence is too high. In keeping with this role, and with Gaudino’s belief that genuine learning is often an uncomfortable process of confronting familiar expectations with immediate experiences, the work of the Fund, through the Board of Trustees and the Gaudino Scholars, is to:

1. Foster academic and pedagogical innovations within the curriculum, particularly those which require greater responsibility on the part of the students and in which there is, to use a description of Gaudino’s, a “mixing of two purposes: the defining of subject matter and the penetration of premises and observations of participants;”

2. Encourage dialogue and critical reflection on curricular and extracurricular topics;

3. Support learning through the experience of confrontation with the self and others in and out of the classroom, on and off campus, promoting affective with intellectual change; and

4. Stimulate debate about the liberal arts enterprise and the Williams experience itself, from curricular reform to the meaning of citizenship.