I am happy to share some of the interesting outcomes of two ongoing projects, the Gaudino Experiential Course Initiative and the Gaudino Arts Initiative.

The Gaudino Experiential Course Initiative has resulted in two new courses and one substantially revised course. The Initiative offered seed money to faculty for developing courses that "combine the abstract analysis and guided reflection that takes place in the classroom with a significant off-campus component calculated to expose students to unfamiliar and possibly unsettling ways of seeing and experiencing the world outside Williams."

First, the course concerned with examining and comparing the theory and practice of feminism, mentioned in Dialogue last spring, coalesced into "Practicing Feminism: A Study of Political Activism," a course cross-listed with Political Science, Women's Studies, and Studio Art, and taught by political scientist Cathy Johnson and nationally-known public art practitioner Peggy Diggs. This fall, more than 20 students were engaged in fieldwork at local community agencies involved in health care, social services, and work; student involvement combined administrative and service work with public art projects designed to raise awareness of the issues these agencies address. This course will be offered again next year, and it is my hope that it will be a regular offering for the foreseeable future.

Second, Hank Art, Clarke Professor of Biology, overhauled a required upper-level course in the Environmental Studies program, described in detail in the article, "GMF at Work," in this newsletter. This course allowed 25 students to develop and propose solutions to local environmental problems ranging from off-road vehicle management to non-point river pollution. This course, too, will continue as a regular part of the curriculum.

Third, the performance art course mentioned in last year's newsletter, designed to involve students in the creation of public performance projects inspired by and addressing concerns of the community, is under active development for the 1998-99 academic year. "Sited Scripted Public Acts," a collaboration among Peggy Diggs, artist, and theater department faculty Deborah Diggs and student involvement combined administrative and service work with public art projects designed to raise awareness of the issues these agencies address. This course will be offered again next year, and it is my hope that it will be a regular offering for the foreseeable future.

GMF at Work: Environmental Studies 302
by Martin Linsky '61

Last year's Gaudino Fund-sponsored conference on Experiential Education yielded fruit this year with the redesign of an upper-level, environmental studies course to include a major experiential component. Biology Professor Henry Art attended the autumn 1995 conference and resolved to revise the class to expose students to real clients with real projects. Art applied for and received a $2000 grant from the Gaudino Memorial Fund (GMF) that enabled him to devote part of his summer to reshaping Envi 302, Environmental Planning and Design Workshop, and recruiting clients. The grant also assisted students with travel and other expenses incurred during the fall semester.

The resulting course design featured student projects as the centerpiece. Art divided the class into four-person teams, mixing hard scientists and data collection, you don't get the benefit of the guidance that only comes from going through the process of doing it."

Two other motives inspired Art to revamp the course. One was dissatisfaction that a required environmental studies course had been delegated to adjunct faculty. "I didn't think that was a good idea. One year it was a planner with little teaching experience, another year it was an architect and an environmental lawyer who didn't coordinate well, and the course had too much law." The second motive was Art's experience with an interdisciplinary course, Perspectives on Environmental Analysis, which existed while the Rockefeller Fund supported it. Taught by faculty from different disciplines, including a biologist, a landscape historian, an economist and a political scientist, the course was for Art "absolutely one of the most fun teaching experiences I've had." He intended the new Envi 302 to replicate the interdisciplinary faculty, because "environmental studies requires synthesis and looking at the intersection of disciplines." In the end, he sought this ideal through the interdisciplinary student teams.

Looking back on the course, Art concluded that the most difficult challenge was assessing student journals, which constituted 15% of the fi-
nal grade. "It was unnerving, for me and the students. Some were excellent, some were perfunc­tory. But I wondered what kind of standards to use for evaluation? Assessing student creative work was outside of my own discipline. It made me somewhat awed of teachers of studio art. I did the best I could, looked for indications of intellectual engagement, coupling that with risk and initiative. I tried to be fair and consistent, but wasn't completely comfortable with it because there was no absolute objective yardstick."

The theme of student expectations preoccupied Art's comments and those of his students. In the future, Art intends to make clearer to students how he envisions his own role. "It was not the traditional role of an instructor. I was a facilita­tor and logistical agent. A number of students were less comfortable with that than I expected. Next time I need to be brutally clear about my responsibilities and the nature of my interaction with the students."

Sarah Altschuller, a political science major and a senior from Dartmouth, Massachusetts, re­flected Art's concern. "We didn't get a lot of input from Art. Our expectations were for more professor time, more lecture. It was frustrating at times. If we knew the professor wasn't going to be much of a presence, it would have been easier."

Altschuller's group assessed the environmental impact of several design options for a golf course in nearby Adams, Massachusetts. None of the group played golf. But Altschuller was surprised by how well the group worked together. "I was not looking forward to a group project. I am used to taking control. I wasn't that thrilled with working with four or five people. We knew different things, talked about different things. I wasn't interested in hydrology. I worked on economic development. Once we gathered the information and then divided the work along interest and ability lines, it was apparent where our individual strengths were. We worked individually and then shared stuff. We finally came together with maps and markers to draw the golf holes. We were worried about missing information, worried about whether it would really be helpful to developers. We didn't know whom it would fit, but we surprised ourselves. The presentation and final report went well. It was exciting and fun."

Jardayna Werlin, '97, another team member, had similar views. "I mainly take science and literature courses," observed Werlin, an English/Bi­ology double major. "This was my first group project at Williams. We each had different expertise and, as a group, we really accomplished more than we would have alone. We did the work of a consulting firm. I am now looking for a job or internship in environmental work. I'm sure that I will talk about it in job interviews. I think the course prepared us for the world of work."

The uniqueness of the course became evident in the difficulty both Altschuller and Werlin had in articulating their learning. Werlin said that the learning came from having to get in touch with people and meet people but that was hard to discuss issues "when you are going for a grade. Grades here are all-important for a job or grad school." Altschuller said the public and class presentations taught her a lot about public speaking. And having worked on a sustainable communities project in Washington during the past summer, she was pleased to see that the issues she identified in that research were re­flected in the real world experience of wrestling with public concerns about the impact of a golf course on the city of Adams. On the whole, she said, the course was very valuable even though "you can't quantify the learning."

Jason Wilder, a senior from Charleston, South Carolina, was assigned to the team that assessed possible uses of land owned by an elderly Williamstown resident who has no heirs. His group had a little more difficulty ("one guy didn't pull his weight"), but the learning for him was all about applying his knowledge in the real world. "I learned to deal with issues. He [the landowner] is going to die and doesn't have a lot of options. It was more than an academic assignment. It involved real people's lives and had to be approached with some care. I learned about different ways of defining the problem."

And for Wilder, who by his own admission usu­ally "doesn't enjoy working with soft scientists," there was some learning about working as a team: "It's everyone's responsibility to motivate each other. When one lost interest other mem­bers of group had to take the next step and keep the ball rolling."

This must please Art, who started out by assum­ing that process was more important than product: "I hoped that success would not necessarily come with a final product which was smashing and immediately implementable, but that the students would come face to face with issues of design that incorporate public interest, environ­mental realities, and economic realities. It was really more of a process orientation, much more important than the product. I hadn't anticipated that the products would be so spectacular as well."

Art talked with special fondness about another project, one to draft agreements for the use of off-road vehicles in state forests. "No one wanted to do it much. They started with a negative view. But they worked with off-road clubs and the state in setting up a monitoring protocol. They found that the state proposal really wasn't going to work. It was a great eye-opening experience since their attitudes changed. The students came to believe that off-roads had a legitimate view about using the environment. They couldn't dismiss it as something that should be just squashed. Their work turned out to be incredibly well-appreciated by the state forest people, who wanted them to do more."

The process-versus-product notion didn't seem to get through to all the students. Williams is still Williams. As Wilder noted, "Hank told us at the dinner [at the end of the course] that the process was supposed to be the most important part. We didn't know that and, as Williams stu­dents, we were more interested in the product. We would have been a little less worried about the aesthetics of the final report and presenta­tion, but I'm not really sure what we would have done differently if we had been more worried about the process; we were so geared to coming up with a solution."

Nevertheless, Hank Art feels very positively about the experience, as do all three of the stu­dents interviewed. In the sciences, individual projects and honors theses are viewed as more important than perhaps anything else. But, as Art concluded, "There are some real advantages in this kind of experiential learning, the feeling of real clients out there, real live issues. The learning from each other greater than I expected. Students came out of it with a tremendous feeling of accomplishment."

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**A Williams-In-India Pair**

by Kitty Earle Babson '72
and Bradley Babson '72

The last several Williams College classes to benefit from Professor Gaudino's teaching are planning and celebrating their 25th Reunions. Two of Gaudino's students look back over their experiences in India. Kitty Earle and Bradley Babson live in Vietnam, where Kitty serves as one of the first female Episcopalian priests in an Asian country and Bradley heads the World Bank's first office in Vietnam.

**Kitty: Williams-in-India II**

That first night in Delhi, we went for a walk in the old city as night fell into a dustbowl of orange and red, and the roiling smoke of the night's cockpots blasted my senses with smells too alien to name. Mine was the only bare leg in the street. When the snake coiled around my ankle, my studied equanimity leapt out in a silent scream. I could feel the fluorescent heat in my pale for­

enced. Milo Beach offered the familiar as a cool

eign face. The Muslims grinned their juicy betal

oids, how best to see them, open to them, 

difference, how best to see them, open to them, 

I could feel the flourescent heat in my pale for­

down: Boys will be boys. Eager for other prey, 

I believed we need to begin with the young and 

to communicate that otherness is a positive, not 

t to a negative — and that we fail to converse with 

difference at our own peril. Honor is due the 

stranger. When we close ourselves down to the 

gifts they bring, however, the closing comes, 

we begin to die. I remain convinced that the only 

way to live is to step toward and move through the 

risk of often uncomfortable raw experience 

coupled with the promise that valuable, enriching 

new insights and ways of mediating these to 

others will come of it. Wise, patient, and open­

minded teachers and guides are necessary — 

conservative in their understanding of the 

discipline necessary to engage the silk snakes in 

life, and liberal enough to be willing to bring 

the patience of a certain wait-and-see while the 

lesson is integrated. Gaudinos and Beaches 

must be sought, found and invited into our edu­
cational institutions, at all costs. I was lucky. I 

stumbled into them. Thanks to Williams.

**Bradley: Williams-In-India I**

For me, adventure was the allure. I had already 
tasted adventure by encountering Labrador and 

Eastern Quebec as a 17-year old, on my own, 

with the permission to act for freedom — a gift 

from my parents that I now want to pass on to 

my children. The idea of encounter with lives that 

were different yet so human and real, stimu­
lated me to act on the invitation on that poster 

among the many plastered on the walls of our 
halls in that confusing time of freshman year 

and Vietnam war. I had just watched the draw­

ing of the draft lottery in Baxter Hall. My birth 
date came up number 8, and I knew that a real 

and harsh world was coming my way, whether I 

was prepared or not.

Williams-in-India became a crucible for testing 

myself in a world outside school. It went beyond 

my experience by forcing me to use my intellec­t

try to engage my experience. The outcome was a challenge to myself to use my mind as well as my emotional and spiritual re­

sources. I learned to have both an empathetic 

and intellectually rigorous relationship with my 

experience and with issues of the lives of oth­

ers. When I returned to complete my final two 

years after the program, I found myself both 

focused on intellectual discipline (this lasted 

through graduate school, which I attended im­

mediately following Williams) and spiritual in­

dependence, which at the time meant that I 

maintained my privacy through off-campus apart­

ment living and pursuing an eclectic academic 

program not dictated by the requirements of any 

one major discipline.

One of the surprises of senior year was that I 

decided that I did not want to be a lawyer. An­
other was that I flunked the health test when I 

was called to be drafted. I ended up with a free­
dom that I did not expect. Other surprises fol­

lowed, including admittance to a graduate pro­

gram in public policy that others coveted and 

for which I was not an obviously qualified can­
didate, given my academically eclectic habits. 

Another was that I felt hopelessly in love and 

decided to get married immediately. All this I 

attribute to the influences of Williams-in-India 

I. These early commitments were strong ones. I 

have stayed in the field of public policy and in­
ternational development for 22 years. I have 

been married (to guess who) for almost a quar­
ter of a century. I still love adventure and strik­

ing out on my own to build new things my way.

These commitments have stuck. For that, I owe 

great gratitude to the Williams-in-India program, 

which helped me to articulate a knowledge of 

myself and, more importantly, led me to act, in 

my own life, in real time.
New Scholar Appointed

In fall 1997, philosophy professor Samuel Fleischacker will become the new Robert L. Gaudino Scholar. Long interested in how abstract and esoteric disciplines of academia should relate to everyday experience, Fleischacker welcomes the chance to pursue these issues through new curricular initiatives. Fleischacker has taught at Williams since 1991; taught at Bryn Mawr and Haverford; and written two books and many articles. He earned undergraduate and graduate degrees from Yale University. His interest and expertise lie in cultural relativism, and the origins of liberal political thought in Adam Smith and Immanuel Kant.

New Trustees Recall Gaudino’s Influence

Four new members became Trustees of the Gaudino Fund in recent months, each bringing a fresh perspective to the position. Two had extensive contact with Bob Gaudino, both in and outside the classroom and two never met Gaudino in person, but in many ways have become living examples of what he taught and valued during his lifetime. Recently, these new trustees were asked to evaluate the impact of Gaudino and his philosophy on their lives.

Robert Herzog ’68 said during a recent trustee gathering that he was attracted to the “intensity” of Bob Gaudino. He specifically noted the concentration, depth and passion of Gaudino’s language, his use of just a few words to explain something that would take Robert and others days to unravel. He also described Gaudino’s unique ability to connect philosophical ideas to the very specific, personal experiences of individuals, and in doing so to have a direct, long lasting impact on their lives.

In Robert’s case that took many forms. Gaudino was instrumental in Robert’s decision to join The Teachers, Inc., a program that had graduates from Williams and other colleges living and teaching in inner city neighborhoods. The program was founded by former Peace Corps volunteers who knew Gaudino. Describing his recent activities as a consultant with high technology companies, Robert puts his work in a perspective that reflects Gaudino’s strong influence: “My consulting work has had an unexpected element of serving as teacher and mentor... It also supports a growing habit of writing, primarily fiction, as well as essays attempting to bridge the gap between the importance of bringing values to one’s work and life that characterized the era in which I came of age, and the difficulty of maintaining that perspective in a more rigid, harsher time.”

Gordon Earle ’75 took three political philosophy courses from Gaudino during his years at Williams. He, too, was deeply influenced by Gaudino the teacher — especially the emphasis on critical thinking and the Socratic method that was utilized to evaluate academic issues and philosophy. But unlike Robert Herzog, he did not think a great deal about Gaudino during the time immediately following his graduation; there was no Peace Corps, inner city teaching or undertaking of that nature.

Gordon began reflecting seriously on Gaudino’s influence during his second decade away from Williams. It began with return visits to the campus, when reflection became particularly intense. Gordon puts it this way: “My visits to Williams town made me stop and think. Those moments frequently occurred where I encountered Bob while he was alive. Sometimes I would stop outside his house, close my eyes, and literally see Bob, slumped in a chair directly in front of him. Gordon puts it this way: “My visits to Williamstown made me stop and think. Those moments frequently occurred where I encountered Bob while he was alive. Sometimes I would stop outside his house, close my eyes, and literally see Bob, slumped in a chair directing class discussion. His body was small and crippled then, but his mind was as dynamic as ever. I remember his razor-sharp intellect as well as his personal warmth and sense of empathy and concern. And while I never completely understood him, I know he changed my life.”

Devonya Havis ’87 never met Gaudino, yet she understands well an important ideal he stood for — connecting “academic” or “theoretical” life with “real” life. Devonya recently said that when she came to Williams, “she believed the myths about what Williams and college life would be like.” She came from a thriving black community in Mississippi and suffered “extreme culture shock” after arriving on campus.

She wanted to find a college community that “took its theories as seriously as the living of those theories.” She wanted academic and residential life to work together. She remembers lengthy discussions in the basement of Stetson Hall and the snack bar as she and others tried to integrate theoretical notions into the real world. A premed major, she switched to philosophy and religion after Kurt Tauber, Gaudino Scholar at the time, asked why she was taking science classes she didn’t enjoy.

After Williams, Devonya continued to seek out links between theoretical constructs and day-to-day experiences. She became active in Boston’s African-American community and is now pur-

(Continued on page 4)

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All who have been touched by Bob Gaudino’s teaching philosophy understand that his influence evolves and deepens over time. During my first classes with him, I was overwhelmed by a sense of near total confusion. I didn’t think I understood anything, because every thought was challenged. There were no right answers — only the best responses I could muster. It was the thinking process — specifically the ability to think clearly and critically — that was important. By my senior year, I was slightly less confused. I had three Gaudino classes under my belt, plus many other Williams courses. I also had experienced four more years of simply “living,” which meant melding my education with many real-world activities beyond Williamstown.

One such experience was a Winter Study program where I worked with mentally handicapped children, a direct outgrowth of studies in psychology. For a month, I no longer read books on personality disorders within the comfortable confines of Bronfman Library. I was, instead, facing four-, five- or six-year old children and trying to teach them something — which is an entirely different ballgame. Sometimes I succeeded; sometimes I failed. But the experience provided an invaluable bridge between academic and experiential learning that provided me with keener insights and knowledge, which is what Gaudino-inspired learning is all about.

Which brings me back to Will. As he prepares for college, like me, he will learn the value of knowledge gained from books and experience. While Bakunin may be his academic influence today, he will have many more influences in the years ahead, all of which will be shaped and refined through personal experience. I was reminded of this evolution at the close of our vacation as Will finished his biography of Bakunin and picked up Joseph Conrad’s Secret Agent. He was reading with palm trees bent by a strong, tropical wind swaying in the background. I watched him, knowing another powerful learning experience had begun.

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Bakunin, the 19th-century Russian anarchist, I didn’t have a clue who Bakunin was. And while I have long known that Will is intellectually precocious, I was surprised that his reading, during a supposedly relaxing vacation, went well beyond the usual fare — say, Rolling Stone. Bob Gaudino would have loved this.

So my questions began. Who was Bakunin? What did he stand for? What was his relationship with Karl Marx? Did he influence Lenin? We picked up steam as the questions and answers became more provocative. What is anarchy? What is its relationship to communism and other political forms? Can anarchy exist without acts of physical violence? What forms of anarchy exist other than political anarchy? And, finally, did Will believe in the violent overthrow of authority (a somewhat delicate proposition since Will, among other things, is president of his school)? We were soon immersed in a very Gaudino-like dialogue — making careful distinctions in our thinking and leaving no answer unchallenged. When I asked Will why he was reading such a book, he pointed out the connection linking Bakunin to punk music and its anarchistic themes. I hadn’t thought of that.

Suddenly, Bakunin didn’t exist in a philosophical vacuum. He was influencing, if only for a few hours or days, my son’s thinking and perceptions of the world. I wondered how Will, his head spinning with new political insights, viewed the abject poverty he saw in parts of the Caribbean, our vacation destination. Did he wonder why blacks don’t revolt against whites, the primary holders of wealth in that region of the world? I have little doubt that he was taking the seeds of academic learning and applying it to his experiences.

Reflecting on my talk with Will, I realize that Gaudino’s legacy is, in fact, timeless — as relevant to a Williams freshman in 1971 as it is to my son today, and to students in the new century. It involves examining issues from every conceivable angle, then integrating that knowledge through active, real-life experience.

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from the Archives

In this issue of Dialogue we offer a short but characteristic and highly revealing piece from the pen of Professor Gaudino. This statement, in both its positive and sharply critical modes, discloses his settled conviction concerning the proper relationship between teacher and student if “their common learning together” is to be productive.

[Teacher and student] are not equals by the very nature of their common study. They are without the mutual interests, the informality and familiarity of equals. Teacher and student are not in a balanced fraternal relation, but in the uneven tension of learning. Distance between them in ordinary and personal affairs is helpful to the rigour, the intensity, the concentration of their common learning together. . . . [However, the teacher in India] neglects the unaffected honesty and unqualified trust essential to mutual academic study. He carries over the personal and social restraint into academic life where it has little relevance, even does positive harm by taking the friendship out of knowledge. He never really works with the intellect of the student, never probes his responses and intimations and confusions, never intrudes upon his inner uncertainty and curiosity. . . . The two never engage in sympathetic, rigorous, critical conversation.

—Robert L. Gaudino, from The Indian University, pp. 208-209.

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Brother, costume designer, and David Eppel, director and actor, will require students to research local public sites and the people who use them — the Williamstown Village Green, the K-Mart parking lot in North Adams, the Williamstown Youth Center — thereby laying the groundwork for the creation of an original public art performance presented on location for the users of the site, and concerned with issues connected to that site.

The Gaudino Arts Initiative, begun in fall 1995 with the AIDS Wall reported last year, has resulted in three new projects. An anonymous group of students and faculty, who took the intentionally irrelevant name Just Another Avon Lady, work together to create on-campus public art projects intended to promote discussion around issues of concern to the community. Last spring, following the appearance on campus of two African-American speakers with known anti-Semitic beliefs and the ensuing tensions between student groups, J.A.A.L. created the Dummy Project to dramatize and invite comment about the “balkanization” of the student body. This project made painfully apparent the continuing presence of racism, sexism and homophobia on the Williams campus, and impressed on us how difficult it is to facilitate constructive exchange about issues of diversity.

This year, responding to widespread student concern about the increasing level of hostility expressed towards certain faculty members and student groups by the student-run conservative paper The Free Press (not a college-funded publication), J.A.A.L. designed the Advice Project, undertaken to raise student awareness about and appreciation for the Williams staff. J.A.A.L. members invited College staff to offer anonymous advice to Williams students. These advice messages were then disseminated to students over four days via e-mail, signs in classrooms and other campus buildings, stick-ems on library carrels, and picture postcards in student mailboxes. Students could respond by e-mail or phone message. Reaction was unexpectedly tremendous both in volume and general vehemence; while a number of students (mostly women) acknowledged that staff were too often taken for granted and treated disrespectfully, many students (mostly male) expressed great resentment at receiving unsolicited advice (especially by e-mail), refusing to believe that staff members actually could offer such pointed comments, and denying that potentially critical comments applied to them. J.A.A.L. followed up with a thank you memo to all staff that included some of the appreciative comments while admitting that there is even greater room for improvement in student/staff relations than we thought.

I will mention just one other event made possible by the Gaudino Fund — the Guerrilla Girls, an anonymous group of women artists working for equity in the art world through provocative poster art, spoke on campus in February, attracting 300+ students to their talk on “Race and Gender in the Art World.” Members of Just Another Avon Lady enjoyed a private audience with the Girls, who offered thoughtful reaction to the projects described above and shared their ideas for future public art projects at Williams.

Two of seven effigies from the Dummy Project hanging in Baxter Lounge, bound, blindfolded, and bearing signs of denial that symbolize the community’s inability to confront racism directly.

Financial Update

As of January 31, 1997, the Fund’s endowment amounted to $596,283. New commitments last year totalled $20,000. During the past three years the combination of Third Century gifts and capital appreciation has greatly increased the Endowment’s size. The spendable income from the current Endowment will not constrain ongoing and immediately anticipated activities of the Gaudino Fund. However, the Trustees believe that in the future a larger endowment will become increasingly important in order to sustain the critically important Gaudino Scholar’s release time. Thus, we encourage contributions to the Robert L. Gaudino Memorial Fund, addressed to Williams College, P. O. Box 231, Williamstown, MA 01267.