Dollars for Scholars
Gareau Gift Spurs Faculty Scholarship

Sometimes a little extra money can make all the difference. If you’re a faculty member who needs funding to travel to a particular archive, library, or historical site to do research, that added money can mean being able to find information necessary for publishing a paper, an article, or a book.

Such funding made a big difference to Michele Troy, assistant professor of English, when it allowed her to travel to Texas to dig through some archives for a history she’s writing on the Albatross Press. And it allowed Daniel Williamson, assistant professor of history, to travel to Ireland to do additional research for a history on the conflict in Northern Ireland.

Both Troy and Williamson are benefiting from a generous gift made to Hillyer College by Joseph and Pauline Gareau. The gift, which was established in 2003, is called the Joseph and Pauline Gareau Endowment. It is earmarked for faculty development and helps provide faculty members with money to do additional research that may give their scholarship the depth that is a prerequisite for publication.

Troy has been conducting research on the Albatross Press, which became a major force in the 1930s in publishing British and American books for European readers. A German firm, Albatross kept writers like James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and D. H. Lawrence in front of European readers up to and continuing through World War II. “Because of this grant, I was able to go back for an additional week to visit a critical archive on the Albatross Press at the University of Texas,” says Troy. “The information I gathered in that week made me realize that I now had a possible book project. Before that visit, I thought I only had enough information for an article.”

With money provided by the gift from the Gareaus, Williamson was able to travel to Ireland to visit the Irish National Archives in Dublin, the British Public Record Office near London, and the

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Dear Alumni and Friends:

One of the things I like most about working at Hillyer College is the opportunity I have to get to know some of the parents of our students. At our best, we are a team that brings together those parents with the dedication and skills of the faculty, support services from staff and administration, and of course, the inner motivation of our students. This triad of parents, University, and students has the capacity to yield wonderful results. Pauline and Joseph Gareau are parents who trusted that Hillyer would help their son realize his potential. Our front-page article describes the Gareaus’ generosity in expressing their thanks through support for the scholarship and development of our faculty members.

The commitment and dedication of our faculty to their research and professionalism continue to impress me. In her recent book, Standing Out, Standing Together, Melinda Miceli, associate professor of sociology, writes about the alliances being made by gay and straight high school students. The book has been very well received by the academic community and may serve as a potential resource for both parents and teachers. Particularly impressive is the fact that Melinda conducted extensive research and writing over a period of years without compromising the quality of her classroom teaching. Read about the evolution of her book on page 5.

When I come to work, I’m often energized by our students—by their optimism, their tenaciousness, and their will to succeed. All of those attributes are combined in Stella Ogwu-Weekes ’06, an honor student who grew up in Nigeria and whose life goals are a lesson to all of us. Against great odds, she’s made the most of her experiences at Hillyer and is very well respected by both her classmates and Hillyer faculty. Read Stella’s story on page 4.

I also think with enormous pride of the Hillyer students who spent their spring break in New Orleans working on behalf of the hurricane cleanup and rebuilding efforts there. Take a look at the photos they brought back on page 3.

When all of us come together—parents, faculty, and students—Hillyer is a place of extraordinary activity and opportunity. I know you share my optimism about the college and its many strengths.

David H. Goldenberg
Dean
Hillyer College
Robert Dryden, assistant professor of English, has had essays about Jane Austen published in two journals, *Studies in the Novel* and *Persuasions*. The latter specializes in academic studies on Austen's works.


Darryl McMiller, assistant professor of political science, has had an article, “Boosting Latino and Black Political Participation: The Impact of Associational and Religious Resources,” published in the journal *Politics & Policy*.

Melinda Miceli, associate professor of sociology, has had an article, “Morality Politics vs. Identity Politics,” published in *Sociological Forum*. (See page 5 for a feature on Miceli’s new book.)

John Roderick, professor of English, has had his book *Shell Keepers* published by the Connecticut River Press. His article, “From ‘Tarantula Arms’ to ‘Della Robbia Blue’: The Tennessee Williams Tragicomic Transit Authority,” was reprinted in a book by Yale critic and editor Harold Bloom that marks the 50th anniversary of *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Scott Scribner, assistant professor of philosophy, has published chapters in two books, *Globalizing Critical Thinking* and *Schelling Now: Contemporary Readings*.


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American National Archives in College Park, Md. The information he gathered is essential for his work on a history of what possible effects the government of the Republic of Ireland might have had on the conflict in Northern Ireland between 1969 and 1972.

The Gareau Endowment also benefited Stephan Bullard, assistant professor of biology, who was featured in the last issue of *Transitions* for his research on the sea squirt, an aggressive and harmful marine pest.

Joseph and Pauline Gareau provided the endowment as a way of recognizing Hillyer’s contribution to the academic and personal development of their son, Keith, who graduated from Hillyer in 2005 and who is now studying environmental science at the University of Vermont. “Hillyer does such a good job with kids who struggled in high school,” says Joseph Gareau, a retired executive from The Hartford Insurance Group. “They helped Keith transition into someone who is now thriving both as a student and an individual. My wife and I thought this gift was a way of recognizing the college for the excellent growth opportunities it provides for students.”

David Goldenberg, Hillyer dean, tied the importance of the gift to how it ultimately benefits students. “The college, its faculty, and its students are grateful for the generous support that comes from parents. Parents understand that the opportunity for our faculty to improve themselves through their scholarship carries into the classroom.”
Someday Hillyer sophomore Stella Ogwu-Weekes plans to go back to Nigeria as a pediatrician.

Ogwu-Weekes, who was born and raised in Nigeria, first came to the United States in 2002 to join her mother who had come here in 1996 after the death of her husband. She left her daughter with four of her seven brothers and sisters in Nigeria, where they lived with aunts, uncles, and grandparents.

Ogwu-Weekes graduated from high school in Hartford and was accepted at Hillyer College, where she is now one of the top students in her class. She plans to spend her junior and senior years at the University’s College of Arts and Sciences majoring in biology and then go on to medical school. Already Ogwu-Weekes has a full course load of the kinds of classes—chemistry, physics, math, pre-med—that you’d expect a student bound for medical school to take.

Ogwu-Weekes’s reasons for becoming a doctor are simple: “I want to be a pediatrician because in Nigeria I saw so many sick children. Children with diseases are dying because they don’t have the right equipment or medicine there. That’s what has inspired me to go back, not necessarily to always heal, but to at least help the children feel better.”

The determined young student, whose full name is the poetic-sounding Unoma Stellamaris Ogwu-Weekes, grew up speaking English as her first language, but she also speaks some Igbo, one of the dialects of Nigeria. She lives on campus but stays with her mother in Hartford during vacations. She says she can tell when her mom is really angry because that’s when she lapses into Igbo.

One of the major cultural differences between Nigeria and the United States, says Ogwu-Weekes, who attended a private Catholic school in Nigeria, is the much stronger emphasis put on respect for adults in Nigeria. “The social interactions here are much more casual. In Nigeria you have to give adults a lot of respect. You’re supposed to say ‘Good morning’ or ‘Good afternoon’ every time you see an adult. When I do that here, my friends think I’m nuts.”

Much of her success at Hillyer, Ogwu-Weekes believes, is due to the support she’s received from Hillyer faculty, from the relatively small classes, and from a variety of opportunities for travel and experience. As an honors student, she qualified for a three-credit course this past winter to study Polynesian culture in Hawaii. During spring break she went with a group of other Hillyer students to help with the hurricane cleanup and rebuilding efforts in New Orleans.

William Major, assistant professor of English, was one of the faculty accompanying the honors group to Hawaii and has had Ogwu-Weekes in one of his English classes. “She’s an extremely dedicated scholar,” Major says. “She does an excellent job of taking my suggestions and going beyond them. I see such a bright future for her.”

Someday, when she is Doctor Ogwu-Weekes, she plans to go back and forth between the United States and Nigeria, working for a number of months at a time in Nigeria, then coming back to the United States for a while. “I consider both places home,” she says.
Melinda Miceli knows what it means to be patient. Patience was necessary during the 10-year period of research and writing it took to complete her recent book, *Standing Out, Standing Together*. And it is necessary when she thinks about the time needed for society’s acceptance of the subject of her book—the social movement to establish recognition and rights for gays and lesbians.

Miceli, an associate professor of sociology, focused her book on the alliances being formed in high schools throughout the United States by gay and straight teenagers to support the needs of gay students. In recognition for her book, which has received widespread visibility and excellent reviews, Miceli also received the Hillyer College Faculty Award for Scholarship and Creativity.

Ten years ago, while she was working on her dissertation at the State University of New York at Albany, Miceli began attending a community group for gay high school students, who gathered to seek support and to talk about the pain, rejection, and harassment they dealt with on a daily basis at their schools. “I was very moved by their strength in light of what they were suffering,” says Miceli. “I was motivated to tell their stories in this book and to allow others to hear their voices.”

The book explores the reasons behind the growth in the number of gay-straight alliances in high schools across the country over the past 10 years.

“There are special challenges for gay teenagers,” Miceli says, “because they are much less empowered than adults and tend to be more at risk for depression and suicide. The gay-straight alliance movement in high schools has grown in part because the parents, teachers, and friends of gay students have increasingly come together to support them.”

Miceli says that the alliances have been critical in establishing a networking framework. “Students from around the country share information and experiences about what works and what doesn’t work as they try to reshape the way schools and their peers perceive them.” The alliances have started to benefit from the support of adult groups in the gay and lesbian movement who have provided students with guidance, resources, and occasionally, legal influence.

One of the most challenging aspects of her project, according to Miceli, was the need to provide a balanced look at viewpoints on the subject of the gay-straight alliances movement. “It was important for me to give voice to the opponents, to understand their opposition and the reasons for it.”

Miceli teaches an introductory sociology class at Hillyer, as well as classes in the sociology of gender and sexuality at both Hillyer and the University’s College of Arts and Sciences. She says there is a strong relationship between her research and writing and her work in the classroom. “I’m researching and writing about youth and I’m spending time with college-age kids in the classroom. I learn from their experiences and insights every day.”
WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR THOUGHTS...
Those who haven’t yet, last call for our alumni survey.
It consists of only eight questions, the answers to which genuinely help us.
You’ll find the survey at www.hartford.edu/hillyersurvey.

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