

Duke University

Welcome

An Alternative Image of Duke

It's been a rough few months at Duke. When the sexual assault allegations against the men's lacrosse team broke in late March, those of us who work and study here found ourselves in the midst of a media maelstrom. Satellite trucks were lined up four deep, first on the main quad, then relocated to the parking lot of the Bryan Center. Anyone walking across campus was fair game for a roving reporter. The novelty of this situation quickly wore off, especially given the complexity of the issues rocking the campus and the deep emotions connected to those issues. How can you talk about the legacy of racism in a sound bite? How do you discuss the complicated intertwined history of Duke and Durham in 30 seconds or less?

Most reporters took the easy way out, seeking interview subjects who would declare their opinion in absolutes. This was certainly *Rolling Stone's* approach; their reporter identified four undergraduate women, all sorority members, who believed staunchly in the innocence of the accused men. She then followed them around, took careful note of their social patterns, and wrote a piece that presented their social lives (focused heavily on alcohol, drugs, and sex) as typical of all Duke students.

I spent two hours with the *Rolling Stone* reporter when she was on campus. I agreed with her that some undergraduate women lead social lives that seem incompatible with their intelligence and ambition. We talked about why that happens, about how pleasing male peers becomes more important than staying true to one's self. I talked about patriarchy, about effortless perfection, about some insidious aspects of female socialization. I also told her –



Co-Directors Emily Klein (left) and Donna Lisker

over and over and over again – that the social scene she was witnessing represented just one subculture at Duke, and that many Duke students would find it as unfamiliar as she did. Unfortunately, the reporter did not include that context in her article, which made it a one-sided piece, an incomplete and inaccurate portrayal of Duke.

What would a complete and accurate portrayal look like? I think back to how the Baldwin Scholars – 36 of them in the spring of 2006, 18 sophomores and 18 first-years – reacted to the accusations. We have a diverse group of women, nearly half of them women of color. We have varsity athletes (two from the women's lacrosse team), feminist activists, sorority members, survivors of sexual violence, and political conservatives. Not surprisingly, they did not all agree on what had happened or on what should happen next. Different students approached the situation from different angles. Aria Branch appeared on *Nightline* with three other African-American students talking about the racial aspects of the

situation. Our lacrosse players, Rachel Shack and Regan Bosch, appeared in an NBC piece about the success of the women's team and the difficulty they had watching their male counterparts go through this ordeal. Rosanna Myers organized a meeting early on for women who wanted to protest the situation. Claire Lauterbach spearheaded a display of party posters, virtually all of them demeaning to women, that she and other Baldwin Scholars collected over the course of the year.

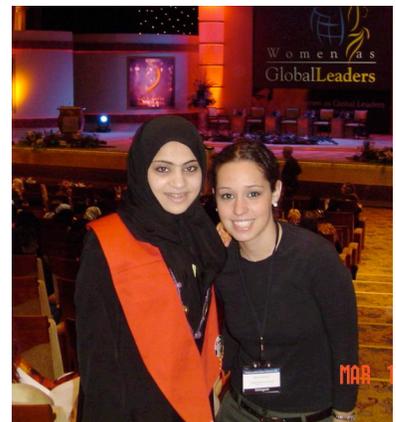
What was remarkable about this diversity of responses is that they all coexisted peacefully. The Baldwin Scholars gave one another the gift of respectful and constructive disagreement. What's more, they did not let this highly polarizing experience split them by race, by campus affiliations, or by social class. They recognized that in a situation this complicated, there would be multiple truths, and they tried to see one another's perspectives. In so doing, they were far ahead of most of the media professionals roaming campus throughout March and April. I spoke often of the Baldwin Scholars to the many reporters who interviewed me this spring; I wanted them to know about these remarkable young women leaders who were asking good questions and refusing to reduce the situation to its lowest common denominator. I thought they might learn something from them.

It was a stressful and difficult spring, but it convinced me of the value of the work we are doing with this program. Though the behavior portrayed in *Rolling Stone* is not ubiquitous, it's true that too many undergraduate women pander to the low expectations of their peers, trading self-respect for popularity. The Baldwin Scholars provide an antidote to that phenomenon by stressing self-discovery, self-confidence, and being true to one's own values. We were very proud of the way our Scholars handled themselves this spring and we look forward to their active participation in the campus culture conversations that will continue throughout the year.

Donna Lisker

Women as Global Leaders

Baldwin Scholar Andrea Dinamarco traveled to the United Arab Emirates in March, 2006 to attend the Women as Global Leaders conference. She received travel funding from Baldwin Scholars, the Office of Student Activities and Facilities, and Women's Studies. Andrea (right) is pictured here with new friend Fatema Saleh Al Marzooqi.



Women and Success



Baldwin Scholar Aislinn Affinito (right) with actress Annabeth Gish



Baldwin Scholar Rachel McLaughlin (left) with midwife Rebecca Turecky

In a new programming series entitled Women and Success, we have been inviting professional women to talk to undergraduate students about success in their field, how success is defined for women in that field, and how they define success for themselves.

Spring semester guests included:

- Dr. Monica Kraft, Director of the Duke Allergy and Asthma Center
- Sheila Curran, Executive Director of the Duke Career Center
- Dr. Sherryl Broverman, Biology professor
- Rev. Betsy Alden, PPS professor
- Annabeth Gish, alum/actress
- Marcee Harris, alum/consultant with Catalyst
- Rebecca Turecky, midwife from Costa Rica

We are indebted to these women for their time and interest in giving back and to the new Duke Conversations program for funding many of these dinner conversations.

Valentine's Day service project

The Baldwin Scholars, including Meng Zhou, made 90+ personalized Valentines for the residents of the Hillcrest Convalescent Home in Durham.



Baldwins Leah Hill (left) and Meredith Metcalf exhibit their craft-y skills.



Internship Update

One of the major components of the Baldwin Scholars Program is an internship during the summer before or after their junior year.

Several of the Baldwin Scholars found exciting and engaging internship sites:

Kamaria Campbell: Feminist Majority Foundation (DC)

Andrea Dinamarco: Feminist Majority Foundation (LA) and The Climb High Foundation

Pallavi Kansal: Catalyst

Claire Lauterbach: Humanity in Action and research trip to Africa with Duke professor Dr. Sherryl Broverman

Lisa Richards: Collegiate Athlete Pre-medical Experience (CAPE)

Rachel Shack: Octagon Sports Agency

Meng Zhou: Mayor's Office, Portland, Oregon

In Their Own Words...

Meng Zhou:

I am having a fabulous time interning with the Mayor's office in Portland. Currently, I help out at the front desk while working on the passage of a Bill of Rights for Children and Youth, the first of its kind in the nation. I am assisting the Mayor's Policy Manager for Neighborhoods and Schools and learning about the issues faced by working mothers and female

leaders. I love the busy atmosphere and policy projects, but I'm not so keen on many of the constituents who phone in and insist the Mayor is responsible for their home maintenance and pest control!

Claire Lauterbach:

During the month of June, I held a fellowship with the Humanity in Action Foundation, which provided me the opportunity to research minority rights in D.C., Copenhagen, Berlin, and Warsaw with a group of international fellows. The program featured intense conferences and debates about human rights, particularly during our stay near the Auschwitz camp. In Warsaw, I was able to observe Poland's largest gay rights parade (and counter-demonstration) and participate in the tenth annual conference of people living with HIV/AIDS, which influenced my interview-based research project on stigmatization of HIV-positive Poles. Engaging interviewees on this sensitive issue has helped me to prepare for my trip to Kenya this July, during which I will be conducting focus group research on women's education in Muhuru Bay with a team from Duke.

Kamaria Campbell:

This summer I am interning with *Ms.* Magazine and the Feminist Majority Foundation in Arlington, VA. There are ten interns in the office working on a host of projects for both the foundation and the magazine. As an intern for *Ms.*, I am responsible for archiving past issues of the magazine online, updating links when necessary, and helping writers with their research for upcoming articles. As an intern for the Feminist Majority Foundation, I am helping out with FMF's Educational Equity program and working on an intern group project to encourage young women to join both campus and local politics. This internship has provided me with several exciting opportunities. While tabling for the magazine at the *Take Back America! Conference*, in early June, I was able to shake hands with Ambassador Joseph Wilson and hear Senator Barack Obama speak!

Marie Wilson's Visit to Duke



On February 2, 2006, the Baldwin Scholars Program hosted the first event in the Jean Fox O'Barr Distinguished Speaker Series at Duke University.

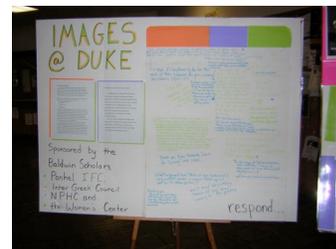
"Vote, Run, Lead!" featured Marie Wilson, who was president of the Ms. Foundation for twenty years, a co-founder of Take Our Daughters to Work Day, and author of Closing the Leadership Gap: How Women Can and Must Help Run the World. Ms. Wilson is currently CEO of the White House Project.

The White House Project is a national, nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that aims to advance women's leadership in all communities and sectors, up to the U.S. presidency.

Marie Wilson's speech was preceded by a mentoring dinner for undergraduate women from Duke and the University of North Carolina.

This event was sponsored by the Baldwin Scholars Program, the Laura Ellen and Robert Muglia Family Foundation, the Robertson Scholars Program, Panhellenic Association, Residence Life and Housing Services, Duke Democrats, and the Women's Centers at Duke University and UNC-Chapel Hill.

The Images Project



This past year, my roommate Sarah Gordon and I began to collect campus party advertisements featuring portrayals of women. As the collection grew, weekend by weekend, we were struck by its outlandish misogyny. The images consistently depict women as subordinate objects of gender interactions. Themes of sexual infantilization ("St. Maxwell's School for Girls") and sexual exploitation ("pimps and ho's" and "sec's & execs") are common. The social

element is entirely absent from the messages of the “snowjob” and “pussy galore” parties. These images are not the monopoly of male groups, with some sororities and co-ed living groups participating.

Our pet “wall of shame,” we realized, could be made into a forum for public discourse. Encouraged by the occasional poster slipped anonymously under my door, I sought out support for the initiative. In conjunction with Kate Guthrie of the Panhellenic Council, we envisaged a display series that would highlight the subliminal and inexcusably unequal gender relations at Duke by letting the collection “speak for itself.” Free response space enabled written public dialogue. The displays were presented from April 21 through May 5, during which parties are sporadic as students settle down to their exam preparations. April 21 also marked alumni weekend at Duke. These former students proved invaluable to the project, as did the support of the National Pan Hellenic Council, Inter Greek Council, Women’s Center, and most importantly, Inter Fraternity Council.

I’ve learned that it is common to shrug one’s shoulders in passing a poster, dismissing them as an almost normal part of a romanticized “college experience.” What is *not* normal is that women and men should experience such aversion to these images as to react in the following ways (excerpted from the display commentary):

- As a male, this brings a moment of self-reflection and disgust and horror at the portrayal of women on these flyers
- Where is the respect? Where is the civility? Do I feel objectified? YES. Am I angry? YES. And we wonder why so many women have issues with body image?!

The displays are not an exercise in prudery, nor are they merely a reaction to the recent rape scandal. These posters are expressions of a deeply-ingrained system of social interactions in which objectification and self-objectification of women is sanctioned. Action is warranted whenever the respect due to women as equal members of society is undermined, and the Baldwin Scholars will continue to act accordingly.

Claire Lauterbach
Baldwin Scholar, Class of 2008

Contact us...

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Best wishes for a relaxing summer!
Donna, Emily, and Colleen