

Duke University

On Entitlement

At Duke, “entitlement” is an unflattering code word among faculty and administrators. When we complain of a student acting entitled, we mean that s/he has made unreasonable demands and acted as if fulfilling those demands should be our top -- and perhaps only -- priority. Entitled students have little regard for others, and come in with the expectation that they deserve a seamless, fun, successful college experience without any setbacks or challenges. Entitled students and their parents complain when they receive a low number in the random housing lottery, or when they suffer consequences for not following rules or meeting deadlines. They can be everyone’s worst nightmare.

I’ve been thinking recently that we give insufficient attention to the gendered aspects of entitlement. While a student such as the one I have described above is insufferable regardless of sex, I have noticed that even among “normal,” healthy, cooperative students, women feel a lower sense of entitlement. That can be a very good thing when it leads them to be more polite, more respectful, more understanding that it takes hard work to accomplish their goals – but it can be a bad thing when it causes them to sell themselves short. When studying the persistent pay gap between men and women, for example, some researchers note that women who take full-time jobs out of college earn a lower starting salary than



Kacie Wallace T’89
professor, attorney, mediator

male peers because they do not try to negotiate more. It does not occur to them to ask whether there’s any flexibility in the salary, or if it does they talk themselves out of it for fear they will appear pushy, demanding, and overly impressed with themselves. Do good work, they assume, and the higher salary and promotion will come.

If only this were true! Start with a lower salary than male peers, and they are unlikely to ever catch up, regardless of their good work. At every step of the way, men ask for and receive more -- bigger salary increases, promotions, new responsibilities. Noting this, we now run regular negotiation workshops, led by Kacie Wallace ‘89, for Baldwins and non-Baldwins alike. Kacie teaches that negotiation can be a cooperative process, one in which everyone comes out feeling

good about the outcome – but she also teaches young women that they will never know if they don't ask. Not *demand*, but ask – equipped with as much information as they can find, deep respect for the person or institution with which they are negotiating, and a calm, composed, and positive demeanor.

It's been eye-opening to hear students talk about how this experience changes them. These are high-achieving Duke women, and yet they have a hard time not only asking for what they want and need, but admitting they deserve it. I have had several conversations with graduating seniors over the years who believed that any attempt to negotiate salary would lead to their job offers being withdrawn. In other words, a woman who asks to be paid fairly and equally may be an unemployable woman (and most certainly a bitchy one). When I argue otherwise – when I tell them that employers expect salary negotiation, and will not withdraw the offer – they look skeptical, as if they would like to believe me but are not sure they should.

It comes back, I think, to the need to imbue our girls and boys with a healthy, limited sense of entitlement. They should understand the need for hard work, perseverance, respect and patience; demanding that you deserve a benefit you did not earn gets you nowhere. But when they've proven themselves and are ready to reap the benefits, I want them not to let gender, race, sexual orientation, or any other identity category keep them from respectful self-advocacy. They should know their own worth, and know that asking for fair compensation helps not only them but also the women who will come after them. It changes the culture of women putting their own needs aside in favor of others, one woman at a time.

Donna Lisker, Co-Director of the Baldwin Scholars Program

Mayda Del Valle, spoken word artist

to all the boys I've loved before, part 1

we are not your mothers and are not meant to be
it is not our responsibility to raise you into respectful
beings
you have been weaned from the breast of a woman
for years yet you come to us
wounded and half filled with promises you can only
keep half the time...



The Baldwin Scholars invited spoken word artist Mayda Del Valle to perform for the campus community in February. The event was co-sponsored by the Duke Women's Center, the Reginaldo Howard Memorial Scholars, Mi Gente, Omega Phi Beta sorority, and Women's Studies. A special thanks to the Muglia family for their generous support of this very special and successful program in the Jean Fox O'Barr Distinguished Speaker series.

Baldwin Alumnae Spotlight:

Merri Estren, Class of 2009

Like many Duke seniors unsure about a career path post-college, I chose to go through the tumultuous and fiercely competitive recruiting process for strategy consulting firms my senior year. I braved the info sessions and crowds of Duke students all attempting to talk to the same people at the same time after the presentations, and dutifully did case study after case study in preparation for the interviews. I had already done an internship in consulting and did truly believe it was the best fit for my personality: a business-oriented job focused on teamwork where you get to learn about all types of industries so you can decide what you are actually interested in. The recruiting process was strenuous and had many highs and lows, which I later realized was actually excellent



preparation for the job itself. After multiple rejections, some successes, and attempting to adopt the mantra to not take the job interview process so personally, I was thrilled to accept an offer from L.E.K. Consulting, a smaller strategy consulting firm based in Boston that was founded by former partners at Bain (one of the "big three" strategy consulting companies).

My non-consulting friends often wonder exactly what it is that we consultants do - it is such a nebulous term, after all. In my specific type of consulting, we most often focus on growth opportunities and the strategy behind them for businesses and also do extensive research into particular industries that private equity clients are looking to invest in. This means that I know vast amounts of information on the most random variety of subjects, from toddler sippy cups to bar soap to LED lights to ophthalmic prescription drugs in development to those extra charges you see when booking your airline tickets (those are called revenue opportunities and you can bet every time you see a charge for a bag or a meal that a strategy consultant is behind it...sorry!).

Most recently, I learned more than I ever thought I would know about the electrical wire industry, coming up with an extensive analysis of why certain materials are chosen over others and what this particular company could do to convince the decision chain of the value proposition of its products. Every project we are on has a case team and mine for this project consisted of myself and four guys, which brought me back to my days at Duke where I would sit around a table with all my engineering guy friends and make study guides or do problem sets while they ate various baked goods that I would always provide. (My goal has always been to wow people with the baked goods and then further stun them with intellectual capability. What now, domestic AND intellectual skills?)

One evening - well, it was actually 3 in the morning - as we sat in the boardroom of the completely empty office intensely discussing the strategic direction we thought the company needed to go in, I realized that despite my chronic sleep deprivation and general exhaustion, this was the reason I had joined this type of work. The variety of topics, challenging work, and intellectual stimulation provided by my colleagues is unparalleled, not to mention the occasional glamorous perks such as private jet travel, airport lounge hangout time, living in hotels, and constant socializing at cocktail parties. (Naturally, my work friends have become my best friends, as we don't exactly have tons of time outside work to meet other people...)

Of course, this type of job comes with many challenges. The most immediate ones that leap to mind are the hours and general lack of control over my life, but a more subtle one that is nevertheless very frustrating is the lack of women in the company, which to me serves as an indicator of the lack of women in business in general (at least at the top levels of companies). As an example, our company has four levels: associates, consultants, managers, and partners. At the associate level, it's a 50/50

split, at the consultant level it skews to about 70% male, and then it's about 80-90% male at the manager level and 95% or greater at the partner level. Until recently in the Boston office, we didn't have a single female manager, which means there was simply no female presence in the pipeline to reach the partner level at all. I am not saying that I want to become a partner at L.E.K. (it's sort of the last thing I would want to do actually - consulting is a starting point and not a permanent thing for most people), but seeing many of my absolute favorite women who I greatly respect and admire leave the company in the past year because they just couldn't take the stress is very discouraging. Additionally, the practice that I most want to become involved in (aviation and airlines) is completely male-dominated, with literally 80% of the cases occurring actually being staffed only with men.

Although seeing things like staffing decisions that clearly always go in favor of males is incredibly frustrating and sometimes makes me so angry that I have to leave the office and take a walk, I can't say that I am surprised when this happens, and I owe that all to Baldwin. Due to the amazing education we received - both academic and through the incredible speakers - I luckily feel prepared to deal with this type of work environment. I actively encourage groups of women in the office to get together just to talk or offer support both informally and formally. I have pushed the agenda of our tiny Women's Network and gotten our first budget approved (which I now oversee for our five U.S. offices), and set up panel discussions, social events, and mentoring groups for us. Personally, I have become really good friends with many of the female consultants and stay in touch with them after they leave L.E.K. to find out how they are able to better achieve work/life balance in their next jobs (and also because they are really cool). Baldwin has taught me that there is simply no substitute for a solid group of women to lean on in absolutely any environment. I absolutely would not be able to survive here without my amazing group of female friends. Whether it's gossiping about how awkward the guys can be, complaining about our hours, sharing work tips, or asking for advice about how to deal with colleagues or superiors, we depend on each other all the time.

I can't express enough how incredibly grateful I am to the Baldwin program for making me aware of these issues before I had to face them in my everyday life and providing me with the tools to cope with them. I look forward to the day when I can pay the knowledge forward and mentor as many women in as many ways as I can. My job at L.E.K is next taking me to Sydney, Australia where, among other things, I am very excited to see a different approach to gender in the workplace (I hear female retention is a higher priority for our Sydney office and in Australian jobs in general than it can be in America). I am extremely excited about the move and the opportunity to internationally expand my own personal women's network!

Congratulations, Class of 2011!



On May 13, we celebrated the Class of 2011 with a ceremony and celebration in the East Duke Building. We now have 69 young alumnae out in the world!

Commencement is the perfect term for this event as students bring their undergraduate experience to a close and prepare to open the next chapter of their lives, with a firm foundation provided by their families, Duke University, and the Baldwin Scholars program.

Several of our Scholars will start work at organizations including Google, McKinsey, Mathematica, Harper's Bazaar, Teach for America, Deloitte, and Bain. Others will begin graduate/professional school at Harvard, Duke, UCLA, Stanford, and Imperial College (London).

Allie Speidel won the prestigious Marshall Scholarship to continue her study of biomedical engineering. Michelle Sohn was elected by her Duke peers to become Young Trustee, the first female to be elected to this position since 2004.

This was a class of remarkable academic and extracurricular achievement. We are very proud of all of them.

Unsung Heroine Award

The Unsung Heroine Award, given annually by the Baldwin Scholars, recognizes a woman who has demonstrated extraordinary dedication to issues that face women at Duke or in the larger community, but whose efforts have not received formal recognition. Nominees can be Duke undergraduate or graduate students, alumnae, faculty, staff, or retirees.

Seven individuals were nominated this spring for the fourth annual award.

A small committee of Baldwin Scholars reviews the nominations and selects a winner. The committee focused on the connotation of courage embedded in the word "heroine" and the lasting impact that the recipients' initiative will have on the Duke community.

Seniors Dana Oppermann, Katie Patellos, Brooke Hartley and junior Rebecca Ortega were recognized for tackling and effectively stopping progressive parties, a significant social and cultural issue affecting Duke women.

We value the activism, leadership, passion, and commitment to women's issues that these women have demonstrated.



(L to R): Brooke Hartley, award presenter
Elizabeth KonKolics, Katie Patellos, Rebecca
Ortega, and Dana Oppermann

Baldwin Internship Spotlight:

Precious Graham, Class of 2012



This summer I had the opportunity to intern for a legal non-profit organization called Justice Matters. Based in Durham, Justice Matters was created by attorney Libby Magee Coles with the help of other attorneys and law students to provide the local underprivileged community with legal expertise that they may not have access to otherwise. Resources available include free legal advice and services from lawyers and law students through legal clinics with other non-profit organizations as well as churches.

Justice Matters is unique in that it is an organization based on a foundation of Christian values and in its work seeks to help clients holistically by addressing their legal needs in conjunction with needs met by the partnering organizations. Justice Matters has collaborated with a variety of organizations to achieve this goal such as Durham Cares, the Durham Rescue Mission, and Pregnancy Support Services.

Founded only two years ago, Justice Matters is still a very young organization and as such is seeking to establish itself and tailor its efforts to the specific needs of Durham. Justice Matters has opportunities for legal fellows, law students typically hailing from Duke Law, UNC Law and NCCU Law, who assist with client relations in addition to legal interns who are undergraduates interested in law or other subjects relevant to the organization. As an intern with an expressed legal interest, I had the unique opportunity to learn about legal issues affecting the community as well as how one can be of assistance legally while still honoring one's beliefs and values.

Specifically, my responsibilities were to assist with clerical tasks as well as to research different topics for upcoming legal clinics. I researched the legal needs of the elder community in North Carolina to pinpoint the glaring areas in which Justice Matters could be of the most assistance to senior citizens, as well as to provide them with other resources at their disposal that they may not be aware of. Further, given my expressed interest in women's legal issues and reproductive justice, I was allowed to research legal issues pertaining to women and participate in a meeting with Pregnancy Support Services to assess how we could be of legal assistance to their clients in an upcoming clinic.

Working with Justice Matters has been an invaluable experience for me in allowing me to gain legal knowledge, establish priceless relationships, and clearly define my career aspirations promoting women's rights. It has been most beneficial in that it exemplifies a way in which those legal aspirations can manifest while still adhering to my personal values.

Gifts to the Baldwin Scholars Program

We offer our sincere thanks to the following donors for their gifts; we appreciate their leadership and their belief in all that our Scholars can become. We are especially excited that so many of our own alumnae have chosen to honor the program with a donation.

Tyla Fowler, Class of 2009 Baldwin Scholar
Tricia McKitty, T'92, Law '95
Meredith Metcalf, Class of 2009 Baldwin Scholar
in honor of Jean Fox O'Barr
Rosanna Myers, Class of 2009 Baldwin Scholar
Oracle Corporation (matching gift)
Marcee Harris Schwartz, T'99

If you are interested in making a gift to the Baldwin Scholars, please contact Donna Lisker at dlisker@duke.edu or, when making a gift to Duke, stipulate that you want it to go to the Baldwin Scholars. Gifts can be targeted toward any area of the program.

Contact us...

We'd love to hear from you!

phone: 919/684-6579
e-mail: baldwinscholars@duke.edu

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



Class of 2012 Baldwin Scholars
Estefany Noria and Kristen Lee
meet up in Quito, Ecuador.
Estefany is interning with De La
Mata a La Olla microfarm and
Kristen is participating in
DukeEngage.