

July, 2007

Friends of the Baldwin Scholars

Duke University

Commencement

In late April I attended an awards ceremony for student leaders in Goodson Chapel, the magnificent new space in the Divinity School. Most of the recognized students were seniors, and it suddenly struck me that in one short year our first cohort of Baldwin Scholars will graduate. I knew this day was coming – they had, after all, been juniors all year long – and we had even begun discussing the graduation celebrations we will hold. But I had not yet allowed myself to feel the emotional impact of their impending graduation, to recognize that this group of 18 pioneers we so carefully selected and nurtured would be leaving us.

We love all 54 (soon to be 72) Baldwin Scholars, but the first 18 will always have a special place in our hearts. They took a chance on a new and unproven program, and they took the responsibility of shaping it in its first years. The class of 2008 answered the question “what’s a Baldwin Scholar?” hundreds of times, and they had patience with the program staff as we did everything – the selection process, the first-year retreat, the academic seminars, the residential section – for the first time. Our subsequent classes have the benefit of their trailblazing and our hindsight, but the first class just had to roll with it.

In return for their flexibility and creativity, they got our undivided attention for a solid year before we recruited the second class. We therefore know this group very well, and it has been a great joy to watch them mature and



Class of 2010 Baldwin Scholars at the January retreat

change over the three years of their Duke career. I remember them as first years so vividly, still more defined by their hometowns and their high schools than by Duke. Some were very homesick, and all were unsure (each in her own way) of where they would fit in, what academic interests and extracurricular activities they would pursue. One of our early speakers, noted author Anne Fadiman, told our first cohort that when they had a choice between “ought ought ought” and “want want want,” they should choose the latter every time. It remains one of the best pieces of advice I have ever heard and I am proud that so many of them have followed it.

Three years later, our first 18 have studied abroad in Paris, London, Barcelona, and Melbourne. They have done internships in Warsaw, New York City, Durham, Washington DC, San Francisco, Kenya and Atlanta. They have declared majors and changed them, gotten elected to

major leadership roles, played in national championships games, and stayed up all night in the Baldwin section or seminar room studying for finals or just talking. Many of them are seriously addicted to *Grey's Anatomy*. They remain committed to the program and have welcomed the two cohorts after them with joy and affection (and have become excellent mentors in the process).

We are very excited to have our first 18 back together in the fall as they undertake the senior seminar, taught by the wonderful Jean O'Barr. As always, they will be the first students to take this class, entitled "Women in the Professions." We anticipate much stimulating conversation and laughter as they sit around the seminar table. Given how well they know one another now, this course will make an interesting bookend to their first-year seminar, when they were still learning so much about themselves and developing cohesion as a group. For many of us – and for them – their first and fourth year selves will coexist, side by side.

Graduation will come in May 2008, and we will wish this group the fondest and most reluctant of farewells. We'll cry and laugh and feel incredibly proud of all they have accomplished. In the meantime, we will savor their final year and remain grateful for the opportunity to work with such a wonderful group of young women. Check the website periodically for updates on their progress, and that of all our Baldwin Scholars.

Best wishes for a wonderful summer –

Donna Lisker

Reflections on Being a Senior Baldwin Scholar

Claire Lauterbach:

"What does it mean to have grown up in the Baldwin Scholars Program?"

I would like to also ask, what does it mean for the Baldwin Scholars Program to have grown up around us, the inaugural class?

We have certainly been a frustration. We spent several high-strung nights pulling ourselves together over different approaches to campus activism. We have also been a joy.



Baldwin Scholars Claire Lauterbach (left) and Roshen Sethna

We are each other's unsuspecting mentors both in Crowell Quad and across oceans. We came to this experience as individuals; I know that I will leave as a member of a group. Many of the inaugural class, myself included, felt a unique pressure to make the Baldwin Scholars Program 'work.' We were trying to chart a course for the program while also fighting to steer our lives in the sea that is Duke...perhaps trying to make this program a little too 'effortlessly perfect'?

My, how we have grown. The individual scholars and the program itself face identical challenges. If these past four years have been a time of growing up, our next task is to grow full. To grow bolder, more varied, more ambitious in our endeavors, more able to 'speak truth to power' and, more importantly, to each other. The Baldwin Scholars Program will always be the sum of its amazing parts, an anchor in an uncertain environment. I hope that, for those of us about to push off from Duke, Baldwin will be the harbor to which we return for strength for the growing full that we have yet to do.

Rachel McLaughlin:

Four years ago I was preparing to leave for college. I was working two jobs while soaking up my last real summer in Fenton, Missouri. Despite a tinge of fear, I looked toward Duke with anticipation – like a dream come true.

The actual Duke was a more difficult transition than I had imagined. The intensity and my homesickness (believe it or not, Duke is nothing like Fenton, MO) shook my foundation.



(L to R) Baldwin Scholars
Rachel McLaughlin, Brooke
Patterson, and Liz Victor

There were days when I loved Duke and days when I felt like I was in the wrong place. Today I cite Baldwin as the single reason I did not consider transferring during this transition period. Donna and Colleen truly cared about my well being. Plus, within the Baldwin Scholars seminar, I felt like myself again.

Since our freshmen retreat and freshmen seminar, we have had our lows and our highs. We had times when we did not trust one another. Our interactions lacked authenticity and honesty. We had moments of conflict when consensus seemed impossible. Whether drafting the constitution or learning to embrace our differences, we were not without our growing pains.

Yet like a family we developed a unique bond. Within this bond, each woman has impacted me in a special way. For example, I always go to Anita when I just want someone to hug me and tell me everything will be okay. Pallavi loves me despite my craziness. Aislinn and Meng make me laugh. Andrea and I

will start a revolution someday. Lisa kindly accepts you, faults and all. Laura is the go-to person for a rousing pep talk. Rachel knows who she is and I like that. Alison is a story-teller. After living together for a semester, Kamaria and I are on the same wavelength. I am in awe of Regan's talent – she is an athlete and an artist. Megan listens without judging. Vanja is brave. Kelley is courageous. Claire challenges me. Nathalie understood exactly how I felt when I came back from abroad. Sarah is my rock.

As senior year approaches, I know that these women and this experience have made me who I am today. This is because we have grown up together, surviving Duke and its challenges while seeking to understand each other along the way. In this space I feel like I can say what I think, air my thoughts, and be honest. Nothing is taboo and nothing is off topic.

EDU149S: Women and the Professions



Professors Jean O'Barr (L) and Betsy Alden at the January reception for new Baldwin Scholars.

The first senior seminar for Baldwin Scholars will be offered in fall 2007. Entitled Women and the Professions, the seminar brings together the 18 graduating Baldwins in the classroom for the first time since their initial course four years ago. Students are excited to be together once more.

The seminar is designed as an opportunity to reflect on women and the professions generally and to prepare students for post-collegiate futures more specifically. Dr. Jean O'Barr, long-term faculty member, will be leading the seminar.

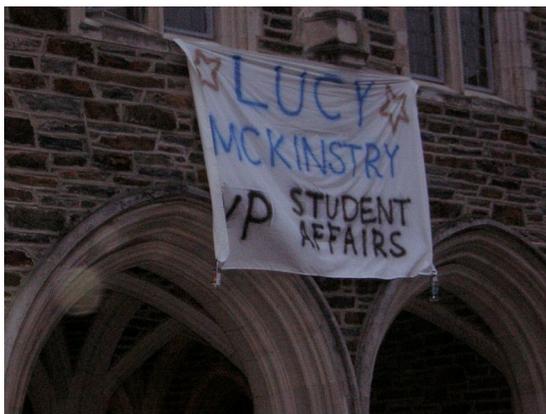
Students will be challenged to take up three sets of questions:

- * How did contemporary American women earn a place in the professions over the past hundred years? We'll use video and readings to explore how the idea of merit based professions arose and how women accommodated and challenged those conditions. With a stronger historical grounding, we will take up a second question...
- * What is the current status of women in the professions? In the middle section of the course, students will undertake independent work to establish the progress and obstacles to achievement in fields from law and medicine to arts, religion and non-profits. We'll examine the ways in which women have changed the professions and the ways in which their ideas of self, family, and society have been changed by the demands of the workplace. In the third section of the course, we will explore a series of twenty-first century debates...
- * What are the policies, preferences and possibilities before this generation of educated women? Here we will pay even closer attention to the differences among women, to the

balance of personal and professional life, and to the role of popular culture and collective action in setting options. Through the use of case studies, we'll debate the ways in which professional decisions are lived.

I LOVE LUCY!

The Baldwin Scholars mobilized this spring to campaign for Lucy McKinstry, who was elected VP for Student Affairs in Duke Student Government. Lucy is a Baldwin Scholar in the Class of 2010.



Baldwin Scholars Retreat

In April, three classes of Baldwin Scholars gathered for a retreat. Our purpose was twofold. First, it was an opportunity for interaction between the classes. As the program continues to grow in size, we have the new challenge of building a support system across classes. Thus there must be opportunities for members to develop authentic, trust-based relationships with one another outside of the classroom. Second, we wanted to re-energize and revamp. Recognizing the need for Baldwin to have an activist role on campus, we used the retreat setting to develop a game plan.

Friday night activities set the stage for an evening of honesty, which included reflection exercises, team building games, and dinner. The next day it was down to business. Polly Weiss, from the Office of Institutional Equity, facilitated a discussion on heart centered leadership to help us determine our core organizational values and to work with us to develop a long term game plan. We identified our core values as: Passion, Integrity, Courage, Participation, Authenticity, and Community.

We sought to create a long term programming plan that reflects these core values. We split into randomly assigned program areas: Leadership (Women and leadership, Mentoring), Our Selves (Emotional & Spiritual Health), and Our Bodies (Physical Health, Body Image). Within these programming areas we brainstormed ideas, chose those programs that most reflected our values, and then used goal setting strategies to narrow our list down to two projects per program area.

We left the retreat weekend with new officers for the upcoming school year and project plans. Since the retreat, we have formed committees around each project plan. Some of the projects have been busy this summer preparing for project launches in the fall. In the fall, look for a unique body image campaign and opportunities for women to network with one another . . . just to name a few!

-Rachel McLaughlin, Class of 2008

Fun photos from spring/summer events...

Five Baldwin Scholars traveled to New Orleans in February for the “Educating Women in a World of Crisis” conference. Pictured here (L to R): Julia Chapman, Alden Littlewood, and Lucy McKinstry



Baldwin Scholars relax at a dinner at Co-Director Donna Lisker’s home.

Top (L to R): Swathi Padmanabhan, Sasha Stein, and Neelima Navuluri

Bottom (L to R): Candis Watts, Lucy McKinstry, Maddie McKeever, and Kamaria Campbell



Goofy antics at the Baldwin Scholars retreat (L to R): Neelima Navuluri, Dani Beckerman, Rachael Moss, and Sara Friedman



Kelley Goes to Australia!

It took me two years to completely step foot within the Sarah P. Duke Gardens. I had visited the Gardens three times before, but it was not until a summer spent researching in Durham that I truly began to appreciate what they offered. Unwilling to pay the summer gym membership fee, I found myself taking morning walks within the Gardens' shadows. Who knew a place of peace was just footsteps away from the chaos that can be West Campus? Put simply, the Gardens



was a space that I was not utilizing. The Garden serves as an apt metaphor for my life at Duke life. The university offers its students so many opportunities that it is easy to become overwhelmed by it all. Yet when an opportunity comes to fruition, the experience can be life-altering.

One life-altering experience of mine was the chance to study abroad in Melbourne, Australia. Before Australia I had never left the continental United States. Now I was boarding (alone) a jumbo jet for a 17-hour journey across the Pacific to a new country (alone). Before leaving I was extremely nervous. As an African-American I was concerned about racism, as a female I was worried about sexism, as a novice traveler I was anxious about everything. Family, friends and the Baldwin Scholars Program—which I consider a mix of the previous two—helped to ease my fears. After all, as a future woman leader I would eventually find myself in compromising situations. When my luggage was lost somewhere in California for 48 hours, I made do with a pair of sweatpants and an extra t-shirt in sweltering, humid weather. When I realized that I was enrolled in a graduate-level education class with the average student's age being 29, I decided to learn from their unique perspectives. When I decided I wanted to try my hand at camping in the Outback (I had no prior camping experience) but could not find a travel partner, I signed up with a tour company and flew to the Outback by myself.

Although I sometimes found myself physically alone while in Australia, the ideas and beliefs I had honed in numerous scholarly discussions within the program helped me to quickly forge friendships with new people. For example, my Baldwin internship this summer will be with the Hillary for President Campaign. Once some Europeans I befriended learned of this fact, we had numerous conversations about American and European politics and various societies' construction of gender roles; that is, when I was not teaching them how to make s'mores or learning about the perks of Irish butter, black pudding, and Belgian chocolate.

I was sad to leave Australia, but the Baldwin Program is aiding in my re-acclimation to the States. I have a future internship to look forward to and a group of women willing to listen to all my stories while inspiring me with their own. In short, I have more opportunities in front of me. With one abroad experience under my belt, new (international, of course) aspirations in mind, and the Baldwin program behind me I look forward to not only senior year, but life after Duke. In other words, I am ready to step foot into another arena; and while in that new place I'll make sure to leave plenty of footsteps for women to follow in.

-Kelley Akhiemokhali, Class of 2008