

Duke University

Claiming Your Expertise

Here's a challenge recently presented to a room full of Duke undergraduate women: introduce yourself to the group using the following rubric: My name is _____ and I am an expert in _____ because _____. Before reading any further, see how quickly you can fill in the blanks for yourself. Your name should come easily to you, but what expertise do you claim, and why?

How many were stumped by the question? Did you think, "Gosh, I'm not an expert in anything – I am too young/too old/not sufficiently educated/don't have enough experience"? In other words, did it seem presumptuous or immodest for you to claim expertise, especially in front of a room full of other people?

If you did experience such doubts, the journalists and editors behind the Op-Ed Project would argue that you are not alone. Their mission, according to their website (<http://www.theopedproject.org>), is "to expand public debate, with an immediate emphasis on enlarging the pool of women experts who are accessing (and accessible to) our nation's key print and online forums." In other words, they want women experts to write editorials, appear on television, and otherwise take up more space in the serious media universe than they currently take. They seek to correct this underrepresentation by training women – like our students – to write editorials and submit them for publication, to seek opportunities to be an expert voice in print, online, on the radio and on television.

You've likely noticed that these media outlets are dominated by men. Pick up the *New York Times* and flip to the editorial page, or turn on a Sunday morning news program, and it will be hard to miss. Women don't know less about serious national and world issues than men do, nor do they have uninteresting

The OpEd Project

perspectives. The Op-Ed Project argues that they have two distinct challenges: lack of confidence and lack of access, and they aim to correct both. You have to believe you have something worthwhile to say in order to put yourself forward in this public way, and you have to be ready to absorb the criticism that follows any strong declaration.

The journalists who guided our students through the workshop challenged them to own their expertise and have confidence in what they know. The students talked about how they often keep their biggest accomplishments private; I was astounded to hear that one of our senior Baldwin Scholars, Rewa Choudhary '12, was a semi-finalist in the prestigious Westinghouse (now Intel) Science Talent Search. I've known Rewa for four years and never heard her mention it, not even in her application to our program. I asked her why, and she smiled and shrugged and said she never brings it up. The facilitators asked the other students if knowing this accomplishment of Rewa's increases her credibility. I'm hoping their enthusiastic agreement convinces Rewa to share it more freely!

Sharing your expertise does not make you immodest, or boastful, so long as you are not taking out newspaper advertisements or hiring skywriters. In appropriate settings and in appropriate ways, women need to step forward and share what they know and what they believe. The conversation is incomplete without our voices.

Donna Lisker, Co-Director of the Baldwin Scholars Program

The OpEd Project workshop, co-sponsored by the Baldwin Scholars Program and the Women's Center, was open by application to every Duke undergraduate woman. Sixteen students attended. Here are a few of their comments about the event:

"The Op-Ed project was an invaluable experience that gave me the skills and confidence to make my voice heard in the media, from the technicalities of writing to the process of publishing an editorial piece. I'm grateful for this opportunity and am excited to write and publish my own op-eds."
-Emily Pinnes, Baldwin Scholar, Class of 2015

"I applied to the OpEd Project to find a new outlet for to express my views. What I found was that the op-ed outlet has always been available to me; I just needed the training to gain the confidence to go for it."
-Courtney Liu, Baldwin Scholar, Class of 2013

The OpEd Project holds day-long workshops that are open to the public in cities across the U.S. We encourage you to investigate this opportunity and to make your voice heard!

Michele Norris: The Grace of Silence



Michele Norris chats with Baldwin Scholars at a reception following her talk.

Michele Norris, the voice of NPR's "All Things Considered," visited Duke in January as part of the Jean Fox O'Barr Distinguished Speaker Series. She spoke about her recent memoir *The Grace of Silence* and the complex legacy of race in her own family.

This series is generously funded by the Muglia family.

Welcome, Class of 2015 Baldwin Scholars!



(L to R) Mollie Breen, Tiffany Lieu, Reem Alfahad, and Ellie Schaack

The new Baldwins met important Duke faculty and staff at a VIP reception in January.

Meet the eighth class of Baldwin Scholars! The class includes 16 Trinity and two Pratt students and one varsity athlete. The new Baldwin Scholars hail from twelve states and three foreign countries. Their interests include scientific research, theater, dance, neuroscience, debate, running, and community service.

Reem Alfahad was born in Virginia but her family moved back to Kuwait when she was in middle school. In high school, she represented Kuwait at the Global Young Leaders conference. At Duke, Reem participated in the Ethics, Leadership, and Global Citizenship Focus program. She is a photographer for *The Chronicle*.

Frances (Cesi) Bosch is from Switzerland and attended an all-girls boarding school in London. She took a gap year after high school to work in a London theater and to travel to South America. Cesi is interested in public policy, international relations, TV journalism, and languages.

Mollie Breen hails from Fall Church, Virginia. She describes her leadership style as “walking with others.” As the captain of her high school cross-country team, she would run with the younger girls during warm-ups. Mollie hopes to be a math major and is a coach for the Girls on the Run program.

Lexia Chadwick is from Little Elm, Texas. She enjoys musical theater and spoken word performances. She plans to be an English major. Lexia is pre-med and was also a member of the Global Health Focus program.

Isabel Clayter, from Pacifica, California, was the student body president of her high school. At Duke, she has joined the Ultimate Frisbee team and WOODS (Wilderness Outdoor Opportunities for Duke Students). She has also begun an internship with the Duke University Union.

Demi Davis is a Durham, North Carolina native. She is interested in science research and community service. She is a new rider on the Duke Equestrian Team.

Jaclyn Dobies is from Niskayuna, New York. She is currently deciding if she should transfer from Trinity to the Pratt School of Engineering. Jaclyn plays club rugby, is a member of Engineers Without Borders, and volunteers with America Reads.

Allison Dorogi, from Fairview Park, Ohio, has already found a research opportunity in a cardiology lab at Duke. She volunteers with GANO, a student-run service organization that offers free English as a Second Language classes to Latino adults in Durham. Allison also plays club tennis and sings with Out of the Blue, Duke's oldest female a cappella group.

Ba'Carri Johnson is from Miami Gardens, Florida. Ba'Carri is also a Gates Millennium Scholar and a Coca Cola Scholar. In high school, she created a math community service project called Future Achievers in Mathematical Excellence (FAME), which has been implemented in socially disadvantaged neighborhoods in Miami, northern Florida and in the Bahamas.

Hajung (Kristie) Kim, from Simpsonville, South Carolina, took a gap year after boarding school and conducted diabetes research in Boston. Kristie is a Pratt engineer and writes for *The Chronicle*. She aspires to practice medicine in a developing country.

Tiffany Lieu hails from Lynnwood, Washington. Academically, she is interested in the intersection of neuroscience and the law. She was elected to be a first-year senator to Duke Student Government.

Addison Malone is from Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Addie is a modern dancer and is interested in how art causes social change. She was a member of the Power of Language Focus program.

Emily Pinnes, from Morris Plains, New Jersey, identifies as an athlete and an activist. In high school, she created a STAND (student-run division of the Genocide Intervention Network) chapter and was selected to be a STAND national team leader. Emily was a member of the Modeling in Economic and Social Sciences Focus program.

Karina Santellano is from San Diego, California. She is pre-med and a member of the Cardea Fellows program at Duke. Karina is involved in Mi Gente and Duke for Humane Borders.

Ellie Schaack hails from Grand Junction, Colorado. She is an AB Duke Scholar and was a member of the Visions of Freedom Focus program. Ellie is interested in English and political science. On campus, she is active with house council and *Encompass* magazine.

Bailey Sincox hails from Houston, Texas. She is active in Campus Crusade for Christ, president of Gilbert-Addoms house council, and was a member of the Memory and Invention: Medieval & Renaissance Worlds Focus program.

Cherranda Smith, from Athens, Georgia, is a licensed minister in the Baptist faith. She is a poet and playwright, having written a play for her high school's Black History Month. Cherranda is involved in the Black Student Alliance and United in Praise gospel choir.

Claire Vannelli is from London, Ontario, Canada. She is a Varsity rower and a Pratt engineer. Claire firmly believes that footprints in history are not made sitting down!

Melissa Bernstein, T'87, Entrepreneur

If you are a parent, you have probably seen this logo on your children's toys!

Melissa Bernstein, co-founder of the Melissa and Doug toy company, visited with the Baldwin Scholars in September. She led a dinner discussion and attended the Baldwin senior seminar, Women and the Professions.



Melissa graduated from Duke with a double major in Public Policy and Japanese. She intended to follow the law school route, then diverted to finance. She soon realized that she needed to identify what she is passionate about and where her skills lie. She founded a toy company with her then-boyfriend now-husband Doug and has successfully built a million-dollar toy company.

These were excellent messages for young college women to hear: that they do not have to have their entire lives planned out right now and that it IS possible to balance family with a career.

The Baldwin Scholars were enthralled with Melissa's story. Her visit was definitely a highlight of the Fall semester!



Six generations of one Baldwin family meet at a Homecoming breakfast in September:
(L to R): Emily Davis (2014), Lauren Vernon (2013), Precious Graham (2012), Snayha Nath (2011), Lucy McKinstry (2010), and Katie Wear (2009)

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

Shari Baker, Baldwin Scholar, Class of 2010
The Braley Family (Megan Braley is a Baldwin Scholar, Class of 2008)
Bonnie Corwin, T'82
David Griffith
Lucy McKinstry, Baldwin Scholar, Class of 2010
Alison Perlberg, Baldwin Scholar, Class of 2008
Jeanne Tannenbaum, G'73
Margaret Taylor Smith, WC '47 and Sidney Smith, Jr.
Dr. Judy Touchton, WC '62

Contact Us...

We'd love to hear from you!

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Best wishes for a healthy and happy year!
Donna, Emily, and Colleen