



July 2009

A Moment for Grove City College

The subject of this “Moment” piece is about how our students today are leaving campus to learn about other cultures and to help other folks. I call it reaching out. It was also the subject of our most recent Annual Report, in which we talked about how our students are “touching the world.” The opportunities are numerous and our students are taking advantage.

But before I talk about that, as most of you know, I like to sometimes compare and contrast today with days gone by. Those days gone by upon which I will comment are the ones I spent as a student (1963-67). The College was really a regional school then. I had three different roommates during my student days – all great colleagues and wonderful friends. During my first two years, each of my roommates was from a Pittsburgh community as I was. In my last two years, my roommate was “all the way” from New York City. We didn’t have many students from “out of town.” In fact, only a handful of states were represented in our student body. Today, more than 46 states and many countries are represented. As a result, our College now has truly transformed into a national school.

Back then, there was also little or no study abroad interest or opportunities, and there were few chances to leave campus and help others. In fact, few of us had been very far from home. I recall being in bed in my dorm room and listening to the train go through town and wondering where it ended up and what that place was like. I soon found out (the same train goes to the same place today and still blows its whistle when going through town) that it only went to Erie! Well, it still took me two more years before I got to Erie and the end of the line (few of us had cars in those days). I also had never been on an airplane until Professor Warner Mendenhall took our comparative government class to Harvard for a week seminar on China. That airplane ride (not a jet) was pretty exciting – it was a TWA four-engine. We propellered our way to Boston and back.

For today’s Grove City College students, things are sure much different. And opportunities to get off campus and even out of the country abound, such as study abroad and work with groups such as New Life, Steel City Ministries, Young Life and Inner City Outreach. These programs are just a few of the many off-campus opportunities our students have. Let me share a little about them.

When this administration began in 2003, only a handful of students took advantage of semester-long **study abroad** opportunities. We needed to do more – much more – and we have. We now have an Office of International Education led by Dr. Lois Johnson and Dr. Mark Reuber. From just a handful of students already going abroad in 2003, we now project close to 400 overseas study and travel opportunities for our students this coming year. A number of our students are studying at the University of Nantes in France and very soon we hope to have a similar ongoing campus residence experience in South America and China. Fifty percent of a typical graduating class now completes some form of international study or international activity. We also have had numerous events on campus with an international or cultural motif, such as the Hispanic Cultural Celebration in the fall of 2008 and the Irish Celebration in the spring of 2009, featuring Irish step dancing. So unlike myself – who took two years to see Erie, Pa., after hearing that train go by and who didn’t get on an airplane until late in my college years – our students today find that learning about others in the world is interesting, essential and abounding with opportunities.



“Grovers abroad”

Learning about other cultures around the world is only one way our students are reaching out. They also step up to offer help when needed in many, many ways. Here is just a small sampling:

New Life focuses its efforts almost totally at nearby George Junior Republic (GJR). GJR is an adjudicated living setting for young boys who have had social, adjustment and even criminal problems in their home communities. More than 140 of our students are involved in this effort of caring and sharing. This is a follow up to (though greatly enhanced) a wonderful program when I was a student. Another enhanced program is the service provided by more than 20 of our students at Polk Center. This group – **Polk Christian Outreach** – provides opportunities for ministry through service to adults identified with special needs (both physical and mental disabilities). They are assisted from time to time by our **New Grace Singers** and **Clowns for Christ** groups.

About 40 students participate in **Steel City Ministries** with the goal to minister to the people of Pittsburgh who are facing poverty, lack mentors and have received little or poor education. The five main outreaches of the program are the homeless ministry, Bethlehem Haven (battered women's shelter), a tutoring program, mentoring program and coaching basketball.

Students in **Young Life** work with students in the area's middle and high schools. Many of our students in this program spend a great deal of time mentoring, teaching and just being friends with the students with whom they work.

In addition, more than 200 of our students each year participate in **Inner City Outreach** trips between semesters, over spring break or early in the summer. These trips focus on helping to construct facilities and generally work with regions and people in need. Each trip is the "inspiration and perspiration" of student groups, assisted by our Office of International Education and Student Life and Learning. Trips this year were to Belize; the Dominican Republic; Beijing, China; Chennai, India; Costa Rica; Guatemala; Toronto, Canada, and places of need in the U.S. On their trips, our students reach out to touch the world and learn. Another program called Red Box Missions was begun by former Dean of Chapel Dr. Bruce Thielemann. This summer, eight of our students are literally spread throughout the world helping others in Uganda, India (2), South Africa, Guinea, Honduras, Togo and the Czech Republic.

Another area you might find interesting is an idea that grew out of our Department of Entrepreneurship's Business Plan Competition. Early in 2006, entrepreneurship major Ruth (Dykstra '07) Entwistle began an internship with Hope for the Children of Haiti, where she explored opportunities to provide jobs and safe water in Haiti. That spring, a team of students consisting of Ruth, Michael Ritter '06, Katie Garland '06 and Jim Palmer '07, with faculty adviser Dr. Timothy Mech, created an innovative plan to help impoverished countries gain access to clean water. While many non-profit organizations dig wells or give away water filters, this group of students wanted to provide the people of Haiti with the training, micro-loans and support needed to own and operate their own sustainable water treatment businesses. Their plan not only won first place in the non-profit category for the 2006 Business Plan Competition, but it also emerged as the successful social enterprise named Deep Springs International (DSI). In less than three years, with the help of 80 student volunteers from the College, DSI has created jobs, provided health and business education to hundreds of students and met the needs for safe water for literally thousands of poor Haitian families. In recognition of its accomplishments, Deep Springs International received the prestigious Templeton Freedom Award last fall. Deep Springs plans to expand throughout Haiti in the next few years. You can learn more at <http://deepspringsinternational.com>.

It is amazing to see all that our students are doing to reach out in both learning and charitable environments. Their work and passion engage the mind, but truly comes from the heart. I never tire in hearing from them about their life-changing experiences. All alumni can be proud of their efforts. It is an essential ingredient in producing an educated young person. We will continue to strengthen these opportunities, and *that is a promise.*

Sincerely,



Dick Jewell '67, J.D.
President