

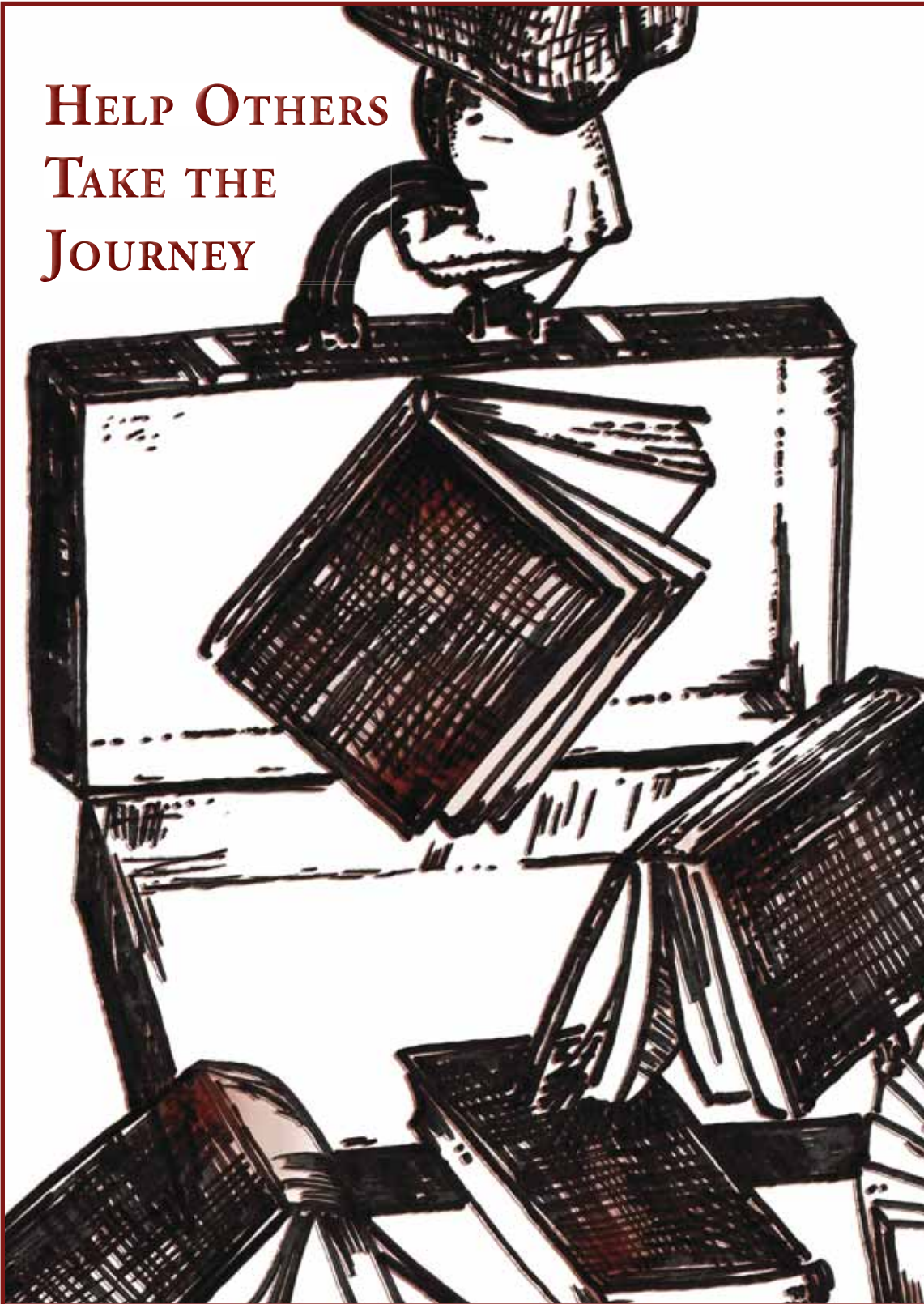
SYMPOSIUM



A Publication of Shimer College - Office of Advancement

Fall 2009

HELP OTHERS TAKE THE JOURNEY



Matching Gift Means \$1 = \$3

Shirley Conibear ('68) wants to help more students benefit from a Shimer Great Books education and she is challenging you to help too.

Between now and January 19th, Shirley will match one of your dollars with two of her own, thus tripling the effect of your donation. Your gift before the end of the calendar year can impact your taxes as well as provide critical financial aid for aspiring Shimerians.

As of this printing, we are ahead of last year in applications. But this is small comfort, since many of those accepted last year could not attend because of financial concerns. The "triple" effect of your donation means we can increase financial aid support to accepted students – the critical difference that turns doubts into enrollment.

A Shimer education is a lifelong journey. **Thanks to Shirley's challenge and your generosity, we can help others take the journey.**

Please use the enclosed envelope and make your gift have triple the impact today.

Read more about Shirley, page 8.

From the President's Desk:

Ethical Leadership and the Great Books



President Thomas Lindsay

Throughout the past decade, we have witnessed numerous instances of business and political corruption. Prominent business and government executives have faced charges of fraud, theft, moral turpitude and violations of the public trust. Why is it that no one along the chain of command within our business, financial, and political institutions mustered the moral courage to say, “Stop?”

For many commentators on this leadership crisis, the cure for our ethical ills is education. And they are correct: there is much more that we in academia can do to foster ethical leadership.

Unfortunately, higher education in this country today is devoted overwhelmingly to technical training. This is ironic, because even before the business and political scandals, studies had shown that executives who fail—financially as well as morally—rarely do so from a lack of technical expertise. Rather, they fail because they lack interpersonal skills and practical wisdom; what Aristotle called *phronesis*, which translates as “prudence.”

As Shimer students learn, Aristotle teaches that genuine leadership consists in the ability to identify and serve the common good. To do so requires much more than technical training. It requires an education in moral reasoning, which must include history, philosophy, literature, theology and logic; that is, a liberal education pursued through study and discussion of the Great Books.

Over the last half-century, academics have forgotten a centuries-tested truth: A Great Books core curriculum fosters ethical leadership as no other training can, because it gives students the life-transforming exercise of engaging in conversations with history’s greatest thinkers and doers.

Indeed, one thing that has distinguished great leaders has been their ardent study of the great ideas and works of those who preceded them. Alexander the Great was a passionate student of the exploits of his role model, Homer’s Achilles. In turn, Julius Caesar patterned his ambitions after those of Alexander the Great.

For the founding generation of our country, Plutarch’s *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans* was second only to the Bible in readership. Lincoln credited the *Bible*, Shakespeare’s political-historical tragedies, Euclid’s *Elements* and the *Declaration of Independence* as his wisest teachers.

As a young man, Winston Churchill read and embraced Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. This work contains the famous description of the *megalopsychos*—the “great-souled” or “magnanimous man”—whose vision is so grand that for him, even “great honors” are but a “small thing.” Such greatness of soul explains Churchill’s moral capacity in the 1930’s—when he was out of office, discredited, and even ridiculed—to stand up and rouse a slumbering world to the coming danger of Nazism.

Of course, history’s great authors and leaders do not always agree on what constitutes leadership. But it is in studying the disagreements that our students gain the maturity necessary to become genuine leaders.

What is the just society? What is human excellence? What do the individual and the community owe each other? Wrestling with the great minds over these questions forces Shimer students to examine and defend their own beliefs and thus develop the breadth, depth, creativity and vision to face today’s complex ethical dilemmas.

These exercises find their analogy in athletics: you play just as you practice. Currently, business education in this country compels students to spend 95% of their time learning how to calculate with a view to maximizing wealth. Just 5% of their time—usually no more than a semester course—is spent developing their moral capacities. Should we be surprised at students’ priorities after they graduate?

At Shimer, we have initiated a project that marries career-directed courses with our required 85 hours of Great Books Core Curriculum. This was made possible by the fact that, last year, our faculty approved a program enabling our students to use their forty hours of electives to pursue concentrations in the fields of pre-med, psychology, mathematics, and political science at IIT. At the heart of this novel marriage stand the intellectual and ethical exercises I have described above. Needless to say, we hope the program will not remain novel for long.

Most of all, we at Shimer hope that if, somewhere down the road, one of our graduates finds herself in the midst of a financial or political scandal, she remembers her Aristotle and cry, “Stop!”

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JOIN US ONLINE!

The Shimer Alumni Community is an interactive, informational, and networking site designed to help Shimer alumni connect with the school, and most importantly, their friends and former classmates.

<http://alumni.shimer.edu>

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Jonathan Timm, Christin Smith, et al.

Sunday, August 23rd marked day one of year 157. For 36 new faces,

it was moving day. Young men and women began hauling suitcases and boxes into their residence hall rooms north of Shimer's main building, where they will spend the next year developing an intellectual foundation rooted in one of the last true liberal arts curricula in the country. With the addition of 36 new students, Shimer's student body now stands at 110.

But the entering class is more than just a number. The incoming students hail from 16 different states. This year an exceptional number of those are from the west coast. This rise is due in large part to the increased recruitment efforts made in that area last year, including Cheryl Park, Assistant Director of Admissions, making a trip to the West Coast to attend college fairs and visit high schools. With the help of alumni like Anne Marie Hill ('91), Matt MacDevitt ('07), Martin MacIntyre ('56), and Nick Schmitt ('08), Cheryl was able to host receptions and offer sample classes to prospective students and their parents, giving them a taste of what Shimer is like and allowing them to speak with alumni about their Shimer experiences.

Also, many members of the entering class are transfer students. These are students who in many cases discovered that the other schools they attended did not offer them a place to thrive and challenge themselves. These transfer students include Kieran and Liz who took classes last year as students from Harold Washington College in downtown Chicago.

Shimer also welcomed Howard, the first transfer student from the Vandercook College of Music, which also lies on IIT's campus. Upon taking Integrative Studies 2 with David Shiner last semester, Howard, who is an aspiring teacher, found the class and discussions so inspiring he had to see what the rest of the core offered. He is also still able to play bass in many Vandercook ensembles.

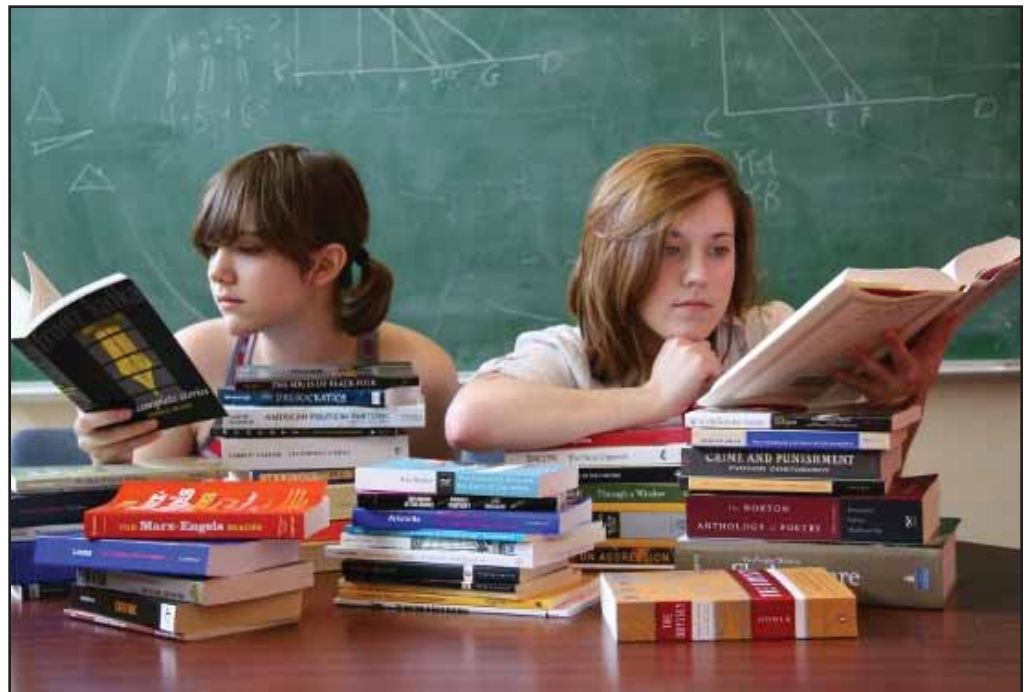
The incoming class brings to Shimer an array of interests and talents. Several play instruments like the piano, banjo, or accordion; one is an accomplished actor; another is an improv comedian; and still others play competitive sports like hockey or basketball.

The entering class was joined by the returning students in time for the first day of classes, Thursday, August 27th. After a week, students began to adjust and get to know one another. In many cases, however, the connections formed before their arrival. Thanks to social networking sites like Facebook, many of the students had been in contact over the summer, sharing thoughts and fears or even discussing summer pleasure reading. The adjustment was also made easier by this year's orientation leader program, in which upper-class students worked to guide and mentor students after their arrival on campus. As we began the year, the first days proved to be as much about opening doors to new ways of thinking and new experience as they were to new rooms.

"I decided to go to Shimer after the Montaigne competition, when I first sensed my limitations [as a thinking person]. I knew right then that Shimer was the place to be to explore and challenge myself."
-- Trillian Bergmann ('13)

On Humanities I: "I got a lot more out of my Hum I class once I talked to my facilitator, working from my understanding of rhythm and my knowledge as a dancer."
-- Lena McCain ('13)

On Nat Sci II: "When we were reading Lamarck, it struck me that all classifications are artificial, like there is no definition between species. It completely redefined the way I looked at Biology and Physics."
-- Neel Rana ('13)



Montaigne Scholars

The Michel de Montaigne Scholars' Competition is a scholarship competition that is held each February.

The competition is based upon a student's merit in writing and a Shimer-like discussion of a Montaigne essay. This February's 3rd annual competition had more than 50 prospective students competing for two full-tuition and two half-tuition renewable scholarships. The two full-tuition scholarship recipients who joined Shimer this fall exemplify the quality of students attending Shimer.



Naomi Neal, 18, is from San Francisco, California. She loves anything involving swimming, baking, and loud music. She also claims that to choose just one book from her favorites is an impossible task, but she'll favor any piece of writing with an untrustworthy narrator, such as Raskolnikov in Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*.

When asked about what she has discovered her first semester at Shimer, Naomi says "I find in discussion I can be convinced of two different perspectives at once, which has greatly influenced the way I think about truth." Naomi is ecstatic to have a chance to attend Shimer College and after graduating plans to write, "or maybe stay in grad school for the rest of my life" she says.

Michael Doherty, 19, hails from Evanston, Illinois. He plays numerous instruments including the banjo, guitar, piano, and drums and also belongs to a band named "Color Card." Michael's other passions include languages (especially German), Old-English poetry, film-making, drawing, writing, and studying Buddhism.



Michael says what attracted him to Shimer was "at first, its relative obscurity and small size," but that the more he learned about the school and its educational methods, "the more apparent it became that I would not find another college as engaging to my wide range of intellectual interests, both academic and personal." After completing his studies at Shimer, Michael plans to study Buddhism and be ordained as a Buddhist monk. Michael also plans to travel and partake in civil and humanitarian rights causes.

Alumni Book Scholarship

Thanks to the generous support of alumni donations, Shimer awarded an alumni book scholarship to an incoming student. This scholarship pays the student's book fee for the academic year. It helps provide the most fundamental basis of a Great Books education: books!



KC Stresak, 18, is from Branson, Missouri. She received a Shimer postcard in the mail, and was sold on the premise of "Great Books, Great Conversation" as a foundation for higher education. She noticed a difference immediately. For the first time in her educational experience, she is excited to come to class. "I never look at the clock."

After graduating from Shimer, KC plans to possibly enter AmeriCorps or the Peace Corps, prior to earning a PhD and eventually becoming a college professor. In the short term, KC hopes to improve her writing and is undecided about her concentration. She is leaning toward the Natural Sciences, largely because she feels that this area, as a blend of fact and opinion, provide the most fertile basis for class discussion. KC's favorite reading so far, she says, is Paley, due to the challenge of understanding the world from a perspective that is polar opposite to her own.

Congratulations Class of 2009



To read the keynote address or see a list of graduates and thesis titles go to: <http://alumni.shimer.edu/commencement09>.

In May, Shimer College celebrated the graduation of the Class of 2009. The keynote address was given by Dr. Herman Sinaiko. Dr. Sinaiko is a Humanities professor at the University of Chicago whose latest book, *Reclaiming the Canon*, emphasizes the enduring value of a Great Books education. In his address, Dr. Sinaiko traced the roots of the modern Great Books curriculum, beginning with Aristotle's first synthesis of the Theoretical Sciences, the Universal Rhetorical and Dialectical Arts, and the Practical Disciplines of Ethics and Politics. Shimer College still retains the essence of this original curriculum, Sinaiko argued, and such a "non-specialized, non-vocational education has actually better prepared [students] than [their] less fortunate friends graduating from other more conventional schools."

Student speakers Stephen Hoppe and Heather Lakemacher echoed this sentiment, expressing gratitude for the singular academic and social experiences Shimer College provides. Stephen spoke first, choosing to share what came

to mind rather than referring to any prepared words as he stood at the podium. "Every draft I wrote didn't seem adequate," he explained. After reminiscing on his journey that began with a dissatisfying experience at a traditional college, Stephen concluded, "I have such a sense of intense gratitude for Shimer; even now I don't think I can put it into words. I've gained so much."

Weekend student Heather Lakemacher admitted to having a more reserved personality when she began, but found that Shimer College inspires students to open up in a profound way: "When you spend so much time together in class talking about the important questions of life...you can't help developing the kind of friendships that will hopefully last for the rest of your lives." Heather also expressed confidence in the curriculum that she had completed. "The world needs people who can comfortably cross disciplines and compose a coherent, broad perspective," said Heather. "That's the kind of thinking Shimer uniquely suits us for."



Hostetter-Bennett Award

The Hostetter-Bennett Award is given annually to the student who, in the opinion of the Shimer faculty, has demonstrated the most academic improvement during their course of study at Shimer.

Presented by David Shiner, Dean of the College: This year's award winner, like most winners, did not begin her tenure at Shimer auspiciously. That wasn't too surprising, since before attending Shimer she had spent six years at an area community college without coming close to earning her Associates degree. Ten years ago, when she applied to Shimer, it wasn't clear that she should even be admitted. But we thought we saw potential for her to succeed at Shimer where the community college had failed her. That's not surprising, since Shimer is so different from most other colleges and universities, and we have been known on many occasions to provide inquisitive and willing, but under-performing, students with exactly the sort of academic environment they've needed to succeed.

Well, it didn't work. Or at least not very well. This student's academic work was, frankly, pretty marginal and not noticeably improving over time. After a couple of years she withdrew from Shimer. And that was that – at least for the next five years. Then the College moved to Chicago, and we heard from her again. She wanted to return to Shimer, and this time she had a plan. She would take one course per semester in the Weekend Program, and she'd give that course her all. We agreed to give it a try, and over the past three years she has followed that plan, with increasingly favorable results. She has successfully completed all of her coursework and her comprehensive examinations, and she's now only one year from receiving her diploma. When the time comes, I will be very happy to hand that diploma to her. For this year I'm delighted, on behalf of the Shimer faculty, to present the 2009 Hostetter-Bennett Award to Colleen Cerny.

Reaction of Colleen Cerny ('10): Thank you for this beautiful award. I probably do not deserve it, as my academic improvement has been so gradual and full of fits and starts, but it is my pleasure to accept it anyway! For me, Shimer College really succeeded where more mainstream institutions had failed, specifically, in propelling me to my graduation day with an instilled desire to continue learning. I feel that one of the primary reasons Shimer has transformed my academic life is due to its unique curriculum. Anyone who has attended Shimer will tell you that there is no philosophy, political position, religious doctrine, moral belief, or social theory stated anywhere in the curriculum that is not also contradicted somewhere else. This exposure to such an expanded vista of human thought and the pursuit of truth in the classroom forced me to face issues I'd had academically, especially with the gaps in my education. Suddenly I knew that I know nothing! It also appeared to me that the only way to overcome all the fragmentation in the world was by Shimer-like dialogue. Instead of throwing up my hands in frustration like I did five and even ten years ago during my decision to apply to Shimer, I decided to use the college as a road map to other possibilities, which include a plan for further education and eventually teaching work. My time at Shimer constitutes the indispensable beginning of an education that will continue to come full circle. That is what I mean when I say that Shimer has transformed my academic life.

Receiving this award means I have learned how to be a good class participant: one who allows people to be heard, is not too impulsive, is an active listener, helps find ways to bring other people and perspectives in, is not too hesitant, is considerate and thoughtful when criticizing, is well prepared, and understands productive silences. The single most important meaning of this award for me is the unlikely fact that as one who was once academically "lost in a dark wood with no clear path," Shimer has found me. And here I am, one of many happy recipients of the Hostetter-Bennett award for academic improvement. I am very grateful to Shimer and its community. Thank you.



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MEANS \$1 = \$3**

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Shirley Conibear ('68)

Dr. Shirley Conibear is the President of Carnow, Conibear & Associates and OMS, Ltd. These two Chicago area companies are leaders in the area of environmental and occupational health concerns. Shirley also serves on the Board of the Elgin Symphony Orchestra and works closely with the Citizens for Conservation in Barrington, which works on issues related to grassland protection, restoration, and stewardship.

Shirley discovered Shimer after two years at Michigan State. Shirley knew she wanted to study medicine; however, she also decided that she wanted a more well rounded liberal arts education than the University could provide. She discovered Shimer by chance through a former Shimer student, and after visiting, soon transferred. Shirley was especially taken aback by the Natural Science curriculum. Coming from a science background, she was accustomed to thinking of "what we know" in the discipline as black and white fact, but soon discovered that there is much more subtlety and openmindedness required in the sciences than she initially realized. When asked how Shimer helped her career, Shirley says, "Shimer taught me how to think and to question things. I was taught to read, apply, and write. I use these skills on a daily basis." Shirley went on after Shimer to receive her MD and later a Master's degree in Public Health from the University of Chicago.

In her experience, Shirley believes a Shimer education is an especially great benefit to those in "boundary professions" that span more than one discipline. "Shimer prepares one to work with others to solve problems, which I do everyday." In light of her cross-disciplinary perspective and interest, Shirley finds Shimer's new relationship with the Illinois Institute of Technology to be particularly exciting. "I feel this is a great opportunity for those wanting to study the sciences," she says. This passion for Shimer inspired Shirley to join the Shimer College Board of Trustees last year. And now, she is challenging others to step up and help Shimer continue to grow with her offer to match others' contributions.

Colby Somerville ('06)

This fall, Shimer alumnus Colby began work in the University of Iowa's Writers' Workshop. The Workshop is a two-year residency program which culminates in the submission of a creative thesis and the awarding of a Master of Fine Arts degree. Alumni of the Writers' Workshop have gone on to publish award winning work, and alumni include poet, professor, and fellow Shimer alumnus Peter Cooley ('62).

Colby says that after some "fruitless years" following his graduation he decided to apply for a M.F.A. As he points out, whenever a writer thinks about an M.F.A. they can't help but consider Iowa. Colby will be writing poetry during his time in the Workshop, but he admits that like a lot of people in this country, he didn't really think of poetry much until he read T.S. Eliot. Colby says, "Some will tell you he was a cold individual, but his work is very physical, even to the point of jarring the body." Colby encourages people to investigate contemporary poetry, saying "if modern city living has you feeling frail, Eliot may be a good body to turn to, he doesn't have much to say about the derivatives market or the Mission Accomplished banner." Colby also recommends the anthology *American Hybrid* and the periodical *Octopus Magazine* as two good places to explore contemporary poetry.

Recently, as Colby was packing up his books into boxes for the move to Iowa, he noticed there were a lot of boxes. "Each book has constituted an encounter with a daring opponent. Part of what Shimer teaches is this, the encounter." Colby adds, "Some of my best friends in the world are from Shimer, and I couldn't write without friends."



Sarah D. Wellings ('99)

In 2006, Sarah graduated magna cum laude from Boston College Law School and is now an associate in the Tax Department of the Boston office of Sullivan & Worcester LLP. In 2008, she received Super Lawyers magazine's "Rising Star" award. Sarah is also a

board member and co-vice president of Massachusetts Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, Inc., a Boston based non-profit dedicated to serving the underserved.

The education that Sarah received at Shimer served her well in the study and practice of law. In class, fellow students were impressed to see that she not only answered the professor's questions without expressing her personal opinion of what the law should be but also quoted directly from the cases. Sarah also quickly took to reading case law, especially old English case law, which she says is a lot like reading Hegel. In law school, one reads a variety of texts, and Shimer gave Sarah the "flexibility of mind" to meet the challenge.

Practicing law has been no different. "In tax law, we are always saying, 'What does the statute say?' and 'What does the IRS say about what the code says? Is that a reasonable interpretation of the law?'" Sarah's firm, it seems, is no stranger to the dialectic. "My firm even has a weekly 'tax lunch' where we all sit around a table with our book of 'code' and discuss various tax problems and what the right result is under the law." Sarah loves the opportunity to apply the critical thinking skills she refined at Shimer in ways that affect people today.

{ALUMNI PROFILES}

Maggie Kast ('57)

This fall, Maggie celebrated the publication of her memoir, *The Crack Between the Worlds: A Dancer's Memoir of Loss and Faith*, which tells of her life's spiritual journey. It begins with a career in modern dance, which is then reformed through personal tragedy into a religious awakening, taking the form of liturgical dance, theological study, and writing. After attending Shimer College for a year, like many others, Maggie transferred to the University of Chicago where she continued to study the Great Books. Shortly after graduating from the University of Chicago, Maggie founded one of the first modern dance companies in Chicago, the Chicago Contemporary Dance Theater.

Unfortunately, at the height of her modern dance career, Maggie's life was struck by the tragic death of her three-year-old daughter. Afterwards Maggie struggled with the loss of her daughter. "Where was she, and what did 'gone' mean?" she agonized. Three years of mourning and reflection led her to investigate Catholicism and eventually enter the Church. Maggie's newfound spirituality and her lifelong passion for art and dance intersected when, after her study of liturgy at the Catholic Theological Union, she began performing and teaching liturgical dance.

Maggie has also received an M.F.A. in fiction from Vermont College and now teaches Writing and Rhetoric part-time at Columbia College Chicago. Maggie's essays have been published in publications such as *America*, *Image Journal*, and *Rosebud Magazine*. *The Crack between the Worlds* is her first book, which, as Maggie stated, speaks to how she got "to A from Z when they are so far apart." You can read more about Maggie's memoir at www.maggiekast.com. Maggie appreciates all your support and encourages you to visit your independent book seller for a copy of her book.



Warner W. Johnston ('73)

Warner entered Shimer as an early entrant in '64 and later returned to Shimer to finish his degree after serving in the military. Warner was one of the students in the pre-engineering program while at Shimer, many of whom later became engineers. While in the military, he received training and was an honor graduate from the US Army Signal School in Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey.

In January, Warner began serving a term as Chair of the New York Section of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). For 35 years, Warner has worked in the area of electronic communications with ABC television. Warner has also served on administrative committees of two professional societies of IEEE, Consumer Electronic Systems and Director of Audio Video Standards for Broadcast Technology. Warner is also very active in the Consumer Electronics Association, chairing the two working groups that have documented Closed Captioning in North America. In 2005, Warner's employer, ABC, along with PBS and the Consumer Electronics Association won a technical Emmy for work in which Warner participated. This Emmy, which Warner can be seen holding in the picture, was for "Documenting Closed Captioning."



Warner is now semi-retired and is looking forward to undertaking serious gardening. He also continues to enjoy some of his other hobbies, particularly the art of charcuterie (sausages, ham, pâtés, and other cooked or processed meat foods). Warner occasionally blogs about his food at blog.charcuterie.com and does photography for his wife's food blog at menu.vldyson.com. Warner is also still fostering an interest in theater, which is partially rooted in his time at Shimer when he served as technical director of Shimer theater.

Weston Rose ('05)

Weston started his first year at law school this fall at Chicago-Kent College of Law. The road to law school for Weston Rose has been an indirect but fulfilling one. After finishing his junior year in Oxford, Weston traveled east to pursue his love of languages in Germany, completely immersing himself in both the country and culture: studying high German at the Goethe Institute in Berlin and supporting himself by cooking at a rock and roll bar where he met countless German artists and musicians.

Then, shortly after Weston's graduation from Shimer, his mother made the decision to travel to the home country of her six adopted Vietnamese children, asking him to accompany her as well. Aside from having a general interest in South East Asia and supporting his mother, Weston decided that learning a non-European language would be another interesting challenge. His dedication to learning Vietnamese extended an extra year beyond his mother's stay so that he could take a language course at the Golden Key Institute at Hanoi and immerse himself in Vietnamese life. In the end, the experience proved so influential that Weston continues to return to Vietnam, traveling to the country most recently during the winter of last year.

Aside from his interest in language, Weston has always harbored a penchant for music. He currently writes songs, sings, and plays both guitar and ukulele with his cousin in an indie folk band called Country Mouse. While his love of both linguistics and music persist, Weston decided that law posed a more intriguing option as a career because of the opportunities for change in the fields of both International and Intellectual Property Law.



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Faculty: Bev Thurber

Shimer College welcomes Bev Thurber as its newest faculty member. With an impressive background in both the Humanities and Sciences, Dr. Thurber provides Shimer with someone who will serve as an important link between the two disciplines. For her first semester, Bev is teaching Integrated Studies 2 and Natural Sciences 3 while auditing Humanities 3.



Bev (left) in Natural Sciences 3

Like many in the Shimer community, Bev has extensive interests in and out of academia. Her educational endeavors include Bachelor Degrees in Mathematics and Humanities from MIT, a Master's degree in Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic from Cambridge, and a Ph.D. in Theoretical and Applied Mechanics from Cornell University.

Outside the classroom, Bev also feels at home inside an ice rink. After 12 years of skating, including a competitive skating career in college, Bev has mostly hung up her skates, hitting the ice on the occasional free weekends. "I heard about a rink in Hyde Park that opens in winter, so I'm looking forward to that. Who knows?" she muses. While studying abroad last year she performed in front of a crowd at Alpsin Oberstorf, Germany, but visions of any future competitions remain hazy. Her academic and skating interests have even crossed at times, including a presentation entitled "How Fast Could the Vikings Skate?" at the Fiske Conference on Medieval Icelandic Studies at Cornell University in 2007.

Bev was drawn to Shimer because of the focus on students and the well rounded curriculum. Bev remarks, "I love teaching because it gives you the chance to think through the material in detail. That's when I really get in it too. Each student has an ability to view a reading in an entirely different way; they connect dots you never even noticed before."

Bev is also on a mission to prove to Shimer students that mathematics is not a subject to be feared and warrants an important place in the Liberal Arts curriculum. "I feel like most Shimer students get so nervous about math, but at its core it's an amazing and interesting subject." She has several ideas for electives including Linguistics, a study of *Beowulf* in Old English, and John Conway's *On Number and Games*, which explores different games and methods of creating abstract mathematical concepts in a more concrete way. It appears that Bev will be an excellent fit at Shimer, providing keen guidance for students willing to foray into the world of numbers, while at the same time helping to provide a traditional grounding in the Humanities.

Student Life Staff

This past year has brought many changes to the Student Life Staff. Stuart Patterson has returned from Oxford and is serving as Dean of Students. Lori

Post, who was an exemplary resource for students last year, has moved to Austin, Texas. This year, Student Life welcomes two new part-time staff members.

Andrea Hohf graduated from Shimer in '05, holds a Master's degree in Social Work, and is a licensed counselor. When asked what it's like working at her alma mater, she says, "It feels like coming home. I have to remind myself I'm no longer a student here; it's



so easy to fall back into that feeling." Andrea would like to encourage Alumni to come back and visit and hopes that the Shimer community will come to be as at home with itself in Chicago as she is in coming back.

Jennifer Milam is a graduate student at Loyola, majoring in Higher Education. Her undergraduate degree from Stevenson University, a small liberal arts school in Maryland, shows that she is no stranger to the kind of environment and values Shimer represents. She

enjoys working with the Shimer community. One of Jennifer's main roles will be to act as a liaison between Shimer and many of the IIT resources such as housing, funding for clubs, health services, etc.

Faculty Notes

JD Donovan, Professor of Natural Sciences, presented a paper at the annual conference of the Association of Core Texts and Courses (ACTC) this past spring. In his paper, *Why Should Science Majors Waste Their Time on the Great Books?*, he confronts the skepticism held by scientists in regards to using a Great Books approach in teaching young scientists

David Lukens, Professor Emeritus, has returned to teaching at Shimer after a 2 year hiatus. He is now teaching Math Workshop and Integrative Studies II.

Stuart Patterson, Dean of Students, returned from Oxford in May with a month to prepare to be Dean of Students before attending a Great Books Summer Camp in Amherst, Massachusetts. Directly afterward he worked for a week in a seminar with two world-class Classical scholars on poems of Homer and Hesiod.

David Shiner, Dean of the College, had his article on Plato's dialogue *Crito* selected for publication in the book *Core Texts, Community, and Culture: Working Together for Liberal Education*, a compilation of the outstanding presentations from the 2004 Annual Conference of the ACTC.

Barbara Stone, Professor of German and Humanities, participated in the annual conference of the ACTC. She presented her paper *Their Eyes Were Watching God: A Woman's Odyssey*, as well as chaired a panel on Synthesis of Image and Text in Transforming Education. She also participated in the Summer Institute for Teachers: The Art of Creative Writing, which was sponsored by The Chicago Humanities Festival.

Harold Stone, Professor of History and Humanities, has been awarded the Fraser Baron Memorial Scholarship to promote academic study of the Renaissance by the National Association of Scholars. His project concerns the impact of the archaeological discoveries of masterpieces of ancient Roman art excavated in the early sixteenth century on the artistic community of sixteenth Rome and on the conception of the artist. The fellowship will allow him to carry out his research in Rome in 2010.

Shimer Also Impacts Faculty

Shimer College began in 1853 as an institution focused on providing an education for young women; a rather exceptional goal for the times. Today Shimer carries on with another exceptional goal, one which the vast majority of other colleges and universities consider unimportant: to teach the Great Books in a dialogical environment. These two missions are linked in the spirit of providing young minds with a place that would otherwise be unavailable to them, one in which they might pursue their passions and interests. Shimer students often comment that if it weren't for such a quirky little college buried in the heart of the Midwest, they wouldn't have pursued higher education at all.

Moreover, it is not only the college's mission or curriculum that inspires young minds, but also those that walk with them along the path of intellectual discovery: the faculty, more informally known in the classroom environment as "facilitators". They consistently hold the balance between allowing students to take on intellectual giants amongst themselves, and intervening to provide keen insight and direction when needed. Yet, the reason so many facilitators are attracted to Great Books themselves is because those books are "inexhaustible" as Mortimer Adler once described them. No matter how many times one returns to a book in Shimer's curriculum, one will always glean something valuable from it.

With this idea in mind we sat down with three of Shimer's longest standing faculty members for a brief chat about what Shimer brings to their lives and what they feel it brings to a student's life.

David Shiner: I often tell people that I received my degrees from various universities but that my education is from Shimer. This is partly because of the Great Books, which I was rarely required to study as an undergraduate. It's also because I've been blessed with remarkable colleagues who have modeled the best aspects of the life of the mind. And it's equally because the sorts of students who come to Shimer and remain at Shimer have a rare cu-



Don Moon, Eileen Buchanan, and David Shiner sharing stories from Shimer's past.

riosity and openmindedness that makes every class an adventure in ideas. As a consequence, I find that I'm always thinking, always reconsidering, always learning.

Don Moon: Over the 42+ years I have taught at Shimer, I am constantly imbued with a sense of mental and physical "aliveness" based upon all the transactions in the classrooms. New ideas and ways of looking at the world surround me. Take, for instance, the few pages from Lobachevsky's *Non-Euclidean Geometry* read in Shimer's introductory mathematics course, Integrated Studies 2. There one learns in a "mind-boggling" way that even the Euclidean geometry one grows up thinking is a natural truth about the world actually depends upon the premises, the postulates, with which one begins.

Eileen Buchanan: I think I've learned most from many readings of that frustrating classic, Plato's *Republic*. What I've learned isn't from the text itself, but from my attempts to understand it. Having now dealt with three translations, Plato continually challenges my assumptions. Some years I read the text as straightforward, sometimes as ironic, and

sometimes as an inquiry in which Plato, through Socrates, is challenging me as he challenges his followers. And, of course, there is no one "right" reading.

Don: For the students, Shimer gives them courage! That is a learned prerequisite for participating actively in the classroom where one must expose their understanding, their ideas, and examine others. It is also a necessary virtue for making one's way in the outside world.

Eileen: Students who learn to read and think deeply, to listen attentively, to express their opinions forcefully but without rancor, are ready for anything from law to teaching, from the business world to the arts and beyond. They make thoughtful citizens who know how to act responsibly in the world.

David: Not long ago, a professor from another institution of higher education said to me that there are two lies that college professors tell. One is that we would teach for free. The other is that we learn a great deal from our students. All I can say in response is that I'm glad I'm not him.

{ALUMNI NEWS}

1950's

Maggie (Nash) Kast ('57) celebrated the release of her first book in September, *The Crack between the Worlds: a Dancer's Memoir of Loss and Faith*. Besides writing, Maggie also enjoys running around and chasing her granddaughter Lola.



Samuel Mitchell ('57) retired from the University of Calgary as Professor after many years. But his retirement was short lived after he walked into a think tank to talk with a lady he thought was interesting. She wanted him to write for the organization Canadian Centre for Alternative Policies. Ironically, this is the same way he got hired by the University of Chicago for his first big job.

1960's

Michael Lipsey ('63) has a second book of original epigrams coming out in November. He has posted a chapter from his book at <http://ithoughtso.net/id13.html>. He has also been posting photos of his art work on his Facebook page and would welcome Shimer students and alumni as friends.

Patricia Samuel ('63) is living a happy, lazy, retired life in St. Cloud, NM, where she worked for 25 years as the Director of Women's Studies at the local state university. She plays around with her computer, gardens, and volunteers. She has posted more info about her life since Shimer on her personal page on the Online Community.

Ron Partridge ('64) became a published science fiction author in the 60th anniversary (October/November issue) of *Fantasy & Science Fiction Magazine*. To help them celebrate this milestone, he contributed a one-page story, continuing the 50's and 60's adventures *Through Time and Space with Ferdinand Feghoot*, the persistent punster.

1970's

Edward Juracek ('70) was elected President of the Board of Directors of the Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies in May 2009 and is engaged in the effort to save the old Shimer Campus in Mt. Carroll.

1980's

Susan Speroff ('80) went to Egypt in May with a group of friends. Then in June she went to Russia for a 2-week volunteer project where she worked in both a psychiatric hospital for women and a hospital for children with emotional/behavioral disturbances. "Although Russia is about 50 years behind the US in medical diagnosis and care, everyone was so welcoming. The children in particular, even though they could be wild and unruly, were incredibly loving." If anyone is interested in more info about the program or pictures, they should drop her a line.



Douglas Peterson ('84) completed his second Masters at Bradley University this Spring and continues to teach Computer Science at Illinois Community College. He wonders where the years have gone since he walked the hallowed halls of Illinois Beach State Park, Barat College, Harrison Conference Center, and the 438 N. Sheridan Building in Waukegan.

1990's

Donna Blumenfeld ('98) has joined alums Dan Sullivan ('95) and Lauren Hesse ('03) on the faculty of Chandler Prep, a Great Books charter school in Phoenix, where she teaches Fine Arts and runs the Junior High Drama Club. She also volunteers with several Phoenix organizations on community projects, including the annual Parade of the Arts and Grow House, a free garden.

2000's

Hilary Bussell ('05) is starting her fourth year as a PhD candidate in philosophy at Loyola University, Chicago. She has presented papers recently at the Modern Language Association Annual Convention and the Radical Philosophy Association Conference.



Andrea (Walsh) Hohf ('05) recently discovered her true calling as a mother, and is crazy in love with her one-year-old daughter, Lillian Frances Hohf. In her spare time, Andrea enjoys being back "home," working in Shimer's Student Life Office.

IN MEMORIUM

Ione Breyer ('30)
Virginia Irvin ('42)
Rebecca Levich ('75)
Mary "Bird" (Norris) Nelson ('42)
Maxine (Stransenback) Schaut ('39)
Barbara Skupien ('72)
David Zack ('58)

Matt MacDevitt ('07) started advising Humanities this fall at Renarts, after paying his dues spending a year as a Study Advisor and a year as a Math Advisor. His required summer reading for the position was *The Odyssey*, *Bleak House*, Mazur's *Imagining Numbers*, and Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*.

Gabe Curio ('09) is taking the prerequisite classes needed to attend business school. He is also planning for his wedding in April.

Lance Dyke ('09) is a nanny (or for all my hungry feminists out there, "manny") working with a high profile family in Beverly Hills. He enjoys being back in LA, especially during the hot month of September, for the first time in four years. He lives in Santa Monica, but still doesn't practice yoga. On the contrary, on his days off you might find him drinking beers at big deans, boogie board and book in tow.

Help Find Your Classmates

Do you know where your former classmates are living?

We have compiled a list of Shimer Alums who are not receiving Shimer newsletters or e-mails.

Please help us find them.

You can view the list at: alumni.shimer.edu/lostalumni

Bridging the Worlds of Ideas & Work

In the classroom, Shimer students learn to engage ideas on their own, debate concepts with others, draw parallels across different fields and synthesize their work into well-considered theses. A dynamic and dialogical liberal arts education is the ideal preparation for life and work. This summer four Shimer students were able to test these skills in the work force through summer internships.

Three of these internships were funded through the Shimer College Internship/Mentorship Program (SIM), made possible by a grant from the JS Kemper Foundation. The SIM program brings selected Shimer students together with experienced mentors in business and industry so they may work and learn, in order to better understand how the worlds of ideas and work can be bridged in a professional environment. Students can apply for existing unpaid internships or work with the SIM coordinator to develop an internship/mentorship experience. Through the SIM program, students are awarded a stipend of up to \$3,000 to help offset the cost of living.

Meg Nelson ('11)

Over the summer I interned at Harold Washington College, one of the City of Chicago's Loop schools. I worked in the Writing Lab as a tutor, helping anyone who came in with various aspects of the writing process--brainstorming, outlining, organizing, editing, etc. The experience was enormously positive for me, not only because I loved where I worked but also because I finally proved the practicalities of my Shimer education for myself.

The Lab was structured very casually and was a great atmosphere to work. I had a supervisor that treated me like all other staff members. I participated in all meetings and decisions just like the rest of the older and more experienced tutors. Every skill I needed to bring to bear in Shimer classes--thinking, conversing, understanding--came into play while tutoring. I didn't tell people what to write; I asked them questions to facilitate a dialogue process that would tell me what they wanted out of their writing and what they had that could do it. Each person had within themselves the ability to make their papers better, and by asking them questions I hoped to bring that out in them. Not every tutoring session was a success, but the greatest feeling of satisfaction came from seeing a student leave happy with improvement, or at least full of the hope of making things better.

This is exactly what we do, not just with writing but with minds, at Shimer. My education of expanding my thinking does apply in the real world, contrary to appearances, and that's what I'll carry away with me.



Justin Lockwood ('12)

During this past summer, I interned at a small law office on Long Island. It is a civil litigation, criminal defense, and financial law office. The experience I gained is invaluable. I saw a glimpse of the world I hope to enter and had the luxury of doing so under professionals who were eager to teach and test. A lot of my time consisted of researching and interpreting statutes or taking notes. It was a welcome reminder of my life at Shimer. My mentor was happy to put my work to use, actually taking a defense I constructed in a lawsuit to court.

The more interesting aspects of the internship occurred in the courtroom. The president of the office gave me the opportunity to sit beside him during courtroom and at-court proceedings, and I got to see first hand everything that goes on in and behind the scenes of every day court. My best experience was when, because of a series of mishaps, the office was short an attorney and they were expected to preside over a real estate closing. In the necessity of the moment they sent me into Manhattan to preside over the deal. It was like being pushed out of a bird's nest: intimidating but exhilarating at the same time. The internship did nothing but reaffirm my intentions of practicing law.

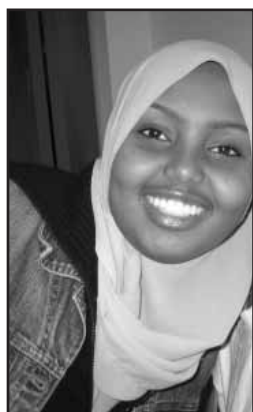
{STUDENT INTERNSHIPS}

Jesus Avina ('11)

This summer I had the opportunity to travel to Santiago, Chile and intern with Revolver Magazine, www.revolver-magazine.com. How did I end up in Chile? Essentially I refused to spend another summer working at Macy's in downtown Los Angeles. The battle was between Mexico City, Buenos Aires, and Santiago. I looked for jobs doing anything in Mexico or Buenos Aires, but then I discovered a small magazine in Santiago trying to cover the art and music scene for English speakers. It was run by a very dedicated director and had a quirky staff. I took a long shot and applied, having never considered working as a journalist. It was the end of April and I was wrapping up my 4th semester when I got word that Robert, my soon-to-be Editor-in-Chief, wanted me in Chile.

Upon first arriving in San Cristobal, I saw the sprawling city of Santiago. The mammoth Andes mountains cast against the steel skyline to the east reminds one of the beautiful relationship between the land and its people. The blinding smog also reminds one of the growing economy. I sat there staring in awe at the jungle that would be my home for the next two months. During my internship, I spent many an afternoon networking, looking up potential shows, and completing management duties for the website. I was in charge of finding 10 events per week to post on the website's agenda. A lot of my work was done in the TV room of the colonial house/hostel where I lived. I was also responsible for cranking out articles every week and collaborating with staff on future articles, often over empanadas at the corner restaurant.

However, one also learns a few other things in Chile, among them how to be a hooligan at football matches (soccer for you Americans), survive food poisoning, endure 32 degrees without central heating or insulation, decipher the jungle of Chilean slang, and enjoy a meal without the vociferous Mexican spices I'm normally used to.



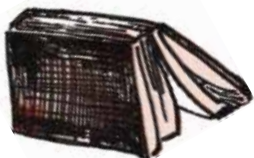
Samira Ahmed ('11)

For 10 weeks this summer, I worked at the Thompson Center for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Workforce Development. All too familiar with how "interns" are depicted on television and treated as expendable pieces of commodity, I expected and braced myself for the menial tasks that awaited me. I reminded myself that everybody has to start at the bottom and work their way up. It would be an experience I would cherish and retell in my old age.

My supervisor told me on my first day that I would begin an "exciting" project the next day. I wanted to believe him but... exciting? To my shock and amazement, the project was exciting as he promised. I would help monitor the Summer Youth Employment Program, which provided jobs to 16,000 eligible youths. I spent the first couple of weeks preparing for my project by reading several federal and state acts: WIA, WARN, and ARRA which funded the Summer Youth Program. The assignment was to visit different job sites around Chicago to interview both supervisors and participants. Each visit took about 30 minutes to complete and consisted of asking questions and walking around the site. This was to ensure that employers were following state guidelines and youth participants were gaining invaluable work experience and receiving paychecks. Some job sites, unfortunately, were problematic drawing media attention and highlighting the misuse of federal money on state level. Others, however, allowed the teenagers to walk away with a wealth of knowledge and precious work experience.

I spent the last couple of weeks completing an online course which certified me as an Illinois WorkNet Advisor. As an advisor I could organize and edit Illinois Worknet, a website geared towards helping people find jobs and explore career choices. Completing the online course prepared me to represent DCEO at The National Council of La Raza Conference. La Raza is a non-profit organization advocating for the interests of American -Hispanics. I encouraged users to join the website and assisted them with creating accounts.

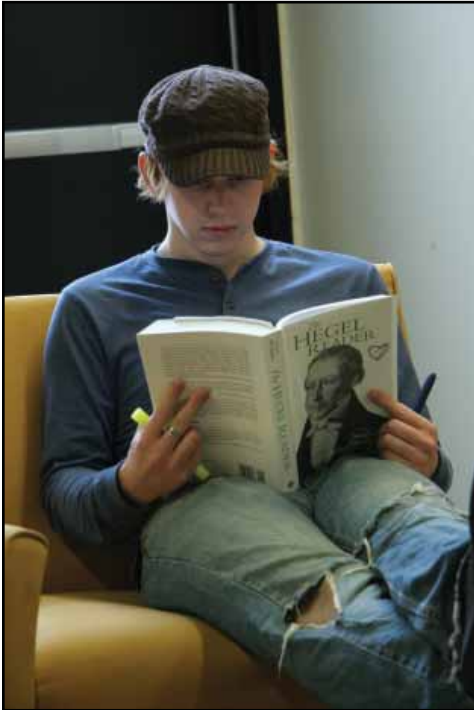
This internship has allowed me to gain important work experience, an insider's view of one of the most important bureaus in the state, and an idea of what to look for in a future career. I can only hope that my future internships/jobs will be as intellectually stimulating and welcoming as this past summer has been.



CALLING ALL ALUMNI & FRIENDS!



Current Shimer students look forward to connecting with graduates of classes past. Chat with us about your how Shimer has affected your life, and we'd love to talk with you about how it's making a difference in ours!



Shimer's future is about enrollment and we need your help.

You can help us by doing **1** thing.

Refer **1** prospective student.

Do you know **1** person we can invite to join us on a life-long journey,

1 person who can benefit from a Great Books education?

Right now, it's the **1 best thing you can do.**

To refer a prospective student, contact the Office of Admissions at admissions@shimer.edu or 312-235-3506.

