

# The Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center

Hamilton College



2013-2014

## Annual Report

The Levitt Center provides opportunities for Hamilton College students to develop the academic knowledge and practical skills needed to understand and address persistent social problems in innovative, effective, and ethical ways. Our programs foster this *changemaking* mindset by focusing on four fundamental qualities: (1) understanding, (2) self-awareness, (3) empathy, and (4) creativity.

**Understanding:** Our research grants, speaker series, and course development grants create opportunities for in-depth academic study that provides insights into the complexity of social problems, the constraints of action, and possibilities for change.

**Self-awareness:** Our programs on transformational leadership and social innovation focus students on becoming aware of the values that inspire them, the skills that enable them, and the challenges that confront them.

**Empathy:** Effective and ethical solutions to social issues require an ability to imagine others' experiences and to respond in meaningful ways. Our service-learning programs and public service internships help students understand the needs and circumstances of others; while our transformational leadership and social innovation programs develop the skills needed to work successfully and ethically with others.

**Creativity:** Our social innovation initiatives introduce students to the ideation and creative problem-solving processes, and nurture creative solutions to social problems with financial and mentoring support.

*Sadiq Abubakar '15, left, works with Wenlu Weng '16, right, and Alex Rudow '14, center, during the Levitt Social Innovation Fellows Program. Photo by Nancy Ford.*

# The Levitt Center

## Levitt Council Members and Levitt Center Staff

- **Frank Anechiarico** is the **Director of the Security Program**, a member of the Levitt Council, and the Maynard-Knox Professor of Government and Law.
- **Peter Cannavò** is the **Director of the Sustainability Program**, a member of the Levitt Council, and Associate Professor of Government.
- **Haeng-ja Chung** is a member of the Levitt Council and Assistant Professor of Anthropology.
- **Katheryn Doran** is a member of the Levitt Council and Associate Professor of Philosophy.
- **Paul Hagstrom** is the **Director of the Inequality & Equity Program**, a member of the Levitt Council, and Professor of Economics.
- **Shoshana Keller** is a member of the Levitt Council and Professor of History.
- **Madeleine La Cotera** is the **Coordinator of Community-Based Learning**.
- **Herm Lehman** is the **Director of the Public Health and Well-Being Program**, a member of the Levitt Council, and Professor of Biology.
- **Sharon Topi** is the **Coordinator of Leadership Programming**.
- **Julio Videras** is the **Director of the Levitt Center**, a member of the Levitt Council, and Associate Professor of Economics.
- **Chris Willemsen** is the **Associate Director of the Levitt Center**.
- **Yvonne Zylan** is a member of the Levitt Council and Associate Professor of Sociology.

*The mission of the Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center is to strengthen and support the study of public affairs at Hamilton College.*

*The goals of the Center are:*

- *To enable students to engage in public affairs through research, service-learning, lectures, discussion, and practice.*
- *To foster creative, ethical, and informed responses to public issues by providing opportunities for students to engage with the local community, develop leadership skills, and explore careers in public service.*
- *To support interdisciplinary collaboration and discussion; and to encourage faculty to address public affairs in their own research and in collaborative research with Hamilton students*

# Social Innovation

## Social Innovation Fellows

The Levitt Social Innovation Fellows Program is a Levitt Center program designed to prepare and support students who aim to use innovative and entrepreneurial approaches to address persistent social problems. These innovations can be implemented in a variety of ways: through a for-profit business, a non-profit or student-run organization, an improvement to an existing institutional process, a new network of existing organizations, or some other method. Whatever the approach, these innovations aim to bring a creative, entrepreneurial, and disruptive approach to solving social problems. The program includes a weeklong workshop with Anke Wessels, who teaches an award-winning course on social innovation at Cornell University. Students received project funding, as well as guidance on developing mentoring support from among alumni and community members.

This summer we provided funding for 9 student innovators to plan, design, and implement their projects. These projects range from a SAT prep/leadership training program in Ethiopia, to developing a portable solar device, to a life coach training program in the D.C. school system for at-risk students.

Here are a few examples of what our students are doing:

**Ryan Ong '16** is using his Social Innovation Fellowship to help realize his social entrepreneurship vision of an independent fashion label “to increase support and to bring awareness to LGBT rights by using a fashion business model to create an unconventional way for people to support the cause.” By partnering with reputable activist organizations and college groups, Ryan’s “Disclosure Group” seeks to provide an outlet for LGBT supporters looking to literally wear their cause on their sleeves – or chests, as the case may be.

**Tsion Tesfaye '16** is using her Social Innovation Fellowship to address the critical issue of the emigration of educated youth from her home nation of Ethiopia. To do this, Tsion aims to establish SAT preparation and college application coaching programs in Ethiopia’s capital of Addis Ababa, while concurrently educating students on how to turn their country’s entrenched social problems into opportunities for fulfilling work in social change. With her Youth For Ethiopia pilot program, Tsion hopes to empower “Ethiopian youth [to] utilize their talents and skills to transform Ethiopia into a developed country.”



*Thomas Figueroa '15, center, works with Ryan Ong '16, left, and Lily Wasser '16, right, during the Levitt Social Innovation Fellows Workshop. Photo by Nancy Ford.*

# Social Innovation

## Social Innovation Fellows

**Fletcher Wright '14** is using his Social Innovation Fellowship to tackle the problem of Washington, D.C.'s flawed public education system. With the help of fellow D.C.-bound graduates Adriana Fracchia '14 and Hannah Carlisle '14, Fletcher will design a pilot mentoring program for a handful of junior students from three of the District's most troubled high schools, improving their access to educational resources, encouraging their participation in extracurricular activities, and advising them on academics. The program will follow students through the college application process, with the aim to provide better prospects than the public schools could independently.

**Matias Wolansky '16** is using his Social Innovation Fellowship to evaluate and improve student participation and collaboration in Hamilton's career resources through the creation of a peer network for students. By sharing information, advice, and opportunities with one another, students gain greater access to the means of driving social change forward in the professional sphere. Matias hopes to create a sustainable network capable of existing on the engagement of students alone.



*Student Innovation Fellows  
Matias Wolansky '16 and Nick Pappageorge '14  
discuss their projects.  
Photo by Nany Ford.*

# Social Innovation

## Innovation Roundtable

Innovation Roundtable is a new Levitt Center program which seeks to provide a forum for brainstorming and discussion around innovative approaches that address a persistent social problem. The discussion is initiated by a facilitator who introduces a social problem and launches the discussion in the hopes that there will be an on-going collective effort to address the issue in a meaningful way. We currently have two ongoing groups (both led by a faculty member): one focused on hunger in the local community and the other on helping formerly incarcerated persons reintegrate into the community. So far the meetings have drawn between 14-24 participants with a good mix of students, faculty, staff, and community members.

### Paul Hagstrom: Food Stamp Shortages

Families in Utica frequently find themselves out of food stamps for several days before receiving food stamps for the following month. What can be done to help these hungry families during this waiting period? The Innovation Roundtable seeks to address this issue through collaborative efforts and collective action.

### Stephen Wu and James Vaughan: Incarceration and Re-entry

Once released, ex-offenders find that the transition back into society is not always a smooth one. What are the challenges facing formerly incarcerated individuals who are returning to their communities? What are some ways that would help their prospects of gaining employment?

## AmeriCorps VISTA

**AmeriCorps Volunteers** (Levitt Center along with Colgate, MVCC, SUNYIT, Community Foundation): four area colleges are supporting 2 AmeriCorps volunteers in Utica, including Kevin Alexander '13. They are working with low-income and refugee entrepreneurs, as well as assisting local colleges with their social and commercial entrepreneurship programs.

**A special thanks to all of our guest mentors who make their knowledge and expertise on transformational leadership and social innovation available to Hamilton students**

Prudence Bushnell, Designed and leader of the Levitt Leadership Institute.

Chris Powers, facilitator for the Levitt Leadership Institute.

Isabelle Van Hook, facilitator for the Levitt Leadership Institute.

Anke Wessels, facilitator of the Social Innovation Fellows Workshop.

Henrik Scheel, Founder and facilitator of the StartUp Experience Workshop.

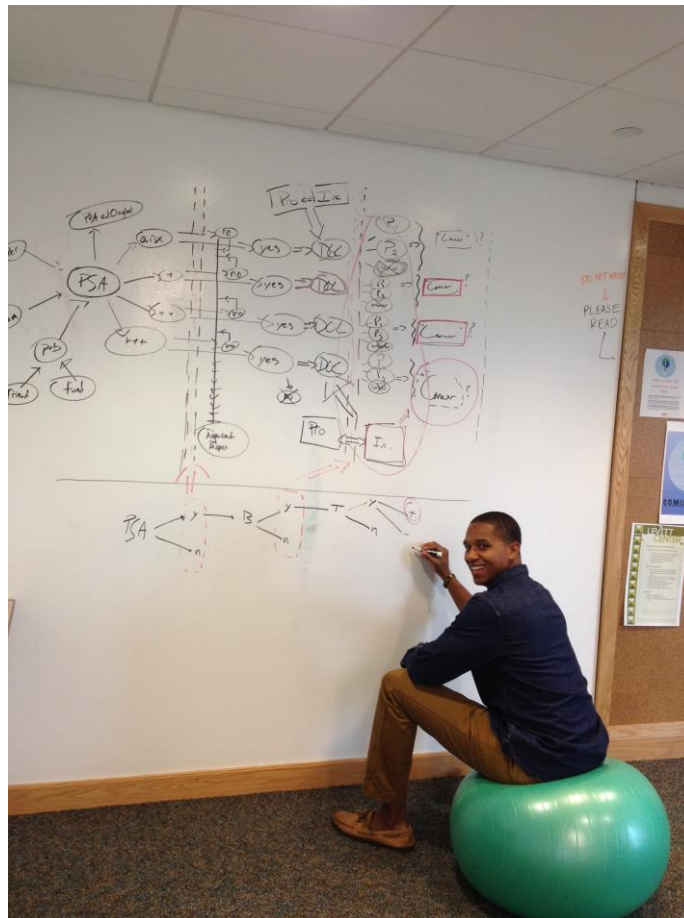
# Social Innovation

## Social Innovation Space

The Social Innovation Space, located in the back area of the Levitt Center, is a space to attract and support student innovators. Most of the construction is complete and the space will be available for use for the Fall 2014 term. Levitt staff and the student Social Innovation Team are developing programming and protocols for using the space. The space includes rooms suited for group brainstorming with white board paint on the walls, and comfortable seating to aid in the brainstorming process.

## Changemaker Maps

The Levitt Center is working with academic and co-curricular departments to create Changemaker Maps (modeled on those used at BYU and Middlebury). We hope to have 5-6 completed by Fall 2014, and aim to recruit more departments to participate over the course of the next year. The maps contain information about relevant courses, faculty contacts, and programs aimed at students interested in addressing urgent social problems in the context of their academic concentration.



*Thomas Figueroa '15 utilizing the white board paint in the social innovation space.*

# Transformational Leadership

## Levitt Leadership Institute

The Levitt Leadership Institute is a two-week intensive leadership training program for Hamilton students. Its mission is to provide students with the opportunity to develop and practice personal leadership skills in the context of their individual career interests with a focus on developing a global mindset, ethical behaviors, and regard for the public good. The Institute is led by former Ambassador Prudence Bushnell and Christine Powers, and is modeled on the programs used to train the senior Foreign Service staff in the U.S. government. Ambassador Bushnell was responsible for providing leadership training to senior state department officials under Secretary of State Colin Powell. Ms. Powers managed senior leadership training at the State Department from 2007-2010 and continues to train senior embassy staff.

Below you'll find excerpts from articles written by Cassie Dennison '16 about the Institute:

Former U.S. Ambassador Prudence Bushnell dreamed of creating a leadership program for college-age students, but was not convinced it was possible. That is, until she came to the Hill as the visiting Linowitz professor and spent a semester with Hamilton students.

The Leadership Institute is a semester-long program culminating in a commitment project – something to be acted upon to effect change for a community. During the semester, participants take part in two, week-long intensive training sessions. The first is on campus in early January and the second takes place in Washington, D.C., during spring break. These objectives of these two weeks are to first identify each participant's leadership style, develop effective conflict resolution skills; and to then take those skills and employ them in real-life situations.

This year's participants found the first week of LLI to be of great value. Emily Goldberg '16 commented, "The Levitt Leadership Institute increased my self-awareness and provided insight into varying leadership styles. I will apply the lessons I've learned not only to leadership positions, but also to daily life."

Michael Nelson '16 added, "It might seem like the Institute's best element is the opportunity to talk with leaders who have accomplished, and are still doing, incredible things. However... the greatest piece I've gotten out of the program is the friendships I've made with the other LLI students." "Just being in a room with such like-minded and motivated student leaders was exciting and inspiring."

## Participants in the Levitt Leadership Institute, 2014

Amareux Rodriguez '14, Andrew Austin '14, Angela Gizzi '16, Aubrey Coon '16, Brian Sobotko '16, Catlin Lomazzo '15, Cassidy Dennison '16, Catherine Conroy '16, Elise Eagan '15, Emily Goldberg '16, Emily Rivera '16, Hannah Tessler '14, Jose Olivares '16, Joshua Glen '16, Liza Strauss '15, Margaret Haag '15, Michael Nelson '16, Ming Chun Tang '15, Naomi Tsegaye '16, Newton Hunter Green '16, Peter Hagstrom '16, Rachel Pollan '16, Sabrina Hua '15, William Marsden '14, Yeun Jae Song '16

# Transformational Leadership

## Levitt Leadership Institute

During the first week of the Levitt Leadership Institute, students formed groups focused on four core themes that they wanted to learn more about while in Washington for the second week: advocacy, foreign affairs, education, and social innovation. Each group was responsible for creating an event by identifying and using contacts developed in the nation's capital. The events centered on panels and speakers, including several alumni.

A snowstorm hit Washington on the first full day of the Institute, shutting down the government and canceling the event set up by the disability advocacy group. The group had planned a meeting with Daniel Vail at the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Vail is the acting assistant general counsel with the EEOC.

The second day focused around a speaker series set up by the foreign affairs group, which highlighted two keynote speakers, Frank Gaffney from the Center for Security Policy and Paul Garaffo '05, an analyst at the U.S. Department of Defense. An alumni reception followed the event, with Kristin Stenerson '12, Laura Gault '11, Paddy McGuire '81, P '11, Christina Garafola '11 and Sara Feuerstein '07 among alumni attendees.

The Levitt leaders' education and social innovation groups hosted events on the third day. The education group hosted two panels. One took place at the Center for American Progress where the participants were able to talk with Tiffany Miller, Associate Director for School Improvement, and Jenny DeMonte, Associate Director for Education Research. The second panel, at the National Education Association, was comprised of Robert Tate '82, senior policy analyst at the NEA, Barbara Stein K '72, Director of Strategic Partnerships at the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and Christie Vilsack K '72, P '00, Senior Advocate for International Education at USAID.

The social innovation group coordinated an event at 1776, a start-up incubator in the D.C. area. This event featured a discussion with four emerging start-ups: SnapDash, Ventureboard, Stories Inc., and Visitdays. Each founder was able to meet with the students and talk about the challenges and opportunities they have encountered, and what they have done to learn from their mistakes. The event concluded with a tour of the 1776 office.

After a great week in Washington, students returned to campus ready to create change with their commitment projects.



*Emily Goldberg and Liza Strauss work together on a group project during the Levitt Leadership Institute.*



# Transformational Leadership

## The Commitment Projects

Students who participate in the Levitt Leadership Institute commit to undertaking a project that will make a measurable and positive difference to their community. This year's leaders are in the process of planning and implementing a diverse and ambitious set of projects.

**Andrew Austin '14** and **Naomi Tsegaye '16** plan to raise awareness about hypermasculinity and rape on college campuses during Sexual Assault Awareness Week. They hope to fundraise for an organization providing support to abused and assaulted women. Working with Hamilton SAVES (Sexual Assault and Violence Education and Support), varsity student athletes, and various fraternities and sororities, Andrew and Naomi hope to not only spread awareness about rape, but also identify allies and support networks for sexually assaulted women.

**Caitlin Lomazzo '15** intends to create an on-campus group focused on the experiences of individuals afflicted with disabilities. This group will enable these individuals to meet with other individuals from their community who also identify with having disabilities. This new network will provide disabled students with an opportunity to voice their concerns and experiences, and subsequently spread awareness about these concerns and experiences. Caitlin plans for the group to meet on a biweekly basis and publish a bi-annual report for the administration. This report will outline specific concerns that individuals who identify with having disabilities would like to see addressed. Caitlin plans to collaborate with the Levitt Leadership Institute, the Hamilton College administration, and members of the Active Minds Executive Board.

**Michael Nelson '16**, inspired by a desire to help students discover what they are truly passionate about, plans to organize a weekly session where students can discuss what they care about and uncover why they care about these things in the first place. Michael plans to work with Sarah Jillings, the Assistant Director of Outdoor Leadership at Hamilton, who studies both satisfaction and purpose in people's lives. Michael hopes that his commitment project will provide Hamilton students with the opportunity to discover their true passion in a supportive and comfortable environment. He anticipates that these weekly sessions will help students working with the Career Center focus not only on possible occupations and career goals, but also on their true interests.

**Katie Conroy '16**, concerned with the high volume of paper cup usage in the campus dining halls, is working to create an alternative solution to decrease unnecessary waste. Katie notes that over 1,500 paper cups are used in the Soper Commons dining hall alone every day, a figure that excludes the paper cup usage in the McEwen dining hall, Howard Diner, and Little Pub. While Katie intends to brainstorm solutions with other students, she believes that a reusable thermos or food container program, where students could bring a thermos in and take a thermos out, could help solve the problem. She held a Levitt Think Tank lunch where students were encouraged to offer support, voice their concerns, and provide possible solutions.

# Transformational Leadership

## The Commitment Projects

**Brian Sobotko '16, Will Marsden '14, Naomi Tsegaye '16, and Hannah Tessler '14**, collaborating together for their commitment projects, intend to create a Late Night Breakfast Club at Hamilton to promote inclusion, bonding, and community interaction on campus. This Late Night Breakfast Club will provide students with a space to meet other students and enjoy great breakfast food a handful of times every month. Will notes that he and his collaborators intend to “capture the spontaneity of something like speed dating” by helping students meet and talk with other students with whom they may not have otherwise crossed paths. Naomi explains that the Late Night Breakfast Club will allow students to learn from other students about different cultures, different experiences, and more.



*Emily Goldberg '16 and Rachel Pollan '16 help prepare dinner as part of a group project during the Levitt Leadership Institute.*

# Transformational Leadership

## The Commitment Projects

### **LEAP: Leadership Experience and Preparation Program**

In the spring of 2013, past LLI participants Kevin Anglim '15, Jack Boyle '15, Meghan O'Sullivan '15, Gretha Suarez '15, and Dylan Wulderk '13 developed the idea of creating a first-year residentially based leadership program known as LEAP, the Leadership Experience and Preparation Program. After months of much planning and hard work, LEAP officially began this past fall with the Class of 2017. Even with a class size of only 492 students, an overwhelming 59 students signed up for this brand-new program. To foster camaraderie and community among the participants, LEAP students were housed in the Wertimer and Root residence halls.

In addition to the leadership training that LEAP participants received, each student was assigned two upperclassmen mentors intended to provide support and guidance throughout the student's first year. These mentors included: Andrew Nichols '14, Isaac Handley-Miner '14, Jessica Moulite '14, Marla Marquez '14, Morgan Markman '14, Sarah Pfund '14, Maggie Doolin '14, Brady Sprague '15, Eren Shultz '15, Nicole LaBarge '15, Ramon Villalona '16 and Hunter Green '16.

LEAP strives to develop six key skills in all of its participants: self-awareness, organization, negotiation, active listening, public speaking, and networking. To foster these skills in first-year students, LEAP participants engaged in team-building activities such as Scavenger Hunts and Iron Chef competitions, participated in public speaking workshops, and were invited to special lectures given by Hamilton professors on topics such as moral courage, decision-making, elevator pitches, and more.



*LEAP students cook with their mentor*

# Transformational Leadership

## The Commitment Projects

Below you'll find excerpts from articles written by Sarah Dempsey '14 and Sarah Destin '14 about LEAP:

One component that makes the LEAP Program different from past residential-based programs is the fact that students initially designed the concept of the LEAP Program. "Last spring, when the Levitt Leaders pitched the residential component to me and my colleagues, we immediately recognized the chance to provide another community-building option for first-years that can ease their transition to Hamilton. Since then, Travis Hill, Tristan Rios and I have collaborated with the student leaders Meghan O'Sullivan and Jack Boyle and with Chris Willemsen in the Levitt Center to launch the program this fall," said Senior Associate Dean of Students, Meredith Harper Bonham.

Bonham expressed her high hopes for the program. "Hamilton has an historic tradition of creating leaders among its alumni, and LEAP creates an opportunity for students to develop the necessary leadership skills and self-awareness from the moment they step on campus," she explained.

Meghan O'Sullivan '15, a co-director for LEAP, feels that one of the most powerful parts of the LEAP Program is the fact that it shows how students can enact real change on campus.

"What I really want to drive home about this program is the power of students to truly effect change on campus, and the importance of being driven towards a vision," she said. "If you can dream it, it can happen. It might not be easy and it will probably require much more work than you'd ever anticipated. However, it's amazing what a group of students can do together after talking for a few hours in a conference room, and it's amazing how people can motivate each other to accomplish daunting tasks."

This coming fall, LEAP is experiencing another exciting change. Starting with the Class of 2018, LEAP students will now take a philosophy course for academic credit focused on the role that transformational leadership plays in the pursuit of happiness. Material learned in the classroom throughout the week will be reinforced on the weekend with leadership exercises and group activities. LEAP students will not only learn about leadership in theory, but will also have an opportunity to practice it.

*LEAP students with their mentor*



# Experiential Learning Summer 2013

## Levitt Public Service Interns

**Levitt Public Service Internship Awards** provide funding for students who have secured an unpaid summer internship that focuses on some aspect of public service. Thanks to this program, 12 students were able to explore careers in public service by working with a government agency, a non-profit, or a non-governmental organization.

**Benjamin Anderson '14** spent his summer interning with Congresswoman Carol-Shea Porter (D-NH) in Washington D.C.. His main responsibilities included attending briefings, performing research and writing memos. Anderson enjoyed his experience and was grateful the "Levitt Public Service Internship funding allowed me to explore a career in the legislative branch and gain valuable experience that will serve me well after graduation from Hamilton."

**Jack Boyle '15** interned at the European Parliament writing over 50 amendments, taking part in negotiations on topics such as the EU-wide tobacco restrictions. Boyle was able to watch speeches from a long list of incredible people and make many contacts. Boyle says "For me this summer was an incredible experience. As a college intern I was able to see my words voted into legislation which is enforced in 28 countries. Pretty cool."

**Caroline Clarke '14** interned at Save the Children, an international non-governmental organization that promotes children's rights, provides relief and helps support children in developing countries. Clarke was able to do research on children in poverty and create a fact sheet for the organization along with editing and writing grants. Clarke explains "I have done extensive research on childhood poverty and literacy, which has increased my interest in helping children across the U.S. reach their highest potential."

**Leah Kramer '14** interned at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), an organization which works to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. Kramer was the non-legal intern in the U.S. Protection Unit and her responsibilities included responding to inquiries from individuals seeking asylum along with visiting detention centers and meeting with detainees. Kramer says "this experience has absolutely impacted my decision to pursue a career in public service and it solidified my desire to work with refugees and asylum-seekers both inside the U.S. and on an international level."

**Stephanie Lang '14** interned at The California School Health Centers Association, which does policy work, some educational work, along with helping start up School-Based Health Alliances around California. Lang worked on revising the Peer Health Insurance Rights Education curriculum, the Mental Health Services Act's Preventative and Early Intervention plans, and co-led workshops. Lang said "I cannot express how much I learned and grew this summer through this internship."

**Victoria Lin '15** interned at the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees (MVRRCR), an organization that provides services to aid immigrants, refugees, and the Utica community. Lin worked on creating and designing graphics along with collecting stories from refugee families for an article for the MVRRCR newsletter. Lin says "The stories that I have heard in my short time here have cemented my resolve to work in nonprofits to directly help those in need, to bring change where it is most needed."

# Experiential Learning Summer 2013

## Levitt Public Service Interns

**Jose Mendez '14** interned at the Anti-violence Project (AVP) NYC as the Community Outreach and Public Advocacy Intern. Throughout his internship Mendez developed organization material through writing, reading, researching, and participating in community outreach initiatives. Mendez was “able to discover the intersection of two career fields that I’m interested in: Psychology and Public Service. Counselling for LGBTQ victims of hate crimes is something I can see myself doing in the future.”

**Amelia Root '14** interned at NYC Department of Recreation where she was able to visit over fifty parks, over twenty recreation centers, every public pool, and most of the beaches working for the Community Outreach aspect of the department. Root explains “I want to work at the forefront of helping cities transition to becoming more adaptable to climate change.”

**Ming Chun Tang '16** interned at the Global Institute For Tomorrow (GIFT), an independent pan-Asian think tank focused on advancing a deeper understanding of the shift of economic and political influence from the West to Asia. As a part of the GIFT team in Hong Kong, Tang worked on a photo book which will be released in October, researching sectors in need of development, and he was invited to participate in an executive education program. Through his internship Tang says “I am starting to look beyond the research and consultancy roles that I previously could only see myself in and consider possible careers in media and grassroots organizations.”

**Morolake Thompson '14** interned at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) where she was involved in research and data compiling of information regarding racial justice and civil liberties. This information is helping on-going and future cases concerning racially based disparate treatment and outcomes. Thompson says that through this internship “I have come across things that have shocked me, inspired me, made me question, as well as made me laugh.” Her time with the ACLU was eye opening and “brought to light the overall significance of careers in social justice in impacting policy or even just one person.”

**Fiona Wissell '15** interned at the State Department where she worked on projects such as creating a presentation for a meeting on post 2015 development goals, and preparing the Assistant Secretary’s briefing books for a trip out of the country. Wissell says, “One of the cool things about interning in DC was being able to witness firsthand the effects of many major events that took place.”

**Joshua Yates '14** interned at J Street, an organization that works to educate and positively influence Americans about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through conflict resolution and peace advocacy efforts. This internship brought Yates a sense of empowerment because, as he explains, “I may only be one person, but I became part of a movement that is making its voice heard in the US political establishment.” Yates worked as a Political and Development Intern working on political fundraising efforts and analysis.

# Engaged Scholarship Summer 2013

## Levitt Summer Research Fellows

Every summer, the Levitt Center funds students who wish to pursue a research question of their choosing. The students work closely with a faculty advisor on their project which culminates in a 25-30 page paper and a poster session over Parents' Weekend where they publicly share the results of their research. This past summer twelve students were selected to be Levitt Summer Research Fellows.

**Nicholas Anastasi '15** spent his summer researching government transparency and rhetoric surrounding oil sand development in Alberta, Canada. This region has large petroleum deposits trapped below the ground in a mixture of sand, clay and water. These resources have become increasingly extracted over the decades due to technological advancements in detection and purification. Anastasi collected data on how the oil extraction industry has changed in the past half-century and "zeroed in on the relationship between government and industry," to see how the Canadian authorities make agreements with international corporations. Anastasi's work will ultimately contribute to determining if the government is moving toward sustainable oil sand development and data transparency. Associate Professor of Government Peter Cannavo served as Anastasi's advisor.

**Mary D'Ambro '15** spent her summer studying the past, present and future of the French political system, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The CAP was established in order to maintain stable food supplies and prices to ensure a proper standard of living for farmers. The program consists of food subsidies and price guards that ensure farmers are paid a fair wage and encourage the purchase of nationally grown foods. D'Ambro examined the period before the policy was put into place to discover why it was necessary, how adjustments to the CAP relate to the overall development of the EU, and future implications of the policy. Alan Cafruny, the Henry Platt Bristol Professor of International Affairs, served as D'Ambro's advisor.

**Neil Edwards '14** spent his summer examining the developing investment of China in Tanzania to see if it fosters a mutually beneficial relationship between the countries. Edwards studied whether or not Tanzania should continue to receive such large investments from China in exchange for short-term economic stability. By examining the actual investments and trading of China, Edwards investigated how that country is approaching its relationship with Tanzania, and Western fears toward China's growing investment activity. Professor of Government Steve Orvis served as Edwards' advisor.

**Adriana Fracchia '14** spent her summer analyzing the Modern Greek political landscape. The Golden Dawn party, which has recently come to political significance, is known for being xenophobic, economically nationalistic and radical. According to Fracchia, despite the party's radical nature, it has gained substantial electoral support by "channeling misplaced anger and using the economic downturn to gain political power." She concluded, "The party will not gain significantly more support" and "hopes the Greek political system will eventually address its citizens' demands and fundamental needs." Fracchia began her research with a comprehensive literature review focused on the Euro and the impact of its introduction. She then traveled to Athens and interviewed journalists, bankers, professors and other shop owners about the existing political system. Alan Cafruny, the Henry Platt Bristol Professor of International Affairs, served as Fracchia's advisor.

# Engaged Scholarship Summer 2013

## Levitt Summer Research Fellows

**Ru Jun Han '14** spent his summer discovering how automated trading impacts financial markets. In particular, he was looking at high frequency trading (HFT), a complex system of computer hardware and programs that use small transactions to accumulate wealth over time. Han said, "Automated trades happen so quickly; even a minor fault in the algorithm can lead to huge mistakes" because machines are programmed to capitalize on price fluctuations and may not recognize errors in securities listings. Han used programming and mathematical tools to solve real problems, and wrote additional source code to increase the complexity of the HFT model. He used agent-based modeling, a method where programming tools simulate real financial markets, to examine HFT. Han hopes his work develops a more realistic model for economists and government officials to study. Professor of Economics Chris Georges served as Han's advisor.

**Krista Hesforfer '14** spent her summer examining the correlation between civic learning and the growing income-based achievement gaps in the United States. She explored how opportunities for civic education vary by socioeconomic class. She found that because "lower income citizens are bound to have lower civic education and extracurricular opportunities" they are less likely to engage in political participation and succeed economically in life. Hesdorfer looked at others' analyses of data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 and other surveys. She is challenging current curriculums and "would really like to make a solid case for expanding civic education in K-12 schools." Director of the Education Studies Program Susan Mason served as Hesforfer's advisor.

**Hristina Mangelova '16** spent her summer studying how to install political trust in the Bulgarian nation. The current political situation in Bulgaria is messy and Bulgarians are confused where politics are concerned. Mangelova sought to shed light on what the Bulgarian people wanted changed in the government and how this change could happen. She was able to observe and participate in the two-month long political demonstrations and see firsthand people's reactions. Mangelova believes the answer to installing political trust in Bulgaria will be found when politicians become educated people who are not brought up with socialist dogmas. Associate Professor of Government Sharon Rivera served as Mangelova's advisor.

**Eren Shultz '15** spent his summer studying sustainable agriculture and cooperative farming in Tanzania and Uganda. Shultz decided to research development in Tanzania by examining the role of agricultural cooperatives. Shultz began his research in hopes of finding a sustainable, scalable, and replicable cooperative model to reduce poverty rates and increase agricultural efficiencies throughout Africa. Unfortunately, he was unable to find one such model. However, through interviews with farmers and experiences working on their farms, Shultz determined that cooperatives could be an effective means of combating poverty if they are allowed to develop organically rather than being imposed on villages as they have been in the past. Professor of Economics Erol Balkan served as Shultz's advisor.

**Hannah Tessler '14** spent her summer connecting with children adopted from China to learn about their unique experiences being "raised American." Tessler is studying the adopted Chinese population to see how their American experiences have shaped their personal images of themselves and attitudes toward adoption issues such as abandonment and racial stereotyping. She listened to others' stories to "search for relationships between a child's environment and their outlook on a variety of topics and issues." One significant conclusion that Tessler drew is that Chinese adoptees tend to be passionate about studying the social sciences because these subjects "allow you to critically analyze society and look at it in a different way, which is empowering for many adoptees." Associate Professor of Sociology Steve Ellingson served as Tessler's advisor.



# Engaged Scholarship Summer 2013

## Levitt Summer Research Fellows

**Anderson Tuggle '14** spent his summer researching India's political integration after achieving independence from the United Kingdom in 1947. Specifically, Tuggle examined the peaceful centralization of power from the princely states to the federal government. Tuggle performed primary research traveling to the University of Chicago, which has an extensive Southern Asia literature collection, to search for more documents. He asserted, "People focus on very violent revolutions," and they tend to ignore peaceful transitions of power. This is an example of hindsight bias because modern individuals view the peaceful transition as obvious and given even though the outcome was far from certain. Associate Professor of History Lisa Trivedi served as Tuggle's advisor.

**Mandy Wong '15** spent her summer researching Chinese student perspectives on obtaining a higher education after passing the Gaokao. The Gaokao, also known as the National College Entrance Exam, is a Chinese academic examination that students must complete to apply to undergraduate schools. Chinese schools prepare children for the grueling exam that determines if the children will pursue an education at highly competitive universities or end their formal education and enter the workforce. Wong interviewed Fuzhounese students individually for their opinions on the Chinese education system. She asked about how much pressure they felt to succeed, how much they think they learned while in school and if their future goals are similar to what their parents want. Wong asked students who now reside in the United States about how the American education system has shaped their future aspirations and career paths. She hopes to empower Fuzhounese children to "realize the importance of their own freedom," and encourage them to pursue their unique dreams and interests. Associate Professor of Sociology Elizabeth Lee served as Wong's advisor.

**Fletcher Wright '14** spent his summer exploring the perpetuation of racial divides in liberated South Africa. Wright examined the cultural, social, psychological, and physical manifestations of South African society and how it continues to be defined by race. Wright explains that "while these manifestations prove divisive and troubling in many senses, they also serve as a route through which groups can mobilize and attempt to remedy the wrongs inflicted upon them under the Apartheid pigmentocracy." Wright's research included interviews and film viewings to discover the main sources of disillusionment within the country that must be addressed in order for the Rainbow Nation to progress. Professor of Government Steve Orvis served as Wright's advisor.



*Anderson Tuggle '14*

# Engaged Scholarship Summer 2013

## Levitt Summer Research Groups

Levitt Research Group Grants support groups of two or more Hamilton students completing summer research projects under the supervision of one or more faculty advisors. The research projects completed by each individual student in the group last for 8 to 10 weeks and help to answer an overarching research question. Students in research groups and their faculty advisors meet face-to-face regularly to coordinate and communicate research efforts. The grants are intended to encourage faculty publication as well as faculty-student publications. Projects that have output that will be useful for policy makers or other researchers are also encouraged. Preference is given to teams working in the local community.

The Levitt Center funded 5 Research Group projects during the summer of 2013:

**Brent Plate and Robert Knight, with Alison Ritacco '14 and Hannah Grace O'Connell '14**, spent the summer examining the realities of religious life in the Utica and Clinton areas that may contribute to the perceived decline of religion in America. Their study, "Religious Spaces in Transition," focused on how local religious institutions adapt to change. The Utica area is a hotbed for religious and cultural diversity, hosting one of the largest refugee populations in the United States. The group visited an array of religious institutions in the area, including The Tabernacle Baptist Church – which has welcomed a large population of Karen refugees from Burma – a Bosnian mosque, a Vietnamese Buddhist temple, and the Stone Presbyterian Church in Clinton.

Ritacco noted, "I didn't know how vast the religious landscape is." Based on their academic backgrounds, O'Connell and Ritacco approached this project from differing perspectives. O'Connell began the research with a strong understanding of religion and sociology, while Ritacco sought to incorporate her knowledge of studio art by developing a visual component. O'Connell stated, "We realized that this is not a summer project. It could become a long-lasting documentation of the area." The group acknowledged that, despite the uncertainty of religion in America, religious institutions in Central New York are still making progress and bringing communities together.

**Ann Owen, with Samantha Sherman '15, Timothy Cowan '15, and Kelly Osterling '15**, searched for factors that drive success in small cities. Unique policies are typically implemented in micropolitan areas (defined as containing an urban core of at least 10,000, but less than 50,000, population), to better serve the local economies and populations. The group defined success by five measures: happiness or high utility, health, government efficiency, high productivity and environmental quality. The team began their research by finding indicators and determinants of successful micropolitan areas. They reviewed literature, as well as interviewed local officials to see what factors were important. Ann Owen, the Henry Platt Bristol Professor of Public Policy, taught all three students in her macroeconomic theory course last semester. She guided them through the statistical analysis and interpretation of the data. According to Sherman "if (there is) something we think could have a really strong policy implication, we would take it further." If their results are robust, they may present their completed work to public officials, and recommend policies to improve success in small cities.

# Engaged Scholarship Summer 2013

## Levitt Summer Group Research

**Andrew Holland and Carol Bellini-Sharp, with Katherine Delesalle '14, Lizzie Buchanan '15, and Allison Schuette '16,** spent the summer creating a site-specific theater performance based on the deteriorating Roosevelt School building in Utica and its various past purposes. Buchanan discovered what community roles the Roosevelt school previously filled while in operation. After reading literature on architectural theory and neighborhood social networks, she hoped to uncover what needs are no longer met by the community's schools and how to address the associated issues. Delesalle stressed the importance of stories and examined the connection between the building and community, and "how this relationship manifests through the stories that residents tell and their overall sense of self." Finally, Schuette studied two other schools to find how they differ in both appearance and impact on their communities. Every week, the group put aside their separate academic focuses and spent six hours volunteering at the Johnson Park and Parkway Senior Centers. The group hopes to uncover many stories that will bring the building to life in their play, creating a complete and accurate representation of the community's engagement with the school and the building's meaning to the neighborhood.

**Todd Rayne, with Zachary Pilson '16, and John McGuinnis '16,** spent the summer applying a survivalist water-collecting technique to develop a new alternative energy source. The group utilized a method similar to solar stills to generate energy from falling condensation. Typically made in the desert, solar stills are built by digging a small hole in the sand and covering it with plastic. The sun's heat evaporates water from the moist sand, and the resulting condensation collects on the plastic film and drips into a cup. The students built a device to mimic this process, with hopes that the dripping water will power a wheel connected to a turbine. Pilson suggested that the group's apparatus could help increase access to electricity and clean water throughout the world, since the device produces energy and purifies the water with only one evaporation cycle. Pilson added, "Ideally this would be able to power whole communities," as a simple, low-maintenance, and self-sustaining energy source. The group believes that the device could be placed on rooftops in New York City or outside small villages in Africa. Next steps for the group include obtaining a provisional patent and applying for the Clinton Global Initiative University, a meeting where students, youth organizations, topic experts, and celebrities work to develop innovative solutions to global problems.



*Lizzie Buchanan '15, Katherine Delesalle '14, and Allison Schuette '16, worked together on the project "BRICKS: An Intersection of Architecture and Community."*

# Engaged Scholarship Summer 2013

## Levitt Summer Research Groups

**Herm Lehman, Phil Klinkner, Dave Bailey, and Todd Rayne, with Shea Nagle '16, Ben Ligas '14, Nicole LaBarge '15, Scott Pillette '14, and Sally Bourdon '15,** spent the summer conducting a project titled "Interdisciplinary Research on the Impact of Lead Exposure." With students approaching the study from diverse academic backgrounds, the group hopes to provide a comprehensive understanding of how lead penetrates the soil, the body, and the community at-large. The group chose to address this issue when they discovered that it posed a significant threat in the Greater Utica area. Bourdon suggested, "Struggles that poor communities face are compounded by the presence of lead." Research indicates that lead exposure can lead to increased healthcare costs and reduced mental acuity, a particularly dangerous combination in low-income areas such as Utica. Disciplines covered during this study include the geosciences, biology, neuroscience, public health, and government. While Nagle determined which organs retain the greatest amount of lead and how our bodies respond to exposure, Ligas built a model to determine whether there is a correlation between lead and crime levels. Other aspects of the project were equally diverse, with all group members seeking to emphasize the severity of lead as a public health concern. The group hopes that their results will lead to greater support for both education and abatement.



*Brent Plate and Robert Knight, with Alison Ritacco '14 and Hannah Grace O'Connell '14, visited Palmyra, New York to explore and document the original sacred spaces of Mormonism in an exploration of the modern religious landscape of the area.*

*Photo by Robert Knight*

# Engaged Scholarship

## Levitt Summer Research Groups for Summer 2014

The Levitt Center is funding 2 additional research projects this summer with 4 faculty and 9 students:

**Chaise LaDousa and John Bartle, with Gabriel Rivas '15, Emily Banzer '15, Christopher Rogers '15, Elizabeth Wilson '15, Justin Long '16, and Jeremy Cottle '17**

“Representing Arrival in Utica: Mass Media and Narratives of Experience”

**Brent Rodriguez-Plate and Robert Knight, with Jasmin Thomas '15, Shannon Boley '17, Sawyer Konys '16**

“Transitional Religious Spaces”

## Course Development Grants

Levitt Center provides course development grants to faculty wishing to incorporate the theory and practice of social change, using the lens of transformational leadership and social innovation, into a new or existing course. It is expected that faculty will teach a course in their field of study that helps students gain the academic knowledge and relevant skills needed to address persistent social problems in an effective, innovative, and meaningful way. We awarded 4 grants last year with classes offered in the education, government, sociology, and philosophy departments.

- Susan Mason: Leadership: Theory and Practice.
- Phil Klinkner: Political Oratory
- Yvonne Zylan: Political Sociology
- Rick Werner: The Pursuit of Happiness (students are required to participate in the first year leadership program, LEAP)



*Brent Plate and Robert Knight,  
with Alison Ritacco '14 and  
Hannah Grace O'Connell '14,  
watch the Hill Cumorah  
Pageant in Palmyra, NY.  
Photo by Robert Knight.*

# Engaged Scholarship

## Project SHINE

**Project SHINE** is a service-learning program that seeks to form intergenerational and intercultural ties between college students and immigrants and refugees. Participating Hamilton College students spend approximately 10-20 hours over the semester assisting adult immigrants and refugees in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and Citizenship Classrooms. This year, 76 students participated in Fall 2013 and 44 in the Spring 2014 term.

Each year students come back with stories of their broadened horizons and of people with different experiences, as well as an appreciation for a person's ability and commitment to learn without the numerous resources that many of their peers have had. When asked about their experiences this year, here are some of our student's responses:

**"Participating in Project Shine made me realize how vulnerable people can be and feel when they do not know the language that everyone around them is speaking. But, that also spoke to the power of language, and how learning new languages can go towards strengthening the global community."-Caroline Kriedburg**

**"SHINE is a great learning experience for tutee as well as Tutor. I worked at BOCES with a man studying for his GED and learned a lot about how language is learned. I looked forward to going every week and always had fun."-Jennie Wilber**

**"Project Shine was an incredible way for me to give back to our nearby community while spending time learning about so many different cultures from such kind and warm people."-Hillary Kolodner**



Christopher Rogers '15 helps teach English at BOCES

# Engaged Scholarship

## VITA

VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) is a service-learning program that offers free tax help to low- and moderate-income families. Students in Policy, Poverty and Practice (Econ 235), taught by Lecturer in Economics Margaret Morgan-Davie, trained and then worked to assist local residents in applying for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Through their efforts, these Hamilton students are becoming more aware of their civic duties and increasingly proficient in the language of tax returns.

The VITA program was initiated by the Mohawk Valley Asset Building Coalition (MVABC), the United Way of the Mohawk Valley, and the IRS as a way to ensure that qualifying taxpayers would receive Earned Income Tax Credits. The Levitt Center coordinates with MVABC to enlist college students' help with the program. Students in Policy, Poverty and Practice attend IRS TaxWise training and obtain at least basic-level certification. Thereafter, they complete at least 15 hours of electronic tax filing as a part of their class requirement. This year, eight students worked at the Resource Center for Independent Living (RCIL) and the Mohawk Valley Perinatal Network in Utica to complete their hours.

## Think Tank and Lunch Discussions

Think Tank and lunch discussions are sponsored by the Levitt Center and strive to increase dialogue between professors and students outside the classroom. Students and other members of the Hamilton community gather for lunchtime discussions, which are facilitated by a faculty member or an outside speaker for lively discussions over lunch.

- What's So Funny About Penguins on Film?... And Other Reflections on Nature Wildlife Documentaries, Luis Vivanco
- Fossil Fuel Divestment, Faculty and Students
- Waste at Hamilton: The Paper Cup Dilemma, Katie Conroy '16
- What Really Predicts Faculty Success? Results of an Eight-Year Retrospective Study of Academic Job Candidates, Gary Wyckoff and Pat Bedard '14
- Changemaking and Social Innovation at Hamilton College, Ashoka University
- Multidisciplinary approaches to teaching and research in the area of happiness and well-being, Rick Werner, Steve Wu, and Gary Wyckoff
- Personal Environmentalism: What it Keeps Invisible, Jeremy Bendik-Keymer
- The history of Progressive Era settlement houses as laboratories of social science and innovation, Joel Winkelman
- Reveries of a Solitary Runner, Janelle Schwartz

# Levitt Center Speakers

## Speaker Series

The Levitt Center Speaker Series is committed to enhancing the academic experience of our students by introducing them to a wide array of intellectually challenging speakers. The Series features many speakers with substantial academic and policy experience, an invaluable asset in helping students make the connection between the classroom and policies enacted in the real world. Students and other audience members have the opportunity to engage speakers in thoughtful discussion following each lecture. Our four program areas, Inequality and Equity, Security, Sustainability, and Public Health and Well-Being; as well as our Transformational Leadership and Social Innovation initiatives, provided a focus for our yearlong lecture series, as well as for our Faculty Lunch series and our student-run Think Tank.

## Inequality and Equity Program

The Program on Inequality and Equity investigates the factors that affect the distribution of income, distribution of health outcomes, impact of policy on intergenerational equity, welfare analysis, discrimination, access to the legal system and the role of incentives, race, gender, and immigration. Paul Hagstrom, Professor of Economics, is the Director of the Inequality and Equity Program.

## Security Program

The Security Program centers on both domestic and international security. Security issues encompass the safety and protection of persons and property, food supply, market exchange, national security, banking and security regulation, cultural preservation, cyber security, local law enforcement, and public health among other public and private concerns across nations, and cultural values and institutions. Frank Anechiarico, Maynard-Knox Professor of Government and Law, is the Director of the Security Program.

## Sustainability Program

The Sustainability Program is an interdisciplinary program that supports research as well as programs that complement and enrich classroom learning. This broad-based, multi-faceted initiative promotes both academic research on sustainable practices, and policies to achieve them, as well as hands-on learning experiences for Hamilton students. Peter Cannavò, Associate Professor of Government, is the Director of the Sustainability Program.

## Public Health and Well-Being Program

The Public Health and Well-Being Program is a broad-based interdisciplinary program that supports research on all dimensions of public health and wellbeing as well as programs that complement and enrich classroom learning. Herm Lehman, Professor of Biology, is the Director of the Public Health and Well-Being Program.



# Levitt Center Speakers

## Inequality and Equity Program

### Jamie Fader: Community Reentry of Inner-City Youth: The Limits of Deterrence

Jamie J. Fader, assistant professor at the University of Albany's School of Criminal Justice, shared her findings based on her study of fifteen young colored convicts in Philadelphia. First, Fader explained and described the institution in which she found her subjects, a private, for-profit "reform school" named Mountain Ridge Academy. Next, Fader deconstructed the reform techniques used by the school indicating its shortcomings. After reviewing participant outcomes, with fifteen men accumulating thirty-six arrests, and one individual murdered, the status quo of reform seems ineffective. To close the lecture, Fader provided some final analysis and policy recommendations, which centered on changing reform measures to recognize and account for structural causes of crime in inner-city neighborhoods.

### Milton Heumann: Policing, Racial Profiling, and the New York Police Department's Use of Stop and Frisk

The Levitt Center had the privilege to host Milton Heumann, renowned professor of Political Science at Rutgers University, for a lecture on stop and frisk. His five main topics were the evolution of the term "profiling," data on stop and frisk, the context of stop and frisk in New York City, police profiling, and reforms. Throughout the lecture, Heumann illustrated the large effect that race has played on stop and frisk patterns in New York City and our society's negative connotation of the term "profiling." While discussing its context in New York City, he highlighted the debate surrounding police officers' ability to make a stop if they possess "reasonable suspicion." Heumann concluded his lecture by presenting possible reforms to improper stop and frisk activity including pursuing litigation, creating an outside monitor to check police activities, and increasing surveillance on police officers.

### Robert Frank: Success and Luck

Robert H. Frank, Professor of Management and Professor of Economics at Cornell's Graduate School of Management at Cornell University, made a rare visit to Hamilton to give an anticipated lecture about the role of chance in human development. Attracting students and professors across all disciplines, almost the entire Chapel was filled with people. Employing economic theories, historical anecdotes and personal experiences, Frank contended that fortune is a universal, essential factor that has contributed to the accomplishments of leaders. People are more successful given the opportunity to demonstrate their aptitude to influential individuals as opposed to merely possessing talent. Frank concluded the lecture with the idea that each person should "View yourself as the Captain of your fate, but looking back be grateful for the breaks you got."

# Levitt Center Speakers

## Security Program

### Tim Colton: Political Leadership after Communism

Distinguished expert on modern leadership in post-Soviet nations, Timothy J. Colton, shared his knowledge about post-Soviet Communism and answered questions during a brief Q&A. He is the Morris and Anna Feldberg Professor of Government and Russian Studies and chair of the Government Department at Harvard University. Colton focused his lecture on how monarchical and patriarchal traditions in many Eastern European states make it difficult to democratize or for states to move away from authoritarian rule. He concluded that “most high-impact leaders are not democrats” but “all forward thinking leaders must accept constraints on their power in the interest of progress.” In order for Eastern European states to improve, there must be a new class of democratic leaders. This will result in a more democratic and competitive system in the near future.

### Christopher Dickey: Policing, Politics, and Paranoia in Post 9/11 America

In collaboration with the Office of the President and the Office of the Dean of Faculty, the Levitt Center was honored to invite Christopher Dickey to Hamilton. Although fear of terrorism rose dramatically following the 9/11 attacks, those fears subsided in 2010 and were replaced by a new anxiety. Due to recent scandals, including Stop and Frisk, Wikileaks, and Edward Snowden, public opinion of the government, the police, and the intelligence companies (CIA, FBI, and NSA) have severely dropped. In fact, people are scared of the information that these entities collect and fearful of the lack of oversight and accountability. As Dickey asked toward the end of his lecture, “who watches the watchers? And how?”

---

### **The Levitt Center is fortunate to have a large staff of dedicated and talented student workers**

Office workers: Brisa Camacho-Lovell, Sitong Chen, Thomas Figueroa, Hunter Green, Sean Henry-Smith, Jennifer Rougeux, Hunter Sobczak, Amy Song, Brady Sprague, Ming Chun Tang, Wenlu Weng, Emma Wilkinson, Will Wallant, Lisa Yang

Drivers: Sophie Aron, Joelle Baer, Elizabeth Barry, Brisa Camacho-Lovell, Isabel Dau, Thomas Figueroa, Emma Hedley, McKenna Kelly, Alexander Klosner, Ianthe Lekometros, Karly Moore, Ishaq Pathan, Zach Pilson, Silvia Radulescu, Kiana Sosa, Carter White, Lisa Yang

Social Innovation Team: Evan Warnock, Teddy Clements, Eren Shultz, Nick Solano

Speaker article summaries: Hunter Green, Hunter Sobczak, Nick Solano, Will Wallant, Emma Wilkinson, Lisa Yang

# Levitt Center Speakers

## Sustainability Program

### Eban Goodstein: Good Work in Hot Times: Building Sustainability Careers in Business and Policy

Eban Goodstein, Director of both Bard's MBA in Sustainability and Center for Environmental Policy, came to Hamilton to share his expertise on the relationship between economics and the environment. In addition to serving as director of two national educational initiatives on global warming and authoring many written works, he has coordinated climate education events at over 2,500 institutions across the nation.

### Jen Kleindienst '09: Challenges and Successes of Promoting Campus Sustainability

Hamilton alumnae, Jen Kleindienst '09 returned to campus to speak about her career in environmental activism. She also shared advice regarding a campus sustainability movement, highlighting the importance of relationship building and diversity in student leaders. On a broader scale, Kleindienst emphasized how the sustainability conversation should revolve around "hope" rather than "despair." She believes discussions should focus on climate change solutions, not problems. Despite the daily challenges she faces, she also receives much inspiration, which is exemplified in her ugly sweater campaign aimed to increase thermostat temperature awareness. "Not every day is perfect," said Kleindienst, "but I feel good to be working for the good of the planet and confident that I chose the right career for myself."

### Luis Vivanco: Reconsidering the Bicycle: An Anthropologist Reflects on a New (Old) Thing

As Hamilton prepares for a new bike path, cultural anthropologist Luis Vivanco, director of the Global and Regional Studies Program at the University of Vermont, made a timely presentation about the current global state of bikes. His personal fascination with cycling has spurred him to analyze their worth and position in society. As suburbs and the auto industry grew, bikes lost their aristocratic status. However, in 2000, the commute population and national bicycle-sharing program grew. Vivanco sees the bike as more than a toy for children, tool for athletes, or symbol for political activism, he claims that the bike has become an integral part of everyday mundane transportation. Mundane, meaning "of or pertaining to the earth," serves not to criticize, but to highlight the ecological sentiments of the lost art of cycling.

# Levitt Center Speakers

## Public Health and Well-Being Program

Dr. Michael Kelberman '80, Karen McDonnell '91, Alysia Mihalakos '01, Allison Demas '07 and James Liebow '13: Public Health and Well-being Panel Discussion

As Fallcoming Weekend approached, five alumni returned to speak about public health in America. During a discussion led by Professor of Biology Herm Lehman, panelists addressed what citizens should know about public health focusing on prevention, not only treatment, of illness. They also warned the audience of manipulative and misinformed news outlets, thus encouraging the use of the CDC website. The main issue with American healthcare is communication, particularly the lack of it between government agencies, healthcare providers, physicians, and patients. The second part of the discussion revolved around today's job market. Although there is no "right path" to a profession in public health, Hamilton's emphasis on writing has helped alumni become competitive job candidates. All panelists agreed that youth education about health is imperative, but the shifted focus on core curriculum makes this difficult. Michelle Obama's Get Moving campaign is an example of a necessary measure to improve America's health.

## Bill Lands: Put Basic Science into Your Personal Health

When distinguished scientist Bill Lands spoke at Hamilton, he urged everyone in the audience to be more conscious about their eating habits. He particularly advocated for consuming more Omega 3 and less Omega 6. He first discussed how a scientist's role is to use data to tell a story. He is also responsible for reducing the complexity of a scientific message so everyone can understand, which he does in his lecture. Land's goal is to initiate a wellness program at Hamilton, because he sees the consequences of poor eating decisions. He mainly attributes problems like arthritis and asthma to eating too much Omega 6. On a broader scale, he emphasizes the direct relationship between what is in your diet and what is in your body. He concludes by mentioning the practicality of eating healthy: why not make informed decisions now without a prescription then be forced to pay for treatment later?



*Former Ambassador  
Prudence Bushnell  
continues the conversation  
with students after her  
speech*

# Levitt Center Speakers

## Transformational Leadership and Social Innovation Speakers

### Prudence Bushnell: Rwanda Genocide: An After-Action Review 20 Years Later

During this lecture, Emily Willard, an affiliate of the Genocide Prevention Project (GPP), joined Ambassador Bushnell to show how “we can take one step towards never again.” Bushnell first began with a brief summary of Rwanda, explaining how the assassination of the Rwandan and Burundian Presidents galvanized the genocide on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1994. A distinguishing factor of the Rwandan Genocide is that killings were brutal and face-to-face. Afterwards, Willard discussed her role with the GPP, which uses the Freedom of Information Act to find out about government secrets that could be used as evidence in international human rights trials. Willard summed up the lecture with a question to the international community’s commitment to the value of human lives. How could the explicit cost of intervention ever even be considered when hundreds of thousands of people’s lives are at stake if genocide continues?

### Prudence Bushnell: Transformational Leadership in Foreign Affairs, Where Is It?

Prudence Bushnell, former United States Ambassador to Kenya and Guatemala, lectured to an enthusiastic audience on the importance of transformational leadership in the modern age of social, political and diplomatic relations. Bushnell described transformational leadership as being “an appeal to higher ideals such as peace, justice and humanitarianism” and stated that it revolves around a leader’s focus on his or her constituents. She proceeded to analyze transformational leadership in the context of historical events like the Marshall Plan, as well as her unique personal experiences. Specifically, Bushnell noted the success of the transformational leadership model as she applied it following the 1998 Embassy Bombings in Kenya. By employing the principles of transformational leadership, she enabled many members of the community to actively assist in the recovery from the tragedy. In Bushnell’s words, “anyone can be a leader.”

### Jon Isham: Social Entrepreneurship: How to Teach It and What Students Should Expect to Learn

John Isham, professor of economics at Middlebury College, visited Hamilton to share his expertise in social entrepreneurship. Paraphrasing another scholar, he says social entrepreneurship identifies an unjust condition and then generates a creative solution to bring about lasting social change. While social entrepreneurs have yet to solve all ills, many have managed to create better equilibrium conditions. Isham argued that education must do a better job of teaching people to listen, hear, and identify with others. Furthermore, he illustrated the connection between social entrepreneurship and the liberal arts. He contends that the liberal arts must return to its historical focus on reflection and “knowing oneself.” Students who embrace the ideals of social entrepreneurship will be uniquely positioned to make progress on today’s issues. Overall, Isham delivered a powerful lecture that instilled in the community a greater understanding of both social entrepreneurship and one’s capability of affecting significant social change to help better the world and tackle the unique challenges of the 21st century.

# Levitt Center Programs

## Levitt Scholars

Every year since 1993, the Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center has sent Hamilton students to area high schools to speak on a wide variety of topics. These Levitt Scholars are typically juniors and seniors, selected by faculty members for their outstanding research and communication skills. Levitt Scholars first complete an Oral Communications course taught by Professor Susan Mason. During this class, they refine their public speaking skills and learn to tailor their presentation to a high school audience.

This year, 11 students participated in the program. In addition to speaking to several area high schools, some of this year's Scholars brought their presentations to their hometown high schools during Hamilton's winter and spring breaks. Local educators participating in the program consistently comment on the high quality of the students' presentations, and Scholars embraced their task with enthusiasm and enjoyed the experience.

### Participating Schools

C.W. Baker H.S., Baldwinsville, NY  
Central Valley Academy, Ilion, NY  
Clinton H.S., Clinton, NY  
Fayetteville-Manlius H.S., Manlius, NY  
Herkimer H.S., Herkimer NY  
Manlius Pebble Hill H.S., Dewitt, NY  
Oneida H.S., Oneida, NY

### Levitt Scholars Spring 2014

**Suzanne Adelman '14:** "Miss Independent: A Talk on Female Leadership and Empowerment"

**Catherine Cooper '15:** "Ethics 101: Right and Wrong"

**Rosario DeGrazia '15:** "Volunteering: Far from 0-Sum"

**Keara Fenzel '14:** "What About Us?: How to Take Political Action When You're Still Not Old Enough to Vote"

**Krista Hesdorfer '14:** "Rejecting Slactivism: The Importance of Political Literacy and Youth Civic Engagement"

**Marcela Peguero '14:** "Supporting Military Kids in the Classroom"

**Alexandra Rudow '14:** "Political Campaigns: The Ability to Change the World"

**Gregory Scott '14:** "Defining Yourself: A New Take on Leadership"

**Rachel Sobel '15:** "Interests and Opportunity: How Taking a Risk Can Lead to a World of Possibilities"

**Katharine Tomalonis '14:** "Know Thy Brain"

**Etan Weiss '14:** "Become the Best Person You Can Be: Tips, Tricks, and a Simple Life Hack"

# Levitt Center Programs

## Social Innovation

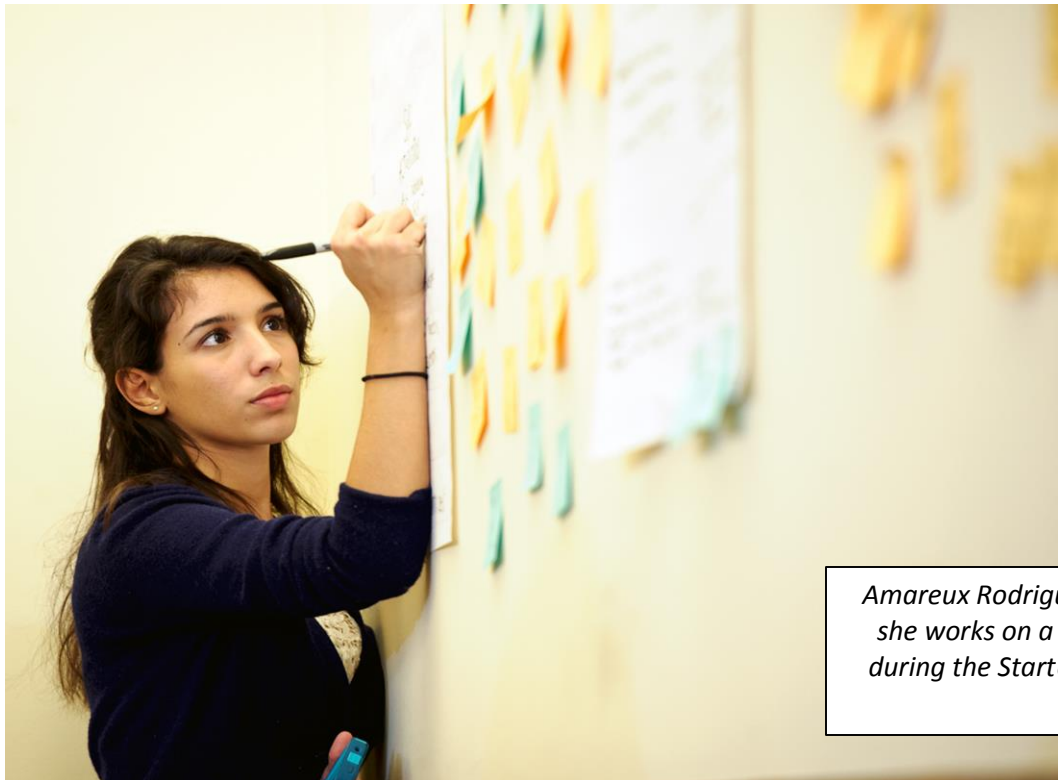
This past year, the Levitt Center has:

1. Hosted speakers and panels on Social Innovation (in conjunction with the COOP and Career Center)
2. Sent students, faculty, and staff to conferences and workshops on Social Innovation at:
  - Middlebury Forum: 12 participants (3 staff, 9 faculty)
  - Middlebury Symposium: 6 students
  - Brown University: 10 participants (2 students, 1 staff, 7 faculty)
  - Cornell University: 1 staff
3. Repurposed the back half of the Levitt Center as an Innovation Space

## Other Programs

The Levitt Center supported a number of additional programs that encourage students to explore the world of public affairs either through funding, advising, or by providing office space and transportation.

- Model EU Program
- The Fed Challenge
- Friends Without Borders, an English for Speakers of Other Languages program aimed at teenagers and young adults
- Hamilton College Continental Lending Club
- StartUp Experience Workshop



*Amareux Rodriguez '14 writes her ideas as she works on a social innovation project during the StartUp Experience Workshop.*

# The Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center

Hamilton College



## Student Spotlight

### Hamilton Student Changemaker

Tsion Tesfaye '16 (aka "T") was born and raised in Ethiopia. T says "I came to Hamilton not decided on my major and with unfocused passion for working in the education section in developing countries." Through her coursework and partnership with the Levitt Center she became increasingly concerned about addressing the problem of brain drain from Ethiopia: talented students leaving and never returning. So as a sophomore, T became a Levitt Social Innovation Fellow. She designed and implemented a six-week program for 15 students who attend her former high school students in Ethiopia. During the six weeks, the students are provided coaching for taking the SAT and are introduced to the concept of social innovation. It is T's hope that as these students begin to think about how they might be able to address persistent social problems in their own country, they will be inspired to return home after going to college elsewhere. T now feels her path is clear and that she will be ready to assume a leadership role in "improving the education system, starting in Ethiopia, and expanding to other developing countries."

For more information on Levitt Center programming, visit our website at <http://www.hamilton.edu/levitt>, email us at [levitt@hamilton.edu](mailto:levitt@hamilton.edu), or follow us on Facebook: *The Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center at Hamilton College.*