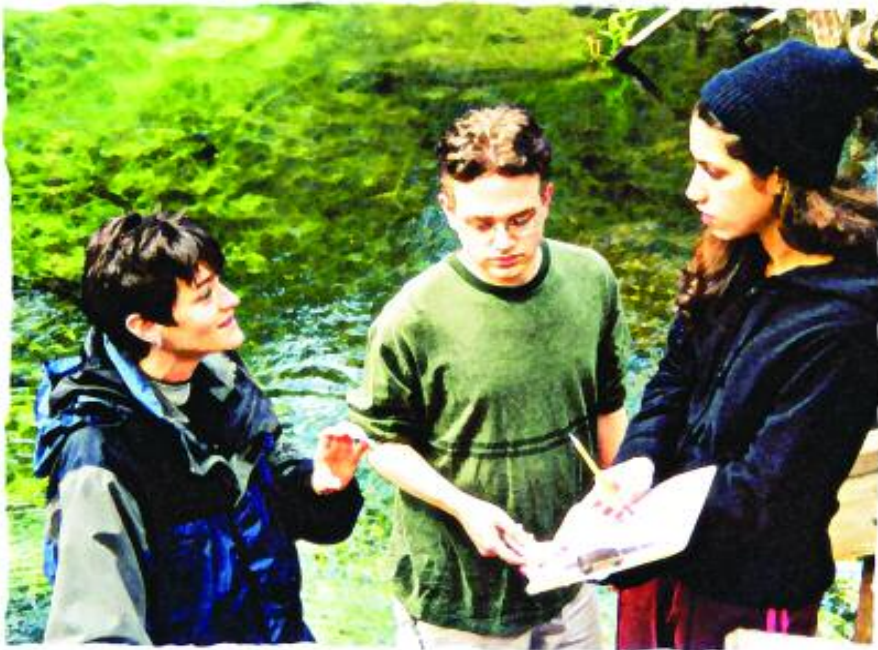


Notes from the Field

JESSIE BALL
DU PONT
F U N D



*Strengthening Schools
of Higher Education*

NO. 13 — SUMMER 2005



The Jessie Ball duPont Fund invests
in organizations and communities
that were important
to Mrs. duPont.

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NO. 13 – SUMMER 2005

*Strengthening
Schools of
Higher Education*



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Introduction

Many of the challenges that the nation's universities, colleges, and schools face today are identical to the challenges that they faced when I joined the Jessie Ball duPont Fund as the program officer for education in summer 1991. Today, they are simply more obvious. Among them:

- A prospective student body that is increasingly non-Anglo, non-white, and non-traditional in age and work responsibilities;
- Escalating costs;
- An aging professoriate and diminishing pool of prospective teachers;
- The need to deliver instruction more efficiently, especially through the use of new technologies;
- The need to increase endowments for colleges and universities, especially to insure that poorer people can access higher education, and public funding for the nation's schools;
- An increasingly interdependent human population made more apparent by tools that allow for instant global communication.

All of these challenges are institutional in nature. Some, such as maintaining affordability while achieving financial security, or growing and retaining quality faculty, or changing instruction methods, are more internal than external. Others are more external, such as student diversity and global challenges, and place particular pressure on colleges and universities to redesign curricula and rethink what is taught so that human beings are equipped to lead the world we are creating.

Over the past decade and a half, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund has used these external and internal challenges to craft our support of the colleges, universities, and schools that are eligible to receive grant support under the terms of Mrs. duPont's will. Forty-three residential colleges of the liberal arts and sciences, 37 of them private; 20 public and private research universities; and 18 independent schools enjoy eligibility. Collectively, over the past 15 years, they have used the Fund's grant support to make extraordinary strides in building their organizational strength and in leading the communities they serve.

Our Education Grantmaking Philosophy

As our eligible academic institutions know, we make organizational capacity-building grants to private pre-collegiate schools and private small liberal arts colleges. This support has included grants to conduct capital campaign feasibility studies, to write campaign case statements, and to strengthen a school or college's capacity to conduct a well-planned capital campaign through employing adequate staff. It also has helped to train professors and teachers to use computer technologies in their teaching. And we have funded efforts to write and adopt strategic plans or to reform the curriculum through the introduction of new majors and minors, especially interdisciplinary in nature and focused on ethnic studies and the natural environment.

In other words, much of our support to these duPont Fund eligible organizations is designed to help school heads and college presidents and deans transform the schools and colleges they lead.

We do not make organizational capacity-building grants to publicly funded colleges or public or private research universities, arguing that this kind of support is the public's responsibility on the one hand and certainly within the fundraising capacity of private research universities on the other. It's not that we don't believe that large research universities shouldn't focus some of their attention on strengthening their internal capacities; it's just that we think this is not a strategic use of Jessie Ball duPont Fund money. We prefer to help these organizations use their research capacities to help the communities in which they locate themselves meet the tough human challenges they face, especially in an era when public policy is reducing the federal government's financial support of the nation's poor and of local nonprofits that provide so much of a community's local social safety network.

We believe deeply that mass education - as it has proven to be throughout the course of American history - remains the road to individual, family, and community prosperity, wellness, and good quality of life. The vast majority of the 2 million people incarcerated in American prisons cannot read.¹ It is a great national irony that peoples from around the globe travel to this country to enroll in the nation's graduate schools, proving again and again that we provide the best graduate programs anywhere on the planet, yet our school- and college-aged students don't perform well compared to the academic performance of similarly-aged students in other countries.

We think the publicly and privately funded research universities we fund know a great deal about how communities work and learn, about what sane education, economic, and social policies at the local level might look like. Consequently, we prefer to employ the Fund's grant dollars to encourage their engagement with community leaders and policy makers around difficult local issues. That may mean helping a local school system provide professional development to classroom teachers or assisting those same teachers in understanding school-level student performance data. It might involve analyzing state tax policy, or documenting the need for more affordable housing. Or, it could mean helping church and nonprofit leaders coordinate their delivery of social services to the community's poor; or developing outreach programs that help nonprofit leaders strengthen their organizations and work collectively to advocate at the local and state level for the work they do.

While our support to research universities is organized around outreach efforts - strengthening philanthropy; building assets of individuals, families and communities; helping folks hold their leaders accountable for the condition of the community; and stimulating community problem-solving - it is remarkable that some small colleges have chosen to do this work as well.

¹ About 7 in 10 prisoners rank in the lowest two levels of literacy skills, according to Literacy Behind Prison Walls, published by the National Center for Education Statistics, October 1994.

This issue of Notes from the Field highlights our education grantmaking philosophy, and focuses on the work of four eligible organizations.

Wesley College proves how much an institution might strengthen itself through tough-minded leadership, rigorous analysis of institutional trend-line data, the use of knowledgeable consultants, and adoption of a strategic plan to move from a position of financial vulnerability to stabilization.

Goucher College exemplifies a small college's understanding of its responsibility to develop leaders for the 21st Century. Spanning the administration of two presidents, Goucher has deeply engaged itself around diversity issues, understanding that it must simultaneously change what it teaches, hire and keep professors whose ethnicity and expertise resemble the world we live in, and develop an inclusive campus that is welcoming to all students.

Stetson University and the University of Richmond demonstrate how institutions can respond to their environments—the physical environment in the case of Stetson University and the social services environment in the case of the University of Richmond. Both of these colleges have taken risks to demonstrate their commitment to being responsible members of their communities and to improving the capacity of their institutions to prepare leaders for the next generation.

The work highlighted in this issue of Notes is exemplary, and represents well the kind of support the Jessie Ball duPont Fund provides many of its eligible academic organizations. We are proud of what they and many others have accomplished with support from the Fund. We are grateful that they are diligent in providing opportunity to students who otherwise would not have access to education. And we hope they remain thoughtful in constantly inquiring what the world requires of an educated person.

This issue of Notes from the Field would not have been possible without the words written by Tracy Constantine and the editorial eye of Mary Kress Littlepage. We are indebted to them.



Sherry Magill
President

GRANT FILE

Wesley College
Dover, Delaware

January 1998 – \$150,000 to stabilize student enrollment.

July 2000 – \$175,000 to support completion of the campus master plan.

July 2002 – \$100,000 to initiate a comprehensive review and development of the College's institutional advancement program.

Institutional Transformation

Wesley College

At Wesley College in Dover, Delaware, President Scott Miller proudly displays a giant, stuffed, pink Energizer Bunny in his office. The Bunny, known for its tenacity in moving forward, perfectly symbolizes Miller's approach to institutional transformation. In 1997, Miller was brought on as president to turn around waning enrollment and retention at Wesley. Outdated recruitment and development plans had contributed to a decrease in full-time enrollment during the five-year period between 1992 and 1997, from 900 to 600 students, and a decline in total enrollment from 1,450 to 1,000 students.

When he arrived at Wesley, Miller was struck by the beautiful campus, rich with tradition as Delaware's oldest private college and situated one block from the vibrant legislative mall of the state capitol. He knew the College had the non-financial assets to stage a comeback. He announced "a progressive, aggressive, energized, futuristic agenda that would revitalize and mold Wesley as a nationally prominent college of the 21st century." He called his vision for the campus "From Here to 2010: A Plan for Wesley College", and approached the Jessie Ball duPont Fund for a grant to begin the transformation by overhauling Wesley's admissions process.

The 1998 grant, for \$150,000, enabled Wesley to hire the consulting firm of Miller/Cook & Associates, Inc. - "by the way, Miller is not related to me," the president notes - to evaluate the existing admissions process and offer recommendations for improvement. With direction from the evaluation, Wesley College reduced the number of admissions counselor visits to high schools (an expensive practice that yielded unpredictable results), converted its financial aid program from a need-based system to a merit-based matrix (in the hope of improving the academic profile of incoming students), and undertook a targeted direct mail campaign using lists of prospective students from the College Board.

First, however, the College needed to articulate a clearer vision for its future and create a demographic profile of likely Wesley students that the College could use to target its recruitment efforts, and thus use its recruiting resources more efficiently. What kind of students fit that profile? "Ideally, our students have a score of 1,050 on the SAT¹ and a high-school grade-point average of 3.25 or higher," Miller says, as if he's only warming up. "Even though Wesley College is affiliated with the United Methodist Church, 42 percent of our students are Catholic, with 18 and 16

¹This quote refers to Wesley SAT scores before changes in the College Board examination, which occurred in March 2005 (see <http://www.collegeboard.com/newsat/index.html>).

percent, respectively, from the United Methodist and Presbyterian traditions. Our students come from 30 states and 18 foreign countries. They play NCAA Division III sports. Nineteen percent are African American. They thrive in small classroom settings, making our average of 20 students per class ideal, and they are looking for a small, private college setting.”

Armed with this profile, Wesley has been able to increase the number of contacts it makes with prospective students from 35,000 a year to more than 150,000 per year. The College uses a 10-part mailing program to contact prospective students, including a letter from Miller on personal, not College, stationery. The admissions department aims for 15,000 inquiries (a 10-percent return) and, from that group, 3,000 applications, leading to 500 incoming freshmen who are academically and socially compatible with the Wesley profile.

Since the announcement of Miller’s plan in 1997, Wesley College has indeed been revitalized. In the seven years since, full-time enrollment has risen from 600 to 1,400 students, and total enrollment has grown from 1,000 to 2,400 students in the 2004-2005 academic year.

In addition to increasing contacts and enrollment, Wesley has effectively improved its retention rate of existing students from 52 percent in 1997 to an average of 89.6 percent over the last seven years. “We’re reaching students who fit the College,” Miller says, “and therefore they are more likely to thrive and to finish.” Miller points to Wesley’s improved development efforts as a core reason the retention rate has increased. With more resources, Wesley has been able to increase faculty salaries, renovate existing buildings, construct new living options to increase the number of resident students, improve its athletic facilities, establish partnerships with cultural organizations, and design programs to enable meaningful student internships and work experiences.

A \$175,000 duPont Fund grant enabled Wesley College to work on a campus master plan that would take the College into the 21st century. Part of that plan has been creative campus housing. In 1997, 290 students lived on Wesley’s campus. In the fall of 2005, Wesley expects to house 1,035 students. Having more students on campus helps create a more stable and collegiate atmosphere, where student learning occurs in and out of the classroom. The recently completed Zimmerman Hall, for example, with 48 apartments and 194 beds, allows students to live in “academic clusters” by degree major. Students who live in this “academic village” have more opportunity for learning from one another outside of the classroom as they share a living room, two bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a common kitchen and dining area. In addition, Honors House, a renovated Victorian home adjacent to the campus, offers 13 honors students from Wesley College the opportunity to live in community and learn from each other.

In fall 2005, Wesley students will occupy the newly built, \$8.5 mil-

lion Malmberg Hall. The 60,000-square-foot hall boasts seminar rooms and classrooms, parking, and a workout facility, and can accommodate 180 students. It is designed to serve as a residence hall during the academic year. In the summer months, the College plans to generate income by renting the rooms for corporate seminars and retreats, as well as an elder hostel site.

Since Wesley College is land-locked in Dover, Delaware, leaving limited possibilities for campus expansion, Miller has been intentional about forging strategic alliances with organizations in the community to maximize Wesley's resources and offerings. For example, since 1998, Wesley has housed a publicly-funded charter school, the Campus Community School, on its campus. The school, which started as an elementary and middle school, recently became a high school as well, offering grades 1 through 12 for 600 students. The Campus Community School exposes young people to higher education while offering Wesley students in the Teacher Education program meaningful experiences in the classroom.

Wesley partners with Delaware State University, the Grand Opera House, and the Friends of Capital Theater to manage and operate the Schwartz Center for the Arts, an historic opera house and movie theater built in 1904 that closed in 1982 due to financial difficulties. The facility was fully renovated in 2001 - at a cost of \$8.5 million - but no plan was put in place for operations. The alliance was formed in 2004 and now 18 college students gain practical arts management experience by working at the performing arts center.

In addition to campus planning and partnerships, Wesley has made a serious effort to improve alumni and board giving to help support its growth. In July 2002, a \$100,000 challenge grant from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund allowed Wesley to retain the services of James L. Fisher, former president of the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and Towson University, to work with its board of trustees and to assess the College's overall institutional effectiveness. In addition, Wesley hired the services of a leading planned giving consulting firm, increasing the frequency and quality of its direct mail and publications, implementing an aggressive telemarketing campaign that uses student callers to reach and update the alumni database, and adding staff to a development office that previously consisted of President Miller and three other College officials whose primary functions included more than just development. According to Miller, "The College and University Personnel Association (CUPA) says a College with an operating budget the size of Wesley's typically has a professional advancement staff of six to eight people and two or three support staff. We needed to take a better-organized, more systematic approach to institutional advancement if we were going to compete for grants, contributions, and planned gifts."

During his tenure with Wesley, Miller has deliberately fostered part-

nerships that both increase student learning opportunities and allow the College to give back to its local community. He supported an affiliation between the College and the local Barratt's Chapel and Museum, an historic United Methodist chapel that was built in 1780 and is known as "the cradle of Methodism" in the United States. The Chapel experienced financial difficulties in the 1970s, leaving the building in a state of disrepair. As part of the College's affiliation with the Chapel, three Wesley history professors and their students work at the building, completing tasks as diverse as painting the outside and cataloguing the historic manuscripts inside. Students help run the museum, serving as docents and tour guides for the public. A Jessie Ball duPont Fund grant in August 2004 helped support this innovative partnership.

Another impressive partnership between Wesley College and the Dover community was facilitated by a Jessie Ball duPont Fund grant to work with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Delaware, another duPont Fund eligible institution, to serve 500 local youth. Miller describes the disparate views of life represented by the neighborhoods that border the College's front and back sides: "The neighborhood that borders the front is elegant, with beautiful Victorian homes leading to a view of the legislative capitol complex of the state. The neighborhood that borders the back is comprised of wood-frame houses, most inhabited by single-parent families and minorities. Many young children actually have to walk through the Wesley campus to get from their neighborhood to school and then back home." In 1997, Wesley partnered with the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, the MBNA Foundation, Wilmington Trust, and the State of Delaware to establish a Boys and Girls Clubs after-school program on the campus. That first year, 35 children from the neighborhood behind Wesley started coming directly from school to the campus, where Wesley students worked with them on homework, tutoring, and athletics. This year, more than 500 children will come to the campus after school - as many as 100 on any given day - where they are met by enthusiastic college students who are exposing them to the resources and benefits of higher education. The Boys and Girls Clubs report that the program has resulted in reduced crime in the neighboring community, as well as higher grades and lower dropout rates for the children.

Wesley's creative planning, fundraising, and partnership efforts have gained recognition for the College, which has won two CASE Circle of Excellence Awards for overall improvement and overall performance. Wesley's "amazing turnaround" is featured in *The Small College Guide to Financial Health*, published in 2002 by the National Association of College and University Business Officers.²

²See www.nacubo.org for more information on this publication.

If the Wesley College partnerships and initiatives sound more like business strategies than academic activities, well, that's a deliberate part of President Miller's plan. One of Miller's proudest accomplishments is having been one of 17 college leaders featured in the 2004 book *The Entrepreneurial College President* by James L. Fisher and James V. Koch.³ "The recruitment grant and subsequent grants from the duPont Fund have allowed us to be strategic thinkers and planners at Wesley College," says Miller. "They have all been 'impact grants'—grants that have been transformational in terms of giving us direction for the future. We've become an institution that's on the move—and the Jessie Ball duPont Fund has helped us move."

³For more information on this publication, see Greenwood Press's web site, http://www.greenwood.com/books/BookDetail_pf.asp?sku=C8122&location=international

GRANT FILE

Goucher College
Baltimore, Maryland

April 1997 – \$5,000 to explore how best to build a campus-wide diversity program.

July 1998 – \$182,700 over three years to create a climate of supportive diversity.

August 1998 – \$40,000 to support the Managing Diversity for the 21st Century Conference.

March 1999 – \$491,141 to establish the Visiting Scholars Program at Goucher, Washington College and McDaniel College.

July 1999 – \$20,000 to support the Gender Summit.

July 2002 – \$55,000 over two years to foster a climate of dialogue on matters of race and intercultural diversity.

Addressing Diversity Over Time

Goucher College

In the mid-1990s, Goucher College recognized the need to foster a more inclusive and nurturing learning environment where all students, staff, and faculty could feel comfortable and prosper. When the College requested a planning grant of \$5,000 in 1997 and a subsequent three-year implementation grant for \$182,700 in 1998 from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, the proposals reflected a realistic awareness that increasing diversity on a college campus doesn't happen overnight. "The greatest challenge is not the lack of programs and existing models," the proposal noted, "[but] the limited resources available to implement the models over time." Administrators at Goucher knew that it would take time to address issues of diversity, but they also knew that the process needed to begin somewhere.

In conjunction with the 1997 planning grant, then-President Judy Jolley Mohraz appointed a Task Force on Climate Issues to conduct focus groups, meetings, and informal discussions about various campus issues. During these conversations, students voiced frustration and concern that racial tensions existed on campus. They asked the College to make an effort to hire more faculty and senior staff of color, to bring high-profile speakers to campus to address various topics around diversity, to organize a program or office for diversity, and to make an explicit commitment to serving its increasingly diverse population. At that time, 14 percent of Goucher's undergraduates were minority students, and approximately 8 percent were African American.

The planning grant enabled the College to devise a multi-pronged strategy for increasing its attention to diversity issues, and the 1998 Jessie Ball duPont Fund implementation grant allowed the College to move from vision to action. Responding to news that the grant was approved, then-President Mohraz said, "Goucher is preparing leaders for the coming century - a century in which diversity will be the watchword nationally and globally. The duPont



Michael Curry, Goucher's Vice President and Academic Dean (right) is joined by Bryn Upton, Ph.D. of McDaniel College during a Spring 2005 event celebrating the success of the Jessie Ball duPont Visiting Scholars Program. Upton was a visiting scholar at McDaniel College.

Fund grant is really an investment in future leadership as well as curricular and cultural changes on campus today.”

Over the three-year grant period, Goucher College instituted and accomplished a wide array of activities to address racial diversity, among them the following:

- ❖ Goucher organized two “Curriculum Transformation Institutes” that brought nationally known scholars to campus to share ideas for increasing diversity in course syllabi and classroom instruction.

- ❖ The College hired three African American faculty members as a result of deliberate efforts by the academic dean and faculty to encourage proactive recruitment of candidates of color. By fall 2001, the College employed nine faculty of color among 81 full-time faculty.

- ❖ In 1998, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton challenged Goucher students to join the national dialogue on race at a special Winter Convocation.



Seble Dawit, Goucher’s Assistant Professor of Peace Studies (left), and Debora Johnson-Ross, Ph.D., from McDaniel College (right) participated in the Celebrating Diversity Conference.

- ❖ Goucher faculty and staff attended on- and off-campus workshops and conferences on appreciating, respecting, and managing diversity of people and perspectives in the workplace.

- ❖ Goucher faculty and students collaborated on projects with community groups, such as Interfaith Action for Racial Justice, and volunteered at local schools. Students mentored and tutored middle school students, serving as

role models for young people of color and exposing them to options for higher education. Biology and chemistry students from Goucher presented lectures and mentored students at the nearby Baltimore City Community College.

- ❖ With regard to improving the recruitment and retention of students of color, Goucher produced a new brochure, hosted receptions for minority students and their parents, and initiated a special overnight-visit program for prospective students of color to allow them to feel more familiar and comfortable with the campus.

- ❖ Grant funds also were used to increase the number of minority students honored with awards for academic achievement, campus leadership, community service, and achievement in the visual and performing arts.

- ❖ The College sponsored a number of programs to increase awareness of diversity, including a performance by South African dancer Vincent Mantsoe, a sold-out student-produced, student-performed play, *Between Sisters*, and a presentation by Harvard scholar Dr. Lawrence Blum called “Can We Talk – Interracial Dialogue in the College Classroom.”

In conjunction with its efforts to address racial diversity, Goucher broadened its focus to address other kinds of diversity, including gender, reli-

gion, sexual orientation, class, and physical and learning abilities. The Fund partnered with the College on a number of these programs, including:

- ❖ The Managing Diversity for the 21st Century conference with a grant of \$40,000 in 1998.

- ❖ The establishment of the Jessie Ball duPont Visiting Scholars Program (modeled after the Black Eminent Scholars Program at the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges) with about \$500,000 since 1989 to support a collaborative effort to diversify the curriculum at Goucher, Washington College, and McDaniel (formerly Western Maryland) College. To date, the Visiting Scholars have included professors of philosophy, religion, chemistry, English and dance.

- ❖ A national gender summit entitled Fewer Men on Campus: A Puzzle for Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities with a grant of \$20,000 in 1999. The grant brought together college presidents and academic leaders from around the country to examine the declining rates of young men attending four-year colleges and universities.

The series of Jessie Ball duPont Fund investments in Goucher reflected the trustees' and staff's understanding that the limited resources of a small liberal arts college potentially could compromise its ability to address the complex issue of diversity in a thoughtful and comprehensive way. In making the grants, the Fund sought to provide Goucher with the time it needed to grapple with sensitive and important issues, rather than merely to react to them.

Sherry Magill, president of the Fund, praised Goucher's creativity and commitment in designing a diversity effort: "Given the Fund's commitment to help create healthy democratic communities that are dependent upon the collaborative efforts of people of different races, religions, and social and economic locations to engage in thoughtful, reflective dialogue and shared action, we could think of no better place to foster this practice than at a liberal arts college where young people are learning and thinking about what it means to be responsible citizens – and human beings."

The enthusiasm and creativity of Goucher's administrators, faculty, staff, and students resulted in a short-term increase in numbers of enrolled



Mark Hoesly, Associate Dean of Academic Advising at Washington College, and Susan Vowels, Visiting Scholar from Washington College (right) visit with a guest at the Celebrating Diversity Conference.

A New Strategic Vision at Goucher

Our new vision for a liberal arts and sciences education is rooted in the belief that in the 21st century, every academic inquiry and intellectual endeavor must have a global context. We have reimagined the ways in which we will deliver a Goucher education in the coming years, building on Goucher's distinguished history and taking bold, innovative steps to develop our students as true global citizens.

Every student who enrolls at Goucher College will fulfill a yearly requirement to explore the international, intercultural, and ecological dimensions of his or her education through intensive experiential learning programs in the local community, around the United States, and overseas.

We will build an Athenaeum, housing an expanded college library, dining facilities, performance and lecture halls, and common areas, that will serve as the intellectual, social, and cultural nexus around which Goucher community members will gather in the free exchange of ideas.

We will increase the diversity of Goucher's faculty, staff, and student body and continue to develop an atmosphere of inclusiveness and respect in which every voice will be heard and every idea considered on the basis of its intellectual merits.

Drawing on the resources and experience of our alumnae/i, friends, and supporters off campus, we will expand, enhance, and reinvigorate the intellectual, cultural, and social life of the Goucher College community.

minority students at Goucher, but not without setbacks. The number of new students of color increased from 47 in 1998 to 60 and 61, respectively, in 1999 and 2000, but declined to 51 in 2001. The number of new African American students increased from 24 in 1998 to 33 in 1999, but decreased to 20 in 2000 and 15 in 2001. These setbacks have served to remind the College – and the Fund – that perseverance and long-term commitment are required to sustain a climate that invites and welcomes diversity.

In July 2002, the Fund approved an additional two-year grant of \$55,000 to Goucher “to foster a climate of dialogue on matters of race and intercultural diversity.” Under the leadership of Goucher’s current president, Sanford J. Ungar, the grant supported efforts to increase diversity on the Goucher Board, to continue to attract faculty of color and to increase campus awareness and discussion about diversity through the Visiting Scholars program, and to support the James Baldwin symposium in honor of the 50th anniversary of Baldwin’s semiautobiographical novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (March 2003).

The grant also coincided with the unveiling of a new strategic vision for the College that places “renewed emphasis on the global dimensions of the Goucher curriculum, construction and renovation of Goucher facilities to concentrate and encourage greater intellectual and social interaction on campus, and further diversification of Goucher’s faculty, staff, and student body.”

To realize this vision will no doubt demand continued creativity and commitment. But, with the increasing diversity and rapidly changing demographics of the United States, the role that liberal arts colleges play in preparing the next generation of diverse leaders capable of working together and establishing common ground with people of different backgrounds and perspectives becomes increasingly important.

“We cannot expect to address the full range of our world’s problems and concerns – or to appreciate fully its multifarious wonders – unless we consider an equally broad range of perspectives on them,” says President Ungar. “At Goucher, we are committed not only to listening to the widest possible variety of voices on the topics we explore, but also to elevating people of the widest possible variety of backgrounds so that their voices may be heard.”



During the Celebrating Diversity Conference, Thomas E. Wilcox, President of the Baltimore Community Foundation, addressed the importance of philanthropic support for diversity initiatives.

GRANT FILE

Stetson University
DeLand, Florida

July 1999 – \$5,000 to study the feasibility of establishing an interdisciplinary environmental studies program focusing on water.

May 2000 – \$150,000 over three years to expand the Environmental Studies Program and water initiative.

Designing an Integrated Curriculum

Stetson University

In a 2004 interview published in *Grist Magazine*, an anonymous reader asks the Oberlin environmentalist and sustainability expert David Orr, “How can colleges and universities—even those without formal environmental studies programs—incorporate the teaching of good environmental stewardship into their curricula?”

Orr offers a useful template in his reply: “Offering courses across the division of social sciences, sciences, and humanities is one obvious thing. Another is to begin to shift campus operations toward ecologically designed alternatives. A third is to integrate the standard curriculum with operations giving students a chance to solve real problems.”¹

These three criteria – interdisciplinary education, ecological operations, and practical research and field study – lie at the heart of Stetson University’s Environmental Studies program. Taking the time to plan and methodically implement program enhancements has allowed Stetson to integrate a number of its institutional objectives successfully into the curriculum and to provide students with a “values-based education.”

Planning vs. Managing

A fundamental tension that exists in all institutions is the need to thoughtfully and deliberately plan for the future while maintaining productivity in the present. Institutions of higher education likewise feel the persistent tug of war between planning and managing. The demands of each semester – orienting and advising incoming students, grading and preparing for classes, attending to unexpected but inevitable human resources, facilities, or funding situations – often make it difficult for administrators and faculty to step back and see clearly the direction the institution needs to take to meet the needs of a rapidly changing world. During periods of planning, liberal arts colleges and universities often need additional support to make the time necessary to step out of their routines and imagine future directions.



Stetson University faculty members Dr. Dewaine Jackson, Assistant Professor of Chemistry; Dr. Bob Sitler, Associate Professor of Latin American Studies; and student Hamish Wilman plant a tulip poplar on campus as part of the university’s native plant project.

¹See “Esprit de Orr: David Orr, environmental educator and writer, answers readers’ questions” in the October 29, 2004 edition of *Grist Magazine* at <http://www.grist.org>.

The period 1998-2000 was such a planning period for Stetson University, as the institution undertook a review of its mission. The result was a commitment by the University to strive to foster the “religious and spiritual life of its constituents, ethical decision making, diversity, gender equity, environmental awareness, and community service.”²

In that same time period, the University applied for and received a grant from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund to study the feasibility of expanding its Environmental Studies program, due to its proximity to the fragile ecosystems of the Everglades and other water areas that were being encroached upon by extensive development. The two intentional planning processes converged when the University’s Natural Sciences Division adopted environmental responsibility as a core value of its mission. An Environmental Responsibility Council was established and the University decided to pursue the expansion of its Environmental Science program focused on aquatic and marine environments indigenous to Florida.

Stetson followed its feasibility study with several grants for funding to make the program expansion a reality. The University applied to the Hollis Renaissance Fund for resources to hire an aquatic biologist who had experience with the South Florida Water Management District. Stetson also approached the Jessie Ball duPont Fund to support the hiring of another professor who could help expand the curriculum with courses in molecular ecology as well as funding to develop partnerships with the County of Volusia, the St. Johns River Water Management District, and other public and private organizations that focus on water and environmental awareness and education. The grant would enable Stetson to establish field research sites on the St. Johns River and other area waterways. “There is no

more pressing need in our county and the state of Florida,” President Doug Lee wrote in his letter to the Fund, “than environmental and water education and research. We are committed to be a statewide partner and leader.”

The Fund reacted positively to the request, because it coordinated the goals of education, environmental awareness, and civic responsibility – goals that align with the Fund’s goals of stimulating community problem-solving and building and preserving community assets. “We were pleased to get Stetson’s request,” notes the Fund’s President Sherry Magill, “because it supported the efforts of duPont Fund-eligible colleges to do more research and more educating with regard to the environment. This kind of work is the right thing to do.”



David Rigsby of Stetson’s Facilities Department speaks to a class at George Marks Elementary School in DeLand as part of the university’s K-5 environmental education program related to the native plants project.

²These commitments are articulated in the April 3, 2000, grant proposal from Stetson University to the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, and can be found at www.stetson.edu/about/values.php.

Stetson's research and planning efforts have paid off in a number of grants and cost-sharing partnerships. Stetson received funds to purchase state-of-the-art scientific classroom equipment and update its teaching spaces in a \$2.5 million federal appropriation from the Fund to Improve Post-Secondary Education. Faculty members have also been successful in securing contracts and grants to fund their research interests. Stetson has hired additional faculty and increased its community outreach, including creation of a K-5 environmental curriculum that is now being offered as a pilot at elementary schools in Volusia County to prepare for future implementation statewide. The University has built consortial relationships with Duke Marine Lab and the University of Florida's Whitney Lab, and has established relationships with the St. Johns River Water Management District and Blue Spring State Park that allow for shared use of space and field study opportunities. Stetson is a primary partner with the St. Johns River National Heritage River Council, providing information and updates on water management and preservation, and has a key role on the West Volusia Eco Heritage Advisory Committee to promote ecotourism. The University also facilitates an ad hoc consortium of all government and education partners working on environmental initiatives in the region.

"The investment made by the Jessie Ball duPont Fund in our Environmental Studies program has enabled Stetson to become a much more effective partner in the county and state in environmental and freshwater initiatives," said Stetson President Lee. "Our native plant project has been embraced by the county and state because it benefits the environment by requiring less use of water, pesticides and fertilizer. Our students and faculty are conducting freshwater research locally and around the state. Our faculty, staff and students have taken a lead role in environmental advocacy in Florida."

Interdisciplinary Education

Just as Stetson's Environmental Science program spans several of its institutional objectives – ethical decision-making, environmental awareness, and community service – so does it span the disciplines to make well-rounded and thoughtful graduates. Students can choose either a Bachelor of Science major to study the environment from a natural sciences perspective that emphasizes conservation or a Bachelor of Arts major to study the environment from a social sciences perspective that emphasizes environmental policy and advocacy. Students take classes from faculty in biology, economics, foreign languages, geography, history, political science, religious studies, and sociology as they explore the many dimensions of environmental issues. This interdisciplinary approach follows the lead of David Orr from Oberlin College, who was a guest lecturer at Stetson in March 2000 and whose work on "ecological literacy" calls for a new paradigm for environmental education: "The planning question is how we might institutionalize the capacity to think and act across discipline boundaries as if evolution, ecology, thermodynamics, and the long-term future really mattered."³

³This quote appears in Marci Janas's "Ancestry and Influence: A Portrait of David Orr" in the September 1998 edition of Oberlin Online at http://www.oberlin.edu/news-info/98sep/orr_profile.html.

Environmentally Friendly Campus

In addition to curricular changes, Stetson has made a number of physical and logistical changes to create a “green campus” that operates using “ecologically sound alternatives.” The University counts among its accomplishments for the three-year grant period the use of reclaimed water for landscape irrigation on campus, construction of the first LEED-certified (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) building in Florida (the Lynn Business Center), addition of solar panels to some buildings to generate power, reduction of waste in dining services, an effective campus-wide recycling program, addition of a chilled water loop air conditioning system to save energy, and replacement of exotic plants with native plants on campus. The campus environmental group Roots and Shoots planted a butterfly garden. The University committed to major renovations of its Science Center and creation of an environmental learning center on campus and is now raising money for both projects. In 2002, students added an Environmental Responsibility Pledge to the University’s commencement programs:

Graduation Pledge

*Initiated by the Class of 2002
and the Student Government Association*

Stetson University

This voluntary commitment is part of a national movement in which college graduates sign a pledge to “lead responsible lives.” Seniors who have signed the Stetson University pledge wear green and gold ribbons at Commencement to indicate their intention to live thoughtfully and responsibly, drawing on values they have developed here as they move forward in life and work:

I acknowledge the impact of my decisions on others, on society, and on the environment. As I graduate from Stetson University and begin advanced study or my life’s work, I pledge to consider the social, spiritual, and environmental consequences of my actions. As I make daily choices, I will do my best to enhance the lives of others, to deepen my understanding of the spiritual dimension of human life, and to demonstrate respect for the natural world.

By supporting and promoting programs and courses that address environmental values, Stetson models critical and serious environmental thinking for its students.

Real Work That Yields Real Results

Finally, Stetson's redesigned curriculum incorporates research and field work by students on real and practical issues that affect Florida's ecosystems. Faculty members work with students at nearby springs, lakes, and freshwater sites. Students observe aquatic life, measure water flow, and collect specimens for laboratory study. Many students go on to careers and graduate study in environmental sciences. Stetson graduates have gained employment at the Ponce Inlet Marine Science Center and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and have earned internships at other national and international environmental protection agencies. Students are required to complete detailed senior research projects that demonstrate the outcomes of their interdisciplinary studies. Research project topics have ranged from studies of manatee population density and mortality to the effects of water flow on algae and aquatic life in various waterways. Students have presented papers at the annual meetings of the Florida Academy of Sciences, the Society of Ichthyology, the Society of Herpetology, and the Florida Lake Management Society, among other professional conferences. In addition, Stetson hosted the Florida Environmental Education Symposium (FEES) in summer 2002, bringing together environmental specialists from throughout the state to discuss their research.

Faculty and students at Stetson have become an important resource for public policy and advocacy in Florida. The University presents public lectures and debates, and local media often call on faculty and students to serve as experts on environmental issues for television and newspaper features.

Coordinating an interdisciplinary major, undertaking environmentally sound improvements on campus, and facilitating meaningful field work take a lot of time and effort on the part of faculty and program administrators; however, such thoughtful and deliberate curriculum development exposes students to the many aspects of environmental science they may encounter in their lives and professions. Stetson's efforts in the Environmental Science program offer a glimpse of the possibilities that can surface within a regional liberal arts institution with enough stature to attract accomplished faculty and students but enough flexibility to make real changes to its operations.



Stetson University Biology Professor Alicia Schultbeis discusses water sampling with students at Blue Spring State Park.

GRANT FILE

University of Richmond
Richmond, Virginia

November 1998 – \$111,700 to integrate community service into the curriculum.

March 2002 – \$110,027 to support a project designed to integrate faculty research, student learning, and community problem solving through GIS mapping.

November 2004 – \$219,975 to develop an Internet-based resource center linking nonprofits in the Northern Neck of Virginia.

Reaching Out To Community

University of Richmond

In 1998, Richard Couto, former professor at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies at the University of Richmond, approached the Jessie Ball duPont Fund with a radical idea. Couto was one of a small group of faculty across the country who were coming to believe that private universities had a responsibility to contribute more actively to solving problems in the communities in which they were located. While public universities' missions historically have included their local communities among their constituents, many private universities had remained separate, making little effort to reach out and to be cooperative and productive members of their communities.

In the 1980s, a handful of organizations like VA COOL (Virginia Campus Outreach Opportunity League) and the Corporation for National and Public Service were advocating for state and private universities to incorporate community service efforts into their curricula. The concept of "participatory action research," based in part on the work of psychologist Kurt Lewin and Brazilian popular educator Paulo Freire, called for students and faculty to work with community organizations to improve civic and leadership education in higher education, to increase collaboration among faculty members and across disciplines, and to encourage universities to be more responsive to the needs of their local communities.

"Service learning as a pedagogy has been controversial in higher education," acknowledges Nancy Stutts, director of the Connect Network, who teaches in the University of Richmond's Jepson School of Leadership Studies. "More traditional faculty have questioned whether service learning is 'rigorous' - saying that true learning occurs in the classroom and from traditional methods of research. People like Dick Couto were trying to convince universities that service learning was not only the right thing to do from a moral perspective, but that it would benefit students by making them better versed in the democratic and civic processes."

Couto proposed LINC (Learning in Community Settings) to introduce service learning to the Richmond area by facilitating a consortium of four Richmond-area colleges and universities to "effect real community change through collaborative student-faculty-community interaction in participatory action research" - now commonly referred to as community-based research. The grant would enable the consortium - consisting of J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, University of Richmond, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Virginia Union University - to fund faculty-supervised student research projects at local nonprofit organizations in the Richmond area, expanding the capacity of under-resourced organizations to address community problems by supplementing their research and data collection activities. At the same time, students would gain valuable and practical experience learning about urban public policy issues and human service needs.

Couto and his colleagues recognized that it would be challenging to find funding for the proposal – and challenging to implement the program. There were no reward systems for faculty who might participate in community-based research. In fact, faculty were unsure about whether they and their work would be viewed negatively if they veered from the methods of scholarship that have traditionally led to tenured positions at the university. This approach differed significantly from the traditional scientific method employed by most scholars. In addition, faculty involved with community-based research would have to give up some control over their research and allow members of the community to have a say in the process and outcomes.

Despite these potential stumbling blocks, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund was intrigued by the University of Richmond proposal: it aimed to bridge the gap between the prestigious private university and some of its sister institutions, as well as the gap between the academic community and urban Richmond. When the Fund agreed to a grant of \$111,700, “they were very much taking a risk,” says Stutts, who served as the coordinator of LINCS under Couto during the initial grant. “There weren’t funders for community-based research at that time. The Fund’s willingness to see opportunity in a process that didn’t have a track record or a body of scholarly literature to back it up made a huge difference. In a lot of ways, the Fund was agreeing to take the same risk that all of the faculty members who were signing on were taking: to try a different path. The Fund’s endorsement of that risk helped push the University’s involvement with the community to the next level.”

The grant funded seven community-based research projects in the first nine months. Among the projects were the following:

- ❖ Couto, Stutts and the members of two Critical Thinking classes at the Jepson School interviewed detained juveniles in the Richmond juvenile justice system and made recommendations for improvements and policy changes.

- ❖ Virginia Commonwealth University’s students in the graduate program in Sociology worked with an agency that addresses homelessness to identify ways to address the educational, health, and faith-related needs of homeless children.

- ❖ Undergraduate students at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College provided legislators with recommendations after working with local agencies to study the lack of child enrollment in public medical assistance programs.

- ❖ Virginia Union University students worked with a Families First program to produce recommendations for parenting programs.

When asked which LINCS project stood out in her memory as an example of the power of the grant, Stutts immediately recounts the story of a male professor of nursing from the Medical College of Virginia (part of Virginia Commonwealth University) who wanted to study the effects of despair on people’s lives. He received a grant to work with a small group of female victims of domestic violence who were part of a YWCA support program.

“He couldn’t have been more unlike the women he was working with,” says Stutts. “Here was this white, highly educated, middle-class man meeting with a racially diverse group of poor, under-educated, and marginalized women.

At first, their meetings were painfully unproductive.” Stutts explains that the women were so used to being dismissed by others that they found no reason to speak up or answer the researcher’s questions. “He went into the project wanting to empower these women, and he couldn’t even get them to participate,” says Stutts, who, along with the other faculty members and students in the LINC consortium, met with the nursing instructor monthly to support learning in the difficult research process.

The researcher remained sincere in his goal to listen to and empower the women he was working with, and he took a professional risk in continuing with the project, knowing that his efforts might not yield concrete or reportable results. Eventually, however, the women began to trust his intentions enough to speak out. By the end of the six-month project, they felt empowered – so much so that they took over the project. They vetoed the researcher’s ideas about how the YMCA program could improve and told him that they could improve the program on their own, based on their firsthand experiences.

“They literally pushed him aside,” Stutts recalls. “They began to question how he – a man so very different from them – could understand what they had been through, and consequently what they needed. It was the most dramatic example we saw of how community-based research works if the researchers go in with a genuine belief that community members have what it takes to solve their own problems, if given an appropriate amount of encouragement and guidance. Eventually the researcher becomes unnecessary. That’s an unconventional position for an academic to find himself in, but it’s the desired outcome.”

At the end of the LINC grant period, the University of Richmond convened 55 nonprofit and community leaders to share the results of the community-based research grants and to find out how the University could help more. The organizations unanimously agreed that they needed additional help with collecting and analyzing data. Their staffs were stretched thin, and they didn’t have the time, money, or expertise to interpret all of the information that was available thanks to advancements in Internet technology. They asked if the University of Richmond faculty could use some of their expertise and technology resources to generate and analyze data and impart the information to the local organizations and their staffs.

“That request pushed the relationship between the University and the community even further,” says Stutts. “Up until then, the University was contributing its cheapest resource: student labor. Students were working as interns and doing research for organizations while gaining college credit. All of a sudden, the community organizations were asking for more expensive commodities: faculty time and the University’s technology resources.”

As a result, the University of Richmond submitted a proposal to the Jessie Ball duPont Fund for a grant to expand its Geographic Information Systems (GIS) resources and use them for community problem solving. “GIS is a tool,” the proposal to the Fund stated, “that allows data to be mapped and analyzed spatially, providing detailed community information for government officials, policy makers, non-profit organizations, law enforcement officers, business owners, and many others.” While some larger research universities had been using GIS to gather data around national and international issues, few small liberal arts colleges had access at the time of the grant (2002). The University of Richmond saw an opportunity

to contribute to local human service agencies' effectiveness, while at the same time involving the faculty and students with the greater Richmond community and teaching students to use valuable data analysis software.

The proposal appealed to the Fund's trustees because it aligned with their commitment to ground action in data and research, as well as to help communities hold their public agencies and elected officials accountable, especially toward the goals of improving the lives and assets of members of the community. With the Fund's investment, the University of Richmond sought to upgrade its resources, train faculty and staff, enhance its curricular offerings, improve its relationships with the local community, and increase the civic awareness and service-based outcomes of University of Richmond graduates. The grant also allowed for continued collaboration among the four universities that had come together with the LINC consortium and additional faculty-led, community-based research projects—all supported by the technical expertise and guidance of GIS specialists.

In addition, Fund monies provided more opportunities for students and faculty to work together and create knowledge.

Some of the work made possible by the grant includes:

- ❖ Work by University of Richmond students in Leadership Studies with the United Way on a project to combat homelessness in Richmond. Students used GIS to analyze the spatial distribution of service providers to detect gaps in service as well as provide a web-accessible spatial database of existing services.

- ❖ Preparation of several maps using the murder rates and ambulance data for pediatric victims of violent crime to show areas where youth were being attacked. These maps were used in an application for a citywide youth violent crime prevention grant.

- ❖ Mapping of youth and family foundation funds distribution in Richmond to identify the foundation dollars per child in poverty for every Richmond neighborhood.

In November 2004, the Fund awarded another grant to the University of Richmond to expand its outreach to the community to the Northern Neck of Virginia, one of the Fund's five core communities, which is located approximately 90 minutes from Richmond. The grant, for \$219,975, will allow the Jepson School to establish an Internet-based resource that links nonprofit organizations to information, resources and each other in an area of Virginia that Mrs. duPont funded extensively during her lifetime – an area whose rural nature and remote location have caused economic hardship. This grant will extend the resources and service-learning scope of the University to more areas of the state of Virginia.

While the University of Richmond's projects to increase the community's capacity to solve its own problems have had positive results, Stutts acknowledges that the work remains incredibly challenging and unpredictable. "It's not for the faint of heart," she warns. "Community-based research and capacity-building are tough, demanding and target adaptive challenges whose rewards often are not realized immediately. But they can be powerful in creating real change."



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