

# TRIO/SSS Gazette

CARLETON COLLEGE

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## Spring Potluck at TRIO House

Carleton faculty, staff and students had a treat recently as TRIO house held its second annual spring potluck. It was a sunny Friday afternoon (a rarity, this spring), and students gathered with faculty and administration attendees to enjoy the weather and camaraderie with a huge spread of food. TRIO provided the ever popular fried chicken and burgers and hot-dogs from the grill, alongside fruit, vegetables and cake for a great meal. The attendees also brought along their own specialty dishes to share. At past events, the TRIO-riffic Spirit Award was given to the class cohort with the

most students present (often measured by the groups' collective noise-making ability). This year TRIO changed things up a bit with a Tug of War competition instead. With a rope borrowed from the Rec Center, the cohorts broke up into four groups and took on the competition. The first match up was between the two most populous classes in attendance, sophomores (2010) and juniors (2009), in which the juniors were victorious. The seniors and freshmen then battled with the rope, with the seniors emerging with the victory.

For the consolation round, the sophomores faced

the freshmen (helped out by a few seniors) and came out the winners of third place. Then it was time for the championship round and decider of the most TRIO-riffic cohort: the juniors or the seniors? A fierce battle took place; both sides pulled with all their might, but the senior class and helping friends from other cohorts couldn't withstand the proven strength of the Class of 2009. The juniors pulled through and captured the victory, thereby winning the 2008 TRIO-riffic award. The overwhelming spirit of the event was FUN! We hope to see you there again next year!



The juniors get their game faces on before the first matchup



An assortment of visitors and TRIO students from all cohorts take on the junior class in the championship round of TRIO-riffic Tug of War

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## Is the Carleton experience preparing you for life after college?

A TRIO/SSS Class Act Discussion

On Friday, April 25 students, alumni, and staff came together in TRIO house as they do every term to discuss a topic pertinent to the entire Carleton community. This term we examined whether or not the life and education at Carleton prepares students for life outside the bubble. There was a great turnout as students gathered to voice their opinions, and a few alumni attendees shared their experiences both during and after their time at Carleton.

Though the topic was framed to elicit both positive and negative perspectives, it was noteworthy that students chose to focus on concerns. Such concerns fell along both academic and social lines. Concerns included fewer academic opportunities because of Carleton's small size, the smaller and less diverse student body, getting adequate help from professors and the Career and Wellness Centers, the high cost of tuition and insufficient financial aid for independent students. It was acknowledged that Career Center services are improving.

A few students who have been independent since their early teens shared their concerns about the ability to pay for Carleton without parental support. They shared frustrations with having to take out more and more loans to pay for Carleton because they couldn't get larger grants from the school, even though none of these students had any financial support from their families. One such alum has had difficulty paying off these college loans while trying to live after graduation. While at Carleton, the alum attended seminars that helped prepare upperclassmen for budgeting and bill paying after Carleton, but now having graduated questioned these programs' abilities to actually prepare students for post-graduation independent life. There was a general view that the school's lack of diversity resulted in the campus services catering to the majority of Carleton students and therefore possibly weakening support for non-typical students, such as independent students, first generation college students, students with disabilities, and students of color.

While attendees discussed their problems at Carleton and their worries about how the college has shaped their futures, most students agreed they have benefited from the Carleton experience in some way, such as networking with students, faculty and alumni, the high quality education, and the encouragement to keep learning beyond graduation. When polled, despite their concerns about Carleton's ability to prepare them for later life, most students said they were satisfied with the experience and weren't really sure they would have been better off attending another college or university.

## Pennies for Change Fundraiser Results

The annual Pennies for Change fundraiser sponsored by TRIO/SSS was held at the end of winter term. Peer Leaders placed collection bins in dorm lounges, the Campus Activities Office, and tabled in Sayles to collect money, as well as sending out requests for assistance to the staff and faculty. This year, Carleton faculty, staff and students raised \$320.00 for Thursday's Table, a new free hot meal program for Northfield residents sponsored by the Northfield Community Action Center. The service will be available on Thursday evenings in the Community Action Center recreation room and is expected to feed as many as one hundred families living in the Northfield area. The TRIO staff and Peer Leaders wish to thank everyone for their generosity in supporting this exciting new program that will help the greater Northfield community.



California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jack O'Connell, invited Nicolina Hernandez to be a keynote speaker at the Achievement Gap Summit in November 2007 at the Sacramento Convention Center. The conference was organized to address and find solutions to close the racial and socio-economic achievement gaps that hinder California's Black, Latino, South East Asian, and English Language Learner students. Nicolina spoke about how she was able to jump the gap in spite of the many ethnic, financial, family-related obstacles, as well as the challenges of attending public school in central California, where teachers have little hope for their students. Nicolina spoke alongside Edward James Olmos, Tavis Smiley, Glen Singleton and others. She was also interviewed by local news station Chanel 10 of Sacramento. Nicolina would like to extend her thanks to MCAN, the TRIO Office, and participants of the Border Studies Program for their support.

## Hope Harvey's Term Abroad in Guatemala

Living with the Mayans in the highlands of Guatemala, I ground buckets full of corn to make tamales over an open fire; I wore the native dress to attend Catholic masses that incorporated Mayan symbolism; I learned to say *maltyox* ("thank you" in K'iche, an indigenous language) after every meal. For three weeks, I traded in my title of student for one of anthropologist, studying the culture of the modern Maya and doing original fieldwork of my own design.

Under the auspices of the Carleton Guatemala Program with Jay Levi, I escaped from the Carleton bubble into the real world. Instead of simply studying the Guatemalan civil war through books, I spoke with guerilla fighters who led it, I heard the stories of survivors who cannot forget it, and I lived



in a town that continues to feel its effects. Rather than simply reading the works of academics, I contributed novel research on the effects the Pan-Maya social movement has on local communities.

Despite having learned so much, my greatest achievement was becoming comfortable with how much I did not know. Because everything was unfamiliar, I had to ignore my shame and ask questions about everything. Some lessons were more disagreeable than others, such as when my host father explained to me that it is disrespectful for women to sit in chairs. Others were comforting, like when my host family told me "the bellybutton of the universe" was located in the town where we lived, an experience that assured me that ethnocentrism is not just a Western phenomenon.

While it wasn't entirely glamorous (I often missed hot showers, cold drinks, and fluffy pillows), my study abroad experience taught me things I could never learn at Carleton. I became an active participant in Mayan culture and made life-long friends with the individuals I was supposed to be "studying." Through my study abroad experience, I learned a lot about the Maya of highland Guatemala, about humanity in general, and, in the process, about myself. For the academic and personal growth it afforded me, I am grateful to the Carleton Guatemala program.



## Got Summer Plans? Insight into a McNair Summer Program

By Nicolina Hernandez

Last summer I participated in the TRIO Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program. If you're wondering what on earth that means, the McNair Program is essentially a summer research opportunity focusing on preparation for graduate school. I participated as a McNair Scholar at the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs under the tutelage of a professor who specialized in public health and immigration. Although the professor I worked with focused on public health, I focused on labor. The title of my research project was "Labor Union Advocacy for Immigration Reform: A Case Study of SEIU and UFCW."

There were nineteen other scholars, half from the University of Minnesota, and we lived in a dorm at the U with students from about ten other summer research programs. We had research and graduate school preparation seminars and met with our

McNair advisors and research mentors every week. We were offered free GRE prep courses and gained experience in not only doing research, but presenting it as well. We presented our research findings at two research symposiums in August and finished the program with a boat ride down the Mississippi River. One of the nice things about participating in this program is that graduate school programs begin to seek *you* out, and there are several universities that pay for your graduate education if you are a McNair Scholar.

I also really enjoyed living in the Twin Cities. Downtown Minneapolis was a bus ride away and I could easily take the light rail to Lake Street (where all the Latino convenience stores, markets and entertainment were located). There were many different kinds of restaurants, clubs, and shows I could go to. Also, because I did my research on labor unions, I often

attended rallies and protests at the Capitol in St. Paul. Living on campus and meeting new people from The U of M and other colleges and universities was the best part of my McNair experience. The people you meet are a tremendous resource for any kind of after college plans you may have. I would encourage everyone to participate; there are McNair programs not only in Minneapolis, but in several other states, too!



Nicolina Hernandez at the McNair Poster Presentation at the University of Minnesota, August 2007



# The Real Deal

with Savannah Steele



Dear Miss Steele,

I really enjoy Art History and am considering it for a major, but my family is against it because they think I'll be unemployable when I graduate. Considering I want to follow my heart without being disowned, do I really have to convince them to accept my major, or should I take this step towards being independent and not care about what they think?

Dear Family Guy,

I'm not sure if anybody else has noticed that these questions are getting more challenging every issue. This one is the hardest yet. I think that the day you stop caring about what your family thinks will be a very ugly day, assuming that your family is functional and healthy. These are (hopefully) people who love you and want only good things and success for you in the future. Of course they want to see you employed. Why? They probably have made some hefty sacrifices so that you can skip through the arb whenever you want. Therefore, it is YOUR responsibility to communicate with them openly. Tell them something more concrete than you want to 'follow your heart'—you could try exposing them to what you love about art history or explaining what kind of jobs art history majors tend to acquire after graduation and tell them students who enjoy their classes get better grades.

At the end of all this, if you are truly facing being disowned, I think that now would be a very good time to explore other departments as well... You can take art history and major in something else or apply for a fellowship to pursue your interests. Your family might need time to process, plan, and respond, and you will need to really figure out what is important to you. What will your life look like without an art history major? What will your life look like without your family? Choose carefully.

Dear Miss Steele,

I've noticed an epidemic of the use of "like" in discussions on campus. There are some people in my Philosophy class that use the word excessively, and it has gotten on my nerves recently. I've started tallying the number of times they say "like" rather than really listening to what they are, like, trying to say. I worry this affects my performance in the class. Should I confront the students or the professor about this distraction, or is it just my problem? I don't want to offend anyone, as it seems to be some peoples' favorite word.

-I feel like I'm going, like, so crazy right now!

Dear Likely-to-Snap/Regulate/  
Flyoffatthemouth,

I feel the same way about the word 'interesting.' Just about every time I hear it I start to roll my eyes. However, people like you and me should try not to get too caught up in the way ideas are presented and pay more attention to the ideas themselves. It's frustrating that people can get away with sloppy speech acts in class; however, we are not born with a thesaurus in one hand and a dictionary in the other. If you're truly worried about your performance in class, I think you should mention it to your professor.

If there is a specific person who you are about to use as a dartboard, tell them about your really great experience with the Speakeasy coaches in the Academic Support Center. Otherwise, quit whining. People often use these filler words because they don't know what else to say—they are growing, learning and developing like you (and me). They still have a right to speak even if it makes you want to, like... umm... ahh... well... whatever... you know?

Dear Miss Steele,

I'm so busy with classes these days that I can't keep in contact with my friends, and I'm feeling kind of lonely. Is there any way I can have a healthy social life without hurting my grades?

Dear Out of Touch,

Yes.

I think that you may have missed the memo on multitasking. There are a slurry of things that you have to do that you can't do during class; these things are ripe moments for socializing. First on my list: eating. Have meals with your friends; you have to eat and so do your humanoid friends, so eat together. Exercise: playing catch gets old rapidly when you're alone. Working out with friends makes a workout more dynamic, especially when you're being crushed on the bench press and your spotter saves your neck. Studying can be social as well. I can trick myself into feeling less lonely by studying in the same room as a friend. (I can actually trick myself into feeling less lonely by studying in the same room as a stranger if I imagine that we're friends... but I'm pretty advanced—that's why I write the column). It is ok to make new friends too. Try to remember that a healthy social life is an important piece of a healthy life and that without it your grades could suffer.

Always a privilege.

Humbly yours,

S.L. Steele

