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## Student Life

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## Lab Collaboration

Summer research opportunities make learning stick

By Alicia Nemiccolo MacLeay '97

"I tried the typical college student job after freshman year—scooping ice cream at Baskin-Robbins—and it got old pretty quickly," said Carolyn Mordas '00, a double major in chemistry and math. Two years later Mordas was ensconced in a chemistry lab for the summer, doing research with Associate Professor Tom Shattuck, trying to find binding constants for guest-host complexes.

More than 40 students remained at Colby this summer to assist professors in research for publications, experiments and other projects. Every academic discipline was represented, from psychology to physics and music to anthropology. Although students remain on campus for various reasons, learning underlies them all. Concepts taught during the academic year are pursued in greater depth, and new ideas are investigated. Opportunities to acquire new skills and sometimes even get author credits while working closely with a professor are appealing.

Mordas, who spent last summer doing research at the University of Vermont and this summer at Colby, said, "although their facilities were greater in number, . . . the quality of their instruments was actually not as good as ours. That is pretty impressive for Colby."

Mordas said she remained in Waterville this summer because "it's much easier to get research done when there are no classes to worry about; January and the summer are prime times," she said.

Wes Baff '99 stayed on Mayflower Hill after graduating to design a research Web site for



Professor Jim Flemming and Wes Baff '99 worked together this summer to build a Web site for the American Meteorological Society.

the American Meteorological Society, working with Professor Jim Fleming (science, technology and society). Baff examined the history of the global warming-climate change controversy and designed a 30-page Web site. "The project seemed like a great opportunity to learn more about something I had an interest in," said Baff. "I've read so much I feel like an expert. Before, I only had a superficial understanding."

Although Baff met regularly with Fleming, he researched and designed the site himself. "It's been nice to work on a project that's my own, and at the end of the summer I can sit back and say, 'I did this' and be proud."

Baff claims he wasn't comfortable with computers and had no programming or Web design

experience. Now he sees the computer screen as an empty canvas. "I can do whatever I want."

Fleming said summer research like Baff's can "give the student some national credentials." Having their findings published or making presentations is common for research assistants and bolsters their career prospects.

Economics major Kirk Allen '00 spent his summer researching two topics with two economics professors—with Jim Meehan he studied "The Organization of Professional Baseball: The Relationship Between the Major League and the Minor Leagues," and with Hank Gemery he investigated U.S. internal migration in the 1930s. "I knew going into senior year I should do something that was a spring-

board to a career," Allen said.

In addition to the academic experience, he spent one day a week with Ken Viens '73, learning about the brokerage business at A.G. Edwards & Sons downtown. He also worked at Dick Whitmore's (athletics) basketball camp. Two more reasons Allen stayed at Colby were the proximity of the Hume Center and the Outing Club cabin.

Most student research takes place in a lab, at a computer or in the library. Betsy Loyd '01, an American studies major, got to watch movies on the job. Part of her research was for David Lubin's (art and American studies) book on the making of the 1933 film *King Kong*. Their goal, said Loyd, was "to use the film as a springboard for discussing what life was like for people in the early 1930s and what would provoke them to make such a film."

She also watched the 1997 hit *Titanic* with the remote control in hand, to get the quotations right for another Lubin book project. She even edited some of the writing. "That part was really fun for me," said Loyd. "I enjoy editing, and it was great to learn how it works in the real book publishing world."

Every researcher acquires skills they wouldn't get from a classroom lecture. Allen says he gained a better understanding of the research process by compiling and presenting data—valuable tools in most careers and for the analytical research paper required of senior economics majors. Mordas explained the value of her work this way: "Once I learn a concept and use it in my research, it sticks with me for good." ♦

## Unique Alfond Apartments Open

When 212 seniors lived off campus during the 1996-97 academic year, Colby commissioned a task force on residential life to study campus housing and the effects this exodus was having on the College. The group concluded that the void left by off-campus seniors deprived Colby of student leaders and hurt the residential life program. That was clearly a problem; the Harold and Bibby Alfond Residence Complex, which opened this fall to house 107 seniors, is the solution.

The senior apartments, located on the wooded hillside behind The Heights, are "a hybrid between living in a regular dorm and living off campus," said Ron Hammond, associate dean of students for residential life. The purpose of the complex is to provide greater privacy, independence and autonomy for seniors, many

of whom are returning from the freedom of a junior-year abroad.

"We didn't want all of the apartments to be the same," Hammond said of the four-, five- and six-person units. Every apartment includes private bathrooms and kitchenettes with all the appliances. While many seniors are interested in preparing their own meals, all maintain a minimum meal plan of 100 meals a semester. "They don't need to be entirely self-sufficient," said Hammond.

Tom Donahue '00 is one student who chose the complex, in part because he wanted to have a choice between eating at a dining hall or cooking for himself. The location of the complex was another advantage. "It's close enough to the regular campus to make everything easily accessible, but it's sufficiently



Jason St. Clair, left, and Matthew Boutet move into a six-person senior apartment in the Harold and Bibby Alfond Residence Complex this fall.

removed for us to feel independent," said Donahue.

To allow maximum autonomy, governance of the complex is in the hands of the residents. No hall staff or faculty are in residence. Instead, representatives from each of the 22 apartments meet weekly, advised by Hammond. Colby searched for another school with similar self-governing apartments with more

than 100 residents and found nothing even close. "The notion that it's self-governing is unique," Hammond said.

"The only problem is that the ARC is probably going to spoil all of us rotten," said Donahue. "Very few of us are going to live in apartments as modern and spacious as these for quite a while."

A dedication ceremony was held September 30.

## What's '03 All About?

Most of the class of 2003 was born in 1981. They were the first generation raised in disposable diapers and never in their lifetime was Yugoslavia a country. Colby's 182nd freshman class is 490 strong, emphasis on strong, and its members hail from 41 states and represent 25 countries.



Charles Strom '03, of Newton, Mass., spent his summer wisely—finishing up his basic Emergency Medical Technician training and, in August, taking the certification exam. On the way back from his COOT, which took him into the mountains on the New Hampshire border, his bus came upon a 12-year-old inline skater lying in the road with a head injury, bleeding and a possible broken arm after being hit by a pickup truck. When the cry "Is anyone an EMT?" sounded, Strom was the only one close, and he was still awaiting his official certification from Massachusetts. He stabilized the victim's neck and spine until an ambulance arrived, helped get him in a cervical brace and onto a backboard and accompanied him into the examination room at Rumford's hospital.

When the September *Seventeen* magazine published "This Town Rocks: 10 Best Cities for Teens," Nate Argüelles '03 was a spokesman for his hometown, Billings, Mont., and plugged both cultural and outdoor opportunities, from swing dancing to mountain biking. "Colby rocks too," he said from his room in Goddard-Hodgkins two weeks after landing in Waterville. "People are really friendly and there's a lot to do. You're surrounded by really smart people, and you can talk with them about almost anything."

### 1981

Tom Hanks is appearing *Bosom Buddies* on t.v.

The automotive trend is toward compact cars

*Ordinary People* wins the Oscar for Best Picture

Kim Carnes' *Bette Davis Eyes* wins the Grammy for record of the year

### 1999

Tom Hanks receives his fourth Oscar nomination for *Saving Private Ryan*

The automotive trend is toward sport utility vehicles

*Shakespeare in Love* wins the Oscar for Best Picture

Alanis Morissette's *Uninvited* wins the Grammy for best rock song