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Shorter Takes (Short Form)

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“Privilege does not always know itself as such. A sense of place, social membership, and entitlement obscure what it means for those who have no such defenses. Even the most sympathetic and insightful perspective that social science can create is obscured by what the social scientist or student cannot see, their own place in the hierarchy. The following chapters try valiantly to look past that obscurity, to look at what is so hard to examine, their own place in the larger world.”

—Scholar, writer, and activist Dorothy Allison in the forward to Negotiating Privilege and Identity in Educational Contexts by Adam Howard (education), Aimee Polimeno '14, and Brianne Wheeler '14. See P. 32.

If There’s Life on Mars, Will It Be Ours?

If we do find life on Mars, it would be good to know it isn’t something that stowed away on the trip from Earth.

That’s the goal of a study of microorganisms on spacecraft—including some that have been found to be surprisingly tolerant of extreme heat, cold, and massive doses of radiation. “Could these organisms potentially survive on Mars?” asked research-team member and microbiologist Susan Childers (biology). “There are still a lot of unknowns.” The unknowns didn’t stop the journal Nature from writing about the research, or Childers from speculating about fascinating possibilities.

More Voices as College Sets Priorities

The newly formed Committee on Mission and Priorities is intended to advise the College on matters related to planning and priorities.

Approved by the faculty in October, the committee is charged with taking a long-term view of planning and taking a broad view as it considers areas of need and opportunities for excellence.

The committee will be made up of five elected faculty members representing each of the academic divisions and athletics, three more faculty members appointed by the president, two students appointed by the president, four senior officers, and a staff representative. The president will chair the committee—a makeup designed for broad community representation.
“If you do these things, you can get as good an education as you can get in the world. Or you can get a degree. They are not the same thing.”

Margaret McFadden, Christian A. Johnson Associate Professor of Integrated Liberal Learning, speaking to first-year students during orientation in August. McFadden urged students to become and remain academically engaged and to bear in mind Colby’s academic precepts.

Lovejoy Award Winner Faults Obama

Reporter and author James Risen, who said he’d sooner go to jail than divulge confidential sources, criticized President Barack Obama for his administration’s crackdown on journalists and whistleblowers as Risen received the Lovejoy Award for courageous journalism Oct. 5.

In response to a question about the government’s pursuit of journalists publishing classified information from unnamed sources, Risen said, “I don’t think any of this would be happening under the Obama administration if Obama didn’t want to do it. I believe Barack Obama hates the press.” That comment was tweeted almost a thousand times and was quoted on blogs including on Politico and the Washington Post sites in subsequent days.

A week after Risen spoke in Lorimer Chapel he was featured on 60 Minutes and was interviewed on NPR’s Fresh Air program about his case.

Picturing It: An Inside Look at New York Art Professions

Senior art majors hit the Big Apple over Fall Break in October to meet with alumni and others in art-related professions at galleries, museums, and auction houses. The trip, organized by the Department of Art through an endowment created by the late Alan B. Mirken ’51, gave students opportunities to talk to art alumni about their lives after Colby, the paths that led to their work in New York, and what that work actually involves.

SUMMER RESEARCH

Last summer 97 Colby students stayed on campus and worked alongside faculty across the disciplines performing serious research with real-world impact.

Academics to Drive Decisions

President David A. Greene sent a strong message about academics at Colby in July when he changed the title of Lori G. Kletzer to provost and dean of faculty.

Kletzer, formerly vice president of academic affairs and dean of faculty, is the College’s chief academic officer and plays a lead role in allocation of resources and setting of priorities.

“It is essential that the primacy of our academic mission guides decision making and that the needs of our academic programs are represented in all resource and planning deliberations,” Greene said in an e-mail to the Colby community.
124 Butterfly Species and Counting
Image at left is a Monarch butterfly, one of the better-known species found in the ongoing Maine Butterfly Survey coordinated by Leslie Brainerd Arey Professor of Biosciences Herb Wilson and colleagues from the University of Maine and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. The project began in 2007, and fieldwork by volunteers concludes next year. As Colby Magazine went to press, the survey had recorded 124 different species. More at the survey website: mbs.umf.maine.edu.

Library Renovation Leads to More Consideration
Renovation of Miller Library, the second phase of which was completed in August, raised concerns that have led to an extended analysis of the role of the libraries at Colby.

The 16-month project included the remodeling of the library entrance and first floor, restoration of the historic reading room (see photo, P. 14), expansion of student study space, and clustering of academic support. The $8.7-million project also moved 50 percent of the collection from Miller to a new storage facility on Washington Street, near campus.

That change prompted some faculty and students to object to what they said was more limited access to research materials and the loss of the ability to browse the library’s collections—the result, they said, of a planning process that they believe did not include sufficient input. Those concerns were addressed at a forum on campus Oct. 9. Based on that conversation Greene announced immediate changes including more frequent retrieval of books from the Washington Street building, improvements to that facility to make it more comfortable for use by students and faculty, and additional availability of on-call librarians. A library committee will work through the academic year to consider next steps. (More on P. 3)

The number of Colby seniors getting their teaching certificates through a minor in education: professional certification. Associate Professor of Education Adam Howard reports that the number of students seeking certification has doubled in recent years, and that the program is becoming markedly more diverse. Forty percent of the members of the Class of 2015 pursuing their teaching certificate are students of color.

Ebola Insight
“In order for a government to manage a health crisis, citizens must believe that their government will work to protect to them.”

So wrote Leah Breen ’15 in the Washington Post online Aug. 29. Breen’s guest post about the Ebola epidemic in Liberia, where she did research last summer, described the epidemic as “Liberia’s invisible rebel.” Unlike bullets fired by soldiers, Breen writes, the deadly virus is silent.

“When Hashim died I don’t think there was one squash player around the world who didn’t know it. His passing was a world event in squash.”

—Colby squash coach Sakhi Khan on the death of his great uncle, Hashim Khan, patriarch of the Khan family and squash dynasty, Aug. 21. The elder Khan learned to play squash as a child when he was paid to retrieve stray balls for British officers at their club near Peshawar, Pakistan. Hashim Khan went on to become national champion, eight-time British Open champion, and a global ambassador for the sport.

Dan Medici ’16 works in the Davis Science Center. The math problems centered on “normed vector space,” he said, applying definitions of length and angle to spaces with infinite dimension.