

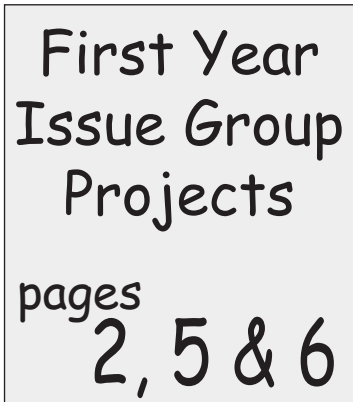


a look inside.... **Seniors Learn Their Final Lessons**



Sophomore Projects

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Leslie Kodet  
Publications Coordinator

After a year and a half apart, the Class of 2011 reunited for its final semester together. Beginning with a retreat in January and culminating with a certificate ceremony in April, these seniors have come together to reconnect, and welcome two early graduates from the Class of 2012.

The class decided to study the Justices on the Supreme Court as leaders. Each student presented a justice as a case study of leadership on the Supreme Court.

Through the presentation and discussion, the class learned how the leadership on the high court could be translated to leadership skills rel-



Andy MacCracken writes a letter to the troops

evant to daily life.

Students discussed the importance of pragmatic versus principled modes of operation, political skills, dissents, and diversity as useful leadership traits. Tracy Empson, for example, while presenting on Justice Scalia, explained how humor is used as a tool to counter his scathing dissents.

Without friendships in

the workplace, not much work would be able to get done. Scalia's use of humor allows him to be approachable and conversational when his dissents are so alienating. The students gleaned from Scalia that humor, when used appropriately, can put an audience at ease and make a le-

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**Leadership Turns 20!**

Peter Goelz  
Staff Writer

The academic year of 2010-2011 marks a special moment in the Leadership Program's life: We've turned 20! To celebrate, the Program hosted a reception at Chef Geoff's for students, alumni and patrons.

The celebration offered those in attendance the chance to network and learn about the Program's roots while also providing them with a variety of appetizers, desserts, and libations. As the hall began to fill, Student Director Amanda Merkwae noted, "We have been looking forward to hosting this for a while now."

Many of Leadership's former directors as well as alumni and members of the present day program came to celebrate. Liza Romanow, a first year in the Program. "I can't tell you how many interesting people I have talked to tonight."

To kick off the programmed portion of the event, Margaret Marr, the Program's current director, offered welcoming remarks and introduced the Associate Dean of the School of Public Affairs, Margaret Weekes who congratulated the Program on a fantastic twenty years.

Following Dean Weekes' brief remarks, the many guests were shown a recorded address from Neil Kerwin, the former Dean

of the School of Public Affairs and current President of American University. Kerwin, regretful that his travels disallowed his presence at the event himself, discussed the Leadership Program's positive influence on the University. Having helped create the program himself, he addressed how the Program was established to further the development of students and their leadership abilities.

He also noted the Program's many profound transformations and reiterated his hope that the Program carries on to far surpass his wildest expectations by continuing to

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## Health, Food and Nutrition

Philip Scrange  
Staff Writer

The Health, Food, and Nutrition issue group partnered with Life Pieces to Masterpieces, an aftercare program in Anacostia for at-risk African American males. The group found evidence that there is a scarcity of grocery stores offering nutritious food in Wards 7 and 8. The group hoped that increasing consumer awareness could alter food choices.

The group held five classes on Tuesdays with 7 to 10-year-old boys. The classes focused on vegetables, fruits, grains, and dairy. On the fourth week, a group of AU Wrestlers went with the group to talk about the value of milk to building strong muscles.

In the first class, the group asked the boys to draw healthy food. The boys came up with pizza and fast food. As the fifth week



wrapped up, the group asked the boys to draw a picture again. This time a couple drew oranges and others apples. By this metric, the Health, Food, and Nutrition interest group considered their project a success.

## Poverty

Emily Yu  
Staff Writer

The Poverty Issue Group conducted its five-week workshop program targeting depression in impoverished youth at the Hopkins Branch of the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Washington. They had the pleasure of working with a group of about 15 to 20 amazing young people ranging from the ages of 4 to 11 years old.

Over the course of six visits the group taught lessons in health and nutrition, conflict management, stress and anxiety relief, and goal setting. They incorporated hands-on and interactive activities that included making ants on a log, creating skits, painting outside, journal writing, drawing self portraits, and relay races.

At the beginning of the program, the group members questioned whether the activities would be enjoyable and engaging for the children or contribute to them learning the intended lessons. But as the group members developed close friendships with many of the children, it was clear that everyone had fun



spending time doing the activities together. The group's project was a success because during the time they spent with the children, everyone got to forget for a little while their trials or worries and just enjoy each others' company.

## Sophomores Wrap-Up Their Projects

Danielle Pullan

Guest Writer

With the end of the year comes the conclusion of the sophomore class' social action projects, many of which saw great success. These projects all address a social issue that the individual students identified as a problem in society. Sophomores began the process immediately after returning from their retreat in September, working on a policy memo, project proposal, and grant application during the first half of the year. The students then implemented their proposed projects over the course of the past semester.

José Morales directed a play about adolescents living in a post-9/11 world dealing with Islamophobia, an issue important to Morales. He discovered "Hearts and Minds" by Luqman Ali and received the author's permission to premier the show in the United

States. Morales teamed up with the on-campus theatre group AU Players, and the cast put on three performances, all of which were extremely well-received. When asked what he learned from this experience, Morales answered, "Don't doubt the power of your idea, because it can turn into something huge."

Sarah Robinson wanted to address the issue of reproductive rights in third world countries, specifically Guatemala. In order to effectively disseminate information and supplies to women in this area of the world, Robinson designed an Alternative Break trip that she hopes will be accepted for the summer of 2012. This entailed planning several pre-departure lessons on the educational aspects of the trip, researching the specific location, and once approved, Robinson herself will be in charge of leading the trip.

A challenge that she faced was finding a partner



*Sophomores Tom Schad, Kathryn Braisted, and Katie Hanson*

who was fluent in Spanish and was willing to sponsor the trip with her, but she has recently succeeded in finding such a person. "This project was challenging, but I learned a lot," Robinson says.

Katie Hanson values educating people on food insecurity and how to eat locally and sustainably. To do this, she partnered with Bon Appétit, the food service company on campus, to put on several events to educate students. Chef Mary Soto put on multiple cooking demonstrations, showing students how they can cook healthy, sustainable dishes and providing them with recipes. For the most recent event, Soto only used foods she found at the on-campus farmer's market and put on the demonstration right next to the farmers' tents.

Hanson also worked with Bon Appétit on their Low Carbon Day event, showing students how they can still eat good

food and reduce their environmental impacts. Hanson now prides herself on being something of a "Bon Appétit ambassador."

In a similar vein, Hannah Murphy wanted to address an issue that was near and dear to her because she grew up near the heart of it – farm workers rights in Amocoli, Florida. Murphy saw the conditions that these migrant harvesters were subjected to – poorly-made, temporary housing, incredibly low wages, and no stable home, as they had to travel from southern Florida up the east coast with the harvest seasons.

Murphy researched the issue while she was home over winter break and put together a presentation that she is using to spread the news of the farm workers' situation. She has presented it to on-campus groups such as Eco-sense and hopes to bring it to a greater audience.

It is particularly



*Players in "Hearts and Minds"*

*continued on page 7*

# Visions of Cherry Blossoms

Holly Hagerty  
Staff Writer

On the evening of Thursday, March 31, Leadership students came together for a combination tour of the Cherry Blossom festival and history of the memorials surrounding the National Mall.

This annual Leadership event allows student to enjoy the festival scenery while simultaneously gaining insight into the leadership lessons offered by figures like Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Thomas Jefferson, whose memorials were included in the tour.

Leaders from all grades traveled together to the Mall, where they were joined by National Park service tour guide and AU graduate student Tim Moore. Moore, who is also a friend of former student director Stephen Laudone, introduced the Leadership students to the history of the District's cherry blossom obsession, which can be traced back more than a century to the years of the Taft presidency.

Touring during the evening hours was an added bonus, giving students the opportunity to enjoy the cherry blossoms without the crowds of tourists that usually flock to the festival during the day.

After enjoying dinner catered by Angelico's Pizzeria, students continued to the FDR memorial, which is divided into

four rooms representing the four terms of Roosevelt's presidency. Leading students through these rooms, Moore discussed their more little-known features and how they related to "the times and actions of Roosevelt."

For example, Moore explained how the recurring theme of water and fountains in the memorial represented the capacity and the potential of Roosevelt's leadership to enact change in the lives of citizens, starting out calm and growing in strength as the group made its way through the rooms.

Moore made a point to demonstrate that Roosevelt was never represented, in life or in his memorial, as having a wheelchair, which in recent years has angered disability awareness groups and individuals who see the former president as an inspiration for disabled individuals.

"Listening to our tour guide talk about the 'controversy' surrounding the issue of presenting Roosevelt in a wheelchair reminded me that I always have to think of how my actions will affect others," says Cristina Kladis, freshman in the program.

Josh Halpren, a program first year, says Moore helped him to "see the memorial in a whole new light." Classmate Katherine Maddente would



agree, "I definitely learned a lot about the memorial... I don't think I ever would've known the historical significance of all the different features if we didn't go on that tour."

Moving on from the FDR memorial, senior Stephen Laudone led the Leadership students on to the Jefferson memorial. Laudone, a veritable "History Wonk" when it comes to D.C. trivia, pointed out interesting facts and architectural features of the memorial.

For instance, the Washington Monument is shifted over so there's a clear view between the White House and the Jefferson memorial, and on the walls are four excerpts from Jefferson's work that highlight his main ideas.

When asked what she took away from the monument tour, freshman Jean Cornell identifies "the difference between how leaders are honored today compared to in the past. Jefferson's memorial idealized him, making him somewhat of a god in a temple; FDR's memorial, on the other hand, honored his work and focused on the people he served."

After the conclusion of the tour, students could catch glimpses of the new Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial being constructed on the National Mall. The memorial, to be completed in August 2011, is located between the Roosevelt and Jefferson memorials on the Tidal Basin. Cornell described it as a "mix" of the two forms of honoring leaders, "highlighting both the man and his work."

The tour is a great way for students to come back together close to the end of a busy second semester.

Margaret Marr, director of the program, described the tour as a way of coming "full circle" with the beginning of the year, commenting on its similarity to first semester events in Dupont Circle, when members of the Class of 2014 were just beginning to get to know one another.



## Environmental Sustainability

John Caddock  
Staff Writer

The 2010-2011 Environmental Sustainability Issue Group immediately became interested in the issues related to the Chesapeake Bay and the surrounding watershed area. This concern was funneled into the creation of the Chesapeake Bay Student Alliance, a network of college students who use both a hands on and educational approach to engage their fellow students and community members to help combat the many threats to the Chesapeake Bay.

Through the combined effort of members John Caddock, Joe Wisniewski, Marissa Kibler, Michael Penek, Evan Brown, Julia Kinsey, Catalina Lilo, and teaching assistant Stephen Bronskill, the group took many important steps in cleaning up the Bay and educating a new generation about the importance of protecting our nation's waters.

The Chesapeake Bay Student Alliance found a tremendous amount of success reaching out to both members of our local community and the AU student body through a dual campaign consisting of hands on park clean ups and an ambitious awareness campaign. The issue group recruited eighty-five unique volunteers over five events that



did everything from plant trees to remove a shopping cart from a river. The group plans to build off of this year's success and combine its efforts with Eco-Sense in the future!

## Gender and Sexuality

Jean Cornell  
Staff Writer

The Gender and Sexuality Issue Group created and implemented not one but two social action projects this semester. Each focused on reducing bullying of and provid-



ing successful role models for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth community in the DC metro area.

The first project took place at Woodrow Wilson High School temporarily located at the University of the District of Columbia. Group members spent three weeks going into social studies classes and teaching a class lesson about issues facing the LGBT community. The lessons stressed tolerance and the impact of bullying.

The second project was a day spent with the Rainbow Youth Alliance (RYA), a LGBT youth group, in Rockville, Maryland. Members of the issue group talked with high school students about college, ate lunch, and channeled their energy into painting.

Group members Zachary Baldwin, Zachary Cady, Jean Cornell, Joshua Halpren, Cristina Kladis, Danielle Nispel, Malea Otranto, and TA Danna Hailfinger learned about catering to the needs of the constituency and developing a curriculum throughout the process. They are proud of the work they have done to help combat bullying and increase support for the LGBT youth community in Washington, DC.

## Education

Dan Raymer  
Staff Writer

Tackling the immense problem of dropping out of school, The Education issue group created a mentorship program at the Boys and Girls Club, Hopkins Branch. Located in the southeast of Washington D.C., the center serves some of the most underprivileged children in the region. Through the development of a fun and innovative program, the group was able to help stimulate the children to stay in school.

The project ran from mid-March through the end of April. Every Monday and Friday groups of three to four students implemented the project with the middle school students. From computer games that taught career planning to a



Pictionary game that focused on goal setting, the education group used creative outlets to accomplish their project's goals.

To conclude the project, 15 students traveled to American University to see college first hand. They enjoyed a tour of campus, a peek into dorm life, and a great dinner in TDR. Through the program, the students who participated gained new insight into the benefits of staying in school and learned about where their education could take them. It was truly a remarkable experience.

## Civil Rights and Diversity

Tyler Sadonis  
Staff Writer

Members of the Civil Rights and Diversity issue group crafted a project around their concern for the youth of Washington DC. Recognizing the power of spoken word poetry, group members Allie Cannington, Ki'tay Davidson, Rachel Dockery, Sarah Durgin, Peter Goelz, Liza Romanow, and Tyler Sadonis created a poetry program to help Washington DC high school students improve their reading and writing skills and give students a means to express their emotions.

The group's program, "Poetry Beats Silence," worked with students at four locations: Washington Metropolitan High School, Mamie D. Lee School, Ballou High School, and the Sasha Bruce House. The group members created curriculums that exposed students to such poets as Shel Silverstein, Tupac, and Andrea Gibson. Each student was given their own composition notebook for them to record their thoughts and poetry throughout the course of the Poetry Beats Silence program.

Members of the Civil Rights and Diversity issue group were touched by the sensitive issues that students raised during group discussions. Working with the students to encourage them through their struggles proved a valuable lesson for the issue group. The Civil Rights and



*From the left: Liza Romanow, Allie Cannington, Sarah Durgin, Ki'tay Davidson, Peter Goelz, and Tyler Sadonis  
Missing from photo: Rachel Dockery*

Diversity group has come out of this experience feeling inspired by the enthusiasm of students in the program and very appreciative for the power of poetry. The issue group members would like to give special thanks to their wonderful TA Cristina Khan.

## A Message from the Student Director

Amanda Merkwae  
Student Director



After one action-packed year, I could not be more thankful for the tremendous individuals responsible for making the program run smoothly on a weekly basis. This year's Steering Committee managed to put on some phenomenal events, match sophomores with incredible professional mentors, produce some fabulous publications, forge excellent ties with Program alumni, raise funds to finance the Program's activities, and foster fantastic buddy re-

lationships between first-year students and upperclassmen.

In the classroom, we added a few new members to the Leadership family this year. Patricia Bory, former Director of the Bay Area AmeriCorps program, joined to co-teach the sophomore class, and Jackie Norris, former Chief of Staff to First Lady Michelle Obama, took over the junior internship class.

Thanks to the hard-working sophomore and senior TAs, the first-year issue groups and second year students were able to create incredible social action projects. Leadership students alone managed to snag seven Eagle Endowment Grants to finance their projects—way to go! And of course, the Program would cease to function without the dedication and work of Professor Marr.

At the Program's 20th Anniversary celebration back in March, it was fascinating to

hear from alumni and former Directors about SPA Leadership's activities over the years.

What started in 1990 as a small group that learned about leadership through speakers and events, thanks to then Dean of SPA Neil Kerwin, blossomed into a comprehensive academic program helping to prepare talented leaders at AU for lifelong public service.

The SPA Leadership's twenty years worth of alumni have generously donated time and money to the leadership development of current students and have played an instrumental role in preserving the oral history of the Program.

Leadership formal went off without a hitch this April—we gave thanks to the TAs and Steering Committee members and wished the new ones great luck in the coming year. The senior class was given a warm send-off and congrat-

ulations through humorous toasts delivered over dinner. The four senior toastmasters sure have excellent comedic timing! Overall the event allowed students from all four years of the Program reconnect and reminisce about past Leadership successes.

Even though the seniors will be heading off to impressive careers and graduate schools across the country, they will never forget the meaningful relationships formed throughout their time in the Leadership Program.

I wish my friend Mitchell Duncombe the best of luck as he takes over for me as Student Director for 2011-2012. We had an impressive year, but as Leadership history seems to indicate, the quality of projects, events, and caliber of students will just keep on getting better and better!

### Sophomores continued from page 3



*Pullan's group posing on the last event with seniors from the Armed Forces Retirement Home. For her project, see the Dec. 2010 newsletter*

clear from Robert Helbig's project that students' backgrounds really shaped the types of projects they were interested in. Helbig, who hails from Erfurt, Germany, spent his year forming the Young Transatlantic Conservative Alliance, a non-profit organization dedicated to engaging American and European conservative youth in a dialogue about their common beliefs. In addition to formally founding a non-profit and launching a website, Helbig succeeded in acquiring a board

of advisors that includes David A. Keene, chairman of the American Conservative Union and president of the National Rifle Association, and former Congressman Jim Kolbe. According to YTCAs launch press release, the organization seeks to "advance the transatlantic relationship" through a "public diplomacy effort."

The entire sophomore class put many hours of hard work into their projects, and now they are able to look back on the impact that they had and reap the rewards of all of their efforts.

## Seniors

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gitimate point.

As a final service project together, Easter weekend they gathered to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to distribute to the homeless in various areas of the city and write letters to the troops.

Completing their final good deed together was refreshing and felt like a closing a chapter in the seniors' lives. "After our original plans were thrown arwy from the flooding, it looked, for a moment, that we wouldn't have a senior service project. However, after having learned the importance of following through, we made a new plan for a week later, and accomplished that goal," refelcted Amanda Merkwae.

Being the end of a four-year (or in some cases three-year) journey together, the seniors have spent plenty of reflecting on their time in the Program, what they've gotten from it, and how the Program has helped them grow as people and as leaders.

"I firmly believe that I would not be graduating with such a passion for social justice and the drive to create positive change in our world without my participation in Leadership," explained Kathryn Baxter, reflecting on how the Program has most affected her.

Many students recognized how the Program teaches emphasizing "strengths, and [recognizing] weaknesses, we have the power to capitalize off our qualities to aid others," in the words of Scarlet Doyle.

Other students have emphasized the op-

portunities the Program presents. Emily Beyer described the Program as "what you make it. You'll form bonds with the people in your grade, those above and below you, as well as with the director. But what you end up getting out of it, including those relationships, will be entirely of your own doing."

Kristen Cleveland explains the Program the best, saying, "I absolutely cannot stress how important the people in this Program have been to me. They are my family away from home, and I would do anything for the friends I have made through Leadership. It is a difficult program, but the people make it entirely worth every minute."



*Meg Miraglia writes letters to the troops*



*Michael Monrroy, Amanda Merkwae, and Nick Armstrong make sandwiches to give to the homeless*

## Future Plans for the Graduating Seniors

- 3 will join Teach For America
- 2 will work for lobbying firms
- 3 are pursuing the fine arts
- 3 will continue at AU to earn their Masters
- 8 are considering law school
- 2 will join research and advocacy institutes
- 1 will join a gubernatorial campaign
- 1 intends to be a Naval Officer



# SPA Leaders Play Dress Up: Formal 2011

Megan Huber

Guest Writer

On Friday, April 15th the members of the SPA Leadership Program gathered at Maggiano's Little Italy restaurant in Friendship Heights to honor the seniors and celebrate the year. The Leadership Formal, a yearly event, is the opportunity for Leadership students to gather and celebrate the year that was before everyone goes their separate ways after the conclusion of spring term.

"It is always a pleasure to see so many leaders in one room," remarked professor Marr as she welcomed everybody to the event. Once everyone had socialized, ventured to the bar, and found their seats, the meal began with bruschetta, ravioli fritte, and salad. Professor Marr kicked off the evening's ceremony by welcoming the SPA Leaders and acknowledging the hard work of Student Director Amanda Merkwae and the rest of the Steering

Committee throughout the past year.

The event represented a "passing of the torch," according to Event Coordinator Tommy Hunt, "The program is now in the hands of a new batch of leadership students." Hunt is referring to the introduction of the 2011 Steering Committee and the new group of 6 TAs for the incoming freshman class. "They have a great year ahead of them. There will be a lot of hard work but it will surely pay off," commented Hunt.

The Senior Toast Committee, comprised of Seniors Andy MacCracken, Stephen Ladone, Emily Beyer, and Meg Miraglia, had the responsibility of toasting, or in many cases roasting, the outgoing senior members of the Program by thanking them for their contributions over the past four years. "Our goal was to make it funny for everyone," reflected Senior Andy MacCracken, "I think everybody, especially the seniors, really enjoyed it this year."



*Amanda Merkwae, Stephen Bronskill, Katie Hanson, Hannah Murphy, and Tommy Hunt*

The Toast Masters used a sarcastic, tongue-in-cheek humor to reflect upon their classmates' embarrassing moments, personal nuances, and hard work as they prepare to graduate from the university.

The toasts gave the seniors a chance to recollect great memories with each other throughout their years in the program and recognize each other for all of their outstanding accomplishments. Even Leadership's underclassmen walked away from the evening with a sense of admiration for the hard work and dedication of the wonderful

people that will be graduating from the program this spring. "We have a lot to live up to," remarked freshmen and incoming Events Coordinator Liza Romanow.

Mitchell Duncombe, the incoming Student Director for the 2011-2012 school year, has even more to live up to as pointed out by Professor Marr following the Senior Toasts. "[Outgoing Student Director] Amanda Merkwae has worked tirelessly behind the scenes this year to make the SPA Leadership Program what it is." Alumni Coordinator David

*continued on page 10*



*Andy MacCracken toasts the seniors at formal*



*Meg Miraglia and Emily Beyer enjoy formal*

## Leadership Formal continued from page 9

Silberman remarked, "Amanda has done a stupendous job leading the steering committee and has contributed so much time and effort to the Leadership Program this year." The program will undoubtedly miss its fearless leader, but has a lot to look forward to in new Student Director Duncombe.

The rest of the dinner, which included a delicious spread of parmesan chicken, fettuccini alfredo, lasagna, and pork with mashed potatoes, students spent time enjoying each other's company, reflecting on their own experiences over the past year.

"It was a great way to end the year," commented Senior Kristen Cleveland, "I'm going to miss all of these people next year. The SPA Leadership program has

been like a family to me."

Students ended the evening with dancing and picture taking. Friends and classmates alike rushed to the dance floor after dinner and had a great time singing to Katy Perry or dancing to the "Cha-Cha Slide".

The whole room flashed with cameras as everyone took pictures to document the fantastic evening. Freshman Rachel Koretsky

remarked, "I loved posing with all of my friends! We all looked so great and getting all dressed up was so much fun. I can't wait until next year's Leadership formal!"

"I was really proud of the hard work everybody put in to make this night possible," said Events Coordinator Tommy Hunt, "It's always amazing to see all of your hard work pay off in such a successful way."

Overall, it was a great night full of laughter and re-

flection for all in attendance. The event left everyone looking forward to the coming year and the experiences that we will have to reflect on at the next Formal.

"I am so incredibly proud of each and every one of you," concluded Professor Marr at the dinner, "Thank you for making this year such a success. You have made the SPA Leadership program a better place to live and learn together, now go do the same to the world."



*Andy MacCracken, Kristen Cleveland, Jenny Leland, Leslie Kodet, Kathryn Baxter, and Graham Vyse reunite Education Issue Group 2011*

## Leadership Turns 20! continued from 1

make a difference in the lives of those who embrace it.

The gathering of celebration-goers was also given the opportunity to hear brief addresses from various notable guests including former directors Joe Arminio and Sarah Stiles, as well as other members of the Program's illustrious alumni. Dr. Arminio, the Program's first director now currently serves as a defense consultant.

Dr. Stiles, the program's longest tenured direc-

tor (2001-2007) now works in the Sociology Department at Georgetown University.

"It was neat to hear from a group of people that took part in the program at various times and at various levels," said Tom Hunt, a current sophomore in the Program who serves as the Events Committee Chair on the Steering Committee.

Freshman Evan Brown agreed with Hunt, saying, "the most interesting part of the many addresses

to me was just to be able to see how far we have come."

To conclude the event's program, Director Margaret Marr shared with the crowd her final thoughts. She introduced and offered thanks to the Program's newest additions in Professors Jackie Norris and Patricia Bory.

In her address Professor Marr also thanked the two individuals that, along with herself, made the evening possible in Student Director Amanda Merkwae and Deputy Student Director Erin Cady.

After the event's program came to a conclusion, desserts, coffee, and conversation continued to persist well into the evening. The celebration proved to be one of, if not the most, well attended annual celebrations to date.

"Happy Birthday Leadership!," proclaimed newly selected teaching assistant to the incoming Class of 2015 Sarah Durgin. "Now, where is the cake?"

## Mitchell Duncombe Named New Student Director



implementing a plastic-bag recycling program at AU with the Environmental Sustainability issue group.

In addition to lobbying campus vendors to decrease disposable bag distribution on campus, the group testified on live television before the DC Council regarding a proposed 5-cent plastic and paper bag tax, which passed unanimously and went into effect on January 1,

Program that has been such an integral part of my college experience and personal development," said Duncombe.

After spending the past two semesters abroad at Oxford University studying politics, philosophy, and economics, he will be tasked with heading the twelve-person Steering Committee in 2011-2012.

"As much as I enjoyed my year-long vacation

across the pond," Duncombe explained. "I am ready to get back to what I love most—putting sharp noggins together and sculpting some beautiful public-service. As Student Director, I hope to enable the gift that keeps on giving—fiery, passionate SPA Leadership students who are bent on making this world a better place."

### SPA Leadership Announces...

#### The 2011-2012 Steering Committee

*Alumni Coordinator:* Zach Baldwin

*Deputy Director:* Ki'tay Davidson

*Events Co-Coordinators:*

Peter Goelz & Liza Romanow

*Fundraising Coordinator:* Rachel Koretsky

*Finance Coordinator:* Joe Wisniewski

*Interclass Coordinator:* Linnea Jordan

*Media Coordinator:* Sylvia Brookoff

*Mentorship Co-Coordinators:*

Megan Huber & Catalina Lillo

*Publicity Coordinator:* Jean Cornell

#### Class of 2015 Teaching Assistants

Sarah Durgin : Civil Rights and Diversity

Cheria Funches : Education

Holly Hagerty : Environmental Sustainability

Dani Nispel : Gender and Sexuality

Tyler Sadonis : Politics and Empowerment

David Shirbroun : Poverty

#### Class of 2014 Teaching Assistants

Sara Aucker

Rebecca Bucchieri

Melissa Chang

Anthony Miller

Olivia Stitilis

The SPA Leadership Program is proud to announce that Mitchell Duncombe, a rising senior double majoring in CLEG and International Relations, will serve as Student Director for the upcoming school year!

He looks forward to building on the fantastic successes of the Program's 20th Anniversary year, and hopes to continue building and maintaining great relationships with the new freshmen class.

Duncombe explained, "If I have learned one thing from this Program, it's that leadership is relationships. By learning and laughing with the talented, creative, and driven students in Leadership, you will develop as a leader and acquire the tools to make a difference in the world."

A proud native of Corvallis, Oregon and avid environmentalist, Duncombe devoted his freshman year in the Leadership Program to

2010.

Although Mitchell relished the success of the project, his love for the Leadership Program developed from the bonds he formed with his tremendously talented classmates and mentors.

"I had a great time working with Mitchell on our freshman project. He is an incredibly positive and encouraging leader. He will surely bring the Program to new heights in the coming year!" said outgoing Student Director Amanda Merkwae.

During his sophomore year, Duncombe served as a teaching assistant for the first year Leadership students and provided guidance to the Education issue group as they implemented a weekly child literacy program in conjunction with Good Success Church in Northeast, DC.

"Serving in the Student Director position will allow me to give back to the

## A Message from the Program Director

### Our Staff

#### Publication Staff

##### Publications Chairs

Leslie Kodet

##### Staff Writers

John Caddock

Jean Cornell

Holly Hagerty

Dan Raymer

Tyler Sadonis

Philip Scranage

Emily Yu

Cheria Funches

Peter Goelz

Cristina Kladis

Malea Otranto

David Shirbroun

Ken Whitley

#### SPA Leadership

##### Program Director

Margaret Marr

##### Student Director

Amanda Merkwae

##### Deputy Director

Erin Cady

#### Steering Committee

##### Events Committee

Tommy Hunt

##### Alumni Committee

Lauren Hickey

David Silberman

##### Fundraising Committee

Rachel White

##### Website Manager

Sylvia Brookoff

##### Treasurer

Phil Cardarella

##### Buddy Coordinator

Sarah Robinson

##### Mentorship Chair

Todd Carney



An outstanding year - made possible only by the many excellent students who lead this program: our Student Director, Steering Committee members, and our teaching assistants. As our program is student led and executed, our students have opportunities to learn leadership lessons that only experience affords. This, in turn, contributes greatly to the leadership education this Program offers. I could not be more pleased or more proud of the students who have contributed to making this year such a success.

Amanda Merkwae has been phenomenal as our Student Director. She is an archetype of Lau Tzu's invisible, servant leader. She carefully times the gentle nudge that motivates people to do their best.

Her exceptional diligence, dedication, and listening skills serve as a model to all whom she leads. As a consequence, this year's Steering Committee has been more successful in all of its events, publications, coaching programs, and relation efforts than ever before.

As Teaching Assistants, sophomores Kathryn Braisted, Stephen Bronskill, Danna Hailfinger, Katie Hanson, Cristina Khan, and Tom Schad have given many hours to the first-year class of 2014. Their service has ensured not only the success of each of the excellent first-year social action projects, but also created camaraderie within class which expanded this year from 35 to 42 students. Their ideas have added components to the first-year curriculum, including Leadership Adventures in DC, where each TA takes a small group of students to explore a part of the city while learning a leadership lesson. They also helped to add a unit on power and privilege, which is sure to become a cornerstone of our program's curriculum.

These TAs have also been on the front line of support that this Program offers our members through all our triumphs and tragedies in the transition from high school to college that is the first year.

Our seniors Kathryn Baxter, Ellen Miller, and Emily Beyer joined Graduate Assistant Mar-ni Bromberg, Adjunct Professor Patricia Bory, and me in guiding the sophomores to the successful completion of their individual social action projects, life skill acquisition, and cultural challenges. Meeting weekly individually with each sophomore, these TAs have helped mentor these students to expand their capacity to achieve. In so doing, the TAs learned management, motivation, and mentorship skills.

I am grateful for these students' service, as I am for the many contributions of every member of this great program.

I look forward to the coming year with great optimism. Following Amanda, Mitchell Duncombe certainly has big shoes to fill as our new Student Director. I am confident that, with his warm heart and insightful nature, he will serve our Program well. He has already amassed an outstanding Steering Committee even as he traveled Europe and Asia on spring break from Oxford. And the outgoing TAs have selected an excellent class of incoming TAs. We are all set for a terrific 2011-12!

#### More fast facts about the senior class...

4909 community service hours served

89 internships held

7 Honors students

3 Presidential Scholars

3 Dean's Scholars

12 will graduate with Latin Honors

1 Truman Scholar

2 Presidents of the College Republicans

29 have worked on campaigns

6 completed the Campaign Management Institute

2 completed the Public Affairs and Advocacy Institute

#### More notable awards...

For their dedicated commitment to their careers in the environment, **Stephen Bronskill '13** and **Jen Jones '12** won the **Udall Scholarship!**

**Carol Foster** and **Nate Brostein** of the Class of 2012 are **Harry S. Truman** Finalists!