On the Road
Students Sharing Experiences
Greetings from Mayflower Hill,

With one year under my belt, I’m often asked about my impressions of Colby and the Goldfarb Center. I always start by saying that Colby is stuffed to the rafters with smart, conscientious, eager students, world-class faculty, and forward-looking administrators. It’s a wonderful place to work because I am surrounded by great students and colleagues. I also talk about the incredibly vibrant, engaged, and generous alumni and the steadfast encouragement and support of Bill Goldfarb ’68, P’00.

I then rave about the broad range of Goldfarb initiatives and how these programs are changing the lives of our students and making such an important difference in central Maine. It’s so easy to highlight our diverse public affairs events, like the Mitchell Lecture and the Cotter Debate Lecture Series, and to brag about the 20 programs under the Colby Volunteer Center. Of course I’ll go on at length about Colby Cares About Kids (CCAK), which now includes close to 500 student mentors. If given a few more minutes, I’ll share some thoughts about the Maine Concussion Management Initiative and the faculty research and student internships we fund.

In fact, this new publication—a yearly review—is designed to spread the word and help others fully appreciate the breadth and importance of Goldfarb initiatives. With an updated website, a documentary film on CCAK, a revised e-mail newsletter, and other communications steps, we are working to keep you more up to date on our work.

Finally, I am always eager to talk about the Goldfarb staff—both past and present. Sandy Maisel, the former director, has not only provided support and advice, but also his friendship. I am privileged to build on the incredible foundation he has laid. The expertise and energy of associate directors Alice Elliott and John Turner were made clear throughout the past year, and our new assistant director, Amanda Cooley, is already making a huge difference. We were very lucky to have the help of longtime Colby friend and colleague Judy Brody in the fall, and Megan Fossa, our administrative assistant and event coordinator, has worked hard to ensure a successful year. Lori Morin has done a splendid job leading Colby Cares About Kids.

So, yes, there is much to tell, some of which is included in the pages to follow. Please feel free to call or write with suggestions or comments. If there is anything I’ve learned in my inaugural year, it is that so many are eager to help.

Best regards,

Daniel M. Shea, Director

About the Goldfarb Center

The Goldfarb Center for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement at Colby, founded in 2003 with a generous gift from Colby Trustee William Goldfarb ’68, P’00, brings faculty and students together with local, state, national, and international leaders to explore creative, interdisciplinary approaches to the complex challenges facing today’s world. Hosting an array of important and influential speakers each year, the center provides Colby students with the means to make connections between their work and contemporary political, economic, social, and environmental issues. The center also leads the College’s efforts to deepen and expand its involvement in the community through various initiatives including the Colby Volunteer Center, the Colby Cares About Kids program, student-faculty research and consulting, and civic engagement courses.

GOLDFARB CENTER by the numbers in 2012-2013

Colby students served as mentors in 14 different sites through the Colby Cares About Kids program.

650 site visits were made per week by Colby mentors participating in the Colby Cares About Kids program.

700 students attended the 2012 election night event in Cotter Union.

342 students were enrolled in one of 18 civic engagement courses.

180 authors joined the Maine Concussion Management Initiative since the program began in 2009.

4,843 hours of service were provided to the greater Waterville community this year through the work of the Colby Volunteer Center (CVC).

30 nonprofit community organizations benefited from the work of 50 volunteers on Colby Cares Day, which is coordinated each year by the CVC.

120 local alumni and community members are registered as Friends of the Goldfarb Center, an informal group that regularly attends Goldfarb-sponsored enrichment seminars, lectures, student presentations, and field trips.

16 conference grants, internships, and research grants were awarded to students and faculty through the Goldfarb Center this year.

Goldfarb Center Hits the Road

The Goldfarb Center traveled far beyond campus this year for events with Colby alumni, parents, and friends. In February more than 200 guests gathered at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., where, in addition to hearing from Director Daniel Shea, guests met several Goldfarb Student Advisory Board members, each of whom gave a brief talk about their work and involvement with the Goldfarb Center.

Later in the semester the Goldfarb Center traveled to Boston, Mass. Several students representing different aspects of the center’s programming shared how their involvement had an impact on their college careers.

Student Leaders

Lisa Kaplan ’13 and Michelle Searles ’13 were two of the dedicated and passionate students who helped make last year such a success.

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The advisory board launched a "Should I Vote?" campaign encouraging students to submit 30-second videos about why they think it is important to vote. "We felt it was important for students to understand why their vote counts," said Madeline Wilson ’14, a member of the Student Advisory Board who helped plan the contest. "We hoped that students would be more interested in exploring the issues if they were able to hear from their peers."

In addition to screening all four major presidential debates, the center partnered with the club Outside Colby to host a debate between the Colby Democrats and Colby Republicans. Participants from both sides debated controversial topics including the economy, the deficit, health care, energy, and foreign policy.

In October Pulitzer Prize-winner and co-founder of Politico Matt Wuerker shared insights gleaned from his 25 years of journalism experience to explore the 2012 elections through the art of cartooning. An editorial cartoonist whose work has appeared in The Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, and the New York Times, Wuerker led a lively, hands-on workshop.

"It was great to be part of a team of Goldfarb students that helped increase Colby’s voter participation and then celebrate democracy by watching the results come in together," said Lisa Kaplan ’13.

In the spring the Goldfarb Center encouraged the campus to revisit the elections and explore new trends in campaigning and media coverage. Presenters at events analyzed developments and trends including Super PACs, social media, campaign finance reform, and more. Panelists included Ray La Raja of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Jennifer Lucas of St. Anselm College; Michael Franz of Bowdoin College; and Colby Professor of Government Tony Corrado.

From Political Cartoons to Super PACS
Understanding the 2012 Election

After the unprecedented involvement of young people in the 2008 election, the Goldfarb Center Student Advisory Board faced a challenge: how to replicate that engagement in 2012. How else but through videos? Goldfarb offered that and more.
Senator George J. Mitchell Distinguished International Lecture Series

As the George J. Mitchell Distinguished International Lecturer April 10, former U.S. Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming did more than speak to an evening audience. Simpson spent the entire day with the Colby community engaging in an active classroom discussion, visiting with faculty and administrators, and briefly touring the Margaret Chase Smith Library in Skowhegan, Maine.

“It was an incredible day,” said Noah VanValkenburg ’13, a member of the Student Advisory Board who accompanied Simpson to his appointments and showed him around campus. “To have a chance to talk with such an important figure like Senator Simpson is something not a lot of college students get to do.”

Simpson spoke about the national debt, Social Security, and other key political issues, and Ostrove Auditorium was filled to capacity. Former U.S. Senator George J. Mitchell introduced his friend and former colleague.

Community Partnerships

The center regularly partners with community organizations, which helps the College build important relationships while providing students with opportunities to meet leaders from across the state. In April the center cosponsored the fifth annual Nonprofit Leadership Conference with the Maine Association of Nonprofits. This year’s event focused on civility and finding common ground in nonprofit work. Professor Robert Putnam of Harvard University delivered the keynote address.

The day concluded with the Maine Philanthropy Awards dinner and celebration. The state-wide recipient this year was philanthropist and business leader Roxanne Quimby.

The center also hosted the Healthy Northern Kennebec-Maine Coalition for its annual legislative breakfast in March, as well as the Maine Development Foundation for its Leadership: Unplugged event, featuring Colby Emeritus Trustee Tim Hussey ’78, P’14 of Hussey Seating.

2012 Elijah Parish Lovejoy Award

This year’s Lovejoy Award, which was granted to renowned investigative reporter and bestselling nonfiction author Bob Woodward, provided an occasion to look at the future of investigative journalism. A Goldfarb Center panel discussion moderated by Steve Engelberg, managing editor of ProPublica, included Matt Apuzzo ’00 of the Associated Press, New York Times investigative reporter Jo Becker, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel editor Martin Kaiser, and Bill Kovach, the founder of the Project for Excellence in Journalism and 2000 Lovejoy Award recipient.

“‘To have a chance to talk with such an important figure like Senator Simpson is something not a lot of college students get to do.’”

— Noah VanValkenburg ’13

2012-2013 Events

Will There Be Occupy 2.0?
Todd Gitlin, American writer, scholar, and author of Occupy Wall Street
Cosponsored by the Departments of Anthropology and Sociology

Lunchtime Talk:
The Innocence of Muslims
John Turner, Associate Professor of History
Cosponsored by the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life

The Invisible War
Movie Screening and Lecture
Kerry Dick, Oscar and Emmy-nominated filmmaker

End of Life
Frank Chessa, Director of Clinical Ethics, Maine Medical Center
Cosponsored by the Jewish Studies Program

Windows: Channels for Communication
Melanie Robbins, Resource and Development Coordinator, Windows

Personal Reflections on Medical Disaster Relief Missions
Dr. Neelakantan Sundar, Anesthetist, Massachusetts General Hospital

Censorship and the Media in Putin’s Russia
Mikhail Makeenko, Head of the Department of International Relations, Moscow State
Cosponsored by the German and Russian Department

Teacher of the Year Award Lecture
Maine Teacher of the Year Winner Shannon Shanning
Cosponsored by the Education Program

The Architecture of the Gun Control Debate
Robert J. Spitzer, Author and Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science at SUNY Cortland

The Camera as an Instrument of Observation: Recent Photographs from Cuba and Vietnam
Cal Mackenzie, Goldfarb Family Distinguished Professor of American Government, Colby

School Districting: Mathematical Programming and GIS for Spatial Decision-Making
Shawn Helm, Senior Program Manager for Portland, Oregon, Public Schools, and Sahin Dissanyake, Assistant Professor of Economics, Colby

Health-Care Reform and Access: The Road Ahead
Barbara Leonard ’83, Vice President for Programs, Maine Health Access Foundation
Cosponsored by Student Health on Campus (SHOC), the Garrison-Foster Health Center, Career Center, Psychology Department, and Sociology Department

Guests gather during the reception at the 2013 Maine Philanthropy Awards in April.

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Today the program, Colby Cares About Kids, involves almost 500 mentors working with children from kindergarten to grade eight at 14 different sites across central Maine. Together, the mentors make an average of 650 visits per week during the academic year, providing a positive adult presence to the children.

“Many of these students just need something consistent in their lives, and this program provides that for them,” said Sue Bradshaw, a guidance counselor at the middle school in Oakland and former teacher.

Bradshaw has referred many students to the CCAK program with positive outcomes, but one stands out to her. “One of the most withdrawn, unengaged eighth-grade students I’ve worked with ended up in my office. I knew it would be a challenge, but the best option was to connect the student to a mentor,” she said.

It took more than a handful of visits for the relationship to form, but the mentor was persistent, finally breaking through the wall when they discovered a common bond—a passion for history.

“The conversations they would have about life, history, and people were incredibly fascinating to listen to. It brought our eighth-grader to life,” Bradshaw said.

The benefit of this program does not exist solely for the children, though. Alice Grubb Jones ’14, who has mentored since her freshman year, attributes much of her personal growth to her involvement in CCAK.

“It was tough at first. It took a long time to gain her trust, and that required a lot of patience. But, after three semesters, seeing her became my favorite thing to do,” said Grubb Jones. “Through this experience, I’ve learned a lot—how to balance my time, how critical it can be to stick to things and maintain commitments, and how something as simple as spending time with someone and listening can make all the difference.”

Colby’s peers are taking note of the program’s success. Six institutions in Maine and beyond are using CCAK as a model.

What began as a civic engagement course 11 years ago has become Colby’s largest ongoing volunteer program, introducing important relationships into the lives of Colby students and the children they mentor.

“One would be hard-pressed to find a larger, more significant community project at any liberal arts college in the nation,” said Goldfarb Center Director Daniel Shea.

The Goldfarb Center is currently developing a short documentary film, produced and directed by award-winning videographer Dana Rae Warren, which chronicles the story of CCAK and its impact on the community and Colby student experience. The film will be available on the Goldfarb Center website this fall. For more information about the program, please visit the CCAK website at colby.edu/ccak or contact Program Coordinator Lori Morin at lmorin@colby.edu.
A program that began as an effort to spread awareness about the dangers of concussions now involves Colby student researchers and has expanded across Maine.

In 2009 three researchers, including two from Colby, joined together to form the Maine Concussion Management Initiative, a program that helps high schools around Maine recognize the signs of concussions in their athletes and properly manage them. Untreated concussions in high school athletes can have long-term cognitive effects, particularly if the athlete suffers from a second head injury before the first one has fully healed. In some cases, this can lead to lifelong brain damage or even death. “Our primary goal is to educate parents, athletes, and health-care providers about the risks of concussions,” said MCMI cofounder Dr. Paul Berkner, director of health services at Colby. In addition, MCMI offers screening tools to help schools recognize when a student athlete has suffered a concussion and should withdraw from athletics. The test, called ImPACT, monitors the cognitive function of the brain and helps determine when it is safe for a student athlete to return to sports.

When Berkner founded the program with Joseph Atkins, visiting assistant professor of psychology and the coordinator of multicultural student programs and support at Colby, and William Heine, team physician for the Portland Sea Dogs and for the U.S. Soccer Foundation, it included 25 schools. MCMI now works with about 80.

The Goldfarb Center provided support that allowed for this growth. “We started the program as part of the Goldfarb Center’s civic engagement arm and have partnered with the center this whole time,” said Berkner. “The Goldfarb Center has helped us get access to individuals, funding, and resources around what we’re doing and how we’re doing it.”

For Berkner, one of the most rewarding aspects of the project is involving Colby students in the research. “We’ve had a long line of fantastic students who’ve been able to help us with implementing public policy and working on concussion studies,” he said.

MCMI was also instrumental in the development of a new state law passed this year that requires all high schools in the state to develop concussion management policies to determine when it is safe to return to the playing field or classroom. “Our goal is to help high schools throughout the state implement these guidelines, which are consistent with what we’ve wanted to do from the get-go,” said Berkner.

The program is still expanding, and in the short term, Berkner and his cofounders are currently working to provide access to concussion management resources to the Down East region of Maine. “Our big barrier is to reach those schools in remote regions to help improve outcomes,” he said. In the long term they hope to help all schools in Maine develop concussion management programs—reducing injuries and ultimately saving lives.

For more information about MCMI, please contact Director of Health Services Paul Berkner at phberkner@colby.edu.

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Some students attended public hearings about chemicals in food containers. Others tested their understanding of poetry in elementary classrooms. They may seem unrelated, but both are examples of civic engagement courses that aim to foster community engagement and activism.

Goldfarb-sponsored courses with civic engagement components provide students with opportunities to explore issues in their community firsthand and to gain skills and knowledge to impact change. This year 11 faculty members from six disciplines offered 18 civic engagement courses with a total enrollment of 342 students.

The Environment and Human Health course, led by Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies Gail Carlson, focused on the health impacts of chemicals like BPA and recent efforts before the Maine legislature to pass two bills that would restrict such chemicals. As part of the course, students were asked to participate in the state policymaking process, where they could attend a public hearing in front of a legislative committee, participate in face-to-face citizen lobbying of legislators, or write a letter to the editor or to a legislator on the issue.

“The activities allow students to apply the science they have learned in class to real-world decision-making to protect public health,” said Carlson. The students found the experience enlightening; many had never taken part in civic activism and were inspired to realize the difference they could make. One student’s letter was published in the Morning Sentinel.

“I feel proud and excited to have learned a valuable lesson in civic engagement. Whether it is an angry mom, a college student, or a retired doctor, everyone has a right to get his or her voice heard,” said Meredith Braun ‘15.

In Zacamy Professor of English Peter Harris’s long-running course, Teaching Poetry in Schools, students are asked to confront difficult and intimidating topics of poetry in elementary school classrooms.

“The course adds value to the students’ college experience by helping them use all of the riches and attention that have been lavished upon them to benefit other kids,” said Harris. “Colby students are astonished by the creativity and joy they find in the kids they teach.”

Like several other civic engagement courses, including Harris’s course that led to Colby Cares About Kids, Teaching Poetry in Schools inspired a group of students to adapt the course’s concept into a sponsored program of the Colby Volunteer Center. The program launched in 2012 with 10 volunteers teaching in five different classrooms at Williams Elementary School in Oakland, Maine.

Meredith Braun ‘15, Laura Duffy ’13, Carol Nakano ’13, Monique Kelly ’14, Megan Linthicum ’14, and Madison Louis ’13 standing with their signs in front of the State House.

Students talking with Representative Henry Beck ’09 at the State House.
One of the goals of the Goldfarb Center is to provide new information and expertise on important public policy questions, debates, and controversies. An important aspect of this work in 2012-13 was sponsoring a national public opinion survey on issues related to civility and compromise in American politics. Co-funded with the Office of Communications and scholars at Indiana University and Central Michigan State University, the study found that Americans believe the tone of our politics is increasingly negative. In fact, a hefty majority saw the 2012 election as either negative or not sure, with 35% voicing uncertainty. Twenty percent were unsure.

Another finding dealt with our willingness to compromise. Asked a generic question on whether it is more important for a politician to find compromise solutions or to stick to principles, respondents overwhelmingly favored compromise: 61 to 35 percent. A full 73 percent of self-identified Democrats and 60 percent of independents suggested compromise solutions were preferable, but only 38 percent of Republicans said the same. Yet, when asked more specifically about a range of policy disputes, support for compromise dropped among all respondents. Just 41 percent said they were very or somewhat likely to compromise with others who disagree with them on the federal budget deficit, compared to 34 percent who were very or somewhat unlikely to compromise. Twenty percent were unsure.

Findings from the poll were widely discussed and reported—including in a prominent story in the L.A. Times. They will also be used by Colby faculty and students in the development of numerous research papers and scholarly publications.

For access to the full set of data, visit clby.me/fYeyE.

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Understanding and Protecting Church Forests in Northern Ethiopia

Contributed by Travis Reynolds, assistant professor of environmental studies

The landscape of the South Gondar zone of northern Ethiopia, once covered in indigenous Afromontane forest, has fallen victim to intense deforestation over the past century, mostly due to land conversion for agriculture. The remaining natural forests in the region are almost exclusively found encircling Ethiopian Orthodox churches—where groves of indigenous trees have been protected by church leaders and followers as sacred sanctuaries. These “church forests” provide myriad cultural benefits, serving as a symbol of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and as a place for church followers to pray. Church forests are also small pockets of natural habitat for indigenous flora and fauna. Today these forests are believed to house much of northern Ethiopia’s remaining natural biodiversity.

In spite of their ancient heritage, the church forests of South Gondar today face a number of threats from illegal tree cutting for firewood, livestock grazing, and gradual land conversion for agriculture. In this context, Assistant Professor Travis Reynolds and students in the Environmental Studies Program have undertaken research to explore how the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and other international actors might respond to forest threats and opportunities.

In January the Goldfarb Center collaborated with the international nonprofit TREE Foundation to sponsor a Church Forests Workshop in South Gondar. Over the three-day meeting, more than 150 priests congregated on the medical college campus in the town of Debre Tabor. Workshop topics included the value of church forests, forest threats, and preservation solutions. Priests’ discussions covered the ecological benefits church forests provide, the role of the church community in protecting forests, the impacts of climate change, reforestation strategies using indigenous and exotic tree species, the consequences of corruption in community-based solutions. The most popular proposal emerging from the Goldfarb Center-sponsored Church Forests Workshop was building walls around individual church forests to impede cattle from destroying tree seedlings. Other proposals included discouraging people from illegally cutting trees for firewood, imposing tougher penalties on illegal harvesting, and organizing community tree-planting efforts.

The 2013 Church Forests Workshop has opened the door for future collaboration and communication among church officials, conservation biologists, and policymakers alike.

Photos provided by Lydia Ball, ’13. More of her photos are online at colby.edu/mag. Key word: “Gondar.”
Madison Louis ’13

As a first-year student, Madison Louis ’13 was unsure of where her college career would take her. After becoming involved in several volunteer opportunities, she was encouraged to join the leadership team of the Colby Volunteer Center (CVC). Her knack for leadership and passion for volunteerism allowed Louis to rise quickly through the ranks of the student-run organization, and by senior year she was serving as the CVC’s executive director. “I attribute much of my growth as a leader and professional to my time with the CVC,” she said. “I learned hands-on how to manage and lead a team, write grants, develop and implement programs, and make connections in the community, just to name a few things. … I don’t think I would have been able to do all that I have anywhere other than Colby.”

Louis was recognized by the College with two highly regarded awards—the Dean Ninetta M. Runnals Scholarship Prize and the Condon Medal, which is the only award presented at commencement. After graduation, Louis returned to her hometown of Boston to intern for Seed Global Health. There she is assisting the nonprofit in its efforts to strengthen health systems in resource-limited communities.

Noah VanValkenburg ’13

When Noah VanValkenburg decided to attend Colby, it was because he knew exactly what he wanted. “An emphasis on faculty scholarship and experience were very important in my decision, and in those areas, Colby really stood out. When I learned about the opportunities available through the Goldfarb Center, the choice became very clear to me,” he said.

VanValkenburg went on to take full advantage of these opportunities, becoming a stand-out student in the Government Department and in the Student Advisory Board of the Goldfarb Center, where he led several program initiatives. One of VanValkenburg’s favorite center events is the annual Mitchell Lecture. “The first one I attended, given by Senator Mitchell, is where I began to understand how challenging it is for today’s leaders to work towards peace and diplomacy. I had chills going down my spine as he spoke.”

As a senior four years later, VanValkenburg and several other students volunteered to assist with the Mitchell Lecture by welcoming former U.S. Senator Alan Simpson to the College and accompanying him to many of the day’s activities. Impressed with VanValkenburg’s knowledge of and enthusiasm for politics, Simpson handed him his card and requested he call should he need help or advice.

VanValkenburg reflects on that moment with a smile. “It was an incredible day. Just incredible.”

Since graduation, VanValkenburg has traveled back to his hometown of Detroit, Mich., where he is exploring opportunities in politics and journalism.
Hundreds of students, faculty, alumni, parents, staff, and community members are involved in nearly every program of the center in countless ways. Are you interested in getting involved but not sure what you'd like to do?

To learn more about these as well as other opportunities to get involved, visit colby.edu/goldfarb or call 207-859-5300.

Here are some ideas:

- Become a “Friend of the Goldfarb Center”
- Volunteer for Colby Cares Day
- Become a Goldfarb Center Student Fellow
- Attend an upcoming event
- Donate to fund the center initiative of your choice