To Move the World

The First Report of the Davis United World College Scholars Program

2004
"Reaching out across borders, learning about the world, and working with others to make it a better place are the cornerstones of education in the truest sense. I commend and congratulate the Davis United World College Scholars program for its invaluable contribution to that goal. Enabling all UWC graduates who qualify to attend five of the top U.S. universities, regardless of nationality or financial need, not only helps them beyond measure, it enriches the lives of the other students they meet. The mutual respect they gain will serve them well as tomorrow’s leaders. I can think of no more precious gift."

Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan
President of the United World Colleges
Contents

Building International Understanding through Education 5
Introducing the Davis United World College Scholars Program

How This Works 7

College Presidents Speak Out 10
“Striking and Dramatic”… “A Complete Renaissance”

“Education Is the Answer” 13
Davis UWC Scholars “Spark” the Creation of a New Afghan School

“I Can Leave My Imprint” 16
A Child of Conflict, Ana Prokic Reaches Beyond Boundaries

People Can Make a Difference 19
A Conversation with Shelby Davis

Growing Toward Leadership 22
Mariana Mejia Connects Science, Activism & Compassion

The Power of a Learning Experience 25
With a Deepened Perspective, Ashirul Amin Aims to Make Change

Emma’s Journey 28
An Engaged New Zealander Has Worked in Places Few Ever Know

Going About the World 31
At Middlebury, Helene Songe Has Modeled Global Openness

Fulfilling a Father’s Dream 34
Mukhtar Amin Is Making the Most of His Chance

Culture and Communication 36
A Scholar from India Puts the Arts to Work for Change

The Class of 2004 38

The Undergraduate Classes 50

A Joyful Noise 58
Mchakamchaka Builds a Unique New Campus Tradition
This publication unveils the Davis United World College Scholars program as a major new philanthropic force in promoting international understanding, by sponsoring the education of students from around the world — all of them committed to building cross-cultural understanding — at leading American colleges and universities. The state of our world, along with America’s future competitiveness in the global marketplace, demands no less than initiatives as large in scale, innovative in design, and powerful in impact as this.

Davis United World College Scholars now number 312 at five pilot schools: Colby College, College of the Atlantic, Middlebury College, Princeton University, and Wellesley College. Plans are underway to grow the number of scholars into the thousands in the years ahead, at up to 50 American colleges and universities.

These Davis United World College Scholars are outstanding students, remarkable young people from 85 nations who have had far-reaching impacts on their colleges and their fellow students. The first class of Davis UWC Scholars graduates this spring from the five pilot schools. They represent the heart and soul of this initiative. In these pages, we invite you to become acquainted with the Davis UWC Scholars program, and with its individual scholars — especially the 43 members of the graduating classes of 2004.

What is the Davis United World College Scholars program? It is, above all, the vision and power of private philanthropy committed to the importance of fostering greater understanding among the world’s future decision-makers — Americans and citizens of other nations.

The program provides scholarships to students, from both the U.S. and other countries, who have proven themselves by completing their last two years of high school at a group of international schools called United World Colleges (UWCs). These UWC schools are in the U.S., Canada, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Norway, Singapore, Swaziland, the United Kingdom, and Venezuela. Since the founding of the first UWC in 1962, at the height of the Cold War, these schools have provided opportunities to students from some 175 countries, representing all regions of the world. Students are selected in their home countries by indigenous, voluntary committees, and receive scholarships to attend the United World College schools.

Four years ago, Colby, College of the Atlantic, Middlebury, Princeton, and Wellesley were selected by philanthropist Shelby M.C. Davis as the inaugural institutions for the Davis United World College Scholars program. Davis offered to meet the financial need of every UWC graduate accepted and matriculated at these pilot schools, regardless of national origin or UWC attended.
The goals of this Davis philanthropy continue to be to:

- provide scholarships to exemplary and promising students from all cultures, who have each absorbed the passion of their UWC school community for building international understanding in the 21st century.
- build clusters of these globally aware and committed students, within the undergraduate populations of selected American schools.
- seek to transform the American undergraduate experience through this international diversity and cultural interchange — as much for the large majority of Americans on campus as for international students.
- invite participating colleges and universities to leverage the value of this initiative to the long-term benefit of their students and faculties, their strategic planning, and their role in contributing proactively to the well-being of our volatile, highly interdependent world.
- create a very diverse group of Davis United World College Scholars who will, during their educational experiences and throughout their lives, contribute significantly to shaping a better world.

The Davis United World College Scholars program is different, intentionally so, from other fine efforts to internationalize the undergraduate experience. While preceding initiatives have focused more on research, faculty development, changes in curricula, use of technology, and study abroad, this program creates a much greater diversity of students on campus. And by sponsoring scholars from many countries who arrive on campus energized by the UWC mission of building understanding in active, personal ways, the Davis United World College Scholars program exemplifies how diversity can contribute to a much richer education, and to a more globally engaged undergraduate experience.

Outcome studies of the earlier initiatives found “low levels of international competency, a decline in the number of international student requirements, few students studying foreign languages as a percentage of total enrollments, and less funding from federal and state sources.” (The Ford Foundation, Preliminary Status Report 2000: Internationalization of U.S. Higher Education.) These findings encouraged the Davis philanthropy to model a fresh synthesis of approaches — some new, some well-proven — to internationalizing the American college experience.

As modeled by the Davis United World College Scholars program, these approaches include:

- private philanthropy as an innovative force. We hope this effort will inspire others in the philanthropic sector to participate.
- experiential learning as the essential tool for fostering international understanding.
- diversifying the undergraduate population through international scholarships.
- recognizing that coherent initiatives and significant clusters of scholars can make greater impact.
- encouraging an overarching purpose, while leaving each college or university to build on its own particular strengths.

In sum, the Davis United World College Scholars program has great aspirations. Though only now in its infancy, the program envisions a growing commitment to international understanding through education in the 21st century. In time, Davis United World College Scholars will take their place beside the alumni of such esteemed scholarship programs as Fulbright and Rhodes. We embrace fully the goal of the late Senator J. William Fulbright for the public-sector scholarship program that bears his name: to “bring a little more knowledge, a little more reason, and a little more compassion into world affairs, and thereby to increase the chance that nations will learn at last to live in peace and friendship.”

The great potential of the Davis United World College Scholars program is not simply to build and perpetuate itself; it is to motivate others, especially in the private sector, to strengthen international understanding through their personal philanthropy. Our future depends on a world of talented individuals from diverse cultures who join in commitment to international understanding.

Davis United World College Scholars will, we believe, contribute to the realization of this important goal. We hope you will, too.

How This Works

Building World Understanding and Educating New Leaders

1. Since 1962, thousands of young people from 175 nations have been selected by committees in their home countries to complete the last two years of high school on scholarship at one of ten United World College schools. UWC schools are in the U.S., Canada, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Norway, Singapore, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Venezuela. The UWC movement works to build multi-ethnic, multicultural understanding among all UWC students.

2. Since 2000-2001, 312 UWC school graduates from 84 nations who gained admission to one of five pilot colleges — Colby College, College of the Atlantic, Middlebury College, Princeton University, and Wellesley College — have received financial support, up to a full scholarship, from the new Davis United World College Scholars program.

3. This spring, the first class of Davis UWC Scholars graduates. Over the next five years, the Davis United World College Scholars program will expand to involve up to 50 selected U.S. colleges and universities.

4. With their education made possible through their own merits and the help of the Davis United World College Scholars program, thousands of future graduates of these institutions will go on to play important, meaningful, often leadership roles in their communities, in their home countries, and in the world.
An Open-Ended Commitment
Provided by Shelby M.C. Davis, financial support for the Davis United World College Scholars program is an open-ended commitment involving tens of millions of dollars per year. All graduates of UWC schools who gain admission on their own merits to any of the U.S colleges involved in the program receive financial support from the program, which enables them to complete college. The level of support is based on accepted measures of family need and ability to pay.

Expanding the Program
The Davis United World College Scholars program is expanding beyond the original five colleges featured in this first report. The following U.S. institutions have been offered grants to host Davis UWC Scholars:

- Amherst College
- Barnard College
- Bates College
- Bowdoin College
- Brown University
- Bryn Mawr College
- Carleton College
- Chicago Art Institute
- Claremont McKenna College
- Colby College
- Colgate University
- College of the Atlantic
- Colorado College
- Connecticut College
- Cornell University
- Dartmouth College
- Dickinson College
- Earlham College
- Franklin & Marshall College
- Ginnell College
- Hamilton College
- Harvard University
- Haverford College
- Hood College
- Johns Hopkins University
- Lafayette University

United World College Locations

Ten UWC schools:
- UWC of the Atlantic (Wales)
- UWC of Southeast Asia (Singapore)
- Lester B. Pearson UWC of the Pacific (Canada)
- Waterford KaMhlaba UWC of Southern Africa (Swaziland)
- UWC of the Adriatic (Italy)
- UWC-USA (Montezuma, NM, USA)
- Simón Bolívar UWC of Agriculture (Venezuela)
- Li Po Chun UWC of Hong Kong
- Red Cross Nordic UWC (Norway)
- Mahindra UWC of India

Five U.S. colleges:
- Colby College (Waterville, ME)
- College of the Atlantic (Bar Harbor, ME)
- Middlebury College (Middlebury, VT)
- Princeton University (Princeton, NJ)
- Wellesley College (Wellesley, MA)
College Presidents Speak Out

“Striking and Dramatic” … “A Complete Renaissance”

A t all five institutions of higher education that are so far involved with the Davis United World College Scholars program — Colby College, College of the Atlantic, Middlebury College, Princeton University, and Wellesley College — the presidents say the Davis UWC Scholars have had a profound, even transformative, effect on their campus communities.

“Ob, indubitably,” says President John McCardell, Jr., of Middlebury. “If you stop any 10 people on our campus and ask about this, I would bet money you will get an answer very much the same as this. All of us have come into contact with these students, and their impacts are everywhere — in our classrooms, in the dining halls, in the dormitories, in the student organizations.”

“It’s been a complete renaissance,” agrees President Steven Katona of the College of the Atlantic.

“The most striking and dramatic effect has been the way that these students have come from a very different place. It’s that they have gone someplace — to a United World College — and they’ve each had a remarkable experience there.”

**The Opportunity — and the Challenge**

Like most of the institutions involved with the program, Wellesley had already done much to diversify its student population. Even so, finding financial aid for international students was a challenge.

“We’d been unable to admit large numbers of extraordinary young women from other countries, whose stories were just so inspiring,” President Walsh recalls. “Then the Davis Program came along and gave us this remarkable opportunity to very quickly create this whole new cohort of international students, who really are amazing young people.”

President Adams of Colby agrees. “We saw this as a huge opportunity,” he says. “And taking full advantage of this diversity is something to which we’re still on the way.

“The challenge is really taking advantage of all those differences among people: getting people to reach across those boundaries of difference,” he explains. “That’s not simple; but it’s clearly what Shelby Davis had in mind. The UWC model is premised, I think, on a recognition of that challenge — and on an optimism that you can overcome these differences. You can transcend them in positive ways.”

At College of the Atlantic, a small school where today one in every six students is a Davis UWC Scholar, it took a couple of years before these students had thoroughly blended in with the rest of the student body. “Now everybody is together,” says President Katona, describing his campus community as “deeply integrated.”

“I want our students to be cosmopolitan,” says President Tilghman at Princeton. “By that I mean open to the fact that there are many world views, many ways to think about a problem, and ways in which people with the best of intentions reach different conclusions. The goal of an educated person is to be able to understand how people come to different conclusions, and then reach their own conclusions about where they stand.”

With that aim of education in mind, she says, “having these Davis UWC scholars on campus is an enormously powerful way to increase the likelihood that an American student, who may not have traveled widely before coming to Princeton, will have a mind-expanding experience here.”

**“Leadership Comes Easily”**

“Leadership seems to come easily to them,” says Middlebury President McCardell of the Davis UWC Scholars. “I think because of the experiences they’ve already had in their lives, they are quite confident when they come here, and they make the most of this opportunity.”

“They do! And they’re so passionate about that,” agrees President Walsh at Wellesley. “They understand that they have an opportunity that so many people will never have. They know that, because of this opportunity, there is something they are being called to do.”

“These are people who we expect to become the leaders of their countries, as well as leaders of international agencies, such as the UN,” says President Katona of the College of the Atlantic. “We presume that, and they certainly deserve it. Many of these Davis Scholars are the first in their family ever to attend college — and many would never have obtained higher education without the UWC system and the opportunity provided by Shelby and Gale.”

As they graduate, the Davis UWC Scholars are departing colleges — and fellow students — that are permanently broadened and changed.

“This kind of diversity has effects on individual students that will have consequences down the road, on the lives they lead and the aspirations they find within themselves,” says President Adams of Colby. “Wherever they end up, these students will be different. Our American students will be different, too.

“We can’t solve the world’s problems — but we can make a contribution,” he concludes. “To do that, these kids are getting a great education. And they’re having a terrific impact on us.”
one day in Afghanistan in summer 2002, U.S. Ambassador Robert Finn introduced Yunos Qanooni, education minister in the post-Taliban government, to a Princeton University student named Karim Thomas. “I told him this was a young man who has really good ideas — and who maybe can really deliver,” the ambassador recalls.

Karim, a Davis UWC Scholar from Canada, was doing volunteer work that summer in Kabul. His idea was that a new, non-profit, K-12 school with high-quality standards and curriculum could be created in the Afghan capital; that it could give scholarships to both boys and girls, who would be admitted entirely on merit; and that a student service club organized by Karim and his sister Rishma, also a Davis UWC Scholar, could play a key role in turning this idea into reality.

Ambassador Finn, who had been a Princeton professor of Near Eastern studies, saw the need a school like this could help fill. Afghanistan’s education system had been wrecked by the Taliban. And during the years that millions of Afghans had lived in Pakistan as refugees, the only education open to their children was in the madrasah, the often-extremist religious schools that were the breeding ground for the Taliban, whose name means “student.”

In the struggle with Islamic extremism, “education is the answer,” Finn says today. “The message of al Qaida and the Taliban is a perversion of Islam — and they take advantage of the fact that people are ill-educated to misrepresent Islam to them.”

Fast-forward just 14 months. On September 26, 2003, President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan has come to Princeton to give a talk welcoming the successful, year-long effort by SPARKS (Students Providing Aid, Relief, and Kind Services) to create a new school in his country. Soon to open in Kabul, the school will be named Omid-e-Afghanistan, or “The Hope of Afghanistan.” “The Omid-e-Afghanistan project has my full support, the support of my government, and the support of the Afghan people, particularly the young people in Afghanistan who will benefit so much from this,” declares President Karzai.

It was the student group SPARKS, led by Davis UWC Scholars, that brought Karzai to campus. Princeton President Shirley Tilghman said later that when she learned the visit would occur, “I was simply thunderstruck. I think I told Karim that I will no longer be skeptical of anything a SPARKS person suggests.”

Last November 1, Omid-e-Afghanistan, also known as SPARKS Academy Kabul, did open its doors, in a converted Kabul home, to 48 kindergartners. The school added a first grade in March, with plans to expand by one grade each year until the academy has a K-12 student body of 1,500. The Afghan government has granted 500 acres in Kabul for the school’s future home.

Organizers of the school — who include more than 20 SPARKS members at Princeton, from 12 different countries — have gathered donations from a wide range of contributors. They
hope the school will become a training center for Afghan teachers. “If we can train teachers, then return those teachers to their schools throughout the country, the school can have a much greater impact,” says Karim Thomas.

“I Saw Poverty, but also Hope” In a sense, the story of the SPARKS Academy began several years ago at Pearson United World College in Canada, where Karim grew close to the family of a fellow student from Afghanistan. Karim and Rishma Thomas’s own parents are eye doctors who often volunteer abroad, and in summer 2000 the whole family went to Pakistan to work with Afghan refugees. “I saw tremendous poverty, but also a lot of hope,” Karim recalls. “The people had absolutely nothing — but the kids were so energetic and bright, and they learned so quickly.” Whenever he asked Afghans what would help them the most, Karim said, “The immediate answer was education. Everyone will tell you that.” He returned to Pakistan to volunteer again during Princeton vacations. “You would see these kids who had so much potential — kids who would be at Princeton, if they had the right access to books, and these kids were going to end up on the street selling handkerchiefs.”

Back at Princeton, Karim developed the idea for a new, high-quality school. After the post-9/11 U.S. action opened the way for a new Afghan government, he saw the chance to try. In Kabul for his sophomore summer to work with humanitarian organizations, he approached Ambassador Finn. The ambassador liked the idea, the Afghan education minister also gave his support.

“Find the One Who Believes in You” Next came a year of hard work. Princeton SPARKS members gave input into the school’s curriculum, researched fundraising prospects, and spread the word among other young people. “This was an incredibly ambitious project, and we had a lot of obstacles along the way,” Karim recalls. The organizers, who included the Thomas family, learned that even if 15 people told them they couldn’t do something, persistence would reach the key person who believed they could. “For each piece, you’ve just got to find that one person who believes in you,” Karim says. The school is now open, and “the kids come from a wide range of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds,” says Rishma Thomas, Princeton ’05. The admissions process reserves places for orphans and children of widows. Otherwise, selections are based entirely on merit.

“Whenever he asked Afghans what would help them the most, “The immediate answer was education,” says Davis UWC Scholar Karim Thomas. “Everyone will tell you that.””

Opposite: Kindergartners from the first class of students to attend Omid-e-Afghanistan (Hope of Afghanistan), the new scholarship school in Kabul.
Ana Prokic, of Belgrade, Serbia, was studying at UWC-USA in New Mexico in 1999, when her host country began a bombing campaign against her home country. As summer vacation approached, fellow students and teachers urged her to stay on campus. To stay safe.

She didn’t even consider it.

Ana flew home and spent that summer with her family in Belgrade. Through weeks without power, watching the night sky above the city, she and her beloved younger sister, Vanja, grew expert at telling antiaircraft fire from incoming missiles.

“My family is that way. We try to make the best of it,” Ana says. “Hopefully it will turn around for the better.”

At Colby College in Maine, this energetic Davis UWC Scholar has pretty much treated the whole campus community as if it were also her family.

“Ana is amazing! She has just been a bulldozer,” marvels Susan McDougal, associate dean of students. “Every opportunity, everything she can do, she has done. She’s an absolutely positive person — and she’s a very hard worker.”

At Colby, Ana has been a student athletic trainer, then supervisor of student trainers. She has been a research assistant and a bartender at the college pub. She has volunteered with Colby Emergency Rescue, served on the college Judicial Board, and volunteered at a rape crisis center and at the Home Family Violence Project in Augusta, Maine’s capital.

“She’s involved in everything,” notes Elizabeta Gorgoska ’04, a Davis UWC Scholar from Skopje, Macedonia. “If you ask her to stay 24 hours, she’ll work 27.”

“I’ve never seen someone who cares more about others,” she adds. “I think other people come first for her.”

Discovering Who She Is

“I think she’s done really well as an international student here because she’s very open,” says Kate Heidemann ’04, a close friend from Connecticut. “She doesn’t get cliquish; she’s not afraid to go out and meet American students. She knows so many people on campus, because she does so much stuff — and she’s so friendly and outgoing.”

Ana says these six years, first at UWC and then at Colby, have also been a time of discovering who she really is.

“In New Mexico, that was the time when we started searching for identity,” she says. “You’re surrounded by 75 different cultures, and I don’t even know how many different religions — so you feel you have to identify yourself. Where do I belong in this group?”

“I guess that was when I kind of set myself straight,” says Ana Prokic, “I’m Eastern Orthodox, I’m Serbian, and I always will be, no matter what.” While she’s been away, her home country has splintered, from the Yugoslavia of her childhood to a smaller federation, and now to simply Serbia — but Ana has held tight to her sense of self and her devotion to family.

Her first goal after graduation is to find work that will enable her to put Vanja, her younger sister, through college.

Ana’s other passion is peace. After all she’s been through — not just the bombing campaign, but the strains of the serial Balkan conflicts of the 1990s — Ana wants to find a way to help make armed conflict unnecessary.

“I know I can’t change the world, but I can leave my imprint. I just think war is wrong, having lived through almost three. So that’s something I want to dedicate myself to. And I want to be able to keep working with different people, of different backgrounds and religions.”

When Ana was nine, her dad was drafted to serve in the conflict in Croatia. She remembers the day he came home. She remembers the moment; she remembers him.

“I remember every single thing about him, the way he smelled that second, the way he looked, the way his face looked. He came home — and that’s why my life is the way it is. “I don’t want another little girl to have to wait for her dad to come home,” says Ana Prokic. “You know? War is not something that’s natural. It is caused by people, and I think it can be stopped by people too.”

Ana’s birthday, by the way, is September 12.
After a highly successful Wall Street investment career, Shelby Davis created and funded the Davis United World College Scholars program. Here he talks about how the program began, some lessons he has shared with — and learned from — the Davis UWC Scholars, and his hopes for their long-term impacts on their campuses, their countries, and the world.

How did the Davis UWC Scholars program begin?
I went to visit the United World College in Montezuma, New Mexico. I’d never been there before, and I was early — so I wandered around campus, unescorted, and saw some lights on in a building that turned out to be an indoor swimming pool. There were two boys sitting at the pool edge, talking. I walked in and said, “I’m new on campus. Could you tell me, are you students here?” They said “Yes, we are.” One boy jumped up and said, “I’m from Israel.” The other boy jumped up and said, “I’m from Palestine. And we’re roommates here.” The first boy said, “And we are friends — and this could never happen in our country.” That bridge of understanding hit me hard. I thought, This is amazing! This is what the future needs. So I funded all the Americans who go to the United World Colleges. Then I started visiting the various UWC campuses around the world — they’re on five continents in 10 countries. I met more of the international students who make up the vast majority of the student population. They were such achievers; they were so vibrant, so motivated. They were far from home, in almost every case — yet they were not going to lose this opportunity.

So I started saying to myself that if some of them want to go on to universities in the United States, and they’re good enough to get in — and I have nothing to do with that — then I’m interested in funding them. Because they’ve proved a lot to me. So I started to fund all students who graduated from the UWC school system and were accepted at five American colleges and universities where our family had some connection.

We’re broadening that now to perhaps 50 American universities that will each, we hope, build up a cadre of students from the United World Colleges. I think we’re going to be funding close to a thousand Davis UWC Scholars a year! It’s been growing rapidly.

Get Us More of These Students!
What impact do you hope these scholars will have on their campuses?
Well, I know they’re making a difference, because the presidents and the faculty are saying: “Get us more of these students!” They’re positively influencing the American students whom they meet. They are in the classroom, leading discussions; they are forming clubs, organizations, different ways to spread energy. They’re in the theaters, international clubs; they’re involved in so many things. It’s just remarkable to read their letters. Many are accomplished musicians,

Shelby and Gale Davis

People Can Make a Difference
A Conversation with Shelby Davis
What have you learned from them?

Yes, Gale and I have made a point of visiting the colleges, and Davis UWC Scholars pretty well, haven’t you? You’ve come to know the seniors the best — and having dinner with the scholars, pretty much every year for the last four years. I’ve come to know the seniors the best — and they’re an amazing group.

What have you learned from them?

What I’ve learned from them is that they don’t stop! These are high-energy achievers, who know this is their ticket to success and freedom. Many of them want to go back to their countries and make a difference. So they are soaking up all they can.

Individuals can make a difference. You have to start somewhere! I decided to start with this group because they are international, multiracial, and multicultural, from every country. They have intelligence and drive. They have background — and they have intelligence and drive. They want to do that, and this gives them a springboard, a running start, a good leadership traits at an early age, so we got into people’s homes. And just an hour of meeting people in their homes can be worth more than all the monuments, all the churches, all the museums that we also went and saw. It made an impression on me — because people make a difference. That’s what I’m betting on, with this scholarship program: that people can make a difference, in leadership positions, whether in countries or in companies — which is my field, investing in companies with good leaders. Leadership is what it’s all about. I think these students have exhibited good leadership traits at an early age, and I’m betting those traits will carry forward.

What lessons from your own life and career do you try to convey to the Davis UWC Scholars?

I offer repeat a certain phrase: “Learn, Earn, and Return.” The first third of your life should be to learn, the next third should be to earn, and the last third of your life, if you’re fortunate, should be to return — to give back, to make the world a better place. Obviously I’m in the return phase now, and I would actually encourage people to get into the return phase earlier than I did. Because you can make a difference all the way along in your life.

The essence of your motivation in this?

You also want to make a difference, don’t you? Isn’t that the essence of your motivation in this? Yes, I come from an international family, in the sense that my parents, after they graduated respectively from Princeton and Wellesley, met in Europe on a trip to Russia. They went on to get their Ph.D.s in international relations at the University of Geneva in the early 1930s, when the League of Nations, the forerunner of the United Nations, was just getting started; so Geneva then was very much an international town. They made friends from all over the world.

As a young man, I was fortunate enough to be taken by my parents on two trips around the world. My father and mother would write ahead to friends and acquaintances, so we got into people’s homes. And just an hour of meeting people in their homes can be worth more than all the monuments, all the churches, all the museums that we also went and saw. It made an impression on me — because people make a difference. That’s what I’m betting on, with this scholarship program: that people can make a difference, in leadership positions, whether in countries or in companies — which is my field, investing in companies with good leaders. Leadership is what it’s all about. I think these students have exhibited good leadership traits at an early age, and I’m betting those traits will carry forward.

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“I Choose to Be an Optimist”

You could have gone in any direction with your philanthropy — and this is the direction you chose. Why? And, lastly, what do you hope will be the long-term impacts of these young people on their countries and on the world?

Well, you can be an optimist or a pessimist. You can say there are six billion people in the world, and what difference can a thousand students a year — maybe 20,000 over 20 years — really make? But I choose to be an optimist. I think about leadership.

Leaders do make a difference. In my investment career, if I bet on a good leader, he or she made the company. In countries, great leaders have arisen to turn the fortunes of their nations around. So I am hopeful this will be like throwing a pebble in the pond: these students will each have ripple effects because of their energy, their education, their international interests, and their desire to make the world better. So I am betting on a group — as many as I can support, and I wish it were more — who, as they spread around the world, will in their own ways make a difference. They want to do that, and this gives them a springboard, a running start, a knowledge base, and a perspective.

Individuals can make a difference. You have to start somewhere! I decided to start with this group because they are international, multiracial, and multicultural, from every background — and they have intelligence and drive. They have already achieved, to get to these American universities of high standing. They are equipped now to make a difference as they go forward in their careers. They are going to have an impact on the world.
Growing Toward Leadership

Mariana Mejia Connects Science, Activism & Compassion

I want to be a village doctor—basically a family practitioner,” says Mariana Mejia, who grew up in both Colombia and the U.S.A. “I can still pursue activism, and pursue public health, but I want to have the tools to do something real and practical, and to really be able to help people, one on one.”

She is focusing her future on making a difference. At Wellesley College, she already has.

This year, Mariana was president of Alianza, the campus organization of Latin-American students, whose focus on building community and understanding led it to help create El Vuelo, a new Spanish-language student magazine. She has helped raise scholarship funds to send urban slum children to middle school in Guatemala City. Mariana also worked for Amnesty International, volunteered at Boston Children’s Hospital, interned at the hospital’s Center for Young Women’s Health, donated her time to an after-school program for young Somali refugees in West Roxbury, helped start a student group called Peaceful Justice that demonstrated against the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, and raised money to help Nicaraguan hurricane victims.

“She’s a young woman who is extremely engaged in everything she does—from dancing the salsa to working on a project for Central American concerns, to her academics,” observes Sylvia Hiestand, Wellesley’s director of international studies and services. “She has a lot of interests, a wide scope of activities. She’s a premed, but her major is political science. So she’s engaged.”

“She’s Been an Inspiration”

When Mariana’s closest friends at Wellesley talk about her, they speak about heart, soul, and leadership.

“She’s been an inspiration to me,” says Jimena Leiva, a senior from Guatemala. “She has a very clear mind and direction, and she’s able to prioritize. She inspires others to take on the same battles with her.”

“I really feel like she’s focused,” adds fellow senior Roshni Sampath, who was born in India and went to high school in Nebraska. “She really commits herself to what she decides to do. Then she puts her heart and soul into it.”

“I tend to overdo it,” Mariana smiles.

As a girl, Mariana moved to New Mexico with her parents, who are staff members at UWC-USA in Montezuma. As a teenager she won a Davis Scholarship to attend Lester B. Pearson UWC in Canada, where she was much involved with singing, dancing, and choreography. She’s still drawn to the performing arts, but at Wellesley her passion for science has grown alongside her commitment to social justice.

“If I can really make a difference in people’s lives, I want that,” says “And I want a family. My dream is five kids! I really love kids, and I want my kids to grow up in a small community.”

“So many people in medicine become specialists,” says Roshni Sampath. “I think she sees small towns to be very underserved populations that don’t get a commitment to long-term health care. I think she sees that as a social-justice choice.”

“The Essential Ingredient”

“At first I thought that being a leader meant that I had to do almost everything,” Mariana wrote in her medical school application. “Now I understand that people will do the things that they are interested in doing, particularly if they feel like their work is valued. “Thus the essential ingredient in a successful project is motivation and unity. If everyone involved is working toward the same goal and is passionate about that goal, then communication and coordination is made much easier and the process itself is much more fun. “She’s not a half-measures person, in any way,” says Roshni Sampath. “She’s very, very loving—and very silly. You don’t get that when you first meet her.” At the same time, “she can work really hard; she has a tenacity and a perseverance that I find really amazing. “She’s just someone who does what she says she’s going to do. She’s trustworthy in that way.”
Ashirul Amin
Bangladesh
Red Cross Nordic UWC, Norway
Princeton University

The Power of a Learning Experience

When I came here my direction was that I would be a computer scientist,” says Ashirul Amin of Bangladesh, a Davis UWC Scholar at Princeton University. “Computer scientists have good jobs and a secure lifestyle. Even if the economy crashes, you still need computers.

“But then I got involved with SPARKS.”

As the story on page 13 details, the student service group SPARKS, organized by Davis UWC Scholars Karim and Rishma Thomas, played a key role in creating a new high-quality school in Afghanistan. The group has embarked on additional projects as well. When Ashirul got involved as a sophomore, it was basically to be the “tech person” — to work on the SPARKS Web site and other technical aspects.

But by the next year he was co-president, with fellow Davis UWC Scholar Ana Barfield ’04 of Serbia. In the process of getting more involved, Ashirul, a computer science major, had seen his own perspective broaden, deepen, and change.

“I’m still very interested in computers, and I spend a lot of time with them — but at the same time I’ve realized that there’s this other thing I want to do as well.”

He’d like to make a difference in developing countries like his own. In his senior year Ashirul created a new SPARKS project: He began working with a Bangladeshi nonprofit to start an internship program enabling Western and Bangladeshi college students to work in his country on micro-credit lending. Ashirul has already seen what this practice can achieve.

“People have been able to take very small amounts of money — $20, which is nothing here — and transform their lives,” he says. “Now they’re earning five times as much, and their children are going to school. It’s incredible. Now the children grow up to another level.”

Looking at his own future, Ashirul is aiming for a graduate degree, then perhaps for development work that can combine his interests in technology and human advancement.

“If you could find a way to get technology to people who don’t have it now — a way which is cost-effective and basically feasible — then they’ll take it from there,” he muses. “To change things back home, you need people who understand the people, and who also have the ability to make a change. The thing that makes a person powerful is what he learns.”
At Princeton there is no shortage of people who believe Ashirul Amin can make a real difference. “He’s off the charts,” says Engineering Professor Alain Kornhauser. “He’s so competent in what he’s doing, and you can see that he wants to address much broader, socially relevant issues in the world around him. “You’d like to see him on the international stage — which is really appropriate for him,” Kornhauser believes. “He will find somebody who will appreciate his combination of talent, and he’ll just rise.”

“Ashirul is amazingly approachable,” says Ana Barfield. “He’s the only person I know that any time of the day or night, if I ask him about something, he will respond, and make sure he helps.” When Afghan President Hamid Karzai accepted SPARKS’s invitation to come speak at Princeton last September, Ashirul was chosen to speak for the group. He and Ana stayed up very late the night before, composing and practicing his speech. “None of us had ever done anything like that, talking in front of so many people,” she says. “Especially with the president of the country sitting right there!”

When the time to speak came, “he was extremely good,” says Shirley Tilghman, Princeton’s president. “He was a credit to the United World College program, he was a credit to Princeton. It was one of those wonderful moments.”

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Ashirul Amin, Princeton ’04

Opposite: Ashirul Amin with President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan.

Says Prof. Kornhauser: “You sit there and think, Geez — I’d like to give this kid as many opportunities as possible. He’s going to do great stuff.”

"No Longer a Dream" Here are some excerpts from the speech that Ashirul delivered to the convocation that welcomed President Karzai to Princeton last September:

“Thanks to the unanimous support from the United World Colleges, the tremendous backing from members of the university community, notably President Tilghman, President Goheen, Vice President Dickerson, and Professor Danspeckgruber, and the incredible generosity and enthusiasm of the Afghan government, this project is no longer a dream of a handful of students but a reality in the making.”

The opening of the SPARKS Academy to its first class in November, Ashirul said, would be “the first step in the establishment of a merit-based school of excellence for 1,500 students on a beautiful piece of land granted by the Government of Afghanistan and the Municipality of Kabul. By bringing Afghanistan’s diverse demographic groups together, the school will also aim to foster an environment of pluralism and inter-ethnic understanding.

“We are excited and yet humbled by this opportunity to contribute in some small way to Afghanistan’s reconstruction,” he told President Karzai. “Working together with you, we look forward to celebrating the day when the first Afghan Academy graduate receives the ‘yes’ letter from Princeton.”
Emma James
New Zealand
Mahindra UWC of India
Colby College

Emma’s Journey
An Engaged New Zealander Has Worked in Places Few Ever Know

Raised in Christchurch, a quiet and well-groomed city on her
country’s South Island, Emma won a scholarship to Mahindra UWC
in India. On the bus from Bombay to the school, she remembers
noticing that no two new students were from the same country.
“Tremendously open to everything there,” Emma remembers. On
campus, she ran a college-based literacy and health program for
children of the neighboring villages. She also served as a college
firefighter, beating out brushfires with long paddles in the hot dry summer.

Then came a disaster.

“In 2001, my second year in India, the Gujarat earthquake happened,”
Emma says. About 16,000 people were killed. Emma went to help. That began
a college-age career in disaster-relief and preparedness work.

“I would imagine that anyone who saw the kind of stuff I saw in
India would realize the importance of getting involved,” Emma says. But her
involvement has been extraordinary. In India she also volunteered in a home
for the children of Bombay prostitutes, and in Mother Theresa’s home for the
dying and destitute in Calcutta.

Then, as a first-year student at Colby, Emma contacted the
South Asia delegation of the International Federation of Red Cross
and Red Crescent Societies. It offered her a summer job as assistant
to the disaster-response delegation, based in Delhi.

That summer she did disaster-response and preparedness work in
India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, which was enduring a four-year drought. She
also helped train Red Cross units in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and
Bangladesh. Emma helped to research a Red Cross report on human
trafficking in South Asia, working with an organization in Delhi that
rescues and rehabilitates children sold into prostitution.

“I actually spent time going through the brothels of Delhi with
this organization, and hearing the stories of a large group of girls
who’d been taken,” she recalls. “It was a very moving experience.”

A Sense of Purpose
During her second college summer, Emma worked as a trainer and
consultant to a Cambodian NGO, the
Emergency Relief and Development
Commission. Meanwhile, she was on
her way to graduating from Colby in
three years, with a double major in
government and international studies.

On campus, she has been involved
with the International Club, the
Muslim Club (though not Muslim,
Emma observes the Ramadan fast),
and the campus gay-lesbian group
The Bridge. She was also student
representative on the college’s Board of
Trustees.

“I think I’ve grown intellectually
here, more than at any other time in
my life,” Emma declares.

This summer she will begin an
accelerated, two-year program studying law at Cambridge University
in England. But, first, some actual time off.

“I’m not doing anything this summer! I want to have a normal
student summer,” Emma says, flashing her bright smile: “I’m going to
live in Boston, with my friends from Colby.”

But when she talks about looking ahead, there is a sense of
purpose. Emma wants to work in international human rights law:
“Tremendously open to everything there,” Emma says, flashing her bright smile: “I’m going to
live in Boston, with my friends from Colby.”

It’s something that I’ve always dreamed of doing — and I don’t
think I would be in a position to do it if I hadn’t had the opportunity
to go to UWC and Colby,” Emma says. “In New Zealand, it was
ever easy for me to accept the status quo, and not question too
much.”

Since leaving home, Emma says she has been “questioning all
the time.”

It seems clear she’s not about to stop.

“I would imagine that anyone who saw the
kind of stuff I saw in
India would realize the importance of getting
involved,” Emma says.
Helene Songe remembers the day she landed in Singapore. She was a high school student from Norway, about to begin two years at the United World College of South East Asia. “Everything was different — the different smells, incense and candles all over, and the different faces,” she remembers. “Singapore is a very multicultural place, and they can still live quite peacefully together.”

Helene next became a Davis UWC Scholar at Middlebury College — and here the busy, outgoing Norwegian has modeled the cultural openness and curiosity she developed as a child, traveling with her family around Europe, then as a UWC student in Asia.

An international studies major with a focus on Latin America, Helene studied Russian, Spanish, French, and Swahili at Middlebury, lived in the Spanish House, became a leader in the International Student Organization, and helped start a South African “gumboots”-style student dance troupe. She spent semesters studying in Chile and Argentina, taught a workshop in Norwegian language and culture, and took a workshop in the Hindi and Urdu languages.

“She inspires me, for the way she can do lots of different things — a combination of things that maybe somebody wouldn’t think is possible,” says fellow Davis UWC Scholar Yohanne “Kido” Kidolezi, a junior from Tanzania. “I think that’s very representative of who she is, setting up an example of what one can really achieve.”

“She’s just delightful — sparkly, energetic, warm, outgoing, and she embraces life,” reflects Barbara Hofer, an associate professor of psychology who has been a mentor to Helene. “She’s someone who is just so open to new experience, and she modeled that receptivity to everyone in class.”

Helene Songe
Norway
UWC of South East Asia, Singapore
Middlebury College

Going About the World
At Middlebury, Helene Songe Has Modeled Global Openness

As a UWC student in Singapore, Helene traveled widely in Asia, often visiting social and economic development projects. At the UWC she learned to open herself to a global diversity of other young people.

“I have found the experience here at Middlebury to be quite similar to what I experienced at Singapore,” she says. “You share with so many students from different places — from within the U.S. and from all over the world.”

“You can tell about somebody from the kind of friends they have,” Kido Kidolezi adds. “And everybody knows Helene.”

In her academic focus, Helene again pushed into new territory. “I picked Latin America as a region to specialize in, rather than focusing on Europe with my Spanish, because I feel it’s more urgent, with more basic needs that need to be filled in that part of the world,” she explains.
“Anthropology is my main specialization. I’m focusing on cultures a lot. I find that, even though more things tend to get prioritized in terms of economics and politics today, many of the problems in Latin America are cultural as well, in terms of the struggle to unify the European and the indigenous.”

Helene has applied to master’s degree programs in England, in development theory and practice. For her future, she hopes to aim for leadership in international work, but also to keep listening to the struggles and stories of people in the developing world.

“I think leadership skills are really important, for things to change; but I also think that people working from above can fail if they don’t try to understand essential problems that depend on culture and basic needs,” Helene reflects. “I’d like to have more dialogues with people living in different societies. I like being creative, and can see myself running around in different sectors, maybe writing articles. But I could also see myself eventually working with an institution that is making a difference in concrete ways.”

“An Excitement and a Passion”

At Middlebury, Hofer believes Helene’s impact on the campus community has typified the effects of the Davis UWC Scholars here. “She is so mature and so worldly, and she’s typical of what these students have brought with them from the United World Colleges — openness to new experiences, interest in other cultures, desire to learn new things. There’s a way in which they carry all that with them, and there’s an excitement and a passion about it. “I think Helene’s going to be remarkable, whatever she does,” Hofer adds. “It will have some large international component, surely. This is her way of going about the world.”

“Helene is more than just a person with a heavily stamped passport,” adds Courtney Hillebrecht, an American classmate and friend. “She’s just a really dynamic person, whether she comes from Norway or North Carolina.”
Mukhtar Amin grew up in southeastern Ethiopia, the son of a bus driver who had a dream for his kids. “My dad never went to school — but his mission in life was to make sure his children were educated,” Mukhtar says. When Mukhtar was among four Ethiopians selected through a national competition to attend a UWC, “that was a huge achievement, to my dad.”

At the UWC in Italy, Mukhtar took an economics course that dealt in part with the developing world. “My country is a developing country; there is a lot of poverty and environmental problems. I got really interested.”

In Professor Ken Cline’s course “Introduction to the Legal Process,” Mukhtar became fascinated with learning how lawyers think. “People would ask me, ‘How does the legal system work in your country?’ I would go to the Internet and find out,” he says.

While he was at COA, his dad passed away. The college community helped him get back home, “and also kept in touch with me when I was home,” Mukhtar says. As the eldest unmarried son, he assumed his family’s leadership. Back in Maine, he stayed in very close touch.

“He just assumes all of his responsibilities,” Jean Sylvia says. “That’s the way he is. He’s got a glowing smile, he’s very bright — and if he believes in something, he will fight for it.”

In September 2002, Mukhtar stepped onto the world stage. He traveled with a group of COA students and teachers to South Africa for the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development. At this follow-up to the 1992 Earth Summit, the young Ethiopian “was in his element,” Cline says. “He was talking to the delegates, asking them questions — educating himself, and also getting them to think about things. It was fun to watch.”

Mukhtar next went home to do an internship with Ethiopia’s environmental authority, and with a nonprofit promoting sustainable development. His interests were now focused on traditional knowledge and use of biological resources. He helped bring delegations from across Africa to his country for a workshop on biodiversity, with visits to local communities.

“The most biodiverse places in the world today are those where the indigenous communities live,” Mukhtar says. “That’s what we see. That’s something the international community needs to learn from.”

“That internship really opened the doors, in terms of ways he can go home and make the most difference,” observes fellow Davis UWC Scholar and classmate Dominic Mutanga of Zimbabwe.

Early this year, Mukhtar and Professor Doreen Stabinsky attended the Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in Malaysia. “I was actually sitting at the negotiation table with the Ethiopian delegation,” he says. Researching a senior project on whether there is need for an international regime on fair sharing of benefits from the use of native genetic resources, Mukhtar brought a lot of questions.

“I got a lot of answers from people, and a better understanding of the issue,” he says.

He’s aiming now for a graduate degree in international environmental law and policy. Those who know him well look forward to seeing what he does in the world.

“I think no matter what he ends up doing, it’ll be on the international level,” Professor Cline predicts.

Jean Sylvia remembers talking once with Mukhtar about all that his dad wanted for him. “I said, ‘Everything your father wanted for you are the same things my father wanted,’” she recalls. “‘People in all these countries want peace. They want their children to do well. Everybody wants a better life for their children.’
Culture and Communication
A Scholar from India Puts the Arts to Work for Change

Anna Kurien
India
Mahindra UWC of India
Wellesley College

Outside her office, Wellesley College President Diana Chapman Walsh grabs an issue of Wellesley Week. She points to a page-one article about an upcoming campus film festival, featuring the works of a much-honored Indian documentary filmmaker. Titled “An Impetus for Social Change in South Asia,” the event will feature the filmmaker. Its organizer is Davis UWC Scholar Anna Kurien.

“She figured out how to do this. She got the funds, she brought the filmmaker here,” Walsh enthuses. “The Davis UWC Scholars talk about how at their United World College they’ve learned all these ideals, intellectually and emotionally. Then they’ve come to college and actually learned how to implement a lot of that.”

Anna Kurien says much the same, though she can’t say it right away. It’s not until several days later, after the weekend event has drawn students, professors, current and aspiring filmmakers, arts activists, and various others from Wellesley, Harvard, Emerson College, other neighboring schools and the surrounding communities — along with filmmaker Anand Patwardhan, flown in from Bombay for this — that Anna at last has time to talk.

A native of India who cares very much about the tough social concerns that face her homeland, Anna joined many issue discussions and presentations at Mahindra UWC in India, then during her first two years at Wellesley.

Along the way, she says, “I noticed that when people see a production, as opposed to just talking about an issue, their guards let down. They’re more interested in stretching a little. If you put something in a play, it’s more appealing — it’s telling a story.”

So as a sophomore she co-founded a Boston-based nonprofit called South Asian Association for Theater — or SAATH, which means “together” in Hindi. With a board, tax-exempt status, and much fundraising, SAATH has put on plays dealing with religious violence, domestic violence, and homosexuality in India. SAATH’s members include professors, actors, students, and “random South Asian people who are interested in activism, and white people who are interested in activism,” Anna says.

She also got involved with the Wellesley Association of South Asian Culture, and with much else (“Do you want to hear everything I’ve organized? That would be quite a bit,” Anna says). Last year Anna and a fellow Indian student decided to put together a festival of films by Patwardhan, whose acclaimed works have dealt with militarism and the fading legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, with workers’ and environmental issues, with fundamentalism and violence.

Back in India last summer for a vacation after working on the trial of former Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic in Holland, Anna and her friend tracked down the filmmaker. Nervously they dialed his number in Bombay.

“This was our big moment!” she says. “What would we say? And he was like, ‘Sure. I’ll come.’”

He did. Anna led the fundraising that brought Patwardhan to Wellesley and staged the festival in February.

To her, this project was one more part of what every UWC student learns to do: share their country and culture with anyone who is interested.

“This is part of being a UWC student. You are always meant to be open to answering questions about your country,” she says. “Not just in front of a crowd of people at a film festival, but at dinner, in classes, in dorm rooms, and certainly before and after the South Asian cultural show every year.”

She cautions questioners that India “has multiple truths. I’m always on my toes about bringing up different facts about India. It’s a responsibility; I don’t represent everyone in my country.”

Yet at Wellesley she has represented her country and UWC well. For the future, Anna says, “I intend to study human rights law, and go back to India and work. I want to do a lot of work there, and make sure I make a difference.” Next year, though, she will be traveling the Caribbean, studying Creole language and culture on a prestigious Watson Fellowship.
This section provides brief profiles and photos of all 43 members of the Davis United World College Scholars program’s graduating Class of 2004. During the preparation of this yearbook, each senior scholar responded to several questions from the Davis UWC Scholars program. They wrote about the impacts of their college experience on their lives, learning, and goals. Many also briefly described their plans and hopes for the future. The profiles follow that quote from their responses.

Ashirul Amin
Bangladesh
Red Cross Nordic UWC, Norway
Princeton University

“Feeling very fortunate in the guidance that I have received from faculty members at Princeton, but I would have to say Professor Michael Doran has been the greatest mentor of all,” writes Ashirul, a computer science major with a certificate in robotics and intelligent systems, and a Minor in Near Eastern Studies. Completing several of Professor Doran’s courses on the Middle East and international relations, Ashirul says he gained “a lasting interest in this field. He is also my advisor for the paper I am writing for the NIES certificate investigating certain facets of Saudi-Bangladeshi relations — and that too has been an incredible learning experience.

“The most important lesson that I will take away from college is that if one believes in something strongly enough, anything is possible. Initiative is appreciated back home, and the scope to be innovative there is enormous. I have the confidence now that if I have a worthwhile idea that can effect change, I can contribute to the momentum to bring about that change.”

Mukhtar Amin
Ethiopia
UCB of the Adriatic, Italy
College of the Atlantic

“Afire graduating, I plan to go to graduate school and study international environmental issues,” writes Mukhtar Amin. “International environmental law and policy is an area of study that I never thought about before coming to COA, so I owe everything to what COA has offered me.”

In particular, Mukhtar cites the class that prepared a group of students, including him, to attend the World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa in September 2002. The feature article on page 34 describes his participation in that summit, and his follow-up trip to Malaysia in 2004 to attend the Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

More than anything, Mukhtar reflects that his experience at COA, “has made me self-confident. It has taught me that many of the problems we face are interconnected, and that solutions might lie in a number of areas. In other words, it has taught me the broader picture of global, national, and local issues.”

Salma Binte Anam
Bangladesh
Mishndra UWC of India
Wellesley College

“Being able to give is both a blessing and a prologue,” writes Salma Binte Anam, whose major was international relations with a concentration in peace and conflict resolution. “I started the South Asian music show on the college radio station, and after becoming news director I reconstructed the news toward more live and phone interviews. I have been president of the International Relations Council, and I led a project that raised over $1,000 for a small primary school in a black township in Cape Town. I have tried to develop personal relations with everyone I have interacted with.

“I hope to combine graduate studies in international relations with a law degree. I used to be a neuroscience major, but after a year at Wellesley, I had the courage to try something I have more passion for.”

“My experience at college has opened my mind, taught me maturity, humility, and leadership skills, and given me the strength to give. My moments here have been filled with inspiration and magic. I hope to be able to pass that inspiration on.”

Andriy Avramenko
Ukraine
Red Cross Nordic UWC, Norway
Colby College

“One of the people who has helped me greatly is Professor James Meehan from the Economics Department,” Andriy Avramenko writes. “Professor Meehan is not just my advisor or tutor, he is my friend. He was the one who helped develop my interest in financial industry. On his suggestion and with his help I obtained an internship with Barclays Capital in New York City in 2001. It was a great month, when I learned a lot and made the decision of pursuing a career in banking.

“In the coming years I am planning to work with JP Morgan Chase in London. This is a direct outcome of my experience at Colby. I am an economics and international studies major.

“After working for three or four years I am planning to get my MBA, as I strongly believe in the value of new knowledge. I think Colby’s emphasis on liberal arts and broad education has encouraged me even more to seek knowledge, and not just in the areas of my majors.”

2004 Davis United World College Scholars
Both in the U.S. and at home.”

An important role in my future life, do get to know each other — and knowledge and skills, which I hope “Colby gave me the necessary providing people with solutions to their financial needs,” he concludes.

My ultimate professional goal here, and by being helpful to people. “Computers over the years I have been more than Colby benefited from me. That “I have benefited from Colby experience was integrating into the Middle East. I also clarified the unique. I tried to play my ‘role’ by informing my fellow students about Islam and where I come from in

“Thanks to COA, I have an opportunity to keep an open mind to the way the subject views the world. This story my subject revealed over time because far more powerful than the imposed narrative I had scripted.”

“Focusing on human similarities, to humans share. I hope when I begin my calling in life. As a graphic design instructor at

Arbër Davidhi Albania

“Of the most valuable experiences I had during my education at COA was my internship in Providence, Rhode Island,” writes Arbër Davidhi. “I learned how computer networks function, and I learned more about professional aspects of a system administrator’s position.

“The major ways that college has affected me is through raising my awareness as a global citizen. This awareness lets me look at things I do every day without taking them for granted. It makes me think about the ever-changing meaning of being a citizen, and what I should do to champion practices that favor the natural landscape. So at College of the Atlantic, I obtained a great education as well as a strong logic to defend this education.”
Charles Benson Data

“Like most students, I came to college not knowing what to expect,” writes Charles Benson Data, a government and economics major. He found a job in the student post office, but it brought challenges. Charles had to wake up early. He also learned that his supervisor, Allen LaRue, is gay.

“Coming from a society where homosexuality is considered beyond the pale, I could not know what to make from all that. I decided I will just let time tell. “Contrary to my past narrow concept of the family, Allen would often remind me to call home by asking how my family is doing. He would be a great father, if given the choice. It would therefore be highly unfair not to mention that gay people like Allen deserve the moral right to have families. Allen taught me how to love my family letter, and that fear and running away from our problems will not do us any good. I have learned tolerance, and the willingness to accept people who are different from you.”

Stanislava Dravtova

“Coming from a formerly Communist society I was influenced by the principle of not standing out and doubting your own achievements and qualities,” writes Stanislava Dravtova. “UWC helped me to think for myself, to be the best I can be, and to follow my dreams. Wellesley made many of those dreams come true.”

“I am an economics major, and have focused my coursework on international finance and business. I hope to pursue a career in international business or diplomacy, as I think this is where I can make a difference and improve the lives of many people.”

Peter Fabian

“I spent my junior year studying at the University of Oxford. This was one amazing year from which I benefited socially and academically,” writes Peter Fabian. He majored in operations research and financial engineering at Princeton, where “my boss and adviser, Professor Alan E. Loebach, has greatly influenced the way I spent my last year and a half. His visionary ideas had a profound impact on my life during this period.”

“I believe the most important quality I have acquired is the true appreciation for other individuals,” Peter reflects. “Interaction with other individuals during my past four years has indeed affected my attitude towards my future.”

Javier Fernandez Riveiro

“My experience at Colby-college internship leader for first-year students has been one of the best things I did in college,” writes Javier Fernandez Riveiro. “I met a lot of interesting and wonderful people; experienced the beautiful Maine nature; got a good job as a first aid instructor; learned a lot about outdoor leadership, and interacted with students from all over the U.S. and the globe.”

On campus, Javier credits Sue McEachron, associate dean of students, for being “simply indispensable. She has advised me on many issues, and has helped me realize countless times.” A double major in economics and international studies, with minors in math and financial markets, he says “the college has helped me to find the subject I really want to pursue — finance.”

“The experience at Colby taught me independence,” he adds. “I learned how to prioritize and divide time. I became more self-motivated, self-disciplined, and focused.”

“I ended up having some of the best times of my life — taking courses in different departments, attending public lectures by big-shot speakers, and having intellectual discussions in my eating club (with people you least expect it from). I can truly say I have become a more enlightened person.”

Jerina Hajno

“Perhaps the most influential attribute of my overall college experience to my personal growth and future, besides the excellent liberal arts education and immersion in a highly stimulating scholarly environment, has been acquiring a healthy and mature perspective on the challenges and obstacles which I will encounter along my path,” writes Jerina Hajno. “At Wellesley, I majored in cinema and media studies, with a minor in Italian studies. “At a multicultural, multicultural college, where minority groups are not only respected but strongly encouraged to improve their status, further prove to me the importance of enduring one’s stand on a cause. The ongoing academic debate enhanced my knowledge and awareness of newer perspectives, initiatives, and approaches in different fields.”

“Experiencing the diversity of two other cultures — my native Albania and Italy, where Betty came from — my way of thinking, my attitudes, and my approach to everything I do has been of utmost importance.”

Jonathan Hsu

“A mathematics major, Jonathan Hsu believes his most important decision at Princeton was to stay for a fourth year when he could have graduated in three. “I ended up having some of the best times of my life — taking courses in different departments, attending public lectures by big-shot speakers, and having intellectual discussions in my eating club (with people you least expect it from). I can truly say I have become a more enlightened person.”

“The experience at Colby taught me independence,” he adds. “I learned how to prioritize and divide time. I became more self-motivated, self-disciplined, and focused.”

“I ended up having some of the best times of my life — taking courses in different departments, attending public lectures by big-shot speakers, and having intellectual discussions in my eating club (with people you least expect it from). I can truly say I have become a more enlightened person.”

“I have been a peer educator in the residential colleges for the past two years, which plays an important role in the university’s effort to improve diversity.” He has long looked toward a career in higher education, “but my interest has switched from research and teaching to administration.” At Princeton, “I have developed my leadership intuitively through the various student organizations I participate in. My public speaking skills have also improved. These attributes will undoubtedly prove useful in any walk of life. (Of course, if I enter academia, then the material I have learned in class will also be useful.)”

2004 Davis United World College Scholars

42
“My time at Colby has been incredible; rewarding both intellectually, socially, and culturally,” writes Emma James, a dual major in government and international studies. “I have enjoyed the opportunity to become involved in political debates and movements I might not otherwise have been exposed to. I have been impressed with the commitment of American students to political, multicultural, and social justice causes. My exposure to this level of activism and enthusiasm has had a huge effect on me.”

“Janice Kassman, dean of students, has been a mentor to me,” Emma adds. “I am dedicated to working for justice. My experience in college has shown me the power of grassroots organizing, and I hope to carry these lessons forward into my career.”

Anna Kurien joined Russian UWC as a head of the English department. “I would say chamber music has been the biggest discovery for me at college,” writes Anna Kurien. “I am fully aware of the concepts in play.”

Chin Hin Leung joined Pearson UWC as a faculty member in Pearson UWC. “I believe that a U.S. military response in Afghanistan to 9/11 would harm civilians without achieving justice for the Twin Tower attacks, as a sophomore Mariana Mejia helped organize the student group Peaceful Justice on the Wellesley campus. The group went on to participate in arts peace initiatives before and during the war in Iraq.”

“I have decided to pursue a career in human rights, because I enjoy an academic environment, and because I picture it as the most effective way through which I can contribute to people’s quality of life: being an advocate for victims of crimes. Numerous times, I was the only non-American in the class, offering a different perspective and a different point of view. Each activity I was dedicated to made a difference in my life: being an advocate for victims of rape and honor killing, being a chief justice of the Judicial Board, etc. I have learned one important thing about myself — that I love helping people through community service, advice, or simply listening. I truly desire to dedicate my life to changing people’s lives, and to learning a significant impact in changing the world for the better and bringing peace to countries like my own.”

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“Here at COA I have developed networks and skills that I will need at work,” writes Inna Poliakova. “I believe that I have matured a lot and become more independent. I want to return to Russia so that I can contribute to our society in the future.”

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"My studies in philosophy have had a great impact on me," writes Diego Puig, who majored in government with a philosophy minor. "Philosophy has introduced me to synthetic reasoning, the ability to put together small premises to get a bigger picture. Together, all my academic experiences at Colby have given me the tools to analyze social and political processes in depth, and to be creative in dealing with many of the issues that affect us individually and as a community."

"As an international student, I have developed many friendships with Americans, being a gay student and activist, I have been able to use my relationships outside of the gay alliance to fight homophobia. I've been involved in political, social, and artistic activities, which have given me the opportunity to show many people that despite being different, we can get a bigger picture. Together, all my academic experiences at Colby have given me the tools to analyze social and political processes in depth, and to be creative in dealing with many of the issues that affect us individually and as a community."

Peter Rashkov, Bulgaria
Red Cross Nordic UWC, Norway
Colby College

"I was an officer of the Colby International Club and have tried through the activities I organized to expand in presence on campus," writes Peter Rashkov, who majored in mathematics and economics. "As the number of UWC students has increased, the international events and the discussion about the problems that international students face have become more noticeable."

"Colby gave me an opportunity to sample courses from different subject areas, and at the same time to specialize in two majors. For me, Colby painted a landscape of American society, and gave me a chance to compare my own values and the values of the people of this country. I discovered that it does not require much to be happy: as long as I am satisfied with the little things in life." "Most of all I will remember the friends I made here and the beautiful surroundings in Maine, especially the red leaves in the trees, the freezing winter and green grass in spring remain the same, and the faces change. Only through my friendships will I keep a vivid and memorable picture of the moments at Colby."

Volha Roshchanka, Belarus
Red Cross Nordic UWC, Norway
College of the Atlantic

"I enjoy working with people and offering a helping hand to those who need one," writes Volha Roshchanka. "For me it was important to learn that I have freedom to be whoever I want — and that meant learning to think freely and across boundaries. While not encouraged in the society I grew up in, such freedom gave me passion for knowledge, and the understanding that it is never too late to start learning. I believe free thinking is crucial to solving problems in our lives, our societies, and our world."

"At COA I had the freedom to explore a wide variety of courses and out-of-classroom experiences. I am grateful to everyone who helped me and to all my professors at COA, in particular Fran Degnan, Fran Konick, Doreen Stanislawski, and John Cooper. "I know my learning will not stop, because it is a miracle to discover new passions. As long as you are passionate about something you are bound to be an achiever. That was my lesson at COA. Right now my passion is to be helpful to a community or individuals, and to bring the tools and ideas I learned during my experiences in UWC and COA.""}

Valentina Saltane, Latvia
Red Cross Nordic UWC, Norway
Middlebury College

"My college experience has made me more independent, accepting, and appreciative of differences," writes Natalia Shreve, an economics major who majored in anthropology and Italian. "The language courses at Middlebury were incredibly fun. Just being able to start a new language from scratch was a unique experience."

"Overall, Middlebury has presented me with all sorts of opportunities that I wish I had prepared to take on a new challenge," she reflects. "My presence as a representative of the UWC program has definitely made people more aware of the organization, and helped them realize the importance of having cultural diversity."

"As for my life back home, it has changed as an institution, because of the Davis UWC Scholars program. Some of that change is because these students are leaders. They are such strong individuals, who have such presence about them; they come to a place like this and they are really active in leadership roles."

Barbara Hofer
Associate Professor of Psychology
Middlebury College

Natasha Shevde, India
Mahindra UWC, India
Middlebury College

"My college experience has made me more independent, accepting, and appreciative of differences," writes Sardar Shokatyev, who majored in economics and French at Middlebury. "It turned me from a jumpy, touchy teenager into a peaceful, confident man."

Volha Roshchanka,
"For the future, Natasha says, "I hope to find a satisfying job, and hopefully move to Europe in a couple of years."

46
2004 Davis United World College Scholars

47
2004 Davis United World College Scholars
I believe I have contributed to the international spirit of the college through the International Student Organization, the Scandinavian Student Organization, various other clubs such as the South African Gamboe Dance/Dance, Study Abroad meetings for Latin America, South Asian and African events, and activities related to the study of foreign languages, among them Spanish and Russian," writes Latin American studies major Helene Songe. "I would like to mention my first-year seminar Professor Barbara Hofin, who has been very kind and helpful.

"I am currently applying to graduate schools in Europe to do international development. I feel much more informed and connected to the world than before. That has made me feel more responsible for the world than before. That has made me feel more responsible for the world.

"I hope somehow to become involved in addressing questions of social and cultural development, either through the private sector or through multilateral institutions such as the United Nations."

"I have been mostly influenced by relationships with faculty and staff. It is those conversations outside of class that open your eyes to previously unseen landscapes. I would like to think that the relationships that have meant the most to me have also been significant to the student, faculty, and staff that have influenced and inspired me.

"My most immediate goal is graduate study and the pursuit of a doctorate degree. Subsequently I hope to be involved in research, and ultimately in international environmental policy."
## Class of 2005

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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Most of these students have a deep-down conviction that it is possible, in this world, to live together. I think that, having had experience through engagement in the difficult issues of cross-cultural integration, they have seen that it works. We have seen Davis UWC Scholars from Pakistan and India get together. Scholars from Pakistan and India have a deep-connection. I think that, in this world, to live together. This is so good."
"I think for many Americans, history and geography are fairly abstract notions. When your classrooms get an injection of people from other places in the world, these discussions become much more real and meaningful. That creates more incentive for American students to travel to other places, and to really become engaged in thinking about and grappling with those issues."

Steven Katona
President, College of the Atlantic

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Sunita Kannan
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Wellesley College

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Ninadav Krivoc
Yugoslavia
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Li Po Chun United World College, Hong Kong
Colby College

Vincent H. Wu
Hong Kong
Li Po Chun United World College, Hong Kong
Middlebury College

Nahal Zebarjadi-Sar
Australia
United World College–USA
Princeton University

Chenyang Zhang
China
Li Po Chun United World College, Hong Kong
Wellesley College

Jingling Zhou
China
United World College–USA
Wellesley College

Oded Zinger
Israel
Lester B. Pearson United World College of the Pacific, Canada
Princeton University
A Joyful Noise

Mchakamchaka Builds a Unique New Campus Tradition

It’s dark out, a weekday evening on the Middlebury College campus. Ten underclassmen gather beneath a tree. Now they start jogging, and their footsteps fall together in a chunky, catchy rhythm. In the midst of nine Americans is Yohanne “Kido” Kidolezi, a slender Davis UWC Scholar from Tanzania. To the pulsing of the footfalls, Kido sings the first phrase of a folksong from home; his friends sing out the response, in unison, in Swahili.

Strong, jubilant call-and-response harmonies now fill the night as the young men jog around Old Chapel, across the green, and into a dorm. As they snake through the hallway, singing loud and right in time, they trail the wide smiles of fellow students looking on.

Everybody on the Middlebury campus knows mchakamchaka. There are two groups now, a male and a female; they run late in the evening, as often as once a week. They are a new, and surely a unique, college tradition.

In Swahili, mchakamchaka means this activity of running and singing. In Kido’s home village of Kintinku in central Tanzania, this is the way schoolchildren start their day. “We’d sing about beauty and daily life;” Kido says. “We’d sing about the sun and the stars, and hope — just being proud of home. Just a celebration.”

“It’s Amazing”

In the spring of his freshman year, Kido and his American roommate were running to catch up with a group of students on an outing. Their foot-thumping rhythm brought Kido back home, and he began to sing. His roommate demanded to know what that was. Then he wanted to try it. The two gathered a group of their buddies. Kido taught them “Anjelema,” a song about a beautiful girl. They ran and sang. They loved it! People who heard them did, too. The next fall, as sophomores, the group wanted to keep going.

“We had the idea to run at sunset,” Kido recalls. “Also we decided, since we’re on campus, we should run through some buildings and confuse people, singing in Swahili,” says Matthew Coons ’05. “We’d run into people’s rooms,” Kido adds. “If somebody was feeling down, you’d go sing to make them feel better.”

The group ran regularly. They also did a concert, and they performed in campus cultural shows, a church supper, and the local town hall talent show. They learned about 10 songs. Kido taught several to a new female mchakamchaka group. And the guys kept running.

“Sometimes we call ourselves ‘Kido and the Caucasians,’” quips Matt. “When you’re in the middle of finals week, you call the guys: ‘Let’s go sing!’ And then you’re out there with your boys. It’s amazing.”

“Tweende Wote, Kule Kule”

“The way we learn songs is by oral tradition,” explains John Stokvis ’05. “You just show up and run — and as we run, we learn.”

And it’s beautiful, their singing: robust and jubilant, infectious and moving. On this night, one of the songs the group sings is about a big house, with room for a whole big family. A few of its words are these:

Tweende wote, kule kule
(Twende wote, kule kule)

Kule kwa Kinoga
(To the house of Kinoga)

Baba na Mama
(Father and Mother)

Most of the original male members of mchakamchaka were studying abroad this year, or had graduated. But as many as 20 new underclassmen have joined.

The younger members are determined to keep the group going after Kido graduates next year.

“The main thing is creating the tradition while he’s still here,” John says. “Learning about him, learning the songs, learning to lead.”

The song is the essential part,” he adds. “But it’s all about brotherhood.”
Private Philanthropy Supporting International Understanding Through Education

Private philanthropy can be transformative. Through the Davis United World College Scholars program, talented individual students and outstanding educational institutions are both being transformed by the philanthropic investments of Shelby and Gale Davis. Their long-term goal is to create greater international understanding among future generations of the world’s decision-makers, by bringing together a growing number of promising students from diverse cultures and supporting their undergraduate educations at select American colleges and universities.

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