

PREPARING GLOBAL CITIZENS FOR AN URBAN WORLD

A new approach to liberal arts education builds on Trinity's successes in urban and global studies BY JIM H. SMITH



A \$3-million challenge grant from the Mellon Foundation will allow Trinity to press forward swiftly this year with plans to integrate the College's longstanding urban initiatives and global studies programs into a single, cohesive program called the Center for Urban and Global Studies. When the center debuts, it will be the embodiment of a new vision of liberal

education that is expected to impact nearly every area of study, while also distinctively positioning Trinity among the ranks of the nation's liberal arts colleges.

"Given what is happening to liberal arts colleges nationally, and given the demographic shifts that are going to occur in the future, these colleges will need a clear,

articulated focus on what differentiates one school from another, and one school from the national cohort of liberal arts colleges," says Trinity President James F. Jones, Jr. "From our strategic planning has come the clear message that Trinity can, and must, distinguish itself as a liberal arts college in a capital city with links from our Hartford campus to cities around

the world, thanks to our global sites."

"The Mellon grant paves the way for a fundamental change in the way the College approaches liberal education and a transformation of campus culture to one that challenges assumptions about what learning means and how it takes place," says Jones. "Over the next year, Trinity will devise a unique undergraduate model aimed at preparing our students for global citizenry. This generous grant from the Mellon Foundation is a significant vote of confidence from one of the most prominent foundations in the world that Trinity is on the right track," Jones added.

Trinity was one of 16 national liberal arts colleges invited to compete as part of the Mellon



STUDYING HARTFORD Students in ENVS 275 "Methods in Environmental Science" conduct an environmental assessment of Hartford's Park River. Top: collecting samples. Below: analyzing samples in the laboratory. Right: clay layers in a soil sample from the Park River project.



and Port of Spain, in addition to the ongoing program in Rome. These programs enable students to travel and study abroad in a host of cultures, while also performing internships or community learning that more fully integrate them with institutions in their host cities.

“We believe that the education Trinity offers its students is distinctly stronger because it encompasses both Hartford and world cities,” says Dr. Rena Fraden, dean of faculty and vice president for academic affairs, but she is quick to add that the College’s commitment to the traditional liberal arts and sciences remains firm.

“This initiative does not mean that Trinity will now aim to graduate only students who are ‘urbanists.’ Our commitment to the full spectrum of liberal arts education has not changed. However, by bringing together our existing, successful, urban and global programs, we believe we can breathe new life into the liberal arts paradigm, creating a variety of ‘real world’ opportunities for students to learn and grow. It also means a stronger commitment to engaging with, investing in, and drawing sustenance from the many programs and relationships here in Hartford and all over the globe that we’ve been building for many years.”

A new dean and a new center

The urban-global initiative will play out in a number of ways, says Dean Fraden, who is spearheading implementation. For starters, the Curriculum Committee is expected to bring to the faculty a proposal requiring that every student take at least one course that focuses on Hartford and another on international issues.

The College is currently engaged in a national search to recruit an accomplished scholar to fill the new position of dean of urban and global studies, with a mandate to provide overall vision and leadership for the program and direct the center’s activities. Two contiguous Trinity buildings at the corner of Vernon and Broad streets will be renovated to create a physical presence for the center. When it opens, the majority of Trinity’s Hartford-focused and global programs will be housed in this complex.

Under the dean’s leadership, the center will sustain and build linkages between Trinity’s Hartford, community, and global programs that previously existed separately. In addition, a new Cities Resource Center will develop a comprehensive Web site with links to other urban and global projects; create guides for students and researchers who are studying Hartford’s history or seeking connections to ongoing work in cities across the United States and the world; and create an introduction to resources in archives, libraries, and cultural institutions in Hartford and the region.

“We’re committed to a model of the liberal arts that strongly incorporates off-campus engagement both in Hartford and abroad,” says Dean Fraden. “A central task for the new dean will be to integrate the three interlocking intellectual spheres inhabited by our students: the classroom, the city, and the world.”

Arthur Vining Davis Foundations grant supports student urban-global research projects

The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations have awarded a grant of \$200,000 to the College to support student research and internship opportunities in an urban and/or global context. The AV Davis Fellows Program will provide stipends, housing, and program support for up to 20 students in the summers of 2007 and 2008, as well as a stipend for a faculty coordinator.

The grant will also support a Summer Institute in Urban and Global Studies modeled on the successful Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Summer Research Program in the life sciences. Participation in the summer institute will be open to any student conducting on-campus research in the Hartford region, their faculty mentors, other faculty members engaged in urban and global scholarship, Hartford-based student interns, and campus-based students preparing for a semester of study abroad. Like the HHMI program, the institute will provide students with the opportunity to participate in weekly seminars throughout the summer and to present work in progress at one of the seminars. Special lectures and panel presentations will be organized on topics geared toward fostering debate and discussion. Guest lecturers may include academic experts in relevant topics; representatives of local governments, nonprofits, and community-based organizations; and speakers from other regions and countries who will bring a comparative perspective to the selected topic. The grant will also provide support for a fall symposium on student urban and global research, which will provide a forum for students to present the results of summer work to the campus and the wider community.



TOP: Internship site--Margaret Kistow Children's Home, Arima, Trinidad
 MIDDLE: Mural project, Santiago, Chile
 BOTTOM: Trinfo Café, Hartford

Foundation's "Centers of Excellence" program. Of the 16, seven schools were selected to receive awards. Trinity and Sarah Lawrence College received the first two and were among four institutions selected to receive the maximum \$3-million grant.

In inviting proposals from these select colleges, the foundation urged them to develop ideas that "address a major priority, leading to a long-lasting, positive educational and financial outcome." The foundation also encouraged them to focus on an aspect of their programs having the greatest likelihood of producing meaningful change for the campus community. Trinity chose its urban and global programs, identifying opportunities to improve their linkages, secure their funding on a permanent basis, and articulate their functional integration as a signature feature for the College. This is a new affirmation of the important relationship between Trinity and Hartford in the College's academic mission and vision.

For its part, the College will raise \$9 million in matching funds as part of the \$12 million endowment to sustain urban and global programs. Trinity will launch an immediate campaign and will pursue an intense 18-month effort to accomplish this goal. Already, three donors have committed \$1.8 million in matching funds toward the challenge.

Encompassing both Hartford and world cities— a new vision of the liberal arts paradigm

Education that involves interaction with the city of Hartford has long been an important part of Trinity's approach, as has the extensive use of overseas study. The new Center for Urban and Global Studies will bring these two existing streams together to give the College a powerful new medium through which to reconfigure the idea of liberal arts education and its relevance to the 21st century.

Urban programs, fueled by grants from the W.K. Kellogg and other national foundations during the 1990s, emerged from efforts to invigorate Trinity's relationship with Hartford, starting with the South End neighborhoods immediately surrounding the College. A host of distinctive programs and institutions—including the Learning Corridor, the Trinfo Café, the Boys & Girls Club at Trinity College, and the new Community Sports Complex—grew from that work. They have significantly improved the quality of life in Hartford while also providing learning opportunities for Trinity students, many of whom have benefited from internships and work-study programs in the city.

At the same time, the College has established learning sites at eight cities worldwide, including Moscow, Istanbul, Barcelona, Cape Town, Paris, Santiago, Vienna,