Joanne Berger-Sweeney Elected 22nd President

Trinity’s Board of Trustees unanimously elected Dr. Joanne Berger-Sweeney the next president of Trinity College. An accomplished teacher, scholar, neuroscientist, and administrator, Berger-Sweeney currently holds the position of dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts, where she serves as chief officer for that institution’s largest school, with more than 5,000 students. Berger-Sweeney, who holds a Ph.D. in neurotoxicology from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, has served as dean at Tufts since 2010. She came to Tufts from Wellesley College, where she served for 19 years as a faculty member and associate dean. Berger-Sweeney will succeed James F. Jones, Jr. as president on July 1, 2014, following his retirement after 10 years of distinguished service.

576 Degrees Awarded at Trinity’s 188th Commencement

Reminding the 576 students who received their degrees on May 18 that passion is “absolutely indispensable” to a successful professional life, Katie Couric delivered an inspiring and entertaining Commencement address that Trinity’s president called “one for the memory books.” The valedictorian of the Class of 2014 is Tram Ngoc Luong of Vietnam, who graduated summa cum laude with honors in international studies, and the salutatorian is Hannah Brickley of Melrose, Massachusetts, who graduated summa cum laude in biology. This Commencement marked the last one in which President James F. Jones, Jr., would preside. He is retiring after 10 years at the helm of the College, as is Paul E. Raether ’68, P’93, ’96, ’01, who is retiring after serving as a member of the Board of Trustees since 1989 and as its chair since 2002. Both received honorary degrees, as did Couric, Julieta Castellanos, Vernon E. Jordan, Jr., and Eric R. Fossum ’79.
Trinity Student Awarded Prestigious Truman Award

Salima Etoka ’15, a QuestBridge Scholar and native of the Democratic Republic of Congo, has been awarded a prestigious Truman Scholarship for 2014, one of only 59 college students in the country and the first Trinity student to be selected in 28 years. The names of the 59 winners, chosen from a pool of 655 candidates nominated by 293 colleges and universities, were announced recently by former Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, president of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation.

A resident of Boise, Idaho, Etoka is majoring in urban studies, political science, and French.

More than 1,500 Donors Participate in Trinity’s First Giving Day

Members of the College community came together in grand fashion on April 30, showing their support for every facet of the student experience and ensuring the success of the first-ever Trinity Giving Day. The 24-hour fundraising drive exceeded expectations, raising more than $1.1 million for the Trinity College Fund.

“Our initial goal of 600 donors was surpassed midmorning, and our stretch goal of 900 donors was exceeded by early afternoon,” reported Director of Annual Giving Bill Knapp. “In the end, over 1,500 donors participated, contributing more than $1.1 million. The response was outstanding and outpaced our highest expectations.” Through social media such as Facebook and Twitter, dozens of Super Bantam ambassadors, including class agents and other Trinity volunteers, were instrumental in helping spread the word about the fundraising day and drove supporters to the special Giving Day Web site.

Crescent Street Townhouses Phase 2 Open, Ferris Athletic Center Renovated

The southeast corner of campus continues to be transformed with the January opening of phase two of the Crescent Street Townhouses, which offer townhouse-style living to 150 students. Two hundred sophomores, juniors, and seniors already reside in the first units, which opened in the fall of 2013. Plans are under way to relocate the College bookstore adjacent to the townhouses, as well as a new eating location. Updates to Ferris Athletic Center, the hub of fitness and athletic programs at Trinity, mark another major campus improvement. The men’s and women’s locker rooms are undergoing a complete, multiphase renovation. In addition to modernized locker facilities, the renovation includes an emphasis on sustainability and reduced energy consumption. Historically one of the largest energy consumers on campus, Ferris now features new equipment to reduce water and energy usage, including high-performance machines and a new HVAC system, among others.

Two Seniors Win $10,000 in First Trinity Entrepreneurship Competition

The name of their game is “Underdog,” a fantasy football mobile application that is team-based rather than based on individual athletes’ performances, as is standard in the fantasy sports world. The idea won Alex Barker ’14 and Jake Shimmel ’14 $10,000 in Trinity’s inaugural Entrepreneurship Competition on April 25, hosted by the Career Development Center. The prize will go toward further development of their project. The application will be entirely mobile based and will reward participants on their ability to correctly predict the winning teams each week during the NFL season, with incentives for correctly predicting “underdog” teams that are not expected to win. Alumni served as mentors to the finalist teams, as event sponsors and as session leaders. Parent George Bell P’15, ’17, a serial entrepreneur, delivered the keynote address at the event to an enthusiastic audience of more than 150.
Women’s Rowing Makes History by Capturing 2014 NCAA Division III National Championship

The Trinity College women’s rowing team made history on May 31 in Indianapolis, capturing its first-ever NCAA Division III National Championship. The Bantams earned 30 points with their exciting first varsity eight win over Williams and took the title by earning 10 additional points with a second-place finish in the second varsity eight race at Eagle Creek Park in the final regatta of the year. After a third-place finish last season, Trinity put together an impressive season of work to top New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC) foe Bates and the nine-time defending champion Ephs. “It’s a testament to the shared experiences that this team has had over time that they kept grinding away to get better,” Trinity Head Coach Wesley Ng (eighth season) said. “We talk about our brand of rowing; they were disciplined all year, and it finally paid off.”

Greek Week Celebration Filled with Fun, Service, Recognition

During the week of April 21, Trinity College’s Greek Letter Organizations (GLOs) sponsored Greek Week 2014, a weeklong celebration of Greek life on campus. Through a variety of social events, philanthropic activities, and community service opportunities, Greek Week was an opportunity to reflect on the good that Trinity’s 10 GLOs provide to their members, the campus, and the community. Activities included community service and philanthropic events, all of which focused on supporting the Trinity College Boys & Girls Club; a faculty appreciation cocktail hour; a karaoke/lip-sync competition; and a dodgeball tournament. Greek Week concluded on Sunday, April 27 with a Greek Awards Ceremony and Reception, where both chapters and individuals were honored. Timothy Dunn, associate director of student services for social houses, commented that “Greek Week is part of the College’s larger effort to invest in and support Greek organizations on campus.”
Robert Cotto, Jr. Named First Director of Urban Educational Initiatives

Thanks to a grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, Trinity has created the new position of director of urban educational initiatives and has announced the selection of Robert Cotto, Jr. as the first director. Cotto was until recently a senior fellow at the New Haven-based advocacy group Connecticut Voices for Children. Building on the College’s commitment to education in the city, Cotto will help Trinity maximize its partnerships with K-12 public schools, including through the College’s Community Learning Initiative (CLI) courses for Trinity students. Melanie Stein, associate academic dean, called Cotto “an ideal choice,” noting that, “he will be teaching a new course in the Educational Studies program in addition to working to strengthen the College’s educational partnerships and ties with local schools and communities.” Cotto holds an A.B. in sociology from Dartmouth College, a master’s degree in American studies from Trinity, and an Ed.M. in teaching and learning from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

‘Art in Medicine,’ ‘Hartford by Bike’ among Programs to Welcome the Class of 2018

Adjusting to College life is on the mind of every arriving first-year student. To assure new students have ways to become involved and feel welcomed even before classes begin, Trinity has expanded its roster of pre-orientation programs to offer more ways for students to acclimate to College, connect to Hartford, meet faculty, and build friendships. Supplementing the popular Quest hiking program on the Appalachian Trail and the P.R.I.D.E program for students from diverse backgrounds are nearly a dozen two-day programs run by faculty, staff, and students to appeal to a variety of interests. These include “Amazing Race Hartford,” “Art in Medicine,” “Hartford by Bike,” “Rock Climbing,” and “Community Service,” to name but a few. Also included in the Starting Out Early offerings is the unique Venture Trinity program, a three-day leadership conference for women, which launched successfully with last year’s incoming class.

Stephanie Clemente is the Latest Trinity Grad to Win a Fulbright

Stephanie Clemente ’14, a double major in international studies and anthropology, was named a Fulbright Scholar and will be heading to Indonesia in August on a Fulbright Teaching Assistantship. In what is proving to be a busy summer, Clemente left for Jordan immediately following Commencement to study Arabic, the result of having won a Critical Language Scholarship (CLS). The CLS program, sponsored by the State Department, offers intensive summer language institutes in foreign languages deemed critical to U.S. interests. The Fulbright Student Program is the flagship international education program sponsored by the U.S. government. In recent years, Indonesia has been a popular destination for Trinity students, and Clemente, who minored in Arabic, is thrilled to be headed there. Clemente’s interests while at Trinity included study of the plight of refugees, an interest she pursued in 2012-13 while studying in Jordan and Denmark, two countries with relatively large refugee populations. Clemente, who is a Posse Scholar, also twice served as president of Trinity’s chapter of Amnesty International.

Students Win Davis Projects for Peace Award, Head to Kenya

Six Trinity students left May 20 for Kenya, where they are spending the next month rebuilding a girls’ orphanage in the small agricultural town of Njoro. Ethnic violence, along with the scourge of HIV/AIDS, has left about 2.6 million children (or 6 percent of the country’s population) orphaned in Kenya. The orphanage project was made possible by an award of $10,000 through the Projects for Peace initiative, which was supplemented by approximately $10,000 that the students raised. Projects for Peace was the vision of philanthropist Kathryn W. Davis, who was intent on advancing the cause of peace and sought to motivate tomorrow’s promising leaders by challenging them to find ways to “prepare for peace.” Davis died in 2013.