As we close out the 2009/10 academic year and plan for 2010/11 activity, we want to take the opportunity to reflect on the Weissberg Human Rights Program. The two-year old program already has had a significant impact on Beloit College. Faculty members have gained new experience in South Africa and Istanbul pertinent to their teaching, advising, and research, while students have had the opportunity to gain first-hand experience in the field of human rights. This experience has helped students find post-graduation employment and set plans for graduate studies. As well, the annual Weissberg Human Rights lecture and alumni career panel have become events to which both faculty and students look forward.

As we approach the 2010/11 academic year, Dr. Jean-Marie Kamatali, a Rwandan legal scholar, has been selected to deliver the Weissberg Human Rights Lecture in September, and four young alumni have been invited to speak about their pathways to careers in human rights. Four students, selected from among nine applicants, will carry out summer projects, while planning is underway for a second group of faculty to visit Istanbul in October. Furthermore, the Weissberg Human Rights Program has generated an increase in applications for student project grants in general at Beloit College and related to human rights more specifically. In the following report, asterisks (*) next to the names of grant winners indicate where other sources of funding have helped support human rights projects.

We are enormously pleased by the way in which this program has enhanced engagement with human rights at Beloit College, and look forward to a highly productive third year of activity.

Elizabeth Brewer, PhD
Director of International Education
Beloit College
Weissberg Grants in International Human Rights

Since 2008, 19 students received Weissberg Grants in International Human Rights to undertake projects during summer and winter breaks. The projects have been located in 12 countries, including the United States. Grant recipients have come from many disciplines and have formed strong connections between their projects and their academic studies.

Project proposals were evaluated by a selection committee and awarded using the following criteria:

- A demonstrated commitment to human rights, as evidenced by coursework, extracurricular activities, study abroad, and other activities,
- The strength and feasibility of the proposed project,
- The strength of connection between the proposed activity and the student’s prior educational experiences and other activities, and
- The strength of the student’s academic record.

Winter 2008/09

Holly Pham (‘09)
Major: Economics & Management, International Relations
& Delna Sepoy (‘09)
Major: Economics & Management
Project: Social Entrepreneurship in India
Location: Hyderabad, India

Holly and Delna are both international students majoring in economics at Beloit College. Holly is from Vietnam, Delna from India. Together they developed a project to study a social enterprise startup in Hyderabad, India, named GreenMango. They wanted to see how GreenMango was able to connect poor, migrant workers to the burgeoning IT economy of Hyderabad through an on-line directory of services. They shadowed GreenMango’s director as she reached out to more than 15,000 small businesses in the poor districts of the city. During their two-week study, they both developed a strong appreciation for the challenges of working across class, economic, and linguistic barriers. Their research resulted in a presentation at the spring Student Symposium.

Anna Wolf (‘11)
Majors: International Relations & Spanish
Project: Internship on Women’s Rights with Pro Mujer
Location: Puno, Peru

Anna Wolf (l.) at visiting a microfinance project in Peru

February working in Puno, Peru, as an intern with Pro Mujer, an NGO that fights poverty and gender inequality by connecting women with health services in their communities and providing them with integrated package of financial and human development services to build small businesses. In addition to providing administrative support to Pro Mujer, Anna interviewed the organization’s clients about how their participation has affected their perception of their own rights. Based on her research, Anna has concluded that for a woman to be safe from deprivation, she must have social support, networks, individual and community knowledge, healthcare and financial income, in addition to the basics of food, clean water and shelter. She presented a poster on her research in conjunction with the 2010 Weissberg address.
Rattana Phon’10
Major: International Relations
Project: Women’s Rights and Land Rights Internships
Location: Cambodia

Rattana returned to her native Cambodia to work with three different NGOs under the guidance of Member of Parliament Mu Sochua. Her internship with Grassroots Women for Change focused on women’s rights and leadership. She also worked with two organizations addressing land evictions and housing rights in Phnom Penh.

This experience increased Rattana’s awareness of current human rights violations in Cambodia, and has given her valuable work experience for her career. “Many times I have seen poor community people or villagers being denied their rights for land registration or a land title,” says Rattana. “Through this internship I have also learned that development inside the city has created a bigger gap between the poor and the rich.”

Ahmad Javid’10
Major: International Relations
Project: Democracy in Afghanistan - Summer Internship with the German Marshall Fund
Location: Washington, DC

Ahmad, an Afghani citizen, is concentrating his studies on international diplomacy and policy. In Washington, DC, he worked as the Development Intern for the Economic Policy Program of the German Marshall Fund (GMF). In that role, he primarily worked on foreign aid effectiveness, transatlantic security and development, and fragile states. He also joined in projects with GMF’s Transatlantic Taskforce on Development and Security. Ahmad was able to continue to work with the GMF during his semester abroad in Brussels, Belgium, and has been offered another summer internship this year with the GMF in Washington, DC, as well as a full-time position following his December 2010 graduation.

Rattana Phon, below, interviewing women in Cambodia.
Summer 2009 (cont.)

Angela Martellaro,’10
Major: Rhetoric & Discourse,
Minor: Peace & Justice Studies
Project: The Language of Migration
Location: Chiang Mai, Thailand

Angela taught English at a school for Burmese migrant workers in Chiang Mai as a portal into understanding migrant issues. The Migrant Learning Center, part of the Thinking Classroom Foundation, was founded to provide a place where Burmese migrants can further their education while in Thailand. The school offers classes to 300 migrants in Thai and English language, from absolute beginner to intermediate levels, as well as vocational training in computers and sewing/tailoring.

“The Burmese community in Thailand is mostly comprised of refugees, political activists, and migrant workers,” wrote Angela. “All of these groups face significant discrimination by the Thai government and Thai people.” Angela noted that the highlight of her project was the friendships she formed with her students, which gave her more insight into their plight than she could have found anywhere else.

Maria Lajewski’10
Major: Sociology
Project: Conference: Poverty and Prosperity
Location: University of California, Berkeley

This conference was hosted by the Institute for Humane Studies (IHS), which is devoted to research and education fostering peace, prosperity, and social harmony. Conference lectures ranged from globalization and public choice theory to immigration and remittances.

Having just returned from a semester in Cape Town, South Africa, where she witnessed great poverty and great prosperity side-by-side, Maria found this conference especially meaningful. “[It] gave me the opportunity to raise my unanswered questions with faculty and students who were just as passionate as I about understanding wealth creation and the persistence of poverty,” said Maria.

Daniel Weyl’10
Major: Anthropology
Project: Refugee Resettlement Internship at Lutheran Social Services
Location: Washington, DC

Daniel’s studies at Beloit concentrated on ways to apply anthropology in the world. While studying abroad in Kolkata, India, he became interested in the role of the anthropologist as social worker and mediator. With this in mind, Daniel used his grant to take a position as Reception and Placement Intern with Lutheran Social Services in Silver Spring, Maryland, just outside of Washington, DC. As intern, he coordinated and collected furniture donations, and assisted in locating and preparing apartments for refugee clients. He also worked with newly-arrived refugees, assisting with their orientation to the US, integration and settlement.

Daniel’s work with Iraqi refugees during his internship led him to write his senior thesis on Iraqi refugees and the humanitarian crisis in Iraq. He presented “Anthropological Insight into Iraqi Refugees’ Resettlement,” an analysis of his research, at Beloit College’s April 2010 Student Symposium.
Noah Watenmaker’10*
Major: Economics & Management
Minor: English
Project: Hyperlocal Microfinance in Ghana
Location: Ghana

To bring an international perspective to his economics studies, Noah volunteered in the microfinance division of Volunteer Partnership for West Africa (VPWA). In this role, Noah used his economics skills to generate a two-year cash-flow and debt-load financial forecast, and also began rewriting VPWA’s business plan. “This experience showed me the importance of entrepreneurship in developing countries,” says Noah.

Noah presented a poster on his project in conjunction with the annual Weissberg Chair address in March.

Lily Rubenstein’11
Major: International Relations
Minor: African Studies
Project: NGO Capacity Building: The Potential of Inter-Organization Communication
Location: Dakar, Senegal, December 2009 and January 2010

Lily spent the academic year in Africa, first in Senegal, then in Uganda. Between these two semesters, she interned with the West African Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Network (WARIPNET), in Dakar.

Andrew Schmitt’11
Major: Russian
Project: The Rights of a Formerly Displaced Population: a Study of the Tartar of the Crimea
Location: Crimea, Ukraine

During his semester abroad in Moscow, Andrew visited the Crimea to investigate the ongoing legacy of the deportation of Crimean Tartars during World War II. This research sprung out of Andrew’s studies of Russian and Soviet history, and was designed to bring a first-hand perspective through interviews with Tartars, the indigenous people of the Crimean peninsula. Through informal discussions with Russians and Tartars, Andrew concluded, “The Tatars are generally of the opinion that their situation is intractable, yet convinced that they will still succeed and once more become the dominant ethnic group in Crimea.”

The most striking thing that Lily discovered throughout her month-long research, she says, was the extreme informality of communication with other NGOs. “The greatest impediment I observed was the way in which this informal manner of communication isolated the few NGOs that relied primarily upon personal connections,” says Lily, whose spring semester in Uganda also focused heavily on human rights and development.
Oliver Wychoff’12
Majors: Psychology & International Relations
Project: Human Rights and Development in Rwanda: Global Youth Connect
Location: Rwanda

Oliver joined other US and Rwandan students for the Global Youth Connect winter delegation in Rwanda. Global Youth Connect (GYC) is a US-based NGO working to “empower youth to advance human rights and create a more just world.” GYC teamed up with AJPRODO, a Rwandan NGO focused on empowering youth to improve human rights and advocate for socio-economic development, for the 2010 meeting in Rwanda (delegates pictured below). The meeting included a four-day human rights workshop, volunteer work, and site visits related to the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide.

“I learned more from this experience than I can put into words,” says Oliver, shown below, in the center of the back row. “The most powerful aspect of this trip was the visceral human element. We saw firsthand the devastation of the Rwandan genocide and heard personal stories of the devastation.”

Kayla Svoboda’10
Majors: philosophy, health & society.
Minor: legal studies
Project: Women’s Economic Emancipation and Empowerment in Ghana
Location: Ghana

Kayla worked with a women’s empowerment project that is an offshoot project of Volunteer Partners for West Africa’s Microfinance initiative. VPWA Microfinance provides microloans to poor women to enable them to start their own businesses or build upon their existing entrepreneurial endeavors. This, in turn, helps to alleviate poverty for the loan recipients and their families, while also contributing to women’s economic emancipation in Ghana. Many Ghanaian women are less educated than men and entirely dependent on their husbands or others for financial support.

Kayla’s work challenged her by requiring creative problem solving in a highly independent setting. She carved out a meaningful project that would be helpful to VPWA, empower Ghanaian women, and provide her with learning experiences. “I gained a first-hand experience of what it is like to live and work in a developing country,” wrote Kayla, “and I was made aware of the human rights issues most pertinent to Ghana specifically. I was able to spend one day in a Human Rights mediation office and one day in a rural hospital to observe midwifery practices, both of which further enhanced my intellectual, experiential, and cultural learning.”
Winter 2009/10 (Cont.)

Alexander Thiel’11
Major: International Relations
Minor: European Studies
Project: The Swedish Way: Approaches to Human Rights
Location: Växjö, Sweden

Alex spent the entire academic year at Växjö University in Sweden, where he compiled research and filmed a documentary on the relations between labor unions and the development of the Swedish welfare systems. He primarily focused on collective bargaining arrangements and how they have influenced the society’s view of human rights. Through contacting local unions and welfare bureaus, he assessed the Swedish model through a comparative and critical lens in order to garner aspects that could benefit other regions and situations.

The film focuses on the adaptation of human rights into policy practices that have been effective in producing social good while remaining wary of the difficulties faced in Sweden and the rest of the world.

Alex found that the Swedish approach to labor rights was much more diverse and dynamic than he had previously thought. “Interacting personally with the people and institutions involved in all aspects of labor rights in Sweden,” he writes, “I have enhanced my comprehension of the complexity and effort needed to sustain and develop effective approaches to human rights challenges.”

Summer 2010

Anna Blankschien’10
Major: Education Youth and Society
Project: Improving the Teaching of Indigenous Cultures: A Case Study
Location: New Zealand

Mark Freker’12*
Major: Health & Society
Project: NGO Database Project: Dongjen Center for Human Rights Education and Action
Location: Chicago, USA & Shanghai, China

Ellery Hamman’12
Major: Chinese Language and Culture
Project: Human Rights in China Internship
Location: Hong Kong

Ahmad Javid’10
Major: International Relations
Project: Democracy in Afghanistan - Summer Internship with the German Marshall Fund
Location: Washington, DC

Midori Bowen’11
Major: International Relations
Minors: E. Asian Studies, Peace & Justice Studies
Location: Saitama, Japan

Lauren Jones’11*
Major: Modern Languages
Minor: Asian Studies
Project: Human Rights and NGO Education Library
Project: Dongjen Center for Human Rights Education and Action
Location: Saitama, Japan

Anna Wolf’11
Majors: International Relations & Spanish
Project: Service Learning Internship with Seva Mandir
Location: Udaipur, India

*Projects funded through other sources.
September 2009

General Steven Xenakis delivered the 2\textsuperscript{nd} annual Weissberg Lecture on International Human Rights on September 14, 2009, entitled “Ending Torture: Implications for US Policy.”

Gen. Xenakis is a MD specializing in adolescent and pediatric psychiatry. Since his retirement from the US Army, he has worked with Physicians for Human Rights to speak out against the use of psychological torture by US personnel in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay, and to lobby for the passage of the Detainee Treatment Act prohibiting the cruel and inhuman treatment of prisoners.

Four alumni of Beloit College returned to campus for a career panel on human rights preceding the lecture: Zsolt Bobis, exchange student ’06, Hungarian Human Rights Foundation, New York; Molly Firkaly’04, Staff Counselor, United Nations Volunteer Program, Burundi; Tom McHale’07, Rotary Ambassador Scholar, Kenya, and student at Harvard School of Public Health; and Sonia Skidmore’07, Organizer, Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, Iowa.

September 2010

The 3\textsuperscript{rd} annual Weissberg Lecture on International Human Rights will be delivered by Jean-Marie Kamatali on September 13, 2010. Dr. Kamatali is a visiting assistant professor of law and assistant director of the LL.M. program at Ohio Northern University. Previously dean of the law school at the National University of Rwanda, he contributed to post-genocide legal and institutional rebuilding in Rwanda. Dr. Kamatali’s address will focus on human rights law.

The alumni panel on human rights careers preceding the lecture will include four Beloit College alumni who have worked and lived in Africa. They include Anne Koplinka-Loehr’06, who worked in Senegal; Megan Sievert’03, a filmmaker whose film, Heart in Place, captures the balance of peace and survival in Malawi; Michael Woldemariam’06, currently pursuing a PhD at Princeton in African politics; and Jacky Burger’04, who worked for the UN mission in Liberia.
Faculty Development in Human Rights

South Africa
Summer 2009

Five members of the junior faculty joined Beth Dougherty and Elizabeth Brewer to engage in an 8-week seminar on South Africa, connecting their teaching to study abroad and to human rights themes. The seminar culminated in a week-long visit to South Africa.

Participants (pictured below with students and staff of the LEAP School outside of Cape Town) were:
- Lisa Anderson-Levy, Anthropology
- Elizabeth Brewer, International Education
- Beth Dougherty, International Relations
- Rachel Ellett, Political Science
- Heath Massey, Philosophy
- Beatrice McKenzie, History
- Matt Tedesco, Philosophy

In addition to questions about study abroad and international education, the seminar participants discussed:
- Apartheid and Post-Apartheid History and Politics leading up to Nelson Mandela’s Presidency
- Prospects for Democracy in Post-Mandela South Africa
- The Relationship between Economic and Political Freedom
- Questions about Rights
- Questions about Race
- HIV/AIDS in South Africa

Istanbul, Turkey
Spring 2010

Participants in this seminar met for two days in January to discuss a variety of readings on historic and contemporary Turkey, many of them focused on aspects of human rights. Additionally, in preparation for a one-week visit to Istanbul in March, participants conducted research related to their particular interests in contemporary fiction, the status of the media and journalism, the family, post-empire nations, the east-west conflict and national identity, education, and theater for social change.

While in Istanbul, seminar participants visited sites of cultural and historic significance, explored neighborhoods, met with a leading journalist, and spent a day on the Yeditepe University campus. As well, they were able to meet with former exchange students and alumni as well as current Beloit students studying at Yeditepe University. The visit to Istanbul provided context for the readings discussed earlier in the semester, allowed participants to better understand the study abroad environment for their students, and helped them identify resources for their teaching.

As a result of the seminar, participants will add Turkish case studies and materials to their classes, be better able to advise students about study in Istanbul, and will work with their departments on strategies to better connect study abroad to the curriculum.

Participants in the seminar were: Elizabeth Brewer (International Education), Beth Dougherty (International Relations), Shawn Gillen and Chuck Lewis (both in English), Kate Linnenberg (Sociology), Donna Oliver (Russian), and Amy Sarno (Theater). Debra Majeed (Religious Studies) participated in the January seminar but was unable to travel to Istanbul.

Interest was so high in this seminar that a second group of faculty members will travel to Istanbul in October 2010.