Are We Having Fun Yet?
Hard-working Bates students find fun in expanded activities program

“M y objective is to provide students with as many different fun chem-free activities as possible,” says Keith Tannenbaum, assistant dean of students at Bates and coordinator of student activities.

From taking in fresh air to picking up new interests, Bates students benefit in all kinds of ways from the extracurricular programs with which Tannenbaum is involved. He organizes, or facilitates student groups that organize, activities ranging from whitewater rafting in the Maine wilderness to intimate folk music coffeehouses.

But the biggest boon from extracurricular activities at Bates is that they afford genuine alternatives to traditional “partying.” They also encourage students to come together — the perfect antidote to the sometimes stressful life of a college student. Weekend Lewiston-Auburn shuttles, in particular, help empower students to get away from campus and simply do normal stuff.

“So many of our students feel that without a car, you’re lost,” Tannenbaum says. “This is an alternative that allows them to get out, go to the grocery store, go to the mall, the movies, and not have to feel like they are stuck.”

“Bates is such a rigorous school,” explains Sarah Neukom ’05, of Colorado Springs, Colo. “You really need a chance to just relax on the weekends or focus on something else.”

The only problem with student activities at Bates, Adam Stern ’02 says with a smile, is that there’s not enough time to enjoy them all.

“There’s so much to do here for such a small school, it’s incredible,” he says. Stern, who comes from Newbury, Mass., adds that between the good friends he has made in four years and the smorgasbord of activities at Bates, it’s been hard to tear himself away for visits home.

“I feel like I’d be missing something,” he says.

Stern favors concerts — both large, like the Counting Crows show the Chase Hall Committee sponsored last October, and small, such as the intimate folk acts Tannenbaum’s office books for the Village Club Series. But the activities that Bates offers as a relief to arduous academics speak to nearly any interest.

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It’s hard to believe that this academic year is almost over and Bates will soon be graduating its 136th class. You may be a family whose son or daughter will be donning a cap and gown this spring, ready to bid farewell to life in Lewiston, a parent whose child has already taken the Bates preparation out into the world, or parents like us, whose daughter Kathrene will return next year. Our congratulations to all of you participating in these exciting milestones in your children’s lives!

Recently, we had the pleasure of hearing Elaine Tuttle Hansen accept her appointment as the next Bates president. She shared some insightful thoughts about her future role at Bates, which includes the challenges to build and sustain Bates’ academic excellence and to help bolster the fundraising efforts of the College. We look forward to her leadership.

Thank You
Through the efforts of the volunteers on the Bates Parents Fund Committee, the 2002 Fund has had tremendous success, raising more than $584,000 from 1,300 families! We are well on our way to meeting our goal of $600,000 from 1,578 Bates families and hope to set a new record. As co-chairs of the 2002 Parents Fund, we are extremely happy to see this generosity and are thrilled with the commitment from Bates parents, families, and friends. Half of the donors are parents of alumni who continue making gifts to benefit the students at Bates today and tomorrow, confirming the value of the Bates education. Your gifts really do help Bates provide each student and faculty member the best programs, facilities, events, and research opportunities. Every gift, large or small, makes a significant difference to our students.

Please enjoy the Bates decal included in this newsletter, compliments of the Bates Parents & Family Association. We hope this will be proudly displayed on your vehicle as you drive around your neighborhood to help enhance the Bates spirit throughout the United States and around the world.

What Shall I Do? CDIP Opportunities Provide Answers

Christopher Gorayeb ’80, an attorney in lower Manhattan, helped Ayana Sawai ’04 of Tokyo explore the field of personal-injury law during an intensive weeklong Career Development Internship Program (CDIP). Sawai shadowed Gorayeb as he made court appearances, deposed witnesses, and met with new clients. Christian Nauvel ’02 of Grand Baie, Mauritius, visited the Washington, D.C., offices of U.S. Congressman Robert Goodlatte ’74, a GOP leader in Internet law, who represents a conservative district in the Shenandoah Valley region of Virginia.

CDIP students such as Sawai and Nauvel spend a week during February break with a Bates graduate as their mentor. The internships can allow students to take a “reality test” to determine if they are really interested in a particular field. Spending time working in a profession offers a taste of the pros and cons, says Charles Kovacs, director of the Office of Career Services. “Many students return from the CDIP with a strong belief in their choice of career.” Other students who are confident of their choice of field, Kovacs says, may choose to explore different aspects of the same field. Either way, the internships build a bridge to the future by creating relationships with Bates alumni or friends who make introductions to others in the field.

Countdown to Commencement

Bates will graduate its 136th class at 10 a.m. Monday, May 27, following a festive weekend of activities including the Senior Commencement Concert, Baccalaureate Ceremony, the planting of the class ivy, and a champagne brunch. Invitations were mailed to all senior parents in March. Personalized announcements may be purchased through the college store.

Visit the Bates Web site www.bates.edu/commencement-2002.xml for detailed information about the weekend. The College’s director of alumni relations and coordinator of this event, Beth Sheppard, welcomes questions from parents. Contact her at esheppard@bates.edu or 207-786-6127.

Sheppard offers the following tip for parents: “We hire a professional photographer to photograph every senior receiving his or her diploma. The pro has the best view and gets great shots, and can save parents a lot of stress. Don’t try to get the shots yourself.” Proofs of the photographs are mailed to families about two weeks after graduation and reprints can be ordered directly from the photographer.

If you still need to make hotel reservations for the weekend, the Parents and Family Association Office has a list of local accommodations, or go to the Bates Web site www.bates.edu/x11783.xml.
President Donald W. Harward worked hard to forge relationships with Bates students during his presidency, which ends June 30 with his retirement after 13 years. “I’ve tried to send the message that the president is accessible,” he says, and as a result, Bates students will miss their activist president’s hands-on approach. When asked what they might wish to convey to Harward on the occasion of his departure, four students had this to say:

David Weliver ’03
Bolton, Mass.
Major: Sociology

“Whenever I speak to President Harward (whom a few of us at The Bates Student affectionately call ‘the Don’), he shows sincere interest in me even though I am one student among a career of thousands. Harward has been a patron for intellectual achievement and moral character. I will always remember his inspiring leadership.”

Nissa Gainty ’02
Concord, N.H.
Major: Music and Spanish

“Under President Harward, Bates has made important strides in the breakdown of barriers that have traditionally separated ‘us’ from ‘them.’ This has challenged us to ‘pop the Bubble’ and to learn from, and bring ourselves to, the surrounding community. Thank you, President Harward, for your vision and dedication to its realization.”

Jenny Blau ’02
Greenbrae, Calif.
Major: Interdisciplinary (Biology, Spanish, Sociology)

“Thank you for giving me the opportunity to integrate my service work at the Bates Street Health Center with my academics. I know that your establishment of the Center for Community Partnerships will encourage and support future students to form the same kind of local partnerships that have been such an integral and beneficial aspect of my Bates career. Good luck and you will be missed!”

Tahsin Alam ’04
Dhaka, Bangladesh
Major: Political Science

“I’ve traveled all over the world and have heard the praises sung of Bates’ excellence and reputation. We’ve exploded from being a small school in Maine to being a pioneer in liberal arts education. We achieved all this under the vision and motivation of ‘the Don.’ I’m thankful to President Harward for not only making us one of the nation’s most respected colleges, but for putting us on the global map as well.”

Submit and Defend

“I’m going to the gym now and work off some aggression,” said Chris Mabbett ’02 (at left) of Medford, Mass., one of 47 ambitious seniors to submit senior honors theses this spring. Mabbett, a geology major, researched “Trichloroethylene Contamination in a Shallow Unconfined Aquifer System: Is Natural Attenuation Working?”

Bleary-eyed seniors delivered manuscripts to academic services, outfitted with balloons and edibles. Students and their thesis advisers attended an evening reception, a prelude to the rigorous defense process that each student undergoes before a committee composed of an adviser, a departmental member of the Bates faculty, a non-departmental Bates professor, and an outside expert examiner.

A bulletin board invited comments from submitters. “One of the most intense, yet rewarding, experiences of my life. Thank you Bates!” wrote Rachel Beckhardt of Nashua, N.H., whose women and gender studies/psychology thesis explored women’s words on the meaning of food.

“It’s good to start early,” commented an anonymous — and wise — contributor.
In the classroom, Tom Wenzel uses innovative, project-based teaching strategies. In his research, he’s secured more than $1 million in external funding. And in both arenas, the real winners are Wenzel’s students, who hone skills that last a lifetime.

Wenzel students regularly become his research colleagues, often publishing their work in leading chemistry journals in addition to pursuing honors and senior theses. Lauded as the 1997 Maine Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation, Wenzel was recently honored with the 2002 Fellows Award from the Council for Undergraduate Teaching, honoring his “demonstrated sustained excellence in research with undergraduates.”

Part of Wenzel’s research investigates molecular chirality, or “handedness” — the natural phenomenon in which two otherwise identical organic molecules are actually mirror images of each other. Organic substances, such as medicines, can have both versions of the molecule, sometimes with marked differences in reactive properties.

**You employ “project-based” teaching strategies. How is that different from traditional teaching methods?**

Lab chemistry used to be, “Here’s a lab manual, follow instructions, do it.” Today, we present real problems where the answers aren’t known. It’s a better way to learn to solve problems, work together, and communicate. And it’s a better way to learn content. A student who learns something in passing during research will retain that knowledge with incredible understanding three months later during a department seminar. The same thing covered in class might be forgotten three days later.

**Why teach undergraduates? Why Bates?**

Undergraduates know enough to do meaningful and creative things, but not so much that they don’t have a lot to gain from their teacher. At a research university, the teaching of undergraduates is de-emphasized at the expense of scholarly work and research. I wanted undergraduate teaching also to become a very important component of my scholarly work. That would be the best of both worlds: having fun doing scholarly work and also being able to use it as student learning.

**For example?**

Bates has been remarkably generous at matching outside grants for instructional and research equipment. Last fall, we landed a NSF grant of $246,700 for a high-field nuclear resonance spectrometer, a device that reveals the three-dimensional shape of molecules. The equipment costs much more than the grant, yet Bates understands how important this equipment is and immediately matched the grant so the department could purchase the equipment. There are other institutions where people have to fight for matching funds.

**How does research influence your teaching?**

You can never stand still with your teaching. If you stand still with your scholarly work and intellectual development and your discipline, there’s a strong tendency to stand still in your teaching. If you develop as a scholar, you will develop as a teacher, and you will instill in your students the ability to want to ask questions that are more and more sophisticated.

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**Parents’ Reflections**

Parents can offer each other advice as they watch their children grow and develop at Bates. This column is one way for parents to share their experience. Please send thoughts or a short story you’d like to share to the Parents & Family Association Office, Bates College, 2 Andrews Road, Lewiston, Maine 04240, or send an e-mail to parents@bates.edu.

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As the parent of a first-year, I am still feeling my way around Bates, but all the people I’ve had contact with have gone out of their way to be friendly and helpful. I love the idea that my son is living and learning in such a place. Our son is involved in rowing, and we have attended some of the regattas. It’s a great way to share the fun, meet some of his friends and other parents, and also see the fine coaches in action.

— Terry Byrnes P’05

When our daughter, Sarah ’00, began her college search, Bates seemed out of the question to me because of its distant location and small size, but Sarah fell in love with everything about Bates. In hindsight, I am glad she did.

Starting as a second-semester freshman, Sarah had a rough road. But with the help of faculty and friends she finished her first year with flying colors and was chosen to be a JA the following year. Geology became her major and the opportunities afforded her were tremendous. As part of a five-year grant from the National Science Foundation, she spent a month in the Arctic researching global warming, which eventually became the focus of her senior thesis. Sarah grew intellectually and emotionally, thanks to Bates’ focus on the whole person. We were never more proud of her than the day she graduated!

Another challenge as parents was to have the same success for our twin sons, Andrew ’04 and James. I truly believe that, although our children may have their heart set on one college, they end up where they belong. Andrew had visited Bates several times while his sister was there and liked it very much but his heart was set on Bowdoin. James wanted to go to Princeton but is happily ensconced at Johns Hopkins.

Andrew is now blooming at Bates. A Bobcat of the Week on the men’s squash team, he hopes to major in economics, and is growing in all aspects!

— Cathy Roberts P’00, P’04
The Class of 2002 Senior Gift project is off to a great start!

It’s a tradition that every year the senior class raises money to give a gift to Bates in honor of the wonderful four years they spent here. The Senior Gift Committee, under the leadership of Joshua Moody and Maria Sparks, is off to a great start.

The committee met with Vicky Devlin, vice president for development, and Kimberly Hokanson, director of annual giving, earlier this winter to discuss their plans for the project. They are excited to announce that the Class of 2002 Senior Gift will be artwork from a local artisan. The committee has begun collaborating with the College and the art museum and is planning to display the commissioned work in the Muskie Gardens.

The class will present its gift at the Senior-Faculty Dinner at the end of Short Term.

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During the 2001-2002 academic year, in addition to the whitewater rafting trips in October, off-campus destinations have included major ski areas, Portland Pirates hockey games, and shopping trips to Freeport. A midnight sneak preview of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone at a local cinema drew more than 400 people (at a net cost to the College of about $60). And on-campus events run the gamut — not just music but dinners, dances, and comedy.

The College’s student activities tend to both reveal the breadth of the Maine experience and ensure that no tastes are ignored. “Whitewater rafting appeals to a very different kind of person than the shopping trip to Freeport,” home of outfitter L.L. Bean and a slew of outlet stores, Tannenbaum says.

“I have regular users of the bus who do all of the trips regardless, because they just like to get off campus and to try new things,” he continues. “And then when I do trips to ski at Sugarloaf or do whitewater rafting, I get a group who would normally never be involved with some of these things they don’t necessarily think of as ‘cool.’”

Tannenbaum also advises three of Bates’ 60-plus student organizations — the Representative Assembly, the Chase Hall Committee, and the Ronj, a student-run coffeehouse. And his office helps out the other groups on campus in whatever ways it can.

The net result is that, as Neukom puts it, events at Bates “are really well done. There’s always something you can do, and they always let you know about them. You’re never left in the dark — you always know about something far enough in advance that you can sign up for it in plenty of time. I think it’s really great.”

Best of all, Neukom adds, “when they do something, they do it up right.” For example, on longer trips “the buses are the nice coaches,” she laughs. “They don’t make you ride on school buses all over the place.”
Kyle Hildebrand ’02 won the slalom at the University of New Hampshire carnival and finished second at the Bates carnival at Sunday River this year.

Skiing is Believing for Kyle Hildebrand ’02

Bates senior alpine skier Kyle Hildebrand ’02 of Waitsfield, Vt., graduated from Green Mountain Valley School, a top New England ski academy in his hometown, in 1996. He was all set to attend the University of Vermont, another ski factory, and stay close to home in Burlington.

Hildebrand deferred a year from UVM to try his hand full-time at competitive skiing. In between competitive trips and earning money by doing some logging, he found a way to visit friends from GMVS. “In a graduating class of about 20, a quarter of them came to Bates,” Hildebrand remembered. “I hadn’t really looked here before, but then I came up to see my friends. I enjoyed the atmosphere and community so much, I applied almost right away.”

After deferring from Bates for another year, Hildebrand put himself on the Eastern Intercollegiate Skiing Association (EISA) map right away. He earned his first All-America honor by finishing seventh in the slalom when Bates hosted the NCAA championships at Sunday River in 1999. After missing the top 10 in 2000, Hildebrand came back with a vengeance last year, placing second in the slalom and sixth in the giant slalom, the highest finish ever by a Bobcat at the national championships. His three All-America awards are the most ever by a Bates alpine skier.

“Beyond graduation, I’d like to give a couple years back to skiing, either working for skiing companies or coaching. I’m also applying to international law schools, but that is down the road.”

With luck that deferral will be as rewarding as previous ones.