

NAVIGATING THEIR WAY THROUGH LEGACY

by Robyn Kaplan

Waking up that morning, all they knew was that they were going to be in the woods all day and should dress accordingly. What the 2007 Legacy Students did not expect was to be *lost* in the woods with obstacles to face and no way out but teamwork and persistence. With logistical and planning support from our friends in ROTC, our student leaders engaged in the ultimate outdoor challenge and team builder on the 16th of September. Legacy students were broken down into groups and told that it was a race to see who could navigate their way through the woods and get out first. What they didn't know, however,



Change, Passion, Humility, Failure, and Risk were the themes of this Fall's land navigation activity—setting the stage for discussions planned for the rest of the semester.

is that no one group could complete the task alone. In the end, they needed each other in order to emerge successful. Each group had very different experiences while in the course, an aspect of the activity that they did not discover until the end. While one group had to cross a river, another group had nothing but flat terrain. One group had to change course in the

middle of the activity while another group's directions were wrong from the beginning. Each group's course layout and experience represented a theme. Those themes—passion, humility, change, and failure, along with risk—are the cornerstones of the bi-weekly Legacy sessions being held this semester at the Alumni House. The Legacy students woke up thinking they were going to be playing in the woods. They went home reflecting on their journey and roles as leaders, while wondering what curveballs life may throw at them next.



A TRULY 'OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD' EXPERIENCE

The Moon, Mars and beyond were only some of the topics covered when Legacy Students met with NASA Astronaut and UConn Alum Franklin Chang-Diaz ('73) on Saturday, October 20th at the Rocky Hill Marriott. Invited to speak at the 40th Anniversary Banquet of the Student Support Services Program later that evening, Mr. Chang-Diaz met in a less formal setting with students from the Legacy Experience, Honors Program, and School of Engineering. Mr. Chang-Diaz shared his personal and professional journey from Costa Rica to America, to UConn and MIT, and eventually into orbit; as well as his own experiences as an entre-



preneur in the field of fusion technology and propulsion. Equally riveting was his vision for the future of space exploration, energy production, and the earth itself! Students and guests were fascinated by the discussion as well as Mr. Chang-Diaz' 'matter-of-fact' perspectives and beliefs about the future of

space exploration and settlement. The conversation touched on topics including not only space, technology, and energy, but also the arts. One of the most fascinating moments was as Chang-Diaz shared his experience of orbiting over the Indian Ocean and watching the sun rise in the east while listening to the 4th movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 (Pastoral Symphony). It made more than a few in the audience want to grab their iPods and dial up classical music. As Legacy Student Jon Sierakowski noted, Mr. Chang-Diaz was not only talking about space, science, or even the arts, 'he was talking about humanity.'



LEAVING A LEGACY OVER SUMMER BREAK

It has been a busy semester for everyone. Looking back a bit however, the Legacy Students were anything but idle this past summer. From across the country and beyond they were out gaining new experiences, helping their communities and leaving their legacies. Here are just a few of their activities from this past summer....



Charlayne completed a human rights internship in health education and English as a Second Language in the Dominican Republic. She also completed a clinical internship shadowing an anesthesiologist where she was able to observe over 100 hours of procedures in the operating room, including a C-section, open heart surgery, and brain surgery. Finally,

Charlayne spent the remainder of the summer conducting research in Dr. Basu's chemistry laboratory at UConn. Her project focused on the mutations caused by various DNA lesions in human embryonic kidney cells.



Dave interned in the Budget Office of the Hamilton County, OH, municipal offices, creating a document that summarizes the county government's achievements over the past year, and which is distributed to all residents in the county. Dave was also responsible for researching the impact of various budget cuts, tax increases, and other fiscal policies that the county is considering.

Allie received a Summer Undergraduate Research Fund (SURF) grant to continue research into the customs and beliefs underlying traditional burn care. For five weeks, she conducted interviews at Pronto Socorro Para Queimaduras, a referenced burn hospital, in Goiania, Brazil.



Sam held an internship for the Putnam County Executive in New York. During this experience she coordinated the Summer Intern Program where she hired, placed, and supervised 35 college interns in various County departments. She also had the opportunity to go to Albany and lobby for local legislation and meet several important state officials. In addition, she traveled to Washington D.C. in July and presented her policy proposal on an Expanded Family and Medical Leave Act at a national conference attended by officials in the Department of Labor. The proposal was published in June in a national journal for policy ideas.

Christian worked for the Trumbull Public School System as a para-professional teacher working with autistic children. He also had an internship at Vertrue, Inc. in Norwalk, CT where he researched potential partners, analyzed competitors marketing strategies, and assisted with new partner contracts.



THE CYCLES OF LEGACY

The Leadership Legacy Experience announced its **call for nominations** for the 2008 Legacy Student cohort. Faculty, staff, and students across campus have been invited to nominate students for next year's group of outstanding student leaders. Nominations will be accepted through November 7th.

The **2007 Legacy Experience Closing Banquet** will be held Sunday, December 2nd in the Great Hall at the Alumni House on campus. Students, parents, administrators, and supporters will gather to recognize our first group of Legacy Students as they complete their journey in the Experience and look to leaving their legacy beyond UConn.





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