

GENESEO

CENTER FOR INQUIRY DISCOVERY & DEVELOPMENT

Introducing the 2014 Student Ambassadors

Frank Vafier '74 Ambassadors in Leadership

Tom Silva & Sara Diaz (Junior), *"Genesee Valley Cooperative Development"*

The Genesee Valley Cooperative (GVC) will provide physical space that is an open-minded and active hub for the community of Geneseo. This fully student owned and run cooperative house will be used to encourage interaction and collaboration between community members and students by hosting workshops, dinners and other events. During our Ambassadorship we will critically examine the meaning of "living intentionally".

Joshua Murphy (Junior), *The Education Conversation*

Along with a group of educators and entrepreneurial guru I have founded a center for self-directed teen learning in Livingston County. During my Ambassadorship I will carry out a multi-faceted approach to preparing our County for the success of such an organization. To ensure success, this summer I will be attending conferences: Alternative Education Resource Organization's Annual Conference and the Liberated Learners Conference.

James Houston '80 Ambassador in Innovation

Tushara Surapaneni (Junior), *GIS for Health Statistics in Borgne, Haiti*

I have devoted my academic studies toward pursuing a career in the global public health sector, specifically in the developing world. During my Ambassadorship I will complete spatial epidemiology research in Borgne, Haiti to create maps that display public health data utilizing GPS and GIS technology. Most importantly, the impact of this research will meet the needs of administrators, physicians, and the community members of Borgne.

Community Advocates Ambassador in Community Engagement

Staci Weiss (Junior), *Bridging the Geneseo Students to Children in Need*

During my Ambassadorship I will implement a structured series of clinically-developed programs to empower and educate children of Bridge, a free daycare that centers on the vulnerable youth of Mount Morris, New York. I will train a team of student-volunteers to incorporate elements of intervention targeted to optimize the outcomes of low-socioeconomic status children.

Provost's Ambassadors in Diversity

Catherine McWilliams (Junior), *Looking Forward/Looking Back: (Re)Staging Memory & The College Experience*

College is a weird sort of liminal time-space, caught as we are between adolescence and adulthood. During my Ambassadorship I am interested in exploring how college students negotiate this time in their life. I am interested in teasing out the importance of memories to how we see ourselves. I will be interviewing and photographing my peers as a way of making sense of my time in college as well as a way of helping others make sense of theirs.

Olga Semertzidis (Senior), *One Family, Four Generations of Immigrants*

My parents are both immigrants. I am the fourth consecutive generation on my father's side of the family to be born in a different country than that of their parents. I believe my story is not unique in the American experience. My Ambassadorship will include an oral history project, supplemented by archival research, conducting interviews in Katerini, Greece. My aim is to humanize the displacement of people and utilize my family's story as a representative for the many who have been forced to relocate and start new lives because of political threats and economic hardships.

John A. '87 and MaryGrace '84 Gleason Ambassador in Student Affairs

Catherine Peterson (Junior), *Coach for College – Hard Work Equals Success*

Working side by side with American student athletes, as well as Vietnamese college students this Ambassadorship will allow me the opportunity to teach eighth and ninth grade Vietnamese students through sports and academics (math), inspiring them to achieve high levels of leadership, teamwork, competition and collaboration, especially in relation to future success. The Coach for College initiative has seen significant improvement in the students' performance in schools after attending the camp. I will bring awareness of the Coach for College program to the Geneseo community upon my return.

Edward Pettinella '73 Ambassador in Business

Eric Maldonado (Senior), *Bringing the Sonata Back: A Cross-Cultural Approach to Reinvigorate Classical Music*

I will be looking for an answer to the fundamental question: Why are the arts, especially Classical music, much more relevant and popular in Europe, whether it is a matter of simple funding – and government subsidies are ubiquitous for music students and organizations – or something more complex like the interweaving of fine arts and Classical music into the culture and education? My Ambassadorship will provide exposure to different business models and allow me to look at a world I love from a fresh and optimistic perspective, and will allow me to visit European countries I have never visited before.

CAS Ambassador in Entrepreneurship

Luciano Scala (Senior), *VisoWorld*

From the time I was a little boy in Italy, I dreamed about coming to America. Now I know that Geneseo is my place. My start-up, VisoWorld, aims at simplifying the match-making process between students and global learning opportunities. During my Ambassadorship I will be working on the complex steps of launching my business. The process will include the application of scientific method, coordination of a team and innovatively adapting pre-existing technologies to the field of international education.

Gerard Gouvernet Ambassador in French Language and Culture

Matthew McClure (Sophomore), *Summer Study of French and Haitian Creole Language and Associated Culture*

Through my Ambassadorship I will be improving my oral French and Haitian Creole. Traveling to Chicoutimi, Quebec and Boston this summer for study programs and immersion in the local ethnic communities will help me contribute to Geneseo's developing partnership with Borgne, Haiti. My future role in this partnership is to design an introductory Haitian Creole course for service learning students so that they might collect more data and make lasting friendships.

The Geneseo Alumni Association Ambassador of Philanthropy

Jennifer Grom (Junior), *Fostering Philanthropy and Friendships across Fences*

As school children, my brother and I founded S.A.F.E, Save a Future with Education, after a visit to Lake Chapala in Mexico. I am proud to say S.A.F.E. has provided over 500 scholarships to students in the village of Ajijic for school supplies and uniforms since 2002. My Ambassadorship will include a documentary demonstrating the synergistic effects of philanthropy and create opportunities for Geneseo students to participate in S.A.F.E. The documentary will feature the success of scholarship recipients in Ajijic and document the dramatic impact that the S.A.F.E. program has had domestically. Additionally, I will be creating an e-pal program between Ajijic students and SUNY Geneseo students.