

FRANKLY SPEAKING

Olin's unofficial,
student-run news
source.

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 3

NOVEMBER 2013

FREE, AS IN BEER

Beyond Interdisciplinary

Allen Downey
Faculty Contributor

For a long time Olin has used the word “interdisciplinary” to describe our curriculum, but I think it's time to stop. Being interdisciplinary was new and exciting for schools 20 years ago, but now it is routine. Olin should be one step ahead while everyone else is catching up – we should be working on the next thing. And the next thing is “postdisciplinary.”

To explain what that means, I'll use the analogy of racial integration. In an integrated society, people from different racial groups live together peacefully. In a post-racial society, the fact that different types of people live together doesn't even have a name; that is just how it is, and how it always should have been.

Similarly, in an integrated curriculum, there are novel classes that combine topics from more than one discipline. In a postdisciplinary curriculum, classes are designed to meet the needs of students without regard to discipline, and they include the topics necessary to serve those needs. The crossing

of those topics cross with what used to be “disciplinary boundaries” doesn't bear comment, because that's just how it is, and how it always should have been.

Modeling and Simulation is a good example (chosen because of my familiarity with it, not because it is uniquely postdisciplinary). The goal of ModSim is for students to use models to predict, explain, and design. Toward that end, students learn programming skills, as well as topics in mathematics, science, and communication (both oral and written).

Does that mean that ModSim “integrates” Computer Science, Math, Science, Engineering, and AHS? You could say that, but by framing it that way, you are betraying the lingering pre-conceptions of a disciplinary mindset. It would a simpler, better representation of the class, to say that it teaches such a variety of skills because they are what students need to build and use models.

If this kind of integration is noteworthy, it's only because so many traditional classes are designed to satisfy constraints that are accidents of history, not the

needs of current students.

One of the biggest barriers to a postdisciplinary curriculum is the faculty. We were trained in a disciplinary world, and many of us attach a large part of our personal identity to our disciplines. My title is “Professor of Computer Science,” and for a long time my professional identity was “computer scientist.” Now I'm not so sure.

Olin does not have colleges, schools or departments. We offer only one curriculum – an engineering curriculum. Every student is a student of engineering, and every professor who teaches part of our curriculum is a professor of engineering.

Part of the problem is that we can't hire postdisciplinary professors; we have to grow them. When we hire new members of the faculty, we give them a title based on their degree, research area, and teaching responsibilities. But when they come to Olin, they should co-teach existing classes and co-develop new ones, gradually expanding their repertoire and expertise. When they have taught and created some substantial part of the curriculum, we should

continued on next page

take away their disciplinary title and rebrand them as Professor of Engineering, or Professor of Olin, or maybe just Professor.

Over the last few weeks, I have had a chance to talk

about these ideas with a few professors and students. The reaction of many faculty has been skeptical and often negative. The reaction of students, most of the time, goes some-

thing like this: "Well, duh."

A postdisciplinary curriculum is like a postracial society. It's not an invention; it's just how things should be, and always should have been.

Popping the Olin Bubble: October Edition

10/1 A Buddhist mob torched more than seventy homes and stabbed a 94-year-old woman to death in Myanmar.

10/2 Tom Clancy died at the age of sixty-six.

10/3 Adobe announced that the data of 2.9 million customers was stolen in a security breach.

10/4 A man of undeclared motive self-immolated at the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

10/5 The US Department of Defense recalled 350,000 of its furloughed civilian workers.

10/6 Twelve people are injured, and one killed, during a shooting at a motorcycle clubhouse in Fresno, CA.

10/7 Mulatu Teshome succeeded Girma Wolde-Giorgis as President of Ethiopia.

10/8 Peter Higgs and Francois Englert win the 2013 Nobel Prize in Physics.

10/9 Ten people were killed by a fire in a garment factory in Gazipur, Bangladesh.

10/10 The BBC announced the discovery of nine missing episodes of Dr. Who starring Patrick Troughton, the second

Doctor.

10/11 The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons wins the Nobel Peace Prize.

10/12 At least fifty people died after a truck veered off a cliff in Peru.

10/13 Gunmen kidnap seven workers from the Red Cross in northern Syria.

10/14 A dry ice bomb exploded in an employee restroom at Los Angeles International Airport.

10/15 Charles Taylor, former President of Liberia, arrived in the UK to serve the remainder of a 50-year sentence.

10/16 Malala Yousafzai was awarded with Honorary Canadian citizenship.

10/17 At least seven emergency warnings were issued for bushfires in New South Wales, Australia.

10/18 The Constitution Council of France rules that the country's mayor cannot refuse to officiate at same-sex marriages.

10/19 At least seventy-nine people were injured in a train crash at the Once railway station in Buenos Aires.

10/20 Toyato Motor Corporation recalls 885,000

vehicles due to electrical problems.

10/21 A student at Sparks Middle School in Nevada kills a teacher and injures two other students before killing himself.

10/22 The Australian Capital Territory becomes the first Australian territory to legalize same-sex marriage.

10/23 A 14-year-old student from Danvers, MA was accused of killing his math teacher and dumping the body in the woods.

10/24 The World Health Organization reports that a polio outbreak began in Deir Ezzor, Syria.

10/25 Japan declared a tsunami warning after a 7.3 earthquake struck off its east coast.

10/26 Iran hanged sixteen rebels in retaliation for the deaths of fourteen border guards who were killed in an ambush.

10/27 A roadside bomb in Kabul, Afghanistan, killed eighteen wedding guests.

10/28 Gunmen stole \$54m from a van carrying local and foreign currency for the Libyan central bank.

Jackie Rose
Staff Writer

Under Utilized Resources

This month, Frankly Speaking posed the question "What is one resource available to Olin students that is massively under utilized?" to the student body of Olin.

IT Resources! Everything from stuweb (Olin-hosted webspace!), to the Cable TV in the dorms, to all the shares (like stufac or your network-wide private user folder. Check out \\fsvs01 sometime!). Judging by the amount of unclaimed print jobs I see daily, very few people do 'secure printing' on the Xeroxes. And see the software on Applications (ECEs, we have DipTrace!). Beyond all that, we have a fantastic network everywhere on campus with Gigabit, powered ethernet and a new, whole-campus wifi network. And the IT Helpdesk is open 8-6 on weekdays to help with almost any issue you may have. Check out it.olin.edu to see everything that you can do!

Mitch Cieminski
Contributor

I think the machine shop is underused. Don't get me

wrong, it gets used all the time by a select group of students; however, the majority of Olin students don't spend much time machining things. It makes me sad to see just a few people getting trained on all of the machines, and yet so many don't make it past the green machines.

Anonymous
Contributor

Not directly related to Olin, but useful transportation tips. Need something besides Go-Bikes and friend taxis?

There is a 59-bus connection in Needham (brief walk/bike ride) that connects to the Newton Highlands Green Line Station. If you are ever in a bind and cannot find someone to take you to Eliot during the day - try going there (cost is \$2 or less).

On weekends for later times, you can use the Babson shuttle which goes to/from Woodland Green Line Station. Your Olin prox card serves as a free pass.

Other transportation options if you have cash to spare

are Babson Zip-cars (\$7 - \$13 an hour), the Wellesley Commuter Rail Station (straight to central Boston and Red Line, \$13.50 round trip), or Needham Commuter Rail Station (straight to central Boston and Red Line, \$12 round trip). Bikes are allowed on the Commuter Rail.

Anonymous
Contributor

The Machine Shop. It is an incredible resource that we have practically full access to as students and relatively few take advantage of.

Gaby Waldman-Fried
Contributor

I feel like the really nice BigBelly Solar Trash Compactor (yay Olin!) that is outside the dining hall is really under-utilized, just because it's in a spot where you very rarely have any trash.

Jennifer Anderson
Contributor

Next month's question: "What qualities or characteristics make someone a great teammate?"

MEET THE OLINER Emily Shackleton



Class of 2013.5
From Wayland, Massachusetts

- went to Antarctica with her twin sister Sarah
- collects baby spoons,

but not the tourist kind
• favorite thing to do in high school was skipping class to go running

Jessica Diller
Columnist



GREEN SPACE*

Green Space is for anyone who wants to contribute to or learn about green initiatives at Olin and the world. Want to submit an article about green initiatives? Please do! Want to learn how you can make a difference in your own life or at Olin? Easy! Want to learn about cool things people are doing at Olin (and elsewhere) to reduce our impact on the environment and improve sustainable technologies?

Dude, we got you covered. So please, read on and listen well, because, you know, this is your world too.

A better place

As a “Little Known Fact” from the last Frankly Speaking pointed out, it is very easy to get caught up in the Olin bubble in an alarming way. There is so much going on here at Olin that one can forget to pay attention to anything else, from current events to struggling with what we want to work for.

One of my favorite

ways to describe Olin is that we’re more “context focused” than other schools, in that it’s not just about what we’re engineering, but why and how. We do some of that really well; we think about the “how” whenever we talk about curriculum or project-based learning, and we talk about the “why” when we work on design, but people’s broader motivations may be less clear.

I’d like to propose a question: What are you doing to make the world a better place for the people who will and do live here?

I find it important to think about those who will come after us, making the world a place where human life has the potential to flourish indefinitely. If you’ve heard anything about global climate change, ecosystem destruction, or depleting natural resources, you know we have a very serious challenge ahead of us.

I urge you to think of ways that you can help. It should start with habits: turning off the lights when

you leave the room should be natural (if you’re coming back in soon, you can turn them back on soon); eating better food; buying fewer products that you don’t need; raising the blinds instead of turning on the lights; being conscious of napkin use in the dining hall, paper use in the computer lab, and paper towel use in the bathrooms; biking instead of driving. These are just a few examples of what you can do every day. Hopefully, you’ll choose to do something more too, perhaps working for a clean-tech company, pushing for sustainability initiatives here at Olin or wherever you work, or some other way of making a bigger impact.

The easiest way to start making changes is to start making changes. The more you do, the more you realize that living for a better world just about always means living for a better you.

David Pudlo
Contributor

Errata from Frankly Speaking: October Issue

Last month's cover article claimed that Frankly Speaking was founded three years ago. It actually existed at the start of Olin, but died and was *restarted* three years ago. In the election article, Hillary Clinton's name was misspelled.

GrOW's Current Initiatives

Gabrielle Ewall, David Pudlo, Ruby Spring
Contributors

GrOW is reinvigorating itself this year. We've got some big ideas and projects that we're going to push for, so we're keeping you, the student body, informed as to what's going on and how you can get involved. Below are updates on our current initiatives, if you have any questions, contact David Pudlo.

The Olin Secret Garden

Over the summer, a few students created the Olin Secret Garden in the middle of Parcel B! We're experimenting, trying to learn what we can grow here in MA, and seeing what it takes to build a garden from the ground up. We've already had some successful harvest, basil, kale, and corn. Make sure to stop by and check it out, it's near the trebuchet (and feel free to grab a bit of basil or kale!). In the future, we're looking into wintering structures and a rainwater collection system, as well as (of course) more yummy plants! Go to olinsecretgarden.blogspot.com to follow our progress.

Shower Heads at Olin: Fun Facts

Kat Brookshier
Contributor

In the short survey I sent out a few days ago for IPD, I asked students to guess how many gallons a typical 10 minute shower uses.

Dining Hall Initiatives

GrOW is working to bring sustainability to our dining hall! We care about reducing the environmental impact that goes into our meals. We want to reduce the negative impact upon the environment from harmful pesticides and unsustainable farming practices. That means pursuing a number of different initiatives in collaboration with our dining hall staff.

Students and dining hall staff are working to increase the amount of healthy, locally sourced food in the dining hall. We'd like to offer more humanely raised meat and dairy products in the cafeteria. We'd also like to increase the number of vegetarian options at each meal, and reduce the amount of meat we're consuming. We're hoping to reintroduce meatless Mondays. Livestock like beef and lamb generate more greenhouse gases than other food sources -- especially when that livestock comes from factory farming. So if we don't eat as much meat, maybe our dining hall will be able to afford more sustainably grown meat that's better for you and the environment.

As an individual and an omnivore, there are lots of ways to minimize your environmental impact in the dining hall. You could become a weekday vegetarian, or avoid eating beef and lamb. Get involved with GrOW! Look for our table in the dining hall where we will be discussing ideas for the dining hall, and gathering student support for our initiatives.

Solar at Olin

Well, not yet, but GrOW is working on it! We currently have a meeting scheduled with higher powers to discuss our options for solar. Here at GrOW we are super excited about converting Olin to solar power, and you should be too. With roof-space and the possibility of solar panel-covered parking lot canopies, Olin has the potential to generate most to all of our own energy. Considering the large sums of energy we currently consume from the grid (about 4 million kWh last year), that would be a huge triumph for both the environment and, in time, Olin's finances. We'll get back to you soon with more updates on this exciting prospect!

Corey Cavicchi, Olin's Associate Plant Manager, has informed me that Olin shower heads have a 2.5 gallon per minute flow (the maximum federal regulatory standard since 1994), but that facilities is "planning to install

1.5 GPM shower heads over Thanksgiving break."

Based on this information, an average 10-minute shower uses 25 gallons of water now, but will use only 15 gallons of water after the anticipated change.

The Business Side of Start-ups

Molly Farison

CEO of Lilypad Scales, LLC

Back in March when Amos and I applied to the MassChallenge accelerator program, we had a cool idea, some initial feedback from potential customers, and a POE-level prototype showing that we could really build a usable bathroom scale for people in wheelchairs. However, when we were accepted into the program and started talking to people, it turned out that there was a lot more to learn about “the business side of things” than we thought. It’s not as simple as just building a product and selling it in an online store, and crowdfunding sites like Kickstarter are not as effective unless you’re selling to engineers (like Technical Machine) or the general population (like 3Doodler). Here are some of the major things we have internalized in the past four months of running a business:

1. If you’re selling a product, it probably makes sense to go through distributors. These exist in every industry, and they are often industry-specific (except for stores like Walmart, Costco, and Target). When you sell to distributors, your value proposition is inherently different. Instead of telling individual customers why your product would make their lives better, you are telling businesses why your product would fill a gap in their product line and generate profit

for them. For us, this means selling our scale to stores that sell wheelchairs, ramps, bath seats, and other independence-enabling products.

2. Your total materials and production cost should not be the selling price of your product. If you are going to sell through distributors, your wholesale price (how much you charge the distributor per item) may have to be as little as half of the retail price (how much you charge the end user per item). Additionally, your cost of materials and manufacturing should probably be less than half of your wholesale price so that you can make a profit and continue to run your business. Thus, if it costs you $\$X$ to make your product, you might sell it to Target for $\$2X$, who then sells it to customers for $\$4X$. If customers are unwilling to buy your product for $\$4X$ then you may not have a viable business idea.

3. Fundraising is difficult and takes a lot of time, and winning investments is a lot like dating. You meet a potential investor informally, and either at some point in the conversation you pop the question “Would you be interested in investing?” or if you’re lucky your potential investor will tell you outright that she would be interested in investing.

If she asks the question, “Are you raising funds?” too early, you should answer “No” if possible, because investors love it when you

don’t seem needy right away. Later you send her a slide deck about the company, the executive summary of your business plan, and a term sheet (so she knows how investing will benefit her). Maybe you set up a phone call or an in-person meeting to discuss what questions she might have (and at this point you still have no idea whether she plans on investing $\$5$, $\$50,000$, or $\$500,000$). You do some back and forth, and in your head you set some time limit like 6 weeks for the negotiation process. If the end of that time window gets close, let the investor know you’re “closing,” so that she doesn’t just take up your time asking questions if she doesn’t intend to invest. Eventually she might say yes, and when that day comes, hopefully you have your forms ready, so you can get her to commit to it pretty immediately. Finally, the cash takes a painfully long time to actually get to your company bank account.

4. Patience, Patience, PATIENCE! Everything takes longer than you think (so try not to give time estimates for anything unless you are the only person that task depends on). You are a startup, operating on a similar time scale to a student in engineering school (checking your email constantly, thinking about problem-solving in the shower, and working more than 40 hours a week). Anyone else you interact with is not on that schedule. Receiv-

ing money takes even longer than receiving documents, which takes even longer than setting up a simple meeting. And doing these things with doctors, entrepreneurs, or CEOs of slightly larger companies takes even longer, because although they operate on your hectic time scale, your email may be missed until a month later when they are cleaning out their inboxes.

5. You are not your business. If you, as an agent of

your business, royally screw up, people will not hate you. At worst, they will think less of your venture and may tell others not to purchase your product. Apologize early and often, and they will forgive you. From the other side, recognize that other people are not their businesses. Point out flaws in the business, not the person.

6. Free things are everywhere, especially in the Boston startup community. Many law firms offer up to

\$10,000 in deferred fees, meaning you don't have to pay a dime until you raise \$500,000 or more. Take advantage of these deals (so that maybe you can go out to dinner once in a while). Negotiate or find alternatives when the cost of doing things one way is too high for your budget, and do things to save cost like filing a provisional patent before you file a full patent. Patent pending means the same thing either way!

the one who moves

Anonymous
Contributor

You are the one who moves
Who can't sit still

There are too many tools to grab
Too many races to run
Too many sources of brilliance in this world

And you want to know them all
You want to feel the burn of your soul as it struggles to find new meaning
Its sinews stretching
Skin sweating

It will ache tomorrow
But grow back stronger

You always move because to sit still
Is to be dormant, to be stagnant
Slowly collecting rest and rot when
You deserve a riot
Pulsing through your veins
Like the crowded streets of a carnival parade

You know to be stagnant is to die
Years before they bury you
And your body, instead of being emblazoned with
The marks of your journey
The callouses, the scars, the missing bits,
Your body starts to reflect the bloat of your stagnant self

So go on, don't sit still
Waiting in idle occupation has gotten too many people nowhere
But you're headed to nowhere and back
And everywhere in between
Because you are the one who moves.

Interview with the Foundry

In this email interview, Frankly Speaking asked Brett Rowley from the Foundry a few questions about the presence of the Foundry on campus and how students can get involved.

FRANKLY: What is the Foundry?

ROWLEY: The Foundry is Olin's student-run entrepreneurship organization. It's been around nearly as long as Olin, albeit in several different forms. "The Foundry" used to specifically refer to Edison House on Great Plains, which acted as an incubator and office space to student startups like Big Belly and the coffee guys. As it grew, it merged with another Olin entrepreneurship group and "the Foundry" became the name for both the building and the group. Now, since Edison house was re-appropriated for Marketing and External Relations office space, "the Foundry" largely refers to just the student group. We do have space in the Campus Center (on the 3rd floor, you'll see our sign) that is available for students to use, but that space is not utilized as much as we'd like.

FRANKLY: What does the Foundry do aside from the Startup Career Fair?

ROWLEY: Everyone knows that Startup Fair since it's by far our biggest even of the semester, but it's a great question. Broadly, our mission is to promote awareness and interesting in startups and entrepreneurship amongst Olin

students. This is a little more general than in previous years when the Foundry was all about getting Oliners to start their own ventures. We are 100% behind students with a vision, but we don't want people to think E! only means starting a company. We raise awareness of awesome events in Boston, help organize the logistics of getting their, creating and sharing a network of amazing founders, designers, developers, and professors, as well as providing financial, physical, and human resources to students starting their own company.

FRANKLY: How can the Foundry help students?

ROWLEY: Well like I said, if you want to start a company or have an idea for a venture, come talk to us. We can offer early-stage funding and give you dedicated office space, but our biggest benefit to you is connecting you with an incredible network across the New England startup community. Olin may be small, but past and present Foundry members have managed to create a great network over the past 5 years. So if you're looking for a co-founder, a mentor, a domain specialist, an investor, or just someone to bounce ideas off of, we can help.

"But I don't want to start a venture!" I hear you cry. Fear not! The Foundry can help you too. We let you know about must-go events, get great discounts for students, help arrange transportation,

let you know about awesome engineering opportunities with Boston startups, and bring companies to campus to talk about the work they're doing or whatever other cool stories they have.

FRANKLY: What else is the Foundry planning and how can students get involved?

ROWLEY: One part of our mission I forgot to mention was figuring out how to make the Babson-Olin relationship work. The schools aren't next door by accident - both bring a lot to the table, but it can sometimes be hard to see that through radically different cultures, bad past experiences, and perpetuated stereotypes. One of the biggest things we are planning right now is a series of informal events to bring Babson and Olin students together to just chat about cool technologies, startups, and opportunities. The Babson Undergraduate E! group is going through a big re-branding push this year and we hope that that transition gives us an opportunity to really push the Babson/Olin partnership forwards. You can help! Let us know that you're interested in being part of one of the most important aspects of Olin's future by emailing the board at foundationboard@lists.olin.edu.

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StatMod to Replace DesNat

Colby Sato
Contributor

In the fall of 2014, Olin will be removing Design Nature from the curriculum and replacing it with a new course called Statistics and Modeling. Many students lament this change, pointing out that Design Nature was their favorite course and was their first large team project.

Previously, Olin has endorsed hands-on learning, teamwork, and design thinking, but recently, too many students have reported also enjoying their work. According to Design Nature profes-

sor Jim Bean, "Olin students are having too much fun. This is Olin College of Engineering, not Olin College of duct-tape and white delirium." Though Olin students may get a lot of soft skills out of Design Nature, alumni interviewed said they've never been able to land a job or internship based on their hot-gluing skills. However, "numbers and stuff" is an area of expertise that is always in demand.

With any change, there will be opposition. Students have expressed concern that first-years will get their classes confused, since

they are already required to take ModSim and ModCon. With one more "Modeling" course, students may think Op-Amps control the populations of sharks and rays.

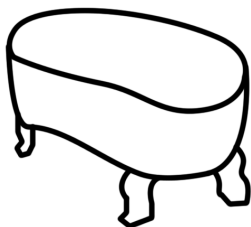
NINJA Jane Doe believes the abundance of modeling classes will be good: "Everything will become a bathtub, and maybe students will finally understand how they work. Have you been in the lounges lately?"

Olin is constantly innovating, and each innovative change leads to more changes. Do you think this is a change long overdue? Is Pass/No Record next?

We have a new bathtub? I am bubbling with joy!



Are we really going with puns for this? They are really draining you know!



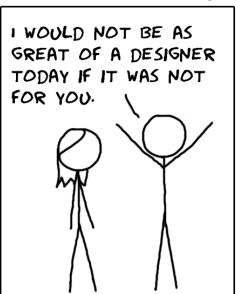
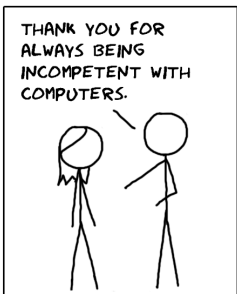
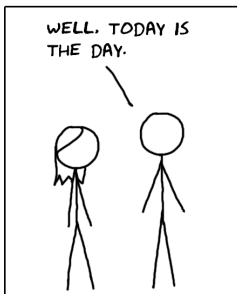
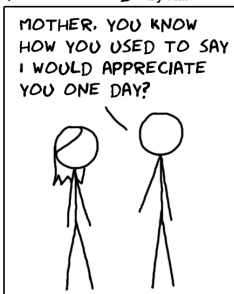
Submerge yourself in the steamy temptation!



All of you - just stop. Okay? Stop.



NOT XKCD by Kai



(SHE HAS APPOLIGIZED FOR SUBJECTING ME TO HER RAGE, BUT I ONLY REMEMBER HIDING...)

Olin's Student Government

James Nee
Contributor

Hello there fellow Olin-er! As one of your friendly neighborhood CORE representatives, I am here to tell you about what CORE is, does, and can be. The Council of Olin Representatives (CORE), meets every Sunday evening from 9 –10 pm in the Crescent room to discuss improving Olin and we would love for you to be part of the conversation. As you may have seen in our CORE digest, this semester we are already working on some projects including improving the GO bike fleet, replacing drumheads in the jam room, and filling student roles on committees. However, these projects are just a small part of what we currently do, and CORE has the potential to be so much more.

Before going further I'd like to give you a brief overview on the history of CORE and its namesake. As with the Honor Code, the partner class invented the governing body of Olin, and the original CORE constitution can be found, still to this day, outside of President Miller's office. Much like the Articles of Confederation and our founding fathers, this first iteration of the CORE Con-

stitution is filled with great ideas that, when applied, didn't work out well.

In the early days, CORE meetings consisted of a large portion of the student body; at any CORE meeting 20 to 30 students might have been presents. This was in part due to the massive numbers of students elected to be on CORE. There was the Executive Board, which comprised of the President and four Vice Presidents, each focused on a specific task, like Student Life or Finance and Records. There would be a representative from SAC, the Honor Board, SERV, "Resident Life", and two class representatives from each class. For those counting, that's 17 people right there. In addition, leaders of the various student groups on campus and other interested students would just show up and join in. The idea was to have key members of Olin's community, and any other interested parties, participate in important discussions, such as how we spend the Student Activities fund and what issues we should publicize.

As with any large group, however, the bureaucracy was stifling, and it was difficult to get much done. Therefore, in the 2009-2010 school year, the CORE con-

stitution was rewritten, and in the fall of 2010 a new CORE, emerged, hungry to do more. This is the CORE that we have on campus today, and we have been able to move and shake better and faster than ever before. As a result of the transition, however, CORE became more of a mystery to the greater Olin community.

So I am writing to tell you to be a champion of ideas, give voice to the needs and wants of you and your peers, and most importantly, talk to CORE. We are here to help make your ideas a reality, no matter how crazy they may be. CORE has helped launch a variety of programs on campus from SCUBA diving certifications to wrestling mats, and we're always looking for more ideas.

Finally, if you're reading this and thinking you have no incentive or reason to care, remember that every Olin student contributes \$175 towards the Student Activities Fund (SAF), which, when combined, totals over \$50,000. Our budget is your money, but if we don't hear from you, we, as CORE, will go ahead and spend it as we please. Don't let your (parents') hard-earned cash be spent on someone else – spend it on yourself!

Frankly Speaking Website Banner Image Contest

Submit your photos of Olin to submit@franklyspeakingnews.com for a chance to be part of the newly revamped Frankly Speaking website, and be sure to check out the site at franklyspeakingnews.com. Submissions accepted and included on a rolling basis.

Advice on Olin, Life & Love

Graham Hooton
Contributor

This past year, I put a lot of time and energy into finding the answers to the question “How can I get the most out of Olin, life, and love?” In last year’s SERV auction, two sophomores won an item donated by the entire class of 2013 in which the then-seniors promised to address any query to the best of their collective ability. This was the question posed, and it struck a chord with us all. Who hasn’t asked themselves at some point: “How can I be sure I’m getting things right?” Really, how can one tell? Dear reader, how do you?

I took it upon myself to track down my friends and peers in order to collect each of their responses. I can’t share what they said (it’s a trade secret, you see), but I can say what insights I gained from the process. It was an enlightening process – most SERV auction experiences are, and I suggest that any and all Oliners engage in it – and it highlighted to me the true worth of giving advice.

To begin with, it was immediately clear that the value of this grandiose line of questioning did not come from the wise words we said, but rather what those words said about us. Placed high up on a soapbox, separated from their subjects by a blank page and a sea of time, my classmates ended up letting their response bring them on a

journey of introspection and wit. It was astounding how well they encapsulated their personalities in a single paragraph – their deepest wishes and their proudly held values proclaimed side by side in a stream of unconscious thought. “Be this way,” they would declare, and I would chuckle at each entry: “Typical this-person,” I’d laugh. “It is just like them to say exactly this sort of thing.”

Responses often revolved around the notion that the way we respond to the world is not in actuality the way we feel we ought to. To the sophomoric versions of themselves, countless students explained: ‘Seize opportunities instead of letting them go by’, ‘try to do what is good for yourself’, and ‘don’t worry too much what others think’. In these answers, I found the recurring sentiment embedded: “You and I are simply striving to live in a way we can be proud of. If we seek hard enough, we will learn what we need to do.” It was astounding to see that seniors, sophomores, and so many more go through this process all the time, wherein we figure out how to be as happy and as beneficial to those around us as we need to.

Finally, I was able to pick and choose from among what matters most to my classmates, to see what resonated with me and what I rejected. I saw every responder interpret the question a little differently – we were all free to advise on any subject at any

length. As a consequence, there was a variety of answers that I found inspirational to varying degrees. The interaction of information and attitude, weight and frivolity, commandment and inquiry, and other dichotomies underscored for me the fact that no one else’s response could possibly be right for me. None were right except my own: Its tone was meticulously tailored and its entries guaranteed to be personalized.

I put a lot of time and energy into finding my own answer to the question, “How should I live my life?” It took me eighty illuminating responses painstakingly collected from my peers to realize that the very best advice is the advice that I give myself. I hope you will feel the same.

“Always be honest with yourself. Seek help if you need it. If you are stretched too thin, take ownership of that fact early and mitigate it before it is too late. Fill your life with seized opportunities. Be generous with your time and energy. Give freely what you have in plenty. Be kind and selfless. Be respectful, though you don’t have to like everyone. Be respected – you will not fail in this if you are responsible and joyous in all that you do. All in all, I believe our greatest challenge and greatest satisfaction is to sow our own ideas in the mind of another. Lastly: If you’re not satisfied with the options in the dining hall, try the soup.”

GO Bike Program Revamped

Jennifer Anderson
Contributor

Olin is a unique community, and as such, it has unique opportunities and resources, including Olin's GO bike program. Very few other colleges trust their students enough to have bikes that students can just take out and ride, and I immensely appreciate the easy access I have to GO bikes at Olin. My appreciation for the GO bikes led me to become involved in the program, and I'd like to share with you some of my thoughts. Recently, due to increasing concern about the use and treatment of the GO bikes, CORE has proposed some changes for the program.

It was announced last week in the CORE digest that GO was working with CORE to develop a new system for GO bikes that would possibly involve either a prox check out system for the bikes or training sessions for new riders. This change is due to the sad fact that I have noticed while working with GO

bikes over the past year: they are not only highly used but also highly abused. Typically, in just one week, at least one bike will be damaged in some way or another, often a popped tire or a problem with the chain. These problems are repairable, but inconvenient.

However, bikes have also been disappearing without warning, which is more difficult to deal with. In the past year, at least 4 of the bikes we had specifically labeled and given lights to have disappeared, not to mention several others whose disappearance was less noticeable because they were not numbered. As far as we can tell, people likely take the bikes out, get rides back, and forget about their bikes, which causes them to be lost and abandoned. The declining number of bikes is extremely annoying for those, including myself, who use them to get to class or to get to the store. Bikes are not the only things that vanish; oftentimes, GO locks suffer the same fate. The possibility of a prox system is designed to combat the

disappearing bike problem. If you remember that you took a bike out, or if GO knows who took the bike out, then it is much easier to either locate a lost bike or get compensation for a new one.

The proposed training sessions would combat a different problem – that of bike safety and maintenance. GO wants to make sure that riders know how to deal with small problems that may arise while riders are on the road, as well as the basics such as how to shift gears on different bikes and how to adjust the bike seats to be a safe and comfortable height. The goal of the idea is not to require people to engage in a worthless activity that they don't want to do or to make it seem like the GO bikes are less easily accessible, but rather to help everyone get the most out of GO bike use.

Overall, I sincerely hope that GO bikes continue to be a resource for Olin students, and that the changes we instill will assist in maintaining the fleet and the happiness of those that use it.

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Editor-in-Chief: Lyra Silverwolf

Editors: Kai Austin, Anne-Marie Buchenan, Juanita Desouza, Pratoool Gadtula, Julianne Jorgensen

Staff Writers: Jackie Rose, columnists

Contributors: Jennifer Anderson, Kat Brookshier, Mitch Cieminski, Allen Downey, Gabrielle Ewall, Graham Hooton, James Nee, David Pudlo, Colby Sato, Ruby Spring, Gaby Waldman-Fried

Special thanks to Brett Rowley, Emily Shackleton and Allie Duncan!