

SPRING '04 NEWSLETTER

March 17, 2004

Spring with its warm weather and flowers should be right around the corner now. (I say this as Amherst digs out of yet another snowstorm!). In keeping with the change of seasons, BDIC has done quite a lot of revamping lately too!



During the winter we moved out of the 607 Goodell offices into the adjacent 608 since the Learning Disabilities Office needed our space. Partitions and workspaces were installed to accommodate all of the staff in 608, and the result is quite impressive. The office still has the same homey atmosphere everyone appreciates so much.

The other major change is that our long-time office manager, Vickie Rupp, left BDIC last fall for a job at Amherst College. And as a result, we have stumbled through the year waiting for the position to be filled. Needless to say, there were some obstacles in this process. Recently, we hired a temporary office manager to help out until someone more permanent is hired. Davina Danian is our "temp" and she has really given BDIC a boost with her tireless energy and enthusiasm. Davina was a BDIC peer advisor for four years previously and so she has a good knowledge of office procedure and advising protocol. We expect to fill the office manager position permanently by the first of April.

There are a lot of new faces in the BDIC office this year since many of our long-time student staff graduated last May. Mirela Abdula is a first-year student whom we hired as a work-study student. Not only is she amazingly dedicated to her BDIC job (she is training to become a BDIC peer advisor), but also she has a very interesting background. Mirela survived a series of war atrocities while growing up in Sarajevo, Bosnia and has quite an interesting story to tell about her experiences. The hardships Mirella endured in Bosnia seem to have helped her appreciate the American way of life more than any of us can imagine. If you are interested, you can soon read Mirella's compelling story on the BDIC website.

Other new work-study students are: Diana Barszcz (Forestry), Amanda Koeck, a junior from the Journalism department and Kara Mendonca (Economics). Erinn Ambs, Jenn Aronson, Katie Cohn, Jonathan Glass and Melissa Rodriguez are all new peer advisors from a variety of

different BDIC concentrations. Each of the peer advisors has a wealth of experience to share with the incoming BDIC students they advise. Jenn, for example, is majoring in "Children's Television" through BDIC. Over last summer and winter vacations, Jenn interned at Lucky Duck Productions in NYC and Zoom (WGBH TV) in Boston.

Another bit of news: Kate Dionne, BDIC junior year writing instructor, had a beautiful baby boy named Connor, born on June 3, 2003. Congratulations, Kate!

News From our Alums: Peter Manseau, '96, majored in Literature and Religious Thought while in BDIC. His first book, entitled **Killing the Buddha: A Heretic's Bible**, was scheduled to be published by Free Press/Simon and Schuster in January. "Publisher's Weekly" called the book "some of the most insightful spiritual writing to come out of America since Jack Kerouac first hit the road." Congratulations, Peter!

Elizabeth Bishop, former BDIC peer advisor, recently designed a new BDIC promotional handout. She graduated in Fall, '03 and found a job as a graphic artist right away with Umass Printing Services.

Erica Schwartz, '02, concentrated in Pre-Art Therapy while in BDIC. She went on to a master's program at Lesley College and will soon graduate as an ATR (registered art therapist) and a LMHC (licensed mental health counselor).

Kate Lieberman, '02 is currently living in Brooklyn, N.Y. and is the Co-artistic Director of Box By Three Dance Company. She is training in aerial dance and trapeze work. Kate also works at St. Johns University School of Law where she helps students find internships.

Alumni Series: Inspired by the success of the BDIC Spring Project's Fair/Alumni Forum, we've started a new series of alumni-centered events: The Alumni Series. The Alumni Series focuses on one concentration area during each event and brings talented BDIC alumni from that field together with current students in an informal and productive setting. The Alumni Series is supported by grants from the Campus Career Network, the Alumni Association and, of course, the ongoing and generous support of our alumni. On March 2, we sponsored the Creative Writing cluster group. Deborah Savage, noted local author, shared experiences from her writing career and offered tips on publishing. A group of students interested in writing careers of their own eagerly absorbed Deborah's words. On April 27, from 5-7 p.m., the Business group will bring together alumni from various

business professions and current students interested in business-related careers. Please let us know if you'd like to participate!

Spring Projects Fair: The annual Spring Projects Fair will take place on Weds., May 5, 5-8 p.m. Students in BDIC junior year writing, BDIC 496C, will display their final projects at the Fair and BDIC alumni from various professions will participate in the program. There will be live music and lots of delicious food. Not only are all BDIC students encouraged to come, but any other students at the University looking for career inspiration are invited. If you want to display a project or show your artwork at the Fair, please let us know. We'd love to include you!

Finally, Happy Spring everyone! Current Students: We hope you stop by the BDIC office often throughout the coming weeks. And Alums: Please come back and visit! We always love to see you!