

## Robinson Scholars Program

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### RSP Receives Study Abroad Grant

The Office of International Affairs and the Robinson Scholars Program was awarded a \$50,000 IFSA Foundation grant for 2006-2007. This grant awards ten \$5,000 scholarships to Robinson Scholars who study abroad for a semester or a year.

### Making a Difference through Community Service



The RSP focuses on the impact one can make on their current and future communities and asks that students complete a minimum of five hours of community service each semester. Some Scholars have organized opportunities in which their Program peers can participate. Robin Reynolds, pictured left, organized an evening preparing dinner for families at the Ronald McDonald House. Julie Whittaker, her group pictured right, sponsored a blood drive with a ride in a stretch Hummer SUV for participants.

# Patchwork of Promise

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**UK** UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

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## Director's Message

We are very pleased to bring you the first edition of *Patchwork of Promise*, a newsletter for friends of the Robinson Scholars Program. Our hope is to bring you two editions of *Patchwork* each year, one in the spring and one in the fall. *Patchwork* is just one of the ways we can share with you the excitement of the Robinson Scholars Program. Each edition will recap Program activities, share the accomplishments of the Scholars, and highlight a particular aspect of the Program that makes it stand out.

2005 was an eventful year for the RSP. We executed a major administrative restructuring, welcomed several new faces to our staff, and made some considerable changes to the delivery of student services. Most significantly, we transformed what had been a scholarship and student support program into a scholarship, student support, and leadership development program.

So far, 2006 has been equally exciting. In January, we learned that the RSP was the recipient of a \$50,000 grant from the IFSA Foundation to support Scholars' study abroad and that NASPA, a major higher education organization, had recognized our Program as one of the best in the nation. Just a few days ago, we received our second major national award of the year when NACADA named the RSP a top advising program. We are certainly honored to receive this type of recognition from such outstanding and well-respected

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Director's Message	1
RSP Receives National Accolades	1
Regional Activity Report	2
Learning to Lead	2
College Services Report	2
Profile	3
Spotlight	3

organizations. These awards acknowledge the quality of our staff and the great work they do with students, but more than that, it says something very special about the Scholars' dedication to educational success and personal accomplishment.

I hope you enjoy this inaugural edition of *Patchwork of Promise*. I want to give special thanks to Katy Bennett, our Program Relations Officer, for designing and editing this newsletter. We are so glad you have an interest in the Robinson Scholars Program, and we look forward to exciting things to come.

## Robinson Scholars Program Wins National Accolades

The Robinson Scholars Program recently received accolades from two international organizations for its work with first-generation college-bound and college students from eastern Kentucky.

Members of the Robinson Scholars Program attended the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA) 88<sup>th</sup> National Conference in March in Washington, D.C., where the Program was honored with a 2006 Gold Award of Excellence for Outstanding Programs in Enrollment Management, Orientation, Parents, First-Year, Other-Year, and related programs. The Gold Award designates the Robinson Scholars Program as the nation's top program in this category. With over 10,000 members at more than 1,500 institutions in the United States and 29 other countries, NASPA is the largest professional association for student affairs administrators,

faculty, and graduate students in the country.

In early April, the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) selected the Robinson Scholars Program as one of four 2006 NACADA Outstanding Institutional Advising Program Award winners. NACADA has over 9,100 members representing all 50 states and several countries, and its members represent higher education institutions across the spectrum of Carnegie classifications and include professional advisors/counselors, faculty, administrators, and students whose responsibilities include academic advising. The Robinson Scholars Program will be honored at a special ceremony and reception during the NACADA Annual Conference in October in Indianapolis, Indiana.

## Regional Activity Report

Last summer, the Robinson Scholars Program undertook a major administrative restructuring. RSP closed two regional offices, one in Harlan and one in Hazard, and opened a new regional office at the Robinson Station in Jackson.



These changes not only provided more resources for student support, but since all students are served through a single office, the changes also improved the consistency of the RSP student experience. Steve Jones joined RSP in June as the Regional Coordinator, and he quickly assembled a top-notch team with Lara May as the Assistant Regional Coordinator and Dana Hays as Program Assistant. The Jackson team has been busy conducting programming, meeting with students, parents, and school officials, and organizing the selection of the tenth class of Robinson Scholars.

During the 2005-06 academic year, each class of high school Scholars participated in two weekend programs, one in the fall semester and one in the spring semester. These events focused on problem-solving, leadership development, and college preparation. Steve and Lara also spent over 80 days on the road this year visiting each Scholar at his or her school.

## Learning to Lead

Since the first Robinson Scholars enrolled in college in 2001, the RSP has focused on helping Scholars become the best college students they could be. Both the Program and the Scholars have been successful with this approach, but as the first group of Scholars prepared for graduation last year, RSP staff members determined that helping students prepare for life after college needed to be a much more intentional component of RSP programming.

This fall, the RSP launched a leadership development seminar series, which will eventually become the centerpiece of RSP programming. The series begins with a 3-credit university orientation course (UK 101) course where college transition issues, study skills, problem solving, and time management take

## College Services Report

The Program's administrative restructuring has also impacted college student services. To better meet the needs of the Scholars, the RSP added a second College Services Coordinator, and Pam McFarland has joined Liz Bryan in that role. In the past, UK and BCTC students met with RSP staff individually once a semester, twice if they were graduating or new to campus. Now, freshmen meet with staff monthly, graduating seniors meet three times a semester, and all other Scholars meet twice a term. This increase in contact allows staff to be more responsive to student needs, and it increases student accountability.

Higher levels of staff-student interaction in individual settings prompted the Program in the spring semester to replace monthly small group meetings with

This individual contact with students and school officials keeps staff abreast of how students are performing in school and if there are any issues that need attention.

The selection of the tenth class of Scholars is essentially a year-long process that began in September with middle school recruitment visits and counselor meetings and ends with interviews and selection committee meetings in late April and early May. The RSP staff in Jackson facilitates this process, but the thirty-six volunteers on six different selection committees do the difficult work of evaluating, interviewing, and selecting the next class of twenty-nine Scholars.

As summer nears, the RSP turns its attention to three week-long summer programs. Rising sophomores will study watersheds and then apply that knowledge through the implementation of water quality projects in their home communities. New Scholars (rising high school freshmen) will study the opportunities and challenges of Appalachian communities, and rising juniors and seniors will participate in the sixth Robinson Scholars Writers' Workshop.



center stage. Students continue with a 1-credit leadership development seminar every term through graduation. The seminars are designed to give students the tools they need to become difference-makers in each aspect of their lives.

This exciting, new component of the Program fits squarely with the RSP mission of empowering students to make an impact in their current and future communities. Robinson Scholars are leaders today, and they will certainly be leaders tomorrow. The RSP has a responsibility to better prepare them for the challenges and opportunities of leadership.

special RSP workshops. These workshops focus on topics about which students want to learn more. Business etiquette, professional dress, interviewing, "real world" financial issues, stress management, time management, and goal setting are just a few of the topics covered in this spring's fifteen special workshops.

Students have responded very positively to these changes as they make the Program more accessible and as they allow Scholars to customize their Robinson Scholars experiences to fit their specific interests and needs.



## Profile: Bobbi Silver, RSP Development Officer

Bobbi Silver joined the Robinson Scholars Program in December 2005 as the Program's Development Officer. Bobbi will draw on a variety of fundraising experiences in her new role, having worked at WEKU, Eastern Kentucky University's public radio station, and most recently, for the Kentucky Children's Hospital, where she was in charge of annual giving programs.

Like the Robinson Scholars, Bobbi was a first-generation college student. A graduate of Western Maryland College, Bobbi enjoys living in Kentucky, and she looks forward to the opportunity she will have to see more of eastern Kentucky through her work with the Program. She is also excited about talking with others about the success of the RSP and our Scholars. "Our Program has outstanding students, and a lot to be proud of, and I am excited to bring that news to our friends in eastern Kentucky and across the nation."

Being active in the community is an important part of Bobbi's life. She is very involved in the Citizen's Police Academy Alumni in Lexington and helped organize one of their most successful fundraisers for several years.

She and her husband Matthew, a Lexington police officer and UK graduate, have two children, Elisabeth, 4, and Jacob, 4 months. They enjoy spending time outdoors, particularly

## Spotlight: 2006 UK Graduates

Each issue of *Patchwork* will feature a different aspect of what makes the Program stand out: our Scholars, our staff, our programming. For this inaugural edition, the spotlight shines on the University of Kentucky Class of 2006. Forty-four Scholars are graduating this year, and their individual accomplishments are impressive. Here are just a few of the highlights from this outstanding class.

### Monica Hobson



Monica, a Scholar from Floyd County, has had an accomplished four years at the University of Kentucky. She has served as Co-Coordinator of the College of Arts and Sciences Student Ambassadors, and she has represented that college as a Student Government Senator. Monica has also represented her peers as one of three students on the University Senate Council. Monica has been on the Dean's List each semester and has maintained a 4.0 GPA. An Honors Program participant and winner of the Vandebosh Award for most outstanding political science major, she will attend the UK College of Law on the prestigious Combs Scholarship and Wethington Fellowship. Monica was named a 2006 Sullivan Medallion winner, awarded to a male graduate, a female graduate, and a non-student who "possess such characteristics of heart, mind, and conduct as evince a spirit of love for and helpfulness to other men and women." The Sullivan Award is generally regarded as one of the most prestigious given by the University of Kentucky, and Monica joins an impressive list of recipients that includes E.O. Robinson and Mary Breckinridge. Monica has also been selected the Singletary Outstanding Senior Award winner.

with their new retriever puppy, Daisy Claire, and enjoy time spent with family and friends.

Are you interested in giving to the Robinson Scholars Program? Or would you like more information about Program activities and ways you can help? Bobbi would love to hear from you! Please contact her at [bjsilv2@email.uky.edu](mailto:bjsilv2@email.uky.edu) or at 859-257-4857.

### RSP Named a 2005 Commonwealth Collaborative

The Robinson Scholars Program and the University of Kentucky Water Resource Research Institute were named a 2005 Commonwealth Collaborative. The Commonwealth Collaboratives program combines UK's research abilities with funding to address issues important to the state of Kentucky. Our program, "Water Pioneers," was one of twenty-four programs selected and will educate rising sophomore Scholars on Kentucky water resources and engage them in the study of water quality issues during a weeklong summer program. Each Scholar will then apply this knowledge by conducting a project in his/her home community to improve water quality.

### Michael Lemaster

A Magoffin County Scholar, Michael is an English and Spanish double major who has always been highly involved in Program activities. This fall, he served as the peer instructor for the RSP section of UK 101, a freshmen orientation course. Michael aspires to teach on the collegiate level, but he will begin his work this fall in Baltimore, Maryland teaching sixth through twelfth graders. Michael has been selected to participate in the highly competitive Teach for America Program, a national corps of outstanding recent college graduates of all academic majors who commit two years to teach in rural and urban schools.



### More outstanding students:

- Victoria Holiday, a biology major from Lee County, was accepted to medical school at the University of Kentucky and will attend on a Wethington Fellowship. She will be the first Robinson Scholar to attend medical school.
- Andrew Farmer, a biology major from Leslie County, will be the first Robinson Scholar to attend dental school when he enrolls in the UK College of Dentistry in the fall.
- Natasha Grubb, a nutrition and food science major from Clay County, will begin her optometry studies at the University of Alabama in the fall.
- Kristy Tsou, an Elliott County sociology major, received the Lexington *Herald-Leader* Fellowship for 2006-07. As part of the fellowship, Kristy will complete an internship with the newspaper this summer. She will begin her graduate studies in sociology at UK this fall.