

A New Center Founded on a Traditional Strength

By Gerald S. Vigna, Ph.D.

Director of the Center for Ethics and Leadership

Alvernia has long emphasized the importance of moral development and increased ethical awareness as essential to a complete college education. Whether in the general requirements in theology and philosophy or in specific programs, the college has required courses in ethics as part of its vision for well-informed graduates. When at the direction of Dr. Flynn the Alvernia community took a look at itself and created a strategic plan for a new generation, it became clear that an institute whose focus was ethics and leadership was a natural evolution in the college's continuing drive for excellence. Several faculty worked together in the summer of 2006 to research existing centers and sketch an outline for a new Center for Ethics and Leadership (CEL). There now exists a Center for Ethics and Leadership, an interdisciplinary initiative for dialogue on ethics and leadership among members of the Alvernia community, the local and regional communities, and colleagues throughout the academic world. The center's first event was last April and featured three prominent speakers on ethics for CEOs.

The *Alvernian* has been kind enough to provide me an opportunity to write to you monthly about issues in ethics and leadership. With this first column, I wanted to get your feedback on the idea of national service. A September issue of *Time* argued that the next president should pursue the idea vigorously. The writer, Richard Stengel, argues that national service is needed in our current social circumstances. He points out that while Americans may be especially distrustful of government now, there is a new, growing spirit of volunteerism. He would like to harness this spirit to build a better sense of common cause among Americans. One concern he has is bringing us together amid our growing diversity. Referring to Harvard professor Richard Putnam's recent work, Stengel reports that diversity can fragment us, drive us apart rather than toward each other in community.

Stengel proposes a volunteer national service, not a mandatory choice between military service and public service as some nations have. He nonetheless thinks that incentives should be so strong that millions of Americans enroll.

He is not alone. Most presidential candidates favor national service of some sort, usually voluntary, so it could become a campaign issue next year. Here's one of the bigger ideas: a National Service Academy. Modeled along the lines of our military service academies, the National Service Academy would provide students a four-year college education in exchange for five years' public service. Our own Republican senator, Arlen Specter, has joined with Hillary Clinton to co-sponsor a bill that would allocate \$164 million per year for a 5,000-student school. Students from Delaware should know that their senator, Joe Biden, also favors this idea.

What do you think? Could national service bring us closer together despite our differences? Is this "big idea" workable? You can reach me at jerry.vigna@alvernia.edu.

(Literary Festival, Continued From Page 1)

On October 17th, Mary Barbera will be giving a presentation that no future teacher or psychology major will want to miss. Barbera is the author of *The Verbal Behavior Approach: Teaching Children with Autism and Other Related Disorders*. She is also an RN, MSN, BCBA, and is the founding President of the Autism Society of America's Berks County Chapter. Barbera is the lead analyst for the Pennsylvania Verbal Behavior Project, and studies the behavior of children in the classroom using Verbal Behavior Techniques. Barbera will share what she has learned through her experiences working with hundreds of children, and training professionals.

These are only a few of the wonderful events planned for 2007. For 2008, Sue Guay and her staff intend on enhancing the Literary Festival's repertoire to create a more academically multi-cultural experience. Guay is also steadily networking her way through directors of other literary

Open Letter From Student Government Association (SGA)

By Andrew Connors

SGA President

Hello, I am Andrew Connors, your Student Government President and I would like to warmly welcome some newer faces to my home away from home, as we go into our fourth week. However in greeting the first year and transfer students, I definitely cannot forget to welcome back all of Alvernia's returning students, the faculty, staff, and administrators. The other members of Student Government's Executive Board are Michael Taylor Vice-President, Andrea Crivellaro the Treasurer, Melissa Masone the Secretary, and Barry Law our Public relations officer. Our advisors are Dr. Kristel Kemmer, the Dean of Students and Abby Swatchick, the Director of Student Activities. We will gladly answer any questions so if you see us feel free to say hi or you can send us an email at SGA@alvernia.edu or call the SGA office at 610-796-8341.

As an aside, you can also meet plenty of new faces at the Open Mic Nights every second Tuesday of the month at 8 pm in the Crusader café and the Student Government meetings on Tuesdays at 2 pm in Bernardine Hall room 19. Now all recognized clubs should be in attendance because our new format for student government calls for a senate comprised of all the clubs to act as the governing body who will discuss important issues and present them for consideration to the administration. If you're in a club that has not been to a meeting yet please hurry on over or you have an idea of something you would like Student Government to work on stop on by.

Also, on September 18, Alvernia's Student Government will be officially welcoming the newly elected class officers for the classes of 2011 and 2010. They are as follows: President for the Class of 2011 is Adam Butler, the Vice-President is Dillon Cole, Emily Berret will serve as the Secretary, and last but not least Andrew Agren is the Treasurer. For the Class of 2010, Nick Rivera will be the Vice-President and Dan Juliano will be Treasurer. Congratulations to the new officers and I happily welcome you and your talents to help serve our student body.

So to all the students, faculty, staff, and administration I would like to wish everyone a happy fall and the best of a new academic year. Hopefully I will see most of the students at student government meetings and the Open Mic Nights every second Tuesday of the month at 8 pm in the Crusader café, but all other members of the Alvernia Family are welcome too. Bring a friend, guitar, poem, anything you want to share to have fun. Even I will perform my limerick about a Cabby Named Phil.

festivals in hopes of hosting even more dynamic and enriching speakers. Alvernia is becoming established as the place to go to engage in culturally elevating affairs. Students and faculty are encouraged to contact the Literary Festival committee with suggestions, and new additions to the staff are always welcomed for 2008!

For a complete schedule of events, visit www.alvernia.edu, or view pg 3.

