



GETTING EN

Sourav Bose C'11 W'11 | CAPSTONE PROJECT:
"Determinants of Pricing for Emergent Inter-hospital
Ambulance Transfer in A Developing Setting:
A Geographically Randomized Study"

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CANDACE DICARLO

The Civic Scholars program, which fuses civic engagement with academic courses and projects, is shaping some remarkable, passionate students who are already having an impact on the communities they serve.

BY SAMUEL HUGHES

GAGED

A Civic Scholar was sitting in a café near campus on a hot summer afternoon, wrestling with the Sisyphean nature of civic engagement. She talked for quite a long time—about her frustration with healthcare inequalities, the challenges of coming from a place like Penn to work in a place like West Philadelphia, her growing distance from people she grew up with who don't share her passion for community service.

"There's a quote I really like from the Talmud," Lisa Doi C'13 said finally. "I'm not Jewish, but it really spoke to me." She began to quote, from memory:

"Do not be overwhelmed by the enormity of the world's grief ... You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it."

That's it, in a nutshell.

Jayne Bernsten C'11 | CAPSTONE PROJECT:
"Reducing the Likelihood of Child Abuse and Neglect: A Policy Approach"



Not that many people, even at Penn, know about the Civic Scholars program. Part of that is owing to the fact that it's only four years old, and just graduated its first boutique-sized cohort of 13 in May. Part of it has to do with the nature of its mission, which is a sort of charged, persistent fusion of civic engagement and academic courses and projects, and not entirely easy to get your mind around. Then there's the fact that an awful lot of Penn students do community-service work, all of it important, some of it also academically based.

Go to the Civic Scholars website, and you can get a reasonably good sense of the concept. By taking a "sustained and connected approach," the Civic Scholars "engage in community service or social advocacy work" (a minimum of five semesters' worth) as well as special proseminars, summer internships, selected courses, and "capstone research projects aimed at public-policy recommendations."

But that still leaves a good deal of room for interpretation, and doesn't even hint at the range of student achievements. Which was pretty much the idea from the get-go.

"I never created this program thinking that there was a definitive vocational end, training people to go into social work or into public-school teaching," says Walter Licht, the personable, bushy-browed Annenberg Professor of History who conceived the program and serves as its faculty director. "Some of them might wind up in social work or in public-school teaching. But I always imagined taking some really terrific young people, and then, wherever they wind up, they're going to shake up where they are. That's my dream."

David Grossman Gr'04, the program's thoughtful executive director, acknowledges that the very lack of a roadmap makes it "challenging to fit within a Penn framework," adding: "It's not an academic program; it's not a school; it's not a research program that people can pop in and out of when they need money for research or when they want to hear a lecture. It's not a pure extracurricular which they can choose to leave—if they want to graduate with the credential. So there aren't the typical carrots or sticks to encourage continued involvement—much of it comes from within them."

Self-motivation hasn't been a problem. And as Penn President Amy Gutmann, who has led a number of the meaty monthly proseminars, puts it: "The program's flexibility is one of the reasons it's so successful—students have the ability to pursue their passions and leverage what they learn in the classroom in the real world."

Hence the broad range of academic majors and schools: from economics and political science to psychology and urban studies to biology and crisis management.

Like any new program, this one is a work in progress, and it was rolled out pretty quickly. But it's already shaped the arcs of some very impressive young men and women. It's becoming a small but important draw for high-achieving, service-oriented students, for whom a program like Civic Scholars—and the sheer magnitude of service possibilities at the University—can make the difference between choosing Penn and choosing another top-flight school. And most important, it's becoming a key part of Penn's multi-pronged efforts to help solve some of the most pressing problems of urban life, and to continue to repair the fabric of its relationship with the West Philadelphia community.

The program "plays to our unique strengths," says Gutmann: "bringing theory and practice together with the aim of serving the greater good."

It starts with a phone call. A lot of kids who get accepted to Penn have impressive histories of civic engagement and academic achievement in high school. But a handful, for one reason or another, have stood out—which is why, along with their acceptance letter, they got a call followed by a personal letter from Walter Licht, asking if they would be interested in becoming a Civic Scholar. By the time they got off the phone, most of them were somewhere between curious and flabbergasted. Especially the members of that first cohort.

"Walter called me, and we had a great conversation," says Sourav Bose C'11 W'11, who majored in biology and economics and crisis management and was also a member of the Vagelos Program in Life Sciences and Management. "It was one of the reasons I came to Penn. Before that it wasn't anywhere near the top of my choice list. After the conversation I was really excited. I just thought it would be a really cool opportunity. Other schools didn't call."

"Walter was really excited about the program," says Allison Huberlie C'11, an urban-studies and political-science major and another civic superstar. (See "A Civic Scholar Sampler" on p. 36 for more on Huberlie and Bose.) "I thought it was really impressive that somebody had taken the time to really read my application and go through it and pick me out from a bunch of other people."

When she came to campus a few months later, she met David Grossman, who took her out for coffee and ended up being her academic advisor. "I just remember thinking of David that he could be this enormously comforting and calming presence in my life," she says. "And I'm the kind of person who needs that."

Back then, when the candidates Googled the program, they got nothing. Some weren't entirely sure what a "capstone project" was.

"I was, to be honest, a little confused," recalls Sam Ribnick C'11, who graduated as a double major in history and modern Middle Eastern studies, and whose capstone project examined the African-American public-school system in 19th-century Washington. "There was absolutely nothing that you could look up about it. Walter said, 'We're starting this new program, and we're choosing people who in high school were very civically engaged, and we'd like you to be part of the first class.'"

Ribnick laughs: "I figured the worst that happens is I have some extra work in college, but I'd have these great relationships with my professors. I was particularly excited to be in the first class, to be in the kind of shaping class, and taking ownership of that. So I immediately said *Yes*."

Most of the Civic Scholars first met each other at PennCORP, the pre-orientation program that introduces interested freshmen to a broad array of community-service programs and people in Philadelphia. It's sponsored by Civic House, the small white 1840s house in Superblock that serves as Penn's hub for student-led community service and social advocacy.

Mark Pan C'11, an ebullient urban-studies major who has become "totally immersed in education issues" during his four years (he's even taught hip-hop dance to local middle-school students), recalls that he was "still bright-eyed and

incredibly honored to be chosen for the program.” Seeing the caliber and accomplishments of some of his fellow Civic Scholars was also “really humbling,” he admits.

“It was incredibly exciting,” he adds. “Really a cool thing to meet the other Civic Scholars and the other people in PennCORP. It was fascinating seeing all these people who cared about civic engagement all together.”

Not everyone loved it. “It was three days of waking up at 7:00, and they keep you till 11,” says Allison Roland C’11, a psychology major who, among other things, founded Penn’s chapter of MEDLIFE, a global-health organization that delivers medical care to low-income families in Latin America. “You’re so tired, you’re rushing from one thing to another—they have the entire

Allison Roland C’11 | CAPSTONE PROJECT:
“A Call to Intervene: Humanitarian
Intervention as a Global Obligation and
the Case of Northern Uganda”



David Grossman Gr’04
CIVIC SCHOLARS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



THE MAKING OF A (CIVICALLY ENGAGED) SCHOLAR

The roots of the Civic Scholars program are closely entwined with Penn's experience in West Philadelphia. They also extend deep into the activist cortex of Walter Licht.

Back in the mid-1960s, as a Harvard undergraduate, he would get into a van on weekday afternoons and drive to one low-income Boston neighborhood or another, settling into a school cafeteria or some such nook to tutor and mentor inner-city kids. He did this for four years.

"Volunteer work was fairly institutionalized at Harvard through the Phillips Brooks House," recalls Licht, sitting in a small, airless room in Civic House, the 19th-century cottage that sits in the shadow of the high-rise dorms of Superblock. "And I'm not sure why I walked in the door to do that. It might have been because of a girlfriend—I always say that I majored in extracurricular activities and falling in and out of love in college. But it turned out that the best moments, the warmest moments, the kind of relaxing moments, was just going to those schools and working with these kids. It took me out of the kind of preoccupations that college students have about themselves—*Will anybody like me? How do I appear? What am I going to be when I grow up?*"

Labor historians, as a whole, tend to be political southpaws, and Licht is no exception. But "he's a questioner—he never tells you what to think," as one of his Civic Scholars notes, and his scholarly books—which include *Working for the Railroad: The Organization of Work in the Nineteenth Century*, *Getting Work: Philadelphia, 1840-1950*, and *Industrializing America: The Nineteenth Century (The American Moment)*—are highly regarded in the field.

He comes by his civic engagement honestly. Though his primary allegiance as a kid was to the hometown Brooklyn Dodgers, he grew up in a "very activist family" filled with "radicals of all stripes." His mother was an "extraordinary rebel and activist" who

organized anti-lynching protests in the South and sundry union and consumer activities up North—and made sure that her bright young son knew about the issues. One spring day in 1957 when he was 10, she took him and a friend to a hardscrabble African-American section of Bedford-Stuyvesant, set them up with a couple of tables, and left them to sell tickets for a massive civil-rights march on Washington.

By the time he got to Harvard as an undergraduate he was an experienced activist, organizing anti-war protests and sitting in on the first meetings to establish the Boston chapter of Students for a Democratic Society. A year later, he helped organize a Boston contingent of the first anti-Vietnam War march, which brought some 50,000 protesters to Washington.

"There were fraternity boys pelting us as we got on the buses," he says. "Two years later, we were sending 50 and a hundred buses down there—including the fraternity boys."

The changing nature of the protest movement was an "eye-opener," he admits cheerfully, one that took him "out of the parochial world of New York City liberal-leftists." For Licht, who connects easily with a broad range of people, expanding his circle wasn't exactly cruel and unusual punishment.

Though he privately fancied himself as a literary sort, he had always loved history, and so became a history major "by default," writing his senior thesis on the short-lived American Labor Party. But his real love was the activism and organizing and other extracurricular activities, which ranged from theater to those supremely satisfying moments of "very direct, hands-on working with people." The summer between his sophomore and junior years, he got himself into a Yale program working with inner-city New Haven kids, and wound up taking four of them on a road trip that culminated in two weeks on an Indian reservation in North Dakota. (That summer he also met another future historian named Tom Dublin, who would become a lifelong friend and his co-author of *The Face of Decline: The Pennsylvania Anthracite Region in the Twentieth Century*.)

But all those hours in schools and after-school programs sparked a deep interest in school policy, and after graduating from Harvard in 1967 Licht enrolled in the University of Chicago's sociology of education program.

"For the first time in my life I actually became a student," he says. "I had extraordinary teachers, some of the great minds in sociology, and the top sociologist education in the field. I loved being in the classroom. But mid-year, two things happened. One, I realized this was ridiculous, to sort of abstractly theorize about all of this stuff and really not know [firsthand] what happens in a school today. So I decided that if I'm going to write on the sociology of a school, I should probably be there.

"Then, right at the same time, my draft board said, 'You're being drafted. You're 1-A, and you're going to be called up.'"

He wasn't. Instead, he got himself a substitute-teacher's license in New York, which provided him with "one of the last teaching deferments"—and a job, at a public school at 113th Street in Harlem. (Around that time he also met his future wife, Lois, a VISTA volunteer who had also recently returned from Chicago, and had the billy-club scar from a protest march to prove it.) That job landed him smack in the middle of the "great Ocean Hill-Brownsville dispute in New York," which boiled down to the United Federation of Teachers versus the increasingly community-controlled school boards, and resulted in a lengthy strike filled with ugly racial and ethnic tensions. To the horror of his Old Leftist parents, he crossed the picket line.

"I went into a circumstance of instantaneous community," Licht explains, "because three-quarters of the teachers went out [on strike], and it was the young New Leftists and the African-American staff who stayed in." One administrator joined them. "We ran the school—it was like a community school—for three months. And I stayed to 6, 7, 8 o'clock at night, cleaning the bathrooms and working with kids."

When the teachers finally came back, it was "instantaneous mayhem, because the community was so angry with some teachers," he says. But even though he

was staying late in a dangerous neighborhood, nobody ever accosted him on his way from school to the subway. Nor did his car tires get slashed, a fate suffered by many of the teachers.

“I once asked the head of the parents’ association, ‘What’s going on here?’” he recalls. “He said, ‘Don’t worry—word is out there. You guys went into the school. No one’s touching you.’”

He taught there for four years, during which time he “gave his heart and soul to teaching.” But by then his old love of history was flaring back up, even as he was reading the great masters of sociology.

“I was struck by how their ability to conceptualize came from an extraordinary immersion in history,” he says. “I knew that if I was going to be a scholar of some sort, it would not be the sociologist who conceptualizes out of thin air, or picks up tidbits of fact from those who do the real research. I was going to do the real research and come from the bottom up to become the great conceptualizer.”

And so he went to Princeton, where he wrote his dissertation on railroad workers, which would become the foundation for his 1983 book *Working for the Railroad*. By the time he left in 1977, PhD in hand, the grassroots conceptualizer had a swelling reputation as a labor historian and a sack full of job offers. He knew he wanted to be in the Northeast, in an urban setting. And so he came to Penn.

It’s fair to say that it’s worked out well for both sides.

Licht is highly regarded in the classroom and for his scholarship, with numerous teaching awards to his credit. (“Greatest History Prof on earth,” wrote one student on RateMyProfessors.com. “Should be teaching people how to teach.”)

In the view of Penn President Amy Gutmann, “Walter’s leadership serves as a model of how Penn faculty challenge our students with tough, important questions and invite the widest range of thoughtful, informed responses.”

He has also pulled his weight and then some as an administrator (associate dean for graduate studies and a “divisional” dean in SAS) and as an overall citizen of the University.

Richard Beeman, who just retired as the John Welsh Centennial Professor of History and whose administrative titles have included dean of the College, associate dean of SAS, and chair of the history department, has had plenty of opportunity to observe Licht during his career at Penn.

“Walter’s one of the real good guys who has poured his heart and soul into the School of Arts and Sciences and the University,” he says. If “five percent of the faculty cause 95 percent of the problems, it’s also the case that five percent of the faculty do 95 percent of the work beyond their own scholarly and teaching careers for the University. And Walter’s one of those people.” —S.H.

day booked, no breaks really, and it was just popping in here, popping in there. I’m more about doing meaningful projects. I think they’ve made it a lot less packed since then.”

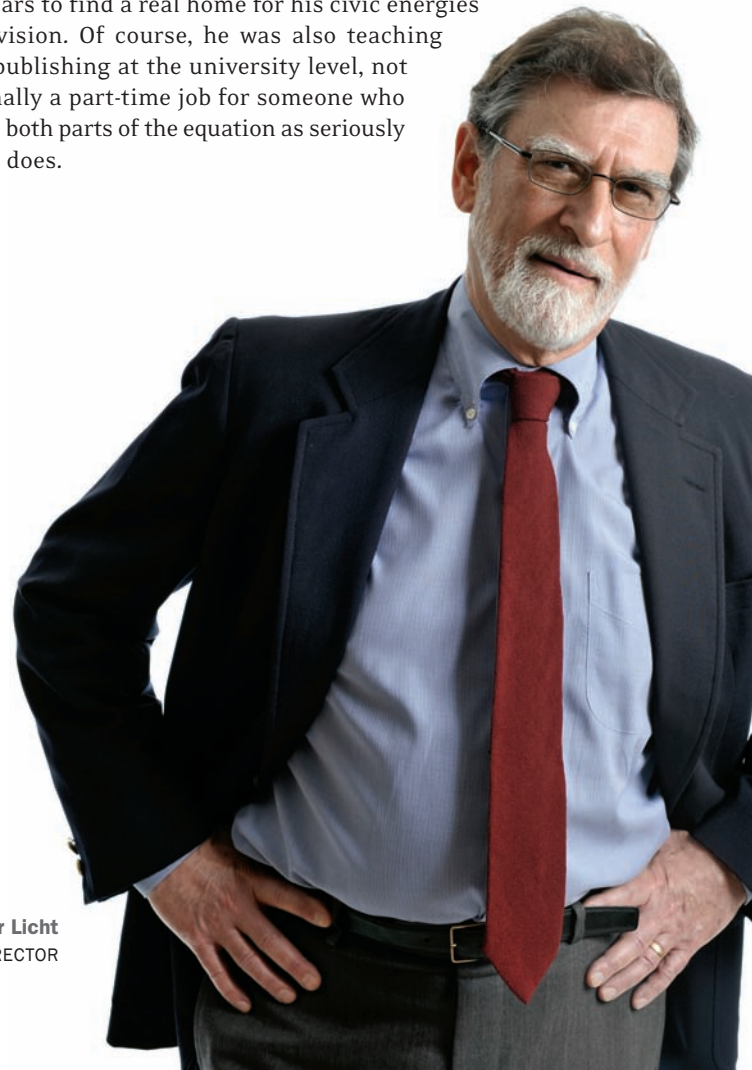
But in terms of opening their eyes to the range of community-service options—and serving as a spawning ground for some of the most lasting friendships that they would make at Penn—PennCORP seems to have been a success.

Benjamin Franklin famously wrote that the “great Aim and End of all Learning” should be an “Inclination join’d with an Ability to serve.” Inclination is pretty fired up these days, at Penn and other Ability-packed institutions. But it hasn’t always been that way.

When Walter Licht arrived at Penn in the fall of 1977, he and his wife, Lois, moved into a brick rowhouse on leafy St. Mark’s Square, a few blocks west of campus. He assumed he would keep putting his shoulder to the community-service wheel—the tutoring and other projects that had proved so satisfying in his undergraduate days. [See opposite page.] But he quickly discovered that community service was a “highly decentralized but very marginalized activity” at Penn. Some of the grassroots groups were essentially homeless.

“I couldn’t even find out where they were,” he says. “There were a few groups that sort of found me, but they were petering out. It was pretty pitiful.” Which didn’t stop him from offering his services and office, and participating in whatever faculty boards he could find.

Although he was deeply involved in the life of the community and Penn’s civic-engagement efforts, it would take more than 20 years to find a real home for his civic energies and vision. Of course, he was also teaching and publishing at the university level, not normally a part-time job for someone who takes both parts of the equation as seriously as he does.



Walter Licht

CIVIC SCHOLARS FACULTY DIRECTOR



“I always felt that, if I was not *just* going to be a scholar and teacher, that I would be taking my love of history into the community as much as possible,” says Licht. That translated into, among other things, a summer “history camp” in which he worked with high-school teachers, many of them from Penn’s neck of the woods. It later led to the West Philadelphia Community History Center, which he undertook with Mark Frazier Lloyd, director of the University Archives and Records Center.

During much of that time, the fabric of the wildly diverse section of the city in which he lived and worked was unraveling. By the early 1990s, crime was spiking dangerously, and Penn’s relationship with its neighbors was marked by mutual distrust and smoldering resentment.

“When I first came here, it was *Dump on Penn*,” says Licht. “I didn’t really understand it. I had never heard such vitriol as at those community meetings. I began to study it myself, to understand what had happened here.”

Unlike a lot of people, he began to see the seeds of something promising in that anger.

Ignacio Crespo C’11 | CAPSTONE PROJECT: “Community-Based Enterprises as an Alternative Model for Rural Sustainable Socioeconomic Development: The Case Study of Jasmine Growers of Coastal Karnataka”

A CIVIC SCHOLAR SAMPLER

Shortly after arriving at Penn in the fall of 2007, Allison Huberlie C’11 co-founded a program called Penn for Youth Debate. It was a subject she knew well, having been a champion debater in her New Hampshire high school, and what started as a modest program in five Philadelphia public schools has since expanded to more than 30 public and charter middle and high schools. The students, whose ages range from 12 to 18, debate everything from universal healthcare to the military draft to the benefits of social networking—“big contemporary social issues,” as she puts it.

The program, with its myriad responsibilities and time-sucks, fulfilled her community-service requirement as a Civic Scholar. It has also been her passion.

“I owe everything to debate,” says the bright-eyed, quick-talking Huberlie. “There’s nothing in college that I haven’t been able to relate back to it—literally nothing. Every single thing I do, I can take something I learned from debate and apply it.

“The basic idea was that debate is just really incredible for students, but that the impact could potentially be magnified for students from less privileged schools,” she adds. “First, there’s the literacy, critical-thinking, public-speaking skills, which are all incredible and amazing. But another thing that debate did for me was, it really surrounded me with high-performing peers. So putting underserved students in an environment where everyone wants them to go to college can also be helpful.”

Under Huberlie, Penn for Youth Debate partnered with a local nonprofit called After School Activities Partnership.

“They teach things like chess and Scrabble, and they wanted to add debate, but while they had the infrastructure to do that, they didn’t have the knowledge expertise, and we had that,” she explains. “They do all the administrative stuff, and we provide about 75 Penn volunteers to go once a week to these schools and teach debate to the students and act as their coaches.”

Then there are the tournaments—at least three a year—as well as scrimmages during the week. Tournaments, usually held on college campuses, provide a “chance for the students to

show off their skills, to compete against each other,” says Huberlie.

“We try to make sure there is an academic focus, and just bringing the students onto a college campus has a profound impact on them. They see what it’s like here, and they want to replicate that for themselves. We also do college preparation for the students.”

That in itself is no small commitment. Until the last big expansion, Huberlie personally worked with every student on college essays and applications. She then created a structure in which the Penn volunteers are responsible for every senior on the debate team, “nagging them and making sure” that their applications and recommendations are in.

The program has had a significant impact on the teachers who are involved with debate. “We’ve been lucky with a lot of these teachers,” Huberlie says. “We’re never going to have enough volunteers to staff every single school in the city, but with a lot of the schools, if you find a young teacher who’s going to be there for a while, and get them involved in debate, they will kind of keep that program going on their own. Then we can pull out the vol-

"In the midst of what was a generalized urban crisis of the late '80s and '90s, it was really thrilling the extent to which the community began mobilizing itself, whether it was at Spruce Hill or the other organizations," he says. "And that was having an impact on campus."

Licht did have some visionary allies in this struggle. One was Ira Harkavy C'70 Gr'79, who had evolved from activist student leader to civically involved graduate student (who consulted with Licht on his doctoral dissertation) and has since become associate vice president and director of the Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships, which he founded in 1992.

"Walter's been involved in the Netter Center's work since early on," says Harkavy. "He wrote a very significant book called *Getting Work*, which talks about job networks, and he actually applied those ideas to work with University City High students and Penn students, to develop policy papers and strategies that were presented to the school district and other bodies." That, he adds, "is what academically based community service is designed to do: integrate research, teaching, service, and learning."

Licht is a fan of the Netter Center—and, since 1999, the Fox Leadership Program, which opened under Fox Leadership Professor John DiIulio C'80 G'80 and executive director Joe Tierney and has also done vitally important work, including

serving as the home of Big Brothers/Big Sisters at Penn and leading Penn's presence in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina ["Bridge to the Gulf," Jul/Aug 2008]. And many of his students have done community-service work through their programs. But he still felt something was missing.

"I loved that Ira could bring together these outreach courses," says Licht. "I taught some of the original ones. But they created an interesting center that left out all of the 30 or 40 student groups."

"The beauty of Civic House is that it's a student-empowered place," he adds. "An empowering place. There are upwards of four dozen of those groups at this point. And our best estimate is that at any time in a given semester, somewhere around 2,500 undergrads are engaged with groups that fall under the umbrella of Civic House."

A genealogist would be helpful in describing the creation of Civic House, formerly the Community Service Learning Center, whose roots are in the Program for Student-Community Involvement, which was led by Grossman. After a group of students in the program petitioned for a space in late 1997, the University turned over the building at 3914 Locust Walk and christened it Civic House. Designated as an official hub of student activity, similar to Kelly Writers House, its mission was to "prepare students for their roles as citizens and leaders." Its first faculty director was Peter Conn, the Vartan Gregorian Professor of English, who was also serving as deputy (then interim) pro-

unteers and put them somewhere else where they're more needed."

Maria Fitzgerald, a chemistry teacher who had been tapped to lead the debate program at Bodine High School for International Affairs in the Northern Liberties section of Philadelphia, recalls not just how good Huberlie was with the kids, or how much she mentored them and critiqued their debate preparation before tournaments, or how knowledgeable she was about debate; she also recalls the sometimes-overwhelming logistical work and perseverance needed to make things happen. (After she'd made arrangements for the kids to stay with host families of debaters for a tournament in New York, for example, the School District's lawyers nixed that plan, whereupon Huberlie had to find them all hotel rooms—then come up with the funding for both the rooms and the insurance. She did it all, fast and without complaining.)

"She was one of those people who, when you work with them, you know the job will get done," says Fitzgerald. "I would sometimes forget that she was only a college student. She was so competent that I would think of her as someone who was about 30."

Huberlie's senior capstone project examined how the leaders of Philadelphia charter schools perceive the tradeoffs between accountability and autonomy.

"I interviewed 16 leaders at 16 different charters," she explains, "and ultimately focused the paper more on the tradeoffs that leaders face between accountability—through standardized tests, audits of finances, how teachers are accountable to one another—and their autonomy to design the curriculum to spend money the way they want to spend, and how those two things balance each other out."

Among the lessons Huberlie learned from her civically engaged mother, who works as a consultant to nonprofit organizations, is that "business skills are lacking in the nonprofit world." That insight is at least partly the motivation behind Huberlie's first job after graduation (foreign-currency trading at Credit Suisse) and behind her eventual plan to attend Harvard Business School, which has an educational-management program.

Whatever part of the educational-management field she goes into, Ali Huberlie is going to help. There's no debating that.

For Sourav Bose C'11 W'11, civic engagement was the result of many factors that fall under the categories of *nature* and *nurture*.

"My parents are physicians, as is my sister," he says. "So there's a certain service element that I grew up with, and my intrinsic values guide me toward service work."

Bose has taken the concept to another level, though. Before he even got to Penn, his family's summer visits to India had prompted him to found a nonprofit organization there that focuses on health education and literacy; he had also conducted research on the variable sequences of the gp120 protein of the HIV-1 envelope at the Public Health Research Institute and volunteered as an EMT with his local fire department in Leonia, New Jersey.

While the latter helped him recognize "the impact I could have in my own community," he says, working in India showed him that all communities are, at their core, the same. "And working for the community had similar impacts, despite the differences in the tools that you use and the cultural sensitivities that are required, and the exact mode in which you are helping—or rather, contributing."

vost; as the demands of that office grew, Civic House began casting about for a new faculty director. Licht, whose academic, civic, and University-citizen credentials were impeccable, “came up as someone who would be terrific,” recalls Grossman.

The student urge for civic engagement is an increasingly powerful one, and certainly not confined to Penn. For most Civic Scholars, community service began in the home or high school. In addition to some mandated civic activities by “top-flight high schools,” Licht points to the role of nonprofits and NGOs and high-profile philanthropists like Bill Gates and Bono.

“The kids are picking up on something happening above and beyond Penn,” he says. “And they’re in a global world, so they’re sensitive to issues of AIDS in Africa or Darfur. Katrina was an essential experience for them, in getting themselves engaged.”

While the academically based community-service courses were often (not always) great, they tended to be “one-semester affairs” that did not lead to a bona fide research experience.

“Thanks largely to Ira, we’ve made huge strides on the academic side, in University-assisted community schools,” says Grossman. “Civic House has paid attention to the student-development piece, in nurturing student leadership and understanding around these issues. And we have a lot of students who, by their own gumption, have woven together their academic work

and their civic-engagement work toward something where the whole is more than the sum of the parts when they graduate. But we’ve not nurtured students from the beginning who care about that. Civic Scholars was an attempt to respond to that.”

About five years ago, having meditated on that programmatic gap for several years, Licht and Harkavy had lunch together.

“We were chatting about this idea that both of us had an interest in,” recalls Harkavy, “and Walter is the one who said, ‘Let’s take it to the next level.’ He took that conversation to the provost and to the dean of admissions—and it developed very quickly. I remember him coming back very excited, but with some degree of trepidation as well, and he said something like, ‘This is moving quicker than I ever dreamed.’”

The program has been strongly supported by both the provost’s office and President Gutmann. The idea “immediately resonated with me, both as a scholar and as Penn’s president,” recalls Gutmann. “It aligns perfectly with the Penn Compact, allowing students to directly engage in community projects and generate research.”

The nettlesome question of how to select the Civic Scholars was given over to the admissions office, which would scour the applications of those being admitted to Penn and recommend a small number, based on their personal essays and their community-service work. The fear was that if there were a Civic Scholars box on the application, too many students would check it.

Bose, who’s also in the Vagelos Program in Life Sciences and Management (majoring in biology and economics and crisis management), continued his work in disaster management and pre-hospital healthcare at Penn, serving as chief of the student-run Penn Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT), which provides medical services for the Penn campus and surrounding areas. He also did research with the Department of Emergency Medicine at HUP on resource needs in the Philadelphia ambulance system.

Eugene Janda, chief of Fire and Emergency Services at Penn, recalls an incident back in April when, in the small hours of the morning, a campus security guard was seriously injured by a car that drove up on the sidewalk. Two groups responded immediately: the Philadelphia Fire Department and the Penn MERT. Even though Bose was a month away from graduating, and had finished his term as chief and was now officially just a MERT advisor, he supervised the MERT response.

“Sourav could have been out at a party, or just relaxing and having a good time before he left Penn,” says Janda. “But he wasn’t. He was out supervising the MERT in his uniform while they helped to assess

and stabilize the injured security officer.”

Bose’s capstone project—“Determinants of Pricing for Emergent Inter-hospital Ambulance Transfer in a Developing Setting: a Geographically Randomized Study,” which won the Rose Undergraduate Research Award—grew out of two summers’ worth of work in rural Guatemala, as part of Penn’s Guatemala Health Initiative. The first summer’s work was “ethnographic in nature,” and the second summer was a “focused project looking at access to emergency healthcare in a community [which] drew on my Wharton education, the University perspective on anthropology and working with people, and certain technical perspectives from a variety of different fields,” he says. “But most importantly it was geared toward the community and working in a community setting and pursuing some sort of sustainable community model for developing access to care.

“We now have data that we can publish and share with those who are working in developing countries,” he adds. “The piece of the project that I’m most proud of is not the results to the actual survey but the methodology that I created to develop that data, which was a novel, low-cost, low-tech approach to doing geo-

graphic randomization of surveys—in rural areas, for example, with no addresses or no enumerable element like phone numbers or social-security numbers.”

Bose spent two years working as a research assistant to Roger Band, assistant professor of emergency medicine at Penn.

“It was clear from my initial interview with Sourav that he is dedicated to research, and, unlike most pre-med students, he is very adept at working with spreadsheets and analyzing large data sets, which has been tremendously helpful,” says Band. “He developed a methodology for this one paper we’re submitting now from when he was in Guatemala, and he basically needed to develop a research tool, which he did almost de novo. He was able to figure out all the IT-related components, and how to do the statistics around his methodology—basically just a new way to collect data in a resource-limited setting. To do any of those components requires a different skill set than I have. That he was able to come up with all of this stuff was pretty impressive.”

Asked, in an admittedly leading fashion, if there’s something Franklinesque about Bose’s range of talents, Band

On the whole, the process has worked quite well, and resulted in a remarkable mix of talented, civically engaged students. But it has drawn mixed reviews from the students.

"I would definitely change the selection process," says Brian Mertens C'11, a health and societies major (see sidebar). "It's based off of your college application, which is not necessarily the best representation of yourself or your commitment to community service. I could probably find five stellar people on campus right now who aren't in Civic Scholars who are more involved [in community service] than some of the Civic Scholars are now."

Licht and Grossman acknowledge the merits of that concern, and are not completely closed to the possibility of taking on new students during their freshman year. But in the meantime, Mertens isn't complaining about the results—or about the fact that the program "really changed the direction of my academic career."

That flexibility—and entrepreneurial ability to take charge of situations—is one of the things the program is looking for.

"We're excited about those students that can deal with ambiguity," says Eric Furda C'87, Penn's dean of admissions. "For a lot of students, a lot of families, they want to know: What is the track?"

Samuel Ribnick C'11 | CAPSTONE PROJECT: "In Pursuit of Education: The Creation of a Black Public School System in Washington, D.C. through a Century of Change, 1807-1900"



laughs. "Yeah, I'll go with that. He's a pretty multidimensional guy."

Bose, who may be most proud of his time volunteering at the Philadelphia Animal Welfare Society, will be spending the upcoming academic year earning his master's in public health in the United Kingdom on a Thouron Fellowship, and will be returning to Penn's medical school in the fall of 2012 (and, he hopes, submatriculating into the MBA program at Wharton). Further down the road, he envisions himself "working as a physician and consulting with governments and corporations, working in disaster zones or high-risk areas to optimize delivery of public-health resources."

But at this point, he says: "My perspective is that I haven't actually accomplished anything."

When it comes to volunteering and community service, Brian Mertens C'11 has seen the good, the bad, and the ugly.

"I've been on both sides," he says. "I was a volunteer at a needle-distribution center, and they didn't seem interested in having me around or not having me around. If I showed up, I showed up. If I didn't, I didn't. There was never any orientation material; I was never introduced to who was in

charge or given any contact information. I'd email people and they never got back to me." As a smart, well-organized student majoring in health and societies, he could have helped that organization—if it had been organized enough.

Since he began working at the Urban Nutrition Initiative (UNI)—a program based in the Netter Center that addresses issues of nutrition, obesity, and diet-related disease—he's seen the flip side: a well-run organization that is understandably wary about taking on volunteers who show up with the best of intentions, commit to a lot of activities, then don't show up.

"The implications of these kinds of relationships in nonprofits, and how the nonprofits operate, I find very intellectually stimulating," he says. "They're their own kind of beast, and I've really benefited from my exposure to them. We're really critically evaluating what is good, what is altruism, what is philanthropy, and thinking about these issues in greater depth than other students who haven't been exposed to it would. We all have these different experiences in service; some of them are successful, and some are not. And I think discussing those models and what works and what doesn't,

and the nuances of volunteering and the public good, is really beneficial."

Mertens' first job with UNI was as an assistant supervisor in its garden, which he quickly determined was not the best place for him. He also ran one of UNI's cooking crews, in which high-school students from several area high schools teach healthful-cooking classes throughout West Philadelphia. Last summer he was responsible for running a program in which UNI placed rising high-school seniors in professional internships in private businesses and at Penn.

"Brian went to our grant meetings with the funder who was going to help us make that happen, and learned the requirements for that grant and also for the program, and then really ran with that project," says Kristin Schwab, UNI's director of youth development. "There's no way we could have pulled it off without him."

"In my five years of working here with Penn students, three of the top students were Civic Scholars," Schwab adds, the other two being Anushka Nadarajah C'11 and Jeremy Levenson C'12. "There's something good going on there, because it connected me with the best students here that are really committed to tying in that service with their academics."



What is the outcome of that track? And there's comfort in that. But what about students who take something that's in formation and who help influence that formation? Those are the leaders. Those are the ones who are going to have an impact."

OF the 15 Civic Scholars who signed on that first year, only two dropped out. And despite the minor criticisms, all of the graduating seniors I spoke with were somewhere between proud and thrilled that they had been part of that first trailblazing cohort.

"I think Walter did it right," says Allison Roland. "Because he has really molded every facet of my academic and extracurricular time at Penn. It's not just, 'OK, I'm going to take three ABCS [academically based community-service] classes and some other courses, write a thesis, do an internship.' You have to go to proseminars. You have to be involved in service at least five semesters. In every single domain of your time here, Civic Scholars sort of filters in. It's not overwhelmingly all-encompassing, but everything I've done has had a Civic Scholars component. And I think that's the way to go, because it keeps civic engagement and the issues percolating in everything you do."

This past May, two days before Commencement, the 13 graduating Civic Scholars gathered at MarBar, the sleek, modernist bar above the Marathon Grill at 40th and Walnut streets. Their families were there, too, and soon the parents were swapping stories about their sons' and daughters' adventures in civic engagement, and examining the capstone project reports on

display—and, of course, wanting to meet Grossman and the famous Walter Licht. Then Provost Vincent Price, a strong supporter of the program, arrived and introduced himself to the students and their families. Finally it was time for him to award the certificates to the newly minted Civic Scholars.

"Franklin wanted to create a new generation of leaders, young people dedicated to responsible, responsive government," he told them. "You lead by example."

And so, after the obligatory hugs and promises to stay in touch, they walked out into the rainy spring afternoon and the rest of their lives.

"It was bittersweet," Licht was saying a few days later. "These were our first children, our pioneer program." He found himself thinking back to the spring of 2007, when the idea was just going from lightbulb-over-the-head to reality, when he was trying to recruit them—with no program, no brochure, not even a website.

"I don't know how those four years went so fast," he sighed. "As I said to a couple of them, 'I was just on the phone with you, trying to recruit you to Penn. Now you're on your way out the door.'"

"They will be special, this cohort," he admitted. "That first year, there were just 15 of them, and then down to 13. We were like a little family. And one word came up several times—the *consistency* of the experience. We were a kind of constant presence for the students over their four years. They were in and out of a lot of things, and this was their ballast in some sense. They knew we were here, constantly, part of their lives."◆

Mertens' capstone project was "The Crusade for Pure Milk Has Begun: Science, Politics, and Municipal Milk Regulation in Philadelphia, 1889-1914." It examines the efforts by the Board of Health of Philadelphia to regulate and inspect milk at a time when its role in infant mortality was becoming clear. It also evaluates how the medical community's emerging understanding of bacteriology changed the Board's concept of the milk problem, especially regarding hygienic conditions in the dairy industry—and explores the still relevant confluence of science, politics, and public health.

Like a lot of Civic Scholars, Patrick Krieger C'13 had plenty of community-service work during his formative years in Ohio. He doesn't mind working hard, and when he taught summer school at Wilson Freedom School in West Philadelphia last year, he was up at 6:30 and in the classroom by 7:30. Every morning.

"He was always on time, and he knew all the children's names the first day," says Kuzonza Barnes, the mother of one of his 10-year-old students. "I liked the

fact that he was respectful to parents—always addressed me as 'Ms. Barnes.' And he expected the best out of the children."

Krieger, who even went to church with the Barneses, acknowledges that he brought high expectations for the kids.

"In my classroom, my students will be learning," he says. "Sometimes they say, 'Oh, why do we have to work?' I tell them, 'It's called *school*. I want you to be the best students in your school next year.' They know I expect them to have their feet under their desk, their backs straight. I will not take any attitude in the classroom."

By several accounts, Krieger did control the classroom remarkably well, with a quiet, firm hand. (It also didn't hurt that he knew when to spring the occasional surprise party.)

"When they acted out, he would get them under control," says Kuzonza Barnes, an assertion confirmed by 10-year-old Kimberly. "But he didn't like to yell. He had good control over the class."

Not that he found teaching easy.

"Working in the schools was just a shock to me," he says. "You walk in

there and it's chaos—kids screaming, yelling, running, hitting. I was thinking back to, 'Where was I in the second grade? Were there students screaming back, refusing to do things?' It's challenging when they're misbehaving and acting out, no matter how much you know about classroom management.

"I think urban education is the hardest and most important field in the nation," he says. "Being able to shape and mold minds at the most crucial stage of life is the most important thing I've done. My work can be frustrating, and it's stressful, but it's rewarding when students get it."

While he hasn't lost any of his interest in urban education, teaching itself has lost some of its luster.

"I completely understand the turnover rates," he says, and admits to a sneaking desire to work for Apple. "But then I think about it—what am I using this degree for? My Penn connections may allow me to gain funding for a charter school. We're in a learning environment that has so many ideas. I want to effect change. The question is, how can I do that with my Penn degree?"—S.H.