

Inspired by our students

Leo I. Higdon, Jr.

›LAST NIGHT, I HAD THE pleasure of visiting with students in Katharine Blunt House. The fire was blazing in the common room fireplace, a chocolate fondue — complete with strawberries, marshmallows and little cakes for dipping — was set up in the corner, and students from all of the central campus residences dropped in to chat.

It sounds almost artificially idyllic, but this is the kind of scene our students can and do create on this beautiful, historic campus. They had invited me in to meet with them informally, and I will be doing similar visits with students in the north and south campus residences as well.

While I often see students on campus — at events or in passing on the way to classes, meetings, shows and games — I consider gatherings in the residence halls a wonderful opportunity to meet students on a purely social basis, with them acting as hosts, and with no agenda except to get to know each other better.

Our students really are fascinating individuals. When I talk with them, I'm encouraged and inspired — by all that they have accomplished and all that they have ahead of them. Yet even as they recognize the value of this comprehensive liberal arts education, many of them are expressing uncertainty about life after college. They're not concerned about getting into graduate or professional schools — most students know Connecticut College has an excellent record of preparing students for success at the top graduate schools



PRESIDENT HIGDON TALKS WITH STUDENTS IN THE KATHARINE BLUNT COMMON ROOM.

in the country. Today's students, very simply, are concerned about finding jobs in this uncertain economic environment.

With that in mind, and knowing the economy is impacting so many people, we have expanded the programs and services available to both current students and alumni to help them prepare for life after college and to connect them with people within our global network of alumni who can be important resources.

Fortunately, many of our students take advantage of our unique funded internship program. Through internship experiences, they apply the skills they've learned in the classroom to a wide range of workplaces. And those internship experiences are helping them now in the job market. In fact, several seniors have already received job offers that are a direct result of relationships developed during their College-funded internships. In addition, many juniors have told me that the funded internship has given them a tremendous advantage this year in securing summer positions that will provide hands-on experience in their area of interest.

The counselors in our Career Enhancing Life Skills (CELS) office are very good at helping students package their interests with their academic and co-curricular experiences in a compelling way. They know our students well and provide a wide range of assistance in planning and preparing for life after college. I encourage all students to get involved with CELS.

The Office of Alumni Relations is

working closely with CELS to provide opportunities for students to interact with alumni in a variety of careers, and arranges one-on-one career counseling for students through job shadowing and mentoring programs.

As our resources allow, we continue to be a resource for alumni long after they graduate. I encourage all alumni to check the College's Web site frequently for College-sponsored networking opportunities and other career-related services — both here on campus and in venues across the country. Earlier this month, I visited with alumni and parents at events in Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. At both events, I was encouraged by the enthusiasm for the College and commitment to our goals.

Just after this magazine goes to press, I will speak at Burdick House's "Dessert and Dialogue." Students there have invited me to talk about how I got started in my career on Wall Street, and to give them advice they could use as they pursue their own post-graduate plans.

I plan to encourage them to take advantage of every opportunity Connecticut College has to offer, including CELS, internships, summer research and alumni career panels, and to get to know people in our vast network of alumni who have successful careers in fields that interest them. The current job market is obviously very challenging, but I feel confident that our students will thrive — following in the impressive footsteps of their alumni predecessors.

›president's page

BRANDON W. MOSLEY