The 2014 Scholarship Appreciation Luncheon

On May 8, 380 students, alumni, faculty, and staff joined donors in Thorne Hall to celebrate the generosity of those who provide resources for financial aid at Bowdoin. The program featured a student string quartet, personal remarks, a video of student testimonials, and an announcement of a new initiative by President Mills. Deborah Jensen Barker ’80, P’16, chair of Bowdoin’s Board of Trustees, served as host.


President Mills announced at the luncheon that the College would embark on a fundraising initiative to add more than $100 million to its endowment in support of financial aid. Mills is dedicating his last year as president to raising these funds to ensure Bowdoin remains a “place that welcomes the most talented, the most diverse, the most engaging students to this campus.”

“I understand what it means to be a first-generation college student and what these places can do. I understand how the opportunity to go to a place like Bowdoin changes individual lives, changes families, and, over the long haul, changes communities. And that really ought to be the goal of Bowdoin. If the common good is about anything, it should be about creating opportunity for students, regardless of background. It’s about the American dream.”

—President Barry Mills ’72

Gift Opportunities

Please make a gift in support of the Access, Opportunity, Innovation initiative and Bowdoin students in a way that makes sense for you.

- You can make your gift to the Alumni Fund, Parents Fund, or other annual fund specifically for financial aid. For more information about annual funds, contact Brannon Fisher at 207-725-3670 or bfisher2@bowdoin.edu; for information about the Parents Fund, contact Pam Phillips at 207-725-3269 or pphillip@bowdoin.edu.
- You can establish a Hyde Scholarship for a Bowdoin student with a $40,000 minimum pledge to the Alumni Fund to be paid over four years. For more information, contact Brannon Fisher at 207-725-3670 or bfisher2@bowdoin.edu.
- In addition to your annual fund gift, you can establish a new scholarship fund with a leadership gift of $100,000 or more, or you can give any amount to one of the many existing scholarship funds, including the Barry and Karen Gordon Mills Scholarship Fund. For more information, contact Elizabeth Orlic at 207-725-3712 or eorlic@bowdoin.edu.
- You can support Bowdoin scholarship aid through your estate plan, retirement plan, charitable gift, or other planned gift. For more information, contact Steve Hyde at 207-725-3436 or shyde@bowdoin.edu.
Standing in extreme temperatures, the steam roars from each of the pressing iron machines. The fumes of different chemicals resonate in the air as my father tries to scrape off pasta sauce, wine, and jelly donut stains from various articles of clothing. My contribution to the family dry cleaner was to iron the dress shirts. On Saturdays and Sundays, the family woke up together at 6 a.m. and we would all travel down to Lowell; my vacation days—from school to Lowell. Summertime—Lowell. Any day that I was free from school, I found myself in Lowell. I did not complain to my parents because I knew the hours they would have had to work without me being there to help them.

As I grew older, I realized that education was the key to getting my family out of our financial situation. I thought that I was strong and I thought that I could do everything independently; that my accomplishments are a product of my own actions and my actions alone. I am wrong… I am here because of my parents, my counselors, my professors, my peers. I am here… because of the donors who made this opportunity to pursue higher education possible.

Nguyen grew up very independent. At the age of ten, he was cooking dinner and commuting on his own to help iron clothes at his family’s drycleaning business. Both of his parents emigrated from Vietnam. Nguyen is a first-generation college student from Lawrence, Massachusetts, majoring in chemistry and minoring in math. He plans to attend medical school.

Why is it important to do so? I have no doubt that we could fill the class with impressive students whose families could and would pay full freight. Even though we could do so, I think we all instinctively cringe at the thought. Doing so would not be consonant with our devotion to the common good. It would mean that we would arbitrarily turn away a substantial number of the best and the brightest. It would diminish the experience of current Bowdoin students by keeping from them the diversity of points of view which students from a range of backgrounds can provide, thus limiting the quality of their education and leaving them less equipped to face a world where nimbleness of mind, tenacity, flexibility and ability to think broadly and creatively are critical competitive advantages.

Today, much remains to be done to ensure that a Bowdoin education can be available not only to the least affluent families but also to families firmly in the middle class.