WILLIAMS IN AFRICA INITIATIVE

The Williams in Africa Initiative (WiA), managed by the Williams in Africa Committee aims to creatively and carefully build experiential learning programs that encourage students to engage meaningfully with the African continent. At this time, the initiative features three major programs: a semester study away program, a summer fieldwork program and a recently launched post-graduate research fellowship. The WiA Committee has taken a collaborative approach in all its programming, tapping the expertise of external partner institutions as well as internal college departments and other programs.

In mid Summer/Fall, 2009, the pilot “Cape Town Policy in Action” semester study away program made a strong start hosting 4 students under the leadership of Williams Professor and EPRI Research Director Michael Samson. In Summer, 2009, Professor Kiaran Honderich led a very successful non-credit field research program for 5 students in Uganda. In January 2010, the Committee unveiled a new 2010-2011 post-graduate research fellowship at the Economic Policy Research Institute in Cape Town at no added cost to the College.

CAPE TOWN EPRI/INTERSTUDY POLICY IN ACTION 2009 & 2010

This innovative experiential study away program teaches students about South African politics, society and development and cultivates their research skills through a special seminar/tutorial and fieldwork placement at the Economic Policy Research Institute in Cape Town (See attached curriculum schematic). The program’s unique feature is the unifying seminar/tutorial on contemporary social and political issues in South Africa. This course partners Williams students with South African Parliamentarians in a collaborative learning effort focused on policy issues of mutual interest.

The first run of this program featured four very talented Juniors who took full advantage of all the opportunities the program provides. All performed well in their tutorial sessions with Parliamentarians and gained great skills in their independent research work at EPRI. In a recent International Studies Colloquium, one student marveled at how quickly he and others took on the role of advising expert in their respective policy areas. The partnership with Interstudy also served the students well. They were housed a few miles from EPRI and UCT in a multi-gated and alarmed housing complex.

The second run of the program holds as much promise as the first. Seven very strong applicants have been pre-accepted into the Fall 2010 program with fieldwork placement meetings with Professor Samson held in late April/May 2010.

WILLIAMS/MAKERERE UGANDA SUMMER 2009 FIELDWORK PILOT

This summer field research program gave 5 Williams students the chance to train and work along side Makerere University counterparts studying the issue of care labor for AIDS orphans. The pilot

---

1Williams College contribution (travel health insurance premiums) financed through redeployment of $2500 EPRI retainer line item in the Williams in Africa budget.
2EPRI has a fifteen year history working with Williams on South African capacity building.
was a great success. Students learned much more than they anticipated, helping design the research program they implemented. The 3 returning students are considering writing honors theses that draw on the data they collected. Two of the three have organized a related WSP 99 group project with other Williams students proposing to build a water tank at an orphanage they visited at the end of their stay.

While financial constraints have forced suspension of the Uganda summer fieldwork program for 2010, Professor Honderich is using the time to explore integrating the program into the Williams curriculum by partnering a 2011 round of this fieldwork with a relevant fall course. The summer fieldwork would be a pre-requisite for the course which will be a research seminar providing students the opportunity to conduct in depth analysis of their fieldwork findings. More information on the Uganda program and other projects in Africa led by Professor Honderich are available at www.williams.edu/go/africa and the Activism in Africa website at: http://activisminafrica.williams.edu/other-projects

POST-GRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP @ EPRI

This newly created fellowship at the Economic Policy Research Institute in Cape Town, South Africa will provide 3 recent Williams graduates the opportunity to work on cutting edge policy research focused on tackling poverty and promoting socio-economic progress in developing countries. Fellows will work side by side with senior researchers at the Institute for 15 months beginning in June 2010.