The Class of 1964 Policy Research Shop (PRS) was designed for students interested in policy issues and policy making. For the last 10 years, Rockefeller Center students have informed public policy discussions in New Hampshire and Vermont through objective, non-partisan research briefs.

The PRS model of teaching and learning engages students in the public policymaking process in ways that reach beyond the traditional classroom experience. For many students, it is the first time that they will produce work for an audience other than their peers or professors.

“We aim to create a learning environment that engages teams of students ‘in and out of the classroom, on and off campus,’” says Professor Ronald Shaiko, director of the PRS. “While the PRS group efforts are guided by faculty mentors who assist the students in focusing their research questions and implementing their research designs, ultimately the students own the analysis and are responsible for presenting their findings to state legislative committees and commissions, both in their written documents and in formal testimonies.”

Since its inception in 2005, PRS students have produced more than 140 non-partisan policy briefs, with most of them testifying on their finding to state legislators and policy makers and some of them directly impacting policy in the two states.

The learning experience, combined with a tangible product, gives students a real taste of participatory citizenship and instills a sense of confidence to pursue even more challenging opportunities during leave terms and in their careers beyond Dartmouth.

The Class of 1964 honored the Center’s dedication to the development of citizen-leaders by fully endowing the Policy Research Shop as part of its broader 50th reunion gift to the Rockefeller Center to support leadership development. In June, Maya and Robert Tichio ’99, hosted an alumni reception in New York City to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the PRS. “President Hanlon has outlined an ambitious institutional priority of advancing experiential learning, and in my view, there is no institution on campus better positioned to advance that calling than Rocky.... The Policy Research Shop — with its blend of academic research and hands-on partnerships with sitting legislators — is a perfect example,” said Tichio, himself an active participant in Rocky programming while a student at Dartmouth and now currently serving on the Rockefeller Center Board of Visitors.
ROCKY BY THE NUMBERS

Value-Based Leadership Development

The Rockefeller Center is dedicated to developing the leadership potential of Dartmouth undergraduates. Leadership is based on action, not position – it is the ability to mobilize a group and its resources toward a common goal. It requires the growth of our students’ talent, vision, and entrepreneurial spirit. The liberal arts education at Dartmouth is the cornerstone, but not the extent, of leadership development. The process of translating education into socially beneficial outcomes begins with a fundamental knowledge of one’s values, which in turn requires time and space to reflect. That is why we are especially excited about one of our newest programs, Dartmouth Leadership Attitudes and Behaviors, better known as D-LAB.

This program, created with first-year students in mind, was deliberately designed to be a student-facilitated program. During the six sessions, in a small-group discussion format, students explore their individual beliefs and values, and how these relate to their individual identities. Session activities offer immediate feedback on students’ congruency between perception, intent, and impact. Participants are encouraged to test how personal strengths and weaknesses affect group dynamics in real time. By the end of the program, students have developed a plan that will keep them focused on aligning their core values with the greater Dartmouth community and identifying ways to uphold the “Principle of Community” at Dartmouth College.

After participating in D-LAB, first-year students are prepared to make more thoughtful decisions about how they spend their time at Dartmouth. The unique experience of being led by upperclass student facilitators allows first-year students to meaningfully connect with campus leaders and potential mentors. The conversations that take place broaden students’ understanding of themselves, their fellow classmates, and the Dartmouth experience itself.

D-LAB ran its pilot in the winter of 2014 with 56 participants and 12 facilitators. The following year, in winter 2015, the program ran with 78 participants and 22 facilitators. Currently co-sponsored by the Rockefeller Center and the Collis Center for Student Involvement, partnerships with other Dartmouth organizations are being cultivated to broaden the reach and the depth of the program.

“D-LAB is an excellent place for students to begin thinking about what leadership means to them,” says Robin Frye, Program Officer. “Before students can lead others, they must have a keen sense of self and examine values that they live by. By the end of the program, students are able to answer, ‘What matters to me, and why?’”

Note: This is a compilation of statistics on our programmatic activities during the 2014-2015 fiscal year.
In February, faculty and staff members from Dartmouth and beyond gathered at the Rockefeller Center to discuss the current research of Janice M. McCabe, an Assistant Professor of Sociology whose area of expertise includes gender, education, and youth studies. With a focus on research that investigates youth culture and social networks, Professor McCabe recently completed a manuscript titled, "Friends with Academic Benefits: Networks Matter During and After College." Andrew Samwick, Professor of Economics and Director of the Rockefeller Center, facilitated the three-hour discussion, which offered constructive criticism of the manuscript at the pre-publication stage.

The formal manuscript review process brought together not only Dartmouth faculty members, but also leading scholars in the field from the Ohio State University and the University of Pennsylvania. McCabe said, "Generous funding from Rocky allowed me to invite two of the top scholars in the field to come to Hanover for the seminar, and I also got to invite whomever I wanted from campus as well." McCabe invited faculty members from six different disciplines across campus, including the Sociology, Economics, and Math departments as well as the Tuck School of Business.

McCabe acknowledged the immense benefit of having gone through the process. She remarked, "It will be a much better book having gone through peer review in an interdisciplinary discussion forum where people can bounce ideas off of each other. I’m very thankful for this opportunity from the Rockefeller Center." The book has been accepted by the University of Chicago Press with an anticipated Fall 2016 publication date.

Although the formal manuscript review process is relatively new to the Rockefeller Center, it is not novel to Dartmouth College. Both the Dickey Center for International Understanding and the Leslie Center for the Humanities have hosted formal manuscript reviews in the past. According to Andrew Samwick, the Rockefeller Center intends to make manuscript reviews a regular part of its offerings to faculty across the social sciences as a result of the success of McCabe’s recent review. He commented, "Such a wide range of thoughtful comments will contribute to a final manuscript that is more convincing and better articulated."
The Nelson A. Rockefeller Center delivers innovative programs that engage students in scholarship and leadership. It is only through the generosity of past, present, and future donors that the Center can pursue this mission and to achieve it with such positive impact.

YOU can have an impact on the next generation of public policy leaders!

“...It has been very rewarding for the faculty and staff at the Rockefeller Center to use experiential learning as an approach to educating our students for a lifetime of learning and of responsible leadership. With each passing year more students take advantage of our program offerings and emerge with a strong sense of self and confidence in their own vision for their future.

This is the transformation that the Rockefeller Center seeks to inspire in each generation of Dartmouth students.”

~ Andrew Samwick

Director of the Nelson A. Rockefeller Center for Public Policy and the Social Sciences,

Sandra L. and Arthur L. Irving ’72a, P’10 Professor of Economics

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