
Dec. 17, 2009

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'04 alum's job takes him to Afghanistan

It has been five years since Matt Dabrowski graduated from St. Bonaventure University with a degree in political science. He has faced numerous political tasks, but none of them may be as tough as the one he faces now.

Since graduating in 2004, Dabrowski has specialized in political polling and using numbers to help politicians understand the opinions of any given population. He has worked for the nationally recognized polling and research firm McLaughlin & Associates in New York City, which advises some of the biggest names in American politics, including California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Dabrowski, originally from Naugatuck, Conn., has also worked in Washington, D.C., for Republican and former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, run political campaigns around the country and spent more than a year working for the Connecticut State Senate.

Dabrowski has now entered into a field of both political and physical conflict in Afghanistan where he plans to stay for at least four months to do political polling for his current employer Glevum Associates. Glevum specializes in polling in the most challenging political environments in the world and sent Dabrowski to Kabul to poll the people there about their beliefs, attitudes and political aspirations.

“We want to know what is in people’s hearts and minds,” Dabrowski said. “We want to know what people are thinking about and how they go about their everyday life.”

As the senior quantitative manager for this trip, Dabrowski will analyze the polling and crunch numbers, while polling partners in Afghanistan conduct scientific and random door-to-door polling. The data will be relayed to policymakers who will use the information to have a better understanding of the Afghan people’s views and help them be more successful in the future, Dabrowski said.

Glevum has offices in the international district of Kabul. Dabrowski is stationed there, living in a private security facility. He said he's not worried about safety issues, but admits his family has concerns.

"There are a lot of different opinions," said Dabrowski. "Some of my family members are really worried ... I will not nearly be in the type of trouble that the soldiers will be in so I'm not worried."

In preparation for his time overseas, Dabrowski spent a lot of time filling out paperwork and learning to speak Dari, a dialect of Persian and one of the two languages of Afghanistan.

"There seems to be an endless number of military forms, civilian forms, passport and visa applications, medical checkups and vaccinations," Dabrowski said before leaving. "I am also trying to pick up what Dari I can."

Even though Dabrowski's time at St. Bonaventure has passed, the university continues to remain a big part of his life.

"Every day I am in touch with a pretty wide group of people from Bonaventure," Dabrowski said. "Bonaventure is a significant part of my life every day."

Dabrowski is grateful for the education he received at Bona's and gives credit to the professors for helping him prepare for his trip to Afghanistan.

"I always say that I owe Bona's everything," Dabrowski said. "I think the biggest influence the professors had on me was on my attitude and the way one operates as a professional. When you're a professional analyst and critical thinker, attitude is key. The right kind of professors make all the difference. I'm thinking about Dr. Neal Carter and Dr. Jim Moor, as well as Dr. Chris Stanley, Dr. Dan Tate and at least a dozen other professors."

There are fewer than a dozen people in the world doing the type of polling he's doing in Afghanistan, Dabrowski said. When asked if there is any honor to be one of those few, Dabrowski said, "No, I'm going to be at a desk playing with numbers and polling. The proud ones are the guys carrying around guns protecting our country. I see this as a really cool adventure and opportunity."

Follow Dabrowski's experience on Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/MattDabrowski/>.

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IMC major to address classmates at St. Bonaventure December Recognition Ceremony

Graham Vosburg, an integrated marketing communications major from Delevan, will address his classmates at St. Bonaventure University's December Recognition Ceremony on Saturday, Dec. 19.

The ceremony, recognizing those who will complete undergraduate and graduate degree requirements this semester, begins at 6 p. m. in the University Chapel in Doyle Hall.

Also at the recognition ceremony, Elizabeth Cashing, lecturer in the School of Business, will give the faculty address.

University president Sr. Margaret Carney, O.S.F., S.T.D., will welcome the graduates and their families. Dr. Michael J. Fischer, provost and vice president for academic affairs, will serve as master of ceremonies.

Dr. Peggy Y. Burke, dean of the School of Graduate Studies, will present the graduate students. Lee Coppola, dean of the Russell J. Jandoli School of Journalism and Mass Communication, will present the undergraduate students.

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St. Bonaventure Martin Luther King Jr. Day program to focus on theme of 'service'

St. Bonaventure will mark Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2010 with an evening program focusing on the theme "service."

Guest speakers for the 7 p.m. Jan. 18 event will include university trustee Ellen Grant and students involved in various SBU service organizations. The program will be held in the San Damiano Room in Francis Hall and will be preceded by a 6:30 p.m. MLK March from Plassmann Hall to Francis. Members of the campus community are invited to join the march at any time along the route from Plassmann to Francis.

Grant is a native of Buffalo and holds a bachelor's degree in sociology, master's in social work, and doctorate in communication and organizational behavior from the State University of New York at Buffalo. She has also completed courses toward an MBA.

In addition to the St. Bonaventure University Board of Trustees, Grant serves on boards of the Burchfield Penney Art Gallery and Boston University Black Women's Health Project. She is a trustee emeritus for the University at Buffalo Foundation.

Her career has included positions such as the first black and female commissioner of Mental Health for Erie County, chief executive officer of Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, and vice president of Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Western New York.

In 1996-97, Grant was selected as one of 12 women internationally to receive a fellowship from the International Women's Leadership Foundation. She has received a number of community awards, including recognition by Trocaire College, St. Bonaventure University, National Association of Social Workers, and the New York Chapter of the YWCA. In 1996, she received an honorary doctorate from Medaille College.

Last January, Grant wrote a chapter in the book "Go, Tell Michelle," in which African American women wrote letters to the new first lady.

Grant and her husband, William Miller, live in Grand Island. Her son, Justin, is completing his master's degree in Hawaii.

Also on Jan. 18, the University's Black Student Union will staff a table in the Reilly Center from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Students are invited to stop by and honor King's dream by signing a sheet that will be hung across Plassmann Hall.

The 2010 Martin Luther King Day events are sponsored by the Damietta Center, Diversity Action Committee, and the Black Student Union.

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BonaResponds to help build children's home in Georgia

BonaResponds, St. Bonaventure University's disaster relief group, will travel to Decatur, Ga., in January to help rebuild a children's home.

From Jan. 3-13, the team will work with the United Methodist Men's Group of Northern Georgia on this special construction project.

BonaResponds will help rebuild Leigh Cottage, a children's home destroyed in a fire two years ago. When the cottage reopens, it will be used to house youth in the United Methodist Men's Group's Independent Living Program.

"It is going to be a great opportunity for us to help and for our volunteers to use some of the skills that they have developed building homes locally and helping this semester in Machias," said Jim Mahar, founder of BonaResponds and associate professor of finance at the university. "I am sure that the trip will be a very rewarding experience for the volunteers and, more importantly, a big help for the children and families who need the help in the Atlanta area."

"Hopefully we'll get a chance to help some of the flood victims down there too, which was the main reason we looked to volunteer in Georgia," said Steve Gearhart, a BonaResponds student leader.

The cost of the trip is \$50, but participants must purchase their own plane tickets.

BonaResponds was created in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. It has taken more than 500 volunteers to the Gulf Coast and led just as many volunteers in service projects throughout the nation and Western New York. BonaResponds aims to be a world-class organization whose mission is to help people in need as well as to build better leaders and better communities. The group, made up of students, faculty, staff, alumni and local residents, is run completely through donations.

BonaResponds welcomes new members, regardless of their affiliation with St. Bonaventure. For more information regarding BonaResponds or the winter service trip, visit www.bonaresponds.org or contact BonaResponds at bonaresponds@sbu.edu.

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St. Bonaventure's Embrace it Africa project raises more than \$3,000 during weeklong campaign

The Students in Free Enterprise's Embrace it Africa campaign at St. Bonaventure collected more than \$3,000 in donations from students, faculty and staff as the group raised money for community development projects under way in the African community of Bethlehem, Uganda.

This month, Embrace it Africa members will be making their third trip to Africa to work with the Bethlehem Parent's School and Orphanage and Embrace it Africa's government registered micro-finance program, the Mikwano Financial Agency.

A total of \$3,385 was raised during the Dec. 7-11 fundraising campaign. For every \$3 donated by a St. Bonaventure student, the Iroquois Group and CEO Laurie Branch, who is a St. Bonaventure trustee and graduate, matched the donation. For each new faculty donation, an anonymous donor gave \$5 to Embrace it Africa. Embrace it Africa members also sold T-shirts, gift cards, holiday cards and more throughout the week. The fundraising campaign is a year-round effort designed to encourage others to embrace the people, community and problems of Bethlehem, Uganda, says Embrace it Africa project manager Lindsay Pohlman, a graduate student at St. Bonaventure.

"Each year we break our projects down into 10 main things we want to focus on," Pohlman said. "We have a lot of fun and get to meet a lot of great people and experience an exciting and different culture."

Embrace it Africa uses the funds to create sustainable community development projects focused in one small village in Uganda. The St. Bonaventure team works with the village residents to plan farming, construction and business projects that will create economic viability. Embrace it Africa's goals for the upcoming December trip include finishing construction of the first teacher housing unit, planting an additional crop farm, providing electricity to classrooms by adding solar panels and building new bunk beds in the dorms.

In addition to working toward the completion of all the projects, the group spends time with the children of the Bethlehem Parent's School and Orphanage teaching lessons, focuses on education projects to help improve the learning situation at the school, and gathers information on the people of the community to help better the communications of Embrace it Africa's projects in the United States. The St. Bonaventure group also meets with the applicants and recipients involved in the Mikwano Financial Agency to discuss various business ideas and to learn more about the local economy.

With more than 70 members, SIFE is one of the largest service organizations on campus and ranks in the top 5 percent of SIFE teams nationwide. For the future, Embrace it Africa members are planning a number of local projects to continue growth and fundraising next semester. In addition to St. Bonaventure, Embrace it Africa is starting programs at other universities and continuing to add programs at high schools and elementary schools.

For more information about Embrace it Africa, contact project manager Lindsay Pohlman at pohlmalr@sbu.edu or visit www.embraceitafrika.org.

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Newsmakers

Dr. Kaplan P. Harris, assistant professor in the Department of English, had a long essay published this month in the journal American Literature: "New Narrative and the Making of Language Poetry," American Literature (Dec 2009): 805-832. The abstract can be accessed online here:<http://americanliterature.dukejournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/81/4/805>.

Carole McNall, J.D., assistant professor of journalism and mass communication, has had an article published in the fall 2009 issue of Media Ethics. McNall's article, "Needed: A Path Online to Other Voices," grows out of a trip in June with the advisory board to the Father Mychal Judge Center.

On Sunday, Dec. 6, 2009, Dr. Paula Scraba presented a Build With Living Stones workshop for the Allegany Franciscan sisters and associates as part of the Associates Covenant Ceremony. The program was titled "Greccio: Francis, Christmas and the Eucharist-Witnesses of the Incarnation."

Dr. Kimberly Young, professor of management sciences, and Dr. Carl Case, professor of management sciences, had the paper "Computer Ethics; Gender Effects and Employee Internet Abuse" published in Issues in Information Systems.

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