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An EPIIC Begins



Learning teamwork on Hurricane Island

They must be driven, intrepid, daring and committed—in the classroom and in planning spring events. So what better preparation for those Tufts students embarking on an “intellectual Outward Bound” than an actual Outward Bound weekend that combines physical and mental challenges.

The 35 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in this year’s EPIIC (Education for Public Inquiry and International Citizenship) colloquium began the school year with a weekend on Hurricane Island off the Maine coast, where they were challenged by physical and mental tasks intended to build trust and personal connections. In two and a half hours, for instance, they had to construct at least two rafts out of barrels, bamboo, rope and two-by-fours, row them out to sea around a buoy, and, back on shore, disassemble them.

“It was incredible,” said Anka Kernkamp, J98. “It was impressive how the group clicked in the first few hours of being on the island. We need to work efficiently and so intensely on projects throughout the year, and don’t think they would go as smoothly without this kind of common experience.”

As EPIIC Director Sherman Teichman noted, the colloquium requires an unusual commitment to teamwork. “Students must immerse themselves in the subject matter, become flu-

ent in current events, history, news and academic analysis of a topic and work with the top thinkers in the field from around the world as they plan a symposium for next spring.”

Joining the students on their Outward Bound trek was Peter Rosenblum, the project director of Harvard Law School’s Human Rights Program and a former human rights officer with the UN Human Rights Centre in Geneva.

“Peter is representative of the kinds of thinkers and activists who are directly involved in and knowledgeable about the events and dilemmas our students must confront,” Teichman said.

This year, students will explore the topic “Exodus and Exile: Refugees, Migration and Global Security” during a year-long colloquium. One capstone of the course is a student-organized symposium, scheduled to take place Feb. 26 to Mar. 1, that will draw on experts from around the world in fields as diverse as human rights, political parties and the arts.

EPIIC students are also planning an “Inquiry Simulation and Refugee Celebration” for Apr. 16-19 in which students from 14 high schools arrive at Tufts for a weekend packed with activities and discussions.

Hurricane Island may seem a far remove from these kinds of topics, but, said Kernkamp, its lessons have been taken to heart. “We are excited about this spring. When we work together, every effort counts.”