Harvard professor of human rights policy will present 2004 Commencement address

Michael Ignatieff, the Carr Professor of Human Rights Policy and Director of the Carr Center for Human Rights at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, will give the 2004 Whitman College Commencement address Sunday, May 23.

Ignatieff, internationally recognized for his expertise as a writer and commentator on world affairs, will present “Fearlessness in a Fearful World” at Commencement ceremonies on the Memorial Building lawn beginning at 11 a.m. The College will present Ignatieff the honorary degree doctor of law.


His research has taken him to Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Afghanistan to study the causes and effects of modern war. His most recent works combine eyewitness accounts of modern war with an historian’s insight into human conflict.

Ignatieff, who earned a doctorate in history at Harvard, has appeared regularly as a commentator and critic on television and radio. He was host of the award-winning series Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism, first screened by the BBC in 1993.

Ignatieff was born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, in 1947 to a Russian émigré father and a Canadian mother. He has written several novels and a memoir of his family’s experience in 19th-century Russia and subsequent exile to Europe and then Canada. The Russian Album: A Family Memoir (1987) won Canada’s Governor General Award and the Heineman Prize given by Britain’s Royal Society of Literature. He also is the author of an acclaimed biography of Isaiah Berlin, published in 1998.

Whitman to honor two internationally noted artists

The College will award honorary doctor of humanities degrees to glass artist Dale Chihuly and sculptor Deborah Butterfield at Commencement May 23.

In 1971 Dale Chihuly co-founded Pilchuck Glass School in Washington, an international glass center,
Through which he has led the avant-garde in the development of glass as a fine art, Chihuly is now widely recognized as the world’s premier glass artist. His works can be found in more than 150 major museums, including the Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Louvre, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Whitney Museum.

He has created many well-known series of works, among them Baskets, Perspectives, and Seaforms, and he has also contributed to large architectural installations, including a 1996 international project, Chihuly Over Venice. His first major glasshouse exhibition, Chihuly in the Park: A Garden of Glass, was on display in Chicago, and the Chihuly Bridge of Glass in Tacoma, Washington, was dedicated in 2002.

Butterfield, who maintains studios in Montana and Hawaii, has made homemade soap the singular focus of a career that has earned her international acclaim and numerous awards and distinctions.

Solo exhibitions of Butterfield's sculptures include those at the Edward Thorp Gallery in New York, the Greg Kucera Gallery in Seattle, the Denver Art Museum, and the Oakland Museum in California. Her work also can be seen in many collections as well as on the Whitman campus, where Stry, a life-size bronze sculpture of a driftwood horse, has maintained a watchful eye over Ankeny Field since May of 2002.

In 2003, the Yellowstone Art Museum presented an in-depth survey of Butterfield’s artwork, showcasing 16 of her horse sculptures while celebrating the release of a book on her career. The exhibit is scheduled for a national tour in 2004.

Washington Work Study Internships

Students struggling to land paid internships can find help not only through the Whitman Internship Fund but also through the Washington Work Study Program. The program reimburses employers 65 percent of the wages they pay their Whitman interns.

“IT gives students a competitive edge over other applicants for an internship,” explained Kelly Patterson, Career Center assistant director. The program is open to students who qualify for need-based financial aid. Applications are evaluated for relevance to the student’s education, potential benefits of the internship, and personal commitment.

Through its network of Alumni Career Consultants, data bases, and directories, the Career Center assists students in finding internships.
Winter 2004 embraces the campus

Ducks on Lakum Duckum, opposite at top, were photographed by Matt Zimmerman, '04. Campus landscapes, by Lore Faurex, a member of the communications office staff, include a wintry view of College Creek, left.
Welcome to the winning sport of ultimate frisbee at Whitman College.

Every year, dozens of Whitman students practice "flatball" five days a week — hard work that could pay off this April in the Ultimate Players Association collegiate tournament.

Whitman ultimate players have competed as the Sweets (like the onions) since 1993, but this year the team has its eyes set on nationals. More than 80 students are active participants in the program, making it one of the largest club sports at Whitman. About 200 students in all express an interest and are on the ultimate frisbee listserv.

The Sweets’ success is no accident. Players credit Adam Templeton, ‘93, and Patrick “Colby” Gilman, ‘92, with inspiring Whitman ultimate to develop tournament strategies. “They upped the ante for organization and started teaching more than the rules of the game,” explained Phillips.

The team is now in its fourth year of Templeton and Gilman’s “five-year plan,” Junior co-captain David Wellington said, “We’re on the brink of a major breakthrough.”

Ultimate at Whitman originated as a virtually all-male I.M. sport in the late ’70s, and traveled to regional tournaments beginning in 1983. Becoming an official club sport in 1993, it ignited under the leadership of Andy Neill, ’97. “I was still learning, as was everyone else, so it was a ton of fun,” recalled Neill. “We played rain, snow, wind, or shine.”

Emulating that dedication has led the Sweets to victory this year. They warmed up by snatching third in Pasco’s Hanford Howl, followed by a first-place showing in November’s Oregon Fall Ultimate Kickoff, the largest college tournament of the fall season. That first-place showing included a 13-0 victory over the University of Washington, which has a professional coach.

“That was the greatest moment of my frisbee career,” recalled Wellington. “I’m proud of our play and behavior… . Our team received much positive feedback about our spirit and friendliness.”

Spring competitions were to include tourneys at Stanford and PLU, Whitman’s own Onionfest April 10-11, and regionals in mid-May. Ultimate players enjoy winning, but the sport places its highest emphasis on sportsmanship. There are no referees. Players call fouls on themselves. The official UPA rulebook states that “the integrity of ultimate depends on each player’s responsibility to uphold the spirit of the game, and this responsibility should not be taken lightly.”

“People are attracted to frisbee because it’s self-officiated, and you have to be honest,” said team member senior Sarah Bronstein. “You set your own level of commitment,” added Phillips.

Whitman’s ultimate team is an entirely student-run club sport. At the end of every spring, the captains informally nominate people to lead the team next year, and the team votes. The captains are responsible for applying to tournaments, setting up fundraising efforts, advocating for the team, and helping to teach new players.

“It’s a lot of work and responsibility. It takes a lot of energy to fire up the team,” said Wellington. In addition to Phillips and Wellington, this year’s captains are junior Gavin Andrews and seniors Breanne Austin, Anna Bucher, and Autumn Ela. Their hard work seems to have paid off.

Without a professional coach, players feel that the program is much more fluid and democratic. Andy Neill said that is what attracted him to the sport in the first place. “The main reasons I kept going as captain were the friendships I made and the ability to get large groups of people together working toward a common goal.”

As the team grows, that philosophy of friendship and hard work continues to be its guiding principle.

— Jeff Ives, ’04
Basketball coach Michelle Ferenz led the Whitman women to a first-place tie for the Northwest Conference crown and concluded the 2004 season with the title Coach of the Year. Now she is looking to the future.

This spring, she and two assistant coaches are making the rounds of district and state high school tournaments in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. More trips will follow during the summer months where they will watch and meet players at tournaments that attract large numbers of high-school age traveling teams.

Finding talented basketball players with strong academic interests is what drives her recruiting efforts, Ferenz says. “All of the players on our roster have special academic talents and interests, but I can think of at least three younger players who came here specifically because of Whitman’s high academic standards. For our basketball program to be successful, we need young people who are highly committed to both basketball and academics.”

Building a successful program also means looking for players outside the Pacific Northwest, Ferenz says. “We need to do as much as possible in terms of recruiting at a national level.

“One of the good things about recruiting nationally is that Whitman’s academic reputation is well known outside the region,” Ferenz adds. “Good athletes in search of a strong academic school tend to know about Whitman. On the other hand, recruiting nationally requires a lot of work.”

Ferenz has spent her first three years at Whitman developing contacts with high school and club coaches in California and Colorado. “I’m to the point now where I recognize the high schools in Colorado and California that have a strong mix of academic and athletic programs.”

Ferenz is pleased with her first two recruiting classes. “We’ve started solidifying who we are as a team. We still have holes to fill, but we’re moving in the right direction.”

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V ictory in the world of collegiate athletics can be a passing fancy. And because today’s triumphs can easily segue into tomorrow’s losses, happy are the coaches whose teams are both talented and young, poised for success in the present as well as the future.

Michelle Ferenz and Jeff Northam, ‘88, are two Whitman coaches who presently share the luxury of winning with athletes whose best days, in all likelihood, still lie ahead of them.

By early March, Ferenz and her women’s basketball team had won 12 of their final 13 games to share the Northwest Conference title — Whitman’s first such basketball crown since the 1987-88 season. At about the same time, Northam was unleashing his strongest men’s tennis squad in years, a team largely composed of five talented freshmen.

Wielding a roster dominated by first- and second-year players, Ferenz was pleased but not entirely surprised to see her young team in the hunt for an NWC title. “It’s exciting to see our young players having some success so soon,” she said at the time. In late January, while breaking a long losing streak to Whitworth with a victory in Spokane, Ferenz used a starting lineup of three sophomores and two first-year players while another first-year student contributed 11 points and four assists as the first 10 minutes into the game.

The spring tennis season was just beginning in early March, but Northam’s band of freshmen Northam, now in his 10th season of coaching at Whitman, says it is unusual to get so many strong players into one recruiting class. “What you normally expect is a slow trickle, maybe one or two excellent players in any given year.”

When Northam served as a part-time coach at Whitman in 1990, 1993, and 1994, tennis coaches in the Northwest Conference were doing relatively little recruiting, he says. By the time he returned to campus as a full-time coach in 1997, times had changed. “Our conference has become much more competitive, and recruiting top students-athletes is a necessity,” he says.

Women’s Basketball,
Men’s Tennis

Two years ago, he had little luck with his recruiting efforts, losing a number of possibilities to athletic scholarships at NCAA Division I schools. “I made recruiting an even greater priority this past year, and this time it turned in our favor,” he says. “Some of our top prospects came here to play instead of going to Division I schools.”

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Jeff Northam, ‘88 (with first-year student David Miller), coached the men’s tennis team to a 10-4 mark in the conference last year.

Michelle Ferenz (with sophomore players Laura Vertatschitsch, left, and Megan Higgins) was named 2004 Northwest Conference Coach of the Year.

Northam, ‘88, works tirelessly for tennis at Whitman

Men’s tennis coach Jeff Northam, ‘88, who played at Whitman’s nationally-ranked teams in the mid-1980s, has worked tirelessly in recent years to restore the regional and national profile of Whitman’s tennis program. After his team won a Northwest Conference title in 2000, he organized and hosted the first two NCAA Div. III national indoor championships in 2001 and 2002, bringing top-ranked teams from around the country to Whitman’s Bratton Tennis Center.

“Hosting tournaments such as those creates great exposure for your own program,” he says. “It shows that you are serious about wanting to compete at the highest level. It definitely helps with recruiting. It catches the attention of the student-athletes you are trying to attract.”

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George Theo, director of student activities at Whitman College, has been honored by the National Association for Campus Activities (NACA).

Theo received the 2004 Patsy Morley Outstanding Programmer Award at the association’s national convention in Cincinnati in February. The award is given to the individual who “most exemplifies outstanding achievement in the field of campus activities advising.” In November Theo was named Outstanding Staff Member by the NACA West Region.

A member of the Whitman staff since 2000, he serves as adviser to numerous student groups including ASWC. He is currently the Western Regional Coordinator for NACA.

Conference honors Whitman’s swim coach

Jennifer Blomme, swim coach at Whitman College for the past four seasons, was named Coach of the Year for women’s swimming by the Northwest Conference. The award, decided by a vote of coaches, was presented at the conclusion of the Northwest Conference Championships, held February 13-15 in Federal Way, Washington.

Blomme was honored after Whitman’s women’s swim team placed fourth at the championship meet with 388 points. It was the second highest point total for the Whitman women swimmers in the history of the conference.

Under Blomme’s direction, the Whitman men’s team also enjoyed its best championship meet in recent memory.

“Our swim program has been on a phenomenal upward trend since Jenn’s arrival,” said Travis Feezell, athletic director. “It seems only natural that her peers in the conference would recognize her hard work. She is a supremely talented coach.”

Blomme, who was born in Walla Walla, earned her undergraduate degree in Spanish at Grinnell College, where she was a varsity swimmer. She completed her master’s degree at Indiana University.

Whit swimmers make a splash

The Whitman swim team (top) celebrated a fourth-place finish in the Northwest Conference Championships. Above left, Danielle Shea swims to a new school record in the 100 fly, and happy coach Jenn Blomme, right, is named Coach of the Year.

Student activities director wins award

Kathryn Farrell-Guizar, ’95

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