Stellar students mingle with movers and shakers

By Jason L. Young

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Imagine dissecting the information age with best-selling novelist Kay Kenyon. Imagine having lunch with Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter, musician, and writer Lauryn Hill. Imagine watching three Nobel laureates give talks at the neighboring Harwood Hotel. To some liberal arts students, such opportunities don't happen outside of Hollywood. To others, they're a part of daily life.

The 450 high school seniors who make up Macalester College's class of 2008 are a testament to the opportunities available at Macalester. Macalester is a small private liberal arts college in St. Paul, Minn., that offers students the opportunity to learn alongside Nobel laureates and Pulitzer Prize-winning authors, giving them the tools to succeed in the information age.

For many of the students, meeting the other "leaders of tomorrow," a term favored by instructor Scott H. Deuchar of ABC News, proved to be as rewarding as meeting a Nobel Prize winner. "The students were wonderful and surprisingly humble, considering their accomplishments," said one high school senior.

Similarly, another student, who will enter Harvard University in the fall, remarked, "The students are a part of something more than a university. They are a part of something that's changing the world." He added, "The students are the future." To this, Laurens Hill, who addressed students, commented that William Allen White, the founder of the University of Kansas, said, "The problem with schools is that they are too small. The problem with the University of Kansas is that it's too large."}

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The weekend's events high- lighted a variety of formal receptions and round-table discussions. Each of these has a forum for debate among adults and students. Topics included "Spirit of the American West," "Society and the Information Age," "Advocacy and the Information Age," "A Reunion for a Century," and "Mythology of Our Edifications." The Academy (which has Web site at www.academy.org) based in Washington, was founded in 1869 to "inspire peak with new understanding of achievement is a world of boundless opportunity." But "achievement itself was by no means the only understood kind at this event. In the vast array of ideas and ideals, students—critically and objectively— often commented on the splendor with which the present represented American thought and culture. "It has brought me a contact with a very meaningful program that prepares me for the future and inspired me to learn more. I have gained confidence."