



As an international student from Pakistan, **Nida F. Ansari '06** understands diversity, but to this senior class president it means more than different cultures. It means exploring the amazingly diverse activities on campus.

With her downtime — which can't be much — this chemistry major plays intramural volleyball and "midnight" dodgeball. In addition to her responsibilities leading her class, she is president of Roanoke's chapter of Omicron Delta Kappa, a national leadership fraternity. She also is a peer mentor, a tutor, a resident advisor in Chalmers Hall and works with the Office of Multicultural Affairs on programming. Yet, Ansari

No downtime for class president

doesn't think that is enough.

"Despite all I've gone through at Roanoke College, I feel like I could have done something more — or done certain things better," Ansari says with a sigh.

Ansari moved from Pakistan to Oman and then to the United Arab Emirates, both small countries in the Middle East that share a border with Saudi Arabia. Her parents finally moved the family to the United States in her junior year of high school so that Ansari and her younger brother could attend college here.

It seems worth it. Ansari says she ran for senior class president in 2005 because she thought it would be a challenging position and she wanted to help improve things on campus. As president, Ansari is responsible for finding a graduation speaker and raising money for the senior class. In particular, she is trying to shift the emphasis for raising money from alcohol sales at college events to other activities. One idea she has planned is a "lip sync" event like the ones Greek organizations put on to raise funds.

While Ansari sought out the class presidency, another fell into her lap when, as a junior, she was tapped for induction into the prestigious fraternity ODK for her leadership activities on campus. At the induction, **David C. Drebes '05** nominated her for president, and she accepted.

Ansari also is a peer mentor with the College's Early Transition Program for incoming minority freshmen and their roommates. She works with the students to provide an easier transition to life at Roanoke and even offers tutoring sessions in

her room when she is on duty as an RA.

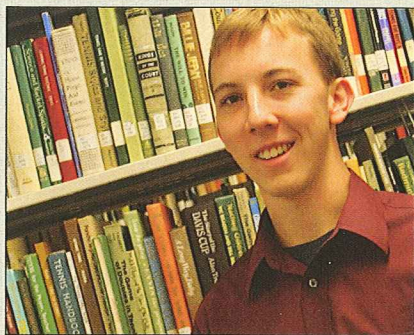
It's good experience for a would-be teacher. Ansari says she first realized she would like to teach when she spent three weeks last summer interning in Alexandria, Va., as a program assistant with a program run by Johns Hopkins. There, she worked five days a week with fifth- and sixth-graders in the Talented Youth Science and Engineering class. The children were advanced science students from around the country — and one was even from Paris. Ansari and others from Columbia, Princeton, the University of Maryland and additional colleges organized activities for these children to better their knowledge of the field.

With all her activities, Ansari says she often needs an outlet for stress relief — and midnight dodgeball, one of her favorite activities, gives her that.

"I look forward to Friday nights because if something stressful is going on during the week, I think at least I can get it out at dodgeball," Ansari says.

Ansari's future plans are about as varied as her interests at Roanoke. She would love to teach high school chemistry because she loves the application of chemistry and working with children. But she also plans to apply to Johns Hopkins and other masters programs for economics. That interests her, and she says she wants to switch her academic emphasis away from chemistry in her graduate studies. Wherever she goes, she's looking for a "graduate school that combines what Roanoke has given me and something new."

Maroon wins prestigious physics scholarship



Research opportunities at Roanoke College helped **Jake Bennett '08** win an inaugural Rossing Physics Scholarship through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

In November, Bennett, a physics and mathematics double major from Lexington, was one of three students nationwide awarded the prestigious \$10,000 Rossing schol-

arship for the 2005-2006 academic year. A sophomore, junior and senior were selected from a field of applicants from 28 ELCA colleges and universities. Bennett was the winning sophomore and received the scholarship that pays for educational expenses and is renewable until Bennett completes his undergraduate physics work.

"I was stunned," Bennett says. "I really didn't think I had that good of a chance to win."

He might have had an inkling since he is attending Roanoke on a Bittle Scholarship, which covers full tuition. The Rossing scholarship will cover all of Bennett's other educational expenses and help him pay off student loans. That means a lot to Bennett, and he credits the research opportunities at Roanoke with putting him ahead of the pack in the competition.

"The faculty members are very focused on getting students undergraduate research opportunities," Bennett explains.

As a Summer Scholar in 2005, Bennett

did research on the mathematics of a tennis serve. He plans to do research in physics this summer. Bennett says Roanoke's research opportunities, like the Summer Scholars program, give students "a good way to get exposed to research ... and get a good feel for what research is like."

Bringing worldviews back to Roanoke

After you've spent a week crossing 50 miles of the Sahara Desert on foot and camelback, finals week just doesn't seem that intimidating.

At least that's how junior **Amanda Dennis '07** sees it. The international relations major spent last summer on an educational and cultural tour of North Africa with an organization called Café 1040. She took classes on Islam and cultural history of Berbers and Arabs and their interactions, traveled, made friends and did what she could to help others.