

## REP. BARNEY FRANK TALKS CANDIDLY WITH STUDENTS DURING RECENT VISIT

Congressman Barney Frank, D-Mass., chairman of the House Committee on Financial Services, came to Exeter recently to discuss his experiences as an advocate of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights, and as an economic leader.

Frank, twice nominated by Capitol Hill staffers as the “brainiest,” “funniest” and “most eloquent” member of the House, wowed Assembly with personal anecdotes of his experiences as an openly gay member of Congress and his rapid-fire dissection of the economic crisis.

“Congressman Frank was hilarious, clear and engaging,” says Mia Della Pietra ’10, a co-head of Exeter’s Gay/Straight Alliance (GSA), the sponsor of Frank’s visit to Exeter. “His story is a remarkable one, and I think he opened a lot of eyes with respect to the dilemma of coming out in the public eye.”

Frank received a standing ovation at the end of Assembly before he continued his Exeter visit with two question-and-answer sessions for students, faculty and staff.

“Students asked many good questions on the financial ‘bailout’ from last fall; on the role of securitization, regulation and moral hazard as new legislation goes forward; and even on the question of whether broad-based home ownership is desirable,” explains Meg Foley, whose Macroeconomics class participated in one of the sessions.

“[The congressman] elaborated on the politics that surround these economic issues,” continues Foley. “Those were, in many cases, the most interesting insights for me—hearing his views of his colleagues in Congress, the new administration, and Greenspan and Bernanke. What an opportunity for any Macroeconomics class—to study a real crisis with one of the nation’s most influential policymakers at the very point when so much important legislation is still being crafted!”

“One of the concerns we read about in economics class is whether the government is doing anything to prevent a repeat of our current crisis,” explains Amy (Qian) Huang ’09, a Macroeconomics student. “Frank’s explanation of what his committee has planned—new regulations and so forth—as well as his statement that, although we are spending lots of money bailing out the big banks, this will still be a punitive and painful experience for most of these big corporations, were very interesting to hear.”

“It was great for students to see how the theories we learn in the classroom are used in the policy arena to make crucial decisions that affect millions of people,” adds Giorgio Secondi, whose Economics class got the chance to ask questions of Frank. “Congressman Frank has an encyclopedic knowledge of economic and financial issues. It was impressive to observe his command of the economics underlying the politics of the bank bailout and stimulus package.”

While at Exeter, Frank had lunch with students from his district (the Fourth Congressional District of Massachusetts) and members of GSA. He also discussed with Rick Schubart ’56, ’78, ’79, ’93, ’03, ’08 (Hon.); P’96, P’00, P’04, history instructor and member of Exeter’s Washington Intern Program steering committee, the possibility of placing an Exeter student in his congressional office for spring term.



*Congressman Barney Frank, D-Mass., discussed the government’s financial bailout plan and his experiences as an openly gay member of Congress during a recent trip to the Academy.*