January 10, 2009—As the founder of Atlas Corps, a leading nonprofit organization committed to social entrepreneurship, Scott Beale (’86) grad students do great things for different countries.

A government major and community activist, Beale credits Georgetown with helping him forge a career in social change.

"My time at Georgetown was defined by public service and community service through groups like Phi Alpha Omega, GSA (Georgetown University Student Association), Campaign Georgetown, and much more," he said. "But only Atlas Academy academically prepared me for pursuing a career in that field, the people that I was introduced to by my commitment to social change and encouraged me to take my activism further."

After graduating, Beale worked as a volunteer assistant for then Governor of Delaware Tom Carper, and later served as associate director of international affairs in the White House for the Clinton administration. In 2006, he joined the nonprofit Ashoka Innovators for the future to lead its youth mentoring initiatives.

Briefly thereafter, Beale moved to India—"with wife Courtney Beale (’00)—from 2006 to 2008 and collaborated with the U.S. State Department and the New Delhi Embassy to fight human trafficking. While living in India, he was motivated to create Atlas Corps whenever he noticed that, though the United States is famous for sending volunteers overseas, many other countries produce volunteers for either themselves or for other nations.

"You see people going from Indiana to Seattle to import Hotmail. The guy who did that becomes a billionaire, and we all benefit because you and I can email each other for free," Beale said.

"But what you did not see is as much use from the nonprofit sector of India going to the nonprofit sector of the United States," he said. "Despite the fact that there were thousands of Americans who had been volunteers in India, or, through the Peace Corps, multiple thousands of people volunteering in countries around the world."

As Beale looked into this phenomenon—the thousand of Indian volunteers in the United States and, conversely, the lack of non-American volunteers in countries around the world—he noticed a "marked failure that existed in the international volunteer space."

He learned about people who wanted to serve part-time or as an encore volunteer to take on activities further.

"It was always more affordable for someone from the United States to volunteer in Nairobi than for someone from Korea to volunteer in DC," Beale said. "Nairobi is a cheaper city than DC, but more than that, the U.S. citizen can get support from the U.S. government through groups like the Peace Corps, or even from churches or universities."

In 2006, Beale decided to start Atlas Corps with this vision of creating a global network of the world's best rising nonprofit leaders. He continued, "Our mission is to address critical social issues by developing leaders, strengthening organizations, and promoting innovation."

According to Beale, Atlas Corps works not only to empower its members to be successful social entrepreneurs—self-starters who use business tactics to address social concerns—but also to promote the volunteer groups it works with like UNICEF, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, and the Special Olympics.

"When I was in somebody from Spain who's an expert on social media or social change and place him in the Netherlands, it was great for him. And places him in the Netherlands, it was great for him. And he was very international, and he was very international, and we got to see how the social networking work all over the world."

"So Beale explained. "Many of the largest nonprofit in the world have partnered with us to take our fellows because we find extremely talented people and have a very diverse network."

"It's a fact that Indians and Egyptians and Mexicans and Colombians communicate in different perspectives, different perspectives, different perspectives on the world," Beale said. "But together, we still have this fellowship where we're all together in fellowship.

"It's a beautiful thing when you walk into an Atlas Corps training and there are 50 or 60 people from 44 different countries. It gives you great hope for the world—a great sense of that we can tackle challenges that we've never been able to tackle before."

—Anthony Combs