Honors College

Honors @ Georgia Southern

University Honors Program Students and Staff, Georgia Southern University

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University Honors Program Students and Staff, Georgia Southern University, "Honors @ Georgia Southern" (2010). Honors@Georgia Southern. 3.
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The University Honors Program provides transformative experiences for bright and talented students. Undergraduate research and creative activity can be one of the most transformative of those experiences. Working side-by-side with a faculty mentor on a substantial project gives a student a much deeper knowledge of the discipline and an appreciation for the ways in which knowledge is discovered and communicated. This issue provides highlights of a wide variety of the undergraduate research and creative activity completed by the honors class of 2010.

As always, the work of our students and our faculty extend beyond the classroom. In this issue, the reader will travel to China with Ryan Pickrell, one of our Boren Scholars; to Japan with Rose Sheehan and Denmark with Anna McGregor, two of our Gilman Scholars. In addition to the variety of other stories about the Program, we are featuring three poems from our students. Honors students and honors alumni are welcome to submit their poems or flash fiction for consideration.

Sincerely yours,
Steven Engel

Mission Statement
The University Honors Program provides a small college atmosphere in the context of a large comprehensive university. The program is designed to foster the development of a critical sense of inquiry, a spirit of creativity, a global perspective and an ethic of civic responsibility. A hallmark of the program is the emphasis on bringing ideas to life through undergraduate research, experiential learning and service-learning opportunities.

Undergraduate Research Experience
Honors students and faculty work closely together on a variety of research projects. The benefits of this research experience include:

Critical Sense of Inquiry
Honors students will explore a variety of approaches to research designed to foster the pursuit of knowledge. Students will develop the ability to question with a healthy skepticism toward accepted opinion. The culmination of the undergraduate experience is an independent research or creative project designed to exemplify a critical approach to inquiry.

Spirit of Creativity
Honors students will embrace the idea that creativity is a virtue that should be experienced by all students, regardless of discipline. This spirit involves a respect for different ways of knowing and an openness to intellectual discussion and challenge.

Civic Responsibility
Honors students will demonstrate an ethic of civic responsibility as through service both to the university and the community.

Global Perspective
Honors students will develop a perspective which allows them to approach their chosen discipline from an international point of view. This outlook involves the critical exploration of global concerns and generation of proposed solutions to international problems. Honors education provides this worldwide perspective through academic courses, study abroad opportunities and co-curricular experiences.

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Undergraduate Research Experience
The housing market may be in a slump but it has turned out to be a great time for the University Honors Program to get a new home. In August 2009, the Program moved into a newly renovated Eidson House. Originally built as the President's Home in 1955, the building had been the campus home of Alumni Relations and Development since 1972 (see timeline). With the opening of the Bishop Alumni Center, this old house became available.

While the Bell Honors Program had its Honors House, that was a residence for just a few students and was across campus from the office of Bell Honors Director Dr. Hew Joiner. Also in a different location was the most important space for the program, the honors seminar room, located in the library. Similarly, the University Honors Program bounced around in its first ten years from the Administrative Annex, to the interior design cottage and then to the Information Technology building. Now located in the Eidson House, the Program offices, student social space, and seminar room are under one roof.

As soon as it was determined that the Eidson House would be assigned to the University Honors Program, students and faculty participated in the planning of the renovation. Kimberly Anderson, honors Interior Design major from Boonton, New Jersey, was instrumental in helping define the color scheme, furniture selection, and layout of the furniture. The house now features a student lounge, a spacious back porch, a seminar room, and a small kitchen in addition to the offices of the honors staff. With the support of student technology fees, the seminar room includes the latest technology and the building is wireless. At any given time, students can be found drinking coffee, studying, relaxing, or conversing in the lounge or on the porch. “I love Eidson House already,” said senior honors student Cassie Beasley. “I go there to do homework, and I almost always have a chance to chat with other students who I wouldn't normally get to see because our classes are on opposite ends of campus.”

For the upcoming fall semester, twelve classes will meet in the seminar room. Math professor Jim Braselton, who is scheduled to teach there in the fall, said “Having classes in the honors building forces it to be a gathering place for honors students … it encourages a sense of culture and community among them.”

To provide the proper setting in the house, the Program has acquired works of art from current and former students. Items added thus far to the honors permanent collection from current students include those from Elizabeth Debban (painting), Jeanne Henry (ceramics), Jennifer Youmans (photography), and Sara Whaley (drawing). In addition, three works from Bell Honors graduate Ashley Anderson (2005) are on display in the student lounge.

Eidson House

Old House

New Home

Kelsey Decker contributed to this article.
Megan Ekstrom’s interest in how people develop their individual identity comes from her own experience as someone who has lived in two countries. Ekstrom, an International Studies major, was born in Sweden. She later moved to America where she learned English as her second language, and in her time at Georgia Southern, she has taken on a third language, German, as a minor. This experience with two cultures and three languages gave her an excellent foundation for her Honors Thesis research on European identity.

Specifically, Ekstrom has been determining how European citizens develop identity, particularly a larger, overarching European identity. “I have been examining the European Union to find out if a common European identity emerges,” said Ekstrom, “or if people continue to hold onto their national identities.”

Ekstrom has been utilizing the Eurobarometer, a research study conducted by European commissioners that asks Europeans about topics, including but not limited to their identity (the question of identity was recently added in 1992). Using the Eurobarometer, Ekstrom has been searching for trends.

On top of an already challenging topic, Ekstrom has had another obstacle to face—she only started the project last semester, giving her merely a year to complete it. However, Ekstrom is dedicated, and she has worked hard to catch up.

Ekstrom’s mentor and thesis director is Dr. Darin Van Tassell, Associate Professor in the Center of International Studies and the Department of Political Science. He has been with Ekstrom throughout her research process, from forming her ideas in the beginning to writing out her research. Dr. Van Tassell is very passionate about Ekstrom’s research, feeling that it is a publishable topic of great interest.
English major Ashley Akins can usually be found working. To find her, one might check the Registrar’s office, her peer leader classroom, the volunteer involvement board, meetings of the CLASS Dean’s Student Advisory Board where Ashley is president, or her apartment where she studies literature. Still, finding time to fit an Honors Thesis was easy, especially if it meant spending her last semesters as an undergraduate with her favorite author, Jane Austen.

“A huge part [of the project] for me was choosing a topic narrow enough to write on in the time frame,” she said. “I had a different topic originally. I scaled down.”

Although Dr. Hemchand Gossai advises Akins on her thesis, “the baseline of my paper was from a previous class,” Akins said. Dr. John Thomas Lloyd’s Jane Austen course called for Akins to write a paper on Austen’s ‘free indirect discourse’ writing style, which Akins developed and expanded into a narratology study of the author.

“Her style lends itself to the mystery genre,” Akins said, rather than the romantic genre to which Austen’s novels are typically attributed. “That’s why they’re survived as widely-read literature.”

Austen wrote *Pride and Prejudice*, for example, in free indirect discourse, a structure which slowly reveals clues to the reader. The reader can, in turn, identify and understand the clues others gave the main character before the character herself notices and comprehends their meaning.

“Elizabeth Bennet believes Darcy is a bad guy, essentially, but she has to read the clues others leave her,” to discover that he is not. Austen uses this mystery, clue-based structure in all her other novels, except one.

In *Northanger Abbey*, Akins said, “Jane Austen talks to herself. She wrote a literary defense of her writing style, this style. She wanted to be appreciated.”

Akins would like to work in federal or state government or for a nonprofit organization, based on an internship last summer in the office of Representative John Barrow. Mercer University’s public interest law program will help prepare Akins for her career beginning next fall, just as the internship led her toward her career path.

A significant part of her acceptance, according to Akins, and the three-year scholarship she received, rested on her academics, volunteerism, and service to the community which the University Honors Program facilitated throughout her final three years at Southern. Akins’ first year she was dual-enrolled at Southeast Bulloch High School, where she is still deeply involved in the literature department.

Still, Akins insists that her law studies will not diminish her devotion to literature. “I’ll have a nice pause while I’m in law school,” said Akins. “I highly doubt that this will be an end to my literary studies.”

Sanitation has become an obsession in our culture and these days every cleaning product promises to be a bacteria killer and germ destroyer. But will staying so clean prevent illness?

Nursing major Sarah Anzjon is questioning the conventional wisdom.

“I’m looking at the hygiene hypothesis, which said that the more bacteria and viruses and infections you are exposed to, the less you get sick,” she said. “So it’s kind of like Lysol, Clorox, bleach and all those things are bad for us. And then’s a lot of interesting papers that contradict the previously thought ideas about vaccines and immunity!”

Anzjon is working in coordination with Dr. Rose Mary Goe, a nursing professor, and chose a topic for her paper that she feels strongly about. “Infectious diseases are my passion,” she said. “So I’m really interested in what people automatically assume, and once I started getting into [the research], it became even more interesting.”

If time permits, she wants to analyze data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which surveys thousands of people around the country by taking blood, asking questions about health behaviors and looking at things like antibodies and living conditions. “I’m going to see if I can correlate anything with antibody levels, which would indicate previous infections, in a positive way – they won’t get the disease again – with things like where they live or income, the number of people in their family and things like that,” she said.

Over the course of her research, Anzjon came across a treatment for some kinds of cancer from the 1970s – before chemotherapy was used against multiple types – that approached treatments in a “counterintuitive” fashion.

“The way that they used to treat some types of lung cancer, and even bladder cancer, was with a strain of the bacteria related to tuberculosis,” she said. “They would infect people with these bacteria and then they would monitor their tumors. They could see that in some certain types of cancer, the tumor was actually shrinking, and these bacteria would elicit some sort of immune response in the individual that the cancer wasn’t doing on its own. They were really boosting the body’s own immune system by infecting it with bacteria, so it’s kind of counterintuitive, but it works.”

Anzjon wants to continue working with infectious diseases after she graduates, as well. “I’ve applied to go into public health and get a master’s degree in infectious diseases and infectious disease epidemiology,” she said. “Lately though, I’ve really been considering Peace Corps for a couple years and then going back to school, but definitely something in public health and infectious diseases.”
English major Ava Conger does not call herself a feminist, nor does she consider Margaret Atwood's novel The Handmaid's Tale a purely feminist work, but feminist literature interests her.

In The Handmaid's Tale, "society is hierarchically divided with women placed into specific roles based on their reproductive capabilities," Conger said. "My [thesis's] focus is to look at how power is usurped by the higher ranking male authority figures, primarily through the prohibition of female reading and writing."

Although The Handmaid's Tale is not strictly feminist, "the lower ranking males in society have limited freedom as well," Conger added. Atwood does address historical issues of backlash against the feminist movements of the 1970s. The book is also dystopian, meaning the story is set in a futuristic society that varies the Utopian ideal, often through an autocratic or repressive form of government.

Dr. Candy Schille serves as Conger's mentor and referred Conger to Atwood's book after Conger expressed interest in dystopian and feminist literature. "She also listened to my ideas about what direction I wanted to go with the paper and helped me refine them," Conger said of Dr. Schille. "Ultimately, the novel underscores the power of language and how this power can be abused by language misinterpretation."

Conger read and studied the novel, as well as sought information through the interlibrary book exchange program within the University System of Georgia called GIL Express. Some resources were unavailable, but Conger also found that the time constraints of the loans proved problematic. It is difficult to do a paper of this magnitude using GIL Express resources because, though honors students are generally allowed to keep library books longer, GIL Express books do not have the same due date extension," Conger explained.

Still, Conger is excited to have completed her project and is looking forward to attending law school at the University of Georgia this fall. "As of right now, I would like to go into environmental law. I believe it would be a way for me to utilize my talents to make a difference," said Conger.

Jenny Dickson

Jenny Dickson knows that Georgia Southern University is the ideal place to study ticks. The university's Institute of Arthropodology and Parasitology is home to the U.S. National Tick Collection, a collection owned by the Smithsonian Institution that contains over one million specimens. Dickson, a biology major, worked with the collection's curator, biology professor Lorenzo Beati, on an investigation into whether there are genetic differences between the strains of a Lyme disease that infects Ixodes scapularis, a species of tick.

While this disease does not hurt the ticks, infected ticks can pass the disease on to humans. As Dickson said, "When an infected tick bites a person they can experience flu-like symptoms and a dark spot may appear around the bite. Her results (as of March) show "that there is no much Lyme disease in the south" as compared to the north where the disease is much more prevalent."

Dickson's individual project is one part of a larger project about ticks. The National Science Foundation has funded this larger project, and thus Dickson's project with Dr. Beati as well.

Dickson became interested in studying ticks when she studied abroad in Switzerland last year. The purpose of the trip was to study Arthropods and the trip, combined with inspiration from Dr. Beati, convinced Dickson to focus on ticks for her capstone project.

"Going through all of the steps for the project was challenging," Dickson said, but she has learned a lot and enjoyed doing so. She also relished working with other students and fellow classmates whose projects have intersected with hers. Some students collect the ticks that she studies, and she has worked closely with them and other students.

Dickson currently plans to stay at Georgia Southern for graduate school. She wants to continue her work with Dr. Beati. She enjoys the challenge and the rewards it brings. One reward in particular stands out: her research has turned up almost no Lyme disease in Southern ticks, but when a researcher from the north brought along some ticks with him that had the disease, she said, "It was quite a thrill to finally get a positive result!"

Dickson knows that researching with Dr. Beati will yield more interesting results, and both look forward to working together in the future.

Elizabeth Debban

Elizabeth Debban has used her Honors Capstone as a zoological facility as a researcher. (CCB). His future plans which include graduating in May and working toward his long-term goal of being an art professor. (KD)

Alzheimer’s disease may not strike most people as the subject for a work of art, but Elizabeth Debban has used her Honors Capstone as an opportunity to create a series of pieces based around the illness that explores the physical and emotional damage it inflicts.

"Alzheimer’s disease is one of my biggest fears for the future, whether it’s for me directly or someone in my family, because losing your mind and your memories is equivalent to losing yourself," she said.

Debban has been incorporating Alzheimer’s into her art since a Drawing II assignment freshman year. Now, working with Dr. Bruce Little and other professors, she’s been able to create a series of pieces that integrate research with art forms involving different media, including drawing, embroidery, printmaking and encaustics.

In addition to researching the disease, Debban visited nursing homes to experience talking one-on-one with Alzheimer’s patients. She also spoke with people who interact with those who have Alzheimer’s because “it seems like everyone knows someone affected by the disease,” she said.

During her studies, Debban found research regarding the effects of Alzheimer’s on drawing. “One study,” she said, “was clock drawing with Alzheimer’s patients, where they had people at different stages of the disease draw a clock, and you could physically see how their brain was decomposing and how they were trying to think.”

To represent the disease in her art, Debban often used puzzle pieces as a motif, representing memories and the missing pieces, but she has interactive pieces, too, to help the viewer connect emotionally because they control what’s happening.

“I have this large, inflatable balloon with embroidered faces on it of the elderly, whose group of people who usually have Alzheimer’s disease, and I use it when it inflates to symbolize the person’s life inflating and filling with memories,” she said. “When it deflates, it’s like the brain actually shrinking, and you can see the wrinkles in the fabric as they form, and the different embroidered faces are hiding, so it’s like memories hiding.”

Through her work, Debban aims to evoke a sense of empathy from her viewers for those affected by Alzheimer’s, as well as establish an emotional connection between the artist and viewer which, she feels, is “the most rewarding part of the process.”

“Following graduation, Debban will work for a year at Callaway Gardens, which has a MFA program for drawing and painting in the future to work towards her long-term goal of being an art professor,” said Rostal.
While most people think of wars in terms of human casualties, George Barnhill said that to him, a different kind of soldier was the most noble of all. During World War II history class taught by Dr. Charles Thomas, he kept running across mentions of animals in battle. "I would find references, little snippets that animals served in the war, but there was never a full article about it," he said.

Intrigued, Barnhill decided to investigate, and he was amazed at some of the stories he found. "There are stories out there about animals that sort of epitomize everything that their species did. For example, there was a dog that fought with the Canadian regiment, and it is credited with saving 20-30 lives," he said.

Stories like this one led Barnhill to the topic of the Honors Thesis project he has been working on with Dr. Thomas as his advisor. Titled "Another Kind of Soldier," his paper explores the roles of animals in the world wars. Barnhill is particularly interested in how the participation of animals changed human perspectives on animal rights. "When war broke out, the Red Cross heard about the need for veterinary assistance, so they started setting up animal hospitals for animals that were serving. Even after the war was over, a bunch of them stayed open," he said. "Over time, you see this heightened appreciation of what animals are capable of. In World War I animals were listed as equipment, but by World War II you actually have some groups that are listing them as personnel."

Despite the number of amazing stories he's found, the research hasn't been easy. History tends to focus only on the human cost of war, and he has found this rewarding but challenging to find the information he is looking for. "We're never going to get every single story. We've got tastes of experiences, and from this we've got to patch together an understanding of what it was really like."

Barnhill hopes his research will help shed light on an underrepresented topic, and he thinks people who read it might discover a love of history. "People think history is boring. It is not boring. This is interesting stuff," he said.

After graduation, Barnhill plans to attend the Cumberland School of Law at Samford University.

Kristina Kegerreis

An interest in one sport often leads to an interest in another, which is exactly what happened to Georgia Southern University tennis player, Kristina Kegerreis. Playing tennis since she was six-years-old led to her earning a full tennis scholarship. However, interests in all college sports is something that came naturally for her.

In an era when many students in college enter with dear majors and career paths in mind, Tyler Thompson arrived at Georgia Southern curious to discover where his life would take him. It was not until he completed all his core classes within his first two years that he declared Political Science as his major, with International Studies as his minor, and devoted himself to a serious interest in the People's Republic of China. For much of his life, Thompson had always had some interest in China. His father, a career diplomat, had been to China years before. Facci- nated by this foreign land, he knew that one day he would want to travel there, and last summer he did just that through a study abroad program. Thompson said, "The country had resonating subcultures." He explained, for example, going to a park and seeing thousands of people rather than a dozen. These differences maintained his interest in the Chinese people and their society, and were considered in stark contrast to his life back in Georgia.

When Thompson started his Honors Capstone project he knew his focus would be on China, he just did not have all the details sorted out. "I struggled with my topic," Thompson said, "until last year spring semester in my Asian poli- tics class." Participating in a discussion about the democratization of China sparked the idea that led to his research project, "Democratization in China: Leave it to the Industries." His plan was to closely examine the expanded view on demo- cratic trends in the People's Republic of China.

The ideal argument about this topic contends that economic liberalization in China will pro- duce a need for political change. However, Thompson's theory is that political liberalization in China, if it is to come, will not be the result of foreign or domestic political pressures, or the consequence of open economic reform. He believes that the practices of foreign industries operating within China will be the cause of such a change in the Chinese government. "If China opens up foreign trade with China within a Sino-Foreign Cooperative Joint Venture, a combined business enterprise between a Chinese and a foreign company within the ter- riory of China. The Chinese company typically provides the factory buildings along with the land use rights and the labor. The foreign company will bring in the equipment along with the necessary technology to put all of this into working prog- ress."

As Thompson began his research, he started to become familiar with the current information available on democratization in China. "The current topic of my research involved reading," he said. As Thompson, "At time went on, by gathering more and more information he was able to formulate a well-developed theory of why and how China is moving towards democratic trends. Assisting in Thomp- son's work was his advisor, Dr. Krista Wiegand, Assistant Professor in the Department of Politi-

Kenesa Moxe now loves all birds.

He has always had an interest in our feathered friends, from their perfect flight skills to their dinosaur roots. A Biology major, Moxe has focused his Honors Thesis on a specific bird species and their habitats. He did this under the guidance of his mentor, Dr. Ray Chandler, professor in the Department of Biology.

I compared the habitats of urban and rural Loggerhead Shrikes (Lanistes ludovicianus) in Bulloch County," said Moxe. "The birds are known for the behavior of impaling its prey on barbed wire and thorns, for nuptial displays, and for storing food." He said that this particular species is in decline but reasons for this decline are unknown. "I tested the urbanization theory that basically said that city building is the reason for the decline," he said.

Moxe faced many challenges while conducting his research. "Searching for the birds was quite difficult since they are known for having large territories and they also look very similar to the common Northern Mocking birds in the area," said Moxe. "The habitats were compared and there were no significant differences in living in urban areas than ones residing in rural areas. Thus proving that decline in Bulloch County is not due to urbanization."

Praising the Honors Program, Moxe says that it inspired him to complete his project. "I would not have considered doing research without being in the Honors Program," he said.

Tyler Thompson

Political Science

Democratization in China - Leave it to the Industries

Dr. Krista Wiegand

Assistant Professor in the Department of Politics

Kenesa Moxe

Exercise Science

The Effect of a Collegiate Soccer Season on Performance and Recovery Stress Score

Dr. Stephen Rose

Assistant Professor in the Department of Health and Kinesiology

...and how well they were trained. Testing the athletes three times before, during, and after the season, participants were given the same instruc- tions at each time point to try to execute the task. Verbal instructions and visual demonstra- tions were given to each athlete. Each athlete was required to perform a self selected general and speci- fically sport specific warm up before the drop jump test. Balancing the requirements of this project along with the tennis team obligations taught Kegerreis to be more efficient. Accordingly, Eisenhart’s Honors Thesis research has been merely an ex-

Kenneth Metasavage

Biology

A Comparison of Habitat Use Between Urban and Rural Loggerhead Shrikes in Bulloch County

Dr. Ray Chandler

Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences

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The rising cost of health care affects more than doctor exams and prescription drugs. Patients often need durable goods like canes, wheelchairs, hospital beds, etc. And the cost for the use of those items adds up just as quickly. Economics major Ann Hedges is examining how changes to Medicare policy affecting durable goods are supposed to help lower their costs.

This research is also resulting in a paper Hedges co-wrote with her mentor, Dr. Michael Reksulak, an Associate Professor in the School of Economic Development, entitled, “Taking the ‘Silver Scalpel’ to Durable Medical Equipment Expenditures: A cautionary tale of competitive bidding in medical markets.”

“The changes incorporate a competitive-based pricing method for the purchase of durable goods through Medicare, and Hedges has investigated how a proposed plan that could result in a 20 percent price reduction has been stymied. ‘We are looking at the fact that it was written into the bill almost a decade ago, and it still isn’t enacted. I am trying to determine why it has taken so long,’ said Hedges.

‘Now with Obama in office, the healthcare issue is getting a lot of awareness,’ said Hedges. ‘It is interesting how much more important this issue has become even since I began researching it.’

Hedges has been working with Dr. Reksulak ever since she took a course from him as a freshman, and they began talking about her research project when she was a sophomore. ‘It has been a great research experience working with a professor on a paper,’ said Hedges. ‘You get to see it from their perspective of preparing it to be submitted to a journal.’

This intersection of economics and politics has prepared Hedges for a future in public policy. ‘I enjoy learning economic theories that can be applied anywhere and using cost-saving analysis to look at these policies to see what’s gone wrong.’ EM

Working with Dr. Heidi Altman, Anthropology major Kristen Mitchell has been studying folklore and how original folklore stories differ from their modern incarnations.

The focus of her project is a comparative study of folklore from a linguistic standpoint. Mitchell has always been interested in folklore, but last year she was inspired by Dr. Altman to examine the different forms folklore stories have taken over time. ‘One of the course of her research Mitchell has found that, “folklore stories reflect the times they are in.” For example, the women in the original versions of the stories she studied tended to be “very subservient, endure and forgive despite what happened to them, and not speak often.”

Modern versions of these stories, however, offer the female point of view. The female characters, “have names, the power of voice, and stand against men.” Mitchell also noted the originals, while much more gruesome than their modern versions, often had happy endings where the lady married the prince and “lived happily ever after.” In contrast, the modern versions do not always have such a clear-cut happy ending, but the characters discover something about themselves.

Mitchell worked with many tales, including Cinderella, Diamonds and Toads, and Rumplestiltskin. While many readers have seen the Disney versions of such tales, Mitchell noted that these movies are for entertainment, whereas the written tales were created to teach a lesson. The written versions are thus of a much darker nature than the Disney films.

For Mitchell, the challenging part of this research was the linguistic angle from which she approached it. She has studied cultural anthropology and it took some effort to properly work from a linguistic perspective.

In the fall, Mitchell will begin her graduate program in Library Science at the University of North Texas where she will continue her love of folklore as well as the study of it.
While the majority of students in college choose one major en route to their degree, Michelle Wehner has taken on the task of double majoring toward earning a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and a Recreational Emphasis in Therapeutic Recreation. To add to the complexity of her ambition, she also completed two separate Honors Capstone projects before graduation, a task no honors student has attempted before. She, however, was not deterred, and with help from Dr. William McIntosh, Dr. Lorene M. Wolfe, Dr. James D. Bigley and her father, Wehner had just the right amount of guidance that she needed to carry out her projects professionally and to completion.

Wehner’s psychology project, entitled Exploring the Use of Different Types of Educational Interventions to Change Attitude and Behavior, used both written and video formats to try to measure attitude and behavior of psychology student participants toward Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches. As a young child she had a constant fear of the insects resulting from an incident. Wehner was forced to confront that long-time fear when she began working at the Georgia Southern Center for Wildlife Education and Lamar Q. Ball, Jr. Raptor Center and was entrusted with cockroaches. After getting over her phobia through exposure, she was interested in examining incidents and fears like hers through science and experience.

A total of 47 undergraduate psychology students, 35 female and 12 male, took part in the experiment. Wehner hypothesized that the video format would be more effective than the written format. She constructed both the video and written format herself. With the help of her father, Wehner composed the six minute video in the back yard of her own home. The results of the experiment showed the males were generally more accepting of the Hissing Cockroaches than the females. Wehner explained, “I discovered several interesting results, one of which is that college students seem to learn more from a video than written material.” The students that participated in the video group demonstrated a significant increase of knowledge compared to the written format group.

Wehner’s second project fell under her Recreational Emphasis in Therapeutic Recreation, and was entitled Motivations, Benefits, and Constraints for a Wheelchair Basketball Program at Georgia Southern University. She, however, was not deterred, and with help from Dr. William McIntosh, Dr. Brent Wolfe and Dr. James D. Bigley, Wehner and her fellow group members discovered the majority of people surveyed had heard of wheelchair basketball but were not aware that it was coming to Georgia Southern. In the end, they concluded the program should be advertised more around campus.

After completing two projects of this magnitude, Wehner feels a boost of confidence. She is currently contemplating on applying for graduate school. No matter where her life might take her, she plans to “live life full of diverse experiences and leisure activities.” She sees herself being involved with animals, animal therapy, and wildlife.

David Robeck believes in the power of art. For his Honors Thesis, Robeck is examining the role of music and art in psychological relief for people, particularly children, whose lives have been torn apart by war.

Robeck is an International Studies and Spanish double-major and Music minor, as well as a percussionist. He is also an officer in STAND, a student-run organization advocating violence and genocide. (Read an article about Robeck’s work with STAND on page 32 of this magazine.) Robeck draws upon research on conflict in Darfur, Sudan and Uganda and also sees application of the process for victims of natural disasters such as the recent tragedy in Haiti.

Robeck used many sources in his research process. He acquired most of his information through interviews. He interviewed some people that ran organizations using music and art to assist war-affected children. Using his connections through STAND, he was able to interview a colleague at a conference. Robeck also turned to the internet and library resources to gather much of his research.

“The feedback was kind of overwhelming,” said Robeck. “The benefits of using art and music are pretty clear. In the past, people have observed how music affects the mind, the anthropology of music, the impact of war, and other similar topics, but I have never seen anything that covers what I hope to.”

Robeck has crafted an argument that examines some of the unconventional ways victims of traumatic events cope. He has found that a wide range of activities are being used to help the people put their lives back together. Throughout his research process, he has been under the guidance of his mentor, Dr. Darin Van Tassel, the Associate Professor in the Center of International Studies and the Department of Political Science.

“I have concluded that psychological relief can come from music in many ways,” said Robeck. “For example, as former child soldiers return home, members of their community are having them participate in production of artwork and learning musical skills; some of them are even being given video games to help them cope. This helps them get their mind off of their tragic past experience and help them to put it in the past.”

After Robeck graduates, he hopes to continue his studies by going to graduate school or possibly entering into the Peace Corps, which Robeck said would provide “an opportunity to serve and improve my Spanish.” As for long-term plans, Robeck would like to work for the government or for an NGO on global issues.
Philosophy major Rhett Moore knows that the search for truth is not only a practical endeavor, but also a fun one as well. His Honors Thesis, which began as a term paper for a class on existentialism, focuses on the similarities between the ideas of ultimate truth in the work of German philosopher Martin Heidegger and Taoism.

Moore chose the beginning of Heidegger's work for his thesis because, he says, "Heidegger is very much like a Taoist in his search for the essence of being. Heidegger's philosophy is very much about the essence of being and how one can find it. Heidegger's work is very much about the nature of existence and how one can understand it. Heidegger's work is very much about the nature of existence and how one can understand it. Heidegger's work is very much about the nature of existence and how one can understand it. Heidegger's work is very much about the nature of existence and how one can understand it. Heidegger's work is very much about the nature of existence and how one can understand it. Heidegger's work is very much about the nature of existence and how one can understand it. Heidegger's work is very much about the nature of existence and how one can understand it. Heidegger's work is very much about the nature of existence and how one can understand it. 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It is often easier to avoid research topics that are difficult on a personal or an emotional level in favor of safer subjects, but Political Science major Kristi Winger is not one to shy away from a tough issue. For her Honors Thesis, Winger is working under the direction of her advisor Dr. Curry to analyze the ways in which language is used in the courtroom during sexual assault trials. Inspired to action by the stories of loved ones who suffered sexual assault, Winger is using an interdisciplinary approach to evaluate court transcripts. “I’m going to try to indentify why people in the courtroom said things. I’m interested in what effect that has on the listener and on the person who is being questioned, and whether or not it influences the direction of the case,” she explained.

The project has been difficult in part because of the sensitive nature of the cases she is reviewing. “My topic isn’t one that people are comfortable discussing,” she admits. “I really didn’t want to get into the emotional aspect of the topic.” The research itself has been daunting as well. “I’m just trying to stick to the language part right now, only what’s said in the courtroom, but that leaves out a lot. Body language is considered language too, but that’s not in the transcripts.” Despite the complexity of her task, Winger is optimistic about the real-world value of this particular avenue of research after completing an internship at the state capital. While there, she was able to discuss her thesis with representatives who were writing legislation that could affect sexual assault cases. “The current laws don’t let victims prosecute after so many years, but they’re trying to change that,” she said. Ultimately, Winger hopes that completing this project will help her to understand more about the subtle uses of language in trials so that she will be well prepared for her future career. After graduating, she plans to attend Mercer Law School.

Music Education major Amy Ruiz knows that the economy places funding for music and arts education in a precarious position and in fact, many music programs survive only through fundraising by students and parents at the school. Her Honors Capstone project examines the various arguments music teachers need to make to convince school boards and administrators the various arguments music teachers need to make to convince school boards and administrators. Her Honors Capstone project examined the open source concept as his topic because it is a relatively new and controversial concept in the technology field that is widely used but not widely taught in universities around the country. He described it as an “interesting issue that is a huge deal in the software industry today.” Not only is open source used in many of the classes that Mr. Styer took during his college career, but he explained how to manage the intensity of a large project and the time and patience required to accomplish it on time. Styer discovered through research into other institutions course offerings. When Styer began his project in Fall 2009, he was unsure of the results he would uncover.

He wanted to clearly define Open Source Development. His next step involved delving into the Internet to find colleges that either used or taught open source. “I used web surveys to examine lists of colleges, while taking a closer look at three different departments, Information Technology, Information Systems, and Computer Science,” he explained. All three of these departments are the most likely areas to find use of the open source tool. However, Styer discovered the open source concept is not firmly addressed in these or any other departments. The closest thing he found was a reference in research papers and consulting papers, and every now and then a reference in a class. But, open source was never included in any course curriculum. Styer mentioned one interesting discovery he made while during his research. He came across a symposium that addressed the issue of Open Source Development and its rising importance, but the group did not know how to solve the problem of teaching the topic. This obstacle is one that Styer himself faces in his project as creating a curriculum for a semester long class on open source is a task that was not included in any course curriculum. Styer’s topic proved to be a tough undertaking. As he sifted through the information he needed, Clayton discovered that he often read journal articles and would end up having to do more research to understand the articles. While his entire project was certainly a difficult one, it was these initial steps that proved to be the most challenging. Clayton mentioned that his work seemed overwhelming at times. Clayton’s project is important to the field of exercise science, as overtraining can cause serious problems for athletes, most obviously in the form of physical injury. Clayton summed up the value of his project by stating: “it is important that early signs [of overtraining] are detectable so that overtraining can be prevented. My research demonstrates a tool that can be used to possibly detect early indicators of overtraining before it becomes an issue.” After graduating from Georgia Southern, Clayton plans to attend graduate school at the University of South Carolina. There he intends to earn a Master’s in Public Health. With regard to his Honors Capstone project, Clayton said, “Overall, I enjoyed the project. Although it was difficult at times, it was the perfect opportunity to learn more about an issue that impacts several athletes.”
A whole team effort was needed for Exercise Science major Natalie Williams to complete her latest research project, and Georgia Southern’s soccer team was happy to provide the assistance in helping her reach her goal.

“I am doing research on seasonal changes in drop jump performance and perceived stress and injury in soccer,” she said. “Basically, we’re just tracking stress in soccer through their preseason and their seasonal competition to see if there are any changes—if they get more stressed throughout the season—and then we’re also looking at drop jump performance to see if it gets better as the season progresses.”

Williams is working with Dr. Stephen Rossi, the exercise science professor who thought of the topic. Originally, Williams wanted to test the vertical jump of college students and college athlete to find out how it affected their maximal leg strength, but the soccer team was already in season, this was a more feasible subject to tackle. In this project, the data were collected through surveys in which players could rate their “perceived stress.” For the preseason, surveys were done at the beginning and at the end; for the seasonal competition, the surveys were given at the beginning, middle, and end.

Following graduation Williams will pursue a Masters in Public Health at Georgia Southern University.

Zebra fish and goldfish have kidneys as well as gills, which secrete sodium chloride as a byproduct of moving ions through a membrane. In gills, the membrane separates the ‘inside’ from the ‘outside’ of the fish and is the topic of Biology major Bradley Wilbur’s Honors Thesis.

“Tons moving makes us ‘living,’” Wilbur said. Wilbur has spent the past year and a half studying zebra fish and goldfish, measuring the levels of sodium chloride that indicate how ions are moving across the fish’s membranes. A similar process of ion movement occurs in human kidneys and both processes, in gills and kidneys, are coded in the species’ genetic sequence. Wilbur hopes to use his research to understand human diseases and both processes, in gills and kidneys, are coded in the species’ genetic sequence. Wilbur hopes to use his research to understand human diseases.

“In most cases, doesn’t matter at all?”

“Some bases can change; mutations occur all the time,” he said. “Why does one mutation from the university or the IT Department. Thompson was missing most of the operation instructions and manuals and had to research the products online to figure out how to assemble them.

Thompson is very passionate about her research project, eager and excited to expand her knowledge of IT. “I wanted to take a different approach to the regular IT projects, like website development, networking, and database projects,” said Thompson. “I felt like this project was an opportunity for me to try something new, to demonstrate that IT is not only about computers, but it expands far beyond that. With the video production studio, of course we use computers, but with this I have the ability to do so much more with the studio production package, the switch, and the green screen. Video production has always intrigued me, and now I want to get the chance to expand my knowledge base and learn something that I might never have learned.”

Thompson is extremely grateful to have had this opportunity. “The Honors Program has given me an enriching educational experience that I couldn’t have received otherwise,” said Thompson. “It has allowed me to meet and work with many wonderful people with designing, creating, and implementing websites, and I truly appreciate the chance that I had to expand my knowledge through the Honors Program.”

Thompson has recently been offered an internship with the Office of Sustainability and Public Safety, where she will be able to use her experiences with the web first-hand. She intends to leave the studio at the school, where future students will be free to use it as they please.

Writing & Linguistics major Jessie Thiemann has always loved reading fantasy, but she didn’t have the chance to try her hand at writing it until she began the novel that she is working on for her Honors Capstone under the guidance of Sonya Huber, Assistant Professor in the Department of Writing and Linguistics.

“My most of short stories were realistic fiction,” she said. “I’ll have ideas for fantasy stories, but they were always too large a scope to fit into a short story.

The honors capstone is really the first opportunity I’ve had where I feel like, okay, I can do this now.”

Thieman began outlining her novel, Manifestations, in 2008. Manifestations will be the tale of the struggles facing a group of siblings who are unexpectedly chosen as religious figures. Since its inception, the project has changed a number of times.

“It was very different from what it is now,” Thiemann noted. “Watching it grow and evolve has been the most interesting part.”

According to Thiemann, the most important difference between the early and final stages of the work has been understanding what her writing said about herself. Manifestations has become much more than something written only for its value as an enjoyable read. As she writes, Thiemann is discovering and considering her own views on herself and society.

“Fantasy and sci-fi are great genres for metaphors, for pointing out societal issues or personal issues in a non-threatening way. I’m definitely seeing different themes that are really important to me in the story,” she said.

Those themes include the dynamics of sibling relationships under pressure and the responsibilities of religious figures in society. Thiemann is the eldest of three siblings, and she is considering a career in the ministry in the future, so these are subjects that have great personal significance. She hopes that the finished novel will balance between serious themes and entertainment. She said, “I hope that whoever reads it will be able to see some of themselves in the story, and just enjoy it, have fun reading it, because it’s been fun overall to write.” After graduating, Thiemann plans to work for a year and then move to either graduate school to earn her MFA in Fiction or seminary school, and of course, she is going to continue revising her novel.
Kendra Mosley Wins Boren Scholarship to Study Abroad in Russia

University Honors Program student Kendra Mosley has been awarded a National Security Education Program David L. Boren Scholarship for study in Moscow, Russia during the 2010-2011 academic year. The Statesboro, Georgia native, ROTC Cadet, and History and International Studies major seeks to use her senior year abroad to develop her Russian language skills and immerse herself in the Russian culture.

Drawing on her experience from a study abroad program in Estonia during 2007-2008, Mosley is well-prepared for another year in a foreign country. “The year I spent in Estonia mentally prepared me to face the adversities of studying abroad,” she said. Mosley plans to travel around the country, but she is focused on her goals. “I plan to earn my minor in Russian, and I also plan to complete my honors thesis research which will focus on Russia,” she said.

Mosley’s education in history and international studies led her to become more globally aware and set learning about another culture as an academic goal. “Dr. Steven Engel, Director of the Honors Program, told my freshman orientation class about the opportunities available for study abroad,” she said. “That message stayed with me and the program was very helpful as I applied for this award.”

Boren Scholarships are awarded to students who wish to study in countries of critical importance to U.S. interests. Language learning is a key component of study for many undergraduate recipients as it is developing a cultural understanding of the country. Boren scholars also must commit to a year-long service requirement in a government agency with national security responsibilities.

Upon her return to the United States, Mosley will be commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army. Her plans following graduation are to attend graduate school for Russian studies and history. My goal is to become a military intelligence officer or air defense artillery officer. Still, she also has plans for more studies. “I want to attend graduate school for Russian studies and history. My goal is to become a military intelligence officer or air defense artillery officer. Still, she also has plans for more studies. “I want to attend graduate school for Russian studies and history. My goal is to become a military intelligence officer or air defense artillery officer.”

Rose Sheahan Returns from Japan

More and more college students in America take advantage of study abroad programs, but very few do what International Studies major Rose Sheahan did, which is go live in another country for a whole year. Awarded a Gilman International Scholarship by the U.S. State Department, Sheahan studied at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies in Japan and immersed herself in the culture and way of life of Japan.

“Experiencing the culture firsthand gives a person the opportunity to learn new things,” Sheahan said. “For example, I learned about the traditional origins of the popular dishes. Learning the history of food adds to an understanding of the culture,” she said.

During her first semester, she enrolled in Japanese language courses. “My study of the Japanese language was, at first, a bit shaky but as I joined clubs and made more friends in Japan, my listening and speaking skills started to really improve, and I became more confident in my skills,” she said. Last September, Sheahan took the placement exams given to exchange students who wish to study the Japanese language. Sheahan scored well on her exams, and for her second semester abroad she was enrolled in courses such as Issues in Global Business in Japan and Introduction to the History of Japanese Diplomacy.

Sheahan returned to Georgia Southern this semester and has been busy fulfilling her Gilman requirement of promoting cultural awareness between the U.S. and Japan through the creation of the Japanese American Friendship Alliance, a new student group at Georgia Southern. The club now boasts 17 members and discusses food culture, hosts movie nights, and plans field trips.

She has also been volunteer tutoring American students learning Japanese and Japanese students learning English so she can keep her language skills sharp. However, doing so has led to a career decision as well. “I really like helping people learn languages, and it has motivated me to become a teacher,” she said.

Sheahan hopes to teach English in Japan and eventually earn a Masters in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages).

In describing her overall experience as a student in Japan, Sheahan said, “I love Japan, even though the society and culture are vastly different. However, it has taught me that I am able to adjust and get used to the feel of other ways of doing things.

“Study abroad has made me a much more global person. And after a year, I really feel a part of both countries.”

Nicholas Hoad
Thomas Eisenhart to Spend a Year in Belfast as Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar

Senior Chemistry major Thomas Eisenhart counts Bob Frigo, former assistant-director of the University Honors Program, as a mentor and close friend. But when Eisenhart applied to earn his master's degree abroad, he did not expect to follow so closely in Frigo’s footsteps.

The Rotary Foundation has awarded Eisenhart the Academic-Year Ambassadorial Scholarship to study in Belfast, Northern Ireland for the 2010-2011 academic year. Frigo studied as a Rotary Scholar and met his wife, Professor Stefanie Frigo of Georgia Southern’s Department of Writing and Linguistics, at Queen’s University in Belfast.

Eisenhart grew up in Statesboro and has called Georgia Southern his home for the past three years, but has traveled extensively. Last summer, Eisenhart backpacked alone through Italy, Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and Spain. Booking one hostel ahead, Eisenhart ended his trip in Madrid, Spain, where he waited on standby for six days to fly back to Atlanta. “After seven weeks spent on the road in seven countries that didn’t speak English, I’m not really worried about going to the grocery store [in Belfast],” he explained.

As a part of the clean chemical technology and management joint degree program at Queen’s University, Eisenhart will earn his master’s degree in just one year. He is also one of just five students accepted to the program annually. “[The program] is relatively new, classroom based, and it involves something I have done before—it is mostly group work and research, and I have definitely been stretching myself as a student. I love Copenhagen and Roskilde!”

Part of her preparation for stretching herself as a student came from two honors classes she took as freshman: Dr. Troy Denton’s Honors Chemistry and Dr. Trey Denton’s Honors Chemistry II. It was relatively new, classroom based, and it involves something I have done before—it is mostly group work and research, and I have definitely been stretching myself as a student. I love Copenhagen and Roskilde!”

Eisenhart will begin classes at the same university in September. “The Rotary makes you write down five schools [where you would like to study], and you pick the final school for you,” said Eisenhart. “I had no idea that Queen’s University is where Bob went.”

Eisenhart has found happiness abroad. As a winner of the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship and a University Honors Program sophomore, Eisenhart is studying in Denmark to investigate claims that it is “the happiest country in the world.”

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, and the Institute of International Education, the Gilman award provides money for student travel and studies overseas. Eisenhart is attending Roskilde University, and she lives every minute of it. “My schoolwork is with mostly Danish students, and it has been great to talk with them,” said Eisenhart. “The style of Roskilde University is so completely different than anything I have done before—it is mostly group work and research, and I have definitely been stretching myself as a student. I love Copenhagen and Roskilde!”

Of her favorite things about studying here would be learning how to take trains, meeting new people, having to sniff things in the grocery store to figure out what they are, walking down cobblestone streets next to buildings that are at least 200 years old...” Happiness, indeed.

Anna McGaughey Earns Gilman Scholarship to Study in Denmark

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For someone who has never travelled outside the country, spending a year abroad may seem rather daunting. However, junior History major Ryan Pickrell was up to the challenge of studying abroad in the People’s Republic of China.

As a freshman at Georgia Southern, Pickrell decided to minor in Chinese language and travel to China for advanced study. Two years later, Pickrell was awarded the nationally competitive Benjamin A. Gilman scholarship to fund his year spent at Huazhong Normal University in Wuhan, China.

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To be selected for a position in the Teach for America corps members. “I was extremely taken by the internship in Washington, D.C. where she had an opportunity to contribute to studies of wasps throughout the years has made such an impact on my life,” Shull said.

Pennington credits her mentors at Georgia Southern and advice from University Honors Program Director Steven Engel for giving her an advantage in the interview process. “I have been through so many interviews with the Honors Program, and I felt like I had an advantage in answering their questions,” she said. She is finishing her Honors Thesis project this spring.

Both graduates will work in Atlanta area schools during their time with Teach For America.

Biology Students Busy as Bees in Research Methods Course

Students choose the University Honors Program at Georgia Southern because they want the challenge of rigorous coursework and the opportunity to develop creative work and conduct research while working directly with faculty. This past year, the students in the honors section of Research Methods in Biology had just such an opportunity to participate in hands-on field research that is part of a larger global project to monitor wasp populations.

Dr. Alan Harvey, associate professor of Biology, led the team of eleven students in the project, part of a larger U.S. Geological Survey endeavor that involves other U.S. institutions as well as universities in Canada, Great Britain, and the Czech Republic. Not only did the students learn about research methods in biology, but they had the opportunity to contribute to studies of wasps around the world.

According to Harvey, the class is designed around the core skills all biology students should have in common, namely design and develop experiments, collect, synthesize and analyze data, and present findings in written form, posters, and presentations.

Sophomore Chet Joyner appreciated the opportunity to experience the combination of in-class, in-lab, and in-field work that this class offered. “I enjoy working with first-year student and volunteering in the community,” Spalota said. “I have a passion for bettering the lives of others around me. Giving back to Georgia Southern and the community is fun and part of who I am.”

Jessica Spaleta Wins National Phi Eta Sigma Scholarship

Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society recently awarded senior honors student Jessica Spaleta a $6,000 scholarship for her hard work in both the classroom and the community at Georgia Southern. Spaleta, an Exercise Science major from Charlotte, North Carolina, maintains a 4.0 GPA and has served as the student liaison between student volunteers from Georgia Southern and Keep Bulloch Beautiful.

Phi Eta Sigma is a national honor society for college freshmen with a full GPA of 3.6 or higher. Spaleta has continued to work with first-year students as a peer leader and peer instructor in First-Year Experience courses, and she will also participate in the upcoming “Conversations with Professors” program for freshmen this August.

“After working with first-year students and volunteering in the community,” Spaleta said. “I have a passion for bettering the lives of others around me. Giving back to Georgia Southern and the community is fun and part of who I am.”
Almost every facet of the program’s operations.

Francis Desiderio became the new Assistant Director of the UHP Bob Frigo as part of such an elite group, Beasley endured a lengthy application and interview process in order to participate in this experience. During her time in Boston, Beasley attended a number of different student sessions focused on leadership training. Oxfam also offered educational sessions for the students in the organization’s three main initiatives of Climate Change, Extractive Industries, and Vulnerable Communities. The students were also given the tools and skills they would need to begin Oxfam programs on their home campuses.

The Climate Change initiative seeks to educate individuals and seek proactive solutions to the changing world climate. The Vulnerable Communities initiative equips communities to handle misfortunes, including crop failures and natural disasters like the 2004 tsunami. The third initiative, Extractive Industries, seeks to educate individuals whose land is being purchased by multinational corporations. Oxfam works to ensure that these individuals are aware of potential risks to the environment and their health and that they receive fair prices for their land and labor.

“At the end of training week,” Beasley said, “we were in initiative and we talked more in depth about that.” Beasley selected Vulnerable Communities, which adheres to the motto, “The Right to Have the Right to Decide.”

Beasley and the campus organization have lobbied Representative Saxby Chambliss to support the Vulnerable Communities bill coming into the House of Representatives this year. The Extractive Industries Transparency Disclosure Act, if passed, would force multinational corporations under the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to publish the funds that they pay to countries where they operate. “The SEC controls all upper multi-national corporations—Chevron, Shell,” Beasley explains. “So the people in these [impacted] communities can get a fair share of the money paid to their country, to go toward necessities like water, education, and environmental clean-up when these corporations leave.”

Beasley and her Oxfam-designated team collected 450 appeal cards, all signed by students, which they presented to one of Chambliss’s staff in his Atlanta office. The team also hosted a call-in day, during which 150 students called Chambliss’s office to encourage the senator to vote in favor of the bill, which should come to a vote in May.

The team was also in charge of the October 2009 Hunger Banquet, held annually at Georgia Southern. During Dining Hunger and Homeless Week, “Students are given the opportunity to experience what it’s like to be impersonated, to live on two dollars a day, for example,” Beasley said.

As a 1906 scholar, Beasley credits a Spring 2008 honors leadership seminar taught by former assistant director of the UHP Bob Frigo as one of the turning points in her college education. The assigned book, The End of Poverty by Jeffrey D. Sachs, “opened my eyes to injustice,” she said. “We do have a global responsibility, [we] who are able to have a university education....We have the ability to change it, not be complacent.”

Kate Brooks

Meet the New Assistant Director

Francis Desiderio became the new Assistant Director of the UHP Honors Program last November, and since then has been immersed in almost every facet of the program’s operations. “One of the questions a student asked me during the interview process started out with, ‘Say Dr. Englert hands you a big stack of applications to the program...’ and that is exactly what happened. I got here just in time to start reading the November

round of applications and the projects haven’t stopped,” he said. Hypervigilant experience includes both teaching and work in university-community partnerships, particularly courses in urban studies and service-learning projects in Atlanta.

“A lot of my effort so far has been working on new service-learning programming for honors students,” he said. “And we’ve planned an alternate break trip to Atlanta for a week this May. Also, I taught a section of the Global Citizens course to the first fresh class of 1906 Scholars.”

Before coming to Georgia Southern, Desiderio was a Brittain Postdoctoral Fellow at Georgia Tech School of Literature, Communication, and Culture and a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts at Emory University, where he earned his Ph.D. At Emory, he focused his research in the fields of American studies and urban studies. His dissertation was on the designs and developments of architect-developer John Portman. Desiderio also earned a Master’s degree from the Department of Popular Culture at Bowling Green State University, where he wrote a thesis on the urban art landscapes of Detroit outsider artist Tyree Guyton. His undergraduate degree in English is from the University of Dayton.

Dr. Desiderio is accompanied in the move to Statesboro by his wife, Jennifer Stocking, their two boys, John and Christopher, and their beagle, Tiggy.

Tiggy

I am just Me

By Michelle Wehner

The log rolled back
Revealed a spider fat and black
I am just Me

Said like a plea
As the boot came down—quieted the sound.

Snake sleeping silent
All gentle and pliant
Curled in the sun,
Unable to run

“I am not what you see
I am just Me” said with a sigh
As down came a hoe
To quiet the cry.

Proud wings beat
Fast and fleet
Me—that’s all I am.

Sung in shrill call
A barrel isaimed
The proud is lamed.

I am just Me

As down came a hoe
Said with a sigh
“I am not what you see
I am just Me”

The trap laid flat
Closed with a clap.
I am just Me.
I am just Me

And what is your plan
Asked of the man
I am just Me.
Complex and free
They ripped out the tongue,
Punctured the lung,
Gouged out the eye,
To silence the lie.

Burned at the stake
For being so fake
I am just Me.
I am just Me.

I am just Me

Keiylene Burgess: “Avoiding Lawsuits in Academe: The Customer Service Solution”

Keiylene Burgess has been thinking about the role of the college student as a customer and recently had the opportunity to present a paper on that very topic at the 2010 meeting of the Southern Academy of Legal Studies in Business at Sam Houston, TX. For the paper, entitled “Avoiding Lawsuits in Academe: The Customer Service Solution,” honors junior Finance major Burgess collaborated with Dr. LeVon Wilson of the College of Business Administration. Dr. Wilson chairs the COBA Educational Outcomes Assessment Committee, on which Burgess serves as an assistant. Burgess and Dr. Wilson’s research is a study of the effects of customer service on universities. A conversation about state policies sparked the idea for the paper. “We started talking about the initiative that Sonny Purdue released, basically asking all state agencies to focus on customer service,” said Burgess. Working closely with Dr. Wilson has been one of the most fulfilling aspects of the research process according to Burgess. She appreciated the chance to examine the subject from the viewpoints of both a student and a professor. “I brought the student perspective to it, and Sonny Purdue has said that the students are the most important customers. Students don’t really think of themselves as customers...” she notes. “The idea really did catch me off guard.”

Burgess was particularly interested in the effect the customer service perspective might have on student expectations. “If you decide that you’re supposed to be being served by your university, are you going to think ‘Well, I don’t have to work as hard’ or ‘I don’t have to take the initiative?’” she wonders.

In addition to presenting her findings to a group of professionals, Burgess had the opportunity to participate in a focus group that was reviewing a new supplemental study aid. “It tracks the effort of students,” she explains. “It lets professors know when they were working and how much time they spent on the assignment.” Dr. Wilson said that Burgess’s contribution to the focus group session were “very constructive and insightful.” As a student, Burgess brought a different perspective to the table. “Being able to give feedback as a student was a unique experience for me and also for the company,” she said.

Burgess’s presentation in San Antonio was a success. “She did an excellent job and received rave reviews from those in attendance. I was extremely impressed by her presentation,” said Dr. Wilson. “She represented Georgia Southern, the College of Business Administration, and her department very well.” Dr. Wilson and Burgess plan to continue researching and working to get the paper published. 

Tiggy
A man of hunched back and purposeful stride
Stalks cooly my thoughts at night
The High Controller of cerebral tide
In my peripheral site
Abnormally tall, he's normally dark
His gaze preys on words unsaid
Ripping and spilling and killing for lark
His dinner lives in my head
Expert of arson, the clown loves to torch
Children and clouds and candy
That man kills sweet words with horrible scorch
Leaves just the sad or randy
Oh, I could kill him; I have not a doubt
With dull verse coats and poisoned wine
But that lust would burn worlds on his way out
And so his absence is mine

As genocide began in Darfur, Sudan, many students around the United States decided to stand against it. Thus was born STAND, Students Taking Action Now Darfur. This organization has chapters in multiple universities and seeks to make Americans aware of the situation in Darfur while also advocating for politicians to take action. David Robeck, senior International Studies and Spanish major, acts as Georgia Southern’s Public Relations Officer for the local chapter of STAND. Robeck explained that the scope of the organization now covers more countries, “STAND has expanded from being an organization that dealt with just Darfur to one that addresses the conflicts in Sudan, Burma, and the Congo.” STAND develops various plans and actions to try to raise awareness about these conflicts.

Robeck said that the local GSU organization screens documentaries about these wars to campus and community audiences and participates in larger events addressing conflict and genocide. Last year, for example, Robeck and other STAND members attended a convention in Washington, D.C. called HedgeProtect. At this conference the STAND members had three goals. The first was to raise awareness about the conflicts, which they achieved through a YouTube campaign. Second, they held a convention in D.C. to bring the genocide to the attention of American politicians, and it was there they met other speakers from around the world who spoke of the conflicts in Sudan, Burma, and the Congo. Third, after the convention STAND conducted a signatures campaign. Around 50,000 people signed the petition for the government to help end the conflicts, and STAND considered the event a major success.

Since then, Robeck has helped new chapters of STAND “get organized” in the Southeast while also working to continue raising awareness on the GSU campus. Currently, he said, STAND at Georgia Southern is planning a 5k run to fundraise for their partner organizations.

For David himself, he said that “many alumni stay in touch with STAND and I hope to be one of those alumni.” If David goes to a graduate school with a STAND chapter, he hopes to join them and continue his participation in the organization. The best part of the STAND experience for David, “was meeting Romero Dallaire (commander of the UN peacekeeping forces in Rwanda during the genocide there). He was inspiring and a really nice guy. Also, the conferences were cool, because meeting like-minded people is always fun.”

Synergy and Learning Meet: Dr. Thomas Case on Honors

Dr. Thomas Case, the current department chair for Information Systems, has taught at Georgia Southern University for the past twenty-seven years, and he has been a valuable mentor and instructor for honors students for more than two decades. His teaching philosophy for honors courses depends on three essential components of the classroom experience coming together. When reading assignments, engaged students and an experienced instructor come together, “the result is almost unforgettable for the professors and the students,” he said. “The synergies are almost impossible to describe” when students and professors start to share their ideas.

Dr. Case’s experience with honors students began when the Bell Honors Program asked him to teach an orientation seminar for incoming freshmen. Together, he and his students studied Adam Smith’s Wealth of Nations. Three years later, Dr. Case saw the opportunity to step in again when the teaching arrangement for an economics seminar dissolved unexpectedly.

“Toward the end of his sophomore year, when they took the required economics seminar, they had bonded.

These bonds naturally led to “head-buttting” during discussions. One pair in particular, “a very bright male and a brilliant female…both really get inspired and worked up.” Their verbal jousting still amuses Dr. Case, who often felt like a referee. “It wouldn’t matter who said what, the other was going to take [an opposing] side.”

Dr. Case feels that these intense intellectual discussions are of great benefit to honors students, and the originality of his students continues to surprise him. Going into these discussions, which Dr. Case feels is instrumental to honors students learning, the individuality of his students still surprises him. “No matter how predictable you think [your students] are, they put things together in ways you don’t anticipate.”

For Dr. Case, this is what the University Honors Program does for its students. Honors classes create an atmosphere for faculty and students alike to come together and learn from each other in a positively charged atmosphere of debate and mutual respect. The synergy that emerges in this situation makes honors classes unique.

“The program needs to get bigger so more students have those experiences and faculty get to experience the honors students,” said Dr. Case. “I will always be a big advocate for the Honors Program. I would love to see a critical mass of honors students in the university.”

“The Eisenhower House serves as a first step. No matter how big or small the space, I’ll never regret how big the college should be or its importance to the university.”

Katie Brooks

The Eidson House serves as a first step. No matter how big or small the space, it’s never regrettable how big the college should be or its importance to the university.”

Katie Brooks

Honors in Action
Alumni Notes

THE 2009 HONORS
HOMECOMING CELEBRATION
NOVEMBER 13 AT THE EIDSON HOUSE

SAVE THE DATE
HOMECOMING 2010
FRIDAY NOVEMBER 5, 2010
Alumni updates

Bryan Kight
(UHP, Finance and Quantitative Analysis, 2002)
and Christin (Patty) Kight (2002) announce the birth of their first child, Annaleise Renee. Bryan is currently a financial analyst for AT&T in Atlanta.

Shahnjayla K. Connors
(UHP, Biology, 2003)
was published in the February 2009 issue of *Oncogene*. She earned her Ph.D. in Medical Sciences at the University of Florida. Her research focuses on the biological and social factors that contribute to breast cancer disparities in the U.S. and around the world.

Honors Survey

In December 2009, honors alumni were invited to participate in a survey of both Bell Honors and University Honors alumni. Seventy-three people responded to this survey—nearly 20% of those for whom we have e-mail addresses. Overall, the survey yielded very positive results from both BHP and BHP alumni.

- 94% Answered yes when asked if they had to do it all over again, would they enroll as an honors student at Georgia Southern University.
- 72% Are enrolled or have completed a graduate or professional degree.
- 87% rate their education as an honors student at Georgia Southern as strong or very strong.
- 61% offered to participate in recruitment of new students, mentorship of current students, planning of honors alumni events, or assistance with honors fundraising. Committees are forming now to work on these issues. To volunteer, contact Dr. Steven Engel at sengel@georgiasouthern.edu.

We welcome news and updates regarding both Bell Honors Program and University Honors Program graduates. Send us your information and photos to: sengel@georgiasouthern.edu

Bell Memorial Oak Tree Collapses After Storm

On February 1, 1997, the large oak tree next to the Williams Center was dedicated to the memory of Orell Bernard “Red” Bell. Arguably the oldest and largest tree on the campus it was a fitting memorial to the long-standing friend and benefactor of the Bell Honors Program.

Nearly thirteen years after this dedication, the oak fell in a large windstorm on January 24, 2010.

Photo Courtesy of Katherine Kennedy
Georgia Southern Student Media

The data provided on these pages provides an overview of the current state and recent growth of the University Honors Program.

Honors ANNUAL REPORT

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2009-2010 by the numbers

Number of Honors Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>2005 Fall</th>
<th>2006 Fall</th>
<th>2007 Fall</th>
<th>2008 Fall</th>
<th>2009 Fall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>406</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Honors 2009-2010 Data

- 406 Honors students (49% men, 61% women)
  - 83% Caucasian, 17% non-white
- 350 Georgia residents (88%)
- 13 States represented
- 18 Countries represented
- 94% Freshman retention rate
- 85 Honors courses offered
- 144 Faculty teaching honors or mentoring honors students
- 4750 Hours of service and leadership

Honors Students On Dean’s List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Honors Freshman Retention Rates

- 90% Fall 2005 Cohort
- 90% Fall 2006 Cohort
- 90% Fall 2007 Cohort
- 94% Fall 2008 Cohort

Honors Courses Offered

- 2005-2006: 47
- 2006-2007: 48
- 2007-2008: 56
- 2008-2009: 79
- 2009-2010: 85

Honors Students By Academic College

- Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS): 149
- Science and Technology (COST): 136
- Health and Human Sciences (CHHS): 46
- Business Administration (COBA): 42
- Education (COE): 14
- Information Technology (CIT): 10
- International Studies: 20
- Undeclared: 8

Program Applicants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Applicants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>709</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Undergraduate Research is one of the hallmarks of the University Honors Program. Every honors student must complete a substantial research or creative project prior to graduation. Many of these projects require considerable costs in supplies, travel and time. The Honors Undergraduate Research Fund helps defray the costs for the growing number of honors students.

There are 650 Honors Alumni.
If each were to make a one hundred dollar donation, we would raise $65,000.

With $65,000 we could:

- Purchase 3,250 pieces of glassware for use in scientific experiments
- Purchase 2,800 copies of Plato’s Republic
- Purchase 135,000 pounds of clay for ceramics students
- Purchase 43 tickets to Paris for students to examine the archives at the Bibliothèque Nationale
- Purchase 2,000 gallons of paint for art students
- Purchase 175 tickets to San Francisco for students to present at the American Chemical Society
- Provide overload salary funds for faculty in eleven College or Departmental Honors sequences

Donations are tax deductible. Their value is immeasurable.

To make a contribution, contact Dr. Steven Engel at sengel@georgiasouthern.edu