

**BRYANT UNIVERSITY  
THE HONORS PROGRAM**

**HONORABLE MENTIONS**

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**CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2010!**

The Honors Program would like to congratulate the thirty-four candidates who presented and submitted their capstone projects.

This year marks another record class of candidates to complete the Program. The Class of 2010 will graduate 29% of the members who entered in September 2006.

The 3rd Annual Senior Capstone Colloquium conducted earlier last month included 33 exceptional presentations on a variety of business and business topics.

And now the candidates ...

Justin Andrews, Kristen Aucoin, Derek Blunt, Rebecca Brown, Cristina Connor, Margaret Dickinson, Geoffrey Ensby, Kaitlin Goldsmith, Katrin Gorham, Jamie Goyette, Katie Heeder, Daniel Janis, Qian Jiang, Jared Koreff, Allyson Lagasse, Arielle Langlais, Yuanjun Li, Christopher Lussier, Laura Lussier, Mark McDonnell, Lauren Morgan, Brittany Murphy, William Nette, Stephanie Olson, Jacquelyn Parr, Katherine Piwonski, Lauren Prue, Bryan Regele, Cailin Rocco, Michael Stanton, Jeffrey Steacie, Lisa Tenaglia, Matthew Veves, Raymond Witkos

These seniors will receive special designation on their transcripts and diplomas at Commencement on May 22.

On behalf of my colleagues from the Division of Academic Affairs, please accept our sincere congratulations. The Class of 2010 should be proud of their accomplishments.

On a personal note, we began together in June 2006. Now I have had the opportunity to see this class develop into wonderful people and professionals.

*Best wishes and good luck!*  
*Kenneth J. Sousa, Ph.D.*

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**Program In Brief...**

- 276 members active members
- In December 2009, one member graduated and completed Program requirements
- For AY09-10, nine members petitioned to join the Program
- Over 450 participants for the PwC Senior Capstone Project Colloquium
- 46 members from the Class of 2011 have submitted initial proposals for the Senior Capstone Project

**SENIOR REFLECTIONS — CLASS OF 2010**

**Cailin Rocco** — The most amazing aspect about my experience with the Honors Program is that I have completed it. When I first began my Honors Program experience, it all started with a simple check box on my acceptance to Bryant. From there, I have had some of the most

amazing experiences of my college career. I made my best friends in the Honors Housing in hall 15. I travelled to amazing cities, visited businesses with some of the most amazing people I have ever met and learned that I am personally capable of an amazing feat such as the Honors

Capstone Thesis. My capstone project has been in the works since my sophomore year due to Professor Stanley Baran's Honors Introduction to Communication course. My interest in the class and the subject mat-

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## SENIOR REFLECTIONS — CLASS OF 2010

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ter spurred my interest in media effects. I had trouble narrowing my topic as the proposal deadline loomed, but a conversation with one of my roommates, an Honors Program member herself, started me on what would be the path of my capstone project.

I sat down with my advisor and mentor, Professor Baran, and told him my ideas. At first, I am pretty sure that he thought I was crazy. When I first started this project, he and I were unsure that I would be able to pull everything together, but I was determined and so, I began by breaking down tasks. I met with my advisor on a weekly basis and went through more Gossip Girl episodes than I would like to admit.

I stressed about deadlines, whined to my roommates, and stared at my computer screen for hours. As I finished the final edits on my manuscript, I realized that I had finally come to the end of this process. There were many times that I feared I wouldn't come to the end of this process, but now that it is complete, I have such a sense of accomplishment. The thesis I have presented is due to the support of my family, friends, my advisor Dr. Baran,

and the encouragement of Professor Sousa.

I am so proud of what I have accomplished and I honestly feel that I am a better person as a result. I was able to push myself, guide myself, and achieve a goal that I have been pursuing for four years. It may have been daunting at first, but now that I have completed the project, I am so happy that I chose Dr. Sousa's path less traveled.

**Christopher Lussier** — As we reach this checkpoint in the road, the road less travelled by, I look back and realize that, indeed, it has made all the difference.

Some say that Honors students are smarter, but I would not say that. I would say, however, that we work harder. Nobody can deny that. Who, other than Honors students, participates in a year-long, extensive research project that consumes much of their senior year? No one. Therefore, who else is given the opportunity to work with the most professional and dedicated faculty at Bryant University one-on-one? No one. Who else gets the opportunity to stay in fine hotels and visit top executives in the world's most financially influential city while also networking

with prestigious alumni? Very, very few.

The Honors Program taught me that people are the most important part of academics, not books or computers. The professors and advisors linked to the Program go above and beyond academics in teaching their students life lessons useful in any career. The

New York Experience connects the Program and its students to the real world in more ways than one through networking events and in-depth corporate visits. The Dave and Buster's event four years ago set the foundation for lifelong friendships.

I've also learned to prioritize my time and to take advantage of my resources. I've learned that sleep is for the weak and that Honors students are involved in more extracurricular organizations than the average student. I've learned that making sacrifices, though difficult, can ultimately lead to amazing rewards.

Looking over my shoulder down that long, winding road, I can see the footsteps that I've left behind on the trail that I've blazed, and therein lays a legacy that I'm proud to have created.

*"I feel incredibly accomplished for finishing the capstone."*

## ALUMNI PROFILE — STEPHEN BALKAM '08

Product Specialist,  
Fidelity Investments, Boston MA  
*Discuss your current position, responsibilities and occupation.*

As a Product Specialist, I serve as the primary liaison between Fidelity, Registered Investment Advisors, and critical third-party providers. I help to analyze and interpret performance, equity and fixed income portfolio reports for Fidelity Investments' institutional clients.

*What were your original thoughts and reasoning for accepting the invitation to the Program?*

I entered Bryant University as a transfer student after 2 years at a state school. I had changed schools to receive a challenge in the classroom and have the opportunity to showcase my hard work. At the time that I accepted I was uncertain if I would be able to complete the program, but was excited for the experience.

*How did the Program help in defining your career development? Or how you approached your career choices?*

The greatest effect the Program had on how I approached my career was to help me to develop an appetite for challenge. Specifically, the Program taught me to always look to the next challenge. In school the Senior Thesis was the

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## ALUMNI PROFILE — STEPHEN BALKAM '08

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final goal, but the next goal was to find a career. I would say even at this point, while I strive to do my best at my current job, I am constantly defining new goals and challenges for myself.

*In retrospect, how did the membership in the Honors Program affect you? Education? Future goals? Perspective in your career?*

My membership in the Honors Program taught me to always work as hard as I can and to consistently challenge myself. This helped me gain a self-competitiveness that drives me to find ways that I can make myself better. The Honors Program also helped me to forge strong relationships with

mentors that I plan to keep.

*In summary, what was your Senior Honors Project?*

For my Senior Capstone Project I worked with Dr. Peter Nigro on a thesis titled "Are Baby Boomers Saving Enough for Retirement?" The simple principle of the project was to define a standard of net worth for a given age and income level that would determine financial preparedness.

*What advice would you provide to an incoming freshman who is considering membership in the Program?*

Consider it a privilege to be offered the opportunity to be involved in this program. In my honest opinion, there was nothing about this pro-

gram that made it impossible to complete. This program offers you a way to differentiate yourself and be a part of a select group of students who chose to challenge themselves past the goal of graduation.

*How did your experience with the Senior Honors Project affect your career?*

My Senior Honors Project taught me very valuable life lessons of patience and persistence. Prior to this project I was very impatient and felt that everything could be done quickly if you worked hard enough. Working on a project of this depth taught me that some aspects of a project take long periods of time and if you keep working hard, it will all come together.

## SO WHAT HAPPENED IN 2009-10?

The Honors Program at Bryant is more than an academic program. Many social, service, and networking events are offered to enhance members' college experience. Many events this past year were planned by the Student Honors Council (SHC), including social events, community service events, and Meet, Eat, and Mingles. In addition to SHC events, members have the opportunity to attend the New York City Experience, and this past year two members were able to participate in a national conference in Washington D.C.

The SHC is currently comprised of ten students: Amanda Beck '13, Alexander Bigelow '13, Stephanie Lemire '13, Kyle Nyshokus '13, Breanna Weaver '12, Daniel Webb '12, Zachary Suter '12, Katie Colton '12, Nicholas Denice '11, and Spencer Pace '11.

Programs that have been held this year include a bowling trip, a visit to Heritage Hills, a local nursing home,

and a team at Relay for Life. Honors members really enjoy these programs because they get to meet other members that aren't necessarily in their class while having fun or making a difference in somebody's life.

The most popular of the SHC's events are the Meet, Eat, and Mingles, in which members are able to enjoy a meal while socializing with other members and getting updates about the Program. This year, the MEMs were focused primarily to first years, and upperclassmen presented about the opportunities the Program has offered them. "I feel the Eat and Mingle gave me a lot of information about the program mainly because of the speech the Senior student gave to us," explains first year Steve Righini.

In addition to the SHC, the Program also provides members with unique networking opportunities through the New York Experience. The Experience is a three-day trip during which members are able to interact with one another, but more importantly network with some of the most successful Bryant alumni and businessmen in New York.

This past year, students had the opportunity to visit the UBS Trading Floor, meet the CEO of M&M Mars, and attend an alumni reception. Through this unique experience, members find themselves not only expanding their knowledge and insights, but creating long-lasting friendships as well. As junior Nicholas Denice described, "The New York

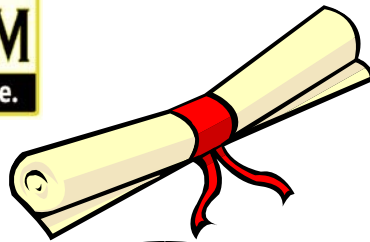
*"We have a really great Honors Program and Bryant really prepares us more than most schools for the professional world."*

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# THE HONORS PROGRAM

Discovering Knowledge. Achieving Excellence.

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## THE 2009-2010 YEAR REVISITED

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City trip really epitomized what the Program is all about. I learned tons, had a lot of fun, networked with alumni, and established enduring friendships."

In October 2009, Katie Colton and Zachary Suter, were able to attend the National Collegiate Honors Conference held in Washington D.C. after their presentation proposal was accepted. Dr. Sousa, Katie, and Zach headed down to D.C. for a four day conference, at which they were able to meet members in programs at universities all over the country, network with these members and their advisors, and exchange information and advice as to what makes an honors program truly successful.

The members participated in the Idea Exchange at the Conference, during which about 50 poster boards are set up and people circle the room to learn about other schools' programs. Bryant had the only professionally printed board, and the students were some of the very few prepared with business cards and resumes. "We learned how much we take for granted at Bryant," Colton writes, "We have a really great Honors Program and Bryant really prepares us more than most schools for the professional world."

As Jessica Nolan '13 explains, "I never knew that the Honors Program could provide me with as much opportunities as it really can. I also realized that getting actively involved with the program is something that can be really fun and give me an opportunity to meet really great people." The Honors Program at Bryant University has grown immensely in recent years. The Program has expanded beyond academics, to create an experience for its members that will allow them to make lasting friendships, network successfully, and have opportunities of a lifetime.

## REFLECTIONS FROM A FIRST-YEAR MEMBER — AMANDA BECK '13

My first thoughts of The Honors Program were that it would be extremely hard and a hassle. What I know now is that the program is neither of those things. In fact, I find the program to be very rewarding in every aspect. I have learned more in my honors classes than any other class. The professors are wonderful and the experience you gain is more relevant to real life.

My first honors class was Business 101 with Professor Adam Rubin. What set our class apart from the non-honors classes was that for our business plan project we got to work with real businesses, which is a lot more fun to do and made me realize that what we are learning really does pertain to real life.

Typically students will sit in any other class and ask themselves why are they learning this and how are they going to use this in real life (I know I've done this plenty of times

in calculus). In the honors classes, this question is quickly answered and proven.

*"... I have met many wonderful people that have already had a positive impact on my Bryant experience as well as on my life."*

When I first received my invitation into the program, I was considering not joining the program but now I realize that would have been a mistake. I am very glad I am a part of the program, because I have met many wonderful people that have already had a positive impact on my Bryant experience as well as on my life. I really like how the program offers a lot of social and community service events for its members. Some of the events included a bowling trip and building gingerbread houses for charity.

Overall, The Honors Program has been one of the best decisions I have ever made. Now that I have realized that, all of the worries and preconceived notions I had about the program are untrue, I am focused on working hard and gradu-