

BISHOP ACHIEVERS

Honors Projects Completed on Range of Topics

By Decree Staff

This semester 13 Wesleyan students—one of the highest numbers in recent years—presented the findings of their honors projects on topics that ranged from “Cooking with Science” to “Risky Sexual Behavior” to “Zoroastrianism.”

Dr. Bill Yankosky, professor of mathematics, was pleased by the quality of the presentations. “Overall the honors projects were quite good,” said Dr. Yankosky, who just completed his third year as a director of an honors program that included 44 students as of the beginning of spring semester. “All the students seemed very poised. I was impressed by the way the students answered questions and spoke extensively about their work.”

Dr. Yankosky noted that some project directors even indicated that the work of their students might be publishable. He added that a few students gave conference presentations based on their projects. Katanya Hall and Cassandra Slater participated in a sociology conference and Brittany Nichols attended a state science conference.

It's not uncommon for honors students to select topics outside their majors, an approach that Dr. Yankosky and other faculty members encourage.

“I think it really captures the spirit of being at a liberal arts institution,” the program director said. “What's valuable about a liberal arts college is that students are given the opportunity to broaden their horizons.”

One such project was completed by Randa Moore, a double major in business and accounting, who collaborated with Dr. Fred Sanborn, associate professor of psychology. Her work studied the academic success of first-generation college students.

“Although she is a business administration and accounting major, she completed a study that was worthy of any psychology honors student,” Dr. Sanborn said. “I was most impressed with Randa's curiosity and her ability to get her project done in a timely, professional way.”

In her paper, titled “An Analysis of First- and Continuing-Generation College Students: Is the Generation Relevant?”, Moore's conclusions were at odds with the results found in published literature—most of it, Dr. Sanborn said, more than 10 years old—which suggests that,

due to economic, social and other disadvantages, first-generation college students succeed at a lower rate than “continuing-generation” students. Based on the data available at NC Wesleyan, Moore showed that the difference is negligible.

Slater was able to combine elements of her two majors, pre-medicine and psychology, in a project titled “Alcohol and Drug Use among College Students.” Of her project, she said, “I learned a ton about drugs and alcohol and the way they interfere with the body,” knowledge that will benefit her when she pursues her dream of a medical degree. She said that Duke Medical School is her top choice.

Her year-long research process was painstaking. “The most challenging aspect was coding and analyzing all the data that I received from the surveys,” Slater said. “Though the surveys were online, determining which variables were significant was quite time consuming.”

Other students faced significant challenges in carrying out their research. Joshua Akers, a triple major in political science, psychology and history, completed a thesis that was 126 pages long with 16 pages of back matter. It was titled “The Exigencies of Combat Leadership: Comparative Analysis of Junior Officers in the Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan Wars.” He mentioned that while it was easy to find material on the Vietnam War, it was a struggle to locate useful information on the more recent Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.

“The current conflicts are on-going,” he said, “and as such, many historians are waiting to see where the pieces may fall.”

His project director, Dr. Jonathan Sarris, associate professor of history, said that Akers did an admirable job of incorporating other, more recent documents into his work. Among Akers' sources were books written by journalists, soldier memoirs, and even blogs. “Josh is right that the more recent wars have not been processed and reflected upon by historians,” Dr. Sarris said. “But his project was outstanding. It was the best honors thesis I've read at Wesleyan. It was graduate-level work.”

Chynna Laws said that she found the writing process to be the most challenging aspect of her project, a thesis titled “Psychological Roots in Criminal Behavior: The Mind of a Violent Criminal.” “I knew what I wanted to say and the direction I wanted it to go,” she said, “but getting the words on paper in a way that made sense and flowed together was a little challenging.”

Like Slater, Laws selected a topic that combined her two majors, criminal justice and psychology.

Dr. Gail Marsal, assistant professor of criminal justice and Laws' director, said that Laws did a fine job of applying social learning theory in her analysis of criminal cases. “Chynna was able to apply knowledge from her courses here at NCWC as she conducted an in-depth analysis,” Dr. Marsal said. “It was truly a testament to her years of learning and growth.”

For many Wesleyan students, the honors project provided a confidence boost as they prepare for graduate and professional school. Akers believes it will help him in years to come as he works toward a graduate degree in history at James Madison University in Virginia.

“This project has prepared me to tackle many of the challenges that come with graduate school—time management, research, writing and editing lengthy papers,” he said. “Being able to defend the thesis has given me some feeling of what it will be like to defend my M.A. thesis or Ph.D. dissertation.”

Laws plans to attend law school next year at the University of Tulsa. Like her peers, she said that the successful completion of her thesis gave her a head start as she begins the next step in her life after Wesleyan.

“I think it will be very useful for my success in law school,” Laws said. “Having the knowledge and ability to research multiple topics and tie them together will help when I'm researching a case and trying to piece together the evidence to make my point. I think the project has given me more confidence in my research skills, my writing abilities, and my public speaking skills—all of which will be vital in my success in law school and as a lawyer.”

Unlike Akers and Laws, Moore intends to enter the job market right after graduation. She said that the honors project really tested her resolve and self-discipline as she balanced a heavy work schedule with her school obligations, which included two senior seminars as well as a writing-intensive class during spring semester. Some weeks she was required to work a total of 40 hours at her two part-time jobs.

“There were many times that my work was turned in at 2 a.m. or later,” she recalled. “This past semester, time was an even bigger enemy.”

Despite the obstacles, Moore and the other students were glad to have completed their projects.

“It will help me in the future because it has made me a stronger and more confident person,” Moore said. “I had severe time constraints and several other obligations but I still managed to get everything in my thesis done in a timely manner. I had to learn even more discipline to stay with the project because there were several times when I wanted to quit and give up but that is not in my nature so I stuck it out. And I'm glad that I did. I will go into the workforce knowing that I can take on any challenge.”

Other Honors Projects Completed in 2011:

- Barbara DeRatt: “Antioxidant Capacity in Urine with the Consumption of Muscadine Grape Juice”
- Oprah Ellis: “Parents and My Sex Life: How Perceived Parenting Style Affects Risky Sexual Behavior”
- Katanya Hall: “The Red Zone Project: HIV/AIDS Awareness amongst Male College Athletes”
- Martha Hernandez: “Immigration: A Comprehensive Approach”
- Jasmine Mann: “Turn That Talent into a Trade”
- Brittany Nichols: “Bird Behaviors and Food Preference as Seasons Change”
- Adam Nyborg: “Zoroastrianism: A Religion of Convenience”
- Kathleen Penrod: “Cooking with a Dash of Science”
- Jessica Willis: “Scare Tactics or Informative Antics: An Examination of the Effectiveness of Sex Education Programs”

2010-2011 HONORS

ACADEMIC SERVICE AWARD	TERRENCE JOHNSON
TUTOR OF THE YEAR	
HUMANITIES AWARDS	ADAM NYBORG
RELIGIOUS STUDIES AWARD	GREGORY SPENCE
THEATRE AWARD	
SCIENCE AND MATH AWARDS	BARBARA DERATT
BIOLOGY AWARD	JESSICA WILLIS
MATHEMATICS AWARD	ELANE DANIELLE ABBEY
EXERCISE SCIENCE AWARD	SHARISE JONES
DONALD SCALF SCHOLARSHIP	ELANE DANIELLE ABBEY
DONALD SCALF SCHOLARSHIP	
EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AWARDS	JACQIE FLYNN
JOHN PAUL JONES HISTORY AWARD	JOSHUA AKERS
OUTSTANDING HISTORY MAJOR AWARD	BRETT TERRY
CORBITT B. RUSHING SCHOLARSHIP	MARTHA HERNANDEZ
CRIMINAL JUSTICE AWARD	SUSAN HEDGEPEETH LUCAS
SNCAE EDUCATION AWARD	CASSANDRA ANN SLATER
PSYCHOLOGY AWARD	JAMES MATTHEW SMITH
EXCELLENCE IN SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES	TIFFANY ROSS
ACHIEVEMENT IN SOCIOLOGY AWARD	
BUSINESS AWARDS	FRED ACHEAMPONG
ACCOUNTING AWARD	MARINE MEYET
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AWARD	TERRENCE JOHNSON
CIS AWARD	
ADULT DEGREE PROGRAM AWARDS	ROBERT JASON WOODALL
OUTSTANDING ADULT STUDENT AWARDS	BRENTON BENT
GOLDSBORO CAMPUS	KAREN ROYAL
ROCKY MOUNT CAMPUS	JOHN Z. SEITTER
TRIANGLE CAMPUS	AARON M. ATKINSON
LAPTOP AWARD WINNERS	

KAPPA MU EPSILON INDUCTEES	PSI CHI INDUCTEES
HOLLY DEAVER	KRISTEN ATWELL
TREVOUR HUBER	VIVIAN BROWN
JENA MCFADDEN	LEILA HEINONEN
LINH NGUYEN	CHYNNNA LAWS
BRITTANY NICHOLS	MACKENZIE TINGLE
TYLER OLKOWSKI	ALEXIS JOHNSON
DEANNA PETERSEN	MILLINESE LUCAS
PHI ETA SIGMA INDUCTEES	PI GAMMA MU INDUCTEES
AARON M. ATKINSON	KRISTEN ATWELL
KIERAN A. BERTSCH	VIVIAN BROWN
STEVEN D. FRANKLIN	VICKIE CHERYL PHILLIPS
RACHEL F. JONES-GROOMS	MACKENZIE TINGLE
JOHN Z. SEITTER	JEFFERY W. THOMPSON
VILLE S. TURA	
ANTHONY F. WHITE	
ALLEN MICHAEL WILSON	
WHO'S WHO AMONG STUDENTS IN AMERICAN COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES	SIGMA BETA DELTA INDUCTEES
ENRIQUE ARANGUREN	BRENTON F. BENT
RYAN D. BAIN	DAVID P. COLLIER
MIRA L. BATCHELOR	WENDY E. MILLER
MICHAEL E. BILLINGER	AMANDA C. WINSTEAD
THERESE A. BOUA	ROBERT J. WOODALL
KIMBERLY R. BOYER	APRIL L. HAUCK
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BARBARA N. DERATT	RYAN D. BAIN
MATTHEW E. DOUGHERTY	JESSE BAKER
JACQIE L. FLYNN	CEFUS J. INGRAM
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JASMINE D. MANN	SAMANTHA HOUSE
MARINE MEYET	SHARISE JONES
RANDA MOORE	CHYNNNA LAWS
CRYSTA PEARSE	ASHLEY MEADOWS
JESSICA L. POWELL	JOSHUA MEEKS
MELANIE RHODES	BRITTANY NICHOLS
CASSANDRA A. SLATER	MELANIE RHODES
LACORYA O. STITH	TIFFANY ROSS
DENNIS TASCHE	MACKENZIE TINGLE
SUSAN E. UZZELL	



Jan Tussa's project “The Investigation of an Unknown Metal Ion in the Tar River” placed second at the recent Student Symposium poster competition, an annual event sponsored by the Math and Sciences Division. First place went to Lisa Breheim and Patricia Taylor for “The Influence of Electrical Stimulation on the Stems of Raphanus sativus (the radish plant) Grown in a Hydroponics Medium. Three entries finished in a tie for third: Dani Abbey and Desiree Driver for “The Effect of Concentrations on the Elasticity of Flattened Polymer Balls”; Damariscotta Helm, “Light vs. Gravity: When Beans Have to Choose”; and Kathleen Penrod, “Testing the Effects of Alleged Antibiotic or Antimicrobial Agents on Two Common Infectious Bacteria, Staphylococcus aureus and Streptococcus pyogenes.”

Photo by B. Grattan

THE DECREE

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SCHOLAR ATHLETES OF THE YEAR:

VOLLEYBALL	BARBARA DERATT
WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY	KRISTIN SEIDEL
MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY	ALEXEY RUMYANTSEV
FOOTBALL	LAQWAN BRODIE
WOMEN'S SOCCER	KASI EDWARDS
MEN'S SOCCER	OWEN WHITE
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL	DESIREE DRIVER
MEN'S BASKETBALL	MATT DOUGHERTY
GOLF	ALLEN MICHAEL WILSON
LACROSSE	ALYSSA BALZANO
SOFTBALL	DANI ABBEY
BASEBALL	TYLER CLARK
WOMEN'S TENNIS	KRISTEN SEIDEL
MEN'S TENNIS	MARCUS RIBBENSTEDT

MOE BAUER SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD:

VOLLEYBALL	HEATHER HUNTER
WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY	BRISTY PARKER
MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY	CLIFTON LESAK
WOMEN'S SOCCER	KATRI SNELLMAN
MEN'S SOCCER	ALEX UNITT
FOOTBALL	JOSH ROGERS
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL	MADONNA WARE
MEN'S BASKETBALL	RIC YARBROUGH
GOLF	ALLEN MICHAEL WILSON
WOMEN'S TENNIS	BRISTY PARKER
MEN'S TENNIS	VIKTOR SELANDER
SOFTBALL	CARLY CREEF
LACROSSE	ALYSSA BALZANO
BASEBALL	HAYDEN WILLIAMS

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER AWARDS:

VOLLEYBALL	KELLY GEORGE
WOMEN'S SOCCER	KASIE EDWARDS
MEN'S SOCCER	VILLE TURA
FOOTBALL (OFFENSIVE)	TERON BUSH
FOOTBALL (DEFENSIVE)	ANTONIO HARRIS/JAMES CARTER
MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY	MARCELO PRATA
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL	SAMANTHA THOUHART
MEN'S BASKETBALL	DOMARIUS THOMAS/MATT DOUGHERTY
GOLF	COLBY LYLES
WOMEN'S TENNIS	SAMIA KACHER
MEN'S TENNIS	ROBERT KJELBERG
SOFTBALL	MEREDITH MILLS
LACROSSE	CHLOE SMITH
BASEBALL	TYLER CLARK