BAIS Students Shine at Liberal Arts Honor Convocation

Several BAIS students were spotlighted at this year’s Honors Convocation, held on April 14, in the Recital Hall of the Performing Arts Center. The first award, the Philip Coulter Award for Excellence in International Studies, was presented by the BAIS program director, John Hazlett, to the BAIS graduate with the highest GPA. This year's awardee was Rebecca Elizabeth Finney, whose GPA was 3.993. Ms Finney was also the recipient of a variety of other College and University awards, including the University of New Orleans Women’s Club Award, the College of Liberal Arts Dean’s Award and Edward M. Socola Prize, the Phi Beta Kappa Club Award, and a Chancellor’s Scholarship. Rebecca was also commended for the work she performed this year in the curricular development of the Peace and Justice Studies Concentration.

The second BAIS program award, given out for The Best Essay in International Studies, went to the BAIS student who had written the best undergraduate paper for a 3000- or 4000-level course taken in the program during the 2007 calendar year. This year's awardee was Aaron Larkin, for his essay, “The Nature of Capitalism in Japan and Germany: A Case of Two National Economies” (Continued on page 3).

Tibet in the Spotlight

Sugam Singh, BAIS student (2011)

With the recent protests following the Journey of Harmony Olympic torch relay in Paris, London and San Francisco, Tibet has been in the eye of all the major media. Because of these events, many people are learning about Tibet for the first time. I myself am a Freshman BAIS student from Nepal, and I am frequently asked where Tibet is located, both politically and geographically. The answer to that question depends upon who is asked. China, and most world governments, believe Tibet is and always was a part of a multicultural China. However, the Tibetan government-in-exile, situated in Dharamsala, India, and supporters of the Free Tibet Movement are adamant in their assertion that Tibet was a free nation until 1949 when China invaded the country and took control. On March 10, 2008, on the occasion of the 49th anniversary of the failed 1959 Tibet uprising, protests asking for the release of political prisoners turned (Continued on page 4)
A Word from the Director

Registration for the summer and fall semesters began in mid-April and students are scurrying to construct schedules that will allow them to organize their work, family, and school responsibilities in a manageable fashion. This can be particularly tricky for BAIS students, who have to find courses across a wide variety of disciplines and make sure that they are getting the course distribution that their concentrations demand. To help you make this process a bit smoother, send the following when you are thinking about courses:

1. a list of the courses you are taking this semester. Provide the course number (e.g., HIST 2991) and course title (e.g., African Crises).
2. a list of the courses you wish to take this summer and fall. Again, provide course number and title.
3. your concentration and student number.
4. if you have your checklist, make sure that it is up to date and send it with the other information as an attachment.

In addition, you should consider the following when you are thinking about courses:

1. If you are using Spanish or French to meet your language requirement, use Spanish or French literature courses to fulfill your General Education literature requirement. Doing so means that with one extra course (in your electives), you can obtain a minor in either of those languages, and a language minor will help you in at least two ways: it will ensure that you get more training in a second language, and it will make you more marketable once you graduate.
2. Do not sign up for electives unthinking or at the beginning of your studies. BAIS students have only 7 hours of electives. Use them wisely. Consult with your advisor before signing up for any elective.
3. Course distribution requirements for the various concentrations can be found on our website at http://cola.uno.edu/bais Be sure to consult your concentration’s requirements as you pick out courses.

Good luck!

John Hazlett

Critical Languages Program Offers Unique Language Study to BAIS Students

The UNO Critical Languages Program (CLP), part of Metro College’s Division of International Education, has been a very useful adjunct to the BA in International Studies Program. Particularly for those students interested in pursuing careers in Diplomacy or with the State Department, the CLP offers less-commonly-taught languages such as Arabic, Czech, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, and Vietnamese almost every semester, with the highest enrollment in Arabic and Vietnamese. Several BAIS students, including Jessie Dwyer, who now works in the CLP office, have taken the Arabic courses in the program, and others, such as Kaylan Geiger, have used the courses as a starting point before going off to study in Egypt and other overseas locations. In fact, the US State Department awards extra points to the applications of candidates who have familiarity with one of the languages on their critical languages list (see State Department Website Page at: http://careers.state.gov/officer/selecion.html#FLS

Mary Hicks, the Coordinator of CLP, informs us that the program originated with about 30 students taking four languages in the fall of 1997 and grew steadily for several years until Katrina. Now, even with UNO numbers not quite at pre-Katrina levels, the CLP is experiencing pre-Katrina enrollment figures. This semester, the Program has an enrollment of 97 students in eight languages. This is undoubtedly the result of the increasing numbers of students who are looking for international opportunities in their degree programs. Students take these less-commonly-taught languages for many reasons, but the ones most often mentioned are improved marketability after graduation, personal enrichment, and familial heritage. Whatever the motivation, these growing numbers demonstrate that UNO’s student profile is becoming increasingly cosmopolitan and globally conscious.

For more information, or to pick up your registration packet to enroll in Fall 2008 classes, go to the CLP office in the Science Building (SC) Room 1046.
Tel: 504.280.6388
Web: clp.uno.edu
written for Prof. Alan Scott, at the University of Innsbruck, during Aaron's post-Katrina Academic Year Abroad in Austria. Aaron was also the recipient of a Chancellor’s Scholarship and the UNO International Ambassador Award to pursue studies this coming summer in Frankfort, Germany. Aaron is currently a junior in the program pursuing two degrees, the BAIS in the College of Liberal Arts, and the BS in Business Administration in the Business College. Rebecca Hicks received an Honorable Mention Certificate for her essay, “Out of Africa: A Modern Colonial Film” written for Assistant Professor James Mokhiber, in the Department of History.

Other UNO International Ambassador Awards went to BAIS students Brekk Botne (Glories of France Program), Sarah Gelpi (Costa Rica Program), Patrick Girard (Innsbruck International Summer School), and Duane Williams (Innsbruck International Summer School).

Michael Spadora received the Phi Beta Kappa Club Award, and other Chancellor’s Scholarships went to BAIS students Sarah Gelpi, John Mark Maust, Sarah Richoux, and Chelsea St. Juniors.

Finally, a number of BAIS students have been honored with the Decennial Scholarship, including Jessie Dwyer, James Smith, and Tammy Vu. The program is very proud of these students and their achievements.

XploreU.com is a travelpedia for students, by students promoting global literacy. They are currently looking for student contributors for their website and newsletter. Topics are focused primarily on student p.o.v's of travel, whether domestic or abroad, and can be in short "review" format (at least 1 paragraph), or a full-fledged article (1 page/3 paragraphs) for the website. Special topics will be announced in their newsletter for future issues.

Phi Beta Delta

Phi Beta Delta, founded at California State University, Long Beach in 1986, is the first honor society dedicated to recognizing outstanding achievement in international education. Membership is offered to U.S students and international students who have demonstrated high scholastic achievement (3.0 GPA for undergraduate students with junior or senior standing) and who have promoted international understanding. Members receive recognition for contributions to international education and become a part of the UNO network interested in international issues. Student initiation and membership fees are $50.00.

For more information, contact Irene Ziegler. Tel: 280-7318 E-mail: pbd@uno.edu
TIBET (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

violent, and in the following
days fierce fighting broke out
on the streets of Lhasa, Ti-
bet’s capital city. The Tibet
government in Dharamsala
estimates the number of pro-
testors killed by the Chinese
military around 300, but the
Chinese government strongly
denies this and blames the
Tibetan rioters for killing 20
people. Whatever the truth
is, the sudden violence was
not well received by the in-
ternational media, especially
with the Summer Olympics
soon to be held in China.
Even in Nepal, under pres-
sure from China to take
strong action against the ille-
gal political activities carried
out by the Free Tibet Move-
ment, police used brute
force, attacking and dispers-
ing the demonstrators with
bamboo batons.

After the March unrest in
Tibet, massive protests have
been staged around the
world demanding a free Ti-
bet and an end to human
rights abuses there. One
organization involved in
these recent efforts is the
Students for a Free Tibet
(SFT). Started in 1994, it is
led by Tibetan students out
of New York. This chapter-
based organization campaigns
for Tibet’s political freedom
and encourages youth to seek
social justice. Even UNO has
an SFT chapter, headed by
Melissa Hughes, a senior
sociology major. Their web-
site states that the chapter’s
main goals are to make peo-
ple aware of human rights
violations in Tibet, the plight
of political prisoners, includ-
ing the Panchen Lama, im-
prisoned since age 6 in 1995,
and the various measures
taken by the Chinese govern-
ment to destroy Tibetan his-
tory, culture, and land. 
Hughes, a devout Buddhist,
also lived in Dharamsala for a
year, helping develop a
school and teaching at the
Tibetan Transit School. Ac-
cording to Hughes, the liber-
ation of Tibet might not be
possible in the near future,
but organizations such as the
SFT can educate people
about the atrocities carried
out against Tibet by China.
Unfortunately, since China is
fast becoming a major eco-
nomic and political power,
few governments are willing
to take on the Tibetan cause,
which makes it even harder
for people to understand the
situation. Although the turn-
out in a March 10 petition-
signing event on campus was
lower than hoped for,
Hughes is certain that with
time, the true nature of Chi-
na’s actions in Tibet will be
exposed. She adds that if
more people learn about the
Tibetan cause, the Chinese
government will feel the
pressure of world opinion
and rethink its policies. As
Hughes put it, “The bully
needs to be confronted be-
fore it’s too late.”

Not everyone agrees.
Many people believe the
Tibet crisis has been exag-
ergated to make China look bad,
and the media have played a
role in publicizing false ac-
cusations against the Chinese
government. Jiajun Chen,
president of the Chinese Stu-
dent Association at UNO,
adamantly believes Tibet was
and is a part of a multicultur-
al China, and that all Chinese
people acknowledge this
fact. Commenting on the
recent Tibet uprising and the
Olympic torch relay pro-
tests, Chen maintains that
protesters’ demand that Ti-
bet be allowed to secede
from China is neither accept-
ed by the Chinese people nor
by the Dalai Lama himself.
He adds that the western
media have fabricated stories
from Tibet about the Chinese
reaction, thus harming rela-
tions between the West and
China that have been careful-
ly established over the last
three decades. Chen com-
ments that China is proud of
its multiethnic heritage and is
striving to bring about posi-
tive change throughout the
country, contrary to what is
said in the international me-
dia. Chen concludes that the
Olympic Games this summer
will help an international
audience understand the real
China, as visitors come to see
the games and find out the
truth for themselves regard-
ing Tibet and China.

So the debate over the
future of Tibet rages be-
tween two opposing view-
points. Recently, the Prime
Minister of Britain and the
Chancellor of Germany have
announced that they will
boycott the Olympic Games’
opening ceremony; President
Bush has suggested that he
will probably attend, and the
international community has
begun to see the issue as a
complicated one. It is indeed
difficult to know which side
is right, but whatever the
truth is, let us hope that the
end of this conflict will be
peaceful and in the best in-
terest of all the groups con-
cerned.