Welcome to our BIS alumni network and congratulations to our 2005 Alumni!

A message from our new BIS Director

I’m excited and honored to have joined the BIS community. Because I was a non-traditional student myself, I feel a strong personal commitment to the program and the adult education theoretical premises it is predicated upon. Yet, it has been my daily interaction with BIS students and faculty over the past few months which have made me a true BIS convert. Why? Because our program is a rare academic jewel; one that gives students not only a chance to attain academic goals postponed for a long time, but that also provides a flexible, stimulating, and student-centered learning environment that nourishes individuality, creativity, and interdisciplinarity.

Although I became a social scientist (sociologist) later in life, I myself have capitalized on the benefits that interdisciplinary degrees bestow upon students. A Latin-Americanist (by training and place of birth), I have conducted evaluation research across the Latin American region, ethnographic research on Latin American immigrants in the Washington metro area, and have taught undergraduate courses on the sociology of Latin America.

Outside academia, I managed educational programs for women in the non-profit world. There, I learned the value of forging strong ties to build a meaningful sense of community, and the fact that the strength and future of an educational program lies in its alumni. Yes, our strength lies in you. So thank you to each and every one of you who, over the years, has generously contributed to our BIS program.

This fall, on October 9th, we are celebrating the 30th year Anniversary of the program with a fundraiser reception and performance at the Center for the Arts. As we look forward to future program development opportunities, we ask that you continue to be our best program advocates and recruiters.

I look forward to meeting you at our BIS Anniversary Celebration in October!

Eugenia "Jenny" Verdaguer, Ph.D.
BIS Fundraiser!

Join us in celebrating 30 years of “learning without limits” [1975-2005]

Sunday, October 9, 2005

Mason Hall, George Mason University

Reception at 5:00 p.m. followed by

Life, A Guide For the Perplexed

7:00 p.m., Center for the Arts.

Please RSVP by October 3rd, 2005, using this form, click link here: BIS 30th Anniversary Fundraiser. Tickets are $57 per person--proceeds support the BIS Program and Scholarship Fund. For more information, please call 703-993-4556.

Congratulations to our 2005 BIS Graduates!

The BIS students who have graduated Suma Cum laude were Catherine Ann Johnson, Roxann Coe, and Samantha Louise.

The following outstanding BIS students received this year’s awards:

Rysheda McLendon, Senior of the Year award from Alumni Affairs.

David Shaw, The Robert T. Hawkes, Jr. Award for Outstanding BIS Project for “Intellectual Property Management: The Design of a Software License Tracking System”

Herb Tax, The Most Creative BIS Project award, “For What It’s Worth: Creating the Musical”

Ann Gerstenberger, Outstanding BIS Project in the Public Interest: “Herbal Medicine in Washington DC Area Healthcare Education: Meeting the Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) Policy Challenge”

Andrea Gooden, The Summer 2005 Faculty-Student Apprenticeship Program: “The Effects of Fairness Perceptions of Performance Appraisals on Organizational Behavior”

Edwin D. Johanknecht, 2005 Environmental Science Essay Contest Winner
Congratulations to our BIS scholarship winners!

Thanks to our generous Alumni Donors, we awarded two scholarships this year.

Jennifer Ailstock won the CAS/BIS Dean’s scholarship!

Shirley Watson won the BIS scholarship!

Jennifer is a part-time BIS student, now a senior, her concentration is in pastoral leadership, which combines pastoral care and business management courses as she prepares for pastoral ministry. A mother of 4, she manages a small business and serves as a part-time associate pastor while taking classes here at Mason. The BIS program “has allowed me to choose coursework that will complement my future seminary training and prepare me for ministry. And this scholarship is extremely helpful to me in fulfilling my financial obligations.”

Shirley has been a BIS student since Fall 2003 and her concentration is in Organizational Development. The BIS program has allowed her the opportunity to personalize her degree by combining disciplines in human resource management, communication, education and psychology. Shirley believes that “studying various disciplines gives me a broad perspective of how aspects of each discipline are interwoven in a particular field of study.” She has two career goals. First, she plans to assist employees in achieving their professional goals, while at the same time, meeting corporate strategic plans. Second, she would like to assist social and community organizations in helping underprivileged workers reach their career potential.

The scholarships are given out annually to a BIS student. Applications are available at and should be submitted to the financial aid office in the South Chesapeake Module. The financial aid website has more details: http://apollo.gmu.edu/finaid/. Search under GMU Scholarships for BIS Endowed Scholarship.

BIS Students in the News:

Barbara O’Donnell, a 77-year-old grandmother of seven, was the oldest graduate to accept a diploma from Mason this year after having started her college career over 60 years ago at UCLA. Her story, featured in the Washington Post and The Mason Gazette, is one of great courage in the face of adversity. After a tragic car accident that left her scarred, she lost her husband two years later. She began using art as a form of therapy - painting, drawing and writing about her experience and emotions. For her BIS 491 Senior Project Presentation, O’Donnell showed slides of some of the painting she created after the accident. “The BIS program was wonderful because it allowed me to be creative and also incorporate my life experiences into my studies,” says O’Donnell.

Rysheda McClendon, the first in her family to earn a college degree, graduated from George Mason with honors and received her BAIS degree in legal studies. She not only earned the Senior of the Year title, but also has been honored for her excellence in leadership and academics through the following awards: Most Spirited Resident Advisor, National Dean’s List, and Office of Diversity Programs and Service Vision Leadership Award.

Support BIS

Your contributions help us continue to enhance the BIS program. If you would like to make a financial contribution, go to http://give.gmu.edu/

Be sure to specify either BIS Program Fund or BIS Scholarships! Thank you for your generosity. Don’t forget to check out our webpage at http://bis.gmu.edu.

We hope to hear from you!
For information about the GMU Alumni Association go to: http://www.gmu.edu/alumni/
Be sure to keep your information up to date.

Have you visited the Career Network Online? Visit http://careers.gmu.edu/cn/ for more information about this great resource. The Career Center on campus is also available to GMU alumni for a nominal fee. Call 703.993.2370 for an appointment.

Know anyone interested in the BIS Program?
Let them know about our upcoming Information Sessions:

Thursday, 9/29/05 - 6PM Johnson Center, Room G
Wednesday, 10/12/05 - 6PM Johnson Center, Room B
Tuesday, 10/25/05 - 6PM Johnson Center, Room D

For more dates click here: BIS Info Sessions

Questions, Comments, Keep in touch
BIS@gmu.edu

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Special Thanks to BIS Newsletter Developers: Maria Hock, Janet Ha

Photographs taken by: Claudette Chenevert, Dilaun Terry, Christine Delan & Janet Ha

A Note from the College of Arts and Sciences:
Effective Fall 2006, the humanities, social science, and interdisciplinary programs of CAS will form the new College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences (CLAHS). The formation of this new college will lend even greater prominence and visibility to the university’s distinguished programs of research and teaching on social institutions, cultures and human behavior. The science departments of CAS will merge with the School of Computational Sciences to form the new College of Science (COS). For more information, click here: Changes in CAS

December 12, 2005 - 4PM

Please join us for the BIS Senior Project presentations in the Fall. This will take place on December 12, 2005 in the Johnson Center, 3rd Floor, Rooms A, D, E & G. All students and alumni are invited. A reception will be held immediately following the presentations.

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