Inside this issue:
Welcome Note 1
BIS Student Awards 2
Faculty Mentor Award 2
Student Spotlight - A BIS Student in Oxford 2
BIS Scholarship Winner 2
Best Research Project Award 3
BIS Staff News 3
Dean Censer Visits BIS 491 4

George Mason University

A Message from the BIS Director

This year, the BIS office witnessed a flurry of activity with more students, more BIS class offerings, more BIS social gatherings and more award winners than ever before. Last October, we celebrated the program’s 30th anniversary with an alumni reception and performance at the Center for the Arts. Thanks to the generous contributions of friends and alumni, we raised over $2,200 dollars for our Scholarship Endowment Fund. We are especially indebted to Sodexo for donating their catering service and gourmet food and wine.

Our BIS class of 2006 included over 105 graduates with numerous student and faculty award recipients. Brian Baker, Sandra Fraser, Catherine Ann Johnson and Andrea Gooden received academic distinctions for their student achievements. On the faculty front, Ann Pollock won Mason’s 2006 David J. King Teaching award. Alan More was awarded the CIA’s Career Intelligence Medal for distinguished service, and Cindy Jong received our Faculty Mentor of the Year Award for outstanding and continuous dedication to our program.

We also saw long time colleagues, Heather Halvorson and Christine Delucia, leave BIS to pursue exciting opportunities. We wish them much success in their new endeavors. And we recently welcomed Mark Sletten as our new Director of Advising and Jason King as our new Student Services Manager to usher in a new beginning for the BIS program.

We are extremely excited about the prospects and opportunities that our new home, the new College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, will bring to our program. Over the next year, we will continue to enhance BIS to better respond to the needs of our diverse non-traditional student population. Please, don’t hesitate to share with us ideas on how we can best do this.

Congratulations to our 2006 BIS Graduates!

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

Andrea Gooden, Best Research Project Award from ITU. Titled: “The Effects of Fairness Perceptions of Performance Appraisals on Organizational Attitudes.”


Catherine Johnson, The Most Creative BIS Project, Titled: “Creating a Playscript.”

Sandra Fraser, Outstanding BIS Project in the Public Interest, Titled: “Literacy on the Move: The Home Literacy Practices of English Language Learners.”
A BIS Student in Oxford

"Oxford, for me, was a gentleman's boot camp."

One of our exceptional BIS students and May 2006 graduate, Edwin Daniel Johannknecht, was accepted into the Oxford University Honors program last year. With this acceptance came a once in a lifetime opportunity to spend his Fall semester at Oxford University in England, one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in the world. This highly competitive and acclaimed honors program provided by the Center for Global Education here at George Mason University, features a month-long lecture series on "British History & Culture" and a variety of custom designed tutorials covering topics mostly from the liberal arts and all taught by prominent university scholars. While at Oxford, Edwin "Dan" Johannknecht took two traditional Oxford tutorials where he was paired up on a one-on-one basis with Oxford tutors (called dons). Tutorials represent a very intensive learning system due to the one-on-one interaction with tutors and the amount of researching, reading and writing involved. Oxford was a life altering experience for Dan and he highly recommends students to enroll in a Study Abroad program.

Every year, the Center for Global Education and a designated Mason Faculty Member invites all Mason students with high GPAs to apply to the Fall Oxford Honors Program.

BIS Faculty Mentor of the Year: Cynthia Lont

"With few exceptions, I have found BIS students to be more focused, creative, and driven than the traditional Communications major."

Because of her continuous support and encouragement of BIS students as a faculty mentor, Cynthia Lont, PhD, Communication Department Professor, was presented with our Very first Faculty Mentor of the Year award during our Spring BIS 491 presentations. Cynthia's mentoring has touched the lives of so many Mason students and her contributions are felt throughout the university.

Ms. Lont was also awarded Faculty Member of the Year for 2005 by the Alumni Association, who consider her an integral part of the Mason faculty and community since 1984. Cynthia has contributed countless hours to the university through her dedication to teaching, mentoring, advising, and leadership.

She has published three books and written numerous chapters for other publications. Cynthia is also the mother of two teenagers and she still manages to find time for community service through her work at The Vienna Women's Center and presentations or advisory roles to local girl's groups such as Girl Power.

When asked how she became a faculty mentor for BIS she answered, "When I started at GMU in 1984, early on I discovered there were a group of older students who wanted to combine video production with other content areas. Since I was the only video production person on campus, I attracted many BIS students." When asked to name a few of her memorable student experiences, she replied with, "I had a student named Steve Gum, who combined theater, video, nursing and courses from NOVA in airplane flying. He wanted to be a stunt director for films. His final project was a one minute piece video taped at Springfield Mall at night with explosions, gunfire and a car wreck. This one minute piece took him over 300 hours to complete. What a great interconnection between divergent areas. Another student, Melody Jackson, completed a videotaped piece of a religious ceremony from her local Baptist Church. It was an incredible production. Melody, like many of my other BIS students, went on for a masters degree. Sharlene Thompson, for example, just completed her PhD from Oklahoma University in Health Communication."

On her overall BIS student experience, Cynthia had this to say, "With few exceptions, I have found BIS students to be more focused, creative, and driven than the traditional Communications major."

Thank you Cynthia for your continued support of our program and the wonderful guidance you provide to our students!

BIS Scholarship Winner: Kim Boak

Kim is currently pursing a BIS degree in Organizational Leadership Communications. The focus of her concentration will be met by taking classes that highlight human resources, nonprofit management, personnel administration, critical thinking, and diversity. She is currently the Director of Operations for a local non-profit. Kim defines herself as an extremely hard-working and focused individual. She believes that "life is too short to not take the time to pursue our dreams." When asked why she became interested in the non-profit sector, she stated that "living in today's world requires passion, compassion and tolerance. Learning about each other's differences can help reduce conflict in people's lives and make life more productive."

Ms. Boak hopes to become the Executive Director of a local non-profit when she graduates with her BIS degree. She says this scholarship has helped her get closer to reaching her goals while meeting her current financial obligations.
BIS Faculty Member, Alan More, Honored by CIA

Alan More recently was awarded the CIA’s Career Intelligence Medal “for a cumulative record of service reflecting exceptional achievement.” Alan spent 32 years in the intelligence and national security communities before retiring about a year ago and joining the BIS program. Most of his assignments were in CIA’s analytical ranks, where he crafted interdisciplinary analyses to support a wide variety of transnational issues. He also held a number of management positions and was assigned to a variety of other US Government agencies, including the Council on Environmental Quality, the White House, the Pentagon, and the State Department’s Middle East Peace Process Working Group. Additionally, he was detailed to the Treasury Department for the last three years of the Clinton Administration as the Deputy Director for National Security.

Best Research Project Award from Innovations

Andrea Gooden, a May 2006 BIS graduate with a concentration in Human Resource Management, has worked as a legal assistant for more than 12 years. She returned to school to broaden her employment opportunities. Andrea is interested in pursuing a career in Industrial Organizational Psychology and hopes to work as a consultant for companies looking to make sure that their hiring procedures are compliant. She will apply to a master’s program next year.

Andrea’s BIS 490 Research Project won the Best Research Project of the Year from ITU Innovations. The title of her project was, “The Effects of Fairness Perceptions of Performance Appraisals on Organizational Attitudes.” Her faculty mentor was Dr. Louis Buffardi in Psychology. Speaking about her faculty mentor experience, Andrea had this to say, “Dr. Buffardi was wonderful. He helped me pull together the surveys, map out what surveys to use, which survey questions to ask and he was immensely helpful with the statistical analysis.” The purpose of her study was to examine how an employee’s fairness perception of a recent performance appraisal impacts their organizational attitudes, including their level of perceived organizational support and job satisfaction. Her study found that the perception of fairness increased positive organizational attitude and resulted in an employee who was more likely to help the organization. Andrea’s future plans for her project include submission for presenting at SIOP (Society for Industrial Organizational Psychology) and possible submission for journal publication. Best of luck, Andrea!

Please Welcome our New BIS staff members: Mark Sistek & Jason King

Mark Sistek, Director of Advising

Mark Sistek comes to the BIS program following 20 years of undergraduate admissions experience, especially in the area of transfer admissions. He has been at Mason since 1997, back when we still required freshman interviews, and well before any final four team! He has worked extensively with students from the Virginia Community College System, primarily our NVCC transfer population. In addition, he teaches ceramics at the Glen Echo Pottery and has recently completed educational outreach projects with the DC public schools and the Smithsonian’s Freer and Sackler Galleries.

Jason King, Student Services Manager

Jason King is responsible for the day to day interaction with current and prospective BIS students and welcomes any questions or comments about the program. A native of Fairfax, he is also the son of two proud George Mason alumni and has watched the university grow over the years. In 2002, he graduated from the University of Virginia with a degree in American History. Prior to joining BIS, Jason served as a Rural Sanitation volunteer for the Peace Corps in Bolivia. He maintains an active interest in Bolivian culture and hopes to return to Latin America sometime in the future.
Support BIS!

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

Be sure to specify either BIS Program Fund or BIS Scholarships. Thank you for your generosity.

For information about Alumni Affairs 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.

Alumni! Please send us your news by e-mail: bis@gmu.edu We’d love to hear from you!

Jack Censer, New Dean of LAHS visits BIS 491 Presentations!

Dean Jack Censer, formerly chair of the Department of History and Art History attended BIS 491 presentations in May. He told students how impressed he was with the scope, ingenuity and creativity of BIS student projects and how the program is a valued component of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences (LAHS). We were very pleased to have him visit and witness the final culminating work of so many hard working BIS students. We are very proud of our student BIS 490 projects and how these projects have gained recognition throughout the university.

We are also especially grateful to all our adjuncts, teaching assistants and Faculty Mentors for their dedication and their contribution to the BIS Program. You are an invaluable part of the department’s continued success.

Please join us for the BIS Senior Project presentations in the Fall. This event will take place on December 6 at 4:30 in the Johnson Center, 3rd Floor, Rooms A - G.

All students and alumni are invited to attend. A reception will be held immediately following the presentations.

Know anyone interested in the BIS Program?

Let them know about our upcoming Information Sessions.

September 16: 10-11AM Johnson Center 3rd Floor Meeting Room C
September 27: 6:30-7:30PM Johnson Center 3rd Floor Meeting Room B
October 18: 6:30-7:30PM Johnson Center 3rd Floor Meeting Room D
October 28: 10-11AM Johnson Center 3rd Floor Meeting Room E
November 8: 6:30-7:30PM Johnson Center 3rd Floor Meeting Room B