

## August 2010

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**Welcome new and returning Honors students!**

**Join us for cake and conversation at the Honors Community Welcome Reception**

**Wednesday, Sept. 1  
2:30 - 4 p.m.  
MGC 200**

### How to contact us:

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Online	www.american.edu/honors

## Study/Travel Program to expand

### *More opportunity to travel and learn abroad*

Are you interested in a special travel experience while at AU? Consider participating in the annual University Honors Program Study/Travel program. In addition to the traditional spring break trip, this coming fall the University Honors Program will host a trip during winter break to Peru, led by SIS Professor Anthony Quinton, who is a former ambassador to the country. In March 2011, History Professor Mustafa Aksakal and Honors Director, Professor Michael Mass, will co-lead a trip to Istanbul.

Wondering what Study/Travel trips are like? Consider the experience of those who participated in the 2010 spring break trip to Vietnam/Cambodia. Led by History Professor Peter Kuznick and Professor Mass in connection with Professor Kuznick's Honors colloquium course, the purpose of the trip was to provide 20 Honors students the opportunity to study on site Vietnamese and Cambodian history, society, culture and politics, with particular emphasis on the Vietnam War.



*AU students, Prof. Mass and Prof. Kuznick visiting the War Museum in Siem Reap, Cambodia*

In Cambodia, Honors students had the opportunity to meet with Ponheary Ly, a Cambodian woman and Khmer Rouge work camp survivor who runs an organization (<http://theplf.org/>) that helps young Cambodians from impoverished families to receive an education. While public schooling is free, each student must have a \$25 uniform to attend school. For families with annual incomes \$300 or less, the uniform stands in the way of children getting an education. Ly's organization helps students receive uniforms, and ultimately, an education. Learn more about Ly in CNN's Heroes feature on her work in Koh Ker, Cambodia.

In Hanoi, Vietnam, students met with the famous Vietnamese author Bao Ninh, who wrote *Sorrow of War*. He shared his perspective on what it was like to be a soldier in the North Vietnamese army. The students also met with Chuck Searcy, a representative of an NGO that clears landmines from the DMZ, where the danger of landmines is still a serious problem. Poor people try to dismantle landmines to sell the metal for scrap and oftentimes end up blowing themselves up. Searcy's organization helps to remove the landmines, and educate local people on how to identify them in order to protect themselves.

From the traditional art form of water puppets to busy street markets, the Honors students acquired a sense of the culture of each country. "Students were exposed to an unbelievable variety of experiences, from the majesty of Angkor Wat to topics outside their comfort zone," said Prof. Mass in describing the trip. "It's one thing to study about it and another to see the character of these countries where we spent a sad and difficult chapter of our history. This trip connected classroom learning with real life experience."

Keep an eye out for these upcoming opportunities to travel abroad with Honors! More details will be available in the next issue of *Honorable Mentions*, and as well as on Facebook and in Honors Community e-mails.

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# Honors grad loves her work - and credits AU

*Cristina Sousa (SOC '05) explains*

"I loved my time at American..." I'm sure you hear, or in this case read, that all the time -- but it's true!

My AU professors always encouraged – and challenged – me to explore every possible creative opportunity while I was studying journalism, and each of them allowed me to pursue a variety of aspects of writing and editing while taking their classes. From teaching me about the ethics of mass communication to helping me craft a grammatically pristine article, they instilled in me a love for what I do now.

The academic highlight of my senior year was, without question, my Honors Capstone. I was given the chance to work TOTALLY out of the typical Capstone box, and built a graduate-level music journalism "class" – full semester-long syllabus and all. Looking back, I realize how being given unlimited artistic freedom, while completing a potentially mundane academic requirement, inspired me to always try and bring creativity to what I do every day.

My first job after graduating from AU in

2005, was working as the editor-in-chief of a publishing firm, located just outside of Boston, where I worked for two years. While there, I learned the ins and outs of the publishing business, including how to simultaneously create book covers, line edit, approve proofs and drink lots of coffee. In 2007, I accepted a job working as the assistant managing editor for a publishing firm in Manhattan, where I spent my days – and quite a few nights – editing financial, niche lifestyle magazines. While at the firm, I was lucky enough to land the managing editor job for *Return to Equities* magazine, a custom project for Merrill Lynch. The publication went on to win the Custom Publishing Council's Gold Pearl Award for Best New Publication in 2007.

In 2009, I accepted an editing position at 89 Degrees, an award-winning direct and digital marketing services company in the Boston area. 89 Degrees works within print, Web, e-mail and mobile channels to create groundbreaking campaigns; some clients include IKEA, hhgregg, the American Cancer Society, Uno Chicago Grill, Friendly's, Genzyme, Stride Rite and Hyundai. Each day, when I walk into the office, I never know what type of material I'm going to edit or



*Cristina Sousa (right) meets with her team member as editor of 89 Degrees.*

write. From proofing online circulars and direct mail, to editing and writing copy for innovative microsites, my days might be busy, but they are never boring. When I'm not editing for 89 Degrees, I also work as the associate editor for *The Independent*, a non-profit independent film site. In the summer of 2009, I started my own media firm, Busy Hedgehog, which focuses on social media development and management, as well as blog customization and digital design.

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# Empowered by AU, Alum now empowers others

*Marshall Bailly II (SPA/SIS '04) shares his story*

One of the greatest experiences of my life was attending American University. I grew up as the oldest of four in a family struggling through financial hardship and divorce, an experience that granted me a special glimpse at what true empowerment was. I knew the only way I could leave my brother and sisters behind was if I left them with the ability to provide for themselves. By helping them find those skills, I learned what true independence was.

American University's Honors Program helped cultivate this passion for self-determination. It provided me access to faculty such as SIS Professors Christine Chin and the late Mark Walker, who helped me not only to understand the subject matter throughout the world, but also how it defined me as a man. Through American University's resources, I was able to see three continents and several nations, exploring the world and gaining invaluable firsthand experience of true freedom and how others could be inspired to acquire it.

In my junior year, this combination of education and experiential learning inspired me to create my own non-profit, Leadership Initiatives, to teach young students how to use their nation's resources to create business opportunities for their community. Leadership Initiatives' first classes were taught at the University of Namibia in 2003, where job creation programs were developed in the fields of child care, home improvement/repair and auto repair. I would later refine the operation and work in new and challenging areas, such as Nigeria and the Philippines, where we would create the nation's first mobile hospitals, computer education and repair companies, drug rehabilitation centers, skill acquisition programs and fish farming programs that feed thousands and help address important vitamin deficiencies. My ultimate goal is to train a new generation of innovative, resourceful leaders who will lead their neighborhoods, regions and nations forward; leaders who in 10 to 20 years, will change the world by creating true independence, for not just themselves, but for their countries. I invite you to learn more at [www.lichange.org](http://www.lichange.org)



*Marshall Bailly II speaks about Leadership Initiatives.*

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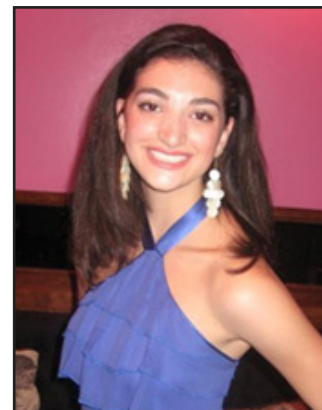
# Honors students win new Hassine Memorial Scholarship

The *Victor Hassine Memorial Scholarship* has been established to be awarded annually to one or more American University students or alumni who use creative work – literary and visual art, or some combination of these – to educate the public on the pressing issues affecting the criminal justice system and the greater society. This award honors the memory of Victor Hassine, who tragically took his life after 27 long years of confinement in Pennsylvania prisons. During those years, Victor used his creative talent to produce a host of writings on crime and punishment, both fiction and non-fiction. He believed that much of the injustice in the world, especially as seen in our prisons, stemmed from ignorance. He wrote to dispel that ignorance, to educate and inform, and to move others to action.

Hassine's legacy lives on in his writings, most particularly his classic work of social science, *Life Without Parole: Living and Dying in Prison Today*, published by Oxford University Press. Its primary editor, Robert Johnson, AU Justice, Law and Society student, with Sonia Tabriz, co-editor of the book and an AU Honors alum, selects one or more deserving American University students or alumni for the scholarship, which is funded by the Hassine family. The *Victor Hassine Memorial Scholarship* is intended to encourage a

new generation of young men and women to produce original works on crime and punishment, and to use their talents in service of a more just and humane future.

The first recipients of the \$500 award are Shirin Karimi and Chris Miller, AU Honors students with a deep commitment to creative work in service of criminal justice reform. Shirin Karimi is an Honors senior majoring in Literature and pursuing the Pre-Medical Program. She is a contributing editor for BleakHouse Publishing, the incoming Editor in Chief of *Tacenda Literary Magazine*, the co-editor for the *Catalyst* science magazine, and a volunteer at Georgetown University Hospital. She is working on a book of poems about suffering and loss in the justice system, especially in prisons, and in life generally. Chris Miller is a senior, double-majoring in Political Science and Law and Society, and a writer specializing in poetry and nonfiction prose. He maintains a strong interest in prison reform and often uses writing as a means to advocate for those whose voices remain unheard. Miller He edited and introduced an anthology of poetry, *A Zoo Near You*. Miller has worked as a research intern for the DC Public Defender Service and the Mid-Atlantic Innocence Project and plans to become a criminal defense attorney.



Shirin Karimi is an Honors senior in CAS



Chris Miller is an Honors senior in SPA

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## From Director Michael Mass ...

I want to extend a heartfelt welcome to all of our Honors students, whether you're starting your first year in Honors or your last. The Honors Program staff and I are excited to see each of you and are pleased that you're all a part of the Honors Community at AU.

We are starting the year in flux with our forthcoming move to Hughes Hall. We are introducing our new staff members and invite you to view their biographies on our all-new website. You can meet our entire staff as well as students and faculty at our Honors Community Welcome Reception, held on Wednesday, Sept. 1, from 2:30 to 4 p.m., in MGC 200. Also, be sure to look out for our announcement about the celebration in our new space this fall. We're looking forward to having a more accessible space to better serve you in Hughes Hall.

I hope that our newest Honors members – freshmen, transfers and self-nominated students – will have a chance to meet our returning students at some of the many activities we're offering this fall. We are planning Tea Talks, panels and, of course, cake days, so keep a look out for important emails from Honors. I hope you'll find a way to be an active member of the Honors Community.

I think that I can speak for the entire Honors Center staff when I say that we are here to help you in any way possible. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any question or concern, no matter how small. Have a great fall semester and I hope to see you all soon!



Welcome Honors students!



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# Calendar of Events

- Monday,  
August 23      **Fall classes begin**  
The semester officially opens as classes begin.
- Wednesday,  
August 25      **Honors Transfer Welcome Luncheon**  
All new Honors transfer students and mentors are invited to a casual lunch with Prof. Michael Mass, director of the Honors Program, and the Honors staff. Please R.S.V.P. to [honors@american.edu](mailto:honors@american.edu)  
**12 - 2 p.m., Mary Graydon Center, room 5**
- Tuesday,  
August 31      **Capstone Information Session**  
Confused about your Capstone? Come and have your questions answered.  
**5 - 6 p.m., Honors Center, Hurst 206**
- Wednesday,  
September 1      **Honors Community Welcome Reception**  
Join new and returning Honors students, faculty and staff for cake and conversation!  
**2:30 - 4 p.m., Mary Graydon Center, room 200**
- Wednesday,  
September 1      **Capstone Information Session**  
Confused about your Capstone? Come and have your questions answered.  
**5 - 6 p.m., Honors Center, Hurst 206**
- Thursday,  
September 2      **Frederick Douglass Distinguished Scholars Welcome Lunch**  
All new and returning FDDS students, faculty and staff gather to celebrate a new school year!  
**12 - 2 p.m., Mary Graydon Center, room 6**
- Friday,  
September 3      **Self-Nominated Students Welcome Luncheon**  
All Honors students who self-nominated into the program since January 15, 2010 are invited to join Prof. Michael Mass, director of the Honors Program, and Honors staff for a casual lunch. Please R.S.V.P. to [honors@american.edu](mailto:honors@american.edu)  
**12 - 2 p.m., Mary Graydon Center, room 6**
- Wednesday,  
September 15      **Honors 101 Deans' Receptions**  
All Honors freshmen are invited to receptions hosted by the five schools and colleges of American University. Each student will receive an invitation from his/her school.  
**3:30 - 5 p.m., various locations.**
- Wednesday,  
September 15      **SHB S'mores Night**  
Meet the current Student Honors Board over a camp fire and learn more about getting involved in the Honors community.  
**7 - 9 p.m., Leonard Barbecue Pit.**
- Friday,  
September 17      **University Honors Program Information Session**  
Are you new to campus and looking to learn more about AU's Honors Program? Faculty, staff, current and prospective Honors students are invited to attend this session to find out what Honors is all about.  
**2:30 - 4 p.m., Mary Graydon Center, room 5**