EIGHTH ANNUAL HONORS AWARD CEREMONY

UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM, FEBRUARY 20, 2013

AWARDS AND OTHER RECOGNITION

FACULTY AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Outstanding Faculty Award

Pek Koon Heng-Blackburn, SIS

Fall 2012 Honors 101 Faculty

Bill Davies, Michelle Egan, Ellen Feder, Lauren Feldman, Pek Koon Heng-Blackburn, Sarah Irvine Belson, Robert Johnson, Despina Kakoudaki, Michael Keynes, Namiko Kunimoto, Richard Linowes, Susan McDonic, Carl Menninger, Christopher Tudge

Ad Hoc Honors Faculty Advisory Committee

Erik Dussere, Michelle Egan, Lauren Feldman, Mary E. Hansen, Robert Johnson, Kiho Kim, Karl Kippola, Richard Linowes, Angela Smith (student), Larry Thomas

STAFF AWARD

Outstanding Contribution to the Honors Community

Margaret Weekes, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education School of Public Affairs

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment Under the leadership of Karen Froslid Jones, Director

ALUMNI AWARD

Outstanding Honors Alumnus

K. David Harrison, SIS '88

Associate Professor of Linguistics, Swarthmore College National Geographic Fellow, and Director of Research, Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages

HONORS STUDENT NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS AND FINALISTS

David L. Boren Undergraduate Scholarship

Starr Brainard, Sean Dugdale, Camila Linneman, Erik Luebbers

Critical Language Scholarship

Kate Lindsey

Fulbright Grant

Lindsey Anderson, Paco Cantu, Emily Pfefer, Allison Sylvester (finalist)

Alternate: Alyssa Frederick

Fulbright Grant-English Teaching Assistantship

Rebecca Anderson, Hannah Herbert, Grant Livingston,

Miranda Shaeffer (finalist)

Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship

Tracy Tabib (Honorable Mention)

Killam Fellowship

Christal Jerez, Alexandra Olson, Jose Ramirez-Rivera, David Silberman,

Alternate: Christina Pierpaoli

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Earnest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Starr Brainard

National Collegiate Honors Council Portz Research Fellowship

Carly Montanero

Public Policy and International Affairs Fellowship

Travis Maiers

STUDENT AWARDS

Outstanding Honors Freshman

Matthew Gabb, Pamela Huber, Matthew Waskiewicz

Outstanding Honors Sophomore

Mana Aliabadi, Carter Lowe, Samuel Epstein, Destiny Jackson, Dylan Kaplan, Jonathan Wallen

Outstanding Honors Junior

Zachary Belinsky, Allison Blauvelt, Molly Fallon, Emma Lydon, Aubrey Rose, Randi Saunders

Outstanding Honors Senior

Lyndsey Grubbs, Tobin Kearn, Max Looper, Elizabeth Rademacher, Autumn Rauchwerk, Jonelle Walker

Outstanding Leadership in Honors

Angela Smith, Saba Tabriz, Emma Zaballos

Outstanding Leadership in the Community

Nicole Dallas, Brock Grecco, Daniel Leon

Honors Scholars and Artists Award

Claire Callahan, Andrew Merluzzi, Casey Petroff, Terri Poxon-Pearson, Tracey Tabib, Brian Weinstein

RECOGNITION OF HONORS 101 STUDENT MENTORS AND STUDENT HONORS BOARD

Honors 101 is a peer-mentor orientation program for Honors freshmen. First-year students are divided into small groups and are partnered with faculty and student mentors.

Fall 2012 Honors 101 Co-Chairs and Mentors

Annika Bergstrom, Emily Fleitz, Kathryn Gillon, Christine Kulak, Hannah Kulakow, Delana Listman, Carter Lowe, Jessica Micciolo, Rebecca O'Neill, Stephanie Pettit, Nicole Piquant, Luke Ramsey, Saba Tabriz (co-chair), Rosanna Tamam, Rachel White, Emma Zaballos (co-chair)

The Student Honors Board represents Honors students and plans events, service projects, and other activities for the entire Honors community.

2012-2013 Student Honors Board

Jonathan Beatty, Eesha Bhave, Eileen Falk (Secretary), Lorraine Magee (Treasurer), Michael Martinez (Director of Communications), Kelly Mertz, Jessica Micciolo, Adam Mildon, Angela Smith (President), Valerie Snaman, Matthew Waskiewicz, Emma Zaballos (Vice President)

CITATIONS

STUDENT AWARDS

Outstanding Honors Freshman

This selective award recognizes Honors freshmen who have a strong academic record and who demonstrate exemplary leadership or service.

Pamela Huber (*Literature*), a poetry editor at *AmLit* and a staff editor at *AWOL*, has also had her work featured in both publications. During her first semester at AU, Pamela's essay and photos about the Lakota people, a group within the Great Sioux Nation, became the cover story of *AWOL*'s fall 2012 issue. Beyond her writing, Pamela has reinstituted and served as president of AU's Student Advocates for Native Communities Club, an organization that helps bring awareness to issues concerning Native Americans, Hawaiian natives, and other indigenous groups from around the world.

Matthew Gabb (*Anthropology*) is co-director of the Queer and Progressive Men Committee in AU Queers and Allies group. Through Queers and Allies, Matthew coordinated and led a Thanksgiving celebration and organized a phone bank operation at the Human Rights Campaign to support marriage equality in Maryland. Matthew also serves on the staff of the 2013 AU Model United Nations Conference and is General Assemblyman for the Hughes Hall Council. He recently joined the Department of LGBTQ Advocacy within AU's Student Government, where he oversees and plans events and programs.

Matthew Waskiewicz (*Political Science* and *Economics*) is a member of the Student Honors Board and serves as Hughes Hall's Vice President of Advocacy for the AU Residence Hall Association. He has exceeded the expectations and met the challenges of his RHA position, "working especially hard," as his nominator says, "to be transparent with his advisers and his peers." He has shown similar transparency and initiative in his conversations with Honors staff, and his peers describe him as a voice for Honors students, seeking to enhance their experience at AU. Matt also plays trumpet in the AU Jazz Orchestra.

Outstanding Honors Sophomore

This selective award recognizes Honors sophomores who have a strong academic record and who demonstrate exemplary leadership or service.

Mana Aliabadi (*Interdisciplinary Studies*) created her own major, weaving together justice, philosophy, and film studies. She is the co-founder of AU Justice Not Jails, a campus group that engages with social justice concerns centered on the prison solidarity movement. A former opinion columnist for *The Eagle* and the creator and host of "Solidarity TV," a news show on AU's ATV, Mana has also served as a teaching assistant to Literature Professor Erik Dussere. Her personal goal is to be a "socially conscious, well-rounded activist" who can support marginalized groups through grassroots organizing or a legal career.

Samuel Epstein (*Public Health*, *Pre-Med*) works as a research assistant in the microbiology lab at AU, studying the effects of antibiotics on MRSA, a bacterium that causes difficult-to-treat infections in humans. A volunteer emergency medical technician (EMT) for the Glen Echo Fire Department, Samuel has also served on a medical response team in Portsmouth, N.H., and as the officer responsible for aiding any injured teammates on the AU Men's Ultimate Frisbee Team. A member of the pre-medical program, Samuel is dedicated to using his education to serve those in need.

Destiny Jackson (*Business Administration* and *Journalism*) worked as an election judge for the Montgomery County Board of Elections and served underprivileged students in Washington, D.C., as a volunteer with the United Planning Organization. An entrepreneur and web designer, Destiny co-founded a clothing brand, Lotus Love Underground Mob, and a resource for home schooling, Rudolph Scholasticus. She also participated in the Google BOLD Immersion Program, a case competition in which she presented a grassroots approach to building awareness of Google applications among Hispanic-owned small businesses. Her team was one of three selected as winners.

Dylan Kaplan (*International Studies*) has published op-ed articles on interfaith dialogue in *The Washington Post*, *Haaretz*, and *Pakistan Link*. He has been a research assistant to SIS Professor Akbar Ahmed, whom he sought out before matriculating to AU as a freshman, and completed independent research on Jewish and Muslim dialogue. He discussed the subject as a keynote speaker at Har Shalom Synagogue in Potomac, Md. He has also served as an undergraduate senator in the AU Student Government Association.

Carter Lowe (*Theatre* and *Secondary Education*) played a lead role in the Theatre Program's production of *Bare* during his first year at AU. He served as an Honors 101 mentor in the fall, guiding a group of first-year Honors students through their transition to college life and connecting them with on-campus opportunities in music and the arts. Carter's mentees praise him as a genuinely caring person and a lasting friend. He works as a resident assistant and is the Vice President of Advocacy in the Residence Hall Association. Carter is also the head student recruitment representative for the Department of Performing Arts, working closely with Professor Javier Rivera to promote AU's Theatre Program to prospective students.

Jonathan Wallen (*Economics*) has produced high-level research as an assistant to SPA Professor Douglas Klusmeyer and CAS Professor Simon Sheng, focusing on law and economics. Professor Klusmeyer described Jonathan's research as having the "analytical sophistication equal to what one might expect from a superior doctoral candidate," and his other nominators characterize him a top student in senior-level courses. The summer after his freshman year, Jonathan traveled to the London School of Economics and Political Science and excelled there in an advanced econometrics course. He is fluent in English, Spanish, and Swedish.

Outstanding Honors Junior

This selective award recognizes Honors juniors who have a strong academic record and who demonstrate exemplary leadership or service.

Zachary Belinsky (*Religious Studies*) is a founding member of the Religious Studies Club at AU. In addition, he serves on the Interfaith Council, the Shabbat Committee, and he is the Interfaith Representative of the Buddhist Exploration Group at AU. Zachary interned at the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington (IFC-MW), where he examined the debate regarding insurance coverage for contraceptives from different religious perspectives. His work contributed to the IFC's statement on the issue.

Allison Blauvelt (International Studies) is an AU Global Scholar who studied in Cambridge, England and Brussels, Belgium. Her impressive performance at the University of Cambridge was instrumental in its establishing a special scholarship program designed to attract more AU Global Scholar students to its summer school. While in Brussels, Allison conducted extensive research on European Union legislation related to art crime. She hopes to continue her research on this topic through her Honors capstone. Beyond her scholarly work, Allison serves on the executive board of the Hughes Hall Council and is Vice President of Intellectual Development for Alpha Chi Omega.

Molly Fallon (Business Administration) is a tutor at the Center for Business Communication in the Kogod School of Business as well as a teaching assistant in the school's marketing department. She has interned at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission where she won its annual competition for a presentation about the benefits of instituting an employee rotational program and developing a more strategic recruitment approach. Accounting Professor Yinqi Zhang praises Molly as "an active global citizen who values diverse perspectives and cultures." She has worked as an intern at the office of U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and the MidAmerican Energy Holdings Company. She has also played the baritone saxophone in the American University Jazz Ensemble.

Emma Lydon (*Political Science*) was a field organizer for a Democratic candidate in California's 7th Congressional District during the 2012 election cycle. In this position, she managed an internship program for 50 high school students and directed a team that organized a "get out the vote" canvass program comprising 500 volunteers. Complementing this field work, Emma trained in an intensive course at AU's Campaign Management Institute. She also gained experience as a press intern for U.S. Rep. Pete Stark (D-Calif.) before he retired in January, and she served as a law intern at Oliver and Sabec international law firm in San Francisco, Calif., where she did research on legal structures for corporations interested in social entrepreneurship. Emma is starting to plan her Honors capstone with support from SPA Professor Candice Nelson.

Aubrey Rose (*Law and Society*) has worked on capital cases and Supreme Court cases through her service to a number of legal organizations, including the Mid-Atlantic Innocence Project and Capital Litigation Communications Project. As an intern with the latter group, Aubrey helped to plan communications on high-profile death penalty cases and on cases that challenged wrongful executions and the constitutionality of the juvenile life without parole sentence. Aubrey has served at AU's Student Advocacy Center, offering counsel to students facing disciplinary charges through the University. A member of the review board for the Clocks & Clouds Undergraduate Research Journal, Aubrey is also a consulting editor for BleakHouse Publishing. Two of her poems will appear in the 2013 issue of *BleakHouse Review*. Since 2008, she has tutored at-risk students in Frederick, Md., where as a high school student, she founded the Frederick Interfaith Youth Organization.

Randi Saunders (Sociology and International Studies) serves as a teaching assistant in the Department of Sociology. She has conducted original research on youth attitudes toward HIV in Nairobi, Kenya, and produced a group report on human rights abuses in the Amazon, reflecting her varied interests and scholarship. She was an intern at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C., during the summer of 2012 as part of the Abshire-Inamori Leadership Academy where she facilitated internal development programs. Randi also was a development intern for the Moraa New Hope Foundation where she gained grant-writing experience and worked on empowerment projects targeting adolescent girls. In addition to her academic pursuits, she volunteers as a hospital advocate for the DC Rape Crisis Center.

Outstanding Honors Senior

This selective award recognizes Honors seniors who have a strong academic record and who demonstrate exemplary leadership or service.

Lyndsey Grubbs (*Public Communication*) impressed SOC Professor Gemma Puglisi as a student in her PR Portfolio class, particularly by the "incredible job" she says Lyndsey and her team did to support a non-profit group, Food for Others, which supplies canned food to families in Northern Virginia. Lyndsey heard about Professor Puglisi's advocacy work on behalf of Troy Anthony Davis, who was executed in 2011 by the state of Georgia after years on death row, and she agreed to do the preliminary work that would enable Professor Puglisi to establish a non-profit foundation bearing Mr. Davis' name. Professor Puglisi says the great deal of legwork that Lyndsey did, including researching and speaking to contacts in the non-profit sector, led to a "beautiful portfolio" and a detailed process for her to follow to create the Troy David Foundation to realize Mr. Davis' dream to help young people and those incarcerated.

Tobin Kearn (*Economics*) interned as a sophomore in the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Financial Stability that operates the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), monitoring economic research and helping to prepare a summary of the Treasury's housing refinance operations for the U.S. Congress. He served as an intern for the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in 2012. Tobin has also held two research assistant positions at AU, in the Department of Economics and in the Kogod School of Business, in addition to serving as a Supplemental Instructor for the Economist-in-Residence, Evan Kraft. He won an award at the 2012 Honors Capstone Research Conference for his project, "Industrial Concentration and Equity Returns," and he is spending the remainder of this academic year studying at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Max Looper (*CLEG*) provided research and editing support to SPA Professor Chris Edelson for articles he wrote and later published. Max is now working on an article with SPA Professor Robert Johnson about a potential working definition of human dignity for the American legal system. Max worked for one year as a teaching assistant for a University College introductory course, "Individual Freedom vs. Authority," for which he planned a visit for the students to the U.S. Supreme Court. While interning at the James B. Moran Center for Youth Advocacy, Max gained field experience researching juvenile crime-prevention programs alongside attorneys. He has also been a leader on campus, serving as Vice-President of the AU Jewish Student Association and as an Intramural Sports Supervisor. He has been accepted at Harvard Law School.

Elizabeth Rademacher (*Law and Society*) is an intern for the American Bar Association. For its Death Penalty Representation Project, she researches inquiries about case law and standards for attorneys working on death penalty cases. She also corresponds with death row inmates who request legal assistance. Influenced by this position, Elizabeth was inspired to write a collection of original poems that describe the last meals of prisoners on death row, which will be published in the 2013 edition of *Tacenda*. She has also worked as a field intern for the Human Rights Campaign, engaging in local advocacy for LGBT equality issues. Furthering her interest in and commitment to social justice, Elizabeth was a compliance intern for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security where she gained experience working with cases involving alleged civil rights and civil liberties violations. Since August 2011, she has served as a resident assistant.

Autumn Rauchwerk (Environmental Studies) is a recipient of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Hollings Scholarship. This program led her to American Samoa in the summer of 2012 to conduct research and to produce a Green Plan Project to make a sanctuary convention center more climate friendly. She also participated in an Alternative Winter Break in Guatemala. She spent a semester in Costa Rica, living for a time in an indigenous community while volunteering for INBioparque, the national center for biodiversity. As part of the International Development and Environment Washington Semester, she developed a campaign to cut the carbon emissions for the AU Tenley Campus. She shows commitment to education and conservation in the community through her varied internships with organizations such as the Earth Day Network, Osa Conservation, Rolling Hills Day Camp, and Temple Micah. For her Honors capstone project, supervised by CAS Professor Roberta Rubenstein, Autumn produced an original compilation of family history and poetry, as well as an analysis of food-related values. Autumn has also served the Honors community as an Honors 101 mentor.

Jonelle Walker (*Literature* and *Performing Arts*) wears many hats as the manager of the Rude Mechanicals, the AU student-run theatrical group. She has performed, directed, handled public relations and taken artistic risks that have contributed to raising the creative standard of the group's productions. Her extracurricular involvement also distinguishes her. She has served as a student ambassador for the Shakespeare Theatre Company, a DC Reads tutor, and a teaching assistant for CAS Professor Erik Dussere for his Critical Approach to Cinema course. In 2012, she received an honorable mention from the Library Undergraduate Research Competition for her research paper entitled, "'As Flies to Wanton Boys': How Reading *King Lear* Helps us Understand Pip in *Moby Dick.*" CAS Professor Marianne Noble describes Jonelle's work as "insightful, penetrating, and masterfully written." She is also a recipient of the Greenberg Scholarship from the Department of Performing Arts.

Outstanding Leadership in Honors

This highly selective award recognizes Honors students who have served the Honors community with distinction while maintaining a record of high academic achievement.

Angela Smith (*CLEG*), the President of the Student Honors Board, has been a member of the board for the past five semesters, twice chairing the annual Thanksgiving Dinner. Her drive and leadership has helped the organization flourish and resulted in many successful events this year. An Honors Student Staff Assistant since Fall 2010, Angela has become an integral part of the fabric of the Honors office. In addition to her leadership within Honors, Angela has served as an AU Ambassador since Spring 2010 and has interned with various political campaigns.

Saba Tabriz (Business Administration, Pre-Med) served as an Honors 101 co-chair in 2012, committing an extraordinary amount of time and energy into planning the program and carrying much of its administrative load. She played a vital, innovative part in its events, including a kick off in which students created LED flashlights and considered them in psychological terms. Saba did all this while serving as an emergency medical technician (EMT) with the Rockville, Md., Volunteer Fire Department, a co-editor of Catalyst, a treasurer for groups on-campus and off, and a leader in the Delta Gamma Fraternity. She also served as an Honors 101 mentor in 2011, and the candor and empathy she showed in that role has become a model for successful mentors.

Emma Zaballos (*Political Science, Mathematics and Economics*), an Honors 101 mentee in 2011, became an Honors 101 co-chair and the Vice President of the Student Honors Board in 2012. She also became the face of Honors for incoming first-year students, participating via webcam in Eagle Summit sessions and posting prompt, sincere, and comprehensive answers to questions on Facebook. Emma's intellectual curiosity and her eagerness to challenge herself, her peers, and the institutions she serves have fostered innovation and rigor in those around her. With Saba, she was key in shepherding Honors 101 toward a more adventurous and academic path, a path she's also pursued in the classroom, on AU's mock trial team, and in the residence halls, where she has led her suitemates in a year-long independent study of ethics and morality.

Outstanding Leadership in the Community

This highly selective award recognizes Honors students who have served the AU or other communities with distinction while maintaining a record of high academic achievement.

Nicole Dallas (*Political Science*) is a member of the Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) and recently organized a national ROTC conference, dedicating months of her time to planning and executing the event. Through her involvement in the Arnold Air Society, she has held many positions, including Finance Officer, Director of Operations and Deputy Commander. She volunteered for the Special Olympics and Wreaths Across America, in addition to successfully relocating Area Conclave from New Jersey to Washington, D.C., in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. She has received a number of awards, including the Field Training Superior Performance Award and the American Legion Scholastic Excellence Award. Nicole is also a manager at the Hatch on campus and serves as the Leonard Lounge Coordinator, planning activities for the residence hall.

Brock Grecco (*International Studies*) is an AU Global Scholar and serves as a class representative for the program, acting as a liaison between students and the program directors. He developed a mentor program that paired members of the incoming cohort with second-year Global Scholars. Brock created the pairings and advised students on how mentoring would benefit both mentors and mentees. He is an intern in the development office at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and a Student Staff Assistant in the Honors office. In addition, he serves as Deputy of Social Programming on the SIS Undergraduate Council. Brock will be presenting an original paper on post-colonial economic development in Fiji and Vanuatu at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research.

Daniel Leon (*International Studies*) has twice received the Annette Langdon Scholar Activist Scholarship for his work with local Washington, D.C., organizations, specifically Our DC, which promotes economic justice locally. He was also the 2012 Abdul Aziz Said Psi Epsilon Pi Scholar for Diversity. Daniel has organized events at AU to raise awareness about the DREAM Act and the status of undocumented students. In addition, he is the student representative on the Advisory Council for Diversity and Inclusion for SIS. He has implemented a number of other campus events promoting diversity. Daniel mentors multicultural and LGBT students at AU and is "instrumental to their retention and success," according to Dr. Fanta Aw, the Associate Vice President of Campus Life and Director of International Student and Scholar Services at AU.

Honors Scholars and Artists Award

This highly selective award recognizes the Honors students who have distinguished themselves through a record of high academic achievement and outstanding scholarship or creative work.

Claire Callahan (Law and Society) has published legal commentary in the University of Washington Undergraduate Law Review, using the Amanda Knox case to compare the American and Italian legal systems. Her Honors capstone examined solitary confinement in England and the United States, and her fluency in French enabled her to use 18th-century French documents in her earlier research on the death penalty. Claire co-authored an article, forthcoming in the peer-reviewed Prison Journal that explains what people should see when they observe executions and bear witness to them. A creative writer as well, she gave a reading of her short story, "Why the Corrida," at the European Society of Criminology's 2012 conference in Bilbao, Spain. Claire has served as an Honors transfer mentor and as the editor-in-chief of Tacenda Literary Magazine. She has also choreographed and performed ballet through the Department of Performing Arts and AU in Motion.

Andrew Merluzzi (*Psychology*) has been a fixture in the Psychology lab group of CAS Professor Anthony Riley, who puts him "at the top" of the list of students who have participated in that group over the last four decades. Andrew co-authored research published in *Developmental Psychobiology* and presented that work at American University and at Georgetown University, winning awards for best poster presentation at both conferences. This spring, Andrew will present additional research at conferences in San Antonio and Boston. A recipient of the AU Summer Scholars & Artists Fellowship and the Robyn Rafferty Mathias Undergraduate Research Award, Andrew recently submitted the research he pursued last summer for publication in *Neuropsychopharmacology*. In that submission—which assesses the effects of MDPV, or "bath salts"—Andrew is the lead author among graduate students and faculty. Beyond AU, Andrew has worked as a research assistant at the National Institutes of Health and the Association for Psychological Science.

Casey Petroff (Mathematics and Economics), who minors in History and Finance, presented at the Honors Capstone Research Conference as a junior, winning recognition among a field of seniors for the best oral presentation in Business—with good reason. Casey's capstone on oil markets, says Professor Mary Hansen (Economics), "would stand as a Master's thesis in many Economics departments." With support from her capstone advisor, Kogod Professor Michael Robe, Casey worked full time last summer at the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission, where her public policy and research work earned praise. Casey worked as Professor Robe's research assistant, and he places her "easily in the top 1 percent of all students" he has taught at AU, McGill, and Carnegie Mellon universities. Casey is spending her senior year abroad at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Terri Poxon-Pearson (*Physics*), a minor in Political Science, received the National Science Foundation's Research Experiences for Undergraduates Fellowship, which she used to pursue an experimental nuclear physics project at the University of Notre Dame. She has presented research off campus at a meeting of the American Physical Society's Division of Nuclear Physics—a premier national conference—and at the Conference for Undergraduate Women in Physics. Terri is completing much of her year-long capstone project at the University of Maryland, College Park's nuclear lab. Assisted by an Honors Capstone Research Grant, Terri is working with faculty at AU and UMD to explore the nature of the neutrino, an elementary subatomic particle with unknown mass, by analyzing how radioactive cobalt makes a rare kind of nuclear decay more difficult to detect.

Tracy Tabib (*Biology*), a minor in Biochemistry, has worked as a Biology research assistant with CAS Professor Kathleen DeCicco-Skinner for more than two years. She is the co-author of two posters that were presented at national conferences and will be listed as co-author on two upcoming scientific research publications. A recipient of an Honors Capstone Research Grant, Tracy is using her capstone to explore the link between fat cells and multiple myeloma, a cancer of the plasma cells in bone marrow. Her capstone could help identify treatment options and therapeutic targets by determining how the cellular environment affects cancer progression. During her sophomore year, the National Science Foundation recognized Tracy through its Research Experiences for Undergraduates program, which funded her participation in a lab at Case Western Reserve University.

Brian Weinstein (*Physics*) is working on a capstone in the field of Physics that CAS Professor Philip Johnson called "perhaps the best in the department over the last 5 to 10 years." With his capstone advisor, CAS Professor Nathan Harshman, Brian is using linear algebra and group representation theory to simplify calculations related to systems of four interacting particles. Among other potential purposes, the systems that Brian is studying could be the working material for quantum computers, which would be exponentially faster than current computers. Last year, Brian won a fellowship to pursue research with a renowned group in ultracold physics at the National Institute of Standards and Technology. He has served since 2010 as a teaching assistant for the Academic Support Center and the Physics Department, and he has supported the Physics Department on two exhibits at the *USA Science and Engineering Festival*. Brian has also served as an Honors resident assistant, as Chief of Staff for the Residence Hall Association, and as Treasurer of the Society of Physics Students.

ALUMNI AWARD

Outstanding Honors Alumni

This award recognizes an Honors graduate who has achieved distinction in a profession or in service.

Professor K. David Harrison, SIS 1988

Nearly half the world's languages are at risk of vanishing in this century, and K. David Harrison is doing all he can to prevent this catastrophe for humanity. His deep commitment takes him from the classroom to field sites across the globe and to the media to spread the word about the need to preserve these endangered languages that serve as repositories for the accumulated knowledge of their cultures.

This leading specialist of endangered languages, with a doctorate from Yale University, is an Associate Professor of Linguistics at Swarthmore College and the Director of Research for the Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages. He is also a Fellow of the National Geographic Society and co-leads its Enduring Voices Project, and he is widely published in journals in his field and other disciplines. News of the plight of dying languages and his efforts to save them pervade the popular press, from the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* to *Time*, the *Economist*, and *Wired*. He has been a guest on the BBC and NPR, among other outlets, and he is featured in a National Science Foundation documentary, *The Linguists*, that premiered at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival.

Professor Harrison has conducted ethnographic research in Bolivia and Northeast India, but he primarily focuses on Turkic languages of Central Siberia and Western Mongolia. Much of his research is described in his book, *When Languages Die: The Extinction of the World's Languages and the Erosion of Human Knowledge* (Oxford 2007), and his encounters with last speakers of vanishing languages are chronicled in *The Last Speakers* (National Geographic 2010).

As a mentor in the Honors Alumni Mentoring Program, Professor Harrison encouraged Kate Lindsey (CAS '11) to pursue Russian linguistic fieldwork and introduced her to Siberian linguists and National Geographic Fellows. He was instrumental in her winning a Fulbright grant and being admitted to the Stanford University doctoral program in Linguistics. "Through his example and support," Kate recently wrote from Russia, where she is conducting Fulbright-funded fieldwork, "he has shaped how AU Honors students view their potential and future and how they, too, can give back and inspire the AU Honors community."

"AU really nurtured me," Professor Harrison said recently. "My favorite classes outside my major were Philosophy, Literature, and Anthropology," including those taught by CAS Professor Brett Williams. His study abroad experiences, Belgium in junior year, Poland in senior year, "really changed my life, my worldview, and my career prospects."

STAFF AWARD

Outstanding Contribution to the Honors Community

This award recognizes a member of the AU Community, a group within it, or others whose service to the Honors Program has been exemplary.

Margaret Weekes, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education Interim Department Chair, Department of Justice, Law and Society

Associate Dean Meg Weekes is everywhere. It is difficult to attend a lecture or event at AU without seeing her there, and it is difficult to find a university or school initiative that Dean Weekes has not participated or taken a leading role in. She took a lead in online education and in summer programs for newly admitted freshmen. She seems to be interested in and knowledgeable about almost everything. Dean Weekes will talk to you about poetry, the note-taking skills of medieval Italian jurists, or the impact the Internet has had on human connection. More important still to Dean Weekes are students, for whom she is a tireless advocate. Fiercely idealistic, she believes that all students can achieve the intellectual life and can dedicate themselves to the improvement of themselves and the world.

The support of Dean Weekes has been critical to the success of the University Honors Program. Whenever she sees an especially talented student, she sends them to the Honors Program; whenever we have an event, she attends; and whenever the Honors Program needs something—whether courses, speakers, or other support—she provides it. One result of her efforts is that SPA students pursuing Honors have an especially rich and rewarding experience. Finally, Dean Weekes has been a reliable sounding board and source of advice to us for many years. The clarity of her vision illuminates the issues at stake in any discussion.

A Massachusetts native, Dean Weekes graduated from Mount Holyoke and received a J.D. from Boston University. As an attorney, Dean Weekes worked in the Justice Department, in a firm, and in private practice. Joining American University in 1991, Dean Weekes taught in the Justice, Law, and Society Department until 1999, when she became associate dean of the Washington Semester Program. In 2004, she became associate dean of the School of Public Affairs.

STAFF AWARD

Outstanding Contribution to the Honors Community

This award recognizes a member of the AU Community, a group within it, or others whose service to the Honors Program has been exemplary.

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

under the leadership of Karen Froslid Jones, Director

Most requests made to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) probably end with a plaintive, "And how soon can you give me that data?" OIRA is one of those university offices that every other office relies on to be efficient, thorough, and, above all, prompt. Data are becoming only more important to every university decision, reliability has become even more highly prized, and a quick turnaround has become the only expectation anyone has. All of these demands make the university community even more grateful to have Karen Froslid Jones, Robin Beads, David Kaib, and Yu-chuan Chuang.

The Honors Program relies not just on the ability of our OIRA colleagues to collect and analyze data but on their wisdom. They have taught us how to frame questions and to explore other ways of gathering information and assessing progress. In short, they are genuine partners, friendly and eager to help, sharing our mission and values.

In the past year, the Honors Program has relied on OIRA to help produce a program review and self-study, to create annual reports, and to help us identify, contact, and attract top AU undergraduates who weren't admitted into the program as freshmen. In assessing the Honors 101 program, we have received critical guidance from OIRA in

asking the right questions.

As resourceful as they are friendly, as insightful as they are considerate, Karen Froslid Jones, Robin Beads, David Kaib, and Yu-chuan Chuang have individually and collectively made significant differences in what the Honors Program is able to accomplish.

FACULTY AWARD

Outstanding Faculty Award

This award recognizes a faculty member who has been singled out by students for their challenging Honors courses and their excellence in teaching and whose service to the Honors Program has been exemplary.

Pek Koon Heng-Blackburn, Assistant Professor, SIS

The inaugural Director of the ASEAN Studies Center, Professor Heng has served the University Honors Program in many capacities. She has taught Honors courses and colloquia and directed a number of capstones. These courses are among the most appreciated on campus, known to be especially rigorous and satisfying. In spring 2012, Professor Heng led a Study/Travel course to her native Malaysia, where she arranged for students to meet at length with members of parliament, American embassy officials, and activists working on behalf of Indian and Chinese minorities as well as for women in the Islamic majority. Reflexively diplomatic, she astonished every group when she made a point of explaining that these American undergraduates were spending an entire semester learning about their country. Professor Heng was especially adept at drawing students' attention to how their experiences were linked to their reading and at pointing out how the last speaker amplified or contradicted what some previous speaker had said. And everywhere she went, Professor Heng made sure that students enjoyed marvelous Malaysian food. Professor Heng has also served as a faculty mentor for Honors 101 three times, gaining a reputation for being witty, approachable, and caring.

Professor Heng did her undergraduate work at the University of Auckland and received her doctorate from the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies. She has been the director of the ASEAN Study Center since its founding in 2009. Working with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the center is the first research entity of its kind in the United States. The relationships the center has helped build have already resulted in AU being one of eight American universities selected in 2012 to help rebuild higher education in Myanmar.

Professor Heng also serves as the Southeast Asia Coordinator for AU's Center for Asian Studies, and in the summer, she takes graduate students to Malaysia to study globalization and regionalism in East Asia. In addition, the U.S. Foreign Service has asked Professor Heng to train officers before they are assigned to the region.

The author of *Chinese Politics in Malaysia: A History of the Malaysian Chinese Association*, which was published by Oxford University Press in 1988, Professor Heng has published numerous articles on the region and has received a number of grants to further her research into a region that is only growing in importance.

The University Honors Program at American University

Over a half-century old, the University Honors Program invites highly motivated and ambitious first-year and transfer students at American University to enter its program of rigorous academic courses and stimulating co-curricular and living-learning opportunities. Knowing that many students only start to shine after they enter the University, the Honors Program also encourages high-achieving sophomores to apply to the program.

More than 1,100 of the 6,500 undergraduate students at AU are currently in the University Honors Program. Honors students are overrepresented in every field of excellence in the University, becoming leaders in Student Government, occupying other student leadership positions, and winning half of all national awards going to American University students.

A Note on the Annual Honors Awards

The Honors Program welcomes and invites nominations for Honors awards from all members of the American University community, including students, faculty, and staff. In addition, the Honors Program distributes lists of Honors students and invites departments, schools, and university offices to decide —as a group—which students to nominate.

A faculty selection committee recommends the finalists for Outstanding Sophomore, Junior, and Senior as well as the awards for Outstanding Leadership and for Scholars and Artists. The Honors Staff recommends the finalists for the other awards.

Special thanks to the Honors Awards Selection Committee

Mary Ellen Curtin, Lauren Feldman, Sally Fowler, Douglas Fox, Robert Johnson, Karl Kippola, Mirjana Morosini-Dominick, Larry Thomas, Mahmud Yesuf