WELL PREPARED TO MOVE ON OUT

Last year, for BDIC’s 40th anniversary, our newsletter focused on some of our senior alumni who are now at the top of their fields. In this issue, we ask: what happens to BDIC graduates right after they leave the university? Do they exit BDIC with confidence? Do they find jobs in fields related to their concentration?

To try to answer these questions, we checked in with some graduating seniors and recent alumni. What we found was that even in a tough economy the BDIC major continues to prove its value, with many young alums thriving in the field of their choice.

Since the BDIC program has a high percentage of students doing internships and its majors are able to combine courses from the professional schools with liberal arts and science courses, it’s no surprise that graduates offer a rare combination of intellectual and organizational maturity. And that’s very attractive to employers or a great help in jump-starting a business or organization of one’s own.

The Class of ’11 in Action

Meet some of our graduating seniors. Pictured are students doing professional work related to their concentration, even before they received their diplomas!
LEARNING TO BE A LEADER

Kelly Haynes '11
Entrepreneurship Marketing and Media

The goal of my concentration was to gain insight and knowledge that would prepare me to work in the music and entertainment industry. Another goal was to be able to take courses from many departments and break the academic boundaries set up by the university. By combining classes from the Communication, Psychology, Marketing, and Hospitality and Tourism Management departments, and the BDIC program, I learned to look at any situation through many viewpoints instead of only one. I wouldn't have been able to do this without the BDIC program. BDIC allowed me to bridge education and passion.

Creating my own major has taught me important lessons. First, it taught me the importance of being an individual. Part of the reason I joined BDIC was so I could be recognized for my individual accomplishments instead of being known as just a number within a large university. Secondly, creating my BDIC concentration and going through the proposal writing process taught me that with hard work and dedication anything is possible. I learned to be persistent because I really wanted my concentration to be approved, and I had to be persistent in order to find a sponsor. I’ve gained useful leadership skills and I will continue to go against the grain in order to do what makes me productive and happy.

Last but not least, I learned to be a leader. I stand out as a BDIC student because I am motivated and devoted to making my dreams a reality and will not settle for less. I will contribute all of these skills to my future work in the music industry and in any situation I come across along the way.

Kelly Haynes was a marketing intern at The Collective Music Group, LLC, and is now a marketing assistant at CBS Radio.

BDIC ALUMNI HELP STUDENTS GET A HEAD START

Thanks to alumni donations, BDIC students are able to do advanced research or unpaid internships during the summer. These experiences help speed their progress into their chosen professions. Scholarships and dedicated funds are particularly effective means to enrich students’ experiences. Here are some recent examples of their impact.

THE ROSA LUXEMBURG SCHOLARSHIP

In spring 2011, Gary Roth, a 1978 BDIC graduate who currently holds the positions of Vice Chancellor and Dean of the Graduate School at Rutgers University, Newark, pledged support for the Rosa Luxemburg Scholarship. The fund is providing a scholarship each year for five years to a student motivated by high social ideals and whose goals relate to the career and ideas of the political theorist and activist Rosa Luxemburg.

This past summer’s recipient was Stephanie Ozahowski, Social Entrepreneurship, 2013. She interned at Rosie’s Place in Boston, founded in 1974 and the first shelter in the United States specifically for homeless women. It also offers education and medical care. As a Development intern, Stephanie assisted the organization with fundraising, event planning, and maintaining databases. Obviously, this internship was a perfect match between her concentration and the scholarship’s intent to promote social change and service.
Some young BDIC alumni have already found their dream jobs. Here are two who are flourishing in the Big Apple.

Sarah Hill, 2011 (International Real Estate and Entrepreneurship), and Megan Kolb, 2009 (Performing Arts Management), are sharing an apartment in New York while they fulfill career aspirations that began in BDIC.

Soon after graduation, Megan lined up a job at Gorgeous Entertainment Inc. in New York City. Gorgeous is a theater, film, and special events production company founded in 1997. She started working at Gorgeous as the project manager for a non-profit organization, the All For One Theater Festival.

Recently, Megan attended the TONY award presentations. While there, she reflected: “I felt like a star among stars, and know I am right where I am supposed to be. I want others to continue to pursue their aspirations. Dreams really do come true. Thank you, BDIC, for believing in me!”

Megan’s roommate, Sarah Hill, also found an outstanding job directly related to her BDIC concentration in real estate after spending her last semester in London interning at a real estate company. Upon graduation, she was at first discouraged by the prospect of working in the slow real estate market. Remarkably, she managed to land every job she applied for.

In her current position as executive assistant at Newcastle Realty, Sarah works closely with the president of this property management company. She was recently given the opportunity to become project manager of a new company her boss is starting. While helping to clinch multi-million-dollar real estate sales, she is also in the process of starting her own company, Perfect Strangers of New York City. It will provide a match-making site for potential roommates and tips for moving into the city.

Sarah says: “I am literally doing exactly what I set myself up to do in BDIC. My parents were astonished that I got a job in my desired field so quickly, but I knew that because of the experience gained through BDIC, I was a perfect candidate.”

A large endowment fund established by BDIC alumnus John Dempsey has recently provided a number of research and travel scholarships to BDIC students. John graduated in 1974 with a BDIC degree in Computer Science (four years before UMass Amherst offered a regular Computer Science major). He has had a successful career as a consultant and executive in software companies on the service side. Most recently, he purchased Jancyn, a company that provides customer service quality assessments for retailers using mystery shoppers. Some of the latest student beneficiaries of the Dempsey Opportunity Fund are:

Paul Burt (Sustainable Energy, Food and Urban Systems, 2012) interned this past summer with an organization called Stir. Here, he piloted a sustainable food and gardening effort to help improve the quality of the food elementary school children are served.

This fall, Paul is studying at the Danish Institute for Study Abroad in Copenhagen, where he is focusing on sustainable urban design. His Dempsey award made both experiences possible.

Miles Sarill (Pathochemistry, 2012) received a Dempsey award to help fund a summer research project with the Environmental Science program in the Environmental Conservation department at UMass Amherst. He is studying the hormetic and biphasic dose response in gene expression. The outcome of the research will be a published review.

Leah Salloway (Wildlife Conservation and Ecology, 2011) used her Dempsey scholarship to present a paper at the International Sea Turtle Symposium in San Diego, on public school education as an aid to sea turtle conservation on nesting beaches.

FINDING THE PERFECT MATCH

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A Successful Entrepreneur Gives Back

Surya Prakash ’03 (Management Information Technologies) illustrates the entrepreneurial side of BDIC. Only eight years after graduation, Surya has accumulated a wide range of achievements and is already giving back to UMass Amherst and BDIC.

Even as a youngster, Surya dreamt about starting and running successful businesses and by his senior year of high school he had started consulting as a software and web programmer. Clients included the Massachusetts High Technology Council and Ethnic Gourmet Foods (now owned by Heinz Foods), among others.

Continuing to consult throughout college, Surya was also one of the first students to participate in the Entre Club (now called the Entrepreneurship Initiative, and housed in BDIC). After graduating, he decided to get some corporate experience and first worked for a large telecommunications firm. A few years later, he joined a software startup, as the second employee, and rose to be the director of product development. He has continued the entrepreneurial passion by starting a side-business to invest in residential real estate and is also working on launching other high-tech initiatives.

Surya has stepped up to help BDIC with a number of recent initiatives designed to bring entrepreneurial alumni together and to assist students with entrepreneurial goals. One of his aims is to establish an entrepreneur/startup group for UMass Amherst alumni and students where people can get together (offline and online) and discuss entrepreneurial activities and pursuits. He has support from the UMass Alumni Association and is looking for volunteers. Alumni who are interested to help/join can email bdic@bdic.umass.edu for more information.

Manny Lopez ’11, Arts Entrepreneurship
Facts About BDIC

BDIC’s main objectives...

» Inspire students to design pioneering, individualized majors and launch the career of their dreams!

» Foster student growth through internships, research, and hands-on experiences.

» Provide innovative courses on entrepreneurship and leadership to students across campus

How well we are doing...

UMass Amherst is home to over 90 majors. **BDIC ranks 1st among all larger majors for overall student satisfaction!**
(Source: Graduating Senior Survey, 2008-2010, Office of Academic Planning and Assessment)

Recent Grants, donations and endowments...

These funds are used to sponsor student internships, academic travel, and advanced research projects. They are also used to sustain new courses in entrepreneurship and leadership.

**FY 2011**...... BDIC Annual Fund Donations of $20,000—a 100% increase in three years!

2011........... Maia Felisse McDermott Scholarship Fund established in honor of BDIC student Maia McDermott ’11 who passed away in 2010

2011........... $10K Microsoft Impact grant to enhance the use of technology in Entrepreneurship and Leadership classes

2011........... $2.5K UMass Team Based Learning grant for BDIC classes

2010........... $45K donation from BDIC graduate Peter F. ’75 and Peg (Owen) DiGiammarino ’75 supports new BDIC Integration and Innovation course, and career/networking events for juniors and seniors

2010........... $30K National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance grant to develop advanced entrepreneurship opportunities, following up on BDIC’s Introduction to Entrepreneurship class
When Dan Gabel ’12 proposed a BDIC concentration in Jazz History, he was already shaping the field of jazz music—big time.

Dan joined BDIC after a year-long tour as a soloist with the Glenn Miller Orchestra. Now, while pursuing his BDIC concentration and a second major in political science, Dan leads several notable bands, including Dan Gabel and the Abletones, the 18-piece big band pictured above.

On November 12, the Abletones performed in a dance-concert to benefit the American Big Band Preservation Society, an event held at Memorial Hall in Melrose, Mass.

In addition to performing professionally several times a week, Dan is in great demand as an arranger and transcriber of vintage jazz recordings. With his close attention to historical and musical detail, he is able to copy original sounds, or create new ones in his own inimitable way.

A senior, Dan is no traditional student. Several musical organizations, including the American Big Band Preservation Society, have already asked him to become their CEO. But Dan’s story, in which high accomplishment and success coincide with college instead of coming after it, is not so unusual in BDIC. Many BDIC students are already leaders in their field and choose BDIC because they can further amplify their achievements through an individualized major.

Now, has anyone thought to call Dan Dizzy?

I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

Robert Frost, “The Road Not Taken”
PLEASE CONSIDER GIVING TO BDIC

In today’s economy, your donation is more important than ever. Departmental budgets are decreasing, while expenses are increasing. Your donation will help to support student research projects and travel opportunities, career advising forums with alumni, senior celebrations, and of course, this newsletter. Please consider investing in our students and their future goals.

You can donate online at our website: www.umass.edu/bdic and click on the “give now” puzzle piece link in the right margin. If paying by check, please make check payable to the UMass Amherst Annual Fund with BDIC specified in the memo line of the check. Mail to:

Linda Roney  
BDIC, 607 Goodell  
140 Hicks Way  
UMass  
Amherst, MA 01003

I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.  

Robert Frost, “The Road Not Taken”
REMEMBERING MAIA MCDERMOTT ’11

In a newsletter that is filled with happy reports of young BDIC alumni, we are deeply saddened to relate that BDIC student Maia McDermott ’11 passed away tragically in an auto crash in February, 2010. In the company of Maia’s parents, Lori and Brian, we honored Maia at our BDIC graduation ceremony this past May.

In her BDIC proposal, Maia wrote: “I have never been a person who is satisfied with following just one direction.” She dreamed of becoming a reporter and an anchorwoman at a news station. Journalism allowed Maia to experience the world through many issues and many creative roles. She worked at Amherst Community Television and enjoyed “being part of the camera crew, editing raw footage and participating in any event and situation that I could,” as she said in the proposal.

Journalism lecturer Mary Carey described Maia as “a wonderful presence in class . . . she really stood out as a student who reached out to form a personal connection with other students and with me.”

The McDermott family has graciously created the Maia Felisse McDermott Memorial BDIC Scholarship Fund to profoundly affect the lives of future students and help preserve the memory of Maia in BDIC forever.

—Daniel Gordon and Linda Roney

Daniel Gordon was director of BDIC from February 2008 to August 2011. He is now associate dean of the Commonwealth Honors College, which houses BDIC. Linda Roney has been the chief adviser in BDIC since 1996 and was named assistant director in 2010.