



# BDIC ALUMNI NEWSLETTER Summer 2007

Hello again, Alumni!

We hope you've had a restful and healthy summer. Summer certainly seems to fly by these days!

The big news at BDIC is that we are still expecting to become a part of Commonwealth College, formerly referred to as the Honors College. This is very good news for BDIC since Commonwealth College could potentially offer us more support, both programmatically and financially. There are many plans in the works that have arisen out of BDIC's association with Commonwealth College, but we will save that news for a little later. Suffice it to say it is a very exciting and promising time for BDIC!

One of the goals that has arisen out of BDIC's liaison with Commonwealth College is to increase our involvement with our alumni. We want to sponsor more events so you can meet one another and also interact with our current students. Later this fall, we plan to have a dinner party in the Boston area for BDIC alumni. We'll let you know the details soon! We will be inviting you to campus for various student-based events, as well. We hope to see a lot of you in the coming year.

Please be in touch! We value your comments and suggestions. After all, you are BDIC.

Warm wishes,

BDIC staff

## ***ALUMNI FEEDBACK***

Alumni of BDIC have a tradition of providing us with generous support that has taken various forms, from attendance at department-sponsored academic events, monetary donations, and offering of internship and job opportunities to current students. As an integral part of the program's success, the alumni survey was created to open another avenue of support, in this instance through feedback from former students. Many of you expressed interest in:

- Mentoring and teaching BDIC students with majors similar to those you pursued;
- Receiving more personalized career placement and more extensive facilitation of employment;
- Having access to an alumni directory organized according to geographic location;
- Learning more information about the current state of BDIC, including an up-to-date list of majors being pursued and more frequent updates about upcoming events;
- Helping to improve the program through providing resources;
- attending more BDIC events.

Some of you also suggested that your experience with BDIC could have been improved by:

- Consultation with Career Services in formulating degree plans;
- Inclusion of concentration titles on Diplomas;
- Provision of a BDIC information sheet (i.e. explanation of the program) to present employers during interviews.

We want to thank our alums for the overwhelming number of responses we received. This active input is vital to the continued excellence of our program and will be taken into account during this exciting time of change as we improve BDIC and establish a connection with the University's Commonwealth College Honors Program. Thank you again for your continued support!

## ***RECENT BDIC GRADUATES***

BDIC graduated 47 students in the May, 2007 graduation ceremony. Many more will graduate in September. The May Commencement was very different this year from any other in the past. For the first time, the deans of the colleges presented every one of the more than 4,000 graduates with a congratulatory certificate, as well as a Umass medallion. In this way, the previously impersonal ceremony became much more meaningful. The following are some examples of what BDIC graduates are doing after completing their degrees:

**Emily Colton** is a recent graduate with a concentration in Recreation Management. She is currently working as a Beach Director at the Wayland Town Beach, where she oversees lifeguards, lessons, and other recreational activities. In the fall, Emily will begin her preparation for acceptance into Wheelock University's Child Life Program by volunteering in the Child Life Department at Boston Children's Hospital. After the completion of the graduate program, a 400-hour practicum, and an exam, she plans to be licensed, both nationally and internationally, as a Child Life Specialist. In her senior summary Emily said, "After becoming a BDIC major, I could not imagine anything different. I found it to be a wonderful program, but also very rewarding because I feel like I created something great."

**Alexandra Luck** has just graduated with a concentration in Community Development through the Study of Life Sciences. In the fall, she will begin working towards a Master's in Public Health, with a possible double Master's in Social Work at the University of Michigan. Her studies in Health Behavior and Health Education will focus on methods of creating, critiquing, evaluating, and improving health behavior interventions. She hopes to focus on adolescents and teens with disabilities and their socialization processes in an effort to increase support to their growth and development. Ali said in her senior summary "But, for all the trials and errors and red tape and paperwork, there is no program that offers the training, skills development, life-lesson learning and empowering opportunities as the Bachelor's Degree with Individual Concentration program does."



Kristen with her mother and grandmother

**Kristen Hamill** is a recent graduate with a concentration in International and Cultural Relations of the Middle East. At the completion of her thesis for Commonwealth College, she was invited to work on a freelance job for Yankee Magazine. Kristen is now writing a piece on an American woman who is an Islam leader. She will be living in Australia for the next year.

**Michelle DiIeso** has just graduated with a BDIC concentration in Equitation Therapy. She is currently working for Americorps in California.

**Chris Cheney** is a recent graduate with a Reading, Writing and Teaching Poetry concentration from BDIC. He will begin the MFA program in poetry at Umass in the fall and will be teaching Creative Writing.

**Amber Archambault** and **Kate Bauer** are recent graduates from BDIC in Entertainment Journalism and Film and International Relations Studies, respectively. They have just participated in an internship program at the Cannes Film Festival in France. They also managed to sneak us a few photos!

**Jean Capone** has just graduated with a BDIC concentration in The Practice of Sustainability Education. She will be earning her Masters at Umass in Higher Education Administration.

**Nadia Villaroel** is a recent Forensic Science graduate from BDIC. She was able to participate in independent studies and internships where she gained first hand experience in forensics, including skeletal fragment analysis. She is now working for Boston Scientific, a medical device company.

**Michael Bonanno** has just graduated with a BDIC concentration in Petroleum and Environmental Sciences. He is currently working in his father's construction business.

**Andrew Brousseau** is a recent graduate with a concentration in Natural Systems, where he combined courses that covered many different aspects of science. He is currently enrolled as a graduate student in the Umass Geoscience department.

**Gwenn Federman** is a recent Child Development and Management graduate. She will be attending graduate school at Umass in the Early Childhood program. Gwen attributes most of her BDIC success to the time she was able to spend student teaching in both college level and pre K-2 classrooms.

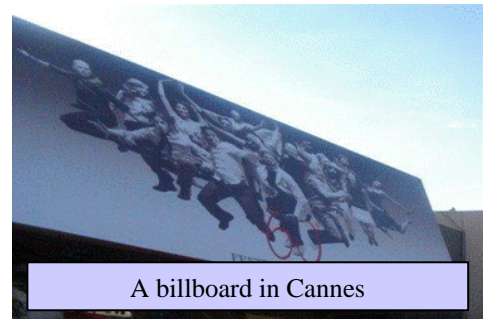


Jen in the BDIC Office

**Jen Miller** has just graduated from BDIC with an Equine Business Concentration. She is currently working at Peak Rock Farm on Buzzard's Bay where she is training horses for competition.

**Brandon Jaworski** has just earned his BDIC degree with a concentration in International and Entertainment Business Studies. This fall he will be attending the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami. In the two-year Music Business and Entertainment Industries Program, Brandon will be studying topics such as music copyright law, music and label management, and artist and repertoire. Brandon is very excited to begin putting his BDIC education to good use in this concentrated Master's of Music program.

**Brett Buchheister** is a May BDIC graduate. Using the background gleaned from his concentration in Management Information Systems, he is now working for EMC in Hopkington, MA, as an associate engineer. It was a competitive position and Brett attributes the first hand experience he has gained through the incorporation of internships into his curriculum to setting him apart from the other job applicants. Brett said in his senior summary, "I feel like I am not just another cookie cutter student. The thought that I bring more to the table and am unique is very motivating."



A billboard in Cannes

Kate and Friends at the Premier of "My BlueBerry Nights"



## ***NEWS FROM ALUMNI***

**Teresa Aravena** graduated from BDIC in 2002 with a degree title of "Public Health with a concentration in the Latino Community." She now works for the Latino Family Counseling Center, which is part of La Alianza Hispana, a Latino non-profit agency based in Roxbury, MA. She is currently serving as the Public Health Programs Supervisor, and has participated in such programs in the Latino community as HIV/AIDS prevention, family based services, and mentoring services. She is also currently helping in the organization of a large health fair event that will take place at Boston City Hall.

**Charlene Galameau** graduated from BDIC in 1978 with a concentration in Bilingual and Bicultural Communication and School Health Education with an Emphasis on Nutrition. She says the lesson of her life is: “You never know where it’s going to go.” Charlene has done a lot of things since her BDIC days that she never expected to do, such as getting a PhD in Religion from Harvard. Charlene constructed a PhD track for herself combining Ethics and Health Policy. Previous to that, Charlene earned a Master’s of Ethics (with a health care context) degree from the Iliff School of Theology. Since Fall, 2005, Charlene has taught in the Women’s Studies Department at Wellesley College and previously taught at the Department of Public Health and Family Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine.

Charlene and Marta MacRostie at an Alumni Gathering



Charlene had originally thought she would go into the medical technology field when she came to Umass. However, she became more interested in a broader public health focus with a multicultural language and culture emphasis. Between her junior and senior years in the BDIC program, Charlene had an internship that changed her life. She worked at a health program for migrant workers in Colorado that served to expand health care coverage to migrant workers and their children. Her focus after that point on bioethics, unheard voices, social structures, race and class became much more intentional.

Charlene affirmed the value of a BDIC degree. She says, “What matters is the solidity of the BDIC program even though employers may not know what BDIC is.” She also stressed the importance of faculty commitment to the program, especially in helping students shape their BDIC concentrations. Charlene has much good advice for current BDIC students and would like to be in touch with them.

**Gary Marchese** is a 1978 graduate of BDIC with a concentration in Human Services and the Law. Gary describes his transition from BDIC to his career path in the following:

“The BDIC Program and I were a perfect fit. When I enrolled at Umass I was certain I would become a physician, and for the next two years, in addition to the core requirements I took Chemistry and Biochemistry courses. In my second semester sophomore year, after meeting with the pre-med advisor, after much debate and consternation, I decided to abandon my goal to become a doctor and began to search for an appropriate major to suit my interests. I could not find one. Somehow, somehow, I stumbled into the BDIC office and I quickly learned that I could shape my own major (or double major) to suit my interests and career goals. I met with my BDIC advisor, Mr. Goldman, and together we decided to combine courses relating to my interest in saving humanity (human services) and the law. The University did not offer a pre-law major at that time. The most rewarding aspect of my BDIC major was working one-on-one with Professor Goldman, who was so instrumental in shaping my curriculum. His advice and counsel were especially helpful in the completion of my Honor’s Thesis. I wrote about the effectiveness of the delivery of legal services to the poor in the Northampton/Hadley region and I published a resource brochure in Spanish and English which provided information about free legal services for the poor. I am very proud of my BDIC degree which prepared me very well for law school. I have been practicing law in Waltham since 1982, and since 1997 I have served the constituents of Ward 5 as their city councilor.”

**Erica Fayrie**, BDIC 2002, concentrated in Pre-Art Therapy while at Umass. She earned a master’s degree in Art Therapy from Leslie College and worked for several years following her graduation as an art therapist at a school for emotionally disturbed boys in New Hampshire. This summer, Erica has made a major life change and has moved, along with her brother, her sister, her cat and her dog to Oregon. Erica plans to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle while living on a large parcel of land in a yurt. In anticipation of her new lifestyle, Erica drove her truck across country, fueled by vegetable oil. Her plans for the future include opening an art gallery and therapy center. While in BDIC, Erica was famous for her bark art creations. Her gentle, generous nature will always be remembered by the BDIC staff.

**Bridget McLaughlin** graduated from BDIC in 2003 with a concentration in Writing and Cultural Studies. Bridget worked as a peer advisor while she was in the Program. Perhaps it was during the exchange semester Bridget spent in Italy during her junior year at Umass that she caught the travel bug. Ever since her graduation from college, Bridget has been traveling the world to the most unlikely places. All of Bridget’s employment situations have conveniently involved extensive travel. Bridget has most recently been teaching in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. She is back in the U.S. for a visit over the summer and is particularly enjoying American food.

**Nancy O'Hare**, BDIC 1978, concentrated in Exercise Physiology. Nancy worked for 20 years after attending Umass as a Senior Clinical Physiologist at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. In order to broaden her career perspective, Nancy earned an MBA from the Sloan School of Management at MIT recently. She credits her BDIC experience with enabling her to think and work in an interdisciplinary manner. Nancy has just begun a new career with the Sterling Planning Alliance, a consulting firm that provides planning services to healthcare clients all over the world.

**Mary Donahue**, class of 1974, earned a BDIC degree in Pre-Physical Therapy. While in BDIC, Mary put together internships at the University Health Services and the former Belchertown State School. She integrated art therapy, plant therapy and pet therapy into her work. These were very new practices at the time and weren't always so well received by Mary's employers. Mary also organized a volunteer exchange between Umass students and Belchertown State School clients so that the Belchertown clients could swim at the Umass pool under the supervision of the student interns. After graduation, Mary worked in an outreach capacity to help clients eliminated from the state hospitals to find employment opportunities. Later, Mary changed gears in her career path and got a master's degree in Environmental Planning and Conservation. For many years she has worked as the Conservation Administrator in Chicopee, MA, and previously held the same position in Amherst.

Recently, a young woman came to inquire about BDIC. She had just transferred to Umass from the University of Connecticut, and she wanted to major in International Business and Spanish. It turned out that she was Mary Donahue's daughter!

## ***A NEW BREED OF BDIC STUDENT***

In the past few years, BDIC has seen more and more non-traditional, working or older students joining the program. Some of them are retired; some are changing their career paths in middle age. Others are finally making their dreams a priority, and despite the family at home and the full-time job, they are pursuing a degree in BDIC. Louise Moulton is one of the latter.

Louise has worked on campus for many years and has two grown children. She now works as the Office Manager for the Undergraduate Advising Center's Academic Dean's Office right next door to BDIC. In her spare time, Louise refinishes furniture she finds at flea markets and remodels her house. Louise's dream is to be an interior designer. It is something she has always wanted to do, but because she needed a degree to do it, she kept putting it off.

Last fall, after talking with several advisors, Louise became a BDIC student. Her concentration is entitled Development of Concepts in Interior Design and Wood. She is combining classes from Art, Building Materials and Wood Technologies, Architecture and Design and Management to form her major. It will take Louise several years to complete her degree since she can only fit one or two classes each semester into her busy work schedule, but she is not at all discouraged by this. Louise genuinely appreciates the freedom BDIC has given her to shape her own major, and thus forge her career.

## ***2007 SCHOLARSHIPS***

Because of the generosity of BDIC alumni, we are able to give research and travel grants to deserving students. Thank you, BDIC alumni! The following are descriptions of the scholarships BDIC gave students during 2007:

**Iman Rastegari** is a senior studying both Psychology and a BDIC concentration in Film and Video Production. For his Capstone project for Commonwealth College he will be writing, directing, and producing a short film that will combine themes from *Star Wars* with the television series *24*. Iman will be using his award money to cover the costs of the overall film production, helping to assure that shooting will be complete by the end of this semester.



Shahan and one of her models showcasing some of her designs

**Shahan Hart** is a senior with a concentration in Fashion Design and Management. She designed a fashion portfolio that was carried through the entire fashion process, including fashion sketches, patterns, and models. Her award money was used to pay for the materials needed for each of the garments she created.

**Sherry Hakimi** is a recent graduate of the BDIC program. While pursuing her concentration in International Development, she used her award money to help her defray the costs of a ten week intensive language program in Madrid, Spain.

**Darren M Ovitsky** is a graduate of BDIC with a concentration in Art, Rhythm, and the Transmission of Culture. Drawing inspiration from his five years of studying musical technique, Darren is currently creating a full length album of percussive compositions and improvisations. His

research award will be applied to his expenses for studio recording time and instructor's fees.

**Cynthia Duplessy** is a BDIC graduate with a concentration in International Business. She used her department award to participate in a Chinese Culture and Business course offered during the summer of 2006. The course included a study tour, which provided Cynthia with valuable hands-on experience that contributed directly to her major.

**Nia Taylor** is a recent graduate of BDIC and plans to supplement her degree in Social Justice Education with travel experience. Nia spent ten days in Sicily with members of her Travel Writing class, seeing and experiencing the culture and landscape while applying photography techniques she has learned. She used her research award to purchase supplies, such as film and books, and to pay for photo processing costs.

**Renaldo Qafzezi** is a BDIC student focusing on International Business and Entrepreneurship. His award has been applied towards a semester abroad in Florence, Italy. While overseas, Renaldo was able to enrich his experience through exposure to a new culture, using his award money to cover travel costs and meal expenses.

**Josh Farrell-Starbuck** is a senior who is pursuing a curriculum titled "A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Approach to Pre-Med." Josh applied his research award towards travel expenses incurred while going to Honduras last winter. There, he volunteered at the Organization for Youth Empowerment, a non-profit founded by a former BDIC graduate, dedicated to fostering creativity in Honduran children.

Many thanks to our alumni for donating the funds that enable BDIC to provide our students with scholarships and research grants!