

Indiana University Individualized Major Program

imp independent

Vol. 4, No. 1

College of Arts & Sciences Alumni Association

Fall/Winter 2010

IMP welcomes Williams as director

The Individualized Major Program is pleased to welcome as its new director Professor **Nick Williams** of the Department of English. Williams, who specializes in British Romanticism with a particular interest in William Blake, succeeds Professor **John McDowell**, who left the IMP post to become chair of the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology. Williams joined the IU faculty in 1992 after completing his PhD at Emory University. He has been energetically involved in the IMP, both as a sponsor and a member of many faculty committees, for more than a decade.

IU hosts second annual IMP conference

The second annual conference of individualized major programs was hosted — as was the first — by IU. Representatives from programs nationwide convened March 4–5 to discuss issues related to individualization in higher education. Among the universities represented were the University of Massachusetts–Amherst; the University of Connecticut, Storrs; Arizona State University; Duke University; and New York University. Panel topics for the conference, titled “Individualized Major

Programs: Assessment of Effective Learning and Best Practices,” included liberal arts and career education, student projects and perspectives, and emerging IMPs.

The traditional dinner at Michael’s Up-town Café was enlivened this year by a talk from **Steve Bonchek**, BA’71 (creative writing and history), director of Bloomington’s Harmony School and one of the IMP’s first graduates.

The IMP plans to host the conference for a third time in March 2011.



Duke University students Allie Sommer and Anjali Bhatia and Professor Norman Keul gave a presentation on Duke’s “Program II” at the IMP conference.

Jenny Bean

From the director’s desk

A spirit of enquiry

As I begin my first year as the director of the Individualized Major Program, I find myself thinking about how I came to the position and what I can bring to it, beyond my longstanding respect for what students can do when given a greater hand in the creation of a major. After all, like almost all the people who’ve directed such programs, here and elsewhere, I was trained within one of the traditional disciplines — English literature, in my case. And I’ve been a fairly happy inmate within the walls of my discipline: once I found my major, I was never really tempted to leave it.

But at the risk of paradox, I do think it’s true that, even if not everyone should enter the Individualized Major Program, an individualized major is the only one worth having. For surely it’s the case that the “individualizing” of a major can happen *within* a traditional discipline as well as between them. Any time a student, in whatever department, brings her own interests to a class, thinks about where she fits within a particular discipline, rather than simply recording the information that is being transmitted, that study is being individualized. Many students have realized that one of the quickest and most interesting ways to individualize their studies is to ponder the question of how classes relate to each other: How does that Introduction to Mythology connect to my bio course? Thinking in an interdisciplinary way, a mainstay of IMP, thus involves making sense of the sequence of classes you’re sitting through in the course of a day.

From this point of view, one that sees “individualizing” a major as a matter of bringing one’s own questions to the

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Program news

IU marine biology IMP wins Rolex scholarship

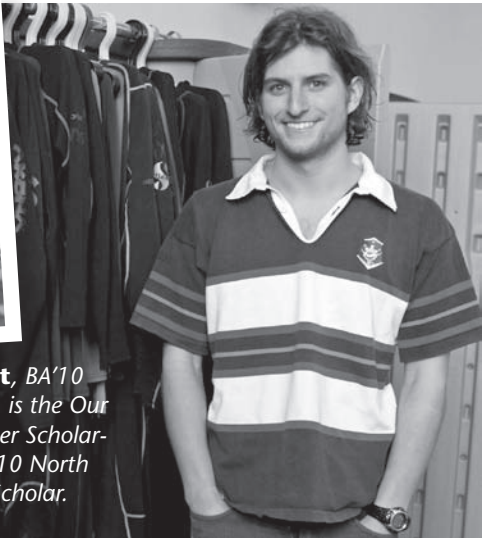
Marine biology in Indiana? You bet!

Although a university in the heart of the Midwest might not seem like an ideal place for the development of a major in marine biology, the global reach of IU's resources — and the ability of programs like the Individualized Major Program to bring them together — makes it possible. Just ask **Joshua Stewart, BA'10**, who majored in marine biology. The New York native was a freshman at Indiana University when he proposed a major that combined instruction in the natural sciences with courses from the IU School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation's world-class Academic Diving Program, while allowing him to take advantage of opportunities for field work offered by IU faculty.

The uniqueness ensured by the individualized approach paid off. "If I'd gone to a university on the coast where marine biology is a top degree, I would have been competing against hundreds of undergrads to do research," said Stewart, who has been selected as the Our World–Underwater Scholarship Society's 2010 North American Rolex Scholar. The prestigious scholarship will finance Stewart for a year working with underwater filmmakers, photographers, marine biologists, and conservationists, paying for his travel and living expenses. Stewart has also been named a winner of the



Joshua Stewart, BA'10 (marine biology), is the Our World–Underwater Scholarship Society's 2010 North American Rolex Scholar.



Heather Brogden

IMP's Outstanding Senior Project Award for 2009–10 for his work documenting underwater biological resources in the shallow water off the Dominican Republic (see page 4).

Follow Stewart's underwater adventures online at <http://owussnorthamerica.org>.

From the director

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study at hand, perhaps English does make some sense as a preparation. English is the great magpie of disciplines, forever sure that it needs to turn elsewhere to justify its love of fictions. No sooner does one become obsessed with stories of a hunt for the great white whale, than one must go out and learn all one can about whales, usually just enough to bore one's friends and too little to impress one's zoologist colleagues. The intensity of a discipline — and this is true of all disciplines and not just English — is centrifugal as well as centripetal: it doesn't only draw you into the vortex of its own concerns, but it also propels you back into the world with newly focused questions.

What I like the most about the IMP and what pleases me the most about directing the program is that this individuating imperative is built in. Although I found a way to individuate my English major to my own liking, thanks to some wonderful mentors, I have the greatest regard for IMP students in that they're asking these questions from the very outset of their study. In that way, the IMP is nothing less than a departmental home for the liberal spirit of enquiry itself.

— Nick Williams

POSTCARD FROM DENMARK

Senior Alexandra Hernly (gender and sexuality from a cross-discipline perspective with a concentration in masculinity) writes us from Copenhagen, where she studied this summer at the prestigious Danish Institute for Study Abroad:

"Studying abroad in Copenhagen, the real challenges are outside of the classroom. When I left home I expected to get lost in the city repeatedly, know no one, and have fun. I was right about all of that, but as soon as I got here I realized I was in for more of a culture shock than expected. The first thing was the language. Even though almost everyone here speaks English, they generally speak to me first in Danish and when I stand there looking confused and say, 'Sorry, I only speak English!' they smile and switch to English. That phrase — 'Sorry, I only speak English!' — is probably the phrase I have said most often since I have been here.

"Another thing that has been a very unexpected challenge is grocery shopping. I live in a *kollegium* — the equivalent of a dorm in the U.S. — but instead of a dining hall I share a kitchen with 10 other students. If I want to eat and not spend a fortune, I have to grocery shop, which is a much more tiring excursion than I ever imagined. The first time I went to the grocery store I probably spent 30 minutes looking for peanut butter; apparently it is not a very common food here. It took about two weeks to get over the shock of being in a new culture, but once I did I realized how much I love it here in Copenhagen. The city is beautiful, the cool weather is perfect for me, and the constant festivities around the city always give me something to do. I still have three weeks here in Copenhagen, but I could spend at least a year here just seeing the things this city has to offer."

Student films receive national, regional recognition

Andrew Behringer, BA'10 (rock and roll history), won best drama for his film *Coda* at IU's Campus MovieFest Competition, a national competition in which student filmmakers are given one week to complete a five-minute entry. *Coda* then advanced to the Northwest regional competition in New York City. Another of Behringer's films, *Ashes to December*, was selected as a finalist in the IU Department of Communication and Culture's 2009 Iris Film Festival.

Another IMP student, **Gesumino Aho-Rulli** (film and television direction), made it to the national round of Campus MovieFest, held June 10–13 in Las Vegas. Aho-Rulli's film *Giggles* made the final 16 (of the 240 that had moved on from the three regionals) after winning Best Picture at the IU campus level. *Giggles* also won a Golden Tripod award for best editing.

Two seniors put on an unusual fashion show

One normally thinks of fashion shows taking place in elegant surroundings. For their presentation of designs inspired by straitjackets and decaying barns, fashion design seniors **Kate Murphy**, BA'10, and **Casey Heck** had something different in mind. Selecting a location on the outskirts of Bloomington — a spartan, seemingly abandoned industrial site called the Cassady Electrical Co. — and a chilly weekend in late February, the two paraded their models before a heavily bundled audience sipping coffee, cocoa, and hot cider. Veterans of the IMP fashion design program declared it among the most memorable such shows ever.

According to the designers, it was natural that the two best friends would organize a joint event, and although their inspirations were different, the designs of each complemented the other's nicely. Heck has been named a winner of the IMP's Outstanding Senior Project Award for 2009–10 (see page 4).

Production manager, IMP sponsor accepts national position

David Grindle, MS'95, who sponsored IMP students in stage management and event planning during his tenure as production manager of the IU Department of Theatre and Drama, has left IU to become executive director of the U.S. Institute of Theatre Technology in Syracuse, N.Y.

Grindle received his BA from Berry College and his master's degree from the Jacobs School of Music at IU. He has served as production manager for the Atlanta Opera and as production stage manager for companies throughout North America. In 2007–08 he chaired a committee that drafted national standards and core competencies for BFA stage management degrees.

The quality of Grindle's mentorship in the IMP was exceptional. One of his recent students, **Claire Diedrich**, BA'08 (stage management), won the IMP's Outstanding Senior Project Award for her experience as the first-ever intern with Opera Australia in Sydney and was the first person from IU to win a national USITT award.

Sponsor profile

Lauren Miller Griffith

Among the presenters at the 2010 IMP conference was **Lauren Miller Griffith**, a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology and IMP sponsor. Miller Griffith practices and studies the Brazilian discipline known as capoeira and co-sponsors IMP student **Adam Rector** (martial arts training methodologies).

Although graduate students are not eligible to sponsor students singly, they may serve as co-sponsors with faculty members. In fact, one theme of the conference panel Miller Griffith presented along



Jenny Bean

Lauren Miller Griffith spoke about the role of graduate students in individualized major programs at the IMP conference.

with anthropology professor **April Sievert** was the unique ability of individualized programs to take advantage of cutting-edge knowledge in areas often pursued, not by faculty, but by graduate students.

“By working with Adam, my eyes have been opened to a new area of research within martial arts,” says Miller Griffith. “He has attempted to teach me some parkour moves, and while I doubt I will ever become a serious practitioner myself, I have begun to think about the theoretical possibilities such a study may offer. I have also worked with **Thomas Greenwood** (martial culture of Japan)

through my Laboratory in Ethnography course. We have discussed the possibility of collaborating on the topic of signature pedagogies within the martial arts.”

In addition to her research and work with the IMP, Miller Griffith teaches courses on the anthropology of martial arts and leads master classes on teaching anthropology.

Miller Griffith has recently accepted a one-year teaching position at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff.

Phi Beta Kappa inductees

Fall 2009

- **Andrew Hahn**, ethics
- **Caleb Levell**, social media ecology
- **Brittney Miller**, event planning
- **Aasiya Mirza**, speechwriting
- **Jayne O'Hara**, stage management

Spring 2010

The spring induction ceremony featured Nobel laureate Elinor Ostrom.

- **Melissa Dittmann**, intercultural arts programming and performance

IMP graduation

The University Club in the Indiana Memorial Union was decorated for the holidays on Dec. 19, 2009, when 61 people gathered there for the Individualized Major Program's winter graduation ceremony. The attendees, including seven graduates, their families and friends, and IMP faculty and staff, enjoyed a breakfast buffet and selections from pianist **Monika Herzig** (including Vince Guaraldi's beloved theme from *A Charlie Brown Christmas*). There followed a program including student speaker **Erika Heidewald** (world languages) and the reading of student biographies and presentation of certificates by IMP director **John McDowell**.

The IMP's spring graduation was held on May 8, 2010, in the Frangipani Room of the IMU and attended by 280 people, including 39 graduates. Student speakers were **Aasiya Mirza** (speechwriting) and **Lauren Zuber** (fashion design).



Nicole O'Neal, BA'10 (*music business*), and **Andy Dunn, BA'10** (*history of rock and roll*), celebrate their graduation at the IMP ceremony.

What they're saying about the IMP

These quotes were selected from a November 2009 survey of graduating seniors.

What did you like about the IMP?

"Its seeming intent to acknowledge controversial topics and to pick up new and under-recognized topics as well."

"The ability to specialize and really focus on the things that I am passionate about. The Individualized Major Program is the perfect option for people who have a personalized drive and a clear life goal! It saved my college experience."

"The program is awesome and let me take a bunch of really cool classes and combine them into a more personal degree."

"I learned a lot about using academic resources and doing research, which will come in handy both in personal pursuits and in graduate school. I was introduced to a lot of new ideas and ways of looking at the world."

"I enjoyed my degree program within the Individualized Major Program; it allowed for exploration in other fields which further broadened my horizons. I enjoyed the flexibility as well as the professor-student dynamic within my program, something that other programs do not always stress."

"My ability to make my own major through the Individualized Major Program. I've really enjoyed making my own class schedules each semester."

"That I could do the individualized major and graduate with a unique degree that I am happy with."

"The availability of opportunities to learn a broad spectrum of topics."



Melissa Malnati, BA'10 (*photojournalism*)

Photos by Ric Cradick, IU PhotoGraphics

Outstanding students recognized with IMP awards in 2009–10

Aasiya Mirza, BA'10 (speechwriting), won the Richard D. Young Award, which honors one of the IMP's early directors and is given to the student whose academic achievement and civic engagement best exemplify the values he sought to foster. The awards committee considered Mirza's exemplary academic record (a Wells Scholar, she also completed an English major with departmental honors); the quality of her final project, a reconstruction of key arguments in the 1991 rape trial of William Kennedy Smith; and her service to the university community. She has served as president of the Muslim Student Union and Collins Living-Learning Center and was the founding president of ABE at IU, an organization devoted to the study of Abraham Lincoln and the implications of his political beliefs and acts for the present. She also served on the Board of Aeons, which advises IU President Michael McRobbie on issues affecting students.

Honorable mention goes to **Andrew Hahn, BA'10** (ethics), a Wells Scholar who double-majored in IMP and political science. His final project was a thesis on empathy that integrated philosophy, sociology, and psychology. Hahn was a member of the IU Ethics Bowl team and was IUSA student body vice president for congress, vice president for the Collins Living-Learning Center board of governors, and vice president for politics of the IU College Democrats. He has interned for Sen. Richard Lugar, Rep. Baron Hill, and the U.K. House of Commons.

The Outstanding Senior Project Award was split four ways among **Casey Heck** (fashion design); **Caleb Levell, BA'09** (social media ecology); **Joshua Stewart, BA'10** (marine biology); and **Max Yoder, BA'10** (brand management and advertising). This distribution represents aptly the range of subjects pursued by the IMP's students,

including the artistic/creative (Heck), the scientific (Stewart), and two approaches to business: its application in new media (Levell) and critical analysis (Yoder).

Heck designed and constructed "Weathered Beauty," a line of garments inspired by the visual attributes of aged, rugged, central
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The class of 2010 celebrates at the IMP graduation ceremony.

Ric Cradick, IU PhotoGraphics

Alumni notebook

2000s

Keith “Noah” Baker Merrill, BA’02, is the co-founder of Direct Aid Iraq, a humanitarian aid and peace-building network staffed by both Americans and Iraqis. The global network connects Iraqis with urgent medical care on a case-by-case basis, advocates for resettlement, and facilitates other organizations. As a result of his activism and support for a peaceful future for the people of Iraq, Baker Merrill was named one of the “50 Visionaries Who Are Changing Your World” in the November-December 2009 issue of *Utne Reader*. For further information visit <http://www.utne.com/Politics/Noah-Baker-Merrill-Direct-Aid-Iraq-Humanitarian.aspx>. Baker Merrill lives in Brattleboro, Vt.

Raymond L.K. Fleischmann, BA’06, had a short story published in the Summer 2010 issue of *River Styx*, a literary journal based in St. Louis. He is completing an MFA in creative writing at the Ohio State University and will graduate in the spring. Fleischmann lives in Columbus, Ohio.

In July, **Samantha F. Kreindel**, BA’08, posted a blog on *The Huffington Post*’s Web site detailing her two-year job search after graduating from IU. After numerous internships and part-time positions, including positions as a sales professional at Tiffany & Co., a freelance publicist at Dalyah Profes-

Johnny Baseball

When the Boston Red Sox won the World Series in 2004, playwright Richard Dresser feared the time might have passed for a musical about the infamous Red Sox Curse. But the show went on, and May 16 marked the world premiere of *Johnny Baseball* at the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, Mass.

Individualized Major Program alumnus **Colin Donnell**, BA’05 (musical theatre), heads the cast as Johnny O’Brien, a rookie with the 1919 Sox. Donnell won the IMP’s Outstanding Senior Project award in 2005 for his role in the musical *Pal Joey*.

sional Jewelers, and a fashion internship at Niche Media, she has secured a position as an account assistant at GMMB, a public relations firm in Washington, D.C. To read Kreindel’s blog, visit http://www.huffingtonpost.com/samantha-kreindel/employed-after-a-two-year_b_651226.html.

Georgia A. Perry, BAJ’09, graduated from the IU School of Journalism with an outside area focus in comedy writing through the Individualized Major Program. She is currently working as an editorial intern and freelance writer in Portland, Ore.

Recent graduate

Laura Nading

Laura Nading, BA’10 (community sustainability), returned to her hometown of Hope, Ind., this fall to pursue a career in sustainable rural community development and continue the research begun in her final project. Her paper “What’s Wrong with Rural?” — which earned Nading departmental honors and a nomination for the Richard D. Young Award — explores barriers to community-led sustainable rural development, focusing narrowly on central Indiana, with the purpose of enhancing current understandings of issues associated with sustainability implementation in rural areas.

Last summer Nading interned with the IU Office of Sustainability with the goal of integrating sustainability awareness and practices into the new-student experience. She had been collaborating with the IU Office of First-Year Experience Programs since December 2009 in efforts to implement sustainability initiatives during summer orientation.

Nading is a co-writer and co-host of *EcoReport*, a public affairs program on WFHB radio that features environmental and ecological news on relevant local, regional, and national levels. On Saturdays she can be found at the Community Farmers Market in Columbus, Ind., selling assorted vegetables, flowers, and animal products from her parents’ farm.

Awards

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Indiana barns, which she presented at a fashion show in February (see page 3).

Levell created a website, CharityMob.org, that invites users to donate to various philanthropic causes and to vote on those they consider most worthy of receiving donations.

Stewart’s project, a paper titled “Methods for Management: Monitoring Marine Resources,” explored strategies for monitoring the health of marine life found within the marine reserves and preserves of the Dominican Republic.

Yoder conducted an extended analysis of corporate social responsibility that included, presciently, a look at British Petroleum’s “beyond petroleum” campaign as an example of “greenwashing.”

Alumnus profile

Michael Bridavsky: Russian Recording

Michael Bridavsky, BA’04, completed an IMP major in music and film and also holds an associate degree in audio technology. In fall 2008, he left a position as audio engineer for the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music Digital Audio Archiving Project to focus full time on his career as a recording-studio owner/operator. At around the same time, his studio, Russian Recording, moved from Brown County to its current location in Bloomington, when the space formerly known as the Art Hospital (once home of world-class Bloomington independent record label Secretly Canadian) was renovated for use as a recording studio. Since then, Bridavsky has recorded — and hosted performances by — dozens of local, national, and international artists in styles ranging from baroque to black metal.

“I don’t ever want to make films,” Bridavsky learned from his IMP major. Nevertheless, he’s quick to assert the importance of education for a line of work in which many assume experience is the only teacher: “To become an engineer is to really understand how your equipment works, why it sounds the way it does, why it only provides good results in certain circumstances, and why the equipment is not nearly as important as understanding acoustics, the physics of sound, electronics, and the most important thing, people skills. You don’t get that experience by sitting in your basement with a four-track.”

IMP Independent

This newsletter is published by the Indiana University Alumni Association, in cooperation with the Individualized Major Program and the College of Arts and Sciences Alumni Association, to encourage alumni interest in and support for Indiana University. For activities and membership information, call (800) 824-3044 or send e-mail to ualumni@indiana.edu.

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