

# THE SPOUTER

## Message from the honors director

Professor Robert Darst

This has been an exciting year of growth and transformation in the UMass Dartmouth Honors Program, and I have quite a few new developments to announce.

First, I am very pleased to announce that we will very soon open our new Honors Program Center on the fourth floor of the University Library. The new Honors Center will have a seminar classroom and a student lounge, as well as office space for the Honors Program staff. We expect to complete the move over the summer, and to officially celebrate the Grand Opening of the new Honors Center at the very beginning of the Fall 2009 semester.

A second major development this year was the creation of the Honors Student Association. The HSA has already undertaken several important initiatives, including the publication of this newsletter. Many thanks to everyone involved! For more information on the HSA's activities, see page 2.

We have also made some important changes to the Honors Program curriculum. In order to better support students who have not yet begun their Honors theses and projects, we have developed a junior year seminar called "Scholarly Inquiry." This seminar will combine visits from researchers and creative artists with topics such as electronic databases and citation software, research ethics, and time management. The seminar will meet once per week as Honors 301 in the fall, and Honors

302 in the spring, and will be worth 1.5 credits per semester. All Honors students should take at least one of these seminars by the end of their junior year, and we strongly encourage those who can to take both.

Another new addition to the curriculum is Honors 101, "Community, Diversity, and Responsibility." This three-credit course is designed to help first-year Honors students make a successful transition to life at UMass Dartmouth. It will combine in-class discussions of community, diversity, and individual responsibility with work on real-life projects in the local and university community. Honors 101 will make its debut next year.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome aboard our new Associate Director, Philosophy Professor Jennifer Mulnix, who joined the Honors Program in September. Since taking up her new position, Professor Mulnix has worked tirelessly to expand and invigorate our activities and programs. None of this year's accomplishments would have been possible without her leadership and support. Thank you, Professor Mulnix!

Finally, I wish to thank each and every Honors student. Your enthusiasm and determination make the Honors Program a success, and it is a great joy to be able to work together with all of you.

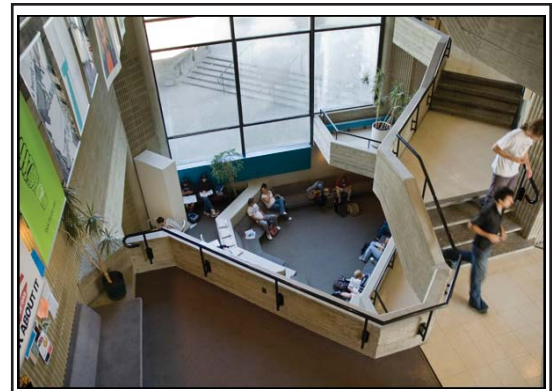
## Why the "Spouter"?

This 2009 inaugural issue of the *Spouter* is actually a revival of the earlier UMD Honors Newsletter, *Spouter*, under the directorship of Louise Habicht. Prof. Habicht came up with the name 'Spouter' because she had been working on Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* at the time, and she also thought of the Honors Newsletter as a chance for "spouting off"! North Dartmouth and New Bedford also have a long history of whale fisheries dating back to the mid-eighteenth century.

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*"World class. Within reach."*



## Honors Student Association

The Honors Student Association is committed to serving the interests and needs of all students at UMass Dartmouth, including those who are in the Honors Program. The HSA will provide opportunities for all UMD students to engage with one another, serve the community, develop and present original student work, enrich their academic experiences, serve as a source of information and fellowship for other students, and participate fully in the university experience.



## Welcoming party for incoming honors freshmen

*Saturday, May 9th 1-3pm*

Will you be an Honors student in the Fall of 2009? Mark your calendar! Please join us on Saturday May 9th in the Library Browsing Area from 1-3pm for a welcoming party. This event is a chance for you to get a taste of UMD life and to meet other current honors students. Food and refreshments will be provided. Please attend!

## Relay for Life

Honors students, do you want to get involved in helping the community? Why not join the HSA team (or any other team) in the Relay for Life walk? Relay for Life is an event which raises money to help fund cancer research. Relay for Life brings more than 3.5 million people from across the country together each year to celebrate the lives of those who have battled cancer, remember loved ones lost, and fight back against a disease that takes too much. This fun-filled, overnight event empowers everyone to help fight cancer by raising money and awareness to support the American Cancer Society's lifesaving mission. Every team will have at least one

of its members walking in a path set up in the campus quad from April 17 at 3pm to April 18 at 10 am. Throughout the day and night, there will be all sorts of fun activities.

The money spent at this event will all go to cancer research. The only thing left for you to do now is to register or join at: [relayforlife.org/umassdartmouth](http://relayforlife.org/umassdartmouth). A ten dollar fee is required, but any money raised after that is from the goodness of your heart. For more information, contact the HSA Community Service Chair, Ben Clarke at [bclarke@umassd.edu](mailto:bclarke@umassd.edu). Hope to see you there!



## HSA Activities

*Six Flags Trip - Saturday, April 25th*

Join us for a day of fun at Six Flags New England, located near Springfield, MA! The HSA invites any interested students to join us for a group trip to Six Flags for the day. The cost will be between \$30-40, and includes bus transportation and entrance tickets. For more information, contact the HSA Social Chair, Samantha Bailey at [sbailey@umassd.edu](mailto:sbailey@umassd.edu).

### 2009 HSA Officers

**President** - Elise Gilbert

**Vice-President** - Colleen Stewart

**Secretary** - Brittany Curcuru

**Treasurer** - Charles Lu

**Social Events Chair** - Samantha Bailey

**Community Service Chair** - Benjamin Clarke

**Web Design Chair** - Sarah Gregg

**Orientation Chair** - Lesley Anderson

**Honors Symposium Chair** - Caitlin McGarigal

**Newsletter Chair** - Elise Rapoza

**Newsletter Editor** - Benjamin Brown

**Faculty Advisor** - Professor Jennifer Mulnix



## Honors student interview with Ben Brown

By Elise Gilbert, English and Philosophy

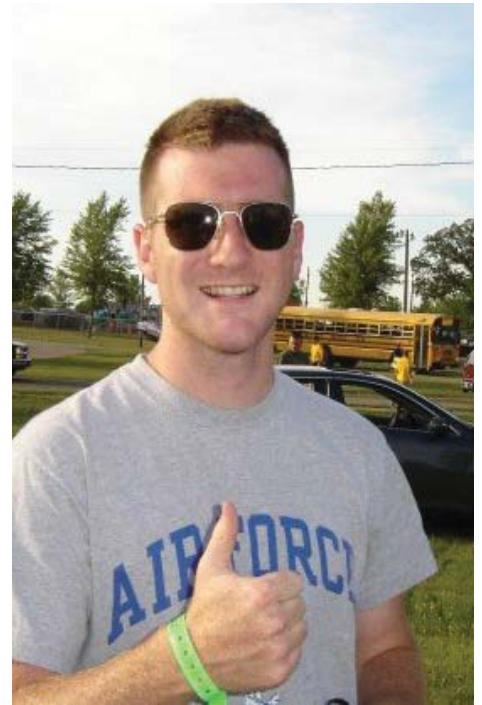
**Ben Brown**, a senior English major in the Honors Program, has a lot on his plate this semester. Not only is he the editor of *The Spouter*, he is the assistant sports editor for *The Torch*, a member of the university tennis team, and he's currently working on a 40 page undergraduate thesis on epideictic discourse in video games. In the midst of all this work, he's also applying to the United States Air Force Officer Training School. This May, Ben will graduate as a Massachusetts Commonwealth Scholar, a well-deserved merit for his commitment to his studies. Last week, I had the pleasure of interviewing Ben about his current progress on his undergraduate thesis.

Typically, when a student mentions that he or she is an English major, he or she is faced with a grimace and the (always encouraging) question, "What are you going to do with that?" While this question can be answered either seriously (teach graduate school) or jokingly ("Why, I'm going to be a biochemist, of course!"), Ben's answer is entirely unique: he is going to be an Air Force pilot. Ben always knew he wanted to fly planes, and he always knew he wanted to fly for the Air Force. His career choice was strongly influenced by his family. His grandfather flew in A-20s during World War II, which are night fighter aircrafts with speeds of up to 339 miles per hour! Ben decided to come to UMass Dartmouth for English because Air Force pilots are required to have a Bachelor's degree and writing is one of his strongest assets. Don't worry, though, Ben's degree will be put to good use as a pilot. He says, "From what I've been told, there's plenty of writing to do in the Air Force." And if he doesn't

pursue a full-time career with the military? He'll most likely go into copy-editing!

Before he began working on his thesis, Ben was lucky enough to have a summer internship with a local newspaper on the south shore. He described this experience as "invaluable," because it gave him in-depth hands-on experience in the journalism field. While working for this newspaper, Ben published an average of three articles a week, one of which he feels is his most accomplished piece to date. This article was an op-ed commentary on voting turnouts, which combined extensive research with Ben's own opinions and observations. Ben says he would encourage everybody to find an internship because you can learn crucial skills that can't be taught in the classroom. For Ben, a key skill he acquired was overcoming timidity, a trait he was forced to conquer by making phone calls and taking statements for major stories.

Although Ben isn't much of a video game player, he admits that he owns an Xbox 360 and enjoys a "heated game of Halo now and then." Like many people, he played video games as a kid but slowly outgrew them with age. Still, fond memories of virtual reality remained when an assignment for his English 257 class gave Ben a chance to view video games in an entirely different light. The class, Introduction to Rhetorical Studies, prompted his interest in the epideictic discourse that video games involve. Epideictic discourse is a classical genre of rhetoric, which involves ideals and values embraced by a certain community. For Ben, this means examining what the video games themselves praise or encourage.



He believes that video games are an "important vessel for epideictic discourse with many subtle social implications." The central questions of his paper are: What does playing video games reveal about societal beliefs and values? What sorts of experiences do players undergo that praise or blame certain actions? So far, Ben found that the social values promoted in video games are many and varied, and include military dominance, teamwork, discipline, and hard work.

His research includes primary sources, such as Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, and a multitude of secondary sources that investigate epideictic discourse in several different forms, including speeches, toasts, and conversations. Currently ten pages into his paper, Ben and his faculty sponsor, Dr. Jerry Blitefield, look forward to presenting the final project.

## Computational mathematics training project

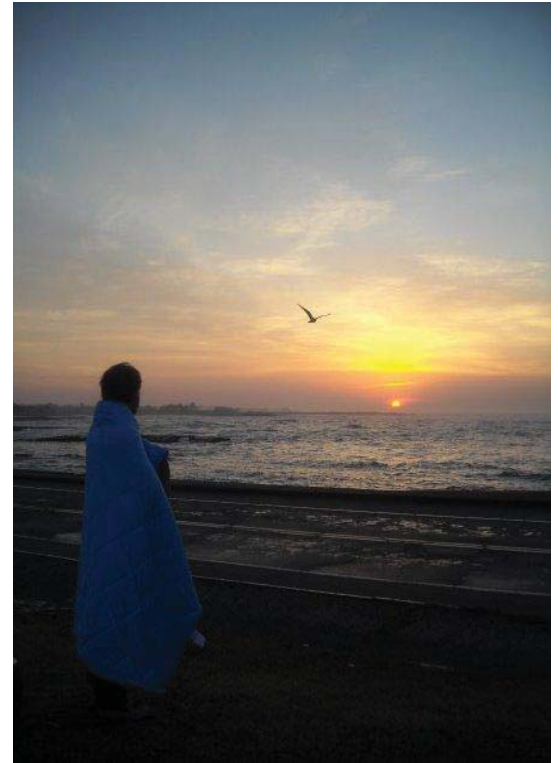
By *Elise Rapoza, Multidisciplinary Studies*

**In a project** that is the first of its kind, four UMass Dartmouth honors students are currently embarking on undergraduate research in computational mathematics. The project is called Computational Science Training for Undergraduates in the Mathematical Sciences (CMSUS), and it is funded by the National Science Foundation. The honors students, Christina Distefano, Elise Rapoza, Aimee Ross, and Leanne Silvia, are just four out of sixteen total undergraduate students chosen for their academic record and motivation.

Aimee Ross, who is studying "Pattern Formation in Growing Sandpiles," chose her topic because she wanted to study a phenomenon that she didn't know existed. She says, "listening to everyone else's presentations in CSUMS are extremely useful, as they are all new and exciting topics that are meaningful to each individual." Computational mathematics is exciting to Aimee because "computers can be incorporated in solving extremely interesting and difficult problems."

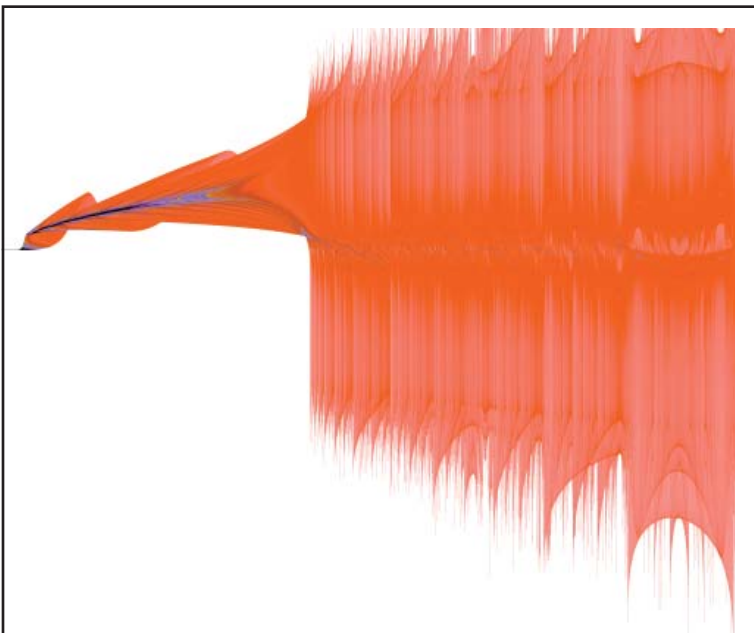
She hopes to gain an in-depth understanding of the research process and apply that information next year when she works on her undergraduate thesis.

In addition to their independent research, CSUMS students participate in a seminar where they can interact and learn about research tools. According to Gary Davis, Ph.D., who worked on the first proposal with Sigal Gottlieb, Ph.D., Steve Leon, Ph.D., and Jae-Hun Jung, Ph.D., "the NSF has a focus on more interactive teaching, less of the 'sage on the stage' approach so common in undergraduate mathematics teaching...The style of the seminar largely results from Sigal and my vision of a student-run seminar for students by students. Alfa [the instructor] has, of course, added his inimitable dimension to the process." All four honors students will be presenting in the Massachusetts Statewide Undergraduate Conference on Friday, May 1st.



Photograph entry: "Newport Beach"  
by *Alyssa Bailey, Psychology*

Below: A numerically generated image of a slice of the Lorenz Attractor created by Chris Bresten



### Promotion

by *Stephanie Mireku, English*

Velocity  
Acceleration  
May the force be with you  
Moving forward like Toyota  
Laughter that chokes the mind  
The mind, the body, and the soul become one  
And so do we  
Kissing under the moonlight  
But then as my heart loses coordination, the  
wheel acts accordingly  
In a whirlwind of asphalt, metal, and heat  
We crash into the night  
Physics and life collide, head-on  
Blood of salvation is what we need  
You thought the next level was physical reality  
And for once, you were right

## Honors faculty interview with Dr. Elizabeth Correiro

By Colleen Stewart, Biology



**In the minds** of quite a few students, the word “lab” conjures up memories of Friday afternoons spent cooped in a stuffy room standing beside a lab bench and praying for a runny clear liquid to boil (“Distill faster!”). But labs are also important to everyday life in ways we don’t always see. Clinical Laboratory Scientists are highly trained and nationally certified practitioners who perform the tests that may tell people they are pregnant, have diabetes or cancer, or that they have managed to get their cholesterol under control. These are the types of skills Medical Laboratory Science (MLS) majors are taught, and Professor Elizabeth Correiro is part of the busy department that does so. Having attended school as a MLS major herself, Professor Correiro is well aware of the challenges and rewards of working toward a lab-intensive degree.

While her passion has always been science, Professor Correiro originally

attended college for chemical engineering, changing majors to MLS her sophomore year. The program she completed was intensive, consisting of three years of classes and a fourth year with an unpaid internship in a clinical lab. No formal thesis was expected of Professor Correiro, but she was required to do thesis-level work. One example she cited was a 65-page case study on a patient with multiple myeloma.

Professor Correiro has managed to find a balance between academics and other endeavors. For over a decade after she received her undergraduate degree, she worked in her field in a lab at New England Deaconess and Faulkner Hospitals, dedicating herself to her career and her family. She describes herself as an avid lover of the outdoors, bicycling for recreation (even daily trips of up to 20 miles!) and participating as a member of a URI crew team where she served as the coxswain for an eight-man rowing skull. This required both cardiovascular and muscular fitness, so both aerobics and weight training were a large part of her life. She still keeps up her active lifestyle, noting her love for southeastern Massachusetts for the variety of activities and scenery it offers. Having grown up in Fall River, Professor Correiro knows the local area well. She has lived in parts of Rhode Island as well as in Massachusetts.

It was not until the late 1990s that she enrolled as a formal Master’s degree candidate, and it would be another 11 years before she completed a degree program. Originally, she entered graduate school for civil engineering, but her love of science returned her to biology, although not without some stops along the way. During the course of working for her Master’s degree, Professor Correiro also began her

career as an educator, holding a position as a high school teacher. At this job, she taught general science as well as biology and biochemistry. While she first enrolled in the University of Rhode Island for her Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) degree, Professor Correiro actually finished her degree in 2007 at UMass Dartmouth.

Professor Correiro is very involved in her field and very active among both the scientific and academic communities. She presents at national meetings several times a year and researches collaboratively with other faculty at UMD. Her scientific passion is genetics and the processes of the human body as it relates to abnormal function, and she also has a commitment to bringing ‘real-life’ practical experience to her students. In that vein, she teaches Human Genetics (both lecture and lab), Fundamentals in CLS Techniques, and Immunohematology. All three courses are MLS courses.

Professor Correiro also participates in the Spotlight Program, teaching a four-week course on Forensics and DNA analysis. She tailored her Spotlight course for university-level education, producing the UMD Honors course: “Forensics and DNA Analysis for the Non-Science Major.”

Professor Correiro feels it is important to make sure that each level teaches material that is appropriate, current, accurate, and useful, especially given all the new material being uncovered every year in the science fields. Above all, she views herself as a person seeking balance. It remains important to balance introductory education with higher education, home with school, education with experience and practicality with practice.

## 2009 Commonwealth Honors Thesis Abstracts

### Erin Lewis, Spanish

*Study of Adult Second Language Acquisition of Spanish: Testing with Two Instructional Methods*

Chomsky (1994) and Pinker (1994) have theorized that the language acquisition device is believed to atrophy after the age of twelve. Consequently, adults have a harder time learning a second language and—as I found in my experiment—they learn language at a slower pace. Using a pre-test and post-test, I measured the second language acquisition of two groups of learners in both written and oral Spanish communication throughout an eight week long experiment. Twenty adults aged 30 to 72 who had received little or no instruction in Spanish volunteered to undertake Spanish lessons. They were divided into two separate groups using two different types of instructional methods: the traditional classroom face-to-face setting, and instructional videos. The face-to-face students were allowed to set the pace of the class, absorbing the material and clarifying questions in areas with which they struggled. This method enabled learners to speak and write in Spanish despite covering less material. Moreover, even though the instructional video group was exposed to more information, these students retained less and therefore did not demonstrate as much progress on the post-test. The results suggest that face-to-face instruction is a more effective method of teaching languages than instructional videos.

### Nicole Brunelle, Spanish & Portuguese *Poetry Book*

For my honors project I am writing a book of poetry, which contains a wide variety of poems in English, Spanish and Portuguese. Some of these poems are based upon the exploration of rhyme and rhythm in these different languages, in which the flow of phonetics takes precedence over content and the meaning is less apparent. Others are creative outlets for societal criticism and personal emotions, wherein meaning takes precedence over style.

### Brian Ashmankas, Political Science & Sociology *The Ideological Triangle: A Pluralist Approach to Political Ideology*

My thesis is a reexamination of the nature of political ideology, divided into two parts. The first part offers a definition of political ideology and shows it to be the result of disagreement over the proper balance of the values of liberty, equality, and community in society. Because these values are all important—but also conflict with each other—there are disagreements over which to favor more often. The sum total of one's preferences is one's political ideology. Once this is established, the thesis shows how twelve prominent political ideologies fit into this understanding. The second part focuses on the construction of a questionnaire to determine one's political ideology founded on this new value-based understanding. It also includes an examination and interpretation of the results of the questionnaire, which was administered nationally through a website of my construction.

### Kristen Emmett, English *Withdrawn: Libraries, the Internet and the Digital Debate*

My thesis looks at the major challenges technology presents to libraries and librarians today, examining the current developments and debates over how to implement new technology while adapting to the changing needs of patrons and communities. I argue that libraries need to continually evolve in order to survive, finding new ways to address current needs while still serving their fundamental function. This means providing tools and materials for the present generation of people, and securing the cultural and material heritage with which they are entrusted for future generations. Technology does not signal the end for libraries, but a new beginning.

### Lauren Watka, Biology *Embryonic expression of cytochrome P450 1A, 1B, 1C1, 1C2, and 1D1 in Fundulus heteroclitus and response to PCB-126*

Cytochrome P450 1A, a well-studied gene across many species, has long been known to play an instrumental role in metabolizing chemicals like pharmaceutical drugs and environmental toxins. Interested in the recently-discovered member of the CYP1 family in zebrafish (CYP1D1), I attempted to characterize this gene along with the other fish CYP1 genes: 1A, 1B, 1C1, and 1C2. To do this, I used a technique called real-time quantitative polymerase chain reaction (RT-qPCR). I also tested if gene expression changed after exposing the fish to an environmental pollutant, PCB-126. Most of my studies used fish from a clean reference site (Scorton Creek), and from New Bedford Harbor, a historic superfund site. My results suggest previous findings that CYP1D is regulated differently than the other four CYPs and that it is disadvantageous for fish to express CYP1s in polluted environments.

## 2009 Commonwealth Honors Thesis Abstracts

### Jason Santos, Political Science

*Socioeconomic and Education  
Based Voting Patterns*

My thesis compares the importance of socioeconomic status and education in voting patterns. I also compare these factors to presidential, congressional, and senatorial elections, and then group the elections together into similar voting pattern structures, which are then used to examine other political issues such as political involvement (e.g., active voting and campaign donations). The main goal of this thesis is to gain a better understanding of what factors determine the ways in which we vote.

### Andrey Ryzanov, Political Science

*Sustainability Studies: Water Sustainability  
at UMass Dartmouth*

My thesis highlights the importance of promoting sustainability on our campus and throughout the world as a whole. First, I look at the struggle to make the earth sustainable as a whole, and then I focus in on the UMD campus, particularly with respect water sustainability, which is a very precious and limited commodity. I then propose a number of things that could be done in order to make our campus more sustainable in regards to water usage, which will better our environmental standing and lower our expenditures.

### George Sessine, Finance

*Benchmarking Wind Energy Investment to  
Crude Oil: A Net Present Value Assessment*

Until oil actually runs out, many feel that it is not feasible to look for alternatives. The result, however, could be a case of doing too little too late. In order to know for sure, raw financial data must be examined to show how potential investments could be used in order to make the inevitable cost of switching energy sources more feasible. The basis of this analysis—net present value—is a powerful tool in showing the potential risks and rewards of investing in renewable energies. The thesis attempts to use a financial analysis of investments in wind energy in the United States to show whether it is a feasible alternative to oil.

### Rebecca Stephens, Biology

*Isotypic Light Chain Inclusion in Naïve B  
cells and Plasma Cells of TNP-LPS  
Immunized Rainbow Trout*

My thesis focuses on a specific structural piece of an antibody molecule known as the light chain in rainbow trout immunized with an antigen known as TNP-LPS. We immunized the trout with TNP-LPS simply to illicit an immune response. Antibodies are proteins made by specific immune cells known as B cells, and they are important in neutralizing foreign particles and preventing them from infecting normal, healthy cells. Normally, it is thought that only one type of light chain can be expressed by an antibody molecule. This idea is known as the isotypic exclusion theory. It has recently been found that isotypic inclusion—where more than one light chain type is expressed in an antibody molecule—can be seen in some mice and human B cells. With my research, I have been finding this same phenomenon occurring in rainbow trout B cells, which has not been seen before.

### Rita Wang, Human Resource Management

*Impact: A Student Leader's Perspective  
On Managing an Organization*

People can have the best intentions in the world, but without using the proper channels, these intentions are merely dreams of what could have been. Throughout my career as a student of the UMass Dartmouth, I have been involved in many student-run organizations, but none has challenged me as much as the International Business Association. As a new Student Run Organization on campus, the International Business Association faced many obstacles. The aim of my thesis is to create a manual for future student leaders in the hope that they won't have to encounter the same problems. If people have figured out how to use the system, why should our posterity reinvent the wheel?

### Annie Willis, English

*Trash or Treasure: A Collection of Short  
Stories Inspired by the Lost and Found*

My thesis explores the concept of found objects as inspiration for short stories. Each story integrates an object I have found in my travels over the past several months. Objects such as post-it notes, burned CDs, receipts, and shopping lists have been woven through the set of ten stories, which are related only by their sources of inspiration. The reader will witness the transformation of the seemingly meaningless pieces of trash into beautiful pieces of treasure as the lost objects find their new purpose: the ability to inspire stories meant to uncover the reader's emotions.

### 2009 Margaret Mullany Panos Essay Contest: *What does it mean to live an examined life?*

Attention Current UMD Students: Would you like to submit an essay for the 2009 Margaret Mullany Panos Essay Contest? If so, please address the following question: What does it mean to live an examined life in the 21st Century, and in what ways has your experience at UMD prepared you to live an examined life? Your essay should be no more than 1000 words (longer essays will be discarded). First prize, \$500; second prize, \$300, third prize, \$150. These awards will be presented at the University Honors Convocation on Thursday, May 7th from 3:00-4:30. The winning essay will be read aloud by the author at the ceremony. All entries must be submitted by 5:00PM on Friday, April 3. You should email your essay (as an attachment) to Professor Darst, Director of the Honors Program, at [rdarst@umassd.edu](mailto:rdarst@umassd.edu).

### 15th Annual Massachusetts Statewide Undergraduate Research Conference

Every year from all around the state, students present work (either individually or in groups) on Thesis Research, Community Service, Creative work in the visual and performing arts, Independent Study, and Study Abroad. Last year's conference involved 400 students from all 28 Massachusetts higher education public institutions. Any undergraduate student is eligible to participate. This is a great opportunity for students to learn to present academic work or experiences in a formal setting, to receive feedback from scholars in their field, to enhance their resume, and to exchange ideas with other undergraduate scholars. This year's conference will be held at UMass Amherst on Friday, May 1st from 8am to 5pm. This year, 29 students from UMD will be presenting their work



### 2009 UMass Dartmouth Honors Convocation

The 2009 Honors Convocation Ceremony will be held on Thursday, May 7th from 3:00-4:30pm in Woodland Commons. UMD Honors Convocation is a highly prestigious ceremony at which parents, faculty, and the administration gather to celebrate and honor students receiving university-wide awards. The ceremony culminates with the presentation of golden stoles to those students who will graduate as Commonwealth Scholars.

This year's Keynote Speaker is Professor Tim Nulty in the Philosophy Department at UMD. Prof. Tim Nulty graduated from Clark University with Highest Honors in Philosophy, where he was also a member of Phi Beta Kappa. While working on

his Ph.D. at the University of Connecticut, Prof. Nulty was the recipient of the Outstanding Scholar Award from 1999 – 2002. He was a University of Connecticut Humanities Institute Graduate Fellow from 2003-2004. He has published numerous articles on such topics as Asian philosophy, the philosophy of language, the philosophy of mind, and metaphysics. Prof. Nulty's areas of specialization primarily involve 20th century philosophy and the philosophy of language. He also published a book on the nature of truth, *Primitive Disclosive Alethism: Davidson, Heidegger and the Nature of Truth*, in 2006.

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*We welcome articles from students and faculty. Please send us an email for more details.*