



Since 1996, the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies degree has offered ASU students an opportunity to apply knowledge in a new way to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world.

Catching up with BIS Alum

Meghan Dorn

By Susan Zinn

Meghan Dorn was born and raised in Ann Arbor, Michigan and moved to Arizona in 1993. She graduated from ASU in 2002 with her BIS degree with concentrations in tourism and communication and a minor in business.

Meghan is currently the community development coordinator at the Arizona Office of Tourism. The Arizona Office of Tourism strives to enhance the state economy and the quality of life for all Arizonans by expanding travel activity and increasing related revenues through tourism promotion and development. Prior to her current position, Meghan was also the project coordinator for Pointe Hilton Squaw Peak Resort where she worked on major renovation and construction projects.

Meghan became the acting president of the Interdisciplinary Studies Alumni Club in August 2008.

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BIS Alumni Integrate Interests, Build a Promising Future

By Dr. Stephanie deLuse



Tracy Perkins recently completed her Master of Science degree in geology from ASU's School of Earth and Space Exploration with her thesis "An Analysis of Place Attachment in Geology Students and the General Public." Tracy graduated from BIS in 2005 with concentration areas in women's studies and religious studies and with a minor in geology. For her BIS 401 Applied Studies she worked teaching at-risk children about local geology and environmental issues and giving them a chance to give back to the community. Her interdisciplinary background inspired her to take a social sciences approach to teaching natural science, which made her both popular and effective with the students. The geology department then offered her additional teaching opportunities that sparked her interest for graduate school.

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From the Editor

Hello everyone!

We are excited to bring you the first issue of *Kaleidoscope*, a publication for BIS students who comprise the largest, most diverse major at ASU. Each issue will showcase the achievements and experiences of past and present BIS students. At the same time, *Kaleidoscope* will serve as an important source of information by featuring segments entitled “Words of Wisdom” written by BIS academic specialists, a calendar featuring important dates, professional development opportunities, and cultural events and segments to help you get to know faculty and staff better.

I would like to extend my appreciation to BIS students Christanna Rowader and Susan Zinn for their help in developing and writing for *Kaleidoscope*. I look forward to a wonderful semester in working with them. We would like to know about your achievements and career plans. If you have a story to share or would like to be featured in a future issue, please contact me at (480) 965-4508 or Denise.Bates@asu.edu.

Have a great semester!

Dr. Denise Bates

Interdisciplinary Studies Faculty
Kaleidoscope Editor

Congratulations to the First Recipients of the Distinction in Interdisciplinary Studies Award!

At the end of every semester each BIS faculty member selects up to two outstanding students whose performance in their BIS classes have distinguished them in remarkable ways.

Fall 2008 award recipients:

Justine Ascanio
Brittany Burch
Bonnie Collup
Christopher Crowe
Tulli Dobler
Sabrina Kinsella
Kathryn Kline
Stephan Kojouharov
Chelsea Parker
Lauren Rohrich
Justin Skiff

A Message from the Director



It is often in the darkest times that we recognize the true value of our greatest treasures. Amidst sobering news of foreclosure, bankruptcy, budget cuts and lay-offs, it is important to recognize that the education you are receiving now—learning to integrate perspectives, solve complex problems, think critically, and communicate well—is more valuable and more indispensable than ever. Your education, received in one of the nation's finest interdisciplinary studies programs, is preparing you for the challenges we face today and for the many opportunities that lie ahead.

Dr. Kevin Ellsworth

Interdisciplinary Studies Faculty Director

Meet the BIS Faculty

Dr. David Wells

By Christanna Rowader

Born in the same hospital as George W. Bush in New Haven, Connecticut and growing up in western New York state, Dr. David Wells is one of the many faculty members of the Interdisciplinary Studies program at ASU. But he's not your average professor. In fact, when he isn't teaching four BIS and other political science courses, he is active in local and state political affairs, having written over 100 op-ed articles for numerous newspapers throughout Arizona. Dr. Wells is the president of the nonprofit Arizona Institute for Peace Education and Research, and he has helped found the Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Program (I-HELP), which provides meals for those without homes. He is also husband to Rochelle Wells, a member of the Tempe Elementary District Governing Board, and together they have three children. Dr. Wells also teaches First Day Sunday School at his local church ... and is a lifelong fan of the Red Sox! He says he wonders how it's taken him "two years to finish painting [his] house."

I do have to admit, that is a full load. Being a Red Sox fan is hard enough. Dr. Wells originally double-majored in economics and mathematics while attending Bucknell University, then pursued a Ph.D. in economics at the University of Southern California. I wonder if he also spends hours playing *World of Warcraft*. Probably not, considering the amount of work he already has on his plate. While at USC, Wells came to realize that he was more interested in concerns involving "income distribution, power, the struggles of working people, and dynamic social change," which led him to "switch to an interdisciplinary degree called PEPP, Political Economy and Public Policy." After obtaining his degree, Dr. Wells taught economics at three liberal arts colleges until finally arriving at ASU in 1998.

At that time, the BIS program was small and he was one of the four faculty members to have been hired to jumpstart this young program. Dr. Wells is the last remaining faculty member of the original four. He says two of these faculty members were "placed in a class to team teach—but I've been told they didn't like each other and actually argued with each other during class. Entertaining, but I guess you could say they couldn't overcome the tension between disciplines and integrate!"

To this day, Dr. Wells focuses on politics and social change, and his BIS classes concentrate mainly on those themes. He says he "likes to have students find their passion and figure out how their concentration areas, values, and skills can be put to use." I asked him what, in his opinion, interdisciplinary studies means and he gave me a very interesting answer through a story:

A colleague remarked recently that many doctors miss cases of child abuse because the child reports a physical ailment like a stomach ache instead, but those trained to look at issues more holistically can come up with the right diagnosis. That's interdisciplinary studies. It stretches you, makes you become more familiar with other disciplines and perspectives, and, therefore, places you in a position to be a visionary change agent no matter what context you find yourself in, from your workplace, your local community, or in broader contexts.

Wells, con't. pg. 5



Meet the BIS Students Behind *Kaleidoscope*

Christanna Rowader

Hello. I'm one of the authors of the *Kaleidoscope* BIS newsletter. Writing is one of my biggest passions. I was originally a music theater performance major, but had decided something was missing from my life, and that was writing. So I changed my degree to interdisciplinary studies so that I could keep my music credits and combine them with the new creative writing credits I would be achieving. I am a huge science fiction fan, so most of my writing leans toward that genre. Outside of school, I am a full-time server and I am currently performing for Broadway Palm Dinner Theater. I was brought up in the opera world of Chicago, so you could say I am destined to return there and continue where my opera-singing father left off. At least this is the plan after graduating from ASU.



Susan Zinn

Hello. My name is Susan Zinn. I am also one of the writers for *Kaleidoscope*. I am a single mom and a returning student. Before I chose to head back to school, I was a retail manager for ten years. I currently attend ASU full time and work part time in the ASU bookstore. My concentrations with BIS are small business and communication. I chose the BIS program because I really could not decide what program I wanted to become a part of. I knew I wanted to study communication but I also knew I loved business. When I learned that I could customize my degree program to fit my needs, I was hooked. Once I declared my BIS major, I have never looked back. As of May 14, 2009, I will be able to call myself a graduate of ASU. It is very nice to write for all of you! If ever you have any ideas you would like to share for *Kaleidoscope* or questions you need direction with, please feel free to email me at smzinn@asu.edu.



Words of Wisdom

Have a Successful BIS 401 Experience

By Sandra Freeman, BIS 401 Coordinator



BIS 401 is more than just one more class standing between you and your graduation. It is the first time in 16-plus years of schooling that you, the student, can actually tailor the content of the class to your special interests and needs. It is the first chance you have to apply both of your concentrations together in a real-world setting.

What are the top ten things you should know about BIS 401?

1. This must be a NEW experience with a NEW mentor.
2. Many students find permanent careers during this semester.
3. You are responsible for finding your own Applied Study site.
4. You can design a unique experience to fit your personal interests.
5. You must incorporate both of your concentrations.
6. There are many resources to aide students during this process. Two are dlt.asu.edu/bis/internships.cfm and www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/career
7. BIS401@asu.edu is the official email address.
8. The BIS 401 cyber workshop is NOT part of the application, it is just a source of information.
9. You must apply online in the middle of the semester prior to your registration semester.
Go to sls.asu.edu/bis/bis_courses/401.html.
10. You must turn in TWO signed documents to the BIS 401 office by the due date. Missing the deadline will delay your graduation. The deadline for application materials for summer 2009 are due on April 16.

Sandee Freeman is available to meet with students Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the Undergraduate Academic Services building (USAB) room 202A on the Tempe campus.

BIS Alum Seeks Intern for a Public Relations and Marketing Firm

By Bryce Jensen

Marketingworx, a boutique PR and marketing firm in Scottsdale, is seeking an intern. The position is for a junior or senior who is looking to earn credit for their college degree. Applicants must have great phone, computer, writing, and organizational skills with a hard-working attitude. This position is a great way to enter the public relations and marketing industry with a fun and creative team that truly cares about helping you learn and succeed.

This internship is unpaid. However, upon the completion of the internship there will be a one-time payment (a.k.a. stipend) based on performance.

Marketingworx has employed five interns over the past few years, and each will tell you that they had a great time while learning a tremendous amount. I was an intern a year ago during my BIS program and am now working full time as an account executive.

Interested applicants may send their résumé to Juliet Straker at juliet@marketingworxpr.com. Please be sure to include a cover letter that provides a brief intro about yourself.

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The following excerpts were taken from my recent interview with her:

Q *What influenced you to choose the BIS program at ASU?*

A Like many students, I began college on one path and found myself on course to some unknown by the end of my sophomore year. A friend referred me to the BIS program and I discovered that 1) not all of my efforts were lost, and 2) I could study what I wanted and make my own degree. The BIS program kept me in school.

Q *What is your greatest accomplishment since graduating ASU?*

A I recently participated in the P.F. Chang's Rock n' Roll Half Marathon. I am very proud to say that I completed all 13.1 miles in 4 hours, 10 minutes, and 50 seconds. I might not be the fastest kid on the block, but I'm committed to seeing things through!

Q *What is your one piece of advice for BIS Students?*

A Don't ever give up. There is always someone out there who will tell you that you can't do something, that someone can do it better or faster. Have faith in yourself and you'll get through the toughest times. Oh ... and join the Alumni Association Club!

For more information on the Interdisciplinary Studies Alumni Club (ISAC) see www.asuisac.blogspot.com.

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When thinking about interdisciplinary studies and what the degree means to you as a student, it's a difficult thing to really define. You're bogged down with questions from family members or friends about what kinds of jobs will be available to you after graduation and sometimes you find that you're drawing a blank. Dr. Wells says that "integration is tough" and that "you might not get it at first. You might end up being a bit multidisciplinary, seeing perspectives separately, but if you keep at it, you'll build the skills. That's what the BIS core aims to do, and you'll be the kind of interdisciplinary problem-solver who makes the right diagnosis. Employers love people with those skills; they're in short supply."

That's a relief, I must say. Being unique and thinking "outside the box" is definitely a prized skill. And as students, we're all faced with uncertainties, time schedules, family matters, and the need to find a break in order to enjoy life. Then there are moments when all you want to do is give up. "Everyone's different," Dr. Wells says, "but my advice is to look at your life and make sure you're prioritizing so you get the most out of your education, because you'll only get out of it what you put in."

Check out Dr. Wells' Web site at www.makedemocracymwork.org.

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"I stayed in touch with Dr. deLusé because I'd had her for both BIS 301 and BIS 302. In addition to really appreciating what interdisciplinarity can bring to a situation, I got my first real exposure to integrative thinking and a broader range of research methods in her classes. And she inspired me to want to be a great teacher because she cared so much about the content and what we were getting out of the class. Unfortunately that is somewhat unique in a large school like ASU so she really stood out. After the courses were done, she was still supportive. I'd come to her with questions about teaching and how to handle various student situations while I was doing my 401 internship and teaching geology labs, etc. Later, she wrote me a letter for graduate school and was there for me during those three years, helping me understand the graduate school experience and was available when I had research design or analysis questions. Yes, I had my "real" graduate committee to ask, but sometimes I needed some extra or different perspective. It was great when she came to my master's defense."

While completing her master's degree, Tracy taught geology at both ASU and South Mountain Community College. She will continue working in geology this spring and continue to build her entrepreneurial spirit as well. Tracy owns and operates *StrawberryHedgehog.com* which provides her handmade, cruelty-free natural soaps and skin care products. She also makes semi-precious gemstone jewelry for women that are inspired by shamanic symbolism, blending her interests in geology, women's studies, and religious studies. Tracy and *StrawberryHedgehog.com* have been featured in the magazines *Raising Arizona Kids*, *EcoSalon*, *Vegan Beauty Review*, and she is a guest blogger for the National Wildlife Federation. She also was recently interviewed on *Good Morning, Arizona!* while she demonstrated soapmaking and discussed quality ingredients. To her growing online sales, she's adding a booth at a farmer's market in downtown Phoenix to build community and let folks feel and smell her products (hard to do online!). Check out her Web site or, if you live locally, stop by the farmer's market and meet Tracy. The farmer's market is 10 – 3pm Saturdays at Ticoz (5114 N. 7th St., north of Camelback) and 10am – 3pm Sundays at Switch (2603 N. Central Ave., on Virginia).

Tracy has a lot on her plate but keeps a positive attitude, "With the ever-changing economy, it is important to be flexible and that's something interdisciplinary studies helped me see. I can be a traditional geologist and teach but also have my business growing on the side so I'm better able to handle any future outcome. Part of me is considering pursuing a Ph.D. in geoscience education, but Stephanie cautions me that doctoral studies aren't for everyone—that you have to weigh the time and labor involved against your goals and what you really gain. She's supportive of both my academic and my entrepreneurial sides and encourages me to be thoughtful about not defaulting into a "next step" of more graduate school without really thinking it through. So I'm going to pause for awhile, catch my breath, and then take it from there."

Tracy is married to James Towner who is another remarkable BIS alum. James graduated from BIS in 2002 (with concentration areas in educational technology and mass communication) and has worked full time in information technology (IT) since then. He currently handles IT system issues for the W. P. Carey School of Business. In addition, James has bridged his IT skills with his eco-interests and is active in the community, including serving on the board of directors of the non-profit organization Arizona Alternative Fuel Alliance (*azafa.org*). James also is founder of *AZsustainability.com*, a resource about anything and everything green. His eco-blog is growing in popularity and has been featured in the *Arizona Republic*.

Mark Your Calendar

Important Dates and Deadlines

Feb 3	BIS 401 application available for Summer 2009
Feb 11	Schedule of summer classes available online
Feb 18	Registration for summer classes begins (ends 6/2 for Summer I and 7/7 for Summer II)
Mar 8 – 15	Spring Break
Mar 31	Graduation filing deadline; course withdrawal deadline—in person
Apr 3	Course withdrawal deadline—online
Apr 16	BIS 401 application due before 4pm for summer 2009
May 5	Complete withdrawal deadline—in person only; last day of classes
May 6	Reading Day
May 7 – 10 and May 11 – 13	Final exams
May 14	Commencement
May 15 or 16	BIS Convocation
May 11 – 18	Final grades due

Professional Development Opportunities

Feb 11	Spring Career and Internship Fair , 12:30 – 4pm, Memorial Union (2nd floor), Tempe campus
Feb 19	Spring Career Fair , 10am – 2pm, Student Union (ballroom), Polytechnic campus
Mar 18	Résumé Writing Workshop , 11:45am – 12:45pm, Historic Post Office 110, Downtown Phoenix campus

Cultural Events

Feb 7 – Mar 29	Arizona Renaissance Festival Saturdays and Sundays only, 10am – 6pm Renaissance Festival Grounds, 12601 E. U.S. 60, Apache Junction For prices and discounts, go to www.RenFestInfo.com or, call (520) 463-2700
Feb 10	Tuesday Morning Music and Tea presents <i>Burnished Brass with ASU Chamber Winds</i> 10:30am Wayne Bailey and Steven McKeithen, conductors Kerr Cultural Center, 6110 N. Scottsdale Rd., Scottsdale Reservations required after Jan. 26, please call (480) 596-2660
Feb 18	ASU Symphony Orchestra presents <i>The Concert of Soloists</i> 7:30pm Timothy Russell, Catherine O'Shaughnessy, and Brian St. John, conductors ASU Gammage Auditorium, Tempe music.asu.edu or, call (480) 965-8863
Feb 21 – 22	A Festival of Japan 10:30am – 4:30pm Celebrate this year's theme of Ni Jyu Go Shu Nen Sai with Japanese exhibits, demonstrations, arts and crafts, children's activities, bonsai displays, food, and entertainment. Heritage and Science Park, 115 N. Sixth St., Phoenix
Feb 26	Best of Scottsdale ArtWalk 7 – 9pm Scottsdale Arts District, Main St. and Marshall Way, Scottsdale Free admission www.scottsdalegalleries.com or, call (480) 990-3939