

Since 1996, the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies degree has offered ASU students an opportunity to apply knowledge in new ways to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world. Ranked among the top interdisciplinary studies programs in the nation, we currently have 2,252 majors and over 7,300 graduates.

## Catching Up With Bis Alumni

By Carolyn Egan

### Chris Cameron

At the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Chris Cameron says they're training graduate students to be "backpack journalists." This is a reference to the ultimate DIY journalist who writes stories, shoots video, creates engaging multimedia pieces, and records radio spots. This is precisely why Chris says that completing his bachelor's degree with ASU's interdisciplinary studies program was the best thing he ever did. He admits journalism is a highly interdisciplinary field these days, and the integrative design of the BIS program did well in preparing him for his graduate studies.



Chris graduated from the BIS program in the spring of 2008 and went on to continue his academic career at the esteemed journalism school here at ASU. He wasn't sure what to do when he realized that a bachelor's degree in music performance didn't leave him with as many post-graduate options as he would have liked. Then he discovered the BIS program, where he could apply the credits he had already earned as a music performance major and intertwine them with another concentration to create a well-rounded education. Not having to start another degree from scratch saved Chris a fair amount of time, and he went on to complete his degree with concentrations in music and history. In fact, several of his classmates have also recently graduated from the BIS program and pursued graduate studies in journalism as well.

Striving to be successful at whatever he does has driven Chris to collaborate with some friends on an internet start-up company, a venture within an industry that Chris sees himself working in over the next ten years. He will graduate with a master's degree in mass communication from the journalism school in December. He enjoys blogging, doing freelance gigs as a drummer, podcasting, graphic design, and traditional journalism.

Chris advises BIS students to take classes that can easily combine your concentrations. In his own case, he was able to take music history classes that naturally integrated his two concentrations. "The more you can intermingle disciplines in your work, the greater the experience will be."

## Inside This Issue

December 2009/January 2010; volume 2, number 3

Catching up with BIS Alumni	<a href="#">Go</a>
Fall 2009 Award Recipients	<a href="#">Go</a>
Editor's Note	<a href="#">Go</a>
Why it Pays for Alumni to Stay Involved	<a href="#">Go</a>
Meet the BIS Academic Success Specialists	<a href="#">Go</a>
Words of Wisdom	<a href="#">Go</a>
Mark Your Calendar	<a href="#">Go</a>

## Contact Information

Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies  
[sfs.asu.edu/bis](http://sfs.asu.edu/bis) | (480) 965-1970

Carolyn Egan, writer  
 Meghan Dorn, guest writer  
 Denise Bates, Ph.D., faculty editor  
 Deanna Johnson Mullican, graphic designer  
 Karen Mancini, consultant

Original artwork in the *Kaleidoscope* masthead was created by BIS student Rebecca Soltis.

## Are you a creative BIS student

Interested in having your work featured in an upcoming issue of *Kaleidoscope*?

Any type of creative work will be considered, such as poetry, short stories, art pieces, or photography.

Please send submissions to  
[Denise.Bates@asu.edu](mailto:Denise.Bates@asu.edu)

[click to continue reading](#)

## Catching Up With Bis Alumni

By Carolyn Egan

### Dayna Tonkin

“When I tell an employer I have an interdisciplinary degree with concentrations in human and family studies and education, they typically say ‘wow!’” said Dayna Tonkin who graduated from the BIS program in the spring of 2008. Dayna is starting an exciting new career in Australia where she will be a child safety officer (similar to Child Protective Services). She will be responsible for the care and safety of children in crisis. Eventually she would like to open and direct her own child crisis center. Her goal is to work side by side with government organizations that provide for the welfare of abused and neglected children.

Dayna discovered the BIS program after she first pursued majors in education and business—each for a semester. Dissatisfied with either option, she found herself with no decided major. Her sister told her about the BIS program, saying that it can be great for students who want more choices. Perhaps sisters know best, because Dayna feels that the BIS program allowed her to study exactly what she wanted. She says that other majors were too broad, while BIS gave her the opportunity to zero in on her specific interests. Amazingly, Dayna did not have to add any additional semesters to her graduation plan and she completed her degree in four years. She’s adamant that joining the BIS program was the best decision she ever made, explaining that she made so many connections with her classmates and teachers. In other degree programs, upperclassmen usually find themselves in classes with other undergraduates with the same core interests. BIS is completely different in that the BIS classes provide the chance to share ideas and do projects with students from a vast array of disciplinary interests.

Dayna credits the BIS core classes as sources for lessons in life skills and career tools. She says she continues to use her notes and papers from BIS 301 constantly. BIS 301, the first of four core classes, is an exploratory class that helps students dive deeper into the roots of their disciplines.

Dayna advises all BIS students to never give up. Keep working hard, and eventually you will reach your goals. In an effort to keep her goals present and constant in her everyday pursuits, Dayna created what she likes to call her “Dream Board.” On this board she has words and pictures that she associates with her dreams and life goals. She says it helps her to look at this board every day, especially when she feels like giving up on a task because it seems impossible. Dayna knows what she wants to do and acknowledges that it’s going to take dedication to get there.

As a graduate of the program, employers often ask Dayna how her degree will help her in the job for which she is interviewing. She says they are always impressed with her answer: “Since I was able to focus on two (completely different) fields, I am able to be flexible when I’m working.”



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

At the end of every semester BIS faculty select students whose performances in their BIS classes have distinguished them in remarkable ways.

*Fall 2009 award recipients:*

Audrey Brock  
Deja Correia  
David Cummings  
Deanne Del Piano  
Britney Jorgensen  
Jacob Williams

Congratulations to you all!

## Editor's Note

*Happy New Year!*

We are excited to be starting our second year of publication for Kaleidoscope, a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies student newsletter. As the largest and most diverse community of students at ASU, we hope you consider the newsletter as your premier source for insight into the many wonderful things that BIS students (both past and present) are doing. In addition, we will continue featuring the profiles and “words of wisdom” of the faculty and advisors whom you will come to know well while pursuing your degree.

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](mailto:Denise.Bates@asu.edu). Have a great semester!

Denise Bates, Ph.D.  
interdisciplinary studies faculty and *Kaleidoscope* editor

## Why it Pays for Alumni to Stay Involved

*By Meghan Dorn, president, Interdisciplinary Studies Alumni Club*



As graduates of ASU, we are frequently reminded how great it is to be a member of the ASU Alumni Association (ASUAA). It is an important way to stay connected to the university, especially if you move after college. I'm not going to bore you with the same reasons ASUAA thinks you should join, but rather I would like to share with you my three favorite experiences I have had because I am a member.

Typically, only friends and family of graduates attend commencement ceremonies, but when the President of the United States accepts the invitation to speak to the graduating class, the interest spikes. Since the event was not open to the public, ASU had to determine who was going to be invited. In addition to the elected officials and major university donors, members of the Alumni Association were offered tickets. I was fortunate enough to receive four tickets and, because of my involvement with ASUAA, was given very good seats—a mere 50 yards away from the main stage!

My second favorite moment came just before Homecoming at the October Maroon & Gold mixer. The *Arizona Republic* was working on an article for the newly formed [ASU Young Alumni \(ASYA\) program](#) and wanted to get photos of young alumni networking. Only a few alumni were quoted or photographed for the article and I am very excited to have been one of them.

My ultimate favorite alumni moment happened in early October. ASUAA partnered with *AZ Magazine* to honor Retired Chief Justice Sandra Day O'Connor with their Woman of the Year award. As she sat on the stage telling her story of growing up in rural Arizona and struggling to find a job as a lawyer, she reminded us all of how much she has done to pave the way for women. After the event, though she was tired, she graciously posed for a picture with me. For that, I am forever grateful.

I cannot promise that you will have these same experiences if you join the Alumni Association. What I can promise is that when you join and get involved, you will meet amazing people who are passionate about spreading Sun Devil Spirit across the nation. I have invested a lot of my time to keeping alumni—especially BIS alumni—connected to the university, and have enjoyed every moment.

So whether you are moving out of state or staying in Arizona, I invite you to join me and become a member of the Arizona State University Alumni Association. Visit the [alumni Web site](#) to register at the new graduate rate. Please be sure to put my name, Meghan Dorn, as your referral and to use the campaign code of ASYA—this will ensure you receive special offers exclusively for young alumni. You can e-mail the Interdisciplinary Studies Alumni Club (ISAC) at [bis\\_alumni@yahoo.com](mailto:bis_alumni@yahoo.com).

**Go Devils!**

## Meet the BIS Academic Success Specialists

By Carolyn Egan

### Douglas Doser

BIS academic success specialist Doug Doser enjoys interacting with students and helping them graduate. One of his first jobs after college made him realize how much he really enjoys working with students. After completing both his bachelor's and master's degrees at Eastern Illinois University, he moved to Tucson and worked as a residence director at the University of Arizona. He also taught students around the valley at both South Mountain and Arcadia High Schools and Supai Middle School.

He's had several jobs at ASU which helped him identify his true interest: working one-on-one with students. He was a residence director at Ocotillo and Mariposa dorms, assistant director to the dean at the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and an academic success specialist in the (then) College of Business.

Doug cites several internships he did while in college that he thoroughly enjoyed and helped inspire him in his career choices. He worked with high school students who were earning college credits attending Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, for the summer. This goes to show BIS students just how valuable the BIS 401 internship experience can be!

When it comes to giving advice to BIS students, Doug has a few words of wisdom: "Make sure you're looking at least a semester ahead in academic planning. And if you have a question, be sure to ask." All of the academic success specialists in the BIS program are always available to answer questions and assist students. Just call (480) 965-1970 to make an appointment.



### Words of Wisdom Getting the Most from Advising

By Scott Thorpe, assistant director of student services

Academic advising is a key component of any degree program and, in many ways, advising is particularly important for BIS students. The unique qualities and requirements of the BIS degree present students with exceptional opportunities to do something just a little bit different. Whatever your goals are, an academic success specialist can offer you the help and guidance you need to achieve them. Further, research shows that students who meet with an advisor on a regular basis are more likely to graduate in a timely manner. Our staff is excellent, with almost 80 years of collective advising experience. We've helped over 6,000 students graduate and hope to help you succeed, too!

Keep reading for ways to maximize your advising experience. [Go](#)

## The Top Ten Ways to Get the Most from Advising

- 1 See an academic success specialist every semester until you graduate—even when you don't think you have any questions.
- 2 Request and learn to read your DARS report—this is what the graduation office uses to make sure you've met all requirements. It's important to know what your DARS is telling you.
- 3 Register for classes **as soon as you** can every semester—doing things early is always a good strategy; this includes making an advising appointment before your scheduled registration time.
- 4 Be aware of BIS policies and deadlines—knowing when and how to do things can save you time and money.
- 5 Come to your advising appointments prepared—bring a copy of your DARS report and prepare a list of questions.
- 6 Remember, your friends and classmates can be a good source of information, but they are not advisors—always ask an academic success specialist to confirm or deny what you think to be true.
- 7 Follow up on referrals to other departments—we can't always help you with everything, but we'll always try to point you in the right direction.
- 8 Become familiar with the School of Letters and Sciences Web site—we want you to be able to find information easily and our Web site is a great resource.
- 9 Create an advising file for yourself—keep copies of your DARS, take notes at your advising appointments, and save those e-mails between you and your academic success specialist.
- 10 Check your ASU e-mail—we use e-mail for all reminders and announcements; you can even forward your ASU e-mail to your preferred e-mail provider.

Appointments can be made at UASB 203, or by calling (480) 965-1970.

## Mark Your Calendar

### Important Dates and Deadlines

Jan. 18	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday observed
Jan. 19	First day of classes
Jan. 22	Drop/add deadline—in person
Jan. 24	Drop/add deadline—online
March 14 – 21	Spring break
March 31	Graduation filing deadline
May 4	Last day of classes
May 5	Reading day
May 6 – 9 and	
May 10 – 12	Final exams
May 13	Commencement

The ASU academic calendar can be found at [students.asu.edu/academic-calendar](https://students.asu.edu/academic-calendar)