Calendar:

October 21-22: Family Weekend

October 28 - 30 and November 4-6: Foot in the Door performances of Twelve Angry Men

November 1: Last day an undergraduate student may, with the dean’s approval, drop a class or change a class to pass/fail

November 3, 4 and 6: Foot in the Door performances of The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940

November 24-26: Thanksgiving break

December 2: Last class day

December 3-4: Fall Graduation ceremonies

January 17: Spring classes begin

March 12 - 17: Spring break

From the director’s desk:

I was chastised lately for using “liberal” in a “liberal education,” the public relations person thinking that some might take “liberal” the wrong way. Becoming liberally educated, however, has little to do with politics. The aim of a liberal education is to acquire the learning, skills, and habits that will lead a student (educere) to freedom (liber). We tell our students that if they know how to write well, speak well, approach problems imaginatively, have in their arsenal some quantitative skills and a mastery of a foreign language, they will be as free as human beings can be—and get a job (See Tyler Womack’s “Advice” in this issue). Our goal in LAH is to provide our students with what John Milton describes as “a complete and generous education, that which fits a man [and woman] to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war” (Read Elisabeth Eikrem on defending Dr. Karadzic). In this time of Twitter, Facebook, and instant messaging, our students with wires coming from their ears, eyes on the IPhone, a liberal education does something more. Describing his generation, Sir Richard Livingston (1880 – 1960) wrote, his words being applicable today: “We are tied down, all our days and for the greater part of our days, to the commonplace. That is where contact with great thinkers, great literature helps. In their company we are still in the ordinary world, but it is the ordinary world transfigured and seen through the eyes of wisdom and genius. And some of their vision becomes our own.” A liberal education enables your sons and daughters to escape the commonplace, puts them in touch with greatness, inspiring them to know themselves—the most powerful knowledge they will ever have—and inspiring them to use their knowledge and freedom to serve their families, communities, and country. I welcome your comments, suggestions, and questions (carver@austin.utexas.edu).

Best wishes,

Larry Carver
On Beginners and their Relevance

“Why do you put the dishes that way?”
“What do you mean?”

My eight-year-old cousin Micah pointed to the large quantity of forks I had just hand-washed and placed in the same dishwasher compartment to dry. My mom had always placed the forks, steak knives, butter knives, and spoons in their respective compartments, regardless of the number in each group. Until Micah made mention of this, I had seen no reason to stray from my mother’s logic. Micah gestured to the six empty utensil compartments and said, “There’s space there. They dry faster if you spread ‘em out! Duh!”

I looked at the twenty or so forks stuffed into the one compartment, the lone steak knife in the compartment next to them, and distributed the utensils evenly. Somehow, an eight-year-old had managed to increase the efficiency of my dishwashing process by identifying a problem and solution neither I nor my mother had thought of. I gave her a high-five for her quick wit and wondered why I hadn’t considered that before.

Many of the ideas history has seen, however flawed, remained in place until someone, usually a young person, challenged the status quo. At the University of Texas at Austin, students benefit from the expertise of esteemed professors; however, these professors also have much to learn from the novices in their classrooms. It was in a prison library (an incarcerated man’s university), that a young Malcolm Little studied extensively the history and plight of oppressed peoples around the globe in order to give context to the condition of Black Americans during the mid-twentieth century. He would later drop his given last name, Little, and replace it with “X,” a move symbolizing his acknowledgement of the forced deconstruction of his identity as a Black man living in America during that time period. A pillar of eloquence, unity, and strength in the Black community, Malcolm X would go on to become one of the greatest leaders, activists, and speakers during the civil rights era, precisely because he dared to do what many would not: speak the truth he believed, even though he was in a position of social, economic, and political inferiority. Invalidating the view that things should continue be done the way they always have been, simply because they always have been, young people have often raised their voices to dispute concepts that are illogical, immoral or unproductive, regardless of the antiquity of the concept. Professors would benefit to engage intellectually with beginners, if for no other reason than to find fresh perspective with which to recalibrate their own viewpoints.

The combination of my own diversity of thought, experience and cultural background prompts me to say that I am most certainly able to bring new wisdom to the University of Texas at Austin. As a three year slam poet, I approach language and people in a radically new way. The performer in me knows when the connection is lost between my audience and me, and the wordsmith in me toys with traditional perceptions of words, phrases, and social concepts, because my writing and performances are centered on changing the way a person understands something. This applies offstage as well: my overall consciousness of language and presentation leads to more productive interpersonal relationships with people. As a biracial African-American Studies and English major, I find both people and language fascinating; I pledge to bring my knowledge, my truth, and my wisdom to the already impressive astuteness of this university.

In the 1997 film Amistad, slave Joseph Cinque, played by actor Djimon Hounsou, spoke of his reverence and ties to his ancestors. “I will call to the past…reach back and draw [my ancestors] into me, and they must come, for at this moment, I am the whole reason they have existed at all.” I am excited to take part in the UT experience as a student, because it means I will be actively participating as both a student “beginner,” respecting and learning what has come before me to understand the potency of my present, and sort of professor, in the sense that I will be sharing my wisdom with others, paving the way for what will come in the future.

- Ariana Brown, English major

Students Write:
A First Year Scholarship Essay

LAH Alumni,

Please keep in touch with us by joining the LAH Alumni facebook group: LAH Alumni.

You can also send updates for future newsletters to Linda Mayhew at lmayhew@austin.utexas.edu

We’d love to hear from you!

Left: All Honors Quiz Bowl; right: An LAH Quiz Bowl team
To the doe-eyed, orange-clad freshman abusing the free printing policy,

Now that your soul belongs to the Liberal Arts, there are two things you can do to optimize your upcoming years in servitude.

1. At first opportunity, schedule an appointment with Dr. Carver to discuss your distaste for obnoxious adverb usage. Emphasize your disgust by suggesting a “Death to Adverbs” campaign, and appear moved on your way out.

2. *Don’t know your limits.*
   *Let me explain.*

You’re genes, organs, and flesh. Genetic makeup is the backbone to your success, and the environment its cultivator. You can work as hard as you’d like, but ultimately, it’s about luck – isn’t it? It’s about who was blessed with the Einstein genes and who wasn’t. It’s about whose parents helped enhance brain activity with music lessons, and whose preferred television as a child distractor. It’s about what has already passed, and hardly about what will come to pass. After all, your potential is in your blood – literally.

If you’re ready to write a foul letter to the APA about their dream-shattering hypotheses, consider this: scientists have only formalized what you’ve believed in. You have always believed in your limits. You have judged your worth, your potential, felt uneasy about deserving a scholarship, and perhaps even felt that, being accepted into UT and LAH, you’re nearing the peak of your predetermined potential. You’ve lucked out and your luck’s drawing to a close. The ladder up looks wobbly from here.

Consider it: fifth edition textbooks aren’t the first to analyze your worth – you’ve been doing it for years. We all have.

And consider this: it’s time to stop.

Stop setting limits, refusing to push your abilities, and shying away from the epitome of your intelligence.

As a freshman, I made two mistakes. The first involved an excessive use of adverbs, and the second a solid, almost arrogant knowledge of my limits. I thought I knew what I could do, and what I couldn’t.

Just like you, I arrived in burnt orange, abused the free printing policy, and knew where I was going. I was a decent writer. I was bad at math. I hated Arabic. I was too shy. And just like you will, I’ve realized that I can’t set my limits.

Now I’m a better writer, taking college-level statistics, in the Arabic Flagship Program, and can be heard at human rights rallies.

Believe this: no textbook, no rejection letter, no insecurity, and no past failure can define today’s limits. Only you can.

So when you step into GEB 1.206 for the first time and marvel at Dr. Carver’s massive office, remind yourself that you’re starting. You’re beginning. Your potential, if it exists, is nowhere near here. And as wonderful as LAH and UT and the burnt orange is, this is not it. You will go further.

Welcome to the Liberal Arts.

Yours,

Ayesha Akbar

- Journalism and Psychology major
The Honest Man stumbles; the Liar falls.
The Honest Man and the Liar went to the same college, but they were never friends. The Honest Man had a hard time warming people to him. His tactless truth put off his classmates and professors. His answers to questions were always sincere, but they weren’t always what the asker wanted to hear. A few people managed to make it past his honest awkwardness, and they realized he was a loyal friend and confidant. He had a few friends and a mentor or two, but he was never the life of the party.

The Liar always sat at the center of the circle. His casual flattery, never overdone, drew in peers and professors alike. He played these relationships to great effect. From extensions on papers to finding worker bees for any group project, the Liar always managed to use style to cover his lack of substance. His loyalty was always to himself first, and he would sell any of his admirers down the river if bringing them low would raise him. While the Honest Man fought his way to the top of the class, the Liar parachuted in, floating on other’s work much more than his own.

Both went to work for the same company, but they still did not associate with each other. The Honest Man started at the bottom. His unimpeachable ethics gained him a bad reputation from his coworkers and supervisors. No one wants to work with someone who refuses to have his back by covering their mistakes. The Honest Man found colleagues who appreciated his hard work and willingness to help anyone who asked him. Though his friends were few in number, the allegiance they showed each other was absolute. His rise through the company was slow, but eventually he entered the upper echelon.

The Liar started near the top. Connections and nefarious inflating of his resume made him appear to be the stronger candidate. He charmed his bosses and employees just as he had charmed everyone else in his life. He delegated plenty of his own responsibilities. He found scapegoats for his mistakes. He rose to the head of the company, victorious at last. He always managed to make himself comfortable, skimming off the top. Who would suspect him, the one they all loved, of impropriety. He wore his Savile Row suits and drove his Porsche confident in his untouchable success.

Then the Honest Man discovered a document with financial irregularities. He kept digging. He found the damning evidence and presented it to the company’s board of directors. The Liar’s silver tongue failed to save him. He was ousted, and who replaced him? The Honest Man.

Virtue is surrounded by smoke, but when that fog is cleared away, it can be a simple concept. Being loyal to honesty above loyalty to men wins few friends, but it can lead to worldly success. The Honest Man walks a winding rocky path to success. He trips over scorned individuals and inconvenient truths, but he picks himself up and keeps walking, and eventually he can make it to the end. The Liar slides forward on the razors edge. His route is shorter, but all it takes is one mistake to knock him into failure. If he loses balance, he cannot get back on the path.

The Honest Man stumbles; the Liar falls.

- Andy Bowman, History, Humanities, Government, and Rhetoric major
LAH Music Ensemble: The Amorous Paulharmonic

Every year seems to bring more and more musically talented students to the LAH program, and many of them become a part of the LAH Music Ensemble! Each semester we choose and perform selections from classical and pop to musicals, including both instrumental and vocal parts. Since we meet often, the ensemble is a great way to meet and get to know fellow LAHers! We perform two concerts each year at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters and also participate in Honors Day, Parents' Day, and Explore UT. So if you sing or play an instrument or you just love to arrange music or even conduct then the ensemble is a great LAH organization to join!

- Jenny Klingshirn

LAH Pre-Med Society

The mission of the Liberal Arts Pre-Med Society is to give Liberal Arts students exposure to medicine and assist in the pursuit of medical school admission. This includes connecting students with local doctors for shadowing opportunities, organizing individual and group volunteering, holding bi-weekly meetings to discuss building resumes and the admissions process, and giving general advice on the pre-med track. The group has two Meals on Wheels volunteer delivery routes and plans to work with St. David’s Hospital, the Austin State Hospital, and Habitat for Humanity. For more information, please contact Dietrich Riepen at dietrich.riepen@gmail.com

LAHSO

Founded two years ago, the Liberal Arts Honors Service Organization has worked with the Micah 6 Food Pantry, Starlight Children’s Foundation, and Keep Austin Beautiful. LAHSO is a great way to get to know other students and have some fun while giving back to the community. Contact Catherine Moreno catherine.moreno77@yahoo.com to get involved.

LAH Yearly Scholarship Winners

First Year
Aidan Aaneastad
Lauren Bednarski
Ariana Brown
Casey Costello
Jillian Fisher
James Fisk
Tracy Frydberg
Teddy Garber
Sam Hagan
Ethan Levinton
Sam Moore
Teddie Owen
Jane Post
Juliette Seive
Anya Singh

Second Year
Ayesha Akabar
Caleb Britton
Jamie Hill
Saraheth Flowers
Josh Fuller
Hayden Lambert
Ann Grace Martin
Andrew McMahon
Eric Nickolaides
Katherine Thayer

Third Year
Andy Bowman
Jessica Chung
Elizabeth Eikrem
Madison Estes
Catherine Hernando
Anne Kuhnen
Dietrich Riepen
Lauren Thomas
Miranda Wargo
Steven Xie

Fourth Year
Elizabeth Fletcher
James Lamon
Pavel Nitchovski
Ben Smith
Preston Nix

Echo

Echo is the literary magazine of Liberal Arts Honors, and we are now accepting submissions for the 2011 edition! Please submit your poetry, prose, and photography echolitmag@gmail.com. Feel free to submit any number of pieces in any or all of the categories!

Our theme this year is “inSIGHT”. While this is the chosen theme, please do not limit the content that you submit; however, think of it as a general guideline of which you can explore the boundaries. “inSIGHT” can mean gaining a deeper understanding, or it can mean what is physically in view. Perhaps think about how we perceive the world by combining our mental insights with what is actually in sight. Whether you explore the theme through its emotional or visual meaning, the possibilities are endless and yours for the taking. We feel you all are a group full of creativity, energy and imagination, and we look forward to a fine batch of submissions.

You can do more than just write for Echo. If you are interested in helping out the Echo Team read submissions and put together the magazine, please email the same email, echolitmag@gmail.com requesting to be put on the mailing list. We will begin emailing out information regarding reading sessions in the spring semester.

Sincerely,
The Echo Team

Students Act:
LAH Student Organizations
LAH Abroad:
Moscow, Russia

Moscow Does Not Believe In Tears

Tverskaya Ulitsa, Moscow’s main street, is the intersection of all the places you never thought you’d wind up. It’s a patchwork of everything that it has ever meant to live in Russia: the towering, colorless apartment blocks, the bitter stares of impoverished pensioners, the commanding glowers of security guards, the larger-than-life statues of revered artists and historical figures, the ancient glow of ornate Orthodox churches, the ceaseless mobile phone chatter of the young, the rich, and the fashionable.

When I proposed to my friends and family the idea of spending five weeks in Moscow to study Russian, I received a worryingly homogeneous body of responses, ranging from a simple “why?” to the firmer “it’s dangerous and you’re going to get kidnapped by the Russian mafia.” Even people I had just met, upon being told of my summer plans, felt at ease giving me unsolicited travel advice: “Oh, I’ve heard Rome is just gorgeous. Plus, there are so many tourists there and everyone speaks English!”

But a small number of people encouraged me to surrender my reservations and “just go,” and I’ll never regret taking their advice.

There’s something about blinking and suddenly finding yourself standing in the middle of Red Square that gets you wondering about your place in the world. Living in a nondescript Soviet-era dormitory, riding one of the world’s most advanced public transit systems, communicating in an intimidatingly foreign tongue and going about daily life as an extreme minority, I reflected on the extent to which I’ve ever felt at home anywhere. In the hardened visages of Central Asian immigrants and construction workers, I thought about what it is that unites us as a planet and as a species. I gained a new perspective from which to view my own home, a far cry from a world where cashier demand exact change and old women wordlessly beg for a spare 10-ruble piece on street corners.

But, as it always happens, just as I was beginning at last to comprehend the Russian way of life, it was time to come back, to readjust to the climate, the time, to the way people speak and carry themselves. Speaking of adjusting, our program director talked to us about a phenomenon known as “reverse culture shock,” where you come back after a long time away from home and discover to your surprise that nothing has changed – except you.

It sounds silly, but it really does exist, even though it’s not as aggressive or long-lived as ordinary culture shock. I stepped off the plane in Washington, D.C. and everything seemed different than what I’d gotten used to over the last 5 weeks.

It reminds me of the Moscow metro. You go underground, and the trains come toward you with a deafening roar. Then you climb into this gigantic hunk of metal and plastic and people, which whisks you at an impossible speed through a pitch-black passageway, and then as if you’ve stepped through some kind of wormhole, you’re suddenly in a different place with different landmarks and unfamiliar streets. You can hardly tell how the two experiences are linked, and it’s hard to form a picture in your mind of the exact path you’ve taken.

But that’s life, a series of disorienting encounters with new people and unfamiliar places that forces us to adapt and change the way we view the world.

There are two basic ways to say “goodbye” in Russian: “do svidaniya” means “until our next meeting”; “proschai” is more permanent – more than “goodbye,” it means “goodbye forever.” I know I’m not through with Russia. Even though the trip had its low points, I can’t imagine never returning, even if it’s in the distant future, I almost have to, just to see how things will have changed and what will have remained the same. It’s an intriguing, enormous and challenging country that can’t be described in generalized terms – indeed, in retrospect, the prospect of writing a concise essay to describe my time there, of taking a brief inventory of all the things I heard, saw, felt, and learned about myself and about humankind, is almost laughable.

And by the way, I don’t plan to stop at Russia. I have every intention of seeing the entire world and what it has to offer, and to find my way across all the imaginary boundaries that divide our planet.

“We shall not cease from exploration And the end of all our exploring Will be to arrive where we started And know the place for the first time.”
– T.S. Eliot

- Nile Miller, Government and International Relations and Global Studies major
It was my first full day in Beijing, China, and I was ready to go at 9:00 AM—impressive considering I had not fully recovered from the 13 hour time difference just yet. I stepped through the gates of my temporary college campus and set out to explore the neighborhood around me. Despite the fact that I could not read any of the signs, I observed several small convenience stores, clothing shops, fruit stands, and people flowing in and out of each store at a steady pace. Although my pace was already slower than those around me, I came to a complete stop when I felt a sharp tug at the back of my head. I spun around to see a young girl in a pink dress shouting words I could not understand excitedly at her mother, pointing at my head. It was then that I realized the magnitude of the curse of curly, blonde hair.

For two months the curse followed me: on the bus, subway, walking in the streets, and even at popular tourist destinations. Cameras snapped wherever I went and phones were directed suspiciously in my direction at all times. Whenever one person was brave enough to ask for a photo with me (and the hair) it was only a matter of time before a line began to form. I think I spent the majority of my time on the Great Wall of China taking pictures with random people rather than soaking in the view! The attention was not something I had expected, and while it was a nuisance at first, it soon became my favorite part of each day.

While it would have been easier and a little bit more peaceful to blend into the background, my hair made me stick out, which in turn gave me a greater opportunity to practice my Chinese with people who otherwise would have ignored me. Each time a picture was snapped I mastered a phrase or learned a new one! With each conversation, my confidence in speaking Chinese shot up and soon, I was the one asking for pictures with locals. I made friends at restaurants, stores, and markets and mastered bargaining skills with the help of my Chinese friends. The hair was not a curse, but a tool through which I could meet more people, strike up a conversation, and learn something fresh and peculiar about Beijing culture and lifestyle. Prior to arriving in Beijing, I believed cultural and linguistic immersion to mean blending into and becoming identical to a culture, but my experience this summer proved that sometimes sticking out a little can give you even deeper connections.

- Emily Young, Government major
Student Snapshots:
Images from Overseas

LAHers Emily Young and Lila Blum in China

Emily Young traveling in China

Caitlin Gulthur standing inside a Celtic bath structure
Having never been out of the country before, I had no idea what to expect when I arrived in Portugal to participate in a six week archaeology dig. One of the first shocks I received was that the elevator in the apartment building we lived in didn’t have doors—as we went up or down I could touch the wall as it went by. The elevator was also amazingly small. At first I felt cramped when it just myself and two suitcases in there, but by the end of our stay it became a game to crowd as many people as physically possible into the tiny space—I think our record was six.

One of my favorite things that happened in Portugal was the Sao Joao Festival, in honor of Saint John the Baptist. To celebrate, there were parades, food stands, fireworks and people went around ‘baptizing’ each other with plastic squeaky hammers. There was some etiquette involved— you were only supposed to hit people who also carried a hammer and could ‘baptize’ you back—but that didn’t change the fact that it was the one day of the year where it was socially acceptable to hit complete strangers.

The most important part of my trip was of course the field work. Every weekday we would travel about 20 minutes out to the site and then dig until 2 or 3 in the afternoon. As much as I loved it, I will admit that it was slow, tedious work. To help pass the time we did everything from quoting videos to naming everything, including our toolbox and a salamander we found. The tedious work was well worth it when we found a stone pavement, perhaps a floor for a house, which dated from around 100BC-100AD. To think we were the first people to see that pavement in about 2,000 years was amazing.

Of course it seems to be some kind of cosmic rule that every time I take a trip there must be at least one disaster and this time was no exception, despite my hope that the cosmos would realize this was a field school and not a vacation. We lived a five minute walk from the beach, something that delighted this West Texas girl. The first Sunday I deemed it warm enough I was determined to spend all day at the beach. I paid for it the next day, when I had a mild case of sun poisoning and was so burnt that I was not allowed to leave the apartment when the sun was out for the next four days. If I wanted to treat this as a learning experience, I would say I learned two things:

One- A day at the beach is not worth a week of misery, no matter how seldom you get to see water.

Two- I am very susceptible to cabin fever.

As glad as I was to get home, I will miss Portugal. I got to meet some great people, see a beautiful country, and lay the foundations for my future career.

- Caitlin Gulihur, Classical Archaeology major
Students Work: Interning at The Hague

My parents always tell me that I cannot plan my path in life, only take each opportunity as it arises. However, if someone had told me I would spend a summer working pro bono for a Bosnian Serb warlord accused of crimes against humanity, I would have laughed. Yet the opportunity arose, and I seized it. Dr. Radovan Karadzic is the former President of Republika Srpska, a Serb stronghold in Bosnia-in-Herzegovina. The Balkan region has historically been war-torn, occupied by the Ottoman Turks, once a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and overrun by the Nazis. After the disintegration of communist Yugoslavia in 1991, ethnic and religious conflict exploded. When the war ended in 1995, over 100,000 were dead in Bosnia. Many were Muslim, civilian victims of genocide, ethnic cleansing, shelling and sniping – crimes Dr. Karadzic is accused of masterminding.

I worked as a legal intern under Dr. Karadzic’s legal counsel, Peter Robinson, at the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague. Undergraduates rarely have internships that involve no secretarial work whatsoever. I was fortunate not only to work solely on legal writing, research and trial preparation such as witness interviews and mock-cross examinations, but also to do so in one of the major theatres of international justice. It was an exciting time to be at the tribunal – during the summer, the last two persons indicted by the court were apprehended, causing a tidal wave of emotion, an increase in already high-level security, and a media circus.

Despite being in awe of my good fortune, I became deeply disillusioned as I worked on this case. It was incredibly difficult to reconcile the grandfatherly man I and other interns affectionately called “Dr. K” with the endless footage, photographs and testimonies that revealed unimaginable evil. My idealism began to vanish, and I flirted with an idea that I had always rejected: that human nature is evil. I had constant nightmares, imagining the faces of my friends on the corpses of the eight thousand Muslim men and boys murdered in the Srebrenica enclave. I shouldered past protestors who screamed that the indicted were butchers and monsters, and others who lauded them as heroes. I traveled to Bosnia and Republika Srpska to interview witnesses and meet Dr. Karadzic’s family and friends, and was physically sickened by blind hatred and radical nationalism, as well as the poverty and destruction wrought by those passions.

Though I joke about my experience working for the “bad guys”, I am haunted by death and by the idea that I somehow contributed to something to which I am diametrically opposed. However, I am also extremely proud of my work this summer. Without a strong legal defense the entire field of international criminal justice is a sham for vigilantism. A fair trial is a basic human right and cannot be denied to anyone, even someone who has demonstrated complete disregard for human rights. As an American I hold that to be true, and, though my faith in that principle was tested this summer, I stand by it. It is a conviction that drives my pursuit of a career in law.

If I could offer advice to idealistic students, it would be to seek experiences that will drastically change their perception of the world, force them to grapple with their own morality, and identify the ground on which they must take a stand. The most important thing I have ever learned is how to stand in a field of graves and still realize how beautiful the mountains are.

- Elisabeth Eikrem, Government and Music major
Student Funding:
Scholarships and Donations

The Pinto Carver Essay Contest

Current LAH Freshman and Sophomores are eligible to compete for this essay prize. The prompt will be posted online in mid-December and responses are due January 20, 2012 at 5 pm. Good luck!

LAH Study Abroad Scholarships

Applications will be due Monday, November 1, 2011 at 5 pm for students planning to study abroad in the Spring 2012 semester. Students must plan on studying a foreign language while abroad in order to be eligible for funding.

Apply online: http://utdirect.utexas.edu/student/abroad/globalassist.WBX

Giving to Liberal Arts Honors

Help Liberal Arts Honors Students pursue academic research, study abroad opportunities, and unpaid internships. You may give to Liberal Arts Honors online: http://www.utexas.edu/cola/progs/lahonors/giving.php

Of course, we welcome the opportunity to meet with you and seek your guidance in assisting the College. If you would like to make a donation, please mail your pledge for Liberal Arts Honors to:

Kathleen Aronson, Director of Development and Alumni Relations
College of Liberal Arts
The University of Texas
1 University Station, G-6300
Austin, Texas 78712

You may also e-mail Kathleen Aronson at mcaronson@mail.utexas.edu or call 512/475-9763 to receive more information.
Breaking in: Advice for Enterprising LAH Students
Tyler Womack, Senior Content Strategist, HCB Health

I graduated with a Liberal Arts Honors Philosophy degree in 2003, and eight years later, I’m the senior content strategist at a growing ad agency in Austin. On paper, “senior content strategist” means the agency lead for influencing, charming or simply directing web users through prose. In practice, it means that I come up with exciting, smart website ideas, sell those ideas to clients, and then bring those websites to life. Advertising should appeal to many LAH students; it’s one of those rare “paying” fields where you can tell stories, write artful prose and have your work seen by millions. But it isn’t the easiest field to break into. Persistence and adaptability got me in the door; the critical thinking skills engendered by an LAH education fueled my advancement.

“Nobody ever got fired for buying IBM.”
It’s the idea that a company will go with a known brand over another that’s superior but unknown — because known equals safe. When it comes to hiring, advertising majors are the known brand: Ad grads are educated in how to speak the jargon, put together competitive analyses and tell taglines from slogans. In my book, Liberal Arts Honors students are the superior unknown: Our degree teaches problem-solving, critical thinking and artful writing. It simply takes persistence to make these talents shine through.

“Cut your hair and get a job — even if you don’t like the job.”
I’m paraphrasing, here, but not by much. This advice was given at UT’s Spring 2003 general liberal arts convocation. And strangely enough, it was pretty spot-on. I took a job I could get as an unknown quantity, and proved my talent. Boring job led to creative job, which led to a chance interview at local ad agency, Springbox. And I nailed it. With a little work, I became a known brand. In the process, I adopted the industry jargon. I learned how to talk about online experiences, and elegantly sell complex ideas.

“Writing is most successful when the form contemplates the function”
I’m paraphrasing again, this time from In Search of Meaning, one of my favorite LAH classes. This adage helps me align online copy and site design with the products I’m selling and the audience I’m wooing. Similarly, ideas like the Categorical Imperative help determine if an interaction model is feasible site-wide. Internal logic fuels successful experiences, and the ability to crank out pages of writing for big websites.

I challenge all LAH students with an interest in advertising to pursue copywriting internships. Even in a down economy, there’s a market for artful writing, critical thinking and raw talent.

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