Calendar:

May 4:  
Last class day of Spring 2012 semester

May 18-19:  
Spring Graduation ceremonies

June 6:  
Summer Orientation for new LAH students begins

August 27:  
LAH Orientation Bike Rides and Walks

August 28:  
LAH Kick-off Lunch

August 29:  
First Class Day

October 26-27:  
Family Weekend

November 6:  
Last day an undergraduate student may, with the dean’s approval, drop a class or change a class to pass/fail

November 22-25:  
Thanksgiving break

December 7:  
Last class day

December 8-9:  
Fall graduation ceremonies

From the director’s desk:

I recently came across a wonderfully concise definition of a liberal education. In talking to a group of young people about what they should expect from college, the then President of Barnard College, Judith Shapiro, said: “You want the inside of your head to be an interesting place to spend the rest of your life” (Andrew Delbanco, College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be, p. 33, a book I recommend). Our LAH students are doing just that, furnishing their minds to be interesting places, doing so in the classroom, honing critical thinking and writing skills, testing their ideas against great works of literature, history, and philosophy, storing up the best that has been thought. Much of what will delight and sustain them in years to come, however, arises from reading and editing submissions to Echo, the LAH literary journal, and then following up with all that goes into funding and publishing the journal; in organizing an All-Honors Semi-Formal, a massive book drive, and selecting and prepping our Quiz Bowl Team, all activities of the LAH Student Council this year; participating in “Foot in the Door,” the LAH Theatrical group, playing in the LAH Music Ensemble, mentoring LAH freshmen, organizing Rousseau and Ransom Reading Groups. In these and many other activities our students learn to lead and to follow, to set priorities and work with another, manage their time and that of others, while sparking their curiosity, learning humility, and developing lasting friendships. That is, LAH students, in and outside the classroom, are interesting minds in the making. Allow me in closing to boast: the LAH Quiz Bowl team—Janette Martinez, Sam Naik, and James Stratton—brought home the trophy this year, besting teams from Plan II, Business, and Engineering Honors. And the editor of The Daily Texan for 2012–2013 is LAH History major, Susannah Jacob. I welcome your comments, suggestions, and questions (carver@austin.utexas.edu).

Best wishes,

Larry Carver
A Reminder

Dear Ayesha,

If you’re reading this, then things have changed. If twenty years have marched on without mercy, then you must be older. You must be gentler, stronger, perhaps not so restless. You must have touched exotic cultures, strutted through every doomsday prediction; you might even have learned to make tea without a kettle steam burn. Perhaps you’ve acquired a husband, or children, or both - or neither. And on that sullen note, perhaps you’ve never traveled to Petra or created a short film or conversed in Russian or finished a chapter of the book you’ve never written. Perhaps you’ve never done too many things, because the beginnings of silver in your hair tell you that it’s too late. If such is the case, then you’ve made a terrible mistake.

You’ve lost what we had.

This is not a forgotten love letter. It is not a warning, not an apology, and there is no return address. This is our story. It is a reminder to revive our bond as I remember it: the night before your first college class, at the pinnacle of youth and an ocean away from home – jittery at where you had started and where chance had thrust you.

You lay brick still under the covers that night, half willing your head to shut up, lest someone overhear your thoughts and ridicule such freshman delusions of grandeur. But head overcame will and you imagined recklessly where these four years could take you: to the United Nations, The New York Times, to a bookshelf in Barnes and Noble, to the think tanks in D.C. You imagined change, and success, and the sweat that would drive you there.

And that night, you pulled me from my grave. I had been but a shadow for years – fallen ill the day you accepted that “Pokémon” was not a legitimate career, and passed the night you locked your window to Peter Pan. Over the next decade, I had been stripped and tamed and lay dormant, only to be conjured back for brief periods during English class. But that night, hours before you began your college career, I came back to life. That night, you could imagine becoming anyone and doing anything – because you were given something raw, exhilarating: opportunity.

As you lay in the darkness, daring to envision a fantastical future, I limped out of my grave. I was stronger with every thought that raced through your head, but weak still. For years, I had endured Settle’s narrow coffin, and returned to you as nothing but a shadow - a flickering gray without a home. And as you lay there, letting me bathe you with restlessness, you began your college career.

Over the next four years, I, as shadow, stood by your side through every demented 8:00 am. I pushed you to dream, and envision a life beyond familiarity and tradition. I believed that you were capable of greatness, whether such an assumption was rational or not. Perhaps at times I deluded myself, convinced that you were greatness of the highest order: the procrastinator that does not pay. But you did pay, and you learned, and your failures left me wiser. Other times – and I do apologize - I underestimated your worth, fashioning monsters out of professors, and dungeons out of their offices. Indeed, I was at times faulty, irrational, hardheaded. I was not always to be trusted.

But like any good shadow, I stayed.

I soon learned that you were only responsible for producing two things during these youthful years: dreams and sweat. I pushed you towards both. I tore down your perceived limits, stood up to your challenges, whispered that difficulty built greatness, and that pursuit was not sin. With my badgering and prodding and constant intervention, you painted a more exquisite dream. And as you dreamt, I grew stronger.

I grew into more than a shadow; I grew into a motivator. I grew into a companion. I hesitate to condone smoking, but I was the trusted lighter to your opportunity. With every passing semester, I let you look further, think bigger, act. With your head and my insatiable curiosity, we pursued the difficult, the unknown, the odd. Though some of your college days left me craving Settle’s coffin, others left me exhilarated; I was undefeatable. On those happy days, I remember resting by the Window with you; through it, we saw a life. This life we dreamt of would be passionate, far removed from Monotony and her tired siblings. In it, we would be inseparable.

And as the years came to a close, I realized.

What I did for College was never as vital as that which College did for me. College brought me back to life. She rekindled our childhood bond, and cultivated me, and gave to me much more than I had given to her. College knew that although she would only live to be four years old, I was timeless. College, God bless her, was intelligent enough to realize that although our whirlwind, youthful romance might dwindle after her death, you and I could never drift completely apart. She would have wanted us to stay friends.

I know you’ve aged, but that is all I know. I do not know if our friendship lived on, or if continued
LAH Student Council

The Liberal Arts Honors Student Council has had another outstanding year. Another group of freshmen have been brought into the fold and assisted by Council mentors. We’ve started a tradition with our premier fall social event, holding the second annual All-Honors Semi-Formal by partnering with Business and Plan II Honors, and this year’s stands as the most successful event the Council has ever put on. We also participated in Explore UT again this year, helping countless children create their very own Thinking Caps (so many that we ran out of supplies!). We’ve also helped spread the joys of learning and creativity another way, holding a large book drive over the spring semester, collecting boxes upon boxes full of books to send off to those who need them. And to top it all off, in our annual Honors Quiz Bowl, a LAH team convincingly won back the title. It’s been a great year, and they just keep on getting better.

- Nicholas Hancox, LAH Student Council President

LAH Pre-Med Society

The LAH Pre-Med Society is a student-run organization focused on combining the world of Liberal Arts and medicine. Our goal is to provide avenues of resources that will ultimately benefit students who are pursuing a career in the healthcare field but are currently majoring or focusing on a degree in the Liberal Arts arena. Some of the things we have to offer are links to internships around the Austin area, volunteer opportunities at local hospitals and clinics, access to Kaplan and Princeton Review’s MCAT preparation classes, and guest speakers who have gone through the process of balancing Pre-Med with the liberal arts and can give us insight into how they worked it in. However, it’s not all academics and work. We have social outings and get-togethers so we can vent and let off some steam. After all, it’s not easy being a Pre-Med student! For more information, contact Farhana Khaja <farhana.khaja@yahoo.com>.

Echo

Looking for an opportunity to publish your prose, poetry, or photography? Echo will soon be soliciting original material for its 2012-2013 issue. Send anything and everything our way to echolitmag@gmail.com. Feel free to encourage fellow students in your English and Rhetoric classes to do the same.

Additionally, we are always looking for more staff members to help review submissions and work on design and layout. If you would like to be a part of Echo, please email us at the above address and we will happily add you to our staff mailing list.

LAH Music Ensemble: The Amorous Paulharmonic

Do you play an instrument or sing? The LAH Music Ensemble is looking for anyone and everyone to join this fall! We are a group of LAH students that meets once a week, working to put on a few shows each year. We’ve played at Honors Day, Explore UT, and we always have a holiday concert. We’ve played pieces from almost every musical genre and we are open to anything that our members want to put together. We always need singers and instruments of all kinds (strings, guitar, woodwinds, horns, percussion, etc.). We are also looking for a conductor! If you are interested in songwriting, composing, or performing, then the ensemble would love to have you! Send a message to heathernwong@gmail.com if you have any questions or are interested in joining.

A Reminder, continued

Monotony and her siblings clawed down your dreams and declared a dictatorship. I do not know how this story ends, only how it began. But if the hunch in your step and the first bit of belly and the first pair of reading glasses is keeping you from dreaming again, then you have lost College’s lesson and pushed me back into my grave. And if indeed I am in my coffin, there is time left to redeem College’s teaching, to again feel her youth and ambition. There is time left to awaken me - to relive that night, twenty years ago.

All you have to do is Imagine.
All my love,
- Ayesha Akbar, Journalism and Psychology major
LAH Abroad:
Córdoba, Argentina

Relearning for the First Time

When I returned to the States in 2009 from my high school foreign exchange, I knew that I wanted to return to Argentina to put a coda on my intense experience. Learning about the UT-Córdoba exchange, I saw my opportunity. In the next years, I would enter Latin American Studies, write my term papers, and form my thesis all with the goal of constructing my ‘bi-national’ identity. When I finally got funding for field research to return to La Plata early as well as to attend Córdoba in the fall, I breathed a sigh of relief as it seemed like the hardest part, getting on the plane, was behind me. Things had surely changed, but I had maintained contact with my host family, my friends, and my professors, and had even received a stipend for a language assistantship at my former exchange school, the Colegio Nacional de La Plata.

Getting on the plane would be the easy part. Two days before departure, I learned that my host uncle had died eight days earlier from a surprise heart attack. However, the family insisted I come anyway, saying that it would bring a bit of normalcy to a difficult situation, but that things had indeed changed.

After a frustrating twenty-four hour delay in my flight, I arrived in Buenos Aires. My host father excitedly greeted me at the airport, and, despite my initial reservations, it seemed as if their decision for me to come had been the right one, but as we arrived to La Plata, the hushed voices and the spontaneous displays of grief were both understandable and unavoidable.

My research on Argentine cinema did not go as planned, with the tensions between working in an informal society and adhering to the strict guidelines of the IRB slowing my project. The school did not stick to the contract, instead dividing my time (and pay) between the Colegio and another school across town. Friends that had ‘waited two years’ to see me again suddenly became ‘too busy’ to even spend half an hour a week over tea. A talk with another host uncle in which he described his inherent ‘mistrust of US foreigners’ and their ‘infantile attitudes’ of believing that anyone should ‘care about their attempts to study us’ only added to my feeling of isolation, although the latter point brought a healthy dose of humility and loosening to my research approach. I had to relearn that my goals were not others’ goals and that a ‘business attitude’ could seriously affect my work in a culture centered on personal relationships and emotional trust. I had to be patient, be present for others, and put my goals into perspective. I even took advantage of the position of the other school to meet new colleagues and experience the difference between private and public education. In short, a mechanistic view of time, goals, and production would prove as futile as it would destructive.

Córdoba was a new start, but life was even more unstructured and ‘inefficient.’ But Córdoba, by rejecting ‘efficiency’ forced the human element, the personal ‘I care’ into everyday interactions. From sitting down with classmates for two-hour beer talks, to kind seventy-year-old ladies inviting me to share mate and sew with them, I was transformed. I learned ‘time is not money’ but that ‘a penny wise’ can be ‘a pound foolish.’ Inviting others to your house to watch a soccer game offering a bag full of criollos could get you the rare and elusive friend whom you could ‘count on for everything’. I learned to emphasize small courtesies, the division between ‘private’ and ‘public’ conversations, even if the former took place in a public setting and/or was of a purely academic nature, that what is said between you and another person is always private until the other makes it public. I learned the importance of projected public perception as opposed to private realities, and that it is better to apologize without knowing what one did than to almost lose a friend by demanding to know why they had cut all communication.

The complexity, the criticism, the ornate diplomacy that almost borders on absurd, were all reasons why I could not stand Argentina, but also why I could not stand to be away. Upon learning the hidden customs, and unspoken taboos, one sees beyond the tango, folklore, the nightclubs, the Che Guevara t-shirts, to a deep culture based on conflicted identities, self-doubt, societal pride, and self-discovery. Deep down, I remembered why I had wanted to come back to the country of the celeste y blanco, even if it took another exchange to unlearn and relearn what I thought I knew.

- Travis Knoll, Latin American Studies major

**Quiz Bowl Champs**
The Liberal Arts Honors team won 1st place in the 4th annual Honors Quiz Bowl. They competed against 16 opposing teams representing the best of Dean’s Scholars, Liberal Arts Honors, Plan II Honors, Business Honors, Engineering Honors and Turing Scholars. Sam Naik, James Stratton, and Janette Martinez amazed everyone with their interdisciplinary mastery and proved that they are among the most gifted students at UT.
Students Write:  
A Fourth Year Essay Prize Winner

“No, but I would lay down my life for two brothers or eight cousins."

Speaking on behalf of kin altruists everywhere, the British evolutionary biologist, J.B.S. Haldane, famously quipped the above when asked if he would give his life to save a drowning brother. I begin with this quote not to espouse its brut scientific outlook, but to point out that modes of thought concerning morality and mortality have evolved since Socrates. This evolution is evident in the prompt itself: Socrates’ consideration of the good, complete with example of Achillean courage, culminates in a question regarding values—values, not virtues.

In classical and Christian thought, temperance, prudence, fortitude, and justice were called the four cardinal virtues. They were cardinal in that morality hinged upon them. Failure to participate in these virtues displeased (the) God(s), and in this morality was linked to mortality: God judges all mortals at death. The virtuous life precedes the pleasant afterlife. This changed, however, when Machiavelli broke from classical and Christian tradition with The Prince. Rather than upholding a system based upon ideals unfounded in nature, Machiavelli based his theories on personal experience and historical example. Recognizing that virtue was exclusively manifest in the divine, Machiavelli took virtue from God and gave it to man. Modernity followed, accompanied by further definitions of virtue. These definitions all share one quality: subjectivity. A virtue is not higher truth but any quality one values as excellent. In this age of the individual, one is free to define virtue or assign value but limited in means to induce agreement. Science, however, can make “good” decisions grounded on fact. In the quote above, Haldane will sacrifice his life for two brothers or eight cousins because, combined, they express 100% of Haldane’s genes. He may die, but his genes will break even for the next generation. From an evolutionary perspective, Haldane made a good decision. In mathematics, value becomes even more calculable. It’s merely a numerical measure of quantity. Here, subjectivity does not apply. Value becomes a quality of an object and not an impression of the mind. Of course, the belief that value should be free some subjectivity is itself subjective.

I cite these truths to show that agreeing or disagreeing with Socrates’ value statement rests upon incomparable notions of value itself. Values are not distinct points on a plane between which meaning can be drawn; each is a unique plane. I cannot impress my contemporary value conception onto the classical because, according to my conception, what’s more important is that all men remain free to decide what is good—but even then I’ve trespassed. I cannot translate values between minds or across time, including the value that everyman is free to formulate value, without nullifying my definition.

As for the final question, I would never die for 1 or 2, but I might for 3. There are 3 primary colors, 3 constituents in the atom, 3 dimensions in the universe, 3 Abrahamic religions, 3 bodies of Buddha, 3 cosmic functions in Hinduism, 3 hand formations in rock-paper-scissors, 3 components in a successful gimmick, and 3 courses in a decent meal. The number 3 has always spoken to me.

- James Lamon, English major
Where in the world are LAHers? 
Summer 2012 Plans

Lauren Bednarski (2015) I will be working at Peninsula Youth Theater all summer teaching acting classes.

Cindy Brzostowski (2013) I will be interning at the Texas Historical Commission this summer on Under-told Historic Markers Stories and Curatorial: Art and Decorative Arts Collections Registration.

Kimia Dargahi (2015) This summer I’ll be taking classes, working, going to Cozumel with my family, and taking a two-week road trip from Texas to California and back with close friends.

Katie De Alvarez (2015) I will be working at the preschool day camp at my church this summer.

Kevin DeLuca (2014) I’ll be working in Dr. Alison Preston’s Neural Basis for Memory and Learning Lab as well as Dr. Buss’s Evolutionary Psychology Lab as a research assistant. I’ll also be taking a few summer classes.

Alex D’Jamoos (2015) This summer I’m going to France and Germany for one month to visit family. After that I will travel to Moscow for three days, and then leave for Africa. Happy Families International, an adoption agency and a humanitarian organization, has invited me to come to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. The purpose of the trip is to demonstrate that even people with disabilities are able to overcome great physical challenges if given the opportunity. I am very excited!!

Elisabeth Eikrem (2013) I am interning at the Orleans Parish District Attorney’s Office in New Orleans, Louisiana and studying for the LSAT!

Madison Estes (2013) This summer I’ll be interning with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.

Caleb Freund (2015) This summer I plan to eventually defeat my little brother in tennis, as well as catch up on all of the sleep and lounging that I’ve missed over the second semester. I will be reviewing movies for the organization “Significance and Cinema”, talking about messages of hope and redemption inherent within popular narrative. My entire family and I are going to Mexico on a mission trip with our church, and immediately afterwards I will be working as a camp counselor for Laity Lodge Youth Camp, where I get paid to have tons of fun with kids, and love on them like nobody’s business. It’s going to be one fantastic summer.

Josh Fuller (2014) My summer plans are traveling with the Normandy Scholars Program in Europe and working at McDaniel and Associates in Austin. They are a small technology and intellectual property litigation firm.

Teddy Garber (2015) For the first half of the summer, I am going to intern at a law firm called Andrews Kurth in Dallas, Texas. For the second half of the summer, I am going to intern at the Bank of Grain Valley in Kansas City, Missouri.

Rachael Harrison (2014) I’m going to study abroad in Paris through June and half of July! I’m so excited!

Jamie Hill (2014) This summer I will be riding my bike from Austin, TX to Anchorage, AK to spread hope, knowledge, and charity in the fight against cancer with Texas 4000!

Salimah Jasani (2014) I’m going to be visiting family in India and Uganda for the first half of the summer and doing the Oxford English Summer Program in England the second half.

Ben Johnson (2013) I will be interning with a non-profit called ALARM. I will be in their Dallas office helping with the development of an orphan care and child-headed homes website. The coolest part is that they have enlisted me to go to Africa to document stories and pictures of these children for the website. The goal is 400 children. Then I will come back to Dallas and organize and upload all of it. LAH is giving me a thousand dollars and then I need to raise another three for airfare and living expenses, as the internship is unpaid. I am so excited to share this, and would love to let the LAH community know about my experiences after.

Olivia Kropf (2014) This summer I will continue being a community organizer for President Obama’s grassroots re-election efforts and will also be going on my first backpacking trip in the Ansel Adams Wilderness in California.

Hannah Lee (2014) I’ll be working as an intern at the Department of Transportation in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs, specifically the Office of Aviation Analysis (I know, long title) in Washington, DC this summer. I’m very excited!

Damir Ljuboja (Humanities 2013) This summer I will work as a Harvard Stem Cell Institute Fellow at a Hematology/Oncology laboratory at Harvard Medical School. I will work to complete the project I began last summer on elucidating the role of histone demethylases in the regulatory network that maintains the pluripotency of embryonic stem cells. I will also devote time to studying for the MCAT in anticipation of a fall 2012 test date.
Words of Wisdom

The only advice I can think of is to get as involved at UT as you possibly can! There are so many amazing programs, clubs, scholarships, and opportunities to grow here that I wish I had taken more advantage of.

- Carolyn Webb

The best way to get to know the campus is to get involved! Find an organization that interests you (and believe me, with over 1000 organizations, you’ll find one) and participate as much as possible. Just remember to make your schoolwork your priority!

- Janette Martinez

Take a wide variety of classes early in college—and as many as possible! You might find that you want to pursue multiple majors, which can really enhance your college experience. While focusing on your major(s) and graduation has its merits, adopting tunnel-vision to complete your degree plan will burn you out. Enjoy the freedom that comes with being a freshman or sophomore, take unique classes that interest you, and it’ll only make your majors more exciting and meaningful.

- Zach Garber
My name is Alana Harrison, and I am currently studying abroad in Machida, a suburb of Tokyo, Japan! I am a third year Psychology major; I’m also minoring in Japanese, which explains my choice in location. I’ve only been here for a little over two weeks, but this experience has already become an enormous milestone in my life! My host campus, J.F. Oberin University (no affiliation with the Oberlin University in the states), is a fantastic place to both learn Japanese and meet new people. As a small liberal arts college, Oberin offers an experience far different than that of the University of Texas at Austin; with a considerably smaller campus and a more intimate student body, it’s much easier to get to know students in a much shorter period of time! In fact, I feel like I get to meet new friends on a daily basis, and I continuously have new opportunities to practice my Japanese with native speakers. My Japanese peers at Oberin are very friendly, approachable, and very patient with my sub-par Japanese abilities. I don’t feel daunted at all by the idea of approaching complete strangers and forging new friendships through the commonality of this amazing (albeit somewhat difficult) language. In fact, that’s how I managed to join a student club (Oberin Dancing Company) here at the university; very few of the members speak English, but we still have tons of fun together! Living in an international dorm is also a great way for me to meet people from all around the world! I have friends from Boston, Hawaii, China, Mongolia, South Korea, Australia, the UK, and the Netherlands. In fact, in many instances, the only way I can communicate with some of my friends is through Japanese. For instance, some of my classmates are Chinese and speak no English whatsoever; I, of course, speak no Chinese whatsoever. Because of this, we rely upon our mutual Japanese capabilities to get the message across—it isn’t always perfect, but it’s an incredible immersion experience. My time in Japan has also been so worthwhile because of the endless possibilities for leisure and travel! In this fascinating world where ancient meets modern, where thousand-year-old temples are just a block away from ten-story department stores, there’s always a variety of new things to see and do! Early April was peak cherry blossom season, and I don’t think I’ve ever seen more beautiful flora in my entire life. Just miles and miles of soft pink foliage! The petals are wilting now, unfortunately, but even that is a breathtaking sight—they drift from the trees and whirl through the air like snow! I have mostly spent my free time shopping for quirky and fabulous Japanese fashions (much to the dismay of my wallet!), but future travel plans of mine include a five-day trip to Kyoto to see temples and attend a geisha ceremony, a weekend trip to Hiroshima to visit the World War II monuments and museums, a relaxing getaway at a Japanese onsen (natural hot springs), an excursion to the top of Mount Fuji in late July, and, of course, a day at Tokyo Disneyland! I have enjoyed nothing but positive experiences here in the Land of the Rising Sun, and I can’t wait to see what else this amazing country has in store for me!

- Alana Harrison, Psychology major

LAH Study Abroad Scholarships

Applications will be due Monday, November 1, 2012 at 5 pm for students planning to study abroad in the Spring 2013 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

Words of Wisdom

Let yourself fall in love with UT. It really is the best experience you’ll have, and you won’t want to leave once you’re close to graduation!
- Sheena Patel

The advice I have for incoming LAHers is to not take on too much too soon. College may require new study habits as well as limitations on the extracurricular activities you get involved. Succeeding in college is all about finding balance.
- Ariel Maxie

Enjoy every minute-- it goes by very fast! Also, take as many LAH classes as you can; the professors are awesome. Especially sign up for classes that really spark your interest.
- Burkley Wombwell

Don’t focus on learning all the little details for a class in order to get a good grade on tests. Instead, try to truly grasp the concepts the professor is teaching. Once you graduate, all the information you bombed your short term memory with goes out the window, and the only thing that you will take away from college, that will benefit you in the future, are the ideas you were able to consolidate inside yourself.
- Dickie Fischer

Please do not take college for granted. Many of you will be coming in with friends from high school and many of you won’t be. Make sure you branch out and make as many close friends as possible. “Close friends” are the key words. College is a time to keep the friends you have and make many more. Honestly, if it were not for my friends, old and new, I would not have been able to get through college in one piece. Good luck on the amazing journey you are about to take and hook ‘em horns!
- Shanup Dalal
Class of 2012 Post-Graduate Plans

Paul Cuno-Booth I will be studying abroad at the American University in Cairo (AUC) with the Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA).

Shanup Dalal After graduation, I will be heading to NYU Medical School to pursue my dream of becoming a pediatric neurosurgeon.

Katie Erwin I’ll be in Houston, attending Institute for Teach for America while teaching summer school in HISD.

Dickie Fischer I will be living in Alexandria for a year, going to a language institute and enrolling in the American University of Alexandria as part of the UT Arabic Flagship year abroad program.

Zach Garber I’ll be immigrating to Israel in August and joining the Israel Defense Forces in November.

Chris Hogan I start working at HomeAway this June as a Software Engineer.

Sydnee Houlette I will be leaving to study abroad in the Ghana Maymester two days after I graduate. Following my stay in Ghana I will be in Florence, Italy for a week and a half working with other artists and visiting friends that I made last summer when I studied abroad there. I will return to Houston at the end of June, and then come back to Austin. I hope to contribute to the ACE program in the 2012-2013 school year, and also am looking forward to performance opportunities and continuing to write creatively. My time here at UT and in LAH has passed so quickly, and I am very grateful for the acceptance and support I have received through being in the Liberal Arts Honors program.

James Lamon I’m working in Austin (currently searching for meaningful employment) and then studying for the October LSAT and GRE. After the test dates, I’m moving to L.A. to pursue a career in screenwriting/television writing. This fall I will apply to MFA programs in creative writing.

Hayden Lawson I am going to either UT or UVA law in the fall!

Janette Martinez After graduation, I will be moving to Houston and teaching middle school at YES Prep Public Schools.

Ariel Maxie I will be interning at The Richards Group, an advertising agency in Dallas this summer which I hope turns into a full time job. If not, I plan to start grad school either in Spring 2013 or Fall 2013.

Nadia Nadesan Riding to Alaska with Texas 4000.

Sheena Patel I’m planning on attending law school in Chicago (Loyola).

Michael Sierra-Arevalo I’ve been here in Austin working at a startup called SpareFoot since I graduated in December. In fall, I’ll be matriculating to Yale for their doctoral program in sociology as an fellow at the Institution for Social Policy Studies. It’s a multi-disciplinary fellowship that combines economics, political science, psychology, and sociology and lets you work together to learn and build policy memos.

Ben Smith I’m off to work as an analyst for Deloitte in NYC!

Lindsey Smith I’m moving to Cairo, Egypt on a Fulbright grant to study at the American University in Cairo and do research for a year.

Carolyn Webb After graduation I will be teaching English in Japan with the JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Program. I actually heard about JET from another LAH-er participating now (Caitlin Eberhardt). I’m so excited and hope to eventually go to law school when my time with JET ends.

Lauren Williams Our semester [in Egypt] is starting to wind to a close, meaning we’re scrambling to read and write several thousand words a week in preparation for finals, and as you can imagine it’s been a bit hectic. When I return from my year abroad in August, I will be entering the Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures program in the UT Graduate School specializing in Arabic. I have also received a Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship from the Department of Education to assist me in my studies.

Burkley Wombwell UT law this fall, traveling this summer.

Alexandra Young I am still in the process of applying to a few full-time jobs, but I have internships with both the Austin Film Festival’s Youth program and the Texas Civil Rights Project. Over the summer I will be preparing to take the GRE as well.

Jodi Zik I’m heading to University of Texas Health Sciences Center at San Antonio for medical school in the fall.

Words of Wisdom

Don’t be afraid to move outside of your comfort zone: try new things, take on more than you think you can manage, push yourself.

- James Lamon

My advice for incoming freshmen? Get involved with research! From volunteering in the Psychology research labs to executing my senior honors project, research has been a crucial component of my education here at UT.

- Aftyn Behn
Student Snapshots:
Interning with the Archer Program in Washington, DC

I moved to Washington, DC in January to participate in the Archer Program, a semester long program that brings 30 University of Texas system students to Washington, DC to intern and study. Students work full time at their internships and take classes with UT professors at the Archer Center twice a week. The University rents two houses close the capitol, where students live together and learn skills like how to share two fridges with fifteen people.

For most students, the most attractive part of the Archer Program is the opportunity to intern for a semester in DC. The Archer Program allows students to find their own full-time internship, which means that Fellows tailor their experience to their interests and career goals. I applied to ten internships, primarily in the field of energy and the environment. After gaining invaluable experience doing rounds of interviews with companies and organizations, I decided to spend the semester interning at the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

I work on the climate adaptation and international affairs subdivision of the energy and climate team at CEQ. During the semester I have worked on three main projects. The first was a synthesis of the three national climate adaptation strategies, where I helped compile a guide to help Federal agencies make plans to adapt to climate change. For example, adaptation actions could include moving a coastal base further inland to plan for sea level rise. My second project is a report about how Native American communities are adapting to climate change. My supervisor asked me to use my critical thinking skills that I have developed as a liberal arts student to make recommendations about how to help Native American communities address the impacts of climate change. My final project is to help develop a youth engagement strategy around the UN Sustainable Development Conference, or Rio+20, that will be held this June. We developed a video challenge to encourage young people to show the world the steps they are taking to make their own lives and own communities more sustainable. I have seen the project through every step of the way, from developing of planning documents, to building the website, to launching the initiative at the end of the month.

The Archer Program encouraged me to explore a variety of outside events. I attended Prime Minister David Cameron’s welcome ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House, where I heard President Obama and Prime Minister Cameron joke about March Madness and the War of 1812, then conclude by speaking about the importance of a strong alliance. I saw President Obama, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi speak at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee Policy Conference. My supervisor at CEQ took my parents and me on a tour of the West Wing. I’ve seen local comedy, a Washington Nationals baseball game, and spent time with the cast of the play 1776. I’ve eaten Ethiopian food, sizzling bowls of traditional Korean bi bim bap, and an unforgettable Afghan pumpkin dish.

I couldn’t have done many of these things without my roommates and friends, the other Archer Fellows. In the Archer house I have learned from each of my roommates about their many different backgrounds and stories. We begin most nights by sharing stories about our days at work in the living room. Our discussions are equally as likely to evolve into philosophical debate about the role of government as they are into a debate about where to get the best burger in DC. Washington, DC really has something for everyone.

- Sierra Shear, Government major

Editor’s note: Check out the website Sierra Shear worked on here: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sustainability-challenge

Year of the Cooperative
LAH junior Sara Ness took a semester off to produce and direct a film “Year of the Cooperative” www.yearofthe cooperative.com

Sara is a member of Royal House co-op in Austin, Texas, and executive producer and director of the film “Year of the Cooperative”. This is her first major film, and she’s really excited about her great team and all the work they’ve done so far. Sara has lived in cooperatives for two years. She bakes, bikes, dances swing, and fosters kittens. She wants to show the world that just by changing your housing, you can have endless opportunities for joy; and that no matter how much or little you know, anybody can create something beautiful.
Being a student is a wonderful, stressful, and ethereal experience. While the world opens up in rich new ways, with lessons to learn, friendships to develop, and opportunities to seize, the pressure to be successful weighs heavily on the minds and hearts of students. Voices of authority and culture tell us that we need to make the best grades, know the most people, and leave the biggest mark on the world to be successful. In this expectation-filled environment of college, it becomes easy to lose sight of who you are and what you need. What do you seek in the solitude when the textbooks are closed? When your phone sits silently on the table? When nothing you do seems like quite enough?

These are the questions that haunted me one night when I heard that someone I knew from back home was struggling with incredibly tough issues in his life. As I sat on my creaky dorm bed amidst the rubble of notes, papers, and an open Psychology 301 textbook, I dreamed of ways to help him and others who struggle with anxiety, depression and loneliness that often stem from the pressure to be successful at everything. I thought about the brilliant discussions held in my Liberal Arts Honors Introduction to Psychology class about positive psychology, or the focus on the good aspects of human experience and behavior. Armed with these ideas, a Sharpie, and a few pieces of computer paper, I created a makeshift advertising flyer with the words “Take What You Need” written in the advertising space. On the pull-tabs at the bottom, I wrote some ideas that I believe people need to be truly happy: Love, Hope, Faith, Patience, Courage, Understanding, Peace, Passion, Healing, Strength, Beauty, and Freedom. I hand-copied six of these posters and posted them late that same night on various notice boards around the UT campus, hoping to brighten a student’s life in some small way.

The response to the signs was astounding. After I saw that all of the tabs were gone from most of the signs on campus by the very next day, I was informed a few days later that a student had taken a picture of the flyer and posted it to the popular blogging site Tumblr. The picture on the blog had accumulated 20,000 “likes” or “re-blogs” from around the world almost overnight. In the months since then, the original picture has gotten over 100,000 “likes” or “re-blogs,” and has been posted to other popular websites including Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, WeHeartit, iWasteSoMuchTime, Reddit, and others. I have received messages from people around the world who have created and posted their own signs in their neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces. Various non-profits and other organizations have shared the picture in support of their own positive causes. Thousands upon thousands of people have seen, loved, empathized with, and shared one simple sign made by one college student. I realized that my small message of hope in the darkness goes far beyond just me, my friends, and this campus; the message resonates with the world.

This incredible experience emphasized to me the things with which the world identifies, which the world needs: simple reminders of hope in the chaos of a pressurized society. When the books are closed, take Understanding to know that grades are indeed important, but that they do not define who you are. When the phone has been silent, take Faith in knowing you are loved. When you do not feel like you are enough, take Peace in seeing the Beauty of this life and the opportunities you have been given. When I had a small idea, inspired in part by a great discussion in an honors psych class, I took an action that ended up changing the world. Whatever the situation may be, we can take Hope in knowing we can overcome the obstacles life presents. So, go ahead. Take What You Need.

- Katie North, Psychology major
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

Just in for Spring 2012
Ariana Brown, LAH first year, won the Austin They Speak youth Poetry Slam finals. She will be on a team, along with four other youth poets, who will attend Slam Poetry nationals Brave New Voices in July.

James Lamon, English Honors student, was selected as one of 12 Dean’s Distinguished Graduates. This award recognizes students for their contribution to research and university life.

Susannah Jacob was elected as Editor in Chief for The Daily Texan 2012-2013 academic year.

Josh Fuller was elected Liberal Arts representative for Student Government.

Ayesha Akbar and Susannah Jacob receive Headliners Foundation scholarships for 2012-2013.

Liberal Arts Honors and Humanities Programs
Dorothy Gebauer Building 1.206  
Phone: 512.471.3458  
Fax: 512.232.2886  
1 University Station G6210  
Austin, TX 78712

http://www.utexas.edu/cola/progs/lahonors/

This newsletter is distributed via our website in pdf form. Those interested in submitting work for the upcoming issue should contact Stacey Amorous at samorous@austin.utexas.edu or Linda Mayhew at Imayhew@austin.utexas.edu.