The media have been all abuzz about the teaching of "Intelligent Design" in our public classrooms. Kansas seems determined to introduce the concept in spite of the nation’s scientists’ shaking their heads in disbelief, while in Dover, PA a judge gave a thumbs down signal to the proponents of ID. As the political and legal battles rage on, Charles Darwin’s visage graces the pages of our country’s magazines; we too have succumbed to the temptation to memorialize him on our front cover. But understandably so, for Charles Darwin himself visited campus this fall in a surprise visit! The story is reported later in this issue.

"Intelligent Design", although not a popular phrase among scientists, does seem eminently appropriate for many activities at UB. In this issue we are delighted to tell you about Professor Mike Ryan, who for many years represented the School of Engineering in our Honors Council. He has now assumed the title and anxieties of the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education. During his first months on the job he has worked diligently to invigorate the undergraduate experience across campus, especially in the area of undergraduate research. He has other plans in the works that you will be pleased to hear about.

Meanwhile here in the Honors Program, we have been hard at work to renovate the curriculum that has been essentially the same for almost twenty-five years. Most alumni have experienced variations of our UB Honors Colloquium where we now seriously engage in community service projects, and they will recall their favorite Honors seminars. Colloquium and Honors seminars are still with us. But for the past year, the Honors Council has pondered how our Honors Program requirements should expand to meet the educational needs of the growing world globalization. As author Thomas Friedman celebrated in the title of his recent book, *The World is Flat*, no nation is isolated from the economic, military and political activities in any other part of the world. Simple classroom experiences are not enough to deal with this whirlwind of change. Students must have a broad background; so the new requirements that we have instituted for the incoming freshmen emphasize experiential learning with a heavy accent on overseas study, internships, and in-depth scholarship leading to a senior thesis. Students must be flexible and wise to survive in the twenty-first century. The new requirements now stretch over four years and are outlined in the coming pages.

You will also read about alumni who have their own versions of "Intelligent Design" as they plan their own careers. Some have seemingly known since they were embryos that they would be a physician, poet, or lawyer. Others (over 50%) change their majors mid-stride and end up on an unexpected journey. And some have discovered that their inner child has an entrepreneurial streak and launched their own businesses. You can read about their interpretations of "Intelligent Design" in this Issue of *Honors Today*.

And finally don’t miss the invitation to our Twenty-fifth anniversary reunion of the Honors Program found on the back page. When you visit we promise that you will see and hear all about UB’s new designs as one of the nation’s premier universities. Remember the dates: August 4-6, 2006. *See you there!*

KIPP HERREID & JOSIE CAPUANA
Academic Director and Administrative Director
Please join me in welcoming my daughter, Makena Claire St. George, to the Honors family! She arrived on January 30, 2006.

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Brian’s Blog

Brian Danielak
Distinguished Honors Scholar, Class of 2007

The Business of Art

Elizabeth Haremza
Honors Scholar, Class of 2004

Virtual Beginnings

Kevin Chugh
Honors Scholar, Class of 1991

Spot Girl

Ann Pellegrino
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A New Century

An Interconnected World

A Different Kind of Honors Program

Tutu’s and Taxes

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Mike Ryan:

Engineering Education—A View from the Fifth Floor

Jessica (Seabury) Dudek
Honors Scholar, Class of 1994
Assistant Administrative Director, Honors Program

Out of Africa: A Journey Out of Context

Paul Hebert
Advanced Honors Scholar, Class of 2005

Darwin Visits UB

Kevin Fryling
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I Do...Honors Alumni Who Have Tied the Knot

Alumni Updates

What They’re Doing Now

On the Cover:
Charles Darwin (1809-1882) in his later years. Photo by J. Cameron, 1869.
I admire Alistair Cooke. As a BBC newscaster he is responsible for the longest-running broadcast in radio history, entitled “Letter From America.” Each week the charming and comfortable English voice would pulse across the worldwide airways of the British Broadcasting Corporation, greeting eager listeners in England and elsewhere with tales, musings, and history from the United States. Cooke was part critic, part humorist, part storyteller. For 58 years his program showcased one of the world’s finest broadcasters practicing the mastery of his craft. It ran from 1946 through its final broadcast on March 2, 2004. Alistair Cooke sadly succumbed to cancer on March 30, 2004, and with his passing the world lost one of the greatest voices of the postwar generation.

As a student ready to spend his junior year abroad at Oxford University I was approached by the Honors Program. They offered me a very rare opportunity to stimulate interest in the Program by keeping a record of my experiences abroad. I was being asked to create my own kind of weekly “Letter from Britain.” They wanted me to write about my travels and adventures; my life in a new city, a new school, and a new country. All this and they wanted to share it with 106,000 prospective UB applicants.

Where Alistair Cooke had radio, my medium of communication is very much a creature of 21st century culture. The weblog that I use reflects the impact of the internet generation on how we choose to communicate. Even the truncation of the name to “blog” evokes the growing predilection we now have toward instant on-demand information. The blog functions like an online repository that allows me to create episodic serials of text and pictures that chronicle my time here. Those who visit can choose to read my experiences in the chronological order they are posted, or to just pick out any episode they like.

I find myself now seeking to follow, at least in my own humble way, in the footsteps of Alistair Cooke. My postings from the first term here at Oxford cover all manner of experiences abroad. Since I have arrived, I have had the chance to cheer a rowing regatta, visit the birthplace of Shakespeare, have dinner with world-renowned author Terry Pratchett, speak at the world’s most famous debating society, and see Brian Dennehey’s portrayal of Willy Loman from the front row of a West End theatre. I have bungled orders for food, struggled with essays, cursed the exchange rate, and lamented the fact that Britons believe any vegetable tastes better boiled. I try, whenever possible, to supplement these experiences with the photographs I have taken. In this way I strive to create for my readers a more complete atmosphere.

I look back on all of the things I’ve done and realize how none of it would have been possible without the Honors Program. When it came to advising, they did not harp on what it was I needed to do, but instead asked the more important question of what it was I wanted to do with my time in college. Until my advisement sessions no one had ever really asked me that question before. With the help of my advisors, studying at Oxford turned from dream to possibility, and now it is very much a reality.)

To visit Brian’s Blog, log onto www.honors.buffalo.edu and click on Honors Blog.
my father began by saying, “What the heck are you going to do with an Art History degree?” I was speechless. Honestly, I had no idea. “Well, I guess I would do something with...art and galleries,” I explained.

That was three years ago, when I was changing my Business Administration major to Art History, two and a half years into my college career. I can understand my parents’ worries - getting a job in your field right after college is a challenge, and Art History is not a particularly easy field to break into. Even my friends were skeptical. I remember trying to explain to my business-school friend how I felt wandering through museums in Europe compared to how I felt studying macroeconomics. At the time, business courses just weren’t doing it for me. If I had not delved into art at that time in my life, I would have completely missed the opportunity to change the course of my life. Even though my parents and friends were worried that I would never find a job after college, here I am, working as Manager for the UB Art Gallery.

It all started with the all-important internship. As soon as I changed majors, I knew I would be behind the rest of the class if I did not go out and get some practical experience. So I knocked on the door of UB’s Art Gallery Director, Sandra Olsen, and asked for advice. She immediately set me up with Kristin Riemer, her External Affairs Officer, to help with press releases, gallery events, and media contacts. After that, I was hooked. The following semester, I found myself interning for Nancy Wulbrecht, Registrar, and learned how permanent collections and temporary exhibitions were cared for, insured, shipped, managed, and what the legal issues were. At the end of that fall, I graduated and was immediately offered a position as Collections Manager for David Anderson Art, the namesake of UB Anderson Gallery, which gave me the opportunity to work with and learn from the gallery professionals.

In the summer of 2004, I traveled to Crete, Greece to work with a UB professor as his research assistant. Without any idea of what exactly to expect on an archeological project, I headed to Crete to dive into thousands of bits of Minoan pottery. That experience helped solidify my passion for working with actual objects; being able to touch and hold a piece of history.

A year later, I applied for and received my current position in the Center for the Arts on the North Campus where I manage the work-study program for the gallery, including interviewing, hiring, and training the students how to be effective Gallery Attendants. I also handle the registrar work for our temporary exhibitions with all the little details and paperwork. However, the most exciting part about my job is coordinating the events that take place inside the gallery. In October, we had an exhibition preview for one of our sponsors, who held a photo-op with Colin Powell, who was speaking that evening at Alumni Arena. I was behind the scenes that night, making sure the exhibition was in order and that our security was prepared. I even got to have my picture taken with Colin Powell!

The galleries are regularly used for special events by campus departments and by President Simpson as he hosts university guests, permitting me to work with a variety of people with different goals. I enjoy the behind-the-scenes views and the satisfaction I get from helping an event succeed. The same is true with a fresh, new exhibition. When I sign for the delivery of the artwork that has yet to go on the walls, I am afforded a peek of artwork in crates and under wrappings, a view that many art-lovers never get to see. From the extensive planning and logistics, to the actual arrival and hanging of the artwork, each show has its own special magic. The most exhilarating time at any gallery is right before the opening, when people are flying around trying to get the exhibition up so that when it opens people come and say, “Wow, it looks like it belongs in here.” They would never know that we were spackling and lighting earlier that day.

There are “gallery people” and there are “art historians”. As a gallery person, I love the hum of the daily operations, the deadlines, the meetings, and working with the diverse people that make UB such an interesting place. I could never research anything for any length of time; I need the ever-changing exhibitions and people to keep me interested.

Somewhere along the line, I must have really listened to what my parents had to say; I am currently half-way through my Masters of Business Administration (MBA) at Canisius College and hope to continue helping the arts by providing them with financial literacy and fiscally sound policies.}

“As a “gallery person” I love the hum of the daily operations, the deadlines, the meetings, and the working with the diverse people that make UB such an interesting place to work."
In the fall of 2001, shortly before completing my Ph.D. at the University at Buffalo in Computer Science, I and two of my colleagues (my advisor and a fellow doctoral student) formed Tactus Technologies. While I was completing my graduate studies, we realized there was an enormous opportunity to bring Virtual Reality (VR) to the masses. While many companies were providing expensive solutions to organizations with deep pockets, no one was really delivering low cost VR solutions. We initially started the company on paper, met once or twice a week at a local diner and then did technical work on evenings and weekends. In 2004, after a lot of soul searching and advice from my wife, I decided to quit my job and join the company full time. We now have three full-time and four part-time employees, and are planning on hiring two more full-time programmers shortly. We currently have several products in development, and we hope to be the market leader in low cost (sub-$1,000) VR solutions for a variety of users.

My job is to run the company, and as such, I am responsible for both the technical design and development of our products as well as administrative functions. While I enjoy both aspects of the job, starting out I had no idea how much time the latter would consume. The best part about the job, and I think everyone in the company would agree, is the challenge of the work. We figure out some of the most complicated simulation computations ever created in the VR domain, and every day brings extremely challenging work.

Last year, my two co-founders and I were honored with the Western New York Inventor of the Year award for a medical device we designed and patented. The device is a medical palpation glove that is worn on a doctor’s hand while he palpates (touches) a patient. It is the first non-invasive device that actually quantifies tissue properties, rather than relying on subjective data. A doctor can then go back later and re-examine the patient by touching the same area and can compare, with actual numbers, the way a certain tissue or organ feels. The technology also allows the physician to virtually feel the old and new exams using a technology called haptics. Winning this award was a wonderful honor in addition to it being a great shock. We were invited to the awards dinner and were chosen for best invention in the health care domain, as well as the best overall invention. It was an amazing experience because we were surrounded by many of the area’s best and brightest, and it was truly an honor to even have been nominated.

The most valuable advice I could give to anyone considering starting a high tech company is to choose your partners and employees wisely. This is an old cliché, but it is also the truest of all of the half-true business book platitudes. Picking the right people is not just a good idea, for small business, it’s everything. All of the employees at our company can disagree and argue, go back and forth, but then walk away with no hard feelings. Good decisions require proper vetting, and proper vetting only works when people don’t take discussions personally. It’s not just choosing smart and hardworking people that’s important, it’s choosing even-tempered and thick skinned people as well.

Overall, working for a startup company is a great experience. You get out of it exactly what you put in - there’s no friction, no wasted time, never a boring day, and every day you come home mentally exhausted - in a good way. The first course I took at the University at Buffalo was an Honors seminar, called “The Computer as a Tool,” and I’ll never forget how freely ideas were exchanged in that course as compared with others, setting the stage for where I find myself today. I use this and many other Honor’s Program experiences every day and I’m grateful for having had the opportunity to expand my horizons at UB.

Kevin Chugh
Honors Scholar, Class of 1991
When I was younger, I always gave homemade greeting cards to my family. It is an embarrassing collection which my mother of course saved and presented to me years later when I graduated from UB. Making cards is something I have always enjoyed doing but never realized it could be a career path until recently.

I was drawn to UB Art School after visiting Bethune Hall (the previous home of the art department before moving to the Center for the Arts on the North Campus in 1994) for the first time. I loved the casual atmosphere and it seemed like the kind of place where students were free to dig in and make a mess! Being awarded a UB Honors Creative and Performing Arts Scholarship was an incredible honor. Interestingly enough, the pieces in my portfolio that received the best response during my initial review were some of the greeting cards I had included, done over the years for friends and family … most notably, a girl with a big round face and pigtails who shows up a few times in my current card collection. Since I was attending classes almost exclusively at Bethune Hall (which was a few blocks down from the Main Street campus in Buffalo), being part of the Honors Program was a good way to connect with the larger campus through Honors seminars and various get-togethers. I appreciated having the support of the UB Honors staff because it was great to have someone to talk to.

My first job out of school was designing yellow page ads. Pretty boring stuff, but I enjoyed the familiarity and - as we were just on the fringe of the digital age - it was also the last job where I ever had to do paste up (I still miss my waxer). After working there for a year, I was offered a job at Prometheus Books in Amherst, NY designing book jackets, which I did for another year. My art director was another UB design grad and a wonderful mentor. When my husband-to-be was offered the chance to move to the Washington, DC area, we both jumped at the chance to relocate. I started working for a small studio in Alexandria, VA that was owned by a husband and wife team who were also, coincidentally, graduates of the UB design department. Within three years, I was the art director and producing annual reports, direct mail pieces, brochures and corporate identity packages for local and national businesses and associations. After eight years in the design field, I could feel myself getting burned out. Creatively, I was struggling and could feel the need for a change. I was fortunate enough to be able to take some time off and figure out what my next step should be. I had been doing some freelance work for a former Hallmark employee, creating photo greeting cards. She believed that I had a real talent for designing social stationery, and suggested that I visit the National Stationery Show (NSS) in New York City. What an encouraging trip that turned out to be! To see such amazing, diverse products and meeting some truly wonderful, creative people solidified my desire to be part of the stationery market.

My first investment was a high-quality laser printer, and my first batch of cards was produced in the fall of 2001. Twelve holiday designs were sold in two gift shops in Buffalo. I spent another year developing more ideas and making another visit to the NSS before deciding to exhibit in the
Orders started to come in, and Spotgirl really started to take shape. Spotgirl cards are produced in house (which is a fancy way of saying that I print, trim, fold, package and ship them from my home office.) I start by making sketches that are scanned and then finished in Adobe Illustrator. Cards are all printed to order, so I don’t keep an inventory. Filling orders takes more time, but I am also free to customize products as requested, such as coordinating recipe cards to go with wedding shower invites or thank you cards to send out after a baby shower. Personalized note cards are very popular right now, especially for children.

One fantastic thing about this business is that I have met some really great people. When I was just starting out, I made lots of connections with other small studios and almost everyone I contacted was willing to share their story with me about how they got started and how their products are made. Another positive is that I can comfortably work at home. It’s usually late nights and weekends, as I also have two small children running around, but it is very satisfying to work for myself and I can set my own schedule. Plus, my children are a great source of inspiration for me … yes, that’s my daughter running around naked on that birthday card and my son with cereal dumped all over the floor on another. Mothers and children are my favorite audience. Last year, Spotgirl introduced a line of “milestone” cards celebrating major accomplishments in the first few years (first tooth, first steps, going to the potty) and several support cards for moms, as well.

My goal is to make cards that will make people smile. I believe in my work and only create cards that I would – and have – sent out myself. My hope is that if I produce work that I truly love, the care that I take will shine through in the artwork and sentiment.)
In today’s globalized environment, it’s vitally important to stand apart from the crowd as an independent thinker. And yet it’s also essential to have the depth of knowledge and breadth of experience needed to work in a wide cooperative network. That is why we’ve revised the University at Buffalo Honors Program requirements, making the experience one of the most challenging and rewarding in the nation.

Globalization — and the shifting economic, technological, and cultural landscape - means that it is likely students will change jobs several times over the course of their career. As a result, they must be creative and nimble to succeed in the international marketplace of ideas. They must be scholars of the first order, be able to work effectively with people of virtually every background, all the while being sensitive to the needs of their community. The new UB Honors Program requirements will help prepare students for the 21st century by:

- Emphasizing experiential learning, providing transforming life experiences both inside and outside the traditional classroom by encouraging study abroad, internships, and community service.
- Fostering in-depth scholarship by encouraging multiple degrees in diverse subjects, undergraduate research, graduate work, capstone courses, and an Honors thesis.
- Requiring a detailed annual review of career plans with our professional advisement staff, recognizing that the majority of students change their majors during their university years, often with unexpected opportunities.
- Conferring a strong Honors experience throughout all four years at UB, enhancing the interaction of students and faculty mentors, and producing a strong network of scholars for the future.

As always, the UB Honors Program offers scholarship support for four years of undergraduate study, faculty mentors, opportunities for independent research, specialized advisement, priority course registration, and preferred on-campus housing.

New Honors Program Requirements

With this in mind, the responsibilities of an Honors Scholar now include successfully completing the Honors Colloquium in the Fall semester freshman year and completing two Honors seminars, one each semester of the freshman year.

In the following three years, scholars will select and complete six Honors Experiences from the following list:

- Undergraduate research or creative activity
- Independent study
- Internship or practicum
- Study abroad
- Undergraduate supervised teaching
- Graduate coursework
- Departmental Honors coursework
- Departmental Honors thesis or project
- Senior Capstone coursework
- Double degree, a double major, or a major and a minor
- Contract Honors coursework

To help guide students in developing a unique Honors academic program, academic advisement is provided during the freshman, sophomore, and junior years to ensure that they are making the most of their undergraduate education at UB.

As you can see, the new Honors Program allows each Honors Scholar the opportunity to shape their “honors experience” to fit their intellectual needs and interests. We took the academic accomplishments of our Honors alumni over the past 25 years and combined them into a new program - one that recognizes and promotes the development of academic excellence and intense personal growth. We feel confident that the “new” Honors Program will prepare our Scholars for the ever-changing global world we live in.
I woke up yesterday morning in a panic. My eyes popped open and the word “video” was the first thought to greet me. That doesn’t sound scary does it? Well, it is. It’s terrifying when 140 students and their parents are expecting to be able to purchase a copy of Holiday Showcase 2005, and you’ve forgotten to call the videographer, with less than two weeks to show time. Everyday I am realizing more and more that owning a dance studio is not just about administrative duties, bookkeeping and teaching dance. It’s also about being a stage mom, a role model and a mentor.

I began taking dance lessons when I was seven years old. For my birthday, my mom signed me up for ballet classes at The Dance Company, in Indianapolis, Indiana. I was hooked and have been in love with dance ever since. I spent about five nights a week there until I graduated from high school. Aside from my parents, Miss Diane was the most influential adult in my life (it is customary to refer to your dance teacher with the prefix of Miss or Mister). She continued to be my mentor and advisor as I pursued a BFA in Dance Performance and throughout my career in the entertainment industry. She also became my friend.

I moved back to Indiana late in 2002. After seven years of auditions, jobs and constant instability, I was ready to spend some time near my family and regroup. I wasn’t sure how long I would stay, what I would do next, or where. That is often what you can expect when you are a performer. The longer I stayed, the less I wanted to leave and go back to that lifestyle. I considered ways to live in a city with limited options for the professional entertainer. I looked at furthering my education; Master’s programs, professional certifications and secondary bachelors’ degrees that might enhance my dance degree. The options were abundant, yet nothing spoke to me.

One day, about a year ago, Miss Diane offered to sell me The Dance Company. After about twenty-six years in business, she had decided it was time to move on and focus on other endeavors. I took some time to make my decision, but it was the easiest decision I ever made. A “no-brainer” if you will.

Taking over the business was a daunting task on many levels, and often eerily simple on others. I immediately began learning the ropes. I was given timelines for a year at The Dance Company. Instructions and tips on how each event is handled - all the time being encouraged to change whatever I wanted - all the time knowing I would change nothing! This is where I grew up. The way things were done is the basis for my fondest childhood memories. That was the easy part. And to make things even easier, Diane wished to remain a member of my faculty. She continues to coach me and offer advice. I have a virtual encyclopedia just a phone call or e-mail away.

The “business” side of the endeavor was another story. It was frustrating at best. When dealing with matters that have potentially legal implications, friendly, free advice is virtually impossible to come by! The only person I knew who had started a business was Diane. Her experiences were with starting from the ground up, which is very different than the situation we were in. Thank goodness for the internet. I had to learn not only to ask questions, but to ask the right people the right questions. I chose to retain the same accountant she had for years. His expertise and knowledge of my business has been invaluable. I read a book that encourages small business owners not to use an accountant, for fear of losing touch with your financial situation. In my opinion, it’s a bad idea. Unless you fully understand the IRS and the tax laws of your own state, you should take the help. I still run the finances of my business. I pay myself, and my teachers, the bills, and even my federal withholding taxes (once he taught me how), but there is so much more out there. Finally, I decided to take the help and quit trying to reinvent the wheel. I feel wiser, and more relaxed because of it.

I officially became the owner of The Dance Company on June 1, 2005, to little fanfare. We signed the papers in the studio lobby one night. Some of our clients didn’t even know it was happening at the time. Most people can barely tell a difference, and that pleases me more than anything else.

I have been blessed with my dream. I live in quiet, sleepy Indianapolis, no more than fifteen minutes away from my parents and siblings. Most of my family is also nearby. I even have some of my cousin’s children in my classes. There’s always something that needs to be done. Sometimes I want to rip my hair out and scream for a vacation. I have had to learn to prioritize, and include time off in the list of necessities. But it never seems like work. That is the beauty of doing what you love. Having the career you spent your entire life training for and were meant to do. The videographer, the same one that recorded my first recital, and each one since then, will be there on December 3rd at 9:30a.m. for dress rehearsal.
Professor of Chemical and Biological Engineering Michael Ryan is moving up—literally. After serving almost ten years as Associate Dean of Student Services in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS), Ryan was named Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education early last year. From his 5th floor office overlooking the campus Ryan will now supervise most matters relating to undergraduate programs and student services, including admissions, advising, academic records, financial services, retention and academic policies. Ryan enjoyed his administrative role in SEAS and sees his new position as an opportunity to impact and speak for a broader student population. “There is a responsibility of student advocacy in this position,” says Ryan. “I feel that the individual who is responsible for undergraduate education has a particular duty to ensure that the student position is articulated and considered in crafting policy, and I relish that.”

Interestingly, Ryan’s academic and administrative career may have played out much differently if it were not for a chance encounter during his last year of high school. While visiting McGill University, his eventual college choice, he happened to ask an engineering professor for directions to the chemistry department. When the instructor found out that Ryan liked math and science, he suggested that the teenager consider the field of engineering instead of chemistry. Says Ryan, “As a consequence, I started out in engineering, liked it, and continued in chemical engineering. I have no regrets, but it is interesting how such a small chance encounter had such a big influence on what I ended up doing.”

Ryan’s affiliation with the University at Buffalo began the fall after he earned his Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from McGill. Ryan visited Buffalo during an unusually balmy February weekend in 1976 and witnessed the beginning stages of the North Campus construction. The Montreal native came away from his interview impressed with the strong faculty in the department and with the direction that the university had charted for the future. He says, “Other schools I had interviewed with were not in the same position as UB at that time. Looking back I am pleased at having
made that choice.” Ryan became interested in teaching while a graduate student, and in his thirty years with the chemical engineering department he has taught courses at all levels, ranging from the freshman Engineering Solutions course to graduate level seminars.

Ryan’s research and publications are equally prolific. He is the author of numerous journal articles, book chapters, and journal and book reviews, and has presented many technical papers, invited lectures, and seminars. He has also served as a consultant to more than twenty companies or corporations. His primary research interests are polymers, fluid mechanics, and environmental issues such as waste management and the recycling of polymers and other materials.

Given his love of teaching and the scope of his research, it is perhaps understandable that Ryan did not originally envision himself in an administrative role. Like most faculty, he had served the university through committee work and in other capacities, but when Mark Karwan, then Dean of SEAS, asked Ryan if he would be interested in serving as Associate Dean, Ryan was initially hesitant to take the position. However, he says, “I recognized that few faculty actually get such an opportunity. There were a number of projects that I was interested in that I thought I would enhance the experience of undergraduates in engineering. So I accepted, and indeed I found it very rewarding.”

He points to the inception of the Student Excellence Initiative Program, headed by William Wild, as one of the highlights of his tenure with the SEAS Dean’s Office. Ryan explains that the program arose out of a need to connect engineering students, particularly freshmen and sophomores who take foundation courses in other departments, more closely to the SEAS. “We were very concerned with student success, and with students having difficulty navigating the transition from high school to the university,” he says. “We wanted to help students acclimate to this change and to help them develop the tools and study skills that they need in a demanding and rigorous discipline like engineering.” The program features staff-led small groups linked to introductory courses in chemistry, calculus and physics, a faculty mentor for each freshman engineering student and assistance with study habits and time management. While data demonstrates the program’s success in the areas of student retention and academic achievement, Ryan also emphasizes the intangible benefits. “I feel that the program has had a big impact in the experience of the students,” he says. “We have a lot of testimonials from students about how the program influenced them and helped them to be successful.”

As Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education, Ryan hopes to continue to foster those beneficial student experiences across the university. “I think that we do a lot of very good things at UB,” he states, “but I think there are opportunities to enrich even further the educational experiences of our students.” One of his primary goals—for both personal and professional reasons—is to encourage students to engage in research and to promote a culture of research amongst UB undergraduates. Ryan says that he was fortunate enough to work on an undergraduate research project and he calls the experience “transformative.”

He explains why such a culture is perfect for this university: “I think the fact that UB is a research university and that the majority of faculty are engaged in research and creative activity presents a terrific opportunity for undergraduate students. I know that some of them do decide to come to UB because of the exciting things that are being done by faculty here. I think it is great that we can provide students with opportunities to experience that excitement of being involved in research.”

In that vein, at the end of the spring 2005 semester Ryan’s office sponsored the Celebration of Academic Excellence, a poster symposium which showcased undergraduate research and creative activities from the past academic year. Ryan plans to make the symposium an annual event. He is also especially excited about the creation of the Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity (www.curca.buffalo.edu), which is designed to connect students with faculty researchers. Says Ryan, “Aside from the Honors Program, we haven’t done a lot in the past to assist students in seeing the opportunities and helping them engage with faculty that have research projects available. This office is designed to elevate an awareness of opportunity, to both faculty and to students.” Ryan’s vision of a culture of research encompasses all disciplines on campus, including the social sciences, arts and humanities. He explains, “When I am talking about research I am not just talking about research that is done in a physical laboratory, but the whole spectrum of things that are done in terms of scholarship at the university.”

In addition to the research initiatives, Ryan is working closely with Vice President of Student Affairs Dennis Black on a number of issues relating to the freshman experience at UB,
including the addition of freshman seminars much like the ones that honors scholars take in their first two years at UB. He says, “I think the chemistry of what happens in a small freshman seminar, where a faculty member is really excited or passionate about a topic, can be very dramatic and very important.”

Although the administration is also looking at enhancing non-classroom experiences and at assisting students academically, for Ryan a primary focus is “promoting or catalyzing engagement between students and faculty, because that can have a very powerful effect.”

Ryan says that UB’s mission to recruit more academically talented students is linked to his vision for improving the undergraduate experience. He explains, “I think as we put in place and identify elements that constitute a distinctive educational experience for our students—opportunities to study abroad for example—and market them and promote them, I think we will attract students not only quantitatively, but also better academically prepared students.” He points out that UB has been consistently improving the academic profile of the entering freshmen and believes that it will continue to do so. He says, “I am very optimistic that as we move forward over the next several years we will continue to successfully attract and recruit better quality students, and students who are excited to be at a research university such as ours.”

A bigger challenge for Ryan’s administration is the recruitment of underrepresented minority students. He acknowledges that although a diverse student population is a university-wide priority he feels that this goal requires a longer term strategy. Ryan says that attracting a diverse student body to UB is not an easy problem. “In my view we need to have a deeper approach, or program that reaches much further back into the community at the high school and elementary school level. It needs to be a more holistic view.” To that end Ryan says his staff is exploring ways of addressing this issue and that it will “require a fairly serious commitment and long term effort on our part to really have a dramatic impact.”

As Vice Provost, Ryan also oversees the administration of the University Honors Program, and he views the Program as a model for success. His involvement with Honors at UB is long-standing—he has served on the Honors Council for many years, has hosted Evenings with Faculty, been a faculty mentor to students, and assisted in recruitment events for the Program. Calling the Honors Program one of the “jewels of UB”, he points to how its tremendous growth over the past twenty-five years has benefited the university and says that it has been a very positive factor in UB being able to recruit the most academically talented students.

Ryan appreciates how the Honors Program has enhanced and enriched the educational experiences of its students through honors seminars, faculty mentors and specialized advisement. He believes that the excellent set of opportunities available to honors students should serve as a template for what the university looks to provide for non-honors students. Ryan says, “What has impressed me is how the Honors Program has continuously challenged itself to see how it can be more inclusive and enriching to its students. It has never stopped doing that. It continues to assess and push the envelope and expand the range of opportunities for the students in the program.” It is precisely that innovative spirit that Ryan hopes to bring to undergraduate education during his tenure as Vice Provost and Dean. If his success with SEAS is any indication, UB’s undergrads are in good hands. Ryan himself states his case more modestly, saying simply, “I accepted the position because you have an opportunity of doing things that help students and enrich their experience at the university. I personally have found that very rewarding.”

“I am very optimistic that as we move forward over the next several years we will continue to successfully attract and recruit better quality students and students that are excited to be at a research university such as ours.”
Out of Africa: A Journey Out of Context

PAUL HEBERT
Advanced Honors Scholar, Class of 2005

“Good morning, how are you? I have malaria.”

Even in a tropical paradise like Ghana, where I studied for a year, a trip to the doctor was a daunting task. After all of the requisite sitting and standing in a half dozen lines that crossed, crisscrossed, and recrossed a single stuffy room, I was allowed to enter a tiny room in which a doctor sat. I fell into my chair as she replied, “Oh, really? And why do you say that?”

So I told her about my symptoms and how tired I had been. I lamented my loss of appetite, complained of my aches, and described my feverish (though exciting) dreams. The doctor looked up from her script sheets, examined me up and down over her glasses and with a broad smile agreed wholeheartedly with my diagnosis.

Twenty minutes later I was back in my room with a few pills inside a plain brown bag. I crawled into bed, moaned dramatically and self-satisfyingly, kicked back the covers up. As I lay back I began to recross a single stuffy room, I was awestruck on my first day in Ghana. I hadn’t a clue what I was doing. I had some half-understood sense of adventure and a desire to learn about a culture different from my own. That first day I tried jollof rice, the red pepper burned my mouth and stung my eyes. Now, I can’t get enough.

As I stir the rice, adding a dash of salt, I realize that making this rice has become more than simply eating a tasty dish I picked up in Ghana. In my act of making, of synthesizing my experiences within my small kitchen in Buffalo, I am fitting Africa within my conceptual framework. Taken out of Africa, made on my gas stove and eaten as I watch TV, it becomes a subtle symbol. It is a hybrid, both mine and no more. For myself, I needed something different, something real. Eventually, in the small corner of one shop, I found masks that were much different from those I had seen before. They were masks used in Northern Ghana, along the Ivorian border. One, which especially drew my eye, bore the facial markings of the people known as the Krobo. When I saw them I knew these were real, authentic masks.

Now, with pictures from my trip strewn about my desk I am searching for a way to show Africa. As I do this, the opening lines of David Diop’s poem Africa slips into my consciousness. Born 1927 and raised in France of Cameroonian and Senegalese parents, Diop, without a physical location from which to summon his vision of Africa, does so from within himself. “Africa, my Africa…Africa of whom my grandmother sings, on the banks of a distant river.”

Diop’s poem is a translation. It comes to me wholly different from how he wrote it. Taken apart and painstakingly replaced piece by piece with new words, nothing is preserved but the subject. Only in this act of translation does the poem enter into my frame of reference, and only by changing it entirely does it gain meaning for me. Maybe I am mistaken in my attempt to preserve some piece of Africa, since my very act of taking it home removes it from context and inscribes upon it new meaning.
Darwin Visits UB

Charles Darwin made a rare special appearance, defending his theory of evolution against creationism and intelligent design before scholars and scientists gathered in Buffalo for a three-day conference, “Toward a New Enlightenment,” sponsored by the Council for Secular Humanism.

Darwin (a.k.a. Clyde F. “Kipp” Herreid, SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences), addressed issues that have surged to the national consciousness with a local school board controversy in Pennsylvania over whether intelligent design should be mentioned in high school biology classes.

“Darwin’s” appearance on Oct. 27 in Lippes Concert Hall in Slee Hall was not listed in the conference program and came as a great surprise to members of the audience, who applauded as Herreid came on stage in Victorian-era garb, complete with waistcoat, watch-fob, cape and top hat. Feigning confusion at the sight of the podium’s not-yet-invented microphone, “Darwin” explained he had heard rumors that creationist ideas refuted in his lifetime were once again on the world stage.

“Inelligent design is essentially defeatist,” Herreid stated. He said whenever intelligent design comes up against something for which there is no current explanation, its proponents are forced to declare the phenomenon a “miracle.”

Herreid explained that in the early 1800s, the Christian philosopher William Paley popularized the idea that everything in the universe possessed a predetermined purpose and was perfectly designed for that purpose. Paley invented the popular concept of a “divine watchmaker,” which claims that everything in nature is so perfectly designed that its purpose is obvious - just as someone who has never before seen a pocket watch can determine its purpose simply by observing its precisely functioning parts.

However, Darwin’s theory argues that not everything in nature is perfect. “One would have thought the ideas of Paley would cease,” Herreid said.

He interspersed humor with examples of basic evidence that support evolution. He noted that numerous vestigial organs and other extra-neous features in the human body, such as some muscles, serve no discernable purpose, although they did in our ancestors. There are at least 100 vestigial parts in the body, he said. In addition to the well-known example of the appendix, Herreid cited goose bumps and muscles that wiggle the ears or move the scalp, the last of which he wryly demonstrated.

Human eyes are not perfect, he added, asking audience members how many of them wore corrective lenses. He also remarked that food occasionally catches in our windpipes because the larynx and the esophagus are linked, and the tube carrying urine from the bladder passes through the male prostate gland rather passing around it causing pain to some men in old age. “That is not intelligent design,” he joked.

Less facetiously, he commented on vestigial organs in other animals as well, such as cave animals with sightless eyes, snakes with one useless lung, or birds with one shriveled ovary. We can not explain these by “Intelligent Design,” but we can explain them by evolution.

In addition, Herreid cited “embryological abnormalities” in fetal animals and humans. “We make a tail and then we absorb it,” he said, adding that human fetuses also grow arteries their necks, as though to develop gills, but these fade away as well. Fetal whales grow hair, which disappears before birth, and teeth, which later in gestation develop into a filter-feeding mechanism to gather algae, he said. Whales also grow nostrils as fetuses, but these migrate to the top of the head and become the blowhole. If an “Intelligent Designer” wanted to create a whale with a blowhole, without hair and teeth, surely he would have made them that way in the first place.

In order to provide some perspective on the great advances of the past two centuries, Herreid described the world Darwin was born into on Feb. 12, 1809 - the same day as Abraham Lincoln, he noted. The early 1800s was before the time of famous biologists Louis Pasteur and Gregor Mendel or psychologists Sigmund Freud and Ivan Pavlov, he said. There was no such thing as the telegraph, no theory of thermodynamics, no concept of DNA and, of course, no theory of evolution.

Scientific inquiry makes advances, he stated, whereas “intelligent design” cannot because it doesn’t question; it simply assumes that things are a miracle. There is design in nature and today we know the “designer” is natural selection. “That is the triumph of science,” he said. “It moves on.”

Joseph A. Gardella recently received a 2005 Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring honoring his commitment to mentoring students and boosting the participation of minorities, women and disabled students in science, mathematics and engineering. Through one of the nation’s few chemistry service-learning programs focusing on environmental concerns in urban communities, Gardella and UB students enrolled in his classes have worked with six community organizations to investigate serious environmental health questions they have raised about their neighborhoods. Gardella is a professor in the Department of Chemistry in the College of Arts and Sciences.

KEVIN FRYLING
UB News Reporter

Photo by Kevin Fryling
I Do... Honors Alumni Who Have Tied the Knot

HAROLD HOTCHKISS (’01) & GILLIAN JULIUS (’02)
Gillian is currently a systems analyst at General Electric and Harold is a freelance entertainment lighting designer in Erie, PA.
Gillian and Harold met in the piano room in Roosevelt (Honors dorm). It was early October of their freshman year, 1997. Gillian was playing the piano and Harold stopped to listen for a while. Eight years later on August 6, 2005, they were married.

MARK (’98) & BECKY (GUGLIELMI) FRANCHINO (’98)
Mark is currently the gallery director and art professor at Clarion University of Pennsylvania and Becky is a stay at home mom (former teacher).
They first noticed each other at freshman orientation and then when school started (August 1994) they realized they were neighbors in the dorms. They lived right around the corner from each other in Roosevelt (Honors dorm). They did not date during their years at UB, but became best friends. However, after graduation they started dating and were married on August 4, 2001. Together they have a two year old son, Charlie.

MARK (’97) & KRISTIN (COFFMAN) HADDAD (’96)
Mark is currently a corporate attorney at Foley Hoag LLP, specializing in mergers and acquisitions, start-ups, venture capital, securities and corporate finance, primarily in the high tech and life sciences industries in Boston, MA. Kristin is currently a stay at home mom, while still doing a small amount of independent consulting work for a foundation that funds biotechnology startups.
A few weeks into Mark’s freshman year at UB, Mark and Kristin met in Roosevelt Hall (Honors dorm). Mark had been assigned to live in a suite with some of Kristin’s good friends and they met at a “social gathering” (no parties allowed) at the suite. The two quickly became friends. Although Kristin had a boyfriend at the time, within weeks Mark vowed to his close friends that he and Kristin would one day marry.
Throughout Mark’s freshman year he consulted often with Kristin on such diverse topics as freshman physics and the best places to bring dates (Kristin was a Buffalo native). Midway through Mark’s sophomore year the couple began dating and were married on June 6, 1998. They are proud parents to Sydney Susan Haddad, born January 28, 2005.

JOSEPH (’95) & RENEE (LANSLEY) SZUSTAKOWSKI (’96)
Joe is currently a Senior Scientist at Novartis Institute for Biomedical Research, Inc. in Cambridge, MA and Renee is an Executive Team Leader - Human Resources for Target Corporation in Framingham, MA.
Joe and Renee met in August 1992 during move-in weekend at the Honors dorms. Joe stopped by Renee’s room to say hello to her roommate (his cousin) in Roosevelt Hall. His cousin was not in, but Joe’s was the first friendly face Renee met that weekend, the first person she encountered whom she had not met at orientation. They became good friends quickly and spent lots of time hanging out and started dating in 1994. After graduation they continued to stay in a committed relationship while pursuing their graduate studies in Massachusetts and Ohio.
In August 2001, Joe proposed to Renee at UB’s Baird Point, and of course she said yes. Renee moved east to Boston to complete her dissertation while Joe was completing his from BU. They were married September 28, 2002 by Father Pat Kelcher (UB Campus Ministries - Newman Center) in Buffalo surrounded by friends and family and are expecting their first child this Spring!

ERIC FAULRING (’00) & CARNIE ABAJIAN (’00)
Carnie is currently completing a Ph.D. in Chemistry at Northwestern University. Eric recently obtained his Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from Northwestern University and is currently working in the Chicago area in the field of prosthetic limb research and development.
Carnie and Eric agree that they began dating a few weeks into freshman year at UB, but their first meeting is the source of some controversy. Eric claims that Carnie had asked him for directions in Slee Hall, whereas Carnie claims that their first encounter was in Roosevelt Hall (Honors dorm) during a Calculus study session. However, they both agree that the movie they saw on their first official date, “The Island of Dr. Moreau,” was hideous, but not even the walk back to the dorms in the rain could dampen their blooming relationship. They were married September 18, 2004. The rest is history.
Alumni Updates
What they’re doing now…

1985

CATHERINE TUFAIELLO
Catherine’s book, Keeping My Name, was the 2004 winner of the Walt McDonald First Book Prize in Poetry, was named an Editor’s Choice title for 2004, and was a finalist for the 2005 Los Angeles Times Book Prize.

1987

FRANK BURAN
Frank, his wife Whitney, and daughter Tess (20 months).

1990

SCOTT FRANK
Scott is a social studies teacher at West Seneca East Middle School. Scott and his wife Julie have two daughters, Anastasia, age 5 (adopted from Russia in 2001), and Emma, age 2 (adopted from China in 2004).

1993

MICHAEL PANDOLFO
Michael is currently the owner of his own music production company called Wonderful based in SoHo, New York. It’s a full service music facility doing original production and composition for advertising agencies in New York, Chicago, Miami and Los Angeles. Some of their recent credits include Converse, New Balance, Mercedes, Cingular Wireless, Schmirnoff, Comedy Central, Sears, Spike TV and Absolut.

1994

NATHAN FLOWER
Nathan is teaching acting at NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts, Undergraduate Drama. He earned his MFA in Acting from Rutgers University professional actor training program and has been acting and teaching regionally and nationally since. He and his wife Missy have a son, Lowden (almost 3 yrs.), and a daughter, Addie (14 mos).

JENNY (FERGUSON) FRIEDMAN
Jenny is currently working at McGee & Gelman in Buffalo, New York.

1995

AMANDA (RUSSELL) ABBOOD
Amanda is residing in Fort Collins, CO and is taking off the year from teaching elementary school to enjoy motherhood. She is continuing to do some consulting work for a local foundation for improving early childhood programs in the community.

2000

JESSICA (BROOKS) HOLMES
Jessica works for The Resource Center in Jamestown, NY as an Employment Specialist. Here she is with her husband David and step-daughter Gage.

IFEOYA IGOELEI
Iffy is a 2nd year surgery resident at Marshall University.

2001

JENNIFER ROMER
Jennifer is currently a biology teacher at Mt Sinai High School.

2002

LINDSEY GROBER
Lindsey will be graduating from New York College of Osteopathic Medicine in May!

DARREN VOGT
Darren is currently working as a staff physical therapist at Monroe Community Hospital in Rochester. In July he competed in the Ironman Triathlon in Lake Placid, NY.

2003

JOSEPH M. DEANGELIS
Joe recently graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a Master’s in Mechanical Engineering. He is now working for Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, MI.

JENNIFER KEENAN
Jennifer is currently enrolled in the graduate program in English at Penn State University and is also teaching Rhetoric and Composition at the University.

BENJAMIN STERMOLE
Ben will graduate from Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine in June 2006, and was selected for residency in Internal Medicine at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. He is hoping to, along with several other graduates of LECOM, generate interest in and possibly establish a resident clinic for Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment.

2003

KATHERINA BENDZ
Katherina is currently working on her Ph.D. at the Environmental Science and Forestry School in Syracuse, NY in Conservation Biology. She is also getting married on July 8, 2006!

RACHEL LYNN BRODY
Rachel graduated with a MFA in Dramatic Writing in November 2005, from Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh, Scotland, where she is currently living.

MONICA KARWAN
Last spring Monica received an Master’s in Expressive Therapies from Lesley University in Cambridge, MA, specializing in dance therapy.
2004

JORDAN BERRY
Jordan is currently living in Chicago, IL and attending the University of Chicago Divinity School as a Master’s student. Last year she had a wonderful experience living in and teaching English in South Korea as a Fulbright Scholar.

2005

BEN CADY
Ben is living in New York City and has a full time position as a Policy Associate for Elliott Spitzer’s campaign policy team.

FLORIA CHAE
Floria is currently attending UB Medical School.

KEVIN HORBOWICZ
Kevin is currently a pharmacy practice resident at UMass Memorial Medical Center in Worcester, MA, a one-year post-grad training experience. He plans to pursue a second residency year to specialize in critical care pharmacy practice.

RUTH KLEINMAN
Ruth currently works for Hillel at Kent State University, which is an organization at KSU serving 1200 Jewish students and the rest of the Kent community. She plans programs for first year students, on campus and in the residence halls, and helps Jewish students celebrate their own Jewish heritage through cultural, religious, educational, Israel-related, and social programs.

NICK KULESA
Nick is pursuing a Master’s degree in Exercise Physiology with a concentration in Nutrition at UB.

YIN TZU SYLVIA PENG
Sylvia will be graduating in May with Master’s in Finance at UB.

AMANDA (RUSSELL) ABOOD (’95)
Amanda’s son Jackson was born October 3, 2005!

JENNY (FERGUSON) FRIEDMAN (’94)
Jenny and her husband welcomed a second child, Alexander Douglas Friedman on February 18, 2005. He joins his sister, Madeleine, (7 yrs).

BRYAN HANYSIAK (’94)
Bryan and his wife Beth are pleased to announce the birth of their second daughter, Lauren Claire on November 7, 2005.

MONICA KARWAN (’04)
Monica and her husband Brian Zybala are the proud parents of Eleanor Frances, born July 31st!

RUSS WASHBURN (’90)
Russ and his wife Mercedes recently welcomed a son, Brandon, to their family.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. John Gallatin for his very generous gift to the Honors Program. His donation will allow us to continue providing study abroad scholarships, furthering our goal to have Honors Scholars experience the many wonders of our international world.

*Donations received January 2005 - March 2006

Marriages

JESSICA BROOKS (’00) married Donald Holmes on August 20, 2005!

Over the years, many of our alumni and friends of the Honors Program have contributed to our scholarship fund, enabling the Honors Program to provide special opportunities for Honors Scholars.

Our heartfelt thanks to all of you who have supported and continue to support the Honors Program through your generous donations!

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We would like to include a photo of you with your update in the next magazine! Photos will be returned after printing. They can be mailed to: The Honors Program, c/o Karyn St. George e-mailed to: kcs9@buffalo.edu
“Buffalo Night”
A boat cruise will be held Friday night on the Grand Lady leaving from Grand Island featuring all your Buffalo favorites! The boat ride is kid-friendly!

“Family Ties”
A family picnic complete with entertainment is scheduled for Saturday at noon (rain or shine)!

“Putting on the Glitz”
A gala event will be held Saturday night for adults only.

“What’s New at UB”
Tours of the campus will be given Saturday morning by current Honors Scholars along with departmental presentations. Kids are welcome!

25th
Come celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Honors Program with us August 4 - 6, 2006!