



Collegium Vitae

OCTOBER 2013

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 2 Announcements
- 3/4 What I Wish I Had Known
- 5 Introduction to D.C.
- 6/7 People Are Stupid
- 8/9 Teaching in Taiwan
- 10/11 Decision Making
- 12 Calendar

From the Director's Desk

Times are busy in the Honors College. The barbecue was a great success as was our first trip of the year to the Dallas Museum of Art on September 20. The Speakers Series is also up and running with guests from Biomedical Engineering, Criminology, and Creative Writing.



The Thomsen Fund has moved over to the Honors College beginning this semester. At 9:00 a.m. on the second Wednesday every month, students from across the university may go to Sheila Kelly in our offices and get two tickets to a variety of selected events including the Dallas Symphony, the Dallas Opera, and various theatre offerings in the Arts District. Students are limited to one offering a month. Tickets are first come, first served. The Thomsen Fund offerings available in October are:

Dvorak Symphony No. 8 - November 1-3
 Night at the Cotton Club - November 9
 Brahms Violin Concerto - November 16-17
 President JFK Memorial Concert - November 23
 Christmas Celebration - December 7
 The Nutcracker Ballet - December 6-7
 A Christmas Carol - December 7-18

In addition, we have begun the Arts and Culture Honors College Series. Forty students attended a night at the symphony and heard Mahler's Symphony No. 4 and Barber's Piano Concerto on Friday September 27. Early in the week I gave a lecture on both pieces preparing us all for the night. This will be followed by groups attending the Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet Ballet in Fort Worth and Bizet's Carmen at the Dallas Opera. Lectures are also in the works for these performances. Keep your eyes open for more announcements regarding Honors College opportunities and events.

Cheers,
 Dr. Harpham

Announcements

Important News and Information

Thomsen Fund Tickets

Tickets are available at 9:00 a.m. on the second Wednesday of the month.

Scholarships & Grants

If you are interested in applying for Critical Language scholarships or National Science Foundation graduate student grants, please contact Dr. Douglas Dow (dougdown@utdallas.edu).

Lounge Cleaning

Please be respectful and do NOT send the cleaning staff away when they try to clean and vacuum in the evenings. It is causing problems, and we all like a clean lounge!

Where in the World?

Look below to see how and where some of our fellow CV students spent their summers!



*"Do NOT
send the
cleaning staff
away"*

*"Diversify
your
education, but
prioritize your
major"*

What I Wish I Had Known-- Five Useful Pieces of Advice

By Waqas Haque (Edited by Katelyn McWilliams)

Whenever I get concerned about what to put on my resume or how to structure the academic phase of my life, the first thing I do is a quick Google search. Unfortunately, most advice articles are overly-broad and don't really provide a fresh perspective on my individual circumstances. Posters on forums like College Confidential, Student-Doctor Network, and Wall Street Oasis offer really great tips, but you're flooded with information in a hyper-competitive context that is not conducive to your psychological or academic health. That said, I'd like to offer five pieces of advice molded out of my superb experience at UT Dallas which will likely apply to many of you ambitious CV students:

1. Diversify your education, but prioritize your major: Many of you are probably coming in with 30-50 credit hours (even more if you're from Richland or TAMS) for college. When you take a look at the CV course list, about half a dozen classes really appeal to you that you don't even need for your major. Think Age of Dinosaurs, Creative Writing, Political Theory, or the host of reading tutorial classes. Definitely try to explore some of these classes, but keep your major's requirements in mind. I took a lot of CV reading tutorials and some classes in literature and film studies (I'm an economics major), all of which amplified my learning. At the same time, I was missing out on some upper-level economics classes that I could've really knocked out of the way early on. Now I'm stuck with 19 credit hours to squeeze in next spring (including 9 upper-level science and a thesis) to try to graduate early. There's the cost of not internalizing opportunity cost.

2. Don't look to the future, look to the past: Western society has a great zeal for imagining what the future holds and the problems that will simply wash away with industrial progress. A lot of the times, you look at the programs, classes, and experiences in the next several years as a reflection of what your persona could possibly be without factoring in reality. A research program in a particular discipline might sound really cool, but you don't know if it's for you. Because of this, always look into things you actually did as a marker for your future pursuits, not what you hope to one day do all-of-a-sudden. For example, getting a doctorate in math economics from an Ivy League sounds like a dream for any economics

Useful Advice

Intro to D.C.

People Are Stupid

Taiwan

Decision Making

What I Wish I Had Known

(Continued)

major student. You start to imagine running into Paul Krugman or Greg Mankiw down the hall outside your class. But if you weren't already at a 5000 (master's) level math ability in your freshman year, then strike that PhD in economics out!

3. If you're an academic itinerant, pick a broad and easy-to-complete major: For all of you freshman, sophomores, and dare I say it, juniors, who are clouded by the matrix of future paths in life, pick a major that is broad and easy-to-complete. Let me demonstrate this for you. Take a look at UT Dallas website's majors list for the requirements in Electrical Engineering, Biology/Business Admin., Finance/Economics, or Cognitive Science. See how many specific courses are required? If you're one of those majors and want to switch out, you'll have wasted a lot of time. Sometimes it's easier just to finish your major and find a new interest in graduate school or in the remaining portion of your undergraduate tenure. Degree plans in majors like Economics, Psychology, the BA Physics, and Mathematics offer a great deal of flexibility and don't overload you with required major classes.

4. Research shouldn't be limited to a one summer endeavor: If you're pre-med, you've likely emailed a bunch of professors for research spots. Just a word of caution: if you don't think you can commit several semesters to research or get a first-name publication, don't bother with it in the first place. Co-authoring with a professor is great, but graduate schools will immediately investigate who actually did the work. Even research on lab rats itself necessitates several other lab rats to enter data and code in Excel. Staying in a lab for a semester means spending a lot of time doing grunt work and spending little to no time engaging in meaningful research activities. Patience is the price of promotion.

5. The two-club rule: The high-flyers of your high school class probably had ten clubs on their resume, but things change in college. Instead of joining organizations, the vast majority of which are conceived by their founders in flock of a filler line on their resumes, look for internships, coops, research experience, and part-time work instead. Most clubs you join will not be questioned about in any interview and will (hopefully) not take up an entire paragraph of your personal statement. Having personally been involved with approximately half-a-dozen clubs throughout college in some capacity, I can truly say that only one of them will actually be worth talking about in the future. Because of this, try not to go over two clubs during the span of your bachelor studies.

*"Patience is
the price of
promotion"*

Introduction to D.C.

By Mikaela McMurtry (Edit by Andrew Nguyen)

Like the plethora of bright American flags billowing atop capital spires and waving from construction equipment, the spirits of all the various honors students are flying high. Washington, D.C., our nation's capital, is a place full of the contradictory promise of our people. Brick, marble, granite monoliths pin this capital to the earth with immense weight, and people moving at every speed give life to the stone all around. Even amongst ourselves there is large disparity, but looking at the women passing in slick suits, the men jogging shirtless (with or without vanity), the tourists ambling in squishy shoes, and the ignored slouching in castoffs, there is definitely a feeling that this trip will be so worth it.

Led by UTD staff, we file past memorials, and everyone is touched differently. Some stride along the Vietnam Memorial, respectful but unmoved, and then later halt, struck by the immensity of Lincoln's memorial that seems to offer to shelter people of all races. Some slow and nod at the Women's memorial, approving but uninterested, and then wind through the Roosevelt memorial as it quietly etches humanity's weakness in a place they won't forget. The memorials speak the language of their time in the tone their artists set for them. Some are wholly gut-wrenching and some are utterly triumphant, but most incite a mix of heartache and hope. The McDermotts take turns presenting the various monuments, and Dr. Champagne has stories about all of them.

Every building in the city says something, some louder than others. The metro system is intricate but easy to follow, a testament to deep investment on behalf of those who take the opportunity to visit and see; it's large and efficient, speaking to those who work so hard to get there and stay. The vastness of the Smithsonian complex enshrines our history, and the sliver-like apartments squeak that the littlest things are greatly meaningful to someone. I think I was happier to hear astonishingly good music slipping out of a faceless tenement than I would have been to attend a fine performance at the Kennedy Center.

There is a certain magic in D.C.: even though it is home to out-of-control ambition and rampant crime, it is also a seat of diversity and hope. Visiting there, both those wearing suits and those in graphic tees feel the same: small and singular, but that this city is their birthright.

Even if you aren't a McDermott, you can fill out a brief application and take a planned and paid-for trip to experience D.C. for yourself.

"D.C. is worth visiting - the time investment is small and the experiential return is large"

"Students, like me, were arriving early and preparing to enter the event"

People Are Stupid

By Carter Plotkin (Edited by Naomi D'Amato)

People, generally speaking, are stupid. Obviously not all people are stupid, as we encounter many intelligent professors, peers, and others each day. The Framers of our Constitution were a learned bunch, as are our modern innovators. Certainly Collegium V students, having attained a high GPA, are keen individuals. I do not claim that the world is comprised of benighted fools. More accurately, most people are unobservant and consequences flowing from this fact justify the thesis of this article. I am sure I have already offended no small quantity of readers, including optimists who take a kinder view of human nature; those who consider themselves observant and thus outside my sweeping proclamation; and those who balk at any slight on their intelligence. Indeed, I have made a grand claim that calls for persuasion, so please take a moment to consider:

I attended the Comet Countdown to Commencement, a program hosted on September 17 to prepare soon-to-be-graduates for their ceremony in the Visitor's Center atrium. The event began at 2:00 in the afternoon, but I was early and so I sat down to read at a table near the event. My attention was later drawn to the growing line, which ran parallel to the queue tape at the entrance to the cordoned-off area of the event. Students, like me, were arriving early and preparing to enter the event. This was entirely unexceptional until the line reached a point where the queue tape made a corner. When I first observed the line forming, it seemed obvious to me that the line of students should turn the corner and continue standing parallel to the queue tape to avoid obstructing the hallway and to maintain an orderly figure. When I looked up from my book, I was surprised to note that the line had continued in its 1-dimensionality and extended into the corridor. Apparently those lined up near the corner of the queue tape did not observe that continuing the line in the same fashion would eventually obstruct the corridor. As I watched in fascination, the line grew until it spilled into the coffee shop on the right side, then curved around to completely block the entrance to the coffee shop (obstructing all access and egress) with bodies. The line then dispersed as the event opened.

First of all, the perspicacious reader will note that I was never in the line, chiefly because there was no need to queue in the first place. Perhaps the illogic resulted from impatience, business, or just a mindless conformity of others to form a line. This observation supports my contention that

Useful Advice

Intro to D.C.

People Are Stupid

Taiwan

Decision Making

People Are Stupid

(Continued)

people are terribly unobservant. The focus of my article is that this line could just as easily have formed so as not to obstruct traffic traversing the Visitor Center corridor and the Coffee Shop. It was especially surprising to me that all those who formed the line were probably about to become university graduates, the products of higher learning. Yet it seemed to escape them that their actions were absolutely mindless. The line indeed obstructed traffic. I personally witnessed individuals having to work their way politely through the mass of people to traverse the line, merely to make use of a corridor which should not have been outfitted with obstacles. That the line eventually dispersed and the impediment cleared is of no consequence, because the lack of perception of those in line raises a larger issue.

The individual who began to extend the line into the hallway could have stood at a 90° angle, parallel to the queue tape, and obstructed no one. Any individual lined up across the corridor could have noticed the need to create a public thoroughfare, and thus lined up to create a traversable gap. The individuals at the end of the line as it extended near the coffee shop could have stood against the wall to the right of the line, instead of to the left, to avoid blocking the entrance to the coffee shop. These observations escaped the attention of all involved except for a select few who chose, as I did, to wait outside the line for the event to open. Even if a few individuals observed any of the foregoing, none took the initiative of leadership to clear the obstruction, not even event coordinators. This painful series of inattentive carelessness draws me to the thesis of this article: people are stupid.

The foregoing example is one that hit close to home for me because of proximity and the surprising realization that near-university graduates would act so mindlessly. But it is not the only example. We can reflect on the Darwin Award's examples of outstanding deaths when individuals drown because they jump out of a boat knowing they can't swim or insert their fingers into an electrical socket they turned on moments ago. We can think of the Stella Award's idiotic lawsuits which include (the woman who spilled coffee on her lap and sued McDonald's or the RV driver who set the RV to cruise control, abandoned the wheel, then sued because the vehicle ultimately came to rest on its roof. I believe an impetus for a book was an interview between a lawyer and a former jurywoman in which the lawyer asked the woman how the jury deliberated upon the aggravating factors and mitigating factors of a murder case. The woman leaned forward and asked the interviewer what an aggravating factor was. Though she previously held the liberty of a man partly in her hands, she was not aware of how he should legally be sentenced and was ignorant to the full proceedings of the trial. On a daily basis we might lament how mindless reality television is, grow irritated with our roommates for carelessly leaving dirty dishes in unsuitable places, or even lambaste lounge users for their uncleanness in the kitchen or their carelessness in abandoning their things. Yet despite our frustrations, these events persist. Surely it is impossible not to err, but human imperfection does not excuse the genuinely stupid activity going on in the world, every day. Think about this the next time you're in a line.

"the lack of perception... raises a larger issue"

Teaching in Taiwan

By Justine Sheu (Edit by Katelyn McWilliams)

Of all the experiences I expected to have in Taiwan, sitting in an elementary school listening to winds howl and branches scrape the windows while a typhoon raged was not one of them. Typhoon Soulik arrived during the two weeks my five group mates and I were teaching at Jiu Fen Elementary. Although the typhoon was an unplanned weather hazard, it was almost a welcome break from the routine monotony of teaching. By the first week, we were already finding problems in the teaching plans we developed during our first week in the AID Summer Program.

AID Summer is a four-week long program sponsored by the Taiwanese government to raise interest in English education in more rural areas of the country. The first three weeks were centered on a mission of teaching - one week of training, then two weeks of teaching - before concluding with a week-long tour of Taiwan. All 350 of the volunteers were high school or college students, many from a Taiwanese background, most with zero teaching experience. In preparation for the teaching portion of the program, we spent the first week focusing on how to teach English in Taiwan, particularly focusing on cultural differences and the most effective techniques for teaching a foreign language to a younger audience. After just seven days of learning how to teach English, our small teams were whisked off to our separate schools. From then on, the challenge was real. But nervous as we were, the two weeks passed by quickly and enjoyably.

Arriving in Jiu Fen appeared to be, at first, the start of a scary adventure. The town wasn't exactly rural, but the days of its gold town heyday had long passed. The school had less than a hundred students, and the town itself was a popular daytrip location for tourists. Being in a new town in a different country where I couldn't rely on English to communicate was intimidating, but within a few days, a schedule was established. On school days, an early wakeup was required to prepare for classes that began in the morning and concluded after an exhausting seven periods of teaching. In the middle of the day a much-awaited lunch break allowed the instructors to refresh our teaching plans while the students ate and napped. After the school day ended we'd often play a few games of basketball or Taiwanese dodgeball with the remaining students before heading down into the streets for dinner, more often than not passing by shops owned by our students' parents.

"Being in... a different country where I couldn't rely on English to communicate was intimidating"

Teaching in Taiwan

(Continued)

*"... students
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The students there were often enthusiastic to learn (operative word being "often") and viewed us and our other teaching assistants as their older brothers and sisters. Every day, as tiring as it was, was finished before we even knew it, and my teaching partner and I would find ourselves hurriedly trying to create new materials for the next day, ranging from flashcards to power point presentations to action games. After a few days of teaching, we quickly learned that the students were eager to participate in anything involving competition. However, the enthusiasm of the majority of the students, especially the younger ones, did not apply to everyone. We ran into a few discipline problems when some of the students failed to respect us because of our youth. Many of the students had participated in the program before and were consequently more than willing to mess around with us and manipulate us for more recess time. On top of that, their English skills were not as developed as we had expected, making "Can you say that in English?" by far the most commonly asked question. Yet despite all the time we spent organizing classes, directing wayward students, and handling language barriers, the two weeks at the school passed by quickly. By the time the last Friday arrived, all of the instructors were reluctant to leave.

When it came time for the program to end, I had already began to miss all the people I had met, particularly those in Jiu Fen - the students, the teachers, and our teaching assistants. Although touring Taiwan after teaching was a fantastic experience, the weeks at the school were without a doubt the weeks I miss the most. Not only did I gain many precious memories, I did learn quite a few things about Taiwan, typhoon procedures, and my own teaching abilities. Now that it has come to an end, I can only hope that during those two short weeks, the imprint I left on the students as an English teacher is as strong as the one Jiu Fen left on me.

"... you are not expected to know precisely what you want to do with your life"

Decision Making

By Carter Plotkin (Edited by Katelyn McWilliams)

When you arrive at college, you're expected to declare a major, but this choice often proves complicated and nonsensical. The first classes you're supposed to be taking, freshman and sophomore-level courses, introduce you to numerous concepts, such as math, history, and government. Such courses are designed to give a student a general overview and a general education. Then when you start junior and senior-level courses, they tend to be in your major and purposed to educate you about a subject, such as psychology. These introductory two years, of course, follow more than a decade of general education preceding higher learning.

But even upon achieving the age of majority and entering the upper echelons of learning, you are not expected to know precisely what you want to do with your life, what interests you or what you're passionate about, or what kind of career you want to pursue. Nor should you be. Entering university as an undeclared major, or as an interdisciplinary studies major, is a perfectly acceptable choice. You cannot be expected to select a major which represents your interests when you have not been exposed to various subjects. It logically follows that the freshman and sophomore-level courses are designed to do just that.

However, upon completing the core curriculum, at about age 20, you should select a major and you should know what you want to do with your life. It is reasonable to question why 2 years makes such a significant difference, and the reason is this: you must make a choice at some point, and the arbitrary nature of this deadline cannot be avoided. See *United States v. Locke*, 471 U.S. 84, 94 (1985) for a case in point. But take into account that you have also spent a decade-and-a-half becoming educated, and the impetus to choose a profession or life direction should come as no surprise. Therefore, it is foolish to fail to determine your interests at the beginning of your junior year. Yet I continue to meet people who cannot describe what profession they would like to get into, or what they want to achieve in life. Our university offers many programs for various majors that can only be taken advantage of with expressed interest. UTD does require declaration of a major once 54 credit hours are accumulated, which is a good standard as it falls proximate to the midway point of graduation.

Generally, honors students are disciplined and decisive, but there are even those among our ranks who have not determined where they will work after graduation

Useful Advice

Intro to D.C.

People Are Stupid

Taiwan

Decision Making

Decision Making

(Continued)

or where their degree will take them. Such indecision is tantamount to inactivity, and it deprives a deserving student of direction and full advantage of the intricacies of the programs which could benefit their employment prospects. It is detrimental to oneself to be indecisive, upon reaching junior status, about what profession one would like to pursue and how one will take each step to achieve that dream, the ultimate goal.

The flip side of this coin is that undeclared majors should not be so sidelined. UTD does have the Student Outreach and Academic Retention (SOAR) advising office, but I am not aware of any programs, honor societies, or events directed toward undeclared majors. Those arriving at college with fresh minds are ripe for the guidance of more experienced students and industry professionals. They should have the opportunity to explore multiple fields and determine their interests, and not merely be held in abeyance until they declare a major and programs that interest them. No undeclared student truly feels welcome or comfortable walking into a pre-law session and listening to the presentation, followed by the discussion of in-groups and banter with professors about legal concepts that escape a student or pre-law events that the student was not a part of. This is an example that could apply equally to pre-health, or engineering, or anything else. But a student would likely be comfortable going to an event purposed for undeclared majors to introduce a topic or field. Undeclared major events and societies would be an excellent launching point for those participating, and an excellent peer guidance experience for leaders. We should think highly of freshman and sophomore undeclareds, whose minds are open to many possibilities, and applaud junior and senior students who have determined a path. Indeed, also we should think highly of decisive underclassmen. But indecisive upperclassmen need to make a choice, and further determine what they want to do after graduation.

"We should think highly of freshman and sophomore undeclareds"

Calendar

October 2013

Honors Round Table- U.S.-Latin American Initiatives- MEXICO Monday, November 4th at 10:30 a.m.

Join the Center for US-Latin American Initiatives and the Honors College in a Round Table Discussion with Mexican Senator Juan Carlos Romero Hicks, who has served as the Director General of the Mexican National Science and Technology Council and Governor of Guanajuato. Discussion will begin at 11:00 AM. <http://www.utdallas.edu/cuslai/>. Spaces are limited so please R.S.V.P to Ms. Naida Ewing at naida@utdallas.edu.

DALLAS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA \$5 TICKETS

We have a limited number of vouchers that will enable you to purchase \$5 symphony tickets. Each student can pick up one voucher only. Since seats and concerts are subject to availability, students need to call 214.692.0203 to ensure voucher will work for desired concert. If yes, bring voucher and \$5 to ticket office to exchange for ticket. **Valid through May 18, 2014.** For more information please contact Sheila.Kelly@utdallas.edu or pick up vouchers in her office, GC 2.216B.

OCTOBER 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 Faculty Roundtable – Math	4 Honors Trip	5
6	7	8	9 Creative Writing Roundtable	10	11 Sigma Xi Why Science?	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Collegium V: Learning That Never Sleeps



The Collegium V Honors Program at The University of Texas at Dallas was established in 1997 to provide an undergraduate honors experience that extends beyond the classroom. Small classes, innovative instruction, world class faculty, bright and inquisitive colleagues, and an array of extracurricular events offer Collegium V members special opportunities for professional and personal growth at the university.

If you are interested in learning more about Collegium V, please visit our website at cv.utdallas.edu or contact us for an application or to set up a tour.

CV Contact Information

CV Council

events@collegiumv.org

CV Network Administrators

cvadmins@utdallas.edu

CV Lounge Phone

972-883-6605

The CV Lounge (GC 1.202) is located on the 1st floor of the Green Center between the McDermott Library and Green Hall

If you have any questions/comments about the CV newsletter, please email Kelsey Drake at krd093020@utdallas.edu.

