

The Individualized Major (IMJR) Program  
The IMJR Director's Prizes – 2007-08  
(Honors Scholar Recipients)  
Margaret Lamb, Ph.D., Director

Three Individualized Majors are awarded the third annual Director's Prizes for high academic achievement; two of these were Honors Scholars. These students distinguished themselves with very high academic achievement in the IMJR and over the whole course of their undergraduate careers.

**Brianna Rosen** will graduate in May 2008 as an Honors Scholar and University Scholar with an IMJR BA in International Relations with a concentration on the Middle East. At the start of the semester her major GPA stood at 4.0 and her total GPA of 3.938. Since last Fall, Brianna has been concurrently pursuing an MA in Political Science, which she expects to finish in August 2008. Doctoral studies feature in Brianna's plans for her future, but she will apply to begin in Fall 2009.

B.A. in IMJR (graduation in 3 years)

IMJR title: International Relations (concentration on the Middle East)

Honors in IMJR (Thesis: Strategic Alignment: Iranian-Israeli Relations, 1956-1963;

Supervisor:

Jeremy Pressman POLS)

Minor: Mathematics

Probable Latin Honors

MGPA: 4.0

TGPA: 3.938

Dean's List: 5 semesters (each UConn semester)

2008 Frontiers: "University Scholar Project - Strategic Alignment: Iranian-Israeli Relations, 1956-1963"

2006, 2007 NE Scholar

2006 University Scholar

Phi Beta Kappa invitee (2008)

Phi Kappa Phi invitee (2007, 2008)

Study Abroad: Toulouse, Summer 2007

SURF Sterling-Wasserman Award, Summer 2007

Sylvia and Leo Dashefsky Prize for Excellence in Hebrew

University Scholar Advisors: Azimi, Fakhreddin HIST; Boyer, Mark POLS; McNeece, Lucy MCL

Brianna's thesis examines the emergence of cooperative Iranian-Israeli relations between 1956 and 1963. Drawing upon historical sources and political science theory, she attempts to explain why this unlikely partnership developed. Since alliance theory does not fully explain this case, she proposes a theory of strategic alignment that emphasizes the pragmatic nature of Iranian-Israeli relations.

**Commendations:**

Mark Boyer, Prof., Political Science: "Rarely do we work with students as self-directed and intellectually challenging as Brianna. She thinks deeply about her course of study and her research interests and will undoubtedly do very well graduate school."

Jeremy Pressman, Asst. Prof., Political Science: "Brianna ... has built an impressive academic record .... She not only possesses intelligence and intellectual maturity but also successfully pursues interests across a range of disciplines including politics, mathematics, and the Middle East. She is a student of languages including advanced courses in Arabic, Hebrew, and Persian. Few students excel to this level in any one category let alone across so many. Brianna is a serious, inquisitive student who can analyze any reading or research and write a paper on par with graduate students."

Stephen Dyson, Asst. Prof., Political Science: "Brianna is taking my graduate class in Foreign Policy Analysis. I cannot speak highly enough of her. Her work this semester is exceptional. I was amazed to find out she was an undergraduate - I had assumed, on the basis of her written work and analysis in class that she was an advanced doctoral candidate."

Howard Reiter, Prof., Political Science: "[Brianna] is one of the best students I have ever taught. [She took my] seminar ... on research design [in which] the students are assigned to critique each other's drafts; each student is assigned to lead the discussion on one of the other papers, and then we open the discussion to others' comments. Brianna is the only student who consistently has comments on ALL the other papers, and very insightful comments at that. She is so consistently high-performing that when she was unusually quiet a couple of weeks ago, I asked her during a break if she was feeling OK, and sure enough, she was under the weather."

Jeff von Munkwitz-Smith, University Registrar: "I was struck in my first conversation with Brianna, a few years ago, by her genuine intellectual curiosity and the quite evident joy she took in studying languages. As a student of many languages myself, I've known many language students, but none who seemed to take as much delight in their study as Brianna. She's an exceptional young woman and well deserving of the Director's Prize." [Jeff was Brianna's First Year Experience Program instructor]

**Nikita Lakdawala** will graduate in May 2008 as an Honors Scholar with a BS in Molecular and Cell Biology and an IMJR in Health Care and Social Inequality. At the start of the semester her IMJR GPA stood at 3.95 and her total GPA of 3.983. Nikita came to UCONN in the Combined Program in Medicine; in the Fall she will move to Farmington to begin her UConn medical studies.

B.S. in Molecular & Cell Biology and IMJR

Honors in IMJR (Thesis: The Willimantic Covenant Soup Kitchen: An Examination of the Interdisciplinary Model; Supervisor: Kathryn Ratcliff, SOCI)

Probable Latin Honors

Dean's List: 7 semesters (each UConn semester)

2005, 2007 Babbidge Scholar  
2006 NE Scholar  
Phi Beta Kappa member (2007)  
Phi Kappa Phi invitee (2008)  
Combined Program in Medicine  
Study Abroad: London, Spring 2007  
IMJR Primary Advisor: Ratcliff, Kathryn SOCI

Nikita's thesis assesses the interdisciplinary model of healthcare at the Willimantic Covenant Soup Kitchen Medical Clinic. The clinic, initiated in January of 2006, provides free medical care to individuals in the community who experience difficulty accessing healthcare. The interdisciplinary model involves the collaboration of a network of healthcare agencies and educational institutions to provide care for patients. The clinic includes pharmacy, nursing and medical professions, as well as various community health organizations. In the Fall of 2007, an interdisciplinary committee was implemented, where representatives from each of the parties come together to discuss clinic issues and promote continued change of its operation and organization. Data collected through surveys, personal interviews and focus groups from providers and patients of the Willimantic Covenant Soup Kitchen Clinic serves as the basis for this study. In conclusion, Nikita suggests modifications and changes that can be made to improve quality for patients and maximize the educational value for students.

**Commendations:**

Kathryn Ratcliff, Asst. Prof. SOCI: "Niki is an unusually inquisitive student who has decided to go outside her comfort zone to acquire an education that will serve her throughout her life. She studied in London and learned about a very different hospital and health care system, has worked with underserved people in various US settings, and is currently completing a thesis on interdisciplinary health teams in a medical clinic which serves poor people in Willimantic. She has prepared herself to be a doctor with an understanding of the patient's perspective."

Mary K. Bruno, Assistant Professor-in-Residence, Molecular & Cell Biology: "Nikki was the top student in MCB 241W during fall 2007. This was a seminar based writing class. Not only was her comprehension of seminar content excellent, but her skills as a writer were by far superior compared to any of the other students .... She is clearly a most impressive student ...."

Jeffrey A. Kramer, Director, Center for Healthcare and Insurance Studies, School of Business: "Nikita performed at a level of excellence in my class this past Fall semester. I am delighted that she is being awarded for her academic accomplishments."

Honors Scholar Honorable Mentions for the Director's Award for High Academic Achievement. All have an IMJR MGPA of 3.91 or better and a TGPA of 3.8 or better:

**Yonatan Freund**

BA in IMJR

IMJR Title: Judaic Studies

Additional Degree in Psychology (Honors)

IMJR Primary Advisor: Dashefsky, Arnold, SOCI

**Katherine Laguzza**

B.A. in IMJR

IMJR title: Puppetry and Human Rights

Honors in IMJR

IMJR Primary Advisor: Dussart, Francoise ANTH

**Jennifer Sayers**

BA in IMJR

IMJR title: Environmental Studies

Honors in IMJR

IMJR Primary Advisor: Schultz, Eric, EEB

**John Super**

B.A. in IMJR

IMJR title: International Relations

Honors in IMJR and University Scholar

University Scholar Advisors: Pressman, Jeremy

POLS; Boyer, Mark POLS; Hallwood, Paul ECON