Program of Study: Biology Major, Creative Writing and Chemistry Minors

Home-town: Oley Valley, PA

Anticipated Date of Graduation: May, 2013

Why did you choose the University Honors Program at FDU?
I was really attracted at the chance to produce an undergraduate thesis in my specialty and now that I am actually realizing that opportunity. The whole process has been challenging but also really engaging and fulfilling.

What do you like best about the University Honors Program?
I think what I like most is the atmosphere surrounding our honors program. It’s more than just an academic program; it becomes a sort of family where everyone helps everyone else. I still remember senior honors student helping me get involved in clubs and pick good professors when I was a freshman. Coming into a new school that type of support system is invaluable.

What is your Honors Thesis about?
My honors thesis is on the efficacy of using genetically modified Drosophila melanogaster as a model organism to study Parkinson’s disease. I have designed several experiments to determine if the same mechanism of disease observed in human patients with Parkinson’s is present D. melanogaster. My mentor is Dr. Danyang Yu, who has years of expertise working on embryology of D. Melanogaster. I am confident that together we can create some really valuable results.

What are your activities/jobs at FDU?
I am the President of the Student Government Association and am also the Captain of the Men’s Rowing Team. In past years I have also been a Resident Assistant, Tutor, Grader, and am a member of numerous other organizations.

How easy or difficult is making friends within the University Honors Program?
It is very easy. I think the other Honors students are some of the friendliest on campus.

What do you do for fun?
I am an avid chess player and reader. I also love traveling and playing the piano, banjo, harmonica, and drums. I also really enjoy writing, mostly poems, short stories, and the occasional play.

What is your favorite spot on campus?
My favorite spot is the Student Government office. It’s probably partly because I spend so much time there, but I just love the tranquility that comes from being in that space.

What has been your favorite class?
My favorite class so far would probably have to be Genetics. The class was just taught so well and the subject matter was so interesting. I would gladly take it again just for fun.

**What are your career goals?**

I am currently in the process of applying to Medical School. I hope to be accepted into a MD/PhD program or just an MD program, and then to go onto specializes in Neurology.

**What is your advice to other students who are considering the University Honors Program at FDU?**

Most of the students I have talked to about the honors program are hesitant to join because of the senior thesis, but don't let that hold you back. First off there is so much more to the program than the thesis. We go to conferences all over the east coast, see Broadway level shows, and get all types of on campus benefits. Furthermore, in my experience applying to post graduate schools, few things on my resume have been more valuable than my undergraduate thesis. Your thesis shows that you not only have a depth of knowledge in your field, but also that you can plan your time effectively, critically think effectively, are driven to excel, and are passionate about what you do. The honors program is a wonderful venture to join; everyone that is eligible should apply.