

PRESTIGIOUS BUSINESS HONORS PROGRAM TURNS 40



The Business Honors Program enters its 40th year on the 40 acres. From its modest beginnings to its current state of 479 outstanding students, more than 1,000 have graduated with an Honors Degree from the Business School at UT Austin. While many elements have changed in the program's 40 years, the one factor that has remained constant is that it continues to attract some of the nation's best students. Routinely, the program vies with top private schools like Harvard, Yale and Princeton, for the cream of the Texas crop.

One need only look at the BHP's most recent graduates and its incoming freshman class to understand that the more things change, the more they stay the same. BHP students are truly among the brightest on campus. They command the highest starting salaries of our Business School graduates (close to \$42,000 a year with a signing bonus of around \$4,000), and are highest in demand among b-school students for paid internships.

Perhaps this explains why the program received over 500 applications for 1999 freshman admission. Admission to the BHP is highly competitive and students are selected based on SAT or ACT scores, high school class rank and grades, and leadership abilities. Of the 174 students offered freshman admission for fall 1999, 130 enrolled in the Business School. Their average SAT score was 1405 and their average high school rank was in the top three percent.

In addition to freshman admissions, the BHP also admits a limited number of sophomores each fall. Admissions criteria include first-year college in-class grade point average (GPA), challenging course load, and leadership abilities. For fall 1999, a record number, 102, applied to the BHP for sophomore admission. Thirty-six sophomores, with a lofty GPA of 3.92, were admitted to the program.

But these students are not one-dimensional. The BHP is committed to diversity in the program and includes national merit scholars, a concert pianist, a Miss Teen of America, and an Olympic-hopeful gymnast, to mention only a few.

As a small and challenging program within a major research institution and the largest university in the country, the BHP offers its students the best of both worlds. Students appreciate the ability of the BHP to stimulate and develop their abilities. They are proud to be among one of the best undergraduate experiences in the country. Its successful

alumni throughout the world can attest to that.

In celebration of the 40 year anniversary, the BHP will be involved in the graduation ceremony for the class of 2000 in May and will host a birthday celebration on campus in the fall of 2000. If you are a BHP graduate and would like more information on the upcoming events, please contact Rick Ponds at 512-471-0684 or texasbhp@bus.utexas.edu. More information on the program is available at www.bus.utexas.edu/~bhp. — Rick Ponds ★

I'LL TAKE BUSINESS HONORS FOR \$1,000

Having memorized the Trivial Pursuit® deck as a child, 1999 Business Honors Program graduate Corey Leahy soon alienated the rest of her game-playing family and friends. After all, it's no fun to play the game if you already know who's going to win. But her penchant for trivia finally paid off when she was selected to appear on *Jeopardy!* in July, winning more than \$22,000 and a trip to Hawaii over the course of three days' competition.

Leahy says her experience in the Business Honors Program actually helped her performance on the game show. "We had to make presentations all the time and received feedback constantly, so I have become a very confident public speaker." She adds, "Also, I happened to have a suit to wear for the show."

Between her childhood fascination and her lucrative game show appearance, Leahy took up the subject of trivia as her senior thesis for Plan II. "I had noticed that trivia has changed over the years," she says. "All the questions seemed to be getting easier." Her thesis looks at the origins, forms, and popularity of trivia and why trivia is changing. In business fashion, she conducted statistical studies to determine whether trivia has been getting easier. These studies bore out her thesis. "One of my conclusions is that trivia is being marketed to a

broad group of people, so it's got to be easier so that more people will play and more will buy the games," she says.

Leahy argues in her thesis that no piece of information can really be considered trivial, since having prior knowledge of a subject can prove useful in a variety of situations—from the life threatening to the mundane. "Also," she states, "trivia has a contrived worth...because *Jeopardy!* might award me \$500 for knowing an obscure fact."

And what will she do with her earnings? Revealing her business acumen, Leahy says, "I'm going to put the money in an index fund for now." She is currently attending UT Law School and hopes to become a trial lawyer.

BELOW: Corey Leahy chats with host Alex Trebeck between rounds of the *Jeopardy!* game show, which aired in July.

