Zack Ryle
Honors College

As a WKU Honors College student, Zack Ryle is double majoring in Broadcast News and Sport Management. Zack’s senior Capstone piece is entitled “A Virtual Tour of WKU’s Main Campus. This tour, which can be found online at www.wku.edu/tour, was completed over the summer and fall of 2011 under the supervision of Director of Web Services Corie Martin and Broadcasting Professor Brad Pfranger. Throughout the summer, Zack went and filmed more than 60 buildings on campus and described to the viewer what the building’s primary focus is and, when applicable, gave some good WKU facts as well.

Along with some of Zack’s recorded pieces, known as stand-ups in Broadcasting, Zack scheduled interviews with some of the leaders of WKU’s campus, ranging from Deans of the Colleges to WKU’s President, Dr. Gary A. Ransdell. These interviews allowed the viewer to understand more about the individual building, program in the building, or the university as a whole.

Zack was also responsible for the editing and production of these videos so that they could go into a brand new, 3-dimensional map of WKU’s Main and South Campus. Once completed, this Virtual Tour has been used not only by WKU Admissions Counselors in their trips to all corners of the State of Kentucky, but has been used by students all across the United States to see what WKU has to offer, and even by our International Admissions staff to recruit those who would not be able to see WKU in person before they arrive on campus. Upon completion of this project in the fall of 2011, Zack’s work received a Council for the Advancement of Secondary Education (CASE) Kentucky Grand Champion Award for World Wide Web and Electronic Communications and for DVD, Flash Publications and Other Electronic Communications.

Nathanael Hovee
Honors College

Nate Hovee is currently a senior in the Honors College, and is pursuing a double major in Theatre (BA in Acting) and Broadcast Communications, with a concentration in TV & Film Production. Since his first semester at WKU in 2008, Nate has taken advantage of many opportunities both within and outside of his majors. For the past several years, he has worked in various broadcast news positions as part of WKU’s NewsChannel 12 team and now serves as the director for weekly live newscasts. In addition, Nate has produced, directed, and edited a number of professional productions, including a sustainability video for Gary Ransdell Hall, a Harlaxton study abroad promotional video, Doritos commercials for national marketing competitions, several short films, and a Hilltopper Showstoppers documentary piece for the WKU Theatre and Dance Department.

Eager to take his education beyond the classroom, Nate quickly took advantage of WKU’s international opportunities. He studied abroad at Harlaxton College in the spring of 2010, focusing primarily on English theatre and drama history. In the spring of 2011, Nate traveled to Wellington, New Zealand, to gain hands-on production experience in the country’s “culture capital” and study cinematography, physical theater, stage and screen producing, and geography at Victoria University. This fall, Nate plans to spend a semester at Yeditepe University in Istanbul, Turkey, to take courses in Asian theatre techniques, television broadcasting, digital media, and film production.

This semester, Nate is combining his Honors CE/T with the School of Journalism and Broadcasting capstone as part of one large television production project. His live production was recently carried out in Van Meter Hall with the WKU Symphony. Six professional high-definition cameras scattered throughout the auditorium were used to record the performance titled “East Meets West” on March 16, 2012. The footage from the performance, as well as interviews with members of the Symphony, will be edited together over the next month to create a thirty-minute television program due to be aired on WKYU-PBS later this spring (pending final station approval).
Keyana Boka
Honors College

As a WKU Honors College student, Keyana Boka is majoring in Biology and Chemistry with a minor in Work-Site Health Promotions. Since her freshman year she has conducted research with Dr. Steve Huskey as well as in Dr. Donald Slocum’s organic chemistry lab. Currently, she is working on a survey of novel sound producing mechanisms over a range of chameleon species towards her Honors Capstone Thesis. The results will be valuable in future studies of chameleon behavior and morphology, to better understand this unusual vocal structure plus its functional significance.

She anticipates presenting a poster of her project at the WKU Student Research Conference. This summer Keyana will be studying abroad in Istanbul, Turkey. While taking two honors political science courses as part of the study abroad program, she intends to begin research on a Middle Eastern politics independent study proposal. Additionally, as Campus Improvements committee chairperson for WKU Student Government Association, she is running for Executive Vice-President in the upcoming spring elections.

Chad Willis
Honors College

As a WKU Honors College student, Chad Willis is majoring in Biology and Chemistry with a minor in Biophysics. Since his sophomore year he has conducted research with Dr. Rajalingam Dakshinamurthy in biochemistry.

Currently, he is working on alternative methods to produce gold nanoparticles that have significant potential in the pharmaceutical and medical fields. The results will be a much more efficient and bio-friendly technique to push nanotechnology further into the medical fields to provide enhanced patient care. He anticipates presenting an oral presentation of his project at the WKU Student Research Conference. This fall Chad will be studying medicine at the University of Kentucky. Additionally, he is an HonorsTopper and on-campus physics tutor.
Justin Pile
Honors College

As a WKU Honors College student, Justin Pile is majoring in Biology and Chemistry with a minor in Biophysics. Since his freshman year, he has been a member of the Ogden Scholars Research Program. In the fall of his sophomore year, he began conducting research in Dr. Nilesh Sharma’s biology lab. He has attended various research conferences and won awards in oral presentation of his research. Recently, he defended his Honors Capstone Thesis, “Studying the Pathogenesis of Ulcerative Colitis Under the Influence of Plumbagin,” and passed with distinction. The results will be valuable in future studies of ulcerative colitis and the use of alternative plant therapeutics. His biomedical research has helped him to better understand and apply the knowledge he has obtained in the classroom.

In addition to coursework and research, Justin has traveled to Kenya with a select group of students, Dr. Nancy Rice, and a team of medical doctors, where he participated in a medical service project. After his undergraduate commencement in May, he will immediately begin his one-year Masters program in Biology and apply to medical school. His current involvement on campus includes serving as a tutor in the Physics Department, chairman on the WKU Up ‘til Dawn Executive Board, and worship leader at the WKU Wesley Foundation Methodist Campus Ministry, among other activities.

Bailey Mack
Honors College

As a WKU Honors College student, Bailey Mack is majoring in International Affairs, Spanish, and Asian Religions and Cultures, and is a member of the Chinese Language Flagship Program at WKU. During the fall semester, Bailey worked as a research assistant at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for scholars, assisting in research of topics such as the Latin American judicial system and the development of the international norm of territorial integrity. Both researchers are planning to use this research in completing books on their topics.

At WKU, Bailey is beginning to work on her CE/T, looking at the inception and development of the myth of the vampire in various cultures around the world. This summer, Bailey will be studying abroad in China, in order to further her Chinese language skills. Additionally, she is an active sister of Omega Phi Alpha, Rho chapter and an Office of Scholar Development Ambassador.
Mark Reeves
Honors College

Mark Reeves is a WKU Honors College student majoring in History, International Affairs, and French. Having conducted archival research in France while studying abroad in Normandy in Spring 2011, he has been using his research to complete his Honors Capstone Thesis. This thesis constitutes one of the first works in English concerning the events in French Equatorial Africa in the aftermath of France's defeat by Nazi Germany in 1940, with analysis pertaining particularly to native Africans' involvement in the events.

The outline of these events, little known in the United States, were presented at a Kentucky Honors Roundtable in Louisville in February, and will be given in a presentation at the WKU Student Research Conference. Mark is applying for the Pickering Graduate Foreign Affairs Fellowship and is awaiting reply from several universities where he hopes to pursue a graduate degree in International Affairs.

Tiffany Guy
Honors College

As a WKU Honors College Student, Tiffany Guy is majoring in Dance with a minor in Entrepreneurship. Throughout her four years at WKU, she has studied dance performance, technique, and choreography under the guidance and instruction of Clifton K. Brown and Amanda Clark. Tiffany is currently researching the chorographical works of George Balanchine, and creating a dance piece incorporating the influence of the Balanchine style for her Honors Capstone Thesis. The research will bring value to her personal development in choreography and dance history, along with informing others of a very unique and well known Ballet Master. On February 25, she presented her research at the Kentucky Honors Roundtable Conference. This summer, she intends to participate in the Dance in Italy program, where she will have the experience to perform for the Italians and take dance classes from European Dance Masters.
J.P. Stovall
Honors College

J.P. is a WKU Honors College student with Majors in International Affairs, Asian Religions & Cultures, and Spanish with a Minor in Latin American Studies, as well as being part of the Federally funded intensive language learning Chinese Language Flagship Program here at WKU. In addition to his love for language, his areas of interest have focused in on the political atmosphere of Latin America and the lasting effects of Colonialism on the region, U.S. involvement in Latin America, Chinese history and modern rise, and the debate on declining public morality and the role of religion in Chinese society. J.P. has been fortunate enough to have traveled quite a bit, beginning in winter 2010/11 when he traveled to 9 different major cities in eastern China while learning the language, culture, and history of the different locations. The following summer he represented WKU on Semester at Sea’s inaugural ‘Maymester’ voyage which went to Trinidad, Panama, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and Belize for study of the politics and economics of Central America. J.P. then went abroad to Beijing, China for two more months on a Critical Language Scholarship awarded by the U.S. Department of State where went through intensive Chinese classes under a strict No-English Language Pledge Policy. J.P. also traveled to culturally unique areas of Qing Hai, an important center of Tibetan Buddhism, and Inner Mongolia while in China. The following Winter J.P. traveled to Argentina for a month where he studied human rights, focusing on Argentina’s dictatorial period of the 1970s and 80s. The coming summer has more travel in store for J.P.; he will be returning to Argentina for the month of May, and has received another State Department Critical Language Scholarship to go study the language for two months in Xi’an, China.

J.P.’s campus involvements include Golden Key International Honor Society, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, International Club, Sigma Delta Pi: National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society, WKU Chinese Flagship Ambassadors, the WKU Mens Acapella choir The Redshirts, and is one of the new ‘Faces of WKU’ as part of a new advertising and recruitment campaign for WKU.

For the future, J.P. is looking on applying for other competitive national scholarships including the Fulbright, Boren, Truman, Pickering, Marshall, Rhodes, and Mitchell Scholarships and will soon be applying for his Capstone year abroad at Nanjing University with the Chinese Flagship Program. His goal is to work as a Foreign Service Officer for the U.S. Department of State or the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Aaron Bell
Honors College

Aaron Bell began his undergraduate career at the Carol M. Gatton Academy. Prior to this he was unsure of how he could ever find the resources to get involved with the topics he loved. The Academy dramatically expanded his range of opportunities. Around the time that he graduated from the Academy and transitioned into The Honors College, Aaron came to the maddening conclusion that he could not major in every scientific field that had given him an inspiring introductory course. After conducting undergraduate research in materials science and stream ecology, Aaron settled on a topic that best allowed him to approach the larger questions he was interested in.

Aaron’s interstellar medium astrophysics research, supervised by Dr. Steven Gibson, has allowed him to study how our galaxy and other spiral galaxies like it, are changing over time. In December 2011 Aaron traveled to Sao Paulo, Brazil to attend an international and interdisciplinary short-school for astrobiology. Contact with one of the lecturers led to Aaron’s acceptance into the physics graduate program at Dartmouth College. This summer Aaron may be conducting research at the University of Tokyo. In graduate school Aaron hopes to explore the boundaries of astronomy, cosmology, and biology. He also hopes to develop a trend of lifetime learning, and to continue sharing this learning with those around him.