Educational Highlights: Throughout my four years at the College I have been part of the Honors College and have fulfilled all requirements to graduate with an honors degree. During the spring of my junior year my independent study, “A Psychological and Neurological Study of Glossolalia,” was selected to be published in the Humanities and Social Sciences journal Chrestomathy.

Research Focus or Project: During the spring of my junior year I completed an independent study with Dr. Lee Irwin that focused on the brain chemistry of religious experience. This project focused on the intersections among neuroscience, psychology, and religion within American Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism emphasizes personal religious experience that takes the shape of ‘Baptism of the Holy Spirit.’ Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit dwells within the body and manifests itself in various ways. Glossolalia, or speaking in tongues, is one of the more prevalent examples of ‘Baptism of the Holy Spirit’ within our society today. The goal of this project was to examine various theories that can help us better understand this phenomenon from a psychological and a neurological standpoint. To better understand glossolalia I attended services on several occasions at a local Pentecostal Church and interviewed a member who practices glossolalia.

Future Plans: After graduation I hope to work either in the Admissions Office at the College of Charleston or in a lab at the Medical University of South Carolina. My ultimate goal is to study neuroscience and focus on depression and bipolar disorder either through graduate school or medical school.

This award presented by Cynthia Lowenthal, Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Department of Religious Studies at the College of Charleston on the 11th day of May 2012.