Educational Highlights: I am a student of the Honors College and have completed an independent study where I interned at a local elementary school as a life skills leader with the student support specialist. I studied the relationship of social bonding theory with Communities in Schools, as I led groups of students in discussions on conflict resolution, anger management, and healthy social habits. I’m a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and I have been nominated for membership in the Golden Key International Honor Society and the International Sociology Honor Society, Alpha Kappa Delta.

Research Focus or Project: My bachelor’s essay, “The Role Tensions of a Christian Soldier,” consisted of my qualitative research of role conflict theory in the context of religion and the military. I conducted 15 semi-structured qualitative interviews with Citadel cadets who are pursuing active-duty military service after graduation. I wanted to research how they resolve the tension of successfully fulfilling the role of a Christian who presumably follows the peace teachings of Jesus Christ, as well as that of a soldier which will most likely require engagement in violence, killing, and warfare. I discovered that to resolve the tension evident in their identities as a Christian and a soldier, the cadets use either rationalization or compartmentalization to defend the compatibility of their two identities. Although most cadets are convinced that these two roles are intertwined, I found that the role of a soldier is usually fulfilled as a priority over the role of a Christian.

Future Plans: This summer I will travel to Haiti to assist with a non-profit organization that provides services to a local school and orphanage. I will also work with homeless teens in Denver, Colo., through a faith-based inner-city ministry. In August I plan to move to Boston, Mass., where I have been accepted as a MATCH Corps member at a public charter school.

This award presented by Cynthia Lowenthal, Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Department of Sociology at the College of Charleston on the 6th day of May 2011.