Educational Highlights: I will graduate summa cum laude with a GPA above 3.9 in both Women’s and Gender Studies and Communication. Throughout college, I have maintained the requirements for the SC Palmetto Fellows scholarship, Presidential scholarship, and the Communication Department’s Charlie Hall Memorial scholarship. I have been inducted into the Phi Kappa Phi, Golden Key, Lambda Pi Eta, and the Phi Eta Sigma honor societies.

Research Focus or Project: During fall 2010 in my Women’s and Gender Studies capstone, I researched the media’s misrepresentation of women. In addition to an extensive paper, I created and led a campus-wide education and activism project centered around that topic and correlated to the National Organization for Women’s ‘Love Your Body Day’ campaign. This was an awesome opportunity to blend my majors and to effect positive change from real-life experience, as I have lived with many girls and known countless others who are suffering from eating disorders by not matching up to the media’s unrealistic beauty ideals. While the main portion of my project was a presentation I had prepared, I also did campus outreach to encourage students to have more self-acceptance and realistic expectations of their bodies. One way I attempted this was through providing “love your body” labels for students to fill out. These labels were a simple yet powerful way for students to defy unrealistic beauty ideals displayed in the media and, instead, to proudly claim a part of themselves – or their entire body – as loved and beautiful.

Future Plans: While I considered going straight into graduate school, I have postponed that goal and instead plan to work for a women’s-focused nonprofit like the Center for Women in Charleston, where I have been interning for the past year. Eventually, I may pursue a master’s degree in social work.

This award presented by Cynthia Lowenthal, Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Women’s and Gender Studies Program at the College of Charleston on the 6th day of May 2011.