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USA TODAY's 2007 All-USA College Academic Team

BYLINE: Tracey Wong Briggs**SECTION:** LIFE; Pg. 6D**LENGTH:** 3110 words

Here are the members of USA TODAY's 18th annual All-USA College Academic First Team. The 20 undergraduates' accomplishments range from leading Hurricane Katrina relief efforts to helping NASA understand the geological history of Mars.

The All-USA College Academic Team was selected from almost 600 students nominated by their schools. They receive trophies and \$2,500 awards as representatives of all outstanding undergraduates. Compiled by Tracey Wong Briggs, USA TODAY

First Team members are unranked; numbers are for photo identification only.

1. Jessica Richman

Stanford University

Hometown: San Diego, Age: Undisclosed

Majors: Economics; science, technology and %society; a master's in management science and %engineering

GPA: 3.85, Graduating: June 2008

Career goal: Social entrepreneur

Accomplishments: A former high school dropout who started a bookstore and book wholesaling business, she started volunteering with the

Women's Institute for Financial Education while at community college and helped found its Money Clubs to support women in gaining financial

independence, writing the program curriculum and serving as director for public outreach;

Associated Students of Stanford University

executive cabinet and chair of academic

improvement; FUSION (Future Social Innovators Network) external relations director; campus radio show weekly student guest; technical consultant on open-source technology to Grameen Bank

Microfinance initiatives; earned Spanish language certificate in Costa Rica and completed summer course at London School of Economics.

2. David Fajgenbaum

Georgetown University

Hometown: Raleigh, N.C., Age: 21

Major: Human science

GPA: 3.835, Graduating: May

Career goal: Oncologist, public health official

Accomplishments: In memory of his mother, Anne Marie Fajgenbaum, who was diagnosed with brain cancer two weeks before he started at Georgetown, he created Students of AMF (Ailing Mothers & Fathers) Support Network to help grieving college students, now a non-profit

organization with 23 campus chapters in

development (www.StudentsofAMF.org); won \$5,000 grant to research college student

bereavement; co-founded Boot Camp 2 Beat

Cancer in Raleigh, which has raised \$28,000 in two years; varsity football quarterback; university Board of Governors; physiology research accepted for publication in Georgetown Journal of Health

Sciences.

3. Daniel Armanios

University of Pittsburgh

Hometown: Marietta, Ga., Age: 22

Majors: Mechanical engineering; political science

GPA: 3.968, Graduating: April

Career goal: Professor, government consultant

Pictured: Carving a niche at Pitt

Accomplishments: Son of Coptic Egyptian immigrants who grew up appreciating multiple viewpoints, he created Session: Middle East, an intercollegiate Model United Nations-type

simulation in which students take up the viewpoint opposite of their own beliefs; National Science Foundation research internships at Cornell

(materials research on silk), Washington State

(mechanical engineering research on biomaterial as bone scaffolding), and Virginia Tech (engineering on hydrogen fuel cells), resulting in numerous

presentations and co-authorship of silk research published in Biomacromolecules; economic case study published in the International Journal of Technology, Policy and Management; research positions at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in musculoskeletal research and orthopedic surgery; Rhodes, Truman and Goldwater scholar.

4. Mary Beth Day

Hamilton College, Clinton, N.Y.

Hometown: Seneca Falls, N.Y.,,Age: 22

Major: Geoarchaeology

GPA: 3.9,,Graduating: May

Career goal: Geologist

Pictured: Weathering winter in upstate New York

Accomplishments: Interning at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, she helped design a process to improve radiocarbon dating, which she presented at the Geological Society of America meeting; first author of publications on the structure of water octamers in International Journal of Quantum Chemistry and the low energy geometries of water clusters in the Journal of Physical Chemistry; Hamilton orchestra principal flutist !and piccolo player; field assistant for a geology ! expedition in Namibia; teaching assistant in geology and archaeology departments; resident assistant; Hamilton Action Volunteer Outreach Coalition volunteer; Goldwater Scholar.

5.Keriann Backus

Brown University

Hometown: Seattle,,Age: 21

Majors: Chemistry; Latin American Studies

GPA: 4.0,,Graduating: May

Career goal: Professor, medical researcher, health policy adviser

Pictured: With a molecule model at Brown

Accomplishments: Researching at Rockefeller University, she created a fluorescent probe to help understand cell division that might lead to cancer prevention; studied at Universidad San Francisco de Quito in Ecuador and conducted independent ecology research in the Amazon basin; Brown !Outdoor Leadership Training group leader; toured China as bassoon player with Brown University !Orchestra; raised \$6,000 for Habitat for Humanity in a Bike and Build by biking 4,000 miles from Providence to Seattle; synthesized triazole

molecules to analyze their properties while bound to metals; chemistry department undergraduate group president; departmental award in organic chemistry; Rhodes Scholar.

6.Sean Genis

U.S. Naval Academy

Hometown: Sharon, Pa.,,Age: 22

Major: Physics

GPA: 4.0 ,,Graduating: May

Career goal: U.S. Navy submarine officer

Pictured: Riding on the Navy cycling team

Accomplishments: As an elite Trident Scholar, !he co-authored research on developing ways to make acoustic detection of landmines more !efficient, published in SPIE-International Society of Optical Engineering Proceedings journal; Academy Regimental Commander; cycling team; glee club member; rock a cappella group co-founder; lead role in campus production of H.M.S. Pinafore; used Spanish fluency while sailing aboard a Spanish tall ship owned by the Spanish Naval Academy;

Rhodes Scholar.

7. Jeffrey Marlow

Washington University in St. Louis

Hometown: Englewood, Colo., Age: 22

Majors: Earth planetary sciences; chemistry

GPA: 3.92, Graduating: May

Career goal: College professor/NASA researcher

Pictured: With a replica of a Mars rover

Accomplishments: As an Athena Team Student Collaborator on the Mars Rover mission, he helped scientists interpret the geological history of Gusev Crater and Meridiani Planum and prove the past existence of liquid water on the surface and

produced a polar map used to help guide the

selection of a landing site for the next mission;

undergraduate representative to the Washington University board of trustees; Science Outreach group leader, doing demonstrations for middle school students in St. Louis; co-president of

marathon team for Lou Gehrig's disease charities; environmental sustainability research in the

Mojave Desert, Hawaii and Spain; Marshall and Goldwater scholar.

8. Andrew Lee

Claremont McKenna College

Hometown: Westminster, Colo., Age: 21

Major: Philosophy, politics and economics

GPA: 3.75, Graduating: May

Career goal: Making government accountable; public service

Pictured: Online with Fantasy Congress

Accomplishments: With two computer science majors and a graphic designer, he founded and is executive director of Fantasy Congress

(www.fantasycongress.com), an online fantasy/sports league-type game to teach students about the political process; co-student manager at the college's **Rose Institute** of State and Local

Government, where he has studied preservation of public lands and redistricting reform and is helping to start the nation's largest California politics

archive; internships at the Environmental

Protection Agency and Government Accountability Office in Washington, D.C.; op-ed piece on gays and Social Security privatization published in San

Francisco Chronicle; Ken Salazar for Senate

researcher and field volunteer; resident assistant; Little League umpire; Truman and Udall scholar.

9.Christopher Marsh

U.S. Naval Academy

Hometown: New Alexandria, Pa. ,,Age: 22

Major: Systems engineering

GPA: 4.0,,Graduating: May

Career goal: Naval aviator/astronaut

Pictured: Juggling studies and sprint football

Accomplishments: Working at Los Alamos National Lab, he developed a control system to regulate reactivity and temperature of a lunar

surface nuclear reactor design, being developed to power a future manned moon outpost; varsity sprint football quarterback; second regimental commander and battalion commander; helped

organize program educating men on how to help a rape survivor, presented to more than 1,000

midshipmen; watchstander at crypt of John Paul Jones.

10.Rebecca Mitchell

University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

Hometown: Chippewa Falls, Wis.,,Age: 22

Major: Biology, society and the environment

GPA: 3.706,,Graduating: May

Career goal: Physician/master of public health

Pictured: In San Francisco, where the Women's Global Health Imperative is based

Accomplishments: After volunteering at a Kenyan orphanage and being nominated to its board of directors, she founded and is executive director of Student Project Africa Network (www.studentprojectafricanetwork.org), connecting college students with volunteer organizations in Africa; assisted with research characterizing stem cell lines for transplant-ready conditions; vice

president, parliamentary debate society; currently doing obstetric hemorrhage research in sub-

Saharan Africa for the University of California-San Francisco's Women's Global Health Imperative; studied abroad in Italy; Truman Scholar.

11.Kevin Koo

Harvard

Hometown: Nashua, N.H. ,,Age: 21

Major: Biochemical sciences

GPA: 3.63,,Graduating: June

Career goal: U.S. surgeon general, public health %researcher

Pictured: At Harvard's biological laboratory

Accomplishments: As a World Health

Organization intern in Geneva, he evaluated the implementation of the International Classification of Diseases, the global standard for measuring health data, and developed a quality-adjusted

completeness index and wrote a paper presented at a WHO meeting in Tokyo; Harvard Dialogue and Diversity Initiative director; Harvard Science

Review co-president; Harvard Asia Pacific Review editor in chief; New Hampshire State Council on the Arts Elected Artist as a folk dancer; presented research on peer-to-peer education program he started in high school at a childhood education meeting in Oslo; trilingual translator at Sharewood Free Health Clinic.

12.Ashley Rhodes-Courter

Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, Fla.

Hometown: Crystal River, Fla. ,,Age: 21

Majors: Communications; theater

GPA: 3.84,,Graduating: May 2008

Career goal: Public policy, politics, public relations

Pictured: On stage at Eckerd College

Accomplishments: A former foster child who was placed in 14 different homes in 10 years before

being adopted, she has written a memoir, Three Little Words, to be released in 2008 by Simon & Schuster; frequent public speaker on foster care at professional conferences and motivational speaker for varied audiences; 2004 Adoption Youth

Advocate of the Year by the North American

Council on Adoptable Children; Child Welfare League of America Kids-to-Kids Grand Prize essay award; resident adviser; intern director for

Palmetto Productions, coordinating campus

entertainment; club rugby player turned assistant coach after knee injury; service learning trip to South Africa.

13.Valerie Gribben

University of Alabama at Birmingham

Hometown: Montgomery, Ala.,,Age: 21

Major: English

GPA: 3.95,,Graduating: May 2008

Career goal: Physician and novelist

Pictured: With Healing Words book donations

Accomplishments: A premedical student and novelist who found reading aloud to her mother helped her mom cope with cancer treatments, she started Healing Words, a volunteer organization of college students who read to hospital patients; wrote the second two books in her children's Fairytale trilogy, which will be published by

Junebug Books this year; UAB ambassador; Early Medical School Acceptance Program executive council member; student newspaper staff writer; official photographer for Mark Twain conference in Elmira, N.Y.; pre-health Honor Society historian; college-wide essay winner; departmental

chemistry awards.

14.Lori Scardino

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Hometown: Eau Claire,,Age: 30

Majors: Comprehensive chemistry; liberal arts !biology

GPA: 3.85,,Graduating: May

Career goal: Professor

Pictured: In the chemistry lab

Accomplishments: Returning to college as a !single parent of two, she developed protocols to characterize a series of fluorescent cellular probes, resulting in a patent application and three

international presentations; co-wrote research on the metal-binding capacity of methanobactin in the Journal of Inorganic Biochemistry, which she'll present at the Experimental Biology meeting in Washington, D.C., in April; American Chemical

Society student chapter president, tutoring

coordinator and chemistry demo show

coordinator; officer in three different honor

societies; student advisory council to the Dean of Arts and Sciences; Girl Scout leader and PTO

officer at daughters' elementary school; McNair Scholar and Kell Container Corp. scholar, UW-Eau Claire's top scholarship.

15.Cynthia DuBois

Louisiana State

Hometown: Ponchatoula, La. ,,Age: 21

Majors: Political science; agricultural business

GPA: 3.936 ,,Graduating: May

Career goal: Public service

Pictured: At her dad's horse farm

Accomplishments: Working with her old high school, which received an influx of Katrina

evacuees, she organized "We've Got Your Back," a drive that eventually provided 46,000 backpacks of school supplies to hurricane-displaced students; 2003-04 state FFA secretary; student government senator, 2005 outstanding assembly member and chair of academics committee; Leadership LSU; Agriculture Student Association; Americans for% Informed Democracy chapter founder and

president; co-authored and presented paper on Louisiana patent production and the role of knowledge stocks on economic growth to

Southern Regional Science Association meeting; American Quarter Horse Youth Association world champion calf roper; schoolwide outstanding sophomore and junior; Truman Scholar.

Photo by Lori Waselchuk for USA TODAY

16.Tianhui Li

Princeton University

Hometown: Portland, Ore.,,Age: 21

Major: Computer science

GPA: 3.88,,Graduating: June

Career goal: Professor

Pictured: Finding connections in numbers

Accomplishments: His efforts to bridge the gap between pure science and practical applications include math research on webpage-ranking algorithms, which led him to a proof exposing a loophole in Google's algorithm; his findings were presented at the Computer Science Affiliates

Conference; research on measures of risk of

financial investments; wrote software converting mathematical proofs to computer code to help make programs more reliable; co-chair,

Undergraduate Research Symposium Steering Committee; math tutor to computer science

majors, underclassmen and disadvantaged high school students; research on wave-driven plasmas at Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory; Marshall Scholar.

Photo by Eileen Blass, USA TODAY

17.Frank Leibfarth

University of South Dakota

Hometown: Yankton, S.D. ,,Age: 22

Majors: Physics; chemistry

GPA: 3.928,,Graduating: May 2008

Career goal: Materials chemistry

Pictured: In the chemistry lab

Accomplishments: As a National Science

Foundation undergraduate intern at IBM's

Almaden Research Center, he studied modeling molecular interactions that control ring-opening polymerization, co-wrote articles in Macro-

molecules, Organic Letters and Biomacromolecules; presented research on synthesizing "molecular wires" from contorted aromatics at the American Chemical Society meeting; varsity football

placekicker and Academic All-America Football First Team; Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity president; homecoming king; played the prince in a

hometown 2004 Nutcracker production; student ambassador; university scholarship committee; Athletic Board of Control; departmental chemistry award; Goldwater Scholar.

Photo by Greg E. Latza for USA TODAY

18. Yoonhee Patricia Ha

Ohio State

Hometown: Proctorville, Ohio „Age: 22

Majors: Microbiology; finance

GPA: 3.91 „Graduating: August

Career goal: Public health physician

Pictured: In the lab

Accomplishments: As a policy intern at American Cancer Society in Washington, D.C., she helped in lobbying for the bill that became the D.C. smoking ban by researching the efficacy of ventilation

technologies and preparing testimony for the ACS chief medical officer; Ohio State University Board of Trustees student trustee; Global Health Initiative co-founder; won six grants to volunteer in Kenya with Kibera Integrated Community Self Help

Programme; Ohio Academy of Science, trustee and Student Advisory Council director; did pre-clinical evaluation of therapeutic antibody for acute

myeloid leukemia; chaired Martin Luther King Jr. day of service; Golden Key Honour Society

president; university-wide Outstanding Student Organization Leader Award; Marshall and Truman Scholar.

Photo by Jay LaPrete for USA TODAY

19. Maya Shankar

Yale University

Hometown: Cheshire, Conn. „Age: 21

Major: Cognitive science

GPA: 3.95,,Graduating: May

Career goal: Professor

Accomplishments: Generating research projects in two different Yale cognition labs, studying visual perception in primates and adult humans, she did parallel studies to draw similarities about how

visual perception works; numerous conference presentations and first author of article submitted to a cognitive science journal; co-founded FIVE magazine, a campus human rights and social

justice journal; co-campus coordinator, United Students Against Sweatshops; co-president, Yale College Council for CARE; founded Downtown

Development Volunteer program; Campus

Progress Student Advisory Board; researched

universal grammar and language acquisition at Max Planck Institute in Leipzig, Germany; Rhodes Scholar.

Photo by Stan Godlewski for USA TODAY

20.Joe O'Shea

Florida State

Hometown: Dunedin, Fla. ,,Age: 21

Majors: Philosophy; social science

GPA: 4.0,,Graduating: May 2008

Career goal: Social entrepreneur

Accomplishments: He spent the summer of 2006 in New Orleans starting a free health clinic in the Lower Ninth Ward (L9hc.org), working with the Common Ground Collective to solicit funding and supplies, coordinating residents and other

volunteers for the clinic, which opened Aug. 28 and is projected to see 10,000 patients annually;

student government senator, deputy chief of staff and director of the office of social justice;

Progressive Student Assembly president; student judicial board; Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity pledge class president; worked to develop a free dental clinic program for indigent adults and organized the Leon County Community Healthcare Coalition, which campaigned for a half-cent sales tax

increase to finance health care for 31,000 working families.

Photo by Steve Cannon for USA TODAY

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