Dara Stofenberg insists she’s not a perfectionist. “I just do the best I can — whatever’s necessary and appropriate for the class,” she says.

On the other hand, she wonders, “Why would you hand in anything that’s less than you’re capable of?”

That kind of attitude explains why the 22-year-old public policy major graduated at the very top of her class last spring with a stellar 4.0 grade point average. She also claimed the coveted $1,000 prize for academic excellence as the highest-ranking member of the University’s Phi Beta Kappa chapter.

The awarding of the prize was the highlight of the annual Phi Beta Kappa initiation ceremony, a campus ritual that dates back to 1974, when PBK granted the University permission to establish a chapter. Since then, UAlbany has been electing an average of about 100 seniors a year to Phi Beta Kappa, the nation’s oldest and most respected undergraduate honor society, dating back to 1776.

In a joyous ceremony kicking off Commencement Weekend, 51 seniors were inducted May 13 into UAlbany’s Alpha Alpha of New York chapter (one of 270 PBK chapters nationwide), culminating four years of exceptional achievement in the liberal arts and sciences.

President Kermit Hall, himself a PBK member, delivered the keynote address. The inductees included six Presidential Scholars, 20 members of the Presidential Honors Society, and recipients of seven Spellman Achievement Awards, five President’s Awards for leadership and excellence, three Chancellor’s Awards, two scholar-athlete awards, an Ada Craig Walker Award, and countless departmental honors.

Stofenberg’s parents, Sue and Alan Stofenberg of Smithtown, Long Island, were among the family members and friends who filled the Campus Center Assembly Hall to capacity.

“We’re extraordinarily proud,” said Stofenberg’s mother. “Dara’s always given 200 percent-plus.”

Unlike many of today’s students, Stofenberg (center photo above) knew right away that being invited into Phi Beta Kappa membership was an honor. That’s because her mentor, Professor David McCaffrey of the Department of Public Administration — another PBK
I

Matthew and Sandy Ostoyich

Stories like those are no surprise to it as a goal. Another inductee, Roman Dubiel of Montreal, says he had “no idea” about Phi Beta Kappa when he received his invitation. “So I was excited to be invited,” said Allstadt, adding that he intended to put it on his resume.

Philip and Fran Shepherd

For more information on the history of Myskania, go to: wards_prizes.html#honoraries.

Academic Stars: The University induction 51 seniors into Phi Beta Kappa, the nation’s oldest and most respected undergraduate honor society, in May.

From left, Row 1: French studies Professor Mary Beth Winn, chapter secretary; Stephen Pampinella, Michael Padovani, Holly Betros, Kristen Amoroso, Kristen O’Brien, Daniel Coniglio, and chemistry Professor Paul Toscano, outgiving president. Row 2: Mary Wells, Isaac Samuels, Sip Zhang, Elizabeth Avivi, Ashley Helmink, John McCullough, Stephanie Lafond. Row 3: Susan Perdomo, Michael Manasar, Sarah Waterman, Roberto Camarillo, Steven Indovino, Nathan Tabor, Fang Yu, Marta Penaud, Matthew Debbielli, Megan O’Donnell, Gretchen Reece, Kenneth Elliott. Row 4: Matthew O’Hare, Franco Rua, Martin Springfild, Adam Willek, Michael Tileikis, Robert Ellwood, Jennifer Mariano, Elizabeth Sautz, Heather Schiavone, Adam Sakrator, Gabrielle Arviso, Rachel Herman, Susan Spinno. Row 5: Joseph Bruno, Roman Dubeil, Michael Dubeil.

Omicron Delta Kappa

Founded at UAlbany: 1991. Purpose: to promote academic excellence, personal and professional development, and community service. Minimum requirements: 3.75 GPA and 15 hours of community service per semester. Open to second-semester freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors. Locally based.

National Society of Collegiate Scholars

Founded at UAlbany: 1990. Purpose: to promote academic excellence, leadership skills, networking and career development. Minimum requirements: 3.25 GPA, rank in top 20 percent of class, freshman or sophomore status. One of 205 chapters nationwide. Nationally chartered in 1994.

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