Fashion Forward
TAM prepares student designers to succeed in the industry.

Yan by Hannah was launched by Hannah Cusack and Linzee Safron in April 2011, during their sophomore year at Mizzou. “I sew all the time, and Linzee is a marketing major, so we came up with the idea to utilize both of our passions and start a clothing line,” explains Cusack, who is now a senior. “Linzee and I were able to make this all happen with dedication to the line and sacrifices. There are times when an order needs to be made, so I have to make that a priority over being a normal college student and going out on weekends. There is also a financial sacrifice you make when you start up, but the amount of people that have supported us is worth it!”

And so, after experimenting with Etsy, an online e-commerce shop, Yan by Hannah was born (Yan which rhymes with man, is Cusack’s nickname). The fashion forward duo market their products as “feminine, fashion-forward event wear.”

“I specialize in making garments for special events like birthdays, homecoming, Prom, weddings and parties,” Cusack says. “My goal is to provide every girl with a unique piece that she can’t find in a department store; I strive to make everything one of a kind.”

Purchases can be made through the Yan by Hannah Facebook page, and customers can also interact with Cusack and Safron via their blog, Twitter or Instagram.

Yan by Hannah showed a collection of twenty garments at Kansas City Fashion Week in March, just two months before May graduation. “We aren’t 100 percent sure what will happen when we graduate, but I plan to keep updating people with my sewing projects, and I will never say no to anyone who asks me to make them an outfit,” Cusack says. “If one day it could turn into something more than a small e-commerce business run by college students then that would be amazing. We can only go up from here!”

Ellie Schamel, who graduated in May 2012, showed three outfits for Little Black Dress, a ladies-only fundraiser that benefits True North of Columbia, a shelter that provides safety and services for victims of domestic and sexual violence. “The Little Black Dress event is a great opportunity for fashion students and young designers to display their talents and gain exposure while supporting a good cause within the Columbia, Mo. area,” explains Schamel, whose designs included a black shift dress created for her little sister to wear to her 2012 high school Father Daughter Dance, a black lace dress designed for Winter Formal 2012, and a black backless dress for 2011 NYE.”

Schamel credits TAM with providing her the educational background and opportunity to develop and express her creativity. “I made my ideas become reality though keeping an open mind, experimenting and thinking outside the box, learning from my peers and having the drive to execute my ideas and decisions,” she says. “Being able to work though construction problems and see my ideas come to life is one of the most rewarding parts of being a designer.”

Schamel currently works as a product development assistant at Soft Surroundings Corporate Headquarters in St. Louis. “I have been working at Soft Surroundings for 9 months but am excited to grow and learn with the company,” she says, noting that in her free time, she still enjoys creating her own designs.

The attire in Memorial Union is usually pretty casual, but on April 17, occupants of Stotler Lounge stepped it up a notch. Or several.

The Earth, Wind & Fire Fashion Show, presented by the Student Union Programming Board and the Union Arts Council, featured element-themed pieces from six student designers. Ten models displayed the garments, which were judged by three judges.

TAM senior Molly Akin received first place in her fashion show debut, as well as a $75 Visa gift card. Her first piece, “Earth & Wind” was inspired by the Creation Story in the book of Genesis and modeled by her sister. The vibrant colors and undulating flow of the fabric were meant to represent the beginning of the world, when life was breathed into existence. Akin’s second garment, “Fire,” was inspired by The Hunger Games and featured a red-riding-hood cap and collar.

Akin, who began studying design after changing her major from pre-veterinarian sciences to Textile and Apparel Management, told the Maneater she was excited to see the crowd’s reaction to her work and “actually being able to see my designs on the runway instead of just in my sewing room…I feel incredibly encouraged and energized to pursue something higher because I totally wasn’t expecting this.”