2000

THE NATIONAL HONORS REPORT VOL. XXI NO. 1 & 2, SPRING/SUMMER 2000

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nchcnhr

Part of the Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons, Gifted Education Commons, Higher Education Commons, and the Other Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons


This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the National Collegiate Honors Council at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in The National Honors Report by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.
“Iron rusts from Misuse,
Stagnant water becomes Frozen;

Even so does Inaction sap the Vigors of the Mind.”
The National Collegiate Council (NCHC) is a professional organization composed of administrators, faculty, and students dedicated to undergraduate honors learning. The nation-wide institutional membership in the NCHC includes both public and private, large and small, two-year and four-year colleges and universities.

The NCHC provides professional and institutional members with information about the latest developments in honors education, encourages the institutional use of learning resources, fosters curricular experimentation, and supplies expertise and support for institutions establishing or seeking to maintain, rework, or evaluate honors programs. It also institutes educational programs of its own.

Radford University serves as headquarters for the NCHC office of Executive Secretary/Treasurer Earl B. Brown, Jr. All communications regarding subscription, membership, address changes, and other matters of business should be sent to him at the NCHC office, Radford University, P.O. Box 7017, Radford, VA 24142; phone (540) 831-6100; email <nchc@runet.edu>; fax 540-831-5004. To learn more about the NCHC, visit the home page at <http://www.runet.edu/~NCHC>.

The National Honors Report seeks material concerning any aspect of honors development, assessment, curriculum, teaching, or learning. Send electronic submissions via email or disk (IBM compatible) if possible. Deadlines are Feb. 10, May 10, July 10, and Nov. 10. Material can be sent to Margaret Brown; email <mcbrown@runet.edu>; or 606 Third Avenue, Radford, VA 24141; or phone (540) 639-3414.

Editor: Margaret Brown
Staff: Liz Cassell, Business Manager
D. Sue Jones, Layout
Stephanie Lucas, Intern, Spring 2000

"...so does inaction sap the vigors of the mind." — Leonardo da Vinci

First, The Cover
— taken from Damir Sinovic’s mural based on da Vinci’s “Man as a Measure of All Things,” with special thanks to Lydia Daniel (Director of Honors Institute, Hillsborough Community College); cover design by Stephanie Lucas with Jon Wszalek, and thanks to Joyce Wszalek (Associate Director, James Madison University VA).

1. “The Story Behind” by Lydia Daniel ........................................................................................................................... 1
   The director of the Honors Institute shares how the mural came to be. With comments from Damir Sinovic, the artist.

2. “About Damir’s Mural” by Margaret Brown ................................................................................................................ 2
   Students and faculty awed by Damir Sinovic’s mural. Many other schools provide special art for student lounges; see the Spring 1999 cover and related stories about Heidelberg College’s cartoon based on the principles of the honors program by visiting cartoonist Polly Keener. Heidelberg’s second cartoon, by cartoonist David Coverley, will be on the cover of the NHR, Winter 2001. Both pieces of art show appreciation of honors in their own special ways.

...and reflections by honors students and graduates

3. “A Handful of Smarties” by Stephanie Lucas ............................................................................................................... 3
   Importance of an honors student lounge by a recent graduate from honors. To promote community, provide computers — maybe even TVs, and especially, to encourage unwinding. Example from James Madison University (Joyce Wszalek, Associate Director).

4. “Defending the Senior Thesis” by Albert Spiegel ......................................................................................................... 4
   Recent graduate of Iona explains the rationale for including a thesis as a requirement for an honors program. Persuasive argument. For programs not including a thesis requirement, as well as programs rethinking or evaluating their own thesis requirements.

5. “The University Symposium: a Student Perspective” by Kathleen D’Angelo ............................................................... 6
   From the student co-ordinator of George Washington University’s symposium (David Grier, Director), a one-credit honors option for upper-class students taught by an expert in the selected topic. With suggestions for roles students can assume in this option.

6. From Student Concerns Committee (Aaron Bibb)
   “Counteracting Political Apathy in Honors Students” by Aaron Bibb ........................................................................... 8
   Honors as agent of change. Informing students, sponsoring events to encourage students’ connection with political process. Good suggestions for directors. (Connie Hood, Director)

7. Working With the Young (from Service Learning Projects at Hampton University, Freddy Davy Director)
   “Learning to Learn/Learning to Serve” by Derek Ham ................................................................................................. 10
   Lessons learned from coaching soccer team of pre-teens. Importance of role models.
   “An Honors Experience with the Homeless” by Gregory Pidgeon, II ........................................................................ 11
   Gregory shares his contribution to others. What he unexpectedly learned from this experience
   “Helping Youth Prepare” by Crisarla Houston .............................................................................................................. 12
   A junior at Hampton discusses collaborative efforts needed to encourage leadership.

8. “So You Want to Have a Student Publication” by Stephanie Lucas .............................................................................. 13
   Five tips for student publications, those new or continuing. From an experienced student editor of publications at James Madison University. A reminder to find core group of students to put publication together—and more. By the NHR’s intern, Spring 2000.
...and reflections and challenges to honors

9. “Common Threads” by Martha Rosenthal ................................................................. 15
   Florida Atlantic’s honors director shows connection between program (started in 1998) and university (started in 1997).
   How each benefits the other, especially how program enriches the university’s curriculum. Importance of linking the two

10. “A Place for Honors” by Jack Dudley ................................................................. 18
    Thoughtful look at honors within its academic community. A legitimate discipline? Too much concerned with structure
    (program or college or...)? Every department to offer honors? Intellectual issues take back seat to fight for stability? Elitist?
    Questions you might not want to think about. From an experienced director at Virginia Tech.

11. “Quantifying Honors” by Len Zane ................................................................. 22
    The uses and abuses of numbers. Problems in counting the number of students in your program. Use of these numbers.
    What this says about your program. Not the first time Len has tackled the problem of quantification. Read this article—a must for
    programs’ own analysis or the reporting of numbers to administrators. Be sure to look up the Winter 1997 issue to read Len’s
    Presidential Address, “Numbers, Mountains, and the Supersonic Fly” (a truly memorable address by NCHC’s President Zane).
    Len has recently retired as Dean of the Honors Program, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

12. Numbers and More Numbers: Conversations on the Listserv (compiled) by Margaret Brown ................................ 25
    A. Discussion on issues of admission and graduation criteria
    B. Discussion on issues of gender in honors

    Sharon Baiocco takes us through the development of a two-day honors orientation program for incoming freshmen at
    Jacksonville University. Her guidelines should prove invaluable to anyone contemplating developing an honors orientation.

14. “All Invited: An Honors Retreat” by Ivy Mitchell .............................................. 35
    A two-day off-campus retreat from Florida A & M provides special opportunities for students and faculty to meet. For
    first-year students to get advice from upperclass students; to associate with and join with others in this special honors community.

15. “Grassroots Groups” by Bill Langley ................................................................. 37
    Honors takes on local issue. Hands-on learning through an Honors Option when an interdisciplinary course is not
    feasible. Local issue is water testing to supplement Kansas’ limited sampling

16. “Looking at the Components of an Honors Culture to Prepare for Strategic Change” by Peggy E. Enochs .................. 39
    Past traditions, ceremonies, and rituals as key to future. Assessment of culture necessary to plan for change. From a
    presentation at Southern Regional Honors Conference.

...and reflections and challenges to teaching honors

17. From Two-Year College Committee (Sandy Deabler & Cheryl Brock)
    “Let’s Continue the Oral Tradition” by Sandy Deabler & Cheri Brock ........................................ 45
    Two faculty at North Harris Community College discuss the importance of teaching students how to convert their papers
    into oral presentations.

18. “Analogizing Across the Curriculum” by George Miller & Ann Wescot Barich ..................... 47
    Example of creating a curriculum based on theories of psychology and philosophy. Not the traditional interdisciplinary
    approach in which one thinker crosses over to another discipline or to a loosely associated theme. Analogies as way to tie together
    cross-disciplinary approach.

19. “Technology & Honors Education (& the 1933 World’s Fair)” by Thomas E. Beutel .................. 50
    The 1933 promise of technology. The promotion and development of technology today and its relationship to honors education
...and reflections and challenges to the NCHC

20. "The New Technology and the NCHC" From Small College Committee (Tammy Ostrander)
   "SMACOHOP on the Web" by Hud Reynolds ................................................................. 52
   The Webmaster shares basic information about the Small College Committee website including how to make the best use of it. Includes sources available on the website. (According to the NCHC, "small college" refers to any institution with a program size of 76 or less OR an institutional size of up to 4001.)

   A former president offers suggestions for the future of the NCHC.

22. President's Report: Conference '99 by Joan Digby ..................................................................... 55
   Joan's summary of income and expenses for the Orlando Conference '99.

23. "From the Home Front" by Earl B. Brown, Jr ........................................................................ 56
   A. Reassessing the NCHC's mission.
   B. Semi-annual report to the Executive Committee

24. Report on Membership Numbers ............................................................................................... 60
   The editor analyzes membership for the past three years.

25. The New Journal by Ada Long ................................................................................................... 61
   Forum for Honors becomes Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council or JNCHC. New issues planned after a two-year hiatus. Editor Ada Long will present 'Liberal Education" by a number of invited participants. A description of six works-in-progress presented at the Orlando 1999 Conference is in the Winter 2000 issue of the NHR. A call for submissions for the second issue.

26. "Beyond Getting Out the News: How Publications Board 1999 Newsletter Award Winners (and Others) Did It" by Rita Barnes, Aaron Bibb & Connie Hood ........................................................................ 63
   Announcement of 1999 winners of the seventh annual newsletter contest. With descriptions of winning entries (and some honorable mentions, as well). Good suggestions for any student or faculty editors, no matter what size circulation, frequency of publication, or format (including Web-based newsletters).

To join the honors listserv at George Washington University, email <listserv@hermes.circ.gwu.edu> with the following command: <sub honors (put your name here)]. The listserv will automatically pick up your email address. To post to the list after subscribing, mail your message to <honors@hermes.circ.gwu.edu>. If you have problems with the listserv itself, contact the webmaster at <uhpmgr@gwu2.circ.gwu.edu>. To remove your name from the listserv, mail the following command, <unsub honors> to <listserv@hermes.circ.gwu.edu>.
The Story Behind Leonardo da Vinci & the Honors Study Lounge
by Lydia Daniel, Hillsborough Community College (FL)

One of the sixteen “Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program” [reprinted Winter 2000] is that “The program should occupy suitable quarters constituting an honors center with such facilities as an honors library, lounge, reading rooms, personal computers, and other appropriate decor.” Because community colleges generally do not have dormitories, an honors study lounge becomes a necessity, far exceeding any basic characteristics. Community college students are commuter students; they arrive and leave campus daily. If they are to stay for more than their scheduled classes, we must entice them to do so. We must provide them with a room of their own, their own place, so that they can establish their place, their place within the honors group.

As a four-campus institution, we at Hillsborough Community College must meet the challenge of providing the appropriate environment in which honors students can develop a sense of community. We are fortunate to have the complete administrative support of the Honors Institute, its students, and its faculty. Three campus presidents have provided the space and assisted in the furnishings for each of their campuses; the fourth president’s campus is under complete remodeling and plans include a new honors lounge in the final reconstruction. The mural from the Plant City honors lounge can be viewed on this National Honors Report cover. The students are currently working on a design for the Brandon campus lounge. Damir Sinovic, who also designed our logo, was responsible for the wonderful mural; the following comments are by the artist, Damir’s explanation.

Leonardo da Vinci’s quote that inspired generations of Renaissance men and women, now inspires the new generations of students in the HCC Honors Institute: “Iron rusts from misuse, stagnant water becomes frozen; even so does inaction sap the vigors of the mind.” When we were given space for a study lounge on the Plant City campus, Dr. Daniel, our Honors director, approached me with the idea of painting the mural on the new honors study lounge wall. Even though I have experience in painting murals, I was glad to accept the help from my fellow students, Liz Jason, Chris St. Jean, and Patrick Hood-Daniel. These students provided input from their very different art backgrounds, so finding a suitable theme was crucial. We quickly decided that a well-known subject was more appropriate for this location. What better and more familiar motif to pick than the Renaissance drawing of the “Man as the Measure of all Things” by Leonardo da Vinci? Paints and brushes in hands, we started to work on enlarging and bringing Leonardo’s sketch to a life-size rendering of a man approximately six feet tall. Further to inspire students, we added quotes on each side of the rendering, one by the master himself and the other by Samuel Johnson: "Everything that enlarges the sphere of human powers, that shows man that he can do what he cannot do is valuable." With these words and the constant watchful eye of our Renaissance man, the HCC Honors Institute students are now constantly cheered, motivated, and inspired as they meet together on the rural Plant City Campus. – by Damir Sinovic
Iron rusts from disuse, stagnant matter loses its purity, and in cold weather becomes frozen; even so does inaction sap the vigors of the mind” – da Vinci.

“About Damir’s Mural”

In many ways, the honors student lounge at Hillsborough Community College in Tampa, FL, is not so very different from student lounges in other colleges and universities. A computer. A refrigerator. A table, a few comfortable chairs. No TV (it was taken out at the request of the students). But it’s different, too.

A lock box (like one used on houses for sale, only appropriate people with a key). Here at Hillsborough CC, the lounge is strictly “Students Only.” “It’s their space,” says Jim Dunn, honors professor of history. “We don’t come in.”

And then there’s the mural. One whole wall of the honors student lounge has been sponge-painted in soft-gold. The oft-seen “Man as the Measure of All Things” by da Vinci rules the center. Drawn in delicate, soft brown, it is framed with words of wisdom from Samuel Johnson and da Vinci himself.

It’s the work of Damir Sinovic, from Croatia, when he was an honors student at HCC’s Honors Institute. He says now that he wanted to paint the mural because “blank walls are not inspiring.”

His director of the HCC Honors Institute, Lydia Daniel, jumped at the chance when Damir approached her about painting a mural on one of the walls. Since he has always loved the classics, choosing da Vinci’s “Man as the Measure of All Things” as his subject was easy. “I wasn’t trying to cause any controversy,” he said. “I just wanted something extra for all of the students, and I wanted everyone to appreciate the work.”

Lydia still laughs at the thought of Damir’s mural gracing the cover of the NHR. “I hope everyone thinks it’s appropriate.” She is quick to shower Damir with praise. “He was so organized,” she says. “He drew up plans, prepared everything ahead of time, and assembled the equipment. With the help of three other honors students, Patrick Hood-Daniel, Chris St. Jean, and Liz Jason. it was completed in no time.

Damir’s commitment to HCC’s Honors Institute comes from his appreciation for what it offered to him. “The honors program at HCC has made such a difference in my life,” he said. He stayed at HCC an extra semester in fall, 1999. “I took 17 hours, but there was still so much to learn.” His English is excellent. He learned it from watching TV. “I immersed myself in it. That’s really how you learn, that way, not memorization.”

He has also added life to the opposite wall of the lounge. “It’s the three Graces of Music, Literature, and Visual Arts.” With a grin, he says. “That balances males and females.” He’s headed into architecture, after deciding among the schools offering admission and scholarships. “Architecture is forever,” he says. So is his mural.

— M. Brown
where are you headed now?” my friend asked.

“Over to the lounge at Hillcrest,” I replied.

“Oh, that’s the place for you honors smarties, isn’t it?”

My friend’s comment was good-natured, but as the cliché goes, many a truth is said in jest, and his statement reflected the (mis)perception often found on campuses towards honors programs and their students. Notwithstanding such perceptions—or perhaps because of them — computer labs and study lounges set aside specifically for honors students play an important role in the honors experience.

The two-room study lounge and computer lab in Hillcrest House that serves the needs of honors students at James Madison University began as the project of the Honors Student Advisory Council back in 1996. They recognized the need to build community among honors students, both for those in the process of completing their honors course work and for students working on their senior honors projects. Even with the small enrollment characteristic of many honors courses, they recognized that it is still possible to have relatively little contact with fellow honors students. This is a particularly significant issue for juniors and seniors working on their senior honors projects. These are students who are still members of the honors program itself because they have completed their honors course work and are pursuing the independent study of their senior honors project outside of the classroom. The goal of the council in creating our lounge and lab was to provide an informal setting in which honors students could study, socialize with other students, and just relax.

After a long search, the basement of Hillcrest House, the building which houses JMU’s honors program, was decided upon as the location for the lounge and lab. Along with recommendations from JMU’s External Academic Review Committee, the effort of the Honors Student Advisory Council played a large role in helping the honors program receive the necessary funding for renovation, furniture, computer, and printer, and software programs. Over the two years after the initial proposal for an honors lounge and lab was made, and following months of construction, the Hillcrest computer lab and lounge opened on January 27, 1998. Amy Basalla, who chaired the original advisory committee that started the project, was quoted in JMU’s Honors News as saying, “It’s so much better than I could have imagined. We kept saying that we just wanted a space, and I thought we’d just have a corner of [a] room and have to get a couch off the side of the road. It was pretty amazing to see how it turned out.”

The computer lab, which is restricted to honors students and faculty as well as members of the Honors Program Committee and Honors Program Advisory Board, is equipped with two PowerMac computers, five Pentium PC’s, two scanners, a printer, and a range of software programs that include Microsoft Office, Adobe PageMaker, and campus email. The lounge area is complete with a kitchenette, table and chairs, VCR and sofas, and provides a comfortable atmosphere for students to study, eat, or just hang out with friends.

In the two and a half years since the Hillcrest Lounge opened, one especially familiar ritual is held at the end of each semester. Seniors gather to complete their honors projects, both commiserating with and encouraging one another through the homestretch of a three-semester-long project, but it is all students, not just seniors, who regularly use the computer lab and, especially, the skills of Trish, the lab’s Administrative Assistant who is responsible for maintaining the computers, helping students with software questions, and answering questions about the honors program. One of the most important things that Trish has done is to seek ways to improve the lounge and lab so that they better meet the students’ needs. This year, she has seen to the rearranging of the lab to use space more efficiently, installing study desks in the lab for students who want a quieter place than the lounge to read or study, and even the small touch of putting hot water, tea and cocoa mix in the lounge’s kitchenette for students who come in on cold winter days.

Having a student lounge and computer lab set up just for honors students has several benefits. All of the honors students need access to computers and study areas, but our lounge and lab help build community and camaraderie, as well as strengthening students’ ties to the program. Especially in this year, I have found our basement lounge and lab to be a great refuge where I can unwind for a few minutes during a hectic day, check email in between classes, chat with Trish, or download an assignment. I have even found myself...
participating in the senior honors project discussions, things like how much progress we’ve made, what approaches we’re taking with our respective projects, and how do you get Microsoft Word to format page numbers so they conform to the project handbook. The answer is to ask Trish for her detailed instructions sheet.

But perhaps the most satisfying aspect of our lounge and lab is that it is the product of a group of students who identified a way to make their honors program better and then put the necessary effort and energy into making it a reality for the greater honors community at JMU.

Stephanie Lucas — editor of student publications at James Madison University and this semester an intern to the Editor of The NHR.

“Defending the Senior Honors Thesis”
by Albert J. Spiegel, Iona College

"It has to be how many pages?" This was my first question to the Director of the Honors Degree Program. I had never written a thesis and had absolutely no clue what I was going to write. But like most college freshmen, I simply dismissed this nonsense of a thesis, since senior year was quite a ways away. Now, after completing an honors thesis, nonsense is not an adjective I associate with the honors thesis.

In May 1999, nearly four years after discovering the mammoth thesis requirement, I finished and defended my honors thesis entitled: “From Slate to Silicon: Building the Technologically-Literate School District.” I examined all of the components necessary for making today’s children computer literate. Now, after having some time to ponder my experience writing a thesis, it is time to defend the honors thesis once again, only this time the defense is for the thesis itself. Rather than disseminating what other institutions do with their honors seniors, I would like to share with you my experiences with the honors thesis, some key thesis elements, and finally why the honors thesis should be an integral part of the honors experience.

My thesis experience began in April during my junior year. I had just finished my Junior Honors Colloquium and written a fifteen-page "mini-thesis" (entitled “The Effects of Foreign Workers on the United States Economy,” which I presented at the NCHC Northeast Regional Conference in March 1998 in Washington, D.C.). My undergraduate degree was in Information and Decision Technology Management. When it came time to choose a topic, I had three years of business and major courses under my belt. I wanted, however, to research the use of technology in education. I had the liberty to choose any topic. I knew enough about technology, but the education part would be a learning experience. I also wanted to approach the paper from a business point of view. Now that I had a topic, I was supposed to spend the summer engulfed in research but instead spent it engulfed in an internship.

The topic, of course, is the most important component of the honors thesis. It can make or break the entire thesis. A good topic has several important characteristics. (1) The topic must interest the writer. If you want to write about Socrates, then you must have a profound interest in Socrates. In general, most of my peers chose a topic that they wanted to learn more about. (2) The thesis topic should also be a "talked about" topic; hence there should be enough information and resources available about the topic. Although the thesis does require original thought, you also need to have resources available for research. (3) Finally, you should pick a topic that bears some relation to your major. Since you bring your general knowledge base to your major, your topic can branch into an area of some original research.

I started my senior year with a topic. A good beginning, but what was I going to do with that topic? Enter the mentor. Not only was my mentor in my major department, he was also the president of a local board of education. I had known my mentor since my freshman year, and we had a good, professional relationship. Occasionally, my mentor and I met informally to discuss my goals, progress, and any issues that arose during my research. When I first started the project, we discussed what main areas I should cover in the thesis.
Picking the right mentor is just as important as picking the right topic. According to my online dictionary, a mentor is a wise and trusted counselor or teacher. It is crucial that you pick a mentor with whom you have a good working relationship: a current or past professor, particularly one who has been involved with honors. The mentor should have some knowledge of the field and/or topic that you are studying or at the very least, be willing to learn something about the topic. The mentor is not a babysitter but rather your resource. A mentor can provide insight and direction into the thesis and assist you with important decisions without interruption. If you make a poor decision when choosing a mentor, the thesis project can become much more difficult. If the mentor/student experience proves positive, then the relationship can even continue after the thesis is written.

Topic in hand, mentor at my side, it was time to research and write. With a project of this magnitude, time management was essential. My mentor and I agreed on a time-line for the project. I spent most of the fall semester gathering information, conducting interviews, and taking notes. I compiled an abstract, bibliography, and outline. During the four weeks between the fall and spring semesters, I outlined and wrote about one-third of the thesis.

By the middle of February, I had completed a draft to give to my mentor for the first reading. By the end of March, I had addressed the comments and suggestions and submitted a second draft to my mentor and to my outside readers. (I was required to have two professors read my thesis; one was another professor in my major department and the other was in the English Department. In addition, I had one other professor and a peer read the thesis.)

In April, I made minor corrections and prepared for the defense. In May, all seniors presented their findings to a group of administrators, faculty, staff, peers, and parents.

A thesis cannot be written the night before it is due. Rather, it must be carefully planned long before the first word is written. You must be conscious of deadlines set by your honors program and your mentor. The key is to start early. a) A topic should definitely be decided on by the end of the junior year. Selecting a topic as a junior at this time allows for summer research, visits, interviews, and hands-on experiments. b) The fall semester of the senior year is the time for compiling research and possibly preparing a rough draft. c) By the middle of the spring semester, your paper should be in its final stages, allowing you to prepare to defend it. Defending the thesis is an integral part of the entire experience and should include questions from faculty and peers.

The senior honors thesis can be a worthwhile and enriching experience. It allows you to choose a topic that you are interested in and fully research it. Writing the thesis pays off in the future. Many graduate schools and employers are impressed by students who have done major research as undergraduates.

The thesis is an essential part of the honors experiences. Programs that have one, keep it. Programs that do not, investigate how your program can create a thesis or culminating experiences. The benefits are there for all to seize.

Albert Spiegel — a graduate of Iona College's honors program.
The “University Symposium: A Student Perspective” by Kathleen D’Angelo, George Washington University

The “University Symposium” at George Washington University was started in its current form in the Spring of 1995 as a one-credit hour lecture and discussion course. The symposium, bringing a well-known speaker to campus each semester to address students for a weekend, was designed to provide an option for students in their junior year faced with full schedules. This symposium allowed students to complete their majors with this honors option. Approximately 100 students per semester enrolled in the forum to create an informed student voice through students’ interaction with well-known scholars and writers representing the top of their fields.

As coordinator of the symposium for the 1998-1999 academic year, I can affirm the numerous benefits of this three-day event. The course solves the problem of the “junior crunch” and provides a cost-effective method for offering students an honors option. Further, the symposium serves one quarter of the program and affords an opportunity to unify our diverse honors program that includes students from across four undergraduate schools: Liberal Arts, Engineering, Business, and International Affairs. Yet the biggest advantage, from my perspective as a student within the honors program, is the opportunity it provides for students to shape their own education.

Because students complete approximately 100 pages of preparatory readings and write an entrance paper before attending the symposium itself, they often arrive with firm opinions about the speaker and the topic. But at some point during the weekend, typically in the second or third day, opinions shift as students become truly engaged in the ideas presented. Students who once vowed no interest in the subject find themselves connecting with the speaker’s ideas, applying knowledge from other courses and realizing that the proposed topic is not as far outside the scope of their studies as they originally thought.

A good example of this learning took place in the Fall 1998 Symposium featuring Karen Armstrong. Armstrong, one of Britain’s leading scholars on religion and author of The New York Times best-selling A History of God, addressed the symposium with lectures about how we construct ideas about religion, the role of fundamentalism, and the future of God. In a school known for its cultural diversity, I was uncertain how students would react to a three-day discussion of religion. Yet the weekend resulted in one of our most successful symposia to date: students took an academic rather than emotional approach to the topic and sustained a relevant and interesting dialogue with Armstrong throughout the weekend’s events.

At one heated point in the weekend, a philosophy professor in the audience challenged the foundation of Armstrong’s ideas by questioning her assumption that God exists. Then the students themselves rose to defend her, articulating concepts shaped throughout the weekend and demonstrating their commitment to critique and apply Armstrong’s theories. Many students later commented not only on Armstrong’s quality as a speaker, but also at their surprise that they had learned so much. Such a challenging symposium topic presents students with the opportunity to come away with an enhanced understanding of subjects they wouldn’t likely have studied in other university courses.

Another valuable aspect of the symposium is the overwhelming student involvement that it demands. Ultimately the symposium is a student-run course, designed for students by students (with a little help from the Honors director). In our honors program, a student assistant serves as the coordinator and teaching assistant, interacting with symposium students at all stages of the course, and performing tasks such as preparing the reading packets, scheduling and advertising lectures and discussions, organizing meals with the speaker, and grading students’ entrance papers and final exams.

Having served as the student coordinator for the symposium for a year, I can say the job is truly a challenge, but one offering many rewards. This job, unlike others offered to undergraduate students in a university, gave me a tremendous opportunity to shape the course’s theme through the various readings chosen, the paper topics assigned, and the discussion established. To directly influence a course offered to 100 students incorporating faculty across the university was a challenging, demanding, and an especially rewarding experience.

In addition to the efforts of the student coordinator, many students in the honors program assist in the preparation for the symposium. First we recruit the honors office staff to the promoting and publicizing events, collecting student papers, and staffing during the weekend itself. Because honors staff members witness symposium preparation from the first stages to the last (and perhaps participated in symposia for many semesters), they can share their wisdom and experience about how the program will run best. Beyond the student staff, there are many additional opportunities for students outside the honors office to participate in symposium preparation.

About two years ago, it became apparent that something was missing from the symposium. In the Spring of 1997, we hosted dinosaur paleontologist Robert Bakker who discussed his book The Dinosaur Heresies. While many
A CALL FOR ARTICLES

A reminder that September 1 is the deadline for submission of articles for the “Science in Honors” theme issue of the Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council (Fall/Winter 2000-2001). We are interested in articles dealing with the natural sciences, mathematics and/or technology education as they are related to Honors courses or programs. We are interested in innovative ways of presenting these subjects in an Honors context. We also encourage articles on interdisciplinary efforts, including the integration of science, mathematics, and/or technology with disciplines in the arts and humanities or the social and behavioral sciences. Articles dealing with the design and implementation of laboratory and/or field-based projects, especially in the context of small Honors classes, are also welcome. Please do not submit articles reporting the results of original research in these fields or student honors projects and theses unless they relate directly to pedagogical matters in Honors education.

Submissions may be forwarded in hard copy, on disk, or as an email attachment to:

Editors
JNCHC
UAB Honors Program
HOH
1530 3rd Avenue South
Birmingham, AL 35294-4450
Phone: (205) 934-3228
email: adalong@uab.edu

students challenged Dr. Bakker’s controversial theories on dinosaurs, many others felt they lacked the necessary background in paleontology, or any science for that matter, to engage Bakker in an effective discussion of his ideas. Many students remained silent, intimidated by Dr. Bakker’s theories.

Once we recognized this problem, it seemed appropriate to make changes within the structure of the weekend to better facilitate a strong student voice. After all, the symposium, when it works best, represents an opportunity for students to challenge the speaker face-to-face, to question a primary source of information. In response, we created a student panel comprised of five to seven symposium students who could demonstrate a degree of specialization in the field. In the case of the Armstrong symposium, the panel consisted of students with a strong interest and some background in religion. This did not mean recruiting a panel of seven religion majors; rather, students on the panel had backgrounds in a range of subjects including philosophy, international affairs, political communications, religion, and English.

These students had to commit themselves to researching the topic in preparation for a panel discussion to take place on the final afternoon of the weekend. Panel members generally read all of the speaker’s published works between them, and attended weekly discussions during the weeks leading up to the event. For Dr. Grier and me, these weekly discussions became an integral part of our own preparation, since we were able to gauge students’ interests and reactions to the reading materials provided. Ultimately, the panel had its own impact in shaping the main themes of the weekend because this panel approached the topic with a level of confidence when addressing and challenging the speaker’s ideas.

In addition to their role in the panel discussion itself, panel members also chaperoned student lunches with the speaker. On Friday and Saturday, provided that the speaker agreed, we sponsored a lunch with the speaker that gives students an opportunity to interact with that speaker one-on-one. This all-day barrage of student discussion can be exhausting for a speaker, but is, more typically, highly rewarding by feedback from the students.

Through these descriptions of our symposium, it is clear that it offers students special access to exceptional scholars and writers. If students identify a point that need clarification, a theory that requires more evidence, or even just an idea that sparks a demand for further discussion, they are able to turn to the primary source, the invited speaker, for an answer. Few other university courses can offer such advantages.

The symposium serves many functions within our honors community. In his 1996 article outlining the course, Dr. Grier cites the symposium as “breaking down barriers between disciplines and encouraging participants to see the educational process as a whole.” Ultimately, the symposium encourages a strong, informed student voice. While it represents a unique way for students to fulfill their honors requirement, the symposium further provides students with an interactive approach to their education, applying their knowledge in practical discussions and encouraging fresh ideas.

Results of the 1999 election
Our new Vice President is Rosalie Otero. Our Executive Secretary Treasurer is Earl Brown, Jr.

New members of the Executive Committee: Faculty: Brian Adler, Jon Schlenker, Shirley Forbes Thomas, Jack White; Students: Kathy Rodgers, Blake Standish, Casey Tippens
Hello, I'm Aaron Bibb, and I'll be your National Honors Report student editor for the next couple years. Nice to meet you. I'm an English student at Tennessee Technological University. At the Orlando conference, I presented a paper on gender bias in language. If you were one of the eight or so people who was at our table, thanks for coming!

On a personal note:
Favorite music: rock, bluegrass, jazz, folk
Political philosophy: Je suis Marxiste, tendance Groucho. (I'm a Marxist, of the Groucho variety)

And now, down to business. My main duty as student editor is to edit student submissions to the National Honors Report (surprise). If you are a student interested in publishing an article pertaining to issues relevant to honors students, send it to me! E-mail is preferred — my address is [ajb5383@tntech.edu]. Microsoft Word format is best, but plain text will work, too. If you would rather send me a hard copy (typed and double-spaced only, please!), here’s my home address: Aaron Bibb/593 E. 3rd St./ Cookeville, TN 38501.

I'm really looking forward to working on the National Honors Report. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to send them to me at one of the above addresses. Thanks!

“Counteracting Political Apathy in Honors Students”
by Aaron Bibb, Tennessee Tech

Recently I was discussing the upcoming presidential election with a friend of mine. “I just don’t care who wins — it won’t make a difference,” he said. “They’re all crooked, and no matter whom you vote for, nothing is going to change.” While I understood where he was coming from, it was still disturbing to hear someone voice it. To many, corporate interests and political “debate” has been reduced to a competition for the best sound bite, this attitude is all too prevalent.

Most students that I have talked to about politics share similar views. They see politicians campaigning on trite slogans, with not much substance to their campaigns. They see Congress votes practically divided down party lines, and they see pork barrel politics determining the way their country is run.

They also see so much to change in their government, but what they don’t see is a way to make that change. It’s an old saw that “the worst cynic is a disillusioned idealist,” and that is true for much student apathy. Many students, however, are apathetic just because they have never really considered themselves as a part of the government of this country. I think that both of these kinds of apathy and cynicism can be counteracted, and I think that honors programs can have a large part in that.

One of the chief goals of honors programs, in my opinion, should be helping students develop into responsible, productive citizens. Combating this pervasive political apathy is essential to this goal — if students do not believe that they have any influence in the political process, our political system can only suffer for it. Whatever your views on the current state of political affairs are, it is only through participation in the system that it can be improved.

There is much that honors programs can do to fight this apathy. The single most important thing that can be done is to keep students informed of what’s going on around them. If you have some sort of official honors space, such as an honors lounge or office, set aside a bulletin board for posting of political information, such as newspaper articles, flyers and brochures of political organizations, and notifications of upcoming political events. Perhaps set this aside as space for your students to post information about political issues that are important to them. This would also be a good place to keep students informed about current legislation on the national, state, and local level.

Your honors program’s web page is also a good place to keep your students up to date. Consider adding a link to a page like The Electronic Policy Network [http://epn.org], which keeps track of current political events and issues. It describes its goal as “to provide trenchant policy analysis to the general public, so that citizens, students, legislators, advocacy groups, educators, and researchers may easily keep pace with the issues that matter.” It’s also important to let your students know who is representing them — consider linking to federal, state, and local governmental web pages (a list is included at the bottom of this article).

One way to get students interested in political issues is to sponsor debates. One or two debates a semester on the current political hot topics can give your honors students a
Conference Registration & Annual Dues

According to a recent decision by your executive committee, payment of your conference registration and annual dues can no longer be paid by a single payment.

Your conference registration form, as well as one for each registrant from your institution, should be sent to:

Convention Management Services, Ltd.
5814 York Road
Baltimore, MD 21212

Your annual dues should be sent to:

NCHC Headquarters
Box 7017, Radford University
Radford, VA 24142

good sense of what’s going on. Try to look at not just the national level, but at the state and local level — often issues of a more local nature will affect the students more directly. You can also sponsor a weekly or monthly discussion group — for each meeting, pick a topic for discussion, either a current issue or an historical one, and have each student research and examine an aspect of it before the meeting. For more literary students, a group could meet once a month and discuss a political science book.

Professors, especially in political science and history, will often jump at the chance to discuss politics and current events with bright, questioning students. Having knowledgeable faculty members working with your students can provide guidance and experience to their endeavors. Consider holding honors forums in which professors can give a presentation on political issues. If you form a book or discussion group, consider asking a faculty member to mentor the group.

Perhaps you could even create a one-time honors class to examine issues of politics and political activism. Here at Tennessee Technological University, our Honors Program recently concluded a very successful colloquium entitled “Social Movements and Political Activism.” For this class, students were required to work on an issue of their choice, in addition to examining past social and political movements. The students’ issues ranged from increasing university library funding to instituting a state income tax to prison reform. The students left the class with an enhanced sense of their own political power and the change they can help enact in the system.

Once your students are interested in the political process, try spreading beyond the honors program. Consider sponsoring campus-wide debates, discussions, and forums on political topics and upcoming elections. Organize voter registration drives, both on and off campus. Encourage your students to become involved with your university’s student government. But above all, just get people to care! Our system has flaws, but the beauty of the American system of government is that the people have the power to change what they see as wrong and unjust in that government. Idealism must be tempered with realism, of course — we must enter politics with realistic expectations. But the spirit of idealism and action must be cultivated in students if there is to be an escape from the current morass of cynicism and apathy.

Addresses of Federal and State Web Pages

The House of Representatives: http://www.house.gov/
The United States Senate: http://www.senate.gov/
The White House: http://www.whitehouse.gov/
The Federal Judicial Center: http://www.fjc.gov/
Your state government: http://www.state.XX.us/

(XX is your state’s two-letter postal abbreviation)
From Hampton University’s Honors Program
Freddye Davy, Director

I. “Serving to Learn / Learning to Serve”
by Derek Ham, Hampton University

I pulled up to the curb on a warm spring afternoon. For a few weeks now I had been coaching the kids’ soccer team of Newsome Park Apartments. I saw the children huddled in a small circle over in the open field and decided not to disturb them but observe from my car to see what they were up to. I suspected a game of some sort. I was wrong.

I watched what I thought was a rock being thrown in the air. I watched them toss it up time and time again. I saw them kicking it. I watched them beat it with a stick. I got out of the car when I saw them set it on fire and throw it smoking in the ditch. As I approached them, one little girl ran up to me. “Hey, coach. They out there kill’n a turtle.”

With another young woman, I took on the task of coaching this inner city soccer team thinking I would be teaching a skill; what I did not realize is that I would be transforming minds and changing hearts. Educating a child for a certain skill is in itself a difficult task, but it is nothing compared to the complexity of affecting the mind and heart. These, the mind and heart, are almost completely out of a coach’s control because affecting them is left up to the individual and his/her willingness to be receptive.

I realized that in order to understand the group, I had to understand their leaders, Hootie, Tash, Doughnut (these are not your everyday names, nor were they your everyday twelve-year-olds). Doughnut was the strongest leader, yet the most mischievous. Hootie was his sidekick, and Tash was the one who tried the hardest to do right. The other kids followed these three and looked to them for acceptance and leadership. Sometimes it felt like these kids had more power than I, the coach!

One practice I recall asking the kids to run laps. Doughnut looked at me and said, “We ain’t running no m-f laps.” I told him he was running extra for cursing and that anyone who did not run did not practice, and anyone who did not practice did not play in the game. To me the decision was elementary: run, practice, play. However, I watched the kids sit and ponder. Four kids sat out at that next game.

An interesting fact: the three with the most power were the three with the most skill. I believe skill had a direct relationship with the gain of power. I know that this is also true in today’s society. These young leaders already had obvious skill and developing intelligence; now if I could direct them on the path of positive leadership, then they would have a better chance to be effective as tomorrow’s leaders.

The next millennium will call for great leaders. An effective leader must not only have head smart but he or she must also have integrity along with acquired knowledge. I questioned my own leadership skills, “Am I the example of what I am teaching them to be?” I questioned this issue of integrity. It’s more than teaching the kids to guard their mouths against profanity or their bodies against lewd behavior. Everyone has been taught “Say no to drugs.” Not to demean this important slogan, but this high level of integrity must be deeper. Someone once said integrity is what you do when no one is around. I add to this integrity is what you do in the worse possible situations, and for my soccer team there were many opportunities for worst possible situations. We had nine losses, two ties, and zero wins.

No one likes to lose, but there is such a thing as good losers and bad losers, high integrity and low integrity. Teaching the children a simple thing as shaking the hand of your victorious opponent is a seed that will help bring fruit to other characteristics. In tomorrow’s world, complete success is not promised to all. I challenged them to give their all and in the end to keep their heads up, while not holding ill repute to the other team that succeeded above them. I then challenged them to take these principles with them off the field in all that they do. This is true, for me, integrity.

Secondly, I dealt with the issue of what it meant to be a team player. Soccer provided the ultimate example of team play versus individual play. Yet leadership requires individual action. To lead and at the same time be a member of a unit is a difficult task. Often my three stars individually tried to dribble the ball down the field in a hopeless attempt to score. I watched them run with their heads down focused on the ball, and though they ran hard and outmaneuvered some, eventually the ball was taken from them. It was not until they learned to look up as they dribbled the ball that the real progress took place. When opponents came their way, they were then able to see the open teammate to whom the ball could be passed. Passing the ball does not equate in the loss of leadership, and vice versa, having the ball at one’s feet does not mean one is leading the team. In real life, those who appear to be performing all the action are not necessarily the ones calling all the shots. It often takes a team to accomplish one task.

Finally, we worked on their abilities to listen and follow directions. In order to be able to give directions one must also know how to take them. Although I had leaders on the field, there was only one coach. Their ability to listen to the strategies I proposed and to carry them out successfully resulted in much progress. Parallel to this thought is a good leader’s walk through life. At some time in life everyone must
listen to direction or advice from a higher authority, a parent, a mentor, or a boss. The task is to listen, analyze the information, and then apply it.

The next millennium is approaching soon. It will need great men and women to be leaders. Those who are the best leaders must have integrity, work well with others, and know how to utilize good advice. To me, life is like a game of soccer. Live to the best and as hard as you can, work together as a team player with others, and listen to God, your coach.

II. “An Honors Experience with the Homeless”
by Gregory Pridgeon, II
Hampton University

Our Honors Service Learning Seminar requires each student to complete a service project. I decided to become involved with a program that fed and housed the homeless. The program is run by a consortium of local churches, all of which alternate the duties of housing and feeding on a weekly basis. Upon first volunteering to the program, I did not know what to expect. Though I had once worked with a soup kitchen back in junior high, I never really interacted with the people. My responsibilities then consisted of making sandwiches and scooping potato salad onto plates as fast as I could. I hoped to gain more than culinary knowledge from this new service project; my hopes were realized.

The first day that I arrived at the church, the church members and other helpers greeted me warmly. By observing the appearances and actions of the helpers, it was clear to me that many came from other churches. The church where we were working was predominately black, and I sensed a degree of uneasiness from some of the white volunteers. I sensed it in their over-willingness to please, and in the over-zealous apologies that they bestowed upon the black volunteers at the slightest mistake. In addition, almost all of the white workers worked together in the kitchen area. Although my first impression of the environment was one of warmth and acceptance, I became increasingly conscious of how xenophobic the people were.

I quickly forgot about the environment when it was time for us to start letting in the homeless to be served. I was assigned to running the bags that the homeless brought with them into the back room. Though it was busy work, I still had an opportunity to observe the people as they came in. Many were pictures of despair. When they first walked into the building, a stench dampened the air. The tattered clothing, which they layered upon their bodies, showed their lack of possessions, and their teeth and hair were evidence of their bodies’ neglect of proper hygiene. However, a few people seemed out of place.

There were two people in particular who caught my attention from the moment they walked into the building. One was a young man about 18, named Oscar, and the other a middle-aged man dressed in a painter’s outfit. Oscar caught my attention because we are about the same age. It was not the painter’s appearance that caught my attention, but more so his mind-set. When the painter approached the desk to register for the night, his first words were not “Hey, how you doin’,” or “My name is...” but “I only want to register for an hour so that I have enough time to take a shower to get back to work.” In a place where all of the people seemed to have been stripped of ambition, one should be able to understand why his words have such a lingering resonance. His face was one of the few that showed energy and strength. Though I did not have an opportunity to speak with him, he impressed me thoroughly. Oscar, on the other hand, left me feeling disappointed.

When I was not running bags, I took time out to speak to Oscar. Oscar is a very misled and disoriented young man. All of our conversations somehow led to him talking about how he is going to make some fast money. He tried to impress me with talk about things that he believed to be important, such as gangs, drugs, and money. I tried very hard to reach him in some way, and to show him that his current situation could be so much better than it is. Nevertheless, his warped perspective about life did not allow him to take my advice seriously. Thinking back upon our conversations, I wish that I could have connected with him better.

Reflecting upon the program, I wonder just how much the program is helping the homeless’ self-esteem. I know that having to rely upon others for shelter, food, and showers would not bolster my confidence, especially when those who are providing the care do not treat them as equals. On several occasions, I observed some of the volunteers making jokes and comments about the homeless in their presence. On one occasion, I overheard one of the volunteers say “I don’t want none of y’all walk’n out of here stink’n tomorrow.” This was said in front of a line of men waiting to register. After the volunteer left, one of the men angrily exclaimed, “We won’t have to if you’d give us a damn change uh clothes.” It was obvious that the volunteer’s words had offended him, and it was also obvious that the volunteer did not care that they did.

Over all, the project was a positive experience. I did feel that I made a contribution to the program, and I met many new interesting people. Mainly, I had an opportunity to become very close to the other two students from my program. J.P. and Olga were fun to work with, and they helped to make the work go by faster. We raced against
striving for success. For them early in their lives provides a foundation toward goals by laying the foundation we were in a foreign environment, we always had something to talk about.

Working with the homeless in a very close and personal manner allowed me to realize some things about myself. Most importantly, I was able to feel the weight of all of my blessings. Every torn piece of clothing I saw made my own seem more precious. The experience made me more conscious of how lucky I am to have parents who love me, a family that supports me, and a will to be the best that I can be.

III. “Helping Youth Prepare for the Challenges of the Next Millennium”
by Crisarla Houston, Hampton University

urges everyone to contribute to society in a meaningful way. With this new millennium, many are endeavoring to prepare the future leaders of the world. It takes a collaborative effort to arm young people with the artillery needed to combat the challenges ahead. Motivating young people to establish long-term goals for their success, cultivating their intellectual abilities, and encouraging them to take advantage of available opportunities are goals in preparing them for their future.

Booker T. Washington, Hampton’s most illustrious alumnus admonished that giving a man a fish feeds him for a day, but teaching him to fish, feeds him for a lifetime. Likewise, pushing children to work toward goals by laying the foundation for them early in their lives provides them with the ambition to continue striving for success.

As a candy striper at Texas Children’s Hospital, I worked with a few, are important areas that require much attention by school systems, especially for the African American population. It is imperative that we educate our children to know that a wealth of knowledge lies at their fingertips. Once we can create a thirst for learning, we must reinforce it constantly. Computer seminars, after-school library clubs, and science programs are useful for schools, churches, and community centers to teach some of the skills our students will need.

Sandria Tolliver, my fifth grade history teacher, often told the class that “An opportunity not taken is an opportunity lost.” Her aim was to compel the class to appreciate the learning opportunities that we would otherwise take for granted. Volunteering at the Rest Haven Nursing Home this school year and talking with the residents opened my eyes to various blessings that I had often unknowingly disregarded. Only by exploring all options and exposing ourselves to different experiences can we broaden our horizons. Young people, particularly those “at-risk,” must be allowed to witness the advantages of attending college, participating in foreign exchange programs, volunteering in their community, becoming fluent in other languages, involving themselves in extracurricular activities and undertaking new endeavors. It is our duty to steer them down the path of opportunity, and to constantly remind them that the sky is the limit.

“We are the world. We are the children. We are the ones who make a brighter day, so let’s start giving.” This gifted lyricist has epitomized a vital mission for mankind. Preparing the leaders of the future to face the challenges of this new millennium requires a joint effort to promote students to set goals, become educated, and take advantage of all the opportunities provided.
“So, You Want To Have A Student Publication?”
by Stephanie Lucas, James Madison University & intern for NHR, Spring 2000

Five Tips for Starting or Maintaining an Honors Newsletter or Creative Arts Journal

1. Keep the “student” in “student publications.”
This may sound obvious, but before trying to start a student publication — or when deciding whether to keep an existing one — it is important to evaluate what kind of student interest is realistically out there. Not just student interest in terms of people who want to read the publication, but student interest in terms of how many students believe this publication is important enough to put their time and effort into.

Do you have a core group of students willing to write articles, take pictures of honors events, and do graphic design for a newsletter? Do you have a core group of students willing to put out the call for submissions, come up with a theme, and judge entries for a creative arts journal? If your goal is to start a student-run publication, make sure you have such a core group so that the project doesn’t end up back in the lap of the honors director or assistant director. The core group doesn’t have to be huge (even one or two strong leaders can effectively organize the rest of the group) but without a certain level of interest and dedication among the rest of the group, even the best leader will face a frustrating, uphill battle. If you decide — even after active recruiting efforts — that sufficient interest doesn’t exist, it is an acceptable course of action to let your publication “hibernate” until some students come forward to run with it again.

2. Save, save...and save again.
Again, something that is seemingly obvious but absolutely crucial — both to meeting your deadlines and minimizing a huge source of frustration. Computers crash, servers go down unexpectedly, power goes off, viruses infect and disks occasionally go bad for no apparent reason...all reasons to keep current back-up copies of your publication. Sometimes, even well-intentioned computer maintenance done in a computer lab by the university’s computing services program can result in disaster, as we learned the hard way last fall at James Madison University. For three years, we had been saving Honors News, our student newsletter, on the hard drive of one of the computers in our honors computer lab. Just before our first deadline this fall, I left town for a week due to a family emergency. Prior to departing, I asked our assistant editor and design staff to complete the graphic design for six pages of our eight-page newsletter, which they did. They saved their work as usual, but at the end of the week, technicians from JMU’s Computing Services came in to reformat the hard drives on all of the computers in the lab. That’s reformatting as in erasing everything off the hard drive...including our newsletter.

I came back from an already stressful week to find the newsletter was gone. Because we were so far behind deadline, I had to redesign the entire newsletter myself in the space of two days and deal with the disappointment of the new members of our design staff whose work and effort had been wiped out. Being conscientious about saving work regularly and in more than one place (hard disk and floppy or ZIP disk) can prevent immeasurable aggravation and sometimes lengthy delays.

3. Think long-term about the staff.
Do you have a great editor? Good. Now think ahead to the day he or she will graduate...will your student publication falter when that person is gone? The time to start thinking about cultivating future leadership is right now. Take particular advantage of strong leaders to train new ones. After three years as Editor-in-Chief of Honors News, I spent this past fall working with an assistant editor to familiarize her with the various aspects of the production process. This spring she has officially taken over as Editor-in-Chief, and I am on staff as an adviser for her to call on when necessary. This kind of teaming could work just as effectively for other newsletter positions, such as graphic designers and photographers, or for staff working on a creative arts journal.

Recruitment is vital to attracting a strong staff. Certainly, the honors program should put out applications for new members at a regular time each year (for example, included in paperwork sent to students at the beginning of fall semester). Current staff members, however, should also network and keep their eyes open for other students whom they can bring in through personal invitation. Even if some students take small roles in the work, their experience and involvement will put them in a good position to take on a bigger role in the future.

4. Keep the lines of communication open — both ways.
Faculty have input and advice to offer the student staff, and so do students with their own observations to bring to the table. Faculty and students, naturally enough, often move within different academic and social circles, and combining your collective experiences can be a big help. For example, faculty have access to information that comes from the university but relates in some way to honors students; the honors program knows about coming events or new programs. All of this information can be passed on, especially to a newsletter staff who can share it with the rest of the program’s students.
Students, through their own networks, may come in contact with other students with the potential to contribute to an honors publication. Through her work on JMU’s yearbook, the former designer of our honors publication Fugue—*a journal of the arts* found a fellow yearbook staff member who could serve as a design editor for this year’s edition of *Fugue*. Likewise, members of the newsletter staff can figuratively keep their ear to the ground to keep up on different projects or activities honors students are involved in which might be of interest to the greater honors community.

Remember what unique role you are fulfilling.

Honors students are not often recognized within their larger college or university community for their achievements in honors, or other academic endeavors. Nor are they often provided an outlet with which to share their unique skills or talents. And it is an unfortunate reality that the stigma of being “too smart” can be attached to students who excel academically. Honors publications are a powerful vehicle for providing a voice and deserved recognition to these students. Using the medium of a newsletter to recognize honors students who are being inducted into an honors society or attending an undergraduate research conference, for example, is not about stroking egos, but about publicly commending their efforts in going above and beyond the academic status quo. Giving students the opportunity to contribute original work to a creative arts journal allows them an outlet to share their talents—whether it be in art, music, dance, or writing—with a community of fellow students that appreciates unique talents. And the opportunity to be on staff of either type of publication allows those students a stronger connection to program through their work, as well as the chance to hone editing and design skills.

Student publications play an important role in any honors program. They serve many functions: informing, being a forum, and providing opportunities for students to gain design and editorial experiences. Additionally, honors programs face a wide range of challenges, especially when it comes to building connections among their students. Student publications can be a valuable tool in helping to meet that need. I hope the information in this article can serve as a starting point for your own honors program as you create or fine-tune your student publications.

New Listserv for Two-Year Colleges

In response to a request at last year’s annual NCHC meeting, the Two-Year College Committee has initiated an e-mail discussion list for honors faculty and honors directors at two-year colleges. The discussion list (also known as a listserv) will allow community and junior college honors staff to more easily consult each other on matters particularly relevant to honors programs in the two-year college. Shared practices, requests for assistance, items of mutual interest, and professional networking are just a few of the topics that can be discussed on the listserv. This will be an unmoderated list, so messages will be posted automatically as they are received.

The name of the list is 2YRHONORS-L. The “-L” designates the type of address for the system administrator and is a necessary part of the address. The address is NOT case sensitive. The list manager will be Andy Geoghegan, Honors Director at Longview Community College in Lee’s Summit, Missouri. Computer time and resources are being donated by the Metropolitan Community Colleges in Kansas City, Missouri, Longview’s parent institution. Problems can be addressed by contacting Geoghegan at <geoghega@longview.cc.mo.us>.

To subscribe to the list, address an e-mail to <listproc@kcmetro.cc.mo.us>. You may leave the subject line blank. In the body of the message, type: subscribe <2yrhonors-L <your name>>. Make sure there is a space between “subscribe”, “2yrhonors-L”, and <your name>. For your name, enter your first and last name, separated by a space. An example of a complete subscription message would be: subscribe 2yrhonors-L Forrest Gump.

Linda Hasley, co-chair of the Two-Year College Committee, encourages all two-year college NCHC members to subscribe to the list as a means of improving communication with their colleagues at other two-year colleges.
any honors program is a tapestry. The students, faculty, courses, and events come together to form a pattern that is woven in and around the fabric of the university. At Florida Gulf Coast University, the honors program is deeply interwoven into warp and woof of the university curriculum, and is tied to it by common threads. These threads include student centered learning, critical thinking, community involvement, learning outside the classroom, an interdisciplinary approach, and a commitment to academic excellence.

Florida Gulf Coast University opened its doors in the fall of 1997 as the 10th university in the Florida state university system. Its unique mission and guiding principles drew faculty from all over the country to come to help build the university. At the heart of the university’s mission is FGCU’s commitment to undergraduate education. As stated in FGCU’s guiding principles, “student success is at the center of all University endeavors. The University is dedicated to the highest quality education that develops the whole person for success in life and work” (Florida Gulf Coast University catalogue, 1999-2000, page 5).

To achieve these goals, we have a dedicated, student-focused faculty and a low student to faculty ratio. Courses are designed to stress interdisciplinary and collaborative learning, in order to allow the students to “think in whole systems and to understand the interrelatedness of knowledge across disciplines” (p. 5). As FGCU recognizes that learning is not limited to the classroom, students are encouraged to develop their problem solving abilities, critical thinking skills, technological skills, and team work that will assist them in the world outside of the classroom.

Florida Gulf Coast University holds community involvement as one of its central values. All students need to recognize their responsibilities to the university, local, and global communities. The mission includes statements stressing the importance of community awareness and involvement. Therefore, the students complete service learning requirements, as “informed and engaged citizens are essential to the creation of a civil and sustainable society” (p. 5). Florida Gulf Coast University also has a strong environmental focus. Located between the Gulf of Mexico and Lake Okeechobee, in an area characterized by the dichotomy of rare natural beauty and incredible commercial expansion, FGCU is dedicated to its commitment to the environment and sustainability. In addition, FGCU believes in celebrating the diversity of our university community and the development of a culturally diverse perspective in our students.

In the spring of 1998, a group of faculty and administrators from FGCU sat down to discuss the formation of the University Honors Program. We realized our university’s mission included many principles that are characteristic of existing honors programs. We were in a unique position, in that our honors program would not need to go beyond the existing standards.

In the Florida Gulf Coast University Honors Program, we are dedicated to the development of the individual student. Maintaining academic success is important, but there’s much more to education, especially an honors education. We are working to create an academic community centered around the honors students of Florida Gulf Coast University. We hope that after participating in the honors program, the students not only will be extremely attractive to both professional schools and employers, but also will develop into lifelong lovers of learning and will continue their intellectual and creative development throughout their lives. To achieve these goals, our program stresses the importance of individual attention for students; faculty and community mentors; learning outside the classroom; promotion of activities which encourage critical thinking and self awareness in our students; and the blending of the academic with the experiential.

There are a number of elements of our program in particular that help to create this academic community: Honors Mentors, Honors Courses, and the Honors Salons.

Honors Mentors

Important threads in the honors fabric are the ties that bind our honors students with each other, with the faculty, and with people from the local and global communities. Honors students at FGCU choose a faculty mentor. Mentors act as students’ guides, consultants, and confidants. All students work with their mentors to outline academic and personal development plans that identify their goals and aspirations,
and then outlines strategies for achieving them. Mentors provide guidance to students to assist them in attaining their goals. Mentors may inform students of internship opportunities, supervise senior projects, or simply act as a sounding board and friend. In this way, there is the opportunity for students and faculty to learn and grow from each other.

Honors students are also encouraged to develop ties with mentors from the community. In our freshman honors course, students are set up with a community mentor in a field each student wants to pursue. This way, the students can begin to evaluate the profession to determine if it is one they wish to explore further. When they share their experiences in class, everyone benefits from hearing about others' projects.

Finally, our honors students act as mentors for each other. Upper-class honors students act as teaching assistants for several honors courses. We also set annual presentations for them to address the freshmen on such issues as stress, perfectionism, time management, leadership opportunities on campus, and how to apply for grants and scholarships.

**Honors Courses**

All FGCU students take a series of three university courses: "Styles and Ways of Learning," "Connections," "The University Colloquium." The honors students take specially designed honors sections in these courses. In addition to these honors sections, students in the honors program also take "Honors Readings." All of these courses go beyond the "what" and "how" to focus on the "why." Students learn by doing, and incorporate the curriculum through active processes.

"Honors Styles and Ways of Learning" is the first in a series of courses required of all students in the honors program. In this course, students will explore issues important in self-discovery and understanding, as well as students' role in the educational process. The course focuses on investigating learning styles, methods of inquiry, logic and writing a persuasive argument. The course also focuses on critical thinking, as well as "how to be in college." Students in the course will have the opportunity to explore course topics through a number of methods, including lectures, group projects, independent study, and community activities.

The second course, "Connections," is an honors section of a course which is the capstone interdisciplinary experience for general education. The "Connections" course summarizes major points in the bodies of knowledge acquired while participating in the General Education Program; illustrates the integration of the Program; and provides opportunities for the students to use the knowledge and skills gained from the General Education experience in an applied manner. This course involves research, application of theoretical models and utilization of learned skills. It allows the students to engage in research related to their majors and/or areas of interest" (catalogue page 133). Honors students, working collaboratively, identify a need in the honors program (i.e., honors scholarships), develop a plan to address the situation, and implement their plan, thus combining the academic with the experiential.

"University Colloquium" brings together honors students from all four colleges in a series of interdisciplinary learning experiences. These experiences are designed to address the ecological perspective outcome in relations to other university outcomes and guiding principles. Critical thinking and communication skills (are) enhanced through field trips, discussion, projects, and a portfolio...maintained by each student" (catalogue, page 134). Honors students in the Colloquium work together to complete a project related to the environment.

In "Honors Readings," the students read three books on a related topic, and discuss the works with faculty members. The books are a mix of fiction and nonfiction, and cover environmental, cultural, historical, legal, and ethical issues. Students meet weekly in groups of five with faculty who have a wide range of academic interests, including ecological biology, art, philosophy, communication, and English literature. This semester, the topic was "the real Florida" and the books were The Orchid Thief, Mean High Tide, and American Beach.

As with many of our honors activities, much learning took place outside of the classroom. One of the highlights of the course was when the authors of the books met with the students. Susan Orlean, author of The Orchid Thief, was scheduled to come in October. Unfortunately, her visit was canceled due to a "real Florida" event — Hurricane Irene. Later in the month, however, we were lucky to have James W. Hall, author of Mean High Tide, address the students and some selected members of the Fort Myers community. Mr. Hall gave a reading of his essays about Florida, and then the students had the opportunity to interact with the author. Meeting the author brought the intellectual context to life for the students — it reinforced that these are ideas that someone had and expressed, not books that mysteriously appear on a shelf.

A number of films about Florida were also shown during the semester. For one of the films, Ulee's Gold, the line producer, Stuart Lippee, came to address the students and answer questions regarding the film. Students
also had the opportunity to participate in community activities related to their readings. For example, some students went on a journey through the Fakahatchee swamp to experience first hand the trip that Susan Orlean made.

Honors Salons

"Honors Salons" also create ties that are woven between the students, faculty, and community, allowing a fabric of intellectual discourse and discovery to be created. During an Honors Salon, students, faculty, and community members gather in an informal environment to discuss topical issues of the day. People wander from group to group, from topic to topic, as they wish. No one lectures, as these are informal gatherings to share views and ideas. Students get the opportunity to talk to people with diverse experiences and different opinions. With activities like this, we hope to help students have the opportunity to think - critically - about diverse issues, to express their views, and to rationally evaluate not only the opinions of others, but their own as well.

Topics have included the role of the media and privacy issues; cloning and the limits and ethical constraints of science; the effectiveness of our legal system; the use and abuse of pharmaceuticals; the causes and perceptions of the apparent rise in violence in America; the role of the government in federally funding artistic endeavors; the two party system; and the changing legal and cultural status of tobacco. We have had a number of guests from the community, including the local news anchor; the editor of the local paper; a reproductive endocrinologist; a pharmacist; attorneys, judges, police officers; executive directors of arts councils, area artists and politicians.

The Goals of FGCU’s Honors Program

How do we measure the success of our honors program? How well have the goals of the honors program been incorporated into the fabric of the university? We state “We hope that after participating in the university honors program, the students not only will be extremely attractive to both professional schools and employers, but also will develop into lifelong lovers of learning and will have the tools to continue their intellectual and creative development throughout their lives.” Are our goals the same as our students’ goals?

When our entering students are asked what is the function of a university honors program?, many students reply that they are honors students because they “must always achieve” or so that they can be a success in their career after college. When they begin at Florida Gulf Coast University, it is rare that students can minimize the focus on their destination in order to appreciate the importance of the journey. We hope, however, that exposure to the principles of FGCU and the honors program, such as dedication to the community and an appreciation of diversity, as well as their experiences both in and out of the classroom, will show our students the joy of being involved and intellectually inspired.

Honors students at Florida Gulf Coast University excel in leadership, scholarship, and service. Our students lead the way in student governance, development of programs and organizations, and involvement with the university, local, and global communities. They do this while maintaining high GPAs, and in many cases, holding full time jobs and supporting families. When FGCU recognizes its top student of the year, the one who has demonstrated academic excellence, leadership, as well as dedication to the community, an honors student has been selected every time. Obviously, our honors students are major contributors in the development of this new university.

So how do we judge our success? As we are only at the end of our second year, our data is somewhat limited. Perhaps we could read student comments about the honors program: “the growth I have made both mentally and educationally throughout this course was the best thing” or “I got a lot out of the mentoring component. It provides a great deal of first hand experience in the field of our interest”. Perhaps we can look at the number of our honors students who have already had opportunities to explore their chosen fields with faculty and community mentors. Or perhaps we can see that our students’ success in getting admitted to graduate programs or finding positions in their chosen careers is due to the fact that they have earned more than a high GPA during their time at FGCU. Critical thinking skills, the ability to work well with others, and the ability to see the interconnectedness of different disciplines are all abilities that are valuable to graduate programs and employers. Based on these criteria, we already appear to be succeeding.

The fabric of Florida Gulf Coast University is based on academic excellence, student-focused faculty, interdisciplinary courses, community involvement, and a dedication to diversity. The honors program supports this mission, and adds its own threads into the pattern. Each honors student is a thread, bringing his or her different textures to the weave. The different honors experiences and principles are also laced into the cloth. We hope that the threads that compose the fabric of the honors program will weave into the tapestry of Florida Gulf Coast University, as a bright pattern of achievement, curiosity, and dedication; an image of excellence.
academic organization has become very fluid and, as with many other academic departments and colleges, Honors Programs seem to be seeking a more stable place in University structure. The attention NCHC is giving to such issues as Honors College and Honors as a discipline signifies this concern in very real terms. Sessions are being held concerning how to become a college and now the Report is seeking articles on Honors as a discipline. Attention to our mandate to provide for extraordinary education requires that we approach a place for Honors with considerable forethought. This paper makes a case that Honors is so special an idea that there is no ordinary place in University administration for Honors to reside.

There are a series of questions to consider: What body of knowledge allows Honors to claim disciplinary status? Given the broad intellectual mandate of University Honors, does the reduction of Honors to roughly the departmental level make sense? For that matter, what is the intellectual basis for the shift to an Honors College? Does it not reduce Honors relative to its obligations concerning the intellectual life of University? Does the University need a program at the university level that seeks to encourage academic and intellectual excellence in every nook and cranny of the institution? Has the need for a stable administrative place in university resulted in a loss of a clear vision of the important intellectual issues that create and sustain Honors?

Has the need for a stable administrative place in university resulted in a loss of a clear vision of the important intellectual issues that create and sustain Honors?

Because we consider Honors an adventure, our location in the University is ambiguous. We seek to be of the University but not always in the University. The reporting line is impossible to "fit into" the general rules for specialized degrees. Students in the program at Virginia Tech do more than regular students. They take more credit hours than they sometimes should and seek close involvement with faculty research projects. They do significant Honors work (including tutorials and research), write a thesis, and maintain a performance level of very high standards. Progress toward such a degree is crafted from the discourse between mentor(s) and student. It is impossible to define such work in the limiting, security-minded language of bureaucracy.

Living with Ambiguity

Because we consider Honors an adventure, our location in the University is ambiguous. We seek to be of the University but not always in the University. The reporting line is through the Associate Provost of Undergraduate Education. Why, you may ask, does the 16 "Basic Characteristics of a Fully-Developed Honors Program" state the Honors directors should report to the chief academic officer? Do we prefer this arrangement? The answer is simple. The Associate Provost is the most direct link to many of the other programs with which Honors is concerned. Even more, the Associate
Provost and the Honors director work within a non-bureaucratic environment of their own creation, not in the formal “line” structure of organizational life. In fact, the argument that Honors should be a College is to argue that it should be in the lines of authority defining the very bureaucracy so often debilitating to the student seeking freedom to expand upon the ordinary requirements for a degree. Honors is reduced to the only non-specialized college amongst a group of deans with the power that comes from representing specialized intellectual interests.

The total space for Honors includes six offices, a workroom, a small conference room, a large conference room, an even larger meeting room, a very large living room, and a hall that will hold 180 people for lectures, 100 people for dinner. The Hall contains a working fireplace and a beamed ceiling that soars over twenty feet above the floor. The space speaks to the same excellence we insist upon in the academic work of Honors.

Intellectually speaking, the engagement of Honors with the community of scholars places our students in relationships with the faculty almost of Arts and Sciences and Engineering formed a partnership with Honors to create a special Honors community. The Deans of the two colleges pay Honors a certain amount for each student they enroll in the community. These payments make it possible for Honors to provide special programs for the community and small additional scholarships for the students. Is this Honors or Arts and Sciences and Engineering? If we were to seriously debate that issue, we would be in the planning stage even now, rather over one-half year into the community.

Simply put, the ambiguity of the Community’s location and ownership of work that rightly belongs to the community of scholars permits us greater freedom of action than simply following the lines of bureaucratic authority. Thus, when the students in the community wish to explore a particular topic, they simply ask faculty experts to join the community in conversation. They have not been turned down yet.

I have been reading on the Honors listserv of late about charging students "Honors fees.” I am opposed to such a mechanism of funding. The funding of Honors should not resemble that of a club. Location in the community of scholars as opposed to the University bureaucracy permits Honors to take the “high road” on almost every issue, thus deans are willing to assist in the funding of Honors projects from their reserves. This would not have happened had Honors been a college competing for these funds with other deans. Our ambiguous location in the hierarchy permits a working together attitude rather than competing for resources.

The ambiguity extends to the relationship between Honors and the students seeking a superior education. We provide for three different Honors degrees in order to contend with the diversity of intellectual needs of students in the University. While we maintain an application process and a
large database on students participating in the program, one does not “join” Honors or become a “member” of the Honors Program. Rather, the students do Honors. That is, to maintain the attention of the Honors staff, a student must be actively participating in the extraordinary work expected. Our database does not act as a roll and students move on and off the database depending upon their some. Honors at Tech is a continuous adventure, not a secure place in which to hide from the larger University community.

The one group in the university that has a secure, non-ambiguous relationship with Honors is the faculty. Honors is “of the faculty.” The faculty association charged with the oversight of Honors is the Academy of Teaching Excellence. These people — all of whom have gained tenure through research and, at the same time, won major teaching awards — thus have responsibilities to Honors very seriously indeed. Through the leadership efforts of these eighty or so faculty members, Honors can rely on the participation of over three hundred faculty a year to mentor research; mentor teaching; teach classes, seminars, and colloquia; serve on administrative and scholarship committees, and to assume responsibilities for areas of Honors work. For the faculty, Honors is clearly a labor of love and there is little ambiguity in such efforts.

Making Ambiguity Work

There are six dimensions essential for such an Honors Program. While this is considerably fewer than the sixteen characteristics set forth by the NCHC, they will serve the students and the faculty well. As you will see, these dimensions are very different from the NCHC standards. NCHC provided a list of essentially bureaucratic criteria and they are useful. Here we list the dimensions of the participation in the community of scholars and, following the theme of ambiguity, these dimensions all engage contradiction.

(1) The first conundrum: do we recruit honors students or make honors students? Daily we decide who is Honors and who is not. If the burden does not weigh heavily on you, don’t be in Honors. Is it selection or is it education? The answer: it is both. We recruit some students where our biggest problem is to stay out of their way and offer the occasional assist. Still others need their intellectual prowess verified or legitimized and require considerable discussion concerning their talents and their best use. The trick is to see beyond both bravado and shyness (they sometimes look the same). Once students are up and running, pointing them to quality professors is the core of our job. Developing an exciting slate of Honors courses, seminars, colloquia, and tutorials is our most effective way of making these introductions.

(2) Honors must be a place of celebrating the ancient traditions of knowledge as well as seeking innovations dictated by new knowledge. Knowing and ways of knowing contain traditions — the experimental technique, the aesthetic, parsimony, survey and field studies, and the like. There is the almost sacred tradition of grounding what we learn in what we know. What do we keep and what do we throw away? Yet, the dawn of the information age is shattering long held traditions. Honors must confront this contentious duality directly. Honors must seek to teach that the well-ordered question lasts forever while most of our answers are transitory. For students seeking (or worse, believing they know) the “truth,” this is a tough lesson.

(3) Honors must constantly monitor and moderate a world where the order (discipline) to pursue knowledge can only be accomplished where people are free to begin and continue the journey. There is a dynamic tension between freedom and order that produces new knowledge, but its cost is great. In the play, Inherit the Wind, Henry Drummond (Clarence Darrow) defending the idea of all new ideas says, “Yes, men can fly, but the birds will lose their wonder and the clouds will smell of gasoline.” The judgment to make choices concerning freedom and order lies at the very core of what we are and, even more, what we do. Appreciation of this contradiction is the very heart of a successful Honors education.

(4) Honors defines the relationship between individual identity and the bonding required of citizenship. Our students must meet the moral requirement that they advance their talents as far as strength and courage will permit. To do so requires that they take more in resources than permitted many students: priority registration, graduate privileges in the library, enhanced

The privilege of serving Honors is the right to make the trip as a companion to a number of excellent students.
access to the faculty, and a special staff creating programs for Honors students, among others. If students think of these resources as privileges, then the relationship between individual and community finds resolution in the misfortune of an unearned privilege. If students see the resource as a tool needed to secure an education commiserate with their talent and understands the obligation to be a servant-leader in the community, then the moral issue is resolved as good citizenship. Such exploration of the nature of talent and its uses is essential.

(5) Honors is elitist in an egalitarian environment. A good friend of Virginia Tech Honors (a Republican) constantly derides my profoundly Democratic allegiance by commenting on my position in the “most elitist organization in the University.” It is true and no amount of declaration of good intent can make Honors non-elitist. Participation is restricted and participants gain significant privilege not available to other students. I would argue that the most elitist behavior we exhibit is when we argue we are not elitist. Even further, we know that leadership in society is elitist. If we pretend not to be what we are, where do the leaders (our students) learn the moral basis of leadership? Given the trust to assist in the education of people with high talent, to treat our charge as ordinary is disingenuous. And I say this even as the widening of opportunity between Honors and other students bothers this old civil rights advocate on late nights when I cannot sleep. Honors is about living in a world where the moral nature of what we do requires, at a minimum, working to one’s talents.

(6) Most important, Honors must integrate itself into the very fabric of the university it serves even as it resides outside the normal administrative structure. At Virginia Tech, this means that Honors serves the larger interests of the University. We have assisted in the creation of the University Writing Program, the Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Education, the Freshman Year Experience, the Residential Leadership Program, the Judaic Studies Center, and the Arts and Sciences/Engineering Honors Residential Community.

Lest you think we are timid about seeking advantage for students in Honors, we are beginning to consider the creation of independent residential colleges for the students in University Honors. Rather than becoming a college, we could look forward to the day when several residential colleges provide the organizational structure of Honors. “Of” the university but not “in” the university. The responsibility of such a location requires leadership of a special sort. It is a participatory form of leadership shared by all that relate to University Honors. It must be based in the ambiguity of preservation and innovation, of maintaining order while permitting freedom of exploration; it must permit expression of high talent as integral to a larger community. It must recruit the best to serve the interests of all and weave the differences into a common fabric. Honors cannot be “directed” or “managed” in the usual manner or with the common rules of administration. The job of the Honors staff is to legitimize the servant-leadership of students and faculty willing to risk the journey.

A Place in the Sun
Restlessness pervades the national Honors community at the moment. In the best American tradition, the place we are standing no longer satisfies and as with the pioneers, we look to another place. Many sessions devoted to whether Honors should be a college or not are extant in the land. Now we approach the question about Honors as a discipline, a notion with which I most profoundly disagree. I also have serious questions about an Honors College. I have even grown to dislike the name “Honors Program” as it suggests yet another place in the bureaucracy. At Virginia Tech, we have begun to refer to Honors as simply University Honors—signifying the taking of a long and arduous journey. We have also grown to love that part of the American spirit that can find no permanent home. It is as if excellence is an elusive ideal requiring that we wander about the landscape of university encouraging and cajoling all to try for more.

Honors is universal, reaching into every nook and cranny of human knowledge for its existence. Its purpose is not only to insure excellence in a narrow band of what we know, but also rather to seek that which is excellent in all that we know. Yet, despite such a glorious mission, when we begin to discuss the administration of Honors education, we are infected with the American version of university organization. Better we take as part of our individual and collective lives the disquiet that the pursuit of significance and excellence seems so often to require and keep our relationship to the administrative structure of university ambiguous. Should we do this, we participate with our students in the adventure that defines Honors and demonstrate the imagination to create an education second to none.
Honors Programs and Colleges come in almost as many different sizes and shapes as the people who manage honors on campuses across the country. This variety can be both enlightening and baffling. Enlightenment happens frequently at conferences during conversations with colleagues who have devised such clever ways of enhancing the education of students on their campuses. Bafflement comes indirectly from my fascination with numbers. I love to ask people quantitative questions about honors on their campus. Sometimes the questions I ask are misinterpreted or even incomprehensible because of structural differences in the way honors is done on my campus compared to the way it is done on the campus of the person being queried. Other times, the answers are misunderstood. And every now and then, but surprisingly rarely, the question and the answer both make sense.

These contextual differences make it difficult to quantitatively compare honors at one campus with honors on another campus. I am usually not clever enough to recognize that miscommunication is going on in real time during a conversation. It is only later, if at all, some red flag goes up alerting me to the possibility that the conversation was about oranges and apples instead of oranges. Understanding these contextual differences sheds useful light on the universality or lack thereof of the numbers bandied about at honors conferences. For example, one campus may want to have the maximum number of students take at least one honors course while another campus may want the students who participate in honors to have an intensive and comprehensive education in honors. Both goals are worthy and they are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but it's easy to imagine it being easier for students to move into and out of honors in the first instance than in the second.

The number of students, as an absolute number or as a percent of the student body, enrolled in honors ought to be higher at the first school than the second. On the other hand, the number of students who “graduate” with honors or the average number of honors courses per honors participant would be expected to be higher at the second campus than it is at the first. So even as simple a question as “how many students are participating in honors?” can be misleading if asked with no understanding of context. This article suggests a variety of ways of measuring the enterprise of honors and attempts to explicitly state some of the biases inherent in each mode of counting.

Numbers can be used to help grasp the role and impact of honors on a given campus or can be used, but with much caution, to compare honors at one campus with honors on another campus. I have focused on the absolute magnitude of numbers as opposed to looking at percent changes or comparing honors numbers to similar institutional numbers such as the total number of undergraduates or credits or graduates at a particular institution. Also numbers can be used to help understand a situation or can be used to obscure and confuse. Whatever a person’s underlying motive, knowing what the numbers actually mean is a valuable step toward successfully meeting your goal.

The most obvious way of measuring honors on a campus is to count the number of students participating. As easy as that may sound, even this number is fraught with uncertainty.

The most obvious way of measuring honors on a campus is to count the number of students participating. As easy as that may sound, even this number is fraught with uncertainty. The number I used this fall to answer this question was 526. That number comes from the database we maintain of students purportedly active in honors at the start of fall semester. At UNLV, active is loosely defined as students who still plan to graduate from the Honors College and includes students who may not be taking an honors course during a given semester.

Although we attempt to delete and add students on a regular basis, at any given moment that count will be off and invariably high. The reason is obvious. Students need to be coded into the computer to take an honors course. Hence it easy to keep track of new students. Students who were participants but have decided to abandon honors are less likely to come by to have the coding removed. Hence the number of active students is going to be an approximation that is high at any given moment. My guess is that it is something like 5% high. Consequently I do not like to use this number, even though it is the one that is most easily understood by my administration.

Quantities that are more reliable for making semester-to-semester comparisons are the number of students enrolled in, the number of credits generated by, or the Full-Time-Equivalents (FTE’s) produced by honors courses in a given term. These quantities can be read off enrollment data in the Student Information System and are better for making semester-to-semester comparisons. Unfortunately there is no simple relationship between any of these numbers and the actual number of people participating in honors during a
given semester. At UNLV, students are not required to take an honors course each semester but many students take more than one honors course in a given semester. This is especially true of freshmen during their first semester when they typically take three honors courses. At UNLV, the number of students enrolled in honors courses is always higher than the number of students participating in honors. In fall of 1999, 800 students were enrolled in honors courses compared to the inherently high estimate of 526 students participating in honors. The difference is less pronounced in the spring — 612 students enrolled in honors courses in spring 2000 — because freshmen attrition lowers the proportion of freshmen to the total number of active students, and the remaining freshmen usually take fewer honors courses.

This presents a dilemma to the quantitatively literate and honest honors administrator. The number that most clearly speaks to the size of the honors enterprise on a campus is the number of currently active students. (I can easily imagine situations where the total number of undergraduates currently enrolled at the institution often and accurate are my attempts at bringing that database up-to-date. (The more lax I am about removing students who appear to be inactive, the larger and less accurate the number becomes.) The numbers that can be measured with some accuracy in a reproducible fashion; for example, total student enrollment in honors courses or credits or FTE’s generated by those students measure honors in a less transparent fashion.

The number of honors courses being offered per semester is also a plausible way to denote the changing impact of honors on a given campus. Since all honors courses on our campus are prefixed HON, this is an easy quantity to identify. It happens to be one that I talk about sometimes but have not tabulated. It is probably the most visible measure of honors on our campus. Anyone can count the number of honors courses in the class schedules published every semester. My guess is that there is not a single person on campus, me included, who actually does that!

All of these numbers measure the instantaneous impact of honors on campus. Any or all of which can be large and impressive, even if few equivalent. Of course this introduces a whole new set of contextual variables since “graduation with honors” means different things on different campuses. It is more intensive in some places and correspondingly less intensive other places. Although the number of graduates is a known number, it is typically not the number that most of us want to have used to demarcate the size of the honors enterprise on our campuses. The reason for this is obvious: the number is smaller than the earlier measures and, on most campuses, represents a surprisingly and possibly even embarrassingly tiny fraction of the number used to characterize the scale of honors at an institution.

At UNLV, even the number of graduates can be a little deceptive as an honest measure of success in honors. Most of the students participating in honors at UNLV join the program out of high school but students can join after enrolling at UNLV or when transferring in from another school. The number used to quantify the size of each year’s entering class is the total of entering freshmen. This number is used because it allows for accurate and useful year-to-year comparisons. The number of graduates includes students who have met the requirements for graduating with honors regardless of when they joined the Honors College. Consequently, comparing the number of graduates with the size of the entering class four years before, is to some degree comparing apples to oranges since some sizeable fraction of the graduates are not represented in any of the entering freshmen cohorts. For example, seven of the forty-three graduates of the HC during the 1998-1999 year fell into the uncounted category. Even with these caveats, graduates are an excellent way of monitoring the impact of honors on a given campus.

Persistence can also be measured by the average number of honors credits taken by students who participate in

The number that most clearly speaks to the size of the honors enterprise on a campus is the number of currently active students.

who have taken one or more honors courses would be a valid alternative number particularly as a counterpoint to the number of currently active students. Although identifying all the students who have taken or are taking an honors course would be difficult if not impossible.) The number of students in honors at a given moment, especially in large programs, changes from day-to-day and cannot be known accurately. To compound the confusion, the number reflecting the students currently active in honors is dependent on how students actually take more than one or two honors courses. However, the quality of experience of students participating in honors may not be reflected by the quantity of students enrolled in honors at any given moment.

A different set of measures that quantify student persistence in honors, and correlate to student satisfaction at least indirectly, can also be used to describe the size of an honors enterprise. The most obvious number in this category is graduates who complete an honors degree, certificate, or the
honors. The number that I can readily produce is the average for students who have graduated from the HC which happens to be 40 credits. Since this number is substantially higher than the minimum number needed to graduate, 30, it can be inferred that students are not setting their collective sights on the minimum as a way to avoid taking extra honors courses. Hence this number can also be used to indicate, at least covertly, student satisfaction.

There are many other ways to quantify honors. The examples above obviously represent only a small sample of the possibilities. Notice I avoided all numbers that have dollar signs associated with them. Although this is at least partially due to my aversion to such numbers, it is also due to the inherent difficulty in comparing budgets for honors on different campuses. There are a whole different set of structural problems that arise when trying to compare honors budgets across institutions. Marrying those structural differences to the ones that arise in comparing students, credits, graduates, FTE's etc. quickly dissipates any opportunity for meaningful comparisons.

The following three numbers, taken together, give a much more complete picture of honors than any one of them alone would. The trinity consists of (a) the number of students currently active in honors (a rough but valuable number); (b) the number of credits generated by students enrolled in honors courses in a given semester; and (c) the number of graduates in a given year.

The first number, because it fluctuates almost daily, is the least reproducible. But its value lies in the fact that it is probably the most obvious measure and has immediate cogency.

The second number is a more accurate measure of the instantaneous impact of honors on a given campus. If the number of students enrolled in honors courses is substantially smaller than the number that are supposedly participating, there may be a problem with how the first number is being calculated. Hence the second number is a reality check on the first number.

The number of graduates, the third number, speaks to the persistence of students and the value they put on earning an honors degree. Because of structural differences in honors, this particular set of numbers may not be the appropriate set for assessing the vitality and strength of honors on all campuses. On the other hand, I do think it is important that some set of numbers measuring corresponding quantities be found that indicate the impact of honors on a campus.

Accountability and assessment questions are going to be asked with more and more frequency and urgency. Having historical quantitative data that measure things that make contextual sense on a particular campus is a valuable way of influencing both the direction and tone of discussions about the role and value of honors. Numbers can be very valuable allies in understanding, developing, and espousing the roll of honors on campus. 

To Contributors

Deadlines for material are July 10, Nov. 10, Feb. 10, and May 10. Please send disks, IBM compatible (no MAC- formatted disks), with a minimum of format codes, if possible. "Indent First Line" on one file messed up a text file (with 18 articles) going to layout. Sending hard copy with your disk is always a good idea. You can also send via email <mcbrown@runet.edu> but send hard copy as well, just in case.
Shared Conversations

On Issues of Admission and Graduation Criteria

Of the 1217 NCHC members, only 507 belong to the NCHC listserv. Our listserv provides an easy way for newcomers (and others) in honors to ask questions and to receive advice from many sources. Often these questions provoke much discussion.

NCHC members know by now that the average honors director remains in that position only about two-and-a-half years. So the listserv contains many FAQs (or Frequently Asked Questions). One question on admission to honors, for example, prompts many responses. What follows is a sampling of responses to this question, with full names added and, where available, titles and institutions. Members can use their notebooks with yearly updates of addresses, institutions and e-mails, if access is available.

To join the honors listserv, email <listserv@hermes.circ.gwu.edu> with the command <sub honors your name here>. To post to the listserv after subscribing, mail your message to <honors@hermes.circ.gwu.edu>.

— M. Brown

“We have an honors program that has been running for two years now. When it was established, the GPA requirement for graduating in the honors program was set at 3.5 (including 3.2 in honors courses). I am beginning to think that this is too high. I would like to know what GPA is used by other programs.”

— from Patricia Odell

Bryant College

It is the STUDENTS who make an honors program live up to its name, and great students are attracted to areas of high standards, and then feed off of one another in classes full of kindred spirits.

“I suspect the exact number is not necessarily so important, but rather that that number/goal is set sufficiently high to identify the top ~ 10% of the graduating class. With grade inflation where it is [the all-campus undergraduate GPA average here is perilously close to ~ 2.8], an average of >3.5 clearly still identifies superior achievement. That’s what honors is about ... creating, supporting, and rewarding superior achievement.”

— from Chuck Barnes
Professor of Geology
Northern Arizona University
New Century Honors Program

“Our Honors Program has a 3.5 GPA requirement. That means that anybody who graduates from the Honors Program receives academic honors as well. It didn’t make sense to us to have Honors students not even qualifying for the lowest rank in academic honors.”

— from Kent Anderson
Director, Honors Program
Clarke College

“Indiana University has had a flexible admissions policy for about a quarter of a century. We admit students based on SATs and class rank. But we also admit them by petition (which must include at least one letter of recommendation from an English teacher) and any time after the first semester if they have a 3.5 or above. In the petition process, we also look at the number of academic units and the quality of the courses students take. Students who not only take honors, AP, or international baccalaureate courses receive better ratings than students who enroll in easier courses. We also accept recommendations from our Admissions officers, especially concerning students from private high schools or high schools that do not rank. We screen for these students as well.

“In the mid eighties, we attempted to do a series of statistical studies to see if there were correlations between success in college and class standing, grade point average, SAT or ACT, and academic units (number of academic courses taken in high school). Unfortunately, because the sample was very homogeneous, the results were, in my view, open to question. But there was a very strong correlation between higher SATs and university grade point average. A number of exceptions to the rule were, of course, part of the equation.”

— from Julia Bondanella
Professor of Italian
Indiana University
President, NCHC (1994)
Admissions, continued

“Kent and Chuck articulate for all of us our investment in the model of honors as superior academic achievement. I don’t think any of us would argue differently. But I wonder if the conversation will allow for the view that honors is about much more than GPAs or SAT scores. As we glance through electronic pages and pages of web sites for honors programs in the NCHC web links to such pages, we might notice that many of us also promote creativity, risk-taking, challenge, independence, etc. I wonder if such qualities are defined only through high academic scores.

“Also, has anyone else had the experience of sitting through graduation and noticing that some of the students who earn academic honors are not necessarily the same students whom we would have identified as the student who is willing to take intellectual and personal risks, willing to take on unique or additional challenges, willing to think critically and learn liberally? They have earned the grade perhaps by doing what they’ve been told: figuring out the system, staying squeaky clean in work habits, but they lack luster and tolerance for the wildness of learning (as opposed to being efficient with knowledge), lack eccentric imagination.

“I am a strong advocate of academic excellence and rigorous standards, and our GPA requirement is high for our college, but given the choice between high GPAs with inert minds and the occasional lower GPAs with alert, alive, curious intellects and imaginations, just throw me in the briar patch with the latter. I confess to an overly simplistic binary opposition, but what do the rest of you think?”

— from John Zubizarreta
Director of Honors & Faculty Development
Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Columbia College (SC)

“Well said!
“We all know that numerical scores miss, or at least often miss, the wonderfully mixed eclectic and idiosyncratic folks who sometimes make our world so much fun. I’m confident that some students who ‘don’t test well’ would benefit enormously from the honors experience. By no means do all grade-hounding ‘nerds’ do well in an honors program; some find the requirement of truly independent thinking and wide-ranging classroom discussion and criticism of ideas really scary! They leave!

“Yet my 30-year teaching experience, some of it in the usual discussion/seminar-based honors classes, where the instructor often hasn’t a clue :-) where things are heading many days, is that this kind of highly interactive and informal learning community requires that most of the class be made up of confident and (demonstrably) bright souls. They’re the ones that challenge us every day, pin us to the wall with their intellectual firepower and think ‘beyond the box.’ They’re the ones that make honors instruction the wonderfully exciting, intellectually charged experience it can be/often is.

“My teaching experience is that the commitment to self-discipline—that allows many of our honors students to double-major, work 20 hours a week, and volunteer at any of hundreds of on-and-off-campus activities, and look for more—is closely, but not uniformly, associated with high national test scores, etc.

“I wouldn’t dream of arguing that selection by the numbers is a perfect system; I just don’t know of any other that will resist the ‘piranha parents’ that lurk behind many [slightly-less-demonstrably] high-achieving souls.

“The level of creativity of our honors students is truly mind expanding; the current editor of our literary journal is a major in vocal performance and also is bilingual at the highest fluency level. A recent graduate was a physics major with a NASA fellowship research on spacetwalking gravity who was invited by NASA to do laboratory work on the NASA Boeing 707 (affectionately known as the ‘vomit comet’); he also composed glorious, glorious choral music in the style of Gershwin “on the side.” Neither of these students are particularly unusual in an honors program; they love the rough and tumble of the brier patch. They’ll make it a home!

— from Chuck Barnes

“I would love to agree with John Zubizarreta, and on a certain philosophical level, I do agree. It would be nothing less than divine to have a program in which everyone associated with it could dance barefoot through the fertile grassy mind-fields of the daring students John describes. Alas, this is too often a world of socks and shoes and boots.....

“Being a large program at a fairly large university, we employ a ‘by the numbers’ approach to freshman admission. We are trying to change to a more rational and more equitable set of numbers, but they still will be numbers. Is this because we believe the new numbers will do a better job of differentiating the life-of-the-mind types from the risk-adverse, grade-grubbing negotiators of safe waters? Actually, yes, but only in part. I shall argue in an NCHC conference session in Washington [October 18-22, 2000], the numbers serve a legitimate and not necessarily ulterior purpose in defining a program that delivers what it promises within the context of finite resources. Without such delimiters, programs risk losing their integrity, and as a result, all students, both the ‘real’ honors students we treasure and those with high GPA’s but impoverished imaginations, will be cheated.”

— from Steve Wainscott
Director, Honors Program
Clemson University
Executive Committee, NCHC (2000 - 2002)
Admissions, continued

“Although there are strong arguments on both sides of the scores/grades debate, I want to speak on the side of my esteemed colleague from South Carolina, John Zubizarreta. Although he teaches at a small college (right, John?) and I at a large university, his experience and mine are very similar.

“For 17 years now, the Honors Program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham has considered ACT and GPA as part but not all of our admissions criteria. My experience tells me that scores and grades do not always identify the best students. One example: One of our most distinguished alumni came into our program with an 18 ACT (she had a hard time getting into UAB and did so only probationally). She subsequently got an NSF Fellowship for doctoral work at CUNY, discovered a new species of chimpanzee in Cameroon (published in Nature and in the NYTimes), and is starting a post-doc at NIH. I could give lots of other examples.

“About 15% of the students we admit are ‘high-risk’ but indicate in an interview that they are smart, energetic, motivated, and all that we look for in honors classrooms. I’ve kept statistics on their success over the years, and it’s about the same as 30+ ACT students in GPA, graduation rates, and post-baccalaureate careers.

“And the advantages are enormous. We get older students, African-American students, rural students, inner-city students and students with special talents that are crucial to the quality of education in our honors program.

“Many of you may have seen the front-page article in the NYTimes two or three Sundays ago about the admissions procedures of Ivy League schools that also consider factors other than grades and scores, sometimes rejecting high scorers for students whose backgrounds will bring important perspectives to the academic community. I (obviously) thought it was a fabulous article.

“Trying to justify decisions to disappointed students and parents (we reject 50-75 students per year, some with 32+ ACT) is no doubt harder when you can’t just point to a quantitative cut-off. (We often have 5-10 candidates from the same high school, and it sometimes happens that we reject a high-scoring student and accept one with much lower numbers.) But I may spend a maximum of three or four hours a year explaining (in detail) why a particular decision was made... not a major sacrifice of my time.

“My point here is that, if you’ve never tried opening up admissions a bit, it’s worth a shot. If you indicate in your written materials that a student who doesn’t meet minimum numerical requirements can submit an essay requesting admission and be considered for an interview, you may find some spectacular students at your doorstep. I doubt you will be overwhelmed; bad or mediocre or unmotivated students rarely take the initiative to apply for honors.

“If there is any director out there who has tried providing access to students in the way I just described and has regretted it, please speak (write) up. I’ve never met one.

“One final remark inspired by the comments of another highly esteemed colleague from the South, Steve Wainscott: in our alumni surveys, the single factor that our graduates most appreciate in their remembrances of our program is its diversity. And the super-high-achievers are the MOST appreciative of this feature; they say it’s invaluable to their careers in medicine, law, business, academia, etc., as well as to their personal lives. As long as you have high and consistent standards for graduating from a program, I can’t see that you run any risk of decreased integrity by taking risks in admissions.”

“I stand with John Zubizarreta and Ada Long. And I suggest that the ‘membership’ concept may be the problem. Given all of our experience with the inexact science (or art) of selecting students for Honors, shouldn’t we consider that Honors has a permeable perimeter, through which students flow in and out as their (and our) judgments of their honors qualifications change. By that I mean that Honors might be considered an array of opportunities for the unusually bright and curious; and what harm is there in letting a wannabe try an honors course to discover the fit. The pattern is that of listing among the criteria for admission into a course is ‘or permission of instructor.’

“The ‘program’ is the array of courses, seminars, tutorials, independent study, activities, etc. The Honors community becomes just that, not by an ‘in-or-out’ membership pattern but by the natural proclivity of students to discover kindred spirits and to group themselves. Like Honors Housing where we certainly don’t move someone out because he or she fails to maintain the academic requirements, we recognize that students will move themselves along when they find that they would feel more at home elsewhere.

“Can we live with the ambiguity of it? Probably — most of us.”

Cheers.

— from Grey Austin
Ohio State University (retired)
President, NCHC (1982)
Editor, NHR (Winter 1988 - Winter 1993)

“Ada’s and Grey’s thoughts remind me of two things I’ve learned from my association with NCHC: (1) so many of us are esteemed or at least esteemable, (2) My, how we so often end up violently agreeing with one another!

“It would be awfully irresponsible, even immoral, for an honors program to deny participation to students who truly want it. This is why our admission
Admissions, continued

process is supplemented by a ‘petition’ for students who might miss the mark on the SAT, GPA, etc. The petition includes a questionnaire that serves as an attitude check of sorts, and as a way to discover indicators of success that may be disguised by SATs and the like. We also ask for fresh, original letters of recommendation from teachers and high school guidance counselors. In reviewing petitions, we try to find reasons to say yes rather than no. The problem of course is in distinguishing the petitioners who really want it from those who desire the prestige of Honors but lack the virtues that John, Ada, Grey, I and everyone else treasure. We also have to contend with political pressures from all kinds of sources, including those who oh, so subtly, express their pleas on Johnny’s behalf on their law firm’s letterhead. I take it we’re alone in experiencing this.

“Continuing students have the opportunity to prove the ‘numbers’ wrong whenever they post the minimum cumulative GPA required for sustained participation (3.4). We believe these approaches bring a needed element of openness to what might appear to be a rigid and closed process of admission.

“In response to Ada’s well-taken concern about diversity, this is one of many reasons why I hope to change our process. Our current flat, equally weighted requirements (1300 SAT and top 10% class rank) exclude many talented and deserving minorities. Also, in part because of the SAT emphasis, our program is 56-58% male. By switching to a composite index in which high school GPA, class rank and other actual performance measures would outweigh test scores by more than 2 to 1, our program would more than double the percentage of minorities, and nearly 60% would be women. The big losers under this proposed process would be the high SAT types who goofed off in high school. Our experience has been that these kinds have less than honorable-worthy values and don’t last very long in the program. The big winners would be the students who lack the stratospheric SATs but get the job done.

“Anyway,... my guess is that is that this is not an issue on which there are two sides across a dividing line, but rather multiple perspectives facing one another from the corners of something like an octagon.”

— from Steve Wainscott

“I’ve been contributing to this marvelous discussion, and I certainly do NOT disagree with my truly esteemed colleagues Ada or John or Grey. We once did essays and letters of rec and just didn’t find the results were worth the effort required; the admits on these grounds didn’t retain nearly as well as those admitted by the numbers. There were, however, certainly some spectacular exceptions to this more general case. “However, our program quite deliberately has an ‘escape clause.’ Make a 3.5 here the first semester, and one is automatically admitted. Currently our program is about 60% female, while the university at large is about 55% female.

The ethnic profile of honors students parallels to less than a percentage point the ethnic makeup of the entire university. The honors program here is a reasonable sample of the entire student body, different only in its academic indicators and instructional style.

“A summary? Quality is elusively captured by any admissions system, and as we all know all too frequently, is sometimes elusively supported by central administrations. Are these not general truths?”

— from Chuck Barnes

On Issues of Gender in Honors

Note: For the 710 NCHC members not belonging to the Honors listserv, and for the other 507 NCHC members who do but may have missed this discussion on gender. This call for dialogue about gender comes from NCHC member Chuck Barnes, Director of Honors, Northern Arizona State University.

Have you or program ever done comparative studies by gender of measures of success in Honors? Such a study might provide some fascinating dialogue, the reason for this extended message. Do any gender-comparative data from Honors programs have anything to say about gender as a predictor of academic success? I suspect we’d all find these data enlightening, and a firm base for ongoing reasoned discourse.

NCHC members might be interested to know that the average honors director remains in that position only about two-and-a-half years. So the listserv contains many FAQs (or Frequently Asked Questions) such as Chuck’s above. If you wish to join the honors listserv, you can email <listserv@hermes.circ.gwu.edu> with the command <sub honors your name here>. To post to the listserv after subscribing (allowing you to participate in this discussion and others), send your response to <honors@hermes.circ.gwu.edu>.

For other views on this issue, see the following:

Editorial and Responses
More on the Disenchanted Generation
Measuring Measurements: A Continuing Discussion
Measuring Measurements
John Roufagalas, “Honors Classes and Student Performance”
Earl Brown, “Honors Admission and Recruitment”

NHR Fall, 1992
NHR Winter, 1993
NHR Spring 1993
NHR Winter 1994
FFH Fall/Winter 1994
NHR Summer 1997
(Reprinted, Winter 1999)
What follows is a sampling of answers to Chuck’s question. All members (and this includes members representing their institutions) can use their NCHC notebooks, yearly updated, to get phones, FAXs, and addresses of others.
— M. Brown

and also from Chuck Barnes....

“By chance, the last two articles I have read are one by Stephen Jay Gould, a Harvard geoscientist, in the current issue of Natural History [“This View of Life: Jim Bowie’s Letter and Bill Buckler’s Legs,” Natural History, American Museum of Natural History, New York: May 2000; not available on-line] and one by Christina Hoff Sommers in the current issue of The Atlantic Monthly. [“The War Against Boys” in the current issue of The Atlantic Monthly; URL address <http://www.theatlantic.com/cgi-bin/o/issues/2000/05/sommers.htm>]

“Sommers dissects and destroys the sloppy premises of another Harvard faculty member, Carol Gilligan, Harvard’s first professor of gender studies [In A Different Voice] is probably her most important book). In a nutshell, Dr. Gould argues that we humans seek order and understanding, finding both in stories that fit preconceptions as “to how it should be.” In a nutshell, Dr. Gilligan argues that American schools at all levels favor boys and grind down girls.

“Given that Dr. Gilligan and her followers have been able to attract national attention, national prizes, awards from “Ms.” magazine, and even federal legislation based on unsupported, unpublished, un-peer-reviewed opinion — the same kind of thoughtless misandry that affects some gender theorists who blame males for all sorts of social and psychological ills — I’ve long wondered why so many people have been so taken with this spurious “science.” The conclusion that schools at all levels discriminate against girls is so obviously politics masquerading as science that I’ve wondered what these particular feminist theorists were smoking.

The much-ballyhooed recent AAUW studies are another example of politics dressed up as science, but again, on review, the emperor had no clothes. After all, we believe that science begins with peer-reviewed, data that can be replicated, not random examples or ungrounded opinion. Why do so many buy this junk science?

“Dr. Gould’s essay provides the answer. The notion that women are victimized by men is one of those that fits Gould’s proposal — it is a story that is accepted unquestioned, because it fits into our prearranged ideas of good and evil in a time of political correctness. Everyone “knows” that men are the aggressors and women are the victims.

“It is the same reason why examples of spousal abuse by men are essentially unreported in the media, or even by the abused men themselves — the story simply won’t fit the mold. In another recent example, the grisly murder of a gay man in Wyoming made national headlines, as it should, while a more recent example of gays killing a straight man [in Arkansas] hardly made even the local newspapers.

“The conjunction of these two articles by Gould and Sommers led me to think about my own experience in teaching Honors classes over the years. Honors classes here are predominantly female [about 60:40] so I undertook my own study, looking at the final student grades I posted in the last eight semesters of my own Honors courses. The database I used made a gender comparison quick and easy.

“The result: women average 0.2 of a grade-point [where A=4.0] above the men. They also had higher retention rates, better attendance, and were generally better in all of the informal indicators of academic engagement. This result is perfectly in line with a number of national studies; it is the boys/men who are in much greater danger of failure at many levels from K through college.”

— from Chuck Barnes, Director, Northern Arizona University New Century Honors Program

“Chuck, You raise some interesting and highly debatable points in your recent e-mail message to our list, and I would like to respond. First, I would note that the results of Gilligan’s “In a Different Voice” (1982) and the AAUW’s “Shortchanging Girls” (1990) thought-provoking studies were published 10-15 years ago (and were based on research conducted prior to publication). I would also note that a good number of thoughtful follow-up studies have been done, including several intriguing studies based on analyses of student learning (and faculty teaching) styles in the context of race, class, sex, sexual orientation, etc. Your accusations of “spurious ‘science’” and “politics dressed up as science” might themselves be considered spurious, particularly if these accusations are based only on the work, published in commercial magazines, of Gould and Sommers, each of whom is generally perceived by a wide range of scholars as having his/her own biases.

“Our Honors program does not do comparative gender-based studies because, as Shakespeare put it, “Comparisons are odious.” (Note: when you say “gender-based,” do you actually mean sex-based, since “gender” and “sex” are not synonymous?) Given that I haven’t seen your database used in your own small study, I could not draw conclusions about the study’s validity and/or reliability. I do tend to think, however, that a truly valid and reliable gender-based study would need to consider not only the categories “male” and “female” but also the categories “heterosexual,” “gay,” “lesbian,” “bisexual,” “transgender,” and “transsexual.” Such a study would also need to examine not only characteristics of Honors Program students but also those of faculty and administrators — comparing and contrasting an extremely large sample at diverse kinds of institutions in socio-economic, historical, and cultural contexts. Only after (and if) such a wide-ranging study were conducted
Gender, continued

might we be able to begin generating the kind of “firm base for ongoing reasoned discourse” that you advocate.”

Sincerely,

Suzanne Bunkers
(Director of Honors Program, Minnesota State University)

“The incident in Arkansas described below [by Chuck Barnes] was a terrible child molestation/murder case. It was a horrifying crime, and it was widely reported in our local media. But it was not a hate crime and should not be compared to the Wyoming case.

“Charles W. Chuck Barnes wrote: ‘It is the same reason why examples of spousal abuse by men are essentially unreported in the media, or even by the abused men themselves ... the story simply won’t fit the mold. In another recent example, the grisly murder of a gay man in Wyoming made national headlines, as it should, while a more recent example of gays killing a straight man [in Arkansas] hardly made even the local newspapers.”

— Suzanne McCray
(Director, Office of Post-Graduate Fellowships, Associate Director, Honors Studies, University of Arkansas)

“At Eastern Connecticut State University we are graduating 19 honors scholars, three of whom are male; my freshman cohort has 22 students, four of whom are male. Twelve of my students participated in the NE-NCHC conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico, all of them women. Our Honors Council is now engaged in affirmative action for males!”

— Jim Lacey
(Eastern Carolina University)

“Chuck Barnes’ posting to the listserv prompted me to do a tally of Honors Degrees awarded at Oklahoma State from May, 1969, to December, 1999, to determine if the data would confirm the impression that I have gained in talking with other honors directors over the years that women are at least somewhat more likely to participate and succeed in honors than are males.

“Our data, running over the tenure of five different honors directors, reveal that 323 women have earned honors degrees in comparison with 159 men — a ratio of 2-to-1. The ratio was somewhat higher than I had anticipated, but the preponderance of women is consistent with anecdotal reports from elsewhere.

“It will be interesting to learn of the experiences in other honors programs.”

— Bob

Folks —

The question of gender and honors in higher education is certainly an appropriate question for discussion, but the tone and content of this message is hardly the way to get it started.

Professor Sommers may certainly criticize the work of Carol Gilligan and her students; that is the kind of give and take of academic discourse that constitutes the way scholarly work gets done.

But Chuck’s assertion that Gilligan’s work is “unsupported, unpublished, un-peer-reviewed opinion” is absurd, as anyone who visits the library and notes Professor Gilligan’s five major publications will discover.

I certainly agree with Professor Gould (if Chuck is reporting him correctly) that “we humans seek order and understanding, finding both in stories that fit preconceptions as ‘to how it should be.’”

In fact, that approach to human cognition is basic to the tradition of developmental psychology in which Carol Gilligan is located. It began with Piaget and was developed at Harvard by Lawrence Kohlberg, who taught Carol Gilligan. Folks looking for more information on it should see the fine book The Evolving Self by Robert Kegan (Harvard UP, 1982).

Clearly Chuck is seeking to fit the data into a story that fits his preconceptions, which are different from mine about the roles of women in secondary and higher education. He is probably too young to remember, as I do, the phenomenon of all male colleges and their cultures and the attitudes toward women that they fostered.

Best,

John Wall, Interim Director of Honors, NC State University

Some semi-soft data from our commencement. The numbers are too small to mean much, but at least for curiosity’s sake:

Our university female/male ratio, for c.13,000 students, is about 60/40 any way you measure it: by classes, by entering freshmen, or overall. Our HP of roughly 250 is (estimate) closer to 75/25.

This spring there were 18 HP grads: 12F, 6M.

Of 26 summa cum laude for the univ: 18F(69%), 8M; 5 of these (3F, 2M) were HP.

Of 60 magna cum laude overall: 49F(82%), 11M. 4 (3F, 1M) were HP.

Of 81 cum laude overall: 64F(79%), 17M. 5 (3F, 2M) were HP.

Of 231 cum laude or better, 167 (78%) were female, and 14(6%) were HP.

Among 18 HP grads, 14 cum laude or better: 9F(64%), 5M. The 4 who were not cum laude or better: 3F, 1M.

I don’t have the sex ratio for grads overall but clearly more were female. I’d say this very weakly confirms the hypothesis that amongst HP students, males do slightly better than females grade-wise, since the overall HP F/M ratio is about 75/25, but for cum laude-or-better amongst this year’s HP grads the F/M ratio is 9/5; and among HP grads overall, it is 2/1.

— from Frank Williams,
Eastern Kentucky University
“The Birth of an Honors Orientation Program”
by Sharon A. Baiocco, Jacksonville University

Imagine that just eight weeks before summer orientation, you have been given limited funding for a special Honors Orientation for new students. It should spread out over two days, lead into the regular orientation, and include programming for traditional-aged honors students, transfer honors students, and their parents. Since it is the first time this orientation has been attempted, you have no way of knowing the number of participants to plan for. What to do?

I could lie and tell you that I consulted a program development model, followed the outline, and produced a great program. Frankly, I don’t believe anyone under the pressure of such a deadline would be that deliberate. Instead, the reality was that I became a one-woman band during the phase planners call germinating the idea, and gradually enticed a team of faculty, students, and staff to join in the show. For one thing, my advisory board had already left campus in many different directions for the summer. But time constraints dictated that the program be developed without the usual academic ritual of discussion, discussion, discussion — decision. My experience has been that while such discussions often produce a more balanced initiative, they can also stifle creativity and, when it came down to it, I had no time!

What follows then, is a true story of how an Honors Orientation program was born. Although the labor did not neatly progress through the predictable phases, a vibrant, successful program did emerge.

My first concern was to attempt to estimate the numbers of participants to determine what we could offer. Past sketchy records suggested that 20 students had indicated their desire to learn about the Honors Program at my university the previous summer, and the Admissions Office gave me a list of 105 students who had been accepted and who met the criteria for admission to the Honors Program. Of those, half had made their deposits. Therefore, my initial estimate of participants ranged from 20 to 105. Later, in a meeting with Student Life staff, I was told that 1.5 parents per student would also attend, for a total projected enrollment of 50 to 250 people. Meanwhile, I had been searching my memory and my files for possible activities, but I must confess, I had not counted on having to plan two programs — one for students, one for parents! I had only been at JU one year and had never even witnessed its regular orientation. Fortunately, the Dean of Student Life set regular meeting times for me and his orientation staff so that I could synchronize philosophy and programming with them. As for the content of the program, however, I was on my own.

I had four guidelines in mind when searching for suitable program activities — that they be academically oriented, active, social and fun. My goal was to accentuate the positive in our program, our campus, and our environment in Northeast Florida.

First, I focused on programming for the students. My year’s work as director of the University Honors Program at JU had involved many hours talking with the students because I had worked on building the program through recruitment and enrichment activities. The Honors Council, which had student, faculty, and admissions staff representatives, had defined a new mission statement, and I knew what our shared values were. I had also assembled an impressive group of faculty to teach honors courses, and had taken the Honors Student Association officers and several freshmen to the Southern Regional Honors Conference in nearby Savannah. Together with the Dean of International Students, we had designed and offered a one-credit course in cross-cultural training for honors students who wished to be orientation leaders for international students in the fall. This networking turned out to be vital to the success of the program, and one-by-one, interested students and faculty offered their help.

Eventually, the program took shape from some nebulous ideas to a tested and polished program including web-page authoring workshops, a personal development portfolio presentation, a cultural exchange and dinner cruise on the St. Johns River, and City-as-Text© for Jacksonville. A parents’ track, which featured a discussion of launching their honors student and young adult development, was later scrapped when too few parents registered.

At the end of spring semester, whenever I saw honors students, I invited them to participate in the orientation program, and even helped line up jobs for them as peer advisors during the regular orientation. I alerted key faculty to my need for help, and scheduled a planning session and a dress rehearsal. Before long, I had a list of about five faculty as well as about 12 students — 10 and two spares, including two coordinators from the regular orientation group. I tried to recruit a variety of students from different majors, with different personalities, and different seniority at the University. They turned out to be absolutely key to making the program...
successful. They troubleshoot, ran errands, critiqued the program, led groups, entertained students after hours, tended bar, and designed and presented aspects of the program.

Simultaneously, as part of my duties as assistant dean, I had been working with our new webmaster to create exciting new Intranet and Internet sites. Two of his student assistants were honors students — outgoing, reliable, and talented. They were also male, and since women honors students outnumber male honors students across the United States, I saw an opportunity to offer a program which would be student-run, which would provide male role models for new students, and which would meet a campus need. The campus, like so many, was just being networked completely with fiber optics. Training of faculty and students was a top priority for the Information Technology staff, and I personally wanted to get my own web page assembled and ready for fall classes. This is what prompted the notion of offering new Honors students the opportunity to create their own web page. The two students were assigned the task of designing and presenting a lesson plan for a web page authoring workshop, which they tested on a group of faculty and other honors orientation student leaders in a dress rehearsal one week before the show. Faculty critiqued the students’ lesson plan looking for any bugs in the planning and the technology. The final program, which these students team-taught, was highly successful. Two sessions, each set in our new model math classroom, were offered in order to accommodate varying numbers of participants.

At the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference in Atlanta and in NCHC materials, I had learned about City-as-Text®, and although I had never participated in one, as a newcomer myself to Jacksonville, I thought that the River City would be an outstanding site for students and parents to explore. In my initial proposal to the Student Life staff, I thought we could have a wide-ranging exploration in groups assigned to different cars, but this was nixed as too diffused, complex, and potentially difficult to insure. I then began to narrow the tour, focusing on sites in the downtown area. I selected sites that would offer students (and parents) the opportunity for insights into the political, social, cultural, economic, and religious make-up of the city. A bus made a circular route, dropping off each group consisting of one orientation leader and the new students or parents at the waterfront shopping area, the daily newspaper, a coffee processing plant, an historic African-American church and museum, City Hall, the performing arts center, and the sports complex where the NFL Jaquars play. I called the NCHC office, where Earl Brown and Bernice Braid talked me through the City-as-Text®. Dr. Brown also gave me the notion to give each student group a disposable camera to record the first honors Orientation, including the City-as-Text® Jacksonville program. Then I recruited an Honors faculty member to lead the activity. He obtained materials from the Office of Tourism to be included in students’ orientation folders, oriented them to their role as social scientists before the excursion, and debriefed them (on audiotape) on the bus ride and after. Three students volunteered to create a PowerPoint® web show, “Honors Students’ Impressions of Jacksonville” in the fall from photographs and tape recordings. These were later added to the Honors website.

For another activity, I called upon a colleague, a new advisor to the Honors Student Association who had been quietly and methodically leading an effort at JU to adopt a Bridgeport University model for student growth, the Personal Development Portfolio (PDP). She had convinced me that we should pilot test the process with new honors students in the fall, though we had not defined how that would work. The PDP is a method for students’ systematic reflection upon life goals.

To Honors Colleagues,

It is with heavy, heavy heart, I forward to you news from Joe Riley’s son that Joe died on Easter morning.... Many of you knew Joe well, but some may have known him only a bit or (alas) not at all. Joe Riley was a legend in Honors. He directed the honors program at Memphis State (now University of Memphis) for many wonderful years. He hosted the first NCHC conference I ever attended: Memphis, 1984. I know he had never participated in one, as a newcomer myself to Jacksonville, I thought that the River City would be an outstanding site for students and parents to explore. In my initial proposal to the Honors website.

Joe was a gentle man with strong opinions, insatiable curiosities, a quick and sometimes acerbic wit, deep loyalties, limitless generosity, and great integrity. He helped to build NCHC and honors education throughout the country as well as on his own campus. He was an expert rose gardener, winning competitions nationally with his roses, and he nurtured honors in the same way he did his beautiful flowers....those of us who knew him were truly honored.

Ada Long
University of Alabama, Birmingham
from a variety of dimensions under the guidance of a mentor. My colleague welcomed the opportunity to create a workshop to orient the new honors students to the PDP process. At the dress rehearsal, honors student orientation leaders and faculty critiqued the workshop, and it was subsequently shortened and made more interactive. After the workshop, several current honors students were so intrigued that they wanted to voluntarily participate. The program will be evaluated for universal adoption after its first year.

As yet there was no social event during the program around which to begin creating a larger honors community. Two of the great draws of our university are Florida’s natural gifts of sunshine and water, and I began thinking of activities that would exploit those features. A beach party was rejected because of the intense heat and typical thunderstorms of mid-day in July, the lack of picnic facilities, and the possible insurance problems. But the University is situated on the bank of the beautiful St. Johns River, recently recognized as an American Heritage River. It winds its wide way from central Florida north past downtown Jacksonville, a city alternately known as “River City” and “The Bold New City of the South.” I had seen a riverboat paddling up the river, and after finding that it would accommodate 70, had a sound system, and offered a catered dinner, I committed nearly all of the funding I had received to book it for an evening cruise. This was a bit of a risk, because if only 20 students came to orientation, even with parents and orientation staff, we would look puny in numbers. Opportunity knocked when I learned that a group of 12 students and faculty from the University of Nantes, France, were on campus for the month of July. They accepted my invitation to join us for some joint activities that we modeled after the first orientation, this time substituting what we called Island-as-Text modeled after NCHC’s City-as-Text©. This activity included four faculty and their families who participated in a mini-symposium introducing the new honors students and 30 new international students to barrier island geography, history, and marine and plant life. Together, foreign students from the Ukraine, India, and the Netherlands and honors students from near and far experienced the natural pleasures of hiking, swimming, beach-combing, and sharing a shore dinner with JU faculty and their children.

We had laid the groundwork for programs that would later benefit everyone on campus....

Upon reflection, I believe JU’s new honors students were not the ones who benefitted from the orientations. By the time we had finished, nine faculty, ten students, and ten administrators had taken part in the dress rehearsal and shows. We had laid the groundwork for programs that would later benefit everyone on campus, and we could share photographs of the first orientations taken during the 24 hours spent together at the exhilarating time when students are beginning their college education. Best of all, new student leaders emerged from these honors orientation teams, and they bonded with each other and faculty to create a wonderful new community derived from sharing adventures and meaningful work.
April 11, 2000
Dear Editor,

Though I know there is not a “letters” section, perhaps you can forward my comments to the appropriate people. I wish to comment particularly on the reprinting of the “Basic Characteristics of a Fully-Developed Honors Program.” That statement should be printed on heavy stock and distributed to every Director/Dean and to every Provost/Chief Academic Officer, if it has not been.

As Director of Honors at Utah State University, I found myself working toward exactly those objectives but it would certainly have been useful to have them for leverage with my Provost. During my last year there, the Program was the subject of review by the Provost’s office in the standard periodic mode. It was the first time, however, that the Program was included in the cycle. (I saw that, in itself, as helping to certify us as a “fully-developed” program.) The document would have provided a wonderful guide for the use of the distinguished pair of external reviewers who provided such a thorough evaluation (and a laudatory one overall).

I voluntarily gave up the best job in the University to go with my spouse to her new challenge as President of Western Washington University in 1993 and, though I have a very fulfilling position of my own, I still miss honors terribly.

Sincerely,
Joseph G. Morse
Professor of Chemistry
Director, Science Education

[Editor’s note: “Basic Characteristics,” approved by the NCHC Executive Committee in May 1994, began appearing in these pages in Fall 1995 (20-21). The most recent reprint is Winter 2000. Several directors of honors programs have written articles about the value of “Basic Characteristics” in the evaluation process. You might look at Donna Menis & Bob Case’s “Beginning in Honors: Approaching ‘Basic Characteristics’ from a Small College Perspective” (Spring 1997, 42-44). Also Guy Sedlack’s “Honors Evaluation Committee Report on ‘The Basic Characteristics of a Fully-Developed Honors Program’: Towards Creating a Dialogue” (Spring 1997, 36-38). You might also be interested in Bob Spurrier’s “Ten Suggestions for Using Your Institution’s Accreditation Process to Benefit Your Honors Program (Summer 1995). Other articles referring to “Basic Characteristics” are too numerous to mention.]
Three years ago, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Honors Program began a two-day honors retreat for its students. It was designed to take students away from the campus to discuss matters relating to them as honors students and to help them better focus on school. The retreat has now become an important part of the program because it gives students an opportunity to know and interact with other students and to learn from each other. The Student Honors Advisory Council assists in making suggestions for the speakers and for activities at the retreat.

It was designed to take students away from the campus to discuss matters relating to them as honors students and to help them better focus on school.

Background
Florida A&M University ranks among the top three Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the country. It attracts many outstanding African American students who come because they are convinced that they will have a sound education which will prepare them well for the future. Generally, an increasing number of African American students attend HBCUs, and it is possible that these institutions provide a comfortable environment for post secondary studies. Florida A&M sees as part of its mission to encourage more African American students to enroll in graduate school and receive advanced degrees thus helping to increase the dwindling pool of African Americans with Masters and Ph.D.

Many of the students in the University’s Honors Program have been awarded full scholarships because of their academic performance in high school. Freshman students admitted to the program during the fall semester have scored at least 1100 (SAT) or 27 (ACT) with a high school GPA of 3.5 or higher. Students receive honors credit by either taking honors courses or by contacting with a professor to receive honors credit for a non-honors course. Juniors and seniors pursue an honors-in-the-major. For this they work with their major professors to complete an honors thesis.

FAMU’s Honors Program seeks to provide its students a means of interaction among students who wish to excel academically and to allow them to explore the limits of their own capability. Students meet for various honors activities on campus but these activities, however, compete with their study time and other activities on campus. The program thought that a retreat away from the campus would provide a relaxed atmosphere for students and encourage interaction with students and professors from other disciplines, undisturbed. Other objectives were to share information that would make their campus life more meaningful, to discuss matters relating to their success as honors students, and to refocus their efforts in honors. The Honors Student Advisory Council made plans to assist in the planning of the retreat which they thought would be a good forum for honors students.

The Retreat
The two-day retreat was held on the last weekend of February. By this time of the academic year the first year students had spent one semester, well into their second semester of college life. They now have a clearer idea about their success as students and about their possible needs. These students’ goals are more defined than when they first arrived at the university.

Although all honors students, not just first-year students, were invited, we only had places for 100 of the 450 students in the program. Our retreat was held in San Destin, a beach resort in West Florida. Transportation, meals, and hotel were all provided for the students and other attendees. Places were reserved for sixty freshmen, twenty sophomores, ten juniors, and ten seniors. The rationale was that the first year in college was critical and the beginning students need more support in helping them to review their program objectives and to maintain their high grade point average. Being driven to achieve was the foundation upon which many of their goals and characteristics were based in high school and they accomplished. The slightest failure, as perceived by them, in college could be devastating to them. For this reason, nurturing and support at this time is critical. The sophomore, juniors, and seniors while themselves benefitting from the experience of the retreat, would have an opportunity to share their experiences as upperclassmen.

As the students traveled on the bus, I could hear them commenting that they needed to get away from campus for a while. They were asked what they expected from the retreat and their comments included “an opportunity to interact with other honors students,” “to find out what classes to take in the future,” “to get help with study skills and to relax.” As I listened to their comments, I was convinced that both honors education and the honors retreat was an important part of the strategy of meeting the diverse needs of these students.

At this first two-day retreat the students listened to presentations on Study Skills, Staying Focused, Undergraduate Research, The Latest in Computer Technology, Mentoring,
What Companies Seek in Their Interns and Employees, Career Placement, Graduate School Preparation, Being Involved in Research Projects and Life after Honors. The luncheon speaker for the first day was Angel Ragins, a graduate of the Honors Program. She discussed what, for her, were the advantages of the Honors Program, the activities in which she was involved while in college and how being an Honors student assisted in preparing her for the future. This student who has published three books since her graduation three years ago and, in addition to attending graduate school and working, has her own consulting business. She was a true inspiration to the students.

The presentations were followed by group discussions depending on the interest of the students. Throughout the sessions, the students had opportunities to meet with other students, to discuss concerns and to seek assistance in areas in which they had a need. These honors students have the unique combination of ability and motivation, and the retreat gave them a place, a forum, and a focus to promote a group identity as members of an honors program. They saw that they could focus their energies on the task at hand — graduating as honors students who are prepared to take their rightful place in the 21st century.

The retreat has been held every year since and evaluations by the students indicate that it is a truly informative and enjoyable affair. Topics this year included Preparing for the New Millennium: Foreign Language and Travel, and What Graduate School Means to Me by an alumnus who is now attending graduate school at Harvard University.

All who attend a retreat — this Honors director, the professors and the students — agree that each retreat proves to be a valuable experience for the students. It takes them away from the campus, gives them an opportunity to interact for a long period of time with other honor students and professors, to have their questions answered and form overwhelming experience were able to discuss their concerns not only with other first year students but with upperclassmen who were able to make suggestions.

As honors directors, we need to be aware that there will be students who will need more nurturing than others, and at activities like these, we will be better able to identify these students and thus be able to offer them needed assistance.

As honors directors, we need to be aware that there will be students who will need more nurturing than others, and at activities like these, we will be better able to identify these students and thus be able to offer them needed assistance.

Suggestions

For honors directors who are interested in planning an honors retreat, I highly recommend that you seek sponsorship. Because the honors program admits outstanding students from all disciplines, a well-prepared proposal will most likely be funded. Graduates from the program who are in the world of work could be resources for soliciting support and funds for the retreat. Because of the support we received through a graduate of the program who is now working for a major company, each student paid only $10.00 (Nothing in life is free). A two-day retreat is more beneficial, for the students do not mind leaving campus for the weekend if the activities are well planned. In addition to the presentations, students should have time to interact with each other and the professors in an informal setting. They should be divided both by disciplines and academic standing for discussion.

You will find it interesting to observe how much information students will be able to receive from the presentations, from interaction with each other and how, among themselves, they processed the information which they received from the presentations.

As honors directors, we need to be aware that there will be students who will need more nurturing than others, and at activities like these, we will be better able to identify these students and thus be able to offer them needed assistance.
“Grassroots Groups”
by Bill Langley, Butler County Community College, KS

Water quality will be a major issue in the 21st century according to Mike Hayden, the former governor of Kansas and now president of American Sports Fisheries Association (El Dorado Times, March 21, 1998). Kansas ranks 50th in the country in the quality of our surface waters. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) samples water throughout the state on a regular but limited basis. Given the episodic nature of many pollution incidents and infrequent KDHE sampling, a need exists for grassroots groups to conduct regular water testing.

Many educators are interested in offering students an interdisciplinary project that deals with real-life problems. A local water quality issue provides such an opportunity. Collection of water samples, conducting the chemical and microbiological tests and analyzing the data can engage students into the many issues that surround water quality. Science, math, social studies and literature can all contribute to solving a water quality problem. One approach is to offer a special course that deals with the project, but this may not always be feasible. Instructors from different disciplines may not be interested in the same problem or, more likely, the number of students participating is too small to warrant a separate course. An alternative approach, which has proven successful at Butler County Community College (BCCC), is to have students participate in the water-monitoring project as part of our Honors Program.

The advantage of an Honors Program is that the Program can operate outside of a traditional classroom setting, reducing the need for additional staff or resources.

The advantage of an honors program is that the program can operate outside of the traditional classroom setting, thus reducing the need for additional staff or resources. Furthermore, students receive special recognition. In competitive academic settings, students need to distinguish themselves in activities that occur outside a normal classroom setting in order to compete successfully for scholarships or admissions to professional programs (Wichita Eagle, May 27, 1999). Many schools already have an honors program or similar activity in place. We at BCCC formed the Water Quality Monitoring Program as part of our college’s Honors Program. The goals for our students were to (1) develop accurate testing methods; (2) provide a baseline and current data for the quality of water flowing into El Dorado Lake, the primary source of water for Butler County residents; (3) become familiar with the non-point source problems in our area; and (4) improve analytical skills through hypothesis testing and interpretation of our data. The following describes how our Program operates and how our students and community benefit from this project.

We recruit students from our biology and chemistry courses at the beginning of each semester. Students sign a contract that describes their responsibilities for what is called the Honors Option. In addition to the contract, students must receive an “A” or “B” in the course offering the Honors Option to receive the Honors Option recognition that is a special designation on their transcript next to the grade for that course.

Students work in teams. Water samples are collected at two-week intervals from eight streams that feed into El Dorado Lake. Twelve chemical and physical parameters are measured for each sample. Microbiological tests estimate the total number of coliforms, Escherichia coli and fecal coliforms. Students are responsible for performing tests, for logging the data in lab notebook and computer files. We used Hach procedures and materials for most tests. Students readily learn the procedures for each of these tests.

The most challenging requirement for students was writing a scientific paper. Students had to test the relationship between two or more parameters: chemical, physical, bacterial counts, rainfall amounts or land-use. Examples of previous students’ papers and handouts illustrated possible topics and the level of expectation. At one group session, students learned how to use the Microsoft Excel program to graph and analyze data from our files. At another session, they learned how to conduct simple statistical tests. Papers were checked for accuracy in the data analysis, format, coherence and content. Students had to do at least one major rewrite of their paper. Afterwards, they made a five-minute presentation to the group. [Editor’s note: see “Let’s Continue the Oral Tradition” in this issue for tips for turning written work into a presentation.]

Another component of our Honors water testing program is the independent project. A number of students plan to do a special project but often have little or no experience in the area and only a vague idea about what they want to do. In the design of our Water Quality Monitoring Program, students learn the techniques while doing an Honors Option. Students’ experiences with the Honors Option have led to more sophisticated and successful projects than when they have begun from scratch.
A concern to BCCC is financial resources. We have received financial support from several sources: Nonpoint Source Pollution Program of Butler County Conservation District, City of El Dorado, Environmental Protection Agency, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and Turner Foundation. Other water monitoring programs have found local support in kind, such as use of equipment for testing or use of supplies at local municipalities or agencies.

Over the past three years, 38 students have completed the requirements and received honors recognition for participating in the BCCC Water Quality Monitoring Program. Another 22 students participated in the program but did not complete all the requirements. Several students benefitted additionally by achieving scholarships, winning “Best Student Paper” presentation at a state conference or obtaining a job in professors’ labs when transferring to a four-year school. Twenty-two of the 38 students acknowledged that letters of recommendation about their activities played important roles in their acceptance into a professional program.

Our community has also benefitted from the program. The data collected over the past three years now serves as a baseline for the action plan of our Non-point Source Pollution Program for the Upper Walnut River Watershed basin. Our students teach elementary students about water issues at the Walnut River Water Festival, which brings over 600 4th and 5th grade students to BCCC for a full day of fun and learning.

Our Program has evolved. Today students test the effectiveness of buffer strips in decreasing nutrient and fecal coliform levels from grazed areas. They compare nutrient levels in various parts of El Dorado Lake with the runoff levels from entering streams. They evaluate the effectiveness of man-made wetlands in reducing ammonia levels in the wastewater effluent from the City of El Dorado plant.

Clearly, there is a need for such programs especially when the students and community benefit from these programs. The evidence shows that water testing programs in schools represent a win-win situation for all.

---

**Bill Langley, Butler County Community College, KS.**

---

**Dear Honors Colleagues,**

After fifteen years of facilitating the development of honors at the University of Las Vegas, Nevada, I have decided to return to the more placid life of a faculty member. I plan on remaining active in NCHC, but will become a former dean as of July 1, 2000. One of the most pleasant aspects of my involvement in honors has been the wonderful friendships that have been made and reinforced during both the National and regional Honors conferences. Although I borrowed considerably more ideas than I contributed, I still feel, as an organization, that NCHC ought to be very proud of the way it encourages sharing and cross-fertilization of ideas from one institution to another.

Since my decision caught everyone at UNLV by surprise, I assume the same will be true in the larger honors community. When I started doing honors at UNLV, I always viewed my hiatus from the ranks of teaching faculty as temporary. After fifteen years, temporary began to take on an awfully permanent look. Consequently, I have spent a growing amount of time trying to find the most graceful way of disengaging myself from my position as Dean of the Honors college. I finally decided that there was no graceful way of exiting and just declared my term as Dean over. This proved to be surprisingly effective!

From my vantage point, the Honors College at UNLV is in the most stable situation it has been in since its inception. Dr. Sue Reimond has done an excellent job as Assistant Dean and has been named interim Dean. The university will do a national search for a new Dean next year and Sue and I are hopeful that a strong slate of candidates will apply.

So I have pulled the cord on my golden parachute and am happily floating back to the pleasant life of a university professor. I would like to thank everyone in NCHC for all the terrific support I have received in the past fifteen years. Now I hope to spend more time hiking and looking for the supersonic fly!

**Shalom, Len Zane**
"An Honors Presentation"
by Peggy E. Enochs

Looking at the Components of an Honors Culture to Prepare for Strategic Change

Southern Regional Honors Conference 2000
Honors at the Center

Prepared by--Peggy E. Enochs
Assistant Director Honors Program
Tennessee State University
Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000
April 6, 2000

Abstract

The culture of an honors program can be studied through various models. A look at past traditions, ceremonies, rituals, and symbols can serve as a key to the future. Assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis) can enable one to prepare for strategic change.

A Case Study Analysis

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING MODEL
The University Honors Program: An Organization in Transition

Key References


“The world of the school has power, structure, logic, and values that combine to exact strong influence on the ways that people perceive, interpret, and respond to the world.”

Robert Owens
**Organizational Diagnosis:**

- Guides organizational managerial decision making and planning.
- Helps managers decide how to cope with crises or accomplish a major transition.

*Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000*

**Assumptions**

- Individuals, groups, and organizations as a whole are best thought of as complex dynamic systems.
- There is a motivation to change.
- Successful coping requires an internal climate of support and freedom from threat.
- Successful coping requires the ability to continuously redesign the organization's structure to be congruent with its goals and tasks.

*Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000*

**The Past as Key to the Future**

Deal, T.E. and Peterson, K.

- How long has the school existed?
- Why was it built?
- Who has a major influence on the school’s direction?
- What critical incidents occurred in the past, and how were they resolved, if at all?
- What were the preceding principals, teachers, and students like?

*Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000*

- What do people say (and think) when asked what the school stands for? What would they miss if they left?

*Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000*

**Culture**

"Culture is a historically rooted, socially transmitted set of deep patterns of thinking and ways of acting that give meaning to human experience, that unconsciously dictate how experience is seen, assessed, and acted on." (Deal)

*Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000*
Levels of Organizational Culture – Schein

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifacts • Values • Basic Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Artifacts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rites and Ceremonies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rituals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Symbols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000

**Artifacts – Personal Enactment**

| • Behavior that reflects the organization’s values |
| • Personal enactment by the principal lends insight into these values |

Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000

**Artifacts – Rites & Ceremonies**

| • Rites of passage – change of individual’s status – retirement |
| • Rites of enhancement – reinforce individual’s achievement |
| • Rites of renewal – emphasize change in the organization |
| • Rites of Integration – unite diverse groups within the organization |
| • Rites of conflict reduction |
| • Rites of degradation |

Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000

**Artifacts – Rituals**

Everyday organizational practices that are repeated over and over are rituals.

Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000

**Artifacts – Symbols**

| • Emphasize the tribal aspect of contemporary organizations |
| • Communicate the organizational culture by unspoken messages |

Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000
Artifacts – Stories

• Stories about the boss
• Stories about getting fired
• Stories about whether teachers can be promoted to administration
• Stories about how the organization deals with crisis situations

Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000

Values

Reflects a person’s underlying beliefs of what should be or should not be.

Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000

Assumptions

Deeply held beliefs that guide behavior and tell members of an organization how to perceive and think about things.

Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000

The Past as Key to the Future

Deal, T.E. and Peterson, K.

"Change your mind, and you will change your life. Usually what we travel miles to see is closer than what we think."

Traditional (Riley)

Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000
Reminders:

• Be sure of a commitment to change by leaders and stakeholders
• Keep priority conditions for successful management in mind
• Develop a change model to guide actions
• Consider leadership styles and interactions when implementing change.

Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000

Planning Steps

• Vision #1 (mega, macro, micro)
• Beliefs and Values
• External and Internal Scan
• Critical Success Factors
• Vision #2 (needs assessment, mega, macro, micro)
• Mission
• Strategic Goals
• SWOT Analysis
• Tactical Planners
• Evaluate and Recycle

Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000

The Model:
The Strategic Planning Model

(Herman & Herman)

Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000

"If you don't know where you're going, you may end up somewhere else."

Casey Stengel

Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000

Strategic Planning

• Long term planning defines what's to be achieved
• Once completed it is turned over to the tactical planners

Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000

Tactical Planning

• refers to the planning elements related to the hows.
## Conducting a SWOT Analysis

- **S** Strengths
- **W** Weaknesses
- **O** Opportunities
- **T** Threats

Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000

## Can the honors program find its direction?

“Success requires artistry, skill, and the ability to see organizations as organic forms in which needs, roles, power, and symbols must be combined to provide direction and shape behavior.”

Owens

Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000

## Strategic Planning Checklist

- A stakeholder’s committee has been organized
- An initial vision has been reached
- Time has been expended on beliefs and values
- External and internal variables scanned
- Six to eight factors most critical to the success of the school identified
- Needs were defined

Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000

## Reminders

- Reach consensus on a vision, mission, and strategic goal selection
- Keep stakeholders updated on the status of the strategic plan
- Involve a broadly representative group in the planning process
- Obtain needs assessment data from all three dimensions: mega, macro, and micro.

Southern Regional Honors Conference, 2000
From the Two-Year College Committee (Sandy Deabler)

"Let's Continue the Oral Tradition"
by Sandy Deabler & Cheryl Brock,
North Harris College (TX)

You've probably been there. You're sitting in a conference session or a workshop, and you realize that you are paying more attention to the relative comfort of your derriere than you are to the speaker. Your eyes roll back in your head. You feel sleepy, or you begin looking for unobtrusive escape routes. Maybe you check your watch or mentally rearrange your sock drawer. Nothing relieves the monotony. The speaker just keeps on reading all 20 pages of the paper usually without looking up. One thing is certain: you're bored with a capital B and that rhymes with flee which is rapidly becoming your goal.

Having been there, you know that there's a world of difference between writing a paper and presenting it to an audience. You know that to hold an audience, you need graphic illustration of your points, and not too many points at that. You know that involving the audience in the experience makes it more meaningful to them, even if that participation means that they are merely following along with a handout. As educators we should also know that the average adult attention span is approximately 20 minutes on a good day.

When we know all of this and have suffered through bad presentations, are we as honors mentors, faculty, and directors assisting our students prepare to give effective presentations? Can we help our students make the transition from paper to presentation?

Each contract or course includes a required component of sharing the product of the honors experience. Sometimes the products are not text-based at all, but students still present their findings or the themes/rationales at the Honors Day Program. In the NHC Honors Student Handbook, students find a calendar of events and a clear set of directions focused on the presentation as well as resource people — speech and multimedia faculty, for instance — who are experts in various disciplines and who are willing to help students hone their presentations. Several steps outlined in the handbook aid students in delivering a successful oral presentation.

1. The Abstract

Before our end-of-semester presentations of honors work, our Honors Student Organization at NHC holds a meeting to acquaint all honors students with the preparation of an abstract for the Honors Day Program. This first step focuses students on the essence of the product and can serve as a preliminary outline for the presentation. It also assures that the honors products/projects are completed about two weeks before the end of the semester. Additionally, it helps the honors director to have those abstracts prepared and ready to go for district, regional, and national program applications.

2. The Outline

Students are encouraged to select no more than four major points for their 15-minute presentation, a shorter presentation time than they would typically have at a conference. Once again, they must be focused on the essence of their research. Students are encouraged to outline their presentation, not to write a narrative.

3. Ancillaries

Students are encouraged to use visual illustrations of their points. If they use PowerPoint or Authorware presentations, they are advised to have an alternative ready if technology fails them. Students are required to produce their own ancillaries. They may not use slides or programs produced by the faculty. Graphics are suggested only to make main points; "busy" graphics are discouraged. Fonts no smaller than 24 are suggested. If additional information is necessary, students are advised to put it and other information in a handout that includes citations and references.
4. Practice, Practice, Practice.

Before students present on Honors Day, each one is offered several opportunities to do a run-through. Each semester we have "Run-through Sessions." These are attended by honors students and various faculty to offer advice and suggestions for those students who have never presented before and/or are nervous about their presentations. In addition to receiving suggestions, students practice with their ancillaries and any technology they have planned to use. Faculty mentors also aid students by listening to their practice runs and offering their recommendations.

5. Check, Check, Check

Students are advised to check over their outline and any audio-visual equipment in the room where they will be presenting before the appointed time. Because schedules of presentations are very tight, technological glitches can cause seriously delay. Therefore, checking over all equipment is necessary.

6. The Big Moment

At their presentations, students are advised not to stand in one place, but to move around the room, if it is appropriate; they are asked to identify three places which are likely places to stand or sit. In the course of practicing for the presentation, students are advised on the kinds of gestures, modes of addressing the audience, tone of voice, eye contact, word choices, and attire appropriate to formal situations. All are asked to encourage questions from the audience after their presentations.

The Winners

The advantage to the students of making this transition from the written to the condensed, spoken word is obvious. Students learn to strip an argument to its bare bones and make it appealing to an audience who is usually uninformed in that particular discipline. Students gain confidence from the process of collecting the information and compiling the project. This research gives them the evidence they need to speak authoritatively in front of the group.

Students also have an opportunity to interact with faculty from various specialties: from the discipline itself, from forensics, and from the graphic arts. The presentations act as a preparation for interviews and community forums. Students gain skills that may aid them in the presentation of their ideas to employers and clients in their future work.

Additionally, students gain valuable feedback on their presentations from the question and answer time that acts as a reality check, from an evaluation of their work, and from validation for time spent on enrichment activities. It shows them that going beyond what is required can reap priceless benefits. Students consistently see the preparation for and presentation of their honors work as a high point of the semester — once they get over their panic.

The advantage to the faculty at NHC is also clear. They have the opportunity to interact with students who have a goal of improving their skills. The teachable moments are many. Faculty may talk about their areas of expertise with students who are focused and appreciative.

The Honors Program also gains. Students and faculty who attend the presentations are shown models for future interactions and presentations. They are given incentives for participating further — offering or taking contracts to become a more integral part of the Program to share in the camaraderie and scholarship that are hallmarks of Honors.

It is a win/win situation that benefits all honors students. Why aren't we all requiring it of our students?
I. Analogies and Dumbing Down

One view on the use of analogies is that analogies are for impoverished learners who cannot get it any other way. For instance, using the traffic flow on a highway as an analogy for a current flow through a resistor. The use of analogies amounts to dumbing down of the curriculum. Another view is that analogical thinking plays a pivotal role in ingenious insights. The only apple as famous as Eve’s is the one that allegedly fell off Newton’s head, whereupon the theory of gravity popped into his head.

Another view sees analogies as a means of the better-versed explaining to the less-versed. For example, a physicist explaining Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle to an English, Sociology, or Psychology colleague. Another view sees all thinking to be analogical thinking. If I have eaten hamburgers at two McGoldstein’s and they run through me in a matter of minutes, then my prediction that this McGoldstein burger will have the same effect on me is a matter of drawing an analogy. When people argue that America would benefit by adopting the excellent French childcare system, they argue that what works in France will work in the United States.

Near analogies might be called no-brain analogies. The entrepreneur who sees that ranch homes sell well in Smithville might draw the conclusion ranch homes will do well in Jonesville. A lounge lizard who picks up X on Saturday night at Rodeo Bill’s with the line, “I just hurt so much: can you help me?!” may reason that the same line may work with Y on Tuesday evening at the Warehouse. In many cases, when that lightbulb shines over your head, you’re drawing some kind of an analogy.

When we talk about learning the lessons of history, we are drawing analogies. Military strategists decided that we should fight in Vietnam based on past experiences in southeast Asia. Unfortunately for Hitler, he did not draw the analogy from Napoleon’s miserable failure in Russia.

Remote analogies are more difficult to make because the resemblances between the objects, persons, or events are less evident, or because only a few such resemblances exist. Plato’s allegory of the cave represents a remote analogy. Plato draws an analogy between the shadows and sunlight with degrees of knowing and degrees of reality. The shadows represent lower levels of reality; the sun the highest. With the increase of interdisciplinary courses, an emphasis on integrated thinking, and a desire to develop points of contact between the arts and the sciences, and between the arts and sciences and career-oriented fields, perhaps analogies can be used to provide those links.

Our presentation begins with a dialogue between a psychologist and a philosopher to determine the curriculum for a team-taught course. Instead of going the traditional route and looking for thinkers who can cross over from one discipline to the other (e.g., William James) or a loosely associated theme, we will attempt to create a curriculum according to resemblance of theories. Which theories in psychology resemble philosophic theories? What can we learn by presenting these theories together?

The bigger picture concerns the development of a curriculum according to resemblance in theories. Some questions to consider include: Could a general education curriculum be developed according to resembling theories? Would such a curriculum exclude some disciplines? How would such a curriculum enrich interdisciplinary thinking? Would such a curriculum encourage more analogical thinking among students and faculty? How would a general curriculum be reorganized according to resembling theories?

WEB ADDRESSES, 2000

The NCHC home page is linked to all regional home pages, or you can go to the regional home pages below.

NCHC
http://www.runet.edu/~nchc/

NORTHEAST
http://www.oswego.edu/nenchc

MID-EAST
http://members.xoom.com/mehapage/index.html

SOUTHERN
http://www.utm.edu/departments/acadpro/honors/srhc/

UPPER MIDWEST
http://www.ndsu.nodak.edu/instructlcinicol/html/UMHC.htm

GREAT PLAINS
http://www.okstate.edu/honors/gphc.html

WESTERN
http://nebula.honors.unr.edu/wrhc/
II. Resembling Theories: Psychology and Philosophy

A. Theories as Common Ground

The first step is to decide upon our areas of interest. During the course of several discussions, many themes were proposed and considered. Among these included opposites, relationships, happiness, death, beginnings and endings, and families. After much debate we settled on the idea of control.

The second step is to enunciate control theories.

Ann chose the following four theories:
1. Ellis' Rational Emotive Behavior Theory
   We create our own disturbed thoughts, but also have the power to change them. While we cannot change the past, we can change how the past influences us.
2. Skinner's Radical Behaviorism
   Human beings are the sum total of external and internal stimuli. All events are caused by other events in the universe. Behavior cannot be explained by mental events.
3. Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory
   Human behavior a struggle between life and death instincts. Our personalities are formed by biological drives and early childhood influences. Ultimately, we are slaves to our biologies.
4. Glasser's Reality Therapy and Choice Theory (formerly known as (Control Theory)
   People have choices and must deal with responsibilities. The only person I can control is myself.

George selected the following four theories:
1. Stoicism
   We cannot control physical events in the universe, only our reactions to them. The ideal is to become indifferent to what is happening in the world.
2. Kant's Intellectual Being
   Human beings are intellectual who can will their own chain of causality. We are more than purely physical beings. Our behavior is largely shaped by the economic relations of our society.
3. Marx's Base/Superstructure
   The religion, art, morality, and mores of a society (superstructure) are the result of the base (economic relations).
4. Sartre's Pure Choice
   No matter the circumstances, human beings have a choice. Not choosing is still a choice: a choice not to choose.

The third step is to classify the theories according to resemblance. We arrived at the following classification:
1. Radical Behaviorism/Base-Superstructure/ Psychoanalytic Theory/Stoicism
2. Reality Therapy-Choice Theory/Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy/Pure Choice/Intellectual Being
   Group 1 denies or restricts personal control of situations. Group 2 affirms or extends personal control.

The next step is to use these resembling theories as a springboard for interdisciplinary questions. We have shrink these theories into a nutshell, so many similarities and differences between the theories cannot be touched on here. Our objective is not merely to enumerate differences and similarities, but to illustrate possibilities for interdisciplinary points of contact. To that end, we pose the following questions with an added element: a specific topic to develop the theories.

We chose the eating disorder anorexia nervosa as our topic, as many theorists believe that it is a disorder caused by the efforts of the individual to gain control over his or her world by controlling weight gain. Anorexia is characterized by a marked weight loss, a fear of gaining weight, and a restriction of calorie intake, sometimes accompanied by compensatory methods for reducing weight (such as excessive exercise or purging).

1. Explain how anorexia develops according to the theories of radical behaviorism and base-structure.
2. Explain how anorexia develops according to reality therapy-choice theory and pure choice.
3. Describe how anorexia can be cured according to the theories of stoicism and psychoanalytic theory.
4. Describe how anorexia can be cured according to the rational emotive behavior and intellectual being theories.
5. Explain how anorexia develops according to the theories of radical behaviorism and reality therapy-choice theory.
6. Explain how anorexia develops according to the theories of base-superstructure and rational emotive behavior therapy.
7. Describe how anorexia can be cured according to psychoanalytic theory and pure choice.
8. Describe how anorexia can be cured according to stoicism and intellectual being theories.
9. Which combination of the theories offers the most possibilities for the description of anorexia?
10. Which combination of the theories offers the most possibilities for the cure of anorexia?

Questions 1-4 view anorexia according to similar theories. Questions 5-8 view it according to competing theories. Questions 9-10 view it
according to a synthesis of questions. Posing these questions forces students to draw analogies. If Theory X works for these reasons, then can it work in this particular case?

We can then draw explicit analogies: (1) In the same way radical behaviorism reduces anorexia to stimuli, so Psychoanalytic Theory reduces it to our biology and childhood events; (2) In the same way the base-superstructure examines anorexia according to economic relations, so reality therapy-choice theory examines it according to our personal historical relations; (3) In the same way stoicism requires us to be indifferent to reality and suggests we are different from physical reality, so the intellectual being argument places us beyond physical reality. Both suggest that society forces compelling anorexic behavior can be overcome.

B. Resembling Theories and Control across the Curriculum

What if we broadened the disciplinary scope of control and decided to examine it across the curriculum? Once again, we will use anorexia as our focal point.

Theories of Control across the Curriculum
1. Biology: Survival of the Fittest
3. Chemistry: Structural Theory
4. Sociology: Inequality Theory (Social ills can be ascribed to poverty)
5. Psychology: Reality Therapy-Choice Theory
6. Philosophy: Stoicism
7. Economics: In pure capitalism, competition is the mechanism of control. Competition forces businesses and resource suppliers to make appropriate responses.
8. Education: Sage on Stage Theory
9. Criminal/Social Justice: Retribution
10. Marketing: Classical Conditioning
11. Political Science: Elitism
12. Art: Artist as Genius
13. Religious Studies: Fatalism
14. Computer Science: Control Structures
15. Mathematics: Order of Operations
16. English: *The Awakening*
17. History: Great Man Theory
18. Nursing: Managed Care

Seeing the broad spectrum, we would be able to make all kinds of connections by drawing analogies from the theories.

1. Explain how anorexia develops according to the theories of fatalism and inequality.
2. Explain how anorexia develops according to structural and classical conditioning theories.
3. Describe how anorexia can be cured according to the great man and artist as genius theories.
4. Describe how anorexia can be cured according to the survival of the fittest and classical conditioning theories.
5. Explain how anorexia develops according to the great man and retribution theories.
6. Explain how anorexia develops according to inequality and survival of the fittest theories.
7. Describe how anorexia can be cured according to reality therapy-choice theory and inequality theory.
8. Describe how anorexia is addressed according to the fatalism and great man theories?
9. Which combination of the theories offers the most possibilities for the description of anorexia?
10. Which combination of the theories offers the most possibilities for the cure of anorexia?

From these questions, the following analogies can be drawn:

In the same way that Newton’s universal law of gravitation applies to every particle in the universe, so the classical conditioning of marketing applies to everybody exposed to mass media (in direct proportion to the exposure of the frequency of advertising).

In the same way that the Great Man Theory takes control out of the hands of everybody except a few, so the mass media takes control of the media and promotes its thin beauty agenda.

In the same way that competition forces businesses to make appropriate responses, so inequalities force people to make inappropriate (at least not to their benefit) responses.

In the same way that Structural Theory reduces everything in the universe to chemical reactions, so psychoanalytic theory reduces anorexia to physical drives.

In the same way that the artist as genius shows people what they have never seen, so the classical conditioning of advertisers compel anorexics to see their bodies in ways they have never seen.

By examining the issue of control and anorexia according to resembling theories, a much larger picture emerges. The many factors that contribute to human behavior can be grasped. Without the intellectual purview this approach offers, important aspects of anorexia remain deeply concealed. The proximate analogies drawn in the philosophy/psychology exercise are less challenging than many of the remote analogies made across the disciplines. Yet remote analogies are an effective means for tying together a cross-disciplinary curriculum.
there is the obvious inclination to assume that technology, especially computer technology can be used to enhance education. However, many articles and books have been written that call this belief into serious question. Consider the following excerpt from education psychologist Jane Healy in her recent book Failure to Connect.

"Today's children are the subjects of a vast and optimistic experiment. It is well financed and enthusiastically supported by major corporations, the public at large, and government officials around the world. If it is successful, our youngsters' minds and lives will be enriched, society will benefit, and education will be permanently changed for the better. But there is no proof — or even convincing evidence — that it will work...while some very exciting and potentially valuable things are happening between children and computers, we are currently spending far too much money with too little thought. It is past time to pause, reflect, and ask some probing questions." (Healy, 1998, p 17-18, italics mine)

With this in mind, let's back up a step and consider the character of technology and the goals of Honors education.

The 1933 Chicago World's Fair

According to John Locke in his book The De-Voicing of Society, "visitors to the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago were greeted by a sign over the entryway that said, 'SCIENCE EXPLORES: TECHNOLOGY EXECUTES: MAN CONFORMS'" (Locke, 1998). While Locke doesn't say so, one might reasonably assume that those who conceived of this motto were proud of it. But I would suggest that we should not be proud of it, as Honors educators, or even as human beings. Whatever one's view of humanity, one would hope that it incorporates the conviction that humans have too much going for them to conform to the demands of technology.

Certainly, as honors educators, we have a somewhat high view of humanity. According to the NCHC Mission Statement, the NCHC "creates, identifies, and enhances opportunities...responsive to the needs of exceptionally able and highly motivated undergraduate students" (NCHC Conference Program, 1999, p. 19). We are not in the business of encouraging these "exceptionally able and highly motivated" students to conform to the demands of technology. Whether by studying the classics, debating significant current issues, or involvement in service-learning experiences, we seek to encourage critical thought and intellectual discourse. Students learn to probe, to question, to analyze, to argue — not to conform!

The point is that there is a certain antithesis between the expectations of technology and an Honors education.

Neil Postman, Chair of the Department of Culture and Communication at New York University, states in his book Technopoly,

"...the accusation can be made that the uncontrolled growth of technology destroys the vital sources of our humanity. It creates a culture without a moral foundation. It undermines certain mental processes and social relations that make human life worth living."

(Postman, 1992, Introduction xii)

Before we jump on the technological bandwagon, we need to examine what the proper role of technology should be in Honors education.

Preparation for Life

It is practically trite to recall that education, in its truest sense, is not preparation for making a living, but is preparation for life. Aristotle believed that education was necessary for the development of good individuals and a good society. John Dewey (1968) believed that, "all education proceeds by participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race" (p. 51). Thorndike (1971) claimed that, "The need for education arises from the fact that what is is not what ought to be" (p. 12). All of these speak to the development of the individual and their contribution to society, not to training in vocational skills. In The End of Education Neil Postman states, "... at its best, schooling can be about how to make a life, which is quite different from how to make a living" (Postman, 1995, Introduction x).

From our current vantage point it seems probable that technological development is going to continue into the foreseeable future, that the pace of development is rapid and increasing, and that people will have to increasingly deal with issues surrounding technological development. Take the Internet for example. Already there are questions about privacy, freedom of expression, intellectual property, addictive behaviors, ecommerce and taxation, censorship, information glut, and other issues. People who can critically analyze, correctly interpret, and draw reasoned conclusions are, and will be, needed to help resolve these issues in ways that are helpful to individuals and society as a whole. Postman (1995) says that schools should "provide ... a serious form of technology instruction ... making technology itself an object of inquiry" (p. 43). The goal would be for students to "become more interested in asking questions about the computer than in getting answers from it" (p. 44).

To ensure that there are such people in society we need to be sure that students are educated in such a way as to promote and develop these capabilities and that they are aware that there are issues related to the increasing use of
technology. Thus, one part of the equation relating technology and Honors education is for students to explore the social costs of technology and to learn what some of the important issues are related to technology. By learning to critically examine technology, identifying costs as well as benefits, students will be better prepared to participate in the discussions that must occur in the years ahead.

Honors Education as a Model of Excellence

In the “Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program” (NCHC Conference Program, 1999, p. 21) point number seven states that the Honors program should provide “standards and models of excellence for students and faculty.” An application of this principle is that Honors education should model effective use of instructional technology. “While it is true that much of what has been done in the sphere of instructional technology has been ineffective thus far, there are pointers to possible constructive uses.

In particular, the effective use of computers in instructional activities has two important facets: (1) making appropriate changes in the way instruction is done, and (2) using appropriate applications. Jane Healy in Failure to Connect asserts,

“Successful integration of classroom technology implies changes of huge magnitude in educational philosophy, classroom management, and curricular goals. "The common belief... is that if one simply teaches teachers how to use computers and telecommunications and provides the necessary equipment, classroom teaching, and learning will improve automatically. Nothing could be farther from the truth. For technologies to be used optimally, teachers must be comfortable with a constructivist or project-based, problem-solving approach to learning.”” (Healy, 1998, p.68)

Again, referring to the “Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program,” point 13 asserts that “the honors curriculum should serve as a prototype for educational practices that can work campus-wide in the future” (NCHC Conference Program, 1999, p. 22). Honors education provides a unique opportunity to explore nontraditional instructional techniques in which computers can play an effective part. Group-based project work in which the computer is used to analyze data is one example of how this can be done. In general, using the computer as a tool in support of constructive, problem-solving activities is an effective way to use technology in the educational process.

Computer use can also be effective when appropriate applications, such as interactive simulations, are used in instruction. For example, in an introductory computer class for non-Computer Science majors I have used a simulation to help students understand how a computer actually operates. This includes understanding that all information is actually stored in numeric form using binary numbers and that program instructions are fetched from memory to the CPU before they are executed. Students who generally consider themselves technologically unsophisticated write simple programs in binary that “run” on the simulated computer. They are able to “see” what actually goes on when a computer program is entered and executed. The understanding that is gained from using the simulation would be difficult to gain otherwise.

Conclusion

In some ways the demands of technology and the goals of Honors education do not mesh. But the problem is not unique to Honors education. Students need to be aware of the many complex issues related to technology especially as it becomes more pervasive. Students need to grapple with these issues and make judgments about appropriate and inappropriate uses of technology in light of the costs to individuals and society. As students explore issues about the appropriate uses of technology, appropriate use must be modeled in the Honors education both by employing technology as a tool in group-based, problem-solving type activities, and in using applications that provide learning opportunities that it would be difficult to achieve in other ways.

References


NCHC Conference Program (1999)


From the Small College Committee (Tammy Ostrander)

The NCHC Executive Committee has approved of the charge to each NCHC committee including criteria, when applicable. Affiliation with the Small College Honors Program Committee (SMACOHOP) is limited to four-year institutions with a maximum enrollment of 4001 undergraduate students OR a program size fewer than 76 students. NCHC records through March 2000 indicate that 228 NCHC institutional members are identified as members of the Small College committee. The charge to the committee includes maintaining and expanding its membership, sharing interests, clarifying distinctive qualities of small colleges, contributing to NCHC publications, and developing presentations and programs appropriate to specific needs of small colleges. Co-chairs for 2000 are Donna Menis (Saint Francis College, Loretto, PA) & Shirley Forbes Thomas (John Brown University AR) — Editor

“SMACOHOP on the Web”
by Hud Reynolds, Web Master, St. Leo College (FL)

Suppose a gifted, computer savvy prospective student wanted to research smaller honors programs at colleges and universities. Is there a site on the Internet that features a link directly to your honors home page, providing contact information, and permitting comparison with other similar sized programs in your region of the country? Well, yes, there is now such a site. Shouldn’t you be familiar with this site? Familiar enough to ensure that the information about your program is current and correct?

Clip this article. Then visit www.saintleo.edu/scnchc for a guided tour of the official SMACOHOP web site. Remember to bookmark it before you leave. You will be ever so thankful you did, for the site is designed to serve both new honors directors, looking for information and advice, and experienced directors, seeking to maintain professional contacts, as well as prospective students hunting for cool links.

The site provides a panoply of services, including a database of smaller honors program URLs and email addresses, committee member and officer listings, general and regional listservs, a calendar of events, a message board, an online handbook, downloadable conference proceedings, timely articles, a help wanted section, a FAQ page, and that collection of ultra-cool links. This article will take you through each of these services, briefly describing them, explaining how they might prove useful, and in some cases giving step-by-step instruction in their use.

I. Using the membership pages to locate your program’s URL

Besides identifying current committee members and officers, the committee members page furnishes phone numbers, email and U.S. snail mail addresses. The rest of the membership pages are divided into regions corresponding to the NCHC regional organizations. The university and colleges are listed alphabetically by region. If you are unsure about the region, look through the listing of states by region. A few states are divided between regions, so you may have to look through two regional listings.

II. Making corrections to the web site

Once you have found your university or college, please review the link to your institution’s web site by clicking on the university or college name. In cases where honors programs have dedicated web pages, the URL should link directly to the relevant honors page. Clicking on the director’s name, listed to the right of the institution, should automatically bring up a blank email message form. Check the email address to see if it is complete and correct. If your program is currently unlisted or any of the information displayed is incorrect, click on the web master’s address at the bottom of the page and send him the correct information: to insure that he receives the message put the words “SCNCHC correction” in the subject line of the message. He will reply to your message when the correction has been made.

III. Using the listservs

A listserv is a collection of email addresses that can be reached by means of a message mailed to a single address. Members may subscribe or unsubscribe to a listserv. Subscribers receive all mail posted to the listserv address. The NCHC general listserv is scnchc@saintleo.edu. Each of the regions of the SMACOHOP has its own listserv, which is to be found on the regional page. The SMACOHOP general listserv simply addresses the individual regional listserv. A tip is in order here: one way of handling the volume of mail issuing from a listserv is to create a special folder and to direct all messages coming from the listserv into that folder by the use of a filter. This technique prevents the in box from becoming overcrowded and allows the recipient to view the listserv mail when convenient. Since many
people tend to delete incoming messages that seem irrelevant at the moment they are received, it is often better to use a site’s message board to post general inquiries.

IV. Using the message board

The SMACOHOP message board is divided into two separate windows or frames. The subject titles of the messages along with the names of their authors and the posting date appear in the top frame. The entire list can be scrolled either by using the up/down cursors or by dragging the scroll icon immediately to the right of the frame. Clicking on a subject title in the top frame brings the message into the bottom frame where it can be read in its entirety. The options in the lower frame allow you to move through the messages either forwards or backwards or to post a new message or to reply to a message. When posting a reply, avoid the common catastrophe of selecting the “Post” option from the menu above your message. Everything you have written will vanish as a fresh page is brought up. Instead, select the option “Post” from below the message and wait a bit. The program will do its mysterious work, and eventually you will be informed that your message has been properly saved. My students so enjoy using message boards to communicate ideas outside of class that they promptly email me whenever a board malfunctions (or refuses to accept their message).

V. Using the Calendar Page

The calendar page permits the committee to post schedules and messages relating to the next planned event—in other words, news! This is the page to visit several weeks prior to the annual NCHC national convention. It also contains a few links to material that was formerly featured on the calendar. Those seeking a specific source of information, such as a sample syllabus, mission statement, or program assessment, may wish to post to the help wanted section. Simply send the webmaster an email message with the subject title “SCNCHC help wanted” and the ending date for the advertisement. There is no charge for placing help wanted solicitations.

VI. Reading and Downloading Small College Handbook

When the committee originally approved the web site, it foresaw its principal application to be distributing documents that would prove especially helpful to new directors. The committee sought and obtained permission from the NCHC publication board to place on line Small College Handbook, recently revised in 1999 by Sam Schuman, a former NCHC president (1992). It is available in two forms: as an online hypertext document and as a downloadable Adobe® Acrobat “pdf” file. The main advantage of the “pdf” file is that the entire handbook can be printed out in its original distribution form using the freely distributed Acrobat reader. Towards the end of the revised handbook, you will discover a list of recommended readings. They are well-selected and very useful readings indeed, but they are also somewhat difficult to obtain. You should be able to download the handbook soon.

VII. Downloading conference proceeding

One of the most rewarding and entertaining undertakings of SMACHOP has been the organization of an annual symposium on a timely issue with the delivery of papers by some of the most original and best minds within the honors movement. Always striking in the diversity of approaches represented and in the give-and-take between imaginative presenters and the irrepressible audience, of these conference proceedings have been published as monographs and are available in “pdf” format from the web site.

VIII. FAQ (frequently asked questions):

While constructing this site, I discovered that some questions concerning honors keep reappearing. There are perhaps no definitive answers, but others have labored to find them over the years, drawing more or less satisfying conclusions. I have posted two samples responses to such frequently asked questions, one from the former 10 year-veteran committee chair, Ann Raia, and one from me. If you happen to be an experienced director, I would urge you to make a contribution of your own. Consider it another opportunity for electronic publication.

IX. Things to come:

The Internet has grown so quickly and the tools available for maintaining web sites are developing so rapidly that it is difficult to keep up with the latest developments and techniques. New opportunities for improving communication appear almost daily. There will undoubtedly be changes in store for the SMACHOP web site, and I would hope that they would be driven by the expressed needs of the users. We would, for instance, like to furnish a running digest of the messages on the NCHC general listserv that bear on honors programs at small colleges and universities. We would also like to present a stable of advisors as a resource for particular areas. There is no reason that “Beginning in Honors” and “Continuing in Honors,” two staples of the national meeting, can’t be continued year round.

Photocopy this article before visiting the site so that you will have it beside the monitor as you glide easily from one page to the next. We guarantee that we won’t smack you with pop-up advertising banners that just won’t go away no matter how many close-window buttons you click, nor will we steer you to “Victoria’s Secret Hide-Away” (any credit card accepted). But there is always the possibility that without a dependable guide, you may miss some item of tremendous interest to you. So hold firmly to this article and direct your browser to http://www.saintleo.edu/scnchc.
"Long Range Planning: NCHC’s Challenges Ahead"
by Ted Humphrey, Arizona State

Long Range Planning Committee — April 2000

TO: Joan Digby, President, NCHC (2000)

I am writing in response to your request for items to come before NCHC’s Long-Range Planning Committee. You asked that I detail some issues the NCHC organization must address in order to operate effectively in the emerging higher educational environment. I believe focusing on three issues will allow us to address most of the challenges that face honors education over the next decade.

Increasingly, people are recognizing that public institutions must attract and educate competitively large numbers of high achieving students. Increasingly, education is explicitly acknowledged as a bastion of democratic society and necessary condition for economic development, particularly as economic development is identified with participation in the new economy, that is, the economy of ideas. This places significant pressure on higher educational institutions to provide high quality education for a larger number of students. NCHC must address the question whether it falls to honors programs not only to lead institutions in the development of pedagogy but also to lead them in terms of deepening the curriculum and making it more rigorous, creating a curriculum that leads to creativity.

• Transmuting honors programs to honors colleges continues to accelerate. The motives behind this are probably mixed. In many instances, the change is made with an eye to increasing competitiveness for strong students. NCHC must straightforwardly address the issue whether the motivation behind such changes ought to have more to do with offering students a richer, more highly articulated educational experience. If so, what is the nature of such an experience, that is, what does it mean to have an honors education, and in what does an honors course and an honors curriculum properly consist. NCHC has been resolutely descriptive in dealing with honors education. The organization needs to explore whether to hazard prescriptions with respect to honors education.

• What are the appropriate career paths for persons wanting to be involved in honors education and for persons who want to lead honors programs and colleges? Further, what stand if any is NCHC to take on issues of proper preparation for leadership roles in honors education? In the disciplines, one can readily map out the career path persons properly follow to advance administratively. Honors directors and deans have not forthrightly discussed this issue, and as honors programs and colleges gain visibility and importance at their institutions, as their curricula become more highly refined, and as increasing numbers of high level administrative positions open up, it is incumbent on NCHC to think through appropriate career paths for honors educators.

• Finally, in which of the national higher educational organizations ought NCHC involve itself? In what ways should the organization become involved? To what end should the organization become involved? Finally, how is it to become involved?

These I think are important long-range issues NCHC should begin to address systematically if it is to serve institutions and students well.
"Conference 1999: The President's Report"
by Joan Digby, Long Island University — C.W. Post Campus

This report is a summary derived in part from the CMS [Convention Management Services] conference report and NCHC calculations. I have also kept my own figures based on transactions throughout the conference year. Although my summary report is a hybrid, it should provide reassurance that our two accounting methods (CMS cash and NCHC accrual) can arrive at the same conclusion. I chose to do my own independent running account without commitment to either method. These are my results, arrived at with some consultations and confirmations from CMS and NCHC, and you will find that they are in general agreement with the final report that will come from Earl Brown's office.

In short, no matter how you cut it, we have a conference surplus of about $60,000. This was not the anticipated result, as all of our calculations were based on a plan to break even. But a few factors contributed to the surplus.

1. We did not have a Gala and therefore did not rent a cultural facility (which might have cost up to $50,000). One of our alternative events, Sea World — was given to us at an enormous reduction and the result was a saving of about $30,000.

2. Another Gala alternative, the pool party, should have cost more money. Because we underestimated the crowd we ordered too little food. On the night of the event, when the crowd swelled, we literally ordered all of the remaining food available in the hotel. It was not enough. The event should have cost an additional $15,000.

3. Valencia Community College contributed an extraordinary sum as local arrangement host. $16,336.

Had we put into the conference figures 1, 2 & 3 from above, we would have spent the additional $60,000. Although I apologize for the surplus, this cushion does give us an opportunity to consider some new directions that NCHC might take. I will be consulting with both the Finance and Investment committees about our obligations with respect to this money. At the same time, I am inviting suggestions from the membership and hope that I can bring a number of good ideas to the Executive Retreat this coming July. I encourage you to come forward with suggestions about how this windfall might open up new doors for NCHC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>INCOME</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Express</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alas, a bounced check</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL INCOME</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>EXPENSES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(including all food audio visual, gratuities &amp; business expenses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing (including program)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer rental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phones, fax, copy &amp; postage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference temps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City as Text©</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gala Alternatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising (for the Chronicle &amp; logo items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site visits and planning (includes pre-99 expenses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS wages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planner fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADA compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit card fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refunds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL SURPLUS**

**$58,201.17**

**Our thanks again to Valencia Community College for its generous in-kind contribution of $16,336.47**

---

Joan Digby — the President of the NCHC, actively seeking to strengthen NCHC's national reputation.
"From the Home Front"
by Earl B. Brown, Jr., Executive Secretary/Treasurer, NCHC

Beginning a new year, a new term (thank you), a new millennium is a time for reflection. Where has the NCHC been? Where is the NCHC going? To answer both questions, we must answer the following: What is the National Collegiate Honors Council? I know of no better place to start than with the MISSION STATEMENT:

Established in 1966, NCHC is an organization of colleges and universities, faculty members, students, administrators and others interested in supporting honors education.

NCHC seeks to enhance opportunities (academic, cultural, and social) responsive to the educational needs of highly able and/or exceptionally motivated undergraduate students. Specifically, the purposes of NCHC are to stimulate development of new honors programs in colleges and universities; to support and nurture the growth of existing honors programs; to promote an awareness of honors learning within higher education; to create enriched educational opportunity for honors students; to assist honors programs in improving intellectual discourse on campuses in ways advantageous to all students and faculty; and to advance the professional standing and expertise of honors educators.

NCHC seeks to reach these goals through communication among its membership and through the creation and support of model programs. Specifically, NCHC sponsors:

- national, regional and state conferences and forums organized to inform and support beginning and continuing honors programs, educators, and students;
- publications, both periodical and occasional, devoted to issues, research, and current development in honors teaching and learning;
- trans-institutional model or pilot academic programs for honors students;
- committees and programs serving specific constituencies and/or addressing special issues of importance in honors;
- inter-institutional honors student honors exchange programs;
- assistance in the evaluation and planning of honors programs;
- special projects which advance undergraduate honors education.

Additionally, NCHC continually seeks out and supports other means to provide resources for the enrichment of local honors programs or the honors movement in general.

That being said, what have we done in the past year to further this mission? One important development has been the revision of the Constitution, ByLaws and Standing Orders. As Bob Spurrier said in the Spring 1999 issue of The National Honors Report, in which he announced his goals for the year, [we need] “to transform our Constitution, ByLaws, Standing Orders, and committee structure and responsibilities from a patchwork of bits and pieces originally developed for a relatively small organization into a coherent set of rules for the governance of a large and dynamic organization” (34). Working with an outdated Constitution made it that much more difficult to further our mission.

A second development last year was the publication of the second edition of Peterson’s Honors Programs. This publication has furthered the mission in several ways: (1) it stimulates “development of new honors programs” — the more publicity honors receives, the more colleges and universities realize the need to have an honors program to attract better students (see Mission Statement); (2) it supports and nurtures “the growth of existing honors programs” — the publicity given existing honors programs profiled in Peterson’s enhance their ability to recruit students, to gain more recognition on their own campus, and might even provide additional support from their institution; and (3) it promotes “an awareness of honors learning within higher education”—this guide brings attention to the honors movement within higher education in ways that the NCHC was unable to do before (quotes are from Mission Statement).

This guide and other public relations endeavors have made the honors movement a hot item nationally over the last several years, receiving notice in national news magazines and newspapers. Many of these articles have commented that enrolling in an honors program is a way to get an “Ivy League Education” at state university prices. Our work with Peterson’s and with the Kettering Foundation to create a National Issues Forums Pamphlet have certainly furthered our mission, providing an awareness and recognition for honors as an important movement in postsecondary education.

Another development, the creation of a certified list of NCHC recommended honors consultants, has also “advanced the professional standing and expertise of honors educators” (Mission Statement). During the past year, the Honors Evaluation Committee has certified the first group of honors educators to serve as site visitors/consultants/evaluators. This is a positive step for the NCHC and honors in general. By offering workshops which provide training for honors educators, this committee has not only enhanced the professional status of honors educators but insured that site visits will be done professionally and effectively in the future.
A fourth development, the work of the Long Range Planning Committee, has led to a series of proposals which would enhance the image of the NCHC with other higher education organizations. All of its nine proposals (see the Winter 2000 issue of The National Honors Report) would further our mission. Its first (“Define NCHC’s role as a shaper of policy and an educational leader”) and fourth (“the possibility of a permanent executive director”) initiatives (12), for instance, would both “promote an awareness of honors learning within higher education” and “advance the professional standing and expertise of honors educators.”

Other developments, not restricted to the past year alone, have been the work of three committees (Honors Semesters, International Education, and the Portz Fund and NCHC Grants) “to create enriched educational opportunity for honors students” (Mission). The Honors Semesters Committee, in particular, through the growth of Honors Semesters and Faculty Institutes, has provided opportunities to honors students, faculty and administrators which have had an impact far beyond honors at colleges and universities. This committee has taught faculty how to use experiential learning as a teaching and learning strategy, has made students more globally and culturally aware, and by so doing has “improved intellectual discourse on campuses in ways advantageous to all students and faculty.” This committee’s Faculty Institutes have also “advanced the professional standing and expertise of honors educators.”

In many ways the work of the Portz Fund has paralleled the work of the Honors Semesters Committee. Through grants the Portz Fund has “enriched educational opportunities,” “has improved intellectual discourse” and “has advanced the professional standing of honors educators” (Mission). I cannot leave this section without mentioning the support of John and Edythe Portz whose generosity has made much of this possible. They provide money for Honors Semesters scholarships and funding for Portz Grants.

The International Education Committee has not been as successful as either the Honors Semesters and the Portz Fund but in its own way is working to make honors students and faculty aware of educational opportunities abroad. Thanks to Ron Brandolini, Director of the Honors Program at Valencia Community College, many of us have become aware of the importance of providing travel abroad opportunities for our own students. Marnie Jones (Director of the Honors Program at the University of North Florida and currently co-chair of the International Education Committee), Lydia Daniel (Director at Hillsborough Community College in Tampa) and others have created such opportunities for their students. As Ron has repeatedly said, “if we are truly educating our students to think globally, to work in a global economy, then we need to show them what global means” (NHR, Winter 1996, 12).

And finally, the work of constituency committees and the regions has also furthered the mission of NCHC in many of the ways already discussed above. But what these two groups have done well is provide information to stimulate the development, and support and nurture the growth of honors. Because these groups have something in common beyond being honors programs/colleges, they are able to address concerns unique to their region or constituency. Due to smaller budgets, this has been particularly important to small colleges and two year schools who often must find creative ways to solve problems.

I don’t mean to neglect the conference but I also don’t want to create the impression that NCHC and its annual conference are synonymous. So much of what the NCHC does to further its mission occurs outside the confines and context of the conference — for instance, its journals and monographs, satellite seminars, faculty workshops and the activities discussed above. Yet, more than any other single activity with which the NCHC is involved, this activity furthers the mission best. The information, the exchanges that occur, the chit-chat in the halls or at dinner and the sessions themselves provide other programs with ideas and resources to strengthen honors education nationally. All of the mission is furthered during the annual conference. The development of Beginning-in-Honors, its sequels — Developing and Students-in-Honors, and City as Text© has provided many directors, faculty and students with ideas to enhance their own programs and their institutions.

I am pleased at the progress the NCHC has made in furthering its mission to advance honors education. But I am disturbed at how few people have actually played a part in the activities and work of the organization and how few people vote in our elections. Both Bob Spurrier and Joan Digby have urged more members to become involved—to serve on a committee, to run for office. So, looking to the future, I would suggest that in order for us to continue to further our mission, we must get more people actively involved in the work of the organization. Joan believes that until more members become actively involved, it will be very difficult to take the next step: making honors, honors education, and the NCHC a national presence.

Where has the NCHC been? It has done an excellent job in furthering its mission through the work of a small minority of the membership. Where is the NCHC going? That depends on you.
Executive Secretary/Treasurer’s Report, June 2000
by Earl B. Brown, Jr.

Financial Report

The books for the year ended 1999 have been closed. A clean opinion was issued by our auditor as a result of the financial review. (The Finance Committee mandated an audit every six years or whenever a new Executive Secretary-Treasurer is elected and a financial review in the other years; our last audit occurred for the year ended 1997.)

For the year ended 1999 the NCHC had an operating excess of approximately $135,000 (General Fund $75,000; Conference Fund $60,000). All outstanding bills have been paid and Reserve Fund requirements have been met — 1/2 (conference 2000 budget [$294,000] + 1/2 headquarters 2000 budget [$109,000]) = $201,500. The total in Reserve Fund as of 12/31/99 was $302,600; therefore, the excess of $135,000 is to be invested as follows: $7,000 will fund scholarships (see Standing Orders under Scholarship, Prizes and Grants); and $128,000 will be invested in the Endowment Fund.

Let me quickly review the procedure for handling excess. According to the principles established by the Investment Committee, Conference and General Fund surpluses are to be used in the following manner: (1) pay outstanding bills; (2) add funds to the reserve fund, if necessary, so that it is, at least, at the minimum mandated level; (3) provide scholarship funds according to the NCHC Standing Orders; and then (4) any remaining funds are invested in the endowment fund. The Investment Committee in consultation with a financial consultant will determine the specifics of the investments in the reserve and endowment funds.

Although that is the current procedure, the president would like to propose a different use for some of the monies earmarked for the Endowment Fund. We will discuss this use during the retreat and the Executive Committee meeting. Until then, the money will be placed in a money market account managed by our financial advisor at Salomon, Smith, Barney.

Report on the 1999 Conference

As Joan Digby stated in her report on the 1999 conference in this issue, the conference made approximately $60,000. On a spreadsheet, I listed income and expenses for the 1999 conference as well as an estimated budget for the 2000 conference. That spreadsheet is the final report on the 1999 conference. It shows revenues of $346,484 and expenses of $286,253. The net income from the conference is $60,230 in round numbers.

I have also reconciled CMS’ cash based 1999 final report to the NCHC and our accrual based report on the conference. Keep in mind that CMS’ report is not strictly a report on the conference but is, instead, a report on the activity of the NCHC checking account which CMS handles for the NCHC.

Quarterly Reports

The first quarter 2000 financial report was mailed to members of the Executive Committee on April 13. As you read, the revenues were at 23% of the expected year’s total while expenses were at 21% of the expected year’s total. In comparison to first quarter 1999 report: our revenues are 4% higher while expenses are 3% lower (the 1999 first quarter numbers represented 24% of revenues and 23% of expenses). Please feel free to ask questions about these reports.

Membership Report

As of 12-31-99, we had 1363 members listed in the database (739I, 457P, 138S, 29C). At the end of 1999 the NCHC had 222 more members than at the end of 1998. We have 73 more institutional members, 94 more professional members, 56 more student members and 1 fewer complimentary member. The increase I believe was due in part to the spirited nature of the election and the publishing of the second edition of the Peterson’s Honors Programs. Nineteen new institutional memberships are directly attributed to the reprinting of the guide. I don’t believe that the jump in membership is sustainable. By the end of 2000, we should have a total membership in the mid 1100’s, a range which we have maintained since 1996. [See membership 1998 - May 1, 2000.]

In 1999 we mailed out 87 starter packs. Of those, approximately 80% now hold memberships (63 institutions and 7 non-member professionals), an increase of 7% over last year’s rate.

Other Information

1. Conference Attendance: I once again reviewed conference attendance data. What I noticed was how similar the percentages were to the those who attended in 1996, 1997 and 1998. For example, 44% of the attendees in 1996 were students, 46% in 1997, 47.5% in 1998, and approximately 46% in 1999. What has changed is the number of non-members attending and the percentage of student presenters: in 1999 we had no non-members in attendance because of our change in Bylaws while in 1996 approximately 10% of our attendees were non-members. Although we once again had a change in conference format, still some 64% of presenters were students as compared to 51% in 1998 but 64% in 1997 and 61% in 1996.
I don't want to make more of these numbers than the fact that they give us some idea who is attending our conference. As to whether we make changes dependent on that information is up to future program planning committees. What struck me was that only 30% of the participants attended both the conference in San Francisco and Atlanta while approximately 33% attended both the conference in Atlanta and Chicago. As we all know, what is important is not who returns year after year but which institutions return. That information is currently not available—but will be available for those who attend the 1999 conference. We will, in fact, have information (I hope by our July meeting) as to what percentage of institutions have returned for the last several years. That information may be of great value in reviewing anchor sites and in determining where to hold our conferences over the next several years.

But what that information does indicate is that having anchor cities as was approved by the Executive Committee at the 1998 spring meeting should pose no problem to City as Text© given the fact that only 30% attended both in 1996 and 1997 conferences, 32% attended both in 1997 and 1998 conferences.

2. Mary Bradford’s Income and Expenses and contract renewal — We need to keep in mind that all services performed for us by CMS which are not part of the negotiated contract must be negotiated with CMS. For instance, we agreed to pay CMS, beginning with the 1997 conference, 10% of the dues that CMS collects as part of registration. This came to $2,325 in 1999, $2,726 in 1998 and $2,831 in 1997. At the Spring 1999 meeting of the Executive Committee, it decided no longer to have CMS collect dues in conjunction with registration beginning with the 2000 conference. We also have agreed to pay CMS 60% of late fees. When, therefore, the Interim Operations Board chooses to refund late fees, the NCHC is not just giving back the $40 but is taking $25 out of its own pockets. When we ask Mary Bradford to help select sites for the Retreat/Executive Committee meetings, her fee is $500 a day plus expenses. I have sent the Executive Committee a copy of the NCHC contractual history with CMS so I won’t belabor our recent attempts to renegotiate the contract. Our current contract with CMS expires after the 2003 conference in Chicago. The purpose for the revision was to provide a more realistic understanding of the actual per person costs paid to CMS for its services, instead of paying a per person fee + a percentage of late fees collected, labor for typing names on name badges and the cost of renting a computer from CMS. But this in no way would have affected arrangements for meetings. It is my understanding that Mary Bradford wishes to address the Executive Committee at this meeting concerning our contract.

3. Conference Sites
1. 2000 Washington, DC — The Washington Hilton and Towers has asked us to change our meeting dates from October 25-29 to Oct. 18-22. They have made a major concession in reducing the costs for hotel rooms — originally the cost was $189 for a single, $199 for a double, $209 for a triple, and $219 for a quad. We have accepted their proposal of $157 for a single and $187 for a double, triple, or quad.

2. Conferences 2001 and 2003 Chicago; 2002 — Mary has successfully negotiated with the Hilton Corporation to change our site for 2001 because we have outgrown the Minneapolis Hilton. The Palmer House has agreed to take us in 2001 and rebate some of the profits to Minneapolis (so that we do not have to pay contract stipulated damages) if we agree to return in 2003 to the Palmer House.

Mary Bradford and Esther Radinger have visited the Hyatt and the Hilton in San Francisco as possible sites in 2002. Both were too expensive. The Executive Committee approved the concept of two anchor sites (Chicago and San Francisco) which would be the site of our conference once every four years. The dates are as follows:
- 2000 October 18-22 Washington, Hilton and Towers
- 2001 October 31-November 4 Chicago, Palmer House Hilton
- 2002 October 31-November 3 Salt Lake City, Little America Hotel and Towers
- 2003 November 5-9 Chicago, Palmer House Hilton

4. Interim Operations Board Meeting — The IOB did not meet formally this year. Instead, we have talked on the phone approximately every two weeks. Any action which required Executive Committee approval has already been solicited. I sent all members of the IOB end of the year information concerning the conference, the budget and other preliminary end of the year financial information, and draft copies of minutes of the Executive Committee and Business meetings.

5. Regional Conferences — At the fall 1999 Conference, then President Bob Spurrier and other officers met with officers from the regions to discuss NCHC representation at the regional conference. All regions were eager to have such representation. Each of the officers attended a different regional conference with Joan Digby attending two. I know that Bob came back from the Upper Midwest with some of their concerns about the national conference. I hope that he will share those concerns during the Executive Committee meeting. Other officers may have similar concerns to share from their attendance at one or more regional meetings.
Membership Changes
1998 - 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Institutional</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Non-Member Professional</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Complimentary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 (May 1)</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% CHANGE 1998 TO 2000</td>
<td>+11%</td>
<td>+19%</td>
<td>-29%</td>
<td>+3.7%</td>
<td>-3%</td>
<td>+6.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANNUAL ELECTIONS

ELECTIONS FOR FACULTY AND STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE NCHC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND FOR THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE NCHC WILL TAKE PLACE LATE FALL.

LOOK FOR A LIST OF CANDIDATES IN THE NEXT ISSUE. FURTHER NOMINATIONS CAN BE MADE FROM THE FLOOR AT THE BUSINESS MEETING AT CONFERENCE 2000. YOUR NCHC HANDBOOK WILL GIVE YOU THE REQUIREMENTS FOR NOMINATION.

BALLOTS WILL BE MAILED TO MEMBERS AFTER THE CONFERENCE. PLEASE VOTE. TOO MANY OF OUR MEMBERS CHOSE NOT TO VOTE IN LAST YEAR'S ELECTION.
General Announcement

The National Collegiate Honors Council is pleased to announce the resurrection of its refereed journal, formerly titled Forum for Honors, now renamed Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council (JNCHC). The journal will appear twice a year in fall/winter (with a submission deadline of September 1) and spring/summer (deadline: March 1). After the first issue, the journal will alternate between a theme-oriented issue in the fall/winter and a general issue in the spring/summer.

Formerly housed at the State University of New York at Oswego and splendidly edited by Dr. Sara Varhus, the journal is now housed in the Honors Program of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, where it will be co-edited by Dr. Ada Long (Honors Director and Professor of English), Dr. Dail Mullins (Associate Director and Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, with a Ph.D. in Biochemistry), and Mr. Rusty Rushton (Assistant Director and Adjunct Lecturer in English). Mr. Jerrald Boswell, alumnus of the UAB Honors Program, will serve as Editorial Assistant.

The first issue is a festschrift in honor of Dr. Catherine Cater, an early and lasting influence on honors education in America. The issue is guest-edited by Dr. Anne Ponder, President of Colby-Sawyer College, and Dr. Samuel Schuman, Chancellor of the University of Minnesota, Morris. The theme of this issue is “Liberal Education,” and contributors include Drs. Bernice Braid, Ted Estess, Jim Herbert, Carol Kolmerten, Anne Ponder, Sam Schuman, and Paul Strong.

The subsequent issue, scheduled for fall/winter 2000-01 publication, will focus on “Science in Honors” (see “Call for Papers” on page 7).

The spring/summer issue of 2001 will be a general issue, and we are happy to begin consideration of submissions for this issue as well. Any topic related to Honors education is welcome (see “Editorial Policy” below). We are especially interested in locating articles that were submitted and accepted for publication in the old Forum for Honors. Several years ago, after Sara Varhus had stepped down as editor, an issue of FFH was assembled but never published, and submissions accepted for the issue were lost. We have no way to find these submissions other than asking — as we do now — that the authors resubmit them to the new journal, where we can follow through on the old promise to publish them. We ask that these authors include with the resubmission copies of correspondence related to its earlier acceptance.

The fall/winter (2001-02) issue will focus on the creative arts in honors, and we ask that you begin considering submissions on this topic.

Editorial Policy

Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council is a periodical publishing scholarly articles on honors education. Articles may include analyses of trends in teaching methodology, articles on interdisciplinary efforts, discussions of problems common to honors programs, items on the national higher education agenda, and presentations of emergent issues relevant to honors education.

Submissions may be forwarded in hard copy, on disk, or as an e-mail attachment. Submissions and inquiries should be directed to:

Editors
JNCHC
UAB Honors Program
HOH
1530 3rd Avenue South
Birmingham, AL 35294-4450

Phone: (205) 934-3228
Fax: (205) 975-5493
E-mail: adalong@uab.edu

Deadlines
March 1 (for spring/summer issue)
September 1 (for fall/winter issue)

Editors
Ada Long (English), Director of the University Honors Program and Professor of English, University of Alabama at Birmingham
D. W. Mullins, Jr. (Biochemistry), Associate Director of the University Honors Program and Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Alabama at Birmingham
Rusty Rushton (English), Assistant Director of the University Honors Program and Adjunct Lecturer in English, University of Alabama at Birmingham

Editorial Board
Gary M. Bell (Early Modern British History), Dean of the University Honors College and Professor of History, Texas Tech University
Bernice Braid (Comparative Literature), Dean of Academic and Instructional Resources, Director of the University Honors Program, Long Island University, Brooklyn
A Note to Contributors

Submissions to The National Honors Report should focus on the nuts and bolts of honors written for honors directors and honors faculty, whether experienced or not, and honors students, whether coming into or leaving an honors program or college. Membership in the National Collegiate Honors Council, publisher of the NHR, is not required in order to submit an article.

Suggested areas of interest include improving a program’s standing within the college or university, choosing or handling honors theses, developing an honors orientation, faculty development, curriculum, and the structure of a program or college. Budgets, fund raising, and scholarships are also possible topics. These suggestions are not meant to be exclusive.

Membership in the National Collegiate Honors Council is constantly changing, so the NHR welcomes your expertise, even if your focus concerns issues raised in the past. What you might consider standard or typical usually proves to be innovative to new directors or to those forming or revitalizing an honors program or college.

Submissions can be sent on disk (Word© or WordPerfect©) or by e-mail. If possible, send hard copy by mail as well, just in case of computer glitches. No faxes. Submissions have no minimum or maximum length. Long articles can be presented in parts across two consecutive issues if necessary. Once your article is accepted, you can send a good black-and-white picture and brief caption for inclusion. Pictures can be returned if so indicated. Acknowledgment of submissions will be done around NHR’s, deadlines of May 10, July 10, and November 10.

You can send your submissions to
Margaret Brown (editor)
606 Third Avenue
Radford, VA 24141
1-540-639-3414
e-mail mcbrown@runet.edu
"Beyond Getting Out the News: How Publications Board 1999 Newsletter Award Winners (and Others) Did It"

by Rita Barnes, Aaron Bibb & Connie Hood, Tennessee Technological University

Contestants in the 1999 Publications Board National Honors Newsletter Contest demonstrated a distinctively wide range of strengths, reflecting the equally diverse strengths and personalities of the honors students, faculty, programs, and institutions that produce effective newsletters.

Winning entries in our seventh annual competition were announced at the 1999 NCHC conference in Orlando this fall. They are:

Category A (newsletters created and run by students):
First prize, Femmes d’Esprit, College of New Rochelle, Editor Jennifer Horbal
Second prize, The Endeavor, Ferris State University, Editors Carrie Ziegler & Doug Ward

Category B (newsletters produced either entirely by faculty/staff, or by a cooperative effort of students and faculty/staff):
First prize, The Spillikin, Christ College-Valparaiso University, Editor Margaret Franson
Second prize, arete, University of Houston, Editor Herbert Rothschild, Jr.

We invite all programs to enter their newsletters in next year’s contest. Because we hope to continue seeing so many different kinds of newsletters, we’d like to give a few examples of imaginative and purposeful approaches from among this year’s twenty eligible submissions. It is easy to find such examples; indeed, they are so plentiful that we can name only a few here. So keep in mind that newsletters that do not win an award are often noticed with great interest by the judges and it is always impressive to see a newsletter that capitalizes on its unique qualities and thereby improves year after year.

Such persistence and success are well exemplified by Femmes d’Esprit, which just keeps getting better and better. A very friendly and upbeat publication produced by students at the College of New Rochelle, Femmes exudes the warmth and energy of its clearly close-knit honors community. At the same time, this newsletter also reaches beyond the familiar borders of its honors program and its campus. A recent edition included an in-depth interview with the founder of the program, a quiz on Internet addiction, a collage of reports by students on their trip to NCHC in Chicago, honors committee reports, a guest column entitled “Freshman Forum,” a review of a recent New York Times article on New York City’s welfare reform issues, alumni spotlights, and much more, including humorous pieces and many reminders about upcoming events.

Hampton University’s Word of Honor has a similar commitment to its student editorial staff’s connections within the honors program as well as in the surrounding community. One article sought to raise involvement in the NCHC National Issues Forums on social security. But the distinguishing feature of Hampton’s newsletter is its attention to students’ achievement as well-rounded individuals with a dedication to service learning. (Hampton’s Honors Program requires 150 hours of community service.) Word of Honor published a good, informative cover article on board-exam prep courses in the Fall 1998 issue, “Princeton Review Comes to Hampton,” paired nicely with a note from the director about preparation for exit exams. Hampton also produces a fine capstone edition each spring in honor of its graduates. [Editor’s note: three Hampton students discuss their service learning projects elsewhere in these pages.]

Denison University’s Arete, competing in Category B (newsletters with faculty/staff input), shares Hampton’s strong commitment to recognizing individual students. The Denison Honors Program draws on the expertise of the University’s Public Affairs Office for final layout and editing. The Endeavor, produced by the students of Ferris State University, stood out for its blend of visual appeal (especially its masthead and font variety) and its bold attention to current events, with topical features on subjects such as tobacco companies and Jerry Springer’s presence in Washington. An excellent lead article on a group of visiting Russians gave readers a sense of the importance this honors program assigns to student involvement in key campus learning opportunities, while demonstrating skillful in-depth coverage.

Indiana University’s Honorable Mention (Category B) appeared even more willing to raise issues of critical contemporary debate. That student editors are given the freedom to engage in controversial on-campus discussions (as in a recent well-balanced piece on proposed curriculum changes) is evidence of Indiana’s belief in the importance of supporting their students’ critical and analytical thinking skills — beyond getting out the news.

Marshall University’s Honors News offers an extremely well-written and often humorous (but tasteful) mix of features: “Comments from the Chair” lends insight into the decision-making processes of academic administration on page one, while page two gives over to irreverent lightheartedness.
Marshall's articles are substantial, including an impressive piece on an Honors Course Proposal Workshop, and — as in other well-balanced newsletters we saw this year — frequently illustrative of how honors students have reached out to participate in non-honors-sponsored events to do honors-level work and service.

We are seeing an increasing number of Web-based newsletters, which we welcome. Please remember to include your URL in your cover letter. Such entries also need to include full names of the program and its location on the newsletter's masthead, following the requirements for traditional submissions. Additionally, we ask that you include a hard copy. Judges are also acutely aware of the need for a polished, professional publication which aims primarily at alumni and other readers outside the honors program itself. While we do pay attention to frequency of publication in relation to production cost and editorial excellence, it is clear that sometimes a once-per-year edition can be invaluable. The Spillikin, the alumni newsletter of Christ College of Valparaiso University, rates highly for its superb balance of sophisticated presentation and economy. Printed on taupe-colored recycled paper, this annual sixteen-pager began a recent issue with a full-page report from the Honors College Dean Mark Schwehn, gracefully addressing a remarkable two-toned editions feature matching mastheads and shaded boxes in muted tones (one edition we saw featured a soft mauve. the other, forest green).

Both Houston and Valparaiso competed in Category B. Obviously these publications function as recruitment literature that speaks to parents of potential students, in addition to their worth as administrative and development prospecti. These newsletters do not neglect student readers, though. Page two of arete, for example, is devoted in a recent issue to the myriad volunteer projects in which students perform community service in the Houston area. The lead article in the same edition reports on an honors professor's research with a student-friendly focus; a back-page photo depicts current students propping up the Leaning Tower of Pisa — the kind of photo that evokes enthusiasm from both current members and alumni.

We could go on, but suffice it to say that every newsletter showed us something that we wish we had been doing in ours. TTU sends its thanks to our guest judges, past winners who graciously agreed to help out in this contest: Linda Webster at the University of Arkansas-Monticello; Dean Mark Greenburg, Linda Marion, and Ananth Achintale of Drexel University; and Jack White, Shawn Cooke, and Joel Farbman of Mississippi State University. Unless your newsletter won last year (in which case we will soon be inviting you to judge the 2001 competition), we hope to see your entry soon. See NHR's Fall 1999 issue for more advice on producing a newsletter that reflects your honors program to its fullest.