2005

Editorial, Volume 1 - 2005

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honors in practice

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

JOURNAL EDITORS
ADA LONG
DAIL MULLINS
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

The National Collegiate Honors Council is an association of faculty, students, and others interested in honors education. Virginia McCombs, President, Oklahoma City University; Jon Schlenker, President-Elect, University of Maine, Augusta; Kate Bruce, Vice-President, University of North Carolina, Wilmington; Norm Weiner, Immediate Past President, SUNY, Oswego; Patricia Ann Speelman, Executive Director, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; John Madden, Secretary, Cerritos College; Philip Way, Treasurer, University of Cincinnati. Executive Committee: Larry Andrews, Kent State University; Richard Badenhausen, Westminster College; Kambra Bolch, Texas Tech University; Akofa Bonsi, University of Alabama at Birmingham; Bruce Carter, Syracuse University; Danielle Coulter, Ball State University; David Duncan, University of Florida; Holli Hitt, Mississippi State University; Jocelyn Jackson, Morehouse College; Kathleen King, University of Maine, Augusta; James Knauer, Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania; Lydia Lyons, Hillsborough Community College; Nancy Poulson, Florida Atlantic University; Jacci Rodgers, Oklahoma City University; Stephen Rosenbaum, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Charlie Slavin, University of Maine; Stephen Wainscott, Clemson University; Emily Zhivotovskiy, Long Island University, C. W. Post Campus.
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About the cover photo: C. W. Post Honors students, Monica Santiago (left) and Dana Debari (right), work on their “Harbor as Text” assignment during a freshman retreat aboard the historic oyster sloop Christeen. The photographer is Adam D’Antonio, a former student representative to the NCHC Executive Committee. Adam is currently entering his second year of law school.

Dedication photo by Paul A. Laughlin.
EDITORIAL POLICY

Honors in Practice (HIP) accommodates the need and desire for articles about nuts-and-bolts issues, innovative practices in individual honors programs, and other honors topics of concern to the membership. HIP complements the semi-annual scholarly journal of the NCHC, Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council (JNCHC). Both journals employ a double-blind review system. JNCHC publishes scholarly essays that stress research in and on honors education. HIP publishes practical and descriptive essays: descriptions of successful honors courses, suggestions for out-of-class experiences, administrative issues, and other matters that were formerly published in the National Honors Report. Submissions and inquiries should be directed to Ada Long at adalong@uab.edu or 850.927.3776.

DEADLINE

HIP is published annually. The deadline for submissions is January 1.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1. We will accept material by e-mail attachment (preferred) or disk. We will not accept material by fax or hard copy.

2. If documentation is used, the documentation style can be whatever is appropriate to the author’s primary discipline or approach (MLA, APA, etc.), but please avoid footnotes. Internal citation to a list of references (bibliography) is preferred; endnotes are acceptable.

3. There are no minimum or maximum length requirements; the length should be dictated by the topic and its most effective presentation.

4. Accepted essays will be edited for grammatical and typographical errors and for infelicities of style or presentation. Authors will have ample opportunity to review and approve edited manuscripts before publication.

5. Submissions and inquiries should be directed to Ada Long at adalong@uab.edu or, if necessary, 850.927.3776.
DEDICATION

C. GREY AUSTIN, M.B.A., M.DIV., PH.D

With pride and gratitude, we dedicate this inaugural issue of Honors in Practice to one of the central figures in the history of honors education. Dr. C. Grey Austin was a founding member of the National Collegiate Honors Council (1966-93) and is an honorary lifetime member. Having worked for eleven years at the University of Michigan, where he got his Ph.D., he became Assistant Dean and Honors Director in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences at The Ohio State University in 1966, becoming University Honors Director in 1974. He was awarded emeritus status in 1988 and now lives with his wife, Barbara, in a retirement village in Central Ohio, where—no surprise—he is editor of The Villager. He also has a web site for his “Theological Musings” at http://www.otterbein.edu/dept/RELG/greymuse/greymenu.html.

In the NCHC, Grey was Executive Secretary-Treasurer (1973-78), President (1980-81), and Editor of the National Honors Report (1985-93). Honors in Practice (HIP) is a descendant of the National Honors Report (NHR), and Grey Austin is a patriarch in its family tree. Grey brought high standards to the NHR, having previously been editor of the Journal of Higher Education (1966-70). We hope that, as editors of this new grandchild of the former NHR, we can live up to those standards.

We also hope to maintain the tradition of encouragement, generosity, and cooperation that Grey Austin brought to the NCHC and to his position as the editor of NHR. Many of us who are now elders in the NCHC were the beneficiaries of Grey’s advice and support as we experimented with new ideas in our programs and in the national organization. If HIP can provide advice and support to current honors directors and deans with even a small degree of Grey Austin’s success, we will be proud. We are proud now to evoke his name at the launching of this new journal and to dedicate the first issue to him.

2005
Editor’s Introduction

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the National Collegiate Honors Council’s new journal, *Honors in Practice* (HIP). As we begin this new journal, we honor its place in the history of NCHC publications. Up through the winter of 2002, the NCHC had a regular newsletter that came to be called, starting in the 1980s, the *National Honors Report*. This newsletter was originally edited by John Portz and later, starting in 1988, Grey Austin. Meanwhile, the NCHC also had a scholarly journal called *Forum for Honors*, which—in the late 80s and early 90s—was edited by Robert Roemer and then Sara Varhus. *Forum for Honors* was discontinued in 1995 and revived in 2000 as the *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*. The *National Honors Report (NHR)*, with Maggie Brown as its tireless and enthusiastic editor, maintained publication through its last issue in the winter of 2002.

*NHR* served two primary purposes: as an organizational newsletter reporting on official NCHC matters and as a vehicle for publishing members’ ideas and insights about honors education, most often by sharing what they did in their own honors programs.

Last year, the NCHC Executive Committee and Publications Board decided to split the two former roles of the *NHR*. A newsletter, still bearing the name *National Honors Report*, will be revived to report on official organizational matters, and *Honors in Practice* now publishes essays on issues and ideas relevant to honors programs and colleges.

*Honors in Practice* reports on “nuts and bolts” issues related to honors education (the journal banner conveys this mission), but essays are carefully selected and edited for high quality of writing and ideas. While Maggie Brown did an outstanding job of maintaining high standards for the former *NHR* virtually single-handedly, *HIP* is, like *JNCHC*, a double-blind, peer-refereed journal with an independent editorial board. Its distinction from *JNCHC* is that it does not require the scholarly apparatus characteristic of a research journal, and it focuses less on theoretical and conceptual frameworks than on useful, viable ideas that can serve as inspirations or models for honors educators, students, and administrators.

This first issue of *Honors in Practice* will, we hope, set the standard and precedent for the NCHC’s new journal, providing the membership with advice, ideas, and insights that enhance the value of honors education. This first issue is divided into three sections: “Administrative Matters,” “Curriculum and Instruction,” and “Student Recruitment and Retention.” All three sections—and
all the essays therein—have the common aim of improving the way we serve students in honors programs and colleges.

We begin with “Keeping Honors Information Current,” an essay by Joan Digby and Tracey Christy, which provides crucial advice for honors administrators—advice that the authors learned the hard way when they tried to hunt down information for the new Peterson’s guide that they edited: *Smart Choices: Honors Programs and Colleges, 4th Edition*. Few of us ever need to contact ourselves and so have no idea how difficult this task might be. Digby and Christy tried to contact many of us and thus got a very good idea. Their essay may just help you improve your program’s marketing, recruitment, retention, visibility, and survival. Read it!

In “Tenure and Promotion in Honors,” Rosalie Otero, as one of the few directors of an honors program that has its own faculty and that grants tenure and promotion, gives insights into the value of an interdisciplinary faculty that has the legitimacy and self-sufficiency enjoyed in the traditional academic disciplines. She gives rationales for a tenure- and promotion-granting honors program as well as experienced advice about how to make it work. Underlying this practical and focused advice is a much broader perspective on the paradoxes and dilemmas within higher education, especially in large research universities, where excellence in teaching is an ostensible goal but rarely a factor in tenure and promotion decisions. Interdisciplinary studies are similarly touted as an important institutional focus without a commensurate institutional commitment. The University of New Mexico, however, has made such a commitment to interdisciplinary teaching and learning in the University Honors Program, and Otero is a leader in this rare new kind of honors environment. Her essay is important reading for all who hope to follow.

Steffen Pope Wilson and Rose M. Perrine—in “We Know They’re Smart, but Have They Learned Anything?: Strategies for Assessing Learning in Honors”—provide descriptions of and suggestions about outcomes assessment along with how it can be implemented in honors programs. The authors have experience with developing outcomes assessment in the honors program at Eastern Kentucky University. Honors administrators who, by choice or perforce, are implementing outcomes assessment programs may benefit from reading this essay by two enthusiastic proponents.

We end the section on “Administrative Matters” with a brief and useful essay by Geoff Orth entitled “Funding Needs Through Student Government Resources.” Orth suggests that an honors program can improve funding overnight, as his program did at Longwood University, by becoming a student organization officially recognized by its institution’s resource-rich SGA. Honors administrators who have not yet considered this funding source would be wise to pursue it. The pursuit might not succeed or might succeed only partially, but it just might lead to a significant source of financial support.

The section “Curriculum and Instruction” begins with an essay entitled “On the Benefits of Teaching in Honors” by Alexander Werth of Hampden-Sydney
College. Werth offers advice to honors administrators who are trying to recruit excellent faculty members to teach honors classes. He provides a rich array of incentives to teach in honors, and administrators might find the essay an occasion not only for head-nodding but for photocopying and distribution to professors they wish to recruit into honors teaching.

Kambra Bolch’s essay “Contracting in Honors” addresses a provocative issue that has long preoccupied honors administrators, who tend to favor or oppose honors contracts with particular vehemence. Bolch describes the history of honors contracts at the Texas Tech University Honors College, a history which revealed the need for contract options as well as the full range of problems in implementing them; she then describes the solutions that gave honors contracts academic value and integrity in addition to a convenient, cost-effective way to provide needed credit hours. Honors administrators who provide honors contracts or who are considering such options will have much to ponder and learn from Bolch’s essay.

In "Reviving an Honors Program with Specialized Sequence Tracks," Sharon Carrish describes the strategies she used at Mansfield University of Pennsylvania to revitalize and increase enrollment in her honors program. Chief among these strategies was the design of "specialized sequence tracks" for honors students in nursing, education, and music. The new curricular sequences eliminate former redundancies between honors and major requirements while also allowing honors students in those majors to complete all their requirements in four years; the changes are, therefore, successful strategies for recruiting and retaining honors students.

Jim Lacey addresses a general and fundamental question about honors education in “Honors Courses: More Difficult or Different?” He offers examples of honors courses at Eastern Connecticut State University that demonstrate a creative curriculum—one that is “different” rather than more difficult. These courses make a case for honors as an opportunity for innovation, team teaching, and interdisciplinary teaching and learning. Lacey’s essay provides ideas for honors courses that may inspire honors administrators and faculty to create new honors courses on their own campuses.

Mark McGinley provides a nice companion piece to Jim Lacey’s essay in “Transferring a Course Developed for Honors Students to Non-Major Biology Students: Lessons Learned.” McGinley describes the design of a “different” science lab he taught at Texas Tech that was consistently successful with honors students and a bomb among non-honors students. The challenges and opportunities of independent and untraditional science projects were exciting to non-major honors students and frustrating to non-major non-honors biology students, who wanted structure, memorization, and predictable pedagogy. McGinley found that the strategies which positively affect the success of an honors class tend to backfire in a non-honors class, and vice versa. We might, therefore, reexamine our organizational notion that honors courses can be successfully replicated in the non-honors curriculum; maybe that is a pipe dream built into “The Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program.”
EDITOR’S INTRODUCTION

A complement to McGinley’s perspective on honors versus non-honors instruction is James D. Bell’s essay “Expand the Honors Curriculum: Teach Entrepreneurship, Risk-Taking, and Change Across the Curriculum.” Bell describes his modification of a regular business course at Texas State University so that, instead of presenting a business plan, teams of honors students design and implement a project to improve the campus or community. Bell provides a model for other honors business courses for non-business majors.

Ellen Riek, in “Building Community and Fostering Excellence through the Writing Process,” offers an idea for transforming introductory honors courses on writing into a year-long preparation for an annual Honors Symposium. In the Northern Arizona University Honors Program, students write and revise papers during their first semester knowing that, in the second semester, they can choose a paper they wrote and prepare to present it at the formal Honors Symposium, much as they would prepare a conference paper. Students also have the option, rather than presenting a paper, to serve as editors or as informed audience members at the Symposium. Students thus learn to take their writing seriously, to work within the honors community on formal presentation, and to seek excellence beyond the confines of a single course.

Jana L. Pressler, Eric Rosenfeld, and Marianne Alverbo Larsson have pooled the resources of The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, The Pennsylvania State University, and the Karolinska University Hospital in Stockholm, Sweden to create a study-abroad course sequence. Their essay, “Stockholm Study Abroad: Scientific Breakthroughs and Nobel Laureates,” bears the same title as the course, which includes a 3-semester-hour honors seminar at Penn State followed by a 1-semester-hour study experience in Stockholm. The authors describe the content and logistics of the course sequence.

The next section of this inaugural issue of HIP—“Student Recruitment and Retention”—begins with an excellent idea for introducing students to each other before they get to college. James Swafford, in “Jump-Starting Honors Community with Introductory Biographies,” explains how he elicits biographical information from incoming students, then shaping them into “bio-blurbs” and distributing them during the summer. Swafford explains the multiple uses and benefits of the strategy that he has developed at Ithaca College, and he suggests how it might be adapted to other kinds of programs and universities. Short, entertaining, and useful, this essay is a good read for veteran as well as new honors directors.

The final two essays in this section and issue address the topic of student mentors. The essay by Alvin Wang, Crystal Espinosa, Cassandra Long, and Anik Patel is entitled “Team Leaders and the Honors Freshman-Year Experience.” While mentoring is a formal part of many honors programs, the Team Leaders initiative that these authors describe at the University of Central Florida is an especially well developed mentor program that ties together the curricular and extracurricular components of the Honors College. The authors describe the
ADA LONG

components of this program, its value to the Honors College, and its transformative influence on both freshmen and Team Leaders.

Finally, in “Using Student Mentors in an ‘Introduction to Honors’ Course,” Betsy Bach, Rachel Kinkie, and Sam Schabaker describe the student-mentor program at the University of Montana-Missoula, a program that pairs experienced honors students with teachers of the freshman honors course. The essay describes the history of the program; its benefits to freshmen, mentors, faculty, and the Honors College; and ways the program might evolve and improve. The essay includes two sections written by students describing the value that the student-mentor program had for them.

We hope that the essays in this first issue of Honors in Practice will elicit from readers not only new ideas for their own honors programs and colleges but also contributions to future issues of HIP. NCHC conferences have always been a rich source of information and dialogue about honors. HIP offers the opportunity to further the dialogue and expand the information in a form that you can read at your leisure and collect on your bookshelves. Please participate by reading...and also by writing. Our next deadline is January 1, 2006.
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Betsy Wackernagel Bach, a past president of the Western Regional Honors Council, is Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Montana and served as Interim Dean of the Davidson Honors College for two years. Her research interests include the mentoring, socialization, and retention of organizational newcomers. She was selected as University of Montana’s Distinguished Teacher in 1991, and in 1996 she received the university’s award for Administrative Excellence. Prior to her academic employment, Betsy worked as a police officer in Holland, Michigan.

James D. Bell is Professor of Management and Entrepreneurship in the McCoy College of Business Administration at Texas State University, San Marcos. Dr. Bell is also Director of Professional Development and Education for the College. He has received every major teaching award the university bestows and in 2004 was chosen by the M. Stevens Piper Foundation as one of the Top Ten Professors in Texas.

Kambra Bolch is Associate Dean of the Texas Tech University Honors College in Lubbock, Texas. She is in the second year of an elected term on the executive committee for NCHC and also serves on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. Holding a J.D. degree, Kambra teaches political science and law-related seminars for the Honors College. She also directs the College’s summer international study program in London and Paris.

Sharon Carrish directs the University Honors Program and teaches communication courses at Mansfield University in Pennsylvania. Her areas of specialization include Business and Professional Communication, Public Speaking, and Interpersonal and Intercultural Communication. She earned her Ph.D. at Boston College. Her latest articles include “Bridging the protocol chasm: What you are not teaching?” (2003) and “I just want to be like everyone else: Teaching public speaking to an exceptional student” (2004). Dr. Carrish is a multiple nominee in “Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers” and a past director of the university forensics program.

Tracey Christy is Administrative Assistant of the Honors Program at the Long Island University C.W. Post Campus. She earned a Bachelor’s degree in accounting from Slippery Rock State University and worked as an accountant in various financial institutions in Manhattan before opting for a career change. In 1997 she joined the academic world by accepting a position with the Honors Program.

Joan Digby is a former president of NCHC and is Honors Program Director at the C. W. Post Campus of Long Island University. A professor of English, she has published several books, including her own poetry as well as literary anthologies. With her husband, collagist John Digby, she has written on
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

contemporary collage and started a small private press, The Feral Press. She is also editor of Peterson’s Honors Programs & Colleges, now going into its fourth edition.

Crystal Espinosa is an honors senior majoring in Journalism and Legal Studies at the University of Central Florida. Formerly president of the Honors Congress, she currently serves as a student ambassador to the university as a member of the President’s Leadership Council. Crystal has served as a Team Leader for three consecutive years.

Rachel Kinkie is a senior at the University of Montana and majors in Forestry with an emphasis in Range Resources Management and a minor in Nature and Democracy. She hopes to pursue environmental law and policy after graduation. She volunteers as an Honors Student Mentor, sits on the Honors Student Advisory Council, and participates in the Honors Student Association.

Jim Lacey, Professor Emeritus of English, was Director of the University Honors Program at Eastern Connecticut State University for ten years. He is a frequent contributor to DIH panels and honors publications and is a past president of the NE-NCHC and an NCHC-recommended site visitor.

Marianne Alverbo Larsson, MS, CRNA is currently the Head Nurse of Nurse Anesthetists at the Karolinska Hospital in Stockholm, Sweden. She earned a master’s degree in 2002 from The Pennsylvania State University in the Family Nurse Practitioner program.

Cassandra Long is an honors junior majoring in International Relations at the University of Central Florida. She is a former Team Leader who served as Vice-President of Honors Congress. This year, Cassandra received a National Security Education Program’s David L. Boren Undergraduate Scholarship to study Mandarin Chinese at the Beijing Foreign Studies University in China.

Mark McGinley, an ecologist, is an associate professor in the Department of Biological Sciences and the Honors College at Texas Tech University. He teaches courses in biology that include "Ecology & Environmental Problems," "Field Ecology," and "Tropical Marine Biology" (in Jamaica). In the Honors College, he teaches ecology-related courses to students majoring in Natural History and Humanities.

Rosalie C. Otero is Director of the University Honors Program at the University of New Mexico and Associate Dean of University College. She is a past president of the NCHC and the WRHC and presently Co-Chair of the NCHC Assessment and Evaluation Committee and Treasurer of the WRHC. She has the distinction of being the first faculty member to be tenured in an honors program in the nation.
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Geoffrey Orth has directed the Honors Program and Cormier Center for Citizen Scholars at Longwood University for five years. He teaches German and world literature, and his publications focus on the interrelations between continental and American literature. His recent activities include a year’s service as Interim Secretary-Treasurer for the Delta Phi Alpha national German honor society.

Anik Patel is an honors junior majoring in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Central Florida. Last year, he served as both a Team Leader and Vice-President of Honors Congress. He is one of the founding members of UCF’s Theta Chi Fraternity, which promotes service activities in the community.

Rose Perrine is a professor in the Department of Psychology at Eastern Kentucky University, where she teaches program evaluation and research methodology courses. Rose earned a Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of California. Her research interests include factors that influence college students’ success and human-pet interactions.

Jana L. Pressler is Professor and Assistant Dean of Research at the University of Oklahoma College of Nursing. She holds a Ph.D. in Nursing from Case Western Reserve University. She was awarded a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Rochester to study special observational research measures and methods for use with newborns. Dr. Pressler’s scholarly interests include honors education, doctoral education, and research development. Her own research involves establishing a taxonomic structure for birth injuries and improving the assessment and care of high risk infants. She teaches honors students in Nursing.

Ellen Riek teaches composition and literature in the Honors Program at Northern Arizona University. She is currently completing her doctorate in educational anthropology, focusing on learner stories as an instrument for curriculum construction. Her scholarly interests include learner-centered instruction, narrative analysis, feminist pedagogy, and aesthetic education.

Eric Rosenfeld is currently a law student at the University of Pittsburgh. He earned his bachelor's degree with Honors from The Schreyer Honors College of The Pennsylvania State University in 2004, majoring in history with a minor in international studies. He completed his honors thesis in visual arts and photography. His participation in foreign study programs in Peru, Sweden, New Zealand, and Singapore continues to influence his academic interests.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Sam Schabacker is a junior majoring in Economics at the University of Montana. He hails from Colorado and divides his time between his studies, volunteering in Missoula, and climbing mountains. His two major short-term goals are to go to graduate school or law school and to continue climbing mountains around the world. Sam has served as an Honors Student Mentor.

James Swafford is Associate Professor of English and Director of the Humanities and Sciences Honors Program at Ithaca College. Though his main scholarly interest is late-Victorian poetry, most of his energy recently has gone into teaching a first-year honors seminar on the theme of wilderness and wilderness.

Alvin Wang is Dean of The Burnett Honors College and Professor of Psychology at the University of Central Florida. He earned his B.A. from SUNY at Brockport and his Ph.D. from SUNY at Stony Brook. From 2000 to 2004, Dr. Wang served as Vice-President for Psi Chi, the National Honors Society in Psychology. He is a fellow of the American Psychological Association’s Division 2 (Teaching of Psychology).

Alexander Werth is Elliott Professor of Biology and Director of the Honors Program at Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia. A functional morphologist, he studies the evolution of marine mammals and also conducts research on the teaching of evolution and the nature of science. He has taught numerous honors courses involving sociobiology, anthropology, and the history and philosophy of science. He earned his Ph.D. in Organismic and Evolutionary Biology from Harvard University.

Steffen Wilson is Associate Director of the Honors Program and Associate Professor of Psychology at Eastern Kentucky University. She earned a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from the University of Georgia. A significant proportion of her honors work is outcomes assessment and strategic planning. Her research interests include the development of attention and factors that support student learning.
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Honors Programs at Smaller Colleges by Samuel Schuman (1999, 53pp.) How to implement an honors program, with particular emphasis on colleges with fewer than 3000 students (Second Edition)

Place as Text: Approaches to Active Learning edited by Bernice Braid and Ada Long (2000, 101pp.) Information and practical advice on the experiential pedagogies developed within the NCHC during the past 25 years, using the Honors Semesters and City as Text© as models, along with suggestions for how to adapt these models to a variety of educational contexts.

Teaching and Learning in Honors edited by Cheryl L. Fuiks and Larry Clark (2000, 128 pp.) Presents a variety of perspectives on teaching and learning useful to anyone developing new or renovating established honors curricula.

Honors Composition: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Practices by Annmarie Guzy (2003 183 pp.) Parallel historical developments in honors and composition studies; contemporary honors writing projects ranging from admission essays to theses as reported by over 300 NCHC members.


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