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Editorial Matter for Volume 3, Number 1

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JNCHC

JOURNAL OF THE
NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

LIBERAL LEARNING

JOURNAL EDITORS

ADA LONG

DAIL MULLINS

RUSTY RUSHTON

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

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Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council is a refereed periodical publishing scholarly articles on honors education. The journal uses a double-blind peer review process. 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: Ada Long / 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).

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council is now accepting submissions for the Fall/Winter 2002-03 issue, which will focus on the broad theme “Technology in Honors.” We are interested in articles which deal with honors coursework in technology, or the application of pedagogical technologies in honors courses (e.g., distance learning, on-line courses, web-enhanced courses, etc.) Submissions which deal with theoretical considerations—both the advantages and disadvantages of instructional technologies—will be especially welcome.

The deadline for submission is September 1, 2002.

For the subsequent issue of JNCHC (deadline: March 1, 2003), we will accept submissions on any honors-related topic.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1. We will accept material by e-mail attachment, disk, or hard copy. We will not accept material by fax.
2. 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 is preferred; end notes 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 obvious infelicities of style or presentation. Variations in matters such as “honors” or “Honors,” “1970s” or “1970’s,” and the inclusion or exclusion of a comma before “and” in a list will usually be left to the author’s discretion.
5. Submissions and inquiries should be directed to:

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DEDICATION



ANNE PONDER AND SAM SCHUMAN

An issue of JNCHC that addresses the topic of “Liberal Learning” could evoke no finer exemplars than Anne Ponder and Sam Schuman. Both of them have stellar individual accomplishments to their credit, including their past service as presidents of the National Collegiate Honors Council and current service as college presidents, but we wish to dedicate this issue of JNCHC to them not as individuals but as a team. Anne and Sam have demonstrated time and time again the value of collaboration. The two of them provided the NCHC with one of its most useful and popular contributions to honors education: the series of workshops at each annual conference called “Beginning in Honors.” They were guest editors of the first issue of JNCHC, a festschrift in honor of Catherine Cater. Most recently, they convened the Undergraduate Summit of some thirty leaders in higher education last October, in conjunction with the annual NCHC conference in Chicago, to begin a dialogue about the role of the liberal arts in undergraduate teaching and learning. In these and all their collaborative efforts, Anne and Sam have pooled their considerable intellects and imaginations in the service of others. Sam has said, “Colleges and universities...are all too often seen as venues of individualized competition—sort of intellectual track meets, where runners are all out for themselves.” Sam and Anne have certainly overcome this “locker room mentality” and have set a new standard for success “by looking for ways to work together, with each other and with others, rather than trampling on the competition.” They have set new ideals, and they have more than lived up to them. It does honor to the JNCHC to dedicate this issue to Anne Ponder and Sam Schuman.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

ADA LONG

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

The essays collected in this issue of JNCHC all connect, at least tangentially, to the topic “Liberal Learning,” and they all focus directly on the importance of balance. Perhaps liberal learning—which I personally tend to define as academic learning at its best—requires balance. Perhaps what we mean when we refer to such clichés as “critical thinking” or “excellence in education” or “high-quality undergraduate experience” is the impulse toward balance. If our cultural pendulum swings toward elitism, the academy almost inevitably provides a counterbalance in the interest of egalitarianism; if globalism displaces regional interests on the national agenda, then the academy is likely to renew interest in smaller ethnological and ecological niches. Industry, commerce, media, politics, and popular culture tend to be in sync; the academy is skeptical of such unanimity, and perhaps this skepticism is its crucial role in our culture. Our politicians and public commentators and media mavens frequently attack or belittle this role, turning it into a weapon against colleges and universities—and what could be more natural? People whose livelihoods and power bases thrive on consensus hardly welcome naysayers. Yet, even those who deride the skeptical stances of the academy in their public orations do, in fact, value it. They deliver their children, during the most impressionable period of late adolescence, out of their families and into the academy, just as they themselves were (in most cases) delivered by their parents. This paradox of simultaneous acceptance and rejection of the academy, combined with the tradition of skepticism within the academy, yields—not surprisingly—a healthy intellectual focus on and orientation toward **balance**.

A perceived imbalance in the current directions of higher education prompted two former presidents of the National Collegiate Honors Council—Sam Schuman, Chancellor of the University of Minnesota, Morris, and Anne Ponder, President of Colby-Sawyer College—to convene an “Undergraduate Summit” in Chicago this past October, in conjunction with the annual conference of the National Collegiate Honors Council. The purpose of the Undergraduate Summit was to “reaffirm the value and role of the undergraduate institution and experience” within the current context of higher education. During the second half of the twentieth century, higher education in America saw the rapid expansion of two-year institutions, graduate research universities, post-secondary vocational schools, and (most recently) distance education. The undergraduate Summit was an attempt to bring together numerous representatives of higher education to reflect on these developments, to reassess the role of the liberal arts curriculum, and to balance the expansionism within higher education with a renewed appreciation of traditional undergraduate education, as represented in smaller liberal arts colleges and also in honors programs.

The opening section of this issue of JNCHC presents two of the plenary addresses at the Undergraduate Summit followed by post-Summit responses from several of the

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

participants. Sam Schuman's presentation—based on an analogy between the small liberal arts college and *The Little House* in the city that came to be surrounded by skyscrapers—laid out the central dilemma that inspired the Undergraduate Summit. Dale Knobel, President of Denison College and a former member of the NCHC Executive Committee, presented a cautiously optimistic vision of the continuing value of liberal education, mindful of the dangers inherent in creating honors "tracks" while the rest of an institution provides something less, but also convinced that liberal education continues to thrive. These two opening perspectives begin our "Forum on Liberal Learning."

Further presentations and then a lengthy, lively exchange of ideas between some thirty participants in the Undergraduate Summit focused on key questions that are represented in this issue by contributions from: Rosalie Otero, President of the National Collegiate Honors Council; Charles F. Blaich and Mauri A. Ditzler from the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College; and John Nichols, President of the Association for General and Liberal Studies. This section concludes with a "CALL" for action—"Presidents' CALL: Campaign for the Advancement of Liberal Learning"—submitted by Carol Schneider, President of the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Two of the key questions emerging from the Undergraduate Summit were (1) the role and legitimacy of honors programs as embodiments of the traditional ideals of undergraduate education, and (2) the precise and appropriate language we need to describe the kind of education we value. Even the sentence I just wrote contains sharp thorns: is "traditional" a word we want to embrace when, in fact, the kind of education most of us advocate is innovative, challenging, and risky? Yet, it would be perverse to deny that education is, above all, the passing down of tradition. The unavailability of an acceptable vocabulary—while the cause of much fretting and debate at the Undergraduate Summit—signals a healthy dissatisfaction, an openness to new ideas that is inherent in the inadequacy of old words. In settling on the phrase "Liberal Learning" as the focus of this issue of JNCHC, I do so embracing its oddness, its tendency to skid into the realm of politics, its provocation, its puns. And I savor the paradox that "liberal learning" really means "conservative learning"—learning that conserves the tradition of the liberal arts.

Erin Osborne-Martin, one of the winners of last year's Portz Awards for Undergraduate Research, has produced an outstanding example of liberal learning in her essay "Understanding Caesar's Gallic Ethnography: A Contextual Approach to Protohistory." In her analysis of the extent to which Caesar's texts on the Celts seem reliable or misleading, she elucidates the fragile balance between different kinds of evidence used in reconstructing protohistory: the historic documents produced by powerful conquerors or the archeological evidence left behind by all people, rich and poor, conquered and unconquered. Osborne-Martin's essay is primarily a recuperation of classical texts as valuable and valid modes of understanding protohistory, but only if they are tempered by the insights and strategies developed by anthropologists in the past several decades. This study of Caesar's texts in the contexts of modern anthropology is a superb example of Dale Knobel's definition of liberal education as "learning to learn," a process that takes place by questioning both old and new methodologies and finding new ways to balance their findings.

The next section of this volume provides examples of effective strategies for teaching students to question, to assess, and to take an active role in their education. Anders

Greenspan describes a course he taught at Long Island University, C. W. Post Campus, on "Perceptions of the Past." The course included a field trip to Colonial Williamsburg, affording the opportunity for students to discover for themselves the accuracies and falsehoods of a major historical renovation project. Students could explore the shifting balance between national mythology, historical fact, and commercial manipulation, learning as much about the era during which the renovation took place as the era that was purportedly being represented.

In "Teaching 'The Other Legacy,' Learning About Ourselves: Latin America in Honors," Celia Lopez-Chavez describes a series of courses about Latin America she has developed and taught in the University of New Mexico Honors Program. Her diverse array of courses has at least one shared goal: to balance the personal with the public, the self with the other. Lopez-Chavez uses Latin American literature, art, music, history, politics, sociology, and cinema not only to teach her students about a distinct culture, in most cases different from their own, but also to provide them with different lenses through which to view their culture in New Mexico or wherever they are from. They learn to read themselves and their own cultures as texts in comparison to the materials they see, hear, read, and experience in class.

Cheryl Achterberg, Amanda Wetzel, and Emily Whitbeck describe, in their essay "Student-Led Quality Teams in the Classroom," a process developed at the Pennsylvania State University for putting students in charge of course evaluation. The process does not follow the standard pattern of written comments at the end of a course but instead introduces a method to assess and intervene while courses are still in progress. The process has proved very successful at Penn State, not only leading to more effective teaching and learning but, just as importantly, empowering students to take charge of the quality of their education. Adjustments to the balance of power between faculty and students thus become an opportunity to provide a more engaged and engaging experience in the classroom.

This issue of JNCHC concludes with a defense of traditional teaching and learning—a defense against the incursions of post-modernism into the pedagogies and curricula of the past several decades. Those of us who have experienced greater excitement in post-colonial, post-modernist, and new-historical theories than has James Kelly will not agree with each step of his argument, but few could deny the interest, conviction, and value of his argument—value especially in counterbalancing what has become consensus in many parts of academia today. Like all of us in the academic world, perhaps especially in honors programs, he seeks the location of authenticity and authority with deep passion—as do all the other contributors to this volume. Additionally, he provides the opportunity to end this issue of JNCHC with an example of conservative liberal learning—an excellent example, once again, of the academy's ability to set standard definitions on end in the quest for better education.

Forum On Liberal Learning

On October 31, 2001, in conjunction with the National Collegiate Honors Council's annual conference in Chicago, Sam Schuman and Anne Ponder convened an Undergraduate Summit of leaders in higher education. The Summit was co-sponsored by the NCHC and the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges. The purpose of the gathering was "to offer these leaders an opportunity to meet under 'neutral' and comfortable auspices to mull the state of undergraduate teaching and learning in America today and to begin working together to chart and articulate its future."

Two of the opening presentations and several post-Summit responses are presented in the following pages. Additional details about the Undergraduate Summit are included in the "Editor's Introduction" to this issue of JNCHC.

On the reverse of this page is the list of organizers and participants in the Undergraduate Summit.

Undergraduate Summit

Organizers:

Samuel Schuman, Chancellor, University of Minnesota, Morris

Anne Ponder, President, Colby-Sawyer College

Chris Dahl, President, SUNY, Geneseo

Dale Knobel, President, Denison University

Participants:

Michael Baer, American Council on Education

Brooke Beaird, Campus Compact

Jerry Berberet, Association of New American Colleges

Earl B. Brown, National Collegiate Honors Council

Margaret Brown, National Collegiate Honors Council

Joan Digby, National Collegiate Honors Council

Richard Elkman, Council of Independent Colleges

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Michelle Guillard, Consortium for the Advancement of Private Higher Education

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Ada Long, National Collegiate Honors Council

C. Peter McGrath, National Association of State Universities & Land-Grant Colleges

Jamie Merisotis, Institute for Higher Education Policy

John Nichols, Association for General and Liberal Studies

Robert Orrill, National Council on Education and the Disciplines

Rosalie Otero, National Collegiate Honors Council

Carol Schneider, Association of American Colleges & Universities

Mary Tolar, Truman Scholarship Foundation

David Warren, National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Cheryl Achterberg is Dean of the Schreyer Honors College and teaches in the School of Information Sciences and Technology as well as in the College of Education at The Pennsylvania State University.

Charles F. Blaich received his Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from the University of Connecticut in 1986. He has been teaching at Wabash College since 1991 and is currently an Associate Professor of Psychology and a Senior Fellow at the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts.

Mauri A. Ditzler earned his Ph.D. in Analytical Chemistry from Duke University and was a Professor of Chemistry at the College of Holy Cross from 1979 to 1994. He is currently Dean of Wabash College and also serves on the Advisory Board for the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts.

Anders Greenspan is Assistant Professor of History at the C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University, where he teaches American History. He received his Ph.D. degree from Indiana University, Bloomington. He recently published a book on the Williamsburg restoration with Smithsonian Institution Press entitled *Creating Colonial Williamsburg*.

James S. Kelly is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Miami University. He is former Associate Director of the University Honors Program and is a Consultant-Evaluator for The Higher Learning Commission for the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. For the past three years he has run, with the support of the Ohio Humanities Council and the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, Summer Teacher Institutes at Miami University for K-8 teachers interested in philosophy for children.

Dale T. Knobel became President of Denison University in 1998. He returned to his native Ohio after twenty-one years in Texas, where he had served as Provost of Southwestern University and Associate Provost at Texas A&M. Knobel came out of the History faculty to direct A&M's 2,500-student University Honors Program between 1987 and 1995. He has served as a member of the NCHC Executive Committee.

Celia López-Chávez is Assistant Professor in the University Honors Program at the University of New Mexico since 1996. She has a Ph.D. in Latin American History from *Universidad de Sevilla* (Spain). Her teaching and research interests center on Latin American History and experiential education. She directs the UNM *Conexiones* summer program in Spain.

John Nichols is NEH Distinguished Teaching Professor at Saint Joseph's College in Indiana. He has served there as Coordinator of the Core Curriculum and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Most recently, he is wrapping up a national project on accreditation and assessment, sponsored by the Association of American Colleges and Universities where he is a Senior Fellow.

Erin Osborne-Martin graduated from Kent State University in May 2001. She is currently working towards a Ph.D. at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, under the supervision of Professor Ian Ralston. Her current research is focused on the regional variability in size and function of *oppida* in Gaul and Britain.

Rosalie C. Otero has been the Director of the Honors Program at the University of New Mexico since 1992. After serving on several NCHC committees including the Executive Committee, she was elected Vice President of the organization in 2000 and is currently serving her term as President of the NCHC. She received her Ph.D. in English, but her professional life has, for the most part, been centered on liberal and interdisciplinary education.

Carol Geary Schneider is President of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). Her interests include an effort to rethink the broad aims of a twenty-first century college education so that liberal learning becomes a framework for the entire educational experience. Her recent publications include “Core Missions and Civic Responsibility: Toward the Engaged Academy” in Thomas Ehrlich (ed.), *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*, 2000; “From Diversity to Engaging Difference” in Nico Cloete and Mashew Miller (eds.), *Knowledge, Identify and Curriculum Transformation in Africa*, 1997. She is coauthor, with Robert Shoenberg, of “Contemporary Understandings of Liberal Education” in the AAC&U series on The Academy in Transition.

Sam Schuman has been at the University of Minnesota, Morris, since 1995, serving as Chancellor for the past four years. Sam’s B.A. is from Grinnell College (“with distinction”), his M.A. from San Francisco State University (“with Honors”) and his Ph.D. in non-Shakespearean English Renaissance Drama from Northwestern University. He has served as President of the International Vladimir Nabokov Society, as well as the NCHC.

Amanda Wetzel graduated from the Schreyer Honors College in May 2002 with a bachelors degree in International Politics and minors in economics and French. She will be studying for a Masters in Law degree at Queens University in Belfast, Ireland with a Mitchell Fellowship in fall 2002.

Emily Whitbeck is a sophomore undergraduate student majoring in Architectural Engineering. She is a Schreyer Scholar in the Schreyer Honors College at The Pennsylvania State University.

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