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Editorial Matter for Volume 8, Number 1

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JNCHC

**JOURNAL OF THE
NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL**

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

GRADES, SCORES, AND HONORS

JOURNAL EDITORS

ADA LONG

DAIL MULLINS

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

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EDITORIAL POLICY

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 and inquiries should be directed to Ada Long at adalong@uab.edu.

DEADLINES

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

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CONTENTS

Call for Papers.....	5
Submission Guidelines.....	5
Dedication to Jeffrey A. Portnoy	7
<i>Editor's Introduction</i>	
Ada Long.....	9

HONORING VIRGINIA TECH

<i>“To Honors People Everywhere” and “All Have Seen the Treasure of the University: Its People”</i>	
Charles (Jack) Dudley, Virginia Tech University	15

FORUM ON “GRADES, SCORES, AND HONORS”

<i>“Grades, Scores, and Honors: A Numbers Game?”</i>	
Larry Andrews.....	23
<i>Evaluation vs. Grading in Honors Composition, Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying about Grades and Love Teaching</i>	
Anmarie Guzy	31
<i>To Speak or Not to Speak: That is the Question</i>	
Joyce W. Fields	37
<i>Grades, Scores, and Honors Education</i>	
Ryan Brown.....	41
<i>Grades, Marks, and Scores, Oh My!</i>	
Rosalie C. Otero.....	45

<i>Searching for Tatiyana</i> Sriram Khé	49
<i>I Love Numbers</i> Bruce Fox	53
<i>Balancing on the Edge of Honors: A Meditation</i> Jeffrey A. Portnoy	55

RESEARCH ESSAYS

<i>Using Characteristics of K-12 Gifted Programs to Evaluate Honors Programs</i> Mary K. Tallent-Runnels, Shana M. Shaw, and Julie A. Thomas	61
<i>The Effects on Outcomes of Financing Undergraduate Thesis Research at Butler University</i> Anne M. Wilson and Robert F. Holm	77
<i>Residential Housing Population Revitalization: Honors Students</i> David Taylor.....	89
<i>Experiential Learning and City as Text[®]: Reflections on Kolb and Kolb</i> Robert A. Strikwerda.....	99

PORTZ-PRIZE-WINNING ESSAY, 2006

<i>The Virgin Mary: A Paradoxical Model for Roman Catholic Immigrant Women of the Nineteenth Century</i> Darris Catherine Saylor.....	109
About the Authors	145
NCHC Publication Order Forms.....	150

CALL FOR PAPERS

The next issue (**deadline: September 1, 2007**) of JNCHC will focus on the theme “Managing Growth in Honors.” We invite essays that discuss growth in size and/or complexity of individual honors programs and colleges or the growth in numbers and kinds of programs/colleges nationally. We invite essays that analyze the consequences of growth for students, faculty, honors administrators, or institutions. Essays might focus on numbers of students, size of budgets, allotment of space, class size, ambition of extracurricular activities, or any other kind of growth within a program or college. Other essays might focus on the increased size of national honors conferences, intra- or inter-institutional competition, national visibility, or any other developments and consequences of the rapid growth of honors during the past three decades. An underlying question might be, “Is less more, or is more better?”

The following issue (deadline: March 1, 2008) will be a general-interest issue

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

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

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.

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

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.

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

DEDICATION



JEFFREY A. PORTNOY

GEORGIA PERIMETER COLLEGE

Jeff Portnoy!—thou in whom creative powers
Blossomed first among the midwest flowers
Of Iowa (the Univers'ty of),
Reseeding then at Emory, where love
Of eighteenth-century literature produced
A Ph.D. and teaching jobs, all juiced
With honors, in whose verdant fields they flourish
Splendidly, as all the while they nourish
The editors on thy most stately Pub Board,
Keeping them HAPPY, with libations poured
To proper grammar, wit, good sense, and pith,
All virtues thy own writing is endowed with,

And generate, like pollen in the spring,
Journals and learned monographs that bring
Acclaim to, with the help of thy sharp pencil,*
The National Collegiate Honors Council—
Of thee I sing, Great Portnoy, who my boss is,
And now I'd better stop and cut my losses
But not before I quote dear Alex Pope, who
Wrote some lines which best were said of you
In praise of a fellow writer, "One whose fires
True Genius kindles, and fair Fame inspires;
Blest with each talent, and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease...."

*Let it be known to all honorable parties that Dr. Portnoy useth, in fact, not a pencil but a Sanford Uni-Ball Micro with green ink, and the author of this so-called Dedication should be chastised for diverting from factual accuracy. [Martin Scriblerus]

ADA LONG

Editor's Introduction

ADA LONG

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

We begin this issue of *JNCHC* by paying homage to Virginia Tech. Charles (Jack) Dudley, long-time Director of the Virginia Tech Honors Program, has honored his program and university with great eloquence in his letter "To Honors People Everywhere," which, along with a newspaper column he wrote, we reprint here with the permissions of both Jack Dudley and the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. All we can add to Jack's letter is that Virginia Tech has inspired all of us with the generosity and nobility that its students, faculty, staff, and administration have shown in their response to the devastating losses they have suffered. We are proud that Jack, his students, and Virginia Tech are deeply intertwined in the history and traditions of NCHC, and we hold them close to our hearts.

The next section of this issue is a Forum on "Grades, Scores, and Honors." During the past decade or two—as quantitative measurement has taken on increasing prominence in regional accreditations, legislative mandates, and institutional self-studies—honors programs and colleges have become ever more sensitive to the numbers game in their policies, marketing strategies, and cultures. Some have resisted this trend; others have made reluctant concessions; others have welcomed the opportunity to do, for instance, quantitative self-assessment; and no doubt some have been thankful for the opportunity to let numbers do the difficult and fraught work of admission and retention decisions. From the beginning of the burgeoning honors movement in the United States during the 1960s, the role of numbers has extended over the full spectrum of possibilities, from the single factor determining admission and retention, for instance, to pretty much complete irrelevance in that process. The more recent decades, however, have expanded both the applications and pressures of numbers within honors programs and colleges. The dedication of a Forum to the topic "Grades, Scores, and Honors" thus addresses a common interest of all honors administrators.

Fortunately, Larry Andrews of Kent State University—in his solicited essay entitled "Grades, Scores, and Honors: A Numbers Games?"—has written what seems almost the definitive essay on the Forum topic. Examining admission, retention, and graduation standards as well as course grading issues, he has covered the broad range of matters that every honors administrator must consider, and he has done so with a wonderfully balanced perspective, connecting the

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

various options with the traditions and cultures of individual programs. The balanced perspective of his essay culminates in the wisdom of his final sentence: "We may depend on numbers, but they must not tyrannize us."

Andrews' essay served as the starting point and inspiration for the Forum, having been distributed on the NCHC listserv with an invitation for responses to his essay and/or to the topic itself. Although it seemed unclear at first what could be added to Andrews' discussion, NCHC members always find a way, and several of the contributors consider the topic in specific contexts within the general field of honors.

Annamarie Guzy of the University of South Alabama—in "Evaluation vs. Grading in Honors Composition, Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying about Grades and Love Teaching"—does not, as the title might initially suggest, argue against grades. On the contrary, her implicit point is that grades are both necessary and valuable. She focuses on the difficulty her students in honors composition have in distinguishing between learning and grades, in reading her comments rather than immediately thumbing to the back of the paper in search of an A. Guzy suggests that figuring out how to learn, as distinguished from simply how to get good grades, is part of an honors education. She describes in this essay how she assigns grades and how she tries to persuade her students to look beyond them.

Joyce W. Fields also argues for the value of grades in "To Speak or Not to Speak: That is the Question," and she proposes that class discussion should be the focus of rigorous, quantitative assessment along with other traditionally graded course work like tests, papers, and presentations. In a survey she did at Columbia College, she found that her students believe that class discussion should be the primary focus of assessment, and she proposes, therefore, that it should be assessed using precise criteria (she offers five) and objective methodology.

Rather than narrowing the contexts in which grades are valuable, Ryan Brown, of Indiana University Purdue University Fort Wayne, broadens it in "Grades, Scores, and Honors Education." He makes the point that grades and scores in honors are part of the larger institutional context. Numbers play an integral role in all components and levels of an institution; honors may use different numbers in different ways than other parts of a campus, but the broader context in which honors programs are situated determines their options and limitations. Brown contends that one should not try to consider the matter of grades and scores in honors as if honors programs were autonomous and independent from their institutions.

Rosalie C. Otero, on the other hand, describes a grading system in the UNM Honors Program that is different from the grading system outside of honors at the University of New Mexico. Otero—in "Grades, Marks, Scores, Oh My!"—

acknowledges the necessity of grades, scores, and other numerical forms of evaluating student performance, but she also describes the unique and controversial grading system that has been a tradition in the UNM Honors Program for almost five decades. She describes some resistance to it, but she provides compelling rationales for its usefulness and value in honors education.

In “Searching for Tatiyana,” Sriram Khé describes his struggles with a number of issues that face all honors directors, and, perhaps because he is still fairly new to honors, he sees them with fresh eyes. He quickly learned that going just by the numbers in admissions, for instance, would have deprived his program of important students, and so he developed another admissions option, which potentially had its own set of problems. Larry Andrews’ essay helped him contextualize and validate his policies within the mission of Western Oregon University.

In “I Love Numbers,” Bruce Fox of Northern Arizona University points us to both the value and the treachery of numbers in evaluating student performance. He describes problems that we have probably all faced in grading: grade distribution vs. attainment of course goals as the determinant of individual grades, for instance, or where to draw the line, precisely **and** accurately, between an A and a B. The problems he identifies suggest the extreme caution we should—and often do not—exercise in using numbers to make decisions about students.

The Forum concludes with an essay by the dedicatee of this issue of *JNCHC*—Jeffrey A. Portnoy—responding to two recent essays by Larry Andrews: the one that begins this Forum and another in the previous issue (“At Play on the Fields of Honor(s),” *JNCHC* 7.2, 33–35) in which Andrews calls for balance between work and fun in the life of an honors administrator. In “Balancing on the Edge of Honors: A Meditation,” Portnoy acknowledges the difficulty of achieving a balance between work and fun, especially in an academic culture that is dominated by numbers, but—in his inimitable fashion—Portnoy makes even this difficulty part of the play that Andrews advocates.

Our first research essay—*Using Characteristics of K–12 Gifted Programs to Evaluate Honors Programs* by Mary K. Tallent-Runnels, Shana M. Shaw, and Julie A. Thomas—is a study of university-wide honors colleges and programs at Big 12 universities in terms of nine characteristics that have previously been applied to K–12 education for gifted students. Based on data gathered from websites, phone calls, and emails, the authors (two from Texas Tech and one from the University of Texas at Austin) evaluated eleven of the honors colleges/programs in relation to each of the nine characteristics, discovering what they perceived to be some areas of weakness, especially the lack of teacher training designed specifically for honors faculty. The authors make some good recommendations, several of which have already been addressed by the NCHC.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In "The Effects on Outcomes of Financing Undergraduate Thesis Research at Butler University," Anne M. Wilson and Robert F. Holm describe three funding opportunities for students at Butler University, their different goals, and the means of assessing fulfillment of these goals. The two funding programs that produced a significant increase in completion of undergraduate theses were one that targeted thesis research and another that provided summer research grants. This essay is a collaborative effort by the directors of the Honors Program and the Institute for Undergraduate Research at Butler. The campus collaboration between these two programs allows effective assessment of the goals and outcomes of undergraduate research.

David Taylor, in "Residential Housing Population Revitalization: Honors Students," presents a statistical study showing that a new, better, more centrally located residential housing center for honors students not only attracted almost full occupancy (in contrast to the older, unrenovated, and out-of-the-way facility) but also increased on-campus residency of honors students in other housing as well.

In "Experiential Learning and City as Text[®]: Reflections on Kolb and Kolb," Robert A. Strikwerda discusses the City as Text[®] (CAT) form of experiential learning in the context of two writers named Kolb: one a philosopher and the other a psychologist. In addition to explaining the process and value of CAT exploration, Strikwerda comments generally on higher education and the lost art of the Peripatetic philosophers, who—like participants in Honors Semesters and Faculty Institutes—understood the relationship between walking and learning.

We are proud to conclude this issue of *JNCHC* with an impressive essay by Darris Catherine Saylor, a 2006 NCHC Portz Scholar. In her prize-winning essay, "The Virgin Mary: A Paradoxical Model for Roman Catholic Immigrant Women of the Nineteenth Century," Saylor focuses a wide variety of research, analysis, and insight on the dilemma of nineteenth-century Roman Catholic immigrant women as they tried to fulfill two sets of impossible expectations: emulation of the Virgin Mary and adherence to the American code of True Womanhood. Saylor presents a well documented account—scholarly and also moving—of the frustrations that had to arise from the imposition of these two patriarchal codes; while adapting to a new country and culture, these women also struggled to achieve unattainable ideals that were adapted by men to be adopted by women. We congratulate Darris Catherine Saylor and her mentor, Dr. Charles Lippy of the Department of Philosophy and Religion at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, for this fine essay and for the 2006 Portz Prize.

About the Authors

Larry Andrews is Dean of the Honors College at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. Holding a Ph.D. in comparative literature from Rutgers, he has published translations of Russian poetry and scholarly work on nineteenth-century Russian and French fiction and on African American women's fiction. He is a member of the NCHC Publications Board and the *Honors in Practice* Editorial Board, served as president of the Mid-East Honors Association, and recently completed a term on the NCHC Board of Directors.

Ryan Brown graduated from the Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne Honors Program. He has served on the program's governing council for six years and has served as a program advisor since 2003. He is currently finishing an M.A. in professional communication.

Joyce W. Fields is Assistant Director of Honors and Director of the Child and Family Studies Program at Columbia College, Columbia, S.C. She earned her Ph.D. in family relations from Florida State University with research interests in value consensus in the family system and gerontology. She has published in the areas of children's literature and the depiction of family, racial and ethnic identification in young children, and a variety of pedagogical issues such as teaching in student groups and the use of popular culture in the college classroom.

Bruce Fox is Director of the Honors Program and Professor of Forest Management at Northern Arizona University. He earned his Ph.D. in natural resources from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and B.S. in forestry and Master of Forestry degrees from the University of California, Berkeley. He has worked as a lumberjack, a field forester, and a consultant in the forestry and aerospace industries.

Annamarie Guzy is an associate professor of English at the University of South Alabama and holds a Ph.D. in rhetoric and professional communication from New Mexico State University. She currently serves on the NCHC Publications Board and was recently elected to the NCHC Board of Directors.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Robert Holm is Director of the Institute for Research and Scholarship at Butler University. He earned his M.S. and Ph.D. in biological sciences from Northwestern University and B.S. in biology from the University of Miami, Florida. He has worked as a biologist for the U.S. EPA and an environmental manager for municipal and county governments in Florida and Indiana.

Sriram Khé is Director of the Honors Program and Associate Professor of Geography at Western Oregon University. He earned his Ph.D. in urban and regional planning from the University of Southern California. He is currently obsessed with using autoethnography in any research he does in geography and honors.

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 National Collegiate Honors Council and the Western Regional Honors Council. She is currently serving as Executive Secretary-Treasurer of WRHC. She is also an NCHC-Recommended Site Visitor and co-author of *Assessing and Evaluating Honors Programs and Honors Colleges: A Practical Handbook* published by NCHC in 2005. Dr. Otero is the author of several articles in *Forum for Honors, Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*, and the inaugural edition of *Honors in Practice*.

Jeffrey A. Portnoy directs the Honors Program at Georgia Perimeter College in Atlanta and is a professor of English. He has served on the Executive Committee of the Southern Regional Honors Council. He was President of the Georgia Collegiate Honors Council in 2000–2001 and was recently elected Vice President of that organization. He is a member of the *JNCHC* Editorial Board and General Editor of NCHC's Monograph Series. During his tenure as co-chair of NCHC's Publications Board, that group initiated *JNCHC* and *HIP*, refocused the mission of *NHR*, and increased its commitment to publishing monographs.

Darris Catherine Saylor is a graduate of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's Honors Program, where she has served as the Student Assistant Director for the past two years. As an undergraduate, she majored in English and religious studies and minored in women's studies and Greek. She will pursue a Master of Divinity degree program this fall at Harvard University's Divinity School. She has attended the four most recent NCHC conferences, delivering student-led presentations each year with fellow delegates. At the 2006 NCHC conference in

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Philadelphia , Saylor presented her undergraduate honors thesis as one of three annual Portz Scholars.

Shana M. Shaw is currently finishing her second year of the doctoral program in educational psychology at the University of Texas. Her research interests in gifted education include underachievement among students of high ability and evaluations of gifted education programs. Additionally, she teaches an undergraduate class in the Department of Educational Psychology.

Robert A. Strikwerda is Director of the Honors Program and Associate Professor of Philosophy at Indiana University Kokomo. He received his Ph. D. at University of Notre Dame. Along with Larry May and Patrick Hopkins, he was a contributing editor of *Rethinking Masculinity: Philosophical Explorations in Light of Feminism* (2nd ed. 1996). He has also written on topics in the history and philosophy of social science as well as applied philosophy. He was one of the facilitators, along with Peter Machonis and Devon Graham, of the NCHC Honors Semesters Committee's Faculty Institute "Miami Beach and the Everglades" in January 2006.

Mary K. Tallent-Runnels is a professor of education psychology at Texas Tech University. Her research has been published in such journals as *Gifted Child Quarterly*, *Roeper Review*, *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *Review of Educational Research* and *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*. Her research interests include attitudes toward gifted learners and children's future concerns.

David Taylor holds a B.S. in geology and an M.B.A., and he is pursuing a doctorate in higher education administration at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. He has been affiliated with residential housing at KSU for the past seven years. His research interests include marketing and program assessment, conflict management theory, and employee-organizational fit.

Julie A. Thomas is an associate professor teaching courses and leading professional development in elementary science education at Texas Tech University. She co-led a PT³ grant to support faculty development in teaching with technology and has extensive experience in gifted education with coordinating and evaluating K-5 gifted programs and advising university honors programs.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Anne M. Wilson is in her third year as Honors Program Director at Butler University. She is also a faculty member in the Department of Chemistry teaching organic chemistry. Dr. Wilson has mentored over fifteen students in undergraduate research in her eleven years at Butler, resulting in four publications with student co-authors. She has also been involved in interdisciplinary efforts through the Honors Program, teaching “Food” and the sesquicentennial course “150 Years of Butler University.”