

2018

Editor's Introduction: *Hip* Now, *Hip* Then

Ada Long

University of Alabama, Birmingham

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nchchip>

Long, Ada, "Editor's Introduction: *Hip* Now, *Hip* Then" (2018). *Honors in Practice -- Online Archive*. 278.
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nchchip/278>

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 Honors in Practice -- Online Archive by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: *HIP NOW, HIP THEN*

Ada Long

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

This volume of *Honors in Practice* contains essays both new and old, demonstrating the variety of subjects and approaches that have characterized the journal since its outset and also suggesting some realignment over time toward a greater focus on research and objective analysis. This trend perhaps reflects the increasing professionalization of honors since the inaugural volume of *HIP* in 2005.

HIP Now

The volume begins with four new essays that spotlight curricular innovations, study abroad, and interactions between honors administrators and students' families. All offer practical ideas in the context of previous literature and current realities.

In the first essay, "Including Families in the Honors Experience," Melissa L. Johnson of the University of Florida makes a persuasive case for developing formal structures to connect families with honors programs. Acknowledging that most honors administrators complain about helicopter parents, Johnson cites research showing that family involvement—"family" being a broadly inclusive term here—has a positive impact on the social wellbeing and academic performance of students. She describes various kinds of family-oriented initiatives currently in practice before describing such programs at the University of Florida, which include, for instance, family weekends, Facebook groups, annual giving campaigns, and orientation break-out groups. Johnson describes the benefits that these activities have had for students, families, and the honors program at the University of Florida and suggests ways to implement them in other honors programs.

The other three new essays focus on improving the honors experience for students. In "Hearing the Marginalized Voice in the Great Books Curriculum," Jennie Woodard describes diversifying a Great Books curriculum at the University of Maine, constructing "a set of pedagogical tools that encourage students to hear voices in the texts that otherwise might be silenced." This initiative resulted from students' observations in their end-of-semester reflective essays that they "wanted more women, more texts produced by people of color, more non-European narratives, more attention paid to class systems."

In addition to adding and contextualizing new texts, Woodard describes deploying an intersectional lens so that students “see beyond a monolithic oppression against an identity population or a particular -ism (sexism, racism, etc.) and understand that oppression is increasingly complex the more identity markers are included in a social issue.” She provides detailed instructions and an illustration of how to provide an intersectional approach to redeem and enrich a Great Books curriculum.

In “Student Preferences for Faculty-Led Honors Study Abroad Experiences,” Nicholas R. Arens, Hanna Holmquist, and Rebecca C. Bott-Knutson describe the interdisciplinary model for study abroad in the Fishback Honors College at South Dakota State University (SDSU). After a literature survey on the models and benefits of study abroad, the authors present the results of their recent study of the effectiveness of the SDSU model in terms of location, cost, length, and outcomes. Their findings indicate, for instance, that the most important factor for students was cost and the least was the faculty leaders. The survey also showed “a positive correlation between our program’s interdisciplinary focus and students’ desires for an interdisciplinary study abroad experience in honors.” The results generally reinforced other research on study abroad, such as the preference for Europe as a destination, and it confirmed the desirability for their students of the model they had developed at SDSU.

The last of the current essays is “A Structured Course for Personal and Professional Development,” in which Deirdre D. Ragan describes the attempt “to intertwine career exploration and academic advising within a defined curriculum” at The Citadel. After summarizing best practices for career readiness, academic advising, and career counseling, Ragan argues that “college students are well-served by a mandatory, credit-bearing, four-year course of study that synthesizes key aspects of academic and career counseling into one setting” and describes in detail what such a curriculum might look like. She then describes the implementation of such a curriculum in The Citadel Honors Program’s Personal and Professional Development plan. She outlines components of the plan, describes the success of the course model, provides student testimonials, and contends that “combined with a rigorous undergraduate curriculum, [the plan] produces a mature, critical thinker who is poised for a successful career.”

HIP Then

While the current essays generally look ahead to suggested improvements in honors education, we now take the opportunity to look backward at

some of the finest examples of essays from the first ten years of *Honors in Practice*. These essays, too, suggest improvements for honors, representing some of the journal's best ideas and insights. The essays also combine to form a retrospective panorama of national and international thinking about careers, curricula, technology, philosophy, experiential learning, STEM disciplines, arts, and humanities.

The essays appear in chronological order, starting with the inaugural issue in 2005. The author of the first essay, Rosalie Otero, represents her own kind of inauguration as the first faculty member in the country to be tenured in honors, a distinction that has become far more common in the world of honors today. Her essay, "Tenure and Promotion in Honors," describes the value of an interdisciplinary faculty that has the legitimacy and self-sufficiency enjoyed in the traditional academic disciplines. Based on her experience at the University of New Mexico, she argues that granting tenure and promotion in honors represents a serious commitment to interdisciplinary teaching in an educational climate that, in 2005, undervalued both teaching and interdisciplinarity. As a pioneer in this rare new kind of honors environment, Otero provides advice for others following this path.

The second essay (2006) is one of *HIP*'s first international publications: "Honors in Chile: New Engagements in the Higher Education System" by Juan Carlos Skewes, then of the Universidad Austral de Chile, Carlos Alberto Cioce Sampaio of the Universidade Regional de Blumenau, and Frederick J. Conway of San Diego State University. The authors developed an honors program at the Universidad Austral de Chile (UACH) that was adapted to the challenges of a rural setting, rainy weather, and poorly prepared students. Funded by the Chilean Ministry of Education, the program addressed national concerns about inequities in education in a setting that provided a living laboratory for environmental studies. The honors program was part of a larger agenda "to bring together faculty from the natural and social sciences to study environmental problems and contribute to policy making at the national and local levels." This innovative, context-based program should still be an inspiration for new honors programs elsewhere, including the United States.

The next essay (2007) is the earliest—and still one of too few—descriptions of integrating honors into a professional school. As honors administrators know, the accreditation requirements of professional schools present often insurmountable obstacles to student participation in honors programs, and engineering is typically the most challenging of all. One of several options for

honors students in engineering at the University of Pittsburgh was created in 1980 and is described by Michael Giazzoni in “The Fessenden Honors in Engineering Program.” This program was an outstanding model for meeting the challenge of integrating honors and engineering successfully but was, alas, phased out in 2012 when Giazzoni left the honors college. Nevertheless, honors administrators might do well to forward copies of this essay to their deans of engineering.

Honors in Practice has from time to time published especially memorable speeches or conference presentations, and the next three essays are examples written by three of the most influential figures in the history of honors. The first is Bernice Braid’s “Majoring in the Minor: A Closer Look at Experiential Learning” in 2008. For those unfamiliar with Braid’s work, or for those who have taken part in some of the many City as Text™ experiences, honors semesters, or honors institutes she has organized over the past five decades, this essay provides a compact introduction to her theoretical perspective and an overview of experiential learning as Braid has developed and promulgated it throughout her career. She argues here and always that “explorers who see themselves as natives in a new land are engaged. . . . [E]verywhere they go, even to books they have read before or hometowns they thought they wanted to escape, they have what it takes to see more than they did before and to feel the power of being able to create their own new pathways in any setting.”

Samuel Schuman’s 2009 essay “Ending in Honors” addresses the fundamental questions of whether, when, how, and why an honors director or dean can best leave honors behind. With his usual civility and humor, Schuman speaks to those who plan, sooner or later, to retire from honors and gives sound advice on how to depart with good will toward and from their academic communities. As I noted in that issue of *HIP*, “A reader who is not yet far enough along to consider retirement would be wise to file this essay in a safe place; those who are about to retire should study it line by line; those who have already retired can discover what they did wrong and maybe even right.” Characteristically, Sam’s observations about retiring with grace can be extrapolated to insights about living graciously. Sam led the way for all of us by exemplifying grace and wisdom—even, alas, in endings.

Providing what might be a fitting companion piece to Schuman’s essay, Ted L. Estess—Sam’s close companion and fellow leader of Beginning in Honors—contributes his own grace and wisdom in “Becoming Part of a Story” (2010). In a moving contemplation of his long (at that time, thirty-one years) and distinguished career in honors, Estess tells a story about the

pattern of his life and all our lives, in which a future that seems random and risky produces a past both coherent and meaningful. In Ted's case, the story was far from over, and his future has contained many more years of teaching in the University of Houston Honors College, even unto this day. At any stage of our own stories and careers in honors, we can find wisdom in Ted's story as it mirrors the confusion and clarity of all our lives. Above all, the essay is great fun to read; Ted always spins a fine yarn.

As honors has moved into the tech world, submissions to *HIP* have increasingly focused on using online resources to enhance not just the classroom experience but all components of college life. In "Designing a Collaborative Blog about Student Success" (2011), Melissa L. Johnson, Alexander S. Plattner, and Lauren Hundley describe a strategy for facilitating student collaboration in honors. In the third semester of a four-course sequence at the University of Florida called Honors Professional Development, the students design, implement, and maintain an ongoing blog and vblog (video blog) to facilitate first-year students' successful involvement in campus and community life. In addition to individual blogs set up by each of the students throughout the course sequence, these blogs are a collaborative project to help first-year students succeed in college by, for instance, finding places to study, communicating with their professors, writing résumés, and managing their time effectively. The blogs helped new students and, perhaps even more, the students who created them, who learned about online skills, research, and teamwork.

A recent innovation in the NCHC's longtime commitment to experiential education has been the very popular and successful Partners in the Parks program, which was created in 2008 as a brainchild of Joan Digby. In "Honoring the National Parks: A Local Adaptation of a Partners in the Parks Adventure" (2012), Digby and Kathleen Nolan describe an NCHC Partners in the Parks program hosted by LIU Post—"From Fire Island to Ellis Island"—and the spinoff from it of a course called "Honoring the Parks" at St. Francis College. As the authors explain, "Like NCHC's City as Text™, Partners in the Parks appears to be developing a life of its own generating creative permutations that evolve naturally from local sites and participating institutions." The essay illustrates the way that NCHC-sponsored programs can spread from a single experience into multiple innovations at local and national levels. The authors also reveal the new energy to be gained by partnering with professionals outside of academia, in this case National Park Services rangers.

Over the years, *HIP* essays have inspired us to create new active learning experiences nationally and internationally, to develop new classroom strategies, to try new technologies, and to find new ways to improve honors education. From time to time we also publish essays that inspire us to be the best students, teachers, administrators, and people that we can be. Such an essay is “In Landlessness Alone Resides the Highest Truth; or, At Sea with Honors” (2013) by Don Dingledine of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. This eloquent, intricate, allusive, and ingenious essay likens the risky adventure of honors education to the dangerous quest for truth undertaken by Ishmael in *Moby-Dick*. Honors programs, like the *Pequod*, propel students beyond the familiar lands of their majors and professional goals, sending them out to sea where, like Ishmael, they examine that big whale of Truth from all angles, traditions, and disciplines, always seeking but never quite grasping the unknown and the unknowable. Dingledine describes models of honors education that exemplify the highest ideals of community, interdisciplinarity, integrity, and truth-seeking, connecting these ideals to our individual and collective survival. He inspires us to practice and cherish honors “not by clinging to the ‘slavish shore’ but by heading out to sea.”

We conclude our celebration of the first ten years of *Honors in Practice* with a focus on the sciences. In “Ask Me about ISON: The Risks and Rewards of Teaching an Interdisciplinary Honors Course on a Scientific Event Unfolding in Real Time” (2014), William L. Vanderburgh and Martin Ratcliffe describe an honors course they taught at Wichita State University on the comet ISON. Ratcliffe, a planetarium astronomer, and Vanderburgh, a philosopher of science, gambled that ISON would be a major astronomical event of the twenty-first century and designed a course for the fall of 2013 that they could make up as they went along while following the progress of the comet. When the comet fizzled toward the end of the semester, they and their students learned that failure can be as interesting as success in studying an ongoing event in astronomy or in any other field; the unfolding narrative and the kinds of resources that lead to a thorough study of an event-in-progress lend excitement and drama to a course no matter what the outcome. The authors offer many good ideas, projects, models, and resources for generating such an interdisciplinary course.

The first decade of *Honors in Practice* reveals the truth of a passage written by Proust and quoted by Don Dingledine: “The only true voyage would be found not in traveling to strange lands but in having different eyes, in seeing the universe with the eyes of another person, of a hundred others, and seeing

the hundred universes each of them sees, which each of them is." Each of the essays included here gives the reader new eyes, and collectively they suggest hundreds of ways of seeing, hundreds of universes to see—and this is what honors education is all about.

