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The National Collegiate Honors Council is an association of faculty, students, and others interested in honors education.

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EDITORIAL POLICY

Honors in Practice (HIP) is a refereed journal of applied research publishing articles about innovative honors practices and integrative, interdisciplinary, and pedagogical issues of interest to honors educators. HIP employs a double-blind peer review process. Authors should include discussion of how central ideas and practices may be applied in campus settings other than their own, and the thesis should be located within a larger context such as theoretical perspectives, trends in higher education, or historical background. Essays should demonstrate awareness of previous discussions of the topic in honors publications and other relevant sources; bibliographies of JNCHC, HIP, and the NCHC Monograph Series are available on the NCHC website.

All submissions to the journals must include an abstract of no more than 250 words and a list of no more than five keywords.

Submissions and inquiries should be directed to: Ada Long at <adalong@uab.edu>.

DEADLINE

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

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1. We accept material by email attachment in Word (not pdf). We do not accept material by fax or hard copy.

2. The documentation style can be whatever is appropriate to the author’s primary discipline or approach (MLA, APA, etc.), employing internal citation to a list of references (bibliography).

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 are edited for grammatical and typographical errors and for infelicities of style or presentation. Authors have ample opportunity to review and approve edited manuscripts before publication.

5. All submissions and inquiries should be directed to Ada Long at <adalong@uab.edu> or, if necessary, 850.927.3776.
Impeccably dressed and immediately identifiable as an academic scholar and dean, Jerry Herron has been a tone-perfect representative of the NCHC for the past decade and more. If you’ve ever shared a cocktail with Jerry as a conference day winds down, though, you’ve had the good fortune to see him let his bowtie down and share a few other dimensions of himself.

First the impeccability. After earning his PhD at Indiana University in 1980, Jerry did a brief stint at Queens College, CUNY, before taking a position in 1982 at Wayne State University, where he remains unto this day. He climbed the traditional academic ladder to become full Professor of English starting in 1993. He then began sharing his time as Director of Honors in 2002 and in 2008 became Founding Dean of the Irvin D. Reid Honors College, this year becoming Dean Emeritus.

As an academic, Jerry has distinguished himself as a significant scholar, publishing two books—*Universities and the Myth of Cultural Decline* in 1988 and *AfterCulture: Detroit and the Humiliation of History* in 1993—and co-editing a collection titled *The Ends of Theory* as well as being textual co-editor of two volumes of W. D. Howells’s letters. He has also published numerous
journal articles and book chapters, increasingly focusing on Detroit, and served twelve years as Chair of the Editorial Board of the Wayne State University Press, of which he is still a member.

Jerry has brought his professional success and expertise to the NCHC, contributing numerous articles and conference presentations to the field of honors. He serves on the Publications Board and the JNCHC Editorial Board, co-chairs the Research Committee, and is a frequent facilitator for Beginning and Developing in Honors. He served on the NCHC Board of Directors and was subsequently elected to the full gamut of offices, including President of NCHC in 2016. As Vice President, he chaired the organization’s spectacular Fiftieth Anniversary conference in Chicago.

Now for bowtie-down Jerry, the cat-lover, Detroit-booster, storyteller (perhaps you heard him at the Story Slam in Boston?), and concocter of exotic gin cocktails. Even in his résumé, a genre that seldom entertains, you can see his impishness in titles like “I'm So Bad, I Party in Detroit,” “Homer Simpson’s Eyes and the Culture of Late Nostalgia,” and “Not the Oprah Show, or Why People Go to Bad Poetry Readings.”

Bowtie up and down, Jerry has been an invaluable scholar, officer, leader, and friend within the NCHC, and we toast him with a Detroit Dirty Martini.
Since its inception over fifty years ago, the National Collegiate Honors Council has served as an oasis of civility and cooperation in times of academic, cultural, and political turmoil. The presidential speeches and other official remarks at annual conferences echo this fact year after year, not as mere self-congratulation or boosterism but as evidence that even as generations of honors faculty and administrators have worked hard to maintain this tradition within the NCHC, it continues to surprise the old-timers as well as those who are new to the organization. Since honors educators have or have had positions in academic departments and in disciplinary organizations where contention is perpetual on matters both weighty and trivial, the novelty never quite wears off of finding oneself among a group of colleagues who earnestly seek better ways to educate their students as well as make education exciting and honorable throughout the country and beyond. In celebration of this tradition, we begin the 2019 issue of Honors in Practice with the 2018 presidential address and three sets of remarks by the year’s award winners.

In her “Presidential Speech,” Naomi Yavneh Klos of Loyola University New Orleans begins by praising the diversity of honors institutions, disciplines, missions, and students. Having acknowledged this shared commitment to diversity, she goes on to describe what she sees as shortcomings in policies and practices that limit the racial, cultural, economic, and social diversity within many honors programs. Increasing diversity has been the primary focus of Yavneh Klos’s presidency as well as a longtime but never fully successful focus of the NCHC. What distinguishes her critical approach to this subject is that she couches it within her sense of a unified community with a shared sense of purpose, intent on self-examination and self-correction. She locates her argument within a personal narrative that signals trust and respect, rather than contention, in addressing a serious problem.

In her “Founders Award Remarks,” Joan Digby of LIU Post focuses on the living tradition of personal relationships and influences within the NCHC. “Only in NCHC,” she says, “did I find a warm group of academic colleagues without hierarchy or competition.” She evokes the previous winners of the Founders Award as inspirations for her remaining committed to honors and to NCHC for four decades, locating herself and her award in the long tradition of personal connections within the organization. She highlights the power
of this tradition when she honors other award recipients: “Acknowledging current leaders with awards named for [NCHC’s] legendary figures—John Zubizarreta for the Sam Schuman Award and Eddie Weller for the Ron Brandolini Award—honors our history, present, and future.”

One of the award winners, Eddie Weller, illustrates Digby’s point about honoring “our history, present, and future” by focusing his acceptance remarks on the influence that Ron Brandolini had on him and on his development of an honors program at San Jacinto College. He recounts his first meeting with the namesake of his award and the subsequent warmth and collegiality that Brandolini granted him in the ensuing years. Weller describes his commitment to carrying on this tradition by helping others as he was helped.

The other award winner, John Zubizarreta of Columbia College, brings home the personal power of this tradition in a letter addressed directly to Sam Schuman, for whom his award is named. Schuman is a legendary figure whose death in 2014 did not diminish the enormity of his presence in NCHC as an inspiration to all who knew him and, secondhand, by all who did not. Zubizarreta’s letter expresses the personal, professional, cultural, and emotional force of Schuman’s ongoing guidance of the organization toward his ethical ideal of civility and toward his ideal of honors education, which John Z. quotes at the end of his letter: “Teachers need to love their subject matter, and they need to love their students, and they need to love bringing them together.”

Contributors to Honors in Practice advance Sam Schuman’s ideal in the various ways that they suggest improving our understanding and practice of honors education with the ultimate goal of better serving our students. The first formal essay in this volume cites Schuman as the source of the authors’ “characterization of honors education as, at its best, engaged, imaginative, and socially conscious.” In “Honors Work: Seeing Gaps, Combining Gifts, Focusing on Wider Human Needs,” Mimi Killinger, Maddy Jackson, and Samantha Saucier describe bringing Canadian activist Leigh Boyle’s “Lipstick Project” to the University of Maine. Based on her experiences in Northern Ethiopia, where she provided “humane and beautifying care” to women with obstetric fistula, Boyle brought the same care to hospice patients in her native Vancouver. Inspired by her story, Killinger and her honors students invited Boyle to UMaine. They reached out to other honors students, Orono high school students, and numerous departments and organizations on campus to sponsor events featuring Boyle and her story, in the process bridging gaps between diverse group on campus and in the community. “Together honors students,
high school students, and honors faculty made real-world connections and worked toward cultivating empathetic, engaged citizens.”

The next essay also focuses on social justice and helping honors students learn how to understand and redress injustices in the world around them. One method of reaching this goal was the theme of the 2018 NCHC conference: “Learning to Transgress.” Richard Holt of Northern Illinois University addresses this goal and theme in “Forever Home: A Multilevel Approach to Fostering Productive Transgression in Honors.” He describes a course he taught at the University at Albany where he had students offer assistance to pet adoption agencies in finding “forever homes” for their animals. In the course, he adopted three main ideas: (1) process over product; (2) instructor deference to students in deciding what and how to learn; and (3) experiential learning strategies transgressing traditional practices. Holt describes the unexpected twists and transgressive turns that occurred in the class, and he explains the transgressive value of what he calls the THERE model—“Teacher as Outlaw; Honors Courses Fit; Expand Problem Space; Reveal ZOPED (zone of proximal development); Engage Real World.”

One goal that is directly related to social justice and that the NCHC has addressed frequently in the past and present, including Yavneh Klos’s presidential address, is increasing the diversity of honors programs, with a predominant focus on including more underrepresented minorities, especially more African American students, in predominantly white institutions (PWIs). In “Opening Doors to Engage a More Diverse Population in Honors: A Conversation,” Giovanna E. Walters, Angela Jill Cooley, and Quentina Dunbar present a conversation about how they hope to achieve this goal at Minnesota State University, Mankato. The three authors—a staff member, teacher, and student in the program—exchange ideas about the best ways to break down the real and imagined barriers that discourage eligible minority students from participating in honors. What they discover together echoes many of the points made by Yavneh Klos during her presidency: a holistic admissions process; cross-listed courses that mix honors with non-honors students; emphasis on social justice issues; creation of a minority advocacy group; and campus partnerships.

Another approach to increasing diversity is accommodating the diverse needs of students. In “‘Connecting Honors for All’: Reimagining the Two-Year Honors Program in the Age of Guided Pathways,” Charlotte Pressler describes the new ways that the honors program at South Florida State College (SFSC) is creating options for students whose primary interests are
vocational. The traditional liberal arts curriculum that is typical in honors excludes many career-oriented students who cannot fit such courses into their curriculum. Adopting a model based on the way honors is conducted at technical universities in The Netherlands, the honors program at SFSC now offers “project-based, faculty-guided opportunities for undergraduate research” in general education courses. Pressler describes the evolution of this new approach to honors at her two-year college and offers it as a viable model for other such colleges in the United States.

The next essay offers a model for teaching science and religion. Honors faculty who have focused on the often fraught connections between these two topics will understand the challenges of teaching such a course, the same challenges that arise in our politics and culture. Joseph W. Shane describes a course he teaches at Shippensburg University in an essay titled “An Evolving Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar on Science and Religion” that will no doubt interest faculty who have struggled with this topic. Shane contends that the subject is ideal for honors because it “requires elements of philosophy, theology, and comparative religion in addition to history and to working understandings of contemporary natural and social sciences.” He describes the background, structure, and content of the course, including a syllabus and concluding with suggestions to honors faculty who want to take on this challenging topic.

A different kind of challenge has been undertaken by Joan Navarre, Maddie Kayser, and Dylan Pass of University of Wisconsin-Stout (UW-Stout) and Marilyn Bisch, Catherine Smith, and Andrew Williamson of Indiana State University (ISU). In “Crossing Campus Boundaries: Using Classical Mythology and Digital Storytelling to Connect Honors Colleges,” they describe a collaborative course they designed that creates a “cross-institutional collaboration blurring the boundaries between campuses.” This unique collaboration involved mutual readings of Classical mythology at both campuses, with students at UW-Stout making short videos of the myths and students at ISU serving as consultants and critics of the films. The films were shown at ISU’s Spring Classics Fest and at UW-Stout’s 4:51 Short Film Festival and Exhibition. The honors students at both universities valued “the unique nature of working with students they did not and could not personally know, challenging them to develop new ways to provide honest evaluation and constructive feedback that was critical, useful, and respectful of multiple, unfamiliar perspectives.” The authors suggest that programs can easily incorporate this kind of collaboration with honors at another institution.
The final essay in this volume provides advice on how best to present such suggestions in honors publications. In “Publishing in Honors: Advice from Reviewers of HIP and JNCHC,” Heather Camp of Minnesota State University, Mankato, presents the results of her survey of reviewers for both Honors in Practice and Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council on the most successful ways to write for these journals. Using a theoretical framework developed by Carole Palmer of the University of Washington’s Information School, Camp organizes the advice from fourteen journal reviewers under two primary headings, exploration and translation, and she then summarizes the character traits of successful journal contributors: enthusiasm, foresight, honesty, and polish. Along the way, she cites detailed advice from individual journal reviewers that potential contributors should find useful. Along the way, she reveals the collegiality and dedication of journal reviewers in helping other honors educators accomplish and communicate their best work on behalf of their students.
Honors in Practice

2018 NCHC
CONFERENCE REMARKS
Presidential Speech

NAOMI YAVNEH KLOS
Loyola University New Orleans

My children like to say that it is dangerous to ride on a plane or even an elevator with me. They know that, at some point, after the doors have closed or the seat belts are fastened, I am going to start talking about honors. As NCHC president this past year, I have had the honor to speak with a great many people about honors and, especially, to address the false dichotomy between “high ability” students, on the one hand, and those who have “high financial need” or are considered in some way “high risk”—students who are from low-income families or underrepresented groups or who have disabilities or who are first in their families to attend college. In airplanes and on elevators and on campuses and in organizational offices, I like to tell folks that NCHC member institutions are public and private, secular and faith-based, two- and four-year, R1s and PUIs. They are HBCUs and HSIs. They are in The Netherlands and China and Siberia and Alaska and Boston. Honors students come from all academic disciplines and are citizens, undocumented, first-generation, and veterans. They are LGBTQ+, as well as Straight, they are cisgender, transgender, and non-binary, and they represent the full spectrum of racial and ethnic diversity in this country.
That’s what I say in the elevator, in public. Here in this room, among ourselves, we know that honors is sometimes constructed as a locus of privilege, raising the rankings of its institution by using restrictive models of admission that fail to recognize the role of systemic bias in the traditional metrics of academic excellence. For example, we know—and have known for a very long time—that SAT and ACT tests favor the children of white, affluent, college-educated parents. They also offer an advantage to those whose parents can afford test-prep tutoring and who can pay for their children to take the test multiple times if necessary. We now have a mechanism in place that boosts that advantage: superscoring! So why, let me ask, beloved honors community, do we still rely on these tests for admission to honors and for high-stakes scholarships, even at some “test optional” institutions? And when we do, why are we surprised that an honors college (or program) might be “whiter” than its institution as a whole?

Even more holistic admissions processes may skew in favor of certain students, as when we focus on how many AP classes a student has taken but bypass the valedictorian at the underfunded school that offers no AP and only 10% of whose graduates go on to college—or when we look at a résumé (rather than a list) of extracurricular activities that doesn’t value “working in the family gas station/convenience store” or “baby-sitting my siblings” or “mowing lawns” as highly as “captain of the lacrosse team” or “unpaid internship at [my dad’s friend’s] law firm” or “tutoring underprivileged children in Ghana.” I am not saying that athletics or internships or tutoring are not worthy activities, but they cannot be the only measure of a student’s worth. I am a champion of community engagement and volunteering but also somewhat suspicious of voluntourism that doesn’t require substantive reflection or of double hours earned by stocking the food pantry at an inconvenient hour.

Then, once students are on campus, are we inadvertently sending a message of who does and does not belong through prompts and support mechanisms that privilege certain viewpoints or experiences? For example, is a student whose first language is not English best served by a writing center with a policy of not correcting grammar?

I am excited by the work that all of you are doing on your campuses and that NCHC is doing by discussing alternative metrics for admissions, new success scripts, and other efforts to recruit, retain, and graduate more students from marginalized backgrounds. Still, there is work to be done reframing the question, in moving far beyond “how can we get more X students in honors?” to creating and understanding the value of an inclusive community.
As Georgetown historian Marcia Chatelain has written in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* about her work with students who are first in their families to attend college, “[They] are not recipients of institutional benevolence. Rather, they are members of our communities who remind us of our need to confront our histories of exclusion and choose a future of inclusion.” I would just say, they are members of our communities. Period.

Fr Greg Boyle, SJ—founder of Homeboy Industries and author of *Tattoos on the Heart*, a beloved first-year read in many Jesuit honors programs—wrote, “When we stand on the margins, the margins are erased.” Honors is not a checklist of experiences but a community of relationships, and we are each strengthened by being part of a welcoming, inclusive community. If we want to teach our students to listen respectfully to others with divergent opinions, if we want them to be consensus builders who work collaboratively to find solutions, they must be educated in a diverse, inclusive community. Let’s remember, too, that the margins are fluid and that we have a history of change for the better. What is transgressive now is status quo tomorrow. How many people in this room know what the term “parietal hours” means?

At the turn of the twentieth century, most colleges and universities denied access to women, to people of color, to Catholics, to Jews. Back before Jews were considered white people, all four of my grandparents were refugees. My father, Raphael Yavneh, was the first in his family to graduate not just from college but from high school. My mother’s mother, Grandma Anne, came to New York from Romania just a year before WWI began. Because New York City at that time, almost uniquely, was committed to free higher education for girls with high academic ability regardless of religion, ethnicity, or race, Grandma—a Jewish immigrant whose first language was Yiddish—went to college. She couldn’t major in physics (I guess they weren’t *that* enlightened at Hunter), but she could minor in it and major in math. Grandma got married after her junior year, but she still finished college, even when she became pregnant. A physical exam was required for graduation, but the doctor (a woman) who examined my very gravid grandmother simply ignored her giant belly and passed her without comment.

Grandma raised her children, including as a single mother during the four years of WWII, while her engineer husband (also an immigrant with a free education at New York’s Cooper Union) served as a CB in the Pacific theater. In her 50s, she went back to school, earning a master’s at Columbia and then teaching at a rural high school, where she prepared students for college. Grandma was the one the kids always asked to chaperone the dance, and
she proudly displayed her “teacher of the year” snow shovel when we came to visit her home in Napanoch, New York.

So, first of all, a big shout out to my STEM grandma, who helped me with my trigonometry homework!

Also, a shout out to New York City, and to Hunter College, which was committed to free education for academically gifted girls and women, including poor immigrants whose résumé included “babysitting my younger siblings” and “working in the family linoleum store.”

We should also honor the high school guidance counselor, who saw Grandma’s ability and who told her, “You can go to college—it’s free and here’s a scholarship so you can buy your books” and even more importantly “You should go to college; you belong in college.”

I tell the story of Grandma Anne because when we share our authentic selves with our students or really anyone, they feel open to bringing their authentic selves as well. When a first-generation student looks at me, she might see a privileged, curly-haired, white woman. I look at her and see Grandma Anne. And when I tell her about my grandma, I generally find that she sees herself in Grandma Anne, and in me. I hope that, when I share the story of Grandma Anne with you, together we can see the power of honors education to transform lives.

Naomi Yavneh Klos may be contacted at yavneh@loyno.edu.
Founders Award Remarks

JOAN DIGBY
LIU Post

I am extremely honored to receive the NCHC Founders Award. The introduction that Richard Badenhausen made, quoting from Jeff Portnoy’s letter on my behalf, was too overwhelming for me to grasp. It is not like me to be emotional or speechless, but this is how I feel.

In listening to the other awards made in the name of Sam Schuman and Ron Brandolini, I think back to those people who were friends over the decades that I have spent in honors. Sam was the greatest leader of this organization, and I can remember my last meeting with him in New Orleans at Café du Monde, when he reflected on his lifelong attachment to our organization without ever letting on that this was likely the end. I can still remember my shock and sadness when Sam died. Ron Brandolini hosted my reception for new directors at the conference I ran in Orlando. He was instrumental in bringing two-year honors programs into prominence in NCHC, and his genial spirit made that day an exceptional event. Acknowledging current leaders with awards named for such legendary figures—John Zubizarreta for the Sam Schuman Award and Eddie Weller for the Ron Brandolini Award—honors our history, present, and future. Both recipients are essential members
of our organization who contribute more than we can acknowledge in a ceremony. I am proud to work with them.

To be named as a “Founder” also makes me want to acknowledge Bernice Braid and Ada Long, my mentors and inspirations in NCHC. I first became an active part of this organization because I heard their presidential addresses, as well as the address of Jocelyn Jackson, whose words convinced me that I wanted to commit myself to this organization. Throughout my academic career—going into my fiftieth year at Long Island University—no disciplinary organization, MLA included, has ever attracted me. Only in NCHC did I find a warm group of academic colleagues without hierarchy or competition. NCHC was inviting from the start and has remained so for forty years.

I believe that the average tenure of an honors director is three years. I have always been astounded by this fact and want to tell all of you to stay with the job. Don’t leave and go back to a department or on to higher administration. After four decades at LIU, I am still having fun. I write for our journals and serve on an editorial board. I am teaching a new course on drones and finding new ways to teach, invent, and enjoy working with honors students. Stick with honors. Students, you too should think about professions that will bring you back to honors education as faculty or administrators.

NCHC and honors education have grounded my professional life, and I’m not through yet. Thank you for honoring me with the Founders Award. I am more grateful than you can know.

________________________________________________________

Joan Digby may be contacted at

Joan.Digby@liu.edu.
First, I would like to thank NCHC for this incredible honor. I have had the pleasure for more than two decades of working in honors education and discovering the joy of being paid to help change lives while having so much fun, so I would also like to thank San Jacinto College for supporting honors throughout those decades.

This award has special significance to me because I was lucky enough to know and work with Ron Brandolini and to consider him a friend. Since I am an historian, indulge me as I tell a short story of how I met Ron.

In 1996, on my third try, I convinced San Jacinto College to start an honors program, and so I came to the NCHC meeting in Atlanta that fall. The president of NCHC that year was Herb Lasky, from Eastern Illinois University, whom I knew through grading Advanced Placement history exams; he had been my table leader my first year. Herb had encouraged me to propose an honors program and had promised that if I ever got a program approved, he would set me up with the best community college honors expert at NCHC. After his Presidential Address, Herb took me and Ron Brandolini to the concierge floor for coffee; as he said, “I’m buying both of you coffee
because it’s free up here!” Then he left me with a treasure trove of knowledge and experience—Ron!

For the next ninety minutes, I picked the brain of “the best community college honors director in the country.” First, he gave me an overview of the program at Valencia College, which he directed, and how it got started. Next, he explained how NCHC worked and why I needed to come every year, after which he answered questions for at least an hour. I left Atlanta understanding how to begin a program. I unabashedly used everything I had learned in setting up the San Jacinto College Honors Program. Much of what we have accomplished at San Jac over the past couple of decades is based on Ron Brandolini’s taking time with me back in 1996.

Over the years I got to know Ron better through the NCHC. He was always warm, giving me his advice whenever I asked. As the program grew, I always had more questions. When I tried to thank him for all he did for me, he just shrugged it off, but this award would not be possible without his having taken time with a 35-year-old newbie in Atlanta. If it were possible, he should be the one receiving the award named for him.

I have tried to “live in the spirit” of Ron during my time in honors by helping colleagues whenever possible. While providing support to other honors educators is “the NCHC way,” to me it will always be above all “the Brandolini way.” So I say “Thank you” to NCHC and to San Jacinto College, but, most importantly, I say “Thank you Ron.” We miss you and wish you were still with us in person as well as in influence.

Eddie Weller may be contacted at Eddie.Weller@sjcd.edu.
Dear Sam,

Letters are almost becoming an extinct form of sharing meaningful ideas or authentic emotions in the wake of Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, or Twitter, but I’m old-fashioned, like you an unabashed lover of Shakespeare and the wonder of well-chosen words, and somehow what I want to say about the rare privilege of receiving the 2018 NCHC award in your name demands more than a tweet or other impermanent post. I write this letter to you, my friend, and by association to all our NCHC colleagues who remember you as an incomparable teacher, scholar, and leader as well as beloved friend. This letter is the link to what is in my heart. No password needed, just love.

It’s hard to believe that our 2018 conference in Boston is already in the past. But as Gavin Stevens in William Faulkner’s Requiem for a Nun says, “The past is never dead. It isn’t even past.” I am still reveling in the warmth and generosity—not to mention the unexpected and humbling surprise—of receiving the Sam Schuman Award at the Awards and Fellows celebration. I
thought the event was a glorious celebration of the students, faculty, staff, and leaders of our organization who have devoted much of their talents, skills, and passions to make NCHC a wonderful home, a cherished family. What a treasure that the award carries your name!

My letter is long overdue, but I wanted to say how grateful I am for the honor of the award. I was unprepared to deliver any sort of formal speech, but I hope that you were listening and that my few words were enough to pay homage to your incalculable influence on our community and to reveal that I spoke honestly and deeply from my heart. You were and still are a hero, plain and simple, and you have touched the lives, stirred the imagination, and sharpened the intellect of countless NCHC folks. To hold an award in your name is praise beyond compare.

You have left many of us with countless warm memories and beautiful dreams, Sam. I remember presenting with you at annual meetings, conducting a program review with you, chatting with you in hallways, learning from you in workshops and sessions, and enjoying the elegance of your words when you shared your wisdom or spun a witty yarn. No matter the topic of discussion, you were always a first-class act with a boyish, genuine smile... and not just because of your perfect, crisp shirts and classy leather suspenders! I also remember running into you, literally, at the 2011 conference in Phoenix, where the outside temperature, despite the fall dates, was over 100 degrees. I was returning from an insane run of my own when I spotted a colorful figure just ahead as I was nearing the hotel. He was decked out in a full jogging suit, making his way indomitably toward the hotel. It was Sam Schuman! You were slowed down but undaunted by your illness. When we reached the hotel lobby, you leaned slightly toward me and said, “John, you’re a good friend.” I will never forget the moment. It was Sam Schuman all the way. Three years later, you were gone from us but never lost.

Thank you, Sam, and all our NCHC friends for another defining moment in my honors career and in my personal life. I know that many hands played a role in the blessing—Jeff Portnoy, Ada Long, office staff, awards committee, and others—and I am grateful for all. To repeat the Yeats lines that came to mind during my impromptu speech:

Think where man’s glory most begins and ends,
And say my glory was I had such friends.
—“The Municipal Gallery Revisited”
Certainly, Sam, your precious friendship comes to mind . . . and so do the bonds I share with all the others I respect, trust, and love in NCHC. The tribute of the Schuman Award—your award, Sam—is more than I deserve. Thank you for enriching my life and reminding us of the gift of our true calling when you said, “Teachers need to love their subject matter, and they need to love their students, and they need to love bringing them together.” The wonder of well-chosen words.

Forever your grateful admirer,

John

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Honors in Practice

ESSAYS
Honors Work:
Seeing Gaps, Combining Gifts,
Focusing on Wider Human Needs

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Abstract: “Honors Work: Seeing Gaps, Combining Gifts, Focusing on Wider Human Needs” describes the authors’ collaborative work with high school girls to bring Canadian activist Leigh Boyle and “The Lipstick Project” story to Maine in April, 2017. “The Lipstick Project,” which Boyle founded and directs, is a women-run volunteer organization based in Vancouver that provides free, professional spa care services to terminally ill patients. The authors contend that their collective efforts with the high school girls to organize “The Lipstick Project” events in Maine brought together a number of community constituencies in important ways, reflecting qualities and values central to honors education. The authors cite the writings of the late Samuel Schuman, a widely involved and highly respected honors administrator and teacher, for their characterization of honors education as, at its best, engaged, imaginative, and socially conscious. The authors note
how, through Boyle’s visit and “The Lipstick Project” gatherings, they confronted significant and bridgeable gaps: gaps between high school girls and college women, gaps among care providers and the university community, gaps in understanding the need for creative care. They conclude that identifying and addressing notable gaps can be an excellent starting point for an honors undertaking, particularly gaps that cross disciplines, form links to the local community, and focus on broader humanist concerns. They offer their experience as a replicable model for other honors communities to consider.

**Key Words:** collaboration, women, community, care, interdisciplinary

In the spring of 2017, an honors-led team brought a unique speaker to the University of Maine community: Leigh Boyle, Executive Director and Founder of “The Lipstick Project,” which is a women-run volunteer organization based in Vancouver, Canada, that provides free, professional spa care services to terminally ill patients. The organizing team’s work to bring Leigh Boyle and “The Lipstick Project” story to Maine reflects qualities and values described in the writings of Samuel Schuman as central to honors education, and it offers a creative, replicable model for other honors communities to consider.

Samuel Schuman was a widely involved and highly respected honors administrator and teacher who served as director of the honors program at the University of Maine, as a chair and member of numerous NCHC committees, and as the organization’s vice president and president. He wrote extensively and thoughtfully about honors education as engaged, imaginative, and socially conscious. In a comprehensive handbook, *Beginning in Honors,* Schuman defined honors as “enhanced educational opportunities for superior students” (7). He named “values essential to the honors enterprise” as “considerate human interactions, faith in the worth of the search for truth, a deep-seated conviction that academic excellence is worth pursuing and unflinching honesty in our work as teachers and learners” (4). Schuman’s description of honors’ “enhanced opportunities” rooted in mindful interactions, the pursuit of truth, excellence, and honesty resonates with the goals and outcomes of Boyle’s visit to Maine, as does Schuman’s summative claim that “sometimes honors work is not like other academic work, but of a different kind” (*Beginning* 8).
SEEING GAPS

“Once you see the gap, you can’t un-see the gap,” said Boyle in her keynote address on “The Lipstick Project” at the 2016 Independent School Gender Project Conference in Lakeville, Connecticut, a biennial gender conference that Mimi Killinger, Associate Professor of Honors at UMaine, and a group of Orono High School girls happened to be attending. Nearly a year later, Boyle would be flying to Maine to speak in Orono to more high school students and the University of Maine community.

“The Lipstick Project” efforts had begun for Boyle in 2010 when she traveled to Northern Ethiopia as a photographer working at a village school. Boyle felt isolated by linguistic and cultural barriers in the Ethiopian village as well as by infrequent contact with home. She found community by volunteering at a local women’s hospital that served patients with obstetric fistula, a debilitating condition that results from obstructed or prolonged labor. Obstetric fistula leaves women chronically incontinent, and in developing regions like Northern Ethiopia, they are often separated from their communities because of the stench that accompanies the condition and the stigma of failed childbirth.

Obstetric fistula is fairly easy to treat, but in rural Ethiopia women typically lack adequate medical resources. Boyle was eager to help the Ethiopian patients but unsure where to start. She reached out to friends back home in Vancouver, receiving several suggestions that she paint the women’s fingernails. Boyle thus began regular Sunday visits to the hospital, bringing nail polish, hand cream, and essential physical contact, connecting with women otherwise deprived of humane and beautifying care (Boyle).

Upon returning to Vancouver, Boyle was approached by a friend with a relative in hospice who needed similar restorative care. Her friend explained that while his relative was receiving necessary medical attention, the critical elements of personal touch and affection were missing. This moment stopped Boyle in her tracks. The troubles of the women she had helped back in Ethiopia were not isolated; they were here across the ocean in Boyle’s own community, too. Boyle describes this moment as “seeing the gap.” Compelled to do something like what she had done for the women in Ethiopia, Boyle and a group of her closest friends gathered their resources, reaching out to local spa care professionals in nail salons, hair salons, and massage therapy centers and then connecting with patients in hospice homes around Vancouver. Nearly everyone they contacted felt inspired or moved by their vision of
end-of-life spa care, and in 2012 their idea was formalized into a women-run, volunteer organization bringing smiles, color, beauty, and touch into the lives of dying patients.

The name “The Lipstick Project” derives from a story Boyle heard in college about a mysterious humanitarian crate of lipstick that appeared at the 1945 liberation of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. A British officer there described the lipstick crate as an act of “unadulterated brilliance” (Gonin), giving prisoners back their individuality and humanity as Boyle and her volunteers likewise do through “The Lipstick Project” (Boyle).

“The Lipstick Project” is steeped in the first value of honors education delineated by Schuman: “considerate human interactions.” The project prompted a Maine team of honors students, an honors faculty member, and local high school girls also to interact and organize in creative ways, addressing local gaps by bringing Boyle and her story to Maine. “The Lipstick Project” events in Maine illustrate the honors focus on experiential education propelled by students who perceive a gap, who recognize something is lacking or amiss, and who have “faith in the worth of the search for truth,” Schuman’s second honors value (Beginning 4).

**COMBINING GIFTS**

In 2015, a special volume of *Honors in Practice* was dedicated to the memory of Samuel Schuman, and Aron Reppman’s essay, “Connections and Character,” focuses on Schuman’s remarkable “bridge-building imagination” as a hallmark of his work in honors. Reppman contends that Schuman used “his insight into people and institutions to establish interesting and unexpected connections among them”; he adds, “I also personally benefited from [Schuman’s] invitations and suggestions that helped me to discover elements of my character and experience that could be put to wider use, especially when they could be combined with others’ gifts in unexpectedly fruitful ways” (31). Schuman himself had written in a 2005 essay, “Teaching Honors,” about the important links to be made among honors students, faculty, and ideas: “fine honors teachers love serving as matchmakers between material about which they are passionate and students of whom they are fond” (32).

Honoring the importance of connections, the high school girls and Killinger determined after hearing Boyle’s keynote address at the 2016 gender conference that they would connect Boyle and “The Lipstick Project” story with their Maine community. In turn, Killinger procured a seed grant from the UMaine McGillicuddy Humanities Center and invited two UMaine
honors students to join the Maine organizing team. She contacted Samantha Saucier, a double major in sociology and Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies, who was actively involved across campus and also an employee at a local retirement community. Killinger next reached out to Maddy Jackson, an English major who works closely with the McGillicuddy Humanities Center. Jackson immediately noted links between Boyle’s work and her humanist interests. Both honors students’ enthusiastic responses to Boyle’s story demonstrated a central tenet of Megan Jacobs and Marygold Walsh-Dilley’s 2018 JNCHC article, “Cultivating Empathy: Lessons from an Interdisciplinary Service Learning Course.” The authors contend that honors in its interdisciplinary and experiential approaches fosters deeper understanding across difference, and by extension “honors education is particularly well-positioned to cultivate empathy” (16). Embedded in the sort of activists’ empathy that Saucier and Jackson demonstrated in their embrace of “The Lipstick Project” idea is Schuman’s fourth value of honors: “unflinching honesty in our work as teachers and learners,” a commitment to confronting important truths with tenacity and integrity (Beginning 4).

Together with the high school girls, Saucier and Jackson worked diligently over the course of the academic year to organize Boyle’s April 2017 visit to Maine. “The Lipstick Project” story was an unusual one to bring to a college campus given spa care’s customary disconnect from academia. However, the focus on spa care and the unique collaboration that formed around “The Lipstick Project” events made the undertaking especially rich and honors-worthy, an academic endeavor “of a different kind.”

As the organizing team exchanged ideas about how best to arrange Boyle’s visit, they realized that, simply through preparatory work, they were bridging a sizeable divide between high school girls and university women. In separate meetings with Killinger, Saucier and Jackson commented on how distant they felt from their high school experience as they talked with the girls. They also remarked how important it was to listen to the girls, to mentor whenever possible, and to demonstrate through their collaborative organizing work how the high school girls might likewise become post-secondary activists and leaders one day.

**COLLECTIVELY FOCUSING ON WIDER HUMAN NEEDS**

In her essay “Helping, Fixing or Serving?” Rachel Naomi Remen writes, “When you help, you see life as weak. When you fix, you see life as broken. When you serve, you see life as whole.” The Maine organizing team’s work
to bring Boyle to Maine was rooted in a holistic service-learning spirit that created an enhanced, experiential, educational opportunity for all concerned, achieving the “academic excellence . . . worth pursuing” that Schuman named as his third honors value (Beginning 4).

Saucier and Jackson, in collaboration with Killinger and the Orono high school team, determined in biweekly meetings that their primary goal was to share “The Lipstick Project” story as broadly as possible in their Maine community in order to educate and inspire others through Boyle’s creative approach to end-of-life care. Together they designed events that would accommodate a variety of constituencies, and they came up with strategies for advertising via social media and flyers. They also sent informational letters to local high school principals, palliative caregivers, salon providers, retirement communities, and hospitals.

Killinger, Saucier, and Jackson recruited ten co-sponsors from across the University of Maine campus (the Honors College; the McGillicuddy Humanities Center; the Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies; the Department of Sociology; the Center on Aging; the Division of Lifelong Learning; the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; the All Maine Women Honor Society; Cultural Affairs; and the School of Nursing). The swell of university support was a testament to the ways that Boyle’s caring work resonates across disciplines and among various groups. It further illustrated Schuman’s claim in Beginning in Honors that some honors work opens “the inviting possibility of honors playing an active role in raising the intellectual and cultural caliber of the entire campus, not solely of a selected group of students . . . [through] cross-institutional enrichment opportunities” (9).

In her essay on service, Remen claimed that “serving requires us to know that our humanity is more powerful than our expertise.” Honors endeavors such as this work with “The Lipstick Project” moved university students and faculty, along with high school girls, outside their expertise into shared, humanist, cross-institutional opportunities. The project’s collaborative events in Maine highlighted the ways that, through interdisciplinary engagement and student effort, honors might serve as a critical hub for a variety of groups to come together around a common concern.

Boyle arrived in Maine on April 24, 2017, and the next evening spoke with local high schoolers, describing her path to “The Lipstick Project” and encouraging the teenagers in the audience to trust themselves as they seek to find their own transformative work. Boyle especially connected with a senior at the high school who was in remission from Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma.
Their connection made evident that Boyle’s work was neither distant nor intangible but rather steeped in stark truths. Boyle conceded in her talk with the high schoolers that “seeing the gap” can be difficult, that the gap does not always present itself clearly, and that whatever community we are in, it is imperative that we look for inevitable gaps.

Boyle also gave an inspiring Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies luncheon talk and an evening address, tracing the evolution of “The Lipstick Project” and telling her audiences, “The ultimate goal should not necessarily be a good death—but a good life until the end,” connecting notions of a “good life” with beauty, care, and touch. Boyle’s story in its simplicity (spa service) and its profundity (bettering death) proved an effective means for communicating to her audience members, particularly college students who might feel distant from old age and dying, that all of us are inextricably connected to end-of-life concerns. “The Lipstick Project” events in Maine not only provided a critical platform for honors women to work with high school girls in shared community engagement, but they also brought together disparate members of our broader community around humanist issues in an honors-like search for considerate interactions, truth, excellence, and honesty.

Schuman argued in Beginning in Honors that the “unique and defining feature of honors is its hopeless and glorious vision of doing collegiate education as well as it can be done” (13). He said that it is “hopeless” because people “inhabit the sublunar world of human imperfection,” but it is glorious “because it can give our entire educational enterprise a direction and a goal to inspire our professional lives, energize our working, and sustain not just those of us in honors, but the colleges and universities within which we live” (13). The Maine organizing team, led by the work of two dedicated honors students, grew as a group and as individuals through their shared work in bringing Boyle’s inspirational and important story to Maine, attempting to do “collegiate [and community] education as well as it can be done.” The team and their Maine audiences learned about human life measured in quality rather than quantity of days, in dignity and beauty, in connections and compassion. Boyle and “The Lipstick Project” also prompted listeners to valorize feminine practices, to see and to bridge gaps, undertaking the sort of personal and intellectual engagement that is at the heart of activism, humanitarianism, and honors.

The high school girls and honors women who brought “The Lipstick Project” story to Maine have worked on fascinating, creative projects since Boyle’s visit. Three of the four high school girls chose to do adventurous
gap experiences after graduating from high school in 2017, and the fourth girl matriculated to a progressive women’s college in Boston. Furthermore, Saucier and Jackson have expanded their impressive academic work. With Killinger, they presented on “The Lipstick Project” Maine collaboration at the 2017 NCHC conference in Atlanta. Saucier has done additional research on women living with obstetric fistula in Ethiopia, analyzing current efforts to eradicate the condition there. Saucier received the 2017 Maine Campus Compact “Heart and Soul Student Award” that recognizes students who have raised their voices on issues of local and global importance. Jackson—still a highly involved UMaine honors undergraduate and activist—has expanded her work to include assisting an English professor with her ongoing research into age and aging. She also received the 2018 UMaine Hill Scholarship in the Humanities.

REPLICABLE MODEL

Honors programs can curate this kind of community experience in a way that is unique within a college or university environment. Honors creates space for experimental and translocational projects that are philosophically and socially meaningful while also inspiring change on some level, even if solely interpersonal. This project represented the innovative nature of honors in its almost piecemeal, interdisciplinary quality, taking useful bits from humanities, local organizations, and women of various ages.

The Maine events centered on “The Lipstick Project” offer a replicable model for other honors programs and colleges in four ways. First is their reflection of the immutable honors values outlined by Schuman. Honors educators would do well—whether in community endeavors or academic pursuits—to look to Schuman and his writings as helpful, lofty guidance for honors work. Secondly, the efforts led to “enhanced educational opportunities” for both the organizing team and for Maine audiences by confronting significant and bridgeable gaps: gaps between high school girls and college women, gaps among care providers and the university community, gaps in understanding the need for creative care. Identifying and addressing a notable gap can be an excellent starting point for an honors undertaking, particularly a gap that crosses disciplines and forms links to local community. Thirdly, the project combined gifts in fruitful ways that allowed for a collective focus on broader humanist concerns. Together honors students, high school students, and honors faculty made real-world connections. With a service-learning spirit shaped by Boyle’s inspiring activist’s story, the Maine organizing team worked
toward cultivating empathetic, engaged citizens, which honors education also strives to do. A final takeaway for other honors educators is the model of honors as a locus for bringing together various efforts to address a common cause that leads to deeper, more complex learning and action, furthering the “glorious” honors educational vision Schuman espoused and giving the “educational enterprise” directions and goals that energize and sustain.

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Forever Home: 
A Multilevel Approach to Fostering Productive Transgression in Honors

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Abstract: Transgressive pedagogical methods such as those advanced by Freire, Giroux, hooks, Kincheloe, McClaren, and others are enlisted to train honors students to assist organizational entities in the pet adoption sector, with the eventual goal of achieving the ideal of adoption, securing a “forever home.” Three self-assigned groups of honors students (six students each) were tasked with contacting pet adoption entities and—based on class readings, lectures, and discussion—offering assistance in improving contact episodes between adopters and adoptees. Students were asked to pre-analyze impending interactions with target entities according to Hymes’s SPEAKING template; to engage contact; and to report to the class afterward. One group achieved linkage but had to fundraise rather than act as consultants for pet-human interaction. The other two groups failed to achieve contact, instead performing in-class
dramatizations of how their interactions went and how they should have gone had Hymes’s communication episode ideals been realized. Relying on discourse analysis, class readings, discussion with students, and past experience, the instructor examined the class from the viewpoint of transgressive pedagogy, creating a five-level model to bring together various influences on the transgressive mode (the THERE model): Teacher as Outlaw, Honors Courses Fit; Expand Problem Space; Reveal ZOPED; and Engage Real World. Based on a review of instructor and student experience via the THERE model, suggestions are offered to engage honors students in transgressive learning approaches for the benefit of society and for finding in honors curricula a “forever home.”

Keywords: creative thinking, service learning, metacognition, transgressive pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

The neo-pragmatist Richard Rorty once said, “The world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not.” This tantalizing statement is a first-rate depiction of the engage-the-real-world approach of experiential teachers as well of their “woke” colleagues who have built upon knowledge in this burgeoning domain by conceptually uniting real-world experience with senses of mission, social justice, and the righting of wrongs.

No more fertile soil is available for nurturing these progressive ideals than honors colleges, where the best and brightest young students seem ready to be enlisted as fighters in redressing social injustice. For years, scholars and practitioners in honors education, knowing their students’ potential, have sought and found ways to make students aware of how they can affect what, as Rorty says, is “out there.” The various domains and levels embraced by transgression literature offer some of the best means to accomplish just that.

TRANSGRESSION—AN OVERVIEW

Relatively recently, serious attention has focused on transgression in teaching (Duncum, 2009; Freire, 2005; Giroux, 2004; hooks, 1994). Though transgression by that or another name has been a pedagogical concern throughout history (Conroy & Davis, 2002), issues of progressive social engagement and education’s role in social activism have foregrounded the
potential for pedagogy to be enlisted in pursuit of social justice (Biesta, 2013; Motta, 2013).

Concepción & Eflin (2009) have provided a working definition of transgression:

to transgress is to flout a valued norm in such a way as to threaten the viability of the norm . . . whether an experience, act, practice, institution, piece of course content, or person is transgressive is context dependent; there are many types of norms and many ways to flout them. (p. 183)

The second part of this definition informed the approach underlying the evolution and outcomes of my course Forever Home, where work involved roughly equal amounts of traditional and experiential learning. The pedagogical process in this course involved levels of entry into acts of resistance to achieve a holistic view of transgression where transgression is not a separate, individualistic, or spontaneous activity. In any curriculum, but especially honors curricula, we must approach transgression warily, mindful of its promises and perils, starting with its multi-dimensionality.

Addressing transgression-based learning in the sustainability movement, Lotz-Sisitka, Arjen, Kronlid, and McGarry (2015) provide a succinct, comprehensive view of transgressive learning processes:

people everywhere will need to learn how to cross disciplinary boundaries, expand epistemological horizons, transgress stubborn research and education routines and hegemonic powers, and transcend mono-cultural practices in order to create new forms of human activity and new social systems that are more sustainable and socially just. (p. 74)

The transgressive approach of Forever Home adopts three ideas: (1) process over product; (2) instructor deference to students in deciding what and how to learn; and (3) experiential learning strategies transgressing traditional practices.

Transgression often appears as defiance of social convention. The OED (“Transgression,” 2018) defines it as “the action of transgressing or passing beyond the bounds of legality or right; a violation of law, duty, or command; disobedience, trespass, sin.” The word’s individualistic flavor may derive from its association with religion, confirmed by several OED examples. As a pedagogical key, though, it is best seen as multi-levelled, situated in complex
elements of circumstantial domains where focus on only one element is ill-advised (Engeström, 1987; Vygotsky, 1978).

FOREVER HOME:
A TRANSGRESSIVE, EXPERIENTIAL HONORS COURSE

An example of exploring intersections among honors curriculum and experiential learning (Braid, 2008; Clauss, 2011) together with transgression was my course Forever Home, a one-credit honors seminar in the fall semester of 2017 at the University at Albany, which has a substantial honors college of over 400 students. The course dealt with external organizational communication, or how organizations present themselves to external stakeholders, mostly through advertising, marketing, public relations, and sales (Cheney & Christensen, 2001) and pet adoption, taking its name from the ideal result where adopters provide permanent homes for pets.

Three teams of six students each approached three organizations in the multiplex pet adoption sector, offering help as consultants to improve chances of pets finding a “forever home.” Teams 1 and 2 failed to gain full contact with their target organizations, while Team 3 made contact but performed the assignment via a different service (not consultancy but fundraising). I view these results as displays of transgression, uniting them in a five-level model (the THERE model) that sharpens our conception of how transgression can invigorate a course in an established honors curriculum.

TRANSGRESSION AND FACILITATING CHANGE:
THE THERE MODEL

To clarify transgressions in Forever Home, I propose the THERE model (Figure 1), uniting five levels that show domains of potential transgression, beginning with the instructor and moving outward to engagement by students with the sociohistorically specific “real world” or, if one prefers, the reverse. The THERE model (T eacher as Outlaw; H onors Courses Fit; E xpand Problem Space; R eveal ZOPED (zone of proximal development); E ngage Real World) to show transgression as “getting there” and that transgression, in pedagogy, is always the “there” there.

Figure 1 shows activity fields where transgressions manifest themselves, moving outward and inward due to level interaction. These fields represent my analysis (based on the class Forever Home and on my experience). Maps
stipulating other levels can be fashioned for this class and even more for other courses.

Movement among levels is multi-directional. In the figure, bi-directional arrows show at least two ways to realize transgression. The center circle, T1 (“T” for “transgression”) is “teacher as outlaw,” which addresses teachers’ relationships to their identity and teaching (hooks, 1994; Palmer, 1997). But T1 is also an outcome as shown by the opposite-moving arrow, so “teacher as outlaw” could also be T5, which addresses the teacher as “teaching to transgress” (hooks, 1994), while knowing the rewards and risks of transgression. Henceforth, levels are named by both positions: “teacher as outlaw” is “T1/T5.”

T2/T4 (“honors courses fit”) concerns honors curricula: how classrooms suffused with transgressive potential compare to honors classes with

**Figure 1. THERE Model: Interactive Levels of Transgression in Forever Home**
seemingly less flexible requirements (Carbonaro, 2005). T3/T3 (“expand problem space”) tackles how, in transgressive classrooms, departure from convention is both permitted and rewarded. T4/T2 (“reveal ZOPED”) envisions movement through sociohistorically explicit territory; minimally, this addresses instructor to student to real world as a zone of proximal development (ZOPED or ZPD), a familiar concept in transgressive and experiential learning (Chaiklin, 2003).

Last, T5/T1 (“engage real world”) shows transgression encountering the messiness of the “real world,” thereby distinguishing “real world” from classroom even though, obviously, everything in the model is the “real world.” T4/T2 is a “no man's land” between problem space expansion and intruding “real world” issues (see, e.g., Kaufman, 2010). T4/T2’s transgressions are among the tools to facilitate outward movement of classroom instruction, a domain where students, needing assistance, start their journey to meet the “real world,” where they need to end up having mastered what is being taught.

The bi-directional arrows hint at how levels modify each other. For example, finding a T4/T2 ZPD in one class can increase a teacher’s confidence as an empowered outlaw, possibly useful in other classes [T1/T5]; expansion of a T3/T3 problem space can improve chances of attracting honors students by casting a wider net, improving the fit between the transgression-suffused Forever Home and more “appropriate” course selections [T2/T4]; and so on.

One further conceptual system that played a decisive role in executing the THERE model (through being pressed into service to deal with anomalous events) is the template proposed by Dell Hymes (1964) for analyzing social situations involving communication, for which Hymes provided another mnemonic, SPEAKING: Setting/scene, Participants, Ends, Acts sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genre. These designate elements of speech events, i.e., one or more speech acts by more than one participant, illustrating Hymes’s view, called “ethnography of speaking,” that successful communication demands more than knowing linguistic code and entails information about context (Briggs, 1986). The elements in SPEAKING pinpoint these areas of contextual knowledge.

**THE RELATION OF EACH LEVEL TO FOREVER HOME**

**T1/T5: Teacher as Outlaw.** Forever Home was immediately transgressive, thrown into a mix of well-defined offerings in a major honors program. Though a teacher of thirty years’ experience, the last eight as full professor, I was on sabbatical from my home university. My teaching, which emphasizes
precision recall from technical scholarly sources plus extensive experien-
tial learning, seemed ill-suited to the honors curriculum of the University
at Albany, where I was visiting. Honors students, composed of the top five
percent of undergraduates, seemed most acclimated to courses that empha-
sized reading from disciplinary specializations, membership on “real-world”
research teams, and seminar classes taught by ranking professors from their
major departments.

My experience suggests that honors students tend to resist transgres-
sion, possibly because honors undergraduates have won the academic game
largely by not transgressing beyond conventional instruction. According to
traditional measures like examinations and writing, they have excelled. I find
that, in contrast, nontraditional returning adults seem most comfortable with
transgression.

However, every teacher designing a new class or adapting an extant one
is already an outlaw, venturing into novel realms guided only by experience
and instinct. A key to using transgression lies in accepting this outlaw status,
thus actualizing a powerful pedagogical instrument. As hooks (1994) nota-
bly put it, “Teaching is a performative act . . . that offers the space for change,
invention, spontaneous shifts, that can serve as a catalyst drawing out the
unique elements in each classroom” (p. 11). Harris (2011) concurs: “I do
not expect students to take any risks that I would not take, to share in any way
that I would not share” (p. 755). Knowingly or not, teachers often don outlaw
mantles.

Finally, the perhaps objectionable term “outlaw,” chosen because of its
transgressive focus, has been defined in more inspiring terms. Palmer (1997)
poses a full range of what the “woke” teacher sees as fields for potential
transgressions:

Good teachers join self, subject, and students in the fabric of life
because they teach from an integral and undivided self; they manifest
in their own lives, and evoke in their students, a “capacity for con-
nectedness.” They are able to weave a complex web of connections
between themselves, their subjects, and their students, so that stu-
dents can learn to weave a world for themselves. (p. 3)

**T2/T4: Honors Courses Fit.** Honors students are known for their focus
on and success at work leading to academic esteem, so they choose courses
demanding greater outlay of time and energy (Lacey, 2005). One might spec-
ulate that honors students also avoid atypical courses that lie outside their
customary well-defined career paths (Wintrol & Jerinic, 2013).
Forever Home lies firmly athwart this “atypical” domain: a one-hour, eight-week course with a workload nearly equal to sixteen weeks in non-honors courses and with eight readings of high difficulty; four objective exams; and a group project targeting an extant organization. As Slavin (2008) and Ford (2008) pointed out, such conditions may mean that honors students find it difficult to experiment with taking courses that lie too far outside a more or less precisely defined career path. For only one credit hour, even with its obvious social appeal, Forever Home could be a hard sell to students with very precise plans about their education.

I had taught this course three times before, for three credits over 16 weeks, at a large midwestern public university, where my students were a mix of non-tracked students, few of whom would be honors level; my home university has no honors program, per se. Thus, ab initio, I saw opportunities overflowing with transgressive potential: some specified, hence inescapable, and others unanticipated, hence abundant with transgressive options.

T3/T3: Expand Problem Space. Problem spaces provide resources to shape solutions. Expanding problem spaces means recasting problems to involve more resources or reconfiguring existing ones, especially those that are veiled at first (Dorst & Cross, 2001) or emerge as solutions develop (Engeström, 1987). In Engeström’s view, problem spaces resemble object nodes in his triangle of activity: “raw material” where activity is directed, adjustable by physical or symbolic tools as internal or external mediating instruments (Wells, 2002, p. 47).

Given the frustrations encountered in contacting the target organizations, my awareness of what was available for solutions underwent several modifications as they always do, each time resulting in expansion of the problem space.

T4/T2: Reveal ZOPED. The zone of proximal development (ZOPED or ZPD) is “the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86)

The ZOPED in Forever Home consisted of: (1) setting up contact between teams and target organizations, with the pre-mastery state (i.e., unfamiliarity with Hymes’s SPEAKING model and reflecting little familiarity with organizational protocol) and post-mastery (i.e., familiarity with the model as an analytical tool) encompassing experiences clarifying relations between fledgling students and formal organizations; (2) honing all three
teams’ ability to use Hymes’s SPEAKING model to aid initial contact with target organizations and to do follow-up analysis after failing to connect with a target (Teams 1 and 2); and (3) providing, through instructor experience in business consulting as well as proficiency with activity theory and the ZOPED, guidance to lead team members from their actual developmental level to the desired level by responding to idiosyncratic experiences with targets, in other words from pre-mastery, defined as a mishmash of experiences, readings, and unfamiliar methods (SPEAKING model) to post-mastery as a unified view drafted in class. Each “move” necessitated breaching boundaries—that is, transgressing.

**T5/T1: Engage Real World.** As noted, the label “real world” is a bit spurious. Clearly, the “real world” is both the goal of Forever Home and the source of all one needs to attain that goal. I reserve more thorough explanation of this level for a point where we know more about the results of analyzing student performances in Forever Home.

**A (SELECTIVE) SUMMARY OF TRANSGRESSION OUTCOMES BY TEAMS**

Starting at T1/T5 (“teacher as outlaw”), in forming teams I transgressed my own process for constituting student groups usually at random and less commonly by tracking students according to various criteria. In Forever Home, at the request of one of my best students, I let them decide their own groups, assuming that since they were honors students, they shared a baseline GPA and might be more culturally homogeneous than teams based on other criteria.

However, the teams proved vastly different in proactive behavior (Campbell, 2000), a key area of expertise in transgressive learning. Team 1 saw the most proactive students band together while Team 3 included those who seemed the least proactive, and Team 2 was somewhere in-between. Nevertheless, in irony familiar to experiential educators, only Team 3 linked to an extant organization. Team 1, despite achieving quick contact and intake, were stood up for their interview, thus having to perform, along with the similarly frustrated Team 2, the “substitute” assignment, an in-class dramatization of the interview and a possibly better outcome based on Hymes’s SPEAKING template.

Some outcomes of the teams’ transgressive engagements with this assignment are shown in Table 1. Guidance on the assignment was kept deliberately
minimal, conforming to the precept that encouraging transgression means that teachers let students determine how they will solve the main problem, which was expressed in the syllabus as

apply[ing] principles we learn to the formulation, execution and evaluation of real-world projects promoting some aspect of the systems (like adoption agencies, shelters, activism, and so on) involved with companion animals. The ultimate goal is to improve the prospects of a pet in the target organization or group to be adopted permanently, to go to a “forever home.”

Table 1 shows that opportunities for transgression appeared immediately and were sustained throughout the project. The more proactive Team 1 made nearly immediate contact with their target, the Seneca-Allegheny Shelter, an established provider of services to animal adopters. This team reached out quickly, with one member—the one who suggested class members choose teams themselves—excitedly emailing me about the initial interaction on the evening of the day the assignment was first described. Two team members contacted Seneca-Allegheny’s Vice-President of Operations, reporting that the meeting went very well; they, like the other two teams, were asked to pre-analyze this interaction according to Hymes’s SPEAKING model. For this most outreaching of the teams, the situation could hardly have looked better; the organization’s CEO even offered to have personal meetings with them and two other executives.

Then Team 1 hit a brick wall. They arrived at the organization (about ten miles away), only to find that the CEO they were scheduled to meet was unavailable, with no reason offered as to why. After an uneasy interaction with a secretary, team members were handed off to the marketing and communication manager, who, also discomfited, proved unable to answer Team 1’s informed questions about operations. Though this and the previous interaction were civil and professional, the team cited examples where pertinent questions could not be answered or were fobbed off with responses like “Have you checked our website?” Promised meetings with upper-level officers never materialized.

Team 2 was also stymied. They sought to alter university rules for pets in undergraduate residences, currently limited to fish in tanks of five gallons or less. Their first contact (Executive Director of a UAlbany residential complex) said that, since residential buildings are governed by university regulations, the team’s aspirations were perhaps unrealistic. With admirable, if imprudent,
tenacity, Team 2 turned to other administrators, such as the Director of Residential Life, followed by the Assistant Director of University Apartments. Unsurprisingly, each time they got the same answer: with operations

### Table 1. Summary of Principal Transgressions by Teams—Forever Home Honors Course (Fall 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Target (Pseudonyms)</th>
<th>Mode Used</th>
<th>Domain Transgressed (Example)</th>
<th>Transgression (Example)</th>
<th>Classroom Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | Seneca-Allegheny Shelter | PtoP Contact, SPEAKING performance [in-class] | Presumed operation of private-sector business | Acting on presumption of equality with target | • Teaching moments: pet adoption as business (*real vs. imagined*)  
• Performance, both domains (*real vs. ideal*) |
| 1    | Seneca-Allegheny Shelter | PtoP Contact, SPEAKING performance | Realm between *theory* and *real world* | Necessary connection between *ivory tower* and *real world* | Creative synthesis, disparate domains |
| 2    | UAlbany Housing | Contact, SPEAKING performance [in-class] | Presumed operation of academic administration | Acting on presumption of ease with which decisions are made in academia | • Teaching moments: academic reality (*real vs. boilerplate*)  
• Performance, both domains (*real vs. ideal*) |
| 2    | UAlbany Housing | Contact, SPEAKING performance | Realm between *theory* and *real world* | Necessary connection between *ivory tower* and *real world* | Creative synthesis, disparate domains |
| 3    | Going Home Agency | PtoP Contact, Execution, Event | Target’s view of own operation | Unsolicited advice, introduction letter |
| 3    | Going Home Agency | PtoP Contact, Execution of Event | Conventional promotion process | Creative, *off-the-wall* promo plan |
embedded in university regulations, there would likely be no change, no mat-
ter how valuable, initiated by students.

With respect to transgression, at the T1–T5 level, I knew well the ten-
dency of academic organizations toward inertia and could have so informed
the team but transgressed this common classroom practice. My “hands-off”
approach created a space where students felt free to contravene assumed
boundaries between administrators and undergraduates, especially since
these students were mostly new freshmen or sophomores.

In conventional, less transgressive classes, results for Teams 1 and 2 might
be taken as failure, with appropriate grade consequences. However, since this
class was deliberately linked with transgression and mindful of hooks’s (1994)
observation that “the classroom with all its limitations remains a location
of possibility” (p. 207), the instructor and the teams, after class discussion,
leveraged the disappointing outcome into a nexus of teaching moments, gen-
erated through applying an established means to analyze interactions.

Using Hymes’s SPEAKING model to analyze speech events (all teams
used this model to scrutinize pending contacts with organizational connec-
tions), I asked Teams 1 and 2 to analyze their failed contacts by each presenting
two dramatizations, a total of eight to twelve minutes long, first showing what
happened, with commentary, followed by another dramatization, also with
commentary, showing what should have happened had Hymes’s elements
been optimized. This transgressive “shotgun wedding” of abstract to concrete
dragged ivory tower and gritty street into useful conjunction.

Transgressive paths deepened student understanding of these episodes.
The assignment goal was to (1) find a suitable organization; (2) approach
it, offering assistance based on students’ previous knowledge and what they
learned in class; and (3) offer suggestions to improve chances that interaction
between their adopters and pets would lead to “forever homes.” However,
because communication moves through sociohistorically specific circum-
stances, picking up all sorts of contesting discourse (Bakhtin, 1992), the three
teams, despite construing the assignment similarly, followed discernibly dif-
ferent paths because of what happened after the initial directions.

Team 3 linked with a respected agency that declined the offer to assist in
strengthening adopter-pet interaction. That agency, “Going Home,” has a rig-
orous, proven procedure for matching pets to adopters. Team 3 was finally told,
though, that if they wanted to help with fund-raising, their help would be wel-
come. Team 3’s experience thus reveals further transgressions. Although the
specific assignment goal was not achieved, the main purposes—to acquaint
students with the complexities of pet organizations and provide “real world” experience in this domain—were actualized. All three teams learned the hard way about the realities of pet adoption organizations. Student responses confirmed that Team 3’s outcomes, culminating in a public event bringing money to “Going Home” and kudos to the team, may have been more rewarding than had the team satisfied the original goal.

These examples show transgression in that the territory through which my instructions passed—to the class, to initial contact, to response, to follow-up, to adjustment, to plan execution or, for Teams 1 and 2, analysis and dramatization—made it impossible for anyone to predict what would happen. Bakhtin (1992) powerfully describes this quest for meaning:

> The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes one’s “own” only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language . . . but rather it exists in other people’s mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions; it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own. (p. 294)

Although this process is frustrating, it is the source of some of experiential learning’s greatest joys as students and teachers surmount surprising obstacles, forging meaning through effortful and novel sharing.

**APPLYING THE THERE MODEL:**
**TRANSGRESSIONS IN THREE EPISODES**

Teams 1 and 2, starting at different points—Team 1 optimistic, Team 2 frustrated—were similar in not satisfying assignment requirements. Team 3 did succeed, but in unforeseen ways. If the goal is to use transgression to effect change in consciousness, as advocated by our colleagues (hooks, 1994; Escalante & Dirmann, 1990; Freire, 2005), then the class process that fails may present the best opportunities for teachable moments “when the student is receptive to new understandings” (Wagner & Ash, 1998, p. 278). Three examples of transgressive activity, one from each team, show how the model illuminates interaction among fields of transgressive potentiality.
Episode 1: The Case of the Missing Contacts (Team 1)

Team 1 was stood up upon their arrival at an agreed meeting time. Not claiming prescience, I must say that, when I was first told how this “perfect” encounter was arranged, I was suspicious. In my consulting experience, I had never seen such quick rapport between students and organization administrators. I nevertheless stuck to a principle of deferring to students in deciding what and how to learn, adopting a hands-off approach and refusing to smooth the way. I viewed the early contacts more with hope than despair: we had an ideal field to learn about the reality of business decorum, not vague prescriptions about how the rules say things should go. This lesson required the team’s transgressions beyond my own. In the context of the THERE model, one nexus of transgression levels stands out: T1/T5 (“teacher as outlaw”) ties to T4/T2 (“reveal ZOPED”) and T5/T1 (“engage real world”), focusing on Team 1’s transgression (Table 1) of “Acting on presumption of equality with target.”

Retracing my thoughts in uncovering the ZOPED, I feared I might have started with too great a distance between what students could initially demonstrate and what I was proposing. I thought I had transgressed by asking too much of students who not only were tracked but were mainly freshmen or sophomores (78% of the class). This course that I had designed for classes comprising a broader range of students was now focused on narrower sociocultural dimensions. As the most dramatic of several examples, an earlier course had a student in his mid-thirties, Antonio, who had groomed pets for several organizations in the United States and Canada. In terms of familiarity with the pet adoption sector, there could hardly be a greater gulf than that between Antonio and my fledgling students, a full third of whom were in their first semester in college.

To clarify linkage between T4/T2 and its connection to T5/T1, and T1/T5, I recalled an earlier personal transgression: my allowing students to choose their own groups. Team 1 brought together what seemed to be the most proactive, confident of students. Of course, teachers know that letting students choose their groups means that those who know and trust each other will coalesce, violating the principle that heterogeneous groups generally make better decisions (Birmingham & McCord, 2004, p. 75).

My agreeing to the student’s suggestion was a transgression perhaps resulting from my ignorance about how to teach honors-only classes. I had perhaps wrongly focused on their grades and presumed homogeneity. But
there was a further transgression: the confidence projected by students who, ambitious and eager, presented themselves to professionals who have their own criteria for deciding who gets noticed. Among those that professionals prefer meeting, a group of undergrads doing an assignment is probably low on the list.

In examining how the THERE model sensitizes perception and trying to sort out confusing transgressive currents, we need to look for something in Team 1’s output pointing to a reason for the aborted meeting. Pondering the model led me to look for answers in the teams’ assignments. I focused on the initial report where, after applying the SPEAKING model, Team 1 referred to another artifact, a letter of introduction I had written to the targets explaining what the project was; why their help would be valued; and what benefits might accrue to them. Team 1 integrated the letter this way:

One of the most important and helpful methods we used was incorporating [the instructor’s] introduction letter. Being an esteemed professor at a prestigious institution [the instructor] demonstrated our group’s credibility. The letter included valuable background information that helped convey our message. (Team 1, Assignment 2)

However, somewhere in the communication process something derailed the meeting, transgressing what students and the instructor thought should happen, given their confidence concerning their educational and cultural status.

This transgression underscores the gap between reality and ivory tower views of education where teachers, both in classrooms and in letters of introduction, open doors students can pass through. Though the teacher’s control over process in the classroom can be strong, this control seldom transfers outside academic settings. Fortified with the letter and secure in their analytical integrity using the SPEAKING model, Team 1’s being stood up threw cold water on their idealism, inspiring teaching moments that emphasized the effects of group norms on business meetings (see, e.g., Feldman, 1984).

In Table 1, one possibly transgressive behavior is expressed as “Acting on presumption of equality with target.” Here is one of several examples of the team’s SPEAKING-based review that might point to such brashness. Note the confident tone and (purported) grasp of real business interaction:

While the duo [the two team members making initial contact were] representing their entire group during the meeting at the [S-AS], they were also representing the Pets Class and [UAlbany]. A sense of professionalism and respect was necessary during the speech act to
uphold the prestige of the University and one of its classes and [the
instructor] . . . We believed that if we were able to establish a profes-
sional genre from the beginning, it would be carried throughout the
research. (Team 1, Paper 1)

This passage’s tone suggests that the team, and not even the whole team, feeling secure in their nascent knowledge of ethnography of speaking and their instructor’s authority, may have gone into this interaction overconfident. In any such interaction, excessive self-assurance can be taken the wrong way, especially when parties widely diverge in organizational experience.

Other clues point to overconfidence. First, initial contacts were by two individuals, not the whole group, possibly making the team seem more complex and hierarchical than it was, having sent emissaries to arrange the meetings. Second, Team 1 seemed the most proactive of the teams, so the authoritative, poised, and confident tone of the description sounds not like college underclassmen but real businesspeople—this, despite the fact that they had only recently been exposed to (1) organizations in the pet adoption domain; and (2) the SPEAKING model they used to analyze them. This tone could be taken as inappropriately suggesting equality between examiners and examined, sometimes a problem resulting from honors students’ perception that they are the best of the best, superior to other students (Achterberg, 2005). Third, the tone suggests that Team 1 self-identifies not simply as students doing an assignment but as responsible for the reputation of the class, the instructor, and indeed the university. Fourth, in place of upper-level executives, Team 1 finally dealt with lower-level employees who could not answer their informed questions; upper management may have decided that lower-level employees were more appropriate to the type of work the team was doing.

My conjecture about the experience of Team 1 expands our capacity to look at the failed encounter in other ways. Norms were transgressed, but we cannot discount the possibility of a simple mix-up in communication. The team’s self-assessment, firmly in place and shared by its members, could also be seen as presumptuous by the administrators, prompting a stern reminder of how business really works. This possibility inspired some of my concluding remarks to the team. Lesson in transgression: Be circumspect about your self-presentation, and approach your target carefully.
Episode 2: Anyone Else I Can Speak To? (Team 2)

Team 2 approached three UAlbany administrators, successively increasing in rank, who told them the same thing: undergraduate input to changing the university’s thinking on pets in dormitories would be, to put it charitably, limited. As with Team 1, I declined to restrain their approach by telling them what experience had taught me about such plans. Though perhaps transgressing what others may see as my teaching duties, I felt the by-product of this approach—students confronting a field profuse with transgressive options—counterbalanced what seemed a likely disappointing result. Besides, there was always the chance they might succeed.

Applying the THERE model to detect reasons why Team 2 was thwarted, one level stands out: T3/T3 (“expand problem space”). To understand T3/T3 as a transgression frame, one should know that Team 2 approached the first official by email:

The tone of this email interaction was . . . professional, formal, and hopeful. We adhered to typical professional business practices like addressing him formally and using clean, professional, respectful language. The outcome of this speech event was a reply from Mr. W_____ stating that he does not think this is the right endeavor to pursue because E____ Commons is a part of the [university] campus and therefore must adhere to campus policy as stated by the university itself. This led to us reaching out to someone directly in charge of the university apartments. (Team 2, Paper 1)

While nothing is inherently wrong with an initial approach by email, the complexity of the problem space should have led to greater awareness of communication alternatives. In confronting a problem space, the more approach and development methods one knows, the better; the more channels one has, the more likely it is that some of them will succeed.

Consider the administrator who receives dozens, even hundreds, of emails each day (Zach, 2005). Like Team 1, Team 2 was probably far down on the list of priorities for university officials. Too, it is hard to imagine that this was first time someone had made this request, so the university had no doubt settled on a safe, unshakable response (“out of our hands”), one that makes sense to anyone, even an underclassman, who has experienced embedded levels of university authority. My experience in academia, which I kept
to myself, also tells me that the target would likely have subordinates handle such emails. Possibly confirming this speculation, when Team 2 approached the next two higher-level administrators, they got the same answer. The first administrator or his assistant may well have blind-copied the original request and/or response to the other two administrators or their assistants.

The utility of T3/T3 is clear. The SPEAKING model, as well as common sense, shows numerous ways to expand the problem space, so Team 2’s preference for email—shared with most undergraduates (Johnson, 2007)—betrays a limited view of resources to actualize this expansion. In fact, one could have obtained that same response from any number of undergraduate students in the housing system: floor supervisors, resident assistants, housing service interns, and so on. A reality check with such students, who live and work with team members, might have hinted at the advisability of taking a more nuanced view of their task.

Even had these suggestions been followed, university administrators would have been unlikely to respond differently. However, inside information from associates might have provoked different goals (expansion of the problem space) from the frontal assault on embedded procedures to something more circumspect. One might propose workshops for administrators and students to discuss pets in housing, scholarly attention to which has lagged (see, e.g., Polking, Cornelius-White, & Stout, 2017). One might try via websites or social media to draw attention to facts about pets in rented housing, countering exaggerated fears; such issues were addressed in our class readings and in summaries such as Palluzi (2013). Few more fertile ZOPEDs (T4/T2) connect real world (T5/T1) and problem space (T3/T3) than spanning what is believed about pets and rental properties versus what is known. Lesson in transgression: Before you transgress, take the time to survey, and use, as much of your entire array of resources as you can.

**Episode 3:**
**We’re Fine Here! (Team 3)**

When we look for transgressive opportunities, Team 3’s experiences are both instructive and delightful. The team approached their target bearing the same kind of letter as Teams 1 and 2. Volunteering assistance, they received no encouragement; in their words,

[The director] believed that [“Going Home”] was well established enough, and that she did not need help with social media or
spreading awareness. We then proceeded to ask if we could volunteer to help out the program, but she explained to us that volunteers must host pets inside their homes as they await adoption, which would not be possible for on campus students. We persisted on helping, and discovered that [the director] only expressed interest in fundraising. (Team 3, Final Report)

Regarding the director’s judgment, I disagree that they needed “no help” with media. Their website, which can tolerantly be described as unsophisticated, needs considerable work. From public presentations and the director, however, we learned that extensive effort had been put into a complex process for matching dogs (their specialty) and adopters: their procedure tackled every obstacle to pet adoption I knew of, from adopter commitment to veterinarian involvement to landlord approval to participation of every family member in the adoptee’s first home visit. My fledgling team had little to offer this process, making their next moves less surprising than they might have been.

Taking stock of the transgressive behavior in this example, we see that, in addition to incursions shared by the other teams, Team 3 trod firmly on the toes of its target organization. Then, in a series of tweaks revealing how wrong a teacher’s first take can be, Team 3, which I judged least proactive (thus least likely to succeed), resolutely stuck to its target until they could leverage their participation, just as “Going Home” was undoubtedly leveraging the team.

Of several possible ways that Team 3’s transgressive realities map onto the THERE model, what happened to the team (and what they caused to happen) involves T3/T3 (“expand problem space”) and T5/T1 (“engage real world”). Although their experience necessarily also spans T4/T2 (“reveal ZOPED”), that is not the focus here. Instead, attention is on the restrictive but realistic adoption environment perfected by “Going Home.”

What makes the example of Team 3 especially valuable is that the team revisited expanding the problem space repeatedly after being shut out of their target’s operations twice. Rejection of each request in the unruly world of T5/T1, even as it blocked the progress of one transgression, invited another. With each reformulation came an opportunity to instigate another transgression, from offering help with media (failed) to volunteering for the process of pet adoption (failed) to fundraising (succeeded). Nor did the outlaw teacher monitor and guide Team 3’s progress through its three-tiered trek; rather, I wrote the assignment so the team could conceive of this outcome, among others. Although repeated frustration followed by transgression was not forecast, in this design it was an alluring possibility.
Team 3’s event was creative, professional, and successful. The fundraiser was held at a local pizzeria known for supporting charitable causes. For each item sold, twenty percent was donated to “Going Home”; the amount raised was just under $170.00, exceeding the target by about fifty dollars.

In another irony, the media help at first spurned by “Going Home” proved critical in promoting the event, made more effective by Team 3’s transgressive joining of it to standard promotional forms, featuring among others (1) hard-copy flyers posted in UAlbany residential locations; (2) direct Twitter messaging to students (after requesting permission, the flyer was posted to that account, then retweeted by a university organization promoting student involvement); and (3) posting the flyer to Team 3 members’ stories on Snapchat as well as Snapchat stories of students in two of the university’s residential complexes.

A final key to success was encouragement from the UAlbany Honors College:

perhaps the most successful [element] was the Honors College. We were able to coordinate with [the] Dean, who agreed to making it an honors event for students to reach their requirements for Honors College housing. This greatly contributed to the fundraiser, as the majority of the funds that were raised came from Honors College students. (Team 3, Final Report)

One learns from this sequence that encouraging transgression is not only useful in encountering T5/T1’s “real world,” but it can, consciously or unconsciously, be an instructor’s perception-shaping ace in the hole. I did not anticipate the range of the effects of encouraging transgressive behavior because no one can, yet the conduct of Team 3, together with what I learned from their classroom presentations, compelled me repeatedly to refine my view, which might not have occurred had I eschewed the transgressive mode to set a conventional goal and judge the team accordingly. Lesson in transgression: Repeated applications of transgressive activities (such as expansion of problem space) can refine views of process, benefiting all levels.

THE HYMES MANEUVER:
TRANSGRESSION AND IMAGINATION

One more element in this array came to me after the failure of Teams 1 and 2 to gain access to perform the original assignment. I needed a way
to permit teams to probe more deeply into what happened while requiring
an amount of work equal to that of Team 3. Most importantly, I needed to
encourage them to assay future activity that could work.

Since Hymes’s SPEAKING model proved useful in preparing the teams
for their initial encounters, I made it the basis for asking Teams 1 and 2 to
invent a classroom presentation (8–12 minutes in length) comprising three
elements: (1) dramatization of the failed encounter; (2) dramatization, based
on the SPEAKING model, showing another way the encounter should have
gone; and (3) commentary in both dramatizations that noted what Hymes
said about how such speech events do and should proceed.

The presentations by Teams 1 and 2 provided valuable additional knowl-
edge and opportunities for enacting and talking about transgression. Two
transgressions in the Hymes maneuver are relevant and situate them in the
THERE model. First are the substitute assignments, which are transgres-
sive because, absent the initial teams’ failures, they would never have been
needed. In normal pedagogy, course syllabi are often sacrosanct (Goodboy
& Myers, 2015), making this transgression more dramatic: in the middle of
class, the instructor brought in an untried assignment to answer a need to
balance workload requirements. To experiential educators, this move is unre-
markable, even routine, but to honors students, whom we know to profit
by sticking to the rules, it can be disconcerting. On the THERE model this
move could be seen as provoked by adjustments in T3/T3 (“expand problem
space”) and T4/T2 (“reveal ZOPED”), stimulated by T5/T1 (“engage real
world”). Conjoining conventional expectations (all students do equal work)
with quirks of the “real world” (flexibility in confronting the unexpected)
means that multiple transgressions are practically unavoidable.

A second transgression is that each of the two teams, lacking specific
instructions and being told, simply, to produce “two dramatizations and com-
mentary,” took the assignment in different directions: Team 1 took it as a
request for a full research paper, with detailed scripts for each dramatization,
and Team 2 took it as asking for an outline along with what seemed largely
improvised dramatizations. Following the first transgression, the divergent
paths toward performing it are both perfectly acceptable. As before, I kept
things indefinite, hoping the teams would show me some creativity, which
they did. Team 1’s more extensive and Team 2’s leaner and cleaner approaches
were transgressions built on an earlier transgression, using Hymes and drama-
tization, settling them squarely in the THERE model’s T3/T3 level (“expand
problem space”).
Team 1’s fully developed paper, which was scholarly and insightful, was an illustration of enacting and talking about transgression. Hymes focuses on eight interrelated components, one of which is “key” (the “K” in “SPEAKING”): “In . . . social interaction, participants offer each other cues as [sic] how to interpret the message content. It refers to the tone, manner, or spirit in which a particular message is conveyed” (Zand-Vakili, Kashani, & Tanbandeh, 2012, p. 30). In their analysis of “key” in encounters with lower-level employees, note the precision in Team 1’s use of terms from linguistics and communication studies:

The key of the speech event is heavily defined by [the manager’s] vocalics and nonverbal language when questioned about things that she does not have a lot of information on. At the end of some of her sentences, she raises her vocal pitch—giving the impression that she is asking a question when she actually is not. She also stutters and hesitates before answering . . . [our representative’s] questions. At the same time, she does not hold direct eye contact. This creates a strong sense of uncertainty from her side of the conversation. (Team 1, Exercise 3)

Of course, one need not take Team 1’s analysis as “correct.” But the forward movement of transgression, firmly established, opens the problem space(s) to numerous incursions and associated transgressive possibilities. The primary objective—to familiarize students with a way to analyze and improve communication—was certainly achieved, and its divergent results confirm the growth possibilities in an environment that consciously encourages transgression. Moreover, discussion of class presentations fostered numerous “teaching moments” (Nelson, 2016) when suggestions about transgression could be further examined.

CONCLUSION

Analyzing Forever Home through the THERE model moves us from seeing transgression as random and impulsive, stimulating often fruitless resistance, to situating it in an inclusive map, grounded in critical pedagogy and proposing rational, deliberate, sweeping struggles to make things better—for animals and certainly for humans. In lieu of presenting transgression as impulsive, inchoate rebellion, the THERE model unites cold-blooded reason with ardent passion, forming a veritable “refiner’s fire,” cleansing one’s
quest of impurities, having been tested, to quote Isaiah (48:10 ESV), “in the furnace of affliction.”

Using the THERE model as a conceptual mnemonic leads to the question “where can one best situate acts of transgression, and how can one use them to more fruitfully direct transgression by pinpointing particular domains of activity and their interaction?” A valuable, practical program can be based simply on the lessons derived earlier: (1) be circumspect about your self-representation; (2) survey and use as many resources as you can; and (3) refine the process by constant application and practice. These lessons can be the basis of a practical program to motivate students to confront even the most wide-ranging and complex problems crying out for intervention. Add to this the model’s carefully defined levels, with the insight that there is substantial freedom of movement from linking the levels with and across each other, plus the fallback that being stymied in transgressing at one point only means you have numerous other avenues to stage a sortie, and you have an extraordinarily potent tool, not an end goal but ground zero in the battle for freedom from stale pedagogical convention.

Doubtless readers will have seen how some of the THERE model draws on roots in critical and experiential pedagogy. I have noted connections with some such sources, among the many others, in my hope of stimulating readers to further vivify the THERE model, bringing insight concerning their learning and experience to praise, vilify, verify, contradict, support, plead for, reject, and/or ignore this initial attempt at a unified field theory of pedagogical transgression.

A course such as Forever Home is appropriate for honors programs different from the one in which it was configured for this analysis. Run with virtually the same general guidelines, the course worked at both UAlbany and Northern Illinois University (NIU). UAlbany, with an undergraduate enrollment of 12,698 and an honors college of more than 400, is part of a network of more than 60 state schools. NIU had roughly the same enrollment (13,454) but no appreciable honors program, a suburban setting, and, except for state budgeting, little to no networking with other state universities.

At NIU, the first iteration of Forever Home (not then known by that name) eventuated in two teams, one of which underperformed and the other performing so spectacularly well that it inspired me to offer the course again. The second iteration at NIU had five teams, all of which were successful at contacting and providing valuable input to local organizations in the pet adoption sector.
Despite the wide variance in standards for providing fertile soil in which an honors course can thrive, we would do well to consider the insights provided by honors educators such as Achterberg (2005) and Freyman (2005), who have ventured into the complex and varied mindscapes of honors students to come up with a number of traits they deem valuable to the successful honors student, no matter where they are situated; among these are appreciation of diversity, communication ability, curiosity, patience, and purpose. The Forever Home class, both in its most recent and previous incarnations, undeniably succeeded in developing these ideal traits. We drew on both failed and successful contacts with a wide range of organizations, exposing students to environments abundant with diversity. The performances called into service a multitude of communication skills and also succeeded in developing student abilities in these areas. Moreover, students proceeded by being curious and advancing into the unknown while having to remain patient in the face of repeated setbacks and keeping their “eyes on the prize,” the ultimate purpose: doing something worthwhile to alleviate the stress on adoption animals.

Finally, the elements of Forever Home, requiring no special physical resources other than the presence of organizations in the pet adoption sector, which are ubiquitous, can be instituted on any campus with little concern about administrative reluctance and indeed the likelihood of garnering a good amount of social approval for getting students involved in such a worthy enterprise.

Standing on the shoulders of champions of critical pedagogy—heroes like Freire, Giroux, hooks, and many others—we look forward to the day when transgression will no longer appear outlandish or rare but will find a resting place—though not too comfortable—in “woke” classrooms within our respected honors programs, its Forever Home.

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Opening Doors to Engage a More Diverse Population in Honors: A Conversation

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Abstract: In this article, a student, faculty member, and staff member address the question of how to engage underrepresented student populations in honors programs. A student of color describes how an honors course with experiential learning components captivated and motivated her, significantly altering her definition of self. The faculty and staff member acknowledge the necessary changes to large-scale policies, such as refining admissions criteria and implementing more diverse programs, in order to engage students of color in honors education. Key suggestions include cross-listing courses to engage current and prospective honors students, teaching honors courses and facilitating honors experiences that emphasize aspects of social (in)justice, and incorporating a holistic admissions process for both new and current university students. Identifying ways to engage
diverse student populations in predominantly white programs is vital to both the success of all students and to honors education as a whole.

Key Words: partnerships, underrepresented, equity, experiential, identity

INTRODUCTION

“Smart but definitely not one of those smart kids—the kids whose parents were members of the booster club and themselves members of the high school’s national honors society.” This is how Quentina Dunbar recalls her high school self. During her sophomore year of college, Quentina joined the honors program at Minnesota State University, Mankato. As a regional comprehensive public university, the institution has a history of increasing access to higher education. Minnesota State Mankato is a predominately white institution where the honors program does not historically attract a diverse body of students. The honors program attempts to extend the institution’s vision of access by engaging diversity and, in particular, by reaching out to domestic students of color.

Ginny Walters, the program’s assistant director, and Jill Cooley, a history professor who often works with honors, recognize the challenges of attracting students like Quentina—students who belong in honors but haven’t seen themselves that way. In her lead article “Thinking Critically, Acting Justly” for the JNCHC “Forum on Honors and Social Justice,” Naomi Yavneh Klos asked “how honors can be a place of access, equity, and excellence in higher education” (4). In this piece, we provide a few possible solutions that we hope other honors administrators will find useful to increase the underrepresented student population in their programs. First, programs can make space in their courses and co-curricular programming for highly motivated students who are not currently enrolled in the honors program, particularly those from traditionally underrepresented communities. Second, these honors courses and experiences can emphasize the study of social (in)justice. Offering such curricular and co-curricular activities to highly motivated non-honors students, especially those from diverse backgrounds, brings issues of social justice to the awareness of more privileged students and attracts a more diverse population of students to honors by engaging them in conversations that are meaningful, important, and influential in their lives. Third, programs can use
a holistic admissions process to admit both new and current students that allows students who express potential for development but who have not previously identified themselves as honors students.

A conversation between such a student and an administrator and teacher in honors can help illustrate and illuminate strategies of inclusion that have been deployed at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and that might be successful in other honors programs and colleges as well.

CONVERSATION

Quentina

Academically, I would consider myself a late bloomer, not by capabilities for I have always been an intellectually inclined student, but in ownership of this inclination. In high school, I took exclusively honors and advanced placement classes yet looked to my classmates in our school’s magnet STEM program as the high achievers. I just liked the challenge. More than anything else I enjoyed the in-depth discussions and the business of thinking for the sake of contemplation. English was always my favorite subject. I did well in my classes but nothing spectacular. I was not a part of any study or test prep groups. Socially, my classmates and I had mostly different circles of friends. Like most, if not all, of my peers, by senior year I had one foot out the door with my sights set on new challenges, bigger and better.

The first semester of my undergraduate career was marked by high achievement and a thirst for purpose. After my first six months in college, my grade point average was higher than it had been in high school. I started my freshman year undecided and was determined, perhaps even desperate, to declare a major. Being the first in my immediate family to attend and eventually finish at a four-year university was not something I took lightly. Social justice was a feeling without a name until my introduction to a Gender and Women’s Studies course during spring semester. Learning about social justice was like tasting a familiar ingredient in a new dish.

The field of gender and women’s studies validated my enjoyment of discussion, storytelling, theorizing, and understanding in a way I had never experienced in or outside the classroom. I went from thirsty to hungry. I needed to fill my belly deep with everything I could. I took courses across disciplines seeking knowledge. I was grasping for knowledge of self. The relevance and opportunity for introspection provided by social justice education propelled me even further onto a path of high achievement. I could finally see
myself in my education. Through my social justice education, I became more active on campus and in the community at large.

**Ginny**

Increasing access to honors for students who have not traditionally seen themselves as “honors students” starts with a more inclusive admissions process. Since 2009, the honors program at Minnesota State Mankato has employed holistic admission. Applicants to honors programs—whether incoming first-year students, current Minnesota State Mankato students, or transfer students—are evaluated with a holistic rubric that takes into account their potential for growth and achievement as well as any previous successes. Qualitative evaluations of achievement—such as student narratives and recommendation forms—carry more weight than numeric data. An important component of our efforts toward inclusivity is accepting current students after their first semester as well as transfer students; we do a round of applications for current students each fall and spring semester. Quentina entered the program via this route as do approximately one-third of our students. This group of students tends to be more diverse in terms of socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and gender.

**Jill**

Current students may need contact with honors pedagogy to encourage them to apply. Cross-listing courses with other departments can facilitate this contact. Three years ago, I taught a study-away course called “Anne Moody’s Mississippi: Race, Culture, and Civil Rights,” which was cross-listed in honors and history. Six students registered for the class: four in the honors section and two as history students. The honors students typified the program as a whole. Although they came from different academic departments—including art, anthropology, education, and social work—they were, like their professor, all white. Opening the class to non-honors students could and in this case did mean expanding access to a more diverse student population as both non-honors students were women of color: Quentina was from a Liberian-American community near Minneapolis, and the other non-honors student, the only history major in the class, grew up in a Spanish-speaking household. I never thought of the class as being divided between honors and non-honors students. They all participated in the same learning activities, were assessed by the same rubrics, and pursued the same learning outcomes and honors competencies.
Quentina

My multidisciplinary courses led me to “Anne Moody’s Mississippi: Race, Class and Civil Rights,” a history class cross-listed with an honors seminar. In addition to analysis of the Civil Rights Movement through the lens of a woman, the course provided an experiential education component—a trip to Mississippi over spring break. The course offered an opportunity not only to mix my studies with travel for the first time but also to explore one of the many intersections of my identities. I spent much of my childhood grappling with what it meant to be African versus African American. Though my paternal grandmother was born and raised in Michigan, my father and all but one of his siblings were born in Liberia because of the turbulent racial climate of the 1950s and 1960s in the United States. My mother was born and raised in Liberia and came to the United States as a refugee.

With this background and understanding, I enrolled in “Anne Moody’s Mississippi” seeking knowledge of self and of the history that altered my family’s story forever. The class was small: six students, our professor, and later the then-director of the honors program (Christopher Corley), who accompanied us on our trip. This intimate encounter with the “smart kids” became another transitional event in my academic career. Prior to this experience, the first word that would have come to my mind when confronted with an honors student would have been “different,” but through engagement with the course content, class discussions, and most importantly my classmates, I came to realize that I am and have always been one of those smart kids. We had similar grades. We were taking similar courses. We had similar interests. I started my honors program application somewhere in Mississippi.

Jill

Quentina’s experience with the course exemplifies another important point in Klos’s article: the significance of using honors curriculum to engage social justice. The course attracted Quentina and her classmates because it gave them an opportunity to examine our nation’s troubled civil rights history and to consider its modern implications. The book Coming of Age in Mississippi: The Classic Autobiography of Growing Up Poor and Black in the Rural South, by civil rights activist Anne Moody, led us to reflect on important questions such as “Who owns history? Who tells the story of civil rights and how do they tell it? What are the implications of past discrimination for communities of color today?”
Driving in a van from Minnesota to Mississippi, we explored the sites where civil rights history played out. In Memphis, we listened to blues, ate barbecue and Delta tamales, and visited the civil rights museum—on the site of the Lorraine Motel, where in April 1968 an assassin took the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In the Mississippi Delta, a culturally rich but financially distressed area, we drove through fields where people of color historically labored to enrich wealthy white landowners. In Sumner, we visited the Emmett Till Interpretive Center, founded in memory of the murdered teenager and designed to seek racial reconciliation. Two memorials sit outside the Sumner courthouse where Till’s murderers were tried and acquitted: one honors the town’s Confederate soldiers, and one commemorates Till’s short life and tragic death. In Jackson, the students visited the campuses of two historically black colleges: Jackson State University, where public funding limited the ability of 1960s-era student activists to protest inequality, and Tougaloo College, Moody’s alma mater and a private institution that served as home base for Mississippi’s civil rights movement.

As the students reflected on the trip, they expressed horror at the magnitude of past discrimination and alarm at the ways historical oppression continues to contribute to contemporary inequality. Social justice classes need to be taught across the university, and in honors they can attract more students like Quentina who seek to understand their positionalities within historical and contemporary hierarchies of power.

**Ginny**

As honors staff, we have known that there is a need to increase our program’s equity and diversity. In the fall of 2016, Anne Dahlman, the honors program director at the time, initiated a student leadership group called Equity Ambassadors, consisting of honors students of color and serving as an advisory, support, and advocacy group. The honors program empowered the group to make bold programmatic recommendations targeting changes that could make the program a more inclusive, safe, and relevant learning environment for all students. As with any group, the efforts of this one involved a lot of trial and error. Some of the students’ ideas were successful and became integral, for instance, to rewriting our application questions. Some of the students’ ideas and efforts flopped—like the conversation circle coordinated for honors students of color that no one attended.

Through all the peaks and valleys of their first year, however, the students learned about efforts to increase equity and access within the program.
and across the institution as a whole; as a result, their role and mission have evolved over the last couple of years. Their current mission statement, created at the beginning of the 2017–2018 academic year, is “to advocate for domestic students of color by enabling all students to provide encouragement and inspiration through community collaboration.” Notice that their mission statement does not specify honors domestic students of color. Their own experiences helped them to understand that any effort to increase equity and access would need to extend beyond the honors program.

Currently, two Equity Ambassadors are pursuing an undergraduate research project that seeks to identify the types of social and academic experiences domestic students of color choose at Minnesota State Mankato and their reasoning behind these choices. They hope that another group of Equity Ambassadors will extend their research by identifying strategies to engage domestic students of color in honors. Equity Ambassadors provide a model that reaches into the broader university community. We cannot assume that a more diverse population of students will begin applying to our programs simply by our becoming more open to the idea. Neither can we assume our eagerness to attract diverse students will enable them to overcome systemic racism, poverty, and other barriers to successful participation in honors. We will meet the goal of attracting and fostering a more diverse student population for and in honors only by actively reaching out to domestic students of color and providing experiences in and out of class that respect them for who they are and what they have to contribute.

**Quentina**

Anne Dahlman approached me to form a group of domestic honors students of color that would conduct conversations about our experiences in the honors program. From such conversations we were able to name a myriad of social challenges involved with being a person of color in our predominately white rural university and to consider how they play out within the honors program. We were also able to discuss why our program can appear unapproachable or foreign to students of color. During my time as an Equity Ambassador, we used the basis of our unity to craft a welcoming space for students of color in our honors community and a rough prototype that we could present to other programs.
Ginny

Last fall, with input from honors students, including Equity Ambassadors, we revised our application questions for the first time since 2009. We rephrased some of the language in order to increase access and diversity. For example, instead of asking students to list or describe leadership positions they held, our question pertaining to leadership now reads: “Identify the most meaningful school or community activity in which you have participated. How did your participation in the activity impact others in your school or community?” In other words, we now acknowledge in our application the mantra that we constantly assert to our students: leadership is about opportunities and results, not positions. This question also allows our students to engage in deeper thinking about their experiences by asking them about the effects their actions had on other individuals, not just on themselves. Since we have only recently started using our new application questions, we do not have evidence yet of their impact on our program’s diversity. We hope they will engage more students who, like Quentina, are already doing honors-like work even if they do not recognize it as such.

Quentina

The honors program allowed me to capitalize on the moves I was already making as an undergraduate student. The semester after I joined the honors program, I left to study abroad with the full support of my honors director, who crafted a practicum course geared toward my studies and travel. I was responsible for submitting critical reflections during my time abroad, promoting my growth not only as a student but also as a global citizen. The honors program gave me a platform to conceptualize, articulate, and reflect on my experience in a richer, more meaningful way.

Upon my return to Minnesota State Mankato, I was a bit apprehensive about how I would meld into the honors program. The only people I knew were the four other girls from the class I had taken the year before. I did, however, have a strong relationship with the director, which had been facilitated by our communications and my reflections while I was abroad. I found myself in her office on my early visits to the honors program. I began to look to her as a mentor who was able to see the light in me. She was constantly reassuring me about my strengths and talents while giving me opportunities to learn and grow. I kept going to her office. As a senior, I had a lot of scary changes and challenges on the horizon, and we were able to talk through them. She pointed me in the right direction.
Ginny

Every student deserves a faculty or staff member who will “see the light” in them. The challenge is to make the type of relationship that Anne Dahlman developed with Quentina accessible to each student. Attracting and admitting students from diverse backgrounds into honors is not the end of the process; the goal is to make them happy and fully participating members of the program. Building successful student relationships is key to that goal but is challenging in an era of budget cuts. One budget-friendly way to increase student access to high-impact teaching and mentoring practices is through campus partnerships, which can make a little investment go a long way. Honors programs can, for example, partner with groups including a greater diversity of students to co-host campus events, or they can purchase tickets for their students to attend cultural events, providing a comfortable venue for diverse students to get to know each other. Programs can also sponsor attendance at events that focus on diversity, access, and equity. For more than forty years, for example, Minnesota State Mankato has hosted an annual Diversity Dinner to celebrate our community’s multiculturalism, an event that provides an opportunity for meaningful partnership.

Jill

For several years, honors has partnered with the university’s Common Read program—a university-wide initiative designed to engage the community in the careful study and exploration of a common text. Each year departments across Minnesota State Mankato collaborate to create engaging experiences with the common read book. The original impetus for the study-away class to Mississippi was the adoption of *Coming of Age in Mississippi* as the common read in the fall semester of 2014. The honors program helped me design and fund the study-away class around this text. Funding, of course, was crucial to making the trip happen. We are fortunate to have an honors program willing to contribute limited funds to pedagogy that benefits honors and non-honors students alike.

Ginny

From an administrative perspective, the types of activities that promote diversity might involve spending funds and non-monetary resources on “non-honors” students. Some may balk at this idea, but our institutions should be committed to increasing the quality of education for all students and not just
the few who find their way to honors. The central values and purpose of a program and institution should guide the philosophy behind such budgetary decisions.

CONCLUSION

As Quentina suggests, many domestic students of color are already pursuing and achieving the competencies expected of honors students. Because of traditional barriers to access, however, many are doing so without the support of high-impact programs. By opening the doors of honors in ways that invite these students to become integral participants, honors can increase its diversity. The more traditional the honors program, the more its students, teachers, and administrators need to leave their comfort zones to enact change of this sort. Teaching faculty and honors staff at predominantly white institutions, most of whom are likely white themselves, must reach out to domestic students of color and invite them into honors activities. White honors students must contemplate issues of race and oppression that they have generally not had to consider. Finally, domestic students of color, according to Quentina, “must be great, boldly, while taking the necessary risks to ensure their betterment, academically and socially.”

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REFERENCE


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“Connecting Honors for All”: Reimagining the Two-Year Honors Program in the Age of Guided Pathways

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Abstract: Over the past three years, honors faculty at South Florida State College, a two-year college offering a limited number of workforce baccalaureates, have reinvented their program. Rather than the themed seminars and exploratory courses popular with an earlier generation, our honors courses now offer students project-based, faculty-guided opportunities for undergraduate research within our general education course sequence. Students thus participate in honors while meeting their state- and program-specific general education requirements, and they do not run the risk of jeopardizing their financial aid by incurring “excess hours.” This focus allows us to connect honors education to the vocationally oriented goals most of our students bring to their educations. We use a model of honors education developed in the technical universities of The Netherlands, which we are now adapting to a two-year college in the
United States. Our purposes are aligned with theirs: to make honors education available to talented students seeking a career or technical degree rather than a liberal arts baccalaureate.

**Keywords:** two-year colleges, honors programs, guided pathways, European honors education

## INTRODUCTION

Although causes for optimism are in short supply at two-year colleges and in higher education generally, individual program and projects create hope for the future. Over the past three years, honors faculty at South Florida State College (SFSC) have reimagined their program under one guiding principle: that excellence, and a commitment to excellence, together with a wider understanding of their purposes for being in the world, can be developed in students whose college and career paths may lie outside traditional liberal arts majors. In developing this approach to honors education, we have drawn on three models: two learned through practice and one theoretical. We discovered the practices first and the theory that supported them only afterward.

The first change in practice we adopted was to refocus our honors courses on undergraduate research projects, which we embedded in standard courses that students could use to meet their state- and program-specific general education requirements. The second was to extend this model of embedded undergraduate research to honors general education courses in the humanities and social sciences with support from a National Endowment for the Humanities grant through their Community College Initiatives program.

The theoretical model for our developing practices was the last to arrive. At the 2018 Honors International Faculty Institute in Groningen, The Netherlands, I became acquainted with the research of Marca V. C. Wolfensberger and her European colleagues on honors pedagogy and practices. This body of work is enabling us to codify and reflect on our own existing practices and to innovate with theoretical guidance. The consequence is that South Florida State College is now explicitly adapting a model of honors education developed in the technical universities of The Netherlands to a two-year comprehensive community college in the United States that also offers a limited number of workforce baccalaureates. Our purpose in so doing is to make honors education available to talented students whose educational orientation is toward a career or technical workforce degree rather than to the traditional liberal arts.
OUR SITUATION AND ITS CHALLENGES

Our location and demographics present us with a group of challenges that are common to many two- and four-year public colleges and universities in the United States today. The tri-county area served by South Florida State College is rural and thinly populated; taken together, the area has less than 1% of Florida’s population, and the population is static (“Quick Facts: DeSoto; Hardee; Highlands”). The largest, wealthiest, and best educated of the three counties, Highlands, skews heavily toward the elderly: nearly 35% of its residents are over age 65, most living on fixed incomes. Residents identifying as Hispanic or Latinx make up about 20% of the Highlands County population as of the last census but are a slight majority both in the SFSC honors program and in its Phi Theta Kappa chapter membership. Residents identifying as Black make up about 10% of the population and are an equal percentage of the SFSC honors program.

Overall, educational attainment in Highlands County is considerably below the Florida average. Just 17.1% of residents over 25 have a bachelor’s degree or higher. The corresponding proportion in both Hardee and DeSoto Counties is below 12%. Nearly 20% of all Highlands County residents and 33% of its school-age children live at or below the poverty level (“Quick Facts: Highlands”).

In all three counties, there were fewer jobs in 2017 than in 2007, just before the Great Recession (Klas). Apart from education, government, and health care, most of these jobs are in low-wage service industries, which offer few benefits. The largest employer in Highlands County is Florida Hospital Heartland (Advent Health), followed by the School Board of Highlands County. Walmart is third; Agero, a call center specializing in roadside assistance, is fourth; and SFSC is fifth (“County Profile”). Except for the high number of elderly people, which is probably Florida-specific, the demographics of Highlands County are fairly typical for present-day rural America.

The great majority of SFSC’s students, whatever their talent level, have chosen to make workforce and career education their college goal. In this aim, they have the support of their parents, peers, teachers, and community, which is not surprising given the community demographics. Few visible alternative possibilities are available locally. Students growing up in a poor, rural area with low college attainment have had few educated professionals to serve as role models for achievement. Moreover, as a 2012 study by the Pew Research Center found, a majority of people without a college education, like the
overwhelming majority of the population in the area SFSC serves, believe that “the main purpose of a college education is to teach work-related skills and knowledge” (“Is College”). Students have had this viewpoint substantially reinforced in their families and communities, and persons identifying as conservative have recently tended to become skeptical of the benefits of a traditional college education (“Is College”); Highlands County, in which two-thirds of the voters in the 2016 presidential election cast their votes for Donald Trump, is a conservative stronghold (“Highlands County”), and it may well be that this skeptical viewpoint influences our students as they plan for college.

On the other hand, students at SFSC often have a tremendous drive to get out of poverty. They want above all else to acquire a skill and earn enough to support themselves and their families. For these students, a short, inexpensive, career-focused college degree or certificate may answer their most pressing needs and may be all they can afford. In an era of diminishing state and federal support for colleges and universities, nearly three-quarters of Americans have come to doubt that traditional college is still affordable (“Is College”). Even the most talented of our students may find the prospect of four years of university tuition plus graduate school, with the accompanying loan burden and uncertain employment prospects, too much of a risk to undertake, particularly without the example of successful local role models. Nevertheless, in the interests of equity, talented and motivated students should not be denied opportunities for personal and intellectual growth if they desire them, whatever their career focus and educational plans. As honors director, in consideration of these circumstances, I began several years ago to review alternate options for honors education.

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AND THE
TWO-YEAR SCIENCE STUDENT

The beginnings of the change in our honors program date back to July of 2014, when a group of four SFSC faculty, including myself, attended the Council of Undergraduate Research conference, “Developing Undergraduate Research at Community Colleges: Tapping the Potential of All Students,” chaired by Eddie Weller of San Jacinto College. This conference inspired in us a new focus on undergraduate research, strategized as research projects embedded in honors courses that also met the requirements of the general education curriculum.
I found the most important part of the vision presented at the CUR workshop to be the definition of an authentic research project at the undergraduate level: one having an open-ended answer. That is, the answer to the research question is not known in advance either by the students or the course instructor. Student research activity thus produces a significant part of the content of the course, and students become, in Barr and Tagg’s well-known phrase, “active discoverers and constructors of their own knowledge.” A metacognitive approach to learning encourages students to set research goals and monitor their progress in achieving them, yet, far from being an unguided free-for-all, the CUR metacognitive approach presumes that students have “a deep foundation of factual knowledge,” which they both understand “in the context of a conceptual framework,” and are able to “organize knowledge in ways that facilitate retrieval and application” (“What Is”). Students in this model do research under the guidance of an instructor, but, as Barr and Tagg write, “the chief agent in the process [of learning] is the learner.”

The SFSC faculty who responded most immediately to the challenge of designing undergraduate research projects embedded in general education courses were, not surprisingly, members of our natural sciences department. Through their leadership, ongoing research projects have now been embedded in honors-designated sections of General Biology I and II. Since General Biology I is one of the general education core courses in Florida while the two-course sequence is recommended only for science majors, students’ normal progress to their degrees will not be disrupted by taking advantage of research opportunities in honors sections. These sections are cross-listed with regular sections of the course, so that the course overall can “make” even though few students may enroll in the research project sections.

Currently, one honors biology student is assessing potential bacterial contamination of lipstick testers at drug and department store cosmetic counters. A three-student research team checks canine “liquid biopsies” (that is, dogs’ blood samples, donated by local veterinarians) for micro-RNA markers showing the presence of canine congestive heart failure. Though congestive heart failure is at present incurable, supportive treatments exist that dog owners can use if they know their dog is beginning to develop the condition. Humans, of course, are also subject to congestive heart failure, and the three students and their faculty research team leader hope that their work may someday make a contribution to a cure in humans as well as dogs.

A research project developed for an honors sociology course connects students with the Florida nonprofit agency Healthy Families. Each student researches an ethnic community in Highlands County that has been identified
as underserved by Healthy Families’ programs. Using as a framework the sociological understandings gained in their course, they prepared recommendations for improving agency contacts with the communities and presented their results in a symposium that included in the audience case workers and managers with Healthy Families. Applying what they had learned to an authentic research project, these honors students also contributed to the well-being of Healthy Families’ clients and the community at large.

AUTHENTIC GUIDED RESEARCH FOR THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The second step in the redesign of SFSC’s honors program occurred when a core group of humanities and social sciences faculty received support through the National Endowment for the Humanities Community College Initiative for development of significant undergraduate research projects in their disciplines. Through the grant, for which I was project director, visiting scholars traveled to our campus to lead small faculty seminars, followed by intensive discussion sessions among our own faculty. For instance, the archaeologist Jerald T. Milanich, who is probably the leading expert in the indigenous peoples of Florida prior to and during the European contact period, gave talks to our faculty in his areas of expertise, and Leslie Kemp Poole discussed her area of expertise, the often-neglected role played by women’s activism in a century’s worth of Florida environmental movements. The effect was to refresh our own disciplinary expertise while building community among ourselves. Core faculty are now in the process of reshaping their honors humanities and social sciences courses through the inclusion of curricular modules that enable student research in these disciplines.

Several research projects deriving from the NEH grant have already been piloted, and others are planned. Our studio art instructor has been inspired by Milanich’s talks to adapt indigenous Floridians’ methods of open-pit pottery firing for her classes. She has since guided her students through two pit firings using indigenous techniques, which can be considered an act of reparation and homage rather than cultural appropriation. As readers may know, the indigenous inhabitants of the Florida peninsula were entirely wiped out within three centuries of first contact with Europeans by epidemics (influenza, tuberculosis, measles, and smallpox being the main killers) together with Spanish ill-treatment of forced laborers and, especially, according to Milanich, the butchery inflicted on them by English raiders of Spanish colonies. Some
scattered groups, however, were able to survive into the eighteenth century in the inaccessible Highlands County area and have left artifacts attesting to their one-time presence.

One of our humanities students, in a project that draws its general inspiration from the grant activities, has been digitizing primary source documents for a local organization, the Sebring Historical Society Archives, and another has done similar work for the Avon Park Historical Society. As one of our visiting scholars, James M. Denham, has made clear, the history of the rural South is little-known compared to that of the larger cities because the archival material is scattered, often poorly preserved and curated, and largely uncatalogued and inaccessible to researchers. These students are contributing to nationwide efforts to make rural and small-town archival material accessible again.

Other planned projects growing out of the visiting scholars and our own intra-faculty discussions include research into the all-Black communities that appeared in Central Florida after the Civil War. Zora Neale Hurston’s hometown, Eatonville, is the best known, and Rosewood had the most tragic history, but there were others, including the little-studied Bealsville, located within a short distance of our college. Additionally, as Denham noted, the Polk County settlement of Homestead, just to our north, was founded during the Jim Crow era as a deliberately non-segregated town. Student investigation into the background and reasons for what was, at the time, a very contrarian decision, together with research into the all-Black settlements, will form part of this research project, which is still in development and will bring together faculty and students from across the disciplines of history, sociology, and literature.

Since many of our visiting scholars raised challenges to local, received views of Florida history and culture, ongoing faculty discussions have centered on the best way to present such challenges to our students. Developing a research project that asks students to sort out what is and is not fact or authoritative interpretation has interested many of our faculty. I am about to introduce a project for the honors students in my Introduction to Philosophy class that combines discussion in their textbook of recent challenges to Enlightenment understandings of rationality with additional readings and case studies on a problem of contemporary interest: “fake news” and “alternative facts.”

Faculty involved in undergraduate research and project-based honors education have so far presented two showcases of faculty and student work.
The first occurred during our Convocation week in August, at which faculty outlined their projects and the rationale for them. The second, which featured primarily students in the natural sciences, was held in October. The third showcase for student and faculty work will be held February 21, 2019, in conjunction with a program open to the public that features visiting lecturers, the last major event of the NEH grant.

HONORS ON THE DUTCH MODEL:
A THEORETICAL BASIS FOR OUR PRACTICE

The reimagining of the SFSC Honors Program received new impetus when I attended the Honors International Faculty Institute in Groningen, The Netherlands, in June of 2018. The ongoing effect of this stimulating colloquium, led by Marca V. C. Wolfensberger of The Netherlands, and Beata Jones and John Zubizarreta of the United States, provided us with a means to understand the practices we had been developing intuitively while continuing to move forward in a framework of sound theoretical understanding.

In brief, SFSC is in the process of aligning our practice with an honors model developed in the technical universities and colleges of The Netherlands, which is now spreading across the European Union. This model makes honors education available to students who are not pursuing liberal arts studies but readying themselves for employment in technical and career fields. A brief history and description of these Dutch initiatives might be useful as both the initiatives and their educational setting may not be well known in the United States.

Technical universities in The Netherlands would seem to be unpromising places for honor education to flourish. As in Europe generally, students in the Dutch technical universities do not have a general education component in their education. Instead, they follow heavily prescribed plans of study that leave little room for the sorts of in-depth explorations of liberal arts questions traditionally associated with honors education. Furthermore, Dutch education traditionally had been oriented toward egalitarianism, emphasizing inclusion and assistance for weaker students rather than talent development and excellence (Wolfensberger, Talent 49).

A change began with the Sirius Programme, a ministerial-level initiative from 2008 to promote “excellence in [Dutch] higher education,” in response to the demands of the knowledge economy (Wolfensberger, Talent 50–51). Although Sirius funding ended in 2014, the universities involved, including the technical universities, have continued their excellence initiatives with their
own funding (Wolfensberger, Talent 53). Thus, a robust network of higher education honors programs exists at present in The Netherlands. The Dutch approach to honors education emphasizes two factors worth consideration by American educators: rigorous research into the characteristics of effective practices and inter-university comparability of programs, the latter grounded in the Bologna process and the Erasmus program, which facilitate EU-wide student exchange between universities (Wolfensberger, Talent 50–52).

Often presented as “talent development,” Dutch technical university honors programs recruit students who “are talented and motivated to do something extra” and develop students’ talents within a “culture toward excellence” (Wolfensberger, Talent 14; 43). These students work on “inspiring and complex assignments and questions,” supplemental projects that require students to mobilize the knowledge they have gained in the standardized technical curriculum; some are discipline-focused, others multidisciplinary, but all require students to have good collaborative and communication skills as well as self-efficacy and perseverance because the problems have “non-obvious solutions” (“Welcome”).

The Dutch model of technical honors education, in short, challenges students to develop precisely those qualities that American employers claim to be seeking in their employees. Often, in fact, these projects are devised in collaboration with regional companies, who are also likely to be the students’ future employers.

The role of honors faculty in this model is threefold, corresponding to the “three pillars” of honors education defined by Kingma et al. as relatedness, competence, and autonomy (1). Faculty foster relatedness by using strategies that build community among teachers and learners, in which talented students are valued and encouraged to develop their talents, and motivated learners feel free to take the initiative. Faculty build competence by offering their own expertise to students and presenting them with demanding and challenging opportunities to gain knowledge; as Wolfensberger said during her first-day talk at the 2018 Honors International Faculty Institute, honors students want and need our expertise as scholar-teachers and seek out material with depth and complexity. Faculty build autonomy by offering freedom, further defined as “bounded freedom,” because, as Wolfensberger also said, self-regulation and autonomy are best learned when freedom is offered but does not overwhelm the student. In this model, as she describes it, students learn not passively through lectures but through active participation in tasks set by the instructor and guided by the instructor’s expert knowledge.
In short, technical universities in The Netherlands have found coherent, research-supported ways to practice honors pedagogy and foster excellence in students whose programs are geared toward career and workforce education. Our honors program at South Florida State College discovered that it had been feeling its way toward a model of honors education similar to that widely practiced in The Netherlands, but we have not yet attained the coherence and theoretical grounding of the Dutch model, which is a future direction for us at SFSC.

In particular, two significant areas have been under-explored and under-theorized in the SFSC Honors Program: authentic assessment (as opposed to narrowly focused rubric scoring) of embedded-research honors courses and development of a community of pedagogical practices among honors instructors. Over the next year, we will begin to bring these two areas into alignment with best practices, using the extensive literature and research on assessment and pedagogy in European honors produced by the circle around Wolfensberger.

**RESPONDING TO CHANGES IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION**

In certain respects, South Florida State College is just beginning the same journey that Dutch technical universities have made over the last twenty years. Our college has undergone at least two major changes in its mission since it was founded in 1965. Once a junior college offering local students the first two years of a traditional liberal arts education, we became a comprehensive community college some years later. Recently, by direction of the Florida legislature, we began to offer a limited number of workforce baccalaureate degrees in addition to technical certificates and two-year transfer and workforce degrees, thereby becoming what is termed in Florida a “state college.”

Through these changes, the Associate in Arts (A.A.) has remained the transfer degree for students planning to finish their education at one of Florida’s universities even though the original “seamless transfer” promised in Florida law has eroded over the years. Our traditional, liberal arts-focused honors program for A.A.-seeking students was intended to fit the seamless model.

In the last few years, however, an increasing focus on programmatic career education, together with a tightening of federal financial aid rules, has changed the emphasis of public college and university systems, and not only in Florida. Education for a workforce credential of some kind, whether earned at the two- or four-year level, is the new goal. Liberal arts courses have been
reconceptualized as general education requirements taken as part of a specified program sequence. Honors education of the traditional kind, whether at two- or four-year colleges, has suffered accordingly. Offering semester-length themed seminars and exploratory topics courses, the mainstays of an earlier generation of honors educators, has become, though not impossible, beset with difficulties at institutions such as ours.

For example, a Florida student wishing to earn an Associate in Arts degree and transfer to a state university finds that much of the degree path, including both general education requirements and prerequisites for admission to the student’s choice of major, has already been prescribed in advance. The system leaves room for relatively few electives. Further, students relying on Pell Grants for college tuition are limited to 60 credit hours of financial aid for the A.A. or A.S. degree and cannot take courses not prescribed or permitted by their declared major or program. If they wish to take additional courses for enrichment or out of interest, they have to pay for them themselves.

The emphasis on education for career credentials has arguably led students to approach their general education courses with a box-checking mentality. Students often see them as burdens and choose to “get their gen eds out of the way” while still in high school through dual or concurrent enrollment, thus freeing more valuable college time for their career-focused courses. Unfortunately, the most academically able students often qualify for dual enrollment and so arrive at our college with the interest and ability to complete our honors program but with no room left in their program to do so.

The newly ubiquitous “guided pathways” movement is formalizing this change in higher education. Broad education, denigrated in the gray literature of guided pathways as a “cafeteria model,” is being replaced in “community colleges and broad access four-year institutions” with a model “designed to address the need of today’s students, who want to enter and complete programs that confer economically valuable certificates and degrees as quickly and efficiently as possible” (“Movement”). To this end, community colleges and public universities are being tasked with prescribing specific sequences of courses that lead as quickly as possible to specific career credentials, and general education requirements are to be prescribed by faculty not in the liberal arts but in career programs. As Rob Johnstone, one of the most vocal advocates for “guided pathways,” expresses it, “accounting faculty should know better than anybody else which GE [general education] courses would best prepare somebody to serve as an accountant” (12).

Although this movement in higher education seems to reduce students to mere functions or tools by giving them no education apart from what they
will need on the job, it can be looked at from a different perspective as an attempt to remodel U.S. community colleges and non-selective public universities as European-style technical universities, focused on education for the career and the workforce.

The importance of the Dutch model of honors education to this American two-year honors director, then, is that it shows how excellence and a commitment to excellence, together with a wider understanding of one’s purposes for being in the world, can be developed in students whose college and career paths lie outside traditional liberal arts majors; it also shows that in a knowledge economy, the traditional path is desirable. The trick, if I can call it that, is to embed the honors content in a general education course, using a project-based model of honors education that borrows heavily from the insights and methods of the undergraduate research community, extending that model to the humanities and social sciences and making it available to students in career and workforce programs.

The South Florida State College Honors Program is adapting to changes in the model of public higher education in America. With the potential to enrich talented and ambitious students seeking workforce degrees, this new model of honors education will offer in-depth, guided, experiential learning and reflection, assisting students to gain in commitment and orientation toward excellence. As Kathleen Knight Abowitz wrote in a classic 2006 article, “It is not educators’ role to dissuade students from seeing college as a path to a career. It is our role to help students see the larger purpose in the work they choose” (16).

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An Evolving Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar on Science and Religion

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Abstract: The majority of this essay describes the content, pedagogy, and assessments associated with an undergraduate, interdisciplinary honors seminar on science and religion. The seminar is structured around five major themes: (a) philosophy of science, religion, and their interactions, (b) historical and contemporary case studies, (c) the controversy over biological evolution in the United States as a necessary case study, (d) comparative religion and science, and (e) contemporary issues at the intersection of science and religion. I also describe the consistency between the seminar and the mission of the honors college at my institution. Given the prominence of both science and religion in contemporary culture, I assert that such a course is engaging for students and faculty alike and provides opportunities for multidisciplinary involvement.

Keywords: religion, science, seminar, interdisciplinary
INTRODUCTION

Science and religion are two indisputably profound and durable cultural forces that have a complex history of interaction ranging from controversy and mutual suspicion to ongoing cooperation and accommodation. These interactions help to illuminate the revolutionary impact of Galileo, Newton, and Darwin as well as modern cosmology, quantum indeterminacy, and genetics. Teaching science within a social context, of course, is not a new idea, but much can be gained by paying specific attention to nuanced relationships between science and religion.

Among my university colleagues, conversations about science and religion tend to be limited to religious communities’ responses—typically negative ones—to scientific theories such as evolution and geochronology as well as to epistemological distinctions—often tersely stated at the beginning of a course—between what is and is not empirical inquiry. Others assert that science and religion are implicitly at odds with one another or that they should simply be kept apart in the curriculum. Sociologist of religion Ecklund (2010) called these “no God on the quad” approaches in a study of academic scientists’ religious beliefs.

The story, however, contains much more that is worthy of addressing in higher education and, in particular, within honors programs given their accomplished students and commitments to interdisciplinary work. Thorough understanding of science-religion interactions requires elements of philosophy, theology, and comparative religion in addition to history and to working understandings of contemporary natural and social sciences. Such an undertaking is ideal for an upper-division honors seminar where students are expected to assume responsibility for guiding class discussions and suggesting course content. Beyond resources that address aspects of evolution (e.g., James and Bruce 2009; Lam 2012), though, similar courses do not currently appear in the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) archives.

Beginning with the origins of the honors seminar at my institution, the present essay then outlines the topics, lessons, and assessments from the most recent iteration. The course syllabus is attached as an appendix. I conclude with future directions and recommendations for colleagues who are considering a science-religion course but who might have reservations about their own qualifications as well as how the course would be received by students, faculty, administration, and surrounding communities.
BACKGROUND AND CONSISTENCY WITH HONORS COLLEGE GOALS

My personal interest in science and religion began in 2005 with the *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School Board* trial (National Center for Science Education 2018), which centered on a school district and community approximately forty-five miles from my campus. In brief, Judge John E. Jones, III, ruled as unconstitutional due to its religious nature a statement approved by the school board advocating a non-scientific alternative to evolution called intelligent design. The ruling itself is compelling (the formal judicial reference is 400 F.Supp.2d 707, M.D. Pa. 2005), but it prompted me to read more about the history of opposition to evolution and other scientific theories in, for example, Larson’s (1998) history of the Scopes’ trial, Numbers’ (2006) history of creationism, and Marsden’s (2006) descriptions of the ongoing legacy of early twentieth-century Christian Fundamentalism with its dedication to removing evolution from public school instruction.

I soon discovered the work of Ian Barbour (1923–2013), who is generally credited with establishing science-religion relationships as an historical sub-discipline. His seminal text, *Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues* (1997), broadened my thinking and prompted my giving presentations at professional conferences for science teachers and teaching short courses at regional churches and public libraries. Eventually, the director of the Wood Honors College (Shippensburg University 2018) approached me to design an interdisciplinary seminar structured on the following student learning outcomes:

• Apply the tools (methodologies/content/skills) of multiple disciplines to analyze and/or solve complex issues and problems.

• Work collaboratively with persons from different fields of specialization (in diverse, cross-disciplinary teams) to analyze and/or solve applied, real-world issues and problems.

• Appreciate the importance of civic responsibility and demonstrate informed and engaged civic responsibility by having participated regularly in community service and/or service learning projects.

The course, *Introduction to the Historical Interactions Between Science and Religion*, is well-suited for these broad goals. The curriculum is by its nature interdisciplinary, and I capitalize on students’ diverse fields, interests,
and experiences. The course also contributes to students’ civic responsibility in that they better understand how to view science and technology in a religiously plural world.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**
**RESOURCES, TOPICS, SEQUENCE, LESSONS, AND ASSESSMENTS**

The fifteen-week course meets twice a week for seventy-five minutes and is capped at twenty-five students. Barbour (1997) is our primary text, which I supplement with chapters from *The Oxford Handbook on Religion and Science* (Clayton and Simpson 2006), articles from *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* <http://www.zygonjournal.org>, audio-recorded lectures (e.g., Larson 2002; Principe 2006), and various podcasts and video recordings of lectures, debates, and panel discussions accessible through the internet.

In addition to serving as a resource repository, our online learning management system allows students to post questions and participate in small-group discussions. The focus is, however, on in-class discussion. Many of the lessons described below follow a similar pattern: readings assigned to separate, small groups that are conducted in seminar-style discussions. I often provide class time for group members to organize their information, and in other cases a group leader assembles outlines or electronic slides ahead of time.

The next five sections describe the major topics from the most recent iteration of the honors seminar with additional resources and lesson details as appropriate.

**Philosophy of Science, Religion, and Their Interactions: Building on Ian Barbour’s Legacy**

I begin the course by having students write an initial draft of a personal statement about science and religion where they address the following questions and prompts:

- **What is science?** (alternatively, what concepts and ideas do you associate with science?)
- **What is religion?** (similarly, what concepts and ideas do you associate with religion?)
- **In what ways might science and religion complement one another?**
• In what ways might science and religion be in conflict with one another?

• In what ways might science and religion be irreconcilable in that they neither assist nor detract from one another?

• Describe any specific contemporary or historical events that you are aware of where science and religion have interacted.

• Pose any questions or concerns you have about science, religion, and their interactions.

• (Optional) Describe any personal experiences you have had with respect to science and religion.

During the first week, students participate in an online chat room and cooperative class discussions about these topics that they find most compelling as they read chapters from Part II of Barbour (1997) addressing philosophy of science and religion and outlining Barbour’s four-part framework for science-religion interactions: warfare or conflict, independence, integration, and dialogue. With respect to science, we discuss the nature of scientific theories and models as well as how science often progresses in a non-linear manner via paradigm shifts commonly referred to as scientific revolutions. Students are encouraged to include examples from their own fields such as atomic theory, evolution, Newtonian mechanics, astronomy, and the nature of human intelligence.

As for common characteristics of religion, students consider the centrality of religious experience (e.g., an omnipresent creator, understanding of suffering, moral obligations) as well as faith communities’ accepted stories and rituals derived from sacred texts and oral traditions. Experience, story, and ritual are the data of religion according to Barbour although these data are not empirically testable and generalizable in the same manner as science. As with science, students are encouraged to give examples from their previous experiences which, not surprisingly in central Pennsylvania, tend to be derived from various Christian traditions.

Having defined some basic terms, we turn our attention to ways of relating science and religion. Barbour’s warfare or conflict position suggests that science and religion are philosophically and/or methodologically opposed and that progress in one field necessarily impedes the other. The independence approach is somewhat more nuanced and suggests that science and religion are simply two separate domains that should not have any border
transgressions. You might recognize this as Gould’s (1999) notion that science and religion are non-overlapping magisterial, or NOMA.

Integration asserts that common ground must be actively sought and established when conflict is perceived between one’s scientific and religious perspectives. Barbour’s last approach, dialogue, does not go as far as strict integration, but suggests that scientific and religious worldviews should continuously communicate and learn about one another’s histories, underlying assumptions, and methods of inquiry.

I provide several examples of historical and contemporary theologians and scientists who represent each approach, and students participate in an informal debate or write brief position statements about the most appropriate way to address science-religion relationships in the twenty-first century.

**Historical and Contemporary Case Studies: Formal Student Presentations**

During the first two weeks, the class is divided into groups of three to five students who prepare seminar-style presentations to be conducted during an entire class period at various points during the semester. Students present science-religion themes based on advances in physics, astronomy, and biology in the seventeenth and eighteenth as well as twentieth centuries up to the current day. Thus, six groups are formed.

Although Parts I and III of Barbour (1997) are structured around these scientific domains and time periods, students are encouraged to use other resources, including brief instructional videos. Each group is required to include an activity that engages their peers and to assemble electronic slides for future reference. Assessment for the group presentation is fairly straightforward—e.g., quality of slides, equal participation, class interaction, and organization—and addresses the following questions at a minimum:

- What were the assumptions about the natural world and/or of science during this period?
- What were some of the religious/spiritual/theological assumptions of the time?
- What ideas, breakthroughs, scientific theories, intellectual revolutions, etc., changed or challenged scientific and/or religious perspectives?
- Who were some of the key scientists (or just thinkers in general) who fomented change?
• What are some of the key scientific concepts that we should remember?
• How does your chapter relate to the concepts we discussed in the first part of the course?
• What lessons can we learn for today, or what science-religion issues still persist today?

Foci of the earlier time periods naturally include Galileo, Newton, and Darwin. More contemporary topics include cosmological origins of the universe, quantum mechanics, and the neo-Darwinian revolution following the discovery of the structure of DNA. Students majoring in science are assigned the more contemporary topics so that they can explain them more easily to their classmates. These presentations constitute a significant portion of the course; six of the thirty class meetings to be precise.

**Biological Evolution in the United States: A Necessary Case Study**

Evolution and its social, cultural, and legal implications remain vital topics to understand even 150 years after the publication of Darwin's (1859) *On the Origin of Species*. To this end, I lead a series of lessons on the varied scientific and theological responses to Darwin's ideas, various manifestations of Social Darwinism, the Christian Fundamentalist backlash in the United States, and the legal history from Scopes to Kitzmiller. Perhaps like me about twelve years ago, most of my students do not realize how opposition to evolution and Darwin is woven into our national fabric.

In brief, if you are not familiar with this history, Barbour (1997), Larson (2002), and Principe (2006) remind us that Darwin's ideas were rapidly and widely accepted in scientific circles. Natural selection based on variation in physical traits and population-level thinking helped biology develop from a largely descriptive field to one with an explanatory and predictive theoretical framework.

Immediate reactions from theologians and religious leaders, however, were understandably mixed. Some asserted that natural selection was one mechanism through which a supernatural creator interacted with the physical world, an approach referred to as theistic evolution. Others argued that evolution denied the existence of a supernatural creator and necessarily led to atheism and a strict materialist worldview that is often the primary objection given by Christian Fundamentalists beginning in the early 1900s and continuing to the present day.
Students generally understand the science of evolution and the student-led seminars review the basic concepts. The complex, often religiously motivated, responses tend to prompt a great deal of discussion since many of my students have direct experience with these responses through their families and peers. This history helps to explain the persistence of anti-evolution sentiments within some religious communities and in organizations such as the Institute for Creation Research, Answers in Genesis, and the Discovery Institute.

Students take a particular interest in how Darwin’s ideas were co-opted for other purposes, including economic and immigration policy, eugenics, imperialism, and justification for war collectively known as Social Darwinism. In this case, I assign readings from *Darwin’s Coat-Tails: Essays on Social Darwinism* (Crook 2007).

Finally, I give a lesson or invite a colleague from the political science department with expertise in First Amendment issues—in particular the Establishment and Free Exercise clauses—to give the legal history including the Scopes’ “monkey” trial (see Larson 1998), *Epperson v. Arkansas*, *McLean v. Arkansas Board of Education*, *Aguillard v. Treen*, and *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School Board*. Prior to this lecture, students watch and participate in a discussion about the PBS (2007) documentary of the Kitzmiller trial, *Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial*.

**Comparative Religion and Science**

By Barbour’s (1997) own admission, *Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues* focuses almost entirely on western Christianity. To broaden students’ perspective, small groups of students are assigned other faith traditions to consider and present: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Indigenous Religions, Atheism (which I purposefully include as a faith tradition), and Religious Naturalism. I also give the option of further explaining contemporary Christian responses to science, subdivided into Catholicism and Protestantism.

I provide chapters from the *Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science* (Clayton and Simpson 2006) as well as articles from the Zygon Institute, but students are free to use other resources to explain the basics of these traditions such as the core beliefs and practices, sacred texts, influential figures, views of the afterlife or transcendence, worldwide distribution of adherents, and comparisons to Barbour’s (1997) general characteristics of religion. With respect to between science and religion, they address the following questions:
• How would you characterize the relationship between this religious tradition and science?
• Are there any particular areas of agreement or cooperation?
• Are there any particular areas of conflict?
• Are there any critiques of Western science from the point of view of this tradition?
• What lessons can we draw from these traditions in the twenty-first-century United States?

Students find this particular set of lessons especially fascinating because it provides them the opportunity to consider faiths other than Christianity and to see how scholars critique Barbour’s categorical—or even dualistic—approach to relationships between religion and science.

Contemporary Issues at the Intersection of Science and Religion

With the remaining time in the course, we address specific societal issues with both scientific and religious implications. Environmental ethics and, in particular, climate change and sustainability are standard topics as are the bioethics of genetic modification. Other viable options are religious pluralism in a globally connected world; information technology and the effects of social media; economic inequality exacerbated by technology, race, and gender; and the neurological basis of religious belief.

Previous resources can be used here, but it is also easy to find editorials or position statements about a particular issue from, for example, faith-based organizations. The general idea we consider here is the extent to which scientists and scientific organizations should cooperate with religious individuals and institutions to address environmental degradation and injustices as well as the limits of science to describe human thought, behavior, and morality: a powerful way to end the semester.

ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Consistent with other honors programs, I assign a substantial amount of writing. Take-home midterm and final exams ask students to respond in more depth to any of the above topics that they did not present to their peers. For example, I ask students to write a compare-and-contrast essay about two faith
traditions and the associated responses to science. In other instances, I provide them an extensive list of topics from which to choose.

In the midterm, students critique a rather radical view of science from Paul Feyerabend in his essay “How to Defend Society Against Science” (there is no one internet resource for this, so I recommend doing a quick search). For the final, students include a revised personal statement about science and religion that draws from course resources that influenced their thinking.

For the semester research paper, students have the latitude to pick any science-religion topic. They often choose to go more in-depth on a previous topic. Some write biographies of influential science-religion thinkers, and others include a public engagement component such as interviewing local teachers about teaching evolution or designing a survey to administer to their peers.

During our final exam period, students participate in an informal competition in the spirit of the Three Minute Thesis <https://threeminutethesis.uq.edu.au>. They are permitted only to use the chalkboard for notes as they summarize the key aspects of their semester papers. Students vote for the top presentations, and I provide prizes, typically food.

As available, I invite guest speakers, e.g., local clergy or religious scholars, to organize faculty panel discussions or ask colleagues to present a science-religion topic. For example, a colleague from the psychology department presented an article on personality and religious beliefs. Involving faculty is a significant asset, and an oversight on my part was not inviting colleagues to attend the student-led seminars; in future courses I will advertise the Thursday Science-Religion Seminar Series and invite all faculty to attend.

RECOMMENDATIONS, FUTURE DIRECTIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

While it is not possible to be an expert on all things related to science and religion and when science-religion scholars devote their professional lives to these topics, that level of commitment is not necessary to structure and guide an honors seminar on these worthy and sometimes daunting issues. A liberal arts course can be assembled in the tradition of a bricolage to adapt to your students whether you go it alone or co-teach.

Picking appropriate primary resources is crucial. Barbour (1997) is a good option, but my students found it a bit repetitive after the first several weeks. A later text (Barbour 2000), When Science Meets Religion: Enemies,
Strangers, or Partners?, or Larson and Ruse's (2017) On Faith and Science might be better options worth reviewing.

I have had tremendous support from my colleagues, even from those who do not associate with a particular religious tradition and from others who assert that religion is ultimately a detriment to society. I make it clear that I am not teaching a course that emphasizes how to reconcile science with a particular faith. Many books and other resources do exactly that, but my broader effort inevitably resonates with students given the scientific nature of contemporary society and the ongoing influence of religion.

Toward the end of the last course, I read an essay by Barbour (2014) that was published in Zygon shortly after his passing. He acknowledged then, as he did throughout his career, that thinking about science and religion in a categorical manner is only a starting point. He urged us to consider much deeper and more complex interactions between science, religion, technology, and ethics. As an educator, I also want to include my students’ knowledge, beliefs, experiences, concerns, fears, and values since I have discovered that conversations about science and religion often prompt introspection. A more appropriate title for the course would be “Science, Religion, Self, and Society,” which is what I will call it from now on.

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APPENDIX

Course Syllabus

Introduction to the Historical Interactions between Science and Religion
(HON 393 Selected Topics)

General Course Description

This Honors Seminar will provide students with a philosophical and historical overview of the interactions between science and religion, two indisputably profound cultural forces. The epistemological differences between science and religion will be addressed along with various perspectives and specific examples regarding their interactions. Although science-religion relationships are often portrayed as hostile and divisive, in particular, with conflicts over teaching biological evolution in the United States, this seminar will broaden students’ historical perspective and, thus, increase understanding of contemporary issues related to science and religion. In addition to traditional journal responses, class discussions, and exams, students will select a supplemental project that explores a specific topic in depth.

Required Materials


Assignment Descriptions (additional detail on D2L as needed)

Journal Responses and Assignments for Class Readings

Face-to-face meetings will center on concepts from class readings. With each reading assignment, students are expected to paraphrase the primary concepts and to respond to the instructor’s questions. Traditional journal responses will be used in addition to discussion boards on D2L and other alternative assignments as appropriate.

Class Participation

Class discussion will be a, if not the, centerpiece of the course. Each student is expected to contribute to each class discussion to demonstrate a basic understanding of the readings and other assignments as well as to ask questions that, for example, address concepts that are unclear, challenge classmates and instructor, and suggest areas for further study.
**Leading Class Discussions**

Pairs or small groups of students will be assigned sections of the primary text and/or supplemental resources to present to classmates during face-to-face sessions. Presentations will include both a lecture portion as well as an activity that engages the entire class in the topic.

**Quizzes and Exams**

Short, “honesty check” quizzes will be given periodically to ensure that students understand basic definitions and concepts. Essay-style midterm and final exams will require students to apply concepts more broadly to a series of questions that will be provided in advance.

**Initial and Final Drafts of a Personal Statement about Science and Religion**

Both drafts will address students’ personal understandings of science, religion, and their interactions. The initial draft will be submitted early in the course and the final draft will ask students to incorporate concepts from readings and discussions to clearly demonstrate a broader, more nuanced perspective.

**Supplementary Semester Project**

The semester project will consist of two parts. First, students will write a traditional research paper that addresses a topic of relevance to science and religion. Several possible topics will be discussed in class. Second, the research paper will be complemented by a presentation given in class to your classmates and invited guests. Depending on time, this might be done during our final exam period.

**Point Values and Grading Scale**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Journal Responses/Activities</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>100–95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading class discussions</td>
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<td>Quizzes</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>Supplementary Semester Project</td>
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Selected Course Learning Outcomes

- To understand epistemological distinctions between science and religion.
- To understand various philosophical perspectives about the interactions between science and religion: Warfare, Independence, Integration, Dialogue.
- To understand science-religion interactions during the scientific revolution of 17th-century Europe, in particular, through the work of Galileo and Newton.
- To understand scientific and theological responses to Darwin following the publication of *On the Origin of Species*.
- To understand scientific and theological responses to scientific theories fields other than biology such as cosmology, quantum mechanics, and geology.
- To understand the religious objections to evolution in the United States via the rise and persistence of Christian Fundamentalism.
- To compare and contrast the responses of various religious traditions to science.

Consistency with Honors Program Learning Outcomes

There are six learning outcomes associated with the Shippensburg University Honors Program <http://www.ship.edu/Honors/Curriculum/Student_Learning_Outcomes>. Outcomes 3–5 are related to students’ ability to conduct and disseminate original research and to assume leadership roles within the Honors Program. These outcomes are likely beyond the scope of this course. Outcomes 1, 2, and 6, however, strongly relate to an understanding of the historical and philosophical interactions between science and religion. Each is provided below with a brief explanation in boldface as to the relevance to this course:

1. Apply the tools (methodologies/content/skills) of multiple disciplines to analyze and/or solve complex issues and problems.

   The nature of the course is multidisciplinary. Themes related to history, theology, science, philosophy, and sociology are necessarily included.
2. Work collaboratively with persons from different fields of specialization in diverse, cross-disciplinary teams to analyze and/or solve applied, real-world issues and problems.

The students in the course are from a variety of majors and the seminar-style structure of the course delivery will require collaboration.

6. Appreciate the importance of civic responsibility and demonstrate informed and engaged civic responsibility by having participated regularly in community service and/or service-learning projects.

Understanding interactions between science and religion is an important aspect of being an informed citizen.
Crossing Campus Boundaries: Using Classical Mythology and Digital Storytelling to Connect Honors Colleges

Joan Navarre, Maddie Kayser, and Dylan Pass
University of Wisconsin-Stout

Marilyn Bisch, Catherine Smith, and Andrew Williamson
Indiana State University

Abstract: In spring 2018, two honors colleges—Indiana State University (ISU) and University of Wisconsin-Stout (UW-Stout)—came together to create a cross-institutional collaboration blurring the boundaries between campuses. This project connected first-year honors students with the core curriculum of two geographically separated honors colleges. Building on their studies of Classical mythology, ISU honors students in Classical Cultures of Greece and Rome reviewed, advised, and critiqued screenplays composed by UW-Stout students in Honors English, leading to the production of short films presented at ISU’s Spring Classics Fest and UW-Stout’s
4:51 Short Film Festival and Exhibition. Drawing on our NCHC 2018 panel presentation in Boston, this illustrated paper highlights the value of cross-institutional collaborations for honors students, teachers, and programs. The collaborative process advanced skills in critical reading, analysis, and writing; engaged students and teachers in the scholarship of teaching and learning; and contributed to curricular innovation. Examples of assignments, interim results, and student-created short films are featured along with students’ assessments of the value of crossing campus boundaries.

**Keywords**: cross-institutional collaboration, Classical mythology, literary analysis, student-created short films, teaching and learning

In spring 2018, two honors colleges—at Indiana State University (ISU) and University of Wisconsin-Stout (UW-Stout)—came together to create a cross-institutional collaboration blurring the boundaries between campuses. This project connected first-year honors students in a coordinated core curriculum of two geographically separated honors colleges. Building upon their studies of Classical mythology, ISU honors students in GH 101 Classical Cultures of Greece and Rome reviewed, advised, and critiqued screenplays composed by UW-Stout students in ENGL 113 Honors English. This coordinated project led to the production of short films that premiered at ISU’s Spring Classics Fest and were submitted for competition at UW-Stout’s 4:51 Short Film Festival and Exhibition. Both events took place on 6 April 2018. Drawing on our 2018 NCHC panel presentation in Boston, we highlight here...
the value of cross-institutional collaborations for honors students, teachers, and programs. The collaborative process advanced skills in critical reading, critical writing, and literary analysis; engaged students and teachers in the scholarship of teaching and learning; and contributed to curricular innovation. Examples of assignments, interim results, and student-created short films, along with students’ assessments of the value of crossing campus boundaries, indicate the success of this kind of collaboration.

The first-year UW-Stout students took the lead. The students divided into six teams with approximately five students per team: Team Arachne & Athena; Team Cyclops & Odysseus; Team Icarus; Team Medusa; Team Prometheus; and Team Pygmalion & Galatea. Each team selected and studied an episode from the mythology of ancient Greece and Rome to adapt into a modern short film (4 minutes 51 seconds or less). The primary reference text was Edith Hamilton’s *Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes*, a compilation of summaries of important Classical myths. Hamilton translates each story for modern readers, drawing details from ancient sources. The students created a plot diagram illustrating their understanding of Hamilton’s translation; they participated in a short oral presentation; they shared their plot summary with the entire class; and they were evaluated on their overall comprehension of course readings.

Next, the UW-Stout students created a plot diagram illustrating their intention for their short film adaptation, their purpose being to tell a story about the current relevance of Classical mythology to an audience of university students interested in learning about Classical mythology. The film adaptation assignment consisted of three phases:

**Phase #1: Team Update in Preparation for Rough Cut**

PowerPoint Presentation (5–7 minutes):

- The Classical myth
- Team members and roles
- Plot diagram: beginning, middle, and end (Consider: Is there a recognition and reversal?)
- Storyboard: beginning, middle, and end (9–12 frames total)
- Screenplay: presentation of a portion of the completed screenplay, with the entire screenplay submitted to an online dropbox
- List of camera angles described in conjunction with each frame of the storyboard
Phase #2: Cross-Institutional Collaborations with Classical Cultures Honors Students at Indiana State University

- Screenplay submitted to ISU (via email), with feedback received based on Aristotle’s basic elements from the *Poetics*
- Reflection
- Revision based on feedback and reflection

Phase #3: Submit Film Adaptation

- ISU’s *Spring Classics Fest*
- UW-Stout’s *4:51 Short Film Festival and Exhibition*

The first step for ISU students was to learn as much as possible about the myths chosen by their UW-Stout colleagues. Building on their fundamental studies of Classical mythology, they began by reading and summarizing the myths as retold by Hamilton, focusing on the essentials. ISU students had discussed and learned from earlier study of the Classical gods that in every telling of a Classical Greek or Roman myth some details never change, and some may change. They were also learning that what changes often depends on the artist’s audience and overall purpose. Using Hamilton’s book as a foundation for both classes was an inexpensive way of giving students a reliable retelling of these myths based on works by Classical authors. ISU students were quizzed on the material and required to compose summaries of myths to demonstrate their comprehension of the course readings.

The next step for ISU students was review of the UW-Stout students’ screenplays, keeping in mind that Hamilton herself was an artist and had her own purpose in retelling each myth. Students supplemented their readings in Hamilton with library and online resources in order to develop a solid understanding of the myths as told and re-told over time.

Following this review, ISU students studied an overview of Aristotle’s six parts of poetry, based on his *Poetics*: plot, character, thought, diction, song, and setting. Isolating these key elements provided a tool for analyzing specific details in literary works of many kinds, especially those that tell a story as all of the UW-Stout films were meant to do. This focus on particulars increased the students’ analytical skills.

ISU students then developed an evaluation rubric that condensed most of Aristotle’s basic elements into two main categories. Here is their summary, evaluation, and assessment tool:
Plot:

1. Accuracy to myth—follows traditional details of the myth and ancient source variations
2. Originality—is based on an actual Greek/Roman myth
3. Modern adaptation—is reasonable, in keeping with the film, and explained
4. Pace of the story
5. Plot development—build-up to the climax; abrupt ending?
6. Attention-grabbing
7. Creativity
8. Repetitive language and pronunciation
9. Setting (distracting? beneficial?)

Character:

10. Characters—appropriately displayed in relation to the myth (dress, costume, dialogue, actions)
11. Credibility—emotional expression; appropriate action
12. Story—told through characters or through narrator

ISU students used this form to evaluate each screenplay. In order to best accommodate the number of scripts requiring review, the ISU class divided into three teams. Each team reviewed two of the UW-Stout teams’ proposed films and provided feedback in the form of a score of 1–10 for each of the twelve points with explanatory comments.

The critical feedback provided by ISU students helped UW-Stout students gauge their effectiveness in communicating their artistic intent. Some cases were challenging. For example, Team Medusa presented a screenplay that deviated dramatically from Hamilton’s version of the myth. Their intention was to illustrate Medusa’s backstory, helping modern viewers see her early trauma, psychological complexity, and character arc, including an awakening to her powers. Almost all of this was lost in translation. The ISU students struggled to find positive comments for the first criteria, “Accuracy to myth—follows traditional details of the myth and ancient source variations.” The completed feedback form was sent to Team Medusa, and the team members were surprised by the responses.
Although the students from Team Medusa were initially bemused, after discussion and reflection they began to understand how the comments were founded in fact. The following excerpts from a final reflection essay written by one member of Team Medusa highlight the value of the collaboration process, including lessons learned about communication challenges:

Looking back on the making of the Medusa video for the 4:51 Film Festival, the experience was an important one. During class, we studied Greek mythology, adapted these stories to create a modern short film, worked in groups, and collaborated with honor students from Indiana State University. The challenges we faced were vast, but by working together, we were able to create a beautiful and enthralling film that represented the Greek past, while channeling a modern refinement.

To begin the project, we chose a Greek myth. After deliberation, we decided on Medusa because we were surprised about her backstory. The origin story of Medusa is powerful yet misunderstood. Contrary to popular belief, Medusa’s monstrous nature is not based on her own faults. Her transformation to a serpentine woman is rooted in misogyny, jealousy, and humiliation. She is a victim of sexual violence and misconceptions. These harmful complications have persisted through history and remain prevalent in modern society. Through her transformation, Medusa loses her innocence but gains a newfound strength—empowerment, strong enough to turn humans to stone with a single glance. Because of this project, we were able to learn this information about a famous “villain” who is actually misunderstood. From this backstory, we developed a film adaption with a presentation for the class and a screenplay to organize our film. These components helped us throughout the process and let my group stay on track to our goal.

With the help of honors students from Indiana State University, we had our screenplays reviewed. Their critiques let us have an objective view and change our film to have a more understandable video. With the review, we were scored, and we didn’t expect the results. But because of this, we found out that through long-distance collaboration, you have to be descriptive because information can be lost in translation.
Maddie Kayser, a member of Team Medusa who presented at NCHC in 2018, shared her formal reflection on the collaboration. Note, in particular, her description in the third paragraph regarding “hard constructive feedback” and the value of working with a team as well as with honors students from another campus:

Reflection

The process of studying Greek mythology, creating a short myth-inspired film, and collaborating with honors students from Indiana State University has helped me grow intellectually as a student, let me experience different views of other students, and gave me the opportunity to make and understand film more.

This experience has given me the opportunity to grow intellectually. Through this process I researched different Greek myths and found out more about the myth of Medusa. It opened my mind up to the different perspectives to the story. I also learned more about other Greek myths from listening to the class groups present. This gave me and other students the chance to bounce off of each other’s ideas, and learn from giving and receiving feedback on our films. We learned about how to adapt these myths and this gave us the chance to become creative with our ideas.

During this process I was able to send in my script and modern adaptation to the other honors students from Indiana State University. I believe this was a very interesting and a good experience. I was able to see their perspective on my plans for my group’s film. They gave us hard constructive feedback, which allowed us to see our film differently. We took this information and understood that by making it a silent film, we had to create a director’s cut to explain the film more in depth. This opportunity also gave me even more motivation to make my film to the best of its potential because I had these students waiting to see the film.

The assignment of the 4:51 film adaptation gave me the chance to understand film more. I really enjoyed this because I was already very interested in producing films, but by doing this assignment I learned more about how to prepare for a film. I also learned how to make a script, and lay out my shots. It opened my eyes to the different ways we could portray a story. I found through this experience that I
appreciate film more. The power of a video could change a person and make them feel things they could have never felt from anything else. I also appreciate film producers more, because of the time, effort, and creativity they put into their work. We as a group had to retake shots and extend our time so we could get the perfect shot we needed for our film. This hands-on experience of making a film made me learn so much more than I would have if I just researched the topic.

In conclusion, the process of studying Greek mythology, creating a short myth-inspired film, and collaborating with honors students, helped me grow as a student intellectually, and was an opportunity that I will now forever remember and have with me. It opened me up to the idea of making other films, and appreciating critical feedback. I have enjoyed this journey in my education and all the bumps in the road that came with.

Dylan Pass, UW-Stout honors student, member of Team Cyclops & Odysseus, and panelist at NCHC, described in his formal reflection the value of collaboration. Reflecting on the process of creating Vlog Ep.1: Journey Home, Pass wrote:

My favorite part about the entire project was the connection with Indiana State University.

This was because we could hear feedback that we didn't think of. Some things we agreed with and other things we had to try to see
their side because that is what they believed. My favorite comment was when they said, “It sounds like you all are coming back from a kegger.” This was commented because we sound very relaxed and the tone of voice isn’t serious at times even when people were dying. But the majority of the time we defended ourselves because it is a vlog, so it has to be relaxed. Our goal was to be relaxed and go towards it being funny because I was in a group with 5 guys and being serious was not an option. They also reacted to that and said we structured the play nicely to cover the whole plot, but still make it original.

According to Pass, “When you hear other opinions, it forces you to think differently, especially if it is from a class that is far away. They were being honest and that makes you look at different perspectives and opinions.” Overall, he considered the project a success “because of the effort of my group and the group at Indiana State University.”

Stills from the short film created by Team Cyclops & Odysseus. Dylan Pass, in the foreground of the first still, filming and narrating *Vlog Ep.1: Journey Home*
The ISU honors students also found the collaboration valuable and enlightening. Catherine Smith, a future teacher, noted the importance of building better skills in close reading, critical writing, and literary analysis. She also observed that she learned valuable lessons about the importance of effective collaboration, evaluation, and assessment. Smith stated in her formal reflection:

Interacting with the honors students from University of Wisconsin-Stout has also given me insight to the benefits of collaboration with other colleagues, even those whom you are not familiar with. We have never met these students nor do we know anything about them yet we are still able to help one another succeed in our work. Critiquing the myth-inspired screenplays was also an opportunity that helped me better understand Aristotle’s *Poetics* versus simply memorizing them for an exam. Looking at specific screenplays and critiquing them showed me that it is important to look at deeper aspects of writing than simply whether it was overall interesting or not.

Studying Greek mythology has revealed the importance of looking beyond just the required text in my courses. For example, when studying about Prometheus, it was interesting to look up different stories about him from other authors to coincide with Hamilton’s version of his story. It was also interesting to piece together different aspects of his life and character to come up with a story of our own about him. This, along with the discussion of each of the myths we read, helped me take more interest in the readings. Because we had to discuss the myths in class, I was also more eager to read the readings so that I was able to participate in the conversation with my classmates. Overall, in studying these Greek myths, I have come to understand these stories far more than I ever did when hearing about them in high school English courses. Although I could retain small details or the names of the gods, it was not until reading them in this course that I became truly familiar with the storyline or importance of the gods to the Greeks.

Collaborating with students from the University of Wisconsin-Stout has been a unique experience that I have not had in any other college course so far at Indiana State. It is very encouraging to know that the critiques we have submitted really are helping other students in their work instead of being simple busy work that so many other courses
require. It was also interesting to learn about the students through their films even without knowing anything about them outside of the course. This experience has really shown me that collaboration can be such a positive thing for students. As a future teacher, I hope this idea to be something that I take back to my classroom one day. It has been a one of a kind experience that has let us learn from other honors students while also learning about the details of the course.

Andrew Williamson was part of the ISU team that sent Team Cyclops & Odysseus the comment about the “kegger.” According to Williamson, the project gave students an opportunity to work together and develop tools to meet challenging situations:

These were pretty different films and styles, for sure, so grading them on the same scales doesn’t really seem logical. But, using Aristotle’s six parts of poetry gave us a good general layout that we as a class could all use to gather ideas of what needed to be in the films to hold true to the myth but allow a modern take on it.

Putting Aristotle’s ideas into practice also helped students learn a variety of lessons. Another ISU student who worked with Smith and the team reviewing Medusa and another film reflected on the process, noting some unexpected benefits.

Along with making the grading scale came learning how to give constructive criticism. Although this may seem easy, I found it to actually be quite difficult. In the beginning, I found myself being too nice on the grading and soon realized that I was being too lenient. Although this may make the students feel good, I realized that I was not going to help them with their films doing this.

As I had never tried to critique a film before, I soon learned how challenging it can be. By the end, we had not only made friends with the students of Wisconsin, but also with the group we graded with. I learned how important it is to be able to critique other people nicely, and realized that this can help me later down the road as I begin to take leadership roles in the workforce.

All involved felt connected with the broader academic community. Classes did not meet simultaneously (ISU met on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and UW-Stout met on Tuesday and Thursday). However, students
were able to communicate through email messages, attachments, and video links. Williamson reflected: “I think working with students from a different school made it seem like a bigger and more important project than just something we had to do in class. It was something that was meaningful and was actually going to produce something we could see and watch.”

On 6 April 2018, the student-created short films premiered at ISU’s *Spring Classics Fest*, with ISU students providing a one-minute introduction to each film. The ISU Honors College posted photographs of the film premier on Facebook, and the honors students from UW-Stout tracked these updates.
A few hours later, on the same day and in another state hundreds of miles from Terre Haute, Indiana, UW-Stout honors students created an exhibition on the relevance of Classical mythology in modern times, and their films were included in the 4:51 Short Film Festival and Exhibition.

In November 2018, two students from ISU and two students from UW-Stout joined their teachers in Boston for a panel presentation on this cross-institutional collaboration at the NCHC conference. The panel was split with ISU on one side of the room and UW-Stout on the other side of the room.
Within minutes, boundaries vanished, friendships flourished, and six people from two separate universities came together to describe a collaboration that honed critical reading, writing, and thinking skills and encouraged interdisciplinary explorations.

This cross-institutional collaboration made it possible for students to overcome both physical and intellectual boundaries. Honors students and teachers engaged in systematic scholarly inquiry, advanced the practice of teaching and learning, and contributed to curricular innovation in the core honors curriculum.

While all project goals could have been accomplished through a collaboration between two honors courses at the same university, what set this project apart was its cross-institutional nature. Honors students at both universities frequently commented on the unique nature of working with
students they did not and could not personally know, challenging them to develop new ways to provide honest evaluation and constructive feedback that was critical, useful, and respectful of multiple, unfamiliar perspectives. To replicate this project, one needs to find an honors colleague from another university with a shared collaborative vision. The collaboration need not follow our model of short films and shared evaluation. Opportunities are countless to recreate this kind of collaboration between two campuses and two courses with an emphasis on the honors core curriculum.

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Publishing in Honors: Advice from Reviewers of *HIP* and *JNCHC*

Heather Camp
Minnesota State University, Mankato

Abstract: This article shares advice to prospective authors from reviewers of *Honors in Practice (HIP)* and the *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council (JNCHC)*. Its aim is to demystify publishing in honors by providing flexible guidelines to those interested in pursuing honors publication.

Keywords: publishing, publication, scholarship, honors, writing

INTRODUCTION

Writing for publication can feel like riding a roller coaster. The writing phase proceeds like a slow, steep ascent toward a lofty goal: manuscript completion. Once a piece is complete and sent out for review, the wait is akin to the pause at the peak of the coaster’s first big lift, where white-knuckled riders balance in anticipation and dread. Reviewer feedback ends the suspense, triggering the sensation of dive drops, cobra rolls, pretzel knots, and double dips that writers experience while reading reviews of their work.
As an academic, I know well the thrill-ride elation and misery of the peer review process. I have had my fair share of reviewer-induced pleasure and pain. I have exulted over reviewers’ praise for my “breadth and depth of knowledge” and “clear, fluent prose.” Encouraging editorial feedback has put a smile on my face and spring in my step for weeks. Conversely, I have been discouraged by less-than-favorable reviews, including being told in one review that “the piece doesn’t travel all that far” and in another that “it’s time for a survey of scholarship [in this area]. But let’s make it a good one.”

Despite the variety in tenor and opinion in reviewer response, reviewers’ intentions are generally admirable: to help writers produce pieces that will benefit the larger disciplinary community. An insightful review is an invaluable commodity. Writing is made easier with assistance from others in refining ideas, identifying relevant sources, assessing audience needs, tightening organization, and making wise stylistic and editing decisions.

Within honors, this assistance may be particularly valuable. Those of us who work in this area were often raised in another discipline. We have adopted honors as a second disciplinary home. Whether our stay is temporary or permanent, we share a desire to grow within the honors community, to learn from our colleagues and participate in the community’s activities. One way to do so is to undertake scholarly honors projects and to share our contributions through publication in the National Collegiate Honors Council’s journals or elsewhere. This work allows us to add to the collective body of knowledge generated by the honors community. As writers in a less familiar disciplinary space, however, we may benefit from the advice of knowledgeable insiders along the way.

Reviewers can provide this assistance by helping us become familiar with the writing expectations of the honors community. Like other academic disciplines, honors is guided by a malleable set of discursive practices that define the questions that can be asked, the research methods that will be accepted, and the writing style that is normalized. To understand these norms is to understand the shared assumptions and values of the honors community. This knowledge, made more accessible by a good review, can help us deepen our involvement in honors and succeed in honors publishing endeavors.

My intent here is to help others find their footing within honors research by sharing advice from reviewers for Honors in Practice (HIP) and the Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council (JNCHC). My aim is to help demystify publishing in honors and spur additional scholarly productivity and quality. My goal is not to establish a comprehensive guide to the writing
activities of honors scholars nor to offer a formal discourse analysis of the writing practices of NCHC contributors but rather to provide flexible guidelines to those interested in pursuing honors publication.

I gathered advice from editorial board members of HIP and JNCHC in the fall of 2016, inviting them to weigh in on a cluster of questions related to honors publication:

What do JNCHC and HIP reviewers love to see in a submission?
What shortcomings do they find across the pieces they review? What advice would they give to those who are new to publishing in honors?

Fourteen reviewers responded to my request. Their advice addressed both the scholarly writing process and the final written product. Some tips were repeated by multiple reviewers, underscoring their shared appreciation for certain features of honors scholarship. Other views came from a single reviewer but were sufficiently insightful to warrant inclusion.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To frame reviewer responses, I rely on a conceptual model developed by Carole L. Palmer, Professor and Associate Dean of Research at the University of Washington’s Information School. Palmer has studied interdisciplinary research processes, including their similarities to and differences from traditional disciplinary research activity. Her model of interdisciplinary research practices among humanities scholars provides a useful heuristic for understanding the research and writing processes of honors scholars.

Admittedly, superimposing Palmer’s model on honors scholarly practices and on reviewers’ remarks has some limitations. First, Palmer’s model was derived from the humanities whereas honors brings together scholars from various disciplines. Second, Palmer’s primary focus is interdisciplinary practices whereas scholarship in honors is not necessarily interdisciplinary. Third, the framework imposes an order on reviewers’ comments that precludes alternative categorizations that might usefully privilege other themes.

Nevertheless, Palmer’s model illuminates reviewers’ feedback in helpful ways, establishing a structure that foregrounds themes evident in reviewers’ comments. Moreover, the parallels between working in interdisciplinary spaces and writing for honors are compelling enough to justify the use of the model. Similar to interdisciplinary scholars, honors scholars face the prospect of joining a new, unfamiliar academic community, and they must shape their
work—imprinted by the norms of another community—for a new audience. These similarities make Palmer’s research model a good fit.

Palmer’s model divides interdisciplinary research activity into two broad categories: exploration and translation. According to Palmer, when interdisciplinary scholars undertake research, they “explore broadly across a wide array of materials,” employing “exploratory scanning” to take in new information (107, 102). They also seek out “channels for receiving information from outside domains,” including participating in academic conferences, editorial activities, cross-disciplinary conversations, and interdisciplinary teaching (102). When this information “grazing” leads them to identify knowledge gaps, they gather additional resources to round out their understanding (103, 104).

Interdisciplinary scholars also translate. To meet the challenge of speaking across disciplines in their research, they consult with colleagues and texts outside their area of expertise. Experienced colleagues and key texts help interdisciplinary scholars appropriate unfamiliar disciplinary concepts to their own ends. This work involves both vocabulary development and repurposing of ideas. “[Interdisciplinary] scholars define, interpret, and redefine new information,” Palmer writes, “retaining essential elements of the original context while revising and reapplying it for their own purposes” (107).

While Palmer’s stated objective was to analyze the research practices of the interdisciplinary humanities community, her findings also provide a glimpse into the character traits of this group. Throughout her analysis, Palmer portrays members of this community as admirably ambitious, firmly committed to boundary-crossing work, with a voracious appetite for a wide range of resources. According to Palmer, these interdisciplinarians manifest a “strong dedication to learning and communicating across boundaries” and engage in research that is “elaborate,” typified by a “diverse and scattered use of information” (109, 107). In their research, they seek out “highly complex networks that include many people, activities, and resources linked to various intellectual communities and institutions” (109). Interdisciplinary scholars could be characterized as academia’s overachievers: they seek challenges that “complicate the already intensive information gathering, reading, and writing processes” of their disciplinary peers (107). Palmer’s analysis implies that interdisciplinary humanities scholars possess a set of traits that enable them to advance their interdisciplinary scholarship and make unique intellectual contributions.
Exploration

Palmer’s interdisciplinary research framework is relevant to writing for honors publications. According to _JNCHC_ and _HIP_ reviewers, prospective writers need to explore, inspecting the existing literature on honors education and bringing scholarship outside of honors to bear on their research. Reviewers note that consulting an array of sources can lead to project ideas and prepare honors researchers to situate their research within a larger conversation. Multiple reviewers stress the importance of this research activity. As one reviewer explains:

> Using literature both in and outside of NCHC, authors should be able to see how the work they do and the issues that interest them are part of a bigger body of scholarship. Since drawing from this literature to frame any one project will be required for publication, getting familiar with what is already published will generate ideas and help authors think about how to pose a question or present results in ways that will be appropriate for this audience.

Another reviewer states, “The saddest scenario may be the author who hasn’t realized or recognized the corporate body of knowledge that already exists. When there are existing _JNCHC_ and/or _HIP_ articles on the topic, it’s critical to cite them!” Reviewers’ comments highlight that successful honors projects are informed by other projects in the field in design, focus, and presentation. Such projects explicitly participate in conversations that matter to the honors community. Exploration—within and beyond the walls of honors—prepares writers to join the conversation.

Relationship building, an important strand in the exploratory practices of interdisciplinary researchers, is also recommended by reviewers. They suggest that prospective writers explore by nurturing relationships with people who might further their research goals. One reviewer advises writers to “make connections with others in honors who share [their] interests” while another notes the benefits of doing so by stating, “Collaborating with honors colleagues from other institutions in producing a publishable piece can lead to productive ideas and tighter quality control.”

One area in which honors scholars might profitably collaborate is research methodology. The spirit of honors is to be accepting of a wide range of research processes, allowing members to bring their academic training to
bear on the fields’ problems and questions. Diverse epistemological inflec-
tions add a richness to honors scholarship. While embracing heterogeneity,
honors research nonetheless strives to maintain standards in methodological
quality. One reviewer comments, “I love to see some data supporting assert-
ions and claims. Our articles do not necessarily need the rigor of a top level
Psychology journal, but I like to see something objective to support anecdotal
evidence.” Another reviewer clarifies that honors researchers do not have to
have the same research methods training to produce a sound study, but then
continues, “If you aren’t a social scientist or education professor and you want
to run a ‘study’ examining learning, then it would behoove you to collaborate
with someone familiar with the methodology associated with studying learn-
ing [to strengthen your research].” The takeaway here is that connecting with
colleagues during exploration enables writers to tap into others’ disciplinary
expertise, honors experience, creative thinking, and incisive feedback.

**Translate**

*HIP* and *JNCHC* reviewers also indicate that translation is important to
success in honors. Their responses stress one particular form of translating
above all others: generalizing to other contexts. In honors, as in other disci-
plines, the onus is on researchers to clearly show the relevance and portability
of their ideas. The mantra “generalize, generalize, generalize” and “appeal
to wider audiences” is prominent in reviewers’ responses. As one reviewer
explains,

I think the biggest pitfall that I’ve seen is that many authors are
excited about something that worked at their campus and write an
article that is ‘too specific’ to their campus/program. They need to
think about how their idea/innovation can be generalized to other
settings and populations. Oftentimes the idea can be generalized but
the first draft does not make those leaps.

To avoid the “here’s what we do at our institution” syndrome, one reviewer
recommends learning to recognize quality contributions and find opportuni-
ties to similarly contribute. The reviewer remarks:

Valued scholarship in any discipline has impact beyond the indi-
vidual situation or circumstance. Take note of those perspectives
of others for which you find value, then watch for those occasions
where your integration and analysis have the potential to likewise
impact the broader community.
In Their Own Words: Advice from HIP and JNCHC Reviewers

**On Exploration**

- Understand and acknowledge the existing scholarship on your topic, both in honors and outside of it.

- Definitely authors should show familiarity with NCHC publications in the area they are treating and avoid duplication.

- Do a quick lit review. Why did you try this practice/approach? What literature informed you or inspired you to try it?

- Attend NCHC conferences; read the journals to determine what approaches and topics represent excellent contributions to the honors community, as they will provide useful models.

- Contact HIP authors whose articles are in the area that you have an interest and chat about your ideas.

**On Translation**

- One of the biggest shortcomings is focusing simply on “here’s what we do at our institution.”

- Link to how ideas/projects discussed in your manuscript are portable to other honors programs.

- Ask yourself how/why your discussion will help others in honors-land.

- Please don’t just tell us what you do in your program or at your school; please generalize your experience to apply to the rest of us. . . . Tell us what you think the rest of us can learn from your experience. To put it more crudely, tell us why we should care about what works for you.

- Do not submit pieces that have only local relevance or importance. Essays should have generalizable, widely transferable, and applicable qualities that readers can use in different contexts.
While most project ideas will no doubt stem from the local setting, reviewers’ comments underscore the need for honors scholarship to elucidate broader applications.

**Character Traits of Honors Researchers**

Just as Palmer’s analysis sheds light on the character of interdisciplinary humanities scholars, the comments by HIP and JNCHC reviewers illuminate character traits that they hope honors researchers will cultivate. These traits aid researchers in their scholarly pursuits and boost the quality of the final product. While far from exhaustive, the following list of characteristics provides a starting point for scholars new to honors publication.

*Enthusiasm*

**LET YOUR PASSION FUEL YOUR PROJECTS**

One reviewer counsels prospective authors to use their positive emotions to identify project ideas. He observes, “As for where to begin, start where you’re passionate. If you’ve got an idea that fills you with excitement, it is probably something that the rest of us can use.” Personal enthusiasm is a good metric for determining whether an initiative has potential for research and writing. Enthusiasm is invigorating and contagious: it helps authors maintain momentum during manuscript production and inspires readers to try new approaches.

*Foresight*

**LEARN TO ENVISION THE FUTURE RESEARCH PROJECT UP FRONT**

The ability to see research potential in the early stages of honors projects prevents researchers from dealing with a host of problems later on. Stressing the importance of taking the long view, one reviewer offers this advice:

> As you think about new curricular or co-curricular ideas, think about what you would like to publish before you start. That makes it easier for you to develop a project in ways that will provide you with the information you need, rather than requiring you to recollect or not have the information you need later on.

From their home disciplines, many honors faculty and administrators bring significant experience building research projects out of teaching and service
initiatives. If transported into honors work, this same anticipatory, connective thinking and activity will position scholars for honors publication success as well.

**Honesty**

BE BRAVE ENOUGH TO SHARE THE GOOD, BAD, AND UGLY

Obscuring the challenges associated with a project may do more damage than good. This rhetorical move has the potential to lower reader morale and incite skepticism. As one reviewer explains,

Most readers of HIP will have struggled in various ways to launch honors activities and projects, only to encounter difficulties or obstacles; for them to read about a project that is described only in glowing terms can be dispiriting or, at least, not credible. I reckon I am asking for submissions that are honest.

Honors administrators can learn as much from other institutions’ failures as their successes; thus, publications that expose challenges and grapple with problems are valuable. Accurate renderings contribute to an atmosphere of trust and openness within the honors community.

**Polish**

MAKE THE ElegANCE OF THE WRITING PARALLEL THE GENIUS OF THE IDEAS

Widespread in reviewer feedback was the sentiment that most honors submissions would benefit from a thorough edit before being submitted for review. “Submit clear, concise, well-organized, relatively error-free writing,” requests one reviewer, while another admonishes, “Never pass up the opportunity to edit, edit, edit.” Reviewers admire “vibrant, muscular prose” and welcome submissions with stylistic flair, but they will settle for clear, correct writing that provides easy access to writers’ good ideas.

**CONCLUSION**

Much of this advice is reflected in the HIP and JNCHC submission guidelines and style sheet, important sources of information for any honors research project. The additional commentary provided here reinforces and elaborates on that information. Notably, reviewers’ willingness to provide
advice highlights their supportiveness for writers through the peer review process. HIP and JNCHC reviewers want writers to succeed, though it is easy to mistake their reviews for a barrier rather than a support. Speaking to this misperception, one reviewer advises prospective writers to “take the reviewers’ comments as they’re meant: not as harsh or cruel, though they may be blunt, but as constructive criticism designed to improve the article.” Helping writers improve their work and make genuine contributions to the honors literature: that is the goal. Working together, writers and reviewers can help excellence in research writing be the norm in honors education—a boon to the entire honors community.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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**John Zubizarreta** is Director of Honors at Columbia College, a Carnegie Foundation/CASE U.S. Professor of the Year, Past President of NCHC and SRHC, and recipient of the 2018 NCHC Sam Schuman Award. He is author of *The Learning Portfolio: Reflective Practice for Improving Student Learning* (Jossey-Bass, 2009) and co-editor of NCHC monographs *Inspiring Exemplary Teaching and Learning: Perspectives on Teaching Academically Talented College Students* (2008) and *Breaking Barriers in Teaching and Learning* (2018).
ABOUT THE NCHC MONOGRAPH SERIES

The Publications Board of the National Collegiate Honors Council typically publishes two to three monographs a year. The subject matter and style range widely: from handbooks on nuts-and-bolts practices and discussions of honors pedagogy to anthologies on diverse topics addressing honors education and issues relevant to higher education.

The Publications Board encourages people with expertise interested in writing such a monograph to submit a prospectus. Prospective authors or editors of an anthology should submit a proposal discussing the purpose or scope of the manuscript; a prospectus that includes a chapter by chapter summary; a brief writing sample, preferably a draft of the introduction or an early chapter; and a curriculum vitae. All monograph proposals will be reviewed by the NCHC Publications Board.

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Honors Composition: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Practices
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Assessing and Evaluating Honors Programs and Honors Colleges: A Practical Handbook
by Rosalie Otero and Robert Spurrier (2005, 98pp). This monograph includes an overview of assessment and evaluation practices and strategies. It explores the process for conducting self-studies and discusses the differences between using consultants and external reviewers. It provides a guide to conducting external reviews along with information about how to become an NCHC-Recommended Site Visitor. A dozen appendices provide examples of “best practices.”

Beginning in Honors: A Handbook

Breaking Barriers in Teaching and Learning
edited by James Ford and John Zubizarreta (2018, 252pp). This volume—with wider application beyond honors classrooms and programs—offers various ideas, practical approaches, experiences, and adaptable models for breaking traditional barriers in teaching and learning. The contributors inspire us to retool the ways in which we teach and create curriculum and to rethink our assumptions about learning. Honors education centers on the power of excellence in teaching and learning. Breaking free of barriers allows us to use new skills, adjusted ways of thinking, and new freedoms to innovate as starting points for enhancing the learning of all students.

Fundraising for Honor$: A Handbook
by Larry R. Andrews (2009, 160pp). Offers information and advice on raising money for honors, beginning with easy first steps and progressing to more sophisticated and ambitious fundraising activities.

A Handbook for Honors Administrators
by Ada Long (1995, 117pp). Everything an honors administrator needs to know, including a description of some models of honors administration.

A Handbook for Honors Programs at Two-Year Colleges
by Theresa James (2006, 136pp). A useful handbook for two-year schools contemplating beginning or redesigning their honors program and for four-year schools doing likewise or wanting to increase awareness about two-year programs and articulation agreements. Contains extensive appendices about honors contracts and a comprehensive bibliography on honors education.

The Honors College Phenomenon
edited by Peter C. Sederberg (2008, 172pp). This monograph examines the growth of honors colleges since 1990: historical and descriptive characterizations of the trend, alternative models that include determining whether becoming a college is appropriate, and stories of creation and recreation. Leaders whose institutions are contemplating or taking this step as well as those directing established colleges should find these essays valuable.

Honors Composition: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Practices
by Annmarie Guzy (2003, 182pp). 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.

Honors Programs at Smaller Colleges
by Samuel Schuman (Third Edition, 2011, 80pp). Practical and comprehensive advice on creating and managing honors programs with particular emphasis on colleges with fewer than 4,000 students.

The Honors Thesis: A Handbook for Honors Directors, Deans, and Faculty Advisors
by Mark Anderson, Karen Lyons, and Norman Weiner (2014, 176pp). To all those who design, administer, and implement an honors thesis program, this handbook offers a range of options, models, best practices, and philosophies that illustrate how to evaluate an honors thesis program, solve pressing problems, select effective requirements and procedures, or introduce a new honors thesis program.

Housing Honors
edited by Linda Frost, Lisa W. Kay, and Rachael Poe (2015, 352pp). This collection of essays addresses the issues of where honors lives and how honors space influences educators and students. This volume includes the results of a survey of over 400 institutions; essays on the acquisition, construction, renovation, development, and even the loss of honors space; a forum offering a range of perspectives on residential space for honors students; and a section featuring student perspectives.

If Honors Students Were People: Holistic Honors Education
by Samuel Schuman (2013, 256pp). What if honors students were people? What if they were not disembodied intellects but whole persons with physical bodies and questing spirits? Of course . . . they are. This monograph examines the spiritual yearnings of college students and the relationship between exercise and learning.

Inspiring Exemplary Teaching and Learning: Perspectives on Teaching Academically Talented College Students
edited by Larry Clark and John Zubizarreta (2008, 216pp). This rich collection of essays offers valuable insights into innovative teaching and significant learning in the context of academically challenging classrooms and programs. The volume provides theoretical, descriptive, and practical resources, including models of effective instructional practices, examples of successful courses designed for enhanced learning, and a list of online links to teaching and learning centers and educational databases worldwide.

Occupy Honors Education
edited by Lisa L. Coleman, Jonathan D. Kotinek, and Alan Y. Oda (2017, 394pp). This collection of essays issues a call to honors to make diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence its central mission and ongoing state of mind. Echoing the AAC&U declaration “without inclusion there is no true excellence,” the authors discuss transformational diversity, why it is essential, and how to achieve it.

NCHC Monographs & Journals
The Other Culture: Science and Mathematics Education in Honors edited by Ellen B. Buckner and Keith Garbutt (2012, 296pp). A collection of essays about teaching science and math in an honors context: topics include science in society, strategies for science and non-science majors, the threat of pseudoscience, chemistry, interdisciplinary science, scientific literacy, philosophy of science, thesis development, calculus, and statistics.

Partners in the Parks: Field Guide to an Experiential Program in the National Parks by Joan Digby with reflective essays on theory and practice by student and faculty participants and National Park Service personnel (First Edition, 2010, 272pp). This monograph explores an experiential-learning program that fosters immersion in and stewardship of the national parks. The topics include program designs, group dynamics, philosophical and political issues, photography, wilderness exploration, and assessment.

Partners in the Parks: Field Guide to an Experiential Program in the National Parks edited by Heather Thiessen-Reily and Joan Digby (Second Edition, 2016, 268pp). This collection of recent photographs and essays by students, faculty, and National Park Service rangers reflects upon PITP experiential-learning projects in new NPS locations, offers significant refinements in programming and curriculum for revisited projects, and provides strategies and tools for assessing PITP adventures.

Place as Text: Approaches to Active Learning edited by Bernice Braid and Ada Long (Second Edition, 2010, 128pp). Updated theory, information, and advice on experiential pedagogies developed within NCHC during the past 35 years, including Honors Semesters and City as Text™, along with suggested adaptations to multiple educational contexts.

Preparing Tomorrow's Global Leaders: Honors International Education edited by Mary Kay Mulvaney and Kim Klein (2013, 400pp). A valuable resource for initiating or expanding honors study abroad programs, these essays examine theoretical issues, curricular and faculty development, assessment, funding, and security. The monograph also provides models of successful programs that incorporate high-impact educational practices, including City as Text™ pedagogy, service learning, and undergraduate research.

Setting the Table for Diversity edited by Lisa L. Coleman and Jonathan D. Kotinek (2010, 288pp). This collection of essays provides definitions of diversity in honors, explores the challenges and opportunities diversity brings to honors education, and depicts the transformative nature of diversity when coupled with equity and inclusion. These essays discuss African American, Latina/o, international, and first-generation students as well as students with disabilities. Other issues include experiential and service learning, the politics of diversity, and the psychological resistance to it. Appendices relating to NCHC member institutions contain diversity statements and a structural diversity survey.

Shatter the Glassy Stare: Implementing Experiential Learning in Higher Education edited by Peter A. Machonis (2008, 160pp). A companion piece to Place as Text, focusing on recent, innovative applications of City as Text™ teaching strategies. Chapters on campus as text, local neighborhoods, study abroad, science courses, writing exercises, and philosophical considerations, with practical materials for instituting this pedagogy.

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

Writing on Your Feet: Reflective Practices in City as Text™ edited by Ada Long (2014, 160pp). A sequel to the NCHC monographs Place as Text: Approaches to Active Learning and Shatter the Glassy Stare: Implementing Experiential Learning in Higher Education, this volume explores the role of reflective writing in the process of active learning while also paying homage to the City as Text™ approach to experiential education that has been pioneered by Bernice Braid and sponsored by NCHC during the past four decades.

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

Honors in Practice (HIP) is an annual journal of applied research publishing articles about innovative honors practices and integrative, interdisciplinary, and pedagogical issues of interest to honors educators.

UReCA, The NCHC Journal of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity, is a web-based, peer-reviewed journal edited by honors students that fosters the exchange of intellectual and creative work among undergraduates, providing a platform where all students can engage with and contribute to the advancement of their individual fields. To learn more, visit <http://www.nchc-ureca.com>.
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