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# HIP

## Honors In Practice

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

Volume 18 | 2022



# Honors in Practice

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A PUBLICATION OF THE  
National Collegiate Honors Council

JOURNAL EDITOR

Ada Long

University of Alabama at Birmingham

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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.

*HIP* also publishes “Brief Ideas about What Works in Honors,” short descriptions of a successful course, project, idea, or assignment. Submissions should be 500–750 words long; they should have three keywords (not repeating words in your title); the abstract should be short (preferably one sentence); and references (if any) should be internal.

Submissions and inquiries should be directed to: Ada Long at <[adalong@uab.edu](mailto: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, nor do we receive documents with tracking.
2. If documentation is used, 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. All research based on data from human subjects should include IRB approval or other ethical review from your institution.
4. All essay submissions to the journals must include an abstract of no more than 250 words and a list of no more than five keywords. For a submission to “Brief Ideas about What Works in Honors,” the abstract should be short (preferably one sentence) and include a maximum of three keywords.
5. Only the “Brief Ideas” have minimum or maximum length requirements; otherwise, the length should be dictated by the topic and its most effective presentation.
6. 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.
7. All submissions and inquiries should be directed to Ada Long at <[adalong@uab.edu](mailto:adalong@uab.edu)> or, if necessary, 850.927.3776.





## DEDICATION



### **P. Brent Register**

If NCHC were a movie, P. Brent Register would provide the soundtrack, and his music would represent the variety, creativity, innovation, and vitality that honors aspires to. The movie would have the added attraction of having Brent as one of its lead actors.

Brent's academic and performance backgrounds have both been instrumental in his contributions to honors education and to the NCHC. He earned his Bachelor of Music Education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) in 1982, his Master of Music (specializing in English horn performance) at the Manhattan School of Music, and his Doctor of Musical Arts (majoring in oboe performance) back at UNCG in 1989. Along the way, he studied at the Norges Musikkhøgskolen and Universitet i Oslo in Norway, where he studied the oboe and performed in ensembles while doing research for his doctorate. Subsequently, he did post-doctoral research and performance at the Mannes College of Music in New York City. Meanwhile, he rose to the ranks of Professor of Music and Associate Director of the Honors Program at Clarion University of Pennsylvania.

The long list of Brent's articles, compositions, and recordings (by my count well over 100) as well as his conference presentations and performances

## DEDICATION

(another 50 or so) include a wide range of CDs that include *Perlas Hispanicas*, *Bedtime Stories (beyond the window)*, and *Songs from the Chinese Poets* (with text translations by John Digby). Several of his compositions have premiered at NCHC conferences, and he has regularly collaborated with both Joan and John Digby. He also served for a decade as Coordinator of the Arts in Honors Education Strand at the annual NCHC conferences, including master classes and performances.

Throughout the time he was devoting his knowledge and talents to honors education at Clarion, the NCHC, and elsewhere, he was also, starting in 1992, a regular member of several orchestras and musical groups, playing oboe and/or English horn for the Nittany Valley Symphony Orchestra, the Altoona Symphony Orchestra, the Venango Chamber Orchestra, the Easterly Chamber Players, and more recently Camerata Amistad, where he also plays guitar.

This summary of Brent's impressive academic and performance credentials might conjure up an image of a stuffed shirt, but Brent's metaphorical shirt hangs as loose as his gracious, generous, fun, and upbeat personality. We have looked forward to playful conversations with our friend and colleague as much as to hearing him play music, and we take great pleasure in dedicating this issue of *HIP* to P. Brent Register.

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Ada Long

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

Whether honors educators are seeking ideas for enhancing diversity in honors, suggestions for renovating their policies, options for program-wide initiatives, or new designs for courses and assignments, this issue of *Honors in Practice* offers a variety of innovations. Along the way, readers will also find wisdom from NCHC leaders about the defining values and ideals of honors as well as some practical advice for those who are leaving or adopting administrative positions in honors. Everyone interested in honors education will find treasures here that will serve them, their students, and their programs.

After written versions of two speeches delivered at the recent NCHC conference in Orlando—Suketu Bhavsar's presidential address titled "A Sense of Belonging" and Bernice Braid's remarks awarding the 2021 NCHC Founders Award to Samuel Schuman—we begin with a topic that has been central to Schuman, Braid, and Bhavsar as well as the rest of us: diversity. Michael Carlos Gutiérrez, a recent graduate of the honors program at the University of California–Davis, describes the background literature about diversity as well as the experiences of current honors students in "Counterstories of Honors Students of Color." The literature reveals that students of color endure challenges in college and particularly in honors that impede their academic progress and their personal well-being—challenges that range from overt discrimination to microaggressions to tokensim. As a result, students of color in honors often feel that they don't belong, that they are not good enough, that they are not welcome, and that their predominantly White peers already have a head start and an unfair advantage. Gutiérrez summarizes five interviews he conducted with honors students of color at his university, and although four of the five were generally positive about their honors experience, they had all experienced some of the challenges indicated in the literature. A main lesson for honors educators is the need to expand diversity so that students of color do not feel so alone and unwelcome.

One solution to the impediments that Gutiérrez describes is the subject of "Inclusive and Effective Holistic Admission Frameworks for Honors Programs: A Case Study Continued" by Andrea Radasanu and Gregory Barker. The authors describe an extension of their previous study, published in Volume 17 (2021) of this journal, contrasting an honors admissions process based on standardized test scores and the holistic, test-blind admissions

procedure recently adopted at Northern Illinois University. Motivated by the need for diversity and equity, the change offered an opportunity to compare the performance in honors of students admitted under the two different sets of criteria. Students admitted through the old test-based process, which skewed toward white privilege based on high school quality and performance, were more successful in achieving the 3.3 grade point average required for retention in the program. However, students admitted under the new, more equitable system—which is based on multiple criteria like high school GPA and extracurricular activities and which admits substantially more Black and Hispanic applicants—showed a tendency to be more active in the program, taking more courses and participating in more co-curricular activities. This contrast raises the question of what constitutes success in and for an honors program. The essay provides the rubrics and data associated with two admissions policies, and the study is ongoing.

While the authors of the next essay “embrace and celebrate” diversity, they argue for the “need also to recognize what Americans share in common,” and they propose honors involvement in a national initiative to accomplish this goal. Their essay is “Constitution Day: An Opportunity for Honors Colleges to Promote Civic Engagement,” and the authors are Richard J. Hardy of Western Illinois University (WIU), Paul A. Schlag of Central State University, and Keith Boeckelman, also of WIU. It may come as a surprise to most of us that under a law passed in 2004, “all American educational institutions receiving federal funding must celebrate the U.S. Constitution each year on or near September 17, the day delegates to the Constitutional Convention formally approved the document and sent it to the states for ratification.” While not honoring Constitution Day could result in loss of federal funding, the authors advocate a less draconian and more high-minded motivation for honors educators to promote this national mandate based on the model at WIU, which provides “a framework for honors students to conduct research, stimulate critical thinking, showcase their findings, and engage in civic dialogues.” The authors offer a detailed description of the model at WIU along with an extensive list of resources and formats for establishing such a model, and they suggest that honors programs and colleges could develop Constitution Day observances not just for themselves but for their institutions. Since most Americans, including honors students, are ignorant about the Constitution, this initiative could help not only educate but unify them in a common cause and culture.

The rest of the research essays in this volume describe ideas, projects, courses, and assignments that show promise for honors education. The first

of these essays is “Serving through Transcribing: Preserving History while Building Community” by Julie Centofanti and Mollie Hartup. The authors describe a project that originated as an adaptation to the virtual requirements of COVID but that evolved into a major initiative within the Sokolov Honors College at Youngstown State University. As part of its commitment to service learning and community engagement, the college held a “large transcribe-a-thon event where 51 students transcribed more than 200 documents” during the fall semester of 2020. The documents ranged from Teddy Roosevelt’s correspondence to Annie Jump Cannon’s scientific documents. The outgrowth of this assignment was a transcribing club with the mission “to transcribe or correct millions of hard-to-read historical and scientific documents.” Providing a training program for transcribers, the members of this club have logged 1,600 hours and transcribed 16,000 documents, providing a service to the community and country while at the same time nurturing a close-knit community among the honors students. The authors provide detailed information about how other honors programs could incorporate historical transcription into opportunities for their students.

With the intriguing title “Using Algorithmic Imaginaries and Uncanny Pedagogy to Facilitate Interdisciplinary Research and Digital Scholarship,” Philip L. Frana describes an interdisciplinary honors seminar he teaches at James Madison University. He describes the purpose of the course: “to understand the historical, literary, cultural, psychological, and philosophical origins of smart technologies along with their ongoing influential roles as metaphors, analogies, and drivers of technological change.” Both the essay and the seminar live up to the intellectual challenge to “propagate the strange and unsettling while tracing out the ordinary and familiar.” Even though this essay is a great pleasure to read, it contains too many “uncanny pedagogies” and “strange loops” for a summary to do it justice, but it is a must-read for honors educators committed to presenting their students with unique intellectual challenges, who no doubt include most readers of *Honors in Practice*.

Another challenging honors course is the subject of “The Critically Reflective Practicum” by Aaron Stoller, who describes the rationale and content of a problem-based class he teaches at Colorado College. Stoller points out that academic research in a discipline is a standard feature of most honors programs, yet students typically have only a vague understanding of the backgrounds, cultures, assumptions, and practices of the academic disciplines and hence also of interdisciplinary scholarship. He writes: “Actively producing academic knowledge requires a nuanced understanding of a discipline, or what educational researchers call disciplinary literacy.” His pedagogy of the

critically reflective practicum (CRP) provides this kind of academic knowledge not only as an important basis for honors research projects but also as an introduction to the power structure of academic culture and practice, inviting students “to question not only what they are learning in the classroom but also why and how they are learning in a particular way.” Based on Donald Schön’s research, Stoller has developed a “ladder of reflection” that he describes in detail, providing multiple examples. This scaffolded approach “treats discipline and interdisciplinary inquiry as design situations and seeks to simulate knowledge construction so that students both experience and reflect on disciplinary and interdisciplinary activity.”

One of Stoller’s strategies is having his students create a “Road Map” of their previous educational experiences. The theme of mapping comes up in several research essays as well as “Brief Ideas” in this issue of *HIP*, and an especially intriguing as well as useful approach to this theme is Nathan W. Swanson’s “Disorientations and Disruptions: Innovating First-Year Honors Education through Collaborative Mapping Projects.” As part of the first-year honors curriculum at Purdue University titled “The Evolution of Ideas,” Swanson, who is a “cultural and political geographer,” teaches a course on the history of maps. While honors students, like the rest of us, tend to think of maps as neutral and objective, Swanson disrupts that idea and disorients his students by having them map the university campus. This map then becomes “a site of contestation and struggle” and reveals “the ways that the university exercises power in the lives of those who live, work, and study there” and “makes visible the institution’s entanglements with broader economic and social structures.” Students learn that the maps they receive on brochures and campus tours erase, for instance, the racial history of the institution and the “legacies of belonging and exclusion reflected in the built environment and campus landscapes.” Swanson assigns four “collaborative mapping projects” during the eight-week course, introducing students “to spatial analysis and to processing, classifying, and visualizing data” through map-making that reveals “the global power structures under which they are studying.” He describes the four assignments in detail so that any or all could be reproduced in a first-year honors course and provide students with unique insights into the educational and cultural world they inhabit.

The last of the research essays also describes a first-year honors experience. In “Embracing New Opportunities in and beyond First-Year Honors Composition,” Teagan Decker and Scott Hicks describe a research experience embedded in the first-year composition sequence at the University of North Carolina, Pembroke (UNCP). The composition courses “stimulate and

frontload mentorship” designed to “to cultivate, amplify, and sustain deepened connection, perspective, and direction” that will serve honors students throughout their undergraduate years, culminating in the senior research project. Having gained suggestions, concepts, and support especially from Annmarie Guzy, the faculty at UNCP have collaborated over the years to develop a mentorship program that involves all sections of the composition curriculum. In an echo of Aaron Stoller’s essay, the authors write: “Student research projects are focused not on topics but rather explorations of a field of study that transcends the conclusion of a semester, and thus we are guides to students as they approach an unfamiliar field in which they are developing sustained interest.” Faculty serve as mentors to students, who also serve as mentors to each other, throughout this process. Decker and Hicks suggest that, based on their experience, “cultivation of a mentoring culture has particular significance for the persistence and success of diverse students. . . .” They hope to expand this culture into “whole-college mentorship” and the “sense of belonging in a research community.”

\* \* \*

The section “Brief Ideas about What Works in Honors” includes short essays on successful courses, assignments, and co-curricular programs in honors that may inspire honors educators at other institutions. What emerges from these brief ideas is their overlap of interests with the research essays, reflecting issues that are at the forefront of current thinking about honors.

The first two short essays continue the focus on first-year honors courses that was the subject of the last two research essays, and the first of these also echoes Aaron Stoller’s idea of having students create a personal roadmap of their educational history (as well as Nathan W. Swanson’s focus on mapping). In “Mapping the Hero’s Journey into Thinking: Assigning a Geo-Literacies Multimodal Assignment in a First-Year Honors Seminar,” Amy Lee M. Locklear describes a strategy she has developed at Auburn University at Montgomery for having students create a narrative about how they developed their belief system and then map that narrative using Google Maps. This visualization shows students how to “value meaning-making as a process, not just a destination.”

Annmarie Guzy, who was the inspiration for the research essay by Decker and Hicks, describes another way to inspire self-reflection in first-year composition in her essay “Using Issues in Honors Education to Teach Argumentation.” Her students at the University of South Alabama investigate and reflect on their experience in honors by analyzing NCHC journal articles and other materials directly relating to the assumptions behind their honors



education while at the same time they are practicing the skills of analysis and argumentation.

An assignment that Rebecca Cepek uses in her honors English class at Fairmont State University can also be adapted to any discipline and in many ways echoes Swanson's focus on the history of maps. In "Creating Knowledge: The Literary Dictionary Assignment," Cepek has students study word meaning and usage in an historical context, learning that language and knowledge evolve over time and that they participate in an ongoing process of creation.

The next two essays describe honors teaching and learning that take place in creative spaces outside of the classroom. In "Building Community during COVID-19 and Beyond: How a Community Garden Strengthened an Honors Community," Steve R. Garrison of Midwestern State University describes the way an honors research project by two senior nursing students became the seed of what is now a flourishing community garden. Originating as an adaptation to the distancing requirement of COVID, a good idea took root in the honors community and led to an organic gardening project that has provided a substantial community service.

Alternative spaces and ways to work outside the classroom are also the subject of "Disrupting the Way We Work: An Honors Summer Vacation" by Lexi Rager and Mollie Hartup. The faculty and student staff decided to use a time when they typically would hunker down in their offices preparing for the next year to instead meet in a variety of locations and work as a team, socializing but also planning and redesigning key components of the Sokolov Honors College at Youngstown State University. This kind of collaboration was not only more fun but more productive than working alone.

The final "Brief Idea" is, in fact, a huge issue for honors administrators. In the spirit of collaboration advocated by Rager and Hartup, "Professional Transitions in Honors: Challenges, Opportunities, and Tips" combines the perspectives of honors administrators at various stages of their careers and from various parts of the country: Suketu Bhavsar of California State Polytechnic University–Pomona; Jill Granger of Western Carolina University; Marlee Marsh of Columbia College; Matthew Means of the University of Nevada–Reno; and John Zubizarreta, Columbia College. Every honors administrator reading this journal has undergone, is experiencing now, and/or will confront a change in their leadership position, and there is advice here for all of you as well as for faculty members who are moving into honors.

To all of you: Prosper and Enjoy!