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Editorial Matter for Volume 5, Number 1

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JNCHC

**JOURNAL OF THE
NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL**

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

RESEARCH IN HONORS

JOURNAL EDITORS

ADA LONG

DAIL MULLINS

RUSTY RUSHTON

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

The National Collegiate Honors Council is an association of faculty, students, and others interested in honors education. Norman Weiner, President, State University of New York at Oswego; Virginia McCombs, President-Elect, Oklahoma City University; Jon Schlenker, Vice President, University of Maine, Augusta; Donzell Lee, Immediate Past President, Alcorn State University; Liz Beck, Executive Secretary/Treasurer, Iowa State University. Executive Committee: Larry Andrews, Kent State University; Kambra Bolch, Texas Tech University; Akofa Bonsi, University of Alabama at Birmingham; Kate Bruce, University of North Carolina, Wilmington; Bruce Carter, Syracuse University; Lawrence Clark, Southeast Missouri State University; Lydia Daniel, Hillsborough Community College; Adam D'Antonio, Long Island University, C. W. Post; David Duncan, University of Florida; Maggie Hill, Oklahoma State University; Holly Hitt, Mississippi State University; Sophia Ortiz, Long Island University, Brooklyn; Nancy Poulson, Florida Atlantic University; Jack Rhodes, The Citadel; Jacci Rodgers, Oklahoma City University; Ricki Shine, Iowa State University; Charlie Slavin, University of Maine.

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Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council is a refereed periodical publishing scholarly articles on honors education. The journal uses a double-blind peer review process. Articles may include analyses of trends in teaching methodology, articles on interdisciplinary efforts, discussions of problems common to honors programs, items on the national higher education agenda, and presentations of emergent issues relevant to honors education. Submissions may be forwarded in hard copy, on disk, or as an e-mail attachment. Submissions and inquiries should be directed to: Ada Long / JNCHC / UAB Honors Program / HOH / 1530 3rd Avenue South/Birmingham, AL 35294-4450 / Phone: (205) 934-3228 / Fax: (205) 975-5493 / E-mail: adalong@uab.edu.

DEADLINES

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

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CONTENTS

Call for Papers.....	5
Submission Guidelines.....	5
Dedication to Joan Digby.....	7
<i>Student Research in Honors</i>	
Joan Digby	9
<i>Editor's Introduction</i>	
Ada Long	11

FORUM ON RESEARCH IN HONORS

<i>Honors Scholarship and Forum for Honors</i>	
Sam Schuman	19
<i>Honors Scholarship: Another View</i>	
Ted Estess	25
<i>The Forum for Honors: An Expanded View</i>	
Robert E. Roemer	29
<i>Honors in Research: Twenty Years Later</i>	
Cheryl Achterberg	33
<i>Research in Honors and Composition</i>	
Annmarie Guzy	37

RESEARCH IN HONORS

<i>Simple, Pure, and True: An Emergent Vision of Liberal Learning at the Research University</i>	
Peter Sederberg	43
<i>Honors Research in Nursing: Integration of Theory and Evidence-Based Practice using Multiple Modalities of Thinking</i>	
Ellen Buckner	53

RESEARCH ABOUT HONORS

<i>Honors, Inc.</i>	
Kelly Younger	63
<i>Honors Selection Processes: A Typology and Some Reflections</i>	
Richard Stoller	79
<i>Differences Between an Honors Program and Honors College</i>	
Cheryl Achterberg	87
<i>The Role of Community College Honors Programs in Reducing Transfer Shock</i>	
Greg Phillips	97
<i>Faculty Compensation and Course Assessment in Honors Composition</i>	
Annmarie Guzy	105
<i>Honours Programmes as Laboratories of Innovation: A Perspective from the Netherlands</i>	
Marca V.C. Wolfensberger, Pierre J. van Eijl and Albert Pilot	115
About the Authors	143
NCHC Publication Order Forms.....	147

Cover photography by Michelle Forman

CALL FOR PAPERS

JNCHC is now accepting articles for the Fall/Winter 2004 issue (Vol. 5, No. 2): "The Sociology and Psychology of Honors." We are interested in submissions that deal with such matters as student demographics; personality profiles (perhaps pre- and post-admission); the honors "environment"; campus-wide perceptions of honors programs and students; standardized tests; honors vs. non-honors curricula; "academic dishonesty" in honors courses and programs, including plagiarism; and service learning experiences in honors.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS SEPTEMBER 1, 2004

The following issue (**deadline: March 1, 2005**) will be a general-interest issue.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1. We prefer to receive material by e-mail attachment but will also accept disk or hard copy. We will not accept material by fax.
2. The documentation style can be whatever is appropriate to the author's primary discipline or approach (MLA, APA, etc.), but please avoid footnotes. Internal citation is preferred; end notes are acceptable.
3. There are no minimum or maximum length requirements; the length should be dictated by the topic and its most effective presentation.
4. Accepted essays will be edited for grammatical and typographical errors and for obvious infelicities of style or presentation. Variations in matters such as "honors" or "Honors," "1970s" or "1970's," and the inclusion or exclusion of a comma before "and" in a list will usually be left to the author's discretion.
5. Submissions and inquiries should be directed to:

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DEDICATION



JOAN DIGBY

Joan Digby serves as exemplar, muse, and presiding genius of this issue of JNCHC devoted to Research in Honors. Joan has been on the English Department faculty at Long Island University, C. W. Post Campus since 1969, full professor since 1979, and Director of the Honors Program since 1977. Throughout her almost three decades in honors, Joan has been active in the National Collegiate Honors Council. She has served on the Publications Board and the Honors Research Committee; she has been a referee for the former *Forum for Honors* and the current *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*; she was NCHC President in 2000; and she planned and edited three editions of *Peterson's Guide to Honors Program & Colleges* (1997, 1999, 2002). She has published many other books, essays, and poems, and she has been active in many other organizations (including service as President of the Northeast NCHC).

Joan has been a champion for serious and rigorous scholarship among faculty, administrators, and students in Honors throughout her long tenure in NCHC. She is a woman of many and various passions that include horseback riding, poetry, art, cooking, swimming with dolphins, and feeding large populations of stray cats. The NCHC has been the fortunate beneficiary of her passion for excellence in research, and we thus respectfully and affectionately dedicate this issue of JNCHC to Joan Digby.

The person who speaks best for Joan Digby is Joan Digby, and so, as part of this dedication, we include her wisdom on the subject of student research in honors:

JOAN DIGBY

Undergraduate Research in Honors

JOAN DIGBY

LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY, C. W. POST CAMPUS

I have very strong feelings about undergraduate honors research, having had a mandatory thesis in my program for more than twenty-five years. I think that the thesis is the most important part of my program. It is the acid test of completion. Many students go through the courses (the way Ph.D. students often do) and then bow out before the final curtain. Either they have gained enough scholarship support to see the light at the end of the tunnel, or they fear a 50-page project, or they are already focused on a professional school, a job, a marriage, a move, or something else. I hunt down the would-be drop-outs because I believe that the decision to be in the program should be a decision to complete the program. I am the hound of hell!

Those who do their research and write their thesis go through a total catharsis when it is complete. I hold a sequence of colloquia to ease them through because I know how important closure is in the whole process.

Is undergraduate honors research “real” research? Who knows? In some fields I have heard faculty speak approvingly of the work accomplished. Recently in music we have had two very fine theses—one on song settings for Blake and another on musical interpretations of Faust. It is clear that the mentors believe these theses to be genuine research that will influence the professional careers of the students who wrote them.

When students present their work to each other and to their mentors in colloquia, I can tell that many represent, if not original work, then at least sustained and extremely compelling studies that are important to the faculty who direct them. The honors thesis, indeed, plays a certain role in binding students to faculty in their majors and affirming faculty conviction that undergraduates can become professionals in the field. I think that alone is an important purpose of the thesis, and it may—though I can’t tell—also have impact on alumni bonding to undergraduate faculty mentors.

Another purpose is to reinforce methods of research and teach the students to write. The honors thesis in my program (with some exceptions in Mathematics, Economics and like departments) is a 50-page paper. In the fine arts it may be shorter but is submitted with CD, performance video, music tape, etc., so the project represents other dimensions of performance and production that are at least the equivalent of fifty pages. Many theses, of course, are much longer. For every student who submits a thesis, it is a testimony to months of work and logic and organization. I believe that a student who has gone through this process can undertake a project in

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH IN HONORS

any profession and know how to gain control of information in order to interpret it and write coherently about it.

Although undergraduate research is rarely publishable, much of it is readable, and in an age when very little is readable, we should do everything we can to encourage honors students to investigate carefully and compose their findings in a readable thesis. The thesis is the last chance they have to sharpen their language skills.

Finally, I have been—like most us—increasingly concerned about Internet-based and other forms of plagiarism. Undergraduate thesis research gives us an extended opportunity to teach students how to work legitimately with sources, and I think we have the obligation to take this ethical stand with the students we graduate from honors programs and colleges.

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

ADA LONG

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Faithful followers of the *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* know already that the fall/winter issues center on a particular theme while the spring/summer issues solicit articles on any honors-related topic. The four thematic issues so far have addressed science, creative arts, technology, and multi-perspectivism in honors. The four general issues have serendipitously fallen into and upon themes as well, themes that are broader but that nevertheless allow perspectives on a single topic rather than simple miscellany; so far these emergent themes have been "Liberal Learning in the New Century," "Educational Transitions," "Liberal Learning" (again), and "Students and Teachers in Honors." This ninth issue of *JNCHC* has also fallen onto a theme: "Research in Honors."

Twenty years ago, the predecessor of *JNCHC* as the national refereed journal for Honors, *Forum for Honors*, included a special section called "Writing for *Forum for Honors*," the purpose of which was to be reflective and reflexive about scholarship in the "field" of Honors education. Sam Schuman, Ted Estess, and Bob Roemer each expressed a distinct perspective on what Honors scholarship is and should be. We revive this conversation in the "Forum on Research in Honors," which reprints the three twenty-year-old essays along with two current responses to them.

My own rereading of Schuman's, Estess's, and Roemer's essays convinces me once again that "plus ça change, plus ça reste même." As an editor of *JNCHC* for four years, I have repeatedly pondered the same issues and formulated many of the same responses. All three authors agree that scholarship in honors does not include descriptions of individual programs or curricula or experiences in Honors. Such descriptions might have great value—in some instances, no doubt, greater value to honors administrators, especially new ones, than research in or about honors—but are nevertheless something other than scholarship. Schuman grants, in a way that Estess might not, that such descriptions migrate into the realm of scholarship if and only if they have what Roemer calls a "theoretical moment" and what Schuman calls abstraction, namely the necessity that the content be "generalized or generalizable" beyond a specific time and place. Another way of making this point might be that, in order to count as scholarship, an article about programmatic issues must provide a social, historical, pedagogical, and/or cultural context; it must link the particular subject to broader concerns that will engage the community of Honors intellectually as well as practically.

On this matter of intellectual appeal, Estess makes the strongest case for quality of thinking (in addition to, of course, writing) as the ideal criterion for publication in a journal for Honors. He argues that a two-year moratorium on articles focused

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

specifically on Honors would liberate scholarship in and about Honors from mundane programmatic affairs and promote genuine thought among Honors scholar/administrators (a juxtaposition that we hope is not an oxymoron).

Both the form and content of Estess's argument reveal his disciplinary background in the humanities, specifically English. And now I come to the issue that has most fascinated me as an editor of *JNCHC* and that does not appear explicitly in the essays by Schuman, Estess, and Roemer—all of whose academic backgrounds are in the humanities (the first two in English and the latter in the philosophy of education, which we can count as the humanities if we squint). Although my teaching for thirty years has been primarily in interdisciplinary formats, I have experienced more interdisciplinary friction as editor of the *JNCHC* than I have at any other time in my career, and this friction has intrigued me.

My field, like Schuman's and Estess's, is English. As a group, we are obsessive about the quality of writing and commit ourselves to eradicating from our students' prose all instances of, for instance, the passive voice. We like originality of voice; we like to be able to guess who the writer is from particularities, even eccentricities, of style. More than 92% of us who teach beyond the high school level embrace the pronoun "I" as far preferable to the wretched pronoun "one." For the past thirty years or so, 52% of us have embraced and even welcomed the personal as a legitimate approach to or inclusion in scholarship. (I made up those statistics, by the way; 73% of us are wary of statistics and the people who use them.) We are far more engaged by a creative interpretation, compelling theory, or startling new idea than by a solid datum. We often begin sentences with conjunctions. And we like to laugh.

In my experience, the majority of contributors to *JNCHC* during my four years as editor probably hail from the social sciences rather than the humanities. Or perhaps Honors administrators, whatever their disciplinary background, have moved into a culture where data, statistics, objectivity, and impersonality are hegemonic values. The responses to Schuman *et al.* by Cheryl Achterberg and Annmarie Guzy seem more in the latter tradition, satisfying the standards set forth by Schuman but perhaps not by Estess. Reading the twenty-year-old essays in conjunction with the brand new ones may alert readers to a significant change in the discourse of Honors.

We do get submissions, though perhaps not as numerous or wide-ranging as Estess might wish, that fulfill his hope for research coming out of the Honors community that is "other-connecting; that is, [reaching] beyond the professional membership of the National Collegiate Honors Council and connect[ing] with issues not of immediate concern to the functioning or operating of an Honors Program." I join Estess in wishing we would get more such submissions. We do get some, however; I think especially of essays by George Maris, one of which will appear in the next issue.

In this issue, I suspect Estess will be most enthralled by Peter Sederberg's essay, "Simple, Pure, and True: An Emergent Vision of Liberal Learning at the Research University." Sederberg writes of the focus on student research that has characterized the evolution of his Honors College at the University of South Carolina. He raises key issues about the mission of universities and the purpose of the research they nurture—namely, "learning," a word he defines with richness and depth in contrast to,

for instance, education in the service of career or status or profit. Sederberg defines university research as an undertaking that encourages disagreement rather than unanimity, and he connects the goals and evolution of his Honors College to this definition. While providing the scholarship about Honors that Schuman and Roemer advocated, Sederberg also does the “other-connecting” that Estess suggested, linking his programmatic practice to major ideas in and about higher education and American culture.

Ellen Buckner’s essay on “Honors Research in Nursing” also posits ideals of student research in a broad conceptual context, examining inductive, deductive, and intuitive reasoning as modes of shaping research projects in the field of nursing. She describes the research projects her students have undertaken as examples of these different modes; she speaks of the ambiguity and occasional frustration some inherent contradictions between the modes can cause her students; and she explains the professional, clinical, and human advantages nursing students derive from trying to resolve these contradictions and learning to work within a multiplicity of modes. Buckner is thus “other-connecting” by showing the links between ways of knowing and preparation for the study and practice of nursing through Honors research.

Buckner and Sederberg both write about student research and thus provide scholarship on scholarship, a subject matter that perhaps lends itself readily to “other-connecting.” The other essays in this issue concern programmatic matters such as admissions criteria, marketing, organizational structure, faculty compensation, and transfer policies. All describe particular programs—as, indeed do Sederberg’s and Buckner’s essays—and all provide Roemer’s “theoretical moment” or Schuman’s “abstract” context. Otherwise, they would not have been accepted for publication in *JNCHC*; a broader general context is an essential criterion now, as it was twenty years ago, for scholarship, as distinguished from practical advice, about Honors. At the same time, these essays appeal to a readership inside, probably not beyond, Honors.

Kelly Younger’s “Honors, Inc.” begins with a fascinating discussion of the “corporatization” of higher education. Most of us think of this trend as a phenomenon that began sometime around the 1960s; Younger traces it back at least as early as 1909. He summarizes some of the extensive literature on the subject, which has become voluminous in these early years of the twenty-first century. He then moves to a description of the corporate pressure at his own institution, Loyola Marymount University in California, and he provides an account of how he has been able not only to accommodate these pressures but even to enjoy them. His is a cheerful essay about making lemonade of what many pundits in higher education and Honors find to be very bitter lemons.

The next two essays describe fairly recent developments at Pennsylvania State University. Richard Stoller, in “Honors Selection Processes: A Typology and Some Reflections,” describes a shift in modes of selecting Honors students that has taken place at Penn State’s Schreyer Honors College and that he surmises is taking place nationally: namely, a movement away from a “skimming” process, where top ACT/SAT scores and GPAs are skimmed off the top of the student body into an

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Honors program, and toward a “free-standing” selection process that includes essays, letters, and other materials that “go beyond ‘the numbers.’” He suggests that “student selection is not so much a technical exercise as a subjective and moral one” and that “[i]n an admissions context, practical morality is perhaps best defined as congruence between institutional mission and selection decisions—any admissions process that picks students who best fit the mission [of a program and also of an institution] is hard to criticize in a disinterested way.” Stoller connects this focus on mission to questions about elitism and democracy in American higher education, clearly finding that the “free-standing” process is more congruent with the mission of Penn State University.

Cheryl Achterberg uses Penn State as a case study of the transformation of an Honors program into an Honors college. For many administrators in Honors, this distinction between a program and a college has been a visible and vexing issue in the past decade. We all know programs that are more like colleges than most “colleges” or that change their name from “program” to “college” while changing little else. Achterberg’s essay will be useful to Honors program directors contemplating the shift to a college and also to Honors deans looking for ways to make their colleges more college-like. The NCHC has tried for quite some time now to create some guidelines that would be helpful in the way that the “Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program” were a decade ago. The program/college distinction has so far remained rather thorny and intractable, but Achterberg’s essay may advance our understanding of some advantages of a “college.”

“The Role of Community College Honors Programs in Reducing Transfer Shock” is also an extremely useful study. Virtually all of us in Honors assume that experience in a community college Honors program will produce students better prepared than their non-Honors classmates for transfer to a four-year institution. Greg Phillips has carried out a well-designed, carefully controlled, and convincing study to support this assumption with empirical data. His results should not only encourage and support Honors administrators at community colleges but also motivate Honors administrators at four-year institutions to recruit aggressively from community college Honors programs.

An essay that will interest administrators and faculty at both two- and four-year institutions is “Faculty Compensation and Course Assessment in Honors Composition” by Annmarie Guzy. Guzy addresses “nuts & bolts” issues such as salary, course load, and assessment for faculty teaching Honors composition, as well as resistance to Honors within the larger institutional context. She conducted a national survey to ascertain the options, successes, and problems that Honors programs have had in addressing these matters, and she shares the results of her survey in this essay.

This issue of *JNCHC* concludes with an exceptionally welcome and exciting essay from the Netherlands on the development of Honors programs in that country and, to some extent, beyond. Wolfensberger, Eijl, and Pilot have provided a detailed picture of the kinds, qualities, purposes, and successes of a growing Honors movement in higher education across the Atlantic. The adaptations of honors opportunities to the somewhat different academic culture of higher education in the Netherlands is

one source of interest, but I was more struck by how much we have in common. Much that the authors describe will not only ring true but also provide guidance to those of us administering Honors programs in the United States. I like to think that this essay is a harbinger of what might become the ICHC, the International Collegiate Honors Council.

All the essays in this issue represent good research in and about Honors. All are scholarly; they establish the intellectual and research background in which they embed their own ideas and observations, and they add something new to that background. All the essays depend on evidence. The *kinds* of evidence they use and the *way* they use it, however, cover a wide range: at one end of the spectrum we find Sederberg's essay with its internal references to Habermas, Rorty, and other intellectual leaders of the twentieth century (*sans* bibliography); proceeding toward the other end of the spectrum, we see increasingly data-driven statistical analyses, complete with tables and extensive documentation.

I have not done a statistical study of essays in and about Honors from the earliest issues of *Forum for Honors* to the most current issues of *JNCHC*. (I would welcome reading such an analysis if somebody else wrote it.) I surmise, however, that the drift of research, like the drift in this issue, is away from Sederberg-like essays to, say, Guzy-like essays. This drift is (apologies to George Orwell) not uncomfortable for me personally, professionally, or editorially *unless* it becomes a torrent that drowns out the voices of an Estess or a Sederberg. I see signs everywhere in our culture—both academic and national—that the drift may become torrential and that research which is not data-driven will no longer be recognized as research, that evidence which is not statistical or empirical will no longer count as evidence, that voices which do not adopt the rhetorical stance of objectivity will no longer sound legitimate.

E. O. Wilson's book *Consilience* is at the heart of my worry about the future of research not just in Honors but in all fields of inquiry. Mind you, I am a great admirer of Wilson both as a person (he is a kind and gentle man from Birmingham, Alabama, which is my adopted hometown) and as an intellect. He is a superb writer and scholar whose ideas never fail to excite and provoke more ideas. In *Consilience*, he converts the descriptive truism (and, alas, obvious fact) of the hierarchy of academic disciplines—physics trumps chemistry, which trumps biology, which trumps psychology, which trumps sociology, which trumps...all the way “down” to the humanities—into a prescription for intellectual evolution, an advocacy of the absorption of all the disciplines by those higher in rank until all is physics. (Well, he exempts the creative arts, but that is another subject.). What he predicts and applauds is that we will all be caught up in the torrent toward pure science, and the social sciences are currently streaming away from the humanities and toward the “hard” (read “real”) sciences in a headlong rush.

I would like to propose some dams. In another book, *The Diversity of Life*, Wilson argues that survival depends on multiplicity of species, which is thus not only a biological but a moral imperative. If such be true of the natural world, surely this imperative also applies to the world of ideas and to ways of doing research. We need variety and plenitude in order to thrive.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

I therefore applaud all the essays in this issue of *JNCHC*, each of which deepens and enriches our understanding of Honors and, in some cases, matters beyond Honors. We will continue to welcome the broad range of subjects and approaches represented here. At the same time, I would like to make a personal appeal, speaking only for myself and not for my co-editors, a biochemist and a poet, or the Editorial Board, which selects all essays to be published in *JNCHC* and which represents the whole array of academic disciplines. My appeal, really a *cri de coeur*, is to all Honors scholars that they consider writing the “other-connecting” kind of humanistic inquiry, advocated by Ted Estess and best represented here by Peter Sederberg, that is fast becoming an endangered species.

Forum on Research in Honors

Editor's Note: The essays by Sam Schuman, Ted Estess, and Robert Roemer were written and published in 1984 in *Forum for Honors*, the predecessor of *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*. The three essays were distributed by email to all members of the NCHC listserv with an invitation to respond. Two contributors of other essays published in this issue—Cheryl Achterberg and Annmarie Guzy—submitted responses. The three original essays plus the two responses comprise this “Forum on Research in Honors,” but this entire issue of JNCHC is also intended to address this topic and elicit further thought and writing about what research in honors is or should be.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Cheryl Achterberg is the Dean of the Schreyer Honors College and teaches in the School of Information Sciences and Technology as well as in the College of Education at Penn State University. She holds a Ph.D. from Cornell in Nutrition. Dr. Achterberg's current interests include promoting leadership education, undergraduate research, international experience, service learning, and honors education.

Ellen Buckner is Associate Professor of Nursing and Coordinator of Honors in Nursing at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Her students have participated in national, state and local meetings and won national awards. She is a member of the UAB Honors Council.

Joan Digby teaches English and directs the Honors Program and Merit Fellowship at the C. W. Post Campus of Long Island University. She is the author of Peterson's Honors Programs & Colleges and editor of several literary anthologies. Her poems and articles have appeared in numerous magazines.

Pierre van Eijl is a senior educational consultant and researcher at the IVLOS, Institute of Education, Utrecht University in The Netherlands. He is involved in a number of innovative curriculum development projects. Within the context of these projects, he conducts research about effective ways to develop talent, the functional use of virtual learning environments and teaching students to do research.

Ted Estess is Dean of The Honors College at the University of Houston, where he holds the Jane Morin Cizik Chair and is a professor of English. A veteran of Honors education, he directs "Beginning in Honors," a pre-conference workshop that is held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the National Collegiate Honors Collegiate.

Anmarie Guzy is an assistant professor of English at the University of South Alabama. Recently appointed to the Alabama state articulation committee for honors/innovative programs, she is currently researching syntactic complexity in honors students' writing. She earned her Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Professional Communication from New Mexico State University.

Greg Phillips is in his sixteenth year of teaching Biology and Microbiology at Blinn College in Brenham, Texas. He also teaches the Science courses in the Alternative Teaching Certification, a program where bachelors and masters students receive training for Texas teaching certification. He is an Honors mentor at Blinn and the campus coordinator for the Service Learning Program, an initiative that ties classroom learning into practical experience in the community.

Albert Pilot is professor of curriculum development at the IVLOS Institute of Education and professor of Chemistry Education in the Department of Chemistry, both at Utrecht University in The Netherlands. His work is concentrated in the field of curriculum development, learning processes and educational innovation. His PhD was on learning problem-solving strategies in Science, more specific in Thermodynamics.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Robert Roemer served as director of the Honors Program at the University of New Orleans from 1981-89. From 1989-1996 he was dean of the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago, where he now teaches at both the campus in Chicago and the university's campus in Rome. He freely acknowledges that what he does in Rome has been heavily influenced by Bernice Braid's *City as Text* experiences featured at many meetings of NCHC.

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