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Editorial Matter for Volume 5, Number 2

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JNCHC

**JOURNAL OF THE
NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL**

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

THE PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY OF HONORS

JOURNAL EDITORS

ADA LONG

DAIL MULLINS

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

The National Collegiate Honors Council is an association of faculty, students, and others interested in honors education. Virginia McCombs, President, Oklahoma City University; Jon Schlenker, President-Elect, University of Maine, Augusta; Kate Bruce, Vice-President, University of North Carolina, Wilmington; Norm Weiner, Immediate Past President, SUNY, Oswego; Patricia Ann Speelman, Executive Director, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; John Madden, Secretary, Cerritos College; Philip Way, Treasurer, University of Cincinnati. Executive Committee: Larry Andrews, Kent State University; Richard Badenhause, Westminster College; Kambra Bolch, Texas Tech University; Akofa Bonsi, University of Alabama at Birmingham; Bruce Carter, Syracuse University; Danielle Coulter, Ball State University; David Duncan, University of Florida; Holli Hitt, Mississippi State University; Jocelyn Jackson, Morehouse College; Kathleen King, University of Maine, Augusta; James Knauer, Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania; Lydia Lyons, Hillsborough Community College; Nancy Poulson, Florida Atlantic University; Jacci Rodgers, Oklahoma City University; Stephen Rosenbaum, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Charlie Slavin, University of Maine; Stephen Wainscott, Clemson University; Emily Zhitovovskiy, Long Island University, C. W. Post Campus.

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EDITORIAL POLICY

Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council is a refereed periodical publishing scholarly articles on honors education. The journal uses a double-blind peer review process. Articles may include analyses of trends in teaching methodology, articles on interdisciplinary efforts, discussions of problems common to honors programs, items on the national higher education agenda, and presentations of emergent issues relevant to honors education. Submissions may be forwarded on disk or (preferably) by e-mail attachment. Submissions and inquiries should be directed to: Ada Long, JNCHC / 316 Cook Street, Saint George Island, FL 32328. Phone: 850.927.3776. E-mail: adalong@uab.edu

DEADLINES

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

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* is now accepting papers for the fall-winter 2005/2006 issue, which will focus on the question “What is Honors?” We are interested in articles that explore, for example, what distinguishes honors curricula, students, faculty, classes, activities, standards, or requirements from the rest of the institution in which an honors program or college resides. We are most interested in submissions that tackle the question of what we mean by “Honors.”

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS SEPTEMBER 1, 2005.

The following issue (**deadline: March 1, 2006**) will be a general-interest issue.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

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

The documentation style can be whatever is appropriate to the author’s primary discipline or approach (MLA, APA, etc.), but please avoid footnotes. Internal citation to a list of references (bibliography) is preferred; endnotes are acceptable.

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

Accepted essays will be edited for grammatical and typographical errors and for 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.

Submissions and inquiries should be directed to:

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DEDICATION



BERNICE BRAID

Nobody has done more for the NCHC, for honors education, or for innovative teaching than Dr. Bernice Braid. She has been a leader and inspiration for almost three decades on her home campus, in the NCHC, throughout this country, and beyond. At Long Island University, Brooklyn, she is Professor of Comparative Literature, Dean of Academic and Instructional Services, and Director of the University Honors Program. In honors, she has been president of both the NCHC and the Northeast Region. More years than not since 1976, she has served as a member of the NCHC Executive Committee as well as chair of the Honors Semesters Committee. She has served as a consultant, evaluator, or workshop leader at over fifty colleges and universities in the United States and several more in other parts of the world such as Prague, Crete, and Alcalá de Henares. Students all over the world have caught fire about cultural studies through participation in one of the 30+ honors semesters she has organized, and faculty have honed their teaching skills in 20+ of her faculty institutes. Any member of NCHC during the last three decades knows Bernice as the founding mother of City as Text©. Thousands have experienced cities with Bernice's maps, handouts, instructions, and insights as their guides, and hundreds have returned to their home campuses to adopt her learning strategies in their own programs and courses. Bernice was practicing and teaching "active learning" for at least two decades before the rest of the country caught up with her, and—in this as in all things—Bernice has kept the NCHC in the forefront of excellent education. Her keen intellect and superhuman energy are the impetus behind most of NCHC's finest achievements, and we dedicate this issue of *JNCHC* to her with gratitude and pride.

DAIL W. MULLINS, JR.

Editor's Introduction

DAIL W. MULLINS, JR.

As indicated on the cover, the theme of this issue of the *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* is “The Psychology and Sociology of Honors.” By addressing the social and behavioral sciences, the content herein might seem designed to complement two previous issues which focused on academic subjects in honors education: the natural sciences (Vol. 1, No. 2) and the creative arts (Vol. 2, No. 2). In those thematic issues, most if not all of the articles dealt with organizational, philosophical, and pedagogical matters related to honors coursework in the respective disciplines themselves. While the social and behavioral sciences could obviously be addressed in this fashion, the editors had in mind in this instance a more direct application of these fields to honors students, faculty, and the culture of honors itself. Thus, after conferring with the editorial board, a “Call for Papers” was issued requesting submissions which dealt with such matters as “...student demographics; personality profiles [of honors students], 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.”

To be honest, much of my own interest in the broad theme of “psychology and sociology” as applied to the culture of honors—and that of academia itself—stems from a number of studies and findings that have appeared both in the popular press and various scholarly publications over the past few years about increased rates of drug and alcohol abuse, depression, and even suicide among college students; about a growing atmosphere of “ruthless competitiveness” among students, and also non-tenured faculty, on college and university campuses; about a generation of students who volunteer huge amounts of time in various “service learning” activities and yet shun political involvement and the voting booth; about educational institutions which have turned the running of their facilities—their faculty, programs, policies and, in some cases, their curricula—over to a class of roving professional administrators and hired consultants; and especially about increased incidents of academic dishonesty and plagiarism among college students—particularly of the so-called “cut-and-paste” variety—abetted, of course, by the Internet and the ready availability of masses of information on virtually any topic, 24/7. Personalizing this interest even more was the fact that our own Honors Program at UAB had been forced to deal with a few incidents of “cut-and-paste” plagiarism over the past few years, and I had heard stories of similar and growing problems from other faculty at UAB and from honors administrators at other institutions.

The publication last year of the much-awaited “exposé” of college life by Tom Wolfe—the awkwardly-titled *I Am Charlotte Simmons*—seems to have added fuel to

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the fire, at least in the media, emetically producing a new wave of op-ed articles, book reviews, and pop cultural commentary now focused not just on students but the whole of the academy, including faculty and administrations, athletic programs, the “intellectual climate” of our campuses, and the general overall health of higher education. Opinions were mixed, of course, some treating Wolfe’s bawdy rendering of college life with a shrug and collective “duh!” and others calling for a long overdue and expansive review of the entire scandalous system.

While unrelated to the fictional exploits of Ms. Simmons at DuPont University but reflective of a growing public concern about campus life and especially the political atmosphere on our nation’s colleges and universities, some state legislators—most notably in Florida—have attempted to enact laws which would allow students to sue their professors and educational institutions for presenting “biased” (read, for the most part, liberal) opinions as fact in the classroom. The Florida act never made it out of committee although similar kinds of legislation requiring teachers in public schools—though not yet in colleges and universities—to “acquaint” students with non-Darwinian views of evolutionary matters may be close to passage in some states, including Alabama.

Most faculty and administrators in Honors today—and in higher education generally—are surely aware of a variety of subtle and not so subtle changes which have taken place not only in their work environment but also seemingly within the personalities and attitudes of their students and, to some extent, their faculty colleagues and administrators. Presumably we all have our own opinions about the precise nature of these changes, their relative importance, and their likely cause. But the reality of such change seems undeniable.

In his recent two-part essay in *The New York Review of Books* (“Colleges: An Endangered Species,” March 10 and 24, 2005), Andrew Delbanco, Levi Professor of Humanities at Columbia University, addresses these changes in the academy within the broader context of social, demographic, political, and economic changes in the larger society. These, in turn, have imposed pressures on institutions of higher learning to abandon their traditional roles as transmitters of a liberal and moral education and to embrace a host of new values, chief among these being “freedom” and “diversity,” as well as a re-definition of universities and colleges as primarily “job preparation” schools. The palpable changes felt by faculty today may simply reflect the machinations of their institutions in trying to deal with these pressures, as well as the social and political backlash of skepticism which has come from the public, who pay the bills, and their political representatives.

For myself, I have always been partial to the broad notion that—as our nation has accelerated its socioeconomic transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society with the concomitant shift from a labor-intensive to an education-intensive economy—the college diploma has become increasingly important, even mandatory, for individual economic stability and social mobility. Not unexpectedly, with the vastly increased numbers of students now dependent upon at least four more years of education, the institutions which house and dispense this learning—their faculties and finances, students and cultures—have come under increased scrutiny by the larger society. And the larger society does not like everything it sees.

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Colleges and universities themselves, responding to this increased attention, have instituted a multitude of reforms and “consumer-friendly” additions to campus environments, mainly in the form of “Centers”—multi-million-dollar “activity” centers which fairly resemble a Carnival cruise ship, replete with rock-climbing walls, swimming pools, indoor tracks and exercise rooms, restaurants, and even store outlets normally found in shopping malls; “student health” centers, “women’s health” centers, “Catholic student” centers, “Baptist student” centers, “black student” centers, “gay and lesbian student” centers, etc., all reflective of the sadly balkanized nature of today’s eclectic student population; subscriptions to “media” centers which allow dormitory residents the ability to download unlimited numbers of songs and movies from the Internet, this to stave off a host of recent lawsuits filed by the relevant industries against colleges and universities; as well as academic centers of one stripe or another, the Center for Human Values at Princeton and the Institute for Ethics at Duke being two examples cited by Delbanco in his essays. “But what can it mean,” he asks, “that thinking about [values and] ethics has become mostly an extracurricular activity?”

All of this can perhaps be related to the honors experience by asking how such programs themselves have managed to adjust to the tide of commercialization in higher education with its many attendant problems and promises. Has the new value of diversity, for example, brought its “clustering” phenomenon into our programs as well, or can this be mitigated, as Delbanco suggests, by attention to the classroom first, and preferably those small and intimate enough to allow students the opportunity to educate themselves “by knowing opposite lives”? Have honors programs and colleges escaped the tiresome bothers of plagiarism and cheating within their ranks, or have they too had to invoke stricter rules and Google searches of written assignments? And how have our programs handled the phenomenon of increased competitiveness among our students while encouraging excellence and independent study within their ranks?

Although the submissions received for this volume of *JNCHC* certainly did not exhaust or even touch every facet of the many complex issues raised by an invitation to address the “psychology and sociology of honors,” a number of interesting findings and ideas on this theme can be found within the pages that follow. Especially prevalent are papers which explore both real and putative differences between honors and non-honors students—whether cognitive, attitudinal, or behavioral in nature—findings which should be of both academic and practical interest to honors instructors and administrators.

Laird R. O. Edman and Sally Oakes Edman (“Emotional Intelligence and the Honors Student”), a husband and wife team at Northwestern College in Iowa, have attempted to correlate the psychological construct of emotional intelligence with the decision of eligible first-year students either to join or not to join the honors program at a selective, private, liberal arts college. Their findings, which confirm such a correlation, are presented within a larger discussion of the concept of emotional intelligence, including its history, veracity, and possible relevance to honors educators.

Heather Blythe (“Ethics on an Honors College Campus: An Analysis of Attitudes and Behaviors of Honors versus non-Honors Students”), who graduated

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from Lynchburg College this May, discusses her survey of the attitudes of honors and non-honors students about various aspects of the "academic dishonesty" issue, including the effectiveness of an "honor code," the proclivity toward Internet plagiarism among students, and their inclination to report or ignore offenders. Somewhat reminiscent of my own college experience in the mid-'60s, Blythe found, among other things, that many students generally think "buying term papers" is cheating but are reluctant to "snitch" on classmates (although honors students are apparently less reluctant to do so.) As in the Edmans' study, Blythe attempts to correlate her findings with student personality traits and temperaments.

Continuing the theme of personality studies of honors and non-honors students, Scott Carnicom and Michael Clump ("Assessing Learning Style Differences Between Honors and Non-Honors Students"), assistant professors of psychology at Marymount University in Virginia, attempt to "uncover, identify, describe, and define" some of the hypothesized differences in thinking and learning between honors and non-honors students. While there appears to be general agreement among educational psychologists that honors students, as a group, tend to be more autonomous, responsible, and motivated than their non-honors classmates, few empirical studies have been carried out to clarify purported cognitive differences in thinking and learning among the two groups.

John Cosgrove ("The Impact of Honors Programs on Undergraduate Academic Performance, Retention and Graduation"), who recently received his doctorate in higher education from the Pennsylvania State University, reports on his comparative study of students who successfully completed the requirements for graduation in honors and those who failed to do so at three Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education universities. Both sets of students are compared to a third group who possessed comparable pre-college academic credentials but who, for one reason or another, chose not to participate at all in an honors program. Assuming that his results can be generalized to the honors experience outside Pennsylvania, two findings should be of particular and perhaps surprising interest to honors faculty and administrators: (1) only twenty-five percent of students who begin in an honors program actually graduate from it; and (2) "...partial exposure to the honors program does not significantly enhance academic performance, graduation rates, time to degree, nor length of enrollment beyond what is achieved by other high-ability students."

Adding a European perspective to these matters, Marca V. C. Wolfensberger ("Qualities Honours Students are Looking for in Faculty and Courses"), director of the Honours Programme at the Faculty of Geosciences at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, asks whether the "theory-based learning context" they employ in her honours programme, with its emphases on autonomy, competence, and "relatedness," both among students and between students and faculty, is actually what students are looking for in an honours experience. Her findings reveal that prospective honours students generally seek friendly and inspirational faculty, freedom of choice in their honours coursework, and a challenging environment, though not in a competitive context. These results are compared and contrasted with those of non-honours students.

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In her article “Academic and Social Effects of Living in Honors Residence Halls,” assistant professor of psychology at Western Kentucky University Anne Rinn first surveys some of the studies which have shown that, for students generally, living in residence halls as opposed to off-campus housing is positively correlated with both academic and social development. She then extends this research to honors residence halls, where the findings are less clear, especially with regard to social effects. Although honors residence facilities do seem to enhance “...persistence and eventual graduation,” it is less obvious that honors dorms help with “...increases in social adjustment...a sense of community...[and decreased] feelings of isolation.” Because, as Rinn notes, honors students “...may experience the same feelings of seclusion as other minority groups,” further studies need to be conducted on these phenomena.

Anne Marie Merline (“Creating a Culture of Conducive Communication in Honors Seminars”), a lecturer in the University Honors Program at Colorado State University, discusses her experiences dealing with controversial topics in the classroom, especially those which arise from questions or comments by students during class that may be deemed “insensitive” or even inflammatory by other students and the instructor. In an effort to make use of what is usually referred to as a “teachable moment” following one such incident, Merline had her class read and study an on-line lesson plan on “cooperative communication” developed as an aid to instructors in resolving conflicts, encouraging dialogue, and communicating more “creatively.” Her descriptions of these awkward moments will be familiar to anyone who has spent time in front of a class of diverse students.

In the turbulent wake of the recent controversy over comments made by Lawrence Summers, the president of Harvard University, about the gender gap in science and engineering, George Mariz (“Women in Honors Education: The Case of Western Washington University”), director of the Honors Program at Western Washington University, explores some aspects of the broader issue of gender differences in higher education, at least as reflected in his honors program: What majors do Honors women choose, and why?; do women view their general education in ways different than men?; and, in a query which could be related even more directly to Summers’ comments, are there uniquely feminine issues as regards their educational choices? Although of admittedly limited size and scope, Mariz’ essay, which begins with an interesting and thorough review of the rise of women as students in American higher education, discusses some interesting findings which, if they cannot be found to support the provocative suggestions that Summers advanced, do not negate their possibility either. Well written and argued, Mariz’ article is one of those—too infrequently seen in *JNCHC*, in my opinion—which dare to approach one of those spaces “where angels fear to tread.”

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Heather Blythe is currently a senior at Lynchburg College, in Lynchburg, Virginia, where she will earn a BA in Psychology and Philosophy-Political Science in May 2005. Her current research interest is the relation of personality traits and academic dishonesty. In her spare time, she likes to travel with her husband and daughter around the United States and Europe.

Scott Carnicom is an Assistant Professor of Psychology and also the Director of the Honors Program at Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia. Scott earned his Ph.D. in Biopsychology at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. His current scholarly interests include sport psychology, learning and memory, and honors pedagogy.

Michael Clump is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia, where he is currently serving as Chair of the Undergraduate Psychology Program. Michael taught at both Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, and Boise State University after receiving his Ph.D. in the Biopsychology of Learning and Memory from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. His research interests include learning styles, teaching styles, effective classroom activities, human learning and memory in classroom settings, and human learning and memory in general.

John R. Cosgrove received his Ph.D. in Higher Education from The Pennsylvania State University and this study was extrapolated from his doctoral dissertation. He was in between jobs when this article went to press. Correspondences sent to his dissertation chair, J. Fredericks Volkwein (volkwein@psu.edu), will be forwarded to him.

Laird Edman (M.A., University of Notre Dame; Ph.D., University of Minnesota) is Associate Professor of Psychology at Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa. Prior to landing in this town named for a Reformation hero, not a fruit, he served as Associate Director of Honors at Iowa State, Honors Advisor and Instructor in English and Psychology at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, and Associate Professor of English (figure THAT one out) and Director of Honors at Waldorf College, in Forest City, Iowa. Of the several interpretations offered for his varied career and many years of schooling, Laird prefers those that use the term "renaissance man" to those that employ the terms "indecisive" or "avoidant."

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Sally Oakes Edman (M.A., Ph.D., University of Notre Dame) is Director of Counseling Services at Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa. Prior to patiently following her peripatetic husband to Orange City, she was a Clinical Psychologist at Mayo Clinic's satellite facility in Decorah, Iowa. She was an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Luther College and Waldorf College, has operated her own private practice, directed the college counseling center at Waldorf College, and has worked as a psychologist in a Community Mental Health Center. While she usually humors Laird's desire to be called a renaissance man, she rests content in the fact that she is clearly the more emotionally intelligent partner.

George Mariz holds BA, MA, and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Missouri, Columbia. He is Professor of History and Director of the Honors Program at Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA. His research interests and publications are in the intellectual history of Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and in the history of religion. He is currently working on a study of the social ideas of the sons of Protestant ministers in Germany, Great Britain, and the United States.

Anne Marie Merline is a Lecturer in the University Honors Program at Colorado State University. Her Ph.D. is an Interdisciplinary Studies Degree from Boston University. The title of her degree is "The Social History of Higher Education." She teaches first-semester seminars on inequality in K-12 Public Education and in Higher Education in the United States, and third year seminars which focus on the issues of community in Post-Modern America.

Anne N. Rinn is an assistant professor of psychology at Western Kentucky University. Her research interests include the intellectual, social, and emotional development of gifted college students, as well as how programming available for gifted college students affects their development.

Marca V. C. Wofensberger is director of the Honours Programme at the Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht University, the Netherlands. She is currently researching various dimensions of honours programmes, including their capacity for educational innovation, and effective methods to evoke excellence in students. She also works as a senior consultant for honours programmes at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Amsterdam. She advises departments and faculties about the design of UA's new university-wide honours programmes.