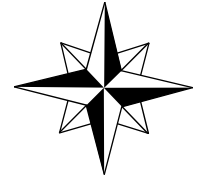


Honors Program Newsletter

Illinois State University



HONORS PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

FALL 2004

The Function of Honors at the Present Time
Doug Hesse, Director

“Don’t resurrect the ‘honors’ program, an elitest subculture conceived by petty bourgeois utopians who sought, through intellectual incest, to breed a special race of ‘super-intellectuals,’ thus denying equal opportunity and expression (identity) to all students.” (*Daily Vidette*, 13 March 1969)

Given the state of college campuses in the late 1960’s, I wasn’t surprised to read the *Vidette*’s 1969 critique of honors at Illinois State, a mere five years after the program’s formation. Now celebrating its 40th anniversary, the Honors Program is, I suspect, still subject to criticism by some. However, the focus of concern has almost certainly changed.

The *Vidette* writer decried “a special race of super-intellectuals,” a charge that in 2004 I find quaintly refreshing. Perhaps the last thing we worry about at a university these days is the triumph of undergraduate intellectualism, the privileging of scholarly *Übermenschen*. Instead we rightly fret about diminished resources. At a time when state funding cuts mean that every department and program across campus must scramble to serve as many students as it did five years ago, one can appreciate the logic of the greatest good for the greatest number. Such a logic might question why any select group of students—athletes, musicians, honors students, or others—receives opportunities not universally available.

I’d like to answer that question. I’m tempted to detail the anorexic honors budget and how it stretches to serve the 1200 students in the program. But let me take it head on.

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Happy Anniversary to the Honors Program and American Culture Night!!

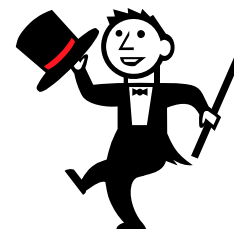


This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Honors Program and the 20th anniversary of American Culture Night. Join us on Sunday, November 7 at 6 pm in the Circus Room to celebrate 20 years of Honors students showing off their talent.

ACN: The Honors Variety Show will feature the talents of current students and will take a look back at 40 years of Honors History.

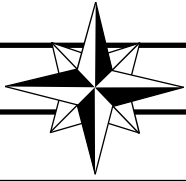


Honors Spring Formal Friday, April 1, 2005 Miller Park Pavilion



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One function of an honors program is to recruit the best students to campus. While the programs and faculty at Illinois State are splendid, top students graduating from midwestern high schools have lots of choices. The ability to do honors work, the access to honors scholarships and grants, and the benefits of advising and registration support make a difference in attracting excellent students to our intellectual community. We all benefit from their presence, both in the ways they enrich classes, offices, labs, and organizations and, to be pointed, in the ways their achievements after graduation contribute to the growing reputation of the university.

But I suggest a more subtle and, in many respects, more important function of an honors program. We live at a time when intellectual pursuits tend to generate suspicions bordering on contempt. During this election season, one needs to look little further than the quality of public discussions of vital issues to perceive that complex analyses, grounded in research and examined principles, have few appeals, at least within the popular media. Simultaneously, basic research is perceived as an impractical indulgence, the province of out-of-touch professors. If it doesn't clearly lead to market, the research project is deemed to have almost no value (and woe especially to the humanities and fine arts). More to the heart of it, politicians and publics alike increasingly perceive a college education as a commodity little different from others in our society, an experience purchased to earn credentials for earning.

I'm not so removed from reality as to discount very practical views of higher education. Students obviously should consider their economic lives after graduation, and universities should embrace the premise that a substantial part of education is learning how to make one's way in the world. But job training is only one aspect of higher education. People live not only in work spheres but also in civic ones. They have relationships not only to bosses and employees but also to broader communities, to friends and families, to physical environ-

ments, and to themselves. A quality life is a river with many tributaries. Furthermore, the ability to cope with situations—even to innovate within them—often comes from surprising sources. It comes from connecting pieces of knowledge and understandings that may, at the time we learned them, have seemed “merely academic:” interesting but impractical. It comes from the experience of working hard to solve complex problems, at least partly for the sheer zest of doing so.

The very peculiarity of that last claim, which I know many will see as my wearing rose-tinted glasses (perhaps even purple ones), might suggest the broadest value of an Honors program at the present time. The program's very existence, expressed in the learning of its faculty and students above and beyond basic requirements, reminds the entire university of its intellectual heritage, of the value of intellectual pursuits as intellectual pursuits. Without such an orientation, there is little to distinguish contemporary universities from any number of ambitious training and credentialing enterprises being generated every day in the American marketplace. I wonder how that long-ago *Vidette* editorialist might react to that claim?

When I recently accepted the directorship of this excellent program, standing on the shoulders of people like Larry Alferink, Steve Rosenbaum, Ira Cohen, and our many predecessors, I found most engaging the opportunity to work closely with students and faculty to develop this intellectual community. It's a collective enterprise. I'll value everyone's ideas about making it thrive and grow.





A Summer in Stirling

Alycia Fetzer

Look out your window. You might be able to see part of Illinois State University's campus, a busy Bloomington-Normal street, or it could be the boring view of a run-down apartment building next door. Most likely there are students rushing to class, late, because they hit the snooze button one too many times. (Unless it's a weekend morning when no one has gotten up quite yet.) For this semester the view from my bedroom window is pretty similar. I can see a few apartment buildings, dorms, as well as tons of cars trying, unsuccessfully I might add, to parallel park. This summer, though, my view was a little different.

For two months this summer when I looked out my bedroom window I saw a gorgeous view. I was about a hundred yards away from the base of a tree-filled highland. There were usually hundreds of sheep and goats grazing about, unless it was raining (which, granted, was a common occurrence); then they were huddled together trying to get protection under one of the trees. If I stretched my head far enough out of the window, I could see a centuries-old castle that was situated on the highest point of land for miles. I was able to make out the orange-brown roofs of the small town that surrounded the castle. Almost every house had an elaborate rose garden in the front yard, and many of them also functioned as quaint bed and breakfasts.

My view this summer seems like a dream compared to my current view, but it wasn't. This summer I was fortunate enough to study abroad in Stirling, Scotland. Granted, for those two months I didn't just stick my head out of my window. I traveled, took classes for general credit, met extremely interesting people, shopped, ate foods I'd never had before... Basically, I was able to experience a different way of life. Prior to my trip, the only thing I



thought of when I heard 'Scotland' was a red-headed man in a plaid kilt. This, along with many other stereotypes, has ceased to exist for me.

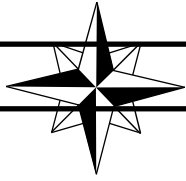
At the University of Stirling, which is one of the many study abroad programs ISU offers, I lucked out and had four-day weekends, every week. This allowed me to hop on a train, bus, or plane to see whatever I wished to see. I was able to visit countries that I might never be able to see again. I mean, once you're working and out in the 'real world,' who has the time to take a month off from work to travel? I had class with students, young and old, from Scotland, England, France, and Ireland. I'll never forget the time I had a twenty-minute conversation about the Loch Ness monster with one of my classmates, a Scottish man who was a retired army veteran!

Although your classes are important (your grades will transfer back to ISU) studying



abroad is about more than just classroom learning. When you study abroad you never know what's going to happen and that's the fun of it. You are definitely out of your element, but it's at times like that when you truly begin to learn about and understand yourself. If you're hesitant about the financial cost of studying abroad, there are programs that are comparable to a semester at ISU. When talking to other students who have also studied abroad, every one of them has said that the cost is well worth the experience.

Although it was extremely nice to return home to see my family and friends, as well as to have ketchup with my French fries (a real delicacy!), sometimes when I look out my window I still wish I had that amazing view I had last summer.



Departmental Honors Feature: Special Education Faculty Point of View: Dr. Julia Stoner

By: Marissa Valentine

The satisfaction gained from positively affecting people on a large scale is the type of satisfaction Dr. Julia Stoner hopes to transmit to her students participating in Honors Undergraduate Research.

Dr. Stoner has been a professor at ISU for two years, before that she taught here part time while working on her Doctorate in Special Education. Dr. Stoner received her undergraduate degree in Psychology from the University of South West Louisiana and her Masters in Speech and Hearing from Bradley University. She is a certified speech and language pathologist.

During her two years at ISU, Dr. Stoner has worked with Honors students in two different research projects. The most recent project she completed with six Honors students, including senior Kelly Goins. The research dealt with the self-determination experiences, or lack of experiences, by individuals with a physical but not mental handicap.

From the eyes of a professor, Dr. Stoner sees this research project as benefiting students because of the experiences it offers. The Special Education program stresses the importance of facilitating self-determination among children with special needs.

Students have heard this lesson repeatedly, but the first hand experience truly validates this mundane textbook material in a more exciting way. One student said, in reflecting upon the research, "It was an interactive, interesting way for me to develop a deeper understanding of special education and its implications in the lives of the people it affects."

This quote and many others were compiled into a presentation which Dr. Stoner and colleagues will be taking to a conference in Albuquerque, New

Mexico in mid-November! The students already had an opportunity to present their research findings at ISU's Undergraduate Research Symposium and will have more opportunities to share their results in the future.

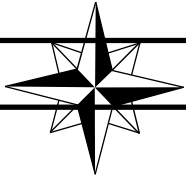
Dr. Stoner loves the satisfaction she gets from research, and is excited to share her positive research experiences with students during their undergraduate careers. If nothing else, the experience helps students to prepare for graduate degrees.

Along with Undergraduate Research, Dr. Stoner has worked with Honors students in many different In-Course Honors projects. Dr. Stoner appreciates and admires the motivation and desire to learn which these students possess. And they are certainly rewarded: the close teacher – student interaction as well as the real world application are things a student would not find in an ordinary classroom environment. Affording students the opportunity for betterment, both of themselves and of the Special Education Department, is what makes Dr. Stoner's job worth while!

The Benefits of Research

Undergraduate Research Participation is just one way for Honors students to work closely with faculty members. Maybe one day you'll be heading to a conference somewhere warm!

In addition to the valuable experience of working with a faculty member, Undergraduate Research Participation could help you earn an Honors designation. Check out the *Ask an Honors Advisor* feature on page 7 to learn more about the designations and what it means to graduate with Honors.



Departmental Honors Feature: Special Education Student Point of View: Kelly Goins

By: Marissa Valentine

The best part about the Honors Program? Developing one on one relationships with professors. At least that is what Kelly Goins told me during our interview. A senior Special Education major, Kelly will graduate in December magna cum laude with Departmental Honors as well as the University Honors Scholar and Certificate in University Honors designations. As an undergrad, Kelly was involved with extracurricular activities such as the Best Buddies program, APO – a co-ed service fraternity, Student Education Association – for which she was on the executive board for one semester, and alternative spring break – to work with inner city kids in Philadelphia.

Kelly's one on one experience with professors began her sophomore year. She joined the Honors Program as a challenge and, as a senior, has unarguably emerged victorious. Because Kelly missed out on all of the Honors courses available to students in their freshman year, she only took one Honors course. This turned out to be quite a blessing! Earning the rest of her Honors credit via In-Course Honors, Kelly was able to tap into the vast wealth of knowledge each of her professors possessed. In-Course Honors helped her to really delve into and explore the intricacies of teaching Special Education students.

Thanks to the individual instruction from her professors, Kelly feels as though now, during her student teaching, she exudes an extra amount of confidence in the classroom. Kelly recommends all students take advantage of the In-Course Honors opportunities in order to go beyond the general information professors may have only glazed over in the classroom.

Kelly was able to complete more one on one work during her Independent Honors Study and her Un-

dergraduate Research Participation, both completed with Dr. Julia Stoner. The premise of both projects was to establish the amount of self-determination in people who have physical disabilities but little to no mental disabilities. Had they become too dependent upon their physical caretaker, or were they still able to make their own choices?

Kelly began her independent study in the summer: she interviewed three adults with physical disabilities, all participants in the summer camp for Cerebral Palsy where Kelly worked all summer. To continue her study, Kelly, with the help of Dr. Stoner, completed her Undergraduate Research Participation the following fall semester. Together they took quantitative data from the interviews and found common themes between the three people interviewed. During the semester, more individuals were interviewed and the combined results were presented at the Undergraduate Research Symposium. Kelly enjoyed her research and is excited because, if the work is published, it will affect many Special Education teachers and students.

After graduating in December, Kelly will immediately enter into the world of teaching for a few years. She hopes to put to use the plethora of in-depth information she gained during her time here in the Honors Program.

Graduating with Departmental Honors is listed on your diploma. Stop by the Honors Office to see how it looks.





Scholarship Tips

By: Becky Mentzer

Everyone needs money for college, right? What are the possibilities for getting those dollars besides working on campus or in the community or winning the lottery? Scholarships, of course! While some students receive scholarships for their first year of college, many are not renewable. Some scholarships are posted on the websites of colleges or departments, so check them out for opportunities available because you are a history major or a major in the College of Business, etc. While many of these scholarships are for junior or senior standing majors, checking early in your college career helps you know what is available and what the requirements are to complete an application at the right time. You can also check scholarship search engines on the web and visit the Scholarship Resource Office in 251 Fell Hall.

While the ultimate goal is to win a scholarship competition after taking the time to search and apply for one, it is not always the easiest thing to do. Many scholarships are very competitive, so we recommend that you keep in mind some basic tips:

1. Maintain academic excellence with a GPA of 3.5 or above.
2. Work toward professional experiences through internships, jobs, and research.
3. Choose wisely how to become involved in organizations and activities relevant to your career field.
4. Develop leadership skills and a record of community service.
5. Get to know your professors well enough for them to write an excellent reference letter that attests to your ability to succeed.
6. Sharpen your writing skills and seek feedback on scholarly writing and required essays.
7. Remember that scholarship searches need to be done often and that it may require writing many essays and making numerous applications to land one; persistence pays off!

Here are a few of the most prestigious national scholarships, which are generally based on future career fields. See Becky Mentzer for more information.

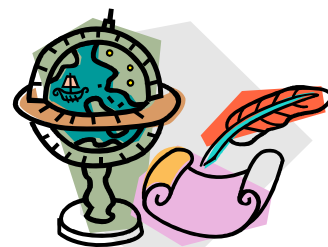
Goldwater: science, math, technology and engineering (sophomore or junior standing; must have one full year left to study as an undergraduate)
www.act.org/goldwater/

Udall: environmental policy (sophomore or junior standing)
www.udall.gov/p_scholarship.htm

Truman: government or public service (juniors)
www.act.org/truman/

Madison: teaching career in American history or government, or social studies at high school level; must be enrolled in a Master of Arts or Education program; after award, must teach a full year in grades 7-12.
www.jamesmadison.com/

Fulbright: given to study in a foreign country, but usually not to complete degree abroad; most applicants are graduating seniors or already enrolled in graduate school; must have a bachelor's degree in any field by date of award; must have language proficiency to carry out study; not given just to study, but in conjunction with research project
www.iie.org/fulbright





Honors Odds and Ends

Ask an Honors Advisor:

Dear Honors Advisor,

I am graduating in May and want to graduate with honors. Does being in the Honors Program automatically mean that I will graduate with honors?

Signed,
Honorable in Normal

Dear Honorable,

Well, that is a tricky one and your answer is—it depends. There are the university wide “with honors” distinctions of summa, magna, and cum laude, which are based on GPA and have nothing to do with being in the Honors Program. This distinction is noted on your transcript and diploma, and you receive cords to wear at Commencement. This award is automatic and you will receive notification prior to Commencement.

There are also four graduation designations that students can earn by being in the Honors Program and completing certain Honors experiences. The Honors Program Scholar designation is automatic in that you don’t have to complete an application.

However, you do have to meet the requirements of three semesters of participation in Honors and have nine hours of Honors coursework with grades of A or B.



You must complete an application for the other designations (Certificate in University Honors, University Honors Scholar, and Departmental Honors) and fulfill the specific requirements of each. These designations each have requirements for semesters in the Honors Program, Honors hours, and specific Honors experiences. Check out the Scholarships and Designations page on the Honors Program website (www.ilstu.edu/honors) for full details and to download the application.

The best time to think about earning these designations is EARLY. So, tell your freshmen, sophomore, and junior friends to check out the requirements and make strategic choices when selecting Honors courses or in-course projects. You have to do Honors work each semester anyway, so why not plan ahead and meet the graduation designation requirements along the way!

Sincerely,
Your Honors Advisor

Thank You!!

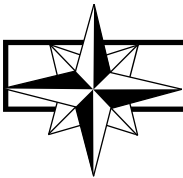
The Honors Assistants recently held an informal, which raised \$118.80 for the Boys and Girls Club of Bloomington. Thank you to everyone who attended and donated so generously.



Important Dates

- Sunday, November 7, 6 pm in the Circus Room: ACN: The Honors Variety Show
- Wednesday, November 10: Registration for the spring will close, but will open again from December 1-17
- November 22-26: Thanksgiving Break, no classes





A Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Achievement

The symposium offers students an opportunity to gain experience presenting their work to a general audience.

Sponsored by
The Graduate School,
Milner Library,
Graduate Student Association, and
Research and Sponsored Programs

Announcing the 2005 Undergraduate

RESEARCH

SYMPOSIUM

Thursday, March 24

Registration deadline:
February 18

The Symposia is open to all students enrolled at the university and engaged in research under the direction of a faculty advisor.

Visit our website for more information:

www.grad.ilstu.edu/symposium

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Associate Director

Sara Schickel

Assistant Director

Becky Mentzer

Coordinator of Student Programs

Christie Proctor

Public Service Coordinator

Anita Chiodo

Graduate Assistant

Melissa Shea

Honors Intern

Alycia Fetzer

Secretaries

Julie Brooks Phyllis Myers

An Exciting Opportunity for Honors Students

If you are not presenting at the Spring 2005 Undergraduate Research Symposia, your help is needed.

Students have always been encouraged to volunteer as student volunteers but this year for the first time, we are inviting students in the Honors Program to participate in the Undergraduate Research Symposia in a different facet—to provide feedback to presenters. In the past only faculty members have served to provide feedback, but we believe it is important to utilize the presence of Honors students at Illinois State in this capacity as well.

The Symposium is university-wide and is an opportunity for students to see themselves as part of the larger university community. Volunteers will be providing feedback to students from all disciplines presenting a wide variety of research and topics.

Volunteers would be asked to spend one hour or more to view several posters and/or multimedia displays; visit a few minutes with each student researcher; and fill out feedback forms giving general feedback. Some possible questions you could ask the student presenter would be:

- Why did you decide to research this topic?
- What problem or question are you trying to solve?
- How does this research contribute to your specific field of study?

Volunteers are not expected to be an “expert” in each student’s field but can provide feedback on organization, understanding of the topic, poster, student’s ability to communicate his/her knowledge and not necessarily the content.

Volunteers gain experience evaluating ideas, learn about research going on across campus, and are exposed to a variety of ideas in multiple disciplines.

If you are interested in volunteering to provide feedback to students participating in the Undergraduate Research Symposium on March 24 in the Bone Student Center, email symposium@ilstu.edu and let us know the times you are available (10-11/11-12/12-1). You will receive an email confirmation with further details.

Those volunteering will be listed in the Program Book.

If you have questions, please contact Jamie Hughes, Research Symposia Graduate Assistant, at 438-2364 or symposiu@ilstu.edu.

Contact us at Campus Box 6100, Normal, IL 61790-6100

Phone: (309) 438-2559 Fax: (309) 438-8196 www.IllinoisState.edu/honors