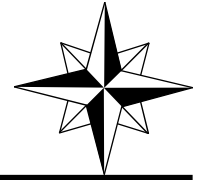


# Honors Program Newsletter

## Illinois State University



HONORS PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2005

### Work, Play, and Life in Between

In the past few weeks, I've enjoyed two contrasting experiences in the Honors Program that have confirmed what I like best about working here.

The first, and more obvious, was the Undergraduate Research Symposium in late March. Among the 270 or so presenters were 66 Honors students, including a few with more than one project. I spent two hours looking at posters, talking with scholars, and hearing oral presentations, and I could happily have spent two more. The range and ambition of the research was impressive—in terms of quality, certainly, but also in terms of the clear amount of effort above and beyond “normal” class efforts.

The second experience was the April 1 Honors Spring Formal. Now, I'll confess a certain amount of cynicism about any dance that has the word “formal” attached to it, and I figured my reticence was likely shared by lots of Honors students. But my perceptions were flawed. I came to the Miller Park Pavilion meaning simply to help take tickets and leave, but I ended up spending the evening, so engaging was the good will resonating through the building. I was impressed by the group's diversity, 170 students, from women in strapless gowns to men in Converse Chuck Taylors and everything in between. I was impressed more by the way that people from obviously different perspectives interacted, dancing together non stop nearly three hours, interrupted only by trips to the chocolate fountain. When I characterized the evening to a psychology professor friend, he was heartened by its vision of our best students.

These two events strike me as containing the balance I think most of us would do well to pursue. There was, on the one hand, the hard, often solitary work of research, of time spent in the lab, the library, the field, or the keyboard, pushing the limits of knowledge, both the researcher's and the world's beyond. There was, on the other, the sheer joy of celebration, coming together for a few hours over food and music, in an admittedly kitsch fantasy world replete with a cardboard Eiffel Tower.

Now, I'm not saying everyone needs to like dancing or making scholarly presentations. What I encourage, though, is balance between whatever forms of work and play capture your imagination.

During my 18 years at Illinois State, I've seen too many students slip into the abyss of working too hard or not hard enough. Several—and certainly many in the Honors Program—push themselves almost exclusively in studies, often achieving great things that we all should admire and of which they should be proud. And yet, at the end of their time here, some feel the lonely pangs of missed opportunities; as an undergraduate years ago at the University of Iowa, I probably tended that way myself.

Perhaps more students I've seen revel in the social opportunities that college presents, to the extent that they're satisfied doing just enough studying to get by. Perhaps this is even enough to produce strong grades. These students make lots of friends and have full social lives. Both are admirable qualities. And yet they leave so much potential untapped: research not begun, stories and art not produced, performances unscheduled, risks passed by. The campus and the world are poorer for these absences.

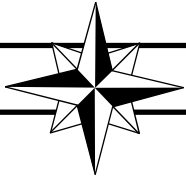
My challenge, then, is to relish all aspects of your life as a student at Illinois State. Don't imagine that some time in the future you'll get around to reading those “extra” books or pursuing those extra creative and scholarly projects. And don't imagine that you'll make time for fun later because you're too busy now. As John Lennon famously said, “Life is what happens while you're busy making other plans.” Plan ambitiously, but live fully now, both in the library, studio, or lab and on life's metaphorical dance floor.

Doug Hesse  
Director



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## Students Succeed in National Scholarship Competitions

By: Becky Mentzer

### MORRIS K. UDALL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

**Julia Ferguson** is a double major in Geology and Theatre (Costume Design) and will have one more year at Illinois State University, though she will be spending the fall semester studying in Sweden. Julia is



interested in a career in political ecology, and wants to bridge the gap between citizen concerns and policymakers. Her favorite experience related to her major and career interests have been her geology field trips. They have given her a broader view of the issues outside the classroom. This summer she will be going on a field camp in Wyoming for six weeks. She also has been involved in Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC) where she has “connected with other environmentalists on campus.”

Julia learned about the Udall Scholarship from Becky Mentzer, scholarship advisor in Honors, and felt the application process helped her realize her passion. She had to write about her professional aspirations and what strengthened her commitment to the environment, which helped her focus even more on her career goals. She is excited to be able to spend a weekend in Tucson, AZ in August with all the other Udall Scholars from around the country, and is looking forward to the experience of being with others who are all working toward a similar purpose. She believes the Udall Foundation’s confidence in her translates to more self-confidence in her plans for the future. She also realistically knows that the Udall Scholar designation on future internship and graduate school applications will be helpful.

Julia’s advice to students seeking to complete major scholarship applications is to “allow your personality to show;” she sensed an expectation for you to be yourself when responding to the questions.

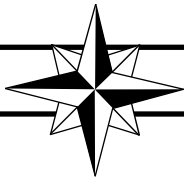
**Caroline Wade** is a junior, Environmental Health major who has had numerous experiences to strengthen her resolve to work in watershed management and water resource protection. She would like to be involved in developing policies to implement water quality programs. Her favorite experience related to her major was visiting the Wind Energy Farm in rural Mendota, which provided a “shining example of the future hope of environmental progress.” Caroline once worked in water quality testing and as a lab assistant on pesticide metabolism and fate research. She is also involved in constructed wetlands research at Illinois State University looking at how to optimize wastewater treatment performance.

Through an email Becky Mentzer sent to her department advisors, she learned about the Udall Scholarship and felt the self-exploratory process required to respond to the questions helped her gain personal insights into what motivates her to continue her environmental studies. She is more focused on what she wants to do and more able to see how her work, family and studies have combined to create her career goals. She said it has been a “great experience” to have applied for this major scholarship and others. Caroline is looking forward to the Udall Weekend Conference in Tucson and feels it is the critical benefit of the scholarship. She is anxious to discuss with others what their thoughts are on current environmental issues.

Her advice for future candidates is to start early to allow time to write your responses, set them aside, and come back to them for revisions. She also encouraged future students to talk with Becky to get her feedback on all aspects of the application process.



The 2006-2007 Fulbright U.S. Student Program opens on May 1, 2005; please see Becky Mentzer for information if you are an interested junior.



## BARRY M. GOLDWATER SCHOLARSHIP HONORABLE MENTION

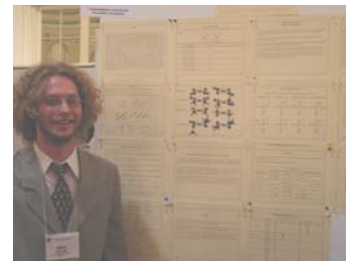
**Matthew Narter** is a junior Presidential Scholar, Computational Physics major. To complete the international component of his scholarship, Matthew spent a summer in Costa Rica and it “ended up changing the direction” of his life. It was through this experience he became interested in a career in environmental engineering and restoration of natural resources. Due to the poverty in parts of Costa Rica, the beautiful river systems are being polluted daily. Matthew found himself taking his waste to where he worked because they had garbage pick-up, as opposed to others living in his apartment complex, who just threw everything into the nearby river.

Besides this international experience, Matthew volunteered at the Ecology Action Center in Normal and, among other duties, researched the local conservation of the Mackinaw River. He has been doing research in his major, participating in the Intense Laser Physics Theory Unit, since his first semester on campus, which led to several research presentations and publications. His department research advisor, Dr. Grobe, nominated him for the Goldwater, and his research experience has been an encouragement to continue to explore and discover and try again when something doesn't work. He feels being involved in undergraduate research will be valuable as he pursues graduate studies in environmental engineering.

The process of completing this application helped him to look at things he has done and his strengths and weaknesses. His words of advice for future candidates are to “start early” and give yourself time to check over your responses with the advisor to allow for rewrites.



**Jehu Strange** is a senior with one year left at Illinois State University, majoring in both Chemistry and Biochemistry/Molecular Biology. His career aspirations are in the field of biochemical/molecular nutrition. With changing interests, yet always in the field of science, Jehu is trying to decide between a career as a biomedical researcher or a physician.

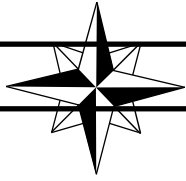


His favorite experiences related to his major are the opportunities to follow his curiosities and make new discoveries. He is doing research with Dr. Frank Shaw, who nominated him for the Goldwater Scholarship in the campus competition. In addition to being named Honorable Mention by the Goldwater Foundation, Jehu has received numerous awards and is currently working on his application for the ISU Pfizer Undergraduate Research Fellowship nomination for Summer 2005.

As a volunteer, Jehu has served as a reviewer of student poster presentations at the Undergraduate Research Symposium, performed chemistry “magic” at a Peoria Park District event, and prepared weekly meals at a homeless shelter in Peoria. He has been a research assistant, teaching assistant, and a tutor; and has made numerous research presentations.

Jehu's advice to future candidates of major scholarships is to take care when responding to open-ended questions, accenting your positives and elaborating on your responses. Also he said it is important to work with your research advisor when writing the essay on a research issue.

For more information on the Udall, Goldwater, or other national scholarship opportunities, contact Becky Mentzer at [rementz@ilstu.edu](mailto:rementz@ilstu.edu)



## Departmental Honors Feature: School of Information Technology Faculty Point of View: Dr. Mary Elaine Califf

By: Christie Proctor

English and Computer Science might seem to be an unlikely pairing of disciplines, but Dr. Mary Elaine Califf has found a way to combine two things she enjoys. Dr. Califf is a professor in the School of Information Technology. In her 7<sup>th</sup> year at Illinois State, Dr. Califf is very involved with the Honors Program and Honors students. She is currently a faculty member on the Honors Council, is supervising an Independent Honors Study project, and is the faculty colleague for a sophomore Presidential Scholar.

Dr. Califf attended Baylor University in Texas, and started her undergraduate career as an English major. She earned both a BA and an MA in English from Baylor. She then went on to earn an MS in computer science from Baylor and a PhD in computer science from the University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Califf's interest in computer science started with a few computer programming courses in high school and in college. While she was working on her Master's degree in English, she had an assistantship in the department doing computer programming for writing. She worked on tutoring programs that included assistance with grammar. Though she went on to earn two degrees in another field, Dr. Califf still enjoys literature, but just didn't see herself with a career in English.

She accepted a position at Illinois State because she discovered early in her doctoral program that she enjoyed teaching and wanted to be at a university that wasn't completely focused on research. Illinois State encourages faculty in their teaching development in addition to supporting their research.

The research Dr. Califf pursues in computer science relates to natural language processing and machine learning. An example would be spelling and grammar checks in word processing programs. The programs learn rules about language to identify mistakes in spelling or grammar. Computers have come a long way over the past 20 years in learning new rules and adapting to changes, but still have a long way to go. Dr. Califf said

that her dream program would be one that could read a paper and give meaningful feedback.

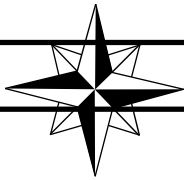
Dr. Califf has had a variety of experiences with Honors Programs, both as a student and a professor. At Baylor, Dr. Califf graduated from the Honors Program. Her Honors requirements included independent readings, a junior colloquium, and a senior project. As a member of the Honors Council at Illinois State, Dr. Califf has shared her experiences as an Honors student, which has helped to open discussions for a new kind of colloquium opportunity for students.

While working on her doctorate at the University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Califf was a TA for an honors course on women and science. Three female professors from different disciplines discussed women in their field as well as their research. Dr. Califf enjoyed the experience of working with honors students.

Currently, Dr. Califf is working with Ben Haan on his Independent Honors Study project, which is one of the requirements to graduate with departmental honors from the School of Information Technology. Ben is continuing the research a previous student started, which involves a computer program Dr. Califf wrote for the English language that is being applied to genetic data.

Dr. Califf's advice for honors students is to look for opportunities to interact with other honors students. She advises seeking out honors sections of courses and to work on in-course projects with other students. She also suggested that when working on an independent honors study that you don't wait until the 7<sup>th</sup> week of the semester to really get started; students are surprised how fast the semester goes and how much work needs to be completed. Overall, she hopes that students take advantage of the opportunities that are available through the Honors Program.

For more information on Departmental Honors, contact your Honors advisor or Departmental Honors Coordinator.



## Departmental Honors Feature: School of Information Technology Student Point of View: Ben Haan

By: Christie Proctor

After just two years in the Honors Program, senior computer science major Ben Haan will be graduating with the Departmental Honors, Certificate in University Honors, and Honors Program Scholar designations. He has accomplished what many students take four years to complete. Ben has worked hard and taken advantage of the opportunities the Honors Program has to offer in order to earn these honors designations.

The majority of Ben's honors experience has been through in-course honors projects as well as the Independent Honors Study he is currently completing. Ben has enjoyed in-course projects because they provide the opportunity to learn about a class topic in greater detail. His favorite project was for his Introduction to Artificial Intelligence class. The class discussed an algorithm that Ben was interested in learning more about. His honors project involved learning about and working with the algorithm that was only a minor part of the course.

In order to earn Departmental Honors in Computer Science, Ben is currently working on research through an Independent Honors Study with Dr. Mary Elaine Califf. At the end of the semester, Ben will present his research to the department as the final requirement for receiving this award.

The research Ben is working on involves a program that Dr. Califf wrote and is the continuation of work a previous honors student started. The program was designed to learn rules about words and their meaning based on the context in which they are used. The program is being applied to protein folding and seeks to find out how the protein will fold and what shape it will take. Just like with the English language, the program looks at the context of the proteins and predicts how it will fold.

The program develops rules and then Ben can ap-

ply the rules to an unlabeled protein strand. Since he knows how the strand will fold, he can determine how well the program works based on how close the rules get to what he knows will happen. If this program works it can be applied in many ways in the sciences. Even if it doesn't work, the research Ben has completed is helpful in understanding more about the capabilities of this program as well as in directing future research.

After he graduates, Ben plans to go to graduate school and hopes to attend the University of Illinois. He would like to get a Master's degree in Computer Science and might consider pursuing a doctoral degree.

Ben's advice for Honors students is to do in-course projects in the subject you are most interested in learning more about. Work with teachers who will develop a project with you, rather than just always doing what they suggest, which might often consist of just another research paper. Ben learned a great deal from his experiences in the Honors Program, particularly because he took advantage of the opportunities available.



### Graduating with Departmental

Honors is listed on  
your diploma.

Stop by the Honors  
Office to see how it  
looks.





## Get Involved and Make a Difference

By: Sara Schickel

### Wanted—Mentees for Inter-Generational Mentorship Program

Are you interested in learning about your career field from an expert who was at the top of the field? If so, you should consider being part of the Senior Professionals Mentorship Program. As a mentee, you will be matched with a retired professional in the community with similar goals. A Senior Professional Mentor is an individual who has made significant contributions to his or her career field. While a match between a mentee and mentor with the exact same career field is considered ideal, this may not always be possible. In these cases, the mentor is still able to help the mentee make connections to local specialists in the student's career field.

If you are interested in being a part of this unique and worthwhile program next year, contact Sara Schickel in the Honors Office or download a brochure and enrollment form at [http://www.exu.ilstu.edu/seniors/mentoring\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.exu.ilstu.edu/seniors/mentoring_brochure.pdf) and return it to the Honors Office.

### Honors Service Learning Colloquium

Are you looking for a *unique* course that provides you practical hands-on experience while you make a real difference in the community? If this appeals to you, then you should consider participating in a new and exciting course—Honors Service Learning Colloquium (IDS 202.72). This course will be offered in the fall, spring, and summer, based on availability.

Service learning is community based experience that facilitates a student's personal and professional growth through active involvement with a non-profit agency in the Bloomington-Normal area. What will you gain from this experience?

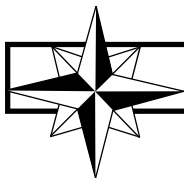
- **Earn honors credit**
- **Gain experience**
- **Have fun and learn at the same time**
- **Serve your community**
- **Expand and improve business and life skills**

This course was originally limited to students in the Presidential Scholars Program, but the experiences that students have through this course are so wonderful that we want to offer the opportunity to all Honors students. Examples of sites include: Normal Public Library, Humane Society, Habitat for Humanity, Ecology Action Center, Community Cancer Center, Western Avenue Community Center, Challenger Learning Center, and Children's Discovery Museum.

This spring, Presidential Scholar Alison LaBarge is completing her project at the Humane Society. With an interest in a career with veterinary medicine, this project is a great experience, as she has the chance to work with animals on a day-to-day basis and has even assisted with the surgeries.



If you are interested in this exciting course for next year, contact the Honors Office, 438-2559, to schedule an appointment with Anita Chiodo, Service Learning Coordinator and instructor of the course.



## Honors Students in the News

### Honors Graduate Receives NSF Grant

Matt Kiesewetter, a December graduate of Illinois State, has been awarded a \$121,500 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program Grant.

Matt was a Chemistry major and graduated summa cum laude with Departmental Honors, University Honors Scholar, Certificate in University Honors, and Honors Program Scholar designations. He was also a Presidential Scholar.

Matt is currently taking graduate classes at Illinois State. He will start a doctoral program at Stanford University in September.



### Congratulations, Alycia!!

The Honors Staff would like to thank Alycia Fetzer for her work over the past year as our intern. Alycia successfully reestablished the Honors Ambassador Program, researched the history of the Honors Program for the 40th anniversary in the fall, and assisted with other special projects throughout the year.

Alycia, a Presidential Scholar, will be graduating in May, summa cum laude, with Departmental Honors, University Honors Scholar, Certificate in University Honors, and Honors Program Scholar designations.

In the fall, Alycia will begin her graduate studies in Speech-Language Pathology. She is interested in pursuing a career working in a medical environment such as a hospital, clinic, or rehab center.

Alycia has been offered a fellowship at the University of Illinois through the US Department of Education Pediatric Traumatic Brain Injury Training Grant. She has also been offered a graduate assistantship from the Speech Pathology Department at Illinois State. Alycia is not sure yet where she will attend, but will no doubt be successful at either university.

### Honors Staff

Director

Dr. Doug Hesse

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

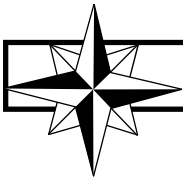
Secretaries

Julie Brooks    Phyllis Myers

### Students Receive Charles W. Bolen Senior Professionals Award

Every year, the Senior Professionals of Illinois State University award the Charles W. Bolen Senior Professionals Award. This award is named in honor of Charles W. Bolen, who served as the Dean of the College of Fine Arts from 1970 to 1988. Upon his retirement, he conceived the idea of establishing the Senior Professionals as a resource to the University and the community. His dynamic leadership inspired the founding of the mentoring program for Honors students and the giving of annual awards.

The recipients for the \$1,000 award are **Charlotte Erickson**, a senior Public Relations major with minors in Writing and Chemistry; **Derek Meiss**, a junior Accounting major; and **Rebecca Wenning**, a sophomore Physics Education major.



# Honors Odds and Ends

## Thanks, Melissa, we'll miss you!!

The Honors staff wishes Melissa Shea, our graduate assistant, the best of luck as she continues her graduate studies in Speech Pathology.

Over the past year Melissa has assisted with Honors Freshman Seminar, advising, and has completed a variety of special projects for the office. We have enjoyed working with her and will miss her enthusiasm around the office.



Melissa will finish her coursework in December and will receive her Master's degree in May 2006, after completing the internship portion of her program.

Thank you to the following students who have served in leadership positions during the past year.

### Honors Office Student Assistants

Jessica Pruemmer      Ashley Street

### Honors Peer Mentors

Bill Gugerty      Marissa Valentine  
Jamie Moderhack      Lacey Wahlig  
Caroline Oles      Kurt Weisenburger  
Ben Swiercz      Brittany Woolley

### Presidential Scholars Assistants

Erin Caldwell      Elise Melrose  
Angela Marotta

### Honors Assistants

Jon Henkels      Danielle Tomevi  
Kate Markowski

### Honors Ambassadors

Brianne Berogan      Tim Reeves  
Scott Cole      Mark Wirtz  
Beth Erwin      Josh Wondra  
Sara McCubbins



Honors Spring Formal, April 1, 2005  
Thank you to all the students who worked so hard to make the night a success.