The Dialogue

HONORS STUDENTS VOLUNTEER AT TEXAS MIRACLE RANCH RESCUE FOR DONKEYS IN MONTGOMERY, TEXAS

In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, and the destruction of the community and university closures and event cancellations, Honors College students volunteered in Montgomery, Texas, at the Texas Miracle Ranch Rescue, which is a safe sanctuary home to almost 400 rescued donkeys— including therapy donkeys, mules, and horses, both wild and domestic. TMR Rescue provides their equines with their necessary veterinary needs, nutrition, and rehabilitation, as well as providing them with the love and compassion that some of them have never known.

The ranch had suffered some damage from the hurricane and their advertisement in the paper for assistance was answered by our group of Honors students.

"I was very excited to be able to do something for the community after the hurricane devastation," freshman Janeth Del Carmen Castellanos shared.

Students divided into groups of volunteers and spent the entire day at the ranch working in the barn, the workshed, the corral, the yard, and the kitchen.

"I helped Pedro, a ranch hand, translate the process of shock therapy for the injured horses in the barn. We were able to comfort and brush the special needs animals in the corral. We also fed the livestock in the pasture and scrubbed clean their water trough," Castellanos continued.

The event was an opportunity to not only get to know the animals of the rescue, but for new students to meet fellow Honors students and Honors Student Ambassadors.

"As this is my first semester in honors and therefore my first volunteer opportunity with program, I made many honors college friends in the process," said Castellanos.

Current Honors students and Honors Student Ambassadors were also looking forward to the group volunteer event.

"I was eager to work with several different kinds of rescue animals with all my fellow honors college students, spending the day doing something I usually would not have had the opportunity to do," senior and Honors Student Ambassador Danielle Watley said.

"I had a lot of fun petting and feeding the donkeys. There were also many barn cats that I befriended. Bus Stop was my favorite; he earned his name from his riding the golf cart around the ranch wherever he goes," said Watley.

Overall, the volunteer opportunity was a new and memorable experience for many students who had never been in such an environment before. The friendliness of the rescue animals and the staff of the ranch helped to add to the positive impression.

"The owners and workers of the Texas Miracle Ranch were extremely kind and hospitable, and they made the entire working experience memorable," shared Watley.

Everyone left with a smile and many stories to share, as well as a desire to potentially return someday. The staff is always open to volunteers, so if you are interested in earning your community service at the TMR Rescue find their contact information at tmrrescue.com.
In the Fall 2017 semester the Honors College organized a class on the increasingly prevalent practice of Fake News. The lead instructors on the class, Dr. Jeff Littlejohn and Dr. Ervin Malakaj led a group of about 20 students through a wide reaching analysis of the phenomena.

“Dr. Malakaj and I designed the Fake News seminar to address recent concerns about the legitimacy and accuracy of news reporting. We hoped to show that fake news is nothing new. Historically, people in power have used the official organs of the state and the mass media to shape public opinion. We saw that with our discussion of American slavery, religious liberty, school desegregation, and with Dr. Zink’s coverage of the 1890s. What is new, however, is the ability to share fake stories on social media like Facebook and Twitter. These platforms allow people -- including our President -- to spread fake stories to friends who share their ideology. In addition, these outlets allow politicians and their supporters to undermine legitimate reporting by calling it fake news. As Dr. Malakaj showed in his discussions of our course reader, stories may easily be manipulated using statistical and verbal sleights of hand. I thought the seminar was enjoyable and successful”, shared Dr. Littlejohn.

Dr. Malakaj was especially satisfied with the students' interaction in the class.

“One of my personal favorite moments in classrooms is when students are eager to express their ideas in a discussion to the point where they talk over one another. I think developing good discussion skills is one of the hallmarks of the US higher education system and we were glad that we were successful in establishing a format for you all to engage in deep, long discussions!”

Brian Loft, chair of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics and Honors College Council member, has been selected to serve with the Texas State University System Chancellor’s Faculty Fellowship Program in its inaugural year. The program, established by TSUS Chancellor Brian McCall, is designed to find innovative strategies to improve student success across the system. Loft is one of three chosen from nominations by each of the eight-member component institutions in the system.

Each year, the Faculty Fellowship Program will engage a select number of faculty members from TSUS member institutions to assume leadership roles with the system and promote improvement in a current or emerging academic or student success area.

Loft was nominated by SHSU and selected by the TSUS system. He will focus on improving math pathways and promoting effective teaching methods.

“I have always been a strong advocate of active-learning by students so that they are better able achieve their objectives in math classes. As educators, we are facing challenges in preparing today’s students for later success in math. As a Faculty Fellow, I plan to exchange ideas with math and statistics faculty from other universities in the system, as well as contribute information on how we have been successful with our program at Sam Houston State,” Loft said.

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Honors students travelled from Huntsville to the Downtown Houston Aquarium for the Fall 2017 HSAC Cultural Outing. Seated around many fish-filled aquariums, students enjoyed fried shrimp and a surprise dessert of marine life-themed decorative cakes and creme brulee with fresh fruit.

After eating, students wandered Houston's Buffalo Bayou and rode the train and amusement park rides at the aquarium. Then students explored the aquarium exhibits, which included fish, a white tiger, and stingrays.

"Petting the stingrays was the best experience. They were surprisingly soft and so friendly to those who had fish to feed them," Honors Ambassador Danielle Watley shared.

In addition to campus organizations, Stallworth is also very involved in research, and has presented at three different conferences over several topics, including solutions to anxiety over written communication, air pollution and social justice in the Houston metropolitan area, and tattoo consumption as a form of consumer behavior.

"This semester I am working on analyzing the international marketing strategy of the L’Oréal Company to identify the successful aspects of the company’s marketing processes, and discuss how their framework could be applied to other companies," Stallworth said.

Upon graduation, Stallworth hopes to attribute her degree to a marketing firm focusing on smaller and family-owned companies to assist in securing marketing services for a reasonable price compared to their income level. In the long term, she would like to earn her PhD in Economics and become a professor.

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**STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Jensen Stallworth**

Senior Marketing and Economics major and International Business minor, Jensen Stallworth, is not unlike the average Honors College student in that she expands her organization involvement across campus. She is involved in many activities that will help her achieve her future goals, including leadership-based honor society Beta Gamma Sigma, Sigma Alpha Pi, the Golden Key International Honor Society, and economics honor society Omicron Delta Epsilon.

"By staying involved on campus, I have gained skills in communication, networking, leadership, time management and planning, and group collaboration, which will all benefit me as I pursue my career goals", Stallworth said.

Stallworth is devoting her academic expertise to personal projects that will benefit the university as a whole. Understanding how critical it is for students to have access to professional attire as they attend business events, career fairs, and internship opportunities, she has proposed the idea of bringing a ‘Career Closet’ to Sam Houston State University.

"This semester, my involvement has expanded to include a campus-wide project, the founding of a career closet. A ‘closet’ on campus that will give SHSU’s students access to inexpensive or free professional attire for use at events such as the career fairs, interviews, and networking events at our university. I developed this project because I saw the need for professional attire on our campus, and I knew that having a career closet on the campus would benefit not only the students in the College of Business, but every student on campus", said Stallworth.

She shared that the most cited complaint from hiring committees is underdressed students, and proposed a career closet in order to give students a solution to this problem, while also removing the burden of cost. Starting in summer, Stallworth and her faculty advisor collected research, contacted other universities, and suggested the idea to career services, student affairs, and several other departments across campus.

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**Cultural Outing**

**Houston Downtown Aquarium**

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Seminar Abroad: Italy

Honors students traveled to Italy in May to experience the wonderful and varied food culture the country has to offer. Visiting such iconic cities such as Venice, Florence, Rome, Pompeii, and Sorrento, students were able to sample regional dishes at family-oriented restaurants. They enjoyed such food as porchetta, gnocchi, eggplant parmesan, and pasta e fagioli; seafood pasta specialties with octopus, clams, or scallops; as well as lovely desserts tiramisu, gelato, and cannoli. Students were also anxious to taste Italian pizza, which is quite different from American-style.

By eating their way through Italy, students learned about the slow food movement, begun in Italy in the 1980’s in response to the incursion of fast food restaurants. Students began to appreciate how the Italians relate to food, how culture influences this relationship, and how Italians use local farms or their own back yard gardens to meet their food needs. Focusing on sustainability, the itinerary of the trip included such places as Salcheto, a completely self-sustained vineyard and winery. They also took a guided tour through Eataly, a grocery store that supports family-owned and eco-friendly farms and small businesses. Students also took a cooking class in Florence to learn how simple, fresh ingredients can be combined to create delicious meals without too much effort or reliance on processed materials.

Yes, students visited Italy’s major monuments and attractions, but they were always anxious to take a break to eat some excellent food!

Study Abroad: Spain

In June 2017, senior Honors College student and ambassador Peiting Liu studied abroad at the University of Castilla-La Mancha in Toledo, Spain. Liu is an International Business major and Spanish minor, and chose to study in Spain for its rich culture.

"I stayed with a host family and immersed myself in the lively culture of Spain. Staying with a host family significantly improved my Spanish. My host parents did not speak English at all, meaning that I had to learn as many words as I can during the time to communicate as efficiently as possible. I walked the ancient cobblestone roads to class in a town that looks like it is straight out of a fairy tale", Liu said.

Class material consisted of learning about the Spanish artist Pablo Picasso and his work, as well as Spanish culture.

"Dr. Enrique Mallen, from the Department of Foreign Languages at SHSU, gave lectures on Spain’s history and culture, as well as Picasso’s art and its background. As a class, we went to The Prado Museum and Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid, Spain. In the museums, many world-famous artwork were shown. One of my favorites was Pablo Picasso’s Guernica, a large cubism-style that symbolizes the tragedies of the Spanish Civil War. Each of us interpret the paintings we see in our own perspective, which made the class even more interesting", said Liu.

Students were also able to explore the cities of Madrid, Segovia, Barcelona, and Salamanca.

"Each city gave me a piece of Spain in art, culture, history, and tradition. I was able to go to most of the city’s famous landmarks - Sagrada Familia, Park Guell, La Rambla, Gothic Quarter, Montserrat, and Montjuic. Overall, I think the most memorable part of traveling is exploring a new place while gaining knowledge and independence," Liu said.
The Legacy of the Honors College
by Ethan Horn and Raynie Leard

According to the Texas State Historical Association, SHSU’s enrollment in 1974 was 10,144, double the enrollment from 1964. Fast forward to 1998, and surprisingly the University population had barely grown, with 12,205 students attending that fall. Even so, one enrollment had changed, and it changed significantly: the number of high achieving students among that 12,205.

The Honors College, which started out as the Honors Program in the Fall of 1990, led to this growth. The Program was the brain child of a few dozen men who had a vision drawn from their experience, a vision that started to take shape in 1987. In 1989 an Honors Program Committee was formed in order to speed the process of creating the program. In the Spring of 1990, Dr. Gary Bell, the head of the committee, was appointed as Coordinator of the Program. By Fall 1990, 25 freshmen were enrolled in the Honors Program and each received a $100 scholarship.

In Fall 1993, Dr. Bell left SHSU to establish an Honors Program at Texas Tech University and Dr. Richard Eglsaer was named Director. “In 1983 I came here to start the Department of Psychology. Before that I had been working as a psychologist in the Austin area,” Dr. Eglsaer said. “Dr. Frank Fair and Dr. Bell sort of strong armed me, asking if I would lead the Honors Program. Up until that time I hadn’t been too involved with the program. I had taught some honors sections of classes, but it was limited engagement. After some thought, I decided to take it on and then worked there for 6 or 7 years.”

In 2000, Dr. Glenn Sanford stepped up to the plate. “At the time, Dr. Sanford didn’t have tenure, and so he had a dilemma; if he becomes Director of Honors he can’t focus on getting tenure,” Dr. Fair said. “So, several of us met with him, and told him that directing Honors is a responsibility that we really value. We don’t want you to worry about tenure, if you can continue to work hard we will honor that. I appreciated that Dr. Sanford had the courage and trust to pursue it.”

After Dr. Sanford left for law school, the former English Department Chair, Dr. Gene Young, continued the string of directors, and came out of the experience loving it. Dr. Young oversaw the transition from Honors Program to Honors College in 2009. SHSU was the first university in the Texas State University System to form an Honors College.

“In the Honors College was the best thing I ever did. It gave me a class I could teach that was an absolute delight. Every class I have taught with honors has been that way, it was like a laboratory for perfect teaching,” Dr. Young said. “You take an ideal student and multiply by 20, they are asking questions, taking the opportunity to learn for themselves. They would take questions I would throw out and take them so much farther than I had even imagined.”

Dr. Eglsaer added, “The goal of the Honors College has always been the same, to allow some of our brightest students to have the small college experience at a large university. It meant more hands-on time with professors, not necessarily more breadth, but more depth on every subject matter. I thought that one of the hallmarks of the Honors College was to allow our bright students to go to class without apologizing for being bright.”

In 2015, Dr. Kimberly Bell stepped up to become the Honors College Dean. And once again the Honors College expanded. Enrollment has doubled since transforming from Honors Program to Honors College. Currently, there are 1600 alumni of the Honors College. Dr. Bell claims, “Immediately after teaching my first Honors English class in 2004, I knew that Honors was the place for me. The students were bright, sociable, and clearly a close-knit community, and I realized that those were the kinds of students I could connect with. I absolutely love teaching honors courses and seminars.”

She recalls, “When Dr. Young invited me to join honors as Assistant Director in 2008, I jumped at the opportunity to advise students and develop the Undergraduate Research Symposium. Now, as Dean of Honors, I really have the best of all worlds: I still get to teach honors courses and advise students, and I can also invest my time and resources into promoting undergraduate research and student development in a myriad of ways.” Dr. Bell states, “I was recently asked by another dean what it was like to have the best job on campus. All I could say was ‘indescribable.’”

The success and stature of the Honors College as it is today is in large measure the legacy of these five dedicated faculty who were instrumental in transforming a small program into a fully developed Honors College.
Two criminal justice undergraduates recently captured top student honors at the Southwestern Association of Criminal Justice (SWACJ) conference in Fort Worth.

Senior Beverly (Chia Chi) Liu and Junior Kayla McCarns, both criminal justice majors and members of the Honors College at Sam Houston State University, presented papers based on their honors theses. Liu’s paper “Civil and Criminal Liability Associated with Reporting Child Abuse” was awarded first place in the Undergraduate Student Paper Competition. McCarns captured third place in the competition with “Place, Space, and Crime: How Geography Relates to Criminal Activity.”

The Southwest Association of Criminal Justice is a regional affiliate of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, one of the largest professional organizations for scholarly activities in the field of criminal justice.

“I want to thank the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, the Honors College, and the Center for Enhancing Undergraduate Research Experiences and Creative Activities (EURECA) for funding the students to attend SWACJ,” said Professor Michael S. Vaughn of the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology, their faculty advisor.

Liu’s paper examined the lack of uniformity in the definition of child abuse across jurisdictions, which causes problems ranging from false arrest and malicious prosecution to failure to investigate ongoing child abuse. The paper reviews court cases involving mandatory reporting of child abuse and identifies important issues and underlying problems with the current system. It concludes with policy recommendations.

“I am surprised to be selected for 1st place in the Undergraduate Paper Competition,” said Liu. “I’m very grateful to have Dr. Vaughn as my mentor and to have friends and family who supported me along the way. I look forward to continuing this research for my honors thesis and to expand the literature in the criminal justice field.”

McCarns’ study examines the theory of criminology involving crime and space. Although many theories try to explain the criminality of individuals, this field looks at criminality by geographic place, which could assist criminal justice agencies to allocate limited resources to crime-prone areas.

“I am humbled and surprised my paper was selected for 3rd in the Undergrad Paper Contest,” said McCarns. “I am grateful for Dr. Vaughn’s help and support on my paper, and I am excited to continue working with him. I hope my experience can serve as an example for other undergrad students interested in pursuing research.”

According to Vaughn, “the SWACJ meeting is a good venue for undergraduate students to present papers, especially their first papers at a professional conference.” He added, “It helps get out the butterflies before presenting at a national conference in the future.”

The Southwestern Association of Criminal Justice conference is well-attended by Sam Houston alumni who received their Ph.D.’s in criminal justice. Many of the officers in the organization are former SHSU doctoral students who are now professors at various universities scattered throughout the Southwestern region, which includes the states of Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and Arkansas.
Rebecca Wood, 2016, plans to attend the Raymond A. Mason School of Business at the College of William and Mary, in Virginia. Rebecca writes, "I was just accepted into the College of William and Mary Raymond A. Mason School of Business in Virginia, and will be moving there in August (after finishing my first semester of graduate studies at SHSU). The Honors College definitely played a large part in my acceptance and determination to get accepted, and the Honors College would not be what it is today without all that you do!"

Somkene Tassie, 2014, is an Associate Consultant at Paradox Compensation Advisors in Dallas, Texas. Paradox Compensation Advisors specializes in helping clients large and small develop and implement compensation programs that are aligned with their business mission and objectives, fair and compliant. Somkene earned her Master’s Degree in Applied Economics and Predictive Analytics at Southern Methodist University.

"My international friends have been the greatest. They enlightened me on things like the strange tastiness of Vegemite, and how the states compare to their homes," Magill said.

Magill has been granted the opportunity through the SHSU animation department to meet many famous animators and celebrities, including voice actress Lisa Ortiz and Disney animator Ron Husband.

"It was incredible to see Husband’s work process and how much he thinks about what he draws rather than ‘What does it look like?’ There were questions answered like ‘What is their personality?’; ‘What ambitions do they have?’, ‘Why would and animal walk like that?’; ‘Is this character effected by something in their past?’. Through my internship, I had many awkward encounters with celebrities who I didn’t recognize until later (Neil Patrick Harris), but it gave me the realization that you never really know who people will become until you get to know them," said Magill.

Faculty Notes

Dr. Tamara Cook received the Excellence in Service Award. Cook was described by colleagues as “an exemplary example of a faculty member who has been dedicated to service at all levels throughout her career.” Tamara Cook has contributed to the Department of Biological Sciences, the College of Science and Engineering Technology, the university, professional organizations, and the scientific community in ways that are “nearly impossible to quantify and express verbally.”

She is the founding director of the university’s Center for Enhancing Undergraduate Research Experiences and Creative Activities. The center provides a connection between faculty members and student, which influences student retention and student success in the work force.

Cook currently serves as the faculty representative on the Biology Laboratory Building project, numerous departmental and college committees, and mentors undergraduate research students, including three honors theses, a student publication, and 17 presentations at regional national conferences.

Alumni Notes

Rachel Magill plans to attend Disneyland as an Attractions hostess. Magill has previously worked in attractions at Walt Disney World in late 2015 as a step into the company. Going to Disneyland, Magill will be able to earn a living, stay with a big name animation company with lots of potential animation jobs, as she helps people create a memorable vacation through the rides she will work at.

“Seeing people leave animated films more relieved and light-hearted gives me a sense of joy. I’m also a bit of a huge Disney fan so working at my dream job is my ultimate goal,” Magill said.

Magill claims she owes a lot of her positive experience at Sam Houston State University to the Honors College.

“Being in honors has given me the opportunity to escape the invisible boundary of the art buildings (we call “Art Campus”) and the main campus. An animation is only as good as how much detail you put into your work. By meeting people from different degree plans who want to take their education to the highest level, I am able to make connections and learn about different aspects of life to create a sort of artificial life in animation,” said Magill.

Magill has been shaped by her previous internship experience with Disney.

“My time in Wonderland and the Hundred Acre Wood gave me more confidence and lifelong friendships I wouldn’t trade for in the world. Some of my close friends here have mentioned that it feels like I’ve grown since my internship. I was able to improve communication with guests, and problem solving became second nature. Any hardships I faced were worth the smiles and hugs from young princesses and knights at the end of the day.

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Fall 2017 Graduates

**College of Business Administration**
- Stephanie Luk Bounsawat*
- Joshua McGinty
- Jasmine Matterson
- Zane Pion*
- Eavy Polio

**College of Criminal Justice**
- Ana Becerra
- Amanda Gannon
- Mackenzie Staber
- Yamilex Velez
- Kristyn Couvillion
- Erick Johnson
- Olivia Torre

**College of Fine Arts and Mass Communication**
- Rachel Magill
- Maureen Reynolds
- Bradley Whittington
- Nereyda Vera

**College of Health Sciences**
- Andrea Clark
- Maureen Reynolds
- Paige Meritt
- Kelsey Tuck

**College of Humanities and Social Sciences**
- Janice Burke*
- Shaelyn Fowler*
- Emily McIntyre
- Haley Crenwelge
- Ashlee Fuller
- Catherine Stallard*

**College of Science and Engineering Technology**
- Sara Bouldin
- Veronica Hernandez
- Kaitlyn Davlin
- John Pinard IV
- Sara Bouldin
- Kaitlyn Davlin
- John Pinard IV

**College of Education**
- Laura Flores
- Sydney Strawn

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**Want to be featured in the next dialogue?**

**Recommend yourself, a fellow honors student, or a professor who should be in the "spotlight."**

**Email us at honors@shsu.edu with a name and reason why.**

**We would love to hear from you!**

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Photo by Brian Blalock
Ana Becerra will enter the workforce as a member of the DFW Airport Police Department before she returns to earn her master's degree at UNT.

Kaitlyn Davlin will attend Texas A&M for her master's in Ruminant Nutrition.

Veronica Hernandez plans to work as a medical lab technician as she prepares for Medical School at UT Southwestern in Dallas, Texas, in hopes to become a gynecologist.

Erick Johnson is seeking his Masters of International Affairs from Texas A&M University.

Rachel Magill will intern at Disneyland while she pursues a career with Disney Animation Studios.

Emily McIntyre is applying to graduate schools for her master's in Industrial Organizational Psychology.

Joshua McGinty will attend the University of Texas at Arlington for his Master's of Business Administration in Marketing and intern at the university's welcome center.

Paige Meritt will be employed as a technician at the Physical Therapy Associates in Huntsville, Texas as she prepares for Physical Therapy school.

John Pinard IV will attend Veterinary School at Texas A&M University.

Zane Pion will attend Stanford University in Palo Alto, California for his Juris Doctor and Master's of Business Administration. He will also continue to serve in the United States Army Reserves as a 2nd Lieutenant.

Maureen Reynolds is pursuing a graduate degree in Biosecurity and Disaster preparedness, with a focus on critical care or medical missions overseas.

Mackenzie Staber will attend graduate school at George Mason University in Virginia for her master's degree in Conflict Analysis and Resolution.

Catherine Stallard is pursuing her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology.

Sydney Strawn will intern with Chi Alpha student ministries in Huntsville, Texas before pursuing a master’s in Literature or Theology.

Olivia Torre plans to work for the Texas Juvenile Justice Department.

Kelsey Tuck is applying for nursing positions in the emergency department.

Nereyda Vera will attend graduate school in Journalism to further her aspirations as a reporter.

Bradley Whittington will travel to Armenia as a volunteer in the Peace Corps.

**Graduate Notes:**

Many things have changed since your time on campus—even if you’re a recent grad!—and The Elliott T. Bowers Honors College remains committed to providing the best possible environment for our students to learn, grow and contribute to the world around them. If you would like to help us and contribute back to Honors, we ask you to either engage with our current students or donate to help all future students.

**Engage**

Drop us a line at honors@shsu.edu and let us know what you’ve been doing since graduation. We’d love to hear your story—it could inspire our students and open up some ideas they might not have considered.

**Donate**

Support The Elliott T. Bowers Honors College by donating through our secure online giving form at shsu.edu/giving. Call (936) 294-3625 if you’d prefer to make the donation offline. Your donation contributes to our programming efforts in the areas of scholarships, internships, study abroad fellowships, undergraduate research support, and leadership experiences. All donations are tax-deductible.

**Highest Honors Graduate Theses:**

Janice Burke: *False Memories of News Articles*, Thesis Advisors Dr. Jeffrey Anastasi & Jessica Lee

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Stephanie Luk Bounsawat: *Economic overview: Puerto Rico Case Analysis*, Thesis Advisor Dr. Zijun Luo

Zane Pion: *Quietus: Efficiency in the NFL Money Line Market*, Thesis Advisor Dr. Mark Tuttle

Incoming honors students have a host of frets and worries in front of them as they prep for their launch into the collegiate experience. Among them the core classes every student must complete regardless of discipline. The Honors College devised a way to ease this burden, at least for one class. The Honors section of ENGL 1301 doubles up and provides 6 credit hours for the price of three if students complete the course with an A or B.

For the past few years, the task of welcoming many students to campus and teaching them a wide swath of foundational English has fallen to Jennifer Child. Professor Child first got involved with the Honors 1301 class over 5 years ago.

“Dr. Bell asked me to start teaching Honors comp in the Fall of 2012, and it has been pretty consistent since, this is actually the first semester I haven’t taught it,” Child said. “My sort of knowledge of the honors college at that point wasn’t that great, outside of having a couple of honors students in normal comp classes I didn’t know much.”

Since starting, her experience with the classes has been noteworthy, each honors section counting as some of her favorite classes each term. She notes the uniqueness of the program isn’t just limited to students, faculty can take advantage of the class as well. In many ways, the class has all the traditional aspects of 1301 and 1302, but with a bit of the fat trimmed.

“The nice thing about honors is that those classes come in on a little bit more of an even footing, a little more preparation. I can forgo the basic sort of questions, “What is a noun?”, and move on to some more technical aspects. I can make some general assumptions about the curriculum. 1302 brings in these aspects of argumentation, structure and oral presentation, and I bring in those elements a little bit earlier on in the semester.”

The honors course offers this sort of accelerated path through English for a number of reasons. Firstly, it provides highly motivated students to make the most out of their education, and it also assumes a certain amount of mental agility in picking up new topics. The more rigorous course load is still manageable for almost all honors students, partly because of the community built around the class. Child also addressed the academic value of the program. Outside of community and practical advantages from the class, there is an academic bend to the course that lets students dig into it a little more than they otherwise might be able to.

“There does tend to be a higher percentage of students who, at least critical thinking and time-wise, spend that extra effort to get a little deeper into the ideas. I can’t generalize for everybody because there is a nice mix of students in the Honors College, some are super smart and don’t work as hard, some work a part-time job, but across the board, they are focused on the deeper questions,” Child said. “I usually don’t get many English majors, they tend to be a lot of CJ and Business. And that’s neat because you are bringing in these perspectives, getting a broader look at the subject from a diverse classroom.”

The benefits for Child have been plentiful too, affecting her overall pedagogy and approach to the classroom environment.

“No semester in teaching the honors class has ever been the same, I try to change it up every time. If there is stuff going on around campus to draw in, I love to do that. Even this coming spring, we are teaching the Diversity common reader in another class I’m leading. So from my perspective, with the honors class the question is how do we involve activities that other students and the larger campus is working on?”

Alongside all these benefits for both student and teacher, there are the little things, like the ease of communication, that is improved.

“One of the hard things with teaching traditional 1301 is that a large part is the teaching of how to ‘do college’ for students,” Child said. “But in the honors section, we can sort of skip that part, we can assume honors students read emails and check Blackboard.”

“Personally, it’s kind of neat. The honors class is so singular that we develop a little more professor-student relationship that builds toward a more involved class. I remember my honors students more readily. It’s great to see them develop, and it has encouraged me to be more involved with the Honors College,” Child closed.
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