New Countries, New Cultures
Honors Students Traverse the Globe

Fall semester is underway, but some Honors students are participating in a less-than-traditional college experience. While we anxiously wait for the mountains to fill with snow and the trees to drop their leaves, these students are studying in locations like England, Scotland, and Argentina. They are experiencing new cultures and different educational systems, and they hope their experiences will encourage other students to study abroad as well.

Senior Tyler Sutton is currently studying through the Principia Consortium at the University of Glasgow in Scotland. He said the experience has already been life-changing, and that being ambitious and overcoming the fear of applying to the program was the biggest hurdle. “I chose to study here because I wanted to experience a rich culture that was both different from my own and yet accessible,” Tyler said. His favorite part of studying abroad has been meeting people from across the world. He mentioned that the number of international students at the University of Glasgow is greater than the entire student population of Westminster. The sheer number of students is one element of Tyler’s experience that has been very different from what he was accustomed to at Westminster.

Junior Lauren Johnson travelled to Scotland through the same program last year. She chose the Glasgow program because it was the most affordable, but the experience was better than anticipated. She agreed with Tyler—one of the greatest parts of the Glasgow semester was immersing herself in a new culture and meeting a wide range of people. She also enjoyed exploring the stereotypes of different cultures. She ruminated, “What are people really like from all of these countries?” Lauren emphasizes the importance of study abroad because “you get a much more nuanced view of the world.”

Hailey Henderson, a current junior, is also studying abroad, though her choice of Argentina does not combine an Honors experience with a cultural one. Hailey, a theater major at Westminster, said she “chose Buenos Aires…in an effort to combine [her] two passions” of theatre and Spanish. In Buenos Aires, Hailey encountered a language barrier not present in other programs. She remembered, “I could not understand a word past ‘Hola.’ Whether it was indigestion from the unfamiliar food or the frustration of attempting to get to know someone despite an overwhelming language barrier, I felt incredibly ill.” But four months later, her experience has led her to say, “Theatre is more than just my passion, but a means by which people can communicate that transcends language or nationality.” Though Hailey’s experience in Argentina differs from Tyler’s and Lauren’s in Scotland, she has taken away valuable experiences in learning a new language and navigating a new culture that she could not have had by remaining at Westminster.

Tyler said committing to a program was the biggest hurdle. “I chose to study here because I wanted to experience a rich culture that was both different from my own and yet accessible,” Tyler said. His favorite part of studying abroad has been meeting people from across the world. He mentioned that the number of international students at the University of Glasgow is greater than the entire student population of Westminster. The sheer number of students is one element of Tyler’s experience that has been very different from what he was accustomed to at Westminster.

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Tyler said committing to a program may be the most difficult part of the process. “If I could give advice to Honors students thinking about studying abroad, I would say: embrace the experience fully,” he said. “Don’t be afraid to try something new and most of all be ambitious; this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to explore a different culture.”

Lauren’s advice to Honors students thinking about studying abroad is simple: “Do it,” she said. “You get to know real people in that country, what they eat, what they talk about at the dinner table, what they think about America. You get a chance to share your own culture, and reflect on it…It’s also great to work with people, and establish a respectful relationship with them.” –Lexie Banks
On The Job
Accessing Experience and Opportunity

For certain students, the Honors program provides more than just challenging courses; it presents a chance to unite their fellow students at fun events, enticing them away from stuffy classrooms and dusty textbooks. It is an opportunity to plan events they want to see happen, have a say in the planning, and create unique opportunities. For these students, members of the Student Honors Council (SHC), assembling a year-long calendar of cool outside activities for their fellow students is just another part of college life.

Already this year the SHC has put its time in, arranging Pros Pick the Flick—where Professor Susan Conter introduced the cult classic The Big Lebowski—as well as the annual Halloween party and the welcome back barbecue. There was a fantastic turn out at all the events. Freshmen, in particular, showed up to celebrate and unwind, and as one freshman, Sabina Schill, said, “The Halloween party was super fun! Unlimited hot cocoa plus a bonfire warmed up the chilly evening nicely.” According to SHC treasurer Daniel Burroughs, “the freshmen are great this year, as are the rest of the Honors students. We’ve really good turnouts for the events and everyone seems to be stoked on getting together and relaxing outside of class.” Thanks to the efforts of the SHC, students have the opportunity to come together repeatedly to chill in Nunemaker.

While we all appreciate the work the SHC puts into the events, especially since it takes time out of already busy schedules, Samuel Wilkinson, SHC Vice President, notes that “planning events has been a lot of fun,” and even though it may require time and effort, Sam says he enjoys being an officer. He goes on to say, “the best part of being on the SHC has been interacting with the Honors community. This year’s freshman class has been very involved in our activities and it has been great getting to know each student.”

SHC is busy working hard on upcoming events for this semester. When asked about the difficulty of balancing Honors, major classes, and SHC, Sam stated, “so far it hasn’t been too much of a problem.” Future events to look forward to from the SHC include Pizza with the Profs with Professor Joel Addams, the annual Dead Paper Society, and maybe even a midnight movie in the campus photo lab. “Since I’m planning on being a fine art photographer, any experience in the lab helps,” he stated.

It is not only the access to hands-on technical experience that Jared appreciates, but also the expansion of his own creativity. “My job gives me a chance to see the sort of creative work that’s happening on campus,” he said.

Whether their jobs provide inspiration, or access to unique opportunities, each Honors student has a distinctly different experience working on campus. But there is one thing all these students can agree upon: they love their campus jobs. – Sara McCaskey

Student Honors Council
Providing a Sense of Community

On the Job
Accessing Experience and Opportunity

Honors programs are notorious for giving students course loads, but Honors students are even more notorious for their interest and involvement in a wide variety of extracurricular activities. But somehow, nearly half of the students in Westminster’s Honors program also find time to squeeze a little nine-to-five on campus work into their daily schedules. In fact, Honors students make up eleven percent of the entire Westminster student workforce, though they only make up six percent of the student body.

These figures do not surprise Honors Director Richard Badenhausen. “Westminster Honors students have always needed to work to support themselves in college,” he said. “Last year’s entering Honors class had a greater demonstrated financial need on average than the freshman class as a whole.” An earlier survey revealed that 85% of Honors students spent a significant portion of their time at paid work during the school year. Badenhausen remarked that he is proud Westminster’s Honors program has always served a significant number of first generation students as well as many students from families with modest resources. “At Westminster,” he explained, “Honors has always meant access rather than special treatment.”

As it turns out, access to experiences and opportunities is what the majority of Honors student employees find most appealing about their jobs. Mai Ho, a junior majoring in accounting and finance, has had many opportunities working in the Gore School of Business. The good impressions she made as a teaching assistant, tutor, and Director of the Opportunity Quest Business Plan Competition led to an invitation to sit on a faculty search committee.

Jared Christensen, a senior majoring in fine art, has also had invaluable opportunities thanks to his job in the campus photo lab. “Since I’m planning on being a fine art photographer, any experience in the lab helps,” he stated.

In the words of Honors student Caitie Wagner, “How awesome is that!”

We have while Honors students involved in a wide variety of student clubs, quite a few students have also pursued leadership positions within their clubs. Jackie Wilson shared her perspective on the club she helps lead, Pierced. “I wanted to find a community on campus, and being in leadership allowed me to learn about planning events, something that has always been fun.” Focusing on the accomplishments of many student leaders, she went on to say, “I love it! A quiet game can turn into an exciting, defensive match involving everyone.”

Similar to Jackie, Kayla Whidden is also a student leader this semester. Her claim to fame as the Secretary for Civic Engagement and Griffins for Gruh. Kayla became involved with the clubs on campus through a study abroad experience in Argentina. “I didn’t realize that volunteerism was a special part of American culture until I left it. Sometimes people can really surprise you with their enthusiasm and energy. I have lots of fun memories from my club activities.”

Caitie also recognizes how serving in a club has been great benefit: “I’m so grateful to be a part of the Institute Council this year—helping others and providing an awesome atmosphere helps me make a difference in someone else’s life!”

Making a difference in the community is a goal shared by all Westminster College clubs, as each club does a service project during the semester. Making service a top priority was in the minds of Andre Biscaye, Melody Redmond and Yvonne Clark when they started the Honors Service Club this semester.

“This all started from a Western Regional Honors Conference idea. We wanted students in Honors programs from many different states to all work together, in order to make a difference in their communities.” Yvonne said. “I am really excited; now we’ve moved from an Honors project to a school wide club, all the students can become involved!”

Many students voice how passionate they are about their clubs, whether doing service, cooking environmentally sustainable food, or discussing shared beliefs. Starting a club, joining it, or taking on a leadership role are all exciting ways to ignite interests, passions and service goals with fellow students and the community. –Yvonne Clark

Announcement Regarding Summer Research Grants

The Honors Council is pleased to announce that the amount of the Honors Independent Research Grant has been increased to $3,750/award. Two of these grants will be offered in the summer of 2012. Applications (which will be made available in early December) will be due March 5. Honors applications that are not selected will be automatically included for consideration in the Gore Summer Research Grant competition.
Mai Ho ran the Opportunity Quest Business Plan Competition for Westminster students.

Yvonne Clark began the Psych Club at Westminster and currently serves as the President.

Katrina England studied Korean Language and History at the International Summer Institute at Seoul National University this July.

Melody Redmond was married to Jacob Van de Graaf on October 12.

Caitlin Wagner participated as a member in the West Valley Symphony and One Voice Children’s Choir.

Joshua Zollinger has started a web-based business for musicians called SingAsOne.

Mai Ho, Lauren Johnson, Sara McCaskey, Elizabeth Nelson, and Jackie Wilson presented at the 2011 National Collegiate Honors Council conference in Phoenix, AZ.

Melanie Long and Sara McCaskey were selected from a pool of 40 nominees as Presidential Ambassadors for Westminster College.

Morgan Anderson studied sea turtles in Mexico during the summer of 2011 through the School for Field Studies.

Tracy Hunsford (‘11) accepted a position as the Education Assistant for Utah Symphony/Utah Opera.

Katrina England and Courtney Hammond have been accepted to the McNair Scholars program.

Sharayah Cook (‘08) accepted a position with McGann Erickson in downtown Salt Lake City as a Strategic Planner.

While walking around campus this semester, you might have noticed a greater number of Honors freshmen milling around. You're not crazy. In response to an increased number of applications over the past few years, the Honors Council decided to raise the entering Honors class size on a pilot basis. The council hopes this move will enable more students to take advantage of the unique Honors experience at Westminster while simultaneously enriching the Honors program with greater diversity.

However, some fear this decision will jeopardize the tight-knit community atmosphere that makes Honors so special, a dilemma the council aims to mitigate, at least in part, by adding a third section of Honors—currently taught by Jeff Nichols and Peter Goldman—and ultimately reducing the head count in each seminar by a few students.

As many Honors students see Honors as the unifying experience of their freshmen year, offering different sections of Humanities poses its own challenges. Alicia Foster, a current freshmen from California, suggests that while the different experiences prove "a dividing factor among the Honors students, it definitely does not cause a strong split." Another Honors freshman, Jorie Page, sometimes finds it difficult to get to know all of her peers, but she also indicates that "Honors definitely retains the feeling of a small community of peers, because [she identifies herself] foremost as an Honors student." In spite of the freshmen being dispersed among three sections of Humanities, the entire group of 47 students gathers together every Tuesday evening for Living Arts.

Whatever the effect on the community, it seems one drumbeat has been averted, at least for this year. With a greater number of students admitted, one would expect a decrease in the overall academic profile of the entering class. However, with an average ACT score of 30.6, the freshmen class of 2011-12 entered with the highest test scores of any group in the history of the program.

Richard Badenhausen comments that additional people mean increased challenges and work for those running the program, but he's thrilled with the increased traffic in Nunemaker, and he's glad to see the abundant energy in the class. "These students," he remarked, "are notable for their wide variety of backgrounds and their willingness to work hard. I'm having a great time getting to know them inside and outside the classrooms." The Honors Council will start evaluating the success of this move around mid-year, discussing the effects on classes and determining opinions of faculty and students alike as they make a final decision on whether the increased enrollment will continue. Regardless of future outcomes, Jeff Nichols admits that "so far, [he] thinks the experiment is a success."—Kellie Carrigan

Welcome to Westminster

The Freshman Experience

No one said it would be easy, but I remember being told that Honors would eventually become manageable. Our peer mentors were right. Humanities definitely keeps you busy. Adjusting to the college lifestyle took some time, within the first week of Honors classes freshmen are buried in reading and ideas for an "original" prompt. Turning in prompts can be a harrowing experience: students check the box indicating that this prompt is "some of my very best work. I'm proud of it." It's hard to receive it back with corrections written all over the margins and the ideas and argument completely ripped apart. Sometimes, trying to find the balance between a text's ideas and your own opinions is very difficult, but eventually we caught on, and Honors freshmen would agree that their individual writing has benefited from receiving regular criticism.

Freshmen have to figure out how to be independent and still do homework, and that takes practice. Professors look to you as adults and expect you to act like it. Sometimes, the mentality of high school reemerges during afternoon homework sessions, but the independence of college is really just as great as we thought it would be. Westminster opens up opportunities to experience every part of student life and how to be a successful college student. The Honors program exposes freshmen to "Living Arts" sessions, showing us what the odds of winning in Las Vegas really are (not good, by the way), what global warming is, and how it affects us, and teaching us new ways to exercise through Zumba classes. Sometimes, knowing that I have a prompt due the next day makes me reluctant to attend Living Arts, since I could be using that time to enhance my prompt or read the next Humanities text, but Living Arts is an experience not to be missed. It is a uniquely Westminster Honors experience and each week is never the same.

Living Arts provides all the Honors freshmen, even the ones in different Humanities sections, to connect through shared experiences during these weekly evening sessions. The students in the freshman class are so diverse, and socializing during Living Arts allows students from all over the country and the world to become friends in Westminster's unique atmosphere. By the middle of the semester, all the students have become so comfortable with each other that tired students can safely and easily find a place to nap just about anywhere. Westminster and the Honors program really have become the perfect home for new freshmen.

Being a freshman in the program is worth the late night reading and the early morning panic. Numerous Honors freshmen have tackled scholarship, jobs, athletics, clubs, and recreation all at once: they know that Honors keeps you on your toes, but that’s half the fun! Living as a freshman in Westminster's Honors environment allows you to take advantage of the many opportunities made available to students. Clubs, events, friendships, and new cultures are just some of the ways Westminster and the Honors program help freshmen adjust to the new climate of college.

In the end, it boils down to knowing that being a Westminster College Honors student is one of the best experiences a new student can have. Plus, who knew it was possible to prove how much of a genius you are in a page and a half?—Arabel Alvarado

These 47 students make up the Honors program's freshmen class of 2011.
The National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) hosts a national conference every year, and Westminster sends students from the Honors program to present, discuss, and participate with students from across the country in three days of sharing research and ideas. This year, five Westminster students attended the NCHC conference in Phoenix, Arizona from October 19-23, 2011. The students presented on three separate topics: Study Abroad as a Transformative Experience, Creating a Winning Honors Newsletter, and How Honors Programs Should Use Facebook. Each conference attendee had something different that they enjoyed the most.

Sara McCaskey, a sophomore presenting on Honors programs and Facebook said about the conference: “My favorite part was the panel I attended about sexual diversity on college campuses. I loved being part of an intelligent and respectful discussion about such a heated topic. It was great to see so many people from different religious, ethnic, socioeconomic, and moral backgrounds put their differences aside in order to try to understand the views of others.”

Lauren Johnson and Mai Ho, both juniors in the program, presented on Honors Study Abroad and Transformation in a roundtable discussion. They responded to the conference through their different interests in academics and travel.

Lauren said, “I loved seeing the research of Honors students across the country at NCHC. There were so many creative ways of looking at different issues. It was a great way to start to formulate what I want my research project to be about.” Mai found a panel discussion on the development of Brazil to be particularly interesting. “I interned at Goldman Sachs last summer, and learned that the firm was investing strongly in São Paulo, Brazil. The panel discussion introduced me to some pretty insightful macro perspectives of Brazil’s new position in South America, compared to its neighbors such as Mexico and Colombia,” she said.

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Elizabeth Nelson, a junior, and Jackie Wilson, a senior, presented in a panel discussion of what makes a winning Honors newsletter. Both students also participated as judges for the 2011 NCHC Newsletter contest.

Elizabeth’s favorite session discussed the importance of Peer Mentors in Honors programs. She said, “I loved sharing our own successes with students from other colleges as well as noting strategies that we could incorporate into our own program here at Westminster!” Jackie’s interests in the conference were two-fold: “I attended a session that encouraged me to continue researching for a paper I am writing and helped me to see that students from other regions are interested in the same topics as I am. I also enjoyed getting to know the students from Westminster on a deeper level and connecting with students from programs outside of Salt Lake City.” – Elizabeth Nelson and Jackie Wilson

**Abstracts from these NCHC presentations can be found on page 11.**
Inventing, do it with style and make the best software and systems you can. This will make you successful. If you are an

Some students in higher education as 'training' for a job simply misses the point of higher education. Getting lost. “Overall, I think it’s very important for people to diversify their education. This notion of ‘utility’ expected by the world, and suggests that all students should get international experience doing something, whether studying, serving, or more heavily on grammar and style than is expected.” Joel has had the opportunity to travel to many places around the community to make campus a better place. Jillian said, “It’s nice that there are a lot of people [in Honors] who have varied interests but are still willing to hang out with each other.” Jillian is a student who follows her passions and gets involved in the student community to make campus a better place. –Melanie Long

Honors students have the unique opportunity to participate in coursework that is multidisciplinary, holistic and unbound by the physical limitations of the classroom. Courses such as Science, Power and Diversity explore not only the world of research and science, but also the social, philosophical and cultural ramifications of science in today’s world. To have two instructors from such varying disciplines team-teaching gives an incredibly broad perspective on such topics as health, ethics, and science. No discipline exists in a vacuum, and Honors coursework definitely emphasizes this. But beyond traditional coursework, Honors students have the amazing opportunity to observe some of the concepts and issues discussed in coursework and apply it to the real world. MayTerm trips, service learning projects, and study abroad give the opportunity to not only just see, but experience what was discussed in the classroom.

All of a sudden, the readings that were read, the topics that were discussed, and the papers and prompts that were written come to life. Education is not limited to the classroom, and these opportunities outside of the physical campus have such great potential to truly integrate what is learned in the classroom. Discussing the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Thailand in class can be very impressive, and these classes can change your viewpoint of the disease. But to actually talk to the public health leaders who fought the disease in person, to walk through the streets of Bangkok and see the red light district and the commercialization of sex, and to visit an AIDS hospice and speak to terminal AIDS patients...these experiences can change your life.

Jillian’s most recent involvement with student life has been her foray into student government. She is serving as an Arts & Humanities Senator this year, a role that gives her a voice in decisions that affect Westminster students. Jillian describes herself as someone who isn’t afraid to ask tough questions, even in the often heated atmosphere of ASWC. She admitted that her willingness to challenge proposals doesn’t make her popular, but does allow her to better serve the student body. “It’s easier being a yes-man,” she said. Jillian ran a spirited campaign for Director of Clubs and Organizations this September, motivated by the value she sees in having active clubs on campus. Describing her participation in student government, Jillian said, “I think I can always do more [to help students], and that’s why I joined.”

Jillian spoke highly of the Honors program, and she emphasized her appreciation for the relationship between students and professors. She described great experiences with professors who were willing to take time to meet during office hours and provide “hands-on” learning opportunities in the classroom exploring her artistic side in “The Arts in Performance,” and throwing paper bombs at her classmates in “Political Economy of Conflict.” Jillian values the close-knit Honors community at Westminster. She said, “It’s nice that there are a lot of people [in Honors] who have varied interests but are still willing to hang out with each other.” Jillian is a student who follows her passions and gets involved in the student community to make campus a better place.

Any students who attended Pizza with the Pros or took Science, Power and Diversity this fall have already met the newest Honors professor, Joel Addams. Joel comes to us with degrees in Business Finance, Middle Eastern Studies, and an M.D. If it seems like these are very different degrees, that is because, in his words, “I was too interested in too many fields.” But these differing fields are what give him an advantage in teaching an Honors class about diversity. He says that teaching with another professor can help students understand what it takes to practice a discipline more fully than students without the team-teaching experience.

Joel also has a background in photography. He takes photography very seriously and said during his time in London, “photography became a way of life” that stayed with him after returning to the United States. When asked what Honors students should know about him, he responded, “I would be surprised if Honors Students knew about any knowledge except me how I grade papers! I probably grade them more heavily on grammar and style than is expected.” Joel has had the opportunity to travel to many places around the world, and he suggests that all students should get international experience doing something, whether studying, serving, or getting lost. Joel sees a lot of room for improvement in the Honors program, and said during his time in London, “photography became a way of life” that stayed with him after returning to the United States. When asked what Honors students should know about him, he responded, “I would be surprised if Honors Students knew about me except the grade I give papers! I probably grade them more heavily on grammar and style than is expected.”

His advice to students is this: “You truly need to measure success on your own terms. Please do not fall into the
disturbing notion that success is what society tells you it is, or what your chosen field tells you it is. If it is money, that’s fine. Make a lot of it, do it honestly, and enjoy yourself. These people do a lot for the world in a variety of ways. If it is inventing, do it with style and make the best software and systems you can. This will make you successful. If you are an artist, throw your whole soul into it and make art that satisfies you. Set your own ideas in your field (or fields) and push for them. People who change the world often don’t do it between 9 and 5 with a half hour for lunch. ‘They do it all the time, even when they’re forced to be away from their goals. Do you want to do, do it well, and your success will come.” –Jackie Wilson

The main benefit and strength of the Honors program is providing a structure for self-directed learning. The diversity of topics and assignments covered by the core seminars encourages us to adapt to critical study and discussion from many perspectives. On top of fostering adaptive students, the curriculum relies on students to draw new connections between seemingly disparate areas. When a course acts as the synthesis of varied schools of thought, we have the opportunity to expand our experience, perspective, and comfort with an unbounded body of knowledge.

Students most benefit from the program by essentially learning how to learn. True education is not the process of passing information from professor to student, and then evaluating learning by requiring the student to repeat the information. Effective education relies on the student to drive deep discussions and explore the curriculum by comparing the many different interpretations and applications offered by each individual. Every student has a unique experience to add to the discussion, and every student receives a cohesive understanding of the content through individual reflection. We are in the primary role of our education.

Progress and success in any field rely on innovation. The ability to recognize underlying relationships between different pursuits allows for creativity and ingenuity that drive this innovation. An Honors student can make these connections because the program does not assume that any particular field is an island in an ocean of industry. Rather, the program demonstrates that each field cannot exist in solitude, and each field is progressed by observing the world as a communicative whole.

Beyond the structured learning environment, Honors students are ready to pursue further learning in their daily lives. Honors students are passionate individuals. Whether enjoying a hobby, hanging out with our friends, or working in our careers, we are constantly looking for knowledge and experience. We are not satisfied by surface interactions and we do not settle for mediocre jobs to just get by. We want to see our surroundings advance with our efforts.

Honors allows us to engage directly with our education and push the curriculum with our interests and experience. Learning is not bounded to the classroom because we are learners regardless of our location. We live our education.
Honors Independent Summer Research Grants

Through summer 2011, the Honors program has awarded three $2,500 Independent Research Grants. These awards are designed to support Honors students who are conducting high level research during the summer in lieu of a full-time summer job. Their projects should lead to conference papers or publishable work. The application process takes place during the spring of each year and is administered by the Honors Council.

Abstracts from the 2011 awards follows.

“Characterization of Novel Haloarachaeae Genera: Halophiles as a Source of Bioremediation”
Allie Roach • Senior • Biology

The purpose of this study was to perform the first round of characterization of a newly discovered haloarachaeon genus, including the following assessments of growth requirements for this organism: the optimal NaCl concentration required to prevent cell lysis and facilitate maximal growth, optimal temperature requirements for maximal growth, optimal pH requirements for maximal growth, optimal MgCl₂ concentration for maximal growth. By selecting specific halophiles with the appropriate biomolecules capable of breaking down pollutants present in industrial brine effluent, toxic waste may be remedied prior to its release into the environment and thus may prevent top soil erosion and/or intermingling with ground water. The first experiment of this study, however, demonstrated extensive microbial contamination of our samples. Several attempts were made to isolate the desired microbial strain, but the attempts were unsuccessful. As Westminster students discover new genera annually in Dr. Baxter’s genetics course, it is vital that we discover a way to maintain the purity of these samples so that they may eventually be characterized and the results published.

“Pigou versus Minsky: Reconciling the Real Balance Effect with the Debt Deflation Spiral”
Tess Graham • Senior • Economics

This project used historical data to explain the contrasting conclusions of British economist Arthur C. Pigou and American economist Hyman Minsky. Pigou theorized that consumers will increase spending in light of falling prices, while Minsky maintained the opposite: that economic agents must repay debts in increasingly valuable dollars. Finally, I compared Pigou’s growth, optimal MgCl₂ concentration required to prevent cell lysis and facilitate maximal growth, optimal temperature requirements for maximal growth, optimal pH requirements for maximal growth, optimal MgCl₂ concentration for maximal growth. By selecting specific halophiles with the appropriate biomolecules capable of breaking down pollutants present in industrial brine effluent, toxic waste may be remedied prior to its release into the environment and thus may prevent top soil erosion and/or intermingling with ground water. The first experiment of this study, however, demonstrated extensive microbial contamination of our samples. Several attempts were made to isolate the desired microbial strain, but the attempts were unsuccessful. As Westminster students discover new genera annually in Dr. Baxter’s genetics course, it is vital that we discover a way to maintain the purity of these samples so that they may eventually be characterized and the results published.

NCHC 2011 Convention Abstracts

NCHC sponsors an annual convention attended by about 2,000 undergraduates, professors, and administrators from Honors programs around the country. Representative from Westminster College attend the convention each year to participate in workshops, attend sessions, and enjoy the many entertaining diversions of the host city. If you are interested in participating in the 2012 conference in Boston, look for information on the Honors website and discuss your ideas with Professor Badenhausen.

“Honors, Study Abroad, and Transformation”
Lauren Johnson • Mai Ho

Study abroad experiences are often discussed in terms of their “transformative” nature. But what actually changes when a student studies abroad? Her perspective on her native country? Her view of other countries? Her understanding of herself? This roundtable will explore the question of study abroad and transformation guided by two Honors students, an American who spent a semester studying at the University of Glasgow and a Vietnamese Honors student currently enrolled at an American college. The group will seek to understand just what happens when students travel elsewhere for an academic experience and why that experience is so powerful. They will also ask whether Honors is especially good at preparing students to study abroad and explore how Honors learning models might alter that experience. Might the Honors emphasis on inquiry and self-reflection help students better negotiate surprises they are likely to encounter like, for example, negative critiques of America and its cultural ascendancy? This discussion is appropriate for both students who have studied abroad and want to reflect on that experience as well as students who are considering study abroad and are curious about the phenomenon. Faculty members involved in study abroad might also gain insight into the student experience.

“What Should Honors Programs Use Facebook?”
Richard Badenhausen • Sara McCasky

Just what is Facebook for, anyway? And how might Honors programs and colleges best use this tool to connect with their students, faculty, alumni, and prospects? The moderators will lead a discussion that invites audience members to share their experiences and consider a wide range of questions, both broad and narrow. For example, what audiences should Facebook target? What is the ideal relationship between a Facebook page and program website? Which types of content belong in each? What kinds of photos should appear on Facebook? What is the best way to use tagging functions? Who is the best person to oversee content on the page? What are the privacy concerns associated with Facebook? How can we best use Facebook to recruit students for events? How do programs of different sizes use Facebook to accommodate their particular needs? Rather than a “How to” session, this discussion will strategize about optimal ways to implement this powerful tool. Three Honors students—from small, medium, and large institutions—will give audience members a reality check by offering their views of how students do (and do not) use social networking tools.

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“Characterization of Novel Haloarachaeae Genera: Halophiles as a Source of Bioremediation”
Allie Roach • Senior • Biology

The purpose of this study was to perform the first round of characterization of a newly discovered haloarachaeon genus, including the following assessments of growth requirements for this organism: the optimal NaCl concentration required to prevent cell lysis and facilitate maximal growth, optimal temperature requirements for maximal growth, optimal pH requirements for maximal growth, optimal MgCl₂ concentration for maximal growth. By selecting specific halophiles with the appropriate biomolecules capable of breaking down pollutants present in industrial brine effluent, toxic waste may be remedied prior to its release into the environment and thus may prevent top soil erosion and/or intermingling with ground water. The first experiment of this study, however, demonstrated extensive microbial contamination of our samples. Several attempts were made to isolate the desired microbial strain, but the attempts were unsuccessful. As Westminster students discover new genera annually in Dr. Baxter’s genetics course, it is vital that we discover a way to maintain the purity of these samples so that they may eventually be characterized and the results published.

“Pigou versus Minsky: Reconciling the Real Balance Effect with the Debt Deflation Spiral”
Tess Graham • Senior • Economics

This project used historical data to explain the contrasting conclusions of British economist Arthur C. Pigou and American economist Hyman Minsky. Pigou theorized that consumers will increase spending in light of falling prices, while Minsky maintained the opposite: that economic agents must repay debts in increasingly valuable dollars. Finally, I compared Pigou’s growth, optimal MgCl₂ concentration required to prevent cell lysis and facilitate maximal growth, optimal temperature requirements for maximal growth, optimal pH requirements for maximal growth, optimal MgCl₂ concentration for maximal growth. By selecting specific halophiles with the appropriate biomolecules capable of breaking down pollutants present in industrial brine effluent, toxic waste may be remedied prior to its release into the environment and thus may prevent top soil erosion and/or intermingling with ground water. The first experiment of this study, however, demonstrated extensive microbial contamination of our samples. Several attempts were made to isolate the desired microbial strain, but the attempts were unsuccessful. As Westminster students discover new genera annually in Dr. Baxter’s genetics course, it is vital that we discover a way to maintain the purity of these samples so that they may eventually be characterized and the results published.

NCHC 2011 Convention Abstracts

NCHC sponsors an annual convention attended by about 2,000 undergraduates, professors, and administrators from Honors programs around the country. Representative from Westminster College attend the convention each year to participate in workshops, attend sessions, and enjoy the many entertaining diversions of the host city. If you are interested in participating in the 2012 conference in Boston, look for information on the Honors website and discuss your ideas with Professor Badenhausen.

“Honors, Study Abroad, and Transformation”
Lauren Johnson • Mai Ho

Study abroad experiences are often discussed in terms of their “transformative” nature. But what actually changes when a student studies abroad? Her perspective on her native country? Her view of other countries? Her understanding of herself? This roundtable will explore the question of study abroad and transformation guided by two Honors students, an American who spent a semester studying at the University of Glasgow and a Vietnamese Honors student currently enrolled at an American college. The group will seek to understand just what happens when students travel elsewhere for an academic experience and why that experience is so powerful. They will also ask whether Honors is especially good at preparing students to study abroad and explore how Honors learning models might alter that experience. Might the Honors emphasis on inquiry and self-reflection help students better negotiate surprises they are likely to encounter like, for example, negative critiques of America and its cultural ascendancy? This discussion is appropriate for both students who have studied abroad and want to reflect on that experience as well as students who are considering study abroad and are curious about the phenomenon. Faculty members involved in study abroad might also gain insight into the student experience.

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Dear Friends,

The Westminster Honors program is about so much more than a degree or certificate. Our students reach out across disciplines to make an education that is uniquely their own. The work inside the classroom is one part of an Honors education, and students approach education as a stepping stone to greater involvement and personal development.

From conducting summer research funded by grants from Honors and outside programs, to expanding interests on campus through club leadership, our students recognize that being part of the Westminster community is about more than just going to classes and doing homework. This year, we welcomed the largest freshman Honors class to date, and here at Honorable Mention, we are excited to see how these new students will impact the community and respond to the challenge of an Honors education.

Honors students reach out to the world through study abroad and to other colleges through attending conferences like NCHC. As we continue to watch our program grow, there will be new challenges to address, and with backgrounds spanning many disciplines, our students will be ready to face those challenges as a member of the worldwide community.

We would like to say a great, big “Thank You” to each person who helped put together this semester’s issue of Honorable Mention. Without our writers and photographers there could be no newsletter—we appreciate all you do!

Honorably Yours,

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Co-editors of Honorable Mention

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Dear Honorable Students,

As we step into another new year, we welcome back our old faces as well as the largest freshman class we've ever had in our little community. We're incredibly excited for the opportunities this year presents, and we've been thrilled by the involvement and enthusiasm of students both old and new. The members of the program are what make Honors at Westminster come alive, and we love to see you involved with Honors and with each other out of the classroom as well as in it. We encourage you to continue this involvement in whatever way interests you, and we look forward to seeing you all in classes, at events, and just around campus. We can't wait to spend the rest of the year with you!

With Honor,

Your 2011-2012 SHC

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From Your Editors

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