Where We’ve Been: The History of the Honors Program

2013 marks the program’s 25th anniversary

For many Honors students, the Honors program was instrumental in forming their initial impressions of Westminster, and the culture of Honors continues to shape their college experience. Because of our intense classes, Honors students in the same year tend to develop strong connections, and the shared space of Nunemaker guarantees interaction between current Honors students of all years. But what about the class that graduated the year before you entered as a freshman? Or the class that graduated ten years ago? Perhaps the closeness and immediacy of Honors sometimes causes us to forget that the program has existed at Westminster for 25 years, and in that time, there have been significant changes to the seminars and culture. In this issue of Honorable Mention, as we look back at Honors memories, it is only fitting that we dig into our roots in order to appreciate the tremendous benefits we now enjoy.

The program accepted its first class of students in 1987, and was the brainchild of Dr. Michael Popich, the beloved, if elusive, Professor of Philosophy who continues to teach Honors seminars today. There were only four students in the first Honors graduating class.

There were only four students in the first Honors graduating class.

Structurally, students still completed seven cross-disciplinary, team-taught seminars, but it was rare for Honors students to interact with each other extensively outside of class or in extracurricular program activities.

Beginning in 2001, however, Honors began to change. First, the college hired Dr. Richard Badenhausen specifically to direct the Honors program. Shortly after his arrival, the Student Honors Council, the official Honors website, and Honorable Mention came into being, and the program began adding other features that aligned it with the National Collegiate Honors Council’s seventeen “Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program.” These additions encouraged dramatic growth within the program and established a much stronger Honors presence on campus.

The Honors curriculum has seen many changes over the years, but the most significant change happened in 2003, with the creation of “Science, Power, and Diversity,” a course designed by former Associate Provost of Diversity Bridget Newell and Professor of Biology Bonnie Baxter. Until that year, students took two semesters of History and Philosophy of Science, but as the program and number of students grew, so did the need for addressing issues of diversity and modern science. Hence, the new seminar was created to explore these relevant contemporary subjects.

Perhaps the strongest boost to Honors culture came in 2004, with the acquisition of Nunemaker Place as a space on campus specifically designated for Honors use. This gave students an open, quiet place to meet and study, and also paved the way for Honors-specific events such as Honors Orientation, the Living Arts program, and many other beloved student-initiated traditions that define the Honors experience today. The Peer Mentoring program, initiated this same year, encouraged greater program unity by connecting current Honors students of all ages.

As a program and a culture at Westminster College, Honors has come a long way in its 25 years of existence. As the college continues to grow, the Honors program hopes to grow alongside it in terms of class diversity, subject matter, international opportunities, and student involvement.

Additionally, in Fall 2013, students will have the option of taking an Honors seminar called “Law and History” taught by Westminster’s President, Dr. Brian Levin-Stankevich—a first in the history of the program. In the years to come, Honors will continue to be student-focused, academically challenging, and maybe someday, just once, the students will finally win the softball game.

- Jessica Bowen
### By the Numbers: Honors Facts and Figures

For the 25th anniversary edition of *Honorable Mention*, we wanted to explore the history of the program. Because none of us were around (much less born) in 1987, we dug into the changes that make Honors what it is today. Here are some of the most interesting numbers we found that capture the evolution and character of the program today.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>303</td>
<td>Students have graduated from the program since it began in 1987.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Honors students were in the first graduating class of the program (1991).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Honors students will graduate this year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$17,075</td>
<td>Since 2003, a total of $17,075 has been raised to fund senior travel grants.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$54,500</td>
<td>In grant money has been awarded to Honors students for undergraduate summer research.</td>
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<th>Major</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>25</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>The most states and countries represented in a single incoming class (2011):</th>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<th>Couple Count</th>
<th>Honors couples (and counting) have tied the knot.</th>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All-time scoreboard</th>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Faculty: 175</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students: 92</td>
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### Contributions to Student Honors Council Fund

The Westminster College Honors program is very grateful to the following friends, alumni, and Honors parents who have contributed to the “Student Honors Council Fund” since the last newsletter. This fund supports modest travel grants to assist Honors students in making decisions about continuing their educations in graduate school.

- Marie Martin
- Edward & Sheila Cunningham
- Holly & Kevin Nagie
- Timothy & Christine Bergquist
- Jean Butcher & Thomas DeLonghery
- Brian & Jo-Anne Nelson
- John & Regie Bradford
- Steven Falen & Susan Ash
- Mary Jo Sweeney
- Douglas & Kathleen Burroughs
- Douglas & Shelley Felt
- Vernon Waters & Mary McGreal
- Tom & Kristine Carlson
- Robert & Monica McCaskey
- Matthew & Connie Zweifel

Contributions to this fund, which are tax deductible, can be made at any time of the year to the “Student Honors Council Fund” and should be sent care of the Westminster College Honors program, 1840 South 1300 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84105.
Take a Griffin to Lunch, Honors style

If you asked Freud to interpret your dream journal, what would he say about you?

—Christina Della Iacono (’11) at Tea Grotto

You’ll be happy to know that once in a dream I asked Freud to interpret my journal and here’s what he said: „Als ich in Wien bin ich liebe einen Spaziergang im Park in der Dämmerung und genieße Sie ein köstliches Sonderschweißmaschine. Sonderschweiß Praline! Ich wollte Sonderschweiß Praline sagen!“ To which I replied: „Alles klar!“

—Nick More, Professor of Philosophy

Were you always so good at talking people in circles, or did you practice?

—Christina Della Iacono (’11) at Squatter’s

This would be a great example of how your assumptions color your perceptions when dealing with logic and science. There is a long-standing debate among physical cosmologists about the shape of the universe. One of the most prominent models is the Milne model, which states that the universe exists on the surface of a sphere. This will have three equally cool consequences.
1. It creates the possibility of wormholes, shortcuts through the universe taken by traveling through the sphere instead of along its surface.
2. Given a powerful enough telescope, you could potentially see the back of your own head.
3. A perfectly straightforward and linear answer to a question could potentially appear circular.

There, that hardly required any practice at all.

—David Goldsmith, Professor of Geology

Interesting you should ask about PEDs. Given the overdeveloped musculature of most Honors professors, this is actually a common accusation, as you might imagine. In fact, some of us have been emotionally wounded by taunts from Honors students in the past, such as “Goldsmith, that’s a pretty thick neck you’ve got there” or “Badenhausen, just what is your hat size, anyway?”

Now we realize as Honors professors that we are partly responsible for cultivating our students’ ability to use language in clever ways. But we have feelings, too, you know.

There was the infamous “testing incident” of 2008, where after destroying the students in especially humiliating fashion (30-8), the professors were immediately marched over to Meldrum for a surprise drug test. A sympathetic science professor who had been watching the students lose year after year arranged for the high-tech analysis, which went off without a hitch save for Doug Wright, who was laughing so hard that he made a mess with his specimen cup.

After rigorous analysis, all test results came back clean; though to be fair, we were only tested for steroids.

—Richard Badenhausen, Director, Honors program

Your unbelievable winning streak prompts the question: has the Honors faculty softball team ever used performance-enhancing drugs?

—Marie Martin (’08)(née Robinson) at Chipotle

As the days grow shorter, the temptation to neglect one’s beard is all too common. I encourage the mustache mentee to set aside time for a dedicated regimen to care for your facial hair. Much like a cat, your beard will let you know when and how to care for the budding bristles. The quality of hair you grow is in direct relation to many things, such as your diet, sleep or lack of sleep, atmospheric trends, and the environment your beard may inhabit.

Try to find ways of providing an enriched environment for your beard by thinking positive thoughts about facial hair, encouraging protein-rich environments, or simply adding pictures of substantial beards to your bathroom walls. Pogonotrophy is an art over science, and is more akin to poetry than prose, so cultivate a sensitivity appropriate to your breed of beard.

—Matt Kruback, Professor of Art

How can I foster a true, winter woodsman’s beard?

—David Luhr (’12) at Squatter’s

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2012–2013 Writing Awards Announced

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category 1</th>
<th>Category 2 (and Best Overall)</th>
<th>Category 3 (tied)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Cunningham</td>
<td><strong>Katrina England</strong></td>
<td><strong>Heidi Saxton &amp; Chris Cunningham</strong></td>
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Summer Research Grants Awarded

Nicole Bedera received funding from the Honors program for her summer research project “Don’t Go Outside Tonight: Rape Prevention Tips and their Impact on Women’s Lives.”

Melanie Long received funding from the Honors program for her summer research project “Assessing the Influence of Gender on Unemployment: A Panel Data Approach.”
**Student News & Notes**

- **Heidi Saxton** will travel to Scotland this summer to present research at the International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant.

- The Westminster Mock Trial team, including Honors members **Nicole Bedera, Kayela Horrocks-Beyeler, James Steur, Abigail McKinney, and Pratik Raghu**, advanced to the first round of the National competition in Newport Beach, CA.

- **Emma Deloughery** published a research article in the journal *Blood Coagulation & Fibrinolysis*.

- **Caitlin Wagner** performed with the Utah Symphony in March.

- **Brianne Miller** modeled in Rock the 307 Runway in Rock Springs, WY.

- **William Palomo**'s work “Snow and Seraphs” has been selected for the 2013 edition of *Scribendi*.


- **Sara McCaskey** has been hired as the Online Editor of *The Forum* for the 2013–2014 academic year.

- **Jessie Smith** has been hired as the Editor-in-chief of *The Forum* for the 2013–2014 academic year.

- **Fehmi Yasin** has been accepted to PhD programs in physics at the University of Oregon, the University of Rochester, and the University of Utah.

- **William Palomo**'s poem “Cradle Song” won the Academy of American Poets Student Poetry Contest and will be featured in *ellipsis...literature and art*.

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**SHC Multicultural Dinner Events, Past and Present**

Ten years ago, the Honors program hosted a Sushi Shindig, an event that developed the same friendships among students that exist in the Honors program today.

### A Sushi Shindig to Remember  
**Fall 2003**

- The convergence of brilliant minds to share lives, ideas, and food. How can this go wrong? It cannot and did not thanks to the dazzling coordinating skills of our own Ali Owens, co-chair of the Student Honors Council.

- A good time was had by all and the stunning ability of those in the throes of Honors to entertain themselves rendered the trivial pursuit portion of the evening unnecessary, one could even say trivial.

- Prominent faces among the crowd were our fearless leader Richard Badenhausen, our awe inspiring Nick More, old friends, new friends, and of course my own voluptuous visage.

- The ability of those in attendance to converse with one another on intellectual matters as well as daily concerns. It was a wonderful opportunity to take a breath, catch up with old friends, uncover the not-so-mysterious-after-all details of professors’ lives, pummel the newbies with a myriad of questions and introductions, and partake of sushi, sandwich, and soda. A great event for a great beginning.

- Now, onward and upward into the best year this Student Honors Council has ever seen!

- Nicki Blair (’05)

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*Now, in 2013, the Student Honors Council presented a new twist on an old classic. With the help of ecological eating expert and Theatre professor Nina Vought, Honors students were able to enjoy a three-course vegan meal consisting of a spring green salad, roasted vegetable lasagna, and a glazed chocolate cake. Nina gave students the chance to ask questions as she shared her expertise regarding veganism and the meat industry, and encouraged students to consider the value of food in their lives. Students had the chance to talk over an excellent home cooked meal, as they shared a truly memorable experience. “I really like the community of friends who are hard-working and committed to learning from you,” said Jeff Collins of his experience in Honors.

For 25 years, the Honors program has combined learning, culture, community, and fun to challenge talented students and help create a sense of belonging within the college. This event may have been the last for some Honors students and the first for many others, but everyone, regardless of age or major, came together, illustrating the importance of Honors tradition and the continuance of friendship.*

- Mackenzie Crow
May Term Offers Unique Experiences for Honorables

May Term offers more than just free credits to Honors students—it offers a much-needed break. Throughout the year, Honors students tend to overwhelm themselves with rigorous and time-consuming academics, but May Term is different. As junior Honors student Samantha Kilpack puts it, “you still spend time on campus and see your friends, but you actually have time to have fun without worrying about mountains of homework.”

In the past, students have taken a variety of unique and fascinating classes, such as “Epidemiology of the Zombie Apocalypse,” “Meditation and the Brain,” or Honors Director Richard Badenhausen’s favorite: “Baseball as America.” In this class, students learned about baseball culture, practiced baseball slang, and even attended a game, at which they learned to apply their baseball knowledge to live action.

One of the great things about May Term is that there is something for everyone. Honors student Jordyn Page remembers her favorite May Term class, taught by Gary Marquardt: “Revolution and the Graphic Novel,” which, she recalls, “broadened her understanding of the applicability of the skills taught in Humanities.”

Another favorite May Term class of the past is one Honors student Nicole Bedera took on the looming apocalypse, which culminated in an investigation of the modern Antichrist. May Term classes such as these allow students to learn, play, and have more time to foster our close-knit bonds.

Jessie Smith feels fortunate to have been able to register for Kay Kuzminski’s last Ceramic Jewelry class in May.

The ceramic jewelry class is so popular that usually only upperclassmen are able to register for it in time to fit.

Not all memorable May Term experiences happen on campus. Many Honors students have the opportunity to travel during May and in the past have visited Hawaii, India, Peru, China, Southern Utah, France, and even Nepal.

One of the most popular May Term travel experiences is the yearly service-learning trip to Thailand, promises more than just a vacation. According to the travel blog of Honors student YiXi Xin, experiencing a clinic in Thailand can be a powerful experience for Honors students. YiXi writes, “people walk miles after miles across the border (which is very dangerous) in order to receive medical treatment.”

Many of the May Term classes provide service-learning components, which open up opportunities for Honors students to act as global citizens, serving diverse communities and broadening their views of the world. As for the future of Honors May Term opportunities, Richard Badenhausen is dreaming big: “I think the time is right to develop an annual endowed international May Term experience for Honors students—we just need to find the right donor!”

- Adia Thornton

Student News & Notes

Heidi Saxton will attend the Medical School at the University of Utah.

Elizabeth Nelson will attend the Medical School at the University of Utah next year.

Jennifer Mattis plans to be in basic training and officer school for the US Army next year.

Yvonne Clark will study critical cultural studies at the Department of Communication Master’s program at the University of Utah next year.

Kellie Carrigan will serve a mission in Phoenix, AZ for the LDS church.

Lauren Johnson presented her thesis on Huckleberry Finn at the National Undergraduate Literature Conference.

Honors students Annie Brings, Fehmi Yasin, Hailey Henderson, Shianne Gray and Jeff Pedersen contributed to the theater production of “Curtains.”

Alicia Foster and Pratik Raghu have been named Presidential Ambassadors starting in August, when they will join current ambassadors Melanie Long, Sara McCaskey, Megan Peters, and Sathya Rivas.

Alumni News

Ray Bradford (’07) was listed on Forbes’ “30 Under 30 Finance: The Top Young Traders, Bankers And Dealmakers” for his work with cloud infrastructure business and big data services.

Tracy Hansford (’11) starred in a local production of The Tempest with the New World Shakespeare Company.

Jake Wayman (’11) will attend George Washington University Medical School in the fall.

Sara Rees (’10) will attend University of Utah Medical School in the fall.

The May Term Thailand trip is popular among Honors students.
Westminster’s Honors program fosters passionate learners who enjoy pondering, questioning, and challenging. We look back fondly at memories of a class where professors made us relearn how to write papers, challenged our life philosophies, and always demanded high levels of commitment. Some call us crazy, but we wouldn’t want it any other way. As one alumna’s father explained to her, “You’ve found your people.”

In finding “our people” we have found more than good classmates; we have made life-long friendships and unforgettable memories, from late-night study sessions in Nunemaker to competitive faculty-student softball games.

We all remember Humanities, when we were challenged to expand our minds in new ways, and the prompts handed back to us “bleeding” the ink of our professors’ pens.

But at the same time, Humanities turns out to be an extremely rewarding and bonding experience for many graduates. Alumna Lauren Robinson (‘11) remembers when a classmate of hers made a dancing elf video that featured Dr. Badenhausen and Dr. More’s faces as the animated elves, with Nick as a shorter female elf. Priceless.

Other Honors classes have proven to be just as memorable. History and Philosophy of Science, always known for its mind-blowing discussions and occasional off-topic tangents, switched up the class routine when Dr. Popich and Dr. Anderson took their class to the Clark Planetarium as part of their final exam.

Nunemaker Place has long been the home of the Honors program, and Alumni Reminisce about the Moments Whether in Nunemaker Place or elsewhere on campus.
under their enemies’ door.

On a deeper level, Arts in Performance has challenged students to broaden their creative horizons, and many remember it as a life-changing class.

Professor Chris LeCluyse remembers a comfort zone-stretching activity during which the students and professors tied their hands together with elastic bands and moved across campus as a single composite organism to buy a cup of coffee at Shaw.

Alumna Victoria Valencia ('12) reflects on Arts and Performance as one of the best classes she’s ever taken, saying, “that class allowed everyone to open up, to share, to bond. We danced, we laughed, we sang, we cried.”

Outside of the classroom, Honors has provided its graduates with even more fantastic memories. Sharayah Cook ('08) credits the Honors program with changing her life when she met and fell in love with her now-husband, Alum John Cook ('10). Pepper Hayes ('05) remembers the encouragement she found when seeking to start up this very newsletter, saying that Honors provides “the support you need to take an idea and make it a reality.”

Honors alumni have been through a lot together, from good times to heartbreaking times of grief. Losing the beloved professor Doug Wright was hard on everyone in the Honors program at the time, and we hope to always remember him and his vibrant personality—forever an exemplary representative of “our people.”

-Alicia Foster
Lesa Ellis, Associate Professor of Psychology

Few people can say they have been both a student and professor at Westminster College, but Honors professor Lesa Ellis can. A Utah native, Ellis grew up in Moab, but moved to Salt Lake City at age 14. As a teenager, Ellis knew she wanted to attend Westminster College, and at age 35 she finally got her wish.

“I started out as an English major until I took an Intro to Psychology class,” she recalled. “The course was taught by a neuroscience professor, and I thought the subject was the coolest thing ever. I had never been so excited to learn something.”

After graduating from Westminster with a psychology degree in 1998, Ellis earned her master’s degree and PhD from the University of Oregon. She then returned to Westminster in 2002 to work as a professor in the Psychology department.

“It was always a dream of mine to work at Westminster,” Ellis said, and returning to the college meant that former professors, like Janine Wanlass, were now colleagues.

“As a student, Lesa was a superb writer, clear critical thinker, remarkable self-motivated learner, and a genuine good person who was simply fun to teach,” Wanlass said. “I welcomed her back as a faculty colleague because I knew she would be a good teacher with creative ideas.”

Wanlass was spot on. In her 11 years at Westminster, Ellis has been integral to the development of the McNair Scholars program and the Neuroscience program. She has worked as an Honors professor for 10 years, and currently co-teaches “Human Culture and Behavior” with sociology professor Kristjane Nordmeyer.

Her enthusiasm for teaching has not gone unnoticed by Honors students. “Les is a pure joy. She is wonderfully genuine and continually challenges students to think and construct beliefs that are authentic and not adopted from societal pressures,” says senior Honors student Fehmi Yasin. “Even though I’m a physics major, ‘Human Culture and Behavior’ was one of my favorite classes.”

For Ellis, working at Westminster and with the Honors program means doing what she loves: teaching students.

“I get more joy from my students’ accomplishments than my own,” Ellis said, “I could not be more happy working at Westminster.”

- Hannah Williams

Jeff Pedersen, Senior

Jeff Pedersen is a senior in the Honors program with the uncommon combination of a vocal performance major and a chemistry minor.

He grew up in the Greek community of Salt Lake City and has always been in love with singing. He participated in choir throughout high school and is now actively involved at Westminster College as the president of the Chamber Singers, which gave him the opportunity of playing the role of the Sorceress in Westminster's first opera Dido and Aeneas.

Pedersen is also involved in the community, participating in the Utah Opera Chorus as well as the Greek folk dance group of Salt Lake, a group he has been a member of for the past nine years.

His experience with the Honors program has been nothing less than memorable. What attracted him to Westminster in the first place were the small class sizes, but the Honors program sealed the deal.

Pedersen was looking for a small, close-knit community and he believed the Honors program took it one step further, creating a family among the Honors students.

The challenge of Honors was a bonus as well, since Pedersen loves going the extra mile. He describes his year in Humanities as exceptionally challenging (and a little intimidating with the infamous duo of Richard and Nick), but he says, “It was nice to go through it together with the other Honors students.”

What really helped build his love for Westminster was the faculty; he is particularly grateful to have worked with Michael Chipman, Richard Badenhausen, Karlyn Bond, and Russ Costa. He is thankful for all professors who have played a role in his upcoming graduation.

Pedersen looks forward to his final Honors banquet and will miss not only Westminster, but the Honors program especially. His future plans include medical school and a career as a physician.

- Anabel Alvarado
This year's NCHC conference in Boston will always stand out among the many frustrating, exciting, and energizing memories I have of Honors. Our first day there, the conference leaders put us into groups and directed us to different spots around the city, also giving us a strict time to return. I was plopped into a group of four strangers and instructed to walk part of the Freedom Trail. Despite the stern warning, we did not make it back in time to discuss our day with the larger group.

But worry not Honorables, I still had a highly educational day. We were supposed to read the city as text, but I can't make a definitive claim about the meaning of Boston, and the Freedom Trail (except, uh, freedom?). I think sometimes as Honors students, we like to explain everything with words, giving points of evidence for meaning. But sometimes you just need to wander around the city and just be there.

So we wandered (as much as you can wander when there's a brick path in front of you) around Boston, not giving a hoot about the time, making our way through trendy parks and graveyards—along with the not-so-pretty parts—talking about ghosts and our respective Honors programs. We interrogated the guides at Paul Revere's house about the fake fruit in the display (apparently they really did have pineapple back then). We went to famous bakeries, ate cannolis, and I got powdered sugar all over my face. We dined on clam chowder in Faneuil Hall. Classic touristy stuff.

When we got to the final stop after walking all day, we had missed the deadline by a long shot, but that was good, because I didn't really want to describe my day in an intellectual manner, anyway. The Freedom Trail was a lot less about analyzing the significance of Paul Revere's House and a lot more about surrendering myself to a little brick path, and letting it lead me all through a city steeped in history.

This trip epitomized an under-appreciated, yet vital element of life as an Honors student—knowing when to take control and think things through, but also when to step back and let interesting experiences happen naturally.

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**Which of your favorite Honors memories exemplifies the character of the Honors program to you?**

**Faculty Response**

David Goldsmith  
*Professor of Geology*

_The Man, The Kid, and One Hand of Poker_

_Note: Some people may dispute the details, but this is how I remember Monte Carlo Nite, 2009._

A thick haze of cigarette smoke hung in the air of Nunemaker place. Somewhere in the distance, a lonely saxophone called out a mournful tune. Nunemaker can feel like the biggest place in the world, vast and cavernous, but that night the activity was centered around one table.

Who was this Goldsmith, who just showed up one day claiming to be The Man? And what happened to Badenhausen? Some said he was on sabbatical, but rumors persisted. Had he really lost the entire Honors program to Goldsmith on a single hand of cards?

The Kid across the table was a cool customer with a dead-eyed stare that made you feel like he could look into your soul and right back out at your cards. In “History and Philosophy of Science,” the Kid was good, one of the best. But this was different. This was poker.

The Man looked down at his cards: 8 9 of hearts with a board of 10 4 3. Ugly. The Kid led out with a bet, but The Man didn't buy it for a second. He put on his mask. It was the same icy veneer this geologist put on whenever he had to explain quantum mechanics. It exuded cool confidence while covering a deep-seated terror of being called. “I’m all-in.”

The Kid looked sick—like a physicist who had just been asked to define magnetism. He thought for a minute and threw in his hand. The Man showed his bluff. “Too bad, Kid, you could have had it all.”

That was the beginning of the end. The Kid started tilting like the deck of the HMS Beagle. A few hands later, The Man finished him off when his King and Queen connected like the Curies to make an ace-high straight.

The Man took his bragging rights and left. He stopped on his way out the door and, like Ada Lovelace, thought about the program. This was the point. Interactions. Conflict. The Kid wasn't ready yet, but by challenging both his peers and his mentors he would get there. The saxophone picked up its tune as The Man walked off into the night.

**Student Response**

Lauren Johnson  
*Senior*

This year's NCHC conference in Boston will always stand out among the many frustrating, exciting, and energizing memories I have of Honors. Our first day there, the conference leaders put us into groups and directed us to different spots around the city, also giving us a strict time to return. I was plopped into a group of four strangers and instructed to walk part of the Freedom Trail. Despite the stern warning, we did not make it back in time to discuss our day with the larger group.

But worry not Honorables, I still had a highly educational day. We were supposed to read the city as text, but I can't make a definitive claim about the meaning of Boston, and the Freedom Trail (except, uh, freedom?).

I think sometimes as Honors students, we like to explain everything with words, giving points of evidence for meaning. But sometimes you just need to wander around the city and just be there.

So we wandered (as much as you can wander when there's a brick path in front of you) around Boston, not giving a hoot about the time, making our way through trendy parks and graveyards—along with the not-so-pretty parts—talking about ghosts and our respective Honors programs. We interrogated the guides at Paul Revere's house about the fake fruit in the display (apparently they really did have pineapple back then). We went to famous bakeries, ate cannolis, and I got powdered sugar all over my face. We dined on clam chowder in Faneuil Hall. Classic touristy stuff.

When we got to the final stop after walking all day, we had missed the deadline by a long shot, but that was good, because I didn't really want to describe my day in an intellectual manner, anyway. The Freedom Trail was a lot less about analyzing the significance of Paul Revere's House and a lot more about surrendering myself to a little brick path, and letting it lead me all through a city steeped in history.

This trip epitomized an under-appreciated, yet vital element of life as an Honors student—knowing when to take control and think things through, but also when to step back and let interesting experiences happen naturally.
Reflection

Remembrance of Things Past (in Honors)
Badenhausen, Honors program director since 2001, looks back.

Right now I’m reading a fun book about memory by Josh Foer called Moonwalking with Einstein. Although the premise of the discussion turns on the incredible plasticity of the human brain, I somehow find it harder and harder to remember much of anything with each passing semester.

My first memory of Honors and Westminster is an easy one: it occurred in late March 2001 when I visited Salt Lake to interview for the position of Director of Honors. I spent two days on campus meeting faculty, staff, and students. It rained the entire time in the valley, which meant snow in the mountains . . . lots of snow! On day three of my visit, I was given keys to the college van and encouraged to drive around town to look at real estate. Somehow the van was instead directed up Little Cottonwood Canyon, where it was almost driven off the side of a cliff, due to the enormous amounts of snow. In spite of that, a wonderful powder day was experienced by the driver/house shopper.

You’ll notice that my account is written entirely in passive voice, since I don’t want to claim direct responsibility for that near accident. Put it this way—a few extra inches of icy pavement and a guardrail were all that kept my hopes alive of a new job at Westminster College.

Most of my early memories of the program actually involve absences. At the turn of the new century, we had no Student Honors Council, no Peer Mentoring program, no Living Arts, no “Science, Power & Diversity,” no Profs Pick the Flick, no Academic Decathlon, no Assistant Director, no Principia Consortium at Glasgow, and no Honors space. Not even an Honorable Mention—perish the thought! I’d love to say that this catalog of deficiencies represented a place of natural perfection, a la Montaigne in “Of Cannibals.” But while Honors did have a robust offering of interesting seminars and dedicated faculty, the program had not yet developed the community that currently exists amongst its students—students who really decided over time to make the program their own. Current Honors students owe a debt of gratitude to those who came before them because those early students worked so hard to lay such a solid foundation.

Students should also realize that administrators have worked very hard to support the program over the past dozen years, and many of the improvements they have seen are due to the doggedness of outgoing Dean Mary Jane Chase, the encouragement of current Provost Cid Seidelman, and the support of former president of the college, Michael Bassis. Our new president, Brian Levin-Stankevich, continues to emphasize the importance of academic excellence and rigor, and as he has already spent time meeting with Honors students in various settings, I am hopeful this tradition of collaboration will continue.

Some of those early Honors moments were humorous. At one of the first Honors faculty-student softball contests (when we used to play in Sugarhouse Park), an Honors student slid hard into third base, manned by Prof. Jeff Nichols. When the student appeared on crutches the next day, she was shouting to anyone who would listen: “Prof. Nichols broke my ankle!”

Other memories are more sobering: the incredible sacrifice of a gifted student leaving the Honors program tearfully after two years at Westminster to help raise her younger sister and make money so that sibling could eventually attend college. I am in awe of such students and will never forget those moments.

I remember beloved Honors faculty member Doug Wright, who while dying of lung cancer chose to spend his last three months on this earth teaching the “Arts & Performance” Honors seminar. He couldn’t imagine anything he’d rather do than work with students. After Doug died, a few of us spent an afternoon at his home packing up his extensive library of books. I was struck by the fact that despite Doug’s training as a philosopher, he owned far more books on art and literature, his two true loves.

Eventually, though, the things that happen in the classroom are the ones that stick in my mind. The “aha” moment when a student achieves a learning breakthrough, the surprising occasion when a quiet student speaks up to challenge an argument on the floor, or the new insight into a text that evolves from a vibrant conversation. Students know that I am fond of citing Janet Flammang’s reminder that “conversation” comes from a Latin root meaning “keep company with.” The Honors classroom is a special place because it’s a space where faculty and students keep company with each other. Instead of talking at students, Honors faculty get to share the authority of knowledge (to use Ken Bruffee’s phrasing) in the belief that reading hard texts about important topics like justice, friendship, truth, and mortality and then discussing that material in an open forum is important, and a kind of hard work that takes place in very few other settings.

I feel very lucky that those are the sort of memories that I get to be part of. I hope the students also share that sense of privilege.
I am a wanderer—not in the strictest sense of the word—because I’m wandering in a general direction, but a wanderer nonetheless. At 27, I’m still trying to get a grasp on who I am, where I’ve been, and where I plan to go. If you had asked me at graduation in 2008 where I would be in five years, I would not have guessed that it was where I am today. What I can say with certainty is that I’m exactly where I should be doing exactly what I never knew I was destined to do.

After graduation, I landed my dream job working at the Office of Sustainability at the University of Utah as their Outreach Coordinator. My job was dynamic. My idealism was sky-high. I was ready to change the world. In my first two years at the University, I ran the campus farmer’s market, “greened” the residence halls, educated the campus on sustainability, and helped lead a task force of eighty students, faculty, and staff in the development of a climate action plan that would guide the university for the next thirty years. I was passionate about my job and optimistic about my future career in environmental advocacy.

And then one day in March 2009, my husband came home and told me he wanted to move to California to take over a family business.

Under normal circumstances, it would be easy to find a job in sustainability in California—a state known for its green-friendly policies and democratic majority—but this was 2009, the peak of the recession. I sent out countless resumes and applied for what felt like a million jobs. After a year of living in a long-distance marriage, I was finally offered a position at the University of California, Riverside (UCR) in the Graduate School of Education working as the Executive Assistant to the Dean. Although I was grateful to find work, I was not altogether happy. I went from being a passionate agent of change at the University of Utah to filing papers and managing a calendar at UCR. This was not the meaningful work I had hoped for and it had nothing to do with my passion for the environment.

But passions evolve and life has a funny way of putting you exactly where you need to be doing exactly where you are meant to be doing. In fall 2011, the Dean of the UCR Graduate School of Education, who had become a personal mentor of mine, recommended that I consider applying to the PhD in Higher Education Administration and Policy. At first, I laughed at the thought of signing up for another five to six years of school when I was just about to complete my master’s degree, but the more I thought about it, the more it made sense. Spend the rest of my life getting paid to explore new research ideas, teach students, and improve higher education? Of course! Why hadn’t I thought of this sooner?! I graduated from Cal State, applied to UCR, was accepted, and started the PhD program in fall 2012.

Now that I’ve provided the details of my five years since graduation, I’ll tell you why my story matters.

As Honors students, you are, by definition, high achievers. If you are like me, you may have always felt the pressure to know exactly what you wanted to do with your life. As some of you approach graduation, you probably have a vision of the perfect job with the perfect salary and a big office, but you are internally panicking trying to figure out how you are going to make your dream happen. You might feel like you are wandering through life burdened by questions like “What will I do? Where will I go? How will I make a difference?”

In the words of J.R.R. Tolkien, “Not all who wander are lost.”

Embrace uncertainty. Wander. Explore. Take on jobs you never thought would interest you in places you never thought you’d go.

As you wander, trust that the skills you learned in the Honors program will carry you to where you need to be. The skills I developed and the professional relationships I built in the Honors program have been truly invaluable. Recently I asked my boss why he had selected my résumé and cover letter out of a stack of 270 applicants. He simply replied, “You can write.” Humanities prompts, while torturous, are in fact excellent tools for preparing you for life after graduation. They teach you to write well and to think for yourself—two skills that are essential for success in any field.

And sometimes it’s not what you know, but who you know that will help you achieve your goals. Activities like Profs Pick the Flick, Halloween parties, and NCHC conferences are more than just fun—they are incredible networking opportunities. Take advantage of them! Rely on your fellow Honors graduates. Stay connected to the incredible Honors faculty who mentored you. Most importantly, give back by mentoring others.

An editor of Honorable Mention recently asked me, “What are your goals for the future?” After reflecting on this question, I have only one response. Rainer Maria Rilke, author of Letters to a Young Poet, encourages us to abandon our search for answers and instead attempt to “live the questions” with the promise that someday far in the future, [we] will gradually, without even noticing it, live [our] way into the answer.” What are my plans for the future? What are my goals? I have no definitive answer. For now, I’m just busy living the questions. I encourage you to do the same.

-Marie Martin (née Robinson), Class of 2008
Dear Honorables,

Spring has sprung an exciting semester for the Honors program. We carried the momentum from fall semester, bringing well-received events to the Honors community. We kicked the semester off with the traditional Profs Pick the Flick when, mimicking the Honors seminar style, we introduced a cross-disciplinary approach to the movie *Contagion* with Dr. Han Kim providing macro-level public health commentary and Dr. Betsy Kleba illuminating the microbiological aspects of the film. It was off the chain!

Then, instead of the traditional Pizza with the Profs event, Nina Vought hosted a home-cooked vegan meal accompanied by a discussion of sustainable eating practices. Both of these events introduced a twist on old classics. We look forward to the remaining events, including Monte Carlo night and the first annual Live-Action Role-Play, an experimental event for the end of the semester that is sure to be a blast.

Warm chai-like regards,
Your 2012-2013 SHC
Sam Wilkinson
André Biscaye
Jeff Collins

Honorables-To-Be, Current-Honorables, and Honorables-Past,

As editors, it’s our job to conceive and create the best newsletter possible each semester. Our rather vibrant imaginations make the first task largely simple, but the latter component is more of a fly-by-the-seat-of-our-pants-and-hope-we-end-up-with-something-great undertaking. In the end, some issues are better than others…but we’d like to say that this one probably takes the cake as our favorite. Why, you ask? Because of you. You have made this issue of *Honorable Mention* special. You have made it truly unique. Its pages have been graced by some of the best articles we have seen. Your memories, pictures, and anecdotes have taken us on a wonderful journey to celebrate the last 25 years of the Honors program in style.

Of course, commemorating the past brings to mind the endless possibilities of the future. Just as the newsletter staff evolves—bidding a fond adieu to Elizabeth and Kellie whilst eagerly welcoming Jessica, Chris, and Hannah—so, too, will the Honors program. And fear not, fellow Honorables...our enthusiasm for covering everything the next 25 years will bring knows no bounds.

Editorially yours,
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