



LAURUS

HONORUM

“Honored with the Laurel”

Volume 10, Fall 2012

## **Honors Students Reach New Heights**





## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR



It has been a busy fall, as usual, and there are several stories here on the accomplishments of the office staff and the activities of the Honors students. Starting with Dr. Lane's NCHC workshop in July and Dr. Gisken's story on his semester in the Loft, congratulations are also in order for Ms. Catina Debord, who completed her MPA in August! Tales of adventure come from some students' summer experiences in

theater in New York City and at a medical school, as well as the interesting summer research projects of others at the NCRC and University of Kentucky. There are also myriad reports from students and alumni traveling around the world, from Spain to Thailand and Zambia.

An overview of Spring courses is on view, and there are fun tales about the first-ever Freshmen Retreat and Community Connections events, in addition to pictures from the Freshmen Family Picnic. There is a report on the annual Vanguard Knighting, the trip to the North Carolina Honors Association meeting, and I hope you take this chance to meet our new staff members, Lisa Kirscht, J.D., the new pre-law/business advisor, and Tori Ford, our new Graduate Assistant for the Prestigious Scholarships Program.

As always, plan to come back again in January to see what the Winter Laurus Honorum has to share, as we already know of a number of exciting events coming up that will bring newsworthy items to your attention!

-- Leslie Sargent Jones, Ph.D

## Thinkin' in Lincoln

In July, Associate Director, Michael E. Lane, so-journed in sunny Lincoln, Nebraska – headquarters of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) – to participate in two faculty development institutes. During the first seminar, he and honors colleagues from institutions nation-wide (and two representatives from Qatar!) collaborated to enhance the assessment and evaluation visions, to advance the strategic planning processes, and to fine-tune the anticipated student learning outcomes of their honors programs and colleges. What Dr. Lane learned there will benefit the Honors College as ASU prepares for its reaccreditation review in 2013 by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The second seminar afforded its dozen participants the training needed to become NCHC-approved honors site visitors.

Dr. Lane looks forward to serving as an external consultant to facilitate the development and promotion of honors education at other campuses.





## FALL AT THE APPALACHIAN LOFT

Dr. Howard Giskin, an English and Honors College faculty member, is directing Appalachian State University's Loft in New York City this fall, a facility the University has had since 1999, when the current Loft replaced an earlier locale. The Loft accommodates an eclectic mix of ASU students, faculty, alumni, staff, and others who have heard about the Loft from ASU friends or family. So far, Dr. Giskin has had a group of eight retired persons for a week of fun and adventure, and students from the School of Music visiting music industry-related venues, all staying in the bunkrooms, and getting along!

Dr. Giskin reports that New York's reputation as one of the most vibrant and ethnically diverse cities in the world is well deserved. In the month after he and his wife Vicki arrived, they had the chance to explore the city in a way they had not done before. They found the building on 122nd street near Grant's Tomb, adjacent to Columbia University campus, where Dr. Giskin lived from ages five through seven as his father was finishing coursework for his doctorate; they saw a musical at Lincoln Center; they toured Theodore Roosevelt's childhood home on East 20th Street; they walked the fantastic High Line; they rode the click-clack of the line to Coney Island; and they marveled at the Ground Zero Memorial Site. There's just so much to do in New York.

The Loft assignment involves a project, and Dr. Giskin's for the semester is two-fold, catching up on reading he has put off for ages, and writing what might be called urban poetry. Dr. Giskin has always loved the writings of Walt Whitman, old man of Manhattan (as he called his beloved island), so he has been working his way through the complete writings. He has taken advantage of his time there also to read Edgar Lee Masters' Spoon River Anthology, a classic piece of Americana. But mostly he is writing poems, which as anyone who does this knows, requires space, not physical, but mental, spiritual, a clearing of the psychic deck, so to speak. Dr. Giskin feels fortunate to be able to do what he is doing now, both in reading and writing, and in meeting the wonderful people passing through the Loft. Viva NYC.

*Dr. Giskin at the 9/11 Memorial Site  
Reflecting Pool*





## New Vanguard Members Inducted

The annual induction of the newest class of the Honors Vanguard took place once again in the Honors College. The incoming members were knighted on August 28th in the lobby of East Hall in the traditional knighting ceremony led by Dr. Jones with her katana. Current Vanguard members also attended to welcome their new colleagues to help explain the duties of this elite group. The Honors Vanguards assist with running events such as open house, honors days, and meeting with prospective students to talk about the Honors College.

Congratulations to all!

### The New 2012-2013 Vanguard Members

**Chris Clark**  
**Erin Coonfer**  
**Anna Coppedge**  
**Alaina Doyle**  
**Corbin Ester**  
**Olivia Frank**  
**Karlie Gale**  
**Danny Garcia**

**Brittany Hintze**  
**Melinda Hodnett**  
**Emerald Orbeta**  
**David Marvel**  
**Alison Rossi**  
**Kelsey Rothenberg**  
**Allison Williams**  
**Caitlin Williams**





## Susan Zhao Participates in Medical Enrichment Development Program

This summer, Susan Zhao participated in the Medical Enrichment Development (MED) Program at the UNC-CH School of Medicine. During the intensive eleven-week program, she stepped into the shoes of a medical school student and took courses that were all taught by medical staff and faculty. Although all of the classes were new and fascinating to Susan, Gross Anatomy was her favorite because she could kinesthetically learn lecture material by immediately performing dissections in cadaver lab. Holding a human heart for the first time was one of her most memorable, awe-inspiring moments in lab. Learning such dense material in such a short period of time taught her what to expect as an aspiring doctor, while building enduring relationships with peers and mentors alike.

The program also integrated a variety of professional seminars with topics that ranged from cultural competence and health disparities, to translational research and healthcare reform. These interdisciplinary seminars were the perfect complement to her studies, as she is also interested in pursuing public health.

Despite its rigor, the MED Program has reaffirmed Susan's passions and dreams of becoming a doctor. Being surrounded by driven, like-minded students in a real medical school environment was a tremendous inspiration. She is grateful for such a fulfilling summer experience.



Susan Zhao (left)



Molly Winstead in Character

## Molly Winstead Performs in New York

Sophomore Molly Winstead traveled to New York City in August with the cast of *Bumbershoot* to perform in the New York International Fringe Festival. Written and directed by Dr. Derek Davidson, a professor at Appalachian, *Bumbershoot* featured a cast from across the country, including Molly and an Appalachian alumna, Shauna Godwin Hamby. The trip was an incredible experience for Molly, and provided her with a look at what is involved in a theater production on a larger scale, as well as many cultural opportunities. The cast of *Bumbershoot* had a brief rehearsal period here in Boone, and ended with an open-to-the-public dress rehearsal before they took the show to NYC.

The show was a new spin on the classic *Film Noir*. It included live Irish music, a Lushootseed speaking Native American god, and a shocking surprise ending! The show did very well at the festival, receiving positive reviews, and it was even selected to be published by FringeNYC. This was an experience of a lifetime for Molly, who got the chance to work with and learn from a varied and creative cast of actors, musicians and directors.



# STUDENTS

## New Freshmen Seminar Peer Mentor Program

This year the Honors College instituted a new program to help promote community and inter-class-year connections by assigning a continuing student Peer Mentor to each of the seven HON 1515 Freshmen Seminar classes (listed below). Upper class students were able to apply and select the course that fit their interests, and then were e-introduced to the professor in the course to start a discussion of how the Peer Mentor would contribute to the course and what their role might be with the students. Each of the professors is involving their Peer Mentor in different ways, and the report on how that works will be forthcoming when the semester is over and everyone has time to assess it. The Peer Mentors have been given a food budget and they are creating social opportunities for their class of freshmen to meet each other and the continuing Honors Students who live next door in Summit. With slide card access between both buildings to facilitate interactions, it is hoped that this program will encourage the integration of the newest group of Honors students into the Honors College's community of scholars.

Course	Professor	Peer Mentor
Metamorphoses in Life: Love & Death	Dr. Michael Dale	Allison Crook
Race & Resistance	Dr. Joseph Gonzalez	Kristie Kennedy
Marketing & Society	Ms. Barbara Michel	Rose Buchanan
Creative Life and Practice	Dr. Thomas McLaughlin	Sara Lackey
de Tocqueville & the U.S.: Reading Democracy in America	Dr. Michael Behrent	Nick Smith
Teacher Leadership in a Global Society	Dr. Michael Jacobson & Ms. Jan Stanley	Brian Clee
Brain on Trial: Neuroscience and the Law	Dr. Leslie Jones & Ms. Lisa Kirscht	Shannon Wright

## SPRING 2013 HONORS COURSES

Students are coming in for Spring schedule advising and once again there is a fascinating line-up of both HON and departmental honors courses. New to the scene are classes like "Art and the Brain" from Dr. Zrull (taking a break from "Plastic Brain"), "Popes, Artists and Revolutionaries" from Dr. Reed, and "Hope and Fear: Challenges to American Democracy" with Dr. Ardoin. Some old favorites are back, such as "Fermentation" (Dr. Cohen) and "Life Coaching" (Dr. DeHart), and then there is a revisit for "Darwin" with Dr. Waters, who is offering it this time as a 2515 with a sophomore perspective. Some challenging Junior seminars (but can be taken senior year!) that are fresh offerings include "Music & Politics," "Tycoons, Titans, and Blaggards," and "Animal Planet," among others. Take a look at those course descriptions!

On the travel side, Dr. Hellenbrand has restructured her Arthurian course into a Junior Seminar, "Britain's Arthur" that will include a spring break trip to the UK to visit sites and sights related to the legend. There will also be the two HON 2515 and 3515 combined classes "The Philosophy of Love, Sex & Power" taught by Drs. Jack Kwong and Randy Reed against the backdrop of Paris and Rome in May/June. If you can manage that, it should be spectacular! And the International Internships will be going to Mexico and South Africa again, with the addition of opportunities now in India and Brazil. The international courses require application and approval by the course instructor, but that is just a formality, so don't let it deter you!

# EVENTS



## HONORS FRESHMEN RETREAT

This year, for the first time, the Honors College was able to host an all-day retreat event for the entering freshmen. Thanks to two very generous donors, Mr. Brad Wilson (Co-Chair of the Capital Campaign) and Mr. Frank Daniels, Jr. (member of the Board of Trustees), a full day of outdoor community-building activities was possible at the Broadstone facility. The day-long event was run by UREC and the remarkable staff of Mr. Rich Campbell, who provided a morning of organized activities that had all 100+ students (two thirds of the entering class plus 15 upper-class students as mentors) playing together in teams in challenges designed to get them working together. They also were meeting their new classmates, of course, along with the AHA! officers and several other continuing students who were there to answer questions and make friendships that would hopefully promote connections between class years.

A great barbecue lunch was served up in the lodge, thanks to the ASU Catering staff, and students had another opportunity to meet and chat in that lovely facility. In the afternoon the students were free to sign up for new things to try, such as the Alpine Tower of High Ropes, or to play games like volleyball, soccer, and ultimate Frisbee (there was a rather large and long game of that), or just to lounge down by the Watauga River. Several students explored upriver, while others floated about on tubes enjoying a chance to relax before the semester started. When a shower blew through in the mid-afternoon, some went back up to the lodge for card games and other indoor fun (thanks to senior Samantha Craig for some of that craziness!).

It was a tired crew of freshmen who were bused back to campus at 5:00, but they were also a freshly-bonded class with new friendships forged through shared accomplishments and fun. The Honors College staff, all there watching (and sometimes joining in), were amazed at how quickly and happily the students made themselves at home and forged those new friendships so critical for support and success during the freshman year. The Honors College is extremely grateful for the gifts that made this possible, and looks forward to being able to repeat the event next year.





## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

On August 16, fifty freshman Honors Students participated in the first Community Connections event, which was organized by Dr. Dale Wheeler. The main goal of the Community Connections experience was to gain perspective on the town of Boone and how various agencies work together to meet the needs of the population and create a vibrant community. Eighteen groups of 2-4 students were assigned various local agencies to visit. Each group was required to ride the Appalcart, the local, free bus system, to reach their destination. Their assignment was to determine how their agency helps to define the town of Boone and the surrounding community.

Agency directors met for 15-30 minutes with their assigned group of students. Students found out about the history, services provided, the population served, concerns, benefits and opportunities for ASU students, and the future of the agency. Some of the locations visited included the Boone Arts Council and Art Gallery, the Watauga County Health Department, the Watauga County Sheriff's Office, Boone City Hall, Watauga County Parks and Recreation Center, the Humane Society, the Watauga Democrat Newspaper, and the Sanitation and Recycling Center. Once the students finished their interview, they found a place for lunch and used the time to determine who would give a 3-minute presentation about what they had learned.

All students reassembled at 1:30 p.m. in Room 114 of the Carol Grotnes Belk Library and Information Commons. Beginning promptly at 2:00 p.m., the students shared their experiences in amazing presentations, including lots of pictures and information, and even a short video of their adventures was shown.







## FUN AT THE FRESHMEN FAMILY PICNIC

Family Weekend at Appalachian also brought the Honors College Freshmen Family Picnic once again! On Sunday, September 30th, freshmen Honors Students and their families joined in Legends for a "picnic" full of great barbecue food and conversation. Everyone took advantage of this wonderful opportunity to meet other families and form new friendships. The picnic ended with a visit from Chancellor Peacock, who had the chance to meet many of the Honors Students' families and to speak to them about the Honors College. A great time was had by all who attended!





## Alumna Kristin Pollock Goes to Thailand



After graduating last December with her English and Global Studies degrees, Kristin Pollock spent four months volunteering in Bangkok, Thailand, doing many exciting things. She volunteered at a church where she taught English to the housekeepers, and she also had the opportunity to teach English at the Rose Marie Academy.

Kristin improved her Spanish-speaking skills by befriending a Peruvian woman who was in prison for smuggling drugs into the country. The woman did not speak any English, but they both enjoyed their weekly chats.

Another rewarding experience Kristin had was teaching orphans with disabilities how to swim, and they showed her how incredibly amazing they can be.

After Thailand, Kristin moved to Wilmington, NC, where she has been enjoying her work as the Volunteer Coordinator at the Good Shepherd Center, a homeless shelter in the community.

Joni Ray spent the 2011-2012 academic year studying in Sevilla, Spain, at Universidad Pablo de Olavide. Her main objectives while abroad were to study other cultures and learn a second language. She spent fall semester living with a Spanish host family. This was a welcoming experience in a foreign country as they became very close, and it familiarized her with the Spanish style of family life. Living with a Spanish-speaking host family also rapidly advanced Joni's level of the Spanish language. She lived in Triana during the spring semester, an area of the city rich with flamenco culture, as well as a history of ceramicists.

While in Europe Joni took advantage of the opportunity to travel and made many unforgettable memories while exploring. Some of her most valuable experiences were in Morocco, where she was able to tour small local farms and learn more about sustainable business practices from a fair trade argon oil production facility in the High Atlas Mountains. Her top two travel destinations were Granada and the southern coast of Portugal.

Joni's favorite class at her university was Intercultural Communications. It added perspective and meaning to intercultural connections that Joni made throughout the year. It has also helped define her future interests of helping to strengthen positive intercultural interactions.

## Joni Ray's Unforgettable Year in Spain





# INTERNATIONAL

## Nick Smith Experiences Zambia

Sophomore Nick Smith wasn't interested in spending his summer at home; actually he was interested in just the opposite. In his mind, the opposite of staying home was, naturally, going abroad. Overseas travel wasn't a new thing for Nick, and through his previous travels outside of the country he had found that he possessed a deep love for traveling. He found the new places, cultures, and people he encountered overseas impossible to forget and he vowed to capitalize on every travel opportunity that came up.

After months of searching for places to go, Nick finally came into contact with New Day Orphanage in Choma, Zambia, and they asked him to come on board as an intern for the summer. New Day Orphanage is a Christian-based organization in its second year of operation, whose main goals are providing a Christian worldview, quality education, and Zambian culture to orphans in the area surrounding Choma. In the two months that Nick stayed at New Day he spent the majority of his time with the children, either helping in the school teaching them English, Bible stories, or music or just playing with them. He made quick friends with the other staff members at New Day, including two Zambians with whom he lived named Kalenga and Mulenga. As the intern, Nick assisted in picking up the teams from the States and helped them acclimate to African life. Nick also played on the local village's soccer team, and scored three goals in four games. In addition to his time at the orphanage, Nick was also able to visit Victoria Falls, one the seven natural wonders of the world, and to go on a safari in Botswana.



# CONFERENCES



## HONORS COLLEGE TEAM TRAVELS TO ECU FOR ANNUAL NCHA CONFERENCE

The Honors College team attended the North Carolina Honors Association Conference (NCHA) on September 14-15, which was hosted at East Carolina University this year. This annual event provides members of our Honors College with an opportunity to meet with individuals from honors colleges and programs throughout the state to collaborate and share ideas for improving their programs.

Honors students, faculty, and administrators all joined in opening the conference on Friday evening with a keynote dinner and discussion. This was followed by a student session for the honors students and an honors best practices roundtable discussion for faculty and administrators.

After beginning the day on Saturday with the NCHA business meeting, the team was able to enjoy some amazing research presentations by the honors students held throughout the morning. ASU's very own Honors Student, Aaron Dallman, presented his research to a standing-room only crowd. The conference concluded with a closing luncheon, where faculty and administrators heard from the honors students about what they learned and took away from the conference.

The Honors College was selected to host the NCHA conference next year, which makes Dr. Jones the NCHA President-Elect for the organization. The team is already discussing plans and is excited to welcome honors students, faculty, and administrators throughout North Carolina to ASU and beautiful Boone in Fall 2013!

(Right) Dr. Leslie Sargent Jones has conversations with Bill Atwill (UNC-Wilmington) and Kevin Baxter (ECU).



(Above) Aaron Dallman presents his research, "Exploring Music Therapy: The Brain and Why Music Works," to a packed room of honors faculty, administrators, and students.





Biology senior, Meghan Kuser, and Dr. Leslie Sargent Jones, Director of the Honors College, traveled to Barcelona where they presented at the 2012 biennial meeting of the Federation of European Neurosciences. Dr. Jones is the founding faculty advisor of the ASU-hosted undergraduate neuroscience journal, IMPULSE, and Meghan is the managing editor. The poster reported on the learning impact for students who submit and publish their work in IMPULSE, and Meghan enjoyed meeting and discussing potential collaborations with fellow neuroscientists from around the world.

Both Meghan and Dr. Jones also had the chance to attend other presentations on topics ranging from neuroethics, to visual processing in monkeys and men. Meghan is hoping that conversations with a colleague at the University of Barcelona will lead to a new reviewer training site at that institution this coming year.

Accompanied by her parents on this trip, Meghan was able to visit a few of the many iconic tourist destinations of Barcelona, including the Sagrada Familia cathedral and trip to beautiful Montserrat.

## MEGHAN KUSER PRESENTS IN BARCELONA



**Dr. Leslie Jones (left) and Meghan Kuser (right)**

## The Honors College Welcomes Tori Ford

Tori Ford joins the Honors College team as the Graduate Assistant for the Prestigious Scholarships Program (PSP). She will be working with Dr. Dale Wheeler, Director of PSP, to coordinate the AIM High and APPetite for Life events, as well as assisting the Honors College staff.

Tori completed her undergraduate studies at Temple University in Philadelphia, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice. She recently relocated from the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania to Vilas. She has joined the ASU community to pursue her Master of Arts in College Student Development.





## **CORBIN ESTER PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION RESEARCH**

This past summer, Sophomore Corbin Ester worked in the National Science Foundation funded Research Experience for Undergraduates in the Biochemical Sciences at the University of Kentucky. While there, Corbin spent his summer working in the lab of Dr. David Rodgers, learning many techniques that are utilized in the field of Structural Biology and Crystallography.



*"While I was working with Dr. Rodgers, I learned many new techniques that both broadened and diversified my skill set as a maturing research scientist. . . . The NSF-REU program at the University of Kentucky really taught me what life as a scientist would be like, not only through my own experience, but by learning from all of the researchers around me. I would fully recommend the program to anyone who even seems slightly interested in research as a possible career."*

Corbin's summer research is being presented at SER-MACS (South Eastern Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society). Corbin's future career plans include pursuing a dual degree in a M.D./Ph.D program, after which he is interested in translational research, cancer research, and pediatric oncology.

## **Congratulations to Honors College Office Manager Catina DeBord!**

The Honors College is proud to announce that Catina DeBord, Office Manager in the Honors College, earned her Master of Public Administration degree from Appalachian this past summer. Catina earned her undergraduate degree in public relations from Appalachian in 2003 and she has been working in the Honors College since 2010.





## ANTHONY PASTORE INTERNS AT APPALACHIAN STATE LAB



This past summer, Senior Anthony Pastore interned at Appalachian State's Human Performance Lab at the North Carolina Research Campus in Kannapolis. Under the direction of Dr. David Neiman, he worked on the lab's most recent project, "Effects of Milled Chia Seed on Exercise Performance in Endurance Cyclists."

Anthony learned how to conduct VO<sub>2</sub> max test and operate a Bod Pod, a machine that accurately determines subjects' body composition. He was also charged with the task of collecting heart rate, rating of perceived exertion, power output, and VO<sub>2</sub> data at specified times throughout the day of the test. On non-test days, he analyzed the subject data and learned how to manipulate the information into graphs and figures similar to the ones found in scientific journals.

As a result of Anthony's work over the summer, he received an Undergraduate Research Assistantship program from the Office of Student Research. Anthony is in the process of creating a poster of the study's findings to be presented at ASU's Celebration of Student Research and Creative Endeavors Day in the spring.

## New Honors Pre-Law and Business Advisor

Lisa Kirscht joins the Honors College team after gaining twelve years of legal experience in Florida. Lisa spent the past four years teaching and directing the academic success program at Barry University School of Law in Orlando. Her prior experience also includes working as an underwriting counsel for a Fidelity National Title Insurance Company, and as a judicial staff attorney for Florida's Ninth Judicial Circuit Court. Lisa has practiced in the areas of insurance defense, domestic, and criminal law.

Lisa received her undergraduate degree with honors from East Carolina University, and her law

degree with honors from North Carolina Central University. She is excited to be back in North Carolina to reunite with family and friends, and looks forward to working with the Honors Students at Appalachian.



# Best Wishes From The Honors College



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For more information on how to donate, please email or call the Honors College. We appreciate your support and generosity!

The Honors College Newsletter

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