

LAURUS

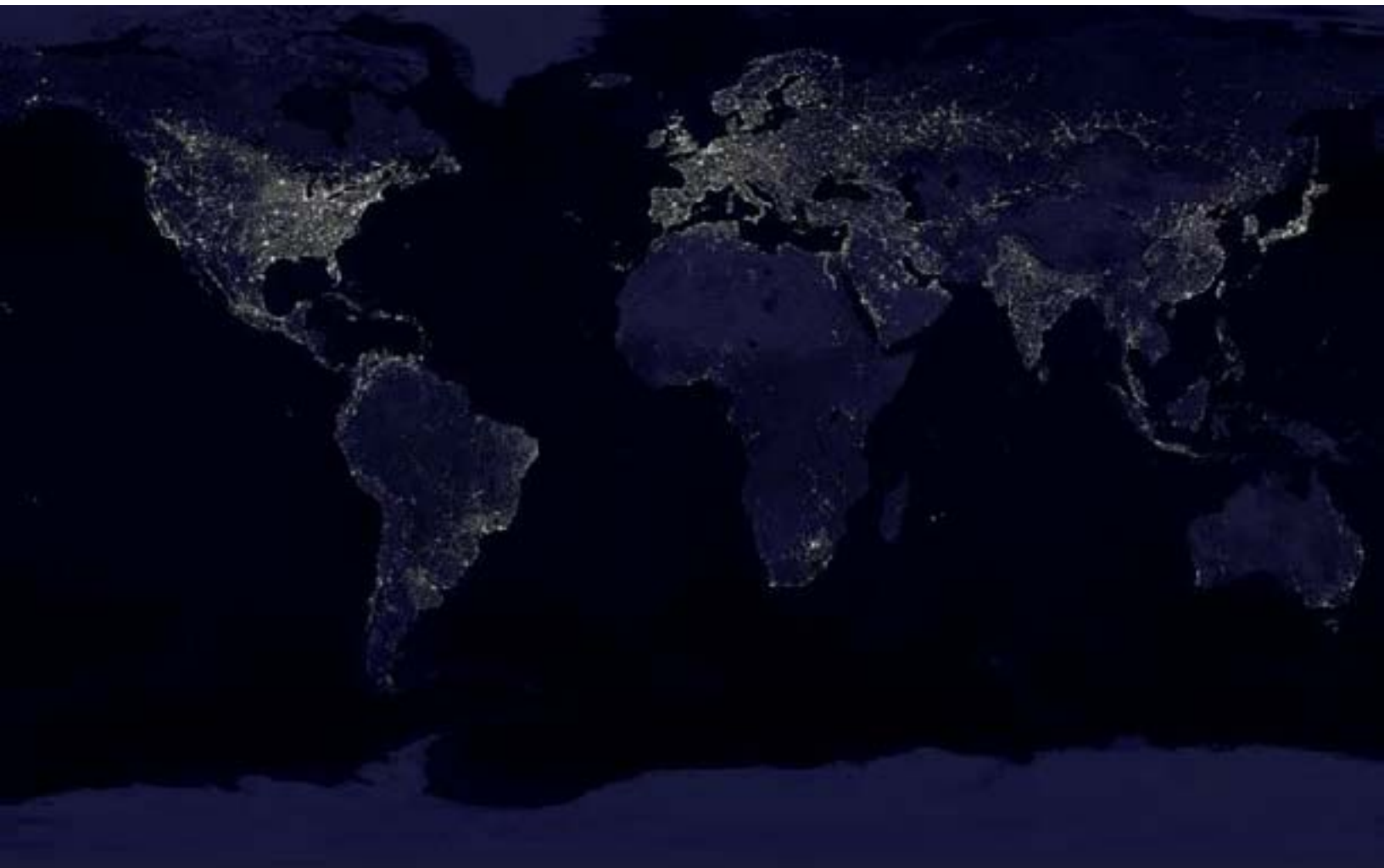
HONORUM

“Honored with the Laurel”

Volume 5, Summer 2011

Honors Students Light Up the World!

Cover photo: “Earth at Night”, National Aeronautics and Space Administration





WELCOME

A Word From The Director



Happy 4th of July! We have just crossed the halfway point of summer with as many students back from their travels as those who are still preparing to go. In this quarter's issue you will find exciting stories of voyages to Africa, Australia, and Europe. You will read about students, faculty, and alumni, all of them reporting either on far-flung adventures geographically or temporally; the future, after all, is the most exotic undiscovered landscape. Of course, we update you here on the recent graduates, and I invite you to visit our website to see the list of their theses and learn more about their scholarly accomplishments while they were with us in the Honors College. Next up, welcoming in the new class of freshmen. We just finished Orientation and they seem like a very enthusiastic group, but come back in the fall for a full report!

GRADUATION!





Honorum Laurus, May 2011

Friday afternoon, May 6, 2011, saw 38 graduates from the Honors College receive their medals at the Honorum Laurus ceremony. The thesis titles were wonderful, the remarks the students made were moving and funny (often simultaneously!), and they are all off to pursue the next step on their bright paths. In addition to the graduates being honored, Dr. Thomas McGowan, retiring this year, was also recognized for his many years of service and teaching in the Honors College. Dr. McGowan, an Appalachian folklore expert and beloved English professor since the early 70s, has taught HON courses almost every year, enlivening the classroom with his wit and stories. We hope to entice him back to teach again in the near future!



GRADS

Honors Alumnus Surprises Dr. McGowan

A special surprise guest at the Honorum Laurus was Dr. David Cook, a student of Dr. McGowan's back in the 70s (see preceding article). Dr. Cook rescheduled his day and drove up to be able to say a few words at the ceremony and share in honoring Dr. McGowan. Dr. Cook was a Chemistry and English double major who came to APP on a basketball scholarship, graduating with Honors in 1980. He went on to be part of the inaugural class of medical students at East Carolina's Brody School of Medicine, graduating in 1984 and receiving the Humanitarian Award for his work to establish a program of medical care for migrant workers. He did his internship and then residence in neurology at the Bethesda Naval Hospital, completing his training in 1988, and then served for a number of years in the US Navy Medical Corps and at the Duke Medical Center. He is currently in private practice in Cary, NC, and has received numerous awards recognizing the quality and compassion of his patient care. We were all very proud and pleased to have Dr. Cook join the celebration - none more than Dr. McGowan. It was wonderful to hear stories about those early days in Honors and the renaissance of the Cold Mountain Review!



FACULTY



Prof. Newmark visits the U.K.



During the Spring 2011 semester, Dr. Adam Newmark was on international assignment at Keele University in the United Kingdom as Visiting Professor in the School of Politics, International Relations, and Philosophy and a Bruce Centre Fellow for American Studies. He was involved in lectures and seminars for courses on American political debates and public policy. Keele University, situated on a large, beautiful campus surrounded by wooded areas, parklands, and lakes, has an ongoing exchange relationship with Appalachian State.

While there, Dr. Newmark presented research at the Bruce Centre on the perceived linkages between President Obama and Islam (research conducted with Dr. Todd Hartman of ASU). He also presented research on pork-barrel politics at the Political Studies Association's annual meeting in London, England (based on research with Dr. Brian Ellison of ASU).

In his free time, Dr. Newmark travelled around England, visiting historic places like Stonehenge, Hadrian's Wall, Nottingham, and the walled city of Chester. He also took several trips to England's Peak District for some amazing rock climbing, an activity that will certainly continue upon his return to Boone. He was also fortunate to spend time in Scotland, the Republic of Ireland, and Northern Ireland. Highlights of these trips included visits to Edinburgh Castle, Urquhart Castle at the bank of Loch Ness, the Book of Kells at Dublin's Trinity College, the scenic Ring of Kerry in Ireland, and the Giant's Causeway of Northern Ireland. He will return to ASU this summer.

OUTREACH



ASU Builds Relationship with Southwestern



On Friday, April 8, 2011, the Honors College signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Southwestern Community College. This now makes it possible for honors students at SCC to transfer to Appalachian and continue their honors education, then graduate with University Honors from ASU. Shown signing the MoU are Dr. Leslie Sargent Jones, Director of the Honors College at ASU (left) and Dr. Thomas R. Brooks, Vice President for Instruction and Student Services at Southwestern Community College. Instrumental in bringing about this MoU were Virginia Trovato (standing far left), who interned with the Honors College this past year, and Cheryl Contino-Conner (SCC Director for Student Support Services, standing center 4th from left). Drs. Mike Mayfield (ASU Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education, 2nd from left) and Lorin Baumhover (ASU Provost, 3rd from left) looked on, along with Kendal McDevitt (ASU Director of Off-Campus Community Relations, far right), Lloyd Scott (ASU Director of Admissions, 2nd from right), Jane Rex (ASU Director of the Office of Transfer Articulation, 3rd from right), and Dr. Barb Putnam (SCC Dean of Arts and Sciences, 4th from right). The Honors College staff members are very excited about this MoU, the first one signed at ASU, and hope to have others to report in the future. This is part of a wider Honors College initiative to encourage community colleges in general to offer honors options for their students, and to promote transfer opportunities for those students coming to Appalachian.



The ASU IMPULSE journal review team once again went to the annual SYNAPSE meeting and presented a poster on the undergraduate neuroscience journal, which is hosted at APP. The meeting at Wake Forest was attended by over 100 other neuroscience-focused undergraduates from around the southeast. The students presented their research, met faculty and students from other programs, and had the chance to learn more about preparing for graduate/professional school. Shown above are students from ASU and several other universities and colleges who contribute as IMPULSE reviewers, as well as the mentor from the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, Dr. Sarah Sweitzer (far left).

A few weeks later, Dr. Jones hosted an ASU team supper at her home (left) to celebrate another great year of journal work by the students. Congratulations to those IMPULSE reviewers who just graduated, and stay in touch!

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION



A Postcard from Sri Lanka

Tim Hefflinger just wrote in with this update on his summer activities:

“I am interning with the Centre for Environment and Development, an NGO headquartered in Colombo, Sri Lanka. My role has been to research and organize the content of a Professional Certificate Course the Centre will be offering on ‘Climate Sustainability’ through a major Asian university. I’ve also been responsible for writing and electronically publishing a number of reports on the Millennium Consumption Goals, as well as a report on Governance for Sustainable Consumption and Production. Perhaps the most exciting aspect of my work has been starting to organize a Platform of civil-society organizations that will represent the causes of social justice and environmental sustainability at the UN Conference on SD (aka Rio+20) to be held in Rio de Janeiro next June. On my weekends, I’ve been traveling all around ‘the pearl of the Indian Ocean’ to such places as Anuradhapura, Kandy, and Galle. Between learning how to operate an NGO in civil society and learning how to travel like a thoughtful, intelligent person, this experience is turning me upside down! I’m applying virtually everything I’ve learned in the classroom to my work and my play, and I can’t think of a better way to kick off my career.”



Anna Goes to Senegal

Rising sophomore Chancellor's Scholar Anna Gannett just returned from Africa where she visited her sister, Maria, a Peace Corps volunteer. In the remote village of Madjaly, Senegal, Anna learned that not all people are lucky enough to have running water and electricity. Maria is working on agroforestry projects such as building live fences and helping the villagers take care of their gardens. Anna worked for a couple days in the garden, turning compost piles and planting a new vegetable plot. Much of the time was spent talking in the shade during the days because the temperatures reached over 100°F daily. The living situation in the village was a one-room hut with a grass roof, a bed outside, and a hole in the ground for the bathroom and for bucket baths. Not only did she learn how to live simply, but she also experienced the huge culture gap between the American and Senegalese lifestyles. During the second half of her trip, Anna travelled to South Africa with her sister to see a different part of the continent. She witnessed the remaining effects of Apartheid on the country and saw how European culture has had a profound influence. Overall, it was a short yet life-changing experience, and she will be writing it up for a one credit Honors Independent Study in the fall.



Exploring Vietnam

Kate Davison, a rising senior honors student, went with ten other APP students this summer to study biodiversity, biogeography, and conservation in Vietnam. They arrived in Hanoi and immediately were immersed in Vietnamese culture, visiting a marketplace, frog farm, and the local government building devoted to conservation. The students had the incredible opportunity of sailing in Ha Long Bay (see photo) and hiking in Cat Ba National Park. From there they traveled to the Red River Delta Region and stayed in the Cuc Phuong National Park, home to conservation centers focusing on turtles, primates, and small carnivores. In Tam Dao they learned about the endangered Tam Dao salamander, a beautiful orange and blue specimen, once found nearly everywhere in the park but now rarely seen. Finally, the group traveled south to Ho Chi Minh City and stayed in Cat Tien, which is recognized as the most well-protected park in Vietnam. While there they were able to see Rhesus monkeys playing in the enormous fig tree right behind the guest house, an emblematic moment of the trip. Kate says it was a remarkable opportunity and she would like to thank her two wonderful professors, Dr. Wayne Van Devender and Dr. Gary Walker, the two guides on the trip, Dave Davenport and Wen, for showing her the natural treasures of Vietnam, and the Heltzer Honors Program for International Education for tuition support for the six credit course.



Philosophy, Love, and Europe

Kelsey Fuller reports that her experience with the “Philosophy of Love” travel course was amazing. Any experience that allows you to see the world, learn about new cultures, make new friendships, and get you class credit is going to be a good one! The trip was dreamlike, she says, from sitting on a field next to the Eiffel Tower to exploring the city. She and her classmates recognized how lucky they were to have this exceptional educational opportunity. She had never taken a philosophy or a religion course before, and she realized that it made the material much more interesting to have the discussions with Drs. Kwong and Reed while at the relevant monuments, museums, and churches. She noted that she also developed some great friendships and acquired a new favorite saying: “Life begins outside of your comfort zone.” Once she found a way to make the credits count for her sociology major, she jumped at the chance to take this class and expand her horizons. Students may request support from the Heltzer Honors Program for International Education to help pay for such a course, and the class fulfills the International Education Requirement for University Honors.



Mitch Studies Memory

Mitch Riley, '09, is working in a neuroscience lab at Wake Forest University and will be starting a Ph.D program there this fall. He plans to use electrophysiology to study the formation and retention of memories, hopefully resulting in an electrical implant that will maintain memory functions after injury to a specific part of the brain. This would allow memory-impaired patients to regain learning functions in everyday life after their injury, which is part of his long-term academic goals. He plans to pursue this work as a postdoc in this field, ideally in a lab in Japan, as he has a passion for their culture and language. Eventually he hopes to teach and pass on the knowledge that he receives to a new generation of scientists while continuing to do research in his own lab. He sees himself as a professor at a university somewhere in the world, studying learning and memory and advising future students. Great work, Mitch!

Honors College's latest Alumni

There are over 40 new alumni for the Honors College from this academic year, and you may be interested to see what some of them will be doing next year. A few examples: Laura Tabor and Leah Thompson are off to teach in Spain and Thailand, while Anna Reichard is also going abroad - in her case to do a psychology internship in Australia. Graduate school is the next step for many like Chase Francis and Robb Young, who will enter Ph.D. programs (U. Maryland neuroscience for Chase and Rutgers biophysics for Robb). Others with grad school plans include Alison Langston and J.R. Archer, who will be at NCSU for psychology and engineering, respectively. Rachel Haycraft and Sarah Pollard will continue their thesis work with their mentors as grad students at APP. Rachel Gooding, Kate Bakewell, and Emma White are all off to medical school at UNC, ECU, and S-VCOM, so we won't expect to hear much from them for a while. Diana Mumford says she plans to be a "starving artist" for the foreseeable future; perhaps she will run into anthropology grad Karen Stevens, who lists "shovel bum" as part of her future plans! Many other grads will be hitting the pavement looking for jobs and we look forward to hearing where they go.



Megan Explores Our Nation's Capital

Getting to spend the whole semester in our nation's capital through the ASU in DC program was truly a life changing experience for Megan Northcote. She interned at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage where she worked in the Ralph Rinzler Collection and Archives. She catalogued and created finding aids for the Ralph Rinzler personal and professional papers, which matched up nicely with her Appalachian Studies interest since Ralph Rinzler is known for discovering Watauga County's very own Doc Watson, among other Appalachian folk musicians.

She explains that the Folklife Center presented her with a rich, internationally diverse network of museum and folklore professionals, as well as other student interns all equally as passionate about preserving and celebrating culture as she was. She also spoke with professionals in other branches of the Smithsonian about their careers and attended other Smithsonian-sponsored events such as symposia and guest lectures. She also reports that she gained a better understanding of our nation's political system through the Honors 3510 political science course with Dr. Phillip Ardoin. She and her fellow interns toured the US Supreme Court, US Capitol, and Holocaust Museum, and they also met with accomplished lobbyists, Freddie Mac mortgage crisis analysts, and North Carolina's 13th district congressional representative, Brad Miller. She considers the opportunity to ask some of our nation's key political and economic players firsthand about their jobs truly rewarding. She and her classmates were immersed in the true DC experience through a tour of the National Cathedral, a visit to the Roosevelt Memorial, and trips to different ethnic restaurants.

When not interning or attending class, Megan found plenty of opportunities to explore the district and surrounding towns. From celebrations such as the Environmental Film Festival and the Cherry Blossom Festival to political rallies to rare sightings of famous political figures, she discovered that there was never a dull moment in DC. She even shook the hand of President Obama after hearing him give a speech in Georgetown about renewable energy! Great Falls Park and Old Towne Alexandria were other nearby attractions and activities. Despite all of this, she even found time to volunteer, making acquaintances with many of the locals as well as other international students, each with their own fascinating stories to share. Although at first skeptical to move from the comfort of a small town like Boone to a bigger, more fast-paced city like DC, Megan says that she is glad that she took the risk; because of her time in DC, she now has plenty of great memories, new friends, and endless opportunities awaiting her for the future.



Honors Welcomes Kent Miller, J.D., to Staff



Kent Miller has joined the Honors College staff as the Pre-Law and Business Academic Advisor. Kent comes to Appalachian State after having completed his law degree at William & Mary Law School. Kent graduated with a B.A. in Honors from the University of Arkansas in 2007 and served as the Assistant to the Director in the Office of Academic Scholarships at his alma mater before attending W&M. While new to the High Country, Kent has previously worked in North Carolina with Duke TIP in Durham. He is glad to rejoin the world of higher education and looks forward to working with Honors students.

Interested in Law School? Consider Pre-Law Advising!

Ever thought about attending law school? Have questions about careers in the legal profession? Even slightly considering the possibility of earning a J.D.? Make an appointment with Kent Miller (left), the new pre-law advisor for the Honors College! Through advising, you can learn more about the application process, scholarships and financial aid, school selection, and potential career paths open to those graduating from law school. Given how important these decisions are, make sure you're on the right track. Contact Mr. Miller at millernk@appstate.edu to learn more about how advising can be beneficial to your future. Also, watch for pre-law workshops, seminars, and other useful programs in the fall. Want more information? Check out the Pre-Law Advising section of the Honors College website at <http://honors.appstate.edu/academics/honors-academic-mentoring/pre-law-advising>.

Honors Students Return to Campus

The first day of classes is fast approaching. Honors students will be returning to Boone, North Carolina from all across the world, bringing with them a new enthusiasm and experiences that will assist them in their studies. The staff of the Honors College is looking forward to seeing the halls of East and elsewhere on campus filled with conversation and laughter once again.

Please keep in mind that we at the Honors College are here to help you! Make an appointment to speak with one of our academic advisors or faculty members to discuss where you want to go with your future. We want you to get the most out of your college experience and to enjoy all that Appalachian State University and the Honors College has to offer. See you soon!



Under Construction: The Future of Honors



The future honors building is well underway, and hopefully the new Honors offices will be completed by January 2013.



The Honors College Newsletter

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