



# LAURUS

# HONORUM

“Honored with the Laurel”

Volume 8, Spring 2012



**Opportunities in Bloom for Honors Students**



## A Word From the Director



It is only a few weeks until graduation, and there is a nice, steady flow of panicked seniors coming by the office to discuss their latest crises. They would probably prefer to be out in the lovely, unseasonably early spring we are enjoying, but life beyond college calls them, and they are anxious to finish and move on to their next challenge. It will be a record year for the Honors College, as over 60 students will be graduating with University Honors! Some of their stories are inside, as they have sent in reports of graduate school plans, awards, and national presentations. It has been a very productive spring, with students going to conferences, choosing their graduate schools, and finishing up research and creative projects before their defenses. There are several items on students traveling abroad, a preview of fall courses, and stories about faculty and alumni, bringing you the latest accomplishments of the extended Honors family. Do come back for the summer issue, though, to see pictures from the Honorum Laurus medaling ceremony in May and read about the many international adventures of the students!

## Honors College Welcomes Internal Admits

The Honors College is proud to welcome 74 new members to our student body. Students who do not join the Honors College for their freshman year have an opportunity to apply if they have a successful fall semester at Appalachian State or another institution. Our new internal admit class boasts an impressive average GPA of 3.79 in a variety of majors, including Biology, International Business, History, and many others. We look forward to the many contributions these students will make, both here at Appalachian and in the world.



## HON 2515 and 3515 Spring Courses!

The Honors College course list for Fall 2012 includes a wide variety of topics to meet just about anyone's interests. Back by popular demand is Dr. Michael Lane's *Pros(e)titution* class, as well as classics like *Love & Death* and *Creative Life and Practice*. Two major themes will provide several new options. Given the proximity of the 2012 Presidential Election, the Honors College faculty will be offering *Math and Fairness in Democratic Elections* and *Campaigns and Elections*. Other classes will explore our educational system through coursework in *Teacher Leadership in a Global Society*, *Un-Caped Crusaders: Education and Social Justice*, and *Occupy School: The Philosophy of Participatory Democratic Education*. Check out descriptions of these and many more Honors Seminars on the Honors College website at [honors.appstate.edu](http://honors.appstate.edu).





## Associate Director Named NC French Teacher of the Year



Dr. Michael E. Lane, Associate Director of The Honors College, has been selected as the 2012 French teacher of the year by the North Carolina chapter of the American Association of Teachers of French (NC-AATF). On March 31 at the Cannon School in Concord, Lane was honored by his K-16 peers at the annual, statewide meeting of the organization for his work with undergraduate students in French courses linked to General Education, minors, majors, and study abroad advisees, as well as his instruction and mentorship of graduate students in the MA program in Romance Languages. Among other things, Dr. Lane was praised for his “incomparable commitment to quality teaching and learning.” He was further commended for his recent leadership of a Fulbright-Hays Group Projects abroad grant with the U.S. Department of Education. This program funded twelve North Carolina French teachers in a one-month cultural and linguistic immersion in Senegal, where participants developed multiple curricular projects now being implemented in K-12 French and area studies programs across the state. Lane was appointed to the Appalachian faculty in 2000 and is Associate Professor of French and Francophone Studies in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures.

Félicitations, Dr. Lane!

# PRESENTATIONS



## **Honors Students Attend SYNAPSE Meeting**

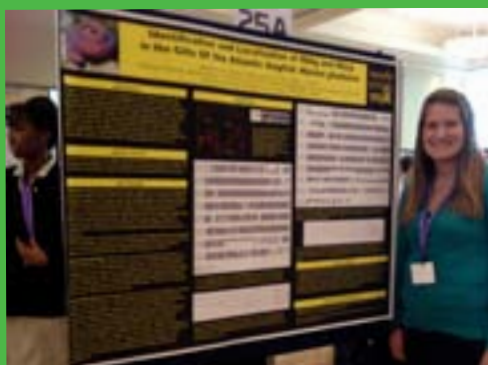
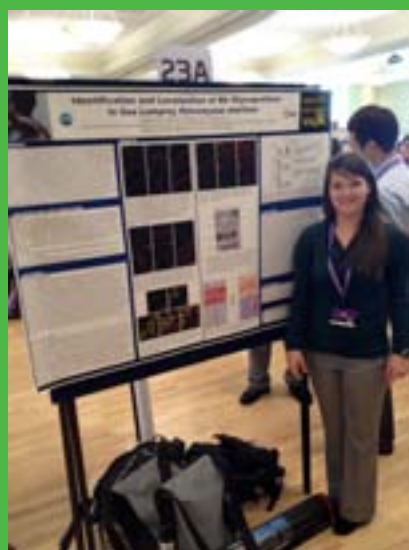
The 8th Annual SYNAPSE meeting was held at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, on Saturday, March 31, and Appalachian had a record number of students attend the meeting. Fourteen students, freshmen through seniors, went to help present a poster about IMPULSE, the undergraduate neuroscience journal hosted through the Honors College at ASU, as well as to attend presentations on neuroscience and workshops on applying to graduate and medical schools. Students also were offered a chance to visit a gross anatomy lab, and a group from Berlin talked about research opportunities in Germany and around the world. The plenary talk on the nexus of genes and behavior in rhesus monkeys was a fascinating tour de force by NIH researcher Dr. Stephen Suomi, and the six student talks, along with the 45 poster presentations, were an excellent reminder of what undergraduates can accomplish in the right environment. As a happy side note, Dr. David Nichols of Roanoke University informed IMPULSE that his institution has set up a team and is ready to become a Reviewer Training Site for the journal, bringing the total RTS number now to eight. Thanks to all those who went to the conference to help promote the journal and share in the excitement of undergraduate neuroscience research!



# PRESENTATIONS

## Honors Students Attend National Research Conference in Utah

Seven Honors College students were among the large group that ASU took to Ogden, Utah, for the annual conference of NCUR (National Conference for Undergraduate Research) on March 29-31. Ryland Bradley (below left) and Margo Pray (top center), shown with their posters, presented their work from research in Dr. Sue Edwards' lab; Margo's title was "Identification and Localization of RhC in the Gills of the Atlantic Hagfish," while Ryland presented on "Molecular Identification of Rh Glycoproteins in the Sea Lamprey, *Petromyzon marinus*." Also at the meeting making presentations were Alexis Dale ("Using a Polar Organic Chemical Integrative Sampler to Detect Fraser Fir Pesticides in Natural Surface Waters"), Chris Eubanks ("Surface-Grafted Cobaloximes as Hydrogen Catalysts in Aqueous Solution"), Amber Harold (bottom center) ("High-throughput Drug Transporter Assays in *C. elegans* Liquid Culture"), and Alicia Woock ("Organic Anion Transport in Live *Caenorhabditis elegans* Viewed by Fluorescence Microscopy"), all from Chemistry. Emily Long (below right) from History gave a platform presentation on "A Critique of Ernst Nolte: Nazism as a Transcendental Metapolitical Phenomenon." The whole group had an incredible experience sharing their research with other undergraduates from around the country, and appreciated the chance to travel to the meeting hosted by Weber State University.





## **ASB Students Help School in Nicaragua**

The Alternative Spring Break trip to Grenada, Nicaragua was full of cultural surprises and fulfilling work. A group of 15 people started off as complete strangers when they left, traveling with no concrete plan and only a vague idea as to what kind of work would be done once there. But after a beautiful first day at a relaxing lagoon, the rest of the week was dedicated to working on a school, painting and developing six classrooms and helping the fifth and sixth grade students with their English in the afternoons. They also took those same students to the zoo, a first for many of the children. While chain link fences were all that separated the tigers from the visitors, many of the children thought the squirrel exhibit was the most interesting! On the last day the students put on a show as a thank you and then, after an all-too-short visit, it was time to say goodbye. It was a busy week full of beans, rice, and plantains (all Nicaraguan staples), painting, laughing children, and growing friendships between every member of the group; it was hard to say farewell. It was a fantastic experience that taught the ASU students an appreciation of what they have, but more than that, the experience as a whole provided an insight into another place and culture that was previously unimaginable, but now will be remembered and cherished forever.



## Libby Explores India, Advocates for Women's Education

Libby Childers, a Junior Human Resource Management major, has been studying abroad at the University of Hyderabad in southern India this spring semester. She has had such a wonderful academic and cultural experience while taking courses in Human Rights and Philosophy. Libby has had the opportunity to travel all across the country, and she has particularly loved riding an elephant in Jaipur and relaxing on the beautiful beaches of South Goa. While in India, Libby has been working with a local non-profit organization as an intern. The organization, Voice 4 Girls, provides English immersion camps for girls in low-income areas and teaches them about educational opportunities and female empowerment. While abroad, interning for Voice 4 Girls has been the most rewarding experience for Libby. She has specifically focused on updating the non-profit's human resource policies and improving the training materials for counselors. Libby is excited to continue advocating for Voice 4 Girls once back in the US and is proud to represent such a worthwhile and important cause.







# INT'L/EVENTS

## Upcoming Events

April 19th - Celebration of Student Research and Creative Endeavors Meeting (Plemmons Student Union, all day)

April 21st - Spring Open House (Holmes Convocation Center, 9am-2pm)

May 11th - Honorum Laurus Spring Honors Graduation Ceremony (Broyhill Events Center, 2:30-4:30pm)

For more updates on upcoming events, check out the Honors College Calendar at <http://honors.appstate.edu/calendar> and the Honors College Announcement Board at <http://honors.appstate.edu/announcements>.



### **Molly Explores Salamanca, Spain**

Molly Spears is a junior Communication Disorders major spending the semester studying abroad in Salamanca. Salamanca is a beautiful city in northwestern Spain, known for having the oldest university in the country. She's had an amazing time so far - not only in Salamanca, but also while traveling to other places like Paris, Berlin, and Rome. Molly is studying Spanish in hopes of one day using it as a speech-language pathologist and working with bilingual children.





## Blakeley Spends Spring in Seville

Blakeley Terral, an honors student studying Global Studies and Spanish as a double major, is studying this semester in Sevilla, Spain, at the Universidad Pablo de Olavide (UPO) to finish up most of his credits for a Spanish degree. He has just finished midterms, and reports that his time in Spain has been fantastic. He tells us that Sevilla is rich with Spanish culture like flamenco, bullfights, and beautiful architecture, in addition to having a lively nightlife. He has found that all of Andalusia has an interesting feel, with beaches and mountains and the clash of Muslim culture from the south and the Catholic culture from the North that has left a beautiful mix of architecture, history, and people. Blakeley lives with a host family in a neighborhood about a thirty-minute walk from the center of the city, away from the center and nightlife, but in the middle of modern Spanish culture. Just behind his apartment is a weekly market that takes place every Sunday with hundreds of vendors and thousands of shoppers. As Blakeley explains, “If you can understand Spanish in Sevilla, you can understand it anywhere, and if you can understand Spanish in that market, then you deserve a gold star.” He has also enjoyed the mix of cultures he has experienced other than Spanish, including French, Italian, Senegalese, Iranian, and German. He will soon be traveling to Morocco and Portugal.

The picture above is of Blakeley in Cordoba, standing on the Jewish Tower.



## **Chancellor's Scholars Dinner**

Chancellor and Mrs. Peacock hosted their annual dinner for the Chancellor's Scholars on March 20, and the scholars and Honors College faculty and friends enjoyed the elegant hospitality of App House once again. A special treat was that Mrs. Jerri Heltzer came up from Lenoir to visit with "her" students, giving us all a chance to thank her for her continued enthusiastic support of the Honors College and the Heltzer Honors Program for International Education. So many students now have benefited from this scholarship, generously funded by Mrs. Heltzer and her remarkable friends, Dr. and Mrs. Mitsch. Thank you to the Peacocks, Mrs. Heltzer, and the students for a wonderful evening!



## **Jordan Heads to Tufts for Prestigious MA Program in Philosophy**

Jordan's Honors thesis is a two-part work that spans areas of cognitive science, the philosophy of mind, and metaethics. Part one focuses on the shareability of concepts as mental representations within Jerry Fodor's Language of Thought Hypothesis. Part two is concerned with the shareability of moral concepts and the impact of concept possession and emotional dispositions on moral motivation. Jordan will specialize in metaethics and philosophy of mind at the Tufts University MA program in philosophy. This program is perennially ranked as the best terminal MA of its kind in the United States, and has a superb record for placing graduates in top-tier philosophy PhD programs. Jordan owes his passion for philosophy primarily to Dr. Christopher J. Bartel, who drew him in with his highly engaging Honors-level introductory course and his whimsical Star Wars t-shirts. In Spring of 2011, Jordan enrolled in New York University's "Spring in New York" program, where he took 17 credit hours at NYU and maintained a paid internship at the Anti-Defamation League's National Civil Rights Division. This experience, combined with the rigor of the Honors College courses and encouragement from the exceptional faculty in the Department of Philosophy & Religion at ASU, solidified his resolve to pursue philosophy as a career.



## **Honors Student Becomes the Teacher**

J.J. Butts was in the Honors Program as a Chancellor's Scholar from 1991 to 1995. The opportunities for smaller, discussion-based classes with a community of other engaged students were deeply rewarding for him, and he felt that most of his professors knew him and were genuinely interested in helping him develop ideas. In fact, he more or less stumbled into his vocation thanks to coursework in the Honors Program; he had several English Honors courses--which he enjoyed immensely, but largely viewed as a sidelight to his major course of study in Anthropology/Archaeology—and, eventually, he realized that he had enough English credits to double major. The participatory and creative pedagogical models encountered in those classes (particularly Melissa Barth's) inspired him to keep his own classrooms innovative and student-focused. They helped him to see that he really wanted a career in a community-based, liberal arts, teaching-focused environment, which provided him with a significant advantage in a field where most graduate students are trained for research institutions. He obtained his Ph.D. in English from Syracuse University, and has since taught at Hunter College, Wartburg College, and now serves as an Assistant Professor at Simpson College in Iowa. He is shown in the accompanying photo with a class taking it to the streets.



## Ronnie Studies Literature in the UK

After graduating from Appalachian last May with a BA in English with Honors distinction, Ronnie Trogden chose to continue his studies in an MA course in Modern and Contemporary Literature and Culture at the University of York in the United Kingdom. The Department of English at the University of York is ranked first in the UK currently. Being a part of The Honors College during his time at Appalachian certainly contributed to his qualifications and preparedness for such a program. For his required study abroad, he spent a summer term at the University of Oxford studying foundational Literary Theory and Shakespeare. He also wrote an Honors Thesis last year on Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, which prepared him to undertake his master's thesis this summer. Though his research skills have improved and his topic has changed, he still has once before completed a project of equivalent length—making the logistics of doing so again less daunting.

Overall, he has thoroughly enjoyed living and studying in the UK so far. The type of program he found in the UK is quite different from one found in the US. British postgraduate studies involve not only more rigorous individual intellectual inquiry, but also dialogue with others in the same and related fields, a program design to which he says he finds himself well suited. MA programs in the UK are also only one year long, and when he finishes his MA this coming autumn, he plans to begin applications for PhD programs both in the US and in the UK. He encourages those now in the The Honors College to take advantage of the opportunities presented and to appreciate that the quality of education you have available through Appalachian is recognized internationally.



# AWARDS

## Honors Grad Awarded NSF Fellowship



Alex Bentz, an Honors graduate and previous Goldwater Scholarship honorable mention, has been awarded a National Science Foundation fellowship to support her doctoral work at Auburn University. She has been working in the lab of Lynn Siefferman in the Department of Biology, where she is completing her M.S. Her research involved manipulating the breeding density of tree swallows to alter the amount of social aggression naturally and, thus, yolk testosterone transferred to eggs via maternal effects. She measured the growth rate and personality (aggression and boldness) of offspring using a partial cross-foster design and found that nestlings hatched in high density sites, regardless of where they were reared, are significantly more aggressive, bold, and grow faster than those hatched in low density sites. Moreover, these personality traits are more strongly correlated when a nestling is hatched and reared in the same environment. These data suggest that maternal hormone provisioning is a mechanism to create adapted phenotypes for anticipated environments. Her Ph.D. research will be a continuation of the MS work as she tries to determine the mechanism responsible for aggressive phenotypes resulting from prenatal hormone exposure and evaluate its role as a mediator of evolutionary change. It was this proposed Ph.D. research that earned her the NSF fellowship, but it was the advice she received from the great faculty members in the Department of Biology, in particular her advisor Lynn Siefferman, as well as Sue Edwards and Ted Zerucha, that made her a competitive applicant.



## *Spring Arrives*



*at Appalachian*

**Next Laurus Honorum  
Arrives in the Summer!**

The Honors College Newsletter

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