



Honors Introduction to the University builds community, friendships for Honors first-years

Six honors students enrolled in the fall 2013 HNRS 101 Introduction to the University and completed an evaluation of the smoking policy on WSU's main campus as their final project.

Peyton Howard, sophomore, explained that the project developed from a prompt to create a video involving a building on campus that could be portrayed in a creative way, such as a game show. The Honors students decided to investigate the smoking policy at WSU, which states that you must be at least 20 feet away from a building's entrance when you smoke. Their investigations concluded that the smoking policy is not well enforced, and they explored this in a final video structured as a newscast.

"I learned there's over 2000 toxins in one cigarette and all the details and percentages about how many people die from smoking and second hand smoke," Howard said. "I want to do cardiology. I'm really interested in smoking and effects on the heart, like that smokers have heart attacks sooner than non-

smokers."

She said she was glad she chose to take this course through the Honors College. "We kind of developed our own little community. We all still meet and talk regularly. We taught each other a lot about different places we use on campus, and where you can get help in this way or where you can get food," she said.

The smaller class also helped Howard tailor her skills of discussion. "Sometimes, some professors will open the floor for discussion, but they have a set agenda," she said. "We interpreted [our questions] any way we wanted and [Dr. Engber] would point out how our points worked together. We read [The Immortal Life of] Henrietta Lacks, and three of us were really interested in the narrative and three of us were interested in the scientific parts. We learned to see things from other people's perspectives," she explained.

She suggests that all Honors students take the course. "It's definitely a learning experience," she said.

Welcome to our new Honors Administrative Coordinator

Honors is delighted to welcome Kimn Gollnick, Honors Administrative Coordinator, to Honors and to WSU. Kimn's previous experience includes work in human resources, in magazine publishing, and as a community college English and freshman seminar instructor. She was a member of the University of Iowa Honors program and graduated with a BA in Journalism and English Special Honors. She received her MA in English also from the University of Iowa in 2010.

Kimn moved to Wichita from Iowa at the beginning of January. Please stop by Neff 115 to welcome Kimn to WSU and to Wichita. She will manage day-to-day office operations and handle immediate Honors student and faculty needs.

Many thanks to John Perry, Elaine Bernstorff, William Vanderburgh, Stephanie Fowler, and Rachel Tuck for their work this fall on the Honors Administrative Coordinator search committee.

Martin Ratcliffe teaches universe classes, planetarium staff

Martin Ratcliffe, Director of Professional Development at Sky-Scan, takes time from his busy schedule each semester to teach Honors astronomy courses at Wichita State University.

"I'm a teacher at heart," he said. "Most of my work has been in planetarium institutions, which are primarily educational institutions."

Ratcliffe moved to Wichita to begin developing the planetarium for Exploration Place, and while in the planning phases, he taught an introduction to astronomy course at Butler Community College. He then joined forces with Wichita State University to teach Cosmology.

"I wanted to have an entry level for any background," he said, "and so I built the course around that idea."

He jokes about the significance of titling a course well. "The first time we titled the course, we called it Cosmology, and we didn't get very many students. So I said, 'How about From Big Bang to Black Holes?' Got a full class. It's all in

how you present it," he said.

After the Cosmology course, he began to teach other courses. Some were centered around a particular event, such as the expectation of a bright comet, and some are focused on introducing students to digital imaging techniques.

"What I like doing is showing examples that every student can understand," said Ratcliffe. "I like trying to cross those bridges."

Ratcliffe hopes to keep teaching Honors students. "I've always had a strong commitment to teaching the classes I teach," he said. "I really feel very lucky to do it."

Outside of teaching Honors, Ratcliffe's full-time job allows him to instruct planetarium staff around the world to use the Sky-Scan technology, a digital projection system that uses scientific data to showcase various perspectives of the universe. He also explores the universe using his home observation and imaging technology.

Looking Ahead >

March 12: Join us to discuss changes with Honors from 5:00-5:30 in Neff 116 at new Honors monthly meetings. For more information, contact rachel.tuck@wichita.edu.

May 7: Honors wants to celebrate you! Mark your calendars for our end of the year celebration, 12:00-2:00 pm. Questions? Email rachel.tuck@wichita.edu.

November 5-9: Interested in attending the National Collegiate Honors Conference in Denver? Look for more information soon, or email stephanie.fowler@wichita.edu.

Undergraduate researchers represent WSU in Topeka

Six undergraduate researchers represented Wichita State University at the 2014 Kansas Undergraduate Research Day at the Capitol, held on Feb. 12. In alphabetical order, the presentations were as follows:

- **Lindsey Carson** and **Lisa Donner**, bioengineering seniors, presented their research entitled, "Time to Target Heart Rate in Professional Firefighters Wearing a Weighted Vest versus Firefighter Gear"
- **Thoi McNair**, psychology junior, presented her research entitled, "Gun Violence Epidemic: Midwestern College Students Sound Off"
- **Joshua Palacios**, bioengineering senior, presented his research entitled, "Mathematical Modeling of Drug Elution from Polymeric Microspheres"
- **Shahla Pourkaram**, aerospace engineering senior, presented her research entitled, "Analysis of Elliptical Lift Distribution on a Finite Wing"
- **Khondoker Usama**, computer engineering sophomore, presented his research entitled, "Color, Relevance and Eccentricity Influence Detection Performance of Changes in Driving Scenes"

Honors Student Advisory Board to propose changes to Honors College

Last semester, Dr. Kimberly Engber and Andrew Longhofer convened a group of Honors students who have demonstrated leadership on campus to share their perspectives as the future plans for Honors are decided.

Longhofer, former Honors Undergraduate Fellow, said that the Honors College was at a place where it was appropriate to get the students perspective. He said that the group began by doing research on what programs and models were in place in other universities, and thinking through what could work at WSU. "It quickly became something much grander than that. It had a little more meat to it as we started looking at what some of those options were."

The plans for this group, called the Honors Student Advisory Board (HSAB), include proposing policies and procedures for the Honors College and creating a sustainable mission.

"One of the central concepts at the core of the Honors College is student leadership," Longhofer said. "We're hoping that the HSAB becomes an opportunity to have that experience and get up to their elbows [in leadership]."

Honors students were invited to this

group, and the students who volunteered contribute their time and ideas to brainstorming how Honors might look in the next few years. Longhofer said this group was envisioned to have students who believe in what is happening and what could happen.

Longhofer said this group is critical to the foundation of Honors. "This can be a laboratory," he said. "This group is pretty well placed to work as a think-tank for what the Honors College should be. There's a real sense that this group isn't just making suggestions; they are making decisions that the Dean will legitimately consider implementing, so far."

In the next few weeks, this group will begin to move from an ideation phase to a production phase, working along deadlines the Dean has requested. Longhofer said that these projects will be seriously considered in establishing the guidelines for Honors.

"The recommendations we make are going to make a difference for the next 5-10 years. Even though we understand the gravity of that," he said, "there is also a sense that any procedures we suggest are going to be able to accommodate change."

Letter from the Dean: Architecture through Honors experiences

Does Honors have an architecture of its own? I believe that the thoughts "so passionate and alive" that you bring to Honors classrooms, projects, and events create the architecture.

Like the nineteenth-century American writers I have been quoting, we are building the tradition of innovation in Honors at WSU. The Honors Student Advisory Board is deliberating how to ensure student governance within the new Honors College. The bricks are going up on the outside walls of Shocker Hall, and the inside walls, when they go up, will be glass. Honors students should look through the walls and break through boundaries created by disciplines and institutions.

In a recent New York Times editorial, Thomas L. Friedman insists that "The world only cares about — and pays off on — what you can do with what you know (and it doesn't care how you learned it). And in an age when innovation is increasingly a group endeavor, it also cares about a lot of soft skills - leadership, humility, collaboration, adaptability and loving to learn..." Both Emerson and Friedman speak to a spirit of

"For it is not metres, but a metre-making argument, that makes a poem, - a thought so passionate and alive, that, like the spirit of a plant or an animal, it has an architecture of its own, and adorns nature with a new thing."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

lifelong learning in Honors students.

Honors students new to WSU in fall 2014 will receive a \$500 a year scholarship as long as they remain in Honors in good standing. With more students, we can offer more classes, community service opportunities, and study abroad experiences. We can hope to raise money for scholarships for continuing students

and for faculty participation in Honors.

We are also expanding the options in the Honors curriculum. For fall, you can fulfill your Issues and Perspective Humanities requirement with "Epidemics in World History" or "Video Games and Philosophy." You can start your interdisciplinary track in leadership with the intensive 5-week "Leadership Challenge" or online "Leading and Motivating." Look to spring when you will be able to take a team internship at the Center for Community Support, fulfill your Issues and Perspectives Fine Arts requirements with "Arts in Wichita," or explore "Public Policy." For more, check out the curriculum options and the course offerings now online at wichita.edu/honors.

Visit with us. I look forward to hearing your thoughts!



WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY
HONORS COLLEGE

The Honors College is located in Neff Hall on Wichita State University's main campus. Honors emphasizes high achievement, and innovative problem-solving to create lifelong, passionate learners.

Send in a tip!
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