

With Honors

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The University of Louisville UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

Spring/Summer 2002

from the director—

Long a hidden gem, University Honors is experiencing a multi-year period of robust development.

Among recent additions to Honors are four Distinguished Honors Fellows (see "New Distinguished Honors Fellows Named" page 6). Joining Honors is associate director Dr. Patricia Condon, fellowship and scholarship advisor as well as director of the Overseers Scholars Development Program (OSDP). We also welcome additional full-time academic counselor, Ann Slider, who with Betsy Langness, provides year-round advising.

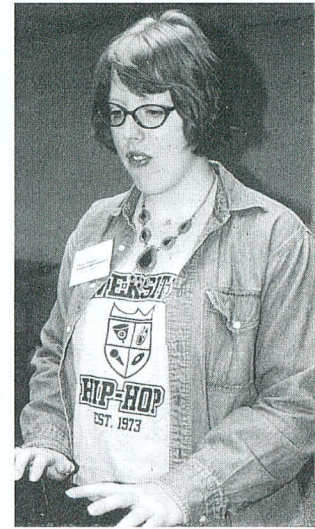
While University Honors has flexible requirements—no specific course outline must be followed—students find that consistent enrollment in Honors classes maximizes the educational and financial benefits the University Honors Program has to offer.

The more students participate, the more opportunities open up.

Benefits for active students include the junior year Professional Mentor Program (see "Overseers Guide Mentoring Program" page 2), international travel (see "Graffiti Outstrips Drum Interest" page 1), conferences (see "National and Regional Conferences" page 5), priority registration, Honors courses and seminars (see "Class Act" page 4), as well as Honors housing, scholarships and advising.

Honors is a remarkable resource for U of L's many high-achieving students.

John Richardson, Ph.D.
Director
University Honors Program



This example of commissioned business graffiti was painted in vivid turquoise, oranges, yellows and cobalt blue to decorate a store front in Guadeloupe where "French Creole Cultures of the Americas" seminar members did field work. At right, Marea Stamper gives a presentation on graffiti at the Kentucky Honors Roundtable.

Graffiti Eclipses Drum Interest

Marea Stamper
English '04

We thought that we had come to Guadeloupe to find the drums, but we had come to find graffiti.

In the semester that leads us here, Dr. Charles Pooser in his fall 2001 Honors seminar "French Creole Cultures of the Americas" conducted one session on mural culture in Haiti. Upon Aristide's return to power, the country spontaneously erupted in public paintings. After the reign of terror, the communal sentiment of relief could no longer be repressed and it exploded in a panorama of color on the walls of the cities.

Through hindsight, I am able to predict the overwhelming presence of graffiti murals in Haiti's cultural sister, Guadeloupe. Yet, when we arrived, I was

completely overcome by them: in long strands down the roadways, storefronts and discothèques.

I realized, after one day of spotting these brilliant urban and rural canvases, that graffiti's identity within the social consciousness of this nation was a photographic negative of American graffiti. They embraced spontaneous painting and the painters had responded. Unlike home, there are few buff marks where former murals are wiped from surfaces. Pieces rest on walls long enough for moss to grow and accept the art back into the dazzling shades' ecosystem. By 2001, I already knew that graffiti art was definitely worldwide. The difference was that, unlike many major metropolitan areas of the United States, Guadeloupe was not fighting the art. The sheer audacity of locations which had been painted was testa-

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Kudos Betsy

Honors academic counselor Betsy Langness has been awarded the Provost's Award for Exemplary Advising. Betsy, who has an M.Ed. in counseling, has been with the University Honors Program since 1998.

Graffiti from page 1

ment to the fact that conversion was unnecessary. Walls are absolutely coated from top to bottom with magnificent detail—including locations bordering courthouses and hospitals—places that must have been plainly discernible in any light.

From the pieces, a few major themes emerge: heroism, nature, political imagery, commission business graffiti, Bob Marley, a militaristic beetle associated with Guadeloupe, critique of the incoming Euro currency and an auto school are examples.

Jessica Taylor and I dashed into the city whenever possible. Bearing a new digital camera, we scrambled under train bridges, through construction, under the overgrown eaves of greenery, in parking structures. We began to rely on intuition to lead us to potential paint spots. We solicited laborers in middle-fair to terrible French for potential leads. We jammed the lens against the glass of the van, which hurtled at mind-boggling velocity through what were "creative" traffic patterns and semi-mapped provinces, at best. Sometimes, rather than snap individual shots, we set the camera to time-lapse and let it click.

I loved the story of spontaneous graffiti overtaking Haiti upon Aristide's restoration to power, but the lesson took on new meaning when applied to literal territories. The expressions of a French Creole culture were made flesh. Just as we had read, the heroes, political life, terrain and feeling of a culture bloomed color on anything that would stand still.

The experience embarrassed me for our cultural bias against street art where repeat offenders for "vandalism" can regularly serve ten years. It is clear to me that other cultures define crime and acceptable means of artistic expression very differently than my own. Bearing witness to expanded definitions changed me immeasurably as a student and as a person.

U of L Overseers Guide Mentoring

It's no accident that U of L's Professional Mentoring Program is considered excellent. For starters, U of L's Board of Overseers considers each mentee placement individually, matching each student with a likely mentor.

Some overseers become mentors themselves; about 20 percent of the 117 have served as mentors recently. Others establish contacts with community leaders. Among the 2001-2002 overseer-arranged mentors are Don Miller, M.D., Ph.D., director of the James Graham Brown Cancer Center; Peter Morrin, Speed Art Museum director; Alderman Barbara Gregg and David A. Jones chairman of Humana Inc.

A thriving program since 1987, the mentor-mentee relationship is designed to give success and freedom to the participants. An underlay of activities and suggestions, guided by academic counselor Ann Slider, gives a foundation to the relationship, but the student and mentor create the experience.

And when the year is completed in April, as many as five significant schol-

arships are awarded to the students who make the most of their opportunity.

A year-long program

In the fall of their junior year, eligible students—those with a 3.35 GPA or above—are invited to participate. The 2001-2002 corps of 41 mentees received announcement of their placements last October at a mentee banquet at the University Club. Student interests ranged from child-care and community service to business, law and medicine.

While original arrangements with mentors is undertaken by the overseers, the introductory contact between mentor and mentee must be initiated by the student. At the banquet, mentees are presented with their placement and two folders, one for themselves, one to give to their mentor at their initial meeting. Guest speakers at the banquet include past mentors as well as scholarship-winning mentees who help new mentees build on their experiences.

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U of L Honors students studying in the rain forest in December, one of the University Honors Program's subsidized travel opportunities. Fifteen students and two faculty members spent ten days in Guadeloupe doing on site research for the "French Creole Cultures of the Americas" seminar.

Personal support services to mentors and mentees are provided by University Honors, as well as a guideline booklet with such practical suggestions as "take your mentee to a professional meeting," advice to the student on professional courtesy and much else.

On January 28 mentors and mentees

plete to finish her high school education and attend college.

Her Louisville host family urged her to come back to Louisville for college, offering both a place to live and to make the necessary legal arrangements that were undertaken by Waverly Townes, an adoption and family law lawyer who had previously worked with the family.

Olga's host family urged her to meet Townes, but busy lives meant the time was never right. Then, entirely by accident, Olga was matched by the overseers with Townes because of her interest in adoption and

family law. The surprise history aside, the match up is highly satisfactory. "It is the best thing that has happened to me in my college years," Olga says of her biweekly opportunities to join him in his office and at court.

"The most amazing thing about the mentor program is the fact that it's the first hand experience of what I, hopefully, will be doing in several years. It's somewhat of a sneak preview of what my professional responsibilities will be like if I continue on my educational path. It's not just about wearing suits to court or having an office with the windows facing the river. It's about the tremendous responsibilities that one takes on when in a legal field, it's about stacks of documents that one has to process, and most of all, it's about details and precision in everything that a lawyer does.

"One knows that most valuable lessons in life come from your own experience. The greatest thing that this wonderful experience has taught me is that being a lawyer isn't simply presenting eloquent arguments in court to win a case, to defeat your opponent, or to impress the jury. It's all about human

lives and the tremendous impact that one leaves after the game is over regardless of its outcome. It's about making life-affecting choices for one who cannot do it himself, like placing a baby with a good and caring adoptive family. It's being able to help your fellow human being who's in desperate need of your legal advice and expecting nothing in return.

"These valuable lessons I have learned from my great mentor, Mr. Waverly Townes, Attorney at Law, at Ackerson, Mosley & Yann, P.S.C."

Scott Tomerlin Pre-pharmacy

Scott will be going to Atlanta in the fall for pharmacy school at Mercer University. According to Scott, the mentee experience opened up new pharmaceutical possibilities for him.

"I would say the most surprising aspect of the mentor experience . . . was the fact that I was able to participate quite extensively in the hospital pharmacy setting. My mentor, Mr. Bob Oakley, is the director of Pharmacy at Baptist East Hospital in Louisville. With his help, I have been able to observe as well as engage in several tasks at the inpatient pharmacy at Baptist East.

"The most rewarding experience I have had from this program has been the chance to further expose myself to the field of pharmacy. Most people commonly associate the field of pharmacy as being strictly retail, where the pharmacist counsels and releases medication upon a prescriber's request. This mentoring experience has given me the chance to see the clinical side of pharmacy, which differs greatly from that of retail. In the clinical hospital setting, pharmacists are actively involved in a one-on-one contact in providing proper drug therapy with their patients. Most of these pharmacists work side by side with doctors in this area. Overall, being involved in this experience has given me a chance to see another side of pharmacy that I may have not been able to with any other program."

have been connected with numerous mentor programs over the last year. What separates the U of L Honors Program from any other that I have worked with is simply the detailing of the entire project. The mentees are Honors students with specific career objectives that they are trying to achieve.

The mentors are business professionals that are chosen by both background and reputation. The administration is flawless from the first introduction to the final awards presentation with the Board of Overseers. I believe this program should be a model for every other mentor program I have been involved with.

Wilson, Senior Vice President
Investments, UBS - Paine Webber

breakfasted together at the University Club for a lively mid-year check in. The Mentoring Program was clearly in good health as excellent rapport between mentors and mentees prevailed along with a fair amount of genial banter.

Among the many things that students gain from the experience, the most important may be "learning how to approach people in their field with a certain sense of self confidence," according to Ann Slider, who guides the students and is available to assist mentors.

The mentee experience

Two students, Olga Zhuravliova and Scott Tomerlin, let us see into their professional mentor encounters. Olga is interested in pursuing adoption and family law, and Scott plans to become a pharmacist.

Olga Zhuravliova Political Science

Olga Zhuravliova, a native of the Ukraine, came to this country in 1996 as an exchange student. She enrolled at Sacred Heart Academy, returning to the Ukraine when the year was com-

Course Work is the Centerpiece of Honors

A Class Act

The Honors Program offers 35 to 40 Honors courses each semester in topics ranging from mathematics to the arts, providing students a broad class selection to fulfill the required 34 credits of general education.

These classes are taught by some of U of L's best teachers and are limited to a maximum of 25 students. In this feature, we report on a single session of two Honors classes to give a bit of insight to Honors coursework.

Advanced Composition for Freshmen

With a seminar named "Sensational Fictions: Scandal and The 19th Century Novel," it is tempting to focus on the lively offerings of the Honors seminars. However, if lively is the drawing card for selecting a class, Jacqueline Brown's "Advanced Composition for Freshmen" offers plenty of competition. The work of the day is the student-selected reading, James Joyce's *The Dubliners*, providing ample opportunity for student discussion that ranges from "nothing happened" and "I didn't like him, he's overrated" to "all of a sudden the end just hits you" and "Joyce makes me think about things I don't want to think about. I think it's cool!"

Brown peppers her teaching with "keep going" as the 18 members of the class tentatively step out into new territory. Her welcoming prompt opens the floor to vigorous discussion that explores every dimension of the written work and the author's life.

Nearly all first-year students take freshman composition, and thus unlike other classes in the University Honors course listing, there are several sections. In the spring of 2002 three sections of "Advanced Composition for Freshmen" meet and in the fall of 2002 there will be nine.

Professors like teaching Honors classes, and the schedule tends to feature many of the highly respected scholars in the English department. For example, the former chair of the English department and Renaissance literature specialist Dr. Robert Miller teaches a section of Honors comp that is finishing up a unit of essays on science. Following spring break, the class will examine the nature of myth and religion. But for this day, the discussion begins with an essay by Edward O. Wilson, noted ant expert and the Harvard entomologist who introduced the idea of sociobiology.

The essay examines the renewal of life on

the island of Krakatau in the aftermath of its 1883 cataclysmic volcanic eruption. Life makes its first appearance with a small spider seven months after the event. The student group scheduled to present today shows a degree of uncertainty, commenting that "he didn't use stuff you couldn't understand," "it was extremely descriptive" and "it never got boring." One student concludes that in such circumstances life reestablishes itself in a haphazard manner, that "if one [species] doesn't [establish itself], another one will."

Along the way Miller casually dips into his impressive off-the-cuff science knowledge commenting on Darwin (including

"Joyce makes me think about things I don't want to think about. I think it's cool!"

dates and locations) and his travels with the *Beagle*, makes a quick aside about Francis Bacon and his activities in politics, science and literature and follows up by mentioning that "some of our best writers are scientists." That comment brings a low-key but rather startled reaction from students. Unexpectedly, this esteemed English professor reads and admires science writing.

Principles of Macroeconomics

The sheer energy expended by Dr. John Vahaly as he practically dances back and forth between the chalkboard and around the room would be enough to captivate student attention.

The topic is not a simple one today. Although it's the Keynesian model, one of two equations that Vahaly requires students to understand in his "Principles of Macroeconomics," the students do not falter. The class is predominantly first-year students with "Finite Mathematics" already

behind them. They are attracted to the class either because of an interest in the topic, or just as likely because the word has spread that Vahaly is a great teacher.

This Monday afternoon class is composed of six women and thirteen men gathered around the seminar table in the Honors House classroom. At one point, Vahaly is so pleased with student responses he exclaims: "We ought to have more Mondays!"

Vahaly begins the class in a careful and detailed delineation of the algebraic and economic formulas with an energy that contradicts any preconceived notion that the topic might be dry. The Keynesian model is one of those ideas that is best expressed numerically. So with careful clarity Vahaly explains the graph and proceeds to apply examples using the Keynesian model formula.

And yet, Vahaly follows the 40 minutes of applying the formula with the comment that "this is a plumbing problem. This is a bathtub . . . bear with me." (Laughter follows as he draws an improbable cross section of a bathtub filled with blue water.) "The level of the water is the GDP, the drain is open and what does that represent? Yes, savings, but that is not the only leakage, taxes are leakage, imported goods are leakage . . ." and on until a clear visual and verbal image has been constructed to supplement and reinforce the more technical examination of the Keynesian model that opened the class.

Vahaly's appointment is in the department of economics in U of L's award-winning College of Business and Public Administration. An eight-time winner of the College of Business and Public Administration's Distinguished Teaching Award, Vahaly received his Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University. He is a widely published author, and has received many grants and contracts from the private sector.

National and Regional Honors Conferences

Kentucky Honors Roundtable

J.R.R. Tolkien or NIH diabetes research? American justice literature from 1620 to 1825 or graffiti in French Creole culture? At the Louisville-hosted Kentucky Roundtable Conference gathering of seven state universities, intellectually curious Honors students could choose between these and 23 other presentations on February 15 and 16.

U of L junior Rana Majd's conference paper "Retinal Capillary Pericytes as a New Pharmacological Target in Diabetic Retinopathy" grew out of her research on this common diabetes-associated eye disease, the leading cause of blindness in American adults. Majd spent two and a half months in the summer of 2001 in Bethesda, Md, as a National Institute of Health (NIH) laboratory research intern with Dr. Sinai Sato, who headed the ocular therapeutics laboratory in the National Eye Institute. She was given two of her own projects which Dr. Sato coordinated. In the lab from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. five days a week as well as a Monday lab meeting at which the scientists presented their work and talked about recent findings, Majd found the experience very educational.

In addition to Majd's work, U of L conference presentations ranged from visual literacy to bio-diversity, with much work based on University Honors-related travel.

Jennifer Hughes and Emily Shaffer presented "The Emergence of Visual Literacy," stirring considerable faculty comment as faculty wrestled with implications of visual literacy and concern for the health of written communication.

Guadeloupe Seminar participants Kristopher Fannin, Melissa Morrison, Marea Stamper and April Weatherman presented "Guadeloupe: Insight into the French Creole Culture" with vivid views about the ubiquitous Guadeloupe graffiti, among other topics. Biologist Jonathan Ballard probed "The Bio-Diversity of Ecuador," drawing from his Kentucky Institute for International Studies five-week exploration of Ecuador. Photographer Patricia Pollock presented a creative piece including an original poem and her black-and-white photography choreographed on two slide projectors.

The opening banquet featured the U of L student Jazz Ensemble followed by Mike Tracy, U of L Jazz Program director, adroitly discussing jazz and musing a bit on his student days at U of L.

Eleven Honors Volunteer Program and Mortar Board members graciously registered and hosted events, deftly guided timing, equipment glitches, confrontational questions, photographs and recreational Friday night skating.

Distinguished Honors Fellows Drs. Julie Bunck, Richard Davitt and Mary Ann Stenger, University Honors director Dr. John Richardson and associate director Dr. Patricia Condon lent thoughts to post-paper discussions and other events. Betsy Langness and Ann Slider, Honors academic counselors, organized the conference and coordinated weekend activities.



Brian Olberz, Jennifer Hughes, Shae Bryant, Kelly Hanlon and April Weatherman in Chicago at the National Honors Conference. Conference participation is underwritten by the University Honors Program.

Honors Community at Nationals

Jennifer Hughes, Biology '03

In November, 2001, I attended the National Honors Conference in Chicago. A group of Honors students and advisors flew to Chicago to deliver a variety of presentations.

Brian Olberz and Sofya Alterman and I presented on the new Honors Housing Community upcoming at the University of Louisville. The presentation lasted thirty minutes, but my time in Chicago extended for three days. The coordinators of the conference scheduled a catered banquet and a tour of the Field Museum. The Field Museum offered displays on Kenya, the story of Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, and many other interesting exhibits. Not only did the events prove to be entertaining and fun, but meeting other honors students from across the country was enlightening.

University of Louisville students came back with refreshed ideas for Honors, as presented in the plethora of presentations. I enjoyed myself greatly and plan to go to the next National Honors Conference.



In March Honors students attended the Southern Regional Conference in Atlanta.

New Distinguished Honors Fellows Named

Two members of the faculty, Dr. Barbara Burns from psychological and brain sciences and Dr. Richard Davitt from mathematics, have been named the newest Distinguished Honors Fellows. The appointment of Distinguished Honors Fellows brings Honors students into closer association with a select group of faculty recognized for their teaching and research.

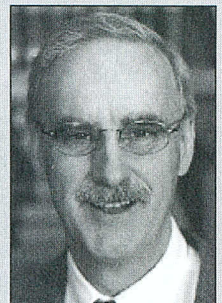
Barbara Burns is a developmental psychologist who received her Ph.D. at Brown University, taught at Mount Holyoke College and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of California before coming to the University of Louisville. Dr. Burns has an active research laboratory in the department of psychological and brain sciences. Many of the undergraduates in her Cognitive Development Lab have gone on to master's and doctoral programs in experimental psychology, clinical psychology, genetic counseling, educational counseling, expressive therapies and audiology, as well as to medical school. Next year she will teach an Honors section of "Life Span Developmental Psychology," and an undergraduate seminar entitled "Overcoming the Odds" which will examine resilience in children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Richard Davitt has, since 1974, taught one or two courses annually at U of L in the history of mathematics and spent the 1989-1990 academic year on sabbatical leave at the University of Notre Dame taking courses and participating in seminars in the history and philosophy of science program there.

An innovative teacher, Davitt has taught University Honors courses for four years, receiving his second Metroversity Instructional Development award for the design of a University Honors course he taught on the history of science in the fall 2000 semester. A graduate of Lehigh University with a Ph.D. in mathematics, he has received the Award for Distinguished Teaching of Mathematics from the Kentucky Section of the Mathematical Association of America and two Distinguished Teaching awards from U of L's College of Arts and Sciences.



Dr. Barbara Burns



Dr. Richard Davitt

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Director, John Richardson
Coordinator, Ruth Spangler

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