



# Honors Program Spring 2010 Newsletter

MIDWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY  
<http://academics.mwsu.edu/honors/>

## Meet and Greet EDITION

### *A Word from the Director*

When I took over as Honors Program Director in 2004 I was aware that the program had started in 1964. But, records more than a few years old weren't available. More recently we have discovered several boxes of archived material in the University library. We've been able to find over 1600 names of former honors program students. This newsletter is an attempt to contact as many of you as possible. I hope it is the first of many newsletters that will help us to build relationships.

This edition describes what the MSU Honors Program is like today. We are interested in hearing from you. Consider telling us about your honors program experience. Let us know what has happened since you graduated—have you earned any advanced degrees or are there other life successes that you would like to share? Suggest what kind of information we could provide in future editions of this newsletter. Let us know how you would like to hear from us: By mail? E-mail? An Honors Alumni web presence? Or perhaps not at all? Our contact information is on the last page.

## *Greetings!*

Welcome back to Midwestern State University and the MSU Honors Program. We have missed you so much we decided to reach out, say hello and inform you of what is new since you've been gone. Depending on when you were last here, the program may look similar to how you remember, or there may be no resemblance at all.

The current program comes with many benefits. Scholarship support of \$750 per semester is offered for up to eight semesters, contingent upon good standing in the program. Honors Program students are able to register early just like seniors and graduate students and are eligible to reside in the Honors House on a space available basis. We are also planning on designating an Honors Floor in one of the residence halls next year. If a student fulfills all requirements and graduates from the Honors Program, this honor is recognized on official transcripts, diplomas, and at commencement exercises. And who can forget the benefit of belonging to a community of scholars who want the most out of their collegiate experience?

Now, as everyone knows, we live in a society where little, if anything, is free. However, the costs of remaining in good standing with the Honors Program also function to enhance a student's academic knowledge in a liberal arts university and, ultimately, to raise a student's prospects for employment or additional education after graduation. To graduate from the Honors Program, students must complete eight Honors courses. The majority of the Honors courses offered are limited enrollment sections of core curriculum courses. Students must also take the Honors Introductory Seminar in the first fall semester in which they are an Honors student, and at least one upper-level Honors course, which is usually a course designed around interdisciplinary concepts.

Aside from courses, Honors students have a number of co-curricular requirements they must also fulfill to remain in good standing with the program. These include: Being enrolled as a full time student except in the student's last semester of undergraduate work; maintaining a cumulative GPA of at least 3.25; fulfilling a community service/leadership requirement involving at least 20 hours per year of volunteer work; and participating in a modest number of co-curricular activities per semester. To graduate from the program, students must also attend at least four conferences or field trips—with at least one being a conference—before graduation and completed either a senior research project, an internship, or a study abroad program. ❀

## ❖ Meet the Staff ❖



**DR. FARRIS** became the Director of the Honors Program on August 23, 2004, his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. He is originally from Daisetta, the Archer City of Beaumont. Although he is a Professor of Mathematics, he made an 11% on his first math test in college. He feels the honors coursework is the biggest benefit for joining the program. “The hope is that students will broaden their horizons; they should take courses that they wouldn’t otherwise take. One of my favorite memories is a Math/Computer Science double major who told me the best course he ever took was Lynn Hoggard’s Medieval Cultures.” ❖



**CHELSEA HUMPHREY** is the newest addition to the Honors Program staff. She graduated from MSU and the Honors Program in May 2009 with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and International Studies and became the Coordinator in August. She was born in South Dakota, but after living in Texas for eleven years, feels she is “truly a Texan at heart.” Her hopes are to spend a year or two working for the Honors Program before moving on to pursue her Doctorate of Philosophy in socio-legal studies or political sociology, whereupon she would like to eventually become an interdisciplinary faculty member at an Honors College. ❖



**CATHY GRIFFIN** has been the secretary for the program since September 2007. She is originally from Massachusetts. She was raised by her grandparents, who were immigrants, and thus learned to be able to listen to several languages at once. “I think the Honors Program is an opportunity to discover how to learn,” she states, when asked about her perception of the program. ❖

## ❖ Faculty Highlight ❖



**LYNN HOGGARD**, Professor of English and Foreign Languages and Coordinator of Humanities, has taught at MSU since 1976 and taught honors courses in various forms for twenty-five years. “What I like best about honors courses,” she says, “is that the subject matter is often more free-wheeling and open than in the larger, more traditional classroom setting (as when an honors humanities class of fifteen looks at works such as Homer’s *Odyssey* and asks what has carried over from ancient Greece to determine who we are today). There’s more room for creativity and original thought. Also, the honors students themselves--bright, lively, and curious about their world--are fun and challenging to work with. They teach me what teaching is all about.” ❖

## Meet HP *Graduates from Spring 2009 and Fall 2009*

### Spring 2009

Anthony Chianese  
Chelsea Humphrey  
Justin McCloskey  
Karla Phillips

Cindy Prunte  
Tessa Sales  
Ian Van Reenen  
Madeleine Zaehringer

### Fall 2009

Shannon Dietz  
Brianna Jamison

Alex Moshtaghi  
Sherisse Wallace

## ❖ Introduction to Current Students ❖



**JOHN JERKINS** is a Social Work major at MSU. He originally hails from sunny Florida and is retired from the military. He has been a member of the Honors Program since his freshman year. “The thing I like best about the honors program,” he explains, “is the small class sizes. Smaller classes make the learning experience more personal.” ❖



**RACHEL “IZZY” TERRELL** is a Special Education major at MSU. She’s in her second semester both in the Honors Program and at MSU and has already secured a position as the Resident Assistant at the Honors house. She is also active in working with the Honors Program Social Committee. “Being around other honors students, I feel almost like I’m home again,” she states. “The reason I help to plan events is so that everyone else in the program has a chance to experience that sense of community.” ❖

## ❖ Featured Alumni ❖



**CINDY PRUENTE** was a biology and chemistry major from Keller, Texas, who graduated in May 2009 with her Bachelor of Science degree. Currently, she is working as an analyst at Armstrong Forensic Laboratory in Arlington, Texas. When reflecting on her time in the Honors Program, she states that it “not only allowed me to meet my fellow peers from other majors but it also got me out of the classroom and involved with other aspects of college life. The Honors classes were smaller and the professors got more involved. My favorite memories of the Honors Program are being a peer leader for the incoming freshmen and keeping other students involved and informed as the Chair of the Honors Program Student Committee.” ❖



**JUSTIN McCLOSKEY** was a psychology major, history minor from Watauga, Texas who graduated in May 2009 with his Bachelor of Art degree. Currently, he is an Industrial/Organizational Psychology Master of Arts student at the University of Texas at Arlington. In regards to his time at MSU, Justin found that “The Honors Program really helped me grow as both an intellectual and as a student. I also enjoyed the financial freedom the scholarship allowed me. At first I thought taking the extra classes would be a burden but actually found them to be some of my favorite classes. The field trips were definitely an added bonus. I would recommend the Honors Program to anyone who wants to get the most out of their college career.” ❖

Our featured alumni are also congratulated on their current engagement and upcoming marriage. Cindy and Justin, aside from being in the Honors Program together and both graduating from it, actually met and started their relationship through the Program. They are wished a long and happy life together. ❖

## ❁ Award Winning Student ❁



**IRENE SPAZIANI** is an Honors Program student who, although Wichita Falls has been her home for a little over four years, originally comes to us from Rome, Italy. She is currently working to obtain her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and International Studies and plans on furthering her education with a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy and a Doctorate of Philosophy in the same. After school, she says that “I would like to start by pursuing a career within an international organization; however, my dream is to ultimately become a diplomat, as I have always loved traveling, learning new languages and encountering different cultures. I currently speak Italian, English and Spanish, but I would like to refresh my knowledge of French and learn a completely new language like Arabic or Chinese. For now, I’ll take advantage of the wonderful opportunities offered within and outside of the Honors Program here at Midwestern.” Irene is also the recent recipient of the Dennis Boe Award sponsored by the Great Plains Honors Council. She was one of the four students to win the award in the over 60 credit hours category and presented on her paper, *The*

*Socio-Economic Ideology of Thomas Woodrow Wilson and American Liberalism*, at the GPHC Conference in Tulsa on March 26<sup>th</sup>. ❁

## ❁ Facilities ❁

### HONORS HOUSE

The Honors House, opened in fall 2002, is a remodeled five-bedroom, three and one-half bath home available to both male and female students in the MSU Honors Program. This beautifully furnished house is located just across the street from the MSU campus, directly adjacent to the President’s mansion. A fully furnished TV room, formal dining room, comfortable den, breakfast nook, laundry room, and kitchen are at the residents’ full disposal, as well as a two car garage and plenty of parking. The residents of the house host a variety of Honors Program functions throughout the year. Every fall they have the Back-to-School Bash, every spring they throw a Valentine’s Party, and there are several faculty dinners hosted there as well. This semester the social committee is hosting events at the House, including a Masquerade Ball.



The Honors Program and Housing are also working together to have a floor of McCullough-Trigg Hall as priority Honors Housing starting in fall 2010. This dormitory is normally not available to incoming freshmen, which makes the living arrangement another perk for being an Honors student. The hope is that by putting Honors students living on campus together, a greater sense of community within the program will be achieved, and students will be able to more freely interact with like-minded peers.



### HONORS PROGRAM LOUNGE

The Honors Office is now located on the first floor of the Moffett Library. It features several resources for students including a computer, copier, couch, refrigerator, microwave, coffee maker, and conference table. It is a great place for students to study individually or in groups, hang out, browse the web, or catch a nap. The Honors Program Student Committee meets in the lounge twice a month and you can often see other students using the space which does not have the same noise restrictions as the rest of the library for group projects, lunch, or simply to read a good book. ❁



## MSU Alumni Association Outstanding Honors Program Students

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	YEAR	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	YEAR
Cody	Cole	1994	Jeffrey (Mark)	Fleming	2001
Chandra	Rodgers	1994	Nyian	Farrell	2002
Melissa	Miller	1995	Shonna	Diggs	2003
Paul (Andrew)	Fleming	1995	Adam	McMahen	2004
Jamie	Benefield	1996	Marie	Ibarra	2005
Jason	Lawrence	1997	Laura Rachael	Kair	2006
Paul	Mussachio	1998	Erin Kathleen	Short	2007
Danielle	Roney	1999	Jonathan	Abel	2008
Jennifer	Veitenheimer	2000	Chelsea	Humphrey	2009

## ❁ Coursework ❁

### INTRO SEMINAR

This team-taught, interdisciplinary class is designed to guide Honors students in their transition to the University, to sharpen their academic skills, and to introduce them to faculty members representing various fields of study. In this course, Honors students learn how to use various research methods to acquire and process knowledge in different fields, how to relate ideas learned in one discipline to those learned in another, and how to participate meaningfully in a learning community. The theme for the past three years has been centered on the 1960s. The required textbooks for the class are *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey and *Times Were a Changin': Sixties Reader* by Unger and Unger. As noted in the introduction to one of the textbooks, this was a decade that "... delegitimized all sources of authority." Guest lecturers from all over campus spend a week with the class discussing an aspect of the 1960s from the viewpoint of their respective academic field. For example, Dr. Kim Robinson from the Wilson School of Nursing discussed the Zimbardo experiment and issues in nursing and mental health one week, and even came dressed as Nurse Ratched from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* on the day she spoke about mental health. ❁



### CORE CURRICULUM COURSES

The majority of a student's Honors coursework is made up of the core curriculum courses that all students take. The Honors versions of these courses are limited enrollment, which provides a more scholarly culture for students to question, discuss, and digest information. Students and professors alike highly regard these courses because of not only the small class size, but the intellectual depth that is often found in these Honors classes. ❁

### UPPER LEVEL COURSES

Honors students are also required to take at least one upper level course. These courses are offered to complement the work in a student's major and broaden the knowledge base of each student. Some of our recent classes have included the Art of Healing, a course on alternative medicine; Crime and Society, a look at different types of crime and how they affect the public; Conflict Processes, a course on how and why war occurs; Life in Europe from 1500 to the Present; a theatre course on Costume History; Cross Cultural Communication; and History of World Cinema. Honors Program students normally take their upper level Honors courses in fields outside of their major. ❁



## ❁ Brains and Brawn ❁ *Athletes in the Honors Program*

**Tiana Bond** – Volleyball

**Jared Dopp** – Football

**Jason Short** – Cycling Team

**Karolina Damjanovic** – Volleyball

**Dean Johnson** – Football

**Masaru Kamada** – Cycling Team

**Dimery Michaels** – Volleyball

**Hillary White** – Volleyball

## ❁ Field Trips ❁

Previously, the Honors Program has hosted several field trips. In spring 2009, Dr. Hendrickson from the History Department and Dr. Farris took students on a trip to Ft. Richardson. Students were able to experience the 1800s through not only a museum, but also through speaking with individuals in period clothing discussing what life was like in the 1800s, and how people interacted, lived, and worked. In fall 2009, the Honors Program took students on an annual Star Party field trip to Comanche Springs Astronomy Campus near Crowell, TX. Students were able to look at stars, planets, and galaxies with the aid of high-powered telescopes and experienced astronomers and stargazers.

Due to the popularity of last spring's field trip, we will once again go to the Fort Richardson Days Living History Event in April. ❁



## ❁ Brown Bags ❁



Brown Bags are special events planned for Honors students. Various MSU faculty members are invited to give an informal lecture on a topic of their choosing, or students are invited to host a discussion panel over a pre-arranged topic. Between the Back to School Bash



at the Honors House and the end-of-year Brainstorming Session, there were five scheduled Brown Bags for fall 2009. Honors Program students were introduced to the Big Brothers and Big Sisters organization by Jamie Monroe, Dr. Kristin Garrison offered an in-depth look into the required Writing Proficiency Exam, a panel of soon-to-be Honors graduates discussed How to Succeed in the Honors Program (Without Really Trying), Dr. David Carlston presented over Internet Addiction, and Dr. Jim Sernoe shed light upon Censorship and the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment. ❁

## ❁ Annual Symposium ❁

Our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium was on March 6, 2010. The theme was "Abstract Thinking in a Concrete World." Several students gave presentations from a variety of majors after Dr. Laura Fidelie gave her keynote address and discussed *The Effects of Cell Dog Programs on Prison Inmate Populations*. Student presenters were Katherine McDaniel (*Peace, Love, and Type*), Izzy Terrell (*Tune In, Turn On, Drop Out*), Kaysi Overby (*Walt Disney's Legacy*), Jenny Oliver and Maria Souliotis (*Minimalism in a Nutshell*), Irene Spaziani (*The Socio-Economic Ideology of Thomas Woodrow Wilson and American Liberalism*), and Liam Guthrie (*Isolation of Antimicrobial Lipids from Tissues of *Sansevieria trifasciata**). The Symposium was started as a venue for students to gain experience presenting for their peers in the hopes of taking more students to present at the Great Plains Honors Council's Conference in the spring, and perhaps even the National Collegiate Honors Council's Conference hosted in the fall. ❁



## ❁ Community Service/Leadership (CS/L) ❁

Honors Program students are required to complete twenty hours of community service a year. Once a year each student turns in a report over their activities that explains how the volunteerism fostered a learning experience for the student. Students are welcome to turn reports in early, making it possible to complete this requirement in just three semesters. Students find that the CS/L requirement “is great for the honors program because it helps to create balance in the lives of people who are often inside their own heads too much” and it also helps “the students gain hands-on experience in becoming more sensitive to and involved in the needs of the university and its host community.” ❁



### A SAMPLING OF HOW HONORS STUDENTS HELP AND SERVE THE COMMUNITY

*Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk*  
*Animal Shelter*  
*Boys and Girls Club*  
*Caribbean Students Organization (CSO) volunteer activities*  
*Children's Aid Society*  
*Church choirs and volunteer activities*  
*Faith Mission*  
*Food Bank*  
*Hotter 'N Hell Hundred*  
*Humane Society*  
*Meals on Wheels*  
*MSU organizations leadership positions*  
*MSU Student Ambassadors*

*MSU's Great Day of Service*  
*Mustangs Rally*  
*North Texas State Hospital*  
*Partners in Education (PIE) Mentor*  
*Relay for Life*  
*Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)*  
*Sorority and Fraternity volunteer activities*  
*Spirit Day Peer Counselor*  
*Student Government membership*  
*Tools for School*  
*Tutoring*  
*United Way*  
*Wichita Falls Pregnancy Help Center*

## ❁ Student Committee & Social Networks ❁

**THE HONORS PROGRAM STUDENT COMMITTEE (HPSC)** is one of the largest student organizations on campus. All members of the Honors Program are automatically members of the committee and are welcome at all meetings. The HPSC meets bimonthly and discusses topics such as what the Student Government is doing, plans events such as the annual Honors Symposium, and volunteers for projects such as Adopt-A-Family at Christmas. The officers for this year are as follows: Liam Guthrie (Chair), Kaysi Overby (Vice-Chair), Kyle Christian (Treasurer), Amaka Oguchi (Secretary), Natasha Sutherland (Senator), and Irene Spaziani and Emily Suhr (Social Committee Co-Chairs).



**AFTER THE INTRODUCTION OF CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**, the Honors Program developed an online forum for students to share information on local events and volunteer opportunities. There is a calendar which shows hundreds of events on campus and within the community that students can attend to meet various requirements. There is also a place to find ideas for helping out in the community to accumulate volunteer hours and also to find study abroad opportunities, etc. However, academics can be checked at the door of the Lounge section, where students cut up, play word games, and just have fun. Also, an Honors Program Facebook group has recently been created to keep students up-to-date on upcoming Honors Program activities whether scholastic or social. ❁

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## Mission Statement

The Honors Program at Midwestern State University is designed to bring out the best in academically talented students and to serve as a core of academic excellence within the university community. Through an enriched liberal arts core curriculum and upper-level interdisciplinary courses, the program strives to achieve three goals:

- To provide an academically and personally challenging home for gifted students where they can become part of mutually challenging and supportive community of scholars.
- To nurture these high achievers so that they can contribute to the intellectual experience of the entire university community.
- To provide a special academic place where new ideas, faculty innovation, activities, and cultural events may be explored in a small, controlled setting which serves as a laboratory for the entire university.

The Honors Program enhances the overall academic quality at the university by recruiting and retaining highly qualified students and developing them into productive citizens and loyal alumni. The Honors Program is available to students in all majors at Midwestern State University.