



# Honors Program

## Spring 2013

# Newsletter

**MIDWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY**  
[academics.mwsu.edu/honors/](http://academics.mwsu.edu/honors/)

## Ch-ch-ch-ch changes

EDITION

### FROM VANDEHEY'S DESK:



Greetings scholars,

By the time you are reading this, I have moved back to psychology full time, and the Honors Program is in its next

phase of evolution. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to be a part of this program and your education. You are truly MSU's brightest stars.

I have had the pleasure of teaching Honors General Psychology for years and have watched many of you grow from your first year through graduation. Some of us have traveled to conferences, and I observed you presenting your work as young academics and professionals. Many of you are now in graduate programs across this nation while others have started families and are pursuing their career dreams. We have learned lessons together such as the quickest way to Kansas City may not be through St. Louis (it's a long story if you don't know this one...and I BLAME Garmin), wearing motorcycle clothing to make a point on the stereotype section doesn't work if one also has a fancy leather briefcase, and multicultural outings can surprisingly be a blast (GPHC 2013).

I have enjoyed students hanging out in the office (staff development sessions were always a hit ;-) and getting to know many of you on a personal level. My office door in psychology will always be open and you are welcome to come by anytime.

With warmest wishes for the future,

Dr. V.



## A Word about Transitions:

The changes in the Honors Program for Fall 2013 will include new leadership and a scholarship increase from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per semester for qualifying students. This decision is meant to enhance the recruitment of high-achieving students by offering them better scholarships and to decrease overhead costs of running the Honors Program. Beginning this fall, the Honors Program will be named the Redwine Honors Program and will be directed by the Provost's Office. In accordance with the Quality Enhancement Plan, there will be an increased focus on undergraduate research. The Honors Program has previously encouraged undergraduates to engage in research, but under the new program, it will be a requirement for every student receiving the new scholarship.

Junior and senior Honors students will see few effects of the changes being made to the program. Many first and second year students have already applied for the Redwine scholarship. If chosen, these students will be required to participate in an undergraduate research project before graduation. After beginning their research, students will enroll in a Senior Seminar taught by the Provost, and in this course, they will present their research. Incoming honors students will take MSU Leadership instead of the Honors Intro Seminar, and in conjunction with this course, they will participate in a class service project.

The Redwine Honors Program will have a cap of 22 students admitted per year, with 20 of these students being incoming freshmen. In previous years, the program has not had a cap system. In the last seven years, the program has admitted an average of 56 students each year, with 43.4 percent of these being current or transfer students. About 35 percent of the current Honors students will participate in the new program and receive the new scholarship. The primary effects of the changes to the program will be felt by incoming students.

Honors Housing in McCullough-Trigg will continue, and students who participate in the Redwine Scholars program will continue to graduate with Honors. The Honors Program Student Committee will continue to be involved, though the committee is making adjustments to suit the new program, including a name change.

New Honors Program Student Committee President Heather Baker said she believes the changes being made to the program are positive and will benefit students who engage in undergraduate research. "The changes work better for me because I am a chemistry major, so I already participate in research. It will help me to have a program that emphasizes research rather than having the two programs be separate," Baker said.

"Those who are not as involved and do the minimum requirements might not see the difference in the new program," Baker said. As an officer of the student committee, Baker said, she feels the new program will give students a chance to start over. "I believe that those in charge of the new program are very open to suggestions and willing to add to the new program to make it the best possible," Baker said. She feels the change between the two programs would be easier for students if elements from the old program were integrated into the new program. Dr. Stewart, MSU Provost, has taken this suggestion into consideration, and, as the new program is developing, it is proving to be adaptable.

*Adapted from a story by Makayla Kinney The Wichitan*

# Honors Graduates 2012

## *SPRING 2012:*

Jaquetta Asafu-Adjaye	Ian McMurrey
Jae Cho	Dimery Michaela
Kyle Christian	Matthew Moudy
Crystal Dinh	Jennifer Oliver
Jared Dopp	Mariette Smithen
Jason Fisher	Emily Suhr
Nikita Jack	Natasha Sutherland
Josh Loeffler	Miranda Westerfield

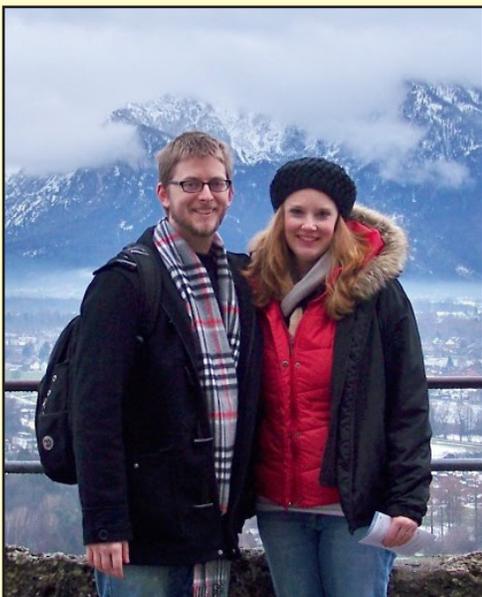
## *FALL 2012:*

Tomii Adelakun
Kamila Bell
Candace Berg
Hannah Hofmann
Katherine McDaniel
Sharon Obami
Kristin Rockwell
Kareem Small

## Staff Update

Honors Program Coordinator and alumna Juliana Felts traveled to Lyon, France, with her husband Mark for the 2012-2013 academic year. Mark was awarded a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship from Rotary International to study in a Comparative Cultural Studies program at the Université de Jean Moulin in Lyon. He is sponsored by the Rotary North Club of Wichita Falls. Mark will receive his MA from the Université de Jean Moulin Lyon after he completes the program this year. Juliana, who is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in translation studies at the University of Texas at Dallas, was pleased about the opportunity to accompany her husband. She has been using her time in France to research translation projects, as she works with French in her studies. Both Juliana and Mark are thrilled by this opportunity to study abroad together. Juliana was awarded the same Ambassadorial Scholarship from Rotary to study in Nantes, France, while pursuing her master's degree in English in 2008-2009. Juliana and Mark agree that they are fortunate and very grateful to the Rotary Foundation, in particular the Wichita Falls North club, for its support. Upon being awarded the scholarship for 2012, Mark commented that he feels as though they have been given a once in a lifetime opportunity twice. Upon their return to Wichita Falls in June 2013, Juliana will resume her position as Honors Program Coordinator, and Mark will return to a teaching position within the Wichita Falls Independent School District.

Meanwhile, Interim Honors Program Coordinator and Midwestern State graduate Hillary Coenen will begin her doctoral studies as a teaching assistant in English at Oklahoma State University in the fall of 2013. As an honors graduate from Angelo State, Hillary found a new home in MSU's Honors Program, and she is sad to leave. Hillary hopes to return to Midwestern State when she completes her doctoral program, and she would love to resume her work with honors students then.



## Faculty Highlight



John Martinez, professor of economics and Director of Business and Government Research, was named Hardin Professor for 2012 during last Spring's commencement ceremony held May 12, 2012. Hardin Professor is the highest honor bestowed upon a faculty member at the university each year. The Hardin Foundation for Wichita County established the annual award in 1962 for a member of the MSU faculty whose teaching and research of the preceding 12 months brought distinction to the faculty member and the institution. The award carries with it a stipend of \$3,500. Martinez earned his Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Texas, and master's degree and doctorate in economics from the University of Oklahoma. Martinez was hired as professor of economics in 1997. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Martinez has authored a number of research reports and publications, and made presentations at conferences held throughout the United States. Martinez served as chair of the Bureau of Government Research in 2005-2006 and 2010-2011 and as chair of the Mamie Raborn Center for Economic Research in 2005-2006 and 2009-2010. Martinez participated in the University Mentoring Program, and has taught in the Honors Program. He has also served on many university committees and task forces. Local media consult with Martinez as an expert on economic news, and he is a frequent editorial comment contributor and speaker at community events. Martinez has served on the strategic planning committee and the board of directors for United Regional Health Care System. He is a member of the Academy of Economics and Finance, and the Southwestern Economic Association.

*Office of Marketing and Public Information*

## Brains and Brawn

Cara Mack - Cross Country
Emily Saville - Soccer
Kaila Maxey - Soccer
Jennifer Sissell - Volleyball
Lauren Pineda - Soccer

# Research Highlights from Current Students



**Erin George and Cody Parish**, senior Honors Program students, presented ***“I Help Write. We Help Write. Honors Students Help Write at the Writing Center”*** at the South Central Writing Centers Association Conference in Corpus Christi, Texas, in February 2013. Cody also adapted the content and presented it the annual MSU Honors Program Symposium in March 2013 and once again at the Great Plains Honors Conference at West Texas A&M in Canyon in April 2013.

## **I Help Write. We Help Write. Honors Students Help Write at Writing Center.**

This year the Midwestern State University Writing Center and the Honors Program created a joint internship that provides the Writing Center with extra space and two additional unpaid undergraduate tutors, while offering the Honors Program an internship opportunity to fulfill the senior requirement and spreading its services to a wider variety of students. This pairing of programs is ideal because both the Honors Program and Writing Center serve a diverse group of students who are striving for excellence. The Writing Center provides a tutoring service for all students who would like help with any form or stage of writing. Honors students chosen for the internship are required to commit to ten hours of tutoring and one hour of practicum in the Writing Center per week. The internship program strengthened a previously weak connection between the Writing Center and Honors Program students and facilitated personal growth in Honors interns through comprehensive knowledge on the aspects of writing and developing relationships with graduate and undergraduate students, and professors. As Stephen North says in “The Idea of the Writing Center,” a tutor’s job is to produce better writers, not better writing, and in

the process of assisting others with this task, we’ve produced better writers within ourselves.



**Joseph Hadwal**, a sophomore Honors student, presented his paper ***“The Election of 1928”*** at the 2013 Honors Program Symposium and at the Great Plains Honors Conference at West Texas A&M.

## **The Election of 1928**

Joseph identified the varying elements that contributed to the 1928 American Presidential election. Research shows that the 1928 campaign was a contest that did not focus on a pressing national issue. Instead the election was fought and won on the grounds of an ideological clash between the two major political parties. This conclusion was reached by a consensus of the primary newspaper sources and secondary book and article sources. The Republican Party in this election focused on the perceived economic prosperity of the Coolidge administration and the enforcement of the Prohibition amendment. The Republicans chose Herbert Hoover to represent their party. Hoover was an accomplished administrator and was a Protestant whose traditionalist values represented Middle America. The Democrats challenged the Republican Party’s policies regarding agriculture, the use of natural resources, and the economy. However the Democrats chose Alfred Smith who was a New York Catholic and known to disfavor the Prohibition laws. Equal to Hoover in administrative talent, Smith represented a new progressive America. This ideological contest known as the 1928 election changed party lines and formed political divisions that can be linked to the modern era. For this reason the 1928 election is considered a critical election.



**Clinton Wagoner**, a junior Honors student, presented ***“Women’s Role in Classical Literature”*** at the 2013 Honors Program Symposium and adapted his presentation for the poster session at Great Plains Honors Conference in Canyon.

## **A Woman’s Role in Classic Mythology**

In Ovid’s pivotal myth about the sculptor Pygmalion, the reader is provided with the description of the perfect classical woman: a pure and beautiful object. One could look at countless sources from the past to see several key themes appear, but Wagoner focuses on the classics, providing images, excerpts, and themes from *The Metamorphoses*, *The Odyssey* of Homer, *The Aeneid* of Virgil, *The Bible*, and *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. In particular, the reader sees women representing an obstacle to great heroes, the object to be won by said hero, or the origin of knowledge. Women served

*continued next page*

## Research Highlights from Current Students *continued*

as obstacles, such as the trial Dido posed Aeneas, or Charybdis and Scylla posed to Odysseus. They served as objects, trophies won, like Odysseus's Penelope. Finally women served as origins of knowledge, as in the case of Eve and Shamhat. In all of these cases, women never played the central role of the story, but rather served as the carrot to lead the hero forward, or the stick prodding the hero backward.

**Yvonne Michaud**, a junior Honors program student, presented her research on oceanic biodiversity at the Great Plains Honors Conference in Canyon.

### Human Impacts on Oceanic Diversity

It is only within the last few decades that humans have realized that we are destroying oceanic biodiversity. We are doing this through several methods, some direct, such as overfishing, and some indirect, such as the negative effects of pollution on coral reefs. The term "biodiversity" was coined by Walter Rosen, and according to E.O. Wilson in his book *Naturalist*, its definition is, "The totality of hereditary variation in life forms, across all levels of biological organization, from genes and chromosomes within individual species to the array of species themselves and finally, at the highest level, the living communities of ecosystems such as forests and lakes." As you can tell from the definition, biodiversity is a very complicated notion. This complication is multiplied by the many facets of how humans are changing the oceanic ecosystem. Michaud describes some effects of overfishing, the melting ice caps, and the increased acidity of the ocean waters. Individually, these anthropogenic changes would cause fluctuations in the diversity of ocean life, but together they are causing irreparable damage.

**Emilienne Kwi**, a senior Honors program student, presented her poster on resource misuse in Cameroon at the Great Plains Honors Conference in Canyon.

### Discovery Cameroon

With twenty million inhabitants, Cameroon is a bilingual country located along the coast of central Africa. It is known around the world as the country with excellent soccer players, but there is so much in this democratic country the world has yet to know. Not only is Cameroon located along the equator, but it is blessed with natural resources which include crude oil, natural gas, rainforest, and the Atlantic Ocean. Cameroon also produces its own electricity from naturally occurring dams. With such resources, one would expect Cameroon to follow, financially, in the path of other small countries blessed with abundant natural resources like Brunei. But this has never been the case. Thirty-nine percent of Cameroonians still live in poverty and less than half of the population can afford education. With the present head of state now ruling for his 31<sup>st</sup> year, the democratic country is far from true democracy.



## HPSC Officers Spring 2013

(From left): Andi Wisdom, Senator; Joseph Hadwal, Secretary; Heather Baker, Treasurer, Honors Floor RA; Michelle Meadows, Vice Chair; Clinton Wagoner, Chair

## Honors Housing Update

Second-year Honors student Heather Baker seems to genuinely enjoy being the Resident Assistant for McCullough-Trigg's fourth floor, but being the Honors RA does come with extra pressure. One of Heather's biggest challenges this year has been building the residents' respect for the rules. She said, "Since it's the Honors floor, I hold them to a higher standard, and they've come to hold higher standards for themselves as well."

This higher standard would have to be difficult to accomplish, since most of the Honors residents are freshmen in an upper-classman's dorm. Heather tries "to give freshmen the feeling of living in Killingsworth through decorations and community activities." She says the benefit is that "it's more laid back and quieter, like upper-classman living." Even the juniors and seniors feel the benefits of Honors housing, because, according to Heather, "there's more community" on the fourth floor than in the rest of McCullough-Trigg, and more of the residents "hang out in the lounges and in each other's rooms."

Heather also let us in on how she's benefitted from being an RA as compared to a resident on the Honors Floor. "As a resident, you see activities and choose whether to participate, but RAs are more involved. It's an understood responsibility that I have to get to know all the residents on a personal level. It's nice for me because those are 24 people I might not have gotten to know otherwise." Heather said it is also her job to create a sense of community on the floor, but some of the most fulfilling moments she's experienced as an RA are when the residents have taken the initiative to reinforce that community on their own by going as a group to Hunan's or CiCi's.



## Student Spotlight: Honors Grad Teaches For America

While many new college graduates struggle to figure out exactly what it is they're supposed to do with their lives, senior Special Education major Rachel Terrell has it all figured out: she'll be Teaching For America! Teach For America, a member of the AmeriCorps national service network, employs highly-motivated teachers in high-need school districts in an effort to combat the educational gap that low-income areas suffer from. Terrell's experiences as an RA at the Honors House and a tutor and mentor for the MSU Initium House and the Autism Support Program have helped to prepare Rachel to work in one of the highest need areas in the country, the South Dakota reservations. Rachel's assignment will be made more specific after her intensive training in Phoenix, Arizona this July, but she knows that she will be at either Pine Ridge or Rosebud reservation teaching elementary school.

When asked how MSU has prepared her for this assignment, Rachel said the teaching program provided her with wonderful mentors like Dr. Ed Schultz, who sponsors MSU's chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children, Dr. Darrell Mohr, and Dr. Millie Gore, who told her "It takes a special person to be a special educator." Dr. Beverly Stiles taught Rachel more about the culture she would enter, and Dr. Michael Vandehey encouraged her to be the best student and person she could. She also found encouragement through the social opportunities provided by the Honors Program and former Honors Program Coordinator Chelsea Humphrey, who helped Rachel find a group of students with whom she could identify.

Rachel doesn't seem worried about leaving all of this support behind. After all, her family is joining her in North Dakota to contribute to her efforts. Rachel's father plans to teach history at a middle school or high school, and together they are developing a plan for opening a community center for the youth. Rachel said, "Moving half-way across the country is sad, but it's exciting. I know that this experience will change me," but she is ready for the new adventure.

This important job opportunity does not mean that Rachel is done with her education. She plans to eventually return to school to pursue her master's in diagnostics and counseling, a path inspired by Dr. Schultz, and she would also like to earn her PhD in a similar field.

# Featured Alumna



MSU Honors graduate Jessica Dunn has a firm grasp on her avocation. After earning her Bachelor of Special Education with Honors from MSU in 2006, she wasted no time; Jessica immediately began work on her master's in special education with emphasis on counseling, and in no time at all, after graduating in 2008, she became the Director of MSU's Autism Support Program, where, during her graduate work, she served as Peer Mentor and Head of House in the residential program, Initium House.

She is now living in Austin, Texas, and continuing her work with young adults with disabilities. Jessica works for College Living Experience ([experiencecele.com](http://experiencecele.com)) as the Independent Living Skills Coordinator, helping CLE Austin students manage household tasks and problem solving. She also teaches Introduction to Special Education at St. Edward's University and works as a personal attendant for three women with disabilities, assisting them "in obtaining independent living skills, experiencing physical and recreational activities, and learning social skills."

Jessica says that being able to get just about anywhere within fifteen minutes is not the only thing she misses about Wichita Falls. "I miss my 'family of choice' in the Wichita Falls community, my church family, and personal and professional network at MSU. I really enjoyed living in the Honors House and wish every Honors Program student had the opportunity my housemates and I had." Jessica also said she is proud of her work with the Autism Support Program, and "although the ASP was closed due to insufficient funding, we assisted eight students with autism spectrum disorders in experiencing university life, gave hundreds of MSU students, staff, and faculty hands-on experience in working and hanging out with students with autism, and extended hope to countless numbers of people, literally, around the world, that people with high-functioning autism and Asperger's Syndrome can go to college."

Besides providing Jessica with training in special education, MSU also prepared her for another aspect of her current job. Since Jessica studied abroad in 2004, she is "able to share personal experiences with my students regarding culture, language, food, physical training" in order to prepare them "physically and mentally for a trip to Spain to embark on 'El Camino de Santiago,' a multi-day walk from at least 100 kilometers away to the city of Santiago de Compostela. We need to be ready to walk 10 or more miles a day through creeks, hills, and streets of France and Spain."

This alumna is definitely multi-talented; she also volunteers in a chapel for adults with disabilities where she assists in leading worship music. When Jessica is not busy volunteering or working one of her three jobs she "hangs out with friends, taking advantage of the diversity of food and music offered in Austin." She also lives within an hour's drive of her family, so she visits them whenever possible. Jessica said of her new city, "Austin is full of lots of people, young and old, doing really creative, inventive, and purposeful things. It has been both a challenge and a blessing to encounter such diversity of ideas, lifestyles, and activities. I like being in a place in which observing a vegetarian diet and living a green lifestyle is highly encouraged and accessible. Farmers markets and CSAs (community-supported agriculture) are commonplace, too, which is a wonderful way for me to know where my food comes from."

Her aspirations do not end in Austin though. Jessica shared that she would "like to pursue national or international opportunities in working with adults with intellectual disabilities in residential communities. I love the idea of people with and without disabilities living, working, creating, and worshiping together."

## Honors Fun Facts from Spring 2013

### 98 total students in the Honors Program

61 students from Texas, 1 student from Virginia

36 international students:

2 from Europe - Germany, Bulgaria

25 from the Caribbean - Dominica (4), Grenada (3),  
St. Kitts (2), St. Lucia (12), Antigua (4)

1 from Asia - Vietnam

8 from Africa - Nigeria (6), Cameroon (2)

Do you have a story to  
share? Send us an e-mail!

We would love to hear from more alumni at  
[Honors@mwsu.edu](mailto:Honors@mwsu.edu)! We hope many of you will  
continue to keep in touch with us, and we look  
forward to sharing your stories in the future.

# Adventures in International Publishing

Honors Program junior Stefan Atanassov had the best possible non-health related excuse for missing the first week of class: he was having his book of poetry published in Bulgaria. After returning to Midwestern State from his home in Bulgaria, Stefan shared a few thoughts about the process of writing, compiling, and publishing his book.

He started working on the collection at 16, and even at that age, he had a plan; "I had a vision of how I wanted to do the book, so I had to learn every aspect of it." He researched other poets, linguistics, layout and design, symbolism, and psychology. He published the book under a pseudonym based on French post-structuralist Roland Barthes' concept of "The Death of the Author." While Stefan was willing to share his pseudonym, he clarified that the pun on what can be translated as "Blackness Purple" is not entirely clear in English.

Several post-modern themes are explored in Stefan's book, the title of which can be roughly translated as "Anomalies in the Symphonies of Nent I-shin" and Other Shocking Revelations in a Report by Blackness Purple. To develop the themes of the existence of happiness and the impossibility of happiness, Stefan says that, "in a typically post-modern fashion, [he] abandoned the notion of a strictly literary text and used an epistolary approach, referencing television, music, film, and the internet." Stefan said, "I took the idea of 'the death of the author' and extended it to the death of the book,

showing that other media have begun to replace it." He says that even though his poems are not supposed to be jokes, they parody TV and other modern means of expression.

Stefan's poetry also illuminates the theme of possession, a concept which Stefan says "is not universal, but has happened through language." He clarifies that possession is irrelevant to the object that is believed to be possessed. The longest poem in his collection explores each of these primary themes in a dialogue between two people in a TV show who are interrupted by a commercial promising happiness for \$1 (sound familiar?). While many may consider these themes depressing, Stefan says that he does not consider his work as happy or sad, dark or optimistic because he believes "in the ambiguity and relativity of art and language." Stefan clarified that "structural linguistics says there is no absolute meaning," and in accordance with that idea, "happiness and love are unreliable," since they belong to the imagined world rather than the material.

Stefan is also working on Bulgarian translations of the poetry of e.e. cummings, one of his major American influences. Stefan has also found inspiration in the works of Elizabeth Bishop, J.D. Salinger, and Bulgarian poet Nikolai Kunchev. But poetry is not his only



Photo by Bradley Wilson

passion. Stefan said that after graduating with his bachelor's in communications, he hopes to attend a film school in Europe, "outside of the corrupt consumerist American institution of Hollywood," he said cheekily. He is especially interested in film because he believes it is potentially "a more influential art form because of its appeal to multiple senses." The artist has more control in the case of film because "the interpretation is less directly dependent on the audience's understanding."

So will those of us who don't read Bulgarian ever get to enjoy Stefan's poetry? Stefan says that it could be extremely difficult to translate in a way that would have the linguistic effects he intended to achieve, and much of the humor might be lost. But maybe there will eventually be a movie version.

## Seventh Annual Honors Program Symposium

*"Abstract Thinking in a Concrete World"*



The Seventh Annual Honors Program Symposium was held on March 23, 2013. The Honors Program Student Committee organized and implemented the event. Students voted to select a faculty discussion panel in place of a keynote speaker. Dr. Mark Farris, Mathematics; Dr. Nathan Jun, Philosophy; and Professor Sandra Grant, Mass Communication, discussed the topic "Political activism is an essential part of a democratic society." The student presentations from March 2013 are as follows:



Clinton Wagoner – *Women's Role in Classical Literature*  
Cody Parish – *I Help Write. We Help Write. Honors Students Help Write at the Writing Center.*

Kylie Parker – *Post Modern Directors*

Joseph Hadwal – *The Election of 1928*

Heather Baker – *Separating and Analyzing Enzymes from the Trans Pecos Copperhead Venom*

Shikemi Olowofela – *Water Conservation*

# Study Abroad



*Many Honors Program students participate in the various study abroad programs offered at MSU. Honors offers additional scholarship support for Honors students who study abroad through any of the programs supported by the university. These opportunities not only help broaden our students' perspectives on the world, but also they fulfill the senior requirement necessary to graduate from the Honors Program. Students must study abroad, complete an internship, or submit a senior research project in order to complete the Honors Program requirements. Some of the programs available at MSU include a fall semester in Granada, Spain, a spring semester in Pontlevoy, France, one month in Madrid, Spain, one month in London, England, and a rainforest study in Panama. In the summer of 2012, three Honors students, Emily Saville, Kalynn Smith, and Alyssa Smith, visited Panama. Emily and Kalynn answered a few questions about this experience:*

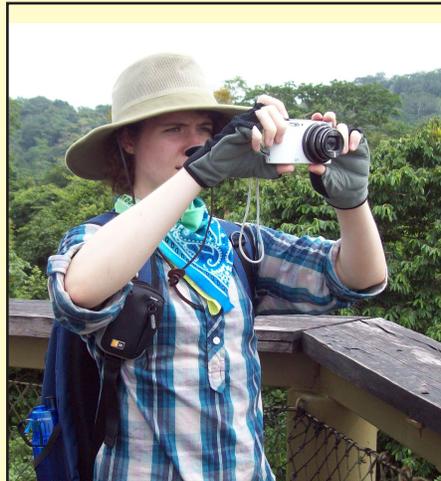
## Where did you study?

Emily Saville (ES): Gamboa, Panama and Punta Patino, Panama. Kalynn Smith (KS): The first half of the course was spent at MSU researching aspects of Panama and being informed about the process of international travel. The second half (two weeks) was spent throughout Panama. We stayed at a station (which was really a large house) reserved for a group such as ours, a lodge which was flanked by the coast and hundreds of acres of rainforest, and also (one day and night) in a native village.

## What was the most memorable experience you had while studying abroad?

ES: When we arrived at our second field station, Punta Patino, I immediately fell in love with the beautiful beach. We wanted to swim, but had to unload our

luggage and eat dinner. By the time we finished it was already dark, but we decided to go for a swim anyway. Panama is known for having a large number of different species of animals and it was evident everywhere we went. The whole country is full of life. My most memorable experience though happened as soon as we got in the water. Someone was quick to point out that the water was glowing and lighting up. We were surrounded by millions of bioluminescent phytoplankton. It was as if we were in a dream. I've never been a part of something so magical until that moment. KS: The most memorable experience for me was the time we spent in the native village. As paradoxical as it may sound, there was a poetic reality to that village that I never thought I would experience. What always stands out in my mind is simply watching the native children play so enthusiastically in the river while their mothers washed their clothes and their young siblings.



## What was the most difficult thing about studying abroad?

ES: I absolutely loved studying abroad. I am one for adventure, change and new things. But it was kind of difficult to stay energized the whole trip. We did a lot of hiking and traveling. It definitely wore me out, but staying positive helped me get the most that I could out of the trip. KS: I doubt this will apply to the other study abroad programs, but the physical demand of the Rainforest Ecology course was by far the most difficult. Even for those who were "in shape," the rainforest was an exhaustive terrain (though being in the rainforest while raining truly is a



unique experience I will treasure). Culture shock obviously also played a role in the trip, but common courtesy and a smile went a long way where common language and culture were absent.

## How was it different from a typical semester at MSU?

ES: It was dramatically different. It introduced a language barrier, new sights, new animals, and new concepts. I loved getting to learn about places like the Panama Canal and then actually being there. It was more of a hands-on experience than any classroom can ever offer. KS: Recreating something in a lab is far different from experiencing it out in the world. This applies to other areas of study as well as the sciences; reading *of* a people is not as beneficial as *being with* a people. Also, typical MSU routines did not apply (e.g. class, class, lunch, class, work, sleep, repeat).

## What is the most valuable thing you learned/gained from this experience?



ES: I learned so much from this trip. Not necessarily just about tropical rainforest ecology either. It's a totally different experience being there and immersing yourself in a different culture. You can hear about things all your life, but until you actually experience them I feel as if you are missing out. KS: Taking one's self out of his/her "comfort zone" is necessary to experience life to the fullest. I'm an introverted person by nature, but international travel made me realize becoming an extrovert occasionally, if not all the time, is fulfilling.



# Events

- Fort Worth Zoo field trip with Dr. Lodge
- Game Night Brown Bag with Dr. Vandehey
- Pajama/Planning Party
- The End of the World Brown Bag with Dr. Lodge
- Evolution of Feminism Brown Bag with Dr. Jun
- Planetarium Brown Bag



## MSU Alumni Association Outstanding Honors Program Students

<i>Cody Cole</i> .....1994	<i>Jennifer Veitenheimer</i> .....2000	<i>Jonathan Abel</i> .....2008
<i>Chandra Rodgers</i> .....1994	<i>Jeffrey (Mark) Fleming</i> .....2001	<i>Chelsea Humphrey</i> .....2009
<i>Melissa Miller</i> .....1995	<i>Nyian Farrell</i> .....2002	<i>Liam Guthrie</i> .....2010
<i>Paul (Andrew) Fleming</i> .....1995	<i>Shonna Diggs</i> .....2003	<i>Ashley Gravelle</i> .....2011
<i>Jamie Benefield</i> .....1996	<i>Adam McMahan</i> .....2004	<i>Kyle Christian</i> .....2012
<i>Jason Lawrence</i> .....1997	<i>Marie Ibarra</i> .....2005	<i>Kistel Hazel</i> .....2013
<i>Paul Mussachio</i> .....1998	<i>Laura Rachael Kair</i> .....2006	
<i>Danielle Roney</i> .....1999	<i>Erin Kathleen Short</i> .....2007	