

The Honors Program at Sweet Briar College

Spring 2013 • Alumni and Parent Newsletter



Greetings from Honors!

Our spring semester is off to a busy start and as always, we welcome the opportunity to share a few highlights of the program with Honors friends, alumni, and the parents of current Honors students.

- Jill Nelson Granger (l), Director of The Honors Program and Julie Hemstreet (r), The Honors Program Associate Administrator



Honors Program Student Council

In late January, two new members were elected to the HPSC to represent the Class of 2016: **Emily Dallas** and **Elspeth Schalk**. Emily and Elspeth join six upper class students elected to represent the interests of all Honors students and to promote academic success and a sense of community within the Honors Program. The HPSC had a busy fall semester organizing a Halloween-themed movie night, a craft party, a Study Skills information session and an end-of-semester “coffee, snacks and games” event in the Honors Center. More activities and events are planned for spring semester, which also will mark the end of the leadership of co-chairs **Katie Bitting '13** and **Morgan Franke '13** who are graduating in May. Katie and Morgan have had a tremendous impact on the HPSC including helping to bring the Honors Hall initiative to successful implementation in the fall of 2012.

Class of 2015 Pannell Honors Scholars

A select group of our sophomore Honors students are completing projects that reflect research, creative endeavors and personal inquiry. The Pannell Honors Scholars were selected last year through a competitive award competition that recognizes students of exceptional initiative and ability. The students began working on the projects at the beginning of the fall semester and the college community has been following their efforts and adventures, reading their blogs and updates on the SBC news site. To read more about **Kasey Stewart** and her project, go to “Sophomore scholarship leads to Costa Rica” 2/11/2013 <http://sbc.edu/news/spanish/sophomore-scholarship-leads-costa-rica/> and read her blog <http://savinglatinamerica.blogspot.com/>



- Kasey Stewart '15

Highlights of two other Pannell Scholars and their projects can be found at these links:

“Science too cool not to share” 12/7/2012
<http://sbc.edu/news/chemistry/science-cool-share/>
<http://chemforeveryone.blog.sbc.edu>



- Ashley Baker '15

“Pannell Scholar: Engineering fits girl to a ‘T’” 11/15/2012
<http://sbc.edu/news/engineering-science/pannell-scholar-engineering-fits-girls-t/>

“Barta hopes program flips a switch” 1/24/2013
<http://sbc.edu/news/engineering-science/barta-hopes-program-flips-switch/>

Honors on Facebook!

The Honors Program supports a Facebook page and a Facebook group! “Like” our Page to keep in touch with news of interest. “Join” our Group to get announcements about upcoming events and news bits! Who do you think is the biggest Fan of the Honors Program? Share your ideas with us on Facebook!



Senior Honors Thesis Projects Nearing Completion

Eight seniors in the class of 2013 are pursuing Honors in their major by completing a year long research or creative project.

Rachael Ashdown (from Freeville, NY) is an international affairs major completing her thesis *“The Evolution of Women’s Roles and Participation in Islamic Societies through Military Action”* under the direction of assistant professor Spencer Bakich;

Katie Bitting (from Elizabethtown, PA) is a biochemistry and molecular biology major completing her thesis *“The Synthesis and Biological Testing of a Biotinylated Dione-Coupled Platinum Complex”* under the direction of assistant professor Abraham Yousef;

CJ Campbell (from Little Rock, AR) is an English major completing his thesis *“Gender Instability and the Monstrosity of the Renaissance Witch”* under the direction of assistant professor Tony Lilly;

A-Joo Kim (from South Korea) is an international affairs major completing her thesis *“Finding an Ideal Process toward Successful Reunification of Korea”* under the direction of assistant professor Padmini Coopamah;

Katherine Macklin (from Seattle, WA) is an environmental sciences major completing her thesis *“Impacts of Channel Characteristics and Land Use History on the Gravel-Sand Transition in a Low-Order Stream in Central VA”* under the direction of associate professor Rebecca Ambers;

Caitlin Playle (from Colorado Springs, CO) is a self-designed Medieval Studies major, completing her thesis *“Comparing Irish Saints’ Lives in the Early Middle Ages”* under the direction of associate professor Lynn Laufenberg;

Rachael Stein (from Reading, PA) is an international affairs major, completing her thesis *“Quantifying Education as an Essential Key to Economic and Social Development”* under the direction of assistant professor Padmini Coopamah;

Kelly Winer (from Atlanta, GA) is a mathematical economics major, completing her thesis *“Modeling Retention at a Woman’s College”* under the direction of professor Rob Alexander.

Senior Honors Thesis projects represent work that goes above and beyond the normal capstone experience. Honors thesis students work with a committee composed of a primary faculty adviser from the major department, a second Sweet Briar faculty member who can offer expertise on the thesis topic, and a third reader selected from outside of the college. Thesis projects culminate with a public presentation in mid to late April, most often a defense. The thesis presentations are a high point of the spring semester and draw large audiences from across the campus including the student’s thesis committee, other faculty, students, parents, deans, and campus staff.

The Honors Colloquia Series

The spring Colloquia began with a talk by Ursula Kuhar, assistant professor and Director of Arts Management Program. Her presentation, “Artful Learning: Leonard Bernstein’s Contributions to Music Education” included entertaining vintage television clips from “Young People’s Concerts,” a concert series for school-aged children that was broadcast live in the early 1960s. On March 6, Jeffrey Jones, assistant professor of music will present “The Skiffle Bunch Project: Music and Community Development in Southern Trinidad.” Janet Steven, associate professor of biology will give the final colloquium on April 3.

Brunch with Two Deans!

On Sunday, March 3rd, Dean Cheryl Steele (l) and Amy Jessen-Marshall (r) hosted a brunch for students in the Honors Program. All of the Honors students were invited to brunch and to attend the matinee performance of “Waiting for Godot.” About 40 students, first years through seniors, gathered at Red Top for good food, good company and some very special “face time” with the deans.



- (l to r) Mariah Miller '16, Taneal Williams '16 and Kiersten Garcia '16

First-year Honors Hall

by Emily Dallas and Elspeth Schalk

The implementation of the first-year Honors Hall for the 2012-2013 school year was a huge success. Not only do students enjoy sharing a living space with other academically focused students, but as scholars, we have formed friendships that extend far beyond the classroom. Discussions from our Honors classes often extend into the dorm, and it is never too difficult to find a study buddy for an upcoming tests or peer editor for a class assignment! Despite academics being a primary focus, there is no doubt that the honors hall residents know how to have a great time. Whether we are busy decorating for an upcoming holiday, or enjoying snacks and just “hanging out”, the honors students at Sweet Briar definitely like relaxing after a day of hard work and getting to know our scholarly sisters!



First-year Honors Hall residents