



News and notes from the University of Dayton *Honors Program*

The Newest Honors Class

300 Incoming Students
Choosing a Challenge

Article on Page 3



Letter from the director

In the course of my interviews for this position, many asked why I wanted this job. Although the parallels with my research specialty (Russian history) make administration an interesting intellectual adventure, such activities generally are not as exciting as the archive or the classroom. Yet, my answer to the question was, and is, one connected to my interest in the past. As an historian, I found the opportunity to engage creatively with the legacy of the Honors Program—its traditions and the students that help create them—to be an exciting prospect.

In addition, I continue to be drawn to the transformative role that a Catholic and Marianist education intended to challenge high-achieving students can play in our lives and in the world around us. Indeed, on these pages you will get a good glimpse of how all of you—past and present—embrace your callings as students to explore the mystery of God's creation in all of its manifestations. You continue to be torch-bearers of a Catholic intellectual tradition that spans two millennia. Furthermore, you have become models of "honor" with your courage, humility, thankfulness

Student Contributors

Stephanie Pugar, Reporting and Writing
Maura Shanahan, Photography (Cover 2010)

Student Staff

Kristina Demichele, Reporting
Kathryn Gardocki, Editing
Kaitlyn Hiti, Layout and Production
Maura LaMendola, Reporting
Linh Pham, Writing
Amy Timmerman, Reporting
Anthony Whaley, Editing

Administrative Staff

Jeanne Palermo, Managing Editor
Ramona Speranza, Layout and Production Manager
Regina Lloyd, Editing Staff Manager
Becca Elliott, Reporting and Writing Staff Manager



Dr. David W. Darrow, Director

and faith—people who, like Mary, have trusted enough to say "yes" to what God asks of you. This legacy of scholarship, leadership, and honor drew me to this position and reminds me every day—even amid the clutter of time cards and meetings—that this is a program that makes a difference in the world in many ways. I am honored and blessed to be a part of it.

The University Honors Program thanks you for your contributions of talent, treasure, news, and humor over the years, and wishes you all the very best. Please keep in touch, visit when you can, and know that, as surely as your class picture hangs on the wall in Jill's office, you are always a UD Honors Student.

Peace,

David W. Darrow, Ph.D.

**On-line issues
of *HONORSlink*
can be found at:**
<http://honors.udayton.edu>

**Look there for our next
issue in May!**

Welcome to *HONORSlink*—the latest edition of news and notes from the University of Dayton Honors Program.

Over the past four years the Honors Program has made great progress in serving more of the University's most talented students. This fall Dr. David Darrow, Associate Professor of History and former Director of International Studies, takes the helm as the Program's fifth director.

Under previous directors, Dr. Steven Dandaneau and Dr. Patricia M. Hart, the Program expanded its diploma options to all students in the University Honors Program. The Berry Scholars Program is winding down, with the final class having entered in the fall of 2009. Now more than 200 students each year enter UD as equal members of the Honors Program with the opportunity to earn a University Honors Program diploma. The Honors academic staff currently includes Associate Director Dr. Andrew Murray (Mechanical Engineering), who organizes and leads the thesis process, and Dr. John McCombe (English), who serves as Associate Director for Fellowship Advising.

Current Honors Program students now can earn one of two diplomas through three pathways. Last year, 87 students earned diplomas and Honors keys from the University Honors Program.

While the Honors Program is proud to offer opportunities and benefits to a larger group of students, it remains committed to building and maintaining a close-knit community. This year's incoming first-year Honors students were invited to move in a day early and participate in a welcome program where they met upper class Honors students and learned more about the Program (see adjacent article). Also, first-year Honors students participate in Learning/Living communities where they take core courses together. Our upper class Honors students are helping to plan additional Honors special-interest housing opportunities in the student neighborhood.

Another part of this close-knit community is the long line of Honors Program alumni. This newsletter is one way we hope to stay linked. The University of Dayton Honors Program Facebook page is another. We hope you'll visit it often to hear about what is happening and also to post your own items. The future is exciting but our past is what has formed our strong foundation.

What do you get when you combine 584 family members, 244 incoming Honors students, 64 student leaders, and 1 day? And no, the answer is not a headache. On August 20, 2010, the Honors Program hosted its first ever **Honors Students Welcome (HSW)**. Inspired by a previous Honors summer orientation program designed for a smaller group of students, the HSW was an effort to provide all incoming Honors students with the opportunity to meet with peers, Honors Program faculty and staff, and the wide array of opportunities awaiting them at the University of Dayton.



The Leaders of Leaders (front to back)—Carol Harper, Natalie Berra, Stephanie Pugar, Jacob Rosen and Zac Sideras

Photo by R. Speranza

Because the Honors Program has never attempted to sponsor an event this large, extensive planning began immediately after the end of classes in April. Over the summer months, five "Leaders of Leaders" devoted a vast

amount of time and energy to ensure that the HSW would run smoothly. And run smoothly it did!

Beginning at 7:30 a.m., 64 student-leader volunteers arrived on campus to provide move-in assistance to incoming students. With over 200 students moving into 4 separate residence halls, the student leaders demonstrated superior skills in manual labor, traffic-directing, and alphabetization, all with never-waning smiles. The HSW would not have been possible were it not for these crucial student volunteers, and they could not have been happier with the end result. A great majority of the student leaders reported satisfaction with their roles as leaders and expressed desire to participate in the HSW again.



Family lunch with new classmates

After the initial shock and sweat of moving 20-pound TVs up 4 flights of stairs, the incoming Honors students arrived at the Rec Plex donning their new white t-shirts. They were provided with a box lunch to enjoy with their families while the

Honors Program Director David Darrow delivered a welcoming speech. Dr. Darrow spoke of the overwhelming benefits the Honors Program has to offer, assuring parents that their children will have every opportunity to succeed at the University of Dayton.

After lunch it was time for the incoming students to willingly part from their parents and meet in



Cool treats for a hot day

small groups while Dr. Darrow hosted a parent question-and-answer session. The students were placed into small groups based on the criteria of residence hall and wide array of academic majors in an attempt to provide them an opportunity to meet and speak with students who have similar interests and live nearby. Through icebreaking, scavenger-hunting, and ice-cream-eating, incoming Honors students became much more comfortable with their newfound home.

Sound like a productive day? It had just begun! For the next three hours students were given the opportunity to sit in on six modules

covering topics such as national fellowships, student organizations, education abroad, faith, service, scholarship, and the benefits of being in the Honors Program. With mounds of information clouding their brains, students moved to a farewell dinner during which they had the opportunity to win what Dr. Darrow likes to call "fabulous prizes" through a raffle drawing.

If you find it exhausting simply reading about all the events of one day, it is nothing compared to the drooping eyes of the incoming Honors students.

However, despite the long day, students felt that the experience was positive and beneficial. One survey comment noted that "it helped to make things less overwhelming both socially and academically." So, the HSW was able to accomplish its main goal to acquaint new students with UD and the Honors Program. With the largest class of students in UD's history, the Honors Program anticipates the most active participation in the Program to date. The future Honors Students Welcome events are sure to continue to provide Honors students with an unforgettable introduction to their next four (or five) years at the University of Dayton.



Getting to know each other



Small-group icebreakers with Honors leaders

The Newest Honors Class 300 Incoming Students Choosing a Challenge

Article written by Stephanie Pugar
Photography by Maura Shanahan

Author Flannery O'Connor once said, "the writer operates at a peculiar crossroads where time and place and eternity somehow meet. His problem is to find that location." This conundrum is faced by authors along the entire spectrum of the written word, including Honors student thesis writers.

Sonya Bilocerkowycz, an English major and sociology minor of the Class of 2011, is in the midst of working on her Honors thesis, a novella inspired by her experiences in Ireland and her study of O'Connor's works. It is a project "that investigates the seemingly contradictory habitation of both doubt and faith within two characters, a father and his daughter," says Bilocerkowycz.

Bilocerkowycz feels she was first inspired to undertake the project when she was studying abroad in Ireland: "I did a lot of creative writing while I was abroad, and [in retrospect] that seems to have empowered me just enough to opt for the creative thesis. I was living on the outskirts of Dublin and taking a Modernism course from a Dublin professor. We read parts of Joyce's *Ulysses*. The combination of learning *Ulysses* from a bona fide Dubliner and being physically entrenched in the city of Dublin while reading the novel was really significant for me. It gave me a very strong, multifaceted sense of place. After feeling what Joyce did with Dublin, I was encouraged to try the same with Ukraine," the country of her ethnic background.

Bilocerkowycz received Honors credit through her study abroad experiences. She feels that the Honors program should receive special recognition for allowing her the opportunity and that her study abroad experience was a worthy challenge that assisted her on her educational journey: "I think traveling has made me more aware of geographic and cultural details that make for a memorable literary setting."

Bilocerkowycz's creative writing thesis is especially inspired by the works of Flannery O'Connor and Graham Greene. "These writers symbolically equate belief with disease and ailment, as is evident in Greene's *The End of the Affair* and O'Connor's

Wise Blood," says Bilocerkowycz. Rather than a convenient, cure-all remedy for life's trials, genuine belief is portrayed as a fierce struggle; like any medical disorder, faith is life-altering and severe. While doubt is sometimes dismissed as a weakness of faith, O'Connor asserts that disbelief can, in itself, serve as a source of redemptive suffering. "With the literary motifs of disease and suffering, I will examine the paradoxical impulses of belief and disbelief in my creative thesis. This work will attempt an honest depiction of modernity and its refusal to approach belief or disbelief with any sense of gravity."

Bilocerkowycz also feels that working on this project has allowed her to explore her own artistic direction as a writer. The opportunity presented in the Honors thesis has pushed her to work on this project, something she says she may not have done on her own.



Ms. Bilocerkowycz at the Giants Causeway

In addition to her thesis work, Bilocerkowycz is applying for a Fulbright Fellowship to teach English in Armenia: "Armenia's Orthodox culture is very unique, and it has produced some great writers. It is also a former Soviet state, like Ukraine, and that resonates with my background."



Ms. Bilocerkowycz on the Aran Islands

It would seem that Bilocerkowycz has solved O'Connor's problem of finding the intersection of place and time and now stands at her own crossroads, trying to make a small mark on eternity with her current writing project. And while all of us who desire to write must find that place ourselves, it certainly helps to have the support like that given by the University Honors Program as we make that journey.

Article written by Becca Elliott

The University Honors Program is foremost a program centered on academic excellence. A passion for learning and a lifelong curiosity is something all former Honors students possess. Some Honors graduates have decided to share this passion by continuing down the path of academia. In this Honors Alumni spotlight we highlight five Program graduates who continued their formal educations and are now educating the next generation of thinkers and innovators.

Joe Acquisto, Class of 1997

Dr. Joseph Acquisto thinks he is probably best remembered by his peers for his crazy credit load. He graduated with a double degree in Music Performance and French. Dr. Alan Kimbrough was a mentor and Acquisto credits Dr. Kimbrough for pointing him in the right direction. Acquisto was a first-generation college student and his time at University of Dayton showed him he never wanted to be away from a college campus.

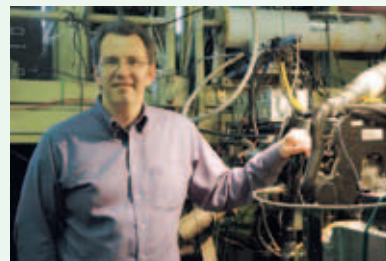
Acquisto earned his Ph.D. in French at Yale University. He wasn't sure he would be accepted, as Yale has one of the top-flight programs in the field, nor was he sure if his undergraduate work at Dayton would be enough to help him compete. He credits his acceptance largely to his work in the Honors Program. The thesis leveled the playing field and allowed him to compete: "Ivy league graduates also have to have a thesis, so even if you aren't coming from an Ivy school you can show you are able to do sustained, focused research."

Acquisto currently works at the University of Vermont as an Associate Professor of French, specializing in Baudelaire, which was also the basis of his thesis research at the University of Dayton.

Andre Boehman, Class of 1986

Dr. André Boehman began his life at the University of Dayton much earlier than most. His parents were living in graduate housing when he was born and his father later became a UD professor. He even has childhood memories of playing with the frogs his dad was using for Biomedical Engineering research.

Boehman studied mechanical engineering at the University of Dayton in the Honors Program. He completed two theses while at UD and even won money in a technical competition which allowed him to buy his wife's engagement ring. He attended Stanford University for graduate school and completed a two-year, post-doctorate program. Boehman said his years in the Honors Program helped to prepare him for Stanford: "The first few quarters [at Stanford] were intimidating because



Dr. Boehman in His Lab at Penn State University

other students were from very elite programs, but I was right in there competing with all of them because I was well trained."

After finishing his doctorate, Boehman's thesis advisor recommended a teaching post at Penn State University because of his thesis on pollution control and his post-doctoral research. He applied for the position in 1993 and was notified that he had received the position while skiing with his wife; he has spent his entire career at Penn State. Boehman's research centers on alternate fuels. He runs a burn lab at Penn State, which tests fuels, then designs engines to run those fuels.

"All of this was enabled by the University of Dayton and it started from a very young age. I was very happy there and I credit a lot of this to the University of Dayton," said Boehman. His advice to current Honors students is to focus on a thesis.

Chikako Mese, Class of 1991

Dr. Chikako Mese studied mathematics at the University of Dayton. The Honors Program provided her with an academically-challenging



Dr. Mese with Friend

environment and helped expand her horizons: "People in the Honors Program are highly motivated and that motivates you to do better yourself." In addition, the math department was influential in her decision to continue studying mathematics: "The math department had very energetic and dedicated people that motivated you to get into the profession. They were great role models."

After graduation, Mese pursued her Ph.D. in mathematics at Stanford University. She was an assistant professor at the University of Southern California for three years, moved on to Connecticut College for five years, then to Johns Hopkins University. She has been at Johns Hopkins for six years doing mathematical research and supervising graduate students. Mese believes that there is a very positive environment at Johns Hopkins and people are "here to do a lot of good work."

Carrie Rohman, Class of 1993

Dr. Carrie Rohman has fond memories of being in the Honors Program under Dr. Kimbrough. As a student in the English department, she saw him in a dual role as Director of the Honors Program and as the English Department Chair. She remembers enjoying dinners at his home with fellow Honors students and his graduation day party attire—shorts with a blue button-up shirt and red polka dot tie—which she said was classic Dr. Kimbrough. These experiences were coupled with an Honors Program that also supported her academically: "It cultivated an intellectual rigor and curiosity at a formative moment that I think was really helpful in getting through graduate school and learning how to be a scholar."

Rohman attended the University of Indiana after graduation and received her Ph.D. in English with a subfield in British Literature. After finishing her Ph.D. program she took a visiting position at the University of Cincinnati and then moved on to her first tenure-track position at the University of Pittsburgh in Johnstown. She is currently an assistant professor at Lafayette College in Pennsylvania where she teaches courses in British Modernism. Rohman enjoys being at a small liberal arts college where teaching is the real focus. The Honors Program helped prepare her for the dual role of teacher and scholar: "I try to get my students to be interested in difficulty, rather than avoid difficulty, and that was modeled for me in the Honors Program."

Link profile Experiences in Higher Education

Jeff Shafer, Class of 2002

Dr. Jeffrey Shafer came to the University of Dayton from his hometown of Bowling Green, Ohio. As an undergraduate, he studied computer engineering and he remembers the campus as having a "friendly and supportive atmosphere." He earned his Ph.D. at Rice University in Houston, Texas. Shafer believes that he learned diligence and independence from writing and researching his Honors thesis, and that the individual student attention from faculty and staff helped him progress as a scholar and academic. This combination helped Shafer in his graduate school pursuits. As an undergraduate, he always thought he would make his way into the computer science industry, but on the suggestion of a professor he applied to graduate school.

Shafer currently serves as an Assistant Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the



Dr. Shafer at the University of the Pacific in California

University of the Pacific in California. He has built a connection to his new school because he is able to give one-on-one attention to his students, similar to his experiences at the University of Dayton. Shafer credits the Honors Program with pushing him harder as a student and getting him on "more of a competitive track" which helped him in his career.

Article written by Becca Elliott

Link profile Sonya Bilocerkowycz



University Honors Program

125 Alumni Hall
300 College Park
Dayton, OH 45469-0311



contact us

email: honorsinfo@notes.udayton.edu ~ website: <http://honors.udayton.edu> ~
facebook key words: University-of-Dayton-Honors-Program

HONORS STUDENTS ARE NEWEST CHAMINADE SCHOLARS

Six of the Chaminade Scholars recently announced are Honors students from the Class of 2013. Congratulations to Emily Hascher, Nicholas Fahrig, Colleen Federici, Kara Kindel, Sarah Kociuba and Emily Motz!

MEGHANN WYGONIK RECEIVES "SMART" MONEY

The U.S. Department of Defense awarded junior civil engineering major and Honors student Meghann Wygonik a SMART scholarship—Science, Mathematics and Research for Transformation—that will provide funding for full tuition, a \$1,000 book allowance, other education-related fees, paid summer internships, health insurance and a job after graduation. Wygonik, who graduated from Kiski Area High School near Pittsburgh, said she is excited to return home for her internship and post-graduation employment with the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Pittsburgh District.

NATIONAL GOLDWATER SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED TO JULIA FAETH

Julia Faeth, a senior Honors student majoring in chemical engineering, has been awarded a 2010-2011 Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship. Faeth is currently conducting research under Dr. Sukhjinder Sidhu with the Sustainable Environmental Technologies Group at UDRI.

In addition, Faeth was recently awarded an American Institute of Chemical Engineers National Scholarship based on academic performance and involvement in chapter activities.

DAN PRINDLE SELECTED TO NATIONAL GOOD WORKS TEAM

University of Dayton senior offensive tackle and Berry Scholar Dan Prindle has been selected to the 2010 Allstate AFCA Good Works Team. Allstate Insurance Company and the American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) annually select the team, which is one of the most prestigious off-the-field honors in college football. Prindle is the first UD player ever selected to the Good Works team.

NICHOLAS PESOLA WINS UD'S RILEY AWARD

Nicholas Pesola, a senior Honors student and psychology and Spanish double major, was the winner of the 2010 Riley Award. This University of Dayton award recognizes a junior student who has exercised sustained leadership through involvement with student initiatives, exemplifying the educational and service values of the University. Nick is an active member of the UD and City of Dayton communities. He also devotes attention to service trips and immersion experiences that benefit the residents of other states and countries.

JOHN MCGINNIS AWARDED NATIONAL CLINTON SCHOLARSHIP

John McGinnis, junior international studies and Spanish major, was recently awarded a William Jefferson Clinton Scholarship to study at the American University in Dubai for the Spring 2011 semester. This scholarship entitles John to a 100% waiver in tuition and housing during his stay, allowing McGinnis to continue his studies in the Arabic culture and language.

Link calendar

January

- 21 Honors Art Exhibit Open House
- 31 Honors Students Symposium: Senior Registration Due
- 31 Hull Applications Due

February

- 11 An Honors Evening at the Dayton Philharmonic

March

- 11 Honors Students Symposium
- 11 Honors Students Reception

April

- 1 Juniors: Thesis Proposal and Grant Request Documents Due
- 8 Seniors: Theses Due
- 13 Joseph W. Stander Symposium

May

- 7 Honors Graduation Brunch
- 8 Graduation