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Honors College at The College at Brockport

Spring 2006

The Promethean: Spring 2006

Kelly Sabetta

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Honors Program News

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Kelly Sabetta
Newsletter Editor
Journalism Major

Dr. Kenneth P. O'Brien
Director of Honors Program

Dr. Donna Kowal
Associate Director of Honors Program

Darlene Waters
Secretary

219 Holmes Hall
585-395-5400
honors@brockport.edu

BRIGHT FUTURE FOR HONORS CLUB

By Mandy Schepis

"The purpose of the Honors Club shall be to sponsor and promote programs and events that benefit the Brockport academic community, address issues of current concern, and stimulate personal achievement in both students and faculty. (Honors Club Constitution, Article II)"

In simpler terms, the Honors Club exists to serve as a resource to students, providing them with a plethora of both academic and social activities. The Club is open to all Brockport students, but is inherently associated with the Honors Program.

In only its second year of existence, the Honors Club was recently declared a chartered organization by the Brockport Student Government. With

this new distinction, the Club will be able to obtain a budget for the 2006-2007 academic year, which will further enhance the Club's ability to continually plan beneficial events.

Already this semester, the Club has held a successful Welcome Back Brunch for students. The event was held on a wintry Sunday afternoon in January. The chill in the air was left at the door, and the Alumni House on Hartwell lawn was filled with the warmth of the few dozen students in attendance. The attendees generously donated a car-full of gently used clothing, which Dr. Donna Kowal, Associate Director of the Honors Program, promptly offered to a Rochester area charity.

Many more events like the brunch are planned for this semester. The Club is currently in the process of putting together an Improvisational Theatre Night with a renowned campus professor as well as organizing a sweatshirt sale.

This year, the Club is privileged to have a truly extraordinary group of students serving as officers, without whom, none of this would be possible. The panel includes, President, senior Biological Sciences major Amanda Schepis; and Vice President, junior Health Science and Childhood Education major Katie Skomra. As well as, Secretary/Treasurer, senior Mathematics and Adolescent Education major Jessica Roth; and Transfer Representative, senior Journalism major Kelly Sabetta. In addition we have a fine group of Class Representatives, including, senior, English major Kathryn Atkinson; junior, Computer Science, Mathematics, and Computational Science major Momchil Kyurtev; sophomore, Mathematics and Finance major, Nikolay Naletov; as well as three Freshman Representatives which include, Dance major, Jacklyn Hamlin; Adolescent Education and Mathematics major Laura Martin; and Political Science major, Will Mitchell.



Front: Mandy Schepis, Kathryn Atkinson. **Back:** Laura Martin, Kelly Sabetta, Katie Skomra, Kerrilyn Frisbee, Jessica Roth, and Will Mitchell. *Photo by Dr. Ken O'Brien.*

FROM THE DIRECTOR

By Dr. Ken O'Brien

This has been an interesting year so far for the Honors Program, following our first program review.

As I reported in the fall, two visitors, Dr. Norm Weiner (SUNY Oswego) and Dr. D. Bruce Carter (Syracuse University), came to the campus last April to evaluate our Program. Their report confirmed much of what we collectively already knew: the Program was large, very solid, and well-supported by the Administration. But, they also noted several problems, especially the student reaction to HON 395. The course was thoroughly revised for the fall, focusing now on providing students with the tools and resources they needed to write a solid Honors Thesis proposal long before they intend to complete the project.

We have also spent time these past months revamping a number of our program materials, particularly the website. (I wonder how many of you actually knew about that?) We will go into "beta" testing in the next several weeks and will seek volunteers who will navigate the site to see if it is logically organized and contains the most useful information.

The Peer Mentor program was expanded this fall, and two student leaders, Katie Skomra and Jen Heim, journeyed to St. Louis, Mo. in November to the national conference where they presented what we have done over the past five years with the mentor program. Their presentation was extremely well received, as was the material they provided about the program. This spring, Kelly Sabetta will be presenting at the regional NCHC conference in Pittsburgh, Penn. Her topic will be the program's newsletter, which she edits.

I'll take this opportunity to remind you all that Scholar's Day is coming up soon, April 12, and a large number of Honors students will be presenting. For some it will be the subjects of their Honors theses, while for others it will be reports on work they have completed in other classes. This is a special day, one that encourages us to celebrate both the quality of the academic work you do and its extraordinary range. Plan on attending as many sessions as possible, especially if you are first year students, as these sessions can give you a clearer idea of what you could be doing for your own thesis projects in the future.

We had a number of program sponsored activities in the fall, ranging from the freshman class trip to GEVA to the Sunday brunch before Final Exam Week. We are currently scheduling a number during this semester as well, including workshops on internships and study abroad. Given the response in the fall, there will be another pre-finals brunch as well.

In closing, I look forward to continuing our work together on this program, to make it as challenging and intellectually exciting as it can possibly be.

THESIS SPOTLIGHT: HARRY POTTER AS HERO

By Kathryn Atkinson



Kathryn Atkinson. Photo by Kelly Sabetta.

With graduation approaching for many senior Honors students, and HON 395 assignments poking at many juniors, there is a lot of talk about Honors thesis papers. I've had my idea since my last semester at MCC.

At first I thought someone along the way would tell me it wasn't a "thesis kind of topic," but I've come to realize the open guidelines, while making it hard for some to pick a topic, allow for all sorts of possibilities.

For an essay I wrote, I looked at reasons why the Harry Potter books were so popular. With some of the books as big as most dictionaries, there had to be a good reason why children (who used to never read for fun) now sneak flashlights under their covers to read once their lights are turned off. The final pages of the essay touched on Carl Jung's archetypes and Joseph Campbell's hero journey, both of which intrigued me farther, and were what I saw as thesis-worthy angles to look at these books.

Although Jung has been dropped, my thesis covers Joseph Campbell's ideas about the hero journey and how it relates to the books. I not only discuss the hero journey in each book, but I also predict the seventh book based on what parts of Harry's journey are left. Intrigued?

Some might say this isn't really a "hard" issue like some might choose to write about, but just because it's not about the United States' effects on world hunger or the psychology of serial killers, doesn't mean it affects our lives any less. These books span countries and age gaps, and the influence they've had on the world, whether you read them or not, is reason enough to write about them.

STUDENT RESEARCH: SENIOR THESIS TOPICS

Renaë Carapella

Senior

Psychology major

Thesis Topic: How parenting styles influence the development of self-control in children.

Fred Cering

Senior

Criminal Justice and Sociology major

Thesis Topic: Racial profiling and hate crimes focused on Muslims and people of Middle Eastern decent post - 9/11.

Elizabeth Delorme

Senior

Biological Science major

Thesis Topic: BOTOX[®]: A Derivative of Clostridium botulinum.**Jennifer Heim**

Senior

Physical Education and Health Science major

Thesis Topic: Obesity and College Students.

Melanie Larsen

Senior

History and Childhood Education major

Thesis Topic: Queen Isabella, the She-Wolf of France (consort of Edward II of England).

Jennifer Litchfield

Senior

English major

Thesis Topic: Mary Wollstonecraft's direct influence in Virginia Woolf's feminist and political essays.

Kelly Sabetta

Senior

Journalism major

Thesis Topic: Censorship of Photojournalism During Time of War: Vietnam and Iraq.

Mandy Schepis

Senior

Biological Science major

Thesis Topic: Evaluation of Caenorhabditis elegans as a Model System for Enterobacter sakazakii Pathogenesis.

Kiera Slye

Senior

Political Science major

Thesis Topic: Rehabilitation of the Criminal Culture: A Qualitative Assessment of the Cephas Program.

PEER MENTORING: THE JOB OF A STUDENT COORDINATOR

By Jen Heim



Jen Heim Photo by Kelly Sabena.

This year I had the opportunity to be the Student Coordinator for Peer Mentoring. During my freshman year, I had an excellent experience as a mentee in the peer mentoring program, and decided I wanted to be a mentor for incoming freshman the next year.

I was a peer mentor my sophomore and junior year, and decided I wanted to take more of a leadership role for my senior year. I always thought sophomores and juniors make the best mentors because they are closest in age with the incoming freshman, which is why I thought I could make a better contribution as a leader.

My job entailed working alongside Dr. O'Brien to decide how to select mentors, train the mentors, form goals for the peer mentoring program, and see the program ran smoothly.

Once the mentors were trained and their questions were answered, it was my responsibility to form the mentor groups based on schedules and common

interests. Similarly to how roommates are matched up for freshman year, I really tried to find a common major or interest between mentors and possible mentees, in order to give the mentor relationship a positive start. I think if there are common interests, it can give groups something to talk about, and make the freshman experience easier.

The student coordinator is also responsible for dealing with any issues that may arise during the semester. If there are scheduling conflicts or other issues that need to be addressed, like roommate problems, the student coordinator is an additional resource for freshman students to use. I also acted as a support system for mentors in case there were questions they didn't know how to ask, or where to go for answers. At bi-weekly meetings, Dr. O'Brien, the mentors, and myself, discussed what was working, and shared ideas about how to make positive changes to meetings. The student coordinator can also find upcoming events on campus to promote to mentors and give them additional ideas on possible meeting topics.

Being the student coordinator for the peer mentoring program was an excellent experience. It gave me a behind the scenes look at how the program began and how it continues to improve through the years. I would recommend it to other students who have been mentors and feel strongly about the effect this program has on incoming freshman.

THE PEER MENTORING EXPERIENCE

By Marisa Ballaro

I have been involved in the Peer Mentoring program since I entered Brockport as a freshman. I was fortunate to be paired with two outgoing and sincere peer mentors who were influential to my decision to apply to become a peer mentor myself. These two students were able to show me how great Brockport is, and made me feel welcome in my new home. I knew this was the kind of impact I wanted to have on students as they began their first year journey at Brockport.

For the past two years I have been a peer mentor and next year I will serve as the Student Coordinator for the program. I really believe in this program and the effect it has on students. Working together on a weekly basis with my peer mentor partner and our group of seven students, we met to discuss issues such as their first year experience, stress busters, time management, exam preparation, study skills, and worked together to create their schedules for the following semester. We held some meetings just to build our friendships inside of the program and to have fun as a little release from the stresses of the week.

I am still close with my mentors from my freshman year, and I speak to many of the students I worked with on a regular basis. I receive many messages and emails from them asking for advice on a class they are interested in taking, or wanting information about almost anything. I am always willing to help any student and so are the other mentors. These are the kind of bonds that make the entire program so meaningful.

Students have said the mentor program is the strongest part of the Honors Program, and I am proud to say I am a part of it. I am honored to be working so closely on the program's plans for the fall, and I look forward to working with our next batch of new students.

PROFESSOR PROFILE: MORAG S. MARTIN

By Kelly Sabetta



Morag S. Martin. Photo by Kelly Sabetta.

The experiences of students and professors at SUNY Brockport depend on a number of variables, among them being our own personal experiences, relationships, and the life long effect we can have on other's lives. Morag Martin, an Assistant Professor of the History Department, actively participates in the lessons she teaches her students, which transcend beyond the classroom.

Martin, 37, has had a worldly experience of learning as a student, and teaching as a professor. Originally from California, she has obtained degrees from colleges located around the globe, and has lived in countries such as England, France, Scotland, and the United States.

Martin achieved her B.A. degree at Bates College, which is a private college located in Maine. She then studied abroad for her junior year and attended University of Edinburgh, located in the Capital of Scotland. Afterwards, she obtained her PhD at the University of California Irvine.

Since achieving her PhD, Martin has taught at the University of California Irvine as a teaching assistant, and taught some of her own classes. She has been teaching at SUNY Brockport for roughly five years. During her time at Brockport, she traveled to England for one year to research at the University at Warwick, and returned to teach an extensive curriculum to her students.

Martin teaches both Honors and regular courses. This semester, she is teaching Honors Modern World, Early Modern Europe, French Revolution, and History of Drugs. Although there are differences between upper division courses and Honors courses, there are also similarities.

"In many ways, I teach the class similarly, it's just heightened," Martin said. "In terms of instruction, it allows me to do a little more challenging assignments." This includes more writing, more challenging types of reading, and more discussion in class.

In terms of the students, Martin said, they are conscientious, and have more enthusiasm and concern for the lessons taught in class. Honors students, because they are competing at a higher level, are more likely to take the class seriously and do the reading, and be active students.

There are also similarities between teaching upper division courses and Honors courses. "Teaching an honors class is in many ways like teaching an upper division majors class," Martin said. The students really want to be there, learn, and focus on the reading and discussions.

The professor-student relationship is also an important part of the experience of Honors experience, as well as the overall college experience.

"What I like teaching is smaller classes where I can give more personal attention to my students, and really get to know them and feel like there is a dialogue," Martin said.

Tim Daniluk, a freshman Honors student, and Meteorology major and History minor, shares the same view. "I think closer student-teacher relationships make the college experience more friendly," Daniluk said. "These relationships help to disprove the stereotype that college professors don't care about their students or even want to know their names."

The professor-student relationship is not only important to students, but to professors as well. Kathleen Kuto-

lowski, PhD, chair of the History Department and Associate Professor, agrees.

"A committed, informed, skilled teacher who cares about her or his students and develops rapport with the students is a powerful motivator," Kutolowski said.

"Professor Martin has developed a number of pedagogical approaches that she constantly hones further, making sure that each is appropriate for the students in a particular class and also the best approach possible," Kutolowski said.

This holds true to the success of students, and the experiences they walk away with. A smaller class-size and increased attention and enthusiasm of the professor helps provide an enriched classroom experience for all involved.

Morag's teaching style and lessons will be helpful throughout life, Daniluk said, not just in the classroom.

"Morag Martin has helped me reach my potential because she pushes us just hard enough without making us feel overworked," Daniluk said. "She has made us look at world history not from a western point of view, but as an outside observer... it really makes you wonder what if? This is a valuable lesson which can be applied to not only history, but many aspects of every day life."

The lessons prepared by professors make lasting impressions on students, while the professor-student relationship helps accentuate the overall lesson and experience.

Martin enjoys teaching Honors Modern World. "I see it as a huge privilege being asked to teach an Honors class," Martin said. "I think it's a huge privilege, and really enjoyable."

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

By Jon Jarvis



Jon Jarvis. Submitted Photo.

During the fall semester, I participated in a co-op at Advanced Micro Devices (AMD) in Austin, Texas. AMD produces processors for computers, which are commonly referred to as "CPUs." During the co-op I learned new things, made lasting friendships, and was able to see a different side of the country.

My experience started out during what was called the spring 2005 co-op rush. I found out about the rush from a friend on the internet, and I applied by submitting a resume. Managers inside the company reviewed my credentials and planned to meet with me for interviews. One weekend in April, the company flew me to the Texas location where I went through six interviews. Approximately 60 students from colleges around the country were there. The interview process was a great opportunity by itself, as I learned more about technical interviews, and networked with the other students. Within a week after I left the rush, I was hired for a position.

Arriving in Austin was a relief after driving for two days to get there. I never lived in a big city, and I was somewhat intimidated by the new environment. Luckily, AMD found and placed me into an apartment complex with fellow student workers. Everyone at AMD treated the co-ops as full-time employees. Since we were treated as full-time employees, our expectations were very high, and we had to attend meetings, meet deadlines, etc. Aside from work, we explored the surrounding cities, which were rich in different foods, festivals, and recreational activities.

Overall, the experience in Texas was entirely worthwhile. The memories and friendships I gained will last forever. Also, I will get to see many of my friends again, as I plan on returning to work for AMD from May 2006 to December 2006. After my great experience, I would encourage every student to do an internship or co-op, as they can network, learn, and achieve a higher value of their education by doing so.

FRESHMAN EXPERIENCE

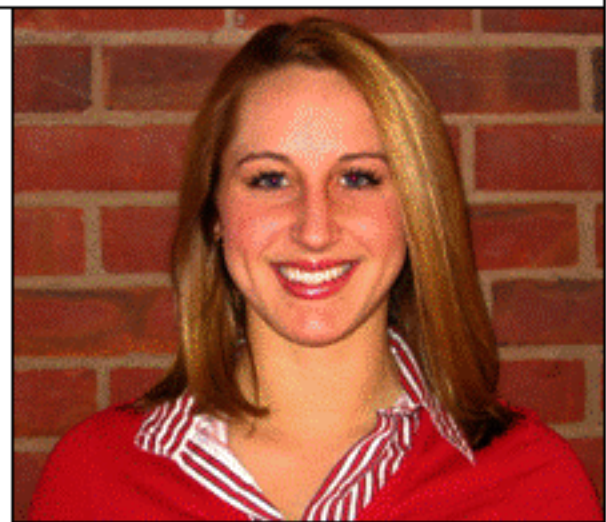
By Cassie Hayes

After graduating from high school, the thought of starting my college experience filled me with mixed emotions. I was somewhat apprehensive, yet enthused to be moving away from home, meeting new people, and being part of a college community.

The reasons I decided to attend SUNY Brockport were its close proximity to home, being a recipient of the Presidential Academic Scholarship, its Honors Program, its reputation for one of the best nursing programs, and ultimately because I was not accepted to my number one school of choice. I expected Brockport to be a fun and healthy college environment, which has so far reached and even exceeded my expectations.

Being a member of the Honors Program has shaped me into a better and more motivated student. I have higher expectations of myself and know I can do whatever it takes to get a task accomplished. Required to complete four honors courses in my first two years seemed outrageous, but I have come to enjoy these classes the most and get to know my fellow Honors students on campus. During my first semester, mentors from the Honors Programs held weekly meetings to make sure our group wasn't overwhelmed or stressed. They also extended our meetings to teach us how to schedule our classes for the spring semester or just to listen and give advice. I was nervous as the first semester quickly came to an end and finals were rapidly approaching. Thankfully, the library became my new home, which is great because they are open late and so is Aerie Café, whose lattes can be very addicting.

Brockport is rated number one for dining services for good reason—the variety and quality of food here is awesome, and the staff is incredibly friendly. I refused to gain the dreaded "freshman fifteen" everyone complains and cautions about, and thankfully, because of utilizing Brockport's athletic facilities, I have maintained a healthy body weight.



Cassie Hayes. Photograph by Kelly Sabetta.

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Outside of academics, Brockport offers many different clubs, activities, and jobs in which to get involved. I am currently a Night Desk Attendant in my residence hall, as well as a member of the Residence Council and Intervarsity/BASIC. When I think back to the final months of high school, anxiously awaiting my acceptance letters, I am thankful I wasn't accepted to my number one school of choice, because if I was, I would have missed out on all of the wonderful things about Brockport that has become part of my life. Blessed with a wonderful roommate, dedicated professors, and surrounded by genuine people who care, Brockport has become my home and the college I love. I couldn't have asked for a better freshman college experience anywhere else.

U P C O M I N G E V E N T S

SCHOLARS DAY

By Kelly Sabetta

SUNY Brockport will be presenting its 23rd annual Scholars Day throughout campus April 12, 2006, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Scholars Day is an opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff to share their research with campus community, while further developing awareness and understanding of the diverse topics being presented.

Presentations may include research papers, demonstrations, chair sessions, and single or group collaborations. They will be arranged by topic as best as possible. Presentations may range from 60 minute sessions to 90 minute sessions.

Honors students who are participating in their Honors Senior Thesis are encouraged to present their work and support others in their research.

The schedule for Scholars Day can be found on SUNY Brockport's website. For more information, please contact Colleen Donaldson at cdonalds@brockport.edu or 585-395-2523.

NORTHEAST REGIONAL NCHC CONFERENCE

By Dr. Donna Kowal

Two Honors students will be attending the Northeast Region of the National Collegiate Honors Council conference held April 6-9 in Pittsburgh, Penn. Marisa Ballaro, a sophomore Dance major and 2006-07 Honors Peer Mentoring Coordinator, and Kelly Sabetta, a senior Journalism major and Editor of the Honors Newsletter, will be attending the conference with the program's Associate Director, Dr. Donna Kowal.

Sabetta will be delivering a presentation entitled "The Honors Newsletter and Community Building," which explores the multiple purposes of an Honors newsletter and how it can contribute to developing an Honors community of students, faculty, and staff. Sabetta and Ballaro will be attending various presentations over the four-day conference in order to learn about the activities of other Honors programs and perhaps come away with some new ideas for our own program.

HONORS GRADUATION CEREMONY

By Dr. Donna Kowal

The SUNY Brockport Honors Graduation Ceremony is scheduled for Friday, May 12 at 4 p.m. in the New York Room of Cooper Hall. The ceremony is a celebration of the academic achievements of those students who have completed the Honors curriculum and thesis project.

During the ceremony, graduating Honors students formally receive the Honors Program medal from their Thesis Director. The Honors medal featuring an image of Prometheus, a god of Greek mythology who gave the gift of inventiveness and productivity, was specially designed by Robert Mark, a distinguished emeritus professor from SUNY Brockport's Department of Art.

If you are graduating, remember to let your Honors Thesis Director know so s/he can plan on attending the ceremony. In the event that s/he is unavailable, Dr. Kenneth O'Brien will present the medal. Of course, don't forget to also invite your family! A reception immediately follows the ceremony. Also, keep in mind that graduating seniors in Honors are expected to attend both the Honors Graduation Ceremony and the College's general commencement ceremony held on May 13.

RELAY FOR LIFE

By Mandy Schepis

The American Cancer Society and SUNY Brockport have teamed up once again to sponsor the annual Relay for Life. The overnight event will be held April 7-8, 2006 in the Tuttle North Ice Arena on campus. Teams of people will spend 12 consecutive hours participating in various activities throughout the night, while at least one team representative will be walking at all times.

The Honors Club is proud to support this worthy cause and participate with a team this year. Our team consists of nine members, including both Honors Club Officers and Program members. The teams participating in the event have collectively raised more than \$12,000, of which \$275 the Honors Club Team raised. Our team members have worked hard to support this event, and are pleased to aid in the effort to raise cancer awareness. We look forward to a successful Relay!

ADOPT-A-TREE

By Mandy Schepis

The Brockport Student Government has obtained 12 trees to be adopted by campus clubs and organizations in honor of the upcoming Arbor Day. The Honors Club is proud to adopt one such tree. On April 28, 2006, there will be a tree planting and dedication ceremony held at 10 a.m. The Officers have committed to caring for the young tree over two seasons by keeping the area free of litter and watering as needed. The tree will be planted in the village of Brockport on Monroe Street between Utica and Main Streets. The Club will also receive a plaque to place in front of our adopted tree.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE HONORS NEWSLETTER

The Honors Program Newsletter is a publication dedicated to the Honors Program, faculty, students, and alumni. Articles are written by Honor students, and are designed to provide information to the Honors community. Content will include a wide variety of topics, including research, Honors program news and events, student and professor spotlights, experiences, and creative work. For submissions or more information, please contact Kelly Sabetta at ksab0610@brockport.edu.