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Designing excellence: Creation of a production system and visual identity for Areté, the Honors College newsletter

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Designing excellence:

Creation of a production system and visual identity

for *Areté*, the Honors College newsletter

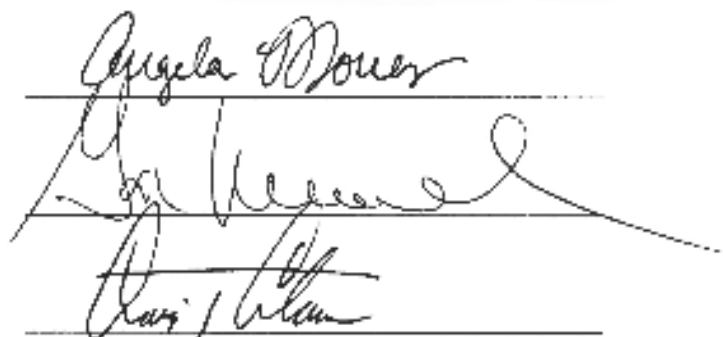
Kat Wilson

Submitted to the Honors College of

Western Kentucky University

Fall 2007

Approved by:



Three handwritten signatures are written on a background of three horizontal lines. The top signature is 'Angela Dones', the middle signature is 'Liz Henson', and the bottom signature is 'David Allen'.

Special thanks

go to Dr. Angela Jones, for being advisor to the newsletter
and my thesis, as well as being my friend on Facebook,
and to Dr. Craig T. Cobane – I wouldn't've ever made it this far
in the Honors College without your help and entertainment.

Abstract

In this writeup, I describe the process and results of redesigning the Honors newsletter and creating a production system to guide its staff in efficient and consistent publications. My redesign included researching what other publications are doing; choosing fonts, colors, and a layout scheme; and creating templates and style guides. The production system includes an ideal schedule, staff member job descriptions, and a flowchart of how the system should work. I also created and included a writing style guide, which (along with the design style guide) is meant to be updated as needed.

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Introduction

Several students, myself included, started the Honors Newsletter in the spring of 2006. We published one issue that semester, three pages under the catchy name “Witty title here,” and it took us the better part of that semester just to organize that one issue.

There was a lot of energy and interest from the students on the staff to produce a solid newsletter, but few staff members had any experience with journalism, and none other than myself had any experience with layout and design or with running a publication. Since I am a Journalism major with an emphasis in design and experience as an editor at the *College Heights Herald*, for my Capstone Experience/Thesis I chose to set up the infrastructure needed to run the publication as efficiently as possible and the templates and style guides needed to make the publication’s presentation inviting, professional, and consistent.

My specific objectives

- Create a workable system for organizing all the processes involved in publication
- Create specific job descriptions for newsletter editors and staff members
- Design a visual identity for the newsletter and create a layout template to reflect it
- Create style guides for writers and designers
- Coach writers, photographers, and designers as needed to help them learn to write, shoot, and design for publication

My ultimate goal

To make the publication look, read, and function like a professional-quality publication, and to make sure that it would be self-sufficient and able to maintain that quality throughout the high rate of staff turnover inherent in a student publication.

My timeline

I began the brainstorming process for the visual identity component while I was studying abroad during the spring of 2007, and I worked on the coaching component throughout the entire life of the newsletter. Coaching designers, in particular, was accomplished through tutorials and feedback over the course of many issues, and specifically at the end of both fall 2006 and fall 2007. The majority of the other objectives were accomplished during the summer and fall of 2007.

My primary resources

As a journalism major, I have studied – through classes at Western and internships at several professional newspapers – the processes of most areas of a publication: reporting, writing, photography, photo editing, copy editing, and page layout. I used this knowledge, along with the stash of journalism books I have accumulated over the years,



Our first issue, May 2006

to coach staff members and create the job descriptions. I also talked extensively during the summer of 2007 with my design editor at the *Birmingham News*, Rick Frennea, about creating visual identity and designing in a newsletter format, specifically. He was a particularly good source because he had overseen a redesign at several newsletters he helps design, and he was in the process of overseeing a redesign at the *Birmingham News*. Other design ideas came from simply looking at lots of other publications, primarily newsletters and magazines, and deciding what worked well and what I thought would be appropriate for an Honors Newsletter. I also got some inspiration and direction from a Society for News Design conference I attended during fall 2007.

A major resource, however, was the newsletter and its staff members. A good deal of trial and error went into the system for publishing, in particular, and I refined it over the course of the three issues published in the fall of 2007. I got specific feedback and suggestions from staff members, and I also got important feedback from the problems we ran into and the length of time it took to get a given issue to publication.

And finally, I created and performed an online survey of members of the Honors email list. The survey asked about the name of the publication, which sections people wanted to see, and what would make them more or less likely to read the newsletter.

My challenges

The biggest challenge was time. Since I started relatively late and studied abroad in the middle of everything, I only had three issues during fall 2007 to try all my ideas, figure out what worked and what did not, and implement new changes. Another big challenge was taking what I had learned at publications with professionally-trained journalists, big budgets, and lots of time, and finding a way to translate that into something for people who did not have a journalism background, did not want a huge commitment and did not have a lot of time to spend on the publication. The problem I faced because of that difference was making things easy and straightforward enough for casual participants, but structured and detailed enough that production would not drag on for too long.

My bragging rights

I have been told I should mention that the newsletter won first place in the National Collegiate Honors Council's student-run newsletter contest for issues produced during the 2006-2007 school year.

When we first published the newsletter, the design was simple and very much like a newspaper on a small scale. Photos were small, stories began on the first page, and the flag (the part with the name of the publication, date, issue number, etc) was boring but serviceable. It was not a bad newsletter, especially for a first issue. However, it did not say anything interesting about the Honors College (the Honors Program, at that time), it had no discernable relationship to the Honors College, and it was not distinct or visually “grabby,” as designers say. It was not likely to grab your attention or be particularly memorable if it did.

In talking with Rick Frennea about redesigns, he explained that one of the first steps is to decide what it is the design is trying to say. That is, the design should reflect the personality/mission of the entity publishing it, so in order to create a design you need a mission. Therefore, I emailed Dr. Craig T. Cobane and other members of the Honors Development Board to see what they wanted the newsletter to say about the program they are in charge of shaping, and what they felt the purpose of the newsletter should be. The only response I got was from Dr. Cobane, but his answers were consistent with what I expected and what I personally thought about the newsletter. Below are the questions I asked and Dr. Cobane’s responses.

1. Who is the newsletter aimed at? Just students, or also prospective students, faculty, alumni, or someone else?

Primarily current WKU Honors College students, but we will be sending it out to prospects, alums and WKU faculty/staff. It should be written by HC students, for HC students.

2. What sort of personality should it have? Serious, goofy, professional, fun, conservative, liberal, etc...

The personality should mirror the culture of the HC students. I would say topics serious, but writing informal and irreverent. It should be fun, risk taking, but appropriate.

3. What is the purpose of the newsletter? Inform, entertain, create a community, something else?

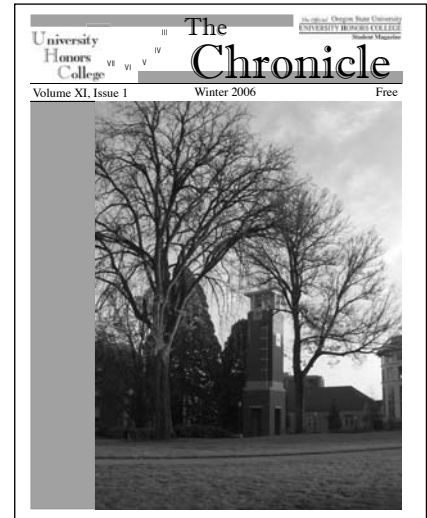
Inform and create community are tied for #1. Many students do not know all the cool stuff that is taking place in the HC (with more cool stuff this year). It should also be a way for students to know about upcoming stuff in advance. Hear about what other students are doing and sound off on issues (in the HC, WKU or country) they want to comment upon.

Dr. Cobane also mentioned that he wanted the publication to become a paper newsletter, not just an online presence, and to steer clear of being a “propaganda rag for the Honors Program” (as I had jokingly called it once) to be “truly a student-driven newsletter.” In talking with him in person about the newsletter, I had gotten the feeling that a newsletter with a magazine feel would not be inappropriate, so I included magazines in the source material that I looked at.

Once I had an idea of the personality the newsletter should have, I looked around to see what other newsletters and magazines were doing. Dr. Cobane directed me toward a few of these publications, and the rest I found online. I looked at Oregon State University Honors College's *The Chronicle*; Auburn University Honors College's *The Eagle*; Coppin State University Honors College's *With honors*; two newsletters Frennea designs for his church and his presbytery; newsmagazines including *Time* and *Newsweek*, and a number of other magazines ranging from *Tennessee Cattle Business* to *Discover* and *Seed*. I looked primarily for how they organized lots of information in a clean and attractive way, how they kept various sections consistent but differentiated, and how they treated photos.

After looking at other publications and taking some notes, I started sketching out various ideas. I knew I wanted to change the column width to make it wider – more magazine-ish and more reader-friendly – so I wanted to go from a four-column standard to a three-column one, with the option to go down to two columns at times. I also knew I wanted to incorporate color, but that I wanted to use standard colors to keep the publication consistent. At first I mocked up some layouts using red, black, and grey (to go along with the university's color scheme), but it was not as distinctive as I wanted, and I also wanted to have more colors available. I finally realized that the Honors College already had a fairly standard group of colors, used in brochures and the Web site. I got those color codes from Shane Bradley (the Honors College IT Consultant), and those are now the official newsletter colors as well. Using these colors instead of Western's emphasizes that this is an Honors College publication, rather than one with a more campus-wide focus.

I also wanted to space things out a little, and organize stories according to the sections I thought we needed (more about that later), so I made section headers. I wanted them to be attractive and not compete with the headlines, but also not be so large or so obtrusive as to distract from page content. I used colors and gradients to make them interesting, but kept them small and used a different font to



The Chronicle, Oregon State



The Eagle, Auburn



With honors, Coppin State

keep them separate from the rest of the content. For the regular content fonts, I wanted to choose fonts that were not boring and everywhere (i.e. Times and Arial), but that would be common enough to come standard with most copies of In-Design, and that would not be noticeably strange. I chose Warnock Pro for the serif font and Myriad Pro for the sans serif font because they were attractive, legible at smaller font sizes, and had a large variety of weights available. This way, we could use just two fonts throughout the entire publication (other than the header font), but we could still have visual variety.

The majority of my time with the redesign was spent working on the front page, since that is the page that will attract readers to look further into the publication, and since the rest of the design would play off of that page. I experimented with a number of options for flag placement, but I was very strongly in favor of running it down the left side of the page from the beginning, so that is what I worked with the most (and what I ended up going with). I wanted to do this because it is unusual – most publications run their flag across the top, like we did initially – so it is interesting and memorable, but not so strange as to be misunderstood. Also, it places less emphasis on the flag and more on the content, which is what I think should drive a publication.

I struggled a little with the content for the rest of the front page. I really wanted to just run one full-page image, with text over it referring readers to the main story inside. This is a common way to present a front page for newsletters, and pretty much the standard for magazines, and it is what we had already started doing in the fall 2006 semester's publications like the example at right. However, this plan relies on always having a lead story with strong vertical images that reflect the story but also have enough negative space to run text over, and I didn't want to back that staff permanently into that sort of corner. We had actually struggled with that already during fall 2006, and there was no way to guarantee that it would get better and not worse. But I still did not want to start stories on the front – I wanted an actual cover page, and not just a page one (to go along with the magazine feel as opposed to a newspaper feel).

I thought of trying to make the newsletter index graphically appealing in some way, but could not come up with a way to do it that I liked until late July. The idea was one of those that just popped into my head, almost fully developed, at 4 in the morning. This made me a little hesitant at first, since late-night flashes of brilliance are often the cause

The fonts

This is Warnock Pro. It comes in 32 different weights, including four to eight versions each of light, regular, **semibold**, and **bold**.

This is Myriad Pro. It comes in 20 different weights, including *italic* and condensed versions of regular, **semi-bold**, **bold**, and **black**.



November 2006 Areté

of long-term regret, but the more I refined the idea by the light of day, the more I really liked it. I ran a bar of color right next to the flag with page numbers equally spaced along it, and the first page of each section would have the section title and a description of one or more stories in that section. We would run photos to go with the sections, but they could be horizontal (most people shoot almost exclusively horizontal shots, which is part of why the vertical cover idea is problematic), and no one photo would have to be strong enough to carry the entire page. I ran a blown-up, lighter detail of the Honors logo behind all the text and photos to give it depth and visual interest and keep the shape of the page a square, rather than a variable shape that would depend on where photos landed on the page.

Overall, the page wound up being unusual without being unreadable, funky but clean, and visually interesting but still organized. My feedback from people in the design community was overwhelmingly positive, and newsletter staff members were also in favor of the design when I presented it at the beginning of the fall 2007 semester. I made a few further tweaks to the flag, including making it narrower and dropping out the grey box, but the overall look has not changed since then.

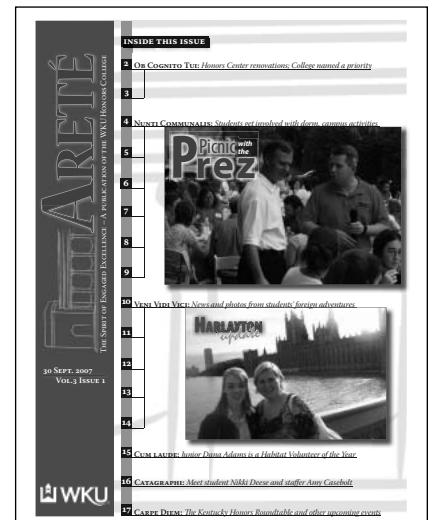
One final design note: As far as making a black-and-white version of the newsletter to be printed, I did an experiment with Acrobat, the program I use to put together the PDFs. I made a version of the November issue with all the photos individually re-toned in Photoshop and then re-imported to the pages, and a second version with the photos left as they were and the document as a whole made black-and-white in Acrobat. The difference in the final quality was very minor, and the difference in the amount of time and work involved was huge, so I recommend in the future that re-toning is not necessary after all if the photos have been toned well initially to have enough brightness and contrast.

The templates

Once I had a workable design, I needed to make sure that someone with a minimal design background could still implement that layout scheme. I made a basic page template and gave a copy of it to designers for the first issue of fall 2007, so they would have the correct margins, fonts, and header design. However, there were still a number of page elements that were not clear, and a lot of ways for things to get screwed up without the



My initial front page mockup, with the alternate title I was experimenting with, and before the addition of the Honors College color scheme



The September 2007 issue, the first one to reflect the new front page design

page designer knowing to fix them or even how to fix them – things like changing the headers, font attributes, and styles for headlines and pulled quotes. So, I improved the template primarily by including what is called a “library” in InDesign – a file that contains pre-made copies of certain elements – and adding what is called a “paragraph style sheet” – a section in the template with pre-set character attributes, so designers can highlight a section of text, click on the appropriate style’s name, and InDesign will apply all those attributes to that section of text. These changes vastly improved consistency, and made the design process more straightforward for the individual designers.



The inside page template

The paragraph styles

Body copy: Warnock Pro regular 10 point, 12 point leading, left justified, first line indent 0p8.

Caption: Myriad Pro semibold condensed italic 10 point, 12 point leading, left aligned, no indent.

Headline: Warnock Pro subhead 40 point, 44 point leading, left aligned, no indent.

Photo credit: Myriad Pro light 9 point, 11 point leading, right aligned, no indent, all caps.

Pulled quote: Myriad Pro semibold italic 18 point, 22 point leading, left aligned, no indent.

The library: “Areté bits”

The library includes a copy of the design style guide and a number of pre-made page elements (including separate copies of each of the page headers for different sections), some of which are included below.

FIRST LAST
Areté staff writer



Dr. Craig Cobane
Honors Director

Pulled quoteXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXX.

Ob cognito tui FYI: News and announcements about the Honors College

Saliens sapiens A fountain of wisdom from Honors College leaders

Nunti communalis News about Honors community involvement and events

ARETÉ

Published monthly by students in the Honors College.

Newsletter Staff:
Dana Adams
Kacy Albany
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Tanner Curtis
Sarah Hood
Lindsey Houchin
Matt Jenkins
Brittany Kittleman
Amanda Loviza
Sam Micallef*
Chelsea Moulden
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Matt Vaughan
Ria Wallace
Mannie Webb
Kat Wilson*
Laurel Wilson
Dunja Zdero

Advisor:
Dr. Angela Jones

Honors Director:
Dr. Craig T. Cobane

*editors

Questions? Comments? Story idea?

Email us at areté@wku.edu

Get published! Areté is not just for students, it's also by students – including you! Send us letters, commentaries, cartoons, whatever. If you want to share your work with the Honors community, we're here for you.

I created the survey near the beginning of the fall 2007 semester using the Easy Survey package that Western's Office of Information Technology has made available to anyone on campus. I talked with Dr. Angela Jones and the newsletter staff members about the questions they thought should be included, and then I created the survey online and sent the link to the Honors College to be e-mailed out.

There were 96 responses to the survey. Overall, they showed that slightly more than half the respondents had read an issue of the newsletter, and that more than 95 percent of them said they thought *Areté* was an appropriate name for the Honors newsletter. (I had suggested a new name, "Up&Out," with a concept and sections playing off that name. The staff was receptive of the idea, but since the survey showed the majority of people liked the current name, we decided there was no reason to change the name and that it would cause more confusion than it was worth.)

I also included several questions related to newsletter content, and the responses there were helpful for the staff in planning future content. For example, nearly 95 percent of respondents wanted to see a calendar of events, and we have made that a standard part of the newsletter. Other popular topics were Honors events, study abroad, and the Capstone Experience/Thesis. We have made the first two topics regular subjects in our coverage, and starting in the December 2007 issue we will be following a student (Ginny Prather) through her thesis process, covering the steps and progress she goes through to finish her project. We have also added games since the survey, including a sudoku puzzle, which we had discussed before but never made a priority until the survey showed how popular it would be. Other direct results of the survey responses include individual stories suggested in the survey that we have run in the newsletter, including a profile of a non-traditional Honors student (Marty McBride, December 2007 issue, page 12), and a list of opportunities to get involved with the Honors College (November 2007, page 3).

See Appendix A on page 16 for the complete survey results.

Professional publications have strict timelines and fancy computer systems to organize their workflows. However, professional publications also have full-time staff members who are well-trained and do not have to fit their jobs around going to class and doing homework. For the newsletter, I needed to come up with a system that was detailed, easy to use, and flexible enough to accommodate everyone's schedules while being rigid enough to keep the publication on its own schedule.

Before fall 2007, the staff met every other week to discuss and assign stories. My co-editor (Maria Wallace) would keep a list of everyone's story assignments and send a group email after each meeting to remind everyone of their assignments and inform staff members who did not come to the meeting about what had happened. She send frequent email reminders to staff members about the meetings and about story due dates, but we still had a hard time getting everyone to come to meetings and get their stories in on time. All stories were supposed to be emailed to Maria, who would then email them to me. Writers were generally asked to try to get photos to go with their stories, but I often ended up calling the Honors Center or the writers' sources directly to try to get submitted photos. Because all the content came in so haphazardly, layout was disorganized and took a long time, and most issues didn't come out until weeks after we had intended.

Another problem with the previous system of production was the lack of consistent writing style throughout the newsletter. Dr. Jones caught errors and inconsistencies in her editing process, but that made her work more time-consuming than it should have been. To help solve this problem, I created style guides for writers and for designers to help explain a standard way to handle common situations, like referencing people and the Honors College, or putting headlines on stories.

These style guides can be found in Appendix B, on page 20.

The first thing I changed after deciding to create style guides was the frequency of meetings. We used to meet every other week, but I felt this was not often enough to keep our momentum going, and also not often enough to keep the newsletter in the front of people's minds enough for them to take it seriously. I think it is harder to forget something that happens every week than something that happens twice a month, so we made the meetings a weekly affair. Ideally, I would also like to add smaller staff meetings once a week as well, for photographers, writers, and designers to meet separately with just the other members of their sections. However, I did not want to overwhelm the staff members right off the bat, and I did not think we had a big enough staff just yet for that to be as useful as it could be. In the future, I think it is something the staff should consider, however – writers could talk among themselves about their stories and help edit each others' work, photographers could touch base with the photo editor and get feedback on what they have shot, and designers could work as a group to organize layout (especially if there is a time when there is not a clear leader to be design editor, or if that person does not feel comfortable making all the decisions).

The four meetings a month were divided as follows: brainstorming, checking up on stories, stories due, and checking up on layout and pre-brainstorming. As the semester progressed, we started doing more and more of the brainstorming and assigning of stories at the fourth meeting, so I would like to see a move toward having stories due at the second meeting so design has more time to work. Many stories that are coverage of events throughout the month obviously would be exempt from that, but ones that are profiles of students or staff, or columns or advice about general topics, could certainly be in sooner. This would spread out the workload for designers and give them a head start.

The ideal schedule

- *Week 1:* Brainstorming and assignments that did not happen during week 4 of the previous month, and talk through story angles and/or sources.
- *Week 2:* All stories and photos that do not involve events that have yet to occur are due. Event coverage stories and photos should be due about 3-4 days after the event, so they should trickle in over the course of the month. During this week, the stories and photos will then be copy edited and sent to the layout editor, who will then send them out to designers.
- *Week 3:* Discuss any problems encountered with that month's stories, and talk about any long-term story ideas. Possibly proofread some pages as a group (to cut back on the amount of proofreading the advisor has to do). Any events coverage that happen after this day should be due 1-2 days after the event, or should be bumped to the next issue. During this week, layout should be finishing the last pages and the first round of corrections should be made.
- *Week 4:* Ideally, have layout completed so group can proofread as a whole, and then start brainstorming for the next issue. Final corrections should be made and the issue published (at least online) by the first of the next month.

Production flow

This area was not hard to design, since any publication's flow starts with writers and ends with layout, so my job was to make it clear, relatively simple, and make everyone aware of their role in the process. I needed to include time for stories to be edited before they were put on page, since it's much harder and more time-consuming to make corrections after pages have been designed, and enough time for the layout team to do their job and get final pages proofed and edited one last time. One big change I had to make, however, was in the design/proofreading area. At first, we tried having each designer make corrections to the pages he or she had designed, but that proved to be cumbersome, disorganized, and not very effective in that a large percentage of mistakes were still not corrected. So instead of sending the layout editor the PDFs of their pages and then getting corrections back to be made to the original files, designers now send the entire InDesign file to the layout editor, and the layout editor is responsible for making all corrections from that point on. This allows the layout editor to also tweak the page designs if necessary, correcting design style errors and minor alignment errors. I created a gmail account, arete.layout@gmail.com, specifically to handle the large file sizes that would result from sending complete InDesign files, as well as all the photos and stories. I recommend

creating gmail accounts for stories and photos as well, so they can be archived easily online, and so they do not clutter up editors' personal email accounts. Below is the final flowchart, more or less exactly the way we worked for the December 2007 issue.

A graphic version of this production system can be found in Appendix C, on page 23.

- *Step 1:* Writers and photographers create their content and send it to their editors. Right now, all stories are going to the editor-in-chief and all photos are going to the layout editor, but I would like eventually to have a writing/news editor and a photo editor to organize those sections (see job descriptions). Duration: depends on when assignments were made, but not more than a week after the monthly cycle begins (with exceptions, as above, for event stories).

- *Step 2:* Stories are sent to the copy editor, who sends the edited versions to the layout editor. This stage should also eventually include the photo editor toning and editing photos and sending them to the layout editor as well. Duration: 2-3 days.

- *Step 3:* The layout editor, who should have all the content, splits it up and assigns stories to pages and pages to designers. He or she then sends each designer the stories and photos to go on each page they are assigned, along with any directions as to how to organize each page. The layout editor is responsible for designing at a minimum the front page, but may also do several other pages, including ones for content that comes in late. Duration: No more than a week.

- *Step 4:* Designers send their finished pages back to the layout editor, who combines them all into one PDF and sends that to the advisor (or whoever is going to do the proofreading). This could also be a point where the staff members have an opportunity at a meeting to look over the pages to look for errors, to take some of the proofreading burden off of the advisor. Duration: 2-3 days.

- *Step 5:* After proofreading the pages, the advisor lets the layout editor know they are ready for pickup. (Or if the staff members have proofread the pages at a meeting, the layout editor is responsible for collecting the pages at the end of the meeting.) The editor then makes all the corrections and creates a new PDF with the corrected pages. Duration: 1-2 days.

- *Step 6:* The pages are sent to the advisor, Dr. Cobane, and possibly other staff members at the Honors Center for a final proofreading. If any errors are found, the layout editor makes them quickly, and then makes final PDFs in both color and black-and-white (if needed for printing). Duration: 1-2 days.

- *Step 7:* The layout editor sends the final PDF to the Honors Center (filename format: XXXXArete, with the date in place of the X's – for example, 1207Arete is the December 2007 issue) to be put online and sent to the printer, and the advisor (could also be done by one of the editors) sends a cover email to the Honors Center as well. The cover email is sent out with a link to the new issue on the Honors Web site, and it introduces/describes the issue and its content.

The ideal staff of the newsletter should consist of an advisor, a writing/assignments editor, a copy editor, a photo editor, and a layout/design editor. These jobs can be combined as necessary, or rotated among members of the staff (other than the advisor job, of course), but these are the basic functions that need to be accomplished. An editor-in-chief can be added if the staff feels they want one, or one of these editors can also be designated the lead editor. Below is a breakdown of who should be responsible for what, including the responsibilities of staff writers and photographers.

Staff writers

Writers are responsible for reporting and writing stories. They should proof their stories before submitting them to catch glaring errors, and should take it upon themselves ask their writing editor or other staff members for help if they encounter any problems. They should also make sure each person they mention in the story is properly referenced: this means double-checking that names are all spelled correctly, that students are identified with their year, hometown, and major, and that professors are identified with "Dr." (if appropriate) and with their department. (As per the writing style guide.) They should also find out if any trips or research projects they cover were funded by the Honors Center (this is mentioned in the style guide). Writers should be encouraged to come up with suggested headlines for their stories, as well.

Photographers

Photographers take photos at events, and ideally take mug shots of people we profile, although at this point we have been running submitted photos instead. They should get caption information for all photos, including the names (and years, hometowns, and majors) of all people in the photograph (unless there are too many people to identify), and a brief description of what is going on in the photo.

Copy editor

The copy editor reads all stories, editing them for house style, AP style, and general grammar and punctuation. He or she should not make major revisions to stories without consulting with the writing editor and the writer. He or she should make sure there is a suggested headline on all stories if the writer did not provide one. Before sending stories to the layout editor, it would be helpful for the copy editor to change the file names on stories to a one- or two-word description of their main subjects, like "tailgating.doc" or "harlaxton.doc." This will help the layout editor keep organized, as will sending the stories in individual files, rather than one lump document as we tried this semester.

Writing/assignment editor

In the absence of an editor-in-chief, the writing editor runs meetings, taking notes on brainstormed ideas and assigning stories to writers. He or she should send an email to the full staff after each meeting with details on what was covered and what all the story assignments are. Should help writers as needed with their stories, and should read all stories before passing them on to the copy editor to make sure they are clear and appropriate for publication. Also, should monitor the arete@wku.edu email address for submissions, and read submissions for the same criteria. During fall 2007, we started a

Facebook group for the newsletter; if this group continues (as I hope it does) the writing editor should be in charge of monitoring this group and inviting new staff members to it. ***Note: If submissions start being a larger part of the newsletter, this job could also be broken out into a separate “submissions editor” role. If there is an editor-in-chief as well as a writing editor, the editor-in-chief should take over running meetings and monitoring the email and Facebook group, while the writing editor should keep track of story assignments and coach writers.*

Photo editor

At brainstorming meetings, decide what visuals, if any, are needed for each story assigned, and assign someone to be responsible for taking the photos. If there is no one to take the photos, or if the photos will be taken by someone not on staff, the photo editor is responsible for tracking the photos down (or making sure the writer gets them in the course of their interviewing, if that is appropriate). Once photos have been taken and sent to the photo editor, he or she is responsible for choosing the photo or photos that will run in print, toning them for print, and sending them to the layout editor.

***Note: If the photo editor has no experience toning photos, he or she can at the least bring them into Photoshop and apply “auto levels” and “auto contrast” (both under Image at the top of the window). Also, I highly recommend increasing both the brightness and contrast a little bit for most photos (this tool is also under Image). Photos do not need to be re-toned in black-and-white, generally speaking, if they have been toned well in color (see the redesign section with my color experiment).*

Layout/design editor

Responsible for organizing which sections each story goes into, and assigning pages based on story length and photos available. Should confer with photo editor as to how many good pictures are available, and whether or not it would be appropriate to run the story over more than one page to allow for more photos. Helps designers with pages as needed, and creates the front page. The front page requires a great deal of time and work because it needs to be accurate and clean, so the layout editor should make sure to budget enough time to get this done. Also, once pages have been proofread the layout editor is responsible for making all the changes, so they need to be detail-oriented enough to do this accurately and efficiently.

***Note: It would also be possible to make proofreading changes part of the copy editor or advisor job, if the he or she had a basic introduction to InDesign and access to all the pages on a computer with the program installed. The layout editor should still make the PDFs of the pages after corrections, however, to make sure no design changes are necessary as a result of the proofreading.*

Advisor

Comes to meetings to help guide the staff in brainstorming and writing. Helps give consistency to the newsletter throughout changes in staff members, and gives advice to writers and editors as needed. Proofreads final layouts for style and accuracy and writes cover email (unless an editor volunteers to take over the cover email). Can suggest story ideas, particularly about classes and faculty members, and serves as a liason between the staff and the Honors College. May help publicize the newsletter through things like emails to other faculty, and could help identify and recruit new members and editors.

I wanted to split the content into sections grouped by content to make it more organized and easier to navigate. Also, having regular sections with defined content makes the brainstorming process a little easier – for each issue, the staff already knows to try to have, for example, a student profile. All they need to do then is choose the person to be profiled. I chose Greek and Latin names for the sections to reflect the name of the publication as a whole, and tried to use as many well-known phrases as possible to make them more memorable. I also added a tagline to each section header to explain the name of the section and give some detail about what the section would contain. I do not intend that the staff in the future feels bound to use these and only these section titles – we created two new sections this semester as the need arose (the Harlaxton one and the Forum one), and I want future staff members to know that this option is always available. Below are the sections available now, with their taglines and the kinds of stories that go in them.

Saliens Sapiens: *A fountain of wisdom from Honors College leaders* (for Dr. Cobane’s column and the HDB student column)

Ob Cognito Tui: *FYI: News and announcements about the Honors College* (Stories that do not fall into event coverage, like Honors opportunities or “meet your new HDB representatives.”)

Nunti Communalis: *News about Honors community involvement and events* (This is the general category that most stories fall into. It could be broken into more than one category eventually if the staff would prefer, but I didn’t see a need to.)

Harlaxton update: *Checking in with our Hilltoppers across the pond* (The monthly question and answer with the students currently studying at Harlaxton.)

Forum Communalis: *Have your say: Submitted articles, art, and opinions* (Anything written by someone not on staff)

Veni Vidi Vici: *News about Honors students going out into the world to see and conquer* (All study abroad content, or pretty much anything that Honors students do outside of the United States.)

Carpe Diem: *Mark your calendar now, and then have some fun* (the calendar and games page)

Catagraphi: *Profiles of Honors community members – students, faculty, and staff* (Exactly what it says!)

The survey responses

Below are the questions I asked and the results I got back from the 96 people who responded to the survey. I condensed a number of the fill-in-the-blank responses where there was no answer or multiple responses with the same answer.

1. The Honors College publishes a monthly newsletter called Areté. Have you heard of it (before now)?

Yes 68.8% (66)
No 31.3% (30)

2. Have you ever seen or read an issue of Areté?

Yes 52.1% (50)
No 47.9% (46)

3. Areté is a greek word meaning “excellence,” “virtue,” and “reaching one’s highest human potential.” Do you think this is an appropriate name for the Honors newsletter?

Yes 95.8% (92)
No 4.2% (4)

4. If you do not like the name Areté, or if you have a suggestion for another name you think would be more appropriate, please tell us about it here, with a brief explanation.

- Arete is a blatant plagiarism of the title of the Honors newsletter of the University of Houston. The fact that we use it shows that we are not original or creative in any manner, and shows that we do not respect the property (intellectual or otherwise) of other institutions. A more creative name would be the Ampersand (&). It is a logogram representing the conjunction “and.” It implies a connection between two or more things, because Honors is a close-knit community of learners that are very connected. It also implies “in addition,” or the adding to something “more,” because Honors is all about doing things “better, faster, and more intensely” than before, e.g. they go above and beyond the call of duty to stand out as excellent students. That is why I think some sort of creative title for our newsletter would be more appropriate. Another minor complaint I have is the fact that the number of TIMES I have heard someone say the word Arete is exactly equal to the number of WAYS I have heard it pronounced. That is, I have never heard it said the same way twice because no one knows how to correctly pronounce it.
- Arete resembles the French word for “stop.” I think more people are familiar with French than with Latin, so while the Latin meaning is cool, the word is most likely going to have opposite connotations to its audience. Also, human potential is a far broader concept than anything that can be achieved solely through academics, and considering I’ve seen little in the newsletter that wasn’t about academics in some way, it is a bit over-the-top to call it that.
- I don’t know but something other than Arete. It is the same as University of Houston. We need something that is Unique to western.
- I like it; it’s unique
- i think a latin name meaning something similar would be cool, but arete is still fine
- it is a good name. but it is hard to talk about something or tell people about something that you don’t know how to pronounce.
- Since I have little knowledge of Greek (every word I know of it came from My Big Fat Greek Wedding), the title is a bit elusive. And I don’t know how to pronounce it. But now that I do know the meaning of it, I like it a lot.
- sounds good to me, i wish i knew how it was pronounced though.

5. How likely would you be to read the honors newsletter if you were notified by email that it is online as a downloadable PDF file, and a link is provided to the download page? 1 is “definitely would not read” and 5 is “definitely would read.”

Average rank: (3.7)

6. How likely would you be to read the honors newsletter if a print copy of it were available in your dorm or academic building? 1 is “definitely would not read” and 5 is “definitely would read.”

Average rank: (3.9)

7. Which of the following would you like to see and read in the Honors newsletter? (Please check all that apply.)

A column from Director Craig Cobane	62.5%	(60)
A column from the student representatives on the HDB.....	44.8%	(43)
Coverage of Honors events.....	92.7%	(89)
Coverage of Honors students’ study abroad experiences.....	74.0%	(71)
Profiles of Honors students	57.3%	(55)
Profiles of Honors faculty and staff.....	63.5%	(61)
Profiles of Honors alumni.....	33.3%	(32)
A calendar of Honors-related events and deadlines.....	94.8%	(91)
Recognition of Honors students’ awards and distinctions.....	65.6%	(63)

8. What other things would you like to see included in the Honors newsletter?

- Descriptions of offered/popular honors courses. (9)
- photos (6)
- Anything Honors related or Honors opportunities (3)
- Scholarship opportunities (4)
- Information on study abroad programs (3)
- Articles written by honors faculty and staff, maybe (2)
- a calendar, including Honors and non-Honors events (4)
- A chance for non-Arete staff to submit articles, photos, comics, poetry, etc.
- a column from dr. cobane about various current issues, both local and national
- A letter to the editor.
- a mention of nonhonors related events taking place on campus that many honors students would enjoy seeing
- Anything helpful for graduation
- Articles about rock bands and pictures of naked chicks. In short, i will probably never read the Honors newsletter, I only answered the above question because it was a requirement.
- Articles that give advise about applying for graduate school would be wonderful.
- cartoons, drawings, poetry, and short stories. Honors students in sports, etc.
- Editorials or articles from honors students.
- events in Bowling Green, fun student polls (ex: if you had a pet cow, what would you name it?), a debate column (it could be something crazy like the best way to walk up the hill or which residence halls are really haunted), and maybe a ‘random fact of the day’ column (ex: did you know that polar bear’s skin is actually black and their fur is clear?! They have so much fur that it makes them appear white.)
- Feature or opinion not necessarily devoted to western or honors.
- Food Reviews on local restaurants. Tips and Insight on things to do in the Bowling Green community that might be little know or give new students an easier transition into the small-town life of Bowling Green. A story by someone who is starting their thesis and follow them through the process.
- honors professors n students column
- Honors students submitted literature i.e. stories, poems, plays, etc.
- How Honors is making an impact on this campus outside of the Honors Program
- humor
- I would like to see information, editorials, or some similar type of coverage of opportunities for things to do outside of or after college that may not be directly academic in nature, but that are enriching for a well-rounded human experience. Anything to help students keep in mind, and potentially pursue, possibilities beyond some dumb office job. Ideas of cool projects and initiatives that others are doing; from Peace Corps to being a journalist in Gaza to international public art projects -- anything that people could get excited about.

- little known things about the honros program.
- Maybe a section where students can voice their opinions about current events.
- Maybe a short highlight of world news or something similar.
- maybe a summary or description of some student's theses?
- maybe like movie reviews or good books to read for certain assignments in class
- more information about what's going on on campus.
- More visual arts images. We have some talented visual artists (both majors and nonmajors) within the program, but it is often overlooked.
- more items of interest for the non-traditional honors students. I know there are not that many of us, but it would help us feel included. Some of us feel a bit out of place in the program.
- Personally i would like to see a "random help" section: within in the small column could be things like, "new help with this class go here" or "want a tutor for this class call so and so" or "want to know how to cook ramen noodles in the microwave email Dr. noodle" and my personal favorite "tips for using, not loosing your meal plan swipes."
- Polls and games.
- social commentary by honors students: cultural observations
- Some fun brain teaser, sudoku, etc
- Student commentaries/letters
- student commentary on recommended classes and other things going on on campus
- sudoku; crossword puzzle; factoids; paragraph along lines of "Thought Provoker", "Food for Thought", "What Would You Do?", "Dilemmas", and so on; guest column from various departments' faculty and staff; column from departments about past/present honors involvement and potential involvement.
- Things honors students have created. It could be anything from poetry to short stories to photography to analytical essays, etc.
- Well, I think the best articles to read are those that are well, interesting. Articles about the quirky things honors students do are very interesting (someone making their car run off restaurant grease, for instance, or someone decorating their dorm room to a jungle theme.) Those stories are the best and I think would bring out the personality of honors better than anything. (I fear that while the things I checked above are a necessity to the newsletter, they steer close to boring very easily. Unless you can think of new ways to approach those ideas differently each time - with the exception of the calendar, etc., or articles that really do seem to work - then the readers won't even bother.
- What the Honors Center is trying to get planned
- Why not include a horoscope?

9. Did you know that you can submit letters, commentaries, photos, artwork, or story ideas to the newsletter?

Yes 18.8% (18)
No 81.3% (78)

10. Now that you know, how likely are you to submit something to the newsletter? 1 is "definitely would not submit something" and 5 is "definitely would submit something."

Average rank: (2.9)

11. Would you be interested in submitting an essay or photo if it were for a contest with prizes? 1 is "definitely would not submit something" and 5 is "definitely would submit something."

Average rank: (3.5)

12. Do you have any other comments or suggestions for the Honors newsletter?

- Advertise for it more! make a print edition!
- Be cool man. Peace.
- Come up with a new name that is different than the University of Houston.
- Could you send out an email or something with submission guidelines for the Arete? I was unaware of nonstaff submissions, and would be interested in submitting, as I think the visual arts students are often overlooked in the honors department.

- Delivery of paper copies to dorm MAILBOXES of honors students would be ideal. Thank you.
- humor column
- I am glad that college students get involved with the community and have something to show for it. It would be a good idea for some of the non honors students to see what is going on, and how great our program is.
- I am happy to know that I can submit photos and such. I think that creativity is an integral part of the honors program, and i am interested to see other students' work. Also, tips on the capstone/thesis project. We all worry about that.
- I can't wait to start reading it!
- I think (without ever reading it) that a honors news letter in theory is a great idea but could quickly become like a high school year book that only showcases one type of student. I would suggest trying to make sure the words remain true to the Greek origin of its title, and actively works for all honors students.
- I would submit a Photo
- I've heard about the publication but I've never actually seen it on print or online. I guess it just needs wider publication.
- keep up the good work
- keep up the good work, i know its hard
- Let students know where than can get it.
- maybe have a coupons' page, or a dedication to a student/faculty (submitted by students anomiously), create an 'I need a friend' page for students who are trouble meeting new people or are (like me) really really shy (or maybe just one or a few students picked at random)
- maybe if it was a great prize, ppl would submit.
- publish regularly
- thank you
- Thanks for all you do! See you in the spring!
- What is the schedule for the newsletter? I know I see it from time to time, but I am not clear as to what the standard circulation schedule for the newsletter is.
- When new issues come out, it should be more publicized.

Areté style guide for writers (version 3.0)

Here are a few rules to follow in our stories to keep things consistent. For the most part (other than the comma rule and titles), we are going to follow Associated Press style as if we were a professional publication. This is just a quick guide, and it will almost certainly be updated at some point. But it's a start.

****THE BIG ONE** Honors:** No apostrophe! Ever, ever, ever, ever, ever.....
And always capitalized, as is Honors College, Honors Center, etc

Commas: Going with good old English style here – DO use the “serial comma,” the last one in a list. So it is “red, white, and blue” like your English teacher says, not “red, white and blue” like you see in the newspapers. Pretty much everyone already does this, and I know it will be more intuitive for Dr. Jones to copy edit things this way, so there is no reason to force the change when there is really no reason for it.

Referring to people: The first time you mention a person in your story (called the “first reference”), use their full name, INCLUDING “Dr.” if they have a Ph.D. (That last part is different from AP style, but in the academic world those two letters mean a whole lot to a lot of people, so we are going to respect that.) After that first reference, just use the person’s last name throughout the rest of the story (without the title). For professors who do not have a doctorate, do not put any sort of title before their name, because there are a lot of different levels of professors/instructors, and there is too much potential for confusion. The story should instead mention somewhere that the person is “an assistant professor in the English department” or something along those lines.

Referring to Dr. Cobane: His name is Dr. Craig T. Cobane. With the middle initial, please.

Dates: Always capitalize the names of months and days of the week. Abbreviate the following months when used with a specific date: Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec., and do not abbreviate days of the week unless they are in a table or calendar or something like that. If it is just the month and year, do not abbreviate and do not use a comma. For example: November; November 2007; Nov. 5, 2007; Nov. 5; Monday, Nov. 5; Monday.

Fall Break: Capitalize on all references to the break from classes.

U.S. vs. United States: Write out “United States” when you are referring to it as a noun, but if it is an adjective, you can abbreviate to “U.S.” as in “the U.S. embassy” or “U.S. foreign policy.”

Western Kentucky University: Refer to our dear university as WKU on all references, to go along with the school’s push to identify itself that way, unless it is part of an official title of something.

State abbreviations: Here we are sticking with AP style, rather than the postal service’s

two-letter ones. Therefore, spell out state names if they stand alone (“The students traveled to Indiana”), but abbreviate them if they accompany a town (“Kat is from Knoxville, Tenn.”). Eight state names are not abbreviated: Those with five or fewer letters, plus Alaska and Hawaii. Here’s a complete list of all states with their respective abbreviated (or not) forms:

Ala.	Hawaii	Mass.	N.M.	S.D.
Alaska	Idaho	Mich.	N.Y.	Tenn.
Ariz.	Ill.	Minn.	N.C.	Texas
Ark.	Ind.	Miss.	N.D.	Utah
Calif.	Iowa	Mo.	Ohio	Vt.
Colo.	Kan.	Mont.	Okla.	Va.
Conn.	Ky.	Neb.	Ore.	Wash.
Del.	La.	Nev.	Pa.	W.Va.
Fla.	Maine	N.H.	R.I.	Wis.
Ga.	Md.	N.J.	S.C.	Wyo.

A few general grammar/spelling things that are often misused

Affect, effect: Affect, as a verb, means to influence. (The resolution will affect students.) It is basically never used as a noun. Effect is most commonly used as a noun, to mean a result. (The effect of the new style guide was astounding.) As a verb, effect means to cause a change. (The writers will effect a change in their stories.) Effect is cumbersome as a verb, though, so avoid using it that way.

Ages: Always use figures rather than spelling out the number, and use hyphens with “years old” as an adjective. (I am 22 years old. My 19-year-old brother is dating a girl who is 18.)

Alumnus, alumna, alumnae, alumni: Respectively, these are for a singular male, a singular female, a group of only females, and a group of all males or mixed genders.

Fewer, less: Fewer is for things that are countable, less is for things that are not. (There are fewer than 50 people in the room. There is less ice cream in the freezer than there was before all the hungry people showed up.)

More than: Use “more than” (rather than “over”) when referring to countable things. (There were more than 100 people at the event.)

Compound modifiers: If a two-word phrase is used as an adjective (like “two-word”), then it is hyphenated, unless the first word is “very” or ends in “-ly.” If they’re standing side-by-side as just nouns, then they don’t need the hyphen. The common example of this in the newsletter is “study abroad.” The students are going to study abroad in France, but they’re going on a study-abroad trip. Voilà!

Areté style guide for designers (Version 2.0)

Here are a few rules to follow in our layouts to keep things consistent. Make sure to always use the style sheets in the template and the pre-made elements in the “Areté bits” library.

Spacing: First line indents and text wraps around images/quotes/etc should be 0p8 picas.

Frames/rules: Use a .5 frame (black) around photos, and a .5 rule (preferably black, but can be one of the colors if it will look good on the page) if you need to separate elements (like more than one story) on a page.

Credits: Byline and photo credits should be just the person’s name, or “submitted” for photo credits if we do not know the photographer. All caps. If there is more than one photo on the page, but they are all by the same photographer, you only need to credit them once. Put the credit under the largest/dominant image. For the byline, it should say “Areté staff writer” if they are, and “Areté guest writer” if it is a submitted story.

Colors: Use only the four Honors colors for accents like rules and pulled quotes. If for some reason the colors do not show up in your swatches in the template file, they are as follows:

- Red: R157, G33, B21
- Green: R92, G100, B41
- Yellow: R188, G162, B101
- Blue: R15, G16, B44

Bullets: If you need to use a bullet for a list (and you should for all lists!), use a lowercase “n” in the font Zapf Dingbats (should be a little solid square), and make it one of the four colors. Also, put one space between the bullet and the first letter of the paragraph, and take out the first line indent.

Headlines: Try to keep all headlines somewhere between 36 and 42 pt. You can use a secondary headline under the main headline if there is extra space or if it will work better for the story – make it the same font as the main headline, and between 18 and 20 pt. Both headlines should be left aligned (NOT centered), and do not capitalize every word. Just capitalize things like you would in a regular sentence (first word, proper nouns, etc).

Fonts: Stick to the house fonts (Myriad Pro, Warnock Pro) unless an exception is discussed for a specific story at a design meeting.

Drop caps/Initial caps: These are good for things like Q&As. Make them two regular lines tall, and make them a color. Also, take out the first line indent on any paragraph that has an initial cap.

Photos: Make them an even number of columns wide, so they don’t cut into a leg of text. Make sure the cutline lines up with the edges of the photo.

Captions: When there is more than one photo, use (Above), (Below), (Left), (Right), etc in front of the corresponding caption to refer to the photo. When there’s a list of people within a caption, use “From left to right, ...” or “Person A, left, and Person B, center, are in the Honors College. Person C, right, is a professor at Harlaxton.”

Production system flowchart

Here is a visual breakdown of the production system found on page 12.

