

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Honors in Practice -- Online Archive

National Collegiate Honors Council

2023

President's Address: The NCHC's Inclusive Mission

Christina McIntyre

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nchchip>



Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Educational Administration and Supervision Commons](#), [Gifted Education Commons](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Liberal Studies Commons](#)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the National Collegiate Honors Council at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors in Practice -- Online Archive by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Honors in Practice

2022 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

President's Address: The NCHC's Inclusive Mission

CHRISTINA M. MCINTYRE

Virginia Tech

Abstract: NCHC president describes and demonstrates the organization's mission "to support and enhance the community of educational institutions, professionals, and students who participate in collegiate honors education around the world." Organizational inclusivity, volunteer service, and collaborative achievement are acknowledged and encouraged.

Keywords: learned institutions & societies; educational leadership; communities of practice; National Collegiate Honors Council (Lincoln, NE); Virginia Tech (VA)—Honors College

Citation: *Honors in Practice*, 2023, Vol. 19: 3–6

(What follows is a revised version of the 2022 presidential address delivered at the annual NCHC conference on November 5 in Dallas, Texas.)

2022 has been a hell of a year.

In February of this year, NCHC's Board of Directors voted for the adoption of the Shared Principles and Practices of Honors Education, a document that was developed through the membership and discussed formally in conference and virtual sessions as well as informally in the hallways and lounges at last year's conference. These shared principles and practices recognize and articulate qualities of honors education that are often present across the spectrum of our institutional members.

NCHC had our busiest summer of programming, juggling both virtual and in-person summer programs, institutes, and workshops. In hindsight, 2022 was probably not the year to offer so much programming.

I have been reading the most recent edition of the *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council (JNCHC)* like an anthology. The Forum on “The Value of Honors to its Graduates” is a treasure trove of reflections by almost fifty honors graduates from as early as 1970 to as recently as Daphne Watson, a 2021 graduate of Northeastern Illinois University. This collection captures qualitatively the longitudinal impact of a collegiate honors education. This issue of *JNCHC* also includes one of the 2021 Portz Prize Winning Essays. The themes of authenticity, respect, self-confidence, and community are woven throughout all these essays. I plan to share Quimby Wechter’s essay “Is Honors Worth the Extra Effort?” (145–47) with my prospective and new students as the author speaks to the value of engaging in course material through meaningful experiential learning; of becoming a part of a community of scholars that is nurturing, not competitive; of classmates focused on challenging each other and growing together. The fact that this advice from an alum of one institution is relevant to my institution is an example of our shared principles and practices in action.

This year’s conference theme is about creating community. Most of us strive to create community in our honors programs and colleges and at our institutions. Measuring success is difficult and is often identified only in hindsight. Let me share a measure of successful community in honors education. Some of you may remember Jack Dudley, who served as Honors Director at Virginia Tech for over eighteen years. Upon his death in the spring 2019, his funeral was attended by many alumni traveling back to Blacksburg from all over the country and the globe; they spanned many generations of students who had mostly never met but instantly felt connected through Jack. One alumnus, Shomir, had made a reservation at a local restaurant, but as more and more people wanted to join, it became apparent that the group would exceed the capacity of the space. Impulsively, and much to the surprise of my husband, I invited the group to our house. Mind you, the house was in no shape to receive company, but this was family. I instructed Jim to grab as many rotisserie chickens as he could find in Blacksburg (he found seven). With the help of a large rice cooker, a quick sauteing of onions and zucchini, the importation of foldout tables, and a quick clearing of the house, we hosted over 45 former students, faculty, and staff until well past midnight and on into the wee hours of the morning. Stories were told and retold. A poem, “You Don’t Know Jack,” was written and performed in Jack’s memory. If that isn’t community, I don’t know what is.

I feel a similar sense of community within the NCHC: a phenomenon that, since I know you, you must know all my NCHC connections, and if you

don't, you will. Coming back together for conferences reinforces the community bond.

To illustrate the quality and inclusiveness of our organization, I'd like for us to take a moment to recognize the strong impact of our volunteer membership base:

- If you have served as a committee chair, please stand (and remain standing).
- If you have served on NCHC's board of directors, please stand (and remain standing).
- If you have published in one of NCHC's publications—*JNCHC*, *Honors in Practice*, or a Monograph—please stand (and remain standing).
- If you have served on the Publications Board or an editorial board or *UReCA*, NCHC's undergraduate student journal, please stand.
- If you have served as a facilitator for an NCHC workshop, institute, or other program, please stand.
- If you have served as a member on a committee, please stand.
- If you have presented at an NCHC conference, please stand.
- If you have served as a poster judge for this or a previous conference, please stand.
- If there is anyone who is still seated or if this is your first NCHC conference, please stand, and join the community. Find a place to participate and contribute. Your voice is needed.

NCHC is a community.

The National Collegiate Honors Council is in transition. Mary Beth Rathe, who worked in the national office for close to a decade and served as Executive Director of NCHC for the past five years, recently resigned due to health issues. The national phenomenon called the "Great Resignation," or probably better represented by the term "The Great Reshuffling," has impacted NCHC's national office with the loss of several key staff. I want to take a moment to recognize Amber Klaus and Tyrra Edwards, both of whom have worked well beyond the scope of their job descriptions in the past year; take a moment to consider their herculean effort to pull off these past three days of a conference with over 1,360 participants. This situation is not sustainable, and the board is close to hiring an Interim Executive Director to

reestablish a fully staffed office and to conduct a national search for an Executive Director.

I want to end by thanking you for allowing me to serve this organization, this community. Since 2007, this community has given me so much: valued colleagues, space to grow professionally, space to imagine, and treasured friendships. I encourage others to accept the call to serve at the national level. It is work, but it is important work.

In the words of my home institution's motto: *Ut Prosim/That I May Serve*

REFERENCES

Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council, vol. 23, no. 1, spring/summer 2022, pp. 1–150, <<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nhcjournal>>.

NCHC. Shared Principles and Practices of Honors Education, 2022, <<https://www.nchchonors.org/directors-faculty/definition-of-honors-education#sharedprinciples>>.

“You Don’t Know Jack,” <<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Bx-lr6xNgw7CycmJ5ArnUQu83GksTuSf/edit>>.

The author may be contacted at
cmcintyre@vt.edu.