



Honors Parent News

First-Year Experience Program

Fall 2011 Upcoming Events

GAME-DAY COOKOUT AND WELCOME

WHEN: Saturday, September 3, 12:30 PM

WHERE: Gordon Hall Front Lawn

WHAT: Free food and games for all Honors students, faculty, staff, and alumni!

WHY: This is a great way for your student to get connected with the Honors College community.

Though this is the Saturday of Labor Day weekend, encourage your student to stay on campus for this annual event and the first football game of the 2011 season!

LUNCH DISCUSSION

WHEN: Friday, September 2, 12:00-1:00 PM

WHERE: Horn/Knapp Hall

WHAT: Free lunch and great discussion!

WHY: Another great way to meet students, staff, and faculty, eat some free food, and participate in a good discussion on a myriad of topics!

BOOK CLUB

WHEN: Third week of September

WHERE: Horn/Knapp Hall

WHAT: Free book provided, complemented with stimulating discussion

WHY: What better way to destress than by reading a good book and discussing it with staff, faculty and students?

Advantages of Pursuing Undergraduate Education through the Honors College


by Marjean D. Purinton



Your student has chosen to pursue a degree program enriched with Honors College curricular and co-curricular opportunities with full knowledge of what a difference those opportunities can make in his or her life and professional development. As we emphasized at orientation, we want Honors students to enjoy a strong first semester, academically and socially, and so we will foster the smooth transition from high school to the university through our First-Year Experience (FYE) Program. Each student is taking an FYE course with an accomplished professor and an accompanying Learning Community Group with two Honors student Mentors. This program will help students discover the resources and opportunities provided by both the Honors College and the university so that they can make informed decisions about what they wish to pursue during their undergraduate careers. We know that students perform much better academically when they are happy, and we know that they are happy when they are involved in curricular and co-curricular activities, when they feel connected to other students who have similar interests and motivations. We will be working to accomplish this formula for student success with your student.

First-Year students can also connect through the Summer Reading Program selection, Michael Pollan's *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto*. Our Honors College Book Club has prepared the discussion guide that will be used across campus in classes and in activities associated with the book. Michael Pollan will be on campus on

October 28 as one of the fall guests in the Presidential Lecture and Performance Series, and we hope your students will enjoy the book and then plan to attend Pollan's talk. We encourage students to take advantage of our Honors College Book Club, meeting every other week, as well as our Friday Lunch Discussion, which meets weekly. Students can learn about these activities and others through the Honors College weekly email and on the monitors in Gordon Hall and McClellan Hall.

Curricular advantages for Honors College students should become apparent through the FYE course each student takes this fall. Honors classes enable students to know their classmates and their professors, to engage in discussion and collaborations amidst a community of scholars who interact in the learning process. Honors classes enable students to have guided practice in academic writing, including revision and re-writing processes for diverse audiences and rhetorical occasions. The most important skill that students learn as undergraduates is how to write well. Honors classes enable students to practice critical thinking and responsible speaking in a learning environment that is respectful to different perspectives and positions. Honors classes enable students to experience interdisciplinary subjects and to ask the challenging and provocative questions. Honors classes enable students to pursue original, creative, and innovative projects, frequently ones that mark the beginnings of larger endeavors, such as Undergraduate Research and Honors Thesis. Honors classes enable students to acquire the love of life-long learning and to cultivate life-long friendships. 

What is a First-Year Experience (FYE) course?

As a member of the Honors College, your son or daughter was required to register for one of our FYE courses offered this fall. These lecture courses cover a core curriculum requirement for Texas Tech University and are taught by some of the finest professors on campus. In each lecture, students will create meaningful connections to their faculty member and learn the critical thinking, writing, and communication skills necessary to be successful as an Honors student. 📖

What is a Learning Community Group (LCG)?

The LCG discussion attached to your student's FYE course meets once a week and is facilitated by two student Mentors. LCG is designed to help your student transition into university life. Weekly topics will include creating a professional résumé and cover letter; information about opportunities available exclusively to Honors students; how to be a successful undergraduate student; and more. As such, LCG does not serve as supplemental instruction for the FYE lecture or as a weekly study session. 📖

Who are the FYE Mentors?

FYE Mentors are successful Honors students with extensive knowledge of the university and the Honors College. Each Mentor was selected in a highly competitive application process and trained to help our incoming students connect to other students and to the faculty and staff, as well as to have the most successful first semester possible. As part of their mission, the Mentors attend FYE lectures and expose incoming students to cultural and community service events both on and off campus. 📖

More Information

Mentor photographs and biographical information can be found at www.depts.ttu.edu/honors/fye/mentors.php.

Descriptions of the FYE lecture courses can be found at www.depts.ttu.edu/honos/fye/FYE2011.php.

Honors College Advisors

The Honors College is fortunate to have four advisors to help guide its students through their undergraduate studies. Because there is a small student-to-advisor ratio, students have the ability to see an advisor on a walk-in basis whenever they have a problem or need advice. We have found that advisor availability is invaluable to our students, who many times cannot immediately speak with their primary academic major advisor. Additionally, due to our students' diverse areas of study and future career goals, Honors advisors must have a working knowledge of the specific degree requirements within each of the eleven academic colleges, as well as knowledge of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, Graduate School, and Law School's admissions and programming information.

In addition, all four Honors advisors also coordinate additional Honors programs. The First-Year Experience Program will introduce these different programs to your student, including those in which he or she can participate right away in their first semester! As your student progresses through their degree, they will have the chance to become familiar with how Honors College programs, and the advisors who coordinate them, can help them in their future goals.



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Coordinator of Study Abroad Waiver,
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Sarah Timmons

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Undergraduate Research Coordinator,
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Contracting

A Fulbright Year in Malaysia

by Mark McGinley, Ph.D.

From June 2010 to May 2011, I was a Fulbright Scholar in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Fulbright Program, an international educational exchange program, is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries. While in Malaysia I served as a Visiting Professor with the Program in Ecology and Biodiversity in the Institute of Biological Sciences at the University of Malaysia (UM) in Kuala Lumpur.

I have been interested in teaching at a foreign university since I took my first scuba diving trip to the Pacific Ocean. Because of my interests in marine biology and ecology, and because I wanted an experience that was as different from living in Lubbock as possible, I was interested in working in a country that had both coral reefs and tropical rainforests. I was interested in teaching, and since I don't speak any other languages, I was limited to countries with university instruction in English.

Dr. Tigga Kingston, Dr. Ken Schmidt, and I received a grant to support a project to use the biology of Malaysian bats as the focus for developing a 4-8 grade biology curriculum. In 2009 I was able to visit Dr. Kingston's study site in Malaysia and while I was there, I visited UM to give a presentation and to discuss the possibilities of being hosted as a Fulbright Scholar.

Ecologically, Malaysia is recognized as one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, home to some of the world's oldest tropical rainforests and coral reefs. Additionally, Malaysia's rapid development is placing pressure on this environment. Finally, Malaysia is a diverse country made up of a variety of peoples (Malay, Chinese, Indian, and indigenous tribes) and religions (Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and Christians). Malaysia bills itself as a moderate Islamic country where people of all races and religions live in harmony. I was very interested in seeing how that worked.

I was excited and nervous about teaching at UM. On average, my students were trilingual. I taught a course entitled "Special Topics in Ecology and Biodiversity" in which I compared the ecology of arid temperate systems, like Lubbock, with tropical systems. I taught this small class in the same style in which I teach Honors classes, writing-intensive with lots of

discussion. I quickly saw that this was quite different from the typical Malaysian teaching style, in which the professor is the source of all knowledge and the students regurgitate exactly what the professor has told them. Though they eventually warmed up, they were initially hesitant to speak up and nervous about their writing ability.

My scholarly goal while in Malaysia was to work with Malay scientists to develop a "Malaysian Collection" for the Encyclopedia of Earth (<http://www.eoearth.org/>) that focused on the ecology, biological diversity, and environmental issues of Malaysia. The project is ongoing and I plan to unveil its beginnings within the next year.

As an ecologist and environmental educator, I was very fortunate that I could consider traveling to be part of my



"research." I visited tropical rainforests in peninsular and Bornean Malaysia, where I was able to see Borneo pygmy elephants and wild orangutans and scuba on reefs with sharks and barracuda. I was also able to watch a Green Sea Turtle laying eggs on the beach of Tenggol Island.

Daily life was often an adventure. To warp those famous words of Dorothy, "I wasn't in Lubbock any more, Toto!" I quickly learned how to eat the eclectic food and deal with basic issues of life, such

as not getting run over by the crazy drivers on their motor scooters! I learned a lot by traveling and reading newspapers and websites so that I probably knew more about current events in Malaysia than most Malaysians.

While away, I shared my experiences through a blog (<http://markinmalaysia.blogspot.com/>). Much of what I learned will be incorporated into my classes. For example, I have a much greater appreciation of tropical rainforests. However, many insights cannot easily be incorporated into biology classes. For example, after living in a majority Islamic country, I can say that not all Muslims are terrorists who want to kill Americans, except for when they are on their motor scooters; then we are fair game! I plan to share these experiences with Honors students through Lunch Discussion and Pizza with a Prof, as well as with the rest of campus.

Being a Fulbright Scholar was a rewarding experience and Fulbright also has programs for students. Already, an Honors alumna is participating in Fulbright's English Teaching Assistant program in Malaysia next year and I hope to encourage other Honors students to do the same. 📖



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To the Parents of:

Honors College Current Student Scholarship

As an Honors student, your son or daughter will be eligible for a couple of different types of Honors College scholarships. Perhaps the most relevant at this point is the Honors College Current Student Scholarship.

To be eligible for the Current Student Scholarship, students must have been in “good standing” with the Honors College for at least one semester, meaning that the student is steadily progressing through their Honors credit hours and is not on probation with the College. However, because we feel that all Honors students are academically

gifted, our scholarships are awarded based on a combination of criteria and are highly competitive.

To be seriously considered for the Current Student Scholarship, students must show exceptional performance, defined through a variety of honors experiences, willingness to overcome adversity and challenges, and consistent volunteer work with the Honors College or in another setting.

The deadline for the Current Student Scholarship is February 1st. More information about this and other Honors College scholarships, as well as the application, can be found at

www.depts.ttu.edu/honors/scholarships.php. 

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