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The Promethean: Fall 2013

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In the beginning of November, I and several other Brockport Honors College students had the pleasure of attending and presenting at the National Collegiate Honors Council conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. Nick Kinney, Amanda Di-anetti, Ryan Hutchings, and I prepared a presentation that showcased the social aspects of our Honors College to share with conference attendees. The conference included both faculty and students presentations on research that they had conducted, but a large portion of the conference was a sharing of ideas for Honors Peer Mentoring, Living Learning Communities (LLC), and other aspects of Honors programs and colleges from across the country. Our own presentation, titled "Honors: It's Not Just Academics," fit right in as we shared the social aspects of Honors life at Brockport, including our own Peer Mentoring Program, the Honors House LLC, and our Honors Club. It was almost comforting to see that other programs around the country were enacting similar programs, yet each one was still unique. One of the best ideas I recall from the conference was holding a Q&A session for Honors freshmen with the Peer Mentors. The faculty would be "kicked out" of the room and students would write down a question they had about Honors, The College at Brockport, or both. I feel that the Q&A would help create a greater bond and trust between the peer mentors and mentees. And, because the students would do so anonymously, there would be no pressure on what question you asked regardless of seriousness or silliness. This was only one of several great ideas that we heard.

The conference was enlightening and gave each of us ideas to bring into our own Honors College, but it was also a way to explore an amazing city and meet new friends. One day of the conference was dedicated to "City as Text" where everyone chose a place to explore in New Orleans and returned to share what he or she learned.

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As we approach the close of the fall semester, I would like to share two news items that will give you a sense of opportunities that are on the horizon for Brockport’s Honors College.

First, the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) recently announced plans to offer voluntary certification of Honors programs and colleges beginning next year. This is important news because it means that Brockport’s Honors College will have the opportunity to seek national accreditation. NCHC is the national organization that represents Honors higher education in the United States (see http://nchchonors.org/), and Brockport has been an institutional member and active participant in NCHC annual conferences for over 20 years.

An accreditation review by NCHC will involve the creation of a self-study (or self-evaluation) of our academic program and co-curricular activities and an external peer review by a team of Honors administrators selected by NCHC from peer institutions. Of course, the accreditation process will require the input of Brockport students, faculty, and staff. Beyond serving as an emblem of quality, accreditation ensures that Honors education in colleges and universities across the country provide exemplary learning environments. It also allows for transferability of Honors courses across institutions.

The second news item concerns the possible future relocation of the Honors College. Brockport’s new Liberal Arts Building is scheduled to open in Fall 2014 with several academic departments moving from their current location to take up residence there (see http://www.brockport.edu/nab/). Once this new building opens, there will be a college-wide initiative aimed at relocating some other academic departments/programs, which will likely unfold gradually over several years. Dr. Banerjee and I are currently engaging in discussions on what the options are for relocating the Honors College to a larger, more functional space to accommodate our growing population of students. Stay tuned! We promise to keep you informed once we know more.

On behalf of the Honors College faculty and staff, best wishes for a successful spring semester!
Amanda and I traveled to the New Orleans Museum of Art. Where we explored an outdoor sculpture garden located next to the museum. The garden was very calm and tranquil, incorporating water into many of the sculptures. There were also many contemporary pieces, including a giant open safety pin. With the museum being located just outside the city, it was like an oasis after being in the hustle and bustle of downtown New Orleans. When we returned later that afternoon, we shared our experiences with the other Honors students and faculty and were able to do some more exploring ourselves. With our hotel located near the famous French Quarter, we got to visit places like Café du Monde, where we ate freshly made beignets, and Bourbon Street, where we watched a live jazz band. And, of course, we tried the local delicacies, including Jambalaya, Gumbo, and Po'boys. The NCHC conference was a new experience, in a new city, with new friends, and definitely a part of my college experience I will never forget.

Technology is a great thing. Recent developments in science and medicine are changing the way we approach care for illness and the way we communicate. Recently, TEDtalks, a sector of the National Public Radio (NPR) organization, reported on the future of science regarding medicine and technology. Medical scientists are experimenting with the ability to grow tissues that are genetically specific to the individual. With this technology, scientists can take a portion of infected tissue from an individual and treat it with different types of drugs outside a person’s body to see which treatment they will respond to best. Because diseases like cancer have a small window of treatment time due to their rapid progression, timing is important in finding the correct drug that responds to that particular body and that particular cancer. The wrong treatment or drug when given to a patient can either not help at all or make the illness worse. These techniques in tissue growth and repair are also being used to grow whole organs. This means that, in the future, organ donation lines could be non-existent. Doctors would not have to worry about whether or not our bodies will reject the transplanted organ, which would save millions of lives.

Technology is also a scary thing. GPS recognition is getting so precise that we can tell where a person is within a few feet of their actual coordinates. Scientists are developing smaller devices that are able to attach to any device, not just vehicles. We would never lose anything again. However, this innovation introduces the possibility of being undesirably located, not just by our own government, which would be a breach of the right to privacy, but by other nations as well. Terrorism works by targeting helpless individuals collectively to do the most damage possible. This technology would allow other users to pinpoint areas that would destroy the most lives and affect the most people. This was not the intention of the creators, nor is it the best case scenario for the people in those concentrated areas whose lives could be in danger. What should we, as Americans, do? How can we ignore this technology that has a great potential upside for the modern day consumer, but also has the potential to become a valuable weapon for terrorism?

These are the questions we must ask ourselves in the ever expanding world of constant technology. We can choose not to put so much of ourselves online. We can choose to tell our governments that we want our security and privacy kept protected. We have the power to use science in a constructive way by funding projects that make sense, such as tissue and organ regeneration studies rather than a device that helps us find our lost keys. Technology has given us the ability to make amazing things, but also has encouraged us to be lazy and disconnected from the real world. Why visit someone when one can call? Why even call when one can send a text message? These things that have made communication easier have also made us more disconnected as a society. This disconnection has separated us from the real world into a world run by machines so much that one does not often think about the implications of such technology. Sure, we could all put GPS devices on all of our belongings so that we can find them easier, or we could simply take the initiative to remember where we left them, or ask for help.
This past summer I completed an internship at Greatbatch Medical, a manufacturing facility in Alden, New York. This experience opened me up to a new sector of business, allowing me to get a view of what life will be like after graduation. I learned a lot about the company as well as myself. I noticed a great improvement in my time management, team work, and visual learning skills. Greatbatch Medical taught me the importance of working as a team. This was demonstrated through their core belief: “We share a passion for mutual success.” I saw this demonstrated daily as co-workers worked together to solve problems in all departments, rather than just worrying about themselves. I learned the importance of the company’s success and the need to look out for everybody and everything, not just yourself. Without this factor, the company would not live up to such a high potential. I am grateful for this internship because it showed me what it is like to be a part of a company where the employees care for one another. I recommend internships to all students who are unsure if they are on the right track in college. There is no better way to see if you like what you are doing than going out and experiencing it firsthand.

Perspectives on Internships

By: Amanda Dianetti, Marketing and Business Administration Major

Chris Kolankiewicz, Healthcare Administration Student
Presents her Honors Thesis at the American Public Health (APHA) Conference in Boston, MA, November 5, 2013
Hope woke up early the day her mother, who rarely ventured up north, was taking her to lunch. After spending more time than usual in the shower, she picked out an outfit that her mother would disapprove of the least. The wire hangers scraping against the metal rod as she whirled through her limited options was like fingernails across a chalkboard and an icicle melting down her back; she shivered. She should have gone to the mall. She was supposed to go to the mall.

Her last thought before drifting into a fitful sleep the night before was of her mother chastising her, as an adult, for wearing flannel shirts and dressing too manly. Now she had to settle and try to make something out of very little. The weight of the futility pushed her down to the floor, where she sat cross-legged and rubbed her forehead. Don’t mess up.

She stood and, this time more slowly, began to rummage through her wardrobe of blues, grays and blacks. She looked at her watch. Damn it. She was wasting time. She looked up at a disarray of shirts on the top shelf of the closet. The cushioned folding chair she stood on to reach them teetered, but she shifted her body and steadied herself. She saw a patch of red in a pile of mediocrity and yanked it free. She turned and held it up to the fixtureless light bulb for a better look. Not bad.

She hopped down. The mirror told a different story. No matter which way she turned or uncharacteristically twirled, her reflection was hideous. Red was definitely not her color. She looked like something straight out of a 1970’s Sears & Roebuck catalog. She hated it. She grinned. Perfect. Her mother would love it. Dressing up like someone else for one day out of the year was a small sacrifice.

She went into the bathroom to brush her teeth. The pants she chose were straight legged and, paired with the red shirt, accentuated the unmistakably female figure she usually hid under men’s Levi’s and white t-shirts. She rubbed her hands in a circular motion against her outer thighs, remembering the awkward walking lessons her mother gave her when she was 12 in an attempt to stifle her boyish gait. She sat primly on the couch and waited.

She considered playing her favorite CD but didn’t want the music to drown out the sound of the buzzer. 11 o’clock turned into 12. 12 into 1. 1 into 2. 2 into 3. She went to bed at nine.

The next night, when the phone rang after Jeopardy, she recognized the number on the caller ID as her mother’s, five states away. She didn’t answer. Her eyes were closed as she listened to the flighty, falsely-repentant message on her voicemail. She allowed herself two tears then opened her eyes. Maybe next time.

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### Dance Like Rain
**By: Benjamin Haskell**

Ripple, trickle  
Flow, bow  
Slip step  
Move like water  
Dance like rain  
Down the street  
And over the drain  
Flow like rivers  
Ripple like a creek  
Dance until your legs grow weak  
Dance because you never have  
Dance because you feel so glad  
Dance because you are in love  
Dance because the water does

### Catch and Release
**By: Mark Sutherland**

Only you and the fish are smiling. The salmon  
since he got away, today and grandpa,  
you got some good looks before the final splash.

I’ve heard the story so many times—  
skunk trips to the sea, early  
to bed, to rise, sounds wise  
until I’m five hours off shore, still broke,  
fishing for kings with my jack-  
of-all-trades Great Grandpa Ray.

Though, we’ve never been salmon  
fishing before  
but I continue to look like you. Arms  
extended, still posing for pictures  
from a childhood never taken, stolen  
memories—with your cigars hooked in cartilage,  
lines set for cancer, me reeling as fast  
as I could to grow big enough for the boat  
so dad and you would pack me in the cooler.  
I was awake then, listening and dreaming,  
when men were rising with the dawn  
and this son only a man long after  
your sun set; Grandpa you were  
*this big* and got away too soon.

### Grandma’s House
**By: Elizabeth Cramer**

My grandfather’s certificate  
for his purple heart from  
World War II  
and a couple medals for  
serving in the action.

A pile of cards saved from  
Birthdays and Christmases past,  
clip on earrings and  
pins galore,  
stored in various boxes.

Some ceramic treasures  
she made and initialed:  
a jewelry box, a Christmas tree, a bowl.

Quilts she made, with her own two hands,  
even up to that day he had to go to the hospital.  
A bag proclaims “patient belongings”  
on the side; stuff she’ll never use again.  

An engagement ring,  
a fiftieth anniversary cake topper,  
and a funky orange vase from the 70s  
that I stole for myself.  

A lifetime of valuables, maybe even more.  
A house—full of belongings,  
most of which will go to strangers,  
and he rest will be split up among us or thrown away.  
And my family and I  
get to sort through it all.