

Fall 2004

The Promethean: Fall 2004

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Honors Program News



SUNY College at Brockport

Fall 2004

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Newsletter Editor
Laura D'Avolio,
Journalism Major

**Happy
Holidays!**



New Leadership in Honors Program



SUNY Brockport's Honors Program has never lacked adaptability. In December 2003, two faculty members were recruited to support the administrative needs of the growing program: Dr. Kenneth O'Brien, Associate Professor in the Department of History and Director of Transfer Articulation, and Dr. Donna Kowal, Associate Professor of the Department of Communication. This academic year Professor O'Brien is serving as Interim Director of the program and Professor Kowal Associate Director. "Our goal is to make sure that the over four hundred students in the Honors Program will continue to get the support they need to succeed," stated Kowal.

SUNY Brockport established the permanent Associate Director position beginning Fall 2004. Kowal sees her role as providing assistance to the Director in accomplishing administrative tasks, planning special events and coordinating academic activities. "In addition to supporting the various functions of the Honors Program, I look forward to getting to know the students, working closely with them in planning activities, and occasionally teaching Honors Program courses," Kowal said. "I am grateful for the opportunity to work with such a bright and ambitious population of students."

Over the past several months, O'Brien has devoted himself to becoming better acquainted with the operations of the program and the office in preparation for a Periodic Program Review scheduled for the 2004-05 academic year. "One of my tasks will be purely administrative, such as scheduling classes

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Twin Brothers Conducting Research

Throughout last year and last semester, twin brothers, Paul and Jeff Colburn, worked on an important research project here on campus. This research, they hope, will better society by creating awareness of a harmful chemical found in many everyday objects.

This chemical called dibutyl phthalates (DBP) is found in most soft plastics and has been linked to cancer as well as infertility. DBP is currently the only chemical known to keep plastics flexible. "That 'new car smell' is actually dibutyl phthalates," warns Jeff. Research has shown that the effects of DBP are passed down from generation to generation, making one's offspring at a higher risk of infertility.

Paul found out about the research opportunity when looking for classes last fall. He noticed that there was an independent study available through the Biology department chair, Dr. Steven Chan. Curious to what the study was, Paul visited Dr. Chan and soon after was invited along with his brother Jeff to join the project. Dr. Chan has been working on the project for approximately three years and has been offering students the opportunity to gain laboratory experience each semester by working with him collecting and analyzing data.

With Chan's knowledge as an endocrinologist and his laboratory skills, the Colburns are learning many valuable things. "We provide Dr. Chan with the experimental data, he provides us with the knowledge to explain it, and we all determine what to do next," says Paul on Dr. Chan, "I think he has a great wealth of knowledge and I thank him greatly for inviting us to study the effects of DBP with him."

Paul and Jeff are specifically working on the effects of DBP on

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Paul Colburn (front) and brother, Jeff, are conducting research on the potentially harmful effects of DBP, or dibutyl phthalates, found in many ordinary substances.

Honors Program Embarks on Periodic Program Review

Academic program review is a tool that allows a department or program to assess how well they are meeting the college's goals, student learning, curriculum, faculty, facilities, funding, and future plans. Here at SUNY Brockport, this type of academic review program is called the Periodic Program Review, or PPR. Currently, the Honors Program is undergoing this process in order to look over and report on its overall status. This process is mandatory for all departments and programs at the college, and is scheduled to occur once every five years.

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Honors Office Update

As many of you already know, we lost the most valuable member of our administrative team earlier this fall when Mrs. Darlene Waters accepted a position in the International Education Office, which included a promotion. I am delighted to announce that Mrs. Waters has returned to the Honors Office, and she is looking forward to working closely with the Honors students again. *My sincerest thanks to all the students who helped maintain the office during the transitional period.*

*By Kenneth O'Brien,
Interim Honors Dir.*

pregnant females by analyzing data of laboratory rats. Also working with Paul and Jeff is a woman from Tokyo, Japan, named Dr. Miho Hanai. Dr. Hanai came to the United States to study American research techniques. "She has an advanced knowledge of the procedure, the experiment, and working with the rats, she is a great asset to the experiment," says Paul, "She is excellent at collecting data and organizing the process," adds Jeff.

With the experience and knowledge of Dr. Chan and Dr. Hanai, Paul and Jeff are working on finding the enzyme or hormone pathway that DBP takes to cause its harmful effects. "We check the rats hormone levels to see if the chemical is causing decreased levels of estrogen and progesterone and we perform autopsies on the rats to check for morphological changes," says Jeff. He further explains that changes in the size of organs like the kidney, liver, and reproductive organs are signs that the organ has been working overtime to try and rid itself of DBP.

Not only is this research important to society but it is also helping the Colburns to gain valuable experience in the lab. Paul and Jeff are both senior biology majors and with hopes of enrolling in medical school after graduation at Brockport.

In November 2003, Paul and Jeff presented their research findings at a conference at the University of Maryland. At the symposium, the Colburns competed for top prizes and scholarships, for which they placed third. "The symposium was a great opportunity for us to make the scientific community aware of what we are doing, I mean, that is the point of research," said Jeff. The Colburns are both considering writing their Honors theses about their research. "I will have a stronger connection with my thesis since I will be the one to have produced the data for the paper," adds Paul.

By Beth Warner, Math Major



The Transfer Experience

The transfer student experience is uniquely different from that of students who enter the College as freshmen. Last year, I asked several transfer students in the Honors Program about the major benefits they experienced in being a member of the program. The following is a summary of the responses I received:

- Studying in the Honors Program is one way that you can stand out to graduate programs and employers because it requires a high GPA and additional activities that enhance your exposure to a variety of experiences.
- Honors students are viewed as the best students on campus because of the inherent motivation, enthusiasm and commitment that is part of being in the Honors Program. Others know that your education is very important to you, and that you work hard to gain as much from your studies as possible.
- The philosophy behind the program is to bring the best teachers and the best students together in small classes where learning can thrive. The environment is informal and facilitates bonds between faculty and students. In addition, the focus is on the students' specific interests, abilities and goals.
- SUNY Brockport's Honors Program offers many course options that are not in any specific order, and therefore the program is flexible. The classes can also be applied to breadth and general education requirements (sometimes more than one). As a transfer student, you may be able to apply a transferred course toward fulfilling SUNY Brockport Honors Program course requirements.
- The Honors classes are the smallest on campus, and the professors are the best on campus (many have been distinguished in various ways).
- The Peer Mentoring program is nationally recognized.
- The program encourages international study, including other Honors programs.

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Transfer Experience, Cont.

- Honors students are able to register early (with seniors).
- The program sponsors cultural events and conferences (which is a great resume builder).

In addition, I think that the Honors Program is what you make it. The more you participate and interact with others, the more you get out of it. I like to take more Honors courses than I need to because I love the teachers. They are enthusiastic and seem to me more varied in their knowledge. The professors are eager to help whenever they can, spending extra time with you whenever possible.

The program also offers opportunities for leadership positions, field trips and conferences. The key is to stay connected. All information regarding extracurricular activities is uploaded in the content area of the Honors club page on ANGEL. Advisement is also important. Initially, transfer students are assigned temporary advisors. Some students feel like they have been shuffled through the door during summer registration sessions, left with classes they didn't want and major requirements unfulfilled. This is one area that takes some perseverance. I suggest that if you are not happy with your advisement, go to a professor in your major department that you trust and respect for help. You can also use the Honors Program advisors for assistance as well. It is also important that you print out your DARS report from BANNER to review all your academic activity. The DARS report has instructions at the top to help you read it and below it lists all the requirements that you have completed or not completed. Having that is the best way to know what you need to finish your degree and to avoid taking classes that don't fulfill requirements.

Lastly, knowing what the college has to offer in the way of programs and services is another area of concern. There are different ways to access the campus, depending on what you are looking for. Because many of you are commuters and have limited time, I suggest that you use the many Internet resources that are available. The Brockport web page is chock full of connections, from clubs to sports to cultural events and trips. On the home page you will see a number of choices. You can access the library, news, weather, events, faculty directories, calendars, final exam schedules, department information,

residential life and campus life. I suggest going to your department office and asking if there is a club that you can join. You'd be surprised at how many clubs there are on campus. Keep in mind that not all are listed on the web page for technical reasons (they have to be established for two or three years to be a formal club).

By Deacy Merritt Dee, Psychology Major, 2004 Graduating Class

The Bounties of Brockport Student Government

The SUNY Brockport campus is a place alive and teeming with life and activity. One need only take a look around to see the abundance of activities available to both resident and non-resident students.

Brockport Student Government is a large part of making all these goings-on possible. With more than sixty clubs, BSG has something for everyone. From art history to physical education to women's studies, there is a club for every interest a student can perk.

Two of the largest and well-known organizations on BSG's club roster are *The Stylus* and 89.1 The Point, SUNY Brockport's very own student-run newspaper and FM radio station.

BSG also heads up several services funded by the Mandatory Fee, which is paid by every student who enrolls in this university. This fee, of \$96, or approximately \$8 per credit, gives BSG a remarkable budget and SUNY Brockport students an awesome opportunity. To see your fee at work, head downtown in a free shuttle bus ride to catch a midnight movie for \$1 on Fridays.

I am anxious to get involved in *The Stylus* and possibly the radio station, too. The sky truly is the limit, thanks in large part to BSG.

By Amanda Holdridge, English Major



The Honors Student Thesis

The Honors Thesis is the capstone learning experience of the Honors Program. The years of work in the program culminates in the creation of the thesis, in which students work directly under the supervision of a faculty member in their major department.

The Honors Thesis fosters the ideals and standards of excellence in scholarship and creativity. It provides students the opportunity to engage in individual research exploration that extends current understanding of societal issues or problems, and generates new ideas and modes of expression. Completion of the honors thesis and the honors program is an extraordinary achievement. Below are abstracts for two thesis projects researched this past academic year.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Children

By Deacy Merritt Dee

This literature review on Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in children focuses on the development of the disorder in children through vicarious exposures. It includes an overview of the disorder: its symptoms, etiology, and factors associated with the course PTSD. It also explores how developmental factors may influence children's perceptions and understandings of traumatic events, the expression of symptoms, factors affecting the course and effective treatment strategies. All of these may differ from PTSD in adults, which is where the majority of research has been conducted. Specifically, I explore the possibility that children may be more vulnerable to vicarious traumatization, such as traumatic themes in the media and the loss of a parent to traumatic causes than are adults.

PTSD is characterized by intense fear and physical symptoms accompanying emotionally difficult re-experiences of an event. This disorder can occur in children following the death of a loved one or exposure to violent themes in the media. For instance, the current world unrest presents both risks for children as many parents and siblings are drawn into the war. In addition, the television relentlessly offers scenes from the conflict zones and the radio predictably announces the number and manner of deaths that day. The purpose of this study is to discover the various levels of treatment effectiveness that are available to treat PTSD in children. This information will provide insight into the progress that has been made as well as the gaps in research on this topic. The method of study is a

literature review of peer reviewed publications. The findings indicate that there is a significant gap in the knowledge of PTSD in children. The treatments currently used are based on methods that were developed for adults. Belonging to a country that is engaging in a war creates certain needs on the scientific community. It is important that people are aware and sensitive to the fact that children are important parts of our community and future, and that they understand and experience life differently than adults.

That being said, I feel that researchers need to focus some attention on this issue so that parents, teachers and clinicians have the tools to identify and effectively respond to the effects that war can have on children, including posttraumatic stress disorder.

The political, economic and social impact of joint telecommunication ventures

in China: 1995 – 2000

By William Donkor

China's government has been monopolistic in all of its industries for many years. There was no easy way for multinationals or foreign companies to begin establishing businesses of any sort in the Chinese economy.

The importance of this issue is that joint telecommunication ventures of companies such as AT&T, IBM, Ericsson, Motorola, Sprint, Bell Canada International (BCI), etc., were forced to abide by the terms of the Chinese government between the years 1995 and 2000.

In this research, the Chinese government's control over the telecommunication industry was to the advantage of the economy, and members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) could not do anything about China's affairs. China is now part of the WTO, so the WTO can step into its business negotiations. Even though the Chinese government was monopolistic, telecommunications corporations were able to cope with strict Communist regulations to achieve a profitable venture.



Honors Program Review, Cont.

The guidelines of the PPR are defined by the faculty senate and focus on a self-reflection period.

In order to get the best feedback, both program faculty and students will give input. For this review session, the Honors Club has selected three students to represent the program's student body. The first student is Kathryn Atkinson, a newly incoming transfer student. Kathryn is currently a junior, who is majoring in English. The next student involved in the process is Beth Warner. Beth is currently a senior class member majoring in Mathematics. The third and final student involved is Katie Skomra. Katie is a sophomore majoring in Health Science, with a concentration in education.

The PPR is a great way for the Honors Program to see what opportunities it is offering students, and what it can do better. If you are interested in learning more about the PPR, please visit <http://www.brockport.edu/assessment/>.

By completing the PPR, the Honors Program will be helping Brockport maintain its record for "Expecting The Extraordinary."

*By Jonathan Jarvis, Honors Club
Vice President*

The 2004-2005 Honors Club

At the start of this academic year, the Honors Club held elections for its new officers. Over a two-week period, the elections were completed. **Jonathan Jarvis** is currently serving as president of the club, with **Amanda Schepis** serving as vice president. Next year, Amanda will automatically become the president as vice president is also a president elect position. The next position is treasurer, filled by **Jessica Roth**, and followed immediately by secretary, **Tiffany Telarico**. In order to ensure representation of all Honors Club members, there are ten representatives from different classes. The senior representatives are **Beth Warner** and **Paul Colburn**. Next, the junior representatives are **Christy Ecklund** and **Wojciech Kuchciak** (Voytek). Sophomore representatives include **Jessy Nicastro** and **Katie Skomra**. The freshmen representatives are **Todd Cavanaugh**, **Jason Parker**, and **Caitlin Wall**. Last but not least is our transfer representative, **Kathryn Atkinson**.

Over the next year, the club plans on providing fun, educational, and volunteer opportunities for all members. Thank you to everyone who ran for offices, and we all hope to see you at our next event!

*By Jonathan Jarvis, Honors Club
Vice President*

New Leadership Con't.

and overseeing budgets," O'Brien said. "But, I really look forward to working directly with the students, both in Honors classes and through program activities." O'Brien and Kowal have divided up many of the tasks and responsibilities to ensure the smooth functioning of the program. They meet weekly to coordinate tasks and to make certain each is well informed. O'Brien said they seek to match the best qualities that they each bring to the program. "We are very excited about the year ahead," he said.

*By Lauren D'Avolio,
Journalism Major*

Honors Club Clothing Sale

The Honors Club is in the process of ordering Honors Program t-shirts and hooded-sweatshirts as a fundraiser. These clothing items would make a great gift, and they will be ready by winter break. If you or someone you know would like to buy one or more, don't hesitate to contact Jonathan Jarvis, jjar0330@brockport.edu for more information. Thank You!

OFFICE HOURS

Dr. Kenneth O'Brien, Monday and Wednesday 1:15-3:45

Dr. Donna Kowal, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 9:30-10:30 and 2:30-3:30

Call 395-5400 for appointments.