

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
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Dr. Ofelia Nikolova

From the Director's Desk

Dr. Nikolova

We are fast approaching the end of another action-packed semester for the Honors Program. It will remain in our annals as the most undergraduate research-oriented semester for Honors. And all this during a time when VSU as a whole is putting together a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) centered on ... undergraduate research! We must be mind readers! It all

started two years ago when we offered to host the 2009 Georgia Collegiate Honors Council conference, a hotbed for undergraduate research in the entire state of Georgia.

Now the most prominent event that Honors has organized in more than 10 years is behind us. This past February, the conference brought together 120 participants (26 from VSU) from 11 schools throughout the state and became a real celebration of the talent and dedication to scholarship of our best and brightest students. The VSU Honors students rose to the occasion and put together a convention that earned us rave reviews from faculty and students from all sister programs which participated in the event. Registration, evening reception with jazz ensemble, presentation sessions, keynote address, all was well planned and brilliantly executed, thanks to the collective effort of many Honors students, faculty, and staff. The momentum that the GCHC conference gave to our strive for research carried over to the Symposium on Undergraduate Research organized by the College of Arts & Sciences at which 20 students presented on behalf of Honors. Last Thursday, we gathered in the UC Theater to celebrate our achievements and, to no surprise, participation in undergraduate research was there among our top accomplishments! I encourage all students in the VSU Honors Program to engage in more research this coming year and to prepare for the 2010 GCHC in Milledgeville, the 16th CUR Symposium here at VSU, and for many more research fora in their respective disciplines. The Honors Program will support you in this commendable endeavor!

Recognition:

Dr. Ofelia Nikolova
Honors Program Director

Ashlie Braswell
*Student Assistant,
Webmaster, Editor-in-Chief*

Mrs. Jane Robinson
Program Secretary

***Honors 2008-2009
Executive Officers:***
*President: Jay Prosser
Vice President: Matt Schmidt
Secretary: Laura Simmons
Treasurer: Tim Malone*

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VSU Hosts Georgia Colligate Honors Council Conference 2009

Ashlie Braswell, Webmaster to the Honors Program



The Honors Program at VSU has lived for two years with the idea that we were going to host the 2009 GCHC meeting. Many people worked really hard at it. And it was a blast! VSU was complimented by students and honors faculty from all over the state about everything: the organization, the selection of papers and posters, the beautiful Honors House, and the great program. This was truly a proud moment, not only for the Honors Program, but for the Valdosta State University as a whole.

In 2007, Jake Newsome, VP of the HSA (2007-2008) was the person who inspired our volunteering to host the 2009 meeting. This past year, all HSA officers and many members - Kristin Morrison, Laura Simmons, Tim Malone, Matthew Schmidt, Michael Holman, Chris Nish, Ashlie Braswell, Matthew Babcock, Rajiv Villait, Phillip Williams, Danielle Sheffield, Amy Dandron, Helen Burkett, Nikki Mashburn, Emily Rumph and Craig Black under the leadership of the tireless HSA President Jay Prosser - met multiple times to discuss and plan the arrangements. On February 27 and 28, 2009, Valdosta State University hosted the annual conference of the Georgia Collegiate Honors Council. Friday February 27, 2009 the Honors House was bursting with students from all over the state during the mixer/ registration session. A jazz quartet under the direction of Joren Cain filled the background with beautiful music. Delicious sweets, engaging conversation, and a chess board helped create a great time for all.

Saturday February 28, 2009, after a continental breakfast, Dr. Matthew Richard, the keynotes speaker for the conference, gave a fascinating speech entitled "Culture: The Key to Understanding... Everything." Shortly after his speech, the students split up to attend and present in the concurrent sessions in which there were forty-eight individual presentations featuring Honors students from across the state. They focused on a multitude of topics and were grouped by similarity of subjects. A few examples of these grouping are as follows: Religion and Philosophy, Honors Environment, Religion and Sexuality, Three Studies in Psychology, Science and Health, and Tales of History. There were also three student-lead panels that discussed topics relevant to Honors education. These panels were entitled Technology and Human Futures, Teaching the Great Books, and War, Women, and Literature: The Dead the Displaced and the Powerless.

An appetizing lunch was provided by the Catering Services of VSU. After lunch, the annual business meeting has held. Election and recognition of new officers took place at this time. The business meeting was followed by the student roundtable session. It centered on the students' experiences during the conference. During the same time directors of the participating institutions held their roundtable devoted to various issues of Honors education at the state level. In the afternoon one more session of concurrent presentations concluded the conference

The following Honors students presented at the conference:

Matthew Babcock, Ashlie Braswell, Stephanie Briggs, Helen Burkett, Candace Edwards, Soumaeya Elias, Carly Floyd, Lani Hollingsworth, Michael Holman, Tim Malone, Kristin Morrison, Chris Nish, Travis Patterson, Jay Prosser, Matthew Schmidt, Andrew Seliga, Danielle Sheffield, Brittney Sims, Cassie Taylor, Reese Thompson, Adam Valdez, Rajiv Villait, Rachel Wayne, Miriam Watkins, Phillip Williams and Kim Wright

GCHC 2009: Continued

Ashlie Braswell, Webmaster to the Honors Program

Those who helped:

Keith, Craig Black, Amy Dandron, Nikki Mashburn, Laura Simmons, Courtney Terrell and Mary Warthen

The staff of the Honors Program worked tirelessly to make all the planning ideas take shape: Our Secretary Mrs. Jane Robinson was everywhere and helped in everything - from creating the program and the welcome poster and decorating the Honors House for Friday evening to fixing technology glitches on Saturday morning! All this was done while supervising everybody else who worked on a multitude of different projects. Our Student Assistants Lani Hollingsworth, Ashlie Braswell, Yvonne Garcia, and our Graduate Assistant Tobi Lovelace stuffed bags, typed lists, created name tags and did much more.

Chocolate Day 2009!

Ashlie Braswell, Webmaster to the Honors Program

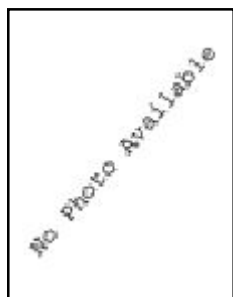


This special, all day feast held at the Honors House February 12, 2009 . It was a first come, first served event. Many Honors students stopped by to sample the delicious treats, many of which were courtesy of students, faculty and staff. The aroma of chocolate filled the Honors House all day. The menu of goodies that were served included at least two types of brownies, chocolate bars, cupcakes, and a chocolate torte. The Honors program would like to thank everyone who helped by donating goodies that made the festivities possible. Some of these people include: Dr. Ofeia Nikolova, Dr. Dennis Bogyo, Michael Hollman, Lani

Hollingsworth, Savannah Spivey and, of course, our wonderful secretary Ms. Robinson. It was much appreciated! For those who did not come by, do not worry. This is an annual event. Come back next year.

Welcome Yvonne Garcia to the Honors Program Family

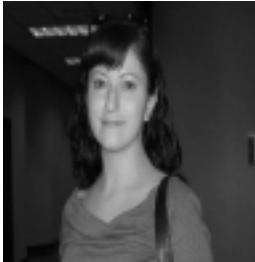
Ashlie Braswell, Webmaster to the Honors Program



Yvonne Garcia, a new addition to the Honors family, started working here at the Honors House through the Work study program near the end of Fall 2008. A non-taditional student with a long career on nursing, Yvonne is currently a Senior in Psychology, and getting ready to apply for the Masters of Social Work program here at VSU. She enjoys her work at the Honors House: "Everyone is very nice. I haven't met anyone I don't like. Working here is fun..." says Yvonne Garcia.

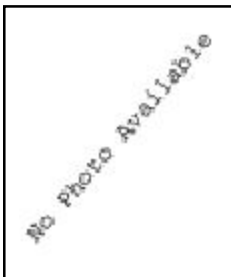
Spotlight On...

Welcome Our New Honors Professors!



Dr. Jennifer Breneiser, originally from New Mexico holds a Ph.D. degree from Washington University in Saint Louis. Her specialization is cognitive psychology, . The main focus in her research is prospective memory. She is also hoping to start work on some research that will blend cognitive psychology with education.

Says Dr. Breneiser about the Honors program, “I like teaching Honors courses because I am typically able to cover material in a bit more depth than in a ‘standard’ course. I [also] get to teach some very motivated, intelligent students who get enthusiastic about the material.” She states that she is “always willing to teach Honors courses” and would be glad to be involved in expanding the number of Honors psychology courses offered.



Dr. J. Michael Orenduff, originally from El Paso, Texas, received his M.A. in Philosophy from the University of New Mexico and his Ph.D. from Tulane University. He taught for about twelve years and then went into administration. He served as a college President at four institutions – The University of Maine at Farmington, The American University in Bulgaria New Mexico State University, and Bermuda College. He took early retirement in 2004. His wife, Dr. Lai Orenduff wanted to continue teaching, and she was hired here at VSU to teach art history. Meanwhile, he started a second career writing murder mysteries. His first one was published last month. Check

out his website at www.orenduff.org. He also published many scholarly papers in philosophy journals when he was a full-time faculty member. He says this about getting his current position at VSU, “Word got out that there was a new philosopher in town and the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies invited me to teach as an adjunct. Then the Honors program asked me to teach for them. I like to teach and it gives me a break from writing.” When asked about his experiences with the Honors courses he is teaching, he said, “I like Honors classes because they are small, the students are alert and interested...” He stated that he would be happy to teach any other Honors class if the opportunity was given to him again.



Dr. Brad Finson received his BFA and MFA in painting from Kansas State University. He also holds an MA in Art History and a Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma. Some past projects he has been involved with include digitizing cassette tapes of interviews with Kiowa elders that were recorded in the late 1970s. He has also done extensive research into color-symbol iconography in Cheyenne and Kiowa men's art during the nineteenth century. Presently, he is in the process of re-writing his dissertation (on the same subject) for publication and working with a number of faculty in the Anthropology, Sociology and Criminal Justice department on establishing a Native American Studies minor here at VSU. When asked about his experience with the Honors courses he is teaching he said, "What I think I like most about teaching the Honors course is the enthusiasm of the students... [who] are avidly applying themselves... and the smaller size of the class. This enables me to handle it more as a seminar versus a formal lecture." He also stated that he would be interested in teaching another Honors course in the future.

More Honors Students Studying Abroad!

Ofelia Nikolova, Director of the Honors Program



Last year Jake Newsome, a senior in History and Vice-President of the HSA packed his warmest clothes and set off to Marburg, Germany, for a thrilling Study abroad experience. Jake is still in Germany, and past his first semester now. He is having a wonderful time, making new friends, traveling the world, and in the process managing to make all As in his classes taught only in German! Jake is keeping in touch and we expect him to bring fresh ideas to HSA this coming fall. This year, history is repeating itself. There must be something in the water in the Honors House! Now, we are packing Jay Prosser's (HSA President 2008-09) suitcases and getting ready to send him off to Grenoble, France, for a year of intellectual and culinary feasting. The senior, majoring in French and History will be taking classes taught entirely in French, will do research, and promises not to forget to keep in touch with the Honors Program. The newly elected HSA President, junior in Physics, Matthew Schmidt doesn't want to stay behind. He is leaving for China on a shorter, but exciting Study Abroad trip with VSU Professor Louis Schmier this summer. Matthew looks forward to investigating medical practices in China that are not widely applied in the US. Several Honors students—Cory Hart and Jennifer St. Aubain, both Biology majors, among others—are signed up for the same trip. We may be missing information on quite a few of you getting ready to travel abroad this year. Write to us with your exciting stories. Bon voyage to all of you leaving soon for overseas in search of intellectual adventures!

Honors Recognition Ceremony 2009

Ashlie Braswell, Webmaster to the Honors Program



More than 50 Honors students, parents, family members and friends gathered along with Honors faculty and VSU administrators to show their appreciation for the top achievements of members of the VSU Honors Program this academic year. The event was hosted by Dr. Ofélia Nikolova, Director of the University Honors Program. Among the distinguished guests were President Emeritus Hugh C. Bailey and Mrs. Bailey, VSU's Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Provost Louis Levy, and the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences Connie Richards. President Patrick Schloss stopped by on his way from the "Take Back the Night" event and en route for another celebration during this most festive season for our campus. Dr. Levy addressed the audience congratulating the Honors students on their achievements and expressing appreciation for the inspiring work of Honors faculty. He

introduced Dr. Hugh C. Bailey, President of VSU from 1978-1991. Dr. Levy highlighted the distinguished career of President Bailey and his extraordinary contribution to the transformation of Valdosta State College into Valdosta State University and to the subsequent growth of the University. Dr. Bailey talked about his unforgettable time at VSU and handed the Bailey Family scholarship awards to the four recipients: Craig Black, Brandi Foster, Chris Nish, and Matthew Schmidt.

Dr. Schloss urged the students to follow the "Bailey way" leaving a legacy for future generations. He stressed the highly symbolic and inspiring value of the scholarships awarded.

Twenty-six students were recognized for completing the requirements for the Honors Program and 24 collected the gold cords, which will be adorning them at the Graduation ceremony in a few days. Dr. Nikolova pointed out the pivotal role of the Honors certificate and expressed her hope that the students earning it will consider it a beginning, not an end in their academic career. She wished all of the graduating seniors success in their further endeavors and invited them to keep in touch with their Alma Mater and their Program.

This year the VSU Honors Program hosted the Georgia Collegiate Honors Council conference, a state-wide event that proved the vitality of our program and its role of esteemed partner in Honors education in the state of Georgia. More than 120 Honors students from 11 programs in Georgia attended the conference, according to Dr. Nikolova, current President of the GCHC. Twenty-six VSU Honors students presented 10 papers and 7 posters at the forum. Many of them also worked tirelessly to organize and advertize the event. A dozen of Honors students who did not present at the conference helped presenters and staff of the Honors Program to ensure the smooth sailing of the meeting. Drs. Hill, Bogyo and Johnson organized panel presentations and served as moderators at the event. Presenters and moderators



received certificates and coordinators and helpers were invited on stage. The GCHC was truly a collective endeavor! A few weeks ago the Council on Undergraduate Research held its symposium. Twenty Honors students who presented their research (2 papers and 8 posters) at this forum were applauded at the Recognition ceremony.

This year's election of Exemplary Honors Faculty of the Year brought in a record number of nominations, eight. The Honors students in Valdosta State showed their deep appreciation for the challenging, inspiring, and dedicated faculty who make the difference in their lives. The nominees – Dennis Bogyo, David Buehrer, Jim Hill, Donna Sewell, Michael Stoltzfuss, Cheri Tillman, Jeffrey Vasseur – all received a certificate and the winner - Michael Davey – a certificate and a gift card for Books-A-Million.

Honors Recognition Ceremony: Continued

Dr. Nikolova praised the dedication of Mrs. Jane Robinson, Senior Secretary of the Honors Program, thanked her on behalf of all students and faculty for her gracious way of juggling her many obligations at the Honors House and for going beyond and above of the call of duty, and presented her with a modest token of appreciation. Tobi Lovelace, Graduate Assistant, Lani Hollingsworth, Work Study, Ashlie Braswell, Student Assistant, and Yvonne Garcia, Work Study received applause from the audience and small gifts for their hard work for Honors.

On behalf of the Honors Program, Dr. Nikolova expressed her gratitude for the outstanding work of Mr. Jay Prosser, outgoing President of the Honors Student Association and presented him with two books on France, the country where Jay is headed this coming fall for a whole academic year of Study Abroad.

Jay, in turn, handed Mrs. Robinson and Dr. Nikolova a “serenity basket” each and thanked them for their patience and good humor in dealing with all things Honors. He then invited on stage the outgoing HSA officers for recognition. Finally, Matthew Schmidt, the newly elected President of HSA introduced the new officers to the audience. The recognition ceremony ended on a high note with refreshments served in the lobby of the UC. Old friends were greeted and new made and all departed in a good mood ready to tackle the last batch of papers, projects, and exams for the semester. We will see you all again in the fall!



Winner of the Bartram Award 2009: Chris Nish

Ashlie Braswell, Webmaster to the Honors Program

The Bartram Award is named for famed explorer and naturalist William Bartram and recognizes exceptional achievement. It is awarded each spring to a University Honors Program student who has demonstrated the skills of intellectual exploration, adventure, and achievement. Any student who wants to be considered for this award must be a sophomore or junior with a GPA 3.3 or higher who is currently enrolled in Honors classes or else has completed all Honors program requirements. This student must also demonstrate exceptional research, scholarly or creative activity in the course of a study. The winner of the Bartram award for the year 2009 is Christopher Nish. He will be recognized at the University Honors Dinner hosted by President Schloss on Thursday, May 7.

The title of Mr. Nish's paper is, “Creating an Information Video about the VSU Honors Program.” This was a project that was undertaken by Chris Nish as well as a group of other Honors students in an Honors Perspectives class taught by Dr. Cheri Tillman. Nish believes that this video will help in recruiting more students to join the Honors Program and is proud to be a part of something that will further boost our Program.