

THE HONORA

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Dr. Ofelia Nikolova

From the Director's Desk

Dr. Nikolova

Time has flown again so fast, it is hard to believe the semester is nearing its end. In this month of University-wide celebration of achievements, the Honors students have a lot to be proud of. We want to share our successes with all of you from the pages of this newsletter and from the podium of the University Center Theater. We will be presenting awards to our new certificate holders, to all graduating seniors, to the Bartram Award winner, Jake Newsome, to the Hugh C. Bailey

Scholarship recipients, Ashlie Braswell, Kristin Morrison, Jay Prosser, and Danielle Sheffield, to our Exemplary Honors Professor nominees, Michael Davey, Charles Johnson, Lai Orenduff, and Cheri Tillman, to the Exemplary Honors Professor winner Matthew Richard, and to many others at our Spring Honors Recognition Ceremony. Come and join us for an evening of celebration at the **UC Theater on Wednesday, April 16 at 7 p.m.**

At the Honors Program, we are family, we share our joys and sorrows, we support each other in difficult moments and we rejoice with each other in moments of great happiness. This spring brought two very joyful events to the Honors family. First, our Secretary, Mrs. Robinson welcomed in the world her second grandchild, little Rebekah Jewell, born on Valentine's Day! Just a few days ago, on April 5, our Graduate Assistant, Jorri Sanders married fiancé Julian Marchi and is graduating this May. (read the individual stories in the newsletter). We congratulate them both for these happy events in their lives!

This year we start a new feature in our newsletter. We would like you, the Honors students, to participate more and send us stories about your accomplishments. By publishing those stories, we will help you share them with our entire membership. Write to us soon at: ornikolova@valdosta.edu.

Recognition:

Dr. Ofelia Nikolova
Honors Program Director

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

Mrs. Jane Robinson
Program Secretary

Honors 2007-2008 **Executive Officers:**

President: Jessica Thomas
Vice President: Jake Newsome
Secretary: Elizabeth Barwick
Treasurer: Tim Malone

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An Update from the ACES *Autonomous Coalition of Exceptional Scholars*

-W. Jake Newsome, Vice President, HSA and Ashlie Braswell, Webmaster to the Honors Program-

It is hard to believe that it is already the end of the school year. But, whether we are prepared or not, this year is coming to a close, and man, has it been a busy one. The Honors Student Association (HSA, or ACES) has set the bar high this year in terms of involvement and productivity. We have redefined and strengthened our mission: While we are a core group of Valdosta State Honors Students which upholds the academic values embodied by the Honors Program, we are also the more socially active branch of the Program.

As ACES, this year we have continued with the tutoring partnership that was established with S.L. Mason Elementary School two years ago. This semester we also held a Clothing and School Supplies Drive to donate to the members of Blue Creek, a small Mayan village in southern Belize. When we found out that the cost of shipping the packages was way more than our budget could handle, our ACES stepped forward and suggested that we hold a bake sale. Many members baked, advertised, and worked the table and we raised just over \$100. This money, combined with the donations made by other individuals, made it possible for us to mail the packages, which contained books, paper, folders, pencils, clothes, and some fun supplies like bubbles, markers, and coloring books.

At the beginning of February (2/11/2008) the Honors Program held the third annual Chocolate Day. All day Honors students were invited to partake in delicious chocolaty goodness. Before the day was out, the goodies had been consumed. What a success. Pictures of this event are on the Honors Program's website. Another event that the Honors Program took part in was Visitation day. Many Honors students helped out as advocates of the Honors Program to the new, incoming freshman class. There were two dates for visitation at which the Honors Program was represented: 2/2/08 and 3/29/08. Thank you to all of the Honors students who participated.

Carly Floyd led the HSA in sponsoring a "Drowning Awareness Week" on campus during the first week of April. Carly and her fellow ACES placed posters around campus that gave little-known facts about water safety and promoted swimming lessons. The Drowning Awareness Week was also advertised in the Spectator. Thanks to Carly for sponsoring a worthy cause and helping to get HSA's name out on campus.

At this meeting, we also elected our new HSA officers; the 2008-2009 Executive Officers of the Honors Student Association are: Jay Prosser, President; Ray Barrett, Vice President; Tim Malone, Treasurer; and Laura Simmons, Secretary. Congratulations to the new officers. All have expressed the desire to further HSA's influence beyond our community, and to focus on getting better known here on campus. The officers have an important year ahead of them, especially since VSU will be hosting the annual GCHC conference in February 2009.

I, unfortunately will not be at VSU next year, and will miss working with such a great group of Honors Students. I would like to give a personal Thanks to all of the students who participated in HSA this year, and helped to make it an organization where students can come to help the community, share ideas, or to simply take a break from school life. I am proud of the work the ACES have done and only wish I could be here to witness its growth. But, it sounds like the HSA will be in good hands next year, and the future can only bring great things.

Honors Program Holds an Open House

Ashlie Braswell, Webmaster to the Honors Program

On Wednesday February 27, 2008 the Honors Program held an Open House. Many excellent students came to see how it would enhance their academic career at Valdosta State University. Many members of the program came to help answer any questions that were brought by the inquisitive minds of the prospective Honors students. The Honors Program would like to thank all of the curious students that came out to see what this program has to offer. Also, the program would like to give a big thank you to the current members that came to help out. Their names are as follows: Ashlie Braswell, Jake Newsome, Lani Hollingsworth, Brandi Foster, Lorraine Anderson, Chris Nish, Danielle Sheffield, Lynda Bernhardt. And yet again, thank you Ms. Robinson for shopping for supplies, setting up the refreshment table, and baking all of the delicious cookies that most of the participants enjoyed. We actually ran short of cookies and punch, because they were so delicious. Many special thanks go to Doel Parrilla who gave five out of the seven orientation sessions! Great job, Doel! Thank you also to Jorri Snaders for her preliminary work on the Open House. She sent out all the e-mails and corresponded with the interested students.



The Sufi Tradition Through the Music of Latif Bolat

-Jay Prosser-

On March 20th, 2008, Latif Bolat visited Valdosta State University. Mr. Bolat is a musician. He is a Sufi Mystic: a man that reaches the Beloved through music and song. He first spoke and played for our class that afternoon and explained some of his views on life and on society in general. His explanations of societal necessity and religious needs, specifically when coupled with socialism, in terms of ancient needs of humans and the responsibilities of not only the people themselves, but of the organizations that they represent and create. We also were able to sing along, or play along, with Mr. Bolat as he led us in some traditional songs in Turkish.

The concert later that night was an even more invigorating event. The songs were presented in a run-on fashion: songs of a certain theme were presented in twenty minute sets. The first theme was sorrow, the second was joy, and the last was sensuality. Mr. Bolat also asked that we refrain from clapping after each set. He said that he spent twenty minutes to create a mood and did not want the clapping to disrupt that mood. He also presented a slideshow of pictures from Turkey that featured mosques, windows of an ornate nature, and people enjoying their time in the country. The entire presentation was an extraordinary event that helped expose the attendees to a new tradition.

Georgia Collegiate Honors Council 2008

Ashlie Braswell, Webmaster to the Honors Program

On Friday, February 22, 2008, the annual meeting of the Georgia Collegiate Honors Council commenced and was hosted by Kennesaw State University. The theme to this meeting was “The Honors Challenge: Resisting, Negotiating, or Expanding Boundaries.” Dr. Paula C. Jackson, an associate professor of Biology at Kennesaw State University opened the event with a very stimulating talk entitled “Expanding Boundaries: The Human Side of Science.” After this talk, an ice cream sundae buffet was offered to the attendees of the conference. Saturday, February 23, 2008, a continental breakfast was served on the KSU campus. Afterwards, Dr. Akunmu



Adebayo, Executive director of the Institute for Global Initiatives at Kennesaw State, gave a thought-provoking key note speech entitled “Global Learning: Preparing our Students for a World without Boundaries.” Following Dr. Adebayo’s talk, students participated in sessions where they reported their personal research on various interesting topics. The presentation sessions were moderated by faculty of the participating schools. Lunch was provided to the participants by Kennesaw State University. Elections of new officers followed lunch. The new President of GCHC is Dr. Jeff Portnoy from Georgia Perimeter College and our Honors Director, Dr. Nikolova, was elected Faculty Vice-President of the organization. Once the business meeting adjourned, students and directors were invited to take part in a roundtable / business meeting. What could be done to improve Honors programs in general, this specific conference, and many other things were discussed. One more afternoon session of presentations of students’ work marked the finale of the conference. The participating schools were: University of West Georgia, Clayton State University, Gainesville State College, Augusta State University, Macon State University, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Georgia Perimeter College, Spellman College, Kennesaw State University, and Valdosta State University. Congratulations to our participants in the Conference: Debra Swearingen, W. Jake Newsome, Christina Huntley, Natalia Batista, Elizabeth Barwick, Jay Prosser, Keri Toggerson, Tristan Buie-Collard, Danielle Sheffield! The Honors Program is very proud of these participants and commends them for their efforts. Next year, Valdosta State will be hosting this event and we all look forward to the challenge!

Hugh C. Bailey Scholarship

This endowed scholarship was created by Dr. Hugh C. Bailey, President of Valdosta State University from 1978 to 2001, to support academic excellence and achievement in every academic discipline through participation in the University Honors Program. It was first awarded in 2006. There are, of course certain criteria in order for a student to be eligible for this scholarship. The student must be a full-time student admitted into the Honors program who has completed from 45 to 75 hours, 10 of which must be Honors classes. Also, the students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.6. Finally, the student must “exemplify the spirit of inquiry and service that characterizes the Honors Program.” The winners of this award for 2008 are Ashlie Braswell, Kristin Morrison, Jay Prosser, and Danielle Sheffield.

Ashlie Braswell is a sophomore nursing major who has recently been accepted into the School of Nursing at Valdosta State University. After receiving her undergraduate degree, she plans to attend medical school to receive an M.D. She plans on having a career in pediatric medicine.

Kristin Morrison is a sophomore psychology major with a minor in mathematics. She plans on attending graduate school to get her PhD. She is considering going into a field with quantitative psychology / psychometrics which focuses on the quantitative, research oriented commonalities relevant to most of the behavioral sciences and their applications in industry, education, and the health sciences.

Hugh C. Bailey Scholarship Continued

Jay Prosser is a junior with a dual History and French major and a minor in international studies. He plans on going for his PhD after he receives his undergraduate degree. He plans on teaching History at the university level some day. Along with being published in the field of history, he also aspires to be published in the field fiction.

Danielle Sheffield is a junior with a major in Communication Disorders. After completing her undergraduate degree in May 2009, she plans on attending graduate school and receiving a doctorate degree (AuD). She aspires to have a career in the field of audiology.

Bartram Award

The Bartram Award is named for famed explorer and naturalist William Bartram and recognized exceptional achievement. It is awarded each spring to a University Honors Program student who had 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 classed or else has completed all Honors program requirements. This student must also demonstrate exceptional research, scholarly or creative activity in a course of study. The winner of this award for 2008 was W. Jake Newsome.



His paper for the Bartram Award was 28 pages long and is titled: “Living the Good Life: Serious Games and their Impact on Mayan Identity”. The paper is the culmination of research, which included: preliminary research, one month in Blue Creek Village, Belize (during Summer 07), and subsequent research once he returned. It is considered an ethnography, which is an anthropological type of paper consisting of observations (interviews, etc) and interpretation of the data using social theories. His paper specifically, dealt with Mayan identity in today’s world. To help understand Mayan identity, he observed the Maya’s view of the “Good Life,” and how they strove to achieve this good life through what are known as “Serious Games” which refers to the “games” of life in which each human being is active player: survival, work, education, the pursuit of happiness. Their goal, their prize is the Good Life. So by watching what kind of games they played, one can see what the Maya valued and what motivated them; this is a deep insight into identity. His results found that there is an identity crisis (though they never used that term) among the different generations of Maya. The older generation was afraid that the Mayan identity was going to die out after they were gone. But, his research found that the Mayan identity was not dying out; it is just changing and adapting. In other words, the rules to the games were changing, and the players had to change their own games in order to reach their Good Life. So, the younger generation is actively creating a new Mayan identity that is adapted to a changing world.

That paper also won First Prize for the annual Georgia Consortium for International Studies Student Prize for Excellence in International Studies. “The GCIS is a collaborative partnership of seventeen Georgia institutions of higher education aimed at promoting intercultural understanding.” It is actually a faculty Consortium and only three students from across the state are recognized each year: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place prizes. This was the first time ever that someone from VSU won the award.

Jake is a history major with minors in International Studies, and German. He also plans on going to grad school where he plans on earning his Master’s and Doctoral degrees. Ultimately, he wants to become a college professor and teach American & German history.

Dr. Matthew Richard: The Winner of the Exemplary Honors Professor of the Year

Ashlie Braswell, Webmaster to the Honors Program

Dr. Matthew Richards is a New Englander and has been “curious since childhood and has spent a lifetime trying to formulate questions” that hold a certain significance to his own life. This, he says, “is harder than it sounds as we humans are so mystified by ‘structures’ that we often don’t know where to begin.” He studied zoology in college and then served as a Peace Corps volunteer in West Africa.

He has won this award 3 times. He says “It’s a nice feeling. I try to deliver meaningful information in my classes and I guess the award means that students feel that the course was indeed useful. The amazing thing about anthropology is that it works on many levels; one gains insight into the workings of the world and into the workings of the self. The impact of all this insight is truly profound.

Dr. Richard believes that Honors students are “fighters for clarity; they’re not satisfied with ‘pat answers’ or ‘canned information.’ They aren’t angry or scared of ideas that complicate their understanding of existence... They are great thinkers with boundless imaginations and tremendous work ethics...”

He feels that his students are also ambitious and they hate mediocrity. “They recognize quality efforts and take a mature approach to learning.” He also says that he and his students laugh a lot. “Wit is a surefire sign of intelligence!”

The Fourteenth Annual CUR Symposium

Ashlie Braswell, Webmaster to the Honors Program

The Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) Symposium is a wonderful tradition. The fourteenth annual CUR symposium is being held in the Bailey Science Center on Thursday April 11, 2008 from 6pm-8:15pm and Friday April 12, 2008 from 8am-4pm. The Honors program is proud to be represented by 4 posters and one paper. Jeff Harrell, Megan MacFarlane and Country Pritchard have submitted a poster entitled “The History of Thanksgiving.” Natalia Batista, Craig Black, Christina Douglas, and Brandi Foster have submitted a poster entitled “The History of Ice Cream.” Jessica Anderson, William Barrett, and Janan Minyard have submitted a poster entitled “The History of Chocolate.” Stephanie Briggs, Carly Floyd, Andrew Seliga, and Phillip Williams have worked on a poster entitled “The History of Coca-Cola: It’s the Real Thing.” These four posters are from students in Dr. Melanie Byrd’s class and are all being sponsored by Dr. Byrd and Dr. Ofelia Nikolova. Jay Prosser will be presenting a paper entitled “Sex and Stanza: Sexuality and the Poetry of Arthur Rimbaud.” Mr. Prosser’s faculty sponsors are Dr. Mary Block and Dr. Ofelia Nikolova.

Barbeque and HSA Meeting

Ashlie Braswell, Webmaster to the Honors Program

Thursday, April 3, 2008 the Honors Student Association held a barbeque prior to their monthly meeting. The turn out was extraordinary! The HSA would like to thank the Tillman family! The barbeque was the brain-child of Dr. Cheri Tillman. She and her family provided the grill that the delicious hamburgers and hot dogs were grilled on. Another big thanks to all of you who came and participated. After the tasty barbeque, the HSA meeting commenced where the main order of business was to elect new HAS officers for the 2008-2009 academic year. The election speeches of our candidates for officers at HSA were very inspired. They were all fervent to bring about more visibility of the Honors Program on campus. Each one of them stated their desire to roll their sleeves up for a fantastic state Honors conference that Valdosta State University is going to be hosting in February 2009. However, these new officers cannot do it alone. The Honors Program counts on all of its students to support the new officers and work for an event bigger than HSA and Honors Program, for more

Our Bride-Dr. Nikolova

On Saturday, April 5, our Graduate Assistant, Ms. Jorri Sanders tied the knot with fiancé Julian Marchi. This May Jorri will be graduating with a Master's degree in Speech Pathology and will be leaving us to take up a new job in Connecticut. We wish the happy couple all the best and we thank Jorri for her great work with the Honors Program. Keep in touch Mrs. Sanders-Marchi!



Honors Secretary Sets Example in Community Service-Dr. Nikolova

Few of the Honors students know where the Honors Secretary Mrs. Robinson spends her lunch break on Wednesdays. They are used to seeing her all the time at the Honors House and used to benefiting from her efficient work, her cheerful personality, and her tactful advice. Little do they know that every Wednesday, Mrs. Robinson spends one hour with Ms. Klimko's class of 3rd graders at S.L.Mason Elementary School, reading stories to the kids. She selects her readings from children's books by American and foreign authors and through her readings educates her young audience about the world. Says Mrs. Robinson: "I really love the children and enjoy reading to them. It is fun to pick books that I think they would be interested in and that I find interesting. I love to travel outside the United States and have found that the children love the books I chose which involve different countries and cultures. I try to show some personal photo of a place I have visited that pertains to the story. It is good for the children to know about other places in the world. I brought them a world map and they have great fun looking on the map to see where the story is from". What a great example in community service for all of us!



The Youngest Member of the Honors Family-Dr. Nikolova

On February 14, our Secretary Mrs. Robinson welcomed in the world her second grandchild, Rebekah Jewell Colson, sister of Grady. Rebekah is a precious little girl and we wish our Valentine's baby a healthy, happy, and fulfilling life. So far, she has shown excellent taste: She seems to like the Honors Program and we hope that she will join our ranks when she grows up.



The Honors Program Sends One of its Brightest Stars to Germany

Jake Newsome, the current HSA Vice president, plans on going through ISEP – International Student Exchange Program – to Philipps-Universität Marburg, located in Marburg, Germany for the entire 2008/2009 Academic Year. We are going to miss you, Jake. Your dedication and hard work did not go unnoticed. Your positive attitude and bright smile always made the Honors House so much more inviting! We wish you the best of luck in Germany.



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***Honors Program -
Dedication To Distinction***

Announcements

Come see youe fellow students' research being presented in the CUR Symposium!

Don't Forget to Register - Check Your E-Mail for Class Seats Available!

Come By and Take a Look at the Honors House Seasonal Decorations!

Don't forget about the Recognition Ceremony!