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Honorable Mentions

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Fall 12-16-2012

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Recommended Citation

Honors College, "Honorable Mentions: A publication of PSU Honors College" (2012). *Honorable Mentions*. 7.
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Honorable Mentions

A Publication of the PSU Honors College
Public Relations Committee

A Word From The Director

Greetings!!!

It is simply unbelievable that the fall semester is already coming to a close!! In my 28 years of teaching, I think this has been the fastest a term has ever gone by. However, even with the fast pace, the students in the Honors College have achieved great thing this fall and I hope you will enjoy reading this issue of the newsletter and learning about their activities.



One of our focuses this year in the Honors College is an emphasis on Undergraduate Research Opportunities. In just the first few months of the term, we had several students approach faculty about being part of their research team. This of course is very common in the sciences, but I am pleased to say that this has expanded to both English and Psychology as well. We will continue to foster an interest in our students to enhance their education through active research.

The Honors College Association continues to grow and expand in their projects. The community service, special events, and public relations committees continue to be active, and now we have added an alumni relations team who will be working to reconnect with alumni of the Honors College to work on a variety of special programs. If you have not yet received this mailing, please let me know so we can get the information out to you. Please know that the Honors College membership is working very diligently to provide a positive contribution to the PSU campus and the surrounding community. We take pride in our organization and we are working hard to do great things for the good of the area.

All my Best-

Dr. Craig Fuchs
Director of Honors College



The Power of Music

Dr. Craig Fuchs and Dr. Julie Allison sponsored a new interdisciplinary course for students of the Honors College during the fall semester. This course was called The Power of Music and combined the basics of musical knowledge with the discipline of psychology.

Sarah Base, sophomore biology major and student in the class, describes her learning experience as, "We learned that there are many types and varieties of music in the world. Everyone can use music to affect their emotions and their physical body."

Every class period was spent trying to define exactly what kind of power music has on society and on each individual person. The goal was for the students to explore the reasoning behind why music affects humans the way it does.

Dr. Allison describes her definition of the actual power of music, "To me, the power of music lies in the personal impact it can have on a person's mind and body. Music can inspire powerful emotions of all kinds. Music can serve as a means for individuals to express themselves individually or socially. Music can serve to validate the reality of a person's feelings and experiences. Music can inspire new ideas, enhance existing ideas, and sometimes may even serve to direct an individual to let go of 'old' ideas. Music has the power to unite people, although it can also sometimes serve to divide."

In class, students learned how to speak in musical terms and delved into the history of music. They composed and performed their own musical piece.

Dr. Fuchs explains exactly what techniques were used in the classroom so that students benefited most from Power of Music, "In the classroom the students were simply asked to have an open mind and give some deep thought to the various lectures presented. We tried to focus on class interaction and discussion as much as the students were willing to participate. Out of the classroom, there was of course the blood pressure assignment designed to have the students become self-aware of how different types of music affect them personally, the music history assignment designed to provide a historical context for the evolution of music, and the personal presentation assignment for each student to present, in musical terms, the music they like best and why."

There were also many speakers who helped bring the class to life; the classroom played host to guests such as an expert in neuroscience and music, a musical therapist, a lyricist and performer, and others who are experts in their fields. The mission of the class has been completed. Students have been filled with musical knowledge and have been able to relate it back to their own lives. Dr. Fuchs was able to sum it up, "Music can be a sort of therapy for the soul."

By: Ellen Wieberg



Peer Mentor Program

After a successful 2012 year the Peer Mentor program is getting ready to kick off 2013. Two years after helping start the peer mentor program Peer Mentor Coordinator Lakota Lee will be passing down the job to Lauren Simmons. Lee on her time as coordinator, "We saw quite a few changes this year in the peer mentor program. We had at least two mentors for each group of freshmen and instituted a budget for each of the groups. I hope everyone involved got a great experience this year and took advantage of the ability to get to know new people. That's probably what I love most about the program, the power it has to bring so many diverse people together and make them feel comfortable around each other. In the future I hope the program continues to grow and create structures that ensure our freshmen get the most out of their first experiences at PSU."

Simmons will take over and lead the new class of mentors which will consist of 25 of this year's 35 freshmen. Honors College Director Craig Fuchs really likes the program in the fact that the mentors are at the interview day and are able to make an early connection and once the mentees are on campus they have someone with a student perspective they can go to anytime.

Freshman Jayden Bowen enjoyed a couple elements of the program which he said were, "That it provided freshman with a couple of older students who had been there and done that. It allowed me personally to network and get to know older students."

By: Austin Masters



Member Spotlight- Lara Ismert

Lara Ismert, an Honors College senior in Math and English, got involved in undergraduate research as part of one of her departmental honors classes as a junior. She was the first student to take Dr. Childers' Discrete Structures course for honors so Dr. Childers wanted to see if they could do research to fulfill the departmental honors requirement. Ismert's research ranges from constructions with a "rusty compass" to an attempt to prove an inequality of all acute triangles which was proposed in an MAA (Mathematical Association of America) monthly article.

According to Ismert, "The math is college and sometimes high school level, but the skills needed to work a research problem aren't what make problems difficult - it's the problem solving techniques required to understand how to attack a research problem."



Ismert, with the assistance of Dr. Childers, does the research and writes a paper on each problem. She has given presentations at conferences such as the Missouri Arkansas Kansas Oklahoma Conference on Mathematics in Springfield, MO and the Nebraska Conference for Undergraduate Women in Math in Lincoln, NE. Ismert is currently applying for competitive PhD programs and on top of her nearly flawless GPA, great letters of recommendation, and solid GRE scores this undergraduate research will distinguish her from other qualified students also applying for PhD programs. This experience that she has been able to obtain as an Honors College member at Pittsburg State University may also increase her chances of increased funding for working as a graduate assistant or research assistant in graduate school.

By: Mary Lipp



HCA Officers Travel To Boston For Conference

Dr. Fuchs and the four HCA officers took a trip to Boston in November. They were there for the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference, an event that brings together representatives from a variety of colleges all over the country from schools of all sizes. The officers attended many sessions about a variety of topics. A few of these were about Honors Advocates, Honors College Newsletters, and Alumni Engagement. While they were learning things from other programs, our officers also took this time to look at things that our Honors College does well.

Jayson Williamson, HCA secretary, said, "While we always have room for improvement, it's hard not to be proud of all the things we do well in the PSU Honors College Association."

Vice president Jessica Wade agrees. "Although some of these schools are two or three times the size of our program, I feel like our program is just as strong, if not stronger."

By: Meagan Linn



HCA Reaching Out to Alumni

We are very excited about a new initiative this year in the HCA. This is an initiative that was created and organized by the student membership and we applaud their efforts to develop the program.

All alumni should have received a mailing at this point explaining the goals of the program and asking for involvement from those who might be interested in seeing the program succeed. If for any reason you have not yet received this mailing please email us at honors@pittstate.edu and we will send you the information.

The program is designed to reconnect with alumni by engaging them as mentors to current students who are seeking degrees in their profession, being willing to serve on panel discussions as desired by the membership, and to serve as a general resource for any interests the current students might have. We are also very interested in ideas the alumni might have in order to make this program valuable to all parties involved.

We hope many alums will respond back with their interest and ideas so we can work during the spring term to put some programming in place. We would also like to start an alumni section in the newsletter. If you would like to have a short entry about where you are and what you are doing, please send the information to honors@pittstate.edu. Please make sure you include your degree earned, graduation date, and maiden name if appropriate.

We sincerely hope we will get great response from this outreach and that many of you will email and let us know what you are doing!!!!

By: Dr. Craig Fuchs

Design By Katie Nance