The University Honors College at Oregon State University

President emeritus John Byrne discusses his vision for the UHC

Honors College: high quality, distinction, rigor, excellence, innovation, individual learning, pace-setter, agent-for-change—all are terms that apply to the Honors College.

The Honors College was created to provide learning at the highest level possible. It was created as a recognition of excellence in the learning process; a place where innovations to enhancing learning could be tested by the high-quality intellects of students and faculty. It was created to provide opportunities to stretch to the utmost the learning capacity of student and faculty. It is not an experiment, but a means to challenge the mind to exceptional levels. It represents the leading edge of learning opportunity for the entire university; a pace-setter; an agent for enhancing the learning process for all Oregon State students and faculty.

For many years Oregon State provided opportunities for the intellectually-challenged student through its “Honors Program.” The Program consisted of special seminars for freshman and sophomores of advanced academic abilities, seminars especially designed to cross disciplinary boundaries. For upper division students there were advanced sections of courses. The Program sponsored special lectures and seminars by accomplished professionals. It was a program of high quality. But many faculty and administrators recognized that in spite of the outstanding quality of the offerings of the Program, the Honors effort could be more.

In November of 1990 Ballot Measure 5 was passed by the voters of Oregon. This measure, a property-tax limitation measure, put a severe strain on the budgets of all state agencies, including Higher Education. A number of programs at all public institutions of higher education were vulnerable to elimination. Budget pressure together with the recognition the Honors Program was not everything it could be, resulted in the decision to eliminate the Program. Once gone, it was seriously missed. The overall quality of the undergraduate experience at OSU had been bruised, if not actually eroded.

Almost three years later, in 1993, the decision was made to bring back the Honors “effort” to Oregon State, not as a Program, but as a full-scale Honors College. Plans were developed and during the 1993-94 academic year the Board of Higher Education approved the establishment of an Honors College at Oregon State University. Joe Hendricks was selected to lead it, the College was developed, and the first students entered in Fall 1995. What it will now become is up to the students and faculty of today and tomorrow.

What it can become is virtually limitless. It can be a center for individual learning, drawing on the most advanced knowledge of how the human brain functions, how individuals learn—as individuals, in groups, in whatever combinations. It can provide models for learning beyond dis-
To promote a sense of UHC community, The Ecclesia has created “Student Profiles,” wherein a few UHC students will be featured each edition. For this issue, The Ecclesia staff has written a few words introducing ourselves...

Jessica Brown
I’m a second-year student majoring in Environmental Science with an option in Communications. I hope to get a teaching certificate and work towards improving public awareness about the environment. I am also learning Russian, and hope to study or work there some day. In my spare time I enjoy hiking, reading, acting, singing, playing piano, and my newest hobby- knitting socks!

Autumn Bryant
Though born in Wichita, Kansas, I grew up here, in the Willamette Valley. I love writing and literature. When not buried under a mountain of university texts, I dedicate my time to reading “real books,” Hurston, Faulkner, Leopold, and Thoreau (to name a few), and to creating my own literary art. I am a sophomore in Natural Resources and plan to receive an International Degree in Spanish. I hope to promote healthy management of the earth’s resources in both the U.S. and Latin America.

Bryce Payne
A native Oregonian, I am in my second year at Oregon State. As a child, I was very creative and artistic, desiring to become an architect or graphic artist. In later years, I discovered technology and my interests changed to communications. Today, I am pursuing a double degree in Business Administration and Computer Science and find myself continually pursuing new activities and organizations than time allows. My interests are many, from traveling to photography to simply good conversation. Above all, though, I miss my Crayolas!

Chris Petersen
I am a junior in History and more or less a Chomsky man. I spend most of my waking hours either reading or watching talk shows with my sleazy friends. Someday, I hope to hurl myself into the machinery of academia. For now, though, I'm satisfied with life as a Project Vote Smart volunteer, collector of John Coltrane CDs and all-around angry white male.

Kevin Stoller
I'm in my second year at OSU and am majoring in Physics; although I am attempting to find a way to keep a veritable plethora of interests from atrophying, most keenly by conniving to get another degree in history or some other liberal arts field. I have been involved in music (piano/trombone) for aeons and am an avid classical music fan. I also play chess, read voraciously, try (with little success) to write, and love to go backpacking and spend time away from cities in general, particularly when it doesn’t rain.

Eileen Wilbur
I was born in New York the third of five kids, and I moved to Eastern Washington (right next to the Hanford nuclear power plant) when I was seven. I have lived in Southern Oregon since I was ten. I love Oregon and can’t imagine living anywhere else. I am a sophomore in Pre-pharmacy with an interest in natural medicines and herbs. I love camping and hiking and being outdoors. I am a belly dancer, and I have the coolest dog named Sam. I have taken a total of 17 years of music lessons and have been a church organist since I was 13.

The Ecclesia
This publication is published on behalf of the OSU University Honors College by a student committee at Strand Hall 229, OSU, Corvallis, OR 97331.

This publication is designed to be a forum in which ideas and information can be freely exchanged. The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of either the OSU University Honors College or The Ecclesia staff. Signed contributions represent the opinions of the author. Unsigned inclusions are meant to be informational only, and should not be construed as the opinions of any particular party.

Submissions may be made to the Ecclesia Inbox in Strand Hall 229 on the OSU campus. Written submissions should be type-written, and preferably submitted on a 3.5" floppy disk with the source application and file name clearly noted on the disk. A hard copy should accompany all submissions on disk. Artistic submissions are also encouraged for the “Honorable Mentions” section. Please include necessary contact information if you would like your submissions returned.

Staff:
Jessica Brown
Autumn Bryant
Bryce Payne
Chris Petersen
Kevin Stoller
Eileen Wilbur

If you would be interested in being profiled in an upcoming issue, please contact the staff.
The Death of da Vinci

By Kevin Stoller

When it is dark and there are no clouds in the sky, I cannot help but marvel at the remote spaciousness of life and the universe in which it inhabits. A moment such as this is a nexus of time in which I can stand shoulder to shoulder with Plato, Lao Tzu, and Beethoven and share the same wondrous confusion that they must have felt. Then, I turn my eyes away from the window, back to my desk where a calculus solutions manual mockingly beckons me into its traps. How can anyone understand their place in the universe when the niches of society often seem to be such tight fits? From our earliest years, reassuring voices have whispered in our ears that we can do anything we want with our lives. These comforters later inform us that some paths have signs reading "abandon all hope ye who enter here" swinging above their gates. So we either agree to pursue a reasonable major in engineering or some other socially practical field, or we deal with the constant question, “So what are you going to do with that?” For some, this situation contains no doubts or questions; the pieces fall nicely into place. But even for these fortunate souls, I cannot help but feel that the sheer mass of human knowledge forces such extreme specialization that universities are just becoming advanced, high-tech trade schools. The Renaissance ideals of diversity and intellectual, symmetrical blossoming are more and more becoming incompatible with industry and career demands. It is rare to find a person of the current generation able to discuss fluently and curiously physics and philosophy. Perhaps a bright spectrum of knowledge is truly no longer realistic. Although this is sad, I can admit to its inevitability. The tragedy lies in the actuality that many find their diverse interests and skills stifled and smothered by the rigors of competitive college demands. Over four (or increasingly five) years promising minds are molded into pedantic robots, all the time knowing that what they are learning in college is probably already several years out of date. As the Baccalaureate core requirements (the last vestige of the Classical and Romantic ideals) continue to be curtailed and the major requirements expand, society seems to have forgotten that the greatest minds of the past were not blindly singular in their skills. Technology, science, politics, every academic field has been historically thrust forward by minds of greatness, not Knowers of Many Things. Modern students are criticized for their lack of creativity and initiative. Perhaps this is because we are no longer taught to think, we are taught to know.
Faculty Focus

University Honors College Professor

Lani Roberts, Department of Philosophy

By Jessica Brown

Lani Roberts is far more than the ordinary Oregon State University instructor. A self-described “aging 60’s counter-culture person” she has scaled the South Sister, plays softball and volleyball, knits her own socks, has raised two sons, is a published author, and even finds the time to teach.

As a senior instructor in the Philosophy Department, she strives to understand why human beings intentionally hurt each other and shares her insights with students in the classroom. Lani is also the Faculty Co-chair of the President’s Commission on Hate-Related Activities, making connections between philosophical theory and practice.

Last term, Lani taught PHL 205H Ethics for the University Honors College. It introduced students to ethical theory and its numerous applications in the modern world, while studying moral responsibility to the self, others, and the environment. Currently, she is teaching PHL 280H Ethics of Diversity in which she uses moral philosophy to examine discrimination and prejudice. Eventually, Lani would like to have an honors course on feminine/feminist ethics, but there are no definite plans yet.

Most students thoroughly enjoy her classes, because it is usually their first contact with ethics, and the numerous opportunities for open discussion are always interesting and thought-provoking.

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Calendar

2/8— Philosophy Department video, Jesus Christ, Movie Star, at LaSells Stewart Center, 8 p.m. Free.
2/9— Philosophy Dept. lecture, Jesus at 2000: A National Scholarly Symposium, LaSells Stewart Center, 8 p.m. Free to OSU students.
2/9— International Film Series, Search and Destroy, Gillfilin Auditorium, 7 & 9 p.m. $3.
2/10— Vietnamese New Year, MU Ballroom, 6 p.m.
2/10— St. Valentines Bazaar and Craft Fair at Oddfellows Hall, Noon to 5 p.m.
2/11— Fashion Show to benefit CARDV in the MU Ballroom. $1 donation accepted.
2/12— AN EVENING WITH THE PRESIDENT; Meet Dr. Paul Risser. A question/answer forum with our new OSU President in the MU Ballroom, 7 p.m. Free. (If you wish to help with this event, contact the UHC office at 737-6400.)
2/12— Chamber Music Concert at LaSells Stewart Center, 8 p.m. $8
2/14— Play: Love Letters at Milam Auditorium, 8 p.m. $3
2/16— Lecture/Video: The Sacred and the Profane at Walker Recital Hall. $1
2/17— Latin Night, MU International Forum, 6 p.m. ($)
2/17— International Film Series. Gillfilin Auditorium, 7 & 9 p.m. $3.
2/18— Expression of Ivy-Black Heritage Fashion Show in the MU Ballroom, 3-7 p.m. Free
2/19— Book signing by Jon Krakauer, author of Into the Wild., at LaSells Stewart Center, 7:30 p.m.
2/22— Poetry Reading by Philip Levine at LaSells Stewart Center, 7:30 p.m.

2/23— International Film Series: True Love at Gillfilin Auditorium, 7 & 9 p.m. $3
2/23— Concert at LaSells Stewart Center. Jean Paul Sevilla, pianist, 8 p.m. ($)
2/24— First annual UHC BRAIN BOWL ’96 in the MU Int’l Forum, 12-8 p.m. Join fellow UHC students in friendly competition as we host University of Oregon’s Clark Honors College and Portland State University’s Honors College students.
2/25— Chinese New Year in the MU Ballroom, 5 p.m.

If you would like additional information about upcoming events in the OSU/Corvallis community, visit this URL on the OSU Web: http://www.orst.edu/cu/atheve.htm