

## A Covenant More than a Contract: A Five-Year Development Plan

It started with a promise, a pledge by OSU to provide a learning environment that put excellence at its center and invited students to a new and innovative University Honors College where they might earn an Honors Baccalaureate degree—one of only a handful in the country. The students applied in droves, so many that only a scant portion could be admitted and still allow us to live up to the intent of our word of honor. The time was obviously right for OSU to offer another niche program aimed at a particular segment of the academic arena just as it had designed programs to meet the needs of many other sectors.

Bringing students to Oregon State University and to the University Honors College implies an important assurance to deliver the “goods.” Very quickly we realized that there was immense appeal not only within Oregon, but around the region and indeed, internationally. Students applied from dozens of other states and from countries abroad as word of the value of the University Honors College spread. Reassuringly, not only did Honors students hail from widely diverse locales, we also managed to attract multiple members of the same family, siblings, including two sets of twins, and even a son and his father who would have been students at the same time. With Honors serving as a beacon drawing top-quality students to campus, OSU must give surety that those students will receive the best we can offer. Doing so is no easy task but it will simultaneously raise the academic quality of the entire institution.

Innovative instruction and participatory learning communities are heavy responsibilities. OSU is intent on making good on guaranteeing they are available to those who join us in the quest and is dedicated to facilitating just as much success as is possible. Students themselves come prepared to put forth a maximum effort, now our job is to live up to their expectations. To do so, Honors have prepared a *Five-Year Strategic Development Plan*, at the invitation of President Tim White, and delivered it to the University Development Council as a fundraising request.

The goal is to secure private support in three successive phases with the bulk of the resources raised being passed through to students, in the form of scholarships, and to other academic units, in the form of enhanced reimbursement rates and assistance with new faculty initiatives. Honors is successful only to the extent that our students are successful and only to the extent that other academic units are able to provide dedicated faculty to meet their needs. As Honors realizes its goals, OSU benefits.

The objectives are simple enough: attract a larger percentage



*Photo by Caroline Wilkins*

*Oregon Governor, Ted Kulongoski, (President Tim White behind) greets UHC Dean Joe Hendricks, at the McCall Lecture co-sponsored by the UHC, CLA, and University Advancement.*

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of the best and brightest students; offer a curriculum that enhances the students' unique skills and talents; support faculty who promote innovative learning; provide the infrastructure necessary for these objectives. If we can do those few things, we will proffer as good an education as the very best public or private colleges and universities any place in the country.

*Phase I* seeks to raise funds to meet existing needs, as they have been identified by students and faculty. In the initial phases our objectives are simple: increase departmental incentives for providing Honors coursework, thus increasing the current quality; implement retention scholarships to support advanced-standing Honors students; and restore the position of Assistant Advisor. None of these objectives are "bricks and mortar" priorities that traditional fundraising maintains are palpable development drivers that donors find so attractive. In our view, however, they are vital as they provide a means of supporting students and passing along to

other academic units over ninety percent of whatever resources Honors receives through contributions from those who share our interest in promoting excellence.

*Phase II* will follow later and is designed as an enrichment agenda. The priorities include a series of recruitment scholarships intended to attract top-flight students who may be planning to leave the state; additional assistance to students with the costs associated with the senior thesis; scholarships for international study, and, finally, mentorship stipends to recognize OSU faculty for overseeing thesis projects. The entirety of the funds raised in *Phase II* will pass through to students, faculty or other academic units.

*Phase III* will ensure appropriate growth and expansion opportunities based on the 2007 Agenda: the charge is for Honors to expand by 20 percent by 2007-08. The priorities in *Phase III* are meant to meet that objective through direct student and coursework support and via additional staffing within Honors itself. Over three-

quarters of the resources obtained will be passed along in the same fashion as the previous two phases.

Some might describe the details of our *Five-Year Strategic Plan* as a set of fairly lofty goals. That is true, exactly as it should be. We aspire to excellence in our students and therefore must aspire to excellence in ourselves and in our operations. Only by continuing to explore ways to meet the needs of students and by recognizing that there are any number of worthy opportunities that might appeal to potential donors can we make good on our Honors Promise. We advise students they should come to Honors as a way to "train their brain." To make sure they do so, Honors must constantly monitor what it is able to provide, seek to expand its horizons and appeal to the generosity of those who believe in excellence. There are few other investments in intellectual capital that will pay as great a dividend.

*Alan Lane, Bryce Payne, Kathy Krajl, Margaret Walton, Denise Lach (facilitator), Tim White (President, OSU), Bill Bogley, Tom Wall, Diana Hancock, Aaron Escobar, John Byrne, Jane Siebler, Jon Hendricks.*



*UHC Board of Regents, Staff and OSU President.*



*Don Richards*



*Sandy Sanders*

## Honors First

Some jobs you simply have to love. Every day, I talk with alumni, parents, friends, supporters and well wishers about how amazing the UHC is and let them know the impact Honors has on OSU.

I believe people want to invest in programs that have merit, a future, and places where their gifts will make a profound difference for an organization about which they care deeply. This is perhaps the prime motivator for those who give. If you love OSU, are passionate about education, or simply recognize excellence, it is hard to imagine a wiser investment than a gift to the University Honors College.

- Students in Honors are drawn from across campus and represent virtually every college and major.
- Two years ago, Honors had over 10 times as many applicants as spots in the entering class.
- For the past several years the averages for incoming first-year students has been 3.96 (GPA) and the average SAT score has been 1340, placing students on a par with the very best colleges and universities in the country.

There is no finer steward of charitable dollars than Honors. Your gifts make a difference and benefit an area where passion is the norm. Opportunities include:

**Excellence Fund** helps underwrite senior theses—many students have significant expenses associated with research supplies, technical equipment and analyses.

**Eminent Professorship Fund** enables Honors to move past budgetary constraints to recognize outstanding faculty and, at the same time, offer more coursework for more students.

**Scholarship Fund** is an accumulating fund to enable Honors to attract students to campus and to keep the best and brightest in-state by providing help with tuition.

**Program Fund** is a chance to make sure those “special things” happen that make being a student a unique time in life.

My job is simple, to help grow the University Honors College. Regardless of your discipline, if you attended the Honors College, the former Honors Program, care about OSU, or simply want to support excellence...think **Honors First**.

*Please contact, Aaron Escobar (OSU, 1996), Development Director with the Oregon State University Foundation for additional information on a charitable contribution: (541) 737-9330 or Aaron.Escobar@oregonstate.edu*

## UHC Student Activities and Commencement, 2003

UHC student activities range from recurring to spur of the moment or brand new and Honors is committed to supporting extracurricular activities. During 2002-2003, traditional activities such as the Back-to-School BBQ and the Presidential Forum occurred as usual. UHC students hosted Tim White, OSU President, at the annual Presidential Forum in January. In a new location, the comfortable and intimate Journey Room of the Joyce Goudy Powell Leadership Center in the Memorial Union, President White spoke to students, faculty and staff at this open forum. Questions ranged from how he liked his new job, to what he saw as outcomes from the 2007 planning process. Winter term saw the time-honored Soup Kitchen and Canned Food Drive to benefit the OSU Food Drive. UHC students contributed more than \$100 toward this year's effort, including several wonderful soups offered for sale.

Spring Term's activities for the UHC include the Mom's Weekend Recital, the Women's Symposium, and the Raft Trip. Nearly 150 UHC students and their moms enjoyed a variety of acts from oboe, piano and guitar solos, to comedy skits, and poetry recitations at this year's Mom's Weekend celebration. The Recital includes a light lunch and fellowship between the two acts. New this spring was the addition of a Dean's Seminar to the Mom's Weekend festivities. Following the Recital, Mike Hogue, who founded Hogue Cellars, gave an inspirational talk about the ethics of being in business. After his talk, guests enjoyed a wine discussion and tasting.

Another Dean's Seminar provided more opportunities for UHC students and their friends to engage in intellectual and personal development. Dr. Tim Gleeson, OSU graduate and practicing physician, presented a seminar on medical school and practice. Over 30 students, both Honors and non-Honors, enjoyed the discussion with Dr. Gleeson. The lunch-time brown bag seminar was held in the McNary Hall main lounge. UHC student Matt Bremmer, Pre-Med major and officer in the Pre-Med Club, assisted with marketing, as well as hosting and introducing Dr. Gleeson at the morning and noon activities.

The Women's Symposium is another custom with a program and delicious desserts. This spring's event included presentations by UHC seniors, Emily Simpson and Anna Schrage. Both women presented their thesis research into issues around women in science and engineering at OSU. Participants shared in a chocolate dessert decadence—another beloved part of this UHC event.

UHC Trips Coordinator, Matt Bremmer, and his capable committee organized the highly regarded Memorial Weekend raft trip. About 30 UHC students and their friends enjoyed a float on the South Umpqua River. One of the standing aspects of this trip is the early morning camp-out at the Rec Center to reserve equipment. The inexpensive rafts are available first come first served, so the Trip Coordinator and helpers get up very early to secure rafts. The raft trip is not an easy activity to pull off—in addition to securing rafts, the committee must purchase food, arrange for transportation and shelter, and pray for good weather. It is always a lot of fun, Head Advisor Jane Siebler and her husband, enjoy being the supply wagon each year. It has become a tradition for Jane and Bill to take half the food to the rafters at the mid-point of their trip. After enjoying lunch on the banks of the Umpqua with the rafters, Jane and Bill exchange food for garbage and send the rafters off on the last leg of the float.

Although the Commencement Reception hosted by the UHC for graduating seniors and their families is a tradition, it is not just a student activity. This event is hosted by Honors for students, as a thank you for all their hard work during their time at OSU. The UHC staff enjoys providing this send-off to the graduating seniors each year on Commencement morning. A light brunch is provided, with plenty of time for reunions and pictures before students line up for the Commencement march. It is the UHC's way of saying thanks for being with us during your college years, congratulations on a job well done, and best wishes for continued success.

## Where In The World Is Honors?

Students in the University Honors College are encouraged to participate in a variety of curricular and extracurricular activities. One of the most popular is to travel internationally—to work, to do research, to study, or simply to have fun and see the world. In any given year, anywhere from 10 to 30+ Honors students can be found in any number of countries on nearly every continent.

How do they do it? How do these Honors students integrate an experience abroad into their schedules? The answers are as varied as the participants, but one reason Honors students participate so fully in work or study abroad is because OSU, OUS, and the UHC make it easy and smooth. Students are able to study, work, or conduct research abroad because systems are in place to allow scholarships to be applied, fellowships to be earned, thesis projects to be supported, and course credits earned to mesh well with an absence from campus. In addition, the UHC encourages students to participate in study abroad programs by allowing a portion of their elective credits to be fulfilled by credited study abroad. Thus, Honors students can make progress toward their Honors electives, while studying off-shore. With well-managed processes in place, Honors students eagerly anticipate their time out of the country.

Where in the world do Honors students go? When do they go? Currently, Honors students are in Spain, Ecuador, England, France, Denmark, Canada, and Australia. In the recent past, they have been in Jamaica, Africa, Germany, Russia, Rome, Finland, Argentina, Costa Rica, and Bermuda. UHC graduates are now working in Japan, serving in the military in Kuwait, and they have also recently served in the Peace Corps in Macedonia and Mauritania, as well as working as teachers in Indonesia.

Many Honors students have had experience traveling or studying abroad when they arrive at OSU. So, for these students, the expectation is to have more

international experience at the collegiate level. These students often choose when and where to go based on interest in improving language skills or access to certain courses. What courses can be taken, or what research can be undertaken, are critical considerations. Some students participate only during a summer, others determine a term or an entire year abroad is best. Fall and Spring terms are desirable because of the opportunities to travel for fun before and/or after the actual program. OSU and OUS offer various length programs, with varying



costs and credits. The choices are excellent and students enjoy the variety. There have even been UHC students who participated in multiple international experiences, often combining study abroad with internships, or doing a second year in a subsequent time period.

Jeremy Gregory, UHC third-year senior, has been in Ecuador all year. He chose Ecuador because he wanted to improve his Spanish by participating in a well-established exchange program with a resident director. He also knew people from his home-town who had grown up in Quito, so Ecuador seemed a natural choice. In addition to improving his Spanish, Jeremy, a Pre-Med student, has been able to study indigenous medical practices and assist a local physician. He has enjoyed getting to know the local citizens and is glad he was able to experience a home-stay. While on his study abroad, Jeremy traveled to

the Galapagos Islands, the Amazon basin, Andean Sierra, Peru, Bolivia and Panama, among other exotic locations. He describes the Canon del Colca in Peru as “a beautiful river gorge twice as deep as our own Grand Canyon...one of my most memorable sights.” The huge artisan market in La Paz was also memorable. He improved his Spanish, made new friends from all over the world, traveled to new places, and did it all “while having immense amounts of fun.”

UHC senior Matt Bremmer chose a different means to gain international exposure. Last summer, he participated in Medical Ministry International, a 2-week sojourn in Jamaica. He acted as second assist in surgery, participating in surgeries under the direction of a general surgeon and OB-GYN. He aided with a variety of procedures, including hernia surgery and hysterectomies. He scrubbed and helped the surgeons, side-by-side, from cutting to retracting to tying. Matt considers his desire to become a physician as a calling, and he describes his Jamaican experience as a chance to be part of “saving lives every day.” Unlike standard study abroad programs, Matt’s work in Jamaica earned no course credit, but the life experience gained with the physicians and surgeons was invaluable. It only served to confirm Matt’s decision to go to medical school.

Marcy Boschee has been studying science all year in Lancaster, England. Marcy has been able to travel through England and Europe, including London, York, Bath, Nottingham, Edinburgh, Rome, Venice, Florence, Vienna, Prague, Munich, Amsterdam and Paris. She has studied biology and physics, and has enjoyed living in dormitories with the “freshers,” (first-year students). Marcy chose this program in England because of a life-long fascination with British culture. She remembers watching BBC programming with her dad and wondering what England was like. In high school, she “devoured everything I could get my hands on that was

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*Study abroad... con't from page 4*

written by Jane Austen,” and took history and literature classes focused on British culture. She opted for Lancaster because it offered the science classes she needed. For Marcy, traveling abroad actually strengthened her ties to home. In her words, “it has made me appreciate those people who are back at home supporting me and helping me...it has also helped me to appreciate what I have in the OSU community and the resources available as an OSU student.” Her most memorable moment in England was when all six Americans in her hall decided to cook a traditional American Thanksgiving dinner for their friends. Everyone took turns in the kitchen, in between classes, and then “all 27 of us sat down to dinner...it was amazing to pull it off, and enjoyable for all of us.”

Sam Boush spent 2001-02 in Lyon, France. He chose Lyon because he wanted to participate in a year-long program of French study. He went to school for two or three days a week, and

then traveled. He visited Spain, England, Ireland, Holland, Germany, Denmark, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, France, the Czech Republic and other places—“but, the list is long enough.” He stayed in Youth Hostels, and estimates that out of the ten months he was there, he traveled for more than three months, total. Sam “fell in love with Lyon because of its beauty and charm,” and he appreciated the central European location, the public transportation, and the night life. He has many memorable experiences, but one that stands out is a pillow fight in a hotel in Menton, France, with “several of my friends from Oregon, after a day on the beach, and followed by hours of conversation.” It is clear that there are many aspects of a study abroad that are simply variations of the typical joys and frustrations of being a college student in any locale.

An article about the international opportunities of Honors students is much like Sam’s list of countries visited—long enough. So many students have so many interesting experiences that it is hard to stop

telling good stories. There is the story of Thom Young’s time as a kind of Park Ranger in Costa Rica; Lei Young’s experience with marine microbes in Bermuda; the time spent in African surgeries on the part of Amber Leis, Sarah Normandin and Charity Dean; John Wilson’s three-year study in Germany; Jerrod Peterson’s engineering internship with an auto manufacturer in Germany; Bory Kea’s research in Argentina, Kristy Drongesen’s teaching internship with middle school-aged children in Finland; Cristian Ion’s two years in Lyon where he received the key to the city from the Mayor, Julian Uselman and Brook Wegner teaching in the Japanese English Teaching (JET) program...the list is long enough!

UHC students are everywhere in the world—studying, researching, working, saving lives, and acting as ambassadors of good will for OSU, Honors, and the entire country. Their international experiences of all kinds enrich their lives and the lives of those they touch at home and abroad.

## Wireless Classroom, The Future of Education

The new McNary Electronic Classroom is not the bridge of the starship Enterprise, but one would be hard pressed to find differences. Adorned with sleek 18” flat-panel monitors, top-of-the-line desktop and notebook computers, the updated McNary Classroom is a futuristic educational resource.

Located in the University Honors College residence hall, McNary, the classroom literally brings high-tech resources to the students’ living room. As Joe Hendricks put it, “This facility blurs the lines between what are too often watertight compartments of a student’s life.”

Freshman Microbiology major and Honors student Jenny Moser agreed, “It’s nice having fancy computers just downstairs,” said Moser.

The new classroom has been in operation since the beginning of 2003 and has already been used for instruction. Instructors and students can easily take one of 21 notebook computers from the classroom’s storage unit and access the Internet on the room’s wireless

network. They can also attach a LCD projector to display presentations, written work or simply show a website on the Internet.

Students can also use the classroom in off-hours as well. Moser said, “I’ve used the computers in the classroom as well as held study groups.” She added, “I also like how you can study in the room, but it’s social enough that you can talk.”

The classroom’s lab hours are 7 p.m.-1 a.m. daily (except Tuesdays – the lab is only open 10 p.m.-1 a.m.). Staffed by McNary Resident Assistants, the space is available to any McNary resident and any Honors student for study groups, meetings or to use one of the eight desktop computers.

Funded by the University Technology Resource Fund, the McNary Electronic Classroom was a collaborative effort between the University Honors



College, University Housing and Dining Services and the Communication Media Center. “The collaboration between UHDS and the UHC is gratifying,” Hendricks said. “This classroom ensures that innovative opportunities are part of our thinking.”

McNary Residence Hall houses nearly 300 OSU students – a third of which

## Carole Ann Continues Her Journey

After eight years of teaching and advising, Carole Ann Crateau says adieu to the University Honors College and Oregon State University. She is retiring from her position as Honors writing instructor at the end of this academic year.

Crateau is not only an inspiring teacher, but is well-respected and loved by her students. "She's just great to be around. She is so fun and she makes you feel great to be around her. The classes I've taken from her have been among my favorites," says Tami Halleck a senior biology major.

Sophomore engineering major Christopher Sandmel agreed, "I really enjoyed taking Honors writing from Carole Ann. She created an environment where I felt comfortable interacting with other students."

Halleck added, "Her writing class really woke me and got me to think about the environment. Even my biology classes didn't do this."

Although she is ending this phase of her career, Crateau has worn many hats. Joe Hendricks, Dean of the University Honors College, said, "Carole Ann was part of Honors at its inception, joining the effort prior to the first cohort arriving in the Fall 1995." He added, "At the time Carole Ann



was serving as both Advisor and Writing Instructor – a Herculean task, to say the least."

While Crateau has had a lengthy history with OSU, she became involved later than most students. Crateau said, after her children grew up, she got a Bachelor's and Master's in English from OSU. She worked with the English department for a few years before joining Honors.

Crateau's intellectual journey is not ending with her retirement; she plans to teach part time. "I look forward to continued connection with the Honors College and with students and teaching occasional courses of interest," she said. Crateau will also maintain connection with the OSU's Spring Creek Project.

While continuing in academia, Crateau plans to retire to a writing life, "an amorphous goal but bound with numerous, specific projects, and expectations." Not all of retirement is devoted to "work" though, Crateau hopes to renew her love for biking, hiking, and enjoying her six school-aged grandchildren.

Crateau has some final thoughts for students: Breathe deeply, engage in lively conversation, ask good questions, seek the truth, write like your life depends on it, and live like others and this earth depend on you.

Crateau has left an indelible mark on her students and the Honors College, Hendricks said. "Carole Ann represents the core of what Honors is about."

### Discover the New UHC Website

The University Honors College has updated its website. Take a few minutes to log on and look at the changes. A few highlights include: a photo gallery, more class web pages, and an area for alumni to update the UHC with any news since graduation. Also, the new site boasts a slick new design created by current UHC student Bob

<http://oregonstate.edu/dept/honors/>



*OSU President Tim White, shares an evening with Honors students and others during the annual Presidential Forum sponsored by the University Honors College.*

## HOT Dollars in Honors

Just to allay your concerns immediately. We are not laundering ill-gotten gains in the University Honors College. But if things go our way, soon there will be a new stream of scholarship dollars flowing through Honors to some of our students.

HOT stands for Honors Opportunities in Technology, a proposal submitted by Honors to the National Science Foundation. It is a grant proposal with Bill Bogley as Principal Investigator, Joe Hendricks as co-Principal Investigator and a host of cooperating faculty in Engineering and in Science. If approved, the resulting grant will yield over \$400,000 and bring more than \$90,000 in annual scholarship funds to the UHC for four years running. The program is called Computer Science, Engineering, and Mathematics Scholarships, or CSEMS. CSEMS supports scholarships for academically talented, financially needy students majoring in computer science, engineering, or mathematics.

Financial hurdles play a significant role as parents and prospective students choose among institutions of higher learning. In addition to the relative merits involv-

ing academic programs, student life, location, and other considerations, choosing a college naturally involves practical consideration of affordability and the level of interest shown by an institution in the form of scholarship aid. These issues are of special importance to Honors as we compete with the nation's top institutions to recruit the very best students during a time when the vicissitudes of public finance are closing the gap in tuition costs between public and private institutions.

We are delighted to have the collaboration of the Office of Financial Aid, as well as faculty participation and administrative support from the College of Engineering and the College of Science. HOT Scholars will receive financial support throughout their undergraduate careers and will join the enriched educational environment of Honors. HOT faculty, eight in all, will guide students to program internship and employment opportunities in industry and at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, Washington. HOT will also work closely with upper division students on career and postgraduate planning.

Our proposal focuses on the benefits derived from scholarship support to those students whose accomplishments and demonstrated talents mark them as the next generation of leaders in society and industry. Some may argue that this philosophy runs counter to current concerns about access to higher education for a broader slice of the potential student population. In response to this, Bogley reports that the HOT proposal was easy to write, a clear indication that its premise is sound. Honors has proposed using the HOT opportunity as a recruiting incentive among students from underrepresented geographical locations. Even if the NSF decision does not go our way, we are committed to creating additional scholarships for Honors students and will pursue other venues to do so. It is a simple matter to rhapsodize on the sparkling successes of Honors students and graduates. This tradition of student achievement is our best argument in seeking support for our students and programs. Honors is only as successful as our students.

## Words From the Past...

*We continue with our view of OSU's Honors Program (1965-1991)*

Rather than re-entering the issues that concerned us in those days, let me reminisce about our Honors touch-football teams. We had both a student team and a faculty team. They played each other – travel funds lacking – on a very warm October afternoon on the east side of the MU Quad. Needless to add, the students won.

This Honors team victory, incidentally, immediately preceded the varsity's series of upsets, the high point of which was the win over O.J. Simpson's Trojans. It probably is too much to claim a causal connection.

In any case, my best to the players, wherever they may be. And also to the spectator – I've forgotten her name.



Congratulations to Dean Hendricks and the Honors College faculty and staff on the remarkable job of reconstruction. I'll second Gary Tiedeman's comment that the "dreams of the past have become a reality."



*David King, Honors Program Director,  
1967- 1968*

## Mentors As Essential Guides

Honors students are required to complete a thesis as part of the Honors Baccalaureate. This thesis is notable in that it is not necessarily related to the student's academic major. The principal requirement is for original work done under the sponsorship of a faculty mentor and committee. Honors has instituted a series of workshops, help sessions and seminars to assist students, in addition to the one-credit Introduction to the Thesis (HC 403).

One critical part of the thesis, without which no Honors thesis could be accomplished, is the faculty committee. It is made-up of a mentor and two additional members. Two-thirds of the committee must be comprised of permanent OSU tenure-track faculty. The third member may be faculty or an outside expert such as a practicing physician, dentist or other medical professional. UHC students have had dentists, physicians, authors, school teachers, professional engineers, ministers, and other practitioners serve as the third expert.

The key relationship for the Honors thesis, however, is the mentor. The mentor is the person with whom the student works most closely. In fact, it is fair to say that without mentors, Honors students could not complete the project. Mentors serve as unpaid guides and cheerleaders, and their critical role is increasingly recognized by the UHC and OSU at large. If you realize that there are almost 100 UHC students completing degree requirements each year, and multiply that number by 3 committee members—that is 300 committee members per year. When you further realize that many UHC students begin their projects during their junior year, the number of faculty members involved is amazing. This commitment on the part of OSU faculty and professionals around the state is gratifying. Though they are not compensated in any financial way, their rewards are great. The following compilation of comments from a sampling of five mentors has been fashioned into a simulated conversational interview. Their views are representative of the kinds of experiences faculty and others continue to have with Honors students.

**INTERVIEWER:** We are fortunate to

have five OSU professors providing insights to working with UHC students on their theses. Prof. Gary Ferngren is in History; Prof. Marjorie Sandor is from English; Prof. Steve Giovannoni is in Microbiology, Prof. Janet Tate is in Physics, and Prof. Denise Lach is in Sociology and serves as Director of the Center for Water and Environmental Sustainability. Thanks to all for the time they spent sharing their thoughts on working with the UHC student theses.

*First, why do you mentor Honor students? What do you get out of it? What makes it worthwhile?*

**FERNGREN:** My Honors students are some of the most inquisitive students I have. It is a pleasure to work with them.

**TATE:** I find that Honors students are both bright and motivated—one without the other is seldom enough! I get the satisfaction of having helped a student along the path to success...if I've helped to shape people who value knowledge and education, then I've done my job.

**GIOVANNONI:** Honors students I have worked with have been interested in contributing something of quality to the society around them. Pride and motivation to achieve are shared within a good research group, so you could say their presence contributes to the spirit of the research endeavor.

**LACH:** I mentor Honors students because they're worth it—they're curious, smart, and hard workers—they consistently deliver. They ask great questions, they're not afraid to take chances, and I also like the range of projects they take on—they're not so stuck in the disciplinary questions that graduate students usually find.

**SANDOR:** It's university teaching at its finest. There's a marvelous sense of an exchange of knowledge not something being delivered from on high. I learn a great deal and I remember what it is I love about teaching.

**INTERVIEWER:** I can see why you are all excited about taking on what might seem like a huge time commitment and challenge. It is wonderful that faculty members find such satisfaction from working with these

students.

*Let's discuss undergraduate research in general. What do you think about it? Does it yield anything worthwhile? What benefits derive from it?*

**FERNGREN:** As a professor in the liberal arts, I seldom see the kind of original research that my colleagues in the sciences see their undergraduates produce. Honors theses do give students an opportunity to explore a subject in depth, to obtain comprehensive knowledge of an area, and they offer a challenging opportunity for first-hand research. All the students whose work I have supervised have expressed their opinion that it was one of the most worthwhile aspects of Honors.

**TATE:** There is no doubt the experience helps students, but does it help the research endeavor? I have had many experiences with REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) programs where I have mentored students but not really furthered my own research efforts. This is okay, but it limits the number of undergrads I can mentor. If they really make a contribution, then I can work with more of them. There is no doubt that this is time-consuming for the faculty, and the undergrad thesis component of our work is not really recognized. Many undergrads point to their research in my lab as pivotal in many ways. Some say they discovered the nuts and bolts of doing science and found they liked it. I think students have a much more realistic idea about how research works and what it means to be a scientist as a result of these experiences.

**GIOVANNONI:** I was heavily involved in research as an undergraduate and I benefited immensely from the experience. It's a real life experience in which you may need to solve a wide variety of problems to achieve a goal. I think the students benefit the most, but the really good students make meaningful contributions and are an asset to their research teams. A good research experience can draw out the best in a student and teach them the value of initiative and perseverance—invaluable qualities in the workplace. It's the job of the university to bring them there if at all possible.



**LACH:** In general, I don't expect anything new to emerge from undergraduate research, but have been surprised many times. I firmly believe that undergraduate research helps students prepare for making an informed choice about graduate school and professional lives. I believe that involving undergraduates in the research enterprise helps them understand more clearly how it is we know the things we claim to know. They become more discriminating readers and thinkers, learning to ask questions that challenge claims and evidence.

**SANDOR:** In the field of creative writing, "research" is an interesting term, as much of the research is an attempt on the student's part to dig more deeply into sources of knowledge hidden in the human heart, as William Faulkner might say. Certainly, if this is undertaken in a spirit of humility and passion for good writing, it can do nothing but good—not only for the student who risks it, but for the community around that student. Mentors, fellow students, professors—all of us benefit from the discoveries and insights young creative writers make when they bend to the rigorous discipline of the art.

**INTERVIEWER:** There seems to be no doubt that the process of undergraduate research and creative work is beneficial to many people—from the student to the faculty and then to society at large.

*Let's turn to something a bit more personal to your own UHC student projects. One of the reasons you were chosen for this*

*interview is because you have mentored several UHC students over the years. What was your most memorable UHC student thesis project?*

**FERNGREN:** Probably the most memorable was Jenny Druckenmiller's thesis on Serpent Symbolism in the Old Testament. Jenny worked for two years amassing an enormous amount of lore on serpents in the ancient near-eastern cultures. She investigated serpentine symbolism and iconography in a variety of societies in order to provide a backdrop to understanding the symbolism of serpents in the Bible.

**TATE:** Dara Easley's thesis this year was an example of a wonderful experience for me. I saw an uncertain young woman become a confident scientist. A person who wasn't at all certain she could program a computer quickly became my group's resident expert. Her work contributed to my research program—it will be part of a paper. And to top it all off, she gave two excellent oral presentations, including one at a scientific meeting. She'll give another at the regional meeting of the American Physical Society. It was an absolute joy to work with her.

**GIOVANNONI:** Lei Young and Jessina McGregor contributed a lot to the high throughput culturing project, which has become a very exciting and successful new area of research for us.

**LACH:** It would have to be one of the more unique projects. Last year, Ian Read participated in our undergraduate research

team on green buildings. He went on to write his thesis about a somewhat related topic, cob houses in western Oregon. As part of his project, Ian actually helped a builder in Corvallis build part of his new structure—the pictures of Ian in the mud up to his knees kneading straw into the mix were hilarious. I wasn't sure I would call it research, but with some work, we were able to get Ian other information for his project. By the time he was done, Ian had a multi-method research study to complement his feet-on experience.

**SANDOR:** One [project] that stands out was a short story collection by a chemical engineering major named Brandon Barret, who not only wrote a very fine handful of stories set in a failing logging town on the Oregon coast, but incorporated his science training into the actual defense of the thesis, by creating a poster for his oral presentation. I've never seen anything like it, before or since. Zen Buddhism, Chemistry and Literature, all figured. It gave us a lighthearted moment at the beginning of the thesis meeting, since it was such a novelty, but then Brandon really used it effectively to highlight the themes of his fiction.

**INTERVIEWER:** Thanks very much. Your willingness to spend time, with essentially no material rewards, helping students with this significant task is strong testimony for the outstanding teaching and mentoring that OSU faculty provide to undergraduates. Honors, its students, and its graduates are grateful to you.

## University Honors College — 2002-2003

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*HonorsLink*® is a publication of the Oregon State University Honors College

What do the following topics have in common?

- A book for family members and friends of closed head trauma victims: *Brain Injury and Its Effects on Families*
  - *The Utilization of Fly Ash and Silica Fume in Developing a Green Concrete*
  - A web-designed set of science lesson plans for K-12 teachers based on Plastics in Daily Life
  - *A Comparison of the Chemistry Departments at OSU & Ecole de Chimie Physique Electronique de Lyon, France Based on the French Paradox Hypothesis*
  - An original one act play, *The Colour Plaid*
- At first glance, they appear

pursuing an International Degree or a degree in Bioresource Research must also complete a thesis, so they combine their efforts and create one satisfying both requirements. A smattering of students in science and engineering want to challenge the “other side” of their brain, creating an artistic piece—a play, a novel, a set of short stories. Whether they work within their discipline or cross boundaries, the guiding principle is to identify a topic that works at different levels and holds significance for the student.

The research and writing process runs from a year to four years. During this time, the student identifies a mentor, two other committee members to provide additional guidance, and moves forward through the labyrinth of the scholarly enterprise. At some point,

a draft emerges, the committee responds and the rewriting begins. As the light at the end of the tunnel starts to shine, students stage for their presentation at the Thesis Poster Fair in late May,

their presentation/defense with their committee, and finally providing the bound copy of their thesis to the UHC.

Even in the midst of the final throes, several seniors offered insights into the value of the thesis. Misty McDowell, writing about families of brain trauma victims notes: “Writing on a topic so personal has been anything but easy, but I wouldn’t trade the experience for anything else.” She intends to become a physician and believes her project will enhance her interaction with patients.

Eric Mock found a challenge writing about polymers (plastics) for teachers, who typically have little background in chemical engineering:

“I have to think about what a teacher is looking for when they search for an activity for their class, and I also have to provide enough background that the teacher can understand it, and then turn around and teach it.” He notes that this process was unique as an undergraduate and will help prepare him to be a graduate teaching assistant.

Cristian Ion is earning an Honors and International Degree simultaneously; his work on the French Paradox provided “an unbelievable experience.” He learned first-hand “how to do library research, how to write a survey, how much work is involved in field research, how to organize and write a research paper, and how to defend it...the kind of tools that can only be learned by doing.” His research allowed him to work “one-on-one with top faculty members” and “sent him into a new culture,” allowing him to make long-lasting friendships in France. In spite of the work and the challenges, Cristian “would not trade this experience for anything else in the world.”

Matt Bremmer, a general science major, chose to write a play for his thesis. Though he has had some theatre background, this is his first time as a playwright. Through his pursuit of appropriate voices he has learned about “the craftsmanship of balancing character with plot and idea, while making it all stageable.” Demanding though it is, he says, “It has been a hell of a run. I’m grateful for having had the experience.”

While the bound copies of these projects grow each year on the UHC shelves, the challenges, connections with faculty mentors, and opportunities to expand their understanding bear testimony in the lives of our students. Those of us who work closely with the process, find the students’ enthusiasm for learning and discovery equally exciting—the ultimate academic feast.

miles apart in purpose and design. But here in the UHC, they represent an essential unifying experience for Honors students in the form of their senior thesis. Customarily, students start thinking about their topic as early as their first-year. Many explore possibilities while researching, interviewing, and writing for the Honors Writing course (HC 199). For some, this becomes a convenient launching point. Others find working in a lab gives them a foothold in research, and they develop their projects along the lines of the lab’s focus. Still others find that establishing a close, collaborative relationship with a faculty member also leads to their thesis. Students

## Honors Roll: Donors of Distinction 2002-2003

As the frontiers of learning expand at an ever greater rate, the challenge is clear: Make sure Honors students are on the leading edge, so they can make important contributions to knowledge, their communities, and the broader world. Thanks to our loyal donors, we are making inroads in maximizing opportunities for Honors students and they, in turn, enrich the lives of their peers and the campus in general. The future will be as bright as we make it and our donors make it brighter still. Honors is about preparing students to “jump into the deep end of the pool,” to be ready to start contributing and to provide service in its many guises when they leave Oregon State University. Donors help make the dream a reality; thank you donors.

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## UHC Alumna Stationed In Kuwait

By Stephanie Root

It was June 2001 at OSU and my Honors thesis was long since completed, the excitement lay ahead, though little did I realize it at the time. I was about to be commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Air Force. One of the coolest Air Force colonels (my dad, actually) pounded some gold bars on my shoulders, saluted and said, "Go to it, Lieutenant." Since then, I have been with the Air Force as a civil engineering officer. My orders read Cannon AFB, New Mexico and off I went, past more dairy cows than I could count. I spent my first year and a half in the Air Force in this high desert country of New Mexico, enjoying as many tourist attractions as time and my duties allowed. I have roamed through the cathedral that is Carlsbad Cavern, managed to avoid being abducted in Roswell, and chugged over a mountain pass on a Santa Fe narrow gauge train. On base, I honed my peacetime skills and trained for war time duties. I learned to juggle paperwork, cut through red tape, construct a building, blow one apart, put out a jet fuel fire, and iron a uniform in less than ten minutes.



In late 2002 I traded the desert of New Mexico for the desert of Kuwait. I have been here several months and I am keeping my fingers crossed to go home about the time you read this. Spending all the holidays over here was interesting, but I am ready to go home and celebrate with my family. Santa did drop into our desert base, however, repelling out of a helicopter with a sack of goodies on his back. New times mean new modes of travel.

As engineers in the Air Force, my unit was charged with readying the base for war and then sustaining and fixing it during conflict. I hit the ground here in the fall, in the midst of a massive buildup. We doubled the base's ramp space, increased fuel storage capacity four times, increased bomb storage space by eight, built new dormitories and dining facilities, and bedded down 6,000 additional personnel. I have worked with troops in the U.S. Air Force, Army, Marines, Navy, and the Kuwaiti and British Air Force. I have helped lay out airfield markings in a sand storm, built additional billeting in 110 degrees, and planned how to manage \$31 million in construction projects.

During the war, I served in a command and control position to oversee damage control for the base. We spent most of our time in and out of our full chemical gear and sleep was something of a distant memory. Thanks to the Iraqi's bad aim and our Patriot missiles, we were never hit. Our Survival Recovery Center then turned into a Deployment Control Center as we shipped engineers, logisticians, and maintainers up to forward operating positions. They are doing well and working hard getting set up for continued operations.

It has been a learning experience to be stationed in Kuwait during combat. I was well-prepared when I arrived and I'll return home even better prepared. Everyone has worked tirelessly to ensure successful, safe missions. I am honored to be a small part of this effort. I, along with our nation, will always honor the women and men who have given their lives in the pursuit of

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