The community of The Honors College at UAlbany is vibrant and growing and continues to strengthen the undergraduate academic environment at UAlbany by attracting increasing numbers of talented undergraduates. Through our honors courses, the involvement of many of our students in research, and our program of evening and weekend honors events, we offer a challenging and supportive academic and social environment to these talented undergraduates.

This year was the third year of our initial growth spurt. We ended the year with 297 students and added 12 graduates to our list of alumni (currently at 16). The academic performance of most of our students has been very high and almost all the honors professors report that teaching an honors course is challenging and rewarding. Most of the students have formed a sense of community within their graduating class through their residence-life experience and their coursework, and feel that they are part of an important new undertaking at UAlbany.

Everyone is aware that the past two years have presented significant budgetary challenges to the State University of New York and consequently to the University at Albany. These challenges will continue into the foreseeable future. During these difficulty times, the university administration has continued to provide the funding needed for The Honors College to pursue excellence.

Honors Students

Goals with our students include attracting top high school students to UAlbany, propelling students forward in their development as scholars, and creating a sense of community among the honors students and their professors. Propelling students forward has been accomplished through (a) a set of honors courses that introduce students to a wide range of disciplines and require them to think and write intensely, (b) involvement of students in research mentored by UAlbany professors, and (c) creating a set of educational activities outside the classroom. Creating a sense of community has been accomplished through a set of educational and social activities sponsored by The Honors College and by the many interactions among honors students as they live and work together. It is anticipated that we will continue to strive toward the goal of attracting increasing numbers of top applicants to UAlbany by achieving the other two goals and working with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions to inform high school students about what The Honors College and UAlbany have to offer them.

Admission of Honors Students

The plan for The Honors College, established when it was created, is to admit about 125 incoming freshmen each year and then add 25-35 students during their first year at UAlbany. Consequently, we aim to have about 150 students in each class by the end of their freshman year. The number of students admitted to The Honors College during the past four years has been:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Class of 2010</th>
<th>Class of 2011</th>
<th>Class of 2012</th>
<th>Class of 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>incoming freshmen</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>during first year</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>113</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Incoming Freshmen**

During the admissions processes for the Class of 2010 and the Class of 2011 (our first and second years), all students offered a Presidential Scholarship or a Frederick Douglass Scholarship were invited to join The Honors College. To join The Honors College, a student had only to respond in the affirmative to our invitation. Although this resulted in about 125 incoming freshmen in the Class of 2010, it resulted in a much higher number in the Class of 2011. Consequently, we created an application process for entering freshmen who wanted to join the Class of 2012. The application process resulted in fewer applicants than we anticipated, and consequently a smaller group of entering freshmen.

When it became clear that we were receiving fewer applications than expected for the Class of 2012, I held several discussions with honors freshmen and sophomores about our decision to require all entering freshmen to complete an application to join The Honors College. Many of these honors students suggested that they would not have applied to The Honors College if doing so required writing another essay and going through another application process. They described themselves as “burnt out” by the application process during their senior year, to the point where they would not have written one more essay to gain admission to The Honors College. Based on this feedback and our lower-than-desired number of honors students in the Class of 2012, we modified our admissions process again. In consultation with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, we created a two-tier process to admit incoming freshmen to the Class of 2013:

--The first tier comprised students who had been admitted to UAlbany and who had (a) a 90 cumulative GPA in their core academic subjects (math, science, language arts, foreign language, social studies), (b) no grade lower than a B in any core academic subject, and (c) a 1250 or higher on the language and mathematics parts of the SAT (or a comparable score on the ACT). These students were required to read the entry on my blog about striving for excellence and send a response about the areas in which they planned to strive for excellence in their first year of college to become a student in The Honors College.

--The second tier comprised all other students accepted to UAlbany. Any accepted student could apply to be a member of The Honors College. These students wrote an essay, and it and the student’s transcripts were evaluated by the honors admissions committee. About 65% of the applicants were accepted as students in The Honors College.

**First-year Students**

Any UAlbany freshman can apply to become a student in The Honors College at the end of his or her first or second semester. At the end of each semester, I send emails to all first-year students who achieved a 3.75 GPA that semester, encouraging them to read about The Honors College on our website and consider applying for admission.

After the Fall 2008 semester, 38 students applied to The Honors College; 29 were accepted and 24 of those students accepted our invitation to join The Honors College. After the Spring 2010 semester, 13 students applied; 11 were accepted and 9 of them accepted our invitation.

**Discussion and Directions for the Coming Year**

The admissions process we used with the incoming freshmen for the Class of 2013 yielded about the number of honors students we expected. Consequently, we will use the same basic procedure again next year with the Class of 2014. The process for admitting students during their first year also worked well and will be used again next year. In partnership with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, we will continue to monitor the admissions process and modify it as needed.
We will change some aspects of the admissions process for incoming freshmen next year. First, it will be done online. There was confusion among some students this year—they submitted some of the material needed for admission but not all of it. The web-based procedure next year will require them to submit all their material at once. Second, I will have the option of returning unacceptable blog responses. We received about a half-dozen responses that I would have liked to return this year. Students who have their response returned will have another opportunity to send in an acceptable response.

Retaining Honors Students at UAlbany and in The Honors College

In many of my messages to the honors students, particularly during their first year, I emphasize that one of my most important tasks, and an important task of many others on campus, is to help each of them excel academically. We work to give our students the information, support, and encouragement that they need to excel through presentations by professors, advisors, advanced honors students, and the Honors Librarian; through information from our website and the many emails I send the students; and through individual meetings that others and I have with students. Many students use some or many forms of the assistance available to them; some use none of them.

Because of the high number of students dropped from The Honors College for poor grades last year, I instituted a round of meetings with all incoming honors freshmen in the Class of 2012, early in the fall semester, focused on understanding the differences between academic expectations at the university and high-school levels and promoting good study habits. In addition, we had several meetings at which second-year students described to first-year students strategies for excelling in specific disciplines and courses. There was a noticeable decline in the percentage of first-year students dropped from The Honors College from last year to this year.

Retention Rates

There are no national data on the retention and graduation rates of students in honors colleges or honors programs. However, information that I have received from experienced honors Deans or Directors during national honors meetings suggests that the experience of the “typical” honors college or program is that about 50% of honors students leave their honors program or college (not their university) during the first two years and about 30% of the admitted students graduate from their honors college or program. Colleges or programs that tie scholarships to membership in their college or program report higher retention and graduation rates than those in which scholarships are not tied to being an honors student (being in The Honors College is not tied to receiving scholarships at UAlbany). Colleges or programs that require the completion of a senior thesis report lower graduation rates than those without this requirement (a senior honors thesis is required to graduate from The Honors College at UAlbany).

Of the 10 students admitted to the Class of 2008, four graduated from The Honors College (and with honors in their majors), one did not have the senior thesis accepted by the major department, three withdrew from The Honors College before their senior year, and two extended their time at UAlbany to five years and remain in The Honors College.

Of the 25 students admitted to the Class of 2009, 7 graduated from The Honors College. In addition, one student initially admitted to the Class of 2008 graduated in 2009 and two students admitted to the Class of 2010 graduated a year early in 2009.

The following table shows the number of students who were admitted (either as incoming freshmen or as first-year students) to The Honors College beginning with our first regular incoming class (admitted in September 2006) and who graduated from, remain in, or have left The Honors College.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Class of 2010</th>
<th>Class of 2011</th>
<th>Class of 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number admitted</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remain in The Honors College</td>
<td>69 (44%)</td>
<td>101 (50%)</td>
<td>94 (83%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntarily withdrew</td>
<td>59 (37%)</td>
<td>55 (27%)</td>
<td>6 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were dropped for grades</td>
<td>19 (12%)</td>
<td>41 (20%)</td>
<td>5 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left UAlbany</td>
<td>10 (6%)</td>
<td>5 (3%)</td>
<td>8 (7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Voluntary Withdrawal from The Honors College**

Students withdrew voluntarily for a range of reasons. Once they entered The Honors College, some students found that the honors experience as we created it was not for them.

- Some found that the requirements for graduating from The Honors College impeded their education plan. For example, students who wanted to focus on a narrow range of courses found that having to take six honors courses impeded this goal. Others found that taking honors courses interfered with their plans to take the required number of courses in their major and/or minor if they planned on a double major or a double minor.
- Some students saw little advantage to engaging in original research in their discipline and so believed that writing an honors thesis would not be useful.
- Some students were frustrated because the general education requirements that they needed to complete could not be met through an honors course that fit into their schedule and that they wanted to take. This issue arose more frequently with students who had completed several of their general education requirements through AP credits earned in high school.
- A few students report early during their first semester that their honors courses are too difficult and withdraw from The Honors College.

**Dropping Students Through Administrative Action**

For the past three years, to remain in The Honors College, honors students must achieve a 3.0 GPA during the first semester of their first year. Each subsequent semester they must achieve a 3.25 (these requirements will change next year; the changes are detailed in a subsequent section). Students who do not meet the GPA requirements in a particular semester can remain in The Honors College if they meet with me and we develop an academic workplan for the next semester. They are then put on probation and must meet the GPA requirements in all subsequent semesters. Students who do not meet the GPA requirements for a second semester are dropped from The Honors College through administrative action. Rather than meeting with me, some students who do not meet the GPA requirement in a particular semester choose to withdraw from The Honors College. Most students who are dropped through administrative action are dropped during their first or second year.

**Students Who Transfer to Another University**

Some entering freshmen at UAlbany have already been accepted to another university, but they must wait until their second year to begin at that university (for example, two honors students in the Class of 2012 were accepted at Cornell University but had to wait until their second year to start at Cornell). Many of these students who join The Honors College plan on remaining at UAlbany only one year and leave after their first year.

Other honors students who have transferred from UAlbany have reported that they looked for another university for a particular academic program or major (e.g., one honors student left last year for RPI for their photography program). Some students have reported that they are transferring to a college or university nearer their home. A few have reported that they are bothered by the large size of UAlbany or by the general rowdiness of the students.
Despite their reasons for transferring from UAlbany, our mostly high-achieving students are more likely than others to be successful in their attempts to transfer.

Discussion and Directions for the Coming Year

As noted above, students withdraw voluntarily from The Honors College for several reasons. Most of these relate to the specific values and requirements of The Honors College. Some students may not understand how these values and requirements will influence their academic and social choices until they begin taking courses and planning their future semesters. In my view, and I believe in the view of the Governing Board (based on the discussions that we have had on this issue), we should not change the values or requirements of The Honors College to reduce the number of students who withdraw voluntarily. However, I will continue to seek feedback from students withdrawing from The Honors College and if I notice new concerns among the withdrawing students, I will bring these to the Governing Board for discussion.

I am pleased with the small number of students we needed to drop because of grades this year. I will continue to meet with students early in their first semester to talk about college study strategies and will continue to encourage second-year students to mentor the first-year students. In 2009/10, we will institute a wide-ranging, year-long orientation program for the students, which will allow me and others to help keep the students’ focus on academic achievement throughout the year (this is described in more detail below).

Academic Performance of Honors Students

Various levels of the GPAs of the honors at the beginning of the 2009/10 academic year are listed in the tables below, along with the mean, standard deviation, and median for all the sophomores, juniors, and seniors. As can be seen, most of the continuing students achieved at a high level during the 2008/09 academic year. Notably, about half of them have a cumulative GPA of 3.8 or higher and almost 90% of them will begin next year with at least a 3.5 cumulative GPA. Among those with a 4.0 cumulative GPA, one will be a senior, four will be juniors, and nine will be sophomores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring 2009</th>
<th>Cumulative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>45 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 3.8</td>
<td>121 (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 3.5</td>
<td>212 (82%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mean</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>median</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A small number of students achieved at a level that was disappointing. The following table shows the percentage of continuing students who have low GPAs.

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1257 students counted, 13 were studying abroad this semester and so had no UAlbany GPA.
Scholarships Awards, and Acknowledgments

Sara Ganetis, a rising second-year honors student, received the prestigious Ernest F. Hollings Scholarship from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration this year. She joins one of our rising third-year students, Julita Patrosz, as a recipient of a nationally recognized undergraduate scholarship (Julita received the Barry Goldwater Scholarship last year).

Nine of our students received an Irving Harold Losee Scholarship this year. The Losee Scholarship provides partial funding for honors students involved in educational activities outside the classroom. The students were: Trisha Hahn (Political Science) for summer study in Egypt, Amanda Boyd (English) for summer study in Spain, Michael Lifvergren (Biology) for a semester abroad in Thailand, Fareed Haddad (Biology) for a community service trip to Ecuador, Audrey Tyszka (Social Welfare) for summer study in Egypt, Jeffrey Knaack (History) for summer study at the Johnson Presidential Library in Texas, Jacalyn Dillon (Psychology) for summer study in Egypt, Yessica Pinales (Business Administration) for winter study in China, Ann Weiner (Linguistics) for a semester abroad in Thailand, and Cynthia Mellen (Political Science) summer study in Italy.

Several of our students received a Presidential Leadership Award this year. Wadhah Al shugaa, George Bezama, and Lauren Nye received Great Dane Awards, which are given to students who demonstrate significant leadership in co-curricular activities. Katie Reed and Jamie Tedesco received Outstanding Senior Awards for contributing greatly to the University during the course of their undergraduate careers. Katie Reed also received the Ada Craig Walker Award as the graduating senior woman who "in the judgment of the faculty best typifies the ideals of the University." Whitney Sperrazza received The Distinguished Scholar-Leader Award, which honors one graduating senior who best exemplifies the scholar-leader-service ideal.

This year, I continued my practice of inviting all honors students with a 4.0 GPA the previous semester to my apartment for dinner. I held fourteen 4.0 dinners this year (about five students attend each dinner).

Each January and May, I send personalized congratulatory emails to all honors students receiving a GPA of 3.9 or higher (a Blue Star Award for all those between 3.9 and 4.0 and a Gold Star Award for those with a 4.0 (with an Oak Leaf Cluster for each semester the student has received a 4.0)).

Change in Academic Expectations

In April of this year, the Governing Board recommended that the academic expectations be raised from their current levels for all honors students, beginning with those entering during the 2010/11 academic year. The recommended new requirements are:

For students who enter The Honors College as incoming freshmen:

During their first semester, they must achieve at least a 3.25 GPA. At the end of their freshman year, they must achieve least a 3.30 cumulative GPA.

Each subsequent academic year, they must achieve at least a 3.5 GPA during that academic year.
For students who enter The Honors College at the beginning of their sophomore year:

They must achieve at least a 3.5 GPA each academic year.

A student whose GPA is one quarter point or less below the expected GPA may be granted a probationary semester by the Director of The Honors College, following a meeting between the student and the Director. Before this meeting, the student will submit a statement describing the issues that interfered with the student's academic achievement and a plan for overcoming those issues in future semesters. Students granted a probationary semester must meet the GPA requirement in each subsequent semester or year to remain in The Honors College.

A student whose GPA is more than one quarter of a point below the expected GPA may be granted a probationary semester by the Director of The Honors College if the Director concludes that issues largely outside the control of the student had a significant influence on the student's GPA (e.g., a prolonged illness, a death in the student's family). A student experiencing these issues must request a meeting with the Director to discuss them and the student's plan for academic success in the upcoming semesters. Students granted a probationary semester must meet the GPA requirement in each subsequent semester or year to remain in The Honors College.

This proposal will be submitted to the University Senate early in the 2009/10 academic year.

Discussion and Directions for the Coming Year

The information in the tables above do not include the GPAs of students who were dropped from The Honors College because of poor grades or those who withdrew voluntarily during the year. However, the grades of our continuing students are very strong. I continue to believe that concentrating our students in honors courses and honors housing contributes to their achievement by surrounding them with fellow students who are high achievers.

I believe strongly that the University as a whole, The Honors College, and I need to provide regular, public acknowledgment of our students whose academic achievements are very high. I will continue to look for opportunities to provide this acknowledgment for students in The Honors College.

The Governing Board spent considerable time exploring whether we should change the grade expectations for our students. The unanimous view of the Board members was that we should increase the expectations while acknowledging that some students may have a bad semester or year, many times for reasons outside their control, and that we should not drop these students without providing counseling, support, and an opportunity to improve their grades. The grade expectations match or are close to those of many other research universities of our size. As an honors college, we remain committed to providing the support and guidance needed by each of our students while recognizing that each honors student has the ultimate responsibility for his or her academic performance.

Honors Professors and Their Departments/Schools

Our goal has been to attract some of the best teaching scholars at UAlbany as professors in The Honors College and to facilitate their teaching intense, interesting honors courses. Each September, we distribute a call for proposals for honors courses for the next academic year. All tenured or tenure-track professors are eligible to submit proposals. The curriculum committee of The Honors College selects which proposals to accept.

Thirty-one proposals were received in October 2008. Of those, 30 were accepted as honors courses for the 2009/10 academic year.
**Professors’ Affiliations and Experiences**

During the 2008/09 academic year, 32 professors taught honors courses (a list of the honors courses is in Appendix 1). Honors professors came from the College of Arts & Sciences, School of Education, College of Computing and Information, Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy, and School of Criminal Justice. Honors professors were affiliated with the following departments or majors: Africana Studies, Anthropology, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Criminal Justice, East Asian Studies, Educational & Counseling Psychology, English, Geography & Planning, History, Journalism, Languages, Literatures & Cultures, Mathematics & Statistics, Music, Philosophy, Physics, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology. For a description of these courses, see: http://www.albany.edu/honorscollege/curriculum_2008-2009.shtml.

The professors who have spoken to me about their honors course have generally been positive about their experiences. Some stated that teaching an honors course was a qualitatively different experience from their other undergraduate teaching experiences at UAlbany. I continued to hear concerns from some honors professors that they had difficulty initiating discussions during their class sessions. However, this concern seemed to be expressed less frequently than it had been expressed the year before.

**Faculty Consultation and Assessment**

To ensure a continually improving curriculum for the honors students, I initiated the Faculty Consultation Program two years ago. In the current version of this program, which was optional this year, I attend a class session suggested by the professor, about half way through the semester. About 15 minutes before the end of the class session, the professor leaves the room and I talk with the students about their experiences in the course. I ask questions about the course material and the style of the professor’s teaching, and ask students to supply any other information that they believe would be helpful for the professor to know. I then meet with the professor several days later, and we have a conversation about my observations and the students’ comments. The goal of the program is to provide more extensive feedback to the professor than is typically provided by written student evaluations, and to provide this feedback in the middle of the semester so that the professor can adjust the course if deemed appropriate. Seven professors participated in the program this year and all said that the consultation was useful.

**Meals With Students**

For the third year, The Honors College provided funding for professors to have meals with their honors students in one of the residential dining rooms. Few professors have used this funding over the past two years, and only one did this year. This professor stated that the meals became an integral part of the course experience.

**Interactions with Departments, Schools, and Majors**

I try to visit a faculty meeting in each department once every three years. This year, I visited 10 departments, and so have visited almost all the departments either last year or this year. I gave a 15-minute presentation in which I described the development of The Honors College, encouraged the professors to consider teaching an honors course, and talked about the numbers of honors students in their departments/schools who would be looking for thesis advisors over the next few years. I distributed a pamphlet that we created last year, *An Invitation to Consider Teaching in The Honors College*, and lists of the intended or declared majors of the second-year and third-year honors students.

**Department Honors Programs**

This academic year, our first entering class of students were in their junior year - the year during which most of them needed to join their departmental honors program and find an advisor for their senior thesis. Consequently,
I initiated contact with department honors program directors more frequently this year than in the past. I sent each director a list of the juniors and seniors in his or her department/major, and also a list of all the declared and intended majors who are sophomores or freshmen. I encouraged the honors program directors to contact me if there were ways that I could facilitate effective interactions with their honors students.

**Discussion and Directions for the Coming Year**

I am pleased that honors professors came from so many departments/schools this year—a pattern that continues from last year. This suggests a continuing broad-based support for The Honors College across units at UAlbany and a broad-based interest by professors in participating in The Honors College.

The Faculty Collaboration Project (the new name for my mid-semester visit to honors courses) will become an expected part of each honors professor’s participation in The Honors College during the 2009/10 academic year. This will provide a broader opportunity for mid-semester feedback to the honors professors.

This summer, we again asked departments/schools to distribute *An Invitation to Consider Teaching in The Honors College* to all professors. I hope that this will increase the number of professors submitting proposals to teach an honors course. Several honors professors this year expressed an interest in teaching in The Honors College on a periodic or regular basis, and I have encouraged them to do this and encourage their colleagues to submit a proposal in the future.

In 2009/10, I will make a concerted effort to visit the departments/schools that I did not visit either this year or last year. In the future, I hope to visit each department/school every three years.

I plan to have ongoing contact with the directors of department honors programs over the year as our first large group of students moves toward graduation.

**The Honors Curriculum**

**Honors Courses**

I conceptualize honors courses as being taught in an overlapping two-year cycle (e.g., one cycle is 2006/07-2007/08, the next cycle is 2007/08-2008/09). Students are expected to take five or six honors courses during their first two years. Consequently, the goal is to have a wide range of courses during every overlapping two-year cycle. As seen in Appendix 2, we achieved the goal of offering courses from a wide range of disciplines and meeting most of the general education requirements during the most recent two-year cycle. Notably missing this past year were courses meeting the Oral Discourse requirement, although we have five courses that meet the Oral Discourse requirement scheduled for the 2009/10 academic year. We continue to have fewer courses in the Cultural and Historical Perspectives category of the General Education requirements than I would like.

At the end of each semester, all students are encouraged to complete an evaluation of their honors courses. These evaluations suggested that most students were satisfied with each of their honors courses. Most reported working somewhat more in their honors courses than in their other courses and that their honors courses required more intense thought than their other courses (see Appendix 3 for the evaluation form).

Each year, I ask honors students to identify professors who I should contact about teaching in The Honors College. Although only a few students respond to this request, I contact each of the recommended professors and encourage them to consider submitting a proposal to teach an honors course the following year.
Research

I have continued to encourage our students to become involved in research or faculty-directed creative work by the beginning of their junior year. Information about this process is on our website (http://www.albany.edu/honorscollege/research_opportunities.shtml and http://www.albany.edu/honorscollege/college_four_year_plan.shtml). In addition to my ongoing haranguing, we scheduled two types of evening events to help students understand undergraduate research involvement more clearly. One type of event included three programs led by professors who talked about the range of student research in their discipline and how best to get started in research in their area (see Appendix 3 for a list of all the honors events), one on research in public health, one on research in political science/public administration, and one on research in business. The second type of event included six evening programs led by graduating seniors, who described how they got started on their thesis research and some findings of their research.

Discussion and Directions for the Coming Year

I believe that the honors curriculum continues in good shape. We offer a wide range of courses and there is overall satisfaction with each course. I continue to hope that the positive experiences of professors teaching honors courses will lead them to teach honors courses in the future and recommend to their colleagues that they consider teaching an honors course. I will continue to visit department faculty meetings to describe the benefits of teaching in The Honors College. I will also send emails to all professors about the honors-course proposal process, once in the summer and then again early in the fall.

A significant concern this year was whether all of the junior honors students would be able to find advisors for their senior theses. I discussed this concern during my visits to faculty meetings and encouraged our juniors to contact me if they were having difficulty finding a research advisor. To date, all students seeking a thesis advisor have found one (whew!). Many departmental honors program directors have been very helpful to our students as they search for research advisors - meeting with the students to determine who might be best to approach as an advisor and facilitating the connections between students and advisors as needed.

A significant enhancement to our honors curriculum will occur during the 2009/10 academic year: a year-long, comprehensive orientation to university life for our incoming freshmen. This comprehensive orientation will include several components: special meetings with honors students and parents during the Summer Planning Conferences; a two-day special orientation in August (incoming honors students will move into their residence halls two days before other freshmen); a one-credit course during the fall semester focused on orienting the students to university life; and a one-credit course during the spring semester focused on orienting the students to undergraduate research. I hope that this orientation program will help our students academically, as they make the transition to the university, and socially, as they get to know their fellow honors students. I also hope that it will help connect the parents of the honors students to The Honors College and their children’s education.

Honors Events Outside the Classroom

First-year and second-year honors students who would like to be eligible for honors housing during future years are required to attend seven honors events each semester. This is based on the belief that if honors students want to be part of the honors residential community, they must be actively involved in the community. This year, we offered 45 honors events during the fall semester and 35 during the spring - an average of about 25 students attended each honors event. A list of the events is in Appendix 4. Most honors events are held in Steinmetz Hall, one of the honors residence halls. This provides an appropriately informal environment for the events and makes it easy for many honors students to attend them.
Several student-initiated events occurred again this year. Amanda Boyd and Melissa Trapani organized four open-mic nights (Florescent Expressions) where students performed music, poetry, and prose for each other. Kellie Helin and Ben Stern organized the Heart Walk and the Relay for Life for the honors students - two community fund-raising events. Vanessa Schrader, Karina Kelly, Roopa Bhopale, Lucy Place, Courtney Adrian, Kellie Helin, and Kylie Murray organized our third annual Dinner/Dance(lessons) in January (a dinner followed by ballroom dancing lessons).

Of particular note this year was our work with Duncan Cumming, a professor in the Department of Music. Professor Cumming contacted me as he was putting together a concert that included eight short piano pieces. He wanted each piece to be accompanied by a poem and a piece of visual art. He worked with two groups of honors students to create the poetry and the art. Each poet read his or her poem and then Professor Cumming played the piano piece. During the poem and the music, the piece of visual art was displayed overhead. The poets were Amanda Boyd, Glenn Caulfield, Kathleen Coonrod, Kathryn Dittmer, Savanna Evans, Amanda Faris, and Alicia Tambe. The artists were Cyndel Carreau, Kathleen Coonrod, Gabrielle Gates, Maggie Lovell, Kelly Murphy, Nyla Naim, and Aylee Nielsen.

We added a new type of honors event this year. Professors teaching an honors course during the next semester came to Steinmetz on two evenings and gave descriptions of their courses. These presentations allowed students to learn more about the honors courses they could take the subsequent semester and many students attended them.

I continue particularly to enjoy interactions with students in my Steinmetz Hall apartment. I had a series of dessert receptions for the first-year students early in the fall, so that I could begin the process of getting to know them. As noted earlier, each semester I have a series of “4.0 dinners” in my apartment for students who achieved a 4.0 the previous semester (four or five students at each dinner). I cook (which many students find amazing). During the fall semester, we had a “diner experience” with meatloaf, macaroni & cheese, cornbread, cole slaw and creamed spinach (which was not a hit - I just stopped making it after about five dinners). During the spring, it was jambalaya, corn bread, vegetables, and Key Lime pie.

This year I tried a new approach to allocating funding to social events. I allocated $750 to each graduating class and met with interested students in each class to determine how to spend the money. The strategy was not as effective as I had hoped. The third-year class did not settle on any social events, so none were planned for them. The second-year class decided to use their funding for a weekend at Dippikill. Only 15 students attended, but those who did had a great time (I was there for one of the two days). The first-year class decided to create honors college t-shirts for each member of their class. The t-shirts had “The Honors College” and “Class of 2012” on the front, and then “The Honors College” (or an equivalent) in several languages on the back, such as Mayan, binary, Morse Code, American Sign Language, and Pig Latin.

Discussion and Directions for the Coming Year

I believe that our honors events were very successful this year. We had a wide range of events, including some that were purely social. Most weeks, there were three or four events for the students to attend. The events gave students opportunities to learn, socialize with each other, and feel a part of the honors community.

I plan to continue a similar lineup of events for the students next year. Although I do not plan to allocate social funding for each class, as I did last year, I do plan to create an honors college t-shirt for the students in the Class of 2013. I have noticed many second-year honors students wearing the honors t-shirt they received last year - and doing so helps with our visibility on campus.
Residential Life

One of the decisions made as The Honors College was being established was to specify one or more residence halls as honors housing. This wise decision has contributed dramatically to the overall success of The Honors College. Administrators and staff members in the Residential Life Program have been very supportive of The Honors College during our first three years.

Honors housing was in four locations this year. Freshmen and sophomores had the option of living in two adjoining buildings on State Quad: Melville Hall and Steinmetz Hall (I live in a faculty apartment in Steinmetz Hall). Juniors and seniors were eligible to live on Empire Commons, in buildings reserved for honors students, or on a particular floor of one of the residence halls on Dutch Quad.

Only a small number of returning second-year students have chosen to remain in honors housing in Melville Hall next year. The dining room in State Quad will be closed for renovations during the entire year, and few students are interested in walking to the Campus Center or another Quad for meals.

I had fewer face-to-face interactions with third-year honors students this year than I had hoped. I scheduled a few events on Empire Commons, where most of the third-year honors students live, but attendance at them was sparse. I do stay in touch with honors students through email - mostly related to their honors work in their major. I have also met with several third-year students to discuss their thesis research. Third-year students do still wave at me on campus or smile and say hello if we see each other - but our group interactions have been reduced dramatically.

Discussion and Directions for the Coming Year

Honors housing continues to be an important component of the honors experience for our students.

I continue to live in a faculty apartment in Steinmetz Hall, where our first-year students live. I enjoy being near the students and many of them come by my apartment to talk about various issues during the year. My living in Steinmetz Hall also facilitates our many evening events, as I can easily be there to host them.

Although we will have few second-year students in Melville Hall next year, I hope that we will go back to having many there the year after next - once the State Quad dining room re-opens.

Other Issues and Activities

Honors Graduation Celebration

We held our second graduation celebration this year. Ten students participated. We asked each graduating senior to identify the high school teacher and college professor who had the greatest influence on his or her development as a scholar. With support from the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, we funded the travel of the high school teachers for a day of activities at UAlbany. The high school teachers and the graduating seniors had lunch with Robert Andrea (Director of Undergraduate Admissions), Greg Stevens (Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences), Sue Faerman (Vice Provost), and me. It was the first time that most of the teachers and students had seen each other in four years. After a tour of the campus, the graduating students, teachers, and some honors professors had a conversation about educating very bright students. It was very informative. That evening, we had a dinner for the students and their parents, the high school teachers and professors, and several university administrators. After dinner, the students introduced their guests and talked briefly about the influence that they had had on their lives. It was a terrific evening. Not only did we honor the graduates, but also their parents, high school teachers, and professors.
Web Development

With the help of the UAlbany marketing group (in particular, Brian Smith) we continued to expand our website: http://www.albany.edu/honorscollege. I continue to rely on the website to provide a significant amount of information to honors students about courses, research opportunities, and moving toward graduation.

Undergraduate Research Conference

In conjunction with the Provost, The Honors College held the 6th Annual Undergraduate Research Conference in April. Students from across UAlbany presented their research or creative work at this two-day event held during the Accepted Student Open House (Office of Undergraduate Admissions). This allowed potential students and their family members to see some of the research in which our undergraduates engage.

For the first time, the Provost conferred a Provost Award to three undergraduates and the professors who mentored their research (with a research stipend for the student and the professor) and an Honorable Mention Award to 13 additional undergraduates and their professors. These awards were presented during the Poster Session held during the first day of the Undergraduate Research Conference.

Many more students participated this year than last year. Efforts by the Provost and the Deans of the Schools and Colleges to get the word out to Department Chairs, professors, and students helped increase the number of student participants.

Development Office

I continue to work with staff members in the Division of University Development to create opportunities for giving to The Honors College. This year we received about $2,000 in gifts, about half what we received the previous years. All of the gifts came through the yearly letter about The Honors College that I send to the parents of our students and the professors who teach honors courses.

Discussion and Directions for the Coming Year

Graduation Celebration: We will need to reformat our graduation celebration beginning in the 2009/10 academic year - recognizing that 60-70 students will be involved (rather than the 5 and 10 students involved over the past two years). I will work with staff members in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and others to plan the celebration.

Web development: I will continue to add new pages to our website as appropriate. We will reformat our “students” page, posting 10-15 student profiles for each graduating class rather than the current strategy of posting a small amount of information about many students.

Undergraduate Research Conference: I anticipate that the Undergraduate Research Conference will use a similar format next year as it used this year. The ceremony at which the Provost Awards were presented was very well attended by students and their advisors. The poster sessions (held outside LC-31) attracted a large number of students and potential students/families who were at the Open House. The paper presentations worked very well. I will ask the Provost again to encourage the Deans to encourage participation by their undergraduates and professors.

Development office: The establishment of The Honors College provides a prime opportunity to increase giving to UAlbany. With a variety of current new programs, and many other programs on the drawing board awaiting needed funding, The Honors College offers a wide range of opportunities for giving. I plan to continue my work with the Division of University Development to take advantage of the opportunities that The Honors College presents.
## Appendix 1: Honors Courses Taught in 2008/09

### Fall 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights &amp; Wrongs: Anthropological Explorations</td>
<td>Professor Burrell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genomics &amp; Biotech: Broad-ranging Impact on Mankind</td>
<td>Professor Zitomer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honors Chemistry I</td>
<td>Professor Snyder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interacting with Organizations</td>
<td>Professor Golden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to Criminal Justice</td>
<td>Professor Worden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to Computer Science</td>
<td>Professor Berg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to English Studies</td>
<td>Professor Byrd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current Issues in Child Development</td>
<td>Professor Newman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women in Medieval France</td>
<td>Professor Winn</td>
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<tr>
<td>The World in the 20th Century</td>
<td>Professor Gauss</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to Documentary Studies</td>
<td>Professor Zahavi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual Culture</td>
<td>Professor Bass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honors Calculus I</td>
<td>Professor Tchernev</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honors Calculus II</td>
<td>Professor Milas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calculus of Several Variables</td>
<td>Professor Hammond</td>
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<tr>
<td>Modern Jazz: Bebop to Free Jazz and Beyond</td>
<td>Professor Gluck</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to Logic</td>
<td>Professor Armour-Garb</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honors Physics I</td>
<td>Professor Lanford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparative &amp; International Politics</td>
<td>Professor Asal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced Introduction to Psychology</td>
<td>Professor Rosellini</td>
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### Spring 2009

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Design of Language</td>
<td>Professor Broadwell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honors Chemistry II</td>
<td>Professor Snyder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to British Literature: Imagining Renaissance</td>
<td>Professor Murakami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the Psychological Processes of Schooling</td>
<td>Professor Andrade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reform and Resistance in Contemporary China</td>
<td>Professor Smith</td>
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<tr>
<td>Go-Getters &amp; Deadbeats: Success &amp; Failure in U.S. History</td>
<td>Professor Hochfelder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historical Fiction</td>
<td>Professor Berger, R.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trials in United States History</td>
<td>Professor Hamm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Africa in the Modern World</td>
<td>Professor Berger, I.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Mass Media and War in U.S. History</td>
<td>Professor Roberts</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Languages of North Africa</td>
<td>Professor Sayahi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honors Calculus II</td>
<td>Professor Milas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to Bioethics</td>
<td>Professor Steinbock</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to Ethical Theory</td>
<td>Professor Cohon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honors Physics II</td>
<td>Professor Lanford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Origins of The Modern World</td>
<td>Professor Lachmann</td>
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## Appendix 2: Distribution of Honors Courses and General Education Requirements

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts (3 credits)</td>
<td>MUS 115</td>
<td>EN G 102 LCS 216</td>
<td>JRL 220 LLC 275 MUS 214</td>
<td>MUS 105</td>
<td>JRL 220 MUS 223</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humanities (3 credits)</td>
<td>ENG 226 PHI 210 CAS 201 UNI 101</td>
<td>CLA 250 EAS 105 LCS 216</td>
<td>ANT 197 CLA 250 ENG 144</td>
<td>FRE 210 PHI 210</td>
<td>ENG 226 HIS 226 PHI 238 PHI 212</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences (6 credits)</td>
<td>CHM 130 ENV 175 PHY 141</td>
<td>CHM131 ENV 175 PHY 141</td>
<td>CHM 131 PHY 160 SPH 105</td>
<td>BIO 175 CHM 130 PHY 141</td>
<td>CHM 131 PHY 151</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences (6 credits)</td>
<td>POS 102 SOC 215</td>
<td>GOG 230 PSI 102 PUB 140</td>
<td>ANT 197 SPH 105 CRJ 201</td>
<td>ANT 141 CRJ 201 POS 102 PSI 102</td>
<td>GOG 230 SOC 215</td>
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<tr>
<td>US Historical (3 credits)</td>
<td>HIS 295</td>
<td></td>
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<td>HIS 199 HIS 292 JRL 230</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Europe (3 credits)</td>
<td>SOC 215</td>
<td>CLA 250</td>
<td>HIS 131 LLC 275</td>
<td>CLA 250</td>
<td>FRE 210 SOC 215</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regions Beyond Europe (3 credits)</td>
<td>LCS 100 EAS 105 LCS 203 LCS 216</td>
<td>GOG 230</td>
<td>JST 299</td>
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<td>GOG 230 HIS 287</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global &amp; Cross-cultural (3 credits)</td>
<td>POS 102 HIS 158</td>
<td></td>
<td>SPH 105</td>
<td>HIS 158 POS 102</td>
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<tr>
<td>US Diversity (3 credits)</td>
<td></td>
<td>ENG 240</td>
<td>SPE 260</td>
<td></td>
<td>HIS 199</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Literacy (1 course)</td>
<td></td>
<td>IST 250</td>
<td>WSS 281 ACC 200 POS 250</td>
<td>WSS 260 CSI 116</td>
<td>EPS 220 PHI 238</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Discourse (1 course)</td>
<td></td>
<td>LCS 203 IST 250</td>
<td>POS 250 PUB 140</td>
<td>ENG 144</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lower-division Writing (1 course)</td>
<td>ENG 226 HIS 295 SOC 215</td>
<td>ENG 102 LCS 216</td>
<td>HIS 131 ACC 200 POS 230 PUB 140</td>
<td>ANT 197 ENG 202 PHY 160 WSS 260</td>
<td>COM 250 HIS 215 ANT 125 JRL 230</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics &amp; Statistics (1 semester)</td>
<td>MAT 118 PHI 210</td>
<td>MAT 118</td>
<td>CSI 116</td>
<td>MAT 118 MAT 214 PHI 210</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3: Honors Course Evaluation Form

The faculty of The Honors College has an obligation to review each course taught in The Honors College. Your contribution to this process is providing a thoughtful evaluation for this honors course. Your thoughtful evaluation will help to ensure that courses taught in The Honors College continue to meet very high standards. This evaluation is anonymous. This form will be read by Professor Haugaard and then will be given to the course professor after the grades for the courses for this semester have been submitted. Thank you for your help with this evaluation.

Course title: Professor:

The first few questions ask about the challenging nature of this course. By challenging, we mean that the course made you think deeply and intensely.

1. Compared with the non-honors courses I took this semester, this honors course was (circle one number):
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   much less challenging much more challenging

2. Compared with the other honors courses I have taken at UAlbany, this honors course was (circle one number):
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   much less challenging much more challenging

3. Are there things that could have been done to make the course more challenging?

4. Compared with the non-honors courses I took this semester, this honors course required (circle one number):
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   much less time much more time

5. Compared with the other honors courses I have taken at UAlbany, this course required (circle one number):
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   much less time much more time

6. What were the strengths of this course?

7. Are there ways that the course could have been changed that would have made it better?

8. Comment on the strengths of the professor’s teaching style and strategies.

9. Are there ways that the professor’s style or strategies for teaching this course could have been strengthened?

10. If you wrote papers, gave oral presentations, or produced other material, comment on the feedback you received about them from the professor.

11. Do you have any other comments that would help in the evaluation of this course?
Appendix 4: Honors Activities 2008/09

Library

Order or Chaos: Tour and Explore the Library (5)
Find it Here or There: Library Catalog, Databases, Interlibrary Loan, and WorldCat (2)
Search and Rescue: Open Session With the Honors Librarian (2)
Help! Literature Reviews, Bibliographies, and Style Guides (4)
Focus on Library Tools: Databases (WorldCat, JSTOR, Scopus, LexisNexis) (3)
Tour the Science Library

The Arts

Annegret Baier Concert
Honors College Musicians
University Concert Band
Capital Collegiate Choral Festival
Flight: A play performed by Robert Spaulding
Holiday Concert
Bacchiocchi-Brown Duo
Reflections on Childhood
Bob Gluck Rehearsal
Bob Gluck: Music for Piano and Electronics
Two Piano Concert
University Jazz Ensemble
Capital Trio
The Sound of the Trumpets, the Roll of the Drums!
Honors Tour of the University Museum - Fall Exhibit, Spring Exhibit, MFA Exhibit
Florescent Expression V, VI, VII, and VIII

Student to Student

Second-year Students Helping First-year Students - Math and Physics
Second-year Students Helping First-year Students - Chemistry and Biology
Second-year Students Helping First-year Students - Political Science, Business, and Economics
Second-year Students Helping First-year Students - Psychology, Sociology, and other Social Sciences
Second-year Students Helping First-year Students - The Humanities
Mentoring by and for Honors Students
Honors Theses Presentation: Lana Bunning and Jamie Tedesco
Honors Theses Presentation: Joanna Smith & Leann Lu
Honors Theses Presentation: Lauren Nye
Honors Theses Presentation: John Conway
Honors Theses Presentation: Nasiratu Larry
Honors Theses Presentation: Whitney Sperazza
Deciding on Social Activities - First-year Class
Deciding on Social Activities - Second-year Class
Deciding on Social Activities - Third-year Class

Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of times an event was presented. All other events were presented once.
Honors Lectures

Professor Zitomer: After a Half Century of Biomedical Research Funding, Where Do We Stand?- A Geneticist's Perspective
Professor Berg: The Future of Digital Electronics
Professor Byrd: Coping with Information Overload
Professor Hildreth: Predicting the Outcome of the Presidential Election
Professor Newman: The Hurried Child: Cross-Cultural Perspectives
Professor Haugaard: Attachment Theory
Professor Armour-Garb: A Radical View of Semantic Paradoxes
Professor Gauss: Che Guevara: Revolutionary, Martyr, Pop Icon?
Professor Malbin: The 2008 Presidential election
Professor Golden: Information and Communication Technologies
Professor Rosellini: Hypnosis Mythbusters.
Professor Pyles: Community Engagement
Professor Hamm: Animal and Cannibal Trials: What Can Trials Tell us About the Past
Professor Haugaard: Sex with my Parent? The Theories of Sigmund Freud
Professor Roberts: War and Journalism
Professor Steinbock: Designer Babies: Choosing Our Children's Genes
Professors Iris and Ron Berger: Historians: Social Scientists or Story-tellers?
Professor Broadwell: Does your language determine your emotions?
Professor Andrade: Why Teachers Mustn't be the Sole Judges in the Classroom
Professor Sayahi: The Languages of Northern Africa.
Professor Lachmann: Death and the Times: Wartime Commemoration During the Vietnam and Iraq Wars.
Professor Murakami: Imaging the Renaissance

Advising

Research in the School of Public Health
Research in the School of Business
Research in Political Science and Public Administration
Pre-law Advising

Et Cetera

Two opportunities for community involvement.
Honors Travel, Summer 2009
DebateWatch 2008
Appreciating Diversity
Honors Societies and Tutoring with Albany Alliance
Fall Honors Course Descriptions (2)
Taxes Finished? Then Relax and Make Some Balloon Animals