

Honorable Mentions

Spring 2015

A Publication of the PSU Honors College Public Relations Committee

A Letter from the Director

Greetings from the Honors College!!

Summer is upon us and another great year in the Honors College has been completed. We have had many great opportunities this year for our students to excel in and out of the classroom. Service to others continues to be a priority within our ranks and you will read about some of those activities in this newsletter. I am so very proud of the accomplishments of all of our students.

While we send a graduating class of 32 students out into the world to pursue their dreams, we will be bringing in a full cohort of 36 new freshman who are eager and prepared to make their mark on the Honors College and University as well. We are excited to welcome them into our ranks and watch them grow as young adults and outstanding students.

Please remember to send us any updates and information about yourself and your career path so we can put that information in future newsletters. Here is to a great summer!!!

Dr. Craig Fuchs
Director of the Honors College



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HCA Participates in BIG Event

By Alex Battitori

Over 900 PSU students participated in the 12th annual BIG Event Saturday, April 11, smashing last year's event participation by more than 250 volunteers.

Twenty-five Honors College Association students were part of the 938-strong community service project, which was the largest BIG Event in the university's history.

"We want to do whatever we can to help the residents clean up their homes and yards," BIG Event Coordinator Kristina Adams, junior, said in a previous interview regarding the event. "Many of the people we help are unable to do that work themselves, so we take great pride in providing this service to them."

Volunteers met in the Weede Gym at 9:30 a.m. before being sent out in groups to rake leaves, clean gutters, clear brush, wash windows and complete other simple projects for community residents.

During the pre-event meeting, University President Steve Scott addressed the students:

"You're going to touch the lives of people throughout the community [...] That's a big deal," he said.

Regarding her experience in assisting with the BIG Event, freshman Kolleen Gladden said, "I think the BIG Event was a wonderful opportunity to unite the campus as one for the greater good of the community. There are fewer college opportunities more rewarding than having a chance to serve the surrounding area that has toiled to bring this educational establishment to life."



HCA members help rake leaves at a private residence during the 2015 BIG Event.

Research Option for Honors Credit Added

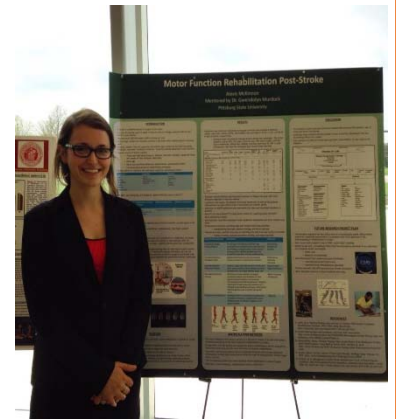
By Kya Rodgers

Recently, a new option has been made available to Honors College members in relation to earning honors credits. A collaboration between the Honors College and the Graduate and Continuing Studies Office has now given Honors College members an alternative to do research for the honors credits that are required of each member every semester.

Dr. Fuchs, the Director of the Honors College, discussed the aims behind creating this new opportunity. "We want to encourage more undergrad research activities on campus. Honors College students have a difficult time earning requirements through traditional Honors College courses because they get general education credits out of the way so early."

On the whole, the goal of this new choice for honors credits is that it's meant to provide a variety of experiences when working on Honors College requirements. That way, once Honors College members have completed general education requirements and Honors classes are no longer an option, there are still choices when it comes to earning honors credits, be it additional work in a class of the student's choice (with permission) or undertaking research on a topic of the student's interest.

Alexis McKinnon, a PSU senior majoring in Psychology as well as the current Honors College President, decided to conduct research this semester through an analysis to find the most effective methods for the physical rehabilitation of a stroke, and spoke about this option for honors credits. "I think it is a great opportunity. Research makes you stand out as a student and as a future employee to potential employers. This incentive to do more research will help students grow in their field as a student and as a professional. I definitely recommend this choice to others. It is a great opportunity to research a topic you are interested in, grow as a professional, and earn Honors College credit for it."



Alexis McKinnon poses with her research presentation at the Research Colloquium.

Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Big Fun

By Kristen Daniel

On Saturday, April 25, 2015, Honors College members hosted a carnival for the local chapter of Big Brothers, Big Sisters. The event took place in front of Russ Hall on the Pitt State Campus. The event opened up for “Bigs” and “Littles” around ten in the morning. Several carnival-style games were set up for the kids to enjoy, including “Hillbilly Golf”, “Ping Pong Pond”, and “Yard Darts”. There was also a table set up for free face painting. An inflatable bouncy playhouse was also set up and was an enjoyable activity for many of the youngsters, including local Little, James York who said “Jumping in the Bounce House was my favorite part”.

The kids, who were accompanied by their Big Brother or Sister, were welcomed to try every game as many times as they wanted. The kids were given prize tickets whenever they scored points in a game. They could trade in these tickets for sweet treats and stuffed animals.

Many of the children requested that their Bigs play the games with them. Kelsey Tronsgard, a senior in Psychology at PSU and local Big attended the carnival with her little sister.

“She’s schooling me” stated Tronsgard about playing against her Little in several of the games. Tronsgard expressed that her and her Little had really enjoyed the carnival “I will definitely do this again. This is a lot of fun” said Tronsgard.

Meghan Winford freshman in Nursing and member of the Honors College, was responsible for organizing the event. “It was actually really easy to organize this event and Dr. Fuchs was really helpful and Big Brothers, Big Sisters was very easy to communicate with” said Winford. She also affirmed that event was successful “The kids seemed like they had a lot of fun. Hopefully we can get even more help and more people out next year” said Winford.

An HCA member jumps in the bouncy house with the “little sister”.



Alumnus Spotlight: Dr. Michael Farris

By Kya Rodgers

Dr. Michael Farris is an alumnus who graduated from Pittsburg State University in 1996 and a former Honors College member who has been making a living in the area of medicine. He finished his time here at Pittsburg State with a Bachelor of Arts degree in biology as well as a minor in chemistry. Once Farris completed his degree at PSU, he then decided to go to medical school, choosing the University Of Kansas School Of Medicine, which he later graduated from in 2000.

Putting his medical degree to good use, Farris has spent the last decade working as a family practitioner. He is currently working for Labette Health, specifically as a part of the Emergency Department in the Labette County Medical Center located in Parsons, Kansas.

Dr. Farris is a major supporter of the Honors College, seen especially in his generous contributions. As thanks for his support and donations, he was recognized as Donor of the Year at the previous Honors College banquet that was held this past April.

When discussing the ways in which the Honors College provided him help and support throughout class as well as after graduating, Dr. Farris commented, “I think the value of the Honors College is the community you form immediately. The community not just of the professors but of the fellow students, because it was incredible having a friend who was a subject matter in any topic I wanted. The Honors College really forms that tight-knit feeling by having us meet a week before class, and the honors classes. It just helps to create that community of students. That was hugely helpful.”

Dr. Michael Farris currently lives in Altamont, Kansas, with a family consisting of his wife, three children, and two stepchildren.



Dr. Michael Farris is a 1996 Pittsburg State University graduate and former Honors College member who presently works in the Emergency Department of Labette County Medical Center in Parsons, Kansas.

Photo from: LABETTE HEALTH

Special Olympics

By Garrett Harmon

Once again, the Honors College had the privilege of contributing volunteers to the local Special Olympics competitions, held here on campus.

Basketball and Track and Field Special Olympics both annually take place at Pittsburg State, and many organizations get involved to help. This year Honors College students handed out medals at the Awards table this past winter during the basketball events, and manned the shot put area in April for track.

Competitors in the games come from the communities in the surrounding area, and all ages compete from elementary school special education classes to adult and elderly care facilities. The Special Olympics are two of the most highly anticipated community service events of the year for our students, and they are always a truly rewarding way to serve.

"The rewarding part is seeing how happy the competitors are and how much the meet means to them," said Gavin Houser, a sophomore double major in Accounting and Computer Information Systems after assisting with the shot put throw in April.

Competitors look forward to the various athletic gatherings they compete in all year both on campus and off, and it's a joy for our students to be able to assist in the facilitation of these events that bring the athletes so much fulfillment and happiness. To the students who help operate the awards table to present medals to ecstatic athletes, it's not a job at all.

Not everyone has taken the opportunity to volunteer at the games, and hopefully this article will help to encourage those who have yet to experience the joy of this particular service. Houser continues saying, "You should volunteer, because it is a worthy cause, and you will be sure to have fun. You can really tell that the participants want to be there and are very happy to be a part of it all."

The Honors College will continue to volunteer in the Special Olympics in the coming years.

Honors College Welcomes New Class

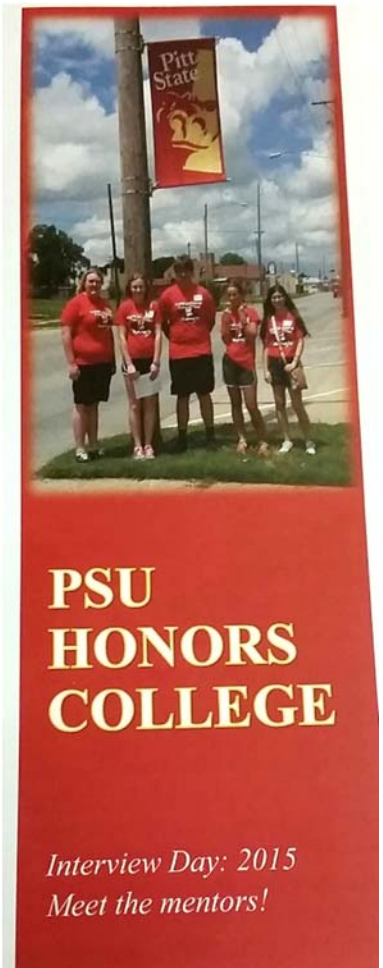
By Victoria Ho

After an exciting Interview Day in February, 36 outstanding graduating seniors were selected as the Honors College 2015-2016 freshmen class.

The new class consists of 21 female and 15 male students. These new additions consist of 20 in-state students, 13 Gorilla Advantage students, 1 Gorilla Edge student, and 2 international students, representing England and Paraguay. The class's average ACT score was 30.45, while the average GPA was 3.95.

First-year student Katherine Wilson, a peer mentor and Psychology major, is looking forward to welcoming the new class during the Honors Overnight in the summer. She says she is excited to watch the new members get to know each other and grow into this great organization. Katie's advice to the new class is to "get to know as many people as possible" and "never be afraid to ask Dr. Fuchs if you have a question."

After enrollment during Pitt C.A.R.E.S. on June 1, the new class will meet regularly during Dr. Fuchs' Freshman Experience in Kelce. Let's all give a big HCA welcome to the new recruits!



HCA Holds Annual Elections

By Charles Ault

This spring the Honors College elected new executives for the 2015-16 school year. All voting took place via online ballot with brief biographies for those candidates that were running against one another.

After voting closed April 6 the Honors College had new people in each position, including two students entirely new to the executive board.

Jayden Bowen will be stepping up from vice president to replace Alexis McKinnon as president.

Abbey Chaloupka will be moving from secretary to serve as vice president. Both Bowen and Chaloupka ran unopposed for their new positions.

While the president and vice president went uncontested there was a competitive run-off for the positions of secretary and treasurer.

Kristen Daniel and Kylie Proctor ran for the position of treasurer.

Daniel named her previous experience as Dellinger Hall Council treasurer as well as her general organizational skills as reasons for consideration in her biography.

"I love being involved in HCA and I would feel honored to be a part of the executive team this upcoming year," said Daniel.

Proctor included her involvement in numerous clubs, previous role as Chemistry Club treasurer, previous experience in dealing with SGA, and anticipated free time in the upcoming year as reasons for her election.

"I hope that I will be HCA's next treasurer," said Proctor.

Proctor's hopes would be met as she won the election, replacing Michelle Forbes as treasurer.

Carlin Greene and Cassidy Bernard both put in for secretary. Greene discussed her leadership in Lambda Sigma Sophomore Honors Society and involvement in her involvement in HCA activities in her biography.

"I am so grateful for all of the opportunities that the Honors College has given me, and I would appreciate the chance to be more involved and help in a new way," said Greene.

Bernard cited her aptitude for organization and communication as well as her "wicked typing skills" in her biography.

"I would love to be voted as the secretary of HCA," said Bernard.

In the end it was Greene who was selected to replace the outgoing Chaloupka as secretary.

Congratulations to the Graduating Seniors!

