

CADENZA

NEWSLETTER OF THE LAMAR  UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
Fall 2011

Honors Student Association Serves the Community

By Amy Morgan

The members of the Honors Student Association at Lamar University pride themselves on being active in the community. Community service is an integral part of the legacy that each Honors student hopes to



leave and, as such, HSA members work very hard to participate in an array of different activities. From the food bank to the beach, the Honors Student Association proudly serves the community, and strives to make the world a better place.

This past year, the HSA participated in many different activities. At Halloween, they went trick-or-treating for UNICEF, helping to raise money for kids around the world. They volunteered for Adopt-A-Beach and spent the day cleaning McFaddin Beach in Sabine Pass.

The students have made multiple visits to the South East Texas Food Bank, where they have helped make boxes to deliver food to those in need. They hosted a bake sale at one of Lamar's baseball games for Japan relief, following the devastating tsunami in March 2011 and were awarded a certificate from the American Red Cross for their generosity and willingness to assist those affected. The students volunteered at the Triangle Aids Network gala, where they helped organize the auctions that supported the network's efforts in the southeast Texas area. The HSA is also active each year in Relay for Life and the Girls Haven Gumbo Fest.



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**Let us know what YOU
are doing so we can
include you in our
next issue of Cadenza!**





Honors students are also active in many organizations outside of HSA. For instance, the Lamar Ambassadors are a group of students that serve as the face of the University at many public events. This year, the majority of the Ambassadors are Honors Program students, who make up only 2.5% of the entire student population at Lamar. This includes: Jasmine Banks, Rachel Binagia, Lucas Castle, Madison Davis, Dana Guy, Valerie Juarez, Elisabeth Maxwell, Long Nguyen, Vaughn Ogrydziak, Will Pickard, Jessica Pospisil, Paul Rizk, Brittnee Rodriguez, Kayleigh Romero, Riyad Samad, and Christine Zabala.



The Honors Student Association at Lamar is a great organization to be a part of. It has many opportunities available to its students and its members are among the brightest in the university. Its participation in serving the community of southeast Texas only enhances its overall appeal and helps develop well-rounded, influential, and caring members of society.



Thinking Outside the Curriculum Box By Amy Morgan

Honors Program students have many opportunities available to them. Each student in the program must graduate with 26 hours of honors credit, which can be gained through Honors topic courses and seminars, in addition to having the option of upgrading regular courses to Honors. These courses give students the chance to learn things they would not be able to learn in other courses. They cover a variety of subjects from rock and roll to the Holocaust. They are always interesting and are very effective in bringing together students from different majors to learn, thereby bringing new perspectives into the classroom.

A good example of the courses offered through honors would be the honors topics

course "Books Reconsidered", taught by art professor Xenia Fedorchenko and English and Modern Languages chair Steven Zani. As an English major, I was excited to learn the processes involved in creating books. I was in for a surprise, however, when I discovered that this course would be fairly art intensive, which is definitely not my strong suit. Although I could never pass for a "real" art student, I learned much more than I expected, and had a great time in the course. We learned about philosophy and art, while doing fun things like reading comics and doodling in class (they encouraged it!). Overall, it was a great opportunity that I would not have had without the Honors Program.

A Message from the H.S.A. President

Phi Kappa Phi



Hello! My name is Christine Zabala, and I am the President of the Honors Student Association for the 2011-2012 academic year. In HSA, we are committed as an organization to helping our members achieve the requirements necessary to

successfully graduate from the Lamar University Honors Program. Participating in events outside of academic life is incredibly important, not just for graduating with honors, but also for becoming well rounded individuals. By participating in HSA, we hope to make finding opportunities for outside enrichment a little easier and more enjoyable. Already this year, HSA has participated in extracurricular events such as the annual Constitution Day held on the LIT campus. Also, we are very active in supporting other HSA members in their endeavors, from the University Theater to band gigs in the Beaumont area. We are very active with community service projects and this semester we have already collaborated with the South East Texas Food Bank and with the annual Adopt-A-Beach program. There will be many other opportunities throughout the semester such as volunteering with Triangle Aids Network and UNICEF. I hope that your time as a member of HSA will enrich your time here at Lamar University.

In spring 2011, the Lamar chapter of the National Honors Society Phi Kappa Phi inducted sixteen students from the Honors Program into its ranks. Admission is exclusively by invitation, with only the top 10 percent of seniors and the top 7.5 percent of juniors eligible for membership in this prestigious organization. Honors Program Director Dr. Kevin Dodson took over spring 2010 as President of the Lamar Chapter. This year's Student Vice President is Honors Program student, Madison Davis.

Founded in 1897 at the University of Maine, Phi Kappa Phi is the nation's oldest and largest collegiate honors society, with chapters on over 300 campuses. With membership drawn from all university disciplines, its mission is "to recognize and promote academic excellence in all fields of higher education and to engage the community of scholars in service to others." To advance these goals, Phi Kappa Phi makes a variety of awards supporting graduate study, study abroad, career development, and literacy programs. Lamar honors students have been recipients of these awards in the past.

The 2011 Phi Kappa Phi inductees include Honors Program students Serena Belley, Chelsey Bromley, Katherine Brown, Gabrielle Carandang, Drew Colvin, Kelsey Crainer, Madison Davis, Bryan Deagle, Jonathan Durr, Lauren Griffin, Andrew Havens, Beverly Paris, Paul Rizk, Susan Rothstein, William Ware, and Carly Wright.

For more information about Phi Kappa Phi, you can visit www.phikappaphi.org.

Honors Briefs

- Honour Harry exhibited two of her artworks, "Electricity" and "With Friends Like These", at TASIMJAE (The Art Studio Inc. Members Jurored Art Exhibition) in the spring.
- At the Student Government Association Annual Toast to Leadership, the Honors Student Association was named Departmental/Professional Student Organization of the Year, while Brittany Ross received the Bess Gentry Award for Outstanding Senior Woman.
- Lamar University baseball player Cameron Campbell and women's soccer player Brittany Ross were among 24 student-athletes selected as 2010-11 Southland Conference Scholar-Athletes of the Year. Brittany was named a recipient of the conference's F.L. McDonald Postgraduate Scholarship, the conference's ultimate academic honor for its top graduates.
- Beginning this past summer, Zia Rogers has been Interning at the Southeast Texas Arts Council.

Partners in the Parks 2011: The Great Basin

By Rachel Binaglia

This summer, I was able to attend the Partners in the Parks trip to The Great Basin National Park. The program is an outdoor experiential learning program sponsored by Southern Utah University and Cedar Breaks National Monument in cooperation with the National Collegiate Honors Council. The goal of the program is to broaden college students' understanding of the overall value of national parks to our country and its citizens.

When I first arrived in the small town of Cedar City, I was wondering what I had gotten myself into. Six days of no showering or plumbing? Am I really going to enjoy this? Even the second day, when we prepared our backpacks and drove two and a half hours to the middle of nowhere, left me feeling wary. Our first stop was Ibex to see an enormous dried lakebed, or playa. I almost thought the stop was a joke, because I could not see past the nothingness. I know I had preformed ideas of a lush waterhole when I signed up for a trip to a Great Basin, and our group leaders knew they should explain by taking us to Ibex. The Great Basin is the expansive region between the Rockies and the Sierra Nevada. It's a series of desert basins and mountain ranges. When it rains, the basins act as a drain, such as Ibex, but until then, it is all desert. I did not think I would appreciate this stop until we walked onto the playa and stopped talking. The absolute silence in such a desolate area was such a surreal experience that I'll never forget. We then had lunch under a really large, old boulder then drove two hours to the campsite, made dinner, and went to sleep.

Sleeping was never very comfortable. It was more of a chore we put up with in order to be functional for all of the fun parts of the trip. I woke up the second morning slightly refreshed and got ready for our tour of Lehman Cave. The Cave was definitely one of the highlights of the trip. It was a 0.6-mile tour through stalactites and stalagmites that made the cave look like an ornate palace. There were also a few underground ponds and marks made from candle soot on the cave walls by people, proving they made it into the cave as far back as the 1800s and 1900s. The rest of the day was spent hanging out or talking with Park Rangers to



Rachel received a McMaster Grant from the Honors Program to participate in the Partners in the Parks Program

learn more about the park ecosystems. We made sure to leave no trace in the park so future generations can enjoy it, too.

The next day we went on a 6-mile hike, three up and three down. We passed three natural lakes, each one more beautiful than the previous. One was green, the other brown, and the last was extraordinarily teal. The colors are different because they depend on the minerals on the rocks below, and different elevations contain different types of rocks. When we reached the top of the mountain, past the tree line, we were able to see the Bristlecone Pines. These trees can adapt to any environment and they have nothing to harm them on top of the mountain. This basically allows them to live forever. One of the oldest dated trees is over 3,000 years old! Besides being ancient, they have the most unique, twisted trunk and swirling branches with bark that is rock hard, creating a really fantastic looking tree. After getting a good look at the trees, we hiked around the corner and had a snowball fight! It was an unforgettable hike.

The final highlight of the trip occurred the next day. We took a leisurely 6-hour hike up to 1060 ft. elevation, to Baker Lake and camped overnight. When we reached the top, a huge circ, or an extremely tall cliff face in a semi-circle with a lake at the bottom, greeted us. We all jumped in the freezing cold lake, just to say we did it. It was one of the most surreal experiences. There were no creepy bugs; the air was crisp, and it was dead silent if we were all

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quiet. It was our own private mountain. That



night, I was able to sleep under the stars, without a tent!

The next morning, a few of us went on a vigorous hike to get a great view of all of the mountain ranges. I got more cardio than I thought was possible, but it was well worth

it for the view. We ate lunch, and then hiked three quarters of the way down the mountain, camped out, and then hiked the rest of the way down the following day.

This trip was a one of a kind experience and I'm so glad I was given the opportunity to attend! I was able to bond with strangers who became great friends (possibly because we all saw each other at our absolute worst with the no showering and the all natural thing). I am now more educated in the National Parks system. I understand what it means to preserve our ecosystem, and how even the tiniest critters in the parks matter. Experiencing all of this and learning necessary skills with knowledgeable leaders and guides has given me tools to be confident when camping in the wilderness. I can already see a couple of potential camping trips in my future. Though I was only able to visit one National Park on this trip, I can't forget about the 57 other national parks, not to mention the countless State Parks that still need to be explored!

What is an REU?

An REU is a Research Experience for Undergraduates. These take place during the summer at universities all over the United States. Students get the chance to work with senior professors and researchers in an area of their special interest. These programs are particularly popular in the physical science and medical fields. An REU can be a vital stepping stone in the highly competitive world faced by our graduates.

Mathematics REU at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

By Lucas Castle

This summer, I participated in a mathematics summer research program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This REU, funded by the National Science Foundation, allowed me the opportunity to study an interesting field of mathematics, learn more regarding the methodology of research, and gain insight into graduate school.

I worked with two other students from other universities under Dr. Allan Peterson and Dr. Michael Holm. The topic our project covered involved discrete fractional calculus of the nabla difference operator. More specifically, we developed methods by which to solve fractional difference equations and ultimately applied these tools to generalized problems. Currently, there are no known applications for the types of difference equations that we studied this summer; however, mathematical theory often lends itself to surprising applications.

Taking part in this research experience has served to increase my interest in attending graduate school.



Furthermore, I learned a great deal in various areas of mathematics as a result of my own research and discussion of topics other groups in the program were studying. Overall, the program was rewarding and engaging, and I most certainly would recommend participating in an REU to anyone even remotely interested in attending graduate school.



Saving the Sharks

By Elisabeth Maxwell

If you want to see a country, you travel there for a week of vacation. If you want to experience a country, you live there for three months. This summer I had the unbelievable opportunity to experience South Africa as I participated in an internship at the South African Shark Conservancy (SASC), a non-profit organization concerned with research, conservation, and management of sharks and all marine species. It was the time of my life! As a biology student who will be pursuing graduate studies in marine biology, there was no place better for me to explore my passion for the marine environment than along the coastline of the Western Cape. Funded by the David J. Beck Fellowship, a prestigious undergraduate award here at Lamar University, I was able to fulfill a dream of working side-by-side with researchers who have been making an incredible impact on the understanding and public perception of sharks in southern Africa.

When I started at the beginning of June, one of my first responsibilities was to assist with preparations for World Oceans Day and the celebrations SASC would be hosting for the local community. Parades with school children, presentations about sharks and marine conservation, a speech by the mayor of Hermanus, face painting, crafting signs to promote ocean awareness, and hosting tours of the SASC Shark Lab all made for a very busy first week on the job. Returning on Saturday from a morning of hard work, the reward was my first snorkel in the beautiful blue-green waves. Spotting Shysharks, a demersal (bottom-dwelling) species having a full grown length of around 1 meter, and playing with jellyfish, made for a very memorable first dive.

During the next few weeks, we continued to host school and volunteer groups for tours and shark dissections, while I also started developing a research project to explore the

magneto-reception capabilities of the local demersal shark species. When I first came to South Africa, I never expected to be building my own research project, much less altering the earth's magnetic field to see if these sharks would respond. It was not long before I was stumped by the physics of the project and when I mentioned this to Meaghen McCord, director of SASC, she suggested that I contact the local magnetic observatory run by the South African National Space Agency. Yes, that is correct. I went to the *national space agency* and met with their top engineers who assisted us with the coil design and magnetic field analysis. Needless to say, I was pretty impressed by the whole situation. During one of our meetings, one of the engineers was explaining z-fields and coil configuration when he remarked, "Don't worry, it is not rocket science." To which we exclaimed, "But you ARE rocket scientists!!!"

Perhaps the single most memorable day of my trip started at 5:30 a.m. Thanks to the wonderful SASC connections with a local dive company, several friends and I, headed to Gansbaai for our big adventure. We arrived at the White Shark Projects office and following a briefing by our skipper, we donned life-jackets and walked down to the harbor. Everyone got quickly settled and, before I knew it, we were on the water bouncing over the swells. It was a spectacular start to the day as the sun was just breaking over the horizon and filling the bay with color. This is the location of the famed "Shark Alley" where White Sharks are known for taking to the air in pursuit of seals. After dropping anchor, it was time to get suited up, organize the first group of divers, and start a chum line. The boys and I were fortunately in this first group. Before I had time to register what I was doing, someone yelled "Shark!!!" and we were climbing into the cage that was lassoed to the side of the

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boat. The water was frigid. Despite the 7mm suit (which is the thickest wet-suit available), I could already feel the warmth leaving my feet. Of course, this is your least concern when a rather large *Carcharodon*

carcharias glides past. It was magnificent! What the media leads you to expect out of these intriguing creatures – the attacking monster from the sea with rows upon rows of teeth aggressively reaching towards an innocent bather – was not what I witnessed; I saw effortless grace, majestic beauty, and perhaps deceptive, calm. For being one of the largest fish in the ocean, they appear to exert no energy to glide through the water. It was one of the best twenty minutes of my life!

Summer Abroad Sailing the Mediterranean

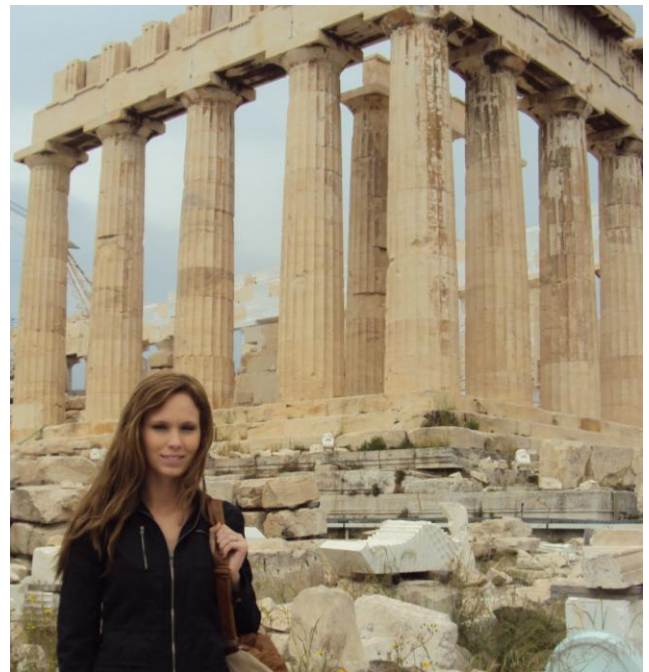
By Brittany Jannise

On May 16, 2011, I began a journey with a group of students to sail the Mediterranean and visit famous historical and political sites located in beautiful Greece and Turkey. The courses involved with this trip were “Social Capital and Political Action” with Dr. Maria Sandovici, studying culture and types of political participation seen in these countries, and “The History of God” with Dr. Rebecca Boone, studying religion and the history of the civilizations. The trip lasted for 2 weeks, with a new exciting destination almost every day.

We began our journey in Athens, Greece. While there, we visited many historical sites such as the Parthenon and the Olympia Coliseum, as well as local restaurants, cafes, and markets. After our stay in Athens, we boarded the Louis Cristal cruise ship, and set sail onto the Mediterranean Sea. We had class in the ship’s small library, where I learned so much about the area.

We stopped in Istanbul, Mykonos, Izmir, Santorini, and Crete. Every place was breathtakingly beautiful. We visited historical sites like Ephesus, an ancient Greek civilization located in Turkey, and an ancient Minoan civilization in Crete.

We also visited religious sites, including the Blue Mosque and Hagia Sophia. Culturally, it was a challenge in Turkey because not very many people spoke English. In Istanbul we visited the Great Bazaar where we had to barter, which I discovered I am not good at. My



Brittany received a McMaster Grant from the Honors Program to assist with her Study Abroad

personal favorite had to be Athens; I loved the Greek culture, and especially the food!

I feel that I have grown intellectually, emotionally, and ethically after taking this trip. I have learned so much and, instead of just looking in a book or pictures on the internet, I was able to experience these destinations firsthand. This study abroad trip was the chance of a lifetime, and I am so thankful I was able to go.

Achievements Recognized at the Honors Program Spring Awards Reception



2011 McMaster Honors Scholarship Recipients

- William Angell, Mortan Ranch (Katy, TX)
- Jacob Hollier, Nederland
- Victoria McCoy, Barbers Hill
- Abby McManus, Barbers Hill
- David Mikel, Sweeney
- Kayla Perkins, Buna
- David Tsan, Orangefield

2011 Mirabeau Scholars

- Alaina Bray, TALH
- Hayley Brazeale, Hardin
- Jessica Franklin, Bridge City
- Kaitlyn Hinch, Vidor
- Jordan King, Little Cypress-Mauriceville
- Prasun Mandal, West Brook
- Riley McMillon, Lumberton
- Logan Moss, Orangefield
- Samuel Placette, Bridge City
- Molly Porter, Nederland
- Brenden Smith, Buna
- Bria Thibodeaux, Bridge City
- Zachery Townley-Smith, Lumberton
- Bernard Yett, Monsignor Kelly

Honors Program Graduates May 2011

- Bethany Aiena, Psychology
- Joshua Autery, Biochemistry
- Matt Beaudry, Chemical Engineering
- Keegan Bratsch, Civil Engineering
- Cameron Campbell, Mechanical Engineering
- Joshua Davis, Criminal Justice & Sociology
- Christine Felix, Chemistry
- Patrick Greer, Biology
- Lauren Griffin, Interdisciplinary Studies
- Maricela Guerrero, Civil Engineering
- Andrew Havens, Mechanical Engineering
- Lauren James, Biology
- Jorge Jimenez, Electrical Engineering
- Caleb Lackey, Industrial Engineering
- Amanda Lilley, Political Science
- Rebekah Maxwell, General Business
- Jennifer Mikel, Nursing
- Hunter Oliver, Nursing
- Beverly Paris, Applied Arts & Sciences
- Kaitlynn Pate, Chemistry
- Mark Placette, Mechanical Engineering
- Brittany Ross, Exercise Science & Psychology
- Wesley Smith, Chemistry
- Jennifer Whittington, Political Science
- Carly Wright, Marketing

The Honors Student Association officially transferred authority to its new officers for 2011-12. Christine Zabala, President; Kayleigh Romero, Vice President; Amy Morgan, Secretary; Kelsey Crainer, Treasurer; Elisabeth Maxwell, Historian; Javon Prophet, Student Government Representative; Daniel Ward, Service Chair; and Jessica Pospisil, Events Chair

Honors Professor of the Year 2010-2011

Each year, members of the Honor Student Association vote for Honors Professor of the year, and this year's winner was Dr. Bogdana Bahrin. Dr. Bahrin is an Associate Professor of Physics.

Honors Program Graduates May 2011 Forms Largest Group Ever



FRONT ROW: Hunter Oliver, Maricela Guerrero, Jennifer Mikel, Brittany Ross, Christine Felix, Kaitlynn Pate, Bethany Aiena, Lauren James, Beverly Paris, Patrick Greer
 BACK ROW: Dr. Kevin Dodson, Mark Placette, Keegan Bratsch, Caleb Lackey, Jorge Jimenez, Matt Beaudry, Wesley Smith, Andrew Havens, Joshua Autery, Carly Wright, Amanda Lilley, Joshua Davis, Rebekah Maxwell
Not pictured: Cameron Campbell, Lauren Griffin, Jennifer Whittington

December 2010



Michaela (McCoy) Bratsch, Jeffery Mitchell,
and Carolina Ramirez

August 2010



Sarah Jennings

Honors Rocks the House



Blake Gaspard is the lead guitarist in the heavy metal band Aureum Chaos. They have been together about six months and hope to bring their mix of covers and original songs to local venues soon.



Indie Rock band Hello Chief, featuring Bassist/Vocalist Jonathan Wooding (center) and Drummer/Vocalist Jake Hollier (Drummer/Vocalist), play at local venues such as at The GiG and Tequila Rok. They also like to take their music on the road, frequenting cities like Austin where they showcase their original music.



Garrett Peters (far right) plays bass guitar in the hard rock band Defiant. The band has been together for approximately one year and they play at venues such as The Art Studio and The Logon Café.

CADENZA is the official newsletter of the Lamar University Honors Program

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LAMAR UNIVERSITY

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