

The University of Michigan-Flint Honors Student Council

The Official Newsletter of UM-Flint Honors Students, Alumni, and Faculty

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Welcome to the Honors Student Council at UM-Flint

By Brian Proffer, Freshperson

What exactly is the Council? It is a council which consists of all the students of the University of Michigan-Flint's Honors Scholar Program. When accepted into the Honors Program each student is automatically admitted into the Honors Student Council (HSC). Within the council are the council members, class representatives, and the officers. The representatives are chosen by each individual class; Freshmen, Sophomores, Junior, and Seniors, by democratic vote. The Council Officers are voted upon at the kick-off meeting of the Fall Term each year. The Council's Faculty Advisor is the beloved Dr. Maureen Thum, who does a TON of various chores for the Program and Council, but who's true purpose in life is to supply a good stock of her infamous brownies (or Sam's Club cookies) at each meeting.

The HSC meets once a month, one day during the second week. At the beginning of each term it is voted on which day it is best for the most members to meet. This term, the HSC meets once a month, on the second Tuesday at 7:00. It is always said that it lasts only one hour, but everyone knows that in the honors program, one hour always means at least two. (We just have so much to say!) Many of the projects the council is tackling this term are to promote the Honors Program.

Many students do not realize that such a great program could exist in Flint, and therefore they do not consider the University of Michigan-Flint as an option for college. For Winter 2003, HSC has captured a fantastic web design specialist, Honors Student Tonya Roper, to work with the



The McKinnon Plaza at The University of Michigan-Flint

Council to design a web page for both the community to view and for the Honors Students to post homework, stories, pictures, and discussions. We have begun publishing the newsletter, which you now hold in your hand, with this being its premier issue. Its purpose is for distribution to alumni, the community, and the incoming freshmen so they may get an idea of what the Council and the Program are doing and about. Also the council has been working at a new scholarship, the council audit, graduation cords (picking a color takes forever), and the annual Honors Trip.

It may sound busy and maybe even a bit messy, but the Council is a major reason for the success of the Honors Program today. It places the Honors Program in the community of the university and of Flint. Everyone is welcome and no one is ever left out. Come join us one night to see what and who we are. (Or to reminisce for visiting alumni.) To the community and alumni who have the privilege of reading

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Off-Campus Study Personal Narrative: Denver, Colorado

By Lisa Cole, Senior

When I began to put my off-campus project together, I knew that I wanted to take on a project that I could apply to my own classroom when I became a teacher. I decided to stay within the United States. I had always wanted to see what Denver, Colorado, was like, so I focused my attention on that area. My emails received many re-

plies, which proved difficult to choose from.

I choose the Castro Elementary project, headed up by Professor Steven Zucker. Mr. Zucker lent me a laptop and put me in charge of data entry. There were marking period grades, test scores, and questionnaire answers from eight different classrooms at Castro elementary that I had to log into my laptop. I met regularly

NARRATIVE (Continued on page 2)

WELCOME (Continued from page 1)

this newsletter, thank you for spending the time and for showing support for the program by simply reading our first publication of the UM-Flint Honors Student Council Newsletter, written by students of the great program.

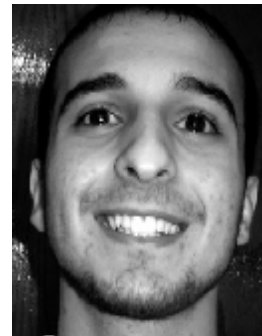
And of course to the interested students, and incoming freshmen, good luck with your final term of high school, have fun, and hope to see you in class next year and at the Fall 2003 kick-off council meeting!

What Does it Mean to be an Honors Student?

By Bishr Aldabagh, Sophomore

What does it mean to be an Honors Student? Does it mean that you are a nerd without a life who sits home and does his or her homework 24-7? That's what some students and unfortunately some professors think. Just because you are in the Honors Program, it does not mean that you have supernatural abilities or that you come from planet Honors. Of course, the Honors Program is not limited to normal people; you could find a super-human or a genius here and there. Most Honors Students are involved in various activities and clubs around campus. In fact, around 85.5% have a job.

In my opinion, some professors do not seem to grasp the concept of "having a life of one's own." The idea of "having a life" seems to be foreign to them because they overload students (especially Honors Students) with hours and hours of work thinking that these students must "earn" their grade. Sometimes, one wishes that he could be in their position and give them so much work that their heads fall off! Just kidding! Of course not all professors are like that and in fact many tend to be lenient around the end of the semester when projects, homework, and tests are in abundance. Now the answer to the title of this article: All it means to be an Honor Student is that you are honorable in that you have put in effort and time into making yourself one of the best. It is not necessarily a question of who is gifted/superhuman/nerd or who isn't.



Honors Student
Bishr Aldabagh

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with Mr. Zucker and Castro's school psychologist, Joe Dionne, to discuss the research and the findings.

Questionnaires were the basis for our data collection on social interaction. There was a set of 24 questions that the students answered at the beginning of the year based on their assumptions and observations of their classmates. Some topics included 'who do you think gets good grades,' 'who has a lot of friends,' 'who would you most like to sit by,' 'who is a bad leader,' etc. For each question, they would write down the names of three students that they thought fit that profile. Each child in each classroom was assigned a number, but not told what their number was. Joe would meet with each class about once a week to discuss the results from the questionnaires using the student numbers. Midway through the year, the students were told what their number was. After this, the students made social and academic goals for themselves. In the spring, a questionnaire was given asking if they had reached their goals and if the intervention had helped them.

Throughout the year, Steven and Joe had been videotaping the intervention sessions that Joe had had with the students. In my meetings with them, we looked over and edited the videos. Our goal was to make a video to be used as a model at other schools for this type of intervention. I walked away from this

project with a lot of data and a knowledge of data programming.

However, my trip involved much more than data entry. I looked on line to find classifieds for housing from the local newspapers in Denver. After many calls, I was going to be staying in a condo with two other women. The biggest challenge in finding a place was the fact that I would only be there for two months. Come to find out, about two weeks before I was to depart, my leaser canceled. As luck would have it though, I found an even better place, a house with just one roommate.

When I arrived in Colorado, I was excited at the prospect of being far away from home and having to depend on myself for survival and entertainment. I cooked, cleaned, did my own laundry, went grocery shopping, etc. I was glad that I had a roommate; otherwise I would have gone without furniture, kitchen supplies, and a TV!

I also took the opportunity to travel throughout the state of Colorado and even into Utah to the Zion National Park. I met many new people and made lifelong friends. It was such a unique experience to be able to hike in the mountains and camp. I also volunteered for the Salvation Army during the wildfires.

If I had to do it again, I would in a heartbeat. I got to see a totally different part of our country, and learn about a topic in education that I can apply to my career. In the short time of just two months, I was able to fit a lot in, although looking back, I wish my stay had been longer. I want to thank the Honors Program for giving me this opportunity. A few people commented on how impressive it was that I had taken the initiative to make contacts, plan, and get myself out there all on my own. I must say that it was quite a learning experience, one that I am grateful for, and I will definitely take the skills that I have gained from this into my everyday life.



Honors Senior Lisa Cole rappelling in Zion National Park during her off-campus study

Honors Student Delivers Commencement Speech at 2002 Ceremony

By Vanessa Ferguson, Senior

For the first time in years, an Honors Scholar was the student speaker for the commencement exercises for the University of Michigan-Flint's graduating class.

Honors Student James Magerman gave his speech at the graduation of the summer and winter 2002 terms at the IMA Sports Arena in Flint on Dec. 15.

Magerman, also a recipient of the distinguished Maize and Blue Award, said that he found out at the beginning of December he would be speaking at the commencement ceremony. He found inspiration for his speech from orators of the past.

"I decided what to speak about from other commencement speeches I've

heard and from great speakers of the past," Magerman said.

He wanted to express during his speech that, "Everyone here has done a lot to open the doors for their future."

During commencement Magerman spoke about how UM-Flint provides an education that fits the needs of each individual student. He also said, "I recognize today these experiences [at UM-Flint] were just the first step in our journey. Today we stand with a clean slate to mark our future."

Magerman offered this charge to his fellow graduates, "All of us have a part to play in carving out our futures. Let us march forward from this ceremony with our heads held high."



Honors Student James Magerman with Honors Scholar Program Director Dr. Maureen Thum at Commencement

Honors 155 Trip to Stratford: A Commentary on Shakespeare's *King Lear*

By Sarah Wice, Freshperson

"You will sit up straight and look forward. There will be no talking. Remove all hats and sunglasses. Have your driver's license and other identification papers in your hands. Try to look as innocent as possible. Answer all questions clearly and concisely. Make eye contact without challenging the Border Guard."

With those statements our beloved HON 155 professor, Dr. Maureen Thum, transformed into a Border Control Freak right before our eyes. Gone was the humorous and somewhat outrageous Dr. Thum. In her place stood a general with the air and authority of a seasoned battle commander issuing orders to her troops who are about to cross over into enemy territory.

Fortunately, Canada is on friendly terms with the United States so the most eventful incident at the Border was just the sudden transformation of our professor. With that behind us the fall trip to Stratford was really underway.

For the freshman this was a much needed break from our first few weeks at college. By this time we had turned in our first critique (a newspaper version of *King Lear*) and five sets of cliff notes from two pieces of literature. We were ready for some of the perks of being an Honors student, one such perk was the trip to Stratford. We were so excited that we were even able to forget about the four page paper that just happened to correspond with the trip. Besides that the chance to see Shakespeare's *King Lear* performed live would undoubtedly help us to better understand the text.

The Shakespeare Festival at Stratford Canada is world renowned. Crazy Shakespeare fans, reluctant students, aficionados of the theatre, and many more travel to this small town to see Shakespeare's plays come to life on stage. This year proved to be exceptionally great with direc-

tor Jonathan Miller and actor Christopher Plummer leading the cast as *King Lear*. Plummer's performance as *King Lear* presented a strong King whose body is betraying him by gradually succumbing to a crippling disease. One minute *Lear* is standing tall booming with regal authority the next he is laughing like a school girl does to some joke only his crazed mind understands.

Evan Buliung is *Edgar*, the naive son and trusting brother. His own bout with madness causes the audience to cheer for him in the final battle with his brother *Edmund*. Maurice Godin does an outstanding performance of the Machiavellian villain. Until his dying breath this *Edmund* remains the true loveable villain and provokes a laugh from the audience. The wicked sisters *Goneril* and *Regan* performed by Domini Blythe and Lucy Peacock couldn't get any more evil than they were in this play.

Sarah McVie plays the loving, devoted daughter *Cordeilia*. She is the good yet stubborn daughter who can no longer put up with the lies that go hand in hand with court life. Her undying loyalty to her father only makes the ending all the more tragic. Barry MacGregor is the Fool. His songs and witty comments give the audience clues about the truth of what's really happening to these troubled characters. Ian Deakin, Stephen Russell, Benedict Campbell, James Blendick, David Snelgrove, Brian Tree, and Gary Folka also performed.

The bus ride was eventful, the town was charming, and the performance was excellent. Now if only that paper would just write itself the day would be absolutely perfect. One thought that prevailed among the freshman was that next year at this time they could simply come and enjoy the show like the rest of the students on the bus. The 2003 calendar is scheduled to perform *The Taming of the Shrew*.



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Promoting Interdisciplinary Education.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.UMFLINT.EDU/CLUBS/HSC

Since its founding in 1979, the University of Michigan-Flint Honors Scholar Program has offered qualified students the opportunity to enhance their education in the challenging and rewarding atmosphere of small, enriched core classes with close faculty guidance and one-on-one learning and research partnerships with specialists in their field.

The Honors Program is designed to promote education across the disciplines in an environment that emphasizes a high degree of literacy, critical thinking and humanistic and scientific inquiry and to encourage a high level of academic achievement and scholarly research.

Honors Top Ten: Survival Tips for Rookies in the Honors Program

By Laura Hill and Sarah Wice, Freshpersons

10. Learn to appreciate the nuances of British Humor
9. Follow in the steps of Shakespeare: never reveal your political thoughts
8. Be well versed
7. Behold the power of sarcasm
6. Master the fine art of social graces
5. Always carry your passport for you never know when the Border Control Freak will appear
4. Embrace the eccentricities of your fellow classmates: they are crazier than you think
3. Write thy Cliff Notes daily for thy health and well-being
2. Become one with the tabs
1. Grovel before thy Brownie Maker for chocolate is the key to survival

This list was compiled after surviving a semester on this strange new planet called "Thum World" a.k.a. The Freshman Experience in the Honors Program. While we found interacting with the planet's inhabitants to be a unique experience by far, we survived and are able to pass on our great wisdom in hope of inspiring the next generation of explorers. Good Luck!

Honors Student Featured Art

HEARTFIRE

By Justin Phillips, Freshperson

Pluck the rose within the brambles,
do not fear the thorns that prick,
for the bloom is fresh and lovely
though the branches may be thick.
Pluck the rose within the brambles,
it entices you to reach,
and you seek a way inside
this wall of nature you must breach.
Pluck the rose within the brambles,
you can shear the thorns away,
but the scars upon the rose stem
will seem harsher every day.
Pluck the rose within the brambles,
it is calling to your heart,
as you slide your hand in slowly,
and the tangles deign to part.
Pluck the rose within the brambles,
set 'mid spines, so sweet and grand,
bear the scratches on your arm
and wash the blood marks from your hand.
Pluck the rose within the brambles,
take the bloom from where it lies.
While no vict'ry comes unburdened,
all the pain is worth the prize.