

# HONORS COLLEGE

## AT THE COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

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### HONORS COLLEGE NEWS

#### Message from Dr. Newell, Dean of the Honors College • Staying Connected



The Honors College continuously seeks ways to serve our students and alumni better. As we prepare to implement a strategic plan designed to improve Honors College facilities, enhance our living-learning community, and develop fundraising campaigns that will support additional scholarship and research opportunities we want to ensure that we stay in touch with our students, alumni, and their families. Beginning this spring we are re-introducing a semi-annual Honors College newsletter. Our goal is to provide you a source by which you can stay informed about Honors College news and events as well as student and alumni successes. Over the past 28 years, we have built a rich community of individuals who share the common link of the Honors College experience. I invite you to notify us about what's going on in your lives, what you like or do not like about the newsletter, and what content you would like to see in future editions. I believe that we can all benefit from staying connected and I hope that you enjoy the first edition of our electronic newsletter.



#### President and Mrs. Benson Visit the Honors College

Past achievements, long-term goals, and future plans set the tone for a meeting with President George Benson and Mrs. Benson on January 19<sup>th</sup>. The meeting, designed to inform the Bensons about the Honors College from past to present and to highlight some of its major challenges and goals, began in the Honors Center and concluded in Hawkins Lounge in Rivers Residence Hall. In addition to informing the Bensons about the Honors College, this meeting in motion also allowed them to see first-hand the facilities that are currently available to honors students.



The Bensons seemed impressed by how far the HC has come since its inception in 1979. In 2005, the Honors Program became the Honors College marking an important milestone for the College of Charleston. This May the HC will graduate 93 top students, its largest class to date and the 3<sup>rd</sup> class to graduate under the Honors College name. Since its beginning, the HC has been working to create a dynamic learning community for its students

including special lectures and seminars, access to the most respected faculty on campus and small class sizes;

positioning itself to compete against rival Honors College's like Clemson's Calhoun Honors College and USC's Honors College.

Surpassing the competition means continuing to improve the program. The HC aspires to be the most intellectually stimulating and challenging HC in SC and among the top 10 Honors Colleges in the Southeast. This requires more than wishful thinking and brainstorming which is why the HC staff presented a strategic plan to President and Mrs. Benson, incorporating a competition analysis and feedback from Honors students. The HC staff proposes to refurbish and expand the current Honors facilities, develop a fundraising plan that will support full scholarships for in-state and out-of-state students as well as endowed professorships, and provide additional research, study abroad and internship opportunities for Honors students.

*“The Honors College aspires to be the most intellectually stimulating and challenging Honors College in South Carolina .”*

Fortunately, through the support of President and Mrs. Benson, Residence Life and Housing, the Office of the Academic Experience, and Institutional Advancement, the HC immediately began making changes after the January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. Residence Life and Housing allowed the HC to assume management of Hawkins Lounge which will help to strengthen the living-learning community in the Honors residence halls. The space will be better utilized with times designated for studying and recreation in addition to Honors classes, meetings and events. Institutional Advancement is supporting the development of an Honors calling campaign for the academic year 2008-2009. The HC is pleased with the progress that was made in the weeks following the meeting with President and Mrs. Benson. The staff is poised and ready to continue making improvements that will better serve honors students well into the future.

## **Growing our Living- Learning Community**

**B**eginning in fall 2008 Hawkins Lounge located in Buist Residence Hall will transform into a multi-purpose classroom and student recreation area. This is all part of a plan to enhance the already vibrant living-learning community in the Honors residence halls. After careful consideration, Residence Life and Housing has allowed the Honors College to assume management of Hawkins in hope that the space will be better utilized by Honors students.

Hawkins is currently used for a variety of HC events including graffiti mixer and pumpkin carving in the fall and open mic night in the spring; however, the space is underutilized. Next year Hawkins will be the home-base for over 120 honors freshman who elect to enroll in the Honors Interdisciplinary Creative Experience. Honors ICE, led by Honors College Associate Dean, Dr. Trisha Folds-Bennett and 14 specially selected and trained honors teaching assistants, is designed to introduce honors freshmen to the philosophical and historical roots of liberal education and to assist them as they adjust to life in college. The course also provides students with the skills they will need to be successful in honors courses, their majors, and their careers. The six class sections will meet in Hawkins on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons for the fall. Many of the students enrolled in the class will come straight from their rooms in Buist to attend class in Hawkins! *“Using Hawkins as a classroom truly enhances the living-learning community for Honors students. Such an opportunity creates an experience for Honors students that is unique on the College of Charleston campus,” reports Dr. Folds-Bennett. “Furthermore,” she adds, “the opportunity for upper level students in the Honors College to participate in the teaching experience provides an excellent opportunity for leadership development.”*



## Growing our Living-Learning Community (continued)

Converting Hawkins into a multi-purpose space will not stop at Honors ICE. In fall 2008 Hawkins will be equipped with smart classroom technology, allowing upper-level Honors classes to be held in the space. The HC staff is also working on new programming ideas, many of which will be held in Hawkins. Over the long-term, the use of Hawkins as an academic and recreation area will reinforce the idea of a living-learning community in the minds of Honors students. Beginning in their freshman years, Honors students will begin to see Hawkins as their space, a place on campus that they may claim as their own and where they will learn, lounge, and live throughout their college careers.



## CURRENT STUDENTS

### Spending a Semester at Sea

by Kristen Thompson, Honors College Junior



Living on a rocking campus, navigating bus routes in foreign countries, and immersing myself in a significantly diverse student body fundamentally shaped who I am. For three months, I traveled by ship around the world and studied in ten different countries through a unique program called Semester at Sea. We departed from Ensenada, Mexico and spent time in Southeast Asia, India, Egypt, and Europe and completed our journey in Miami, Florida. This gave me the opportunity to immerse myself in different cultures and have a comparative perspective of the places I visited.

Entering college, I thought that studying abroad would be an impossible option. Looking back, it is the best decision that I have ever made. I found out about Semester at Sea from a study abroad fair and did some research on the program. It is sponsored by the University of Virginia and allows students to take upper-level courses in a variety of majors. This program was a perfect fit for me because I needed to fulfill major requirements in any program in which I participated, and I loved the idea of visiting so many places in one semester. The Semester at Sea experience taught me more than I could have ever learned in a classroom. The world was my classroom. I saw many different cultures and experienced ways of life drastically different from my own. I ate food that I couldn't identify. I learned to be more content with uncertainty. There were many times that I set out on a bus having no real understanding of where I was going, but being certain that I would arrive where I needed to be. The language and cultural barriers were also intimidating before I arrived in many countries. I soon realized that these barriers are not so difficult to overcome and that everyone really does smile in the same language. This adventure taught me to be comfortable with myself and to be more flexible.



Part of my experience entailed community outreach projects in Vietnam and India. I went to orphanages in both of these countries and connected with children. I learned about how much I take for granted. This provided me the opportunity to understand the needs of many developing countries, which is something that has shaped my future plans. I realized that I am very interested in international affairs and seek to further my education in this field.

**“I now look at the map and...I feel more connected to the world around me.”**

I now look at the map and see people I've met and places I've been. I feel more connected to the world around me. The world is my home and its people are my family. For further information about my experience, access my blog at [www.kristenatsea.blogspot.com](http://www.kristenatsea.blogspot.com).



## **Election Year Involvement: Interning for a Political Campaign**

by Katie Moske, Honors College Sophomore

**I**t is a rare moment in life when we discover what makes us passionate. For me, that moment came as I was sitting in a crowded campaign office amongst empty coffee cups, patriotic hand-made posters, and the chaos of telephone calls and updated polls. I was exhausted, hungry and scared to death about the upcoming primary results, but as I looked around at the hundred or so dedicated and hardworking volunteers that were tirelessly crowded into our tiny rented space, I was inspired.

For years, I had falsely believed our political system to be run by a few old men in plush chairs and with comfortable bank assets. But at that moment, I realized what truly made this amazing country the free and proud America that it is today. It was the strength, conviction and *passion* that had led each one of those volunteers into that office that day to do their small part to make the world a better place. Regardless of gender, nationality or end of the political spectrum, they were putting their faith in the good of government to fulfill its purpose to serve the people.



And now, one week before the state's presidential primary, they were looking to me to lead them to victory.

I can honestly say that my internship with John McCain's campaign changed my life. By unveiling my strengths, developing my passions and cultivating my professional and personal skills, I came out of the experience with a clear vision of myself and what I want out of my education and career. Although rubbing shoulders with some of the nation's greatest leaders was awe-inspiring to say the least, the grassroots campaign work itself was by no means glamorous. But it was the hours of door-to-door flyer distribution, long nights that somehow turned into early mornings, and thousands of coffee runs that gave me a true taste of real world work pressures and a glimpse of what it takes to keep an office going. From planning events for the Senator to tabulating volunteer contact information, I was able to cultivate many of the skills needed in working with different kinds of people in demanding situations. Too many students these days

## Election Year Involvement: Interning for a Political Campaign (continued)

by Katie Moske, Honors College Sophomore

come fresh out of college and into the real world with no true work experience. However, while completely necessary and very important, textbooks and lectures can only fulfill one aspect of a complete education. Internships provide an opportunity for young people to gain real experience in a field they think they may want to pursue, and an advantage over those who have never been challenged in a competitive environment. Taking the initiative to apply for an internship in an area of interest shows dedication to future employers, but more importantly, it helps one gain a better understanding of oneself.

## CONNECTING ALUMNI

### December 2007 Honors College Graduates

Congratulations to our newest alumni!

Rebekah Drysdale

Charlotte Montgomery

Shannon Renzulli

Brandi Revels

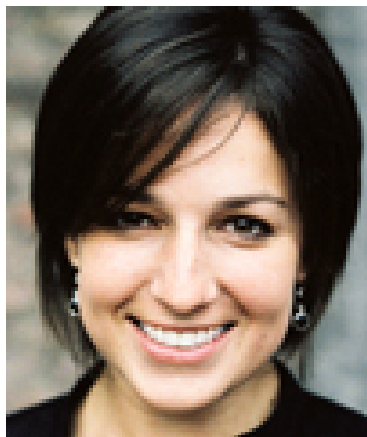
Kaley Ruebush

Shana Sigsbee

Jessica Smth

Laurie Wells-Trompeter

### Life After Honors: Melissa Siegel on the Move



**M**elissa Siegel, hailing from the small town of Liberty, South Carolina (population 3,000), graduated from the Honors College in 2003. She majored in Economics with a minor in Business Administration. After graduation, Melissa entered a Masters program at Utrecht University in the Netherlands where she completed two Masters degrees - an MSc in Law and Economics and an MA in Policy and Organization. She is currently working on her Ph.D. in Social Protection Policy at the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance. Her research is concentrated on monetary remittances between developed and undeveloped countries. Melissa has worked on research projects for the Dutch Ministry of Finance and the World Bank while being employed as a Junior Researcher at Utrecht School of Economics. Her projects have focused on money laundering and on the remittance corridor between the Netherlands and Suriname.

In 2008, Melissa spent five months at Harvard University as a visiting fellow at the Kennedy School of Government. After finishing her Ph.D., Melissa plans on taking a Post Doctoral position in Migration and Development at Maastricht University. Melissa first got her taste for European affairs in 2001-2002, when she studied abroad at Utrecht University in the Netherlands for a semester and at Jonkoping University in Sweden for a semester. During this period, after years of attempting to create a single European currency, the Euro became the legal currency of the fifteen members of the European Union. Living in Europe during this historic time, Melissa began researching the history of the Euro, and subsequently wrote her Honors Program Bachelor's Essay, "An In-Depth Study of the Euro," when she returned to the College of Charleston. Fittingly, Melissa is currently finishing her Ph.D. studies at Maastricht University where, in 1991, the members of the European Union signed the Maastricht Treaty to set up a single currency as part of a drive towards economic and monetary union.

Always the athlete, Melissa took martial arts and horseback riding at the College of Charleston and presented her research on martial arts at the Southern Regional Honors Conference. In Europe she has continued these endeavors by completing two marathons, an Olympics distance triathlon and will do a half iron man in the fall. Although she loves living in Europe and has been able to travel to many countries while living there, Melissa loves coming back to Charleston and tries to time her visits with the Cooper River Bridge Run.

## Networking Nook

*New Job? Pursuing Another Degree? Getting Married? Got a Promotion? Having a Baby?*

### WE WANT TO KNOW!

Please e-mail your life updates to Kendra Luce <honors@cofc.edu>. List the subject as Alumni Update and we'll include your news in upcoming issues of the Honors College Newsletter.

You can also stay connected to the Honors College and the College of Charleston through the Alumni Association's online community. Visit <<http://alumni.cofc.edu>>.

## STAFF NEWS

### Welcome to our New Employees

The Honors College Administration has changed a bit since our last newsletter! Here's a long awaited announcement of our newest employees.



**Dr. Trisha Folds-Bennett**

Associate Dean  
Coordinator of Nationally Competitive Awards  
Joined the HC Administration in 2006  
E-mail: [foldsbennett@cofc.edu](mailto:foldsbennett@cofc.edu)



**Laura Euler**

Academic Advisor  
Joined the HC Administration in 2006  
E-mail: [eulerl@cofc.edu](mailto:eulerl@cofc.edu)



**Kendra Luce**

Office Manager/Assistant Director  
Joined the HC Administration in 2007  
E-mail: [lucek@cofc.edu](mailto:lucek@cofc.edu)

For a complete listing of our Staff, please visit the Honors College website <<http://www.cofc.edu/honorscollege>>.

## SUPPORTING HONORS


### **Thank You for Your Support!**

The Honors College is grateful for the support of our alumni.



If you would like to give a gift to the Honors College you may do so by visiting the College of Charleston Foundation website <http://ia.cofc.edu/howtogive.htm> or you can send your gift by mail:

College of Charleston Foundation  
66 George Street  
Charleston, SC 29424-0001

 Please be sure to indicate that you would like your gift to go to the Honors College. Your donation is tax deductible.