From the Director

As you will read in more detail later in this newsletter, the national Phi Beta Kappa Society awarded a chapter to the PBK faculty and staff at OSU. The chartering ceremony this semester was the culmination of more than 30 years of effort on the part of OSU, and we are thrilled about the number of Honors College students who were invited to join this spring.

With the eight Honors College Degrees earned in December, 2012, our outstanding students have earned a total of 1,366 honors degrees since the first three were conferred in the College of Arts and Sciences in May of 1969.

We continue to enjoy support from faculty and the OSU administration, and this has allowed us to expand the number and variety of honors courses that we can offer for our students. To see our current list of honors course offerings, please visit http://www.okstate.edu/honors/quicklinks.html. Many of you can remember, I’m sure, when the list was a great deal shorter.

Whenever you are in Stillwater when university offices are open, I hope you will stop by Old Central. It’s always great to have a chance to visit with our alums, and you can ring the original 1894 bell in our belfry!

Finally, on a personal note, I have told the provost that I plan to retire from OSU in the summer of 2014—and I want to say “thank you” a bit in advance to all of you who have contributed to the record of success of honors education at OSU. It has been a real privilege to work with such outstanding students, faculty, administrators, and professional staff over the years.

Robert Spurrier, Director, The Honors College
Phi Beta Kappa Now at OSU
Honors Students Among First Invited to Join New Chapter

One of the highlights of the academic year was the chartering of a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa at OSU during a ceremony held in the Assembly Hall of Old Central on the evening of January 17, 2013. Phi Beta Kappa is the most prestigious and oldest academic honor society (founded at the College of William and Mary on December 5, 1776) for students who are pursuing majors in the traditional liberal arts and sciences. The strength of the OSU Honors College was one important factor in the decision to charter our chapter (Gamma of Oklahoma), and the following students who are actively pursuing Honors College awards were among the first group of students invited to join Phi Beta Kappa.

Dru Albin, BIOL
Megan Bennett, SOC
Kelsie Brooks, MCMB
Sarah Brooks, SPAN
Nicholas Cain, CHEM
Tara Cooper, SPAN
Brandi Gallaher, PHSL
Anthony Gonzalez, POLS
Susan Lester, ENGL
Erin Nally, ZOOL
Mark Nelson, RUSS
Madison O’Meara, PSYC
Amanda Pesicka, POLS
Kathryn Saunders, PSYC
Judy Schillo, HIST
Harrison Schroeder, SPAN
Andrew Simmons, HIST
Ashlee Tisdale, PHSL
Hayley Twyman, PSYC
Amelia Wilson, SPAN
Thomas Wright, MATH

National Collegiate Honors Council:
2013 NCHC Conference Report

In November 2012, six members of the University Student Honors Council represented The Honors College at the NCHC Conference in Boston, Massachusetts. Mikala Anderson (EDUC, Athletic Training), Jessica Branstetter (A&S, Microbiology/Cell and Molecular Biology), Lauren Foley (A&S, Zoology), Emily Jones (HS, Nutritional Science), Tyler Nicholas (BUS, Management Information Systems), and Amelia Wilson (EN, Aerospace Engineering) attended sessions to learn about other honors programs and interact with honors students from across the country. Amelia Wilson noted, “The NCHC conference in Boston was an eye-opening experience because it allowed me to see the true breadth of The Honors College at OSU. Our program has classes in nearly every major - we have the unique ability to get honors degrees in engineering, agriculture and other non-humanities.” The students also had the chance to explore the city, including Boston’s Public Gardens (Amelia and Lauren, above left) and Harvard University (Tyler, Jessica, Mikala, Lauren, and Emily, right). The theme for the 2012 conference was “Challenging Structures.”
Honors College Student Profiles

John Leos [right], from Mesquite, Texas, will graduate in May with an Honors College Degree in Theatre. John has been involved in almost every theatre production on OSU’s campus since his freshman year, and he also served as president of the OSU Theatre Council. According to John, the most beneficial part about his time in the Honors College has been his time in Stout Hall. It provided a great sense of community that, as a student coming from out-of-state who did not know anyone coming to OSU, made his experience in the hall enjoyable.

John’s passion for his craft is evident through his senior creative project; he cast and directed a 20-minute scene from the Shakespeare play Macbeth. He even created a new character specifically for a fellow theater major, a freshman who is hearing impaired. Even though his major option is acting, John says that he’s found a new passion in directing and hopes to continue doing it in the future.

Upon graduation, John will move to Dallas and become a production assistant for a new musical being developed at the Dallas Theatre Center. He will also looking into various opportunities to act and direct around the city. He hopes to one day become an artistic director of a major theatre company in New York City.

Amelia Wilson will graduate from OSU in May with an Honors Degree in Aerospace Engineering with a second major in Mechanical Engineering and a second degree in Spanish. Amelia moved to Stillwater from Reno, Nevada, during her senior year of high school and now calls Stillwater home.

As a student, Amelia has been active in Engineers Without Borders; she also has served as a success coach with the CEAT Student Success Center. Amelia became interested in Engineers Without Borders during her freshman year at OSU and went on to serve as vice president and president of the organization. She was able to do a lot of work with the organization, including taking a trip to Honduras during her freshman year.

Amelia credits her time in Stout Hall as a major benefit of being a member of the Honors College all four years. She met a lot of engineers while living in the hall and made lifelong friends. She says that even though she only spent two years in the hall, she greatly enjoyed her time there.

This fall, Amelia will start on her Master’s Degree in Aerospace Engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology. She hopes to work in aeroacoustics, where she hopes to specialize in reducing noise emissions in the entire fleet aircraft. Before she moves to Georgia, she will spend the summer interning with Spirit AeroSystems in Tulsa.
Faculty Profile – Dr. Donald French

Dr. Donald French earned his bachelor’s degree with Honors and master’s degrees in Biology from Fordham University. He went to Indiana to complete his Ph.D, where his focus was fish behavior and ecology. His first faculty position was at the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore campus. He taught in the Marine Science Program, where he specialized in crab behavior and ecology.

Dr. French came to OSU in 1992 and coordinates all sections of BIOL 1114, Introductory Biology. His favorite part about being a Biology professor is teaching. He enjoys being in the classroom and getting students to think new ideas. He likes designing curriculum and new lessons for his courses.

Dr. French’s specialty is Biology Education. He follows research on improving learning in the sciences. He tries to find better ways to teach as well as new ways to help students learn. He started in this area out of a desire to improve how he taught Biology courses. He uses a scientific approach to determine what methods are effective and to discover reasons that students may not be learning the material.

Dr. French’s involvement with Honors students includes teaching the honors sections of BIOL 1114, directing theses, and overseeing honors contracts. He likes that Honors students are engaged in learning and willing to discuss the subject matter. He finds that honors students ask interesting questions and can be quick to take responsibility for learning.

Dr. French enjoys assigning students problems that help them gain new perspectives. A favorite assignment involves a legal case that determined the definition of science. Students read the brief and render an opinion. Their arguments must be based on the evidence presented in the brief. This exercise helps students understand the nature of science.

One of Dr. French’s best memories of teaching involves an Honors class using electronic clickers to answer questions. He would present a question and students would answer the question using their clicker. Usually, as students discuss the question, more information comes out and more students answer the correct answer. In this situation, more and more students were answering incorrectly. Dr. French wanted to help direct them towards the correct answer without giving them the answer. When only one student was selecting the right answer, he was tempted to give up and starting explaining himself, but then that student stood up and reminded the rest of class about the part of the system they were ignoring. Immediately everyone asked to vote again and chose correctly. Dr. French likes this example because it shows how a professor does not always have to give the correct answer, but can allow the students to find the solution through discussing it among themselves, and that each of us can make a difference if we are persistent and persuasive.

Outside of class, Dr. French likes designing new lessons, programming animations, and reading about teaching. He is involved in professional development for faculty and served as president of the National Association of Biology Teachers and Society for College Science Teachers. He serves as the coordinator of the University Faculty Preparation Program at OSU. This program pairs doctoral students with high-quality mentors to help them develop their teaching skills in preparation for faculty positions.
Faculty Profile – Dr. William McLean

Dr. William McLean first came to OSU as a professor and department head of the Military Science department. He came to OSU after serving 23 years in the army where he also taught. He left after four years to become a high school teacher, but later returned to OSU in 2002 as a Ph.D. student. He taught courses at OSU while working on his doctorate and completed it in 2010. He teaches Economics of Social Issues and Money & Banking as well as Honors and regular sections of Micro and Macro Economics.

Dr. McLean has worked with one student on a thesis and overseen numerous honors contracts. He enjoys working with Honors students because of their focus on what they want to do. They know what is required to meet their goals and have a plan and a purpose to accomplish these goals.

His favorite part of being a teacher is helping people learn. He tries to give them tools to learn and then provides opportunities for students to use these tools in class. He thinks of himself as a facilitator in the classroom and uses questions to encourage students’ curiosity. He aims to have a dynamic environment in the classroom where the students are involved in learning. He feels that teaching is an honor.

Dr. McLean’s favorite topic is teaching the lighthouse method, which are three foundational ideas for decision-making. The idea is a person will do whatever is in their best interest. They will do something if the benefit outweighs the cost. They will keep doing it until the cost outweighs the benefit. He teaches this method in his economics courses but it may be applied to make decisions in any area.

His specialty is Economic Education. He looks at how to teach and help students learn better. He strives to be realistic with students that learning is hard work and realizes that a lot of learning takes place outside of the classroom. His focus is helping students recognize what they know and do not know.

Outside of teaching, Dr. McLean enjoys swimming. He swims with the masters swimming class at the Colvin center several days a week. He also serves at LifeChurch. He tries to develop relationships with his students that last beyond class. He enjoys seeing their successes and contributing to this through letters of recommendations.
Alumni

Lenzy Krehbiel-Burton received her Honors College Degree in Journalism and Broadcasting in 2006. She is now a freelance reporter based out of Tulsa, Oklahoma. In 2012, Lenzy received national recognition from the Native American Journalists Association for her coverage of the 2011 Cherokee Nation election. She is currently working on a grant project with the Fund for Investigative Journalism. When not chasing down stories or her three-year-old daughter Adedolisi, Lenzy serves on the national board of directors for Alpha Pi Omega Sorority, Inc., and volunteers with the Oklahoma Quiz Bowl Alliance.

Alee Gossen (née Mitchell) graduated in 2008 with an Honors College Degree in Political Science and minors in Religious Studies and Emergency Management. In 2011, Alee graduated from the OU College of Law (wearing orange every Friday and many days in between). She was married and passed the Oklahoma Bar Exam in 2011 as well. Alee is now a licensed attorney in Oklahoma, and currently works at Houston Financial.

Erin Rogers received her Honors College Degree in Animal Science in May of 2011. Since then, she has worked at a veterinary clinic in Stillwater for a year and is currently in her first year of veterinary school at Oklahoma State University. She expects to graduate in 2016.

Tricia Seth (née Cunningham) graduated in 2008 with an Honors College Degree in Accounting. She still works for KPMG, but moved to Midland, TX with her husband, Cody, in March 2012. Tricia and Cody welcomed a healthy baby boy named CJ Seth on April 9, 2013. They are enjoying every moment with their future OSU Cowboy!
Alumni

Christopher Michael Hoover graduated from OSU May 2nd, 2010 with an Honors College Degree in Biochemistry. He has been working at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation (OMRF) for the past 3 years as a Senior Research Technician in the Genetic Models of Disease Program. During that time he has been published twice in Genetics: the first paper, published in 2011, describes the role of the novel protein HID-1 in the Dense Core Vesicle maturation pathway; the second paper, coming out this May, shows the protein JIP-3’s role in regulating vesicle trafficking in the axonal segments of neurons. Christopher also has a pending paper with Neuron about a novel function for CaMK II and Dense Core Vesicle trafficking. He decided 19 months ago that he was interested in pursuing a career in medicine as well as continuing in his passion of medical research. Christopher began applying to MD/PhD programs this past fall and was accepted into the University of Oklahoma’s College of Medicine and into their MD/PhD program, with his first lab rotation starting June 1st and Medical School starting in the fall.

Christopher was married November 20th, 2011 to Tracy Danielle Roberts. They met their freshman year at OSU in Biochemistry Club, Delta Nu Alpha, and she also graduated May 2010 with a degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. She is finishing her Masters in Teaching, Learning and Leadership this May at OSU and will be teaching secondary biology in Oklahoma City this coming fall.

Janie Taylor (née Johnson), PT, DPT, OCS, graduated in 2003 with her Honors College Degree in Family Relations and Child Development. After graduating from OSU, Janie attended the OUHSC earning a Master of Physical Therapy Degree in 2006. She then attended A.T. Still University in Mesa, AZ to receive a Doctorate of Physical Therapy degree. In 2010, she earned her American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties certification as an Orthopedic Clinical Specialist. Janie currently is a partner in Physical Therapy Central, with multiple outpatient private practice physical therapy clinics in Oklahoma. She lives in Pauls Valley with her husband and two children, Kate and Harrison.

Profiles (cont.)
Elizabeth Steichen Bailey Kastl earned her English Bachelor’s Degree with Honors in 1972 and her Master of Arts in English in 1974.

Currently, Elizabeth does some consulting for Laying the Foundation, a company providing training for Pre-AP and AP teachers. In June 2011, she retired after working with Putnam City Schools as Secondary Language Arts Specialist for 7 years. Previously, she worked with Edmond Public Schools for 26 years as an English teacher for 8th-11th grade students. Elizabeth also taught 11th and 12th grade English at Stillwater High School for 3 years.

John Hess graduated in 2011 with two Honors College Degrees in Political Science and History. He is currently a second year history graduate student at the University of Kansas and studies American military history. This year he received the Kevin J. Carroll Prize from the Society for Military History for a paper presented at the Missouri Valley History Conference. John plans to complete his Ph.D. by May 2016 and hopes an opportunity presents itself to return to OSU to teach and research. Go Pokes!!!

Bryson Baker graduated with his Honors College Degree in Theatre in 2009. He went on and graduated with his Masters in Theatre in 2011. In the summer of 2011, Bryson married his college sweetheart, Raychel Ann Craven (OSU 2010). They bought their first house in Stillwater and love cooking together, watching movies, and hanging out with their two beagles. In 2012 Bryson co-starred in a movie filmed in North Eastern Oklahoma called "Left of Center." Visit leftofcentermovie.com for details. In 2012 he helped open "OrangeTech" in the newly renovated Student Union. OrangeTech is a full-service technology store and an Apple, HP, & Dell authorized reseller.

Profiles (cont.)
Alumni

Eric Moffitt, who served as an Honors College Ambassador, graduated in May 2012 with an Honors College Degree in Design, Housing, and Merchandising with the Interior Design emphasis. Wanda Hotels and Resorts in Beijing, China recently hired him. Eric will be moving there at the end of April or early May. Along with his team, Eric will be creating design concepts for luxury hotels throughout China.


Erin Prutow graduated from OSU in May 2011 as an outstanding senior with two Honors College Degrees in Political Science and Philosophy. She is currently finishing up her first year at Emory University Law School in Atlanta, Georgia. Erin has an externship lined up for next year with the Turner Environmental Law Clinic, where she will be immersing herself in the world of sustainability and energy law. She is also the Vice President of Emory OUTLaw, an LGBT allied organization focusing on human rights and equality.

This summer Erin plans on finishing her MA in Philosophy and spending time in Bozeman, MT with recent OSU Veterinary Medicine Graduate, Aaron Mackley. She is also continuing to live out her passion on horseback, riding part-time at Macara Stables under Paul MacRae in Alpheretta, Georgia and cannot wait to have time to compete this summer! She wishes the best of luck to all the 2013 Honors College Grads! You are part of an exceptional network and should be very proud! GO POKES!

Profiles (cont.)
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