As you will see elsewhere in this newsletter, Honors College students continue to set records in all sorts of ways. All of us are extremely proud of these fine students, and we celebrate their many accomplishments!

One recent example is that another OSU student was elected to a student position on the Board of Directors of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) in the fall of 2011. Emily Jones, a Nutritional Sciences and Physiology double major in the College of Human Sciences from Overland Park, Kansas, was one of two students elected to a two-year term. Six students and eighteen faculty and professional members make up NCHC’s governing board. OSU honors students previously elected to the NCHC Board include Alaina Harrington (B.S. Accounting, 1995), Angela Coulson Shuck (B.S. Management, 1999), Casey Tippens (B.S. Agricultural Economics, 2002), and Maggie Hill (B.A. Journalism & Broadcasting, 2005). NCHC has more than 800 member institutions, and no other college or university has matched OSU’s record in terms of the number of students elected to the Board over this time period.

It continues to be a real pleasure to be able to work with OSU students, faculty, and administrators to build on our record of success in The Honors College to improve the range of opportunities available to some of OSU’s very best students—and for the first time we have included an optional essay as part of the admission process for new freshmen. We hope that giving students the chance to provide this additional information will help us accept additional highly-motivated students. If you would like to see the essay questions, you can go to http://www.okstate.edu/honors/essayquestions.html on our web page.

As always, I would like to invite you to stop by Old Central whenever you are in Stillwater during the week. It’s always great to have a chance to visit with our alums.

Robert Spurrier, Director, The Honors College
One for the Record Books
Honors College Students Have Another Record-Breaking Year

Honors College students continue to excel at Oklahoma State University, and this year was no exception.

Last fall, The Honors College welcomed a record freshman class of 437 active participants, which was an increase of over 25% from fall 2010. The total number of “active participant” Honors College students broke the 1000 mark for the first time ever in the fall semester of 2011, reaching 1001. That record didn’t last long, though. The spring semester of 2012 saw that record shattered with the number of active students topping the charts at 1,052, an increase of over 20% from spring 2011.

For the first time in Honors College history, the number of active participants increased from the fall semester to the spring, due in part to another record number of new active participants who joined The Honors College in January of 2012. Over 200 second-semester freshmen accepted invitations to become members of The Honors College and are currently active participants this spring.

With freshman enrollment just around the corner, the Honors College staff looks forward to welcoming another outstanding freshman class into its supportive community of scholars!

National Collegiate Honors Council:
2012 NCHC Conference Report

This past October, three members of the University Student Honors Council represented our Honors College at the 2011 National Collegiate Honors Council in Phoenix, Arizona. The event, which carried the theme “Stewards of our Colliding Worlds: Rights, Wrongs and Responsibilities,” was attended by Mikala Anderson (EDUC, Athletic Training), Clairissa Craige (CASNR, Animal Science) and Emily Jones (HS, Nutritional Sciences). The conference allowed students to interact with peers from other honors institutions across the country through various sessions, plenaries, and events. The plenaries focused on topics such as the Arizona immigration law debate and how the environment is being negatively affected by human endeavors, and they gave the students the chance to see controversial issues affecting our country from different viewpoints. They also attended a special event at the Arizona Science Center that offered special hands-on exhibits on the mind, body, and world around them.

The yearly conference gives members of the University Student Honors Council the chance to view other programs and bring back ways to make the honors experience at Oklahoma State University a better one for all of our students. We look forward to working with some of those ideas in the future.
Honors College Student Profiles

Jamie Vickery, a senior from Del City, Oklahoma, will graduate in May with her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science. Along with being a candidate for the Honors Degree, she is also minoring in Sociology and Emergency Management along with earning a Certificate in Environmental Studies. A member of the Honors College since her first semester at Oklahoma State University, Jamie attributes her success in the program to the guidance she has received from her Honors College advisor, Dr. Robert Spurrier, and professors in her various honors courses.

During her time at OSU, Jamie has been very involved on and off campus; she has served as the director for The Big Event, and she has been active with her sorority. Last summer, she interned with the Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security, gaining valuable experience in grant writing and working with various agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

This fall, Jamie will begin working towards a Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of Colorado.

Tyler VanArsdale is a senior Entrepreneurship major from Ponca City, Oklahoma. He is also on his way to earning minors in French, Japanese, Management Information Systems (MIS) and Entomology, as well as the Honors College Degree. According to Tyler, the most beneficial part about his years as a member of the Honors College has been his time in Stout Hall; he has lived there for the duration of his college career and has been very involved, most notably serving as president of the hall for a year.

Tyler is also an active member of the OSU student body and is a member of several different organizations across campus. He is a past recipient of the Wentz Research Scholarship, is involved with the Entrepreneurship Club and the International Student Organization, and has served as a U.S. student representative on the executive board for the Phi Beta Delta Honor Society.

Tyler recently accepted a Fulbright grant and will teach English in South Korea for a year; he will leave for this opportunity this upcoming July. Upon his return, he would like to pursue a Master’s in Linguistics or similar field and plans to continue one of his passions – photography.
Dr. Tom Wikle, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and Professor of Geography came to OSU in 1989. He was hired as an Assistant Professor of Geography after completing his doctorate at Southern Illinois University.

Dr. Wikle’s research area is in the geography of telecommunications. He has looked at the international adoption of cellular telephones and FCC policies towards low power FM radio stations. He is currently working on a paper about the non-adoption of Facebook in other countries and why Facebook is not the dominant social media platform in certain countries.

Dr. Wikle teaches an honors section of Physical Geography at OSU. He enjoys teaching students, especially honors students, because they are excited and energized about learning. He has found honors students to be motivated, well prepared, and have high expectations for themselves. He enjoys helping them uncover new knowledge.

In addition to teaching at OSU, Dr. Wikle enjoys traveling and teaching the study abroad courses offered through the university. He has taken students to Morocco, Italy, and Greece for short-term study abroad experiences. He will be one of two instructors for this summer’s trip to Cambridge in which many honors students participate. He will also travel to South Asia on a recruiting trip for OSU.

Dr. Wikle’s other hobby besides travel is flying. He enjoys being both a pilot and a flight instructor. He gives flight instruction to people of all ages here in Stillwater.
Faculty Profile – Dr. Carisa Ramming

Professor Carisa Ramming started teaching at OSU as a visiting professor in 2007 and became an assistant professor in 2009. She earned a Master’s degree in Architectural Engineering and another Master’s in Civil Engineering at OSU after completing her Bachelor’s in Architectural Engineering, also at OSU.

Professor Ramming began working with honors students by overseeing contracts in the Steel class and the Statics class. The popularity of contracting Statics led Professor Ramming to create an honors section of Statics. She enjoys the honors section because she has great interaction with students in her class. In the honors section, guest speakers come speak with the students. The speakers talk about careers they have involving structural engineering.

One project Professor Ramming enjoys assigning is a comprehensive design homework at the end of the semester. The solution to this problem requires integrating different principles and teachings from throughout the semester. This problem allows the student to use the material they have learned and use it together to find a solution.

A favorite teaching moment was when she took her Steel class on a field trip to WW Steel in Oklahoma City. They saw a new type of pedestrian bridge that is being built for Oklahoma City. She enjoyed this time because she was able to see the students become excited and have fun with the subject of steel design and framing.

One of Professor Ramming’s special activities involved her collaborating with other professors on a workbook for Project Lead the Way. This is a program for high school students explaining and promoting architecture and engineering. This program is designed to give students a realistic picture of what being an engineer or architect will be like. This workbook will go alongside a textbook that is part of this program used in high schools.

When not teaching, Professor Ramming enjoys running marathons, participating in triathlons, and biking. She is currently training to run in the Chicago marathon. Another interest of hers is gardening in her flowerbed.
Faculty Profile – Dr. Franklin Norwood

Dr. Franklin Norwood is an Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics. He arrived at OSU in 2003 after completing his doctorate in Economics at North Carolina State University.

Dr. Norwood teaches an honors section of Introduction to Agricultural Economics. In previous years, he taught honors students alongside non-honors students with a special discussion section for the honors students. This year, for the first time, the honors section is a completely separate section.

One of his favorite experiences from teaching an honors course occurred this semester when he showed a video in class that sparked a discussion lasting one hour. He enjoyed this experience because students are not normally this engaged and videos rarely generate this level of interest.

The good discussion in class is one of the things Dr. Norwood enjoys about teaching honors students. He finds honors students really enjoy reading and discussing the material he assigns in class. He assigns a combination of fiction and non-fiction books each semester. He likes that they have a lot of curiosity about the subject matter covered in class.

One special project that Dr. Norwood likes to assign in class is a plan for retirement. He saw a lack of knowledge among students in this area and how many people are not saving nearly enough. He gives students a spreadsheet to fill out. They put down how much money they expect to earn and what their expected return will be. This spreadsheet then shows them how much income they would have in retirement. Students can adjust the amount and gain a realistic picture of how much they should be saving for retirement.

Dr. Norwood, when not teaching or with his family, likes to write fiction. He always had a love for books and had studied other peoples’ writing. He always wanted to write a book and felt he could write a novel after writing a textbook and another book on farm animal welfare. Last semester he accomplished this by going on sabbatical and writing a novel.
Faculty Profile – Dr. Priscilla Schwarz

Dr. Priscilla Schwarz came to OSU in 1995 as a Visiting Assistant Professor in Art. She had previously spent a year as a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Missouri-Columbia after completing her Ph.D. in Art History at Rutgers University. Though she began with one course her first semester at OSU, she quickly accumulated more courses, and currently teaches a full load of 8 courses a year.

Dr. Schwarz teaches an honors section of Art 1603, Introduction to Art, and in 2007 began teaching the Honors Western Humanities seminar sequence. She enjoys team-teaching this seminar as well as listening to her colleagues lecture. She also enjoys reading the students’ papers based on assigned readings for the class. Her favorite part of these courses is when, during an exchange with her students, they gain a full understanding of the lesson.

Dr. Schwarz has a lot of fun teaching honors students and always hates to see the semester end. She likes that honors students have greater awareness and knowledge of social, cultural, and historical references. She also enjoys their political awareness. She finds that they are inquisitive, enthusiastic, and very good at critical thinking and analysis.

Dr. Schwarz’s specialty is Nineteenth-Century French paintings. Her focus is the French Realists and Impressionists periods, including social and gender issues in visual imagery, and the relation of popular imagery to salon-bound and avant-garde art.

Outside of the classroom, Dr. Schwarz enjoys attending performances at the Seretean Center and doing yoga. Assisting her children in their creative pursuits and enhancing their education is also a priority for her.
Alumni

Robert Choate graduated from OSU in 1997 with an Honors Program Degree in Aviation Science. He worked as a pilot for eleven years with PSA Airlines, and was recently hired at US Airways. Robert and his wife of fifteen years are expecting their seventh child in June.

Brenton Massey graduated in 2011 with an Honors College Degree in Philosophy. He is about to complete his first year of medical school at the OSU College of Osteopathic Medicine, and he credits his experience in The Honors College at OSU with helping him successfully secure a medical school seat.

Dr. Christopher Lehman graduated with an Honors Program Degree in History in 1995, and was the first African American to do so. He is now a full professor in the Ethnic and Women's Studies Department at St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Christopher has written four books, one of which--The Colored Cartoon--won a Choice Outstanding Academic Title award in 2008. In June and July 2011, he was a summer visiting fellow at the W.E.B. DuBois Institute for African and African American Research at Harvard University through a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

A glimpse of our old home – Edmon Low Library

Profiles
Alumni

Emily Littlejohn graduated from OSU May 2009 with an Honors Degree in Athletic Training. She began Physical Therapy school at OUHSC-Tulsa that summer and will graduate in May 2012 with a Doctorate of Physical Therapy. During her time in Physical Therapy school, she traveled to Texas and Alaska for clinical rotations, and completed two rotations in Oklahoma. She also served as the Student Physical Therapy Association Vice-President of the Tulsa campus for one year. She was awarded the Elam-Plowman scholarship for excellence in musculoskeletal physical therapy twice, and recently was selected as the 2012 Oklahoma Physical Therapy Association Outstanding Student from OU. After graduation from PT school, she will return to her hometown of Newcastle, Oklahoma, and will work as a Physical Therapist for Physical Therapy Central of Newcastle.

Corey Farrell (Political Science ’03) sends greetings from Washington, D.C. She is pictured below with fellow OSU Alum Rob Stalzer. Both are attorneys with the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Immigration Litigation. Corey joined the office in 2006, after graduating from American University Washington College of Law. She now lives with her husband in Maryland. Rob joined the office in 2010, after graduating from Pepperdine University School of Law and accepting two clerkships in Los Angeles. He now lives in Virginia. At OSU, Corey and Rob were in one of Dr. Spurrier’s seminars offered for honors students interested in law. At the time, neither of them suspected that they would see each other again. Imagine their surprise to discover that not only did they both become lawyers, they now work in the same office, just down the hall from each other.
Alumni

Rhonda (Feightner) Sweeney graduated from OSU in December 1972 with a Bachelor’s Degree with Honors in Mathematics. Joining Exxon immediately after graduation, she held executive positions in Information Technology and Controllers before retiring in 2006.

Rhonda serves as a trustee and active volunteer for the Houston Grand Opera and the Houston Grand Opera Guild. She is Membership Vice President for Opera Volunteers International and on the Advisory Board for the University of Houston’s Moores School of Music, where she and her husband Donald are major underwriters for the annual summer Texas Music Festival. Donald and Rhonda are also benefactors for the biennial Catholic Charities’ Concert at the Villa, benefiting the Diocesan AIDS ministry.

Rhonda and Donald, also an Exxon retiree, enjoy travelling and will be visiting Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia in 2012. In summer 2013, they will visit Zambia, Botswana, and South Africa with their family to celebrate their 25th anniversary, and in the fall they will travel to Australia where they will see Wagner’s Ring Cycle in Melbourne. They are traveling around the U.S. to see operas in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New Orleans, Santa Fe, and Seattle, and will try to catch a baseball or basketball game when possible! In Houston, they have season tickets to the opera, ballet, Houston Rockets, and spend their summers in Hawaii.

Rhonda remains active with OSU as a member of the Spears School of Business Hall of Fame, Spears School of Business Associates, OSU Alumni Association, and through funding the ExxonMobil Controllers Alumni Scholarship with other retirees and employees.

Since graduating with an Honors College Degree in Political Science in 2010, Sadie Stockdale (left) has almost completed two years as a Teach for America English I teacher in Tulsa, Oklahoma, while also earning a Master’s Degree in Education. On June 1st, Sadie will be married and will most likely be moving to Los Angeles to continue her graduate work in public policy at the University of Southern California.
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http://www.facebook.com/OklahomaStateUniversityHonorsCollege

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Ebonie Hill-Williamson

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Comments, inquiries, and submissions should be addressed to: Editor, The Honors College, 101 Old Central, Stillwater, OK 74078 (405)744-6799 or email ebonie.hill@okstate.edu

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