From the Director:

If the 90-plus degree afternoons are any indication, summer has officially arrived at Lone Star College Kingwood. These hot summer days are usually quiet times around the campus compared to the longer fall and spring semesters so it is the ideal time for many of us who teach to reflect on the successes and failures of the previous nine months. We reached several milestones in the Honors Program this past year. We graduated our largest class to date in May that included future teachers, professors, nurses, lawyers, and activists. A few months earlier we opened our new Honors Lounge to students, and much to my surprise, students are using the space for studying much more than socializing and relaxing. Unfortunately, the number of students participating in our program dropped to an all time low this past spring.

The quiet summer days also allows us to contemplate the future. In order to continue to grow the program, we are placing greater emphasis on recruiting talented students and reaching out to students looking to enrich their education. We are also developing new honors courses for the fall and spring semesters, and as the number of students graduating from our program increases, we are starting an alumni association to allow them to keep in touch with each other. We now have graduates at UT Austin, A&M, UT Arlington, UH, Sam Houston, Stephen F. Austin, and several other universities around the state. One of our former students will begin her PhD work this fall as well. I am also happy to announce we are building a seminar room next to the Honors Lounge to be used exclusively for honors classes.

As you read through our newsletter, see how the Honors Program is helping our graduates, alumni, faculty, and current students reach their own personal milestones.

David Putz, PhD
Director, Honors Program
Non-traditional student and December graduate Veronica Hales-Galbreath (AA ’11) did not have the opportunity to go to college after high school. Over the last twenty years she had thought about continuing her education, but with each passing year the thought of going to college grew farther away; she began to feel she was too old to learn anything new. Veronica finally took the big step soon after her fortieth birthday and enrolled full time at LSC Kingwood in 2009. After her first semester she realized she had the desire to not only learn, but excel. She was encouraged by Professor Link Hullar and Dr. David Putz to enroll in an honors course and join the Honors Program and Honors Student Organization. Joining the Honors Program not only enriched her learning experience, but it also allowed her to meet new friends, participate in service learning projects, and go to events and functions that she would have otherwise not been able to experience. Outspoken and opinionated, Veronica was an ideal honors student.

Veronica was recognized as an Honors Scholar at graduation and graduated Summa Cum Laude. She is now enrolled fulltime at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville where she is earning her BS in Education 4-8 Mathematics.

By joining the Honors Program and LSC Kingwood, Gillianne Ardoin (AS ’11) was, as a returning student, able to benefit from the camaraderie and support provided by a variety of motivated and wonderful people. She says there were ample opportunities to work with other students, and the community environment provided by the program surpassed her friendship networks. Her honors courses and her faculty relationships opened doors for her, including getting accepted to the University of Texas School of Nursing in the Houston Medical Center.

As a future nurse, Gillianne says she found the challenges set by the Honors Program both significant and extremely rewarding. Dr. Mike Clark, professor of Anatomy and Physiology, in particular, helped her develop the mindset necessary to succeed as a nurse. Her year of Anatomy and Physiology, she says, would not have been possible without his guidance and inspiration.
Teresa Wells  
_in her own words_

I’m the youngest daughter from a homeschooled family of seven. I was born in Naples, Italy. My parents worked with humanitarian aid programs and disaster relief throughout the years and they moved often between various foreign countries. As a homeschooler, I had more freedom to pursue my interests, and during high school I helped start several small businesses and charities. Recently, I worked with helping train service animals for handicapped children.

Here at LSC-K I’ve been studying full-time to get the basic courses that I need to transfer to the University of Houston for Computer Science. I chose to study Computer Science because I’ve been obsessed with the technical aspect of computers for as long as I can remember. I haven’t gotten much into extracurricular work with any campus organizations yet, but I hope that working with the Honors Student Organization and Public Achievement will change that.

I decided to take honors at the recommendation of my Philosophy teacher during my first semester at LSC-Kingwood. The different structure of the honors classes appealed to me. I also liked the idea of working with other motivated students and being able to get more out of the courses I take.

Jonathan Long is a dual-credit home-schooled student entering his junior year of high school. Before arriving at LSC-Kingwood, he participated in homeschool co-ops and other resource classes in the area. The classes at LSC-Kingwood have been a great opportunity for him to complete his high school education while kick starting his college education and offering a greater challenge and more experience than he would normally have. Currently, he has acquired 18 credit hours, and plans to have around 40 by the time he graduates.

At the end of the Spring 2012 term, Jonathan was surprised by a referral to the Honors Program from his Spanish 1411-12 teacher, Professor Elena Cataldo. Initially, he was skeptical -- in his mind, “Honors” meant “harder” and “more work.” However, after Dr. David Putz and several Honors students explained the program and what it has to offer, he decided to join. The aspects that have attracted him to the program are the smaller classes, the more discussion-based lessons, and the large number of interesting classes available to Honors students. As he has not yet selected a college or a major, Jonathan is hoping that the classes -- more enhanced and focused -- will allow him to better explore his interests in different fields.
Dr. Joan Samuelson completed most of her academic work at the University of Houston where she received both her Bachelors and Masters degrees. She also holds a PhD in English awarded by The Ohio State University. Dr. Samuelson has 38 years teaching experience, 28 of those years have been at Lone Star College-Kingwood. As one of the college’s founding faculty members, she has seen the college grow from a handful of students in 1984 to over 12,000 today. Her teaching specialties include British Literature, Women’s Studies, and Holocaust Lit. With two other professors at the college, Dr. Samuelson initiated online teaching at the college 12 years ago. In addition to her teaching, Dr. Samuelson has been a department chair twice, has led the faculty as Faculty Senate President, and even created and managed the college web site for 5 years. Away from campus, Dr. Samuelson founded Houston Sheltie Rescue, and the group has saved over 1,000 Shetland Sheepdogs.

Though Dr. Samuelson enjoys all of the courses she teaches, she especially likes the Honors Classes in British Literature-Medieval to Restoration and Holocaust Literature because they give her an opportunity to work closely with relatively small classes in a seminar environment much like graduate school. The emphasis is on discussion, journals, research, reading, oral reports, and field trips with classes that become very bonded to one another in a collegial academic atmosphere. Look for Dr. Samuelson to offer an honors seminar on Women’s Literature in the spring.

CORRECTION: In our Spring 2012 faculty spotlight Professor Peggy Aalund was recognized as a Nurse Practitioner. She is a Pediatric Nurse.

What We Teach: Honors Common Read

This fall, the Honors Program will, for the first time, have an Honors common read. Modeled after a successful program at the University of Wisconsin, students in honors classes will share in the experiences in reading the same book. By doing so, we hope to create a stronger sense of community among students in our program. Faculty in the Honors Program have been encouraged to adopt the same book to read and to incorporate the book in to their class. At the end of the semester, all honors students will gather to share their thoughts on the book and to create conversation among students and faculty in the program.

Our first book will be The New York Times’ bestseller The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot. Lacks, a patient at Baltimore’s Johns Hopkins Hospital in the 1950s, had cancer cells unknowingly removed from her body that have since become some of the most important tools in medicine. Though many have profited from the sale of her cells, the Lacks family received no monetary compensation for the cells and is today unable to afford health insurance. The book traces the contribution the HeLa cells have made to science and research and raises questions of medical ethics, race, and quality healthcare. It’s an ideal interdisciplinary read.
Since transferring to UT Austin almost two years ago, Guy Hawkins (AS ‘10) has had access to resources and opportunities that he previously thought unimaginable. His time at LSC Kingwood was an invaluable experience, but to know himself meant exploring the many different paths and opportunities offered by UT. Transferring in, he had his sights set on a degree in Biology and a career in Medicine. After shadowing a doctor, touring a medical school, and volunteering at a hospital (all provided by organizations at UT), he realized healthcare may not be the right career choice. By a stroke of luck, he enrolled in Introduction to Computer Programming his first semester. This class opened up the world for him. There was something about software development that just clicked. He took some more Computer Science classes the following semester, and by his third semester, he had switched majors. This summer, Guy is working full time as a Software Engineer for Overwatch Systems in Austin. He will finish his degree next year and will either explore options in graduate school or will continue working at his career. Either way, he could not be happier with his choices, and the Honors Program is happy for him and wishes him the best of luck.

Congratulations to our December 2011 and May 2012 Graduates

Krystal Broussard
Veronica Hales-Galbreath
Lucy Hofle
Corey Lenon
Caitlin Lowe
Shelley Peterson
Brandon Swaringim
Christina Thornton
Rick Westover
Nayely Zamudio

Caitlin Lowe (AA ’11) has had a busy, but enjoyable, first semester at the University of Houston. Following in the footsteps of other Honors Program graduates like Jana McKelroy (AA ’09), she joined the UH Honors College and took her first four classes at the university through the Honors College. Needless to say, she spent a lot of time at the College, but she did take some time to share her experiences as a UH cougar with the Honors Program at LSC Kingwood.

Having already been exposed to life as an UH Honors College student through a visit organized by the Honors Program, Caitlin became involved with the UH Center for Creative Work’s Ekphrastic Art Exhibition and Dionysia, an annual event that celebrates the great books and ancient Greek festivals. She submitted two pieces for the event, a quilted fabric inspired by King Lear and a second one based on the tale of Orion and Artemis. Caitlin also spent time working, as part of the City Dionysia class, on the crew of a modern version of Aristophanes’ The Frogs.

This summer, Caitlin studied abroad for two weeks in Italy as part of a Cultures of Italy course. The trip included visits to the cities of Florence, Lucca, Pisa, Siena, San Gimignano, Rome, Naples, and Campania. The highlight for Caitlin, both figuratively and literally, though, was ascending the peak of Mt. Vesuvius.

It’s no surprise that Caitlin is an active member of the UH Honors College. At Kingwood, Caitlin took advantage of many of our honors courses and was closely involved with the leadership of the Honors Student Organization. Caitlin graduated as an Honors Graduate with Distinction this past December but you can still find her on campus visiting with former professor Dr. Joan Samuelson. Thanks for sharing Caitlin!

WHERE CAN YOU FIND OUR GRADUATES?

Keelie Barrow-University of Texas Arlington
Krystal Broussard-Texas A&M Corpus Christi
Shobhit Keswani-Stephen F. Austin State University
Corey Lenon-University of Houston-Downtown
Brandon Swaringim, University of Houston Honors College
Amos Zimmerman, University of Texas at Austin
A Word on the Honors Student Organization
From Coralyn McAnally, HSO President

The 2011-2012 school year seemed to fly by, and as we look back on it, the HSO had a great year filled with fun activities and learning opportunities. As always, eligible HSO members were delighted to participate in several Honors Program activities, highlighted by a trip to East Texas which included an afternoon at the Museum of the Gulf Coast, great Cajun food, and a trip down the bayou at Shangri-La Botanical Garden and Nature Center. We also had another enjoyable weekend when the HSO sponsored an overnight trip to New Braunfels for a tour of Natural Bridge Caverns, definitely something every Texan should see.

Our year was interspersed with some of the best-ever service projects with which I have been personally associated, including the Lowlands, a 200-plus acre part of the Kingwood campus north of the tennis courts. HSO placed mile markers for trail runners, installed trash receptacles, and worked to get the 200-foot boardwalks assembled. In addition, HSO sponsored a “Tree Planting Challenge” to help Office of Sustainability Director David Burre plant 300 willow trees to assist with erosion control.

In addition, HSO is very excited about the new officer team for the 2012-2013 school year. Our new incoming president is Gilberto Flores and our vice-president is Teresa Wells. They will be joined by our new secretary, Nataley Cajina, and new treasurer, Magdalena Crofts. We are excited about this group to spread the word about HSO. Have a great summer and we’ll see you in August!

Photos on this page: Shelley Peterson receiving Outstanding HSO member award (top right), HSO students at the Downtown Aquarium (top left), Shelley Peterson and outgoing HSO President Coralyn McAnally (bottom left)
The spring semester ended with the recognition of our largest graduating class to date from the LSC Kingwood Honors Program. Ten of our students successfully completed the requirements to receive their Associate’s degrees as well the requirements to graduate from the Honors Program. Seven graduates received our highest level of recognition as Honors Program Graduates with Distinction. To receive this award, students had to complete a minimum of 15 credit hours in honors coursework and complete an additional 25 hours of service learning.

An intimate graduation reception was held for all of the Honors Program graduates and Phi Theta Kappa officers in the college’s new Student Conference Center the Friday before spring commencement. College president Dr. Katherine Persson and Honors Program director Dr. David Putz presented graduates with their graduation regalia. Graduates were also presented with a personal copy of Dr. Seuss’ Oh, The Places You’ll Go. Deans Jim Stubbs and Dr. Linda-Luehrs-Wolfe, Dr. Rebecca Riley, Vice President of Instruction, and Honors faculty watched as the academic accomplishments of students were recognized in front of friends and family.

Photos this page, clockwise from top right: Rick and Heather Westover, Nayley Zamudio and Lucy Hofle, Dr Jay Theis, Coralyn McAnally and Shelley Peterson.