From the Director:

In graduate school, one of my professors had a set of what he called “teaching laws,” and one of them had to do with the proper relationship between students and faculty. “I am their professor, not their friend,” he would tell me, and as a young faculty member at LSC Kingwood, I tried to follow this law and keep a professional distance from my students. I never much engaged them outside of class and I would never inquire about their personal lives.

That strategy, however, proved to be difficult once I became director of the Honors Program. When a faculty member works closely with a group of students and spends a considerable amount of time with them, it is challenging to keep the personal and public separate. Over the past few years, I would say that I have become friends with many of the graduates from our program, and I am finding that true this year as well. I have been fortunate to watch friendships develop among the students in the program and I have been fortunate enough to share in some of those friendships. I am honored to call many of them friends and thank them for showing me the fallacy of what I learned in graduate school about faculty and students.

I hope you enjoy reading our fall newsletter and learning about some of the students who are pulling me out of my professional shell.

David Putz, PhD
Director, Honors Program
Corey Lenon returned to college to pursue a degree in education after a ten year career as a pasty chef. As a returning student, Corey enrolled at Lone Star College-Kingwood because of the smaller class sizes and the joint enrollment agreement the college has with the University of Houston-Downtown for the education program.

Corey says that she joined the honors program when her English professor, Joseph Minton, extended a personal invitation to her to join his honors section of Composition and Rhetoric II early during her time at Kingwood. Until that point, Corey writes, she had not considered taking an honors course, believing it would be too difficult. It turned out to be an amazing class that she thoroughly enjoyed. Corey eventually took additional honors courses at the college and also completed several honors contracts, a privilege reserved for the college’s strongest honors program students.

One of the advantages, Corey says, of honors courses is the ability to students to learn about each other as they build community over the semester. Instructors are able to go into more depth with the material because of the structure and size of the class.

Ramsha Hussain is in her fourth semester at Lone Star College Kingwood. She was a member of the first graduating class of K-Park High School in 2010 and will be graduating from Lone Star with her Associate of Arts next spring. The Honors Program, she says, has been great because the small class size is great for discussion. The Honors community is close knit and Ramsha said it provided her with the opportunity to get to know her fellow classmates and have friends long after she leaves Lone Star.

Ramsha’s presence on campus isn’t limited to participating in the Honors Program. She is also a student ambassador for the college. As an ambassador she represents the school to the community and gets the opportunity to be involved in school activities. After graduating from LSC Kingwood Ramsha hopes to attend Rice University to get a degree in business marketing.
Christina Thornton
2011 Coca Cola Leader of Promise

Nineteen year old Christina Thornton graduated from Kingwood High School a year early and joined the LSC Kingwood Honors program because she wanted to give herself an advantage over other students who were also looking to transfer to a major university. She says she enjoys being in the Honors Program because the classes have an atmosphere that is very different from other classes. The teaching style, which is more discussion-oriented builds a sense of comradery with fellow classmates and gives, she says, students a chance to think deeply about the topics under discussion. She, like many other students in the program, has met some of her best friends through the program, friendships that she will maintain after she leaves campus.

Christina has been active outside the classroom as well, organizing a petition drive in support of Bradley Manning and leading the effort for a fundraiser for the college’s Lowlands area. Last semester, she started a book club at the college and next spring she will be one of the college’s National Model United Nations delegates. In addition, Christina received one of 150 Coca-Cola Leaders of Promise awards through Phi Theta Kappa this semester.

After graduation, Christina hopes to attend Rice University and major in English and American Literature with a double minor in Sociology and Jewish Studies.

Danielle Senyk, who regularly claims that her life is chaotic, joined the Honors Program during her second semester on campus. She, along with many others in our program, is a non-traditional student. She has a three year old daughter, is a single mom, and yet has managed to have one of the most competitive grade point averages in the program.

Danielle initially enrolled in a Continuing Education program in 2009 to become a phlebotomist. She quickly excelled only to realize that, although she had received her certificate, she had only gained the skills to perform a job. Truth be told, just over broke, what she really was seeking was a career. She returned to her counselor, Dr. Suann Herford, to enroll in credit classes. By the end of her first semester, she had been recruited to the Honors Program by Professor Stacy Walker who would go on to become Danielle’s mentor and support system. Since that time, Danielle says she has made many life-long connections and friends she will cherish for a lifetime.

Danielle will graduate in 2012 with her AAS in Nursing and her BSN requirements complete. She readily admits that she takes on too much, but what she does, she does to the best of her ability. She hopes to continue to grow and enrich her life pursuing an education that will eventually pay back twentyfold in the long run.
Kirsty Miller has been an Academic Advisor at Lone Star College-Kingwood for five years. After graduating from Texas State University in San Marcos, Kirsty decided that she wanted to work in the “helping field.” Her role as an Academic Advisor at Kingwood allowed her to achieve that goal. She has a love for working with students. “Helping them realize their potential while achieving their dreams is very rewarding,” she says, and it makes her feel good about herself to know they deeply appreciate what she does for them. In fact, advising is one of the services at the college that students find most valuable. Kirsty especially enjoys working with the honors program because the students involved in it are exceptional students who desire to get that extra 10% to everything they are doing in an effort to become more than what is expected of them. Students tell Kirsty they prefer the honors courses because of the group interaction and class discussion. Today, Kirsty can be found at the college’s new center in Atascocita. Thanks Kirsty for all your hard work and support of the Honors Program!

What We Teach: Literature

Our Honors section of Composition and Rhetoric II, taught in the spring semester by Professor Joseph Minton, has the same number and type of writing assignments as conventional English courses. The smaller class size will allow for more extensive, in-depth discussion of the literature, more thought-provoking essay topics, and reading assignments selected to spark the imagination as well as to demonstrate the usual elements of the literary genres. MW 1.30p-2.50p

Topics covered in the Honors section of Dr. Joan Samuelson’s Literature of the Holocaust include the early experiments with genocide, historical anti-Semitism, experiences of victims, and moral questions centering on the question of evil and collective responsibility. Students in the course can expect to become familiar with the Holocaust by reading entries in the texts and supplements provided by Dr. Samuelson, viewing numerous films on the Holocaust, and taking a tour of the Holocaust Museum in Houston. Students will be expected to participate in discussions, keep a weekly journal, write a research paper, and give an oral report based on their research. Dr. Samuelson offers this course each spring semester. MW 12.30p-1.50p
When Jonathan Wendt (AA ’10) started at Lone Star College-Kingwood, he was unsure of what he was even doing here in the first place. College did not run in his family so it was definitely unchartered territory for him. He found the Honors Program quite by accident. During his second semester, Jonathan needed an English 1302 credit, and he needed it at a time to fit his schedule. The only class that fit his schedule was one offered by Dr. Joan Samuelson. He excelled and was recruited by her to take several additional honors courses, including British Literature and Literature of the Holocaust. He was again recruited by Rick Westover to join the Honors Student Organization and eventually joined a small group of students on a service trip to Nicaragua as part of the college’s first alternative spring break program.

After graduation, Jonathan transferred to Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches where he is currently pursuing his BFA in Creative Writing. If all goes well, he plans to graduate next fall with honors and a portfolio of his works and begin the pursuit of being published. He also has plans to return to Kingwood to pursue another degree in field of music training as he has various opportunities in music ministry.

Where Can You Find Our Graduates?

Gilliane Ardoin, UT Health Science Center Houston
Keelie Barrow, UT Arlington
Guy Hawkins, University of Texas at Austin
Kyle Hyland, Texas A&M
Jana McKelroy, University of Houston Honors College
Amos Zimmerman, University of Texas at Austin

The Honors Program wants to hear from you! Got something you would like to share with us? Then contact Dr. Putz at dputz@lonestar.edu or Jana McKelroy with the alumni association at jana.mckelroy@gmail.com.
Kyle Hyland (AS ’09) was a student at LSC Kingwood during the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 academic years and spent the majority of that time as a member of the Honors Program. He met many amazing people and has remained connected to them since graduation, but most importantly, he says, the Honors Program woke his passion for science and clarified his choice of major and career path. Kyle was also a member of one of the largest cohorts of graduates from the Kingwood Honors program and graduated with distinction, completing more than 15 hours of honors credit and several service learning projects.

Kyle has spent the last two years studying molecular biology at Texas A&M University where he was awarded a collegiate transfer scholarship his first year there. He attributes his success at A&M to his experiences in the Kingwood Honors Program, especially the work he did with Biology Professor Betsy Morgan. The Honors Program, he said, taught him how to think critically about a problem from completely new perspectives and that has been advantageous for him at A&M. He was able to apply those methods of critical thinking to the problems he encountered once he transferred to a major university. He also says the Kingwood Honors program prepared him for the transition from a community college to university. Eventually, Kyle will begin work on a doctoral program in biology.

Kyle has no regrets about his two years at Kingwood and says the hardest part about taking honors courses was overcoming the idea that the word honors and harder mean the same. “Honors courses were a great way to approach old questions with new approaches, yet at not point in my honors experience did I ever feel that the process was hard,” he writes.

Kyle can still be found on the Kingwood campus over the summer earning credits that he transfers back to A&M. He keeps in regular contact with the Honors Program and has returned to be the keyboard player for the Honors Program at the Lake Houston Relay for Life the past two years.
A Word on the Honors Student Organization
From Cory McAnally, HSO President

HSO hit the ground running this August and never looked back! Starting with the Rush Registration table in the old SFA building, the Honors Student Organization, under the leadership of a new officer team, has been working hard to fill Honors classes with qualified students and build the social arm of the Honors Program. We were excited to see a lot of interest from new students at Club Rush, as well as a good turnout at the monthly meetings, held the first Tuesday of each month in LIB 218 at 12:30.

Our service learning projects have been especially rewarding this semester, with a full day at the Volunteers for Animal Protection spent bathing, feeding, mowing, and cleaning. HSO Officer Krystal Burroughs will be returning to VAP in December to photograph the homeless animals and trying to help get all of them a new home for Christmas.

HSO also continued to participate in its ongoing support of the Lowlands, a 250 acre plot of land being developed in conjunction with David Burre, the college’s sustainability director. HSO was able to work on the property setting mileage markers, installing boardwalks, and cleaning the trail and banks around Evans Gully.

And just in case you think we are all work and no play, HSO has had some fun this fall! We sponsored the first ever Great Pumpkin Carving Contest for Oktoberfest and we also took a trip to New Braunfels to see Natural Bridge Caverns. We have also continued the tradition of Book Bytes, selecting local author Jerry Moore’s A History of the GREATEST City on the Planet, Humble Texas, and adding a visit to the city museum in Humble and ending with lunch with the author and his wife. This has been a great semester with lots more to come in spring.

Photos on this page: HSO students entering Natural Bridge Caverns (top right), Krystal Broussard talks to a student at Oktoberfest (top left), Natural Bridge Caverns can get humid (bottom left)
The mission of the Honors Program at LSC Kingwood is to enrich the academic experience of the college’s academically talented students. The program provides students with a different learning experience inside the classroom, and we add to that experience by providing students with numerous opportunities for experiential learning that takes place outside the classroom, and this semester was no different. We started by taking Texas History students on a day trip to the San Jacinto monument where Professor Steve Davis led the students in a private tour of the battleground. Cody Pogue also announced his candidacy for the state legislature on the trip. Dr. Joan Samuelson took a group of students enrolled in her British Literature class to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston to see the traveling exhibition, Tutankhamen: The Golden King and the Great Pharaohs. Many of the 100-plus pieces of antiquities had never been shown in the United States. Dr. David Putz also took a group of students on an overnight trip to southeast Texas to experience a little Cajun culture. The weekend started with a tour of the Gulf Coast Museum and dinner at a local restaurant, Larry’s Cajun Market, where students listened to zydeco (though no one ended up on the dance floor!). Saturday the students visited the Shangri La Botanical Gardens, one of only ten sites in the world to receive LEED Platinum recognition.

The Honors Program also continued its popular “Conversations with…” discussion series. This semester the theme was artistic expression and students had the opportunity to sit and talk with LSC Kingwood Theatre Director and faculty member Eric Skiles, and Art Professors Kelley Revuelto, Cory Cryer, and Mari Omori. The college’s Vice President of Instruction, Dr. Rebecca Riley, also shared some of her work with students. The discussion series ended with a visit to the Menil Collection, which houses one of the largest private art collections in the country. Once again, the “hairy cheese” was a student favorite. Thanks to all the Kingwood faculty who helped make the series a success!

Photos on this page: top left, Honors Program students at Shangri La Botanical Gardens.

Get Ready for these Spring Events!

An Day at the Zoo
GCIHC Spring Retreat
Club Rush
Krewe of Kingwood