From the Director:

Summer months are times of transition on college campuses. The spring semester comes to a close, and many on campus use the quieter summer months to begin preparing for the fall semester. The Honors Program is no different as we are busy this summer preparing for our transition from a small, campus oriented Honors program to a much larger, six campus Honors College.

Some of these changes will be quite dramatic while others will be less so. Students who are members of the LSC Honors College will continue to take advantage of special classes that are limited to fewer than 20 students and are taught by some of the most exceptional faculty at Kingwood. Students who are members of the Honors College will also continue to enjoy privileges unavailable to other students on campus such as out of classroom enrichment activities, travel, research opportunities, study abroad, and recognition at graduation. One of the biggest changes is that we will welcome 15 incoming freshman to campus who will be recognized as Chancellor’s Fellows and will receive one of the most generous scholarship packages LSC offers that covers in district tuition and provides students with both a textbook allowance and living stipend each semester.

With the support of college administrators who acted as champions for our most academically talented students and the hard work of a dedicated group of faculty who believe in Honors education, LSC has positioned itself to be a leader in Honors education among community colleges. Come see what we are doing to prepare.

David Putz, PhD
Director, Honors Program
John Feierabend graduated Valedictorian from high school at the age of 16, and after his parents expressed concern that he might not be ready for life at a four year university, he investigated local community colleges and opted to attend LSC Kingwood because of its academic reputation. As soon as he enrolled, he was determined to participate in organizations on campus that would give him additional academic and service opportunities. That determination led him to the Honors College at Kingwood.

John just completed his second semester in the Honors College, which, he says, offered more than he could have imagined. What has affected him the most is the diversity of people in the Honors College and how accepting they are of differences. He has friends from different cultural and religious backgrounds that he believes would not have been possible without the Honors College. The opportunities provided by the College, he says, have enriched his understanding of culture and people more than what most people undergo in a lifetime.

After earning his Associates of Science from Lone Star, John hopes to continue his education at the University of Houston where he will work toward a Bachelor of Science with the long term goal of a career in medicine as a pediatrician, though, he says, LSU is also an option.

Angie Zelaya started her academic journey with Honors with she was in the eighth grade. She always had the determination to exceed and challenge herself academically because she was not very athletic. She subsequently took AP courses in high school and continued to take honors courses when they were offered.

She joined the Honors College at Lone Star Kingwood upon the recommendation of English Professor Sherry Young. She struggled with her first Honors course, Composition and Rhetoric II, taught by Professor Joseph Minton, but liked the challenge and the feeling of satisfaction that came with her eventual success in the course.

Angie has found that the Honors College has continued to challenge her academically. She has also found it refreshing to have peers that are as determined as she is to learn. She has created amazing friendships in the Honors College and memories that she will cherish forever.
Da-Wabomate (Boma) Cheetham-West, In Her Words

This is my last semester at Lone Star College-Kingwood. I have been a full time student for the two years that I have been going here. My original plan was to take some basic core classes that would transfer to university, but I decided to get my Associates of Arts degree after my first year of being here.

When I first started attending Lone Star, I was not interested in the Honors College. My mother suggested I join, but I just wanted to take classes and get good grades; I had taken AP and honors courses during high school and wanted a break. During my first semester my Economics teacher invited me to join the Honors College. I looked over the classes that were to be offered the following semester and became interested in a Holocaust Literature class that was taught by Dr. Joan Samuelson. This class quickly became my favorite and I went on to take two more classes taught by Professor Samuelson. Through the Honors College I was able to apply myself in a way that contributed not only to whom I am as a student, but who I am as a person. The professors are passionate about teaching, and excited to watch the students learn and grow.

After graduating this spring, I am planning on transferring to the University of Texas in the fall.

The Honors Program at LSC Kingwood allowed Geology major Kristan Garcia to be challenged in a class that went directly toward her Associate of Science degree plan, her intended major, and her career plans. Kristan was able to earn Honors credit by working closely with Dr. Cherith Letargo on an honors contract. The Honors contract option allows students like Kristan to earn Honors credit in courses that could not be offered as a regular honors section. Kristan's project included visits to Galveston to perform mapping of local beaches, a research paper, and a presentation to her peers. Her final project will be presented at an international conference in San Diego with Dr. Lethargo. The project allowed Kristan to collaborate with Professor Lethargo and reaffirmed her enthusiasm for Geology.

After graduating from LSC Kingwood, Kristan intends to transfer to Texas A&M University in College Station to complete her undergraduate degree in Geology. She has plans to pursue a graduate degree in Geology after successfully completing her coursework at A&M.
Betsy Morgan has been teaching Biology at LSC-K for over 18 years after starting her career in education at John Jay High School in San Antonio. The highlight of her teaching career, though, was a 10 day trip to the Galapagos Islands where she hiked several of the islands and snorkled with penguins. She has also done work in Belize and Guatemala studying ecosystems and coral reefs.

A graduate of Texas A&M University, Professor Morgan’s research interests include science education and wildlife fisheries sciences. She is a board member for the Society of College Science Teachers and is also active with the National Association of Biology Teachers and the National Science Teachers Association. Professor Morgan teaches the Honors sections of Biology 1406 and 1407, a course recommended for science majors. Many of her students continue to talk about their experience in the class after they graduate LSC-K, making it one of those rare courses that creates community among students of different generations.

When she isn’t in the classroom, Professor Morgan competes in marathons and triathlons. She has biked the MS150 several times and has completed two Ironman triathlons. She is hoping to compete in her third Ironman in 2014. Way to go Professor Morgan!

What We Teach: Biology in the Field

This past semester, BIOL 1407 students, under the leadership of Professor Betsy Morgan, travelled to Port Aransas for a weekend visit to the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and the University of Texas Marine Science Institute. The first stop was the ANWR where students saw alligators and heard their mating calls. Students also saw the only population of wild Whooping Cranes in the area and had the opportunity to hike through the park and test their plant knowledge.

On Saturday, students went out on the UT Marine Science Institute research boat and collected plankton, squid, and crab. The afternoon was spent at Padre Island National Seashore seining the marsh and walking the beach. Students were able to observe the differences between a Texas beach closed to vehicular traffic and one that has constant traffic.

Experiential learning is an important part of the honors curriculum at LSC Kingwood. Whenever possible, our faculty are encouraged to take their students in the field, whether it is the marshes of the Texas gulf coast, the main stage at the Alley Theatre, the San Jacinto battlefield, or exhibits at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.
Brandon Swaringim (AA ’12) describes his time at Lone Star Kingwood using one word: growth. When he first stepped foot into a college classroom in January 2010, Brandon felt like a child overwhelmed by the intimidating world around him. At the time, finding his place in the world seemed impossible. However, thanks to the guidance and encouragement that he received from a few strong mentors, he decided to break out of his comfort zone and become involved in the Kingwood Honors College, serve as a Kingwood delegate to the Model United Nations in New York City, and even spearhead a few clubs. The sense of competence he obtained from all those experiences radically changed his life.

Since his days at LSC Kingwood, Brandon has completed his Bachelor’s degree in Psychology at the University of Houston, and after preparing for and taking the GRE, is looking forward to graduate school. While at UH, Brandon was active with the Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA), the Texas affiliate of the National Education Association (NEA), itself the largest teacher union in the US. Brandon was elected president of the TSTA Student Program in 2013 and sat on the TSTA Board of Directors and made decisions effecting the direction of legislation in Texas.

Like many of our former students, Brandon attributes his success in all of these activities to his sense of self-empowerment that he gained from his time at Kingwood. Brandon continues to live in the Kingwood area with his wife and son and makes occasional visits to campus. We wish him the best of luck as he transitions to graduate school at the University of Houston-Clear Lake.

Where Can You Find Our Graduates?

Jacob Abajian, Trinity University
Christian Arnold, University of Houston
Teresa Wells, Stephen F. Austin
Amos Zimmerman, Baylor Medical
Veronica Hales-Galbreath (AA ’11)
In Her Own Words

After graduating from LSC-Kingwood I transferred to Sam Houston State University. I am an Education 4th-8th Mathematics major. I am finally a senior and will be graduating next year. It will have taken me three years to complete my B.S. at SHSU because, like a lot of students, I changed my major only to change it back. I plan to begin an M.A. degree in Mathematics Education soon after I graduate. I am a member of Alpha Chi National Honors Society and Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education. I have maintained a high GPA despite the fact that I still work full time in Humble and drive to Huntsville four days a week.

To be honest, there are days when I am exhausted and want to give up, but that is not an option. I did not start college until after I was 40 years old; the primary reason was that I was petrified of math. However, during my first semester at LSC Kingwood I discovered I was awesome at math. That being said, I did not choose math as my area of certification because I am good at it. I chose math because there are so many who are afraid of math just like I was. I believe if even one student does not attend college because they are afraid of math that is one too many.

Veronica was recognized as an Honors scholar upon graduation from LSC Kingwood. She was also the first graduate to be recognized on the LSC Kingwood Learning Center’s Wall of Fame.
A Word on the Honors Student Organization
From Magdalena Crofts, HSO President

The Honors Student Organization (HSO) is an on campus club that is dedicated to enriching the experience of academically focused students at the Kingwood campus. The goal of the HSO is to provide educational opportunities for students enrolled in the Honors Program and to other students who are striving to expand their knowledge and experience at the college. The HSO had an active presence on campus during the spring semester. Members participated in the College’s Earth Day event by setting up a booth where students could guess the decomposition time of everyday trash items and win prizes. Later in Earth Week, the HSO hosted a lecture by Dr. Brian Shmaefsky about environmental advocacy. HSO members also had the opportunity to volunteer at the Humble Area Assistance Ministries (HAAM) food bank by stocking food and filing client orders.

On the lighter side, the HSO attended the Theatre Department’s annual Evening of Shorts, a series of plays written and directed by students, explored the Menil museum, one of the largest private collections of art in the country, and participated in an overnight trip to Sam Houston State University. In addition to all of the events over the past semester, the HSO also hosted monthly meetings where students could get to know one another. The monthly meetings created opportunities to participate in enriching workshops such as building a strong resume and writing great college applications. At the end of the semester, the HSO sponsored “Pancakes through Finals.” This is a biannual event where the members get together and make pancakes and serve them to the students on the mornings of their finals. The HSO had a very fun Spring semester, and the organization is looking forward to the Fall!

Photos on this page: Top right, HSO members on the campus of Sam Houston State University; Center; at the Texas State Prison Museum; Bottom left, HSO 2013-2014 officers.
The mission of the Honors College 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. This past semester, a group of Honors students participated in an Alternative Spring Break trip to El Paso. LSC Kingwood partners with Border Servant Corps to immerse students in the experiences of the El Paso/Las Cruces migrant community. Students spent the week learning about border issues the importance of community and living simply. Students also got hands on experience working in food pantries and community gardens. The highlight of the week was working with migrant children and playing “shaving cream baseball.” Professor Betsy Morgan’s BIOL 1407 class also had the opportunity to travel together to Port Aransas to experience firsthand research on Texas Gulf Coast marine life and learn about the issues facing Texas beaches and marshes.

Dr. Joan Samuelson once again took a group of students enrolled in her British Literature class to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Dr. Samuelson even serves as the tour guide for some of the museum’s artwork! This is the fifth year Dr. Samuelson will be taking to students to the museum and it is a highlight of the semester. Students have lunch together after the tour where they discuss what they consider art and how it relates to the literature they are studying.

The Honors College also continues to support local theatre and the LSC Kingwood theatre department. For the final event of the semester, the Honors College supported Kingwood faculty member Dr. Susan Cotton as her original play was performed at the 9th Annual Kingwood Shorts Festival.

Photos on this page: BIOL 1407 class at University of Texas Marine Biology Institute, Port Aransas.