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# HONORS

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# NEWSLETTER

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

What is the role of Honors in the College of Liberal Arts today? What services does it provide? What benefits does it confer? In a time of declining enrollments and recurrent retrenchments, isn't such a program really superfluous? Isn't the money diverted to Honors better spent by line departments in the teaching of students? These questions and others have surfaced many times during the past six months or so. This essay is an attempt to supply some answers. It is an inadequate attempt to be sure, but one that, despite its limitations, indicates the basic points that a more complete discussion would make.

The aim of the Honors Program is to promote academic excellence. It does this by attracting bright, academically talented students to the college and by spurring, enticing, and encouraging them to perform to their potential. All students, for example, who want to graduate *summa cum laude* (the highest level of honors) must complete a thesis. Many students at the honors levels *cum laude* and *magna cum laude* also complete major projects in their senior year. To support and encourage this activity the Honors Division awards research grants to deserving students.

The Honors Division annually recruits a large number of talented students who might otherwise have enrolled in either another university or another college within the University. In a recent survey of Honors freshmen, for example, 63 out of 161 (39 percent) said that acceptance into the Honors program was a major factor in their decision to come either to the college or the University, and 23 out of 149 (15 percent) said that had there been no Honors program they would have gone elsewhere.

The Honors program, because of its ability to identify and provide a program for high-ability students, generates a good deal of scholarship money for the college. Donated to the University by private persons and designated for those who exhibit merit as well as need, such grants enable the University to attract the very ablest students in the Upper Midwest.

The Honors Division offers faculty and graduate students a chance to experiment with new courses. College Honors Seminars provide faculty the opportunity to try out new topics, approaches, or methods on bright students. Since many seminars, furthermore, are taught by faculty outside the college, they often introduce liberal arts students to advances and techniques in areas like medicine,

agriculture, and the biological and physical sciences. Freshman-Sophomore Colloquia, on the other hand, offer advanced graduate students the chance to teach courses of their own devising in their specialties — a chance that many would not otherwise have.

The Honors Division brings students together with faculty at perhaps the most crucial time of all — when they enter the University. A group of about 50 faculty, from within CLA and without, have volunteered to advise Honors freshmen and sophomores. Students receive advice about courses, careers, and prospects, and faculty get a chance to guide and influence interested and intelligent beginners. The important thing is that the interaction comes at the beginning of a student's educational career.

Has then Honors a place in today's environment? The answer, it seems to me, is an unequivocal yes. In a time of declining enrollments, Honors attracts students — bright, intelligent, talented students; in a time of pinched resources, Honors brings to the college large sums of scholarship money; in a time of course offerings tending toward the tried-and-true generators of student credit hours, Honors provides a home for innovation and experimentation; and in a time of the University's struggle to overcome its image as a large, anonymous, impersonal, and overly bureaucratic institution, Honors introduces entering students to close and often friendly relationships with faculty. Honors programs at the other Big Ten universities, though under scrutiny like all other programs and departments these days, enjoy strong support and are thriving. The Honors Division of CLA is strong and vital. It performs functions that are unique and valuable. It has the enthusiastic backing of a strong segment of the faculty. It deserves support.

Stephen P. Blake

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## COLLEGE HONORS SEMINARS: 1979-80

For the coming year juniors and seniors in the Honors program will be offered a series of interesting courses covering a wide variety of topics. College Honors Seminars augment departmental honors courses and introduce advanced students to subjects outside their specialties.

Seminars count as Honors opportunities and may be taken A/N or S/N. Registration procedures remain substantially the same. In order to draw a card from the Class Reservations Office, students must obtain a clearance from the Honors office. Once the registration limit for a seminar has been reached, no additional students are admitted. There is no entry by special permission and no possibility of auditing. Waiting lists, however, are maintained in the Honors office.

Following is the schedule of College Honors Seminars for 1979-80. Final listings, including times and places, are published each quarter in the Class Schedule. Course descriptions and scheduling information are provided with registration materials.

### Fall Quarter

#### *Human Sexuality*

Professor Patricia J. Aletky  
Department of Family Practice and Community Health

#### *Methods of Archaeology*

Professor William Coulson  
Department of Classics

#### *The Concept of Wilderness in Literature and Politics*

Professor William Cunningham  
Department of Genetics and Cell Biology

#### *When Revolutions Occur, and Why*

Professor Raymond D. Duvall  
Department of Political Science

#### *Rural Health Care in Minnesota*

Dr. John B. O'Leary  
Department of Family Practice and Community Health

#### *The Livable Winter City*

Professor William C. Rogers  
World Affairs Center

#### *Interpersonal Variables in Communication*

Professor Gerald M. Siegel  
Department of Communication Disorders

### Winter Quarter

#### *Islamic Science: Its Impact on the European Renaissance*

Professor Subir Banerjee  
Department of Geology and Geophysics

#### *Animals in Traditional Chinese Culture*

Professor Franklin Barnwell  
Department of Ecology and Behavioral Biology

#### *Biochemistry and Our Environment*

Professor Stanley Dagley  
Department of Biochemistry

#### *Islamic Revivalism and Activism in the Middle East*

Professor Caesar E. Farah  
Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies

#### *The German Americans*

Professor Evelyn S. Firchow  
Department of German

#### *Privacy and Private Space*

Professor Yi-Fu Tuan  
Department of Geography

### Spring Quarter

#### *The Western Manuscript Book*

Professor Rutherford Aris  
Department of Chemical Engineering

#### *The Older Woman*

Professor Jeanne E. Bader  
Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs

#### *The Novelist as Social Prod*

Dr. M. Michael Eisenberg  
Department of Surgery

#### *Solar Energy Conversion by Living Plants*

Professor Albert Frenkel  
Department of Botany

#### *African Nationalism and Revolution: 1945-75*

Professor Lansine Kaba  
Department of History

#### *Mathematical Ideas and Methods*

Professor Warren Loud  
School of Mathematics

#### *Women in the Performing Arts*

Professor Elizabeth Nash  
Department of Theatre Arts

#### *Environmental Degradation: From Indifference to Concern to Chicken-Littlism*

Professor W. Dixon Ward  
Department of Communication Disorders

## SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

James R. St. George, a sophomore in the College of Liberal Arts and a student in the Honors Division, was selected as the 1979 Truman Scholar from the state of Minnesota. Mr. St. George bested a field of candidates from other colleges and universities within the state and will receive, along with 52 others from across the country, an award of up to \$5,000 for tuition, fees, books, and room and board. The scholarship is renewable for four years: two years of college and two years of graduate school. The successful candidate must demonstrate outstanding potential for public service and academic excellence. Mr. St. George is a political science major and plans to attend law school. He is committed to representing the interests of minorities in the United States — Indians, blacks, and others.

This is the third year of the Truman Scholarship program and there have been three winners from the state of Minnesota. All three have come from the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota, and all three have been students in the Honors Division.

## HONORS COMMONS ROOM

The need for a meeting place for Honors students has been recognized since the beginning of the Honors program in 1961. On any campus (even the smallest) it is often difficult to bring students and students and faculty together outside of the classroom; at a commuter campus like the University of Minnesota it has been well-nigh impossible. An Honors Center or Honors Lounge would enable students and faculty to engage in the relaxed, informal kind of intellectual interchange that is so essential to a liberal arts education, but that is often difficult to achieve inside the classroom. Most of the other Big Ten universities, having realized the importance of such a place, have long since established special Honors areas.

Plans for a centrally located facility have been discussed, formulated, and put forward for the last 15 years or so. William McDonald, the first Director of Honors, tried unsuccessfully to obtain several places in the early days of the program. As the Division grew in size and complexity, the need for a meeting place became more acute. Burnham Terrell, the second Director, drafted an elaborate proposal for an All-University Honors Center that was to service about 1,600 students. The Center would have included 11 rooms: a lounge, dining room, study room, listening room, studio, library, and five seminar rooms. It would have taken about \$10,000 a year to run and administer. Unfortunately, the proposal was not funded.

In 1974 Frank Hirschbach, Professor Terrell's successor, submitted an Educational Development Grant Application asking for about \$5,000 to furnish and renovate an Honors Lounge. The proposal was modest; it envisaged one or two rooms with a total of about 850 square feet. The application was not funded because Honors had not been able to

acquire, at the time of the proposal, the proper space.

In late June of 1974 the Honors Division tasted its first success. A room in Westbrook Hall (201) was given to the Division. However, there were so many restrictions about the room — its use, the renovations that could be made, and Honor's tenure there — that Peter H. Robinson, the last Director, decided not to move in.

In early 1975 Professor Robinson requested that 125 Johnston be assigned to Honors. Although the space (544 square feet) was the smallest of all the proposals (successive directors having scaled down their requests), the convenience of the location (next door to the Honors office in 115 Johnston), and the reasonable cost of refurbishing made the location attractive. In March 1975 the plan that was submitted to Space Programming and Management for solving the space problems in CLA designated 125 Johnston as the site of an Honors Lounge. Over the past three and a half years most of the other aspects of that plan have been completed — everything except the Honors portion. Finally, in late November 1978, some 17 years after the establishment of the program, Honors won out. An Honors Commons Room came into being in 125 Johnston.

The Commons Room has been an enormously successful addition to the Program. Freshman-Sophomore Colloquia and College Honors Seminars have been scheduled there; symposia and discussions of various kinds have been held; and the Honors Student Senate and the Honors Committee have met there. The room has also been available for studying, informal class discussions, and bag lunch programs. It has given Honors students for the first time a room of their own. It has also helped to establish the atmosphere of inquiry and interest, of intellectual creativity and seriousness that is at the very heart of the Honors Division's insistence on academic excellence.

## HONORS SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

Thirty-one persons from the 1978-79 freshman class in the College of Liberal Arts received scholarships from the Honors Division last fall. Seven persons received awards from the Century Fund. Established by former CLA Dean Frank Sorauf, this fund distributed monies solely on the basis of merit. Twenty-four persons were awarded grants from the Charles and Ellora Alliss Educational Foundation Fund. Recipients of these awards had to show evidence of financial need in addition to promise of academic achievement. The top winners are listed below:

### Century Fund

Keith William Baker, Western Spring, Illinois  
Scott Plous, Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
Kathleen V. Moseman, Worthington, Ohio

### Alliss Foundation Fund

Laura Mary Joy McCann, Moose Lake, Minnesota  
Bruce D. Carlson, New Brighton, Minnesota  
Sandra G. Swanson, Deerwood, Minnesota

## FRESHMAN-SOPHOMORE COLLOQUIA

Twenty-three Honors Colloquia were taught this past year, presenting students with a variety of challenging topics and excellent instructors. These topics attracted the most interest:

Decision Making for Women  
Clinical Psychopharmacology  
Bach, Beethoven, and Borges  
Infant Intellectual Development  
Critical Play Viewing  
Women in the World: Challenge and Change  
Speleology: the Study of Caves  
Liberal and Marxist Perspectives on "The Woman Question"

While many colloquia were taught by Ph.D. candidates working on their dissertations, several courses were taught by regular faculty members and University administrators. Professor Barbara Knudsen, Criminal Justice Studies; Dr. F. S. Abuzzahab, M.D., Department of Psychiatry; and Dr. Barbara Pillinger, Assistant Vice-President for Student Affairs, all taught highly stimulating and successful Honors Colloquia.

## HONORS STUDENT SENATE REVIVED; NEW OFFICERS ELECTED

After a period of dormancy, the Honors Student Senate has come back to life. A number of meetings were held during winter and spring quarters, and, although the turn-outs were usually light, enough students indicated interest to warrant holding elections this spring. As a result of a tie in the polling for Senate president, Tim Brandow (studio arts and psychology) and Scott Plous (psychology) agreed to cochair the Senate for 1979-80. Rita Tellers (a probable language major) and Julie Carley (journalism/advertising) were elected by acclamation to secretary/treasurer and publicity chairperson, respectively.

Among the projects being considered for next year are faculty/student symposia and informal get-togethers (perhaps regularly scheduled "teas" in 125 Johnston for faculty and students involved in Honors courses each quarter); social events for Honors students (perhaps a "get acquainted" dance in the fall); and noontime seminars or panel discussions. Of course, more student involvement will be necessary to get these projects started.

Already in the works is one major project sponsored by the Student Senate: the One-to-One program. Under the leadership of Sue Pribyl, Julie Keil, Perry McGowan, and Maureen Welch, the One-to-One committee has been recruiting volunteers to serve as big brothers and big sisters to next year's freshmen. The primary objectives of the program are to help first year students become acquainted with the people, places, and procedures of the University and to help orient them to the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of participation in the Honors Division. The group will be meeting this summer to plan a mailing to next year's freshmen and to make arrangements for fall activities involving the One-to-One people.

## FINANCIAL AID FOR GRADUATE STUDY

Students who plan to begin graduate school in September of 1980 should visit the Fellowship Office of the Graduate School (422 Johnston Hall) soon. Many national scholarships require essays, letters of recommendation, and up-to-date transcripts, and have fall deadlines. To apply for one of these grants a student should begin planning and preparation before the start of the 1979-80 school year. Listed below are approximate deadlines for a few of the major fellowships:

Fulbright: early October  
Marshall: early October  
Rhodes: middle October  
Danforth: late October  
National Science Foundation: middle November  
Churchill: middle November  
U of M Endowed Fellowships: early February

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