Have you ever wondered what goes on in Office 103 of Clayton Hall every day? Who is the staff member that helps plan social events and manages prospective students for the Honors Program? Among many other duties, the Honors Program Coordinator provides administrative and secretarial services, maintains communication within the program, maintains the website, monitors incoming applications, meets with prospective students, and oversees Honors interns.

In January, the Honors Program bid farewell to Nancy Andres who had been the Honors Program Coordinator since the summer of 2007. For many students in the Honors Program, Nancy was their mom-away-from-home. Freshman Tricia Martin said that Nancy “knew each of us by name. She always asked how our days were going. She was there for anything and everything. I can think of numerous occasions where I had questions that didn’t necessarily deal with the Honors Program. She would answer them for me herself, or pass along the question to someone who knew better.” Dr. Christopher Swanson, the Director of the Honors Program, agreed with Tricia, saying that, “One of Nancy’s strengths was her ability to listen to academic or personal issues with which the Honors students were dealing and problem solve with them to help resolve these issues.”

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While Nancy will be missed by all of the staff and students involved with the Honors Program, it is with great excitement that the program welcomes Sarah Papesh as the new Honors Program Coordinator! Dr. Swanson is excited to be working with Sarah and commented that, “she will bring a fresh viewpoint to the Honors Program as we continue to make improvements to it in the future.”

Sarah said that one of the most appealing aspects of working with the Honors Program at Ashland University is the opportunity to work with the Honors students and others who truly value education. She looks forward to assisting the students and challenging them in new ways; she said that “the students that apply to be in the program need to be willing to be challenged, and the scholars that are part of the Program need to rise to the challenge.” Sarah also mentioned that she has already noticed that the faculty members that work with the Honors Program encourage the students to be creative, engage in activities both inside and outside of the classroom, become positive leaders, and think outside of the box. As she continues to get acclimated to the University and the Honors Program, Sarah said that she has “some ideas brewing and is looking forward to seeing where they fit and getting them implemented.”
Health. How can we not be aware of arguably the most important aspect of our lives? Perhaps we live in a state of perpetual ignorance out of choice; we’re young, we don’t have to worry about cardiovascular disease, diabetes or cancer for another thirty years. Dr. Michael Roizen came to Ashland this March to show just how important health is for people even in their early twenties.

He began his lecture by explaining that the cost of healthcare is increasing significantly because there is an “influx of chronic disease.” His work at the Cleveland Clinic has made it possible for chronic disease, at least in the Cuyahoga County, to decrease by 2 percent every year. How is this change possible? While Dr. Roizen never said this directly, I believe awareness must first be implemented. We’ve all heard from doctors and parents to avoid added sugars and unnecessary stress, but have we ever been told why? Arteries are lined with tiled cells between which protein acts as mortar. When sugar is introduced, the cells’ ability to stick together weakens, tears occur, and LDL—the bad cholesterol—is used to patch them up. Stress, perhaps more alarmingly, raises blood sugar, increases heart rate and blood pressure, and inevitably increases fat while decreasing muscle. Stress also has the same effect as dementia; it decreases brain size and reduces memory.

Change occurs through the changing of culture: eliminate the use of tobacco; alleviate unmanaged stress; make better food choices, which also leads to portion control; become active. Dr. Roizen says that within three years of these behavioral changes, it’s as if we never had those aforementioned behaviors. In fact, health concerns can be changed in 28 days. The genes are still present that make it possible for you to have these health concerns, but they are now turned off by the presence of healthy life choices. If we all reduced these behaviors listed above, healthcare cost would decrease by 75 percent. And if this still isn’t enough to encourage you to change your behaviors, keep this in mind: you might be able to burn off the calories of a Pepsi, but the physical effects will not be removed for 180 days.

The Honors Program completes many different service projects each year, but some students made the decision to help the community even further. Ashland offers many different service opportunities, and a few Honors students take full advantage of them and even help plan new ones.

Mariah Moyers is a junior marketing major in the Honors Program. She serves the Ashland community by organizing events with the cat and dog shelters in the city, including weekly visits and fundraising events. She also acts as the student tracker for the community service organization on campus. She volunteers because she loves to make a difference and see the effects her help has on the world. She says that her experience has been “amazing, fun, challenging, and above all, fulfilling.” She encourages others to get involved in their communities because volunteering can be a small time commitment that obtains big results.

Alison Biro is a sophomore toxicology major. She is an active member of the community service executive board here at Ashland University. Alison does most of her volunteer work helping the environment and other people. She organizes events for Green Week (the week of Earth Day) and frequently helps with recycling around campus. Alison says she volunteers because she likes to “help people in need and see the impacts [her] volunteering has on them.” She encourages students to volunteer so they can also see the positive effects their actions have on others. Serving the community creates memories and is a meaningful way to spend free time while in college.

Alaina Berry and I also volunteer through the Ashland University community service programs. We mainly work with a program that visits residents at the Good Shepherd Nursing Home near campus. Personally, I have gotten so much out of visiting the residents. They are kind, funny, and always excited to see us. Alaina feels the same way. She said about the visits, “It gives me a good sense of accomplishment when I visit. It’s like figuratively cleaning up the world by making things even just a little better.”

Serving the community is a vital part of the college experience, and it is wonderful that our Honors students choose to go out of their ways to help others. Many more Honors students than could fit in this article also attend service events, and the Ashland community definitely benefits from all of the work they do.
The 16 graduating seniors have each had a unique learning experience while participating in the Honors Program. As a member of the program, each senior is required to complete a capstone project as a culmination of their area of study. The capstone project allows students to explore his or her interests more deeply and develop a thesis of their choice. Students present their projects in a thesis defense before graduating. The senior class of 2013 is comprised of students from a number of majors, such as biochemistry, journalism, and psychology. Each member of the graduating class has shared his or her favorite aspect of the Honors Program and how it will benefit them in the future.

**Brandy Alexander:**

"The Honors Program really gave me a home-away-from-home."

Capstone Project: A Unique Approach to Learning: A View of Two Schools’ Application of Multiple Intelligences

Major: Middle Grades Education 4-9 (Science and Social Studies), Generalist Endorsement

**Amber Weaver:**

"It has provided me with a number of great opportunities, including taking more challenging classes, getting involved in an organization, and making a lot of great friends!"

Capstone Project: The Relationship Between Students’ Personal Responsibility in Paying for College and Their Academic Motivation and Success

Major: Psychology

**Lauren Goossens:**

"The Honors Program has helped to set my grad school application apart from others."

Capstone Project: Family Caregivers of Loved Ones with Aphasia: How They Are Affected and How We Can Help

Major: Psychology

**Nicole Marchetta:**

"I am glad that I have spent my 4 years in Ashland in the Honors Program. I think that it has helped me get the most out of my college experience.

Capstone Project: Effectiveness of Anti-Bullying Practices in Elementary Schools: Current Literature and a Sample of Northeastern Ohio Administrative and Staff Perceptions

Major: Early Childhood Education (PreK-3); Generalist (4-5) Endorsement, Reading (K-12) Endorsement

**Jared Baisden:**

"The program gave me an opportunity to make close faculty connections that were vital to my college experience and learning."

Capstone Project: Isolation and Characterization of a Suspected Phytoalexin from Acer rubrum L.

Majors: Biology and Biochemistry

**Rachel Carson:**

"It has set me apart during the graduate school application process."

Capstone Project: Divorce and Perceptions of Conflict

Major: Psychology

**Theresa Riley:**

"The opportunities for leadership, travel, networking, professional development and building lasting relationships have enriched my college experience and set me apart from other graduates as I enter the workforce."

Capstone Project: Improving Motivation and Needs Satisfaction of Employees in the Hospitality and Food Service Industries

Majors: Hospitality Management and Entrepreneurship
Lindsey Grudnicki:  
"Being in the Honors Program has been a rewarding experience."  
Capstone Project: "True to a Single Object": The Character of Tadeusz Kosciuszko  
Majors: History and English

Megan Liggett:  
"Becoming a member of the Honors Program was one of the best decisions of my undergraduate career."  
Capstone Project: Measuring Halogenated Flame Retardants by Silicone Tubing Microextraction  
Major: Biochemistry

Lindsey Knapp:  
"The Honors Program and Society has been a major part of my college experience from the very start."  
Capstone Project: Differential Gene Expression of Piccolo (PCLO) in Mouse and Zebrafish Brain Development  
Major: Biology

Larissa Berry:  
"I have really enjoyed the Honors Program because it has enabled me to explore disciplines outside of my major."  
Capstone Project: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Brazilian and American Mathematics Curricula  
Major: Integrated Mathematics

Conner Darsee:  
"Graduating from the Honors program is an invaluable addition to any resume, no matter what field you pursue."  
Capstone Project: The Person & Purgatory: The Advantages of Thomistic Hylemorphism  
Majors: Literature and Philosophy

Caitlin Music:  
"The Honors' core courses challenge students and make core classes more interesting."  
Capstone Project: Applications of the Sieve Bootstrap Method  
Majors: Actuarial Science and Mathematics

Tyler Remmel:  
"I know that being a part of the Honors Program has encouraged me to achieve my greatest potential and has undoubtedly prepared me for a world beyond the university."  
Capstone Project: The Early Bird: How Twitter Has Fueled a Perpetual Media Race  
Majors: Journalism and English

McKenzie Roth:  
"The Honors Program gave me the opportunity to conduct my own undergraduate research and compile and defend a thesis."  
Capstone Project: Analysis of Bacterial Abundance and Species Diversity in Various Soils  
Major: Integrated Science Education

Sarah Guarino:  
"The Honors Program has been an invaluable experience and has prepared me to continue on in graduate studies."  
Major: Psychology
Last semester, senior Lindsey Knapp, along with the previous Honors Program Coordinator, Nancy Andres, attended the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) conference in Boston, Massachusetts. The goal of the NCHC is “to support and enhance the community of educational institutions, professionals, and students who participate in collegiate Honors education around the world.” The conference invited Honors Programs from a variety of schools – both large and small. There were sessions for visitors to learn about research and presentations on how to improve their Honors Program, but she gained information for personal research and life outside of school as well. Specifically, they encouraged students to take action! The NCHC wants students to obtain any kind of learning experience whether that be research or career-related. The sessions also urged the use of peers to help recruit other students to join the Honors Programs or to participate more. Finally, Lindsey really enjoyed getting the chance to meet new people, venture around Boston, and learn new techniques for her academic endeavors.

In addition to the Honors Program’s usual class options, this semester offered something unique. The International Perspectives on Women course is an Honors Social Work class in which students discuss women’s struggles and achievements in different cultures over time and throughout the world. I had the opportunity to take this course, and I can easily say that it has been quite an eye-opening experience.

The professor of this class, Dr. Nancy Udolph, was excited about the chance to teach Honors students, and she said, “Because the course is small, we can have far more discussion than we can with a larger class.” Dr. Udolph began her full-time teaching career 25 years ago following her work as a clinical social worker. However, she still practices once a week to “keep up [her] skills.” When asked about her interests outside of the classroom, she emphasized her love of travel. Her extensive list includes 47 of the 50 states, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, England, Australia, and many more. She also commented that she loves “hiking, walking on beaches, soaking up the rays and swimming.” As the chair of the department along with her teaching position, clinical work, and traveling, she stays quite busy throughout the year. Her traveling and passion for learning keep her very up-to-date on social issues around the world as well.

Knowing that she is well-informed and well-educated, I was curious what her students brought to the table. I asked Dr. Udolph what she has learned from her Honors students this semester. Though she initially joked that they have taught her how to adjust the volume on the classroom’s television, she answered: “I’ve learned that they are engaged students who care about world issues…I’ve learned that…all of them had a computer in their homes growing up, though they barely remember floppy discs! I’ve learned that they’re not particularly morning people but they come to class anyway (I share this with them!!). They are insightful, curious, respectful and talented.” This course offers a new learning experience for Honors students because it addresses topics that are often overlooked in core classes. I highly recommend this class to anyone who enjoys learning about different cultures. Dr. Udolph is a fantastic professor who is able to inform her students of important social issues in a way that makes them eager to learn and want to become active advocates for women’s organizations.
Dear readers,

This semester has brought about many transitions! From welcoming a new Honors Program Coordinator to bidding one of the largest Honors Program senior classes farewell, these are just small reminders of how the program is constantly changing. Though the process of adapting to these changes is not always smooth, it is our mission to turn those challenges into positive outcomes. Ultimately, that is the goal of the Honors Program—to challenge its members so that they are able to reach their full potentials.

I’d like to thank both the current and incoming Honors Society Officers, Dr. Swanson, Sarah Papesh, the Honors interns, all who have assisted and played an active role within the Honors Program, and Nancy Andres—whose encouragement and support knows no bounds. It is the dedication of individuals, such as those previously mentioned, that creates a truly spectacular Honors Program. We shall forge ahead to find the great, new opportunities that await us!

Best wishes,
Alaina Berry
Editor

401 College Avenue
103 Clayton Hall
Ashland, Ohio
44805
Dr. Christopher Swanson, Director
www.ashland.edu/academics/honors-program
ashlanduniversityhonorsprogram.blogspot.com
www.facebook.com/pages/Ashland-University-Honors-Program

Honors Interns:
Melany Bagnola
Alaina Berry
Larissa Berry
Kelly Crowl
Sarah Guarino
Ashley Lorah
Amanda Mayes
Mary Moeller