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LoRec: Some practical advice

Dr. Craig Cobane
Honors Director

Every year I write dozens of letters of recommendation (LoRec) and read scores of other drafts letters written by colleagues. These letters are for scholarships, internships, graduate/professional schools and a host of other leadership and public service opportunities. To achieve their educational and professional goals, students want/need strong, detailed LoRec. Of course, faculty members want to provide students with supportive letters, but students must always remember the weight of responsibility is on them to provide their letter writers the necessary information. What follows is some advice on what students can do to help ensure they will get strong and effective letters. Always remember, you will get a letter commensurate with the effort you put into the preparatory work.

■ Get to know your professor and let them get to know you. Talk to them about educational and career interests, life goals, personal philosophies, etc. Nothing is worse than a LoRec where it is obvious the faculty member hardly knows the student or only knows them in a superficial manner. One of the great advantages of membership in the WKU Honors College is the smaller classes create a myriad of opportunities to interact with and get to know faculty. You should take advantage of these opportunities, faculty office hours, etc. to get to know your faculty and more importantly, let them get to know you. It is your responsibility to create opportunities for professors to get to know you.

■ Provide your faculty the information they need. At a minimum you should provide an up-to-date resume/vita, a copy of the application you are asking them to support (including any essays required - even drafts), transcript(s) and all the contact information required to write the letter (i.e., to whom it should be addressed, where should it be sent, when is it due, etc.). Additionally, you should provide your assessment of what the evaluators are looking for in a candidate. Every scholarship, admission committee, etc. lists the criteria used to evaluate applications, so you should provide this information, and how you meet the criteria, so a letter writer can be sure to focus on these points. It is not in your best interest if a letter writer raves for paragraphs about your incredible oratory skills, when the evaluating committee is looking for candidates with excellent writing skills. In short, remember that you know the scholarship, internship, graduate/professional school criteria better than the professor, so it is your responsibility to provide the requisite information to your letter writer. They should not have to do any research in order to provide you with an excellent letter.

■ Plan ahead and be reasonable in your request. Remember, your letter writers are very busy. Provide letter writers ample time to digest the information you have provided, so they can write a well-thought-out letter. Professors have a host of responsibilities and have very packed schedules (yes, it rivals even your busy schedule!), so to ask a professor to produce a letter for you in a couple days is unreasonable. You should make an appointment to meet with the professor, ask them in person if they would be willing to write LoRec(s) for you. Provide them the information they need (see above) and then give them 2-3 weeks to get it complete. Schedule a time that you will pick it up or that they will have it sent. Tell them you will follow up with them in a week, to see if they need any more information. It is certainly appropriate to respectfully follow up with a reminder several days prior to the pickup date to see the status of the letter. In short, it is your responsibility to provide ample time for your professor to write you a strong letter. You would not appreciate a professor telling you on Monday that you will have an exam on Wednesday, when you already have a Monday and Tuesday night scheduled – neither do your letter writers.

In sum, remember that letters of recommendation are about a great deal more than just your grades and how you performed in class. They are about you maturity, civility, professionalism, decorum, honesty, assessments of character, etc. Letter writers are expected to comment on your ability to be a future colleague. Therefore, how you treat your letter writers (i.e., providing important information, giving them plenty of time, and making it easy on them) will affect how the LoRec is written – put another way, “you will reap what you sow.”

Published monthly by students in the Honors College.

Newsletter Staff:
Dana Adams
Kendrick Bryan
Tanner Curtis
Bobby Deignan
Sarah Hood
Lindsey Houchin
Matt Jenkins
Amanda Loviza
Sam Micallef*
Chelsea Moulton
Katherine Scanga
Matt Vaughan
Ria Wallace
Mannie Webb
Kat Wilson*
Laurel Wilson
Dunja Zdero

Advisor:
Dr. Angela Jones

Honors Director:
Dr. Craig T. Cobane
*editors

Questions? Comments? Story idea?

Email us at arete@wku.edu

Get published! Areté is not just for students, it’s also by students – including you! Send us letters, commentaries, cartoons, whatever. If you want to share your work with the Honors community, we’re here for you.
Honors-Toppers: What it’s all about

JEFF SORCE
Senior HDB Representative

Honors Flair (verb: to give kudos to a fellow Honors student on a job well done; noun: created by the HonorsToppers, a traditional ending to each business meeting).

Honors student organizations are quickly becoming a part of the WKU Honors College culture. With Honors-sponsored groups such as the Honors Development Board student representatives, the Honors Club, and Honors Dynamic Leadership Institute, there are many opportunities to get involved. Another organization that is developing just as rapidly is HonorsToppers, sometimes called “HTs.” Created in the spring of 2006, HonorsToppers is still fairly new, and we felt this was a good time to explain to our Honors peers what the HonorsToppers are all about.

The HonorsToppers are an ambassadorial group to the Honors College whose main role is serving the Honors Community. HonorsToppers serve at events such as Picnic with the President and BBQ with the Profs, and they often give campus tours to prospective Honors students. Many current Honors students had their first impression of the Honors College made by a HonorsTopper. The HonorsToppers also help support other Honors organizations, such as Areté and the Honors Club. Recently, HonorsToppers and Honors Club co-sponsored Dunja Zdero as a candidate for Homecoming Queen. HonorsToppers helped to promote Dunja and the name of Honors across the campus.

If serving the Honors College as a student ambassador is something you are interested in, make sure to watch for the distribution of applications during the spring semester. The current HonorsToppers are more than willing to answer any questions you may have about our organization, HonorsToppers responsibilities, or the Honors College in general. If there is an event that you would like to see an HonorsTopper be present for, please contact Leah Craig, Coordinator of Membership, or Jessie Magee, Coordinator of Events, at honors.toppers@wku.edu.

Thank you for your support of the HonorsToppers and we look forward to serving you in the future at Honors events!

More information about HonorsToppers can be found at http://www.wku.edu/Honors/toppers.html.

Get to know your HDB representatives

1. What is your major?
2. What is your CE/T project/idea?
3. If you had a pet lobster, what would you name it and why?

Reagan Gilley
1. A double major: Biology and History.
2. My CE/T is a project entitled: “Testing the Equal Energy Hypothesis in Noise Exposed Fishes.” It looks at taking the effects of loud sounds (like ship engines or sonar) on the ability of three fish species to hear (and the damage that occurred to their auditory system) after different lengths of exposure to the sound.
3. My pet lobster’s name: Cicero

Kevin Smiley
1. Undecided\exploratory
2. Completely and Totally Unsure (CTU).
3. I would name it “Takhomasak.” It is my favorite foreign phrase.

Lindsey Filiatreau
1. I am a Biology major. I should be a double major with Chemistry soon (pre-med).
2. Unfortunately because I’m a freshman I don’t have a CE/T project yet.
3. If I had a lobster and could name it anything it would probably have to be Franchesca. My family is Hispanic and we like to keep this cultural ancestry thriving in all that we do.
Ransdell, Cobane visit Harlaxton
Discussed, investigated other possible study-abroad opportunities

KENDRICK BRYAN
Areté staff writer

WKU Honors College students studying at Harlaxton College in Grantham, England were recently visited by President Gary Ransdell and Honors College director Dr. Craig T. Cobane, ambassadors of the Western spirit.

Harlaxton College is the British campus of the University of Evansville, and its study-abroad program was recently cited amongst the top 25 programs of its type by the Student’s Guide to the Best Study Abroad Programs authored by Greg Tannen and Charley Winkler. The college is located on 105 acres and has been associated with the University of Evansville since 1971. WKU formed a partnership with the study-abroad location in 2006.

Ransdell and Cobane visited England from Oct. 22 to Oct. 26. The two visited London for a day before visiting the college. The duo discussed a number of business items on the trip including more study-abroad opportunities for WKU students.

Cobane said they met with staffers of the Centers for Academic Programs Abroad (CAPA) regarding possible future partnerships in Australia, Costa Rica, and Italy. WKU has teamed with CAPA previously with a study abroad program in Spain. CAPA was founded in 1972, and it has partnered with U.S. institutions of higher education for more than 35 years.

Cobane said they also met with an official of the Marshall Scholarship, a nationally-competitive scholarship that finances young Americans of high ability to study for a degree in the United Kingdom, and at least 40 scholars are selected each year. He said students at Harlaxton are representing WKU well.

“Students are kicking butt and taking names at Harlaxton,” he said.

He said WKU students at the campus received praise from many officials of the college.

“They kept on asking if we could send more and more students,” Cobane concluded.

If you are interested at studying at Harlaxton College, contact Honors special assistant Jeremy Phillips by email at Jeremy.Phillips@wku.edu or by phone at 270-745-2081.
Eight anxious students and two faculty members from WKU’s Honors College stand huddled together outside Denver International Airport trying their best to ward off the cold breeze coming from over the snow-capped Rockies. It’s Halloween night, and this group is preparing for a busy week of representing WKU’s Honors College at the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference.

This year’s conference was the 42nd annual for the National Collegiate Honors Council with the theme Creative Tensions, Challenging Environments. The conference featured students and faculty from Honors Colleges and Programs from across the nation sharing strategies and advice on how to better their programs.

WKU’s Honors College brought along eight students including seniors Jeff Sorce and Leah Craig, junior Sam Micallef, sophomores Kevin Smiley, Drew Eclov, Brittany Kittleman, and Jerebeth Lucas, and freshman Matt Vaughan.

For Eclov, attending this year’s conference meant flying on an airplane for the first time in his life. “It was terrifying and amazing at the same time,” Eclov said. “When you’re no longer on the ground, it’s a completely unique experience.”

The conference offered a wide range of educational sessions for students and faculty to attend and gain new ideas to bring back to their Honors College.

“I was a little worried that I was just going to attend a bunch of boring meetings,” Eclov said, “but there were so many different sessions tailored to so many different categories. There was something for everyone to benefit the Honors College and our own educational endeavors.”

Leah Craig was one of the WKU Honors students who took participation in the conference to a whole new level by actually presenting to the other Honors attendees.

“I was really nervous at first, but the presentation went really well,” Craig said, “People asked a lot of questions, which showed they were interested. I was relieved when it was over because I knew I could relax for the rest of the conference.”

Many of the sessions at the conference about common problems associated with Honors Colleges and Programs helped WKU students realize just how good they have it.

“The first main session I attended that showed the quality of our program was on building community,” Eclov said, “So many people were trying to figure out how to make their kids feel welcome and a part of the community. That’s not a problem here. For the most part, when you get here you feel part of the community, not ostracized from the rest of the (WKU) campus.”

Along with the program-focused sessions, the conference also featured some more diverse sessions about different topics which Honors students from around the nation researched.

“The poster sessions were interesting,” Eclov said, “You spoke one-on-one with people who were passionate about the things they researched and were open to discuss everything you wanted to know about subjects ranging from nonlethal ray guns to peanuts.”

Along with this unique experience, students were also able to venture out into the Mile High City on their free time as well as at a session titled City as Text in which students explored different areas of the city to experience the local culture.

“Denver was amazing. It was different from all the other big cities I’ve been to,” Eclov said, “It was huge but felt small. There was so much to see and you could get around the city easily.”

One of the many benefits that WKU Honors students received from the conference was being able to meet with fellow Honors students from all around the United States.

“It was cool meeting people from all across the nation,” Eclov said, “It was nice to see strange and quirky people like myself. It’s not just a bunch of broken glasses and pocket protectors but a bunch of interesting, quality people.”

Even more special though, was the bonding that occurred within the group of student and faculty attendees from WKU’s very own Honors College.

“I went into it knowing some not so well and others not at all,” Eclov said. “But when you’re stuck on a plane and crazy elevators and hotel rooms with these people, you’re bound to get to know them better and you learn about their quirks and the unique qualities they brought to the conference.”
The Honors German 100 class recently met at Drs. Charles and Linda Pickle’s house, where they enjoyed authentic German cuisine. While the main course was being prepared, students munched on Brot (bread), Emmentaler Käse (“Swiss” cheese), Butterkäse (“buttercheese”), fruits, and veggies. After a green salad, many enjoyed the main course – Königsberger Klopse, a delicious German meatball dish. Their dinner also had the vegetarian option of Königsberger Klopse: a mixture of carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, and parsnips in a cheese sauce, which all the students really enjoyed. Side dishes included potatoes and sauerkraut, which many students had the pleasurable experience of trying for the first time. And just when the students thought the meal couldn’t get any better, a dessert of Apfelkuchen (apple cake) and Käsekuchen (cheesecake) was served.

During the meal, students asked the faculty about different aspects of German-speaking cultures, mainly Germany. Students and faculty shared memories of study-abroad experiences, providing useful tips and knowledge to those who haven’t traveled abroad yet. The night allowed students to learn about the German culture and language in a hands-on way that is often hard to accomplish in the classroom. The class will leave on Jan. 2 for Berlin and return to WKU on Jan. 20. During that time, the students will have the opportunity to stay with a host family for a week. Check the upcoming issue of Areté for more information after the trip.

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Dinner is served, German style
Honors language class enjoys foreign cuisine; Next stop: Berlin

MANNIE WEBB
Areté staff writer

The Honors German 100 class recently met at Drs. Charles and Linda Pickle’s house, where they enjoyed authentic German cuisine. While the main course was being prepared, students munched on Brot (bread), Emmentaler Käse (“Swiss” cheese), Butterkäse (“buttercheese”), fruits, and veggies. After a green salad, many enjoyed the main course – Königsberger Klopse, a delicious German meatball dish. Their dinner also had the vegetarian option of Königsberger Klopse: a mixture of carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, and parsnips in a cheese sauce, which all the students really enjoyed. Side dishes included potatoes and sauerkraut, which many students had the pleasurable experience of trying for the first time. And just when the students thought the meal couldn’t get any better, a dessert of Apfelkuchen (apple cake) and Käsekuchen (cheesecake) was served.

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And a very Harry Halloween to you, too

SARAH HOOD
Areté staff writer

Luna and Tonks and Bertie Botts’ Every Flavor Beans, oh my! All of these things and more were at the Harry Potter-themed Honors Halloween party held on Oct. 26 in McLean Hall.

Many students came out to show their abiding love for the famous boy-wizard-wonder created by J. K. Rowling by dressing up as their favorite characters. Among the witches and wizards in attendance were Hogwarts High Inquisitor Dolores Umbridge, Triwizard competitor Fleur Delacour, troublemaking twins Fred and George Weasley, two different Harry Potters, Daily Prophet reporter Rita Skeeter, Dobby the House-Elf, and even He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named himself! However, a few other, more inventive students showed up as slightly more obscure “characters.”

Megan Edwards, a freshman, won first place in the costume contest as a Golden Snitch, followed in second place by fellow freshman Matt Downen as the acromantula (also known as a very, very large spider to Muggles) known as Aragog. “I had always made a big deal to my friends about Aragog, because I like insects and spiders. Once the party came, it just hit me to be Aragog,” Downen said about his winning costume choice.

There were also snacks fit for even the most discerning magical palate. Licorice Wands, Bertie Botts’ Every Flavor Beans, Cockroach Clusters, and even Madam Rosmerta’s infamous Butterbeer helped complete the scene.

However, for many of the students, the party continued well past McLean Hall. A group from the third and fourth floors of Minton Hall turned the night into an all-out event.

“It began on the fourth floor, carried on over to McLean, migrated to Steak-n-Shake, and everybody par-tayed until the cows came home...or until the caffeine wore off,” freshman Savannah Pennington, a fourth floor Minton resident, said.

Whatever the mischief that students managed to get into, it seems safe to say that a truly magical time was had by all.
The McLean Hall porch was the place to be for any devoted Honors student on the Saturday of Homecoming. Run by HonorsToppers and supervised by the Honors College staff, the Honors tailgate provided plenty of free food, lively games of corn hole, and of course, sparkling conversation.

Staff and students both enjoyed games of corn hole, made a bit more challenging by the fact that the bean bags were just a little too big to fit easily into the holes. But since WKU Honors students are never afraid of a challenge, they commenced multiple games with the overly-large bean bags. Amy Chester herself had spent her time the night before covering the bean bags “red like Western, and black like death,” as sophomore Drew Eclov described them.

The real star of the show came in the form of “Baby Nate,” escorted by his father, Honors Center staff member Jeremy Phillips, who joined in the festivities. Everyone, male and female, took their turns playing with the adorable baby.

Overall, the first-ever Honors tailgating experience was deemed a success. While Dr. Craig T. Cobane may have been overheard still grumbling about falling out of the raft over Fall Break, everyone enjoyed hanging out with fellow Honors students and staff members and eating some great barbeque. As sophomore Justin Mobley declared as he left the tailgating, “It’s been a pleasure. Thank you for the food; I love the Honors [College].”
A conversation with Jeff Corwin

MATT VAUGHAN
Areté staff writer

Arriving early, he made his way to one of the front seats, sitting amongst an eager crowd of students waiting to see the man that many of today’s WKU students grew up with and aspired to be: the man who wrestled with alligators in the Everglades and who discovered new species in the rainforest just in time to be seen later on in the evening on the Disney Channel. This man, the man, Jeff Corwin, was finally within arms reach.

Sophomore Honors student Drew Eclov grew up watching Corwin on TV and was shocked when he first found out about the opportunity HonorsToppers had been given to attend an invitation-only conversation with the animal man himself.

“He was a small part of what formed my appreciation of nature as a child by communicating the importance of nature and its inhabitants,” Eclov said. “My hand was the first one up at the HonorsToppers meeting when they said they had spots to attend the conversation.”

Corwin was set to speak later in the evening to an anticipated crowd of several hundred students and members of the community as part of this year’s WKU Cultural Enhancement Project, an effort to promote cultural diversity across WKU’s campus. The earlier conversation was organized by Dr. Saundra Ardrey of WKU’s Political Science Department as part of the department’s Political Engagement Project.

Instead of showing students exotic animals from afar, Corwin appeared at WKU to speak about a much more pressing issue and concern of our generation, climate change and its impact on the environment.

“My initial thoughts were that he was going to come in and talk about animals, his TV show, and smile a lot. But I was still a bit shell-shocked that he was actually here. But he didn’t speak to us like he was on TV. Instead he was one of the most well versed individuals I’ve ever heard. He knew so much about climate change and its impact on humans and the animal world.”

The conversation was held just days after GreenToppers and CAB sponsored a screening of Al Gore’s An Inconvenient Truth on WKU’s south lawn. Both events were meant to educate and engage the student body at WKU to be informed and inspired to respond to today’s climate-change emergency.

“I was pleasantly surprised by his insight,” Eclov said, “It was interesting to hear him say that we are not yet at the point of no return but that the time to act is now.”

The conversation with Corwin provided HonorsToppers and members from other campus organizations (including Americans for Informed Democracy and GreenToppers) with a different format for gaining information about one of today’s most pressing issues.

“I was still a bit shell-shocked that he was actually here. But he didn’t speak to us like he was on TV. Instead he was one of the most well versed individuals I’ve ever heard. He knew so much about climate change and its impact on humans and the animal world.”

“Having somebody who has this wealth of knowledge just sit with you and talk and answer your questions opens a whole new path to learning,” Eclov said, “You can read about these things and watch them on TV, but to be able to hear it straight from the source and be able to pick their brains is a whole new experience which is beneficial in its own unique way.”

The conversation not only helped to create an overall awareness of climate change but provided a spark to Eclov and others in attendance to go beyond the traditional means of preserving the environment.

“The conversation made me want to further educate myself and do more to contribute starting by watching Corwin’s documentary, A Planet in Peril,” Eclov said, “We all know to recycle and to not leave the faucet on while we’re brushing our teeth but there’s so much more to do and meeting someone with that much concern and passion for the environment inspired me to learn more and do more to make a difference.”
An out-of-university experience

MOLLY MERRICK & LATIE MOORE
Areté guest writers

The three Honors University Experience classes led by Thomas P. Weakley, Dr. Dean R. Kahler, and John P. Baker visited the Perryville Battlefield in Boyle County on Oct. 12, 2007. Michael Johnson, WKU’s Director of Student Support Services and Civil War enthusiast, was our tour guide for our battlefield analysis.

Upon our arrival we watched a video that provided a play-by-play synopsis of the Battle at Perryville. Next, we took a tour of the battlefield museum. Here we learned about the many events of the Civil War which led up to the eventual Battle of Perryville.

Next we took a step-by-step tour of the battlefield and all of the events that took place on that fateful day, October 8, 1862. Prior to our trip, students worked in groups focusing on either the Union or Confederate actions during the battle. Students researched the various actions by leaders or significant events during the battle to provide context for this visit. We were also given the names of the more prominent division and brigade commanders of the battle and of their strategic locations during the fight. At each stop of our tour, students gave individual presentations, based on their assigned identities, about the battle events at their particular stop focusing on aspects of geography, tactics, leadership and communication and how they influenced the eventual outcome of the battle.

At one of the stops of our tour, we learned about Hardee’s Tactics, a famous method for training soldiers on both sides on small unit operations. Johnson guided Honors students through several of Hardee’s Tactics, re-enacting basic maneuvers that Hardee described in his manual.

Throughout the tour, the students passed around an authentic 1863 Springfield Civil War rifle. Holding this rifle gave us an appreciation for the tremendous amount of weight that the soldiers in the war had to carry with them during battle and as they marched across the nation from one place to another.

Since the focus of our University Experience classes is leadership studies, the importance of leadership was emphasized throughout our experience at the battlefield. Overall, the trip provided us with an interactive lesson on how leadership can affect our daily lives. Indeed, it was the leadership of the brave men who fought at Perryville which ultimately determined the outcome of the battle.
Western student attends SCUSA

Steven Jones is only freshman invited to the foreign policy conference

SAM MICALLEF
Areté staff writer

From Oct. 31 to Nov. 3, Honors freshman Steven Jones traveled to West Point, N.Y., for the 59th annual Student Conference on United States Affairs (SCUSA). SCUSA is sponsored by United Military Academy at West Point. Each year Dr. Craig Cobane is allowed to send one student to represent WKU. Only about 250 students in the world are invited to attend, and this year Jones was selected as one of the lucky delegates as well as the only freshman attending the conference.

SCUSA focuses on U.S. foreign policy and this year’s theme was “Uncertain Future: Freedom, Security, and Responsibility.” As a political science and German double major, Jones immediately saw the conference as a great learning opportunity. Jones said he wants to someday be an ambassador and the conference allowed him to learn about international policies. “I have a great amount of new knowledge on security issues and issues in the European Union that pose future problems,” Jones said, “I also have a better understanding of the way international diplomacy works.”

At the conference, students were assigned to a specific roundtable discussion group. 9 groups debated religion and 9 groups discussed various themes. Jones participated on the roundtable for Western Europe, a topic that interested him. “In our roundtable we discussed issues involved in Western Europe that could pose a problem for the U.S.,” Jones said, “We then came up with what we believe the U.S. should pursue as its policy in Western Europe.” On the last day of the conference, groups presented their topics to everyone.

SCUSA is not all work. Students were also able to eat in the mess hall with the cadets, tour the campus, and watch a weapon display. They also stayed in the barracks in rooms with 2 cadets and had the numerous opportunities to meet other students from all around the United States and other countries. Jones said his favorite part of the trip was meeting all the various people. He met students from Japan, China, Portugal, Germany, Canada, Cameroon, Pakistan, and Turkey. Jones also met different political figures including retired General John Abizaid, Major Maria Metcalfe, and Dr. Ray Raymond. His favorite individual he met was Raymond, a former British diplomat and head advisor to Tony Blair. “Dr. Raymond is very intelligent, has a great personality, and a great sense of humor,” Jones said. On the last night of the conference students ate dinner in the First Class Club, played pool and darts, and danced.

If given the opportunity again, Jones said he would absolutely go back. “It was a great educational experience but also fun,” Jones said, “The people of my roundtable made a close bond with each other. I also had the chance to meet high profile political figures and make good connections.” Jones made new friends and was even able to catch up with an old high school friend, who is currently a cadet at West Point. Most importantly, Jones walked out of the conference with a better understanding of international politics, cultures from different countries, and the different point of views various countries have on the same issue.

Cum Laude
Recognition of Honors community members’ outstanding achievements

Congrats to December Honors grads!
The following Honors students will be graduating from Western on December 15. The graduation ceremony will be held in Diddle starting at 10 a.m.

- Victoria Gaylord
- Melissa Messer
- Ian Nash
- Saurin Shah
- William Turner
- Kathryn Wilson

Areté wins award
The Honors newsletter won first place in this year’s National Collegiate Honors Council newsletter contest. The publication competed against approximately 20 other schools in the student-published newsletter category. It was judged on six criteria, including content, appearance, production, creativity, purpose, and relevance. A plaque honoring Areté’s award is hanging in the Honors center. The names of the students on staff during the award year will be listed on the back of the plaque.

December 2007
Areté
Group meets for ‘Distinct Dialogues’

BRITTANY KITTLEMAN
Areté guest writer

It was an intellectually inviting atmosphere, round tables seated with knights full of pure knowledge on distinct, thought-provoking topics leading to dialogues of insight and debate. The intimate crowd had gathered that cool Monday evening in the backyard of President Gary Ransdell’s home, for dinner and discussion over a specifically set table subject. The evening’s official title, “Distinct Dialogues,” was a perfect label for the occasion, as nine tables of eight to ten people engaged in stimulating conversation over ideas concerning history, politics, art, science, leadership, and gerontology. The event was a fundraiser held by the Honors College, and due to its success, it is bound to become an annual affair.

The evening was opened by Ransdell and Dr. Craig T. Cobane, followed by a united partaking in the saying of grace. After spending the previous week visiting Harlaxton College, Ransdell had become attached to the Harlaxton grace that the students would recite before each meal together, and decided that it would be the perfect way to welcome the meal and good company all were about to share.

Dinner was delightful, and quickly broke through the ice to lead into the grand affair. Discussions were under way on the history of beer; the global war on terrorism; healthy aging for the 21st century; the greatness of Abraham Lincoln; the promise, perils, and politics of stem cell research; post-World War II art; the strategies of political campaign ads; the misunderstood ideal of American capitalism; and the transformational and charismatic leadership of Adolf Hitler and General George S. Patton. The diverse knowledge present at each table offered unique perspectives on each of the subject areas, ranging from the insight of a college student to that of a professor, an attorney, a business owner, a military veteran, a community leader, and a historian. It was as if old groups of friends had been reunited after years apart, as the conversations at each table flowed continuously with great interest.

It was only by the force of the damp darkness and chilling temperatures that the evening was concluded around eight o’clock. Thorough enjoyment appeared to be shared by all those who attended, and many were leaving already looking forward to the next opportunity to engage in such dialogue again. The event was truly a success, proving how well great conversation and intellectual stimulation can unite friends of all ages.

Meet your staff member: Jeremy Phillips

DANA ADAMS
Areté staff writer

Hometown: Evansville, IN
Education: BA in History from the University of Southern Indiana; Master’s in Public Administration from WKU
Favorite color: Blue
Position in Honors College: Official title is Assistant to the Director. His job focuses on student relations concerning prestigious scholarships, study abroad, and CE/T.
Favorite Animal(s): Dogs and turtles (he once kept a turtle in his backyard that his wife was unaware of).
Reason for coming to WKU: He took the opportunity to be closer to his significant other, Amanda Phillips, who works at WKU as well.
Favorite holiday: Thanksgiving

Suggestions for students:
– Watch out for being overworked. Get involved but don’t overdo it.
– Take advantage of opportunities at school and within the community.
– Plan ahead.
– Look into Harlaxton (it’s cheaper than WKU).

Pet Peeve: People who crack their knuckles.

What he wishes to see at the Honors Center and within the College:
– Making sure students are planning early.
– Having a movie day for the Honors College staff.
– An Honors College houseboat.
– Fancy transportation (a limo).
– A hot tub.

Historical Person he admires: Abraham Lincoln, because Phillips is fascinated by Civil War History. He also likes the leadership style in which Lincoln befriended people with different ideas than his own so he could have alternate opinions.
Honors appeals to non-trad, too

LINDSEY HOUCHIN
Areté staff writer

For most of us, plans after high school graduation were pretty clearly defined: apply to your favorite colleges and universities, choose one, attend school for a few years, graduate with a degree in one thing or another, and step foot into the scariest place of all: the “real” world. Nursing and Psychology major Marty McBride, however, made a few alterations along the way.

McBride is a non-traditional Honors College student, meaning she did not just graduate from high school when she began coursework at WKU. McBride enrolled in the nursing program at the University of Southwest Louisiana immediately after high school, but dropped out in 1994 in order to become a wife and mother.

According to McBride, who commutes from Glasgow, she always knew she would return to college. “I took a few night and correspondence courses, but by the time my youngest went off to Kindergarten, I knew that I had had enough of playing housewife,” she said.

McBride said some students probably believe she is only in college to advance her career or make more money, but it has been more rewarding for her than money could be. Since she was a mother at the time, her parenting class could not imagine that she would learn anything new. “I would always point out to them all the things that I didn’t know before and try to show them that you can always learn something new,” she said. “[The professor, Patty Randolph,] got me to think of parenthood in totally new and different ways. It has totally changed my relationship with my teenagers.”

The college experience is different for McBride this time, she said. “I was in such a hurry to finish school and get started with my career that I really didn’t appreciate the learning experience. Now that I am older it is really less of a chore and more of a journey,” said McBride.

Often questioned about why she would join the Honors College, McBride said she did so with reason. “I think I simply enjoy challenging myself and pushing myself to higher standards in my education,” she said, “I love being around all the Honors students who take their education so seriously. They also tend to have a much broader worldview than other people their age.” Finding the time and energy to do everything is a challenge for McBride that requires a very different support structure. “I know in my own experience I have more responsibilities and distractions from my schoolwork,” she said. “We have a large family and it is hard to juggle everyone’s schedules around.” McBride and her husband are both dealing with disabled, elderly parents that also place demands on time and resources.

McBride, mother of four, realizes she is creating an example for her children. “I feel like I am a very important role model for [my children] right now as to the importance of education and the value of family support during tough times,” said McBride.

“You should never allow the mundane routine of everyday life to cause you to forget the wonder and passion in learning.”

– Marty McBride

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Ginny’s journey: Beginning the CE/T

SAM MICALLEF
Areté staff writer

Ginny Prather, an Honors student from Shelbyville, started attending WKU in Fall 2005. She was first introduced to WKU through WKU’s summer program for Verbally and Mathematically Precocious Youth (VAMPY). She attended VAMPY in the summers of 2002 and 2003 for English. Prather loved WKU’s gorgeous campus, and when she found out it had a strong elementary education program (her major) and was not too far from her home, she knew that WKU was the university for her.

But why choose to join Honors? “I loved the small community aspect of it, and I wanted to find other people who were smart and hard working,” Prather said, “But the best thing about Honors is the friends I made.”

Prather is now almost halfway done with her first semester of junior year, but she is not thinking about finals yet. There is something else occupying her mind, the same thing that stresses most Honors juniors out: THE THESIS. Fortunately for Prather, this past summer she was a student assistant in the Honors Center where she worked in the same building as the Honors Capstone Experience/Thesis guru, Jeremy Phillips.

“Jeremy is wonderful,” Prather said, “He likes to work with other people, he knows just about everything, and he is so willing to talk to and help students.”

At the end of her sophomore year, Prather did not have a clue what her project would entail. She brainstormed as much as she could over the summer with Phillips, and has been thinking about it ever since. Later she decided that she would write a thesis. She knew that she wanted to combine English and elementary education. After thinking about and throwing out several possibilities, Prather decided she would design a unit focusing on literature.

Now that she had a strong idea of what she wanted to do, what was the next step? Meeting with Phillips again. “Jeremy recommended that I write the piece of literature and then focus my unit around it,” Prather said, “Sounded like a great idea, so that is what I am going to do.” Prather added, “Jeremy was definitely helpful. I don’t know if I’d get even this far without him.”

The next step for Prather was to find an advisor for her thesis. For her, this was the easy part. She chose Dr. John Hagaman, an English professor at WKU. She met him at VAMPY, and has built a positive relationship with him since then. Prather does not have a second reader yet, but she plans to find one soon.

Prather is looking forward to working on her thesis. “Doing a thesis project is really good,” Prather said, “Elementary education is a competitive major. Completing a thesis will help me stand out and get a job someday, and of course, graduating from the Honors College will help too.” Prather added that she hopes the overall experience will be positive.

The next step? Prather plans on narrowing down her topic a little more, find a second reader, meet with Hagaman, and create a timeline with him. She plans on submitting a proposal at the end of this semester and to complete her thesis project by December 2008, the first semester of her senior year.

Prather advises students who have not yet started their CE/T to “pick something that interests you, even if it takes a long time to figure it out because it’s a year of your life you will be spending on it.”

Follow Prather and her process through completing her thesis in upcoming issues of Areté.
Q: Who’s the most interesting person you’ve met at Harlaxton?

A: The most interesting person I’ve met here is Christine, aka “Chris,” one of the ladies who serve us food and help us rent bikes and buy stamps so that we can send postcards. I have this shirt that reads “I’m confused... wait, maybe I’m not” that she loves (or least I think she does). One day I was wearing it under my jacket as I went through the lunch line, and right as I was about to ask for the beans she said “Quick flash!” So I unzipped my jacket really fast, pulling both sides apart so she could read my shirt, then zipped it back up again. Needless to say, it made all the people behind me wonder what kind of relationship we had.

Jennifer Dooper, Owensboro sophomore

A: The most interesting person that I have met while studying at Harlaxton would have to be Dr. Bujak. He is one of the British Studies professors and he is my seminar leader. He is interesting because he is the typical boisterous Englishman and he makes learning about Britain fun and enjoyable. He is very straightforward and not afraid to offend anyone, but at the same time he is really nice and cares about the students and their well being. Everyone agrees that if you have him for the British Studies seminar then you get the most out of it due to his enthusiasm for history.

Maggie Roe, London, Ky., sophomore

Check out more stories about the students’ Harlaxton experiences online!
http://blogs.harlaxton.ac.uk/news/

Congratulations to next semester’s Harlaxton students from WKU:

- Brandon Bowman
- Katie Brandenburg
- Brittany Kittleman
- Helen Fay Pruitt
- Dawn Reinhardt
- Rachealle Sanford
- Elizabeth Thornton
- Bethany J. Truax

(Above) Ellie Cundiff, Lindsey Greer, and Courtney Aldrich look for the perfect bracelet in Camden Town, London. After trying all of them on, Ellie and Lindsey made a purchase.
(Below) Hannah Grogan and Courtney Aldrich outside a cafe in London. Not even tea was cheap!
Mark your calendar now, and then have some fun.

**Carpe diem**

Test your trivia and logic skills – race your friends or just see how much you know!

Q. How well do you know your Honors professors? Match the professor with his or her pet peeve.

1. Dr. Judith Szerdahelyi (English)
2. Dr. Eric Reed (History)
3. Dr. Steve Huskey (Biology)
4. Dr. Karen Mason (Human Nutrition)
5. Mary Ellen Miller (English)
6. Dr. Stephen T Kenworthy (Geography)
7. Dr. David LeNoir (English)

A. Having to yell over the “punk thugs” that drive by with their booming bass turned up while he’s teaching.

B. Stupidity, lazy/procrastinating students. Students who think they know so much more than they do. “That kind of makes them unteachable.”

C. “Students who don’t show up for class. Especially students who don’t do their assignments and then don’t come to class. Then they are double-punished and that is the stupidest reason for not showing up.”

D. The climate in campus buildings – it’s freezing cold in the summer and burning hot in the winter. He has a problem with the energy being used to run a heater in his office so he can work in the summer.

E. People talking on their cell phones while driving. They swerve too much and never use their turn signal.

F. “Anything Late – being late for an appointment, being kept late, work turned in late.”

G. “The thing that bothers me the most is students that just don’t give a crap.” Also, when students email him their papers and expect him to print them out.

Visit www.wku.edu/Dept/Special/Honors/calendar.html for Honors events.
Visit www.wku.edu/Info/Events/ for more WKU campus events and activities.

**December/January calendar**

Dec. 1 Christmas Parade, 9:30 a.m. downtown
10-14 Final exams
15 Commencement, 10 a.m. Diddle Arena
Jan. 1 McLean Hall opens for winter term at 6 p.m.
2 Winter term classes begin
2 Honors German class leaves for Berlin
17 Residence Halls open for spring semester, 8 a.m.
18 Final exams for winter term classes
18-19 Honors ski trip
20 Honors German class returns
21 Martin Luther King Day; the University is closed
22 Spring semester classes begin

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**SUDOKU**

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 2 3 1 8 7 9 2 6 9
 7 2 6 9 5 9 3 1 2
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Answers: 1-C, 2-G, 3-A, 4-E, 5-B, 6-D, 7-F