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PHOTO BY MEGHAN KENNEDY

PHOTO BY SAM OLDENBURG
Western Kentucky University’s Honors College welcomed 150 members of the class of 2013 earlier this semester with the third annual Honors Freshman Orientation Retreat, also known as H4. These 150 new students were accompanied by counselors, comprised of current WKU Honors students and other Honors College staff members, to Camp Loucon in Leitchfield, Ky.

The purpose of H4 is to welcome incoming freshmen into the Honors College as well as get them acquainted with their new classmates before the first weekend of MASTER Plan.

At H4, students attended informational sessions about studying abroad, prestigious scholarships, and campus life. Outside the classroom, students participated in team-building exercises, such as the high ropes course, rappelling, zip lining, a bonfire, and playing the ever-favorite Capture the Red Towel.

“This is ‘one of the best tools that we have in the Honors College to help build our community.’”

-Amy Chester

H4 gives students a great chance to meet each other and figure out who they will be living with for the next year.

“They’re all thrown in, they’re forced to socialize,” first-time H4 counselor Beth Truax said.

This year’s H4 saw a record number of 150 students attend. According to Amy Chester, Coordinator of Academic Advising and Retention, H4 is “one of the best tools that we have in the Honors College to help build our community.”

Some changes H4 will see next year are improvements to the DLI sessions along with the big news that President Gary Ransdell will be attending the bonfire.

So with another year of H4 behind, it is important to spread the word about H4’s benefits to the Honors College community. As Chester says, “It’s really important for students to go, and also tell all their high school friends how important it is to go to H4.”

Teams North, South, East and West come together for a final picture on the last day of H4. The teams competed against each other during the retreat.
Big Red Rumbles at Ice Cream Social

Who doesn’t love ice cream? On Monday, Sept. 14, the Honors Club held its first meeting of the year with an ice cream social. The meeting took place in the Faculty House near Cherry Hall.

To start things off, Honors Club President Allie Kerns gave some insight into what the Honors Club is all about. Nicole Stratten, Coordinator for Special Programs, spoke next, encouraging students to send her ideas for upcoming activities. The Chair for Campus and Community Events, Rachaelle Sanford, informed those present of opportunities available through participation in various committees, such as the Mix-and-Mingle committee.

Next, Nikki Deese, Community Service Chair, talked about upcoming volunteer projects including Cheney’s Dairy Farm and the Humane Society. Treasurer Samantha Culver discussed fundraising, the forthcoming sale of Honors Club t-shirts, and the highly anticipated debut of sweatpants. She also mentioned involvement in the Special Olympics through fundraising and event hosting. President Allie Kerns, speaking on behalf of the Social Events Chair, alerted everyone that the position of Co-Chair for Social Events was up for grabs.

When all items of business were taken care of, various flavors of ice cream from Cheney’s Dairy Farm were served. When asked what she thought of the meeting, freshman Anna Vied said, “I’m really excited about all the things the Honors College is going to do this year. And of course the Big Red Rumble [a distinctive ice cream flavor honoring our beloved mascot] was the best part!”

Freshmen Start Year at BBQ with the Profs

“Meet at the bell tower.”

The common phrase between upperclassmen has already caught on amongst the new freshman, or rather as Dr. Ransdell prefers, the class of 2013. But the tower may have seemed ominous as Honors freshmen, with their tentative majors, approached it Thursday night. The walk marked what would certainly be a fine dining experience, one most students do not get to enjoy: Barbeque with the Profs.

On what would have been a gloomy day, the chime of the bells whisked freshmen to a gracious professor’s home, designated by major. Professors were ready at their doors to welcome freshmen and jump right into conversation: “What’s your major? Why did you choose it?” Or even, “How was your day?”

Sam Hester, guest at dinner hosted by Dr. Cornell Menking, Chief International Officer, commented that Barbeque with the Profs “made me feel closer to the staff at Western. It was more student oriented rather than being a number in a class.”

Many other students left with similar welcome feelings; feelings that will guide them now, without tentativeness under the bell tower, and for many more adventures at WKU.

“It was more student oriented rather than being a number in a class.”

-Sam Hester

Students fill their plates with food provided at BBQ with the Profs. Left to right: Cameron Franey, Jacqui Powell, Michelle Gilstrap, and Brian Campbell.
Welcome to Honors

NIKKI DEESE
Areté staff writer

Starting college is scary. Whether you admit it or not, part of you secretly trembled at the thought of going to Western Kentucky University. Even though you thought you prepared yourself for every little thing by bringing extra containers and clothes and socks and papers and everything in your kitchen pantry but the closet itself, none of it seemed to work.

Above all, you applied to be part of the WKU Honors College and really have no clue about what Honors actually is. You feel lost and alone with no one to answer your questions and everything around you is going crazy and changing and…

STOP. Luckily for you, Honors can help you figure out this mess. In an interview with Amy Chester, the Coordinator of Academic Advising and Retention, she provided tips for a successful career both with WKU and with the Honors College.

Areté: In your opinion, what is the most important thing about Honors?
Amy Chester: This might sound cheesy, but it is all the opportunities that are available to you by the Honors College. Just to name a few, there are Honors Development Grants (HDGs), Travel Abroad Grants (TAGs), study-abroad trips to places such as Harlaxton and Germany, social events, volunteer opportunities through Honors Club, special housing on campus, priority registration, and even the faculty and staff that works here in the Honors Center.

Areté: Is there anything else Honors students should know or realize about the WKU Honors College?
Amy Chester: We are the first Honors College in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and one of the fastest growing in the nation. At conferences, the WKU Honors College is one that people are looking at and beginning to copy our programs and ideas. Our students are the best and the brightest, but college is still what you make it. Stay focused! Be an H4 counselor so you can pass off your wisdom and be a leader for the Class of 2014.

So on behalf of the Areté staff, welcome to the WKU Honors College, Class of 2013. Even though this transition from high school to college can be frightening, remember that others have gone through this very thing before you. May your dreams not be far from your reach.
Torrence Tailgating

MEGHAN KENNEDY
Arete staff writer

Honors students refused to let the rain dampen their spirits for Honors Tailgating at the WKU versus Central Arkansas game. The group of Honors students gathered beneath the columns of McLean Hall to avoid the dripping weather and participated in lively conversation, played corn toss, and had some delicious barbeque.

When asked about the turnout for the event, one Honors Topper said that in spite of the downpour, “There have been plenty of people. It’s going really well, actually.”

One Honors freshman, McKenzie Croghan, used the event to meet more Honors students and “catch up with some of the Honors kids before the game.”

Tours were being conducted around campus during that day, and several tailgaters used the opportunity to speak with potential WKU students. More than one Honors student saw it as a chance to talk frankly with them about being in the Honors College and the opportunities it provides. One freshman mentioned getting “to talk to the kids about applying. I think I made some converts!”

But touring seniors in high school were not the only visitors on campus. Since Honors tailgating coincided with parents’ weekend, the occasion was a chance for Honors students to get to know each other and give their families a taste of the Honors College experience.

In addition to Honors students and their families, both Honors Toppers and Dr. Craig T. Cobane were present to chat and answer questions. Despite the terrible weather, Honors students came out and got to know each other better, met potential members of the class of 2014, and had a good time.

PHOTO BY MEGHAN KENNEDY

A Presidential Welcome: Picnic with the President

ERICA ASHLEY
Arete staff writer

In addition to his fine administration skills, WKU President Gary Ransdell proved to have an impressive throwing arm. At a picnic at his home to celebrate the reopening of classes, Ransdell took on Honors College challengers in an intense game of beanbag toss and emerged victorious.

After greetings from Big Red, students were treated to a delicious meal provided by Aramark. Door prizes were given away with gifts ranging from the essential WKU gear such as t-shirts and water bottles to an iPod.

However, it wasn’t the prizes that left students talking after the picnic. Many who attended the event were very enthusiastic about the opportunity to talk personally with the professors and administration.

Freshman Meghan Kennedy said, “It was nice to talk on one on one with both a professor and a dean. They actually made me feel better about not having my whole life planned out, since both of them had changed their majors.”

Nick Condor also enjoyed the communication with the professors. “It was a pretty enjoyable atmosphere,” Condor said. “The food was high quality and I liked the interaction we got with so many members of the faculty and staff.”

Other students took this chance to connect with their fellow Honors College peers. Freshmen Mitchell Ice took advantage of this opportunity saying, “It was a good chance to meet and get to know other members of the Honors College. I didn’t go to H4, so there were a lot of members I got a chance to meet at the picnic.”

The relaxed atmosphere, great food, and delightful company was definitely a perfect ending to a stressful first day of classes, and a rare opportunity for students to surround themselves with the wonderful members of our WKU community.
The Book of Success: Rivalry Run

And so it goes that every great story ever told had to start first with an idea and page one. A proper beginning and an adequate grip on an idea are key. Yet, the year is 2009, and the campus of Western Kentucky University has seen enough of the “status quo” Greek philanthropic events. Each year fraternities and sororities host events to raise money for their chapter’s philanthropy of choice, and each year the redundancy remains. Some of these events include Sigma Chi Fight Night and the Alpha Omicron Pi Rose Bowl. Both of these philanthropic events are excellent in their own respect. Yet every year it seems as if something could be done to change the way the public views “philanthropic events.”

Enter Phi Gamma Delta (FIJI). Phi Gamma Delta colonized in October 2008 with extreme success. The pool of potential candidates ranged from athletes to Honors College students, ROTC members to Spirit Masters. Now entering into the fall of 2009, FIJI has 28 active brothers and 13 pledge brothers. Fourteen of these brothers are students of the WKU Honors College—the highest percentage of Honors College fraternity members in the history of the University. To take that one step further, Phi Gamma Delta presented a 3.29 and a 3.32 GPA in fall 2008 and spring 2009 respectively. These grade point averages were the highest of any fraternity.

What started out as an idea has quickly blossomed into a new age of Greek philanthropic events. FIJI Historian and Honors College junior Chaz Vittitow summed it up by stating, “Just because you might not actually be running doesn’t mean that you can’t be involved in the success of this event.” Vittitow later concluded, “Every dollar adds up to something—to lives saved.”

The answer for involvement is simple: sponsorship. Not only does FIJI make sponsorship affordable, but the members make it convenient to sponsor no matter what your budget. Corporate sponsors can donate $101-250 and receive their logo on the back of the shirt. Or if a smaller sponsorship better fits you, there are opportunities for you to “Sponsor-a-mile” for $10, or simply support the cause by buying a shirt for $10.

Josh Wiseman, a sophomore Honors College student, elaborated, “Five thousand dollars definitely seems like a lot of money to work towards, but I’m ecstatic about the opportunity to not only raise that much, but to surpass it.”

So you might be asking yourself, How do I get involved in something like this? The answer is quite simple. FIJI brothers huddled together at their first formal in May 2009.

“Every dollar adds up to something—to lives saved.”

JAKE RYLE
Areté staff writer

Areté
Activities by Honors College Students
See the World Through Honors

CAITLIN PIKE
Areté staff writer

Should I stay, or should I go? This is a question often asked by many Honors students thinking of studying abroad. It can often be a difficult choice when deciding to leave the country and friends behind, but through the Honors College there are multiple ways to go abroad, even with Honors friends.

There is the ever-popular and some might say tremendously advertised Harlaxton College, in England. The program also comes with great reviews. “A semester at Harlaxton College is an exclusive experience of a lifetime,” Amanda Pursell, a sophomore Honors student currently attending Harlaxton, said. “When else will you get to explore Europe while studying in a castle in the heart of small-town England?”

Harlaxton, as many Honors students know, is a semester-long experience, but this summer Dr. James Flynn (English department) and Dr. Clay Motley will be taking a group of Honors students for two weeks in late July to study British literary landscapes. The program allows students to earn English 399 credit while traveling across the U.K., visiting cites which inspired many authors, and ending with a three-night stay in London. There is still plenty of time to sign up for the two-week trip.

Another new option exclusively for Honors students is the Semester at Sea program. Students spend just over 100 days on a cruise ship sailing to ten different countries while earning 12-15 credits. The Honors College has been working on making a permanent agreement with the University of Virginia, where Semester at Sea is housed, said Dr. Motley. Additionally, Dr. Andrew Wulff will be leading a WKU Summer at Sea program which will sail through the Caribbean for two weeks.

“If you’re looking for a standard in studying abroad, then Harlaxton is for you,” said Dr. Motley. “If you want something a little more unorthodox, like studying biology in Japan, or Chemistry in India, then Semester at Sea is for you.”

Dr. Motley recommended that the first step for anyone thinking of studying abroad is to go ahead and begin the process of obtaining a passport.

“Studying abroad isn’t an end in itself. I like to think of it as a stepping stone to something else,” said Motley. “It opens doors to other interests. It’s like a building block.”

Motley added that studying abroad is what makes a student stand out for nationally competitive scholarships, and when applying for graduate school.

Amanda Pursell stands in front of Harlaxton Manor in Grantham, England. She is living there and taking classes during the fall semester.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY AMANDA PURSELL
Areté
New Faces and Events within the Honors College

A Wicked Field Trip

KATIE KNECHT  
Areté Editor

Green signs pronounced the show for the evening. Green Oz shirts and cupcakes with green icing were for sale. Green lights were reflected in the water at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center. The main character matched the theme: her skin was green.

The most famous fictional character to be green from head to toe in the epic tale of The Wizard of Oz was featured in Wicked, a musical that tells the untold story of the witches of Oz.

A group of 50 Honors students and three faculty members filled up a bus on Thursday, September 17, and headed to Nashville to see the production that has been on stage since 2003. The show explains how the Wicked Witch of the West, Elphaba, and the Good Witch of the North, Glenda, met at school and became friends despite their differences.

“I was in complete awe by the entire performance,” Williamstown sophomore Erin O’Flaherty said. “I barely blinked for fear I’d miss something.”

Lindsey Westerfield, the Honors College Admissions Councilor, couldn’t get enough of the show.

“Having heard so much about the show, I knew I was going to love it,” she said. “But after being in the theatre firsthand, hearing the music and feeling the energy, I want to go back and see it a second and third time!”

Their story is spelled out with quick-witted humor, elaborate costumes and stage designs, amazingly talented singers, complete with subtle hints about the “farm girl” from Kansas, and a skilled orchestra below the stage. The musical features many well-known songs, including “Popular” and “For Good.”

Honors students were given the opportunity to see an award-winning show and gain cultural experience. Don’t miss out on these adventures that could open your eyes to a whole new world. Just don’t forget: there’s no place like home.

“I was in complete awe by the entire performance.”
-Erin O’Flaherty

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY LINDSEY WESTERFIELD

Students group together after seeing Wicked in the Tennessee Performing Arts Center in Nashville.

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