



# The Torch

FALL 2010

# The President's Address

BY: AMANDA WARNER



I would like to welcome everyone back for another great year with the

Honors Program, and I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of the freshmen students. I am very excited that there are so many new faces in the program, and I am looking forward to a productive and engaging 2010 – 2011 school year.

So far this semester, I have been impressed with the dedication and enthusiasm of both new students and returning students. The Honors Program has already taken part in community service opportunities, and we have had several representatives at recruiting events on campus. Student organizations have also been formed by Honors students. An Honors alumnus and I created the Society for Southern Studies, an interdisciplinary history organization that promotes Southern history and culture. Honors students are also the driving force behind the Gay-Straight Alliance, an organization that promotes tolerance and seeks to end discrimination toward non-heterosexual students. I feel confident that future semesters will be just as successful through the hard work of ULM's Honors students.

This spring ULM will host the Louisiana Collegiate Honors Council (LCHC) conference, and the event promises to be an outstanding experience for the Honors Program as well as the university. Honors students will have the chance to work closely their peers from several other universities in the state and share ideas with the students and faculty of other Honors programs. The other Honors programs in attendance will have a chance to see firsthand how successful our Hon-

## Welcome Back!

ors Program is and how committed our students are to academic and extracurricular pursuits.

In closing, I would like to congratulate the current Honors students on their successes and encourage them to continue to strive for excellence in all their endeavors. Through the hard work and dedication of its students, the Honors Program will continue to flourish and grow. Based on my observations thus far, I believe that the Honors Program will thrive not only this year, but in the years to come.

## 2010 Student of the Year:



Jesse Lee

Jesse currently serves on the Honors Program Student Council as the Public Relations Representative. In addition to her involvement with the Honors Program, she is the Public Relations Officer for the Gay-Straight Alliance of ULM and the Captured for a Cure/ Entertainment Chair for Up Til Dawn— a campus organization that raises money for St. Jude's Medical Research Hospital .

“The Honors Program allowed me to be truly comfortable with who I am by allowing me the chance to be involved with people that are like me or get me. I have met some amazing people through the program that I will never forget.”

# Study Abroad Experiences

FOR MANY STUDENTS, STUDYING ABROAD IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE. THE HONORS PROGRAM ENCOURAGES ITS STUDENTS TO STUDY ABROAD AND SUPPORTS THEM BY PROVIDING SCHOLARSHIPS AND FACILITATING INTERACTION BETWEEN STUDENTS AND PROFESSORS.

I am a French major with an Arabic Studies minor. With the aid of scholarship money from the ULM Honors Program, I have been fortunate enough to be able to travel to Paris in the winter of 2007, Morocco in the summer of 2009, and Montpellier, France in the summer of 2010. I am currently studying French Language and Translation at the Université de Mons-Hainaut in Belgium for the 2010-2011 school year.

The study abroad experience is integral to one's education. Whether your major be foreign language or pharmacy, study abroad is an opportunity to ex-

pand your knowledge and gain new insights. It is such an essential part of education in Europe that European governments now give out ERASMUS grants to students studying in another country for durations of either a semester or a full academic year, and some universities have even made it mandatory for foreign language students to partake in the ERASMUS program.

I have found that my study abroad experience has benefited me in many different ways. Besides just improving my language skills, I have also studied culture, cuisine, and even geography. I have made many inter-

national friends with whom I still remain in contact, and the relationships I have made will undoubtedly enhance my chances of finding work since the majority of my network has similar aspirations as me.

Assuredly I can say that it was with the help of the Honors Program that I was able to achieve so much through study abroad. In addition to financial support the program has also given me the courage and confidence necessary to stretch beyond my comfort zone. I feel very fortunate to be a part of something that assists me in obtaining my life ambitions.

## Joshua Beckham



This summer, I was given the opportunity to Study Abroad at Cambridge University. Through the Honors Option, I built a relationship with Dr. Jana Giles, an alumna of Cambridge, which led to an extraordinary summer that I would never have expected. I took two classes, one on James Joyce's epic *Ulysses* another on 19th Century Detective Fiction. The *Ulysses* course was a true gem, which ultimately led me to discover my fervent passion for Joyce's work that I will thoroughly explore on my long journey to a PhD.

This summer meant a great deal more than free pass to aca-

demic heaven. I could easily go into detail about bedders, butterflies, trains, planes, people-carriers, Stephen Hawking and telephone boxes. However, the most important information I gained was exactly what I was capable of. This realization came to me when I first arrived at Gonville and Caius College at Cambridge. I was met with the force of hundreds of thousands of hours of work that I was now invited to sit next to at afternoon tea. I quickly saw that my short experience could not yield a true understanding of sheer magnitude of this University.

Regardless of the physical labor of hauling my luggage or walking miles daily, I learned

that anyone can work hard enough and be a part of this intellectual dream. I will never forget the performances, the professors, the students, the janitors, the books, the food, my room and the landscape that so generously gave me its time. I now know that I am on the cusp of that intellectual dream. I cannot wait to embark on the journey that may one day lead me back to Harvey's statue, punts, cobblestone streets and spiral staircases. I was really lucky to learn all of this through Cambridge ... but, let's be honest, the real nugget of gold was the knowledge of how many lumps of sugar I want in my tea.

## Karen Woolie

# Moving Forward

BY: ANDREW PRICE

## An Alumni Perspective



When I started college in Fall of 2006, I entered the Honors Program as part of the largest freshman

class to date. When I saw what a large portion of the program our class constituted, I knew that we would be influential in how the program would evolve. What I did not realize at the time, though, was how influential the Honors Program would be on our lives.

Being a part of the Honors Program made the transition into college life considerably less intimidating and difficult than what it could have been. Not only did I instantly form a bond with the dozen or so other students who had entered the program in my class, but I was also able to form relationships with the other students and the faculty members I met through the program. Being an intelligent and driven person can be a lonely state in a small town like Monroe, or at a small university like ULM. Fortunately, the combination of the intellectual drives of the faculty and students in the Honors Program creates a warm and welcoming environment. That will always be one of the Honors Program's strongest features. Becoming a part of it means stepping into an instant social network of students and faculty who have a great deal in common.

At that time, Dr. Rubio was the Co-Director of the Honors Program. Over the next three years, he would become the Director of the program and institute an amazing amount of changes. My class saw what was likely the largest period of development in the program since it was created in the early 1990s. We saw the burden of a large and difficult to follow honors curriculum be replaced with one that is much more manageable for students. Not only were the course offerings made more beneficial to students, but they were also made more self-directed. In addition to maintaining the high standards for critical thinking, discussion, and writing that honors courses in the program have always followed, the new curriculum added the honors option. This new addition has allowed students to develop a strong academic background in their core classes, as well as giving them the option to demonstrate their abilities as honors students in their own majors. By creating different tiers in the program, students are further given the ability to take charge of their academic careers.

The theme of self-direction has not been limited simply to curricular design in the Honors Program. What has truly helped our program grow has been Dr. Rubio's constant urging for students to take charge and remain active. It would be impossible to count the number of times he reminded our class that the program was ours and was here for us, not for the faculty council.

Being able to take an active role in our academics and in the organization that affords us that opportunity is one of the greatest promises the Honors Program holds.

While the desire to reach higher and take control of our academic careers may unite us as honors students, there are a number of factors that can also create challenges. Honors students have a tendency, knowingly or not, to go beyond what is required in most of their classes and to demand that their intellectual curiosities are fulfilled. They are also more likely than many other students to exercise a greater deal of agency and self-direction along their academic paths. Honors students are almost always highly involved on campus, both within and outside of the Honors Program. While these characteristics are wonderful and full of promise, they can also burden students. The demand for intellectual stimulation can often morph into being stressed, overworked, overwhelmed, and engulfed in schoolwork and other tasks. And, since honors students are accustomed to excelling in what they do, asking for help is not always an easy thing to do.

Fortunately, the Honors Program's tightly-knit social network provides an ample amount of resources for students. Since honors students often take classes with other members, the ability to study



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together and support one another is always there. Many of the relationships we develop with other honors students turn into strong friendships; the level of mutual understanding and support the program provides to its students is invaluable. In addition, there are always a number of honors faculty members that are willing to work with students and provide advice for them. The pressure of being a high-performing student requires that there always be a sense of support for them, and the Honors Program always offers a warm social support network.

The most important lesson I have learned is how powerful honors students can be when they support and take care of one another. No matter how alone and overwhelmed we might feel, most of the students around us are either experiencing the same stress as we are, or they have been where we are. Asking for help and offering it can be a difficult and often awkward step to take, but it is one that proves invaluable.

While I saw many large-scale changes and a great deal of growth in the program in terms of its curriculum, overall design, and enrollment, I also saw a growth in the Honors Program's internal strength. Serving on the student council un-

der Karen Woolie opened my eyes to how effective honors students can be when they work together. Karen introduced a level of structure and support to student council that had never been seen. And while it will take time for students to develop the council into a well-oiled machine, the precedent we set as a council was monumental and, at the same time, realistic. There were times when we faced challenges; but we achieved something no other council to my knowledge ever had. Karen called consistent and regularly scheduled meetings the entire year, and officer turnout was unparalleled compared to past years. Our reforms to the constitution and the committee system offer a great deal of promise to future students.

I can foresee a great deal of growth ahead for the Honors Program; the things it has accomplished make me proud to know that I hand even a small hand in it. We have come so far under Dr. Rubio's guidance, and the program has become strong by heeding his insistence that the Honors Program is ours and exists for our shared benefit. In recent times, the student council has developed a great deal of inner strength by taking the reins and actively leading the program forward. If the program continues to develop a strong system of support between students while maintaining the self-direction, drive, and determination that characterize honors students, the Honors Program will continue to grow stronger both internally and externally.



CLASS OF 2010

# A Look Back At 2010



Ace's Amazing Race



Louisiana Collegiate Honors Council (LCHC) Quiz Bowl



Honors Banquet



High School Quiz Bowl Host



Smarty Party



Love for the Arts



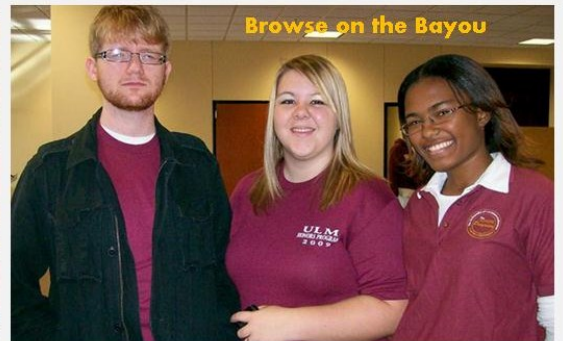
THE HONORS PROGRAM



Our Fearless Leader



Oozeball



Browse on the Bayou