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A Note from Dean Bottoms

Dear Honors College Students, Faculty, Alumni, and Friends:

As we look toward the end of the semester, we have many things to be thankful for in the Honors College. For example, I just spent a wonderful evening thanking dozens of donors who have supported the College over the past year with gifts that provide students with scholarships and awards for tuition, research, study abroad, and community engagement projects. Among those I had the pleasure of thanking was the new Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Lon Kaufman, who is not only a long-standing Fellow of the Honors College, but also its former Dean. Our College is indeed fortunate to have a provost who is so concerned and knowledgeable about undergraduate success.

I am also thankful to recent Honors College visitors such as University of Illinois President Michael Hogan, University of Illinois Trustee and Boeing Chief Counsel Lawrence Oliver II, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, and former Governor Jim Edgar. Each spoke and then took time to meet with Honors College students. Next up? Mayor Rahm Emanuel on December 2nd at noon thanks to partnerships with the Caterpillar Foundation, the LAS Department of Political Science, the Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement, UIC Great Cities Institute, and the Office of Social Science Research.

Our students are hard at work in research (over a third of them are involved in research at any one time), including many who are in the midst of their Senior Capstone projects. They are also taking advantage of other Honors opportunities -- two dozen students recently accompanied Dr. Ekaterina Pirozhenko, our Post-Doctoral Fellow in Teaching and Mentoring, on an Honors College-sponsored trip to the Chicago Lyric Opera to see Jacques Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann*. And they are learning about and practicing leadership skills by leading various Honors-supported student organizations and by participating in the Honors College Student Leadership Council. In fact, I quite enjoyed my recent discussion with students about special issues faced by women leaders and look forward to future events.

As students start to focus on end-of-the-semester exams and papers, the staff and I are focusing on the recruitment and admissions of next year's wonderful freshman class. Things have never been better in the Honors College, thanks to the dedicated staff, the creative and motivated students, and the faculty, alumni, and friends who support the success of the Honors College. Again, there's a lot to be thankful for.

I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving, and I wish you the very best for all the upcoming holidays!

Best wishes,

Bette L. Bottoms

Dean and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs

Professor of Psychology





By: Anam Syed

**Junior
Neuroscience
Major**

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Helen Sweiss

Weili Zhang

**Staff Advisor
Sarah Gardiner**

HCAB Updates

Hello again Honors College students! I hope you all have had a good semester and are ready to take those finals! The Honors College Advisory Board has had tons of fun planning various activities for you all. The annual HCAB Halloween party was a success this year. There were plenty of ghoulish characters walking around and the pizza was devoured in less than five minutes! Also, lets not forget the hidden talents of many Honors College students when it comes to pumpkin carving. I think that it's safe to say that it was spooktacular night.

Even though the semester is almost over, HCAB is still working to making sure that you have a great way to relax from the stresses of school. That is why everyone should attend the fantastic game night we have planned for Wednesday, November 30th from 5pm-7pm. We will have plenty of games such as Monopoly, Taboo, Twister, Wii, Super Smash Bros, XBOX Kinect, and of course everyone's favorite; Karaoke sing-off! Make sure to drop by and play some games and enjoy the culinary cuisines of HCAB; as it will be a potluck.

On behalf of HCAB, we hope that everyone will have a great winter break. When you come back expect some great events planned for the semester such as the Honors College luncheon, a hot chocolate social, and, of course, the Ball!

Scholarship Information

Notes from the Office of Special Scholarship Programs

As the weather begins to cool down, scholarship deadline season is beginning to heat up! REMEMBER: OSSP will assist students with any national scholarships listed here or ones that you contact the office about! For more information on the specific awards listed below, contact the Office of Special Scholarship Programs at 312-355-2477 to schedule an appointment with Beth Powers, Director. Here is your guide to some nationally-competitive scholarships and fellowships that might suit you:

NSEP Boren Undergraduate Scholarship for Study Abroad (UIC Campus Deadline: December 15, 2011)

Scholarships for continuing undergraduate students who are U.S. citizens to study in world regions and languages critical to U.S. interests (travel outside Western Europe, Australia or New Zealand). Scholarships are available for study year-round or an academic semester and range from \$10,000-\$20,000 depending on the length of study and expenses associated with the program. **NOTE: You must apply through OSSP for this scholarship. The current application cycle is for students studying abroad Fall 2012, Spring 2013 or Academic Year 2012-2013.**

Website: <http://www.uic.edu/depts/oa/ssp/nsepug>



Scholarship Information (Continued)

Carnegie Endowment Junior Fellows Program (UIC Campus Deadline: December 15, 2011)

Junior Fellows are one-year-long research assistants to associates working on Carnegie Endowment's projects such as non-proliferation, democracy building, Middle East political reform, trade & environment, economics, international security, South Asian politics, China-related issues, and Russian and Eurasian affairs. Applicants must either be graduating seniors or students who have completed their bachelor's degree within the past academic year – no one will be considered who has started graduate studies. In addition, applicants need not be U.S. citizens; however, they must be eligible to work in the United States. Students also should have completed a significant amount of course work in international affairs, political science, economics, history, or Russian, Chinese or Middle East studies. The selection process for the Junior Fellows Program is very competitive – only 10-12 students are selected per year. Accordingly, applicants should be of high academic quality. **NOTE: You must apply through OSSP for this scholarship.**

Website: <http://www.uic.edu/depts/oaq/ssp/carnegie.htm>

Hispanic Scholarship Fund (Deadline: December 15, 2011)

The HSF General College Scholarships are designed to assist students of Hispanic heritage obtain an undergraduate or graduate degree. Awards range from \$1,000-\$5,000. Applicants must be of Hispanic heritage; a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident with a permanent resident card or passport stamped I-551 (not expired); have a MINIMUM cumulative GPA of 3.0/4.0 scale; be enrolled full-time in a two or four-year, degree-seeking program the following academic year; apply for federal financial aid by filling out the FAFSA form and submitting the Student Aid Report with application; and be pursuing their FIRST undergraduate OR graduate degree.

Website: <http://www.uic.edu/depts/oaq/ssp/hsf.htm>

Oxford | Cambridge NIH Partnership Program (Deadline: January 3, 2012)

For students interested in biomedical research; program in cooperation with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) culminating in an M.D./Ph.D. from the United States and a D.Phil. or Ph.D. from the University of Oxford or University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. Eligible students are U.S. citizens or permanent residents either in their last year of undergraduate study or having graduated less than two years prior to the time of application.

Website: <http://oxcam.gpp.nih.gov/index.asp>

U.S. Department of Homeland Security STEM Summer Internship (Deadline: January 5, 2012)

Paid positions to research over the summer for undergraduate upperclassmen (rising juniors and seniors) pursuing homeland security-related science, technology, engineering, or mathematics-related majors. Must be a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years old, and have a cumulative GPA of 3.3/4.0.

Website: <http://www.orau.gov/dhsinternships/>

Humanity in Action (HIA) Summer Fellowships (Deadline: January 9, 2012)

For current college students and recent graduates interested in exploring discrimination, resistance, social, and discrimination issues in an international setting. HIA covers the costs of participation and accommodation during the fellowship. However, all Fellows will be responsible for financing the cost of airfare to participate in the program. HIA will cover this cost for Fellows with documented need. Although HIA provides a modest stipend for meals, Fellows should also plan to bring spending money of approximately \$500 for food and social activities during the fellowship program.

Website: <http://www.humanityinaction.org/pages/91-main>

DAAD-RISE Summer Internship Program (Deadline: January 31, 2012)

RISE is a summer internship program for undergraduate students from the United States, Canada, and the UK in the fields of biology, chemistry, physics, earth sciences, and engineering. It offers unique opportunities for undergraduate students to work with research groups at universities and top research institutions across Germany for a period of 2 to 3 months during the summer. Applicants must be currently enrolled students who have completed at least two years of college by the time they would go to Germany. The online database of available research labs and positions opens on December 6. Students receive health insurance, a monthly stipend of 650 Euro, and a travel stipend. Airfare to get to Germany is the responsibility of the student.

Website: <http://www.daad.de/rise/en/11638/index.html>

*Lecture**Series***By: [Josiah Han](#)****Junior****Bioengineering****Major**

Future of Chicago Lecture Series: Toni Preckwinkle

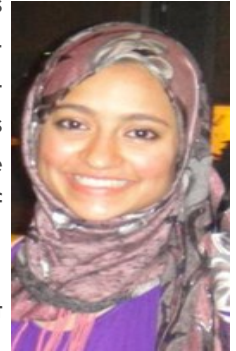
On October 7, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle addressed the UIC community as a speaker in the “Future of Chicago” lecture series. In her talk, she addressed issues regarding the purpose of the Cook County Board, the problems the county faces, and solutions she proposed to deal with these problems. President Preckwinkle laid out the two primary responsibilities of the county: healthcare and criminal justice. Healthcare, according to Preckwinkle, accounts for approximately 33% of the county’s \$3.1 billion total budget. Between the three hospitals, ACN-clinics, and public health services, around 60% of the patients served by the Cook County healthcare system are uninsured. The large uninsured percentage of its patient base represents one major problem for the county healthcare system. The other significant issue facing the county’s healthcare program is the coming implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in 2014. According to Preckwinkle, increased health coverage leads to fewer patients choosing county hospitals for healthcare, which will ultimately destroy the county healthcare system. In order to combat this dilemma, Preckwinkle echoed the words of one her chief healthcare advisors in stating that the Cook County hospitals must be hospitals of choice and not just of necessity.

The other primary concern of the county is the criminal justice system, which accounts for 42% of the budget. Preckwinkle was adamantly against the \$487 million spent on the jail system alone. Instead, she actively advocated for other means of dealing with the largely nonviolent criminal offenders incarcerated in county jails. Approximately 70% of inmates currently in the system are awaiting trial for nonviolent offenses; the cost for one day of imprisonment is \$142.80 for a single inmate. She believes that it is impractical and cost inefficient to imprison so many inmates when there are cheaper alternatives available, such as ankle monitoring. Funds saved through the implementation of more cost effective means could be used to support counseling programs that aim to reduce the amount of drug and alcohol abuse that leads to crime. Ultimately, Preckwinkle wants to reduce the number of inmates in county prisons and also the extremely high current recidivism rate of 52%.

After her lecture, President Preckwinkle moved to the more intimate setting of the Honors College quiet study lounge for lunch with a small group of Honors College students and faculty. There, she continued to outline her plans for economic development. For example, Preckwinkle wishes to “coordinate economic development with work force initiatives” in order to not only create growth but to put people to work and use county resources to “participate in regional economic growth.” During the course of the lunch she also fielded questions clarifying some of the statements she had made earlier in her lecture. She addressed the issues of racial inequality prevalent in the judiciary system, but made sure the incendiary subject did not dominate the entire discussion. She continued to emphasize the importance of decreasing the number of inmates in jail concluding that her first goal was to reduce the jail population.

Leadership Lecture Series: Lawrence Oliver II

Doing the "right thing" is often easier said than done. When does abiding by moral standards become difficult? These standards, called ethics, have significance in all aspects of life including leadership. On October 11th, guest speaker Lawrence Oliver II discussed the value of ethics in leadership and how it can be easy for leaders to slip on ethical behavior. Oliver serves as one of the thirteen members on the University of Illinois Board of Trustees. He is also the Chief Counsel of Investigations for the Boeing Company. Trustee Oliver's lecture was part of the Honors College Leadership Lecture Series.



By: [Maria Quadri](#)

Freshman

Biology Major

During his talk, Oliver emphasized the importance of ethics in leadership. He asserted that unfavorable outcomes are the results of ignoring the need for ethical behavior. Oliver mentioned specific incidents where unethical leadership yielded unfortunate consequences. The first episode that Oliver discussed involved a criminal investigation of a company whose employee illegally possessed confidential documents. Afterwards, Oliver also discussed the "ethical lapses" that occurred at Boeing which led to the need for his appointment as Chief Council of Investigations.

Oliver followed his discussion of the incidents by listing important lessons from the occurrences. As Oliver noted, "[You] can't let the temptations of an improper advantage guide your actions." Oliver further explained that, "There are no shortcuts to compliance." The emphasis here was on understanding and abiding by governing laws. Oliver believes it is especially crucial for the most influential and powerful leaders to embody good ethics: "The higher the profile of the leader, the higher their standard."



Oliver continued the lecture by discussing two more incidents: former governor Blagojevich's political scandal and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's (UIUC) clout scandal. Here, leadership was tainted with improper ethical conduct. Oliver offered a lesson concerning power and the importance of listening during former Governor Blagojevich's scandal. He discussed the intoxicating effect of power and how it can lead to unethical behavior. Oliver stated that "greed is still a deadly sin," naming greed as an enticement to Blagojevich's immoral behavior. He further mentioned that Blagojevich's lack of a "listening ear" resulted in his poor judgment.

Oliver concluded his lecture by offering the lessons that should be gained from the UIUC admissions scandal. The first point that Oliver emphasized for any leader was that, "You must have the fortitude to go against the grain," and that even good leaders can make wrong judgments. It all depends on whether leaders follow their instincts or are misguided by what has always been done. Oliver recognizes good leaders as those who "look beyond the status quo." Ultimately, the emphasis of Oliver's lecture was that proper ethics are indispensable to great leadership.





Brian Ward

Honors

College Staff

& Faculty



By: Masood Qader

Sophomore

Bioengineering

Major

An Interview with Brian Ward

Brian Ward is one of the two newest faces in the Honors College. As Assistant Director of Admissions, he is responsible for admission and recruitment for the Honors College. He also handles student records, serves as an academic advisor, and this year instructs the freshman first-year experience course, Honors 101. I had the pleasure of sitting down with Brian and asking him some questions that all Honors College students would like to know.

What events are you looking forward to, specifically within the Honors College?

I attended the HCAB Ball last year and I had a great time; I am really looking forward to it this year.

How did you hear about the Honors College? What attracted you to apply for this position?

While I was a Resource and Policy Analyst in [the Office of Admissions and Records], I worked closely with the GPPA program, which required me to be in contact with the Honors College. I enjoy the opportunity of working with the students with a more hands-on and personal approach.

Do you have any words of wisdom for incoming/current freshmen about college or life?

College- Be as active as possible. Involve yourself with study abroad and undergraduate research. This is a great networking opportunity; don't waste it.

Life- Treat each day and moment as if it was your last. Make sure you are doing something that you enjoy in life.

What is the most and least enjoyable place you have worked?

Least- When I was working with the underperforming schools (part of the Platform Learning Inc.) I had to work with people who were frustrated and tired of the school system. Sometimes I felt that the anger was misdirected toward me.

Best- Working here in the Honors College has been my best working experience. I love doing the different tasks every day. One day I am teaching Honors 101, the next is filled with advising appointments, and another day I will be travelling some place for a conference. It definitely is an experience that I have never had.

Would you rather be feared by those you work with and respected by those you live with, or feared by those you live with and respected by those you work with? Why?

Put into that situation, I would rather be feared by those I work with and respected by those I live with. If I'm living with someone I don't want them to fear me and if I'm in an authoritative position in my work environment I am okay with coworkers fearing me.



Meet a Faculty Fellow! Dr. Chiang

“You know, it’s not too late to become a doctor,” Professor Mark Chiang reminisced, vividly recalling his mother’s words. Like that of many children of Asian parents who immigrate to the United States to pursue careers in medicine, Dr. Chiang’s upbringing was characterized by high expectations of success and the deliberate placement of the medical profession on a pedestal. However, Dr. Chiang had different plans in mind. He had always loved reading and subsequently declared an English major in college. During graduate school, in the English Department at the University of California at Berkeley, Dr. Chiang was first exposed to Asian American literature, a field that was underdeveloped at the time. Fortunately, the conditions were ripe for innovation. “A group of graduate students were interested in the same thing, but none of us knew anything about Asian American literature,” commented Chiang. The interest was high and the solution simple in principle: “We formed a reading group and started teaching ourselves, and that was the cool part of it.”

Several years later, it is evident that those informal reading group sessions bore the seeds of Dr. Chiang’s now well-developed career in Asian American literary studies. Dr. Chiang was one of the first faculty members hired in the UIC English Department to specialize in Asian American literature. Thus he had the liberty of developing a curriculum centered on questions regarding the role of culture in the broader Asian American movement and how the perspectives of different segments of the Asian American population are reflected in that literature. At the same time, Dr. Chiang was researching the origins of ethnic studies in the context of larger social protests. This led to the publication of his first book, *The Cultural Capital of Asian American Studies*, in which he explored the historical development of Asian American studies as an academic field and looked at how the founders of ethnic studies sought to change the institutional structure of the university. His current research focus leads to overarching societal questions such as the purpose of government and the role that it plays in providing social services for its citizens. Nowadays, although Dr. Chiang admits that stereotypes and pigeon-holing are still ongoing struggles, he reflects positively on the development of Asian American literature. As more Asian American authors are recognized and their voices heard, stereotypes are gradually undermined through an ever-increasing volume of writing.

At UIC Dr. Chiang enjoys working with “an extraordinary range of students.” He counts himself as very fortunate to be able to do what he loves as a profession: talking about great books with students, which subsequently inspires new questions to research, leading to new perspectives to be discussed with students, thereby bringing the process full circle. His advice for students is straightforward: “In the larger scheme of things, there is not such a big difference between schools. The strict hierarchical ranking of schools is not such a good way to think about education in relation to the rest of your life.” What matters, Dr. Chiang said, is that students “take full advantage of the opportunities that present themselves” no matter where they are.



By: [Wenjii Guo](#)

Sophomore

Biology Major

Dr. Mark Chiang

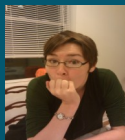
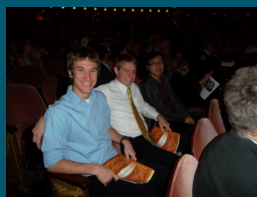
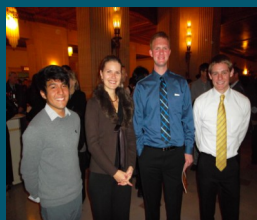
Director of Asian American
Studies

Associate Professor in the
Department of English





By: [Maria Quadri](#)
Freshman
Biology Major



By: [Michelle Skinner](#)
Junior
English Major

Exploring Honors 124

Honors 124: Understanding the Past and Understanding the Creative Arts: Romance and Realism, gives an interesting perspective on some of the greatest works American literature. Taught by Professor Brian Higgins, the class takes students into a world where great literary classics persist within the realms of romance and realism. This course focuses on authors Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James, and Edith Wharton.

For some, it may be difficult to sit through a 75-minute lecture at 9:30 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but what Professor Higgins teaches in his British accent keeps students on their toes. "What he adds about the books adds a new dimension to the class," said freshman Andrew Go. Others, such as freshman Ariel Jordan, agree. Jordan says her favorite part of the course is Professor Higgins and "how he gets into it."

The students' enjoyment class may be due to Professor Higgins' keen sense of young adult interest. In fact, the novel he enjoys teaching most is Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* because, "it's a powerful book and students usually respond very positively to it," he said. Such a positive response from students allows Higgins to enjoy the class himself, especially when he sees "the students' growing appreciation and understanding of the works."

With just a few more weeks left in the semester, students have yet to read *The House of Mirth*. "The best is still to come," chuckles Professor Higgins.

Lyric Opera Trip: *The Tales of Hoffmann*

Very rarely do students get the opportunity for a night out on the town with their professor. With the support of the Honors College, the students in Honors 127 were able enjoy one such opportunity, taking in an evening of opera with their professor, Dr. Ekaterina Pirozhenko.

Thanks to the collaborative effort of Dr. Pirozhenko, Assistant to Dean Fiona O'Connor, and Dean Bottoms, the students of Honors 127 were offered \$15 tickets to *The Tales of Hoffmann*, composed by Jacques Offenbach. The price of tickets, discounted by \$45 for main floor seats, snagged the attention of curious students.

At the opera the students were engrossed by the stage and singing culture. "I loved their costumes, and I loved how the singers were so dedicated to their performance, not to mention their voices. The singers were incredible and the whole show was very entertaining," said Frances Diaz, an Honors 127 student.

Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann* draws upon the life of German author E.T.A. Hoffmann and details the author's journey to find the ideal woman. Four times Hoffman thinks he has found her only to be thwarted by reality. *The Tales of Hoffmann* paired well with Honors 127, a class that considers urban life in German-speaking countries. "The trip gave me a deeper understanding of E.T.A. Hoffmann, one of the authors [who] we read [in class]," Brian Havel, another Honors 127 student, noted.

Dr. Pirozhenko also allowed interested students from her other Honors class to join in the trip to prevent classmate envy, and she provided information regarding the life and work of Offenbach to give context to the experience. Class discussion supplemented the trip experience, and Dr. Pirozhenko noted that if the experience were to be repeated, she would like to hold a discussion following the opera to enhance the academic impact.

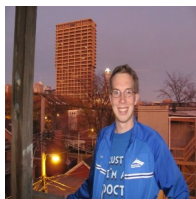
Both Dr. Pirozhenko and her students hope for that repeat experience. Dr. Pirozhenko enjoyed having the ability to expand the horizons of her students, many of whom had never before seen an opera. The students were able to experience Chicago as a world-class city and began to connect sonorous voices occasionally slipping into another language with a plot steeped in something as intrinsically human as chasing an ideal existence.

Perspective: Garden of Beasts

Let me begin by saying that if you are looking for a cheerful read, Erik Larson's *In the Garden of Beasts* is not it. Larson's most well-known work, *The Devil in the White City* chronicled a serial killer operating under the glamour of the 1893 World's Fair, so fans probably are not coming back to his work for a warm ending anyway. I have been a fan of Larson ever since reading *Devil* five years ago. One of my re-readings of it happened to be in the Professor Anthony Grosch's Honors 121 class on literature and Chicago, my freshman year. Reading Larson in the context of a course was a great change from my previous, leisurely strolls through his text. Armed with some of this insight, *In the Garden of Beasts* took an added dimension for me.

Set in the period between from 1933 to 1934, *Beasts* tells the true story of William E. Dodd, the first US Ambassador to Germany under Hitler's authority as Chancellor. As a contrast to Dodd's political narrative, Larson details the narratives of the other three members of the Dodd family, most notably Dodd's daughter, Martha. A vivacious and attractive young woman,

Martha initially falls in love with the pageantry and spectacle of the new Nazi Germany.



**By: Bryan
Killian**

**Junior
Biology Major**

The way Larson details Martha's infatuation with Nazi Germany shows why he's arguably the best at what he does—meticulously researching little-known passages of history and weaving journal entries, diary excerpts, and personal testimony seamlessly into an engrossing and thrilling non-fiction narrative. Descriptions of the Berlin streets and their residents paint a colorful image, far different from the black-and-white view of Nazi Germany with which so many are familiar. Martha meets and engages in romantic affairs with Gestapo Chief Rudolf Diels, as well as a member of the Soviet embassy. With excellent uses of quotation and stylistic description, Larson is able to draw out the fragile and tragic humanity of each, as events around them quickly threaten their lives.

The modern reader knows where this segment of history will lead, but can only read on helplessly as those who experienced it are subjected to its horrors. Dodd is the victim of political subterfuge by both the Nazis and the U.S. State Department, and the anti-Semitism of the latter is contrasted with its far more fanatical counterpart in the former. The cultural elite of Berlin are given chapters of their own in order to chronicle the quelling of artistic and philosophical resistance to the Nazi regime. For Martha, the initial fascination with Nazi culture turns to disgust and fear when attacks against Jews and Americans become more dangerous.

Screening of “Unnatural Causes”

As the lights in the lecture center dim, a hush descends upon the students in a manner not unlike the stillness before the opening credits of a major motion picture. As the opening credits of *this* documentary flash across the screen, I know that it will impact us as strongly as any Oscar award-winning film. I had the good fortune to attend the screening and discussion of the documentary “Unnatural Causes” on October 27, 2011. Hosted by UIC/FUSED, the UIC chapter of the national U/FUSED organization, this event was the first major initiative to promote awareness of socioeconomic diversity on campus.

While many people view diseases as the product of compromised immune systems or poor dietary choices, this four-hour documentary underscores the relationship between our health and the socioeconomic environment around us. While we watched only one hour of the documentary, this segment provided valuable insight into the relationship between income and health. Not only did this documentary highlight the very real correlation between income gaps and health disparities, but it also proposed solutions for communities to counteract these effects. It was with these proposed solutions in mind that we began our discussion. As we reflected on how income and living environment affect our health, we began to question how we can improve the environment within our own UIC community, given the relatively “low-income” lifestyle of college students. One freshman student even proposed a reevaluation of the food offered in the cafeteria to ensure the availability of healthy choices in the meal plans. At the end of the discussion, we all came to the unanimous agreement that just as community-led grassroots organizations are necessary to address the socioeconomic needs in larger communities, a similar infrastructure is also necessary at UIC.

UIC/FUSED is the UIC chapter of the organization “United for Undergraduate Socio-Economic Diversity.” Known on a national level as U/FUSED, this organization is student-led and promotes increased socioeconomic diversity at universities across America. Founded first at Washington University in Saint Louis, U/FUSED strives to increase: access to universities for all academically qualified students regardless of their socioeconomic background, retention rates across the socioeconomic spectra, and the overall awareness of socioeconomic diversity on college campuses. The UIC chapter is led by the Undergraduate Student Government's Interpersonal Relations Committee. In conjunction with USG, UIC/FUSED has been working closely with the Student Money Management Center this past semester to increase financial literacy on campus, an initiative that directly relates to increasing retention and promoting awareness.



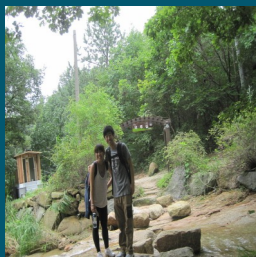
By: Rupa Mirmira
**Sophomore
Biochemistry Major**

Not only did this event highlight the importance of socioeconomic diversity awareness, but also the role we play as individuals in influencing this system. The documentary offers us an opportunity to reflect on the role of our community in our current lifestyle. It is through the active participation of everyone in our community, whether it be the UIC community specifically or the Chicago-land community as a whole, that we can affect a lasting change that can improve our lives!

By: Alex Kim

Senior

Biology Major



Summer Study Abroad in Korea

When people ask about my ethnicity, without a thought, I say I am Korean. The Southern type, in case you were wondering. In reality, I was born in San Antonio, Texas and lived practically my whole life in Illinois. I attended Korean school for a few years to learn the language, went to a Korean Catholic church each Sunday, and I even woke up at odd hours of the earliest morning to watch the Olympics and World Cup just to see people from Korea represent the nation. However, when I stepped back from it all and really questioned myself, I never really felt as if I understood what it meant to be Korean. I wasn't satisfied.

I visited the country two years ago with my mother and younger brother for ten days. Though we were able to see a few tourist sites, the trip felt slightly inadequate; I was unable to truly feel what it meant to be a Korean living in Korea; we were confined to a tourist bus and, consequently, the people accompanying us on the tour. I still wasn't quite content. With this notion itching at the back of my mind for a couple of years, I decided to spend a summer studying abroad there. It seemed the perfect opportunity to get away from life at home and immerse myself for two months in a country that I was supposed to call the Motherland, the most ethnically homogenous country in the world.

For six weeks, I attended summer school at Yonsei University, a prestigious university situated in the heart of Seoul. I attended classes from 11 AM to 6 PM Monday-Thursday, and participated in extracurricular activities and field trips on Fridays. Professors from around the world gathered at Yonsei and offered interesting perspectives on the culture of Korea. For example, my Korean History and Literature professor was from Oklahoma and had lived in Korea for 20 years. The Friday field trips offered immersion experiences such as museum exhibits, trips to traditional Korean villages that preserved lifestyles from 200 years ago, and cultural dance and musical performances. The nightlife of Seoul, a city that never sleeps, was left for students to explore independently. Street food, late night shopping, bars, and clubs line the streets of Seoul, attracting people at even the latest hours of the night.

I worked diligently to spend my weekends traveling, shopping, eating, and just experiencing the culture of my ethnic roots. What makes Seoul a great city for young college students is its efficient public transit system and busy urban atmosphere. The subway and system spans all of Seoul, so exploration of the city is relatively simple. Recently, cafes have boomed in the city, and I believe the average distance to any random café at any random moment is approximately 300 meters, a great asset to any studious college student. Shopping ranges from cheap street shopping where those who lack bartering abilities will be cheated, to huge building complexes that house world-famous brands and even 4D movie theaters. Those who are looking for outdoor and nature-related activities can find havens in several mountains and coastal areas that border the metropolis. Again, Yonsei is one of the premier universities of Korea where the nation's top 1% of students have the privilege of studying. I knew of the intensely competitive academic system of Korea from hearsay and *Korean News*, but I had never met anyone who had actually experienced it. In my Korean language class, however, I met an energetic teacher who had been through the process.

The high school experience in Korea is one of endless cramming. Students go to class during the morning and early afternoon; some students attempt to pay attention, others finish homework for other classes, but most nap during class. Sadly, teachers are unable to say anything because they understand how little many of these students sleep at night. Afterwards, students spend extra hours reviewing material learned that day until it is time to attend cram school. This is where parents pay institutions their life savings so that their children might attain a competitive edge over other students. The irony is every student does it, so where exactly is this edge? I saw this every day and night on the subways: quiet lonely children commuting around the metropolis of Seoul to get to different places, hoping to cram more material into their strained minds.

Usually, cram school ends around 12 AM. This means they aren't able to eat a proper dinner; instant noodles or something of the like are usually scarfed down. No wonder the kids looked so thin and measly. But it doesn't end there. After cram school, students usually go to a "reading room." Here, they pay money for a quiet room devoid of distractions in order to review material they had learned earlier that day. Afterwards, they go home around 3am and sleep for a couple hours, only to start the next identical day. This might explain why so many students sleep during actual school hours. The motivation behind this cycle is a single test; it is the college entrance examination, a test that potentially determines students' socioeconomic statuses for the rest of their lives. After hearing this story, I understood why my grandparents had decided to immigrate to the United States back in the '80s.

My teacher had done well on this exam and had been quite successful. She was able to attend Yonsei University much to the happiness of her family. However, it was also at this institution where she decided to teach Korean language to foreigners, much to the disappointment of her family. Usually, those who attend Yonsei end up working a stable job at some large company or as another professional. My respectable teacher, however, decided her life's calling was to teach Korean, and I'm extremely glad she did. In his 2011 State of Union address, President Obama stated that teachers in Korea were nation builders. I thought about this again, and my personal observation and understanding of the situation is quite different. For the betterment of education and adolescent life in Korea, I hope that more bright people like my teacher work diligently to become future educators of the country, true nation builders working cooperatively for a better society.

Honors Capstone: Micro RNA Research

Every semester, it is rather entertaining to see how startled people seem when realizing yet again that they must choose an honors activity. Panic is quickly followed by hurried cost-benefit analyses of the various options, all overheard in the Honors College lounge.

I'm fortunate in that one of the activity options has always appealed to me more than the others, making the choice easy every semester: research. In fact, I enjoy research so much that the honors credit has always seemed like an extra bonus, not a motivating factor. It's like being paid for having fun.

So what is it that I'm researching? I recently made a colossal jump from mechanical engineering research dealing with stiffness and movements to classic biological research--complete with cell cultures and western blots. While I cannot release all the details on what I'm doing in particular (read the paper when it gets published!), my project has to do with the role of microRNA in neural tube development. RNA stands for Ribonucleic acid, and is a single stranded form of DNA responsible for many different cellular processes, the main one being gene expression. MicroRNA, which have only recently been discovered, are extremely short strands of RNA used by the cell to regulate gene expression in a unique fashion. Unlike transcription factors (proteins that regulate genes on the chromosome), which are highly domain-specific in their binding, microRNA can have thousands of different targets. They work by binding to strands of messenger RNA to prevent them from being translated at the ribosome. Since this is done by base-pairing, there is a lot of room for mismatches in the two sequences because the microRNA can bunch up in portions that don't bind and take advantage of what are known as the "wobble-rules" to pair non-complementary base pairs. As a result, microRNA bind not only to messenger RNA specific to their sequence, but also to many, many others. This implicates them in major developmental changes, at moments when many genes must be up-regulated or down-regulated to create an increase or decrease in their expression in a time-dependent manner.

If microRNA have this vital role in gene expression, what regulates them? Since microRNA were discovered only ten years ago (resulting in four Nobel prizes), this is still mostly a mystery. People have found partial answers, but nothing that allows a comprehensive explanation of the time-dependent changes in microRNA expression. My research in particular investigates the role of a certain protein (again, read the paper for the mysterious protein's name) previously thought to be unrelated to microRNA in this process.

Whether or not you've understood every detail of what's written above, I hope it's clear how genuinely exciting these things are. Research can be whatever you want it to be: a team project or an independent sojourn, a risky adventure or a surefire protocol. There's really no greater thrill than having an experiment you've painstakingly designed and carried out produce results. But don't take my word for it--see for yourself next semester! Save yourself the deliberation over which Honors seminar to take or the temptation to create a new organization simply so that you can claim to be the president. Who knows, your contributions to science may end up in a later edition of the textbook you're holding.



By: [Sasidhar Madugula](#)

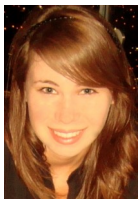
Senior
Bioengineering
Major

Project ESTEEM : An Honors College Sponsored Org

When it comes to kids, I believe that there are two types of people: those who love the miniature adults and those who do not. I had always been one of the former until the summer I agreed to three babysitting jobs. After three months of dealing with constant nagging and questions like, "Why do your eyes look scary?" (Sweetie, it's called eyeliner), I made an agreement with myself to avoid kids at all costs.

Despite my aversion, I made an effort to join Project ESTEEM. When I first heard of the organization, I thought it sounded interesting. Every other Monday is spent at the Lydia Home, a learning center in Irving Park, teaching children the beauty of science by demonstrating small experiments. Having not been a fan of science myself during my elementary school years, I thought Project ESTEEM could have a meaningful impact. So I joined.

The day of Project ESTEEM's volcano experiment finally came along. Putting all negative experience aside, I put on a smiling face and helped my team members lead a group of boys through the experiment. We started with pre-lab questions like, "How are volcanoes made?" and "What volcanoes can you name that exist in our world today?" The kids answered with surprising knowledge of the material until the question, "Why do volcanoes erupt?" was asked. A boy answered, "To let out their anger!" My team members and I laughed and moved on to the [correct?] answer. However, that little boy's answer made me think. Wouldn't it be nice if the world was that easy? It would certainly be a lot easier to explain nature if we could simply say, "The grass turns green because it feels happy."



That boy's answer was a simple one -- a simple, yet rational one. Since my encounter with these children, I have tried to view the world through their eyes. Granted, kids are less experienced and educated than a college student, but they have a unique way of seeing things. They get candy when they are good or do not when they are bad. They smile when they are happy or frown when they are upset. Everything a kid does is straightforward.

By: [Nicole Cardos](#)

Freshman

Undeclared Major

Such an encounter was experienced in Lydia's Home. With visits every other Monday throughout both semesters of the year, volunteers help children come to understand and appreciate science through simple experiments. The Monday sessions that are not spent in Lydia's Home take place in the quiet study room of Burnham Hall where a discussion is led on what should be taught in the coming week.

Experiments range from playing basketball to help the kids understand heart rate to making mini rockets to explore the difference between jet engines and the fuel used in rockets. Such projects not only help the kids to see science in a new light, but help volunteers appreciate the simplicity of kids.

Upcoming Events

HCAB Board Game Night

November 30, 2011 at 5:00-7:00 P.M.
Burnham Hall

Honors College Faculty Meeting

December 1, 2011 at 11:30-1:30 P.M.
Burnham Hall

Tuition Waiver Applications Due

December 2, 2011 at 5:00 P.M.
103 Burnham Hall, M/C 204

HCAB's Salvation Army Angel Tree Gifts Due

December 9, 2011
Burnham Hall

Honors College Annual Dinner and Ball

March 3, 2012 at 6:00 P.M.-12:00 A.M.
Holiday Inn Mart Plaza

UIC Student Research Forum

April 17, 2012 at 1:00-5:00 P.M.
UIC Forum

Honors College Convocation

May 2, 2012 at 7:00 P.M.
UIC Forum

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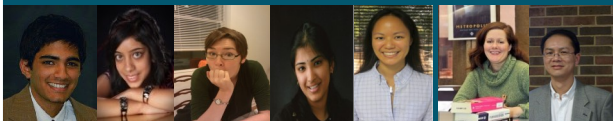
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*Thank You for Writing &
Thank You for Reading*

GET AMPED!

The Ampersand is open and eager to accept submissions from all Honors College students.

Interested? You know you are!

Please contact smadug2@uic.edu.

Lounge Talk

A poll taken in the Honors College Lounge of Favorite Honors Activity among Honors College Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors

