Honors @ Georgia Southern

Fall 2008

University Honors Program Students and Staff

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The University Honors Program at Georgia Southern University has many success stories. Our graduates have pursued a variety of meaningful careers and our current students continue to develop interesting research and service projects. Of course, all of the hard work of these impressive honors students has been made possible by the mentorship of dedicated honors professors. This magazine, Honors @ Georgia Southern, is designed to tell these stories. In so doing, we will keep the entire honors family—our alumni, our students, our professors, and our supporters— abreast of the events and accomplishments in our community of scholars.

I have been fortunate to be the Director of the University Honors Program for the past three years and I am keenly aware that I stand on the shoulders of a distinguished group of predecessors, Dr. Hew Joiner, Dr. Fred Richter and Dr. Martha Abell. They built a culture and a structure to support liberal education at Georgia Southern University.

Each issue of Honors @ Georgia Southern will include stories about our current students as well as items about our distinguished alumni. Because we can only tell these stories if we are made aware of them, I invite you to contact us to let us know what you are doing so that we can pass the news along to the broader honors community.

I hope you enjoy this first issue of Honors @ Georgia Southern. As you read it, please keep in mind that our students were responsible for creating it. This is yet another case, as I am reminded daily, that the strength of our Honors Program and our university rests on the quality of our students.

Sincerely yours,

Steven Engel

Mission Statement

The University Honors Program provides a small college atmosphere in the context of a large comprehensive university. The program is designed to foster the development of a critical sense of inquiry, a spirit of creativity, a global perspective and an ethic of civic responsibility. A hallmark of the program is the emphasis on bringing ideas to life through undergraduate research, experiential learning and service-learning opportunities.

The University Honors Program at Georgia Southern University rests on a foundation of the following ideals that are inspired by the institution’s emphasis on engaged learning.

Critical Sense of Inquiry
Honors students will explore a variety of approaches to research designed to foster the pursuit of knowledge. Students will develop the ability to question with a healthy skepticism toward accepted opinion. The culmination of the undergraduate experience is an independent research or creative project designed to exemplify a critical approach to inquiry.

Spirit of Creativity
Honors students will embrace the idea that creativity is a virtue that should be experienced by all students, regardless of discipline. This spirit involves a respect for different ways of knowing and an openness to intellectual discussion and challenge.

Civic Responsibility
Honors students will demonstrate an ethic of civic responsibility and exemplify the motto of the program, “Humility before Honor.” Students will be challenged to use their abilities and talents for the advancement of humanity and the pursuit of a greater good. The primary vehicle for the expression of civic responsibility is through service both to the university and the community.

Global Perspective
Honors students will develop a perspective which allows them to approach their chosen discipline from an international point of view. This outlook involves the critical exploration of global concerns and generation of proposed solutions to international problems. Honors education provides this worldwide perspective through academic courses, study abroad opportunities and co-curricular experiences.
"Once in Madrid, I discovered that the Spanish live the precise lifestyle I would choose for myself if I could and embody many of the characteristics I have always noted about myself. Having the opportunity, then, to study for five weeks in that environment was the opportunity to experience a culture, people, language, and lifestyle very different from my own but one which I feel connected to and which I may never have that opportunity to live again."

—Katie Brookins  Madrid, Spain

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The world is not flat nor is it getting smaller. The need to learn about other cultures and to expand our horizons has always been a hallmark of a liberal education. In an age of a globalized economy and a globalized communications network, it becomes all the more obvious that it is crucial to foster a global perspective among students. In the following pieces, you will learn of a sampling of the efforts of University Honors Program students to move beyond their comfort zone. Especially noteworthy is the Program’s recent record of support for Georgia Southern students competing for nationally competitive scholarships and fellowships to study and do research overseas. Also, more honors students this past year participated in study abroad programs than at any time in history.

Service has been a feature of the University Honors Program since its inception. This past fall, ten students extended their service projects to the world stage during the Honors Alternative Spring Break trip to Honduras. While many students seek relaxation or the revelry of beaches over spring break, these students paid nearly $1000 each and spent their week working with children in an orphanage and participating in a cultural immersion experience.
Jake Taylor was awarded the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship for Spring 2008. Taylor is an honors junior majoring in History and Geology. The award provided funding for Taylor’s study abroad semester at the University of Oulu in Finland where he was enrolled in courses such as Scandinavian history and culture as well as environmental and biological issues.

“My exchange period in Finland was an intense, life-changing moment that will forever have a deep impact on my life. I made numerous friends across the world and was able to glimpse many different cultures and lifestyles,” said Taylor.

Taylor was equally involved in the Finnish community and became involved in sauna and ice swimming, as well as sports such as Salibandi (floorball) and Pesapallo (Finnish Baseball). Also, Taylor was given an opportunity to visit different areas of Finland and Norway as well as St. Petersburg, Stockholm, Riga, and Tallin.

Since the fall of 2005 when the support for applicants was centralized with the administration of the University Honors Program, we have been able to support more and more excellent students for these prestigious awards. The following is a partial list of the major scholarship opportunities available to all Georgia Southern University students who meet their requirements:

- Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship
- Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship
- Freeman ASIA Award
- Fulbright U.S. Student Grant
- Gates Cambridge Scholarship
- George C. Marshall Scholarship
- George J. Mitchell Scholarship
- Harry S. Truman Scholarship
- Jacob K. Javits Fellowship
- Morris Udall Scholarship
- National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship
- Rhodes Scholarship
- Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship

Nicole Harper, now a doctoral graduate from Georgia Southern University in the Department of Curriculum, Foundation and Reading in the College of Education, was awarded a Fulbright U.S. Student Grant to Slovenia for 2007-2008.

Harper’s research project, ‘Cultural Arts, Intercultural Immersion and Learning Perception,’ explored the role of art in the intercultural immersion process and involved case studies of expatriate educators during their immersion into Slovenian culture, the Slovene experience in the arts and cultural sectors, as well as her own experiential commentary on cultural immersion during her nine month stay in Slovenia.

The Fulbright grant permitted Harper the means to complete her dissertation research as well as contribute to the local educational community of Slovenia. “The Fulbright grant allowed me to grow both personally and professionally while conducting research abroad and widening my cultural knowledge base,” said Harper.

Prior to attending Georgia Southern, Harper served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Botswana and taught art at the International School in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates.
The University Honors Program serves as the campus clearinghouse for nationally competitive scholarships and fellowships and is committed to helping prepare all Georgia Southern University students for these awards.

In the past two years, four Georgia Southern students - Nicole Harper, Jeff Palis, Jake Taylor and Zack Anderson - have been awarded scholarships or grants through the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Jeff Palis, a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University in the Department of Curriculum, Foundation and Reading in the College of Education, was recently awarded a Fulbright U.S. Student Grant to Latvia. He is also the Study Abroad and Exchange Coordinator in the Center for International Studies at Georgia Southern University.

Palis’s research project, 'Cultivating Global Citizenship,' will explore how global citizenship can be fostered on university campuses and in local communities. Palis will work in collaboration with the Department of University Relations at the University of Latvia, Riga.

He holds a Master of Arts degree in International Studies from East Carolina University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Geography from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. He has served as the chair of the Ad-hoc Strategic Planning Committee of the European Council of the University System of Georgia as well program coordinator for the University System of Georgia’s summer studies programs in London and Paris, Czech Republic and Poland.

Zack Anderson, a recent graduate of the University Honors Program, was awarded the U.S. Department of State Critical Language Program Scholarship for Summer 2008. With this award, Anderson studied Arabic in Cairo, Egypt.

Anderson holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Justice Studies and has previously studied Arabic with Professor Waleed Ali, a visiting Fulbright professor from Egypt. During his time at Georgia Southern University, Anderson participated in research with Dr. Krista Wiegand in which he looked at the likelihood of fatalities during terrorist attacks dependent on the terrorists’ goal.

Anderson is a graduate of the inaugural class of 1906 Scholars in the University Honors Program. After concluding his study abroad in Egypt, Anderson plans to attend law school and work in federal law enforcement in the future.
“My experience studying abroad in Montepulciano, Italy was one of the most incredible and influential experiences of my college career, if not my entire life. The chance to interact with members of another culture is priceless. This study abroad experience expanded my global perspective and provided memories that I will cherish and share with those around me.”
— Elizabeth Debban  Montepulciano, Italy

“While in Italy, I was enrolled in Art Appreciation and Watercolor Painting. Art has always been a large part of my life, and to be able to learn about the works in a stimulating classroom environment and then the following day visit the actual original piece was very overwhelming. It is very hard to put into words the emotions that took place when I would walk into a room in a museum and be placed before a work of art that I had spent a large sum of time studying and admiring.”
— Brittany Porter  Montepulciano, Italy

IN THE SUMMER OF 2008, thirty University Program students participated in university-sponsored study abroad programs. International travel, not simply as a learner, plays a critical role in the development of global perspective. Included here are a select group of those who stepped outside their comfort zone to participate this past
abroad

University Honors sponsored study abroad tourist, but as an eager of global perspective. decided to step outside summer.

“As a Biology major specializing in avian behavior, the biodiversity and different biomes located in Costa Rica makes it an ideal location for me to study. The University Honors Program made it possible for me to catalogue 300 of Costa Rica’s 850+ species of birds.”
— Kenny Metasavage Costa Rica

“Studying abroad in Costa Rica was a very memorable experience for a biology major like me. Seeing treasures such as the Resplendent Quetzal Bird and the Red Eyed Tree Frog made it all worthwhile.”
— Kenny Metasavage Costa Rica

“I feel that studying abroad over the summer in Ireland, England and Germany greatly enriched my college experience. As a music minor at Georgia Southern, I found singing in Canterbury Cathedral to be very rewarding.”
— Ava Conger England, Ireland and Germany

“It is an experience that you will remember for the rest of your life. Your perspective is permanently changed.”
— David Robeck England, Ireland and Germany

“Spending five weeks in Germany was the greatest experience I’ve ever had. I learned so much, and made life-long memories and friends.”
— Jake Wallace Germany
Fostering a Global Perspective

“Studying abroad in Spain allowed me numerous opportunities to explore various cities and countries immersing myself in their cultures and lifestyles. I saw the United States from another country’s perspective and was able to develop a better sense of how the world works from the interaction of our economies to my own personal life.”
—Ann Hedges Segovia, Spain

“Studying abroad in Ireland, England and Germany impacted my life in ways I never would have imagined. Not only was it incredibly exciting to experience other cultures outside of the United States for the first time, but studying abroad helped me to understand why having a global perspective is a foundation of the University Honors Program: we live in a global society.”
—Cayla Rowell England, Ireland and Germany

“Participating in the study abroad trip to Ireland and England was not only a fun way to spend part of my summer, it was also an immensely valuable experience that has greatly added to my education at Georgia Southern. Not only did I learn about cultures, I also learned about how people in other parts of the world view the same issues we face. I felt like a global citizen when I came home.”
—Brittany Thurston England & Ireland
“The study abroad program allowed me to see new places, explore new cultures, investigate global problems, and learn many things about myself and others. All in all, it was one of the best experiences of my life.”
—Chris Booth Chile

“Italy was a time of growth—growth of person, growth of knowledge, growth of friends and growth of spirit…. Sadly, it was not until leaving Montepulciano that I realized the profound impact of the city on all of us…. Its art taught me the price we are willing to pay to remember the past and what we are willing to sacrifice in the present. Most importantly, its people taught us that no matter how different we may be, we all have something in common. Italy was the greatest experience of my college career.”
—Steven Roberson Montepulciano Italy

“It wasn’t just a trip that showed us history—Italy is history. It was like a walk through the past, living in it, breathing it, dining with the Caesars themselves.”
—John Di Pietro Montepulciano Italy
This spring, ten Georgia Southern University students participated in the Honors Alternative Spring Break to Honduras, an opportunity that intertwined a cultural immersion experience with service to a local community.

The philosophy of the University Honors Program rests on four foundations, one of which challenges students to develop a global perspective. In this spirit, the Honduras experience was created through a partnership between the University Honors Program and the Office of Admissions to prepare students to become global citizens, foster international understanding and increase the number of Central American students studying at Georgia Southern University.

"The Honors Alternative Spring Break to Honduras enabled me to go on my first venture outside of the United States. The unforgettable children of Copprome and the outstanding hospitality of the Honduran families have helped me to set a new standard for myself — one that makes use of the impact I can have on the world," said Maricel Williams, a sophomore honors Pre-Nursing major.

During their week abroad, honors students coordinated a series of projects at Copprome, an orphanage located in the town of El Progreso. The orphanage houses seventy Honduran children who have been abandoned, sexually or emotionally abused, or have lost their parents to the AIDS virus.

In the months leading up to their departure, the students meticulously planned activities to meet the needs of the children at Copprome. Recalling a lecture from Dr. Darin Van Tassell’s Introduction to International Studies course, David Robeck, a sophomore honors International Studies major, encouraged the group to focus their projects on universal facets of every culture – art, music, sport and food.

Examples of the resulting activities included a lesson on playing the recorder, an exercise which allowed the children to paint their aspirations and dreams on canvases, and organized games of ultimate frisbee and soccer.
Since the trip coincided with Semana Santa, the week leading up to Easter, students introduced the children to the Easter Bunny and the American tradition of the Easter Egg Hunt using items donated by the University Store, Department of University Housing, Office of Admissions and Center for Student Leadership and Civic Engagement.

In addition to giving their time to the children, the students made a group donation of durable goods such as cookware, plates and utensils to Copprome’s spartan kitchen.

“Working with the children of Copprome opened my eyes to a whole new world. Although I felt that I was able to impact the lives of the youth we worked with, I believe that the biggest impact made was by the children on myself. They taught me so much about life — I could not have asked for a more rewarding experience,” said Heather Jo Harralson, a junior honors Exercise Science major.

At the orphanage, the honors students were joined by local high school students who assisted with the projects and served as translators. Many of the Honduran students expressed significant interest in attending Georgia Southern University, one of whom was Gustavo Rodriguez who was presented with an official invitation to join the University Honors Program along with a corresponding scholarship. Rodriguez had interviewed for the award by phone several weeks prior to the trip.

In preparation for the experience, the honors students met regularly with international Georgia Southern students from Honduras to learn about Central American history, economics, culture and politics. One Honduran student, freshman Pre-Business major Fares Lagos, was selected to participate in the trip as a cultural liaison. “I was honored to have the privilege of introducing the American students to my home country,” said Lagos. Lagos, along with his parents Javier and Susie, was key in helping the group make local arrangements and navigate the Honduran countryside.

One evening, the Lagos family arranged a dinner featuring local cuisine hosted by prominent Honduran attorney Jorge Garcia Martinez, son of a member of the Honduran Supreme Court of Justice. At the event, Garcia expressed his gratitude for the contributions the Georgia Southern students had made to the children of his country.

As a result of the Lagos’s efforts and additional Honduran relationships cultivated by Ron Jones, international recruitment manager in the Office of Admissions, the honors students were able to delve beneath the surface and experience true Honduran culture during their stay. Jones worked with several Georgia Southern Honduran connections to arrange a series of cultural events over the course of the week.

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“After a childhood trapped in suburbia, being given the opportunity to travel to Honduras to help underprivileged children has been both exciting and eye-opening.”

- Brad Wilbur, a sophomore honors Biology major
Lidia and Billy Coplan, parents of freshman Art major Stephanie Coplan, provided a tour of a local banana plantation. Public Administration graduate student Jennifer Tarrab’s parents, Ana and Victor, traveled from their home in the capital of Tegucigalpa to host a barbeque.

Lastly, Georgia Southern Business Administration alumna Cecilia Midence welcomed the students to Telamar, a resort located in the beach community of Tela where she currently is employed.

“I have traveled to many different places over the years, but the Honors Alternative Spring Break was a completely different experience. Instead of seeing the glossed over ‘touristic’ view of a country, I was given the opportunity to immerse myself in the culture and societal problems of Honduras,” said George Barnhill, a sophomore honors History and Anthropology major.

One of the many cultural highlights was an excursion to Copán Ruinas, the jewel of the Mayan kingdom in Honduras. The ruins, which date back to 1000BC, were declared a UNESCO world heritage site in 1980.

In the fall, the honors students will host a photography exhibition intended to capture the people, places and landscape of Honduras as a way to share their experience with the entire university community. At the event, the students will sell the fruits of one of their projects at the orphanage — greeting cards adorned with artwork created by Copprome’s children.

Proceeds will help fund desperately needed mattresses, blankets and pillows. The fall semester will coincide with honors Biology sophomore Jessica Sparrow’s efforts to launch a chapter of Students Helping Honduras on the Georgia Southern campus.

“The Honors Alternative Spring Break to Honduras was a motivating, inspiring and humbling experience. Not only did I gain a new perspective on the social and cultural aspects of the Honduran people, but I was humbled to realize what I had taken for granted as a United States citizen. This experience through the University Honors Program has broadened my mind and furthered my sense of civic responsibility to the interconnected global community,” said Angela Williams, a junior honors Biology and Spanish major.

The Honduras trip was made possible, in part, through generous donations by Statesboro resident Evelyn Mabry, who worked with Linda Griffin, a director of major gifts in University Advancement, and from Dr. Fred Richter, founding director of the University Honors Program.

The Honors Alternative Spring Break to Honduras was the second trip offered by the University Honors Program in a series designed to allow students to develop a global perspective and foster an ethic of civic responsibility. The 2007 program took place in Miami, where honors students worked with two non-profit organizations which provide services to Cuban and Haitian refugees — the International Rescue Committee and Church World Service. Additional thoughts shared by honors students as they reflected on their Honduran experience:

“The Honors Alternative Spring Break to Honduras provided me with an excellent opportunity for service, experiential learning and fun. The combination of these three things made the trip an extraordinary experience in which I was challenged and grew. We gave the children we worked with at the orphanage the affection they needed and returned with a greater understanding of the world.”
— David Robeck, a junior International Studies major

“When participating in the Honors Alternative Spring Break to Honduras, I feel I was able to make a difference in the lives of these children at Copprome and get a new perspective on life, which would not have been possible without my participation in the program.”
— Jessica Sparrow, a junior honors Biology major
HOLLY LARSEN, a 2007 graduate of the University Honors Program stands out among others as an alumna to remember. After graduating with a B.S. in Sports Management with a minor in Business, Larsen became a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer in the small West African nation of Mali. There she began work as a Small Enterprise Development Advisor. Working for a microfinance lending organization, Holly helps to provide loans to poor and low income clients who cannot afford to work with a bank.

The job ahead of her was promising, even exciting, but her initial arrival was not without a sense of unease. Just ten days after her arrival, Holly had a definitive conversation with a neighbor who spoke broken English. She recalls, “He said to me, ‘You can walk in Africa.’ I knew then that I could do this and that Peace Corps was the right thing to do...”

The language of Mali is French and Larsen was required to pass several language proficiency tests before leaving her initial host home to arrive at her permanent site. Once there, she had to overcome her apprehension at being referred to as the “white girl.” She works mostly with the women of Mali and is generally ignored by the men. These are the established gender roles in this country.

She has worked with the women of Mali to develop the production of Shea Butter. She has looked over a “new and modern” way of collecting, cleaning and storing Shea nuts in order to extract the Shea oil and eventually produce Shea Butter. This would be a great industry for the women of Mali and they are equally excited about the prospect.

Larsen is also interested in working with high school students to create an HIV/AIDS awareness group. She currently has plans to meet with the director of the school systems and to interview those who are living with HIV/AIDS in Bamako, where she is stationed. This will, however, not be easy due to a stigma in Africa surrounding the subject of HIV/AIDS.

The University Honors Program is proud to claim Holly Larsen as an alumna. Larsen’s blog refers to her as a Peace Corps Volunteer who will “hopefully save a few lives and change the world.” It is apparent that she has already gone a long way toward achieving those goals. Larsen’s stint in the Peace Corps is scheduled to last a total of twenty-seven months.

The text in this article was gathered from Larsen and from her blog on her experiences and does not reflect the opinion of the United States Peace Corps. To learn more about Holly Larsen, please visit http://hollymlarsen.blogspot.com.

Oxford worked in the Molecular Biosensor and Imaging Center (MBIC), which is a program that includes bio-imaging that is conducted by faculty in both the Chemistry and Biology departments at Carnegie Mellon.

His research involved proteins that were isolated from antibodies that give off fluorescent properties when they bind with organic dyes. The proteins, known as Fluorogen Activating Proteins (FAPs), have a wide variety of tasks in cell biology, according to Oxford.

Oxford said, “REU programs are a great way for students interested in a career in research to have an opportunity to see what the lab life is really like and how rewarding it can be.”
Anzjon participates in Research experience

Sarah Anzjon, a junior Nursing major who was recently accepted into the Georgia Southern University School of Nursing, participated in a National Science Foundation sponsored Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) at the University of South Carolina this past summer.

The REU was a nine-week program where Anzjon received free housing and a $4,000 stipend while completing her research. Along with 14 other students, she studied bacteria isolated from marine snow particles. Her project was entitled “Molecular Aquatic Microbial Ecology.”

Anzjon had to collect her own data, including the process for the sequencing of DNA. Through this analysis of DNA, Anzjon examined the community structure of the bacteria.

Anzjon said that she was able to identify all of the isolates and, after that, she created a phylogenetic tree that showed how closely related the isolates were. If carried out further by other labs, the results could possibly be used in medicines for humans.

Anzjon said, “If able to classify the pathogens, antibiotics could be used in pharmaceuticals.” She has been invited back to participate in research next year as well. In the future, Anzjon hopes to work in the field of public health epidemiology.

The medium is the message

How often do you watch television and criticize the message that is coming into your home? Perhaps, not of-

ten.

How often do you watch television and criticize the

“Implied Messages in Mass Media” with Communication

dentients who participated in intense discussions about the

messages present in the text (all aspects of the show).

Many of the students used clips from television series

and allowed the students to go about the presentation in

their own way.

Participating in a seminar entitled “Implied Messages in Mass Media” with Chris Geyerman, an Arts associate professor, Anzjon

Robert Martin, a 1906 Scholar and dinosaur enthusiast, has loved dinosaurs ever since she was a small child, having played with small plastic dinosaurs instead of dolls, she said.

“I have always wanted to be a dinosaur digger once I found out you could do that as a career,” Martin said.

Martin chose Geology because of her love for rocks and

admits that she has a five pound bag of rocks from this recent excursion.

Martin is now a Senior Geology major and has been hard at work to pursuing her love for dinosaurs by working

in the field of Paleontology, the study of ancient life.

During the months of July and August, she had the op-portunity to be a field leader at a dinosaur dig near Jordan, Montana in the northeastern part of that state.

She was a leader for her group, taking student teams and families out into the field to dig for dinosaurs. Famil-

ies were also welcome to participate.

“It’s cool to see people discover things because they are the first humans to ever lay eyes on that fossil,” Martin said. “It may be the first time that fossil has seen sun in 65 million years.”

The area that Martin worked in, the Hell Creek For-
mation, is known for Triceratops, duck-bill dinosaurs and the ferocious Tyrannossaurus Rex. According to Martin, the first recorded Tyrannosaurus was discovered at the ranch by Barnum Brown in 1902.

“Paleontology is a science for wild imaginations. We are never going to know everything about the past ani-mals that have walked on this planet and we’ll probably

never find all of them,” Martin said. “We may never know what color a dinosaur was, so we can use our minds to color them!”

Martin said that one of her accomplishments in the paleontologic world is to change the field of Paleontology for the better.

“I really want to change the way that paleo people cooperate with each other,” Martin said. “We need more cooperation between people. I want to be a part of the new wave of scientists who want to advance the science and work together.”

She also has a goal that would be exciting for any person to accomplish.

“Of course, I would also like to find a new dinosaur and get to name it. That is everyone’s dream,” Martin said.

Martin’s abstract, titled “Improving Congruence Between Morphological and Molecular Data using Implied Weighting,” was accepted for the 68th annual meeting of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology.

Martin will be graduating from Georgia Southern in Spring 2009 and plans to attend graduate school where she can earn her doctorate in paleontology. She said that she would like to work as a professor at a university and take her students out on digs with her.

A field log of the work completed by Martin and oth-
er ‘dinosaur diggers’ during the month-long expedition can be found at www.paleoworld.org.

Martin digs up dinosaurs

Jessica Martin, a 1906 Scholar and dinosaur enthusiast, has loved dinosaurs ever since she was a small child, having played with small plastic dinosaurs instead of dolls, she said.

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In the fall of 2007, Dr. Krista Wiegand of the Department of Political Science taught an Honors Enrichment Seminar which challenged students to analyze the roots of conflicts across the globe. To understand war, one must first comprehend the role of territory, and Wiegand’s students spent the semester analyzing the importance of land to individuals and nations and the disputes that arise over territory.

“Dr. Wiegand’s class opened my eyes to the complexities of international disputes and has caused me to look at current events in a whole new way,” said sophomore 1906 Scholar Christine Dalton.

Wiegand is an expert in international territorial disputes. Her research examines why it is so difficult to settle territorial disputes, what causes countries to use militarized force in territorial disputes and how leaders use territorial disputes to mobilize domestic support. She holds a Ph.D. from Duke University where her studies focused on International Relations and Security Studies.

Kayla Whaley, a sophomore 1906 Scholar stated, “I learned more in Dr. Wiegand’s class than in any of my other classes this semester because it truly allowed for a discussion-oriented, intellectually stimulating atmosphere that also fostered fun and friendship.”

“I spent time living in Lebanon, doing research, teaching Political Science courses at a university there, and studying Arabic. I’ve also spent time traveling in the Middle East in Syria, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Egypt, Turkey and Morocco. I met with leaders of Hezbollah to interview them about their “resistance movement” in the south of Lebanon against Israel. It was a rare opportunity for me to interview them about their views and gain insight into the minds of a group like Hezbollah,” said Wiegand, on her fascinating and remarkable background.

Of her scholarship on territorial disputes, Wiegand stated, “I became interested in studying the Middle East when a good friend who was from Lebanon lost her family in the civil war there. I was curious about how people were so willing to kill other people in the name of religion, nationalism and for territory. As a result, my specialization is now in terrorism, causes of war, and territorial disputes.”

The University Honors Program serves as a pivotal link between undergraduate scholars and world-class faculty, creating a framework for educating the next generation of globally competent leaders.
Starting this fall, Georgia Southern University has developed a new approach to the orientation course for first term freshmen. The new First Year Seminar course will allow students to choose from a variety of courses centered on themes chosen by professors with a genuine passion for a specific topic not normally covered in the curriculum. The University Honors Program was instrumental in piloting this approach in the Fall 2007 semester. This fall, the honors options for freshmen First Year Seminars are:

- Calculus and Beyond in Everyday Life: The Great Theorems in Mathematics
- Surviving the Technology Revolution
- Robotics
- Science and Ethics: Medicine
- American Fiction and Change
- Literacy
- Developing a Global Perspective
- Ethical Leadership
- Finding Happiness in a Consumption Oriented World

Enhancing the First Year Experience

1210 course replaced with First Year Seminars

In Fall 2007, the University Honors Program launched new College/Departmental Honors sequences to provide mentorship as students prepare honors theses or honors capstone projects. The pilot programs for 2007-2008 in the Department of History, Department of Political Science, and the College of Education established seminars for juniors and seniors to prepare innovative research projects.

According to D. Brett Curry, assistant professor of Political Science and co-coordinator of the Political Science departmental Honors sequence, “These departmental honors sequences have clearly enhanced the student-centered focus of the honors program. By enabling students to research topics of their own choosing in depth, students have the ability to work closely with faculty members, share research experiences and develop close friendships with others in their cohort.”

New Honors sequences are being added this Fall in Biology, Construction Management, Civil Engineering Technology, International Studies, and Health and Kinesiology as part of a long-term plan to enhance honors in the major through colleges.

Enhancing Honors in the Major

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Following upon the success of the Bell Honors Program, first established in 1982, the University Honors Program at Georgia Southern began in 1998 with only twenty-three students. Together, the two programs enrolled the academic elite of Georgia Southern University. Since then, the Bell Honors Program has been phased out and replaced by the 1906 Scholars who represent Georgia Southern University's most academically accomplished students.

At the beginning of the Fall 2008 semester, the University Honors Program consists of 343 students, the largest number of honors students at anytime in the history of Georgia Southern University. These students make up not only a community of scholars, but a dedicated group who provide service and leadership throughout the campus and community.

This Fall the University Honors Program welcomes the largest number of new students in history: 161. These students, faculty, staff and administrators celebrated the new academic year at the Honors Welcome Banquet.
The United Student Honors Association (USHA), started the new semester with a cookout at the RAC. USHA plans social and community building events dedicated to supporting honors students.
Honors in the ARTS

Celebrating the work of honors artists

Clockwise, from top:

“Untitled” Paper Mosaic
Jennifer Dukes, Junior Art Major

“Frayed Friendship” Oil
Elizabeth Debban, Junior Art Major

“Tabula Rasa” Watercolor
Steven Roberson, Sophomore Art Major
This section will be reserved in every issue for updates on honors alumni.

We welcome responses from Bell Honors Program and University Honors Program graduates. Send us your information, send us photos, or drop a line to say hello.

Send alumni items to sengel@georgiasouthern.edu
Honors Students traveled to Copprome orphanage in El Progresso, Honduras in March 2008 for the Honors Alternative Spring Break. Here, children at the orphanage demonstrate their membership in the Eagle Nation. To learn more about the trip, see page 12.

Photo by Bob Frigo