

# THE HONORA

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## UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH THRIVES AT THE HONORS PROGRAM GCHC AND SRHC CONFERENCES THIS SPRING

BY: DR. OFELIA NIKOLOVA

Friday, February 26, 2010, marked the beginning of the annual meeting of the Georgia Collegiate Honors Council hosted this year by Georgia College and State University at Milledgeville. The theme of this meeting was “Honors Beyond the Classroom: Campus, Communities and Cultures.” Participants included Honors students from more than 12 schools from the entire state of Georgia. This year, I had the pleasure of taking to the conference 15 VSU presenters, a record number for a meeting held out of town. Twelve current students: Audrey Dowis, Jennifer Stakich, Chelsea Norton, Jennifer West, Helen Burkett, Jaimie Squardo, Matt Schmidt,



Chris Nish presenting

Chris Nish, Hope Harrison, Meagan Wood, Kathryn Grant, Feartatious Hogan, two alumni: Jake Newsome, and Kristin Morrison, and the Psychology Professor Dr. Steven Kohn presented papers and posters on topics ranging from physics to art. The hosts offered a rich cultural program including a visit to the ranch Andalusia, home of prominent Southern writer Flannery O’Connor, and tickets to the musical *Rent*. Discussions, presentations, meetings in the corridors and at the hotel, it all contributed to a great event, which educated and entertained all participants.

A few weeks later, on March 25, four Honors students – Ashley Brickner, Audrey Dowis, Matt Schmidt, Chris Nish - and I drove to Greenville, SC, where we attended the Southern Regional Honors Council meeting. This time again, we set a record – a first ever participation of VSU presenters at the Regional conference. Not only that, it was also the first ever participation of artwork from VSU at an Honors conference.

Enjoying the presentations, the discussions, and the camaraderie at these conferences motivates the students to keep working on research projects, to think big and to want to return to the meetings over and over again. I would like to challenge all Honors students out there to think seriously about presenting their research at these fora. If you are working on a project in any and every discipline and your project advisor is confident this is undergraduate conference material, please let me know at [honors@valdosta.edu](mailto:honors@valdosta.edu). I look forward to taking more of you to these remarkable meetings!

### RECOGNITION

*Dr. Ofelia Nikolova*  
Honors Program Director

*Mrs. Jane Robinson*  
Program Secretary

*Jessica Dickerson*  
Graduate Assistant

*Lani Hollingsworth*  
Student Assistant

**2009-2010 HSA Officers**  
President: Matt Schmidt  
Vice President: Chris Nish  
Secretary: Helen Burkett  
Treasurer: Amy Dandron  
Community Service  
Coordinator: Tim Malone  
Public Relations: Matthew Babcock

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## SPRING 2010 RECOGNITION CEREMONY



This year's Honors Recognition Ceremony gathered more than 80 Honors students, parents, family members and friends gathered in the UC Theater to celebrate the top achievements of members of the VSU Honors Program. In attendance were also Honors faculty and VSU administrators. The event was hosted by Dr. Ofélia Nikolova, Director of the University Honors Program. Among the distinguished guests were President Emeritus Hugh C. Bailey and Mrs. Bailey, VSU Assistant Vice-President for Academic Affairs Sheri Gravett, the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences Connie Richards, and the Dean of the Graduate School Karla Hull, and Mr. John Trombetta, Director of the Alumni Association. Dr. Bailey personally handed the Hugh C. Bailey Family Scholarships to the four recipients - Helen Burkett, Amy Dandron, Audrey Dowis, and Meagan Wood - and commended them for their achievements.

All fifteen presenters at the GCHC and the four presenters at the SRHC conferences received certificates of participation. Dr. Nikolova recognized also the thirty-four presenters at the VSU Undergraduate Research Symposium. Twenty-six students completed the Honors Program this academic year and received

their Honors certificates. The VSU Honors Program also said "good-bye" and "good luck" to the twenty-four students graduating with Honors in 2009-2010.

Dr. Nikolova congratulated the recipients of the Bartram Award. Tim Hilgert, Matt Schmidt and Meagan Wood for their work on three outstanding research projects. She recognized also all faculty nominated for the Exemplary Honors Faculty of the Year election: Drs. Dennis Bogyo, Napoleon Bamfo, Maren Clegg-Hyer, Christine James, Donna Sewell, Michael Stoltzfus and handed the award - a gift certificate for Books-A-Million - to Dr. Mike Orenduff, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, winner in the election.

Honors alumni Jake Newsome and Monica Chana signed along with Mr. John Trombetta a letter of intent consecrating the founding of the Honors Chapter of the VSU Alumni Association.

The evening ended with Matt Schmidt's acknowledgements for the outgoing officers of HSA and introduction of the newly-elected ones. Students and guests remained for a short reception after the ceremony. Soon it was time to say good-bye and return to the papers and projects of the end of the semester.

**THE BARTRAM AWARD  
GOES TO THREE RECIPIENTS**

The Bartram Award is named for famed explorer and naturalist William Bartram and recognizes exceptional achievement. It is awarded each spring to a University Honors Program student who has demonstrated the skills of intellectual exploration, adventure, and achievement, has a GPA of at least 3.3, is currently enrolled in Honors classes or else has completed all Honors requirements.

This year, for the first time, the Awards Committee appointed by the Honors Advisory Council, ran into a conundrum. The applications were so strong, the projects proposed by three of

the applicants were so original and boldly adventurous that the only way to be fair was to recognize all three of them. Thus, the 2009-2010 recipients of the BARTRAM Award became Timothy Hilgert, Music, for his paper "Parallel between the Development of the Music for Video-Games and the Development of Western Music." Matthew Schmidt, Physics, for "Solar Power Tower Technology: Emphasis on DAHAN," and Meagan Wood, Psychology, for her research on "Intergenerational Communication." Congratulations to all!



**JAKE JONES &  
READE HALL**

Jake Jones, a VSU Honors student, was honored by the National Association of College and University Residence Halls as the First Year National Student of the Month Award for his work in February. He was nominated by Nontalie Morrow for going above and beyond the expectations. Mr. Jones is the vice

-president of the Reade Hall Council and has been very involved on campus. Some of his current efforts include serving as the National Communications Coordinator -In Training and being a member of the planning committee for VSU's Residence Hall Association campus conference.

**TIM MALONE TAKES THE  
MAC AWARD**

Honors Student, Tim Malone, is the 2010 recipient of the Mac Award. Each year, VSU names one female and one male for the Marga and Mac Awards.

Malone, a double-major from Alpharetta, GA, was more than qualified to win the award. The senior has a 3.97 GPA and is an extremely active student both on and off campus. Some of the organizations and activities Tim is involved in include Alpha Lambda Delta, Alpha Chi, Golden Key, Habitat for Humanity, Second Harvest Food Bank, and the VSU Honors Program.



## HSA ELECTIONS & COOKOUT

The Honors Student Association Barbeque was a great success. The rain did not deter a crowd from gathering at the Honors house. People gathered quicker than the meat could be grilled, conversing and remembering the good times had in the Honors Program over the past year. Once everyone stuffed themselves full of delicious foods, the elections became the focus of everyone's attention.

This year's elections had a much greater showing than in the past. Positions that were usually run for unopposed, now had fierce competition. This shows that more and more students are becoming interested in the Honors

Student Association. They are caring enough about the organization to take responsibility, run for office, and make their mark on the entire group. Voters favored some incumbent officers, Matthew Schmidt and Christopher Nish, President and Vice President respectively.

Some new executive officers include Jennifer Stakich, Chelsie Norton, Amy Dandron, and Kate Fix as Secretary, Treasurer, Freshman Board Advisor, Community Service Coordinator and Undergraduate Research Coordinator. A strong and dedicated group voted as class representatives show promise for the upcoming year as well.



## HSA VALENTINE'S DAY

For Valentine's Day HSA organized a delicious bake sale that included chocolate rats, cookies, cupcakes, brownies, candy hearts, etc. In addition to the bake sale, Honors Students also

dressed up as live "Cupid Grams", which required the Honors Student to dress up nice. For Michael Holman, dressing nice meant wearing a red and black tuxedo, along with an HSA cupid

sash. Customers paid \$10 to deliver a live "Cupid Gram" to their loved ones. The Cupid delivered gifts, cards, and a song of the customer's choice.

## PIZZA WITH PROFESSOR STOLTZFUS

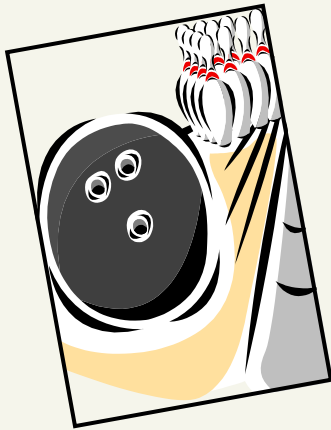
This semester Professor Michael Stoltzfus was the featured professor at Pizza with a Professor. The event took place on a Thursday evening in the lobby of Reade Hall. Professor Stoltzfus came and help an open discussion with about 30 residents.

While enjoying some tasty pizza, students, along with Professor Stoltzfus talked about religion, sexuality, politics, life, learning, classes, and many other controversial issues. The discussion lasted for 2 hours and was amazing!





## BOWLING FOR KIDS



On March 6<sup>th</sup> the Honors Student Association participated in the annual Bowl For Kids' Sake at Jac's lanes. This event is for Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Georgia. Big Brothers Big Sisters is an organization that has been matching underprivileged children with greater role models, thus decreasing their risk of making bad decisions in the future.

The Honors Student Association raised enough money to

sponsor a bowling team. The participants of this event were Jennifer Stackich, Matthew Schmidt, Robert Rozier, and Ashley Brickner. These bowlers also helped in the event, selling t-shirts, taking raffle tickets, and distributing food to the other participants.

If anyone would like more information on this organization you may contact them at 1-866-614-4215. These children's lives are truly changed by having some-

## SUMMER STUDY ABROAD

Both Jennifer Stakich and Matt Schmidt will be attending study abroad programs this summer. Jennifer will be leaving the U.S. on June 17th for a five-and-a-half week stay in London, England. While studying abroad, Jennifer will take courses in British Literature and theater. Both classes will have

a heavy emphasis on the culture, which will be absorbed through field trips, events, and other activities.

Matt Schmidt will be going to Italy this summer to work on research with a professor. They will examine gravitational waves of low frequency with a highly sensitive group of radio telescopes.

*"What better way for an English major to visit some of the places that inspired great works of Literature?"*  
~Jennifer Stakich

## H S A W A N T S Y O U !

Benefits of joining HSA include numerous opportunities to be involved in community service and social events. For more information look for VSU's Honors Student Association on Facebook and check out their website.



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