

August 2008

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Honors Community Welcome Reception

Whether you spent the summer break traveling, interning or just hanging out at home, we'd love to hear about it!

Wednesday, Sept. 3
2:30 - 4 p.m., MGC 200

Capstone Information Sessions

Have questions about your Capstone? Come and get some answers.

Tuesday, Sept. 2 &
Thursday, Sept. 11
5 - 6 p.m., Hurst 206

How to contact us:

Phone 202-885-6194
Email honors@american.edu
Walk-in Hurst Hall 206
American University
4400 Massachusetts Ave NW
Washington, DC 20016
Hours Monday - Friday,
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Online www.american.edu/honors

Welcome back, Honors students

Welcome to all who are new to the University Honors Program, including Honors self-nominated and transfer students – and our freshmen! This year's freshman class is the largest incoming group the Honors Program has ever seen, as well as one of the most academically distinguished.

We are very pleased that each of our new Honors students is part of our Honors Community and look forward to every student's unique contributions in the classroom, on campus and beyond.

Please join us in welcoming the two new members of the University Honors Program staff: Honors Counselors Melissa Gang and Brad Turner. To learn more about Melissa and Brad, please see page 2.

We welcome our new freshman students to our expanded Honors 101 program. This non-credit fall course introduces them to our University Honors Program and what it means to be an Honors student at AU.

We hope that our returning students will meet our new freshmen at many of the activities we have planned for this fall, including the Nationals vs. Padres game on Sunday, Sept. 21 and the Honors "Tea Talk" with CAS Professor Allan Lichtman on Tuesday, Sept. 30.

Please be an active member of the Honors community. There are many ways to become involved, everything from organizing Honors community service activities to serving on the Student Honors Board.

The entire staff at the University Honors Center welcomes you to the fall semester and reminds you that we are here to help you in any way we can.

Have a great semester!



Professor Michael Mass, Director
University Honors Program

Honors 101 undergoes facelift

Honors 101 enrollment has continued to grow along with the swelling population of American University. With this growth comes fresh faces and program changes.

Honors 101, the program designed to introduce incoming freshmen to Honors and life in Washington, D.C., is celebrating its fourth year as a cornerstone of the University Honors Program.

Co-chaired by juniors Rachel Cannon and Jon Weakley, Honors 101 has adapted its program to accommodate the largest group of incoming freshmen the Honors



Honors 101 mentors planning in February for the 2008 program.



Honors 101 mentors and Honors staff take a break from planning at their retreat.

Program has seen to date. Rachel and Jon have worked closely with Honors staff and the 36 upperclass mentors to give the program a whole new look, altering the dynamic of each of the individual events and even the groups themselves. Most events are to occur during the traditional Wednesday class period and will periodically include 18 faculty mentors to help promote the benefits of getting to know professors at AU.

Among the innovations to this year's Honors 101 is the opportunity for a free visit to the Newseum, the critically acclaimed, 250,000 square-foot news museum that recently opened downtown. Other events in their tentative stages of planning include an election extravaganza as well as a semi-formal reception to celebrate the end of the semester. The upperclass mentors, vetted for their leadership qualities, are more than enthusiastic about making this fall's program what they hope will be the best introductory experience for Honors freshmen yet.

Meet our new Honors Counselors

The University Honors Program is pleased to welcome Melissa Gang and Brad Turner to its staff as Honors Counselors.

Melissa joins the Honors counseling



Honors Counselor Melissa Gang

team at American University as a graduate student in International Peace and Conflict Resolution with the

School of International Service. She has just returned from three years as a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer in Vanuatu,

Melanesia, where she was posted after graduating from Amherst College in 2004. During her Peace Corps service, Melissa worked in education, health, youth and sports and community development. Melissa brings a variety of experience to the Honors Program, ranging from career counseling to choral directing. She hails from Boston, Mass., and is an avid Red Sox fan.

Brad is a recent Honors graduate from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, where he double majored in Political Science and Religion. While attending Wright State, Brad served in various student leadership positions such as the Student Government President and as the Head Delegate of Wright State University's award-

winning Model United Nations Team. Brad moved to the Washington D.C. area in order to earn a Masters of Public Administration from AU.



Honors Counselor Brad Turner

Melissa and Brad bring many talents to their roles in Honors and are eager to get involved with Honors students. Stop by Hurst 206 to introduce yourself or to make an advising appointment.

BleakHouse Publishing names its first fellow

BleakHouse Publishing is a small, independent press devoted to creative writing in the service of social justice. The Bleak House Fellows Program was established to support teaching and writing on crime, punishment and social justice.

Molly Kenney (SPA, '09) is an AU Honors student as well as a Truman Scholar. As a Bleak House Fellow, Molly will study the death penalty and serve as a mentor to selected Honors students who are examining the death penalty as part of their course of study at American University.

Bleak House Fellowships are accompanied by a stipend of five hundred dollars.

For more information on BleakHouse Publishing and its fellowships, visit: www.bleakhousepublishing.com.

Honors alumni celebrate

Event gathers old friends, new ideas

The University Honors Program celebrated a terrific success at its first Honors Alumni Happy Hour at Clyde's in Friendship Heights on June 24. Nearly 50 Honors alumni turned out to catch up with their peers and hear about Honors news.

To spread the word about this new event, the Honors Program created an AU Honors Alumni Facebook group, which quickly became a popular place for recent – and not-so-recent – alums to share news and reconnect. There is also a Facebook group for current Honors students, where Honors-related news and events will be posted.

In addition to updating Honors Program staff about their many and varied accomplishments, the recent Honors

graduates who gathered at Clyde's had the chance to offer input on the next big Honors alumni project: a mentoring program for Honors upperclassmen.

Honors plans to launch this mentoring program during the 2008-2009 school year, since both Honors alumni and current students have shown a significant interest in building a network together. As the Honors staff continues to refine plans for this mentoring connection, we

welcome ideas from Honors alumni and current students. Please submit your feedback and/or requests to become a mentor or mentee through the Honors Facebook groups or to honors@american.edu.

The screenshot shows a Facebook event page for 'Honors Alumni Happy Hour at Clyde's'. The event is organized by the University Honors Program and is a cocktail party. It is scheduled for Tuesday, June 24, 2008, from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at Clyde's in Friendship Heights, 5411 Whisman Ave, Chevy Chase, MD. The description states: 'Whether you have been away from American University for a couple of years or just a few weeks, the University Honors Program would like to offer you a special opportunity to reconnect with your Honors peers. Take a break from your week and enjoy free food, beer, and wine. We hope this will be a great way for you to get back in touch with the Honors community and share your ideas with Honors staff and more Honors alumni. A worthy connection.' The page also includes a 'Your RSVP' section with options for 'Attending', 'Maybe Attending', and 'Not Attending', and a 'Share' button.

The Honors Program used a Facebook invitation to notify recent alums of the Happy Hour.

Student Honors Board: Election 2008

If you thought the only interesting election of 2008 occurred in November, think again. An election to fill 13 positions – including president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer – for the Student Honors Board (SHB) will take place in just a few weeks.



Members of the '07-'08 SHB grill out with Prof. Mass at last year's SHB Spring Barbecue.

SHB serves as a liaison between Honors students, the University Honors Program staff, and the general Honors community.

Candidate nominations, which should include the candidate's intended graduation year, contact information and a short paragraph expressing why he/she should be on the board, will be due on Friday, Aug. 29. Nominations submitted via e-mail to honors@american.edu should note "SHB Nomination" in the subject line. Alternatively, hard copies may be delivered to the Honors Program office during weekday business hours.

Cast your vote online between Friday, Aug. 29 and noon on Friday, Sept. 5. Voting will take place on the Honors Program Web site, www.american.edu/honors.

In addition to being an important voice for Honors students, SHB also plans and coordinates Honors events, including the annual Brain Bowl, the Thanksgiving Honors Community dinner, and the spring barbecue, among other activities. SHB members are also responsible for arranging Honors community service projects. In the past, SHB has worked with DC Reads and Operation Outreach.

Calendar of Events

The University Honors Program calendar is updated regularly on the Honors Web site at www.american.edu/honors.

Friday,
August 22

Honors Writer as Witness Breakfast

All Honors freshmen are cordially invited to have breakfast with Luis Alberto Urrea, author of *The Devil's Highway*.

9:30 - 10:45 a.m., MGC 2-6

Saturday,
August 23

Honors 101 Kick-Off

This will be a chance for Honors freshmen to meet their Honors 101 mentors and co-chairs in person, as well as the rest of their mentor group.

Check-in begins at 11 a.m., Ward 1

Wednesday,
August 27

Honors Transfer Student Luncheon

All transfer students new to AU and the Honors Program are invited to a casual lunch with Prof. Michael Mass, director of the Honors Program. Please RSVP to honors@american.edu.

Noon - 1:30 p.m., MGC 6

Tuesday,
September 2

Capstone Information Session

Confused about your Capstone? Come and get all of your questions answered.

5-6 p.m., University Honors Program Center, Hurst 206

Wednesday,
September 3

Honors Community Welcome Reception

Join Honors students, faculty and staff for cake and conversation!

2:30 - 4 p.m., MGC 200

Friday,
September 5

Self-Nominated Student Luncheon

All self-nominated students who entered the program after Jan. 18, 2008 are invited to a casual lunch with Prof. Michael Mass, director of the Honors Program. Please RSVP to honors@american.edu.

Noon - 1:30 p.m., MGC 6

Thursday,
September 11

Capstone Information Session

Confused about your Capstone? Come and get all of your questions answered.

5-6 p.m., University Honors Program Center, Hurst 206