

HONORS NEWSLETTER

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The Honors Program

By Dr. Paris Svoronos, Chemistry

Last Sunday April 8, Columbia University's Undergraduate Research Symposium was held on their campus from 9am to 3:30pm. Twenty-five (25) out of the total of thirty-two (32) posters that were presented involved Queensborough students from the departments of Chemistry, Biology and ECET. More important out of the three abstracts that were selected for oral presentations, two of them involved our kids. For the first time ever a Queensborough student, Fathima Nazumdeen, had her research findings presented on power point.

Our college was also invited last year to participate for the first time and our kids had 20 posters out of the total of 40 accepted from the New York Metropolitan area.

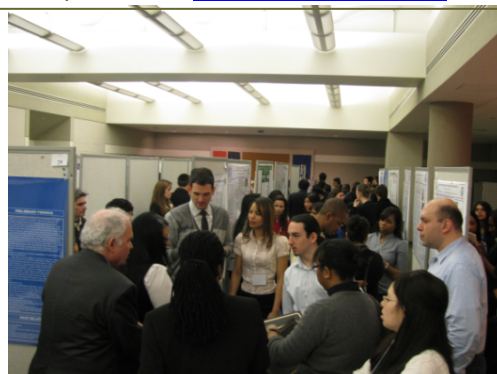
Like in many chemistry conferences there was no selection for best presentation. This is not as important- after all according to Pierre de Coubertin, Founder of the Modern Olympics in 1996, "The most important thing in the [Olympic Games] is not winning but taking part; the essential thing in life is not conquering but fighting well" or "The important thing in life is not victory but combat; it is not to have vanquished but to have fought well."

Old timers would remember where our kids were 12 years ago, in terms of research, exposure and acknowledgement by the four-year colleges. We have come a long way and we will still expand as long as there is unselfish commitment by the mentors, often working without compensation, who take kids under their wings and place them on the pedestal of recognition. It is these same faculty colleagues whose heart represents what

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Comments and feedback on this issue of the Newsletter may be sent to EHanssen@qcc.cuny.edu



The Honors Program Library Workshop

Students participating in the QCC Honors Program are required to take a Library Research Workshop. The Workshop enhances existing skills and offers options in developing new research methods.

The Workshop provides students with a forum to discuss their research techniques, share research strategies with other participants, learn new methods in selecting and evaluating sources, along with learning about the research support network available to them at the QCC Library.

Library Workshop components include:

- Evaluating Internet Websites
- Legal and Ethical Use of Sources
- Online Database Searching
- Primary versus Secondary Sources
- Use of CUNY+PLUS Online Catalog

A recent survey was conducted about The Honors Program Library Workshop and the Top Ten comments from the QCC Honors Student completing the workshop are:

- I did not know I could access *The New York Times* from 1851.
- Did not know about the online databases and that they were full-text...online newspapers and journals.
- I learned what a Boolean search is.
- I learned what periodicals are.
- Navigation of available resources from the CUNY library.
- That we have databases available to us and we can borrow books from other CUNY libraries.
- How to do an advanced search in GOOGLE and select a specific domain.
- The difference between HTML and PDF files.
- How important the source is that we use for our research.
- I did not know there are more resources than GOOGLE or Wikipedia.

The Student Honors Library Program workshop will not only help the Honors Student while in attendance at QCC, but will serve as a tremendous resource during the student's academic research experience.

The Importance of Honors Research to our Students

By: Dr. Julie Pigza, Chemistry Department

I am fortunate to be a mentor of research students who register for the Chemistry Department's 900-level Honors courses in Independent Study. The students are involved in all aspects of the research project including developing new ideas and directions, reading literature references, and setting up and purifying reactions. In addition to lab work, the students also get to present their results in poster and/or PowerPoint format at both local and national conferences. In addition to the QCC Honors my research students have presented their work at the Undergraduate Research Symposium and Mid-

Atlantic Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society.

Being involved in chemistry research gives the students a completely different understanding of chemistry than they can get from their undergraduate labs. They really get a feel for the process of research and all that is entailed in designing a project. They learn to broaden their horizons, get to expand their resume and experiences, and are trained as future scientists. Learning about the successes of previous research students is one of the most rewarding aspects of our profession.

Teaching BI-202 as an Honors Section as Part of the Phage Hunters Program Associated with the Howard Hughes Medical Institute

By Urszula Golebiewska- Biology Department

During the spring 2011 I taught my first honors class, the second semester of General Biology course (B-202). The session is run as part of the Phage Hunters Program associated with the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. It was a challenging experience for the students attending the class as well as myself. It required an enormous amount of work. Students had to learn modern tools in bioinformatics and newest advances in the phage genomics in addition to the standard general biology material. Ultimately it was the most positive experience I had as QCC faculty. The students were required to apply for the course and the class was composed of committed and well prepared individuals. There was no fear of anybody dropping or not passing. It was a delight to come to the class as nobody was hiding in the corner and everybody was

ready for a discussion. To everybody's astonishment my community college students performed as well as the students from four year colleges throughout the country. Their participation in the wiki side, where students are required to answer questions posted by HHMI staff was superb. All of the students presented excellent talks during the 2011 Annual QCC Honors Conference. The final presentation by a selected student during the Symposium at HHMI was of professional quality and I was proud. It all resulted in a submission to the Gen Bank of genome of mycobacteriophage EricB and a publication authored by all involved in the phage program in the Journal of Virology. Currently I am teaching the HHMI phage hunting session for the second time. This semester more students are involved. I hope that the outcome will be equally rewarding..

Administering Honors Contracts in History: A Fulfilling Experience

By Dr. Emily Tai, Associate Professor, History Department

What is most likely to happen in my classes is that a few students choose to sign an honors contract to work on a special project and/or present their work in history at Queensborough's annual honors conference.. In my electives on women's history and the history of religion, students present their research in women's history, or discuss their experiences as interns at the Harriet and Kenneth Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archives. In my history of Western Civilization, students spend a semester working on a single source (or a group of sources) and discussing its significance--over the years, I've had students work on the biography of a fifteenth-century French king; seventeenth-century works of economic philosophy; sources for the medieval Crusades; and Germanic Law codes. I always learn something I didn't know from mentoring



these projects---and I always enjoy hearing student presentations!!

To watch a student work hard on a presentation, and then get an enthusiastic response from their peers is so delightful--students are justifiably proud of their accomplishments, and I can't help but be happy for them...what could be better than that?

Queensborough Mock Trial Team Competes in Regional Tournaments

By Prof. Ted Rosen

This year, for the fifth straight year, Queensborough Community College's Mock Trial team competed in the American Mock Trial Association's ("AMTA") national competition, in which, approximately 600 teams of students from colleges and universities throughout the country (including approximately four two year colleges) competed by trying the same case. This year the case was a criminal homicide case based on a fatal car crash caused by an alleged drunk driver. Students competed by serving as lawyers or as one of 10 witnesses. Team members presented opening and closing statements, introduced evidence, asserted objections to offered evidence, conducted direct and cross examinations, and role-played as witnesses in mock trials at which panels of three volunteer lawyers presided as mock jurors and judges.

This year QCC had three teams in the AMTA competition. Over the weekend of February 3rd – 5th, one of QCC's teams, consisting of seven students, competed in the AMTA Philadelphia Regional hosted by Drexel University and held in the Criminal Justice Center in Philadelphia. In four rounds, our team competed against teams from the University of Pennsylvania, Elizabethtown College, Seton Hall University, and Stony Brook University. QCC was the only two year college in the Philadelphia Regional. As a result of their effort, the team was awarded The Spirit of AMTA award – given to the one team in the tournament that best exemplifies AMTA's ideals of civility, justice and fair play and is based on rankings provided by each team's opponents. QCC received twenty-nine of a possible thirty ranks from the opponents it faced. This was the third time in its existence that the QCC team had won the Spirit of AMTA award.

The following weekend, QCC competed in AMTA's New Haven Regional Tournament hosted by, and held at, Yale University. In the New Haven Regional, twenty-six teams from 20 colleges and universities, including Yale, Princeton, Brown, Columbia and Wesleyan University competed by trying both sides of the criminal case in four rounds. The two teams

of nine students each from Queensborough (the only two year college in the New Haven Regional this year) competed in hard-fought trials against Wesleyan University, Trinity College, Marymount Manhattan College, Hunter College, Roger Williams University and the University of Connecticut. At the New Haven Regional, two members of the Queensborough team were awarded the very prestigious and difficult to earn Regional Outstanding Witness Award. This award is presented to the ten students, who, in performing as witnesses in the mock trial competition, earned the highest rankings from the judges presiding at their respective trials out of the more than seventy-eight students competing in the Regional tournament as witnesses. Andrew Kim, earning nineteen out of a possible twenty ranks, tied for second place for his portrayal of Dr. Ashley Norton, a medical expert who is called as a defense expert to establish reasonable doubt in the accuracy of the breathalyzer test administered to the defendant. Shirley Aguilar, earning eighteen ranks, tied for third place, for her performance as Police Officer Ryan Foster, the first officer responding to the accident scene and who, as a member of the police department's fatal crash team, reconstructed and analyzed the crash for the prosecution. In commenting on Andrew's performance after one round, one of the "judges", a practicing trial lawyer, stated that he had cross-examined more than fifty medical doctors testifying as experts in court and that Andrew was as good as any of them. Shirley, who won praise from the judges presiding over the rounds in which her team competed, also doubled as the defense's accident reconstruction expert – a difficult part which she mastered in only a few days after a change in strategy by the team in the final week before the competition. QCC was one of only three colleges in the New Haven Regional to have received two of the Outstanding Witness Awards. This is the second time in the five years of its existence that Queensborough has earned the Regional Outstanding Witness Award.

The members of the 2012 Queensborough Mock Trial Team

The members of this year's QCC Mock Trial Team are:

Shirley Aguilar, Duane Alexander, Oluwadamisi K. Atanda, Thalia Berrospi, Clemens Bastos, Julie Ann Belaustegui, Nathaly Callejas, David Coba, James Correa, Jace Dunn, Gabriela Gomez, Ahmed S. Islam, Anwal Kassim, Andrew Kim, Helen Kwok, April Maroshick, Mayur Pathak, Anthony Rivera, Daniel Shokunbi, Sam Mishra Shrikant, Kandola Singh, Jeremy St. Clair, Frank Wu, Renee Young and Owen Yun.

The team's faculty advisors are: Professor Kelly Ford, Professor Leslie Francis, Professor Stephen Hammel, Professor Ted Rosen and Mrs. Bonnie Cook.

Mock Trial Team: Mock Republican Presidential Primary Debate

By Prof Ted Rosen

This past March, members of the QCC Mock Trial Team presented a Mock Republican Presidential Primary Debate. Students played the part of the then four major Republican presidential candidates, Governor Mitt Romney (Anthony Rivera), Speaker Newt Gingrich (Jace Dunn), Senator Rick Santorum (G.B. Omotade), Congressman Ron Paul (Shirley Aguilar). The candidates were asked questions by a panel of "distinguished journalists" consisting of Kandola Singh, Julie Ann Belaustequi, April Maroshick and Ahmed Islam. Owen Yun and Helen Kwok served as the moderators.

Three "wives" of the candidates were in attendance in the audience: Mrs. Newt Gingrich (Nathaly Callejas), Mrs. Rick Santorum (Thalia Berrospi) and Mrs. Ron Paul (Gabriela Gomez).

The questions posed to the candidates covered a broad range of issues. The candidates were given a minute and half to respond to each question and were permitted the opportunity for rebuttal upon request.

Using skills developed from their experience in Mock Trial, the student candidates answered the questions based on their review of material obtained from actual debate transcripts and the web sites of the candidates. The answers were not scripted.

Queensborough Community College

Presents the

Eighth Annual Honors Conference

Celebrating Student Research and Academic Life

Friday, May 4, 2012

12 Noon to 4PM

Medical Arts Building – First Floor and Basement

www.qcc.cuny.edu

Queensborough 2012 Fed Challenge Team

This fall will mark the ninth year that Queensborough has competed in the Fed Challenge competition. It was the first two year college to ever enter. The Fed Challenge is a nationwide intercollegiate competition sponsored by the regional Federal Reserve offices, with the winner of each region competing in a national final competition held in Washington D.C. in December.

The New York regional competition is held in November. The list of thirty plus area colleges competing usually includes Rutgers, Princeton, Baruch, University of Pennsylvania SUNY Binghamton and SUNY Oneonta.

The objective of the competition is to promote understanding of our Federal Reserve System among college students.. Their presentation discusses economic indicators such as consumer confidence, unemployment and inflation. It also covers the housing market issue and the weakening of the U.S. dollar. The team has devoted many hours on evenings and weekends preparing for the event over the past three months. The incentive to be part of the team is to earn honors credit for business courses through Honors Contracts that they are enrolled in.

On April 20th the team presented at the Money Maters High School Symposium at Queensborough. Organized by Prof. Christine Mooney the symposium was designed to promote interest in the High School

Fed Challenge competition held each spring. The team also presented a second demonstration on how they learned about economic issues and indicators. A second symposium is being scheduled for this fall.

On April 26th the team of thirteen students traveled to Boston for a scrimmage with North Shore Community College and Gateway Community College Connecticut. Queensborough hosted a similar event last spring and we hope to continue and expand this event in years to come.



The members of the team are: Ean Chin Ang, Girrel Banks, Thalia Berrospi , Nathaly Callejas, Robin Christian, Gabriela Gomez, Samuel Hague, Andrew Kim, Helen Kwok, Santana Newell, Nekesha St Rose, Kandola Singh and Tanvir Walia.

Faculty advisors are: Prof Ed Hanssen and Prof Ben Murolo.

My First Semester Dealing with Honors Contracts: A Worthwhile Experience

By Dr. Rosemary Iconis – Health, Physical Education and Dance Department

This is my first semester working in the Honors Program at Queensborough Community College. My honors student, Raj, and I worked together to select projects that will be completed to satisfy his requirements as an honors scholar in my human sexuality class.

My singular regret is that only one student in my

class of 35 is a participant in the program. Though I have only two months of experience working with an honors student, I already see the program's potential to enrich the academic experience for the student and positively affect the quality of the student's education. From my perspective as the instructor, the interaction with an extraordinary student enriches my experience as well.

Biotechnology and Genetics: Two Honors Course Opportunities

Dr. Nidhi Gadura - Biology Department

It was another productive year for Biotechnology and Genetics Honors courses in Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 semesters. Twenty students participated in Honors activities throughout the semester and made their presentations at the end of the semester in the Fall. We are really excited that starting Spring 2012 Biotechnology program (Genetics & Bioinformatics courses) has been accepted to participate in a national research program sponsored by Department of Energy – Joint Genome Institute. This takes the honors research component of our courses to a national level. We are really proud that when our students take on individual research projects for their honors courses they will participate in the Gene Annotation Project in a big way. This is genuine research that might eventually lead to a peer reviewed publication. Our students are really enthusiastic about this project!

Honors program over the last few years have helped us recruit students willing to continue research projects



even after the course is finished. This leads to more students interested and retained in STEM disciplines overall. Our recent publication is a prime example of students starting in honors courses and working on research projects for almost 2 years! {Hong R, Kang TY, Michels CA, Gadura N. Appl Environ Microbiol. 2012 Jan 13. [Epub ahead of print] Membrane lipid peroxidation in copper alloy mediated contact killing of *Escherichia coli*.}

Teaching General Chemistry II Honors: My First experience with the Honors program at Queensborough

By: Derek A. Bruzewicz, Ph.D

It was a privilege to teach a linked honors course (General Chemistry II) this past fall 2011. Compared to regular classes, I found the students to be more attentive and, as a group, significantly better writers. They were well prepared for college-level work, unlike many students of general chemistry who often require extensive review of algebra and notation. A mathematical treatment of some topics in chemistry gives the best understanding, and the honors students began the semester with the necessary tools. My only complaint is that the students were often too quiet or polite to comment during class. By the end of the semester, every student was prepared to discuss and criticize in front of the group.

Most rewarding was to see the improvement in writing, especially for students who had difficulty with English at the start of the semester. Honors students appreciate the need to write well. Most surprising to me was the diversity of backgrounds and interests---I expected to teach future chemistry or biology majors, but found instead a group that included, engineers, pre-med students, business majors. I count chemistry as part of any complete liberal arts education. It is gratifying that QCC students seem to agree.

SIDE NOTE: As the honors program develops, I hope that diversity of culture and academic interest will soon be joined by more representation of women in the sciences.

Biotechnology and Genetics: Two Honors Course Opportunities

By Andrew Nguyen, Department of Biological Sciences and Geology

At first I was reluctant to take on any students in the honors program knowing full well that what good it would be to mentor students who did not what a difference between a molecular weight and from a mole and how to dilute a stock solution even to save their lives. But, I had to do it because it is the best for me at this early stage of my career and service to department after all, is necessary for tenureship at Queensborough. So I took on some students in my Anatomy and Physiology class.

For my first batch of students, I had them work with Project Prize high school students showing these students different organs and organ systems of the cat. Seeing these students' excitement in education, I wondered whether the extra hours of mentoring students worth the values that they might gain by exploring their own education through teaching. I knew that for most of the high school students, this was their first opportunity to dissect and exam inside a cat and as for my A & P students, their first opportunity to apply their knowledge. I stopped wondering after seeing the way that knowledge was excitedly absorbed through young minds and delivered by young minds. Of course some of my students got a kick of being on the other side of learning and told me that they had the experience and respect for what I was doing. They told me the challenge and the difficulties of getting the student attention to focus in classroom and to deliver their own message even though they were well-prepared and were prepped by me. As my students gained confidence with their work with other students, I found myself with the confidence knowing that the extent of my teaching does not end after the lecture period. The following semesters, some of my students continued work with the cats while others taught high school student the metric system, showed them how to make a wet mount and look at microorganisms using microscope,

and extract DNA from strawberries using dish washer soap, cheese cloth and a bit of alcohol. Some even taught STEP students using fetal pigs and frogs.

The students also began to assess the effectiveness of their workshops by giving pre and post workshop questionnaires. Their organization of data and graphs showing positive gains and self reflections of workshop preparation and experiences in classroom presented at annual honors conference were a testament that there was indeed learning beyond the classroom.

Recently, in my own immunology course, I knew that some of these students were more prepared than my A and P students because they had finished the A and P series and even biology series before entering my class and thus, I could offer them honors experience by doing research with me. I was impressed with the students who had just a year or two of science courses and were running assays and generating publishable data. Even my colleague and collaborators at Albert Einstein College of Medicine were surprise of QCC students and the way they carried themselves. They were able to work with tissue culture, animal tissues, running real time PCR, doing immunohistochemical analysis of tissues, documenting their works, compiling their data and presenting their work at local and regional conferences. Looking back at my years working with honors students, I have to admit that the extra works of meeting students outside of classrooms, training them as I have been trained and mentoring them as I have been mentored, far exceeded my expectations of the rewards that I gained knowing that some of my students did get a better education, one with applicable knowledge that they can take with them throughout life. It pleased me knowing that I had a little part in that.

Honors Bioinformatics: An Advanced Biology Honors Class

By: Peter Novick, Biology Department

Incorporating honors projects into biology courses is extremely rewarding. Students get the opportunity in Bioinformatics (BI357) to go above and beyond the basics, think like a scientist, and conduct their own research. At first students find it difficult and even overwhelming to come up with their own projects; however, upon completion of their task, they are left with a feeling of self discovery and pride in their

work. This excellent opportunity also allows them to create power point presentations and present their res in a formal manner at the QCC Honors Conference, something most of the students are doing for the first time. From concept development to their final presentation, our QCC science students are enriched by the addition of Honors components.

Teaching the Honors Laboratory Section for General Chemistry I

By: Dr. David M. Sarno, Associate Professor, Chemistry Department

I have been teaching the Honors Laboratory section for General Chemistry I for many years. Each semester I meet a new group of students with different personalities, preparedness, and goals. One thing they have all had in common, however, whether they intend to pursue the sciences or not, is the sincerity of their effort. They have shown exceptional perseverance in a very demanding course and they strive for more than a good grade; they want to understand.

They also invariably form cohorts that stay together long after the semester has ended with students supporting each other in and out class. This has truly been a team effort involving the students, Paris Svoronos, who teaches the lecture, and myself. Finally, I have recruited many students from this course into my research group. While some are more successful than others, I have always been happy with the quality of their work and also the positive and serious attitude they bring to it.

THE HONORS PROGRAM at Queensborough Community College is a comprehensive academic program that provides an enriched classroom and overall intellectual experience to students who have demonstrated high academic achievement. Honors scholars have an opportunity to expand their knowledge in areas of particular interest, to distinguish themselves among their peers, and to make an acknowledged contribution to the intellectual and cultural life of Queensborough. In this way, honors scholars develop the strong academic and leadership skills required in the pursuit of advanced degrees and challenging careers in New York City and beyond. Honors scholars take a combination of honors and non-honors classes, and may earn honors credits through honors contacts. To graduate as an honors scholar, students are

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

Comments from Honors Students in Honors Italian 112

By: Shirley Falconi

Going to see Jovanotti was a surprise. I thought that going on a school trip we would be going to a museum to look at Italian art. Even though that would have also been interesting, but having the opportunity of seeing an Italian rapper for the first time was a ton of fun. Although I didn't understand a lot of the lyrics the show was still great. Jovanotti had the crowd moving the whole time especially me. I met a few native Italian people, and was able to practice my Italian with them. My new amico (acquaintance) was

By: Gaelle Muzac

My Italian class is just amazing. Having Dr. Santoro as a professor is really helpful. I'm not only learning about grammars or verbs but also about the culture Italian, geography and history. On March 14th, we went to Jovanotti's concert, it was fun.

By: Saime Mustafic

Going to see Jovanotti in concert was a great event for me, because it was a new experience to see an Italian

By: Kayla Bimonte

My professor for Italian Honors really goes above and beyond while teaching. He teaches the class the required material, and also entertain us with historical and culture knowledge of Italy. The experience our class has gained from him is like no other. Instead of learning the language and the grammar rules of Italian that Rosetta Stones Program offers you, Prof.

By: Andrea Barragan

Being in the Italian Honors class has been a splendid experience. I have learned a lot about the Italian language and, apart from that, Dr. Santoro has made

from la citta di Napoli. I also met few ragazze (girlfriends), but I don't recall their names. The best part of the evening was when Jovanotti was in the crowd. It was fabulous! . Over all, I strongly believe that letting American students participated into foreign cultural events is a great way of learning and practicing the new languages . Thank you professor Santoro for choosing a great concert, and thanks QCC for supporting students to learn new languages and cultures.

I enjoyed every single minute. I never visited Italy before, because of that class, I'm getting myself ready to visit most of the cities. And I'm grateful to be able to speak and understand Italian pretty well.

rap singer in person. Although I do not care much for rap singing, I enjoyed Jovanotti's performance, to my surprise.

Santoro gives the students the whole package. As a result, our class participates and learns from one another's success and mistakes leaving us with the best possible experience. As a whole, I am sure that my class would agree the highlight of the semester has been our participation at the Jovanotti's concert.

sure that we are informed about the Italian traditions and customs. I have learned and have had a lot of fun in this class.

Taking Honors Courses: A Challenge with Positive Outcomes

By: Julia Boroday

While taking various honors courses, primarily in the sciences, I encountered a challenge with positive outcomes. The instructors pay more attention and concentrate on specific topics which gives the students the opportunity to see things better and in greater depth. This experience also teaches students to interact more with both faculty and classmates because the groups are smaller and the creation of the

cohort occurs very early in the semester. I have come out of it a lot more comfortable and with a lot more knowledge than just taking a regular non-honors course. I have also been engaged in research under Dr. Moni Chauhan and Dr. Ursula Golebiewska, which I have presented at several professional conferences including the Middle Atlantic Regional Meeting at the University of Maryland, College Park in May 2011.

Conducting Synthetic Organic Chemistry Research and Taking an Honors Biotechnology Class: Two Unique Opportunities

By James Kang

I am currently taking my very first honors class in Biotechnology and I am privileged to be a part of this learning experience. At first I did not know what to expect from an honors class. I imagined difficult exams and more comprehensive material. Although that is partly true, it has been much more than that. The classroom size is smaller than a normal class. Each question raised has more weight to it. Instead of simple answers, there is discussion with fellow students weighing in their opinions and thoughts. In addition, the professor becomes more involved with the students, even beyond the classroom.

In addition to this honors class, I am part of a research project under Dr. Sasan Karimi's mentorship in the Chemistry Department. The project deals with the synthesis and properties of benzazepines which has exposed me to laboratory techniques and skills that help me better understand the concepts I learn in class. I am scheduled to make at least three presentations at professional conferences this Spring either in poster or power point presentation form. I have also been introduced to two summer research programs that I am applying to, where I hope to be accepted.

Taking Honors Chemistry Classes: A true Challenge to Think and Participate

By Suk Ju Ham

General Chemistry was my very first honors class at Queensborough. Dr. Paris Svoronos' methods were challenging because he asks his students to continuously participate by coming to the blackboard to work problems out to the class. Initially this was very difficult for me as I lacked the confidence to present in front of other people but slowly I got the courage and willingly volunteered to his requests. By doing that, I was able to understand the material in greater depth

and was forced to apply principles I learned in class. I have also joined Dr. Jun Shin's research group and have started working on the determination of the refractive index of solid materials with the intent to present my findings at four different conferences this year. This project matches my interest in forensic science which I plan to follow as a career upon graduation from Queensborough.

Taking Honors Classes as a Freshman

By Yueting Chen

This is my second semester at Queensborough. Last semester, I registered and completed two Honors classes, Calculus I (MA-441) and General Chemistry I (CH-151), at the recommendation of Dr. Paris Svoronos. In addition, this semester I am taking two more Honors classes, Calculus II (MA-442) and General Chemistry II (CH-152). Many people tell me that it is not necessary to take so many Honors classes, but I strongly believe that these classes will benefit me in the foreseeable future. Just like people always fight for many things in life, taking as many Honors classes as possible is one thing I should pursue diligently. I believe I can learn more in these sections for several reasons.

Since the number of students registered is relatively small, students can be nurtured more carefully and more delicately. In addition, being with classmates who have almost the same schedule, we create a cohort which makes the class go smoother and easier for both the professor and my classmates. If I transfer to other colleges, my Honors courses will be designated as such on my transcript and will give me a chance for scholarships and greater networking for other opportunities. As a result of my success, I have been assigned to tutor introductory chemistry classes which gives me confidence and comfort because I know that, if

Conducting Research at Queensborough: An Experience so Unusual for a Community College

By Rebecca Cho

As part of the Honors curriculum at Queensborough Community College, I have been conducting research in the chemistry department regarding the determination of refractive index of various substances. I have been working closely with my mentor, Dr. Jun Shin, and presenting our findings at various conferences including the national American Chemical Society's annual meetings. Working in the lab and learning how to use various scientific instruments as well as attending numerous conferences has been very exciting and rewarding. This experience has been invaluable in terms of exposure to the research world as well as in exposure to public speaking/presentation. The research I have been working on involves a new method of determining refractive index without the use of an expensive refractometer. In the lab, we have succeeded in obtaining the refractive index of various compounds and solutions via a simple setup involving a chromatography column and laser

pointer. This cost effective setup has proven to give accurate results in determining the refractive index of pure liquids, liquid-liquid mixtures and solid-liquid mixtures. A good relationship was found between the refractive index and various types of concentration such as percent mass, percent volume, molarity and density. Currently, my research project specifically involves the further application of this laser pointer system to indirectly find the refractive index of a solid. I am scheduled to present my findings in four more professional conferences in addition to four more that I had last year. In all of them I found no other community college students presenting. This makes me proud and I am grateful to the opportunities the chemistry department has given me and, in particular, my advisor Dr. Paris Svoronos and my mentor Dr. Jun Shin.

My First Year at Queensborough: Taking Enough Honors Credits for Me to Graduate with an Honors Certificate

By Kaung (Zach) Myat San

I am currently in my second semester at Queensborough and by the end of May I will have more than the minimum of 12 credits needed to graduate with an Honors certificate. This experience has granted me the opportunity to be exposed to more challenges. My first course in General Chemistry I under Dr. Paris Svoronos taught me how to work problems on the blackboard for the rest of the class. It has also given me the confidence and therefore the ability to conduct group tutorials in the Chemistry Department. You don't need to be extra intelligent to take honors classes. Instead they are for the serious student who will be committed to his responsibilities. The effort is also one of the

main essential components for one's academic goals and future career. After I completed my first semester of honors courses, I found myself more responsible for all of my classes' materials and more willing to undertake the challenge. In order to be successful and fulfill the future career, one also needs the guidance, support and encouragement from his mentor(s). Dr. Svoronos was my professor of Honors General Chemistry I last semester and is currently my research mentor. He has already made arrangements to present my findings at Columbia University on April 8 as well as four other chemistry conferences later this Spring. I am looking forward toward a summer internship which is also part of the Honors program as well as more honors classes next year.

Reflections on my Very First Experience in Honors: Conducting Biology

Research By Ricky Loh

When I first started taking Honors classes, I did not know what I was getting myself into. I thought that since I asked my anatomy and physiology lab professor, Dr. Andrew Nguyen, about research, it would be easy work since I got an A in the class. I naively thought that research will consist of me playing with a microscope and maybe I could pet a few animals along the way. I was terribly mistaken when the first day of research, I felt quite ill equipped as if I had bought a knife to spaghetti western gunfight scene. I was a complete oaf at the laboratory. I did not understand complex scientific vernacular and I could not do solution dilutions without putting it into pen and paper. I remember reading an article published by my mentor regarding the research I was involved in and the perfect phrase to sum up my experience was "Graecum est; non legitur" ("it is Greek, [therefore] it cannot be read") or simply "this is Greek to me". I remember asking my research partner if she knew what STAT3 IKO was and she just shook her head. I googled the term hoping to find a definition but instead found only links to the original article I was supposed to read and understand. Since learning the research topic was not in a class setting without pressures of examination, I must to admit that I would take a cavalier approach and did not review the material. I cringed to see the look of disappointment in my mentor's eyes when I could not remember certain topics. Luckily for me my mentor was quite patient and he asked questions quite frequently to make sure that I understood the material. He never once yelled at me for all the bumbling mistakes that I made and I felt terrible some days when research did not yield any results. I am pretty sure that there were moments that he thought I rode on the "short bus" to grade school. The honors program coupled with four science courses that semester made my social life quite non-existent. Suddenly my research became another class that I have to constantly read and had deadlines to meet. I had to learned how to manage time better or sink; during the winter vacation my three hour train rides to the Bronx Hospital lab became studying time amidst the bums begging for change and the urban youth trying to sell candy to raise money for a make believe basketball team. More and more often I found myself sitting down in the noisy school library trying to transcribe the journals into layman's terms while daydreaming about strangling the student next to me with her headphone cord since her ipod was turned up a few decibels too loud. On the brighter side of things, I became accustomed to dealing with pressure. Sleep was for the weak and it can be kept

away by cups of hot beverages from beans of a tree. Sundays was not a rest day, it was a day for me to go Queens College and abuse their empty quiet library. I cannot complain when I have to wake up early to go to school since there are professors who are there from 8 am to 12 midnight (I speculate that they must live in some hidden nuclear bunker on school grounds) or professors who drive for over 3 hours one way to teach their class and make the arduous journey at the end of the day .

Seminars given by guest speakers from other schools seem easier to understand. I remember attending a nano carbon tube seminar and having semi-understanding of the material while my classmates were drawing blanks. I contribute that to the extra time spent reading textbooks and journals. My attention span seemed to improve and I was able to point out errors during some of my class lectures (Yes! I WAS THE ANNOYING KID WHO TRIES TO CORRECT THE PROFESSOR) . All joking aside, I strongly suggest that students should take part in the honors program. The program is free, it does not cost you anything and it gives you more bang for the buck. It perfectly complements your existing classes and helps in better understanding the class material. Concepts do not come quick or easily to me but I felt the program helped out tremendously. I had never received any type of accolades until I enrolled in the honors program. Two semesters ago, I remember getting a call around 11pm asking me to put on a shirt and tie for an awards ceremony the next day. In the auditorium, under the gaze of beaming parents and there I stood proudly on stage but with no tie and a shirt that did not fit properly while holding an honors certificate . Next semester, I went to my first conference at another university and I won my first award. I tried to make light of the situation by jokingly telling professors and classmates that I will attempt to wear the plaque around my neck but inside I was quite ecstatic. I never thought I was particularly bright or able to achieve anything of significance in my life. I am just glad that I had an opportunity to observe brilliant people work and hopefully pick up some distinguishing characteristics from them. The proverb 27:17 states "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another"; hopefully my mind will be sharpened and fashioned so I can give something back to my friends and community in the future.

The Honors Program at QCC: A Way to Strengthen your Background as a College Student

By Mario Balducci

Attending Queensborough Community College as a Health Science major has reinforced my dedication and motivation to continue and pursue a career in the science field. At Queensborough Community college, honors sections are provided, but recommendations are needed. I have completed two honors classes at QCC, CH-151 and CH-911. The honors section requires more effort and work and an additional project in lecture and lab, but the structure of the courses truly prepares you for what is to come ahead. As part of my obligations for completing my research work I

was invited to present at several conferences last year. It was truly exciting to stand by my poster and let the attendees, that also included professors from senior colleges, listen to the description of my findings. I do recommend that if a student is serious about the Health Sciences, to seek information as to how to register for an honors section. Being that I am now taking Organic II, my 6th chemistry course at QCC, I can emphatically state that starting at the honors level has set the groundwork and helped me develop work/study habits that have been conducive to excelling in science courses.

Taking Honors Classes: Are they Worth the Challenge?

By Deokmi Ok

When I first registered to take Honors General Chemistry I, I was reluctant about my decision. I was hoping to enhance my resume with this course if I could pass it with a good grade. However, after getting an A in Dr. Svoronos' class I realized that it was better than what I thought. Through this class and the others that followed it, I met a lot of good friends and professors and I faced a lot of challenges. The material is taught in a different way where the student input is important. In Honors General Chemistry, for instance, I had to prepare an oral presentation for

the 2001 Honors Conference, something I never had to do for any regular class. The students created study groups to keep pace and handle the frequent quizzes and tests. As a result of my performance I was recruited to conduct group tutorials for the Honors General Chemistry I class this semester. This has improved my confidence and has made me imitate Dr. Svoronos who would insist that students work problems on the board for the rest of the class. I strongly recommend to any serious student to take as many Honors classes as possible. They are all worth it!

My Experience with Honors General Chemistry II

By Matthew Matzelle

My experience in Honors General Chemistry II has so far been both challenging and rewarding. The difficulty level has been raised but I feel more confident that I can apply what I am learning now, later on in life. The staff has been extremely helpful. Although I only met him once, to help choose my classes, Dr. Svoronos gave me the impression of being approachable and supportive. My professor, Dr. Chauhan, in particular, is always going out of her way to provide guidance in the subject. She has been very generous with offering hours to help students outside of class time. I had my chemistry professor, Dr. Chauhan, for General

Chemistry I last semester and luckily this semester, she is my professor again in the General Chemistry II honors class. The class is faster paced and more in depth than last semester's. We have an extra assignment on top of the normal chemistry course work as well. Everyone in the class has to present a chemistry topic at the upcoming Honor's Conference. It is a good way to learn more about the real life applications of chemistry and practice making presentations. I am thankful for the opportunity to take these classes and hope they lead to future successes.

Queensborough's Honors Program: A Second Chance for my Academic Career

By Daniel Andre Novoa

Queensborough Community College is not my first college experience. Initially, I began at a prestigious four-year university. Needless to say, my academic career has had its relative ups and downs. As a result, no school was interested in my transfer application. I came across QCC by mere chance, but I can say, without a shadow of a doubt, that I have learned more here than anywhere else. The faculty here cares about the students and their work. This could not be more exemplified than with the honors class instructors. I was recommended to the honors classes because of professors that truly believed in my abilities. However, it was in the honors classes that my abilities were put to the test. I found these classes more engaging, more

challenging, and more fulfilling. In addition, I was encouraged to commit to other honors level work, extracurricular activities, and internships. I have been invited to participate in scientific research and have presented my work at regional and national conferences. As it stands, I will soon graduate with an Associates of Science in a major I never realized I would have enjoyed so much until I came to this school. Furthermore, I feel more prepared for what lies ahead of me than most people with a Bachelors degree would. I intend to continue my academic career with the same focus and commitment I was taught in the honors program. Because of the honors program, I consider my time here to be a rare second chance spent well, something I will never take for granted.

BI-302 A&P Honors/Service Learning Project

By Sheila Carmen Jean-Charles

The knowledge and understanding of Anatomy and Physiology is of utmost importance to students who are interested in certain careers in the healthcare field. Being a part of the Anatomy and Physiology II Honors/Service learning project has given me the opportunity to mentor and tutor students who are in Anatomy and Physiology I. Moreover, participating in the honors/service learning project has ensured my increase in knowledge of Anatomy and Physiology I, because I provide academic support to students who are taking the course. Having already learned the material from Anatomy and Physiology I and having supportive Professors who are always available, I am able to help the students better understand topics in the course, relate to the students' current experiences in taking the course, and reinforce my understanding of the

course material. I help guide them towards a different approach on how to study Anatomy and Physiology I, for learning Anatomy and Physiology I requires more than just memorization. In serving students who are a part of the Queensborough Community College population allows me to share my study skills and advice on how to understand and interrelate concepts of Anatomy and Physiology I, refer them to on campus resources such as The Learning Center, and change their perspective on Anatomy and Physiology I to enhance their success in the course. Through the service learning project, aside from gaining understanding of Anatomy and Physiology I, I and the students further develop social skills through teaching and learning from each other. Interactively engaging with others through service learning gives a sense of gratitude, importance, and encouragement to continue to want to help others and gain knowledge in the process.

Anatomy & Physiology Honors Service Learning: Learning Through Teaching

By Vanessa Almonte

Anatomy and Physiology Honors Service Learning is a project devised to reinforce students' knowledge of A&P while tutoring other students. It is a great way to approach an honors project because it gives the tutor an active role in the learning experience. The service-learning project is designed to increase the knowledge of the tutor in a few ways. One way is through the preparation for the session. The tutor must prepare for the tutoring session in advanced by reading relevant information, take notes that will facilitate the tutees comprehension of the material and by making the concepts taught in A&P relevant to real

world applications. As the tutor re-visits previously learned concepts, they are challenged to make the connections to the new material learned in A&P 302. Another way the tutor benefits from the service-learning project is by having to find appropriate ways of communicating with the tutees, the mentor and other tutors participating in the project. The REACH students benefit from the tutoring sessions by receiving tips on how to study effectively, they are encouraged to play an active role during the tutoring sessions, and they are provided with a student-based interpretation of the concepts learned.

ALUMNI REFLECTIONS

The Honors Program at QCC: The Ripple Effect, or How It Affected My Career at Stony Brook University

By Rana Edwards

The honors program at QCC provided me with great opportunities that have enabled me to excel in my academic career. I found the smaller size classrooms, rigorous curriculum, and the research opportunities provided to be of great benefit in building my scientific background and study skills. In conducting research at such an early stage of my academic career, I was able to develop my critical thinking skills by testing and putting theories into application and eventually coming up with my own conclusions. Working under Drs. Paris and Soraya Svoronos on the quantitative determination of antioxidants in beverages actually gave me the opportunity to present my findings at ten professional conferences.

After graduating from QCC in Spring 2009, I carried on my research training at Stony Brook University where I majored in Pharmacology and pursued my interest in translational research by joining a lab in the Pathology Department. My undergraduate thesis was ranked as the best at Stony Brook in the summer of 2011 and I was given a prestigious award. I most recently got my research work in Pathology published and am currently in the process of applying to medical school. I owe my success thus far to the great training and guidance I received from my professors at QCC, especially in the Honors Program.

ALUMNI REFLECTIONS

From the Honors Program at Queensborough to Pharmacy School: Reflections Four Years After Graduating

By Nadia Abolely

During my stay at Queensborough Community College I had the opportunity to join the Honors Program in my second year, first in General Biology BI-201, where I attended the extra workshops that were held every Wednesday from 1-3 p.m. I then proceeded to take more such classes: French 112 with Dr. Anne Marie Bourbon and Calculus II with Dr. Rosa Rusinek. Conducting research also with Dr. Regna Sullivan helped me graduate with the minimum of twelve honors credits and earn an Honors Certificate. Because of these opportunities, I had the chance to join a summer internship research experience at Rutgers University called the RISE Program. I enjoyed taking honors classes because they were more intensive which pushed me to do more than the minimum. The professors were available in case things were unclear and my classmates were also intelligent, so the discussions that took place and the questions they asked were very enlightening and constructive.

I also loved conducting research because it developed my critical thinking and perseverance which are characteristics that no matter what path one chooses to take in life, are very important. Dr. Sullivan really cared about my opinion and that made me feel special. One of the most rewarding experiences was attending and presenting my work at conferences. Seeing hundreds of other people doing similar or different things was fascinating to me. The networking was important because it opened up my mind to new directions and future work. Being in Honors classes definitely is a plus that sets one up above his/her peers. This experience also demonstrates that if a student wants to do more than what is required or expected, a brighter future is ahead. If I had to do it over, I would have taken more Honors classes and would have networked even more when I attended conferences.

The Honors Program at Queensborough: The First Step Towards a Successful Academic Career

By Fathima B. Nazumudeen

Taking Honors classes at Queensborough has been a great experience. I was fortunate to be in honors Spanish, Chemistry, Biology and Calculus classes that have prepared me to handle the more difficult junior courses at Queens College. At the time all seemed to be upper level, challenging courses with intense practice and a harder than normal syllabus. However I got a deeper knowledge on the subject in each case and was given extracurricular activities. I was involved in chemistry research under Dr. Paris Svoronos' mentorship which I presented at six different conferences including those held at Columbia University, City College, Queens College, University of Maryland-College Park and Mount St. Vincent. I was also hired to conduct group tutorial workshops

in both general Chemistry and Organic Chemistry. In addition in my Honors biotechnology class with Dr. Gadura I had an opportunity to explore various genetic engineering techniques such as inserting genes on the plasmid, and identifying genetically engineered food items as well as finger printing techniques used in forensic science. I really enjoyed my experience with the honors classes that have prepared me to handle the biochemistry classes I am taking at Queens College. It has been a long voyage from my very first steps as a CSTEP student at Queensborough.

How Taking Honors Classes at Queensborough has Made me a Better Student

By May Myat Moe

My experiences in taking the honors classes at Queensborough have changed my mind about education. Since my initial experience in General Chemistry I with my guide, research mentor and advisor Dr. Paris Svoronos I was convinced that I should take the challenge and register for more such courses in Chemistry, Biology and Calculus. All my professors impressed me with their intention to challenge my abilities, thus making me a better student while increasing my critical thinking. I have taken 30 credits of Honors classes and have presented my research findings in several conferences both in Biology and Chemistry. I was given the opportunity

with summer internships at the DEP, where I analyzed water samples, as well as the BioPrep program at Stony Brook University. I have learned how to be responsible for my own education and how important it is for one person to be educated without falling behind in his responsibilities. I have gained enough knowledge that helped me become a leader in group tutorials in various courses in chemistry. At the same time I have created a strong cohort of friends who are always there when I need help. I am now a junior at Queens College and I am looking forward towards post-undergraduate studies in the medical field.

How the QCC Honors Program Has Helped my Career as an Engineering Student at City College

By Andre Smithson

The honors program at Queensborough has helped me attain my present level of achievement. I am currently a chemical engineering student at The City College of New York. I got in to the honors program through the guidance of Dr. Paris Svoronos. I was given the benefit of getting into research and the opportunity to make presentations at conferences, each of which played an important factor in my development. I have been tutoring since the Fall of 2009. Through this opportunity, I am able to share my experiences concerning the subject matter to fellow students. I also encourage students to strive for excellence. It is a joy to see students learn, and I get to enjoy that every time I go to tutoring. Tutoring has

developed my leadership skills and ability to relate information to others around me. The skills I gained from tutoring in the honors program allowed me to receive a tutoring job at Queensborough Community College and at The City College of New York. The research experience I was given have led me to different conferences including the National ACS Meeting in Boston (2010) and the 41st and 42nd MARM ACS Meetings (2010 and 2011, respectively). I am grateful and overjoyed that I was involved in the honors program at Queensborough Community College or else I would not have seen the benefits this opportunity offers to the students.

How Honors Classes Helped my Post-Undergraduate Academic Career

By Jin Bakalis

Taking Honors courses at QCC was a rewarding experience. These courses provided a solid foundation for what I am doing now. Thanks to the great, caring professors, I learned how to solve advanced problems and to present my research findings in a professional

manner. This learning opportunity helped me better succeed in a four-year college. I am currently taking advanced graduate physics courses at The Graduate Center and conducting research at Brookhaven National Laboratory.