

CYNOSURE

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA HONORS PROGRAM

MAY 2010

INSIDE

- 2 A Note from the Director
- 3 Congratulations to UF's Goldwater Scholars
- 4 Honors on the AT
- 7 UNESCO Human Rights Summit

“One machine can do the work of fifty ordinary men. No machine can do the work of one extraordinary man.”

— Elbert Hubbard

UF's First Marshall Scholar

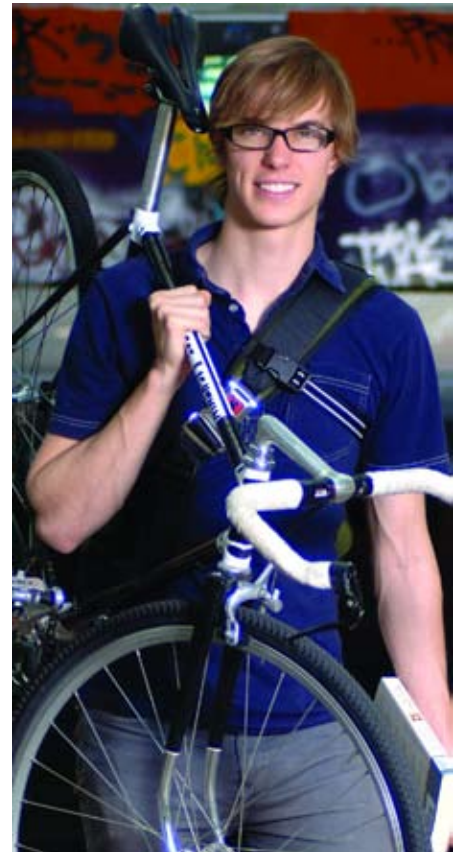
Steve Robinette, who graduated in May with degrees in biochemistry and molecular biology, is the first student from the University of Florida to win a Marshall Scholarship for graduate study in the United Kingdom. He has pursued research projects in the field of metabolomics with Art Edison at UF, Rafael Bruschweiler at Florida State University and Frank Schroeder at Cornell University. His work has been documented in six peer-reviewed publications.

Robinette spent his junior year as a Barry M. Goldwater scholar at Imperial College London working with Jeremy Nicholson's group developing computational methods in metabolomics and he will return to Imperial to apply his previous work to identify small molecule markers of stem cells. Outside of the lab, he volunteers at Art Edison's 4-H Science Club for elementary students.

Son of an Air Force flight surgeon, Robinette grew up across the United States and abroad, living in five states and Japan, before graduating from high school in Niceville, FL. In his spare time he enjoys rock climbing and is looking forward to exploring the granite of Cornwall and the gritstone of the Peak District in the U.K.

Named for Secretary of State George C. Marshall, the Marshall Scholarship Program began in 1953 as a gesture of gratitude to the people of the United States for the assistance that the U.K. received after World War II under the Marshall Plan. The scholarships offer talented young Americans the chance to study for up to three years at a U.K. university of their choice. Today, the Marshall Scholarships continue to serve not only as a living gift from the U.K. Government to the U.S. for the Marshall Plan, but also as a way to deepen and strengthen the transatlantic relationship through education and cultural exchange.

Since the program's inception, more than 1,500 young Americans have become Marshall Scholars. Prominent alumni include Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Anne Applebaum, inventor Ray Dolby, and former U.S. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt.



Marshall Scholar Steven Robinette

A Note from the Director

When I began this job in the summer of 2009, someone told me that it would take a year for me to figure out what is going on and that I shouldn't make any drastic changes right away. I thought that was sound advice and I still do. I even managed to follow it, at least some of the time. Still, sometimes I couldn't help myself and I just had to make some changes. Most of them were minor things that no one outside the Honors office would even notice—procedural things that helped improve efficiency and decrease redundancy. Some changes were a bit bigger, such as the institution of a thorough review of existing Honors courses and solicitation of proposals for new ones. After some tough decisions, I am proud to report that the slate of Honors courses for 2010-11 is the freshest offering in many years, and I hope our students get a lot out of them. Were I back in school, I'd do my best to get into Andy Vince's Experimental Geometry class (full disclosure: I am a mathematician) and William Logan's Poetry Workshop (second full disclosure: I like to write poetry, too), but all the other courses, new and old, sound just as fascinating to me.

The biggest change on the horizon, though, is one of culture. If you've been to one of our visitation days, you have heard me speak about my philosophy of Honors education. My primary message is this: Honors is a challenge, not a reward. To be sure, there are benefits to participating in the program—more personalized advising, smaller classes, living in Hume—but these exist to help students take full advantage of all the opportunities UF and the Honors Program have to offer. A common misperception about honors programs in general is that they are an upgrade to first class; that is, by virtue of being in Honors these students are somehow entitled to special treatment and extra perks.

The truth, though, is that the average student at the University of Florida would be admitted to the honors programs of the other universities in the state. I say this not to boast about the quality of UF's students (although the student body as a whole is rather remarkable), but to point out that most of our students are "worthy" of being in Honors. What, then, should distinguish a student at UF and make him or her an "honors" student? The traditional approach has been to fall back on quantitative measures like SAT scores and high school GPA, but when the average SAT of the admitted class is only 77 points below the threshold for invitation to Honors those sorts of metrics lose their appeal.

What I look for in a student is, to paraphrase Thoreau, the desire to suck the marrow out of their education. To be an honors student is to be inquisitive and driven to take some risks in search of a deeper understanding of the surrounding world. So many students come to the University of Florida with a single goal in mind, and they focus all their energy on that one task. While it is important to set goals and work hard to attain them, it is not all there is in life. I hope our students will take at least a little time to pursue some things they love and that have nothing to do with their future career plans. This university offers so many opportunities and outlets for personal growth that it would be a shame not to at least try some of them.

So, to our new students, welcome to Honors! And for our continuing students, we wish you ongoing success at UF. It's going to be a great year.

Dr. Kevin Knudson
Director



Dr. Kevin Knudson

Congratulations to UF's Goldwater Scholars for 2010-11

Three University of Florida students were named Goldwater Scholars for the 2010-2011 year by the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation. A fourth student received honorable mention in the competition.

This is the fifth year in a row that three UF students have been named Goldwater Scholars. UF now has had 20 since 2003.

Michael Mavros, Christopher Reeg and Andrew Scheuermann are three of just 278 students nationwide to receive the scholarship, which recognizes and awards sophomores and juniors who excel in mathematics, the natural sciences and engineering.

Mavros of Homosassa, FL is a junior with a double major in chemistry and biology. He plans to earn his doctorate and to conduct research at the interface of chemical biology and physical organic chemistry. His ultimate goal is to teach at the university level.

Reeg of Atlantis, FL is a junior with a double major in physics and mathematics. He plans to pursue a doctorate in condensed matter physics and teach at the university level.

Scheuermann of Merritt Island, FL is a junior with a double major in chemistry and economics. He will pursue a doctorate in material science with a specialization in alternative energy sources.

In addition, Mohammad Ehsan, a junior biochemistry major from Orlando, FL, received honorable mention.



Michael Mavros



Christopher Reeg



Andrew Scheuermann

More than 1,000 students were nominated for the award by college and university faculty members around the country. Each university in the United States may nominate up to four students annually. The Honors Program manages this effort at the University of Florida. Physics Professor Greg Stewart coordinates the internal competition and, in consultation with a committee of UF faculty, makes recommendations to Dr. Kevin Knudson, the university's representative to the Goldwater Foundation. The nomination for each student consists of a summary of previous research experiences along with a proposal for work to be done during the tenure of the award, letters of recommendation, and an institutional endorsement. All three of this year's winners have published in well-respected peer-reviewed journals and have worked in prestigious laboratories around the world.

Each scholarship covers eligible expenses for undergraduate tuition, fees, books, and room and board, up to a maximum of \$7,500 annually.



The SHO executive board during Welcome Week

SHO Makes it Happen

The Student Honors Organization (SHO) is not your standard group of Honors kids. We know how to have fun, and how to become leaders while doing it! SHO throws events for all honors students as well as the residents of the Honors Residential College at Hume Hall. This year, SHO was recognized as the Area Government of the Year for its dedication to on-campus Honors students.

This year, SHO put on over 75 events for its members. Some of our recurring events include monthly ice cream socials, movie nights, local service projects, and our Week of Welcome, where we hold 15 events in 7 days to kick off the year. In addition, SHO holds large events throughout the year, including a murder mystery dinner, a swing dance, and a themed Harry Potter Day.



Honors on the AT: Advising in the Wilderness

by John Denny, Associate Director



Top: Students reach the summit. Above: Students hiking the Appalachian Trail on the fall Honors backpacking trip.

Last November I climbed into a fifteen passenger van and headed to the Appalachian Trail for a weekend of hiking and camping with thirteen undergraduates. This was the third Honors wilderness adventure with the University of Florida Travel and Recreation Program (TRiP) and the second time we visited of the most beautiful places on the AT: Max Patch. Our adventure traced the North Carolina – Tennessee state line, beginning at Lemon Gap, leading us to Walnut Mountain for the first night. The next day we trekked to the summit of Max Patch, a truly unique feature of the AT. After hiking through miles of dense canopy, we emerged into bright sunshine, climbing the bald to enjoy the spectacular view. It's difficult to express the beauty of the Great Smoky Mountains, the Black Mountains, Craggy Mountains, Pisgah, Newfound and Walnut Mountains, all of which can be seen from the top. The amazing sights during the day were matched by a beautifully clear late-autumn night which featured falling stars every few minutes.

TRiP is a UF sponsored volunteer-based program in which leaders complete extensive field training and become certified in wilderness first-aid. The leaders are skilled social facilitators; soon thirteen strangers got to know one another through a series of games and activities. Our participants ranged in experience from seasoned outdoorsmen to first-time campers. All were made to feel welcome and all left the weekend with some new friends. We were fortunate to have four intrepid TRiP leaders with us who not only guided us safely through the wilderness, but also prepared some respectable grub as well. Edward Abbey once said, "Hunger is the best sauce." This food was good, hungry or not. We dined on veggie pasta, apple and peach turnovers and rice and bean burritos. I chuckled when one of the participants commented that she didn't eat this well when she was at home.

Wilderness experiences are the perfect remedy for breaking away from the rigors and stress of the academic year. Far away from cell phone signals and Facebook pages, students get the chance to relax, learn some new skills and deepen their appreciation for the natural beauty of the Southeast. Talking with students about their academic goals and career plans takes on a whole new dimension when doing so around a campfire rather than from behind a desk. Honors TRiPs have been some of my favorite experiences as an academic advisor and I look forward to my next adventure rock climbing at Sandrock, Alabama this summer. The Honors Program is also planning a whitewater rafting trip and another hiking experience this fall. Students interested in participating in future Honors TRiPs should check their Honors Daily Opportunity List emails. For more information on TRiP, please visit <http://www.union.ufl.edu/trip/>

Introducing the 2010 Lombardi and Stamps Scholars

Each year, up to eight students who exemplify former UF President John V. Lombardi's commitment to academic excellence, community service, leadership, and public responsibility are selected as Lombardi Scholars. These students receive a generous stipend each semester and participate in four summer experiences to enhance their potential to make a significant impact on the world. This is the ninth year of the program.

The Honors Program is also proud to announce the inaugural class of Stamps Scholars. The Penelope W. and E. Roe Stamps IV Leadership Scholar Awards are made possible by generous funding from the Stamps Family Charitable Foundation. Stamps Scholars are chosen from the same applicant pool as the Lombardi Scholars, receive the same financial package, and participate in the same enrichment activities. The Stamps Foundation seeks to reward exceptional students who exemplify leadership, perseverance, scholarship, service, and innovation. We are grateful to the Stamps Foundation for its support.

This year's Scholars were selected by a committee of UF faculty from 162 nominees and 18 finalists. The winners are:

■ Lombardi Scholars

Lindsay Avila of Gainesville
Lauren Donnangelo of Ponte Vedra
Matletha Fuller of Belle Glade
Gabriel Hament of Osprey
Jose Perez of Tampa
Austin Reed of Longwood
Darien Williams of Jacksonville

■ Stamps Scholars

Tyler Davidson of Cocoa Beach
Claire Kent of Ocala
Alice Rhee of Melbourne

Follow UF Honors Online 

Web: www.honors.ufl.edu

Facebook: search for UF Honors Program

Twitter: @UFHonors

The 2010 Dunlevie Honors Term Professors

Two distinguished University of Florida faculty members have been appointed as Elizabeth Wood Dunlevie Honors Term Professors for the 2010-11 academic year.



Ranga Narayanan

Ranga Narayanan, professor of chemical engineering, and **Howard Louthan**, associate professor of history, will each teach a course for the UF Honors Program during the fall semester. In addition, each professor will be responsible for organizing an event in the spring, tied to the fall course, for the UF community.

The Elizabeth Wood Dunlevie Honors Term Professorships are made possible by a generous endowment gift from Elizabeth Wood Dunlevie, a

UF graduate. The goal of the program is to encourage the most esteemed faculty at UF to participate in the Honors Program as instructors and mentors. The endowment provides summer salary and support for the faculty members' spring activities.

Narayanan will offer an interdisciplinary course titled Patterns in Nature with Applications to Engineering and Science. This course is aimed at juniors and seniors, and will give students an understanding of pattern formation and cooperative phenomena. Students also will be required to participate in outreach activities with local school teachers through the Spring Engineering and Science Fair. Narayanan's spring activity will

consist of a workshop with poster and paper sessions for the students, and a distinguished guest speaker will be invited to deliver a plenary lecture.



Howard Louthan

Louthan's course is titled Challenging Authority in the Renaissance World, and will focus on a variety of Renaissance figures who challenged the norms of their society: the scholar, the artist, the prince, the religious leader, the scientist, the peasant, and the explorer. In the spring term, Louthan will organize a workshop around the theme "Understanding the Reformation World," culminating in a visit from Euan Cameron of Union Theological Seminary, in New York City, widely considered the foremost North American authority on the Reformation.

Narayanan joined the faculty at UF in 1981. He has published nearly 80 papers and is the author or editor of four books in his field. His research has been supported by the National Science Foundation, the Proctor and Gamble Fund, the Fulbright Foundation, and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. He has garnered numerous teaching awards in the College of Engineering, and, in 2009, was inducted into the UF Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars.

Louthan has been a faculty member in the UF department of history since 2001, where he also serves as the department's undergraduate coordinator. He has published several books on the Reformation and related topics and dozens of articles and reviews in scholarly journals. He has received support for his work from the Lilly Endowment, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the Center of Theological Inquiry, and Princeton University's Institute for Advanced Study, among others. He is regarded by students as one of the top teachers in the history department, and has introduced many innovations into the undergraduate curriculum.



The Honors Office is Moving!

Over the summer, the Honors staff will make a gradual move to our new office closer to the center of campus. Hume 118 has served us well, but we are excited to be relocating to the third floor of the Nurses' Wing of The Infirmary, a historic building with a lot of charm and a more convenient location. We will continue to offer walk-in advising at Hume, Monday through Thursday

afternoons, as well as hosting our Afternoons with Honors program in the Hume classroom.

In conjunction with the Department of Housing, the Honors Program will convert our existing office suite in Hume 118 into a student study lounge. There will be two small group study rooms, a conference room for student group use, and an abundance of comfortable seating for quiet, individual study. Renovations will take place early in the fall semester, and we hope the new space will be available in time for final exams.



In Solidarity with the People of Rwanda

by Ruth Acevedo-Cruses (Peru)
United World Scholar

Arriving in Kigali in the midst of a dangerous lightning storm just showed me the beginning of what would be the most adventurous and meaningful two weeks of learning from Rwanda, a country harshly marked by one of the most bloodthirsty crimes against humanity: the 1994 Tutsi Genocide.

The Government of Rwanda and the UNESCO Chair & International Institute of Comparative Human Rights organized this I Global Summit in the African Great Lake region with the purpose of discussing, promoting and contributing to the current policies and programs of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission by working with Ministers of sectors such as gender and family, education, justice, and health. Around 60 UNESCO alumni had the opportunity to take part in this event and write a resolution presented to the Rwandan President Paul Kagame, UNESCO Chair Dr. Amii Omara-Otunnu, and the High Commissioner of Human Rights, Mrs. Sylvie Kayitesi, at the official ceremony.

However, the aim of bringing us together from all over the world wasn't just to write resolutions and spend time with important gray-suit people (ministers and officers), but also to learn the Rwandan reality from the locals in the most forgotten communities far away from the capital. That is why we visited Millennium Villages in Mayange, run by the United Nations, traveled to Huye to build homes for destitute persons, and then Nyamagabe to assist in the building of its first school. I must admit I have never been so touched by humanity while interacting with the women and children. They speak Kinyarwanda and I don't, but it seemed that language wasn't a barrier to sharing and learning. Without doubt it was a life-changing experience to be face-to-face with children dying from malaria, to witness the hard work and the spirit of men and women to change their past, and to comprehend that we all have a responsibility as human beings.

All this great experience would not have been possible without the strong commitment of the University of Florida. Through the Honors Program, I was more than delighted to receive a Wentworth Travel Scholarship to embark on not only a two-week trip, but to a future of research on Africa's contemporary issues. In the words of Kofi Annan, "suffering anywhere concerns people everywhere."

