UF Honors Program Welcomes Special Guests

It was a very busy January for the Honors Program as we hosted two distinguished authors on campus for public lectures. We began with Dr. Robert Sapolsky on January 11, for a standing-room only talk titled *Why Zebras Don’t Get Ulcers: Stress, Disease, and Coping*. Dr. Sapolsky is a professor of biology and neurology at Stanford University and the author of the 2010 Honors Common Reader, *A Primate’s Memoir*. In his lecture, he discussed the negative effects of stress on the human body, answered many audience questions, and signed every book presented to him. Before his talk, a dozen lucky honors students joined Dr. Sapolsky for dinner at a local restaurant.

A week later, on January 18, we were joined by Kathryn Schulz, author of *Being Wrong: Adventures in the Margin of Error*. She spoke about some of the topics covered in her book—why we find it so gratifying to be right and so maddening to be mistaken, and the negative effects this attitude has on our relationships. Her central message is that error is both a given and a gift, one that allows us to transform ourselves if only we will embrace it. The following day, Ms. Schulz visited Dr. Knudson’s (Un)common Reading Program course and engaged in an intimate dialogue about error and Honors students’ revulsion to it.

During the 2011-12 academic year, the Honors Program will host other fascinating speakers, including medical journalist and author Harriet Washington and author Sarah Vowell.

“Take it easy, but take it”
— Pete Seeger
A Note from the Director

I wear a few hats around campus. During the week of May 1 I donned my Creative Campus Committee Chair cap and headed to Ann Arbor, Michigan, with a few UF arts and engineering administrators to attend the ArtsEngine meeting at the campus of the University of Michigan. This conference, sponsored by the Knight Foundation, Ford Foundation, and the U. of M.’s Rackham School of Graduate Studies, brought together representatives of about four dozen major universities to discuss ways to infuse the arts and art-making into the campus culture of research institutions. I learned about many interesting projects such as the collaboration between professional dancers and biomedical engineers that has challenged some of the engineers’ thinking, and the engineering course at Michigan in which students learn to cast bells from bronze (this is a wonderful interdisciplinary experience involving physics, sculpture, music, materials science, etc.).

My own experience in this area happened during the fall 2010 semester when a group of Honors students and I constructed a Level 3 Menger sponge from 48,000 business cards (for more information, visit http://magazine.ufl.edu/2011/03/house-of-cards/). This was a semester-long project for my course, Origami: Math Meets Art, in which I taught the students how to fold various pieces of mathematical origami (and taught them some math, too, surreptitiously). To me, the most valuable aspect of the course was that students got to do something with their hands. With declining education budgets, students rarely get hands-on experiences in school these days; indeed, the courses available to me in junior and senior high back in the 80s—art, shop, auto mechanics—hardly exist anymore. There is real value in learning to do things with your hands, and not just for acquiring specific technical skills.

The Honors Program at UF is filled with creative individuals. Many of our students play a musical instrument, while others enjoy acting and dancing. But creativity is not limited to the fine and performing arts, and the most innovative work in any discipline, including the sciences, requires a tremendous amount of creative thinking. I defy you to watch a robotics competition and walk away thinking there was no creativity involved.

It is all too easy for students to come to college, not work very hard, and leave with a degree. Frankly, that is just not enough anymore, and my hope is that students in the Honors Program at UF are here to do much more, to engage fully and bring all their creativity and curiosity to bear to solve important problems. I am exploring ways to bring more creativity into the curriculum across campus as a whole (that is why the Creative Campus Committee exists), but also more specifically in the Honors Program. My goal is to implement a course (perhaps required) about the creative process that will help students in all disciplines become more innovative problem solvers. In the meantime, I hope our students will take full advantage of all the opportunities to engage in the vibrant creative atmosphere on our campus.

It is summer in Gainesville, which means Preview advising, preparation for the fall semester, and lots of humidity. I hope you have a safe and productive season. We’ll see you in the fall.

Dr. Kevin Knudson
Director and Professor of Mathematics
Two University of Florida students were named Goldwater Scholars for the 2011-2012 year by the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation. Two other students received honorable mention in the competition.

Icon Mazzaccari and Brian Williams are two of just 275 students nationwide to receive the scholarship, which recognizes and awards sophomores and juniors who excel in mathematics, the natural sciences and engineering.

Icon, from Boynton Beach, FL is a junior with a double major in physics and mathematics. She plans to earn her doctorate and to conduct research in low temperature condensed matter physics. Her ultimate goal is to teach at the university level.

Brian, also from Boynton Beach, FL is a junior with a double major in physics and mathematics. He plans to pursue a doctorate in high energy theoretical physics and teach at the university level.

In addition, Michael Durante, a junior chemical engineering and molecular biology major from Fort Myers, FL, and Zachary Kaufman, a sophomore from Plantation, FL, majoring in electrical engineering, received honorable mention.

More than 1,000 students were nominated for the award by college and university faculty members around the country. This is the seventh year in a row that UF has had multiple students named as Goldwater Scholars.

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

Justin Fisch, a junior from Oldsmar, FL, was named a Udall Scholar for the 2011-2012 year by the Udall Foundation.

Justin is majoring in Political Science and Geography with a minor in Sustainability Studies. He is also pursuing the certificate in International Relations. He speaks three languages and is the president of the UF Travel and Recreation Program (TRiP). Justin served as a member of the Tallahassee Internship Program in 2010 and was a J. Wayne Reitz Scholar during the current academic year.

The Udall Foundation, named for former Arizona Congressman Morris K. Udall and his older brother and former Interior Secretary Stewart L. Udall, selects each year’s group of scholars on the basis of commitment to careers in the environment, health care, or tribal public policy. Leadership potential and academic achievement also factor into the committee’s deliberations. More than 500 students were nominated for the award by college and university faculty members around the country, yielding a class of 80 scholarship recipients.

The scholarship provides $5,000 for each student’s senior year. The entire class of Scholars will assemble in Tucson, AZ in August to receive their awards and meet policymakers and community leaders in environmental fields, tribal health care, and governance.
The First Annual Honors Banquet

by Liz McNeill

The Honors Program and the Student Honors Organization hosted the first annual Honors Banquet on the evening of April 15th at the Samuel P. Harn Museum. University professionals and Honors professors, students, and staff attended this event to celebrate a year in the Honors Program. Guests chatted as they walked the Harn gallery, enjoyed a free Italian dinner, and then listened to an hour-long presentation outlining the forthcoming innovations and the ultimate future of the Honors Program. Dr. Knudson, the Director of the Honors Program, presented the first State of the Honors address, which outlined the direction of the program for the coming years. Professor Eric Kligerman introduced the new common Honors course, Poetics of Justice, which is mandatory for incoming freshmen. The newest Honors organization, Honors Without Borders, described their philanthropic purpose and the ways students can get involved. The keynote speaker, Dr. Jeanna Mastrodicasa, advised students to relish the undergraduate experience and to seek opportunities that improve their characters. And at the end of the night, Dr. James L. Nation received the 2010 – 2011 Honors Professor of the Year Award for his exceptional commitment to his students and their education in and out of the classroom. This night celebrated the UF Honors community and recognized its incredible members.
From top left: Dinner is served!, Dr. James Nation, Honors Professor of the Year, guests listen to the evening’s program (bottom left), attendees enjoying dinner and conversation, and faculty and students socialize at the banquet.
Honors Program Names
2011-12 Dunlevie Professors

Three distinguished University of Florida faculty members have been appointed as Elizabeth Wood Dunlevie Honors Term Professors for the 2011-12 academic year.

Dr. Barbara Barletta of the School of Art and Art History, Dr. John Cech of the Department of English, and Dr. Robert Weiler of the Department of Health Education and Behavior, will each teach a course for the Honors Program during the fall semester.

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 the University of Florida to participate in the University Honors Program as instructors and mentors. The endowment provides summer salary and support for the faculty members’ activities.

Dr. Barletta will offer a course entitled Art and Power in Classical Athens. Students will learn about the development of Athenian art and power from the city’s rise to prominence in the later 6th century B.C. to the loss of its empire at the end of the 5th century. Historical developments, including the creation of the world’s first democracy, will intertwine with a study of Athenian innovations in art to form a truly interdisciplinary experience.

Dr. Cech’s course is entitled The Brothers Grimm, Fairy Tales, and the Paradigms of Enchantment. The seminar will explore the cultural and psychological implications of the tales and the history of their reception and criticism. Extensive use will be made of the UF Libraries Baldwin Collection of Children’s Literature, a nationally-recognized resource of children’s books.

Dr. Weiler will address public health issues through his course, Introduction to Epidemiology. Students will explore the basic principles of epidemiology, examining the determinants of major public health problems including infectious and chronic diseases, injuries, environmental health, and emerging threats. Through case studies, students will develop applied epidemiology competencies in public health surveillance and outbreak investigations.

Dr. Barletta joined the faculty at UF in 1983. She is the author of two books and several book chapters and articles on the Parthenon and the materials and techniques used in Greek architecture and sculpture. Recently, the American School of Classical Studies in Athens granted Professor Barletta “publication rights” to the remains of the Temple of Athena at Sounion; this work will represent a completely new study of this important and highly unusual Greek temple and is supported by a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities. She was inducted in the UF Academy of Distinguished Teaching Fellows in 2010.

Dr. Cech has been a faculty member at UF for 36 years. He is the founding director of the university’s Center for Children’s Literature and Culture; in that capacity, he has organized many conferences and other events and directed a popular public radio program, Recess. He has authored many award-winning children’s books and has served as president of the Children’s Literature Association.

Dr. Weiler joined the faculty at UF in 1993. His research focuses on adolescent risk behaviors, community health, and substance abuse prevention with an emphasis on prescription drugs. He has authored or co-authored over 50 papers, and his work has been funded by the National Institutes of Health. In the classroom he combines theoretical knowledge with field observation to help his students gain applied skills in epidemiology and public health.

Dunlevie Professors are selected by the director of the Honors Program, Dr. Kevin Knudson, in consultation with a committee of UF faculty, from a pool of nominees submitted by department chairs.
Many universities and honors programs have first-year reading programs (see below for our 2011 version), but during the spring 2011 term the UF Honors Program launched its (Un)common Reading Program. The idea is simple—a one-credit course based on a single book, meeting once per week. There were no other rules. Some example texts: *Being Wrong*, by Kathryn Schulz; *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, by Douglas Adams; *Moneyball*, by Michael Lewis; *Animal, Vegetable, and Miracle*, by Barbara Kingsolver. There was also a course about the Cherokee Indian newspaper and printing press, and a class based on the Harn Museum of Art’s Asian Collection.

These courses were so popular, we have decided to expand the program in the fall 2011 semester. Books to be offered include *Freedom*, by Jonathan Franzen; *The Inferno*, by Dante Alighieri; *Alone Together*, by Sherry Turkle; *Democracy in America*, by Alexis de Tocqueville; *Desert Solitaire*, by Edward Abbey. The Harn will again offer a course around a collection (the Indian art this time), and local musician Cathy DeWitt will bring her unique talents to bear with Patrick Smith’s *A Land Remembered*. A total of 14 such classes will be offered during the semester. We encourage our students to sign up; you can always find time for one credit and one book.

**The (Un)common Reading Program**

During Preview, each incoming Honors student will receive a copy of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, by Rebecca Skloot. The woman in the title was a poor black tobacco farmer who died of cancer in 1951. Her cells were taken without her knowledge and became the HeLa strain of cells that has become an important tool in medicine, used for developing vaccines, cloning, gene mapping, and other applications. The cells have been bought and sold by the billions, yet her family continues to live at poverty level.

This bestselling book chronicles Henrietta Lacks’s story, and tells the story of the collision between ethics and medicine, and the unsavory legacy of medical experimentation on African-Americans. This compelling story will be of interest to everyone.

**UF Names 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 tenth year of the program. The Honors Program is also proud to announce the second 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 169 nominees and 18 finalists. The winners are:

**Lombardi Scholars**

TJ Anderson of Miami  
Corey Flayman of Coconut Grove  
Hannah Gamache of Tampa  
Alexia Khella of Bradenton  
Andrew Kolarich of Winter Park  
Corey Nickels of New Port Richey  
Grace Ooi of Davie  
Valentina Vincentelli of Fort Lauderdale

**Stamps Scholars**

Deina Bossa of Gainesville  
Joseph DiPaolo of Lake Mary  
Kristin Tringali of Crystal River
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