In 2007, Sesi Aliu entered the University of Pittsburgh as a Helen S. Faison Scholar. Four years later, he graduated from Pitt with a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in French and Africana Studies. Currently, as a 2011-2012 Fulbright grant recipient, Sesi is in Paris, conducting research on the mobilization of West African immigrants in France.

I first heard about Sesi through Elizabeth “Liz” Van Loon (BS in Nursing ’11). We were discussing Project Malawi, a development initiative of Student Leaders in International Medicine (SLIM). At the time, SLIM was working to establish water sources in a rural community outside Lilongwe, Malawi. Liz is a take-charge type of person with the ingenuity and determination to overcome any obstacle. “In Project Malawi, I am the human resource person,” she said. “That’s what I do best, talking to people and coordinating the action. But the real mastermind behind the project is Sesi. You know Sesi Aliu, don’t you?” I shook my head no.

“He takes care of all the details, the nuts and bolts of the project. Our different strengths perfectly complement each other. He’s in charge of the planning, budget, and construction management. You have to meet him—he’s amazing.

Referrals of students from other students are the best kind. Plus, I was still fairly new to the Honors College. It was the first I had heard of SLIM, and I was happy to meet both of its co-Presidents.

Sesi was in the middle of organizing SLIM’s annual fund-raising 5k/10k race in South Park (in Allegheny County), so our first meeting, in March 2009, was brief. He described SLIM’s upcoming summer field-learning trip to Malawi, which he was to lead. During the trip, he and five SLIM members interviewed health workers of community-based organizations, conducted needs assessments in areas lacking water sources and coordinated between funding, construction, and oversight partners in Pittsburgh and Lilongwe to complete the water project.

That summer, shortly after returning from Malawi, Sesi also spent five weeks in Denmark on the Humanity in Action Fellowship. He worked with leading experts and a multinational student group on human rights and minority issues. Winning this award as a sophomore is impressive: approximately 50 fellows are selected nationally. As part of the fellowship, he co-authored an article on the Iraqi refugee crisis in Denmark.

continued on page 2

David Frederick Named Honors College Legacy Laureate

In conjunction with Homecoming festivities October 13-16, the University of Pittsburgh named 16 new Legacy Laureates, alumni recognized for their outstanding personal and professional accomplishments. David Frederick is the first such laureate to identify himself as an alumnus of the UHC. He is a partner at Kellogg, Huber, Hansen, Todd, Evans & Figel, P.L.L.C., specializing in appellate and U.S. Supreme Court cases. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree, summa cum laude, in political science in 1983 from the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh. Frederick holds the distinction of being Pitt’s first Rhodes scholar. While at Pitt, he was among the first students to matriculate in the University Honors Program, was an award-winning debater in the William Pitt Debating Union, was a member of the academic honor societies Omicron Delta Kappa and Phi Beta Kappa, and was the recipient of Rotary Ambassadorial and Truman scholarships and the University’s Emma W. Locke Award.

Frederick served as a law clerk for the Honorable Joseph T. Sneed III of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Byron R. White, was counselor and assistant to the solicitor general in the U.S. Department of Justice, and has extensive experience in private law practice.

One of the nation’s leading appellate attorneys, Frederick has published four books and authored many articles and commentaries on trial advocacy, the Supreme Court, and the history of the Ninth Circuit, in addition to having argued 36 cases in front of the Supreme Court.

A loyal Pitt alumnus, Frederick helped to establish the G. Alec Stewart Endowed Student Research Fund in memory of the founding dean of the University Honors College, and he is an active volunteer with the Pitt Alumni Association.

(from left to right) Chancellor Mark Nordenberg, Dean N. John Cooper, Ms. Sophia Frederick, Dr. David C. Frederick, Dean Ed Stricker, and Provost Patricia E. Beeson
In the fall of 2009, I asked him to consider applying for the Truman scholarship, which recognizes extraordinary leadership and commitment to service. “No,” he replied, “I thought about it, but I’m not yet focused enough.”

“But you’ve already accomplished so much,” I said. He responded, “I have many interests: environmental studies, Francophone film and literature, health and development policy, and ethnomusicology. I’m unsure of my direction.” He promised me he would stay in touch.

He continued to widen his scope—as a Brackenridge Undergraduate Research Fellow, an intern with the World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh, a member of the African Students Organization, and a student of Senegalese and West African culture, history, and language (Wolof) during a semester-long study abroad program in Dakar. He received a rich, comprehensive, and structured academic grounding from the Department of French and Italian and the Department of Africana Studies. His faculty mentors watched him develop into an extraordinarily independent thinker. His vision became more powerful as he made sense of the political, socioeconomic and cultural implications of migratory movements across the globe, dealing first-hand with these issues as a Nigerian-born American citizen.

After reading his Fulbright grant application, I asked him how he wrote so well. “I really work hard at it,” he said, “and I read a lot. When I was younger, my older brothers were constantly giving me books to read.” His father, who was a minister in Nigeria, is now a case worker for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission; his mother, an English teacher and vice principal in Nigeria, is now a middle-school teacher. They moved to Texas from Nigeria when Sesi was eight. He said, “Winning the visa lottery was the most important opportunity I’ve been afforded in my life. Looking back on where I came from leaves me with a deep appreciation for how fortunate I am, and a desire to pay it forward.”

Recognizing that migrants face many complex challenges in resettling and finding a way to live a fruitful life, and that the hardship of people in their home countries continues to worsen each day, Sesi says, “My experiences in SLIM taught me that the challenges facing developing countries, such as disease, hunger, and illiteracy, are most effectively remedied by eliminating poverty.” His focus on the African Diaspora and the brain-drain from sending countries made him realize the necessity of what he describes as “tapping into this global pool of human and financial capital.”

He has a vision of how to do this. He plans to devise ways to channel migration towards development.

Elizabeth Van Loon is a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar.

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The University Honors College now offers advising to Pitt undergraduate students who are planning to prepare for careers in the health professions, specifically medicine, dentistry, optometry, veterinary medicine, and podiatry. Students interested in the medical professions will be encouraged to find opportunities through the UHC to challenge themselves to excel and to learn from other honors students in multiple disciplines. Freshmen should contact a UHC health professions advisor to schedule meetings each term throughout their undergraduate years in order to develop plans of study that include the requisite coursework and learning experiences that both inform students about health professions and prepare them for application to appropriate medical schools. Programs that address current health-related topics and provide networking and mentoring opportunities are also offered in the fall and spring terms. The University of Pittsburgh’s Pre-Health Professions Committee, composed of faculty members who evaluate student readiness and provide recommendations to accompany student applications for graduate study in the health professions, is now coordinated through the Honors College as well.

Special Thanks to Steve Husted

By KAREN BILLINGSLEY and NATE HILBERG

The staff and students of the UHC offer our sincere thanks to Steve Husted for serving as our Interim Dean during the academic year 2010-11. Steve’s collegiality and enthusiasm energized us all and reaffirmed the UHC’s commitment to excellence in undergraduate education. During his stewardship, Steve built upon many of the successful initiatives of the UHC and developed more opportunities for students across campus. For example, he increased the number of undergraduate students participating in mentored research by implementing a program of Honors Research Assistantships; he initiated the summer Summer Research Abroad Awards Program, through which undergraduate students pursued global research opportunities; he expanded the number of Brackenridge Summer Research Fellowships awarded each summer; he doubled the freshman honors housing capacity; and he reached out to undergraduate programs university-wide to increase the diversity and number of honors courses. The UHC thanks you, Steve, for your strong commitment to the UHC and to undergraduate students campus-wide. We wish you all the best in your future years at the University.
Brackenridge Fellowships Expanded to Fall and Spring

By MIKE GIAZZONI

This fall Dean Stricker directed the UHC to expand one of the University Honors College’s flagship programs, the Brackenridge Fellowship, into the fall and spring terms. Thirty-seven participants currently make up the inaugural group of Fall Brackenridge Fellows, and the program will run in the spring with room for a total of 52 Fellows. Being awarded a fellowship means a cash award of $800 for the term, academic credit, and seminar-style presentations and discussions of student and faculty research.

Outside of their individual research projects, Fellows participate in two weekly seminars: one in which students discuss each other’s research progress, and one in which faculty mentors present their work to the assembled students. For the student meetings, the fellows were divided into two groups and met at 11am on Mondays or 4pm on Fridays. The faculty presentations were incorporated into the UHC Friday Afternoon Lecture Series on Fridays at 2:00 p.m. Kaitlyn Folweiler, Neuroscience major and Fall Brackenridge Fellow, describes the tone of the seminars: “Both the student and faculty seminars have a positive, relaxed atmosphere that promotes the asking of questions and various perspectives.”

As with the summer Brackenridge program, projects run the gamut from analytic to purely creative, and the student and the sponsoring faculty member make a joint application. Fellows are selected on the basis of their academic records, the originality and promise of their proposed projects, and their aspiration to create and participate in an interdisciplinary community of students in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and applied disciplines. Ryan McGinnis, English Literature and History major and two-time Brackenridge Fellow, describes the program building bridges between disparate academic discourses, saying, “The program allows students to see why disciplinary boundaries are drawn the way they are, and how they might be transcended.”

Future plans for the Brackenridge program include applying for NSF grant support and inviting local high school students to observe student presentations. The Brackenridge program has long been a programmatic manifestation of the UHC’s core values of intellectual breadth, depth, and quality. With the addition of Fall and Spring Fellowships, the program is set to extend its values to dozens of additional students each term.

“Both the student and faculty seminars have a positive, relaxed atmosphere that promotes the asking of questions and various perspectives.”

-Kaitlyn Folweiler, Brackenridge Fellow

Did you attend the SHAC Student/Faculty Labor day picnic?

If you answered “no” to that question, what other fantastic opportunities are you missing out on? Get e-mail updates of upcoming events by joining the Student Honors Activity Committee’s mailing list. Just send a message to shac@pitt.edu with “subscribe me” in the subject line! More in-depth information about events is available on our Facebook page; just search for “University of Pittsburgh Honors College” and friend us!
Dean’s Letter

By Dean ED STRICKER

Six months ago, when I was still a candidate for the position of Dean of the University Honors College (UHC), I asked my undergraduate teaching assistants what connections they had to the UHC. One of them mentioned that she wasn’t a member of the UHC because her SAT scores were just below the level required for “automatic honors eligibility,” and so she has not been able to take any honors courses or to participate in other UHC activities during her three years here. When I asked how she knew she wasn’t a member of the UHC, she said (among other things) that her roommate, who was a member of the UHC, received frequent e-mail messages from the UHC whereas she didn’t.

This is a very sad story. The student is a terrific talent who has attained a very high GPA during her years at Pitt, in addition to being a very nice person. She certainly would have benefitted from, contributed to, and enjoyed honors courses and other UHC activities in which she was interested. What kept her from participating more fully was misunderstanding. Although it is true that she wasn’t a member of the UHC, the reason it is true is because there is no such thing as membership in the UHC. Nor was her roommate a member of the UHC despite the mailings; any student can receive such mailings and be informed about UHC activities simply by asking to be put on the mailing list.

One of the questions I have been asked frequently during the past few months is, “What will I do to sustain and increase the positive influence the UHC has had on undergraduate education?” It happens that we do have a group of new initiatives, some of which have already begun (e.g., extending the summer Brackenridge Research Program to the Fall and Spring terms) and others of which will emerge later during the academic year, but the main thing I hope to accomplish is not so much to add something good as to subtract something bad; that is, the misunderstanding of who is or isn’t eligible to participate in UHC activities such as honors courses.

Honors courses are intended to be more challenging and informative than regular courses on the same subject. I recognize that not every student wishes or is able to do well in them. But many students do have these pre-requisites and are willing to work harder in order to learn more, at least in courses on subjects of special interest to them.

Those students, their friends, their advisors, and their instructors all should know that the UHC is ready to welcome students whenever they are ready for the challenge and intellectual stimulation that is part of a first-rate education, inside or outside the classroom.

By ED MCCORD

Celebrate 25 Years

Honors College to Celebrate 25 Years

By ED MCCORD

The University Honors College (UHC) was founded on February 24, 1987, which also was the 200th anniversary of the founding of the University of Pittsburgh in 1787. Accordingly the UHC will begin celebrating both anniversaries with an event in the early evening of Friday, February 24, 2012.

Of course, the integrity of this observance is only as secure as the calendar on which that calculation is based. So it is only fitting that we celebrate as well the calendar that forms the basis of that celebration. That would be the Gregorian Calendar, which was introduced by Pope Gregory XIII by a decree signed on February 24, 1582, a coincidence in timing that makes the day even more auspicious.

Furthermore, the integrity of that decree, stemming from planetary regularities calculated by the Jesuit priest/astronomer Christopher Clavius, presents some onus for us to appreciate all the astronomical irregularities that there are, like supernovas. Supernovas just turn up sometimes out of synch with any calendar. In fact, the founding of the UHC was an event very much like a supernova, quite bright and quite unpredictable, an event that we discover one day is happening. So there is every reason for us to include supernovas in our celebration, just to make that point. In this regard, was it merely another coincidence that a legendary supernova—Supernova 1987A, the first one that was visible to the naked eye since the one Kepler studied in 1604—was first seen by jubilant astronomers on the same day the Honors College was dedicated?

Therefore, we believe that the weekend of February 24 should be used for observing the visible universe as well as viewing the invisible one. It seems to us that the calendar is an event very much like a supernova, quite bright and quite unpredictable, an event that we discover one day is happening. So there is every reason for us to include supernovas in our celebration, just to make that point. In this regard, was it merely another coincidence that a legendary supernova—Supernova 1987A, the first one that was visible to the naked eye since the one Kepler studied in 1604—was first seen by jubilant astronomers on the same day the Honors College was dedicated?

Understand Philosophy Degree

By DAVE HORNYYAK

The availability of a special degree distinguishes an honors college from an honors program. At the University of Pittsburgh, the University Honors College (UHC) provides the opportunity for qualified undergraduates to pursue a unique degree based on extra breadth and extra depth. This University-wide degree, designated the Bachelor of Philosophy (BPhil) by the University Board of Trustees and offered through the UHC, combines general requirements for an individually approved program of study with requirements for concentration that culminates in a thesis evaluated by a faculty committee. Through this degree, it is possible for...
Students and Faculty Outline Honors Course Fundamentals

By NATE HILBERG

A recent forum conducted by the Student Honors Activities Council with University Honors College faculty exemplified the usual success of such endeavors. That is, it was an occasion for faculty and students to interact and foster UHC ideals regarding excellence in undergraduate education. In this particular case, faculty discussed the idea of what makes a course an honors course. Professor Paul Floreancig, who teaches UHC Organic Chemistry, indicated that it was the students. No matter the university, “organic chemistry is organic chemistry,” Floreancig said, suggesting that it is students’ desire to learn more that characterizes UHC coursework. Professor Lewis Jacobson, who teaches UHC Genetics, likened UHC coursework to marathon training in that if the training does not extend you, then you will not pull through as well when it is time to perform. As a fellow marathoner and instructor for UHC Problems in Philosophy of Religion, I seconded the idea that meeting challenges in training (i.e., the classroom) helps to meet challenges when called upon to perform. Thus a theme emerged: More challenging training, likened to UHC coursework, makes for better performance. At this same forum, I also stressed the emphasis on fundamental issues that characterizes UHC courses, often taking the form of engagement with primary sources.

Like faculty, students are concerned about the quality of courses. They do not mind, and in fact enjoy, working hard especially when it is evident that the effort will be rewarded with an enhanced understanding of the material. Engaged faculty is the key to achieving this level of quality. They teach more demanding courses because their students want to learn more. In keeping with this spirit, the UHC is always interested in increasing the number of high-quality UHC courses. Next term new offerings include:

- **The Economic Constitution** (ECON 1700)
- **Photography and Art** (HAA 0470)
- **Comparative Views of Freedom in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries** (HIST 1755)
- **Honors Ordinary Differential Equations** (MATH 1275)
- **Biological Bases of Language and Memory** (NROSCI 1040)
- **Introduction to Psychology** (PSY 0010)
- **Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Scientific Puzzle** (PSY 1053)
- **Computational Methods in the Humanities** (SLAV 1050)
- **Living Latin American Writers** (SPAN 1450)

The UHC thanks the faculty for contributing to the enriched education of motivated students.

For faculty who would like to propose UHC courses, please see:

http://www.honorscollege.pitt.edu/courses/forfaculty.html

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24, 2012, is thus an apt time to celebrate, in a single stroke, the joint anniversaries of the UHC and the University of which it is a part, the anniversary of the Gregorian calendar that gives all anniversary celebrations their meaning, and the 25th anniversary of the greatest supernova in 400 years.

Unfortunately, since our celebration is bounded by our conventional work week, derived from the *Dies Solis* decreed by Constantine and the Biblical Sabbath, we will not have enough time to celebrate all of those things. We only have Friday night and Saturday. But we promise that we will make up for this constraint with a celebration that is worthy of the date and the occasion.

**Stay tuned at:**
http://www.honorscollege.pitt.edu/news-events/25th-anniversary.html

undergraduate students to produce scholarly work in a manner usually reserved for the graduate level. The program of study, approved by the Dean of the UHC, demonstrates that the student has exceeded the requirements for a standard undergraduate departmental degree. In some cases existing curricular options may fulfill the program of study requirements, while in other cases the program of study may be highly individualized, which often happens in the upper-division professional schools. In general, it is expected that a student’s curriculum will reflect breadth and depth, and it is incumbent upon each candidate to demonstrate the scholarly merits of the proposed curriculum as it relates to his or her own work.

Once admitted to candidacy, students focus on the thesis component of the degree. They select a thesis advisor from the faculty in their major department of study and develop a plan to address the project. The thesis defense consists of a public presentation and discussion of the project, followed by a private oral examination conducted by the faculty committee which includes an external examiner.
UHC Course Spotlight: “Great Modern Journalists” Teaches Students to Focus on the Story

By CINDY SKRZYCKI

I teach a course for the University Honors College called “Great Modern Journalists: First Drafters of History.” It is what I would call a “greatest hits” list over the past two centuries of journalists who transformed institutions, affected the direction of war, chronicled major American social movements, uncovered criminal deeds, and brought down a president. This is not a course where students learn to write, though I do expect excellent writing as they work toward a major research paper. Rather, they read and think deeply about the course of history and how the media affected it. In some cases, they are so influenced by the course that they go out and become journalists or non-fiction writers themselves. They start down the road that perhaps will make them the great journalists of their time.

Most students really don’t know what to think when they enroll, and they often end up in the class after a fellow student recommends it or someone on the faculty or advising staff says it will be good for them. Hali Felt was such a student. As she remembers it, “In the Fall of 2004, Doc Stewart suggested I take a class with a new lecturer. At the time, I was about to begin my senior year and was fresh out of a summer internship at the Columbia Journalism Review, champing at the bit to pursue the kind of reporting, researching and writing to which I’d devoted the previous three months.” Because relationships with students develop quickly in this class—they become quite passionate about how thrilling a career in journalism can be (or so they think), they do more work than they expected in and outside the classroom. For many of them, it prepares them for a lifetime pursuit. “In class, I read work by reporters and editors I had never heard of before and had the time to do closer reads of ones that I had. Out of class, I became a kind of fixture in Cindy’s office, popping in to ask a question about how to approach an editor or tackle a cover letter for a job application. These visits were (thankfully, I thought) often interrupted when a source returned one of Cindy’s calls and she proceeded to grill them with a vigor I still try to summon when faced with a steely source,” said Hali.

Hali didn’t become a reporter, but she used the same skills as the great journalists possessed to: write her first non-fiction book, Soundings: The Forgotten Woman Who Mapped the Ocean Floor (to be published by Henry Holt & Co. in March 2012); get an MFA in nonfiction writing at the University of Iowa; teach and have writing residencies; be in the classroom currently as an adjunct at Pitt. She isn’t alone as a graduate of that class who has gone on to do spectacular work as a writer.


I like to think of them as “Great Journalists” alumni with a big job, and that they understand what Joseph Pulitzer said more than a century ago: “Our Republic and its press will rise or fall together. An able, disinterested, public-spirited press, with trained intelligence to know right and courage to do it, can preserve that public virtue without which popular government is a sham and a mockery.”
Robert D. Reischauer, President of the Urban Institute and former head of the Congressional Budget Office. Dr. Reischauer is a nationally known expert on the federal budget, health reform, Medicare, and Social Security. He is currently one of the two public trustees of the Social Security and Medicare trust fund. All are welcome.

For more information, please see:
http://ae.honorscollege.pitt.edu/

Honors Housing Grows to Satisfy Demand

Due to the increase in number of high-achieving freshmen entering the university, and a corresponding increase in demand for honors housing, Freshmen Honors Housing has doubled. In the Fall 2011 semester UHC housing began occupying the west wing of Sutherland Hall, allowing us to accommodate 408 incoming first-year students.

Sutherland West, located on upper campus, provides students access to a TV lounge and study room on each floor, a fitness center, laundry facilities, and a computer lab. The air-conditioned rooms are mostly doubles with semi-private baths, and larger suites. There are two large common areas located on the first floor of the west wing as well as other common areas accessible to all Sutherland residents including a dining facility, coffee shop, and student mail center.

Just as with upper-class UHC housing, this community is comprised of a diverse group of undergraduates who hail from around the globe, represent virtually every major, and have a great many different interests. Nonetheless, all students share a commitment to academic excellence, student involvement, and responsible living. Our goal is that first-year students learn from each other and enrich their intellectual lives by living with like-minded people. We believe that learning does not take place only in the classroom, the laboratory, or the library, but can occur in the resident dorms during a lively discussion between floor-mates in a hallway or during one of the numerous floor - or building-wide activities.

Since this community is devoted entirely to freshmen who enter college with a distinct set of needs and abilities, we believe it is important to devote our time and energy to the intellectual and personal growth of this unique population. We strongly encourage interested students to apply for Honors Housing but, in keeping with the voluntary nature of the UHC, students wishing to be involved in UHC opportunities are not required to live in an honors community.

In planning ahead to next year, we have just learned that the 210 beds in Brackenridge Hall will become available for Honors Housing for sophomores. This additional facility will supplement our use of Forbes-Craig Hall as Honors Housing for sophomores and juniors.

application was the hardest for me (as I’d imagine it would be for everyone else). Working on the application, I was fortunate enough to have Judy Zang’s assistance in reading over it. In fact she read through it multiple times, so if you haven’t met Judy yet, I would highly recommend it! Needless to say, my first draft was thoroughly marked in red. I had to write everything about myself, yet remain concise. It was not an easy task. It took me a fair amount of time to write at each attempt and I went through about four drafts (a fairly low number when it comes to scholarship applications) before reaching one that seemed acceptable.

I did not receive the Goldwater the first time I applied, nor the second time; I did not give up however. I like to believe that it never hurts to apply since, even if I don’t win, I have at the very least learned valuable lessons from each application. In a sense, my two applications for the Goldwater have given me two years of reflection and a base of material for future applications. Once the first application is done, all subsequent applications will seem very similar and the question prompts similar as well. I learned from my weaknesses through the Goldwater experience and successfully applied for Rotary and Whitaker Scholarships. The application process has allowed me to learn more about myself and precisely express my strengths on paper. Despite my unsuccessful Goldwater applications, I never gave up and that has paid off. Now I have been given the opportunity to write this piece from Australia, and all I can say is, “Cheers, mate!"

David Gau is from Kennett Square, PA. In 2011, he received a BPhil in bioengineering and a BS in mathematics and economics. He won both the 2011 Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship and the 2011 Whitaker International Fellowship to Australia to continue his research on breast cancer. He is also engaged in outreach programming with local schools in Australia to encourage minorities to participate in science and engineering.

Gau was an undergraduate researcher in the Center for Biotechnology at Pitt, founder of the Pitt Association for Leadership and Success, president of Tau Beta Pi, and Pitt ambassador through Pathfinders. In addition to coauthoring several papers and posters, Gau earned numerous other honors and awards in his undergraduate career, including Pitt’s 2011 Omicron Delta Kappa Senior of the Year.
The Dick Thornburgh Forum for Law and Public Policy Teams up With the Honors College

By ED MCCORD

Last fall, Provost Beeson appointed Dr. Edward McCord to be director of the Dick Thornburgh Forum for Law and Public Policy, and the UHC gained a major new alliance in this development. Pitt alumnus and trustee Thornburgh (LAW ’57) was elected for two terms as governor of Pennsylvania (in 1978 and 1982) and was attorney general of the United States under both Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush (1988 – 91). He served as United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management (1992 – 93) and director of the Institute of Politics in the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University (1987 – 88). The mission of this Forum in his honor is to create a framework for public education and civic action to advance effective and principled governance at the local, state, and national levels. Among its prominent assets are extensive personal papers that the Governor presented to the University Library System in 1998 (www.library.pitt.edu/thornburgh).

The Thornburgh Forum supports initiatives across the University through the generosity of the Thornburgh family and friends. For example, the Law School and the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences sponsor the Thornburgh Family Lecture Series in Disability Law and Policy. It was created when the Governor and his wife, Ginny, donated to the University the $50,000 Henry B. Betts Award that they had received from the American Association of People with Disabilities for their lifelong service to its cause. On March 15, 2012, the seventh of these annual lectures will be delivered by Jonathan Young, Chairman of the National Council on Disability, and everyone is invited. In addition, last year the School of Law presented the fifth Dick Thornburgh Prize for Public Service to an outstanding graduating law student whose goal is to pursue a career in public service. Moreover, there are Dick Thornburgh Faculty Academic Support Grants that have been awarded to faculty in information science, nursing, political science, civil and environmental engineering, and law to work with students to develop courses involving the Thornburgh Archive Collection.

With the UHC alliance alongside these others, the Thornburgh Forum is bringing a broad spectrum of contribution to the undergraduate community. Steps are in motion with Governor Thornburgh and Dean Stricker to accomplish that. The Thornburgh Forum now cosponsors with the UHC the American Experience Distinguished Lectures, one of the oldest and most prominent lecture series in the city of Pittsburgh, created by the late Robert Hazo more than 40 years ago (http://ae.honorscollege.pitt.edu).

Visitors of national prominence are brought in this series to campus every year for a public address and discussions with students on political, social, and economic issues of great moment.

The Forum also aims to support student research. A “Dick Thornburgh Summer Fellowship Program” has been created (http://www.honorscollege.pitt.edu/opportunities/thornburgh-fellowship.html) to increase the Brackenridge Summer Fellowships with two new positions reserved for undergraduate students who would like to examine real-life public policy dilemmas in depth involving the Dick Thornburgh Archive Collection. Priyanka Kaura, a junior majoring in economics, sociology, and history, worked as a Thornburgh Fellow last summer with Professor Melanie Hughes in the Department of Sociology and with Nancy Watson at the Thornburgh Archives on a project about politics and crisis communication during the 1989 Graterford prison hostage incident.

Most noteworthy this academic year, on March 27 and 28, 2012, the Forum will hold a national “Symposium on Future of Nuclear Power: Views from the United States and Abroad,” cosponsored by the Swanson School of Engineering. The symposium will feature experts in nuclear, fossil fuel, and passive energy sources who will examine these sources across engineering technology, public health, emergency management, insurance, and financing parameters. Governor Thornburgh was confronted with the Three Mile Island nuclear incident in his first months in office, and March will mark both the thirty-third anniversary of this event and the first anniversary of the Fukushima Daiichi crisis. What better occasion to bring communities of experts together to review for a diverse audience the risks and benefits of our energy options? The Thornburgh Forum and the UHC are working closely to afford a wide range of academic opportunities in this rare program both in the physical conference itself and through internet simulcast viewing.

Contact: Kimberly Carson, Program Administrator, Dick Thornburgh Forum for Law & Public Policy, Hillman Library, Dick Thornburgh Room, 412-624-1514, kac15@pitt.edu.
The Forbes-Craig residence hall has been a part of the Honors College since the late nineties. Converted from graduate student housing, Forbes-Craig offers an experience similar to “apartment style” living with its two and three bedroom suites. Yet, one may wonder, “What is honors housing?”

To our minds, honors housing is all about community. It is a community of thinkers and learners, those curious about the world around them and eager to grapple with its mysteries. This community represents a wide range of interests from philosophy to art, literature to quantum physics. When in close proximity to the students it is evident that their curiosity is infectious; they inspire in each other a desire to learn more.

While these ideals are the spirit of the honors housing communities, the structure itself can contribute (or detract) from a positive interaction effect. Spaces where people gather for house events or to study, or where they just mingle while watching a football game, are vital to getting people to interact. It is this quality that the Forbes-Craig residence Hall lacked.

The only place in the building for the community to assemble was the commons room which was “through that door, make a left go through the fire door, down the hall, look for the door on the left on the side of the laundry room.” Several years ago, Lute White and Chris Chirdon, UHC staff members, began mulling over ways to improve access to the commons room and had a rough idea of what should be done: install a set of attractive divided-light wood double doors to open the main lobby directly into the commons room. They presented their idea to interim dean Steve Husted who gave it a full endorsement. After building schematics were examined, computer models constructed, and contractors consulted, it was evident that the work could be done quickly and over the summer. What resulted is a radical departure from the dull and dark commons room and entry area.

You don’t make communities by just changing the interior décor…but, you can help them to develop if the space is easily accessible and attractive. Hopefully, your curiosity has been piqued and you’ll want a firsthand look at the remodeled and renovated space at a Friday Night MESS or SHAC event in Forbes-Craig.
The Honors College Welcomes Our New Staff Members

The Honors College was pleased to welcome several new staff members during the past year.

Matt Schultz joined the UHC as our Receptionist in December 2010. As a native western Pennsylvanian, Schultz made an easy transition from Ebensburg, PA to Pittsburgh. He began attending the University of Pittsburgh in the Fall 2006 semester and graduated in 2010. Schultz considers himself a bit of a renaissance man, graduating with a BA from the School of Arts and Sciences where he majored in history, political science, and communication. Schultz spends his spare time reading, writing, learning, playing sports, and talking with friends. Some of his favorite authors include Albert Camus, Philip K. Dick, George Orwell, and Fyodor Dostoyevsky. He is a big Pittsburgh sports fan, and he actively follows the Steelers, Penguins, Pirates, and the Pitt Panthers. Schultz enjoys studying history and plans to further his education in that field in the near future.

Kristin DeLuca joined the UHC in August 2011. As the Graduate Resident Director for the Sutherland Hall Freshman Honors community, Kristin DeLuca collaborates with the UHC and the Office of Residence Life in overseeing the development of a unique living learning community. DeLuca is responsible for coordinating student and community development initiatives, facilitating programming in Sutherland, mediating conflict, and supervising a team of nine upper-class resident assistants. Professionally, DeLuca’s experience is diverse and runs the gamut from campaign politics to student affairs. Prior to coming to Pitt, DeLuca worked at Chatham University in academic affairs, institutional advancement, and student affairs. DeLuca also spent a couple of years living a nomadic life while working on national and state political campaigns in New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Pennsylvania.

DeLuca’s academic background includes a BA from Chatham College (now Chatham University) where she majored in political science and a master’s degree in Higher Education Administration from the University of Pittsburgh. Currently, DeLuca is pursuing a doctorate in Social & Comparative Analysis in Education in the Administrative and Policy Studies department of Pitt’s School of Education. Outside of work and school, DeLuca can be found playing with her dog Bailey just over the bridge in Bloomfield where she enjoys hosting dinners with friends.

Jaclyn Bankert also joined the UHC staff in August. After earning her BA at the University of Pittsburgh where she majored in history, Jaclyn joined the UHC as the housemaster for the Forbes-Craig Honors Community. Her duties include developing academic community through the facilitation of student-initiated programs and one-on-one interactions with upperclass honors students. An honors housing alumnus, she considers herself very fortunate to have returned to such an intellectually stimulating and fun environment.

Since September 2010, Katie Maietta has

Matt Schultz

Kristin DeLuca

Jaclyn Bankert

Katie Maietta
been working with the director of national scholarships, Judy Zang. Katie helps students meet with Judy and take the necessary steps in applying for various scholarships. Katie grew up in Saxonburg, Pennsylvania and began attending the University of Pittsburgh in the Fall of 2008. She will graduate this spring with a double major in Political Science and Italian Language and Literature with a German Language Certificate. Katie loves learning new languages (she’s currently on her sixth) and has studied abroad in Sicily. She hopes to apply what she has learned to a career in the government. Before coming to Pitt, Katie worked as a lifeguard and a dance instructor. In her free time, Katie likes to read, cook, and bake.

The UHC’s newest hire is Andrea Abt.
Andrea joined the UHC in October, 2011 as a health professions advisor. She has been with the University since 1990, serving as a career consultant in the Career Development Office, advisor in the Department of Neuroscience, coordinator of student and faculty support services with the University External Studies Program, and coordinator of faculty development for the Center for Instructional Development and Distance Education. In fall of 1997, she sailed with Semester at Sea as the assistant academic dean and registrar. Andrea is a Pitt alumna, earning a BA (communication rhetoric) and an MEd in Higher Education Administration. Most mornings and evenings you can find Andrea walking her dog, Molly, in South Park.

Forty-six students involved in UHC opportunities were awarded national scholarships during the 2010-2011 school year. The student winners were recognized by sixteen different foundations, receiving such highly-competitive and widely-recognized awards as the US Fulbright Student Scholarship, The Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, and the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship. The University Honors College provides specialized advising to students seeking to apply for national scholarships. These students represent a wide cross-section of the undergraduate population. This year’s award winners come from each of the four undergraduate grade-levels and sought degrees or certificates from seven of the twelve undergraduate colleges and programs. They will use their awards for international travel, language acquisition, graduate school funding, research projects, or some combination of the above. Their achievements represent a series of landmarks for the University, including the following: Pitt’s first recipient of the Samuel Huntington award, a $10,000 public service award given to three students annually; Pitt’s third-ever recipient of the Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship, a $40,000/yr. award that assists in the academic preparation of foreign service officers; a campus record-setting 14 Fulbright grant recipients (nine undergraduate and five graduate students), placing Pitt at 7th among U.S. public research universities and 17th among all U.S. universities (public and private); and four winners of the Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship, a total that tied for the second-highest number of Ambassadorial scholarships to come from a single university. The UHC’s emphasis on academic attainment is embodied by these students’ accomplishments and the efforts of all national scholarship applicants, regardless of the outcomes of their applications. We congratulate them all on their successes.

State of the Honors College Address

Dean Stricker was the founding chair of the Department of Neuroscience (1986-2002). In each of the 16 years in which he was chair, he delivered a “State of the Department” address presenting his vision of the department and how ongoing activities and planned future developments fit into that vision. Now that he is Dean of the Honors College, he wants to continue that tradition by presenting his vision of the Honors College.

Accordingly, at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 11th, in the auditorium of the Frick Fine Arts Building, Dean Stricker will be giving a “State of the Honors College” address. This will be the inaugural lecture in what he imagines will be a series of annual presentations. The intended audience is anyone who is interested in the Honors College – whether student, faculty, staff, or administrator.
On November 19, 2011, Cory Rodgers was selected as a 2012 Rhodes Scholar. He is the fourth Rhodes Scholar from the University of Pittsburgh in the past seven years, and the seventh in Pitt’s history.

Cory will graduate from Pitt with a BPhil degree in Africana studies and the history and philosophy of science, and a BS degree in biological sciences with a minor in chemistry. He will receive certificates in African Studies and in Global Studies. Beginning next fall, he will pursue graduate work in medical anthropology at the University of Oxford. Presently, Cory is in Tanzania working on a project funded by the Samuel Huntington Public Service Award that assists people living with HIV and AIDS.

To learn more about Cory’s accomplishments and the range of experiences that helped shape his interests in medical and health practices in the United States and abroad, see http://www.news.pitt.edu/Rhodes-Scholar-Cory-Rodgers.

We congratulate Cory on his Rhodes Scholarship and numerous achievements to date during his undergraduate career. In addition, we congratulate Nina Weaver (a Rhodes finalist), Sesi Aliu, and Max Greenwald, three Pitt alumni who also were nominated for the Rhodes Scholarship this year. We are proud of their excellent academic and community work, their leadership, and their genuine dedication to others.