THE AMPERSAND

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• Struggling with your classes? Find information about Honors College Tutoring inside!

• Read about your fellow HC Students’ opinions on questions posed to them by the Ampersand staff.

• Check out pages 6 and 7 for pictures from the latest Honors College events

HONORS COLLEGE HAS A BALL!

Joshua Kannankeril

It was that time of year again. Yes, on February 27th, the 17th Annual Honors College Ball was finally upon us, and the Honors College Advisory Board made sure that it would be a night we would not soon forget. Dinner, dancing, and all-around good-natured fun was exactly what we needed to take a break from our busy lives for just one night. HCAB began preparing for the event a whole year ago, and all that preparation showed! From the venue, the Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel, with its light-up dance floor, to the amazing dinner and silent auction items (who can forget Dean Bottom’s famous homemade pecan pie which sold for over $250!!) everything about the night seemed serenely perfect.

Doors opened at 6:00pm, and students, faculty, and alumni filed in wearing their most elegant outfits. Faculty finally got to see students wear something besides the usual sweatpants and hoodies. Who knew we could clean up so well! From walking around the ballroom, mingling with faculty and students alike, it was clear to see that this was going to be a special night.

After dinner and the silent auction were over, all 300 guests started heading onto the dance floor. The DJ played a great assortment of hits, everything from Michael Jackson to Hannah Montana. The night was filled with memorable dance-offs between students and yes, even faculty. Let’s just say the faculty showed us students the real way to break it down.

All in all, the evening was a great success. I’m sure I am not alone when I say that I can’t wait for what HCAB has in store for us next year.

The dance floor at the Knickerbocker was packed from the moment the music started!
Public Service with Lisa Madigan

Sasidhar Madugula

“There’s nothing more rewarding than waking up in the morning doing a job that you love. Serving people is just priceless.”

These words were spoken by Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan during her speech before an audience of UIC students, staff, and teachers Wednesday, February 24th, 2010 in the Illinois Room of Student Center East.

Lisa Domkowski, Director of Advancement of the Honors College, invited Madigan to come speak at UIC on the topic “Why Choose Public Service?,” an apt subject considering the nature of the Honors College. Prior to the talk, the Student Leadership Council hosted a private reception for Madigan. Student leaders from the Honors College Organizations had the opportunity to personally welcome and meet with Madigan, impressing her to the point where she made several references to them in her speech.

After the reception, Madigan was escorted to the Illinois room by Provost Tanner and Honors College Dean Bette Bottoms. Through Provost Tanner’s opening remarks, the audience learned that Lisa Madigan was the first woman to be elected to the post of Attorney General in the State of Illinois in 2002 (having served on the Illinois Senate from 1998-2002, next to Barack Obama); that she was a recipient of the prestigious John F. Kennedy New Frontier Award in 2005; and that she has a strong conviction that “one person can make a difference.”

After the Provost was finished, the Attorney General took the stand and delivered an energetic speech about her experience with service. She started by describing the three defining moments in her life that led her to choose the path of public service. First was her internship in the office of prominent US Senator Paul Simon, where she was exposed for the first time to people who had a genuine interest in the welfare of their fellow citizens and the idea that “we all have an obligation to try and make a difference,” an idea that was to stick with her for the rest of her career. Simon’s work in Africa inspired Madigan to go there herself and volunteer as a high school teacher during Apartheid. Madigan expressed her admiration for the students, who even in that time of racial instability and strife were enthusiastically “engaged in learning,” and cited them as a major source of inspiration for her as well. After her volunteer work in Africa ended, Madigan’s next goal was to “translate her experience in Africa to helping students here” in the US. Therefore, she started an after-school program at Wright College to help keep south side children away from the influence of drugs and gangs. Of her experience, Madigan said that “through that program, I had another opportunity to see how we can change a child’s life.” Powered by these events and her own potential to cause positive change, Madigan went on to receive a JD from Loyola School of Law so that she could serve more effectively.

She then related to the audience her entry into politics and her eventual winning of the Attorney General’s seat in the 2002 election.

Madigan described her position as “the people’s lawyer.” Employing 700 people in her office (300 of them lawyers), she not only represents the State of Illinois in court but also has undertaken several legal reform projects throughout the state. She gave examples of her more prominent programs, such as her Nursing Home reform, her stand against domestic violence, and her consumer protection initiatives, all of which have met with hard-won success. Through all her work, she stated that it was and continues to be her strong dedication to “improving the lives of other people” that drives her. In her closing comments, Madigan gave some advice to the Honors students in the audience: “Seek out opportunities to work with good, moral, interesting people” and stated jokingly that “you don’t have to be a lawyer to have a career in public service.” In summary, the Attorney General said, that the fact that “the effect you can have on people’s lives is dramatic” is her answer to the question “Why choose Public Service?”

Qualified Honors College students are available to help you in almost every subject. A great advantage of the Honors College tutoring program is that the student who is helping you with the topic did very well in the class, understands the material, and just might have had the same instructor!

Hard copies of the schedule are in the literature rack across the from the Honors College front desk. The online version is available at: http://www.uic.edu/honors/learning/tutoring.shtml

The Honors College Tutoring Program takes place Monday through Friday, between the hours of 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Tutoring center is located on the second floor of Burnham Hall in Room 220 BH. You do not need an appointment; tutoring is free and available to every UIC student.
News from the Office of Special Scholarship Programs

Through April, the Office of Special Scholarship Programs will be offering a series of special information sessions regarding many of the national scholarship and fellowship competitions. If you might be interested, attend a session, because you need to plan early and discuss your options often!

Opportunities for Students Graduating in 2010 and 2011:
Wednesday, March 31 @ 4PM, 2550 University Hall
Monday, April 12 @ 4PM, 2550 University Hall

Fall Scholarship Planning for Juniors:
Monday, April 5 @ 3PM, 2550 University Hall

Fulbright Full Grant Fellowships and English Teaching Assistantships:
Friday, April 23 @ 2PM, 2650 University Hall
Tuesday, April 27 @ 4PM, 2550 University Hall

Other Upcoming Scholarship Deadlines:

Gilman Scholarship for Study Abroad
Aims to broaden the student population that studies abroad by supporting undergraduates who might otherwise not participate due to financial constraints. Must be studying abroad in Fall 2010 OR, if you are a STEM student (majoring in sciences, technology, math or engineering), you can apply for Summer 2010. Students must be Pell Grant recipients AND U.S. citizens. Scholarships up to $5,000 with a $3,000 Critical Language Award enhancement for the study of a critical language while abroad. The program strongly encourages students to choose non-traditional study abroad destinations, especially those outside Western Europe and Australia.

Deadline: April 6 (www.iie.org/gilman)

UIC Everett and Florence Drumright Scholarships
The UIC Everett & Florence Drumright Scholarships are awarded in the amount of $1,000 to selected Chinese American students studying at UIC. The awarding of the scholarships will be determined based on a combination of academic merit and financial need. Students in all fields are eligible. Applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0/4.0 scale and have completed at least one year of course work by May 7, 2010.


Tylenol Scholarship
The makers of Tylenol will award (10) $10,000 scholarships and (150) $1,000 scholarships for higher education to students who demonstrate leadership in community activities and school activities and who intend to major in areas that will lead to careers in health-related fields.


Spring Application Deadline for the British Scholarships – APRIL 15
(Ahead of the final application due in October)
If interested, please contact Beth Powers, Director, Office of Special Scholarship Programs at 312.355.2477 or bpowers@uic.edu.

Rhodes
The Rhodes scholarship provides direct payment of all tuition, fees and a monthly stipend for a minimum of two years study at the University of Oxford, England. Thirty-two scholarships are assigned annually to the United States. (http://www.rhodesscholar.org/)

Marshall
Marshall Scholarships finance young Americans of high ability to study for a degree in the United Kingdom. Up to 40 Marshall Scholarships are awarded each year. They are tenable at any British university and cover two years of study in any discipline, at either the undergraduate or graduate level, leading to the award of a British university degree. Candidates are invited to indicate two preferred universities, although the Marshall Commission reserves the right to decide on the final placement. (http://www.marshallscholarship.org/)

Mitchell
Scholars are eligible to attend seven universities in the Republic of Ireland and two universities in Northern Ireland, for one academic year of graduate study. Prospective scholars must have a demonstrated record of intellectual distinction, leadership, and extra-curricular activity, as well as personal characteristics of honesty, integrity, fairness, and unselfish service to others. (http://www.us-irelandalliance.org/wmspage.cfm?parm1=2)

Gates Cambridge
Provides expenses for studying at the University of Cambridge, England, for 1-4 years. Students may pursue a second bachelor's degree, participate in one-year postgraduate courses, or participate in research leading to a PhD. (http://www.gatesscholar.org/)

Office of Special Scholarship Programs
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Focus on a Fellow: Dr. Brenda Russell

Kasia Plachta

Dr. Brenda Russell is a Professor of Physiology, Biophysics, Bioengineering and Medicine, and Executive Associate Vice Chancellor for Research. She was recruited as an Honors College Fellow shortly after arriving at UIC in 1988. Although kept busy with the demands of research and collaborative efforts both on campus and abroad, Dr. Russell finds time to interact with her Honors College students in personal and thought-provoking ways. Many times I nearly forgot to get her signature on forms because I became so absorbed in the conversation. After these visits, it became apparent that Dr. Russell is a “human-interested” person – someone interested in others’ success as much as her own. When a former student ran through the rain from east to west campus to tell her about his medical school acceptance, she enthusiastically shared in his excitement. This genuine interest in students is one of many qualities that make Dr. Russell a great Fellow.

As a young student, Dr. Russell already had this enthusiastic approach to life and learning. In grammar school, she took two coinciding language classes, Latin and German, because just one wasn’t enough. After secondary school, she decided to attend the University of London, despite her family’s objection. She wanted to study physics, but the department was not admitting women. Unaffected, she joined the physiology department instead. Shortly after, she had to change departments again because she met and married a colleague, which was not allowed since university policy did not approve of spouses working together. As a result, she began working in an anatomy lab, which taught her more about the structure of living things. In 1971, Dr. Russell received her Ph.D. in Physiology.

Several years later, Dr. Russell was in California, this time as a post-doctorate researching muscle adaptation at UCLA. Although university policy had prevented her from studying physics, Dr. Russell never lost her knack for it. The UCLA lab received an electron microscope to view muscle tissue samples, but the anatomist did not know how to use it. With her knowledge of electro-magnetic lenses, Dr. Russell was able to master the microscope’s components. Her ability to combine concepts of physics to physiology helped her gain the respect of her colleagues and became especially handy as bioengineering emerged as a new, exciting field of study.

In 1977, Dr. Russell and her husband moved to Chicago, along with their three kids, Ben, Emily, and Jill. Dr. Russell began working in Chicago as the Director of the Graduate Division of Cell Biology at Rush University, and shortly after welcomed her fourth child, Sally. In 1988, she arrived at UIC as a Professor of Physiology in the College of Medicine. Dr. Russell has since has held several positions and taught students from many of the UIC graduate programs. Currently, Dr. Russell splits time between her office as Executive Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, and her lab as the director of two NIH-funded, collaborative projects. One project studies cellular response to heart failure, and the other regeneration of cardiac tissue.

During my latest visit, Dr. Russell wore a triumphant grin on her face. She was explaining the difficulty in the use of antibodies in a recent experiment. Her lab produced conflicting results with published data. Results from previous research found a large amount of an essential protein at one location in cardiac cells, but when the Russell Lab reproduced the experiment using a more specific antibody, they instead found that the protein resides in other places. Both groups wanted to be right, but the dispute wasn’t settled until a third party gave full support of Dr. Russell’s findings. She was very excited about the news, saying, “I enjoy science, thinking, debate - I think this is fun!” Despite her victory and having every right to gloat, it was clear that the outcome was more thrilling as a strengthened discovery than a demonstration of superior method. She continued, “You always have a great respect for your colleagues.” Dr. Russell takes true pleasure in the process and products of her work, not just from the laudatory perks that accompany it. She makes the most of opportunities, as is seen in her recent efforts in planning committee meetings, developing curriculum for a course on the ever-expanding study of stem cells, and helping in the organization of the Student Research Forum.

My hand couldn’t write fast enough to keep pace with the interview, so I took a mental note to finally buy one of those voice recorders that everyone seems to use...and then lose in a lecture. Luckily, I remembered something Dr. Russell said in an earlier visit: “Life is not a race to see who will finish first.”
Honors College students have been making a difference in the lives of children for over a decade now. Project ESTEEM: Enrichment of Science Through Exposure to Experimental Models, works with a national charity named Lydia’s House to engage young and disadvantaged children. It was founded by Honors College students a decade ago and continues to be led by them. This year, the group’s President is Anisa Isap.

The Department of Children and Family services provides shelter to abused women and neglected children in conjunction with Lydia’s House. Students involved with Project ESTEEM meet with them to work together on fun science projects. The benefit for the kids is that they receive attention and get to learn new things as well. It helps them develop healthily as individuals despite their tough circumstances.

Project ESTEEM visitors go to Lydia’s House every other Tuesday during the semester. Between sessions, the volunteers meet to discuss and organize for the next session. Anyone can volunteer, and can contact Project ESTEEM President Anisa Isap to do so. aisap2@uic.edu

STUDENT ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT: PROJECT ESTEEM

GREGORY ROYAL PRATT

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STUDENT OPINIONS

What are your plans for spring break?

“Over spring break I will be dedicating my time to working at Walgreens Pharmacy and reading up on my homework.”

-Antonio Rodriguez, Freshman, Biology

“I will be going to my high school to visit my badminton team.”

-Jingpin Li, Freshman, Biology

“I am going to relax. Sleep!”

-Josh Jones, Junior, Math
Honors College Recent Events!

The fabulous Knickerbocker Hotel was the site of the 17th Annual Honors College Ball. As you can see from these photos, a good time was had by all who attended.

Alex Kim and Josh Kannankeril tore up the dance floor all night!

Vik Jagadeesan and Neha Agnihotri.

Josh Kannankeril and Resham Khiani on the dance floor.

A highlight of the evening was the Knickerbocker’s beautifully lit dance floor.

Assistant to the Dean Marie Khan and HCAB member Annabelle Vidal-Ruiz.

Freshmen Bryan Killian and Michelle Skinner enjoy a break on the dance floor.

L to R: Tom Karagiannis, Natasha Shah, Parth Nanavati, Laura Zitella, Resham Khiani, Josh Kannankeril
MORE HONORS COLLEGE RECENT EVENTS!

It was not the "typical" St. Patrick's Day fare at the Honors College. Students and faculty alike enjoyed delicious Mexican food from Los Comales Restaurant.

Later in the day on March 17th was the Honors College publications release event. Red Shoes Review, One World, and JPHAS all showcased their newest efforts. A highlight was the ceremontial "hanging of the covers" on the wall in the Student Lounge.
Dr. John D’Emilio

AN ACTIVIST’S LIFE: JOHN D’EMILIO
SASIDHAR MADUGULA

The Student Leadership Council hosted History and Gender and Women Studies Professor Dr. John D’Emilio in the Honors College Library on Thursday, March 11th, in order to hear the story of his dynamic work and his resulting perspectives on leadership. Few others would have been as qualified to elaborate on this topic as Dr. D’Emilio is: from his undergraduate years to the present day, Dr. D’Emilio has been engaged in ceaseless efforts for social justice on behalf of the misunderstood gay and lesbian community. Through his struggle, he assimilated many of the qualities that define a leader, becoming a founder of his field of study and a key organizing force in the gay liberation movement.

Professor D’Emilio expounded on the qualities of a leader by presenting his own evolution from an active but directionless student at Columbia University to an effective exponent of social justice, and then by distilling events in his life into sound advice. Coming from a conservative Catholic family, Dr. D’Emilio was the among first in his family to attend college, causing him to jokingly say of himself: “I’m the last person one would expect to have authored a dozen books and found a field of study”. His undergraduate education coincided with the inflammatory Vietnam War, introducing him at a very young age to the realm of protest and reform. From then onwards, D’Emilio said, “The heart of what I’ve done has been concerned with movements”. From this, D’Emilio learned the first lesson that “life is full of unexpected turns”. After his time at Columbia, D’Emilio started working at a library, where he was first introduced to history, which would develop into his academic passion because, among other things, he felt that it was the key to understanding what it means to be a responsible American. He went to graduate school, and given his energy and passion for reform, joined a start-up group of gay intellectuals that would eventually turn into the National Gay Academic Conference. “It was inevitable that me and gay liberation would cross paths” says D’Emilio. By now, he had developed a set of goals and principles concerning his life and work, goals and principles that gave him energy and direction. “Values are at the heart of leadership” was Dr. D’Emilio’s second lesson for the audience.

It was these values that led D’Emilio at the end of graduate school to do something nobody had done before: write a dissertation about the history of the early gay liberation movement. “I was basically told by all my professors I wouldn’t get a job”. Yet D’Emilio insisted upon writing on his topic of choice, and did so. By this time, Professor D’Emilio was heavily involved with many active liberation movements and organizations, and connected to many different influential people. After obtaining a teaching position at the University of North Carolina, D’Emilio once gave up tenure in order to help found a policy institute in Washington D.C. According to Dr. D’Emilio, what kept him going was the fact that he “felt as though hundreds of people were supporting me” and the fact that he “set as a goal ending homophobia and gay oppression”. Hence came his last two lessons: “No matter what you are choosing to do, don’t go it alone” and “setting goals...long range goals... is the most important thing.” So whether Professor John D’Emilio is doing his job by writing, researching, or teaching, his work in social justice is always at the forefront of his mind and efforts, a powerful example of dedication for all aspiring leaders.