It is with real pleasure that I welcome you to the latest edition of the School of Arts and Sciences Honors Program newsletter. These pages are designed, first and foremost, to keep you informed about the Program as it continues to thrive—for the very latest news you can always visit our website at sashonors.rutgers.edu. But I’d also like to help you understand what makes the Program so valuable, and encourage you to support our mission in these challenging times.

In May, we were proud to celebrate our seniors as they graduated from Rutgers. As honors students they had the chance to explore their academic and intellectual potential, develop leadership skills, and become globally aware citizens. With Rutgers degree in hand, each and every one of them steps out prepared to face the challenges of a world much changed since they were freshmen. As they take the next steps on their chosen path, we sincerely hope that our graduates will stay in touch and be proud to call themselves alumni of the SAS Honors Program and of Rutgers.

Last September, we welcomed 420 exceptional new students to our community, and to the academic opportunities and challenges only the SAS Honors Program can offer. The very active SAS Honors Program Student Advisory & Programming Committee co-sponsored with Johnson & Johnson Exploring Rutgers as Text, an event that had incoming students explore our four campuses together with the diverse neighborhoods of New Brunswick and Highland Park.

A further highlight this year was the founding of the SAS Honors Program Artists’ Collective. Students came together under the aegis of Dean Nazario to discuss art, share ideas, and take drawing lessons. Rutgers Day saw the opening of the collective’s first exhibition, attended by over a 100 visitors, in the SAS Honors Program’s main office (35 College Avenue).

The SAS Honors Program remains committed to developing new initiatives, both within the University and further afield. In the course of this academic year we discussed educational collaborations with Rutgers Libraries, with the Social Justice Learning Community, and with the Zimmerli Museum. But above all it’s our students who make the Program exceptional! This coming fall, for example, members of the SAS Honors Program Student Advisory & Programming Committee have been selected to present their ideas at the National Collegiate Honors Council. Honors students also volunteer their time to tutor their fellow Rutgers students in various academic subjects. And our students have taken their academic talents beyond the walls of the university and into the community, serving as tutors for elementary school students in New Brunswick.

These are just a selection of the diverse events, activities, and initiatives fostered by the SAS Honors Program. Over the years, our graduates have made unique and lasting contributions in the worlds of government, medicine, business, law, academia, and elsewhere. I believe that our current crop of students, outstanding when they arrived on the Banks, will, with the special opportunities and challenges offered them by the SAS Honors Program, meet and even surpass those contributions.

The motto of the SAS Honors Program is: *Artes et scientiae floreant* – Let the arts and the sciences flourish. The fact that they continue to flourish, and so robustly, is thanks to the dedication of students, faculty, and staff, but also thanks to you, our alumni, who continue to support us as we strive to educate the next generation. To learn about how you personally can get involved in Honors Program activities, just go to our website sashonors.rutgers.edu and visit our Alumni section.

I would also ask you to consider making a financial gift to support the ongoing work of the SAS Honors Program. Once again, details on how to donate can be found under the Alumni section on our website.

With all my best wishes,

*Sarolta A. Takács*
Dean, School of Arts and Sciences Honors Program
Professor of History
Participating in the Honors Program has been a wonderful experience. Living in honors housing on College Avenue provides a community, which is enhanced by special in-dorm events. I have developed a particular appreciation for the smaller class sizes made possible by the Honors Program. The honors sections of Introduction to Microeconomics and Macroeconomics allowed me to attain a greater understanding of the material and to know my professors on a personal level.

I have also enjoyed my honors seminars, in which we discussed topics ranging from inequality in America to Verdi’s operas in a small class setting. A special feature of these classes is that they allow discussion in a seminar setting, a rare opportunity for many of us—most of my classmates are freshmen and sophomores. The Honors Program is very supportive of these seminars and even provided my class with tickets to the Metropolitan Opera.

Beyond these academic benefits, the Honors Program has provided me with great opportunities to hear guest speakers, attend special events like tea-time discussions with the deans, and participate in excursions to New York City. To me, the Honors Program represents a fusion of academic, social, and extracurricular life. The result is an extraordinary and supportive community.

The special honors seminars and sections of classes are a great opportunity to get to know your professors. Since most of my other classes are huge lectures, it’s nice to be in a class where the professor knows your name. You can really say what’s on your mind and achieve a level of interaction that would be impossible in most classes. There is a sense of shared experience that comes from being in the Honors Program that really enables students to connect with each other.
FACULTY STATEMENTS

RUDY BELL Professor of History

I’ve been teaching in the Honors Program ever since its inception at Rutgers College several decades ago and now in its unified SAS structure. I’ve taught seminars on holy women who starved themselves, popular advice manuals on healthy living, childrearing beyond Dr. Spock, and, most recently, parent/child conflict in Verdian opera. Usually I do the same general subject two years running, so that what I learn from students can enrich the second try, but not a third time because I want to be as fresh and enthused as are the students.

In my view, a seminar is never solely about teaching students what I already know; rather, it becomes a joint exploration into uncharted territory. Inevitably, I choose the main topic, one related to my professional interests, and that decision puts me at least initially in the traditional role of "expert." But always some students, indeed many students, pose questions or offer ideas that fundamentally change my thinking and shape the way I present my research in future publications.

Honors seminars allow me to reach beyond the confines of my discipline to explore areas where my lack of expertise puts me on a level playing field with the students. We become co-participants in a learning experience, something they do routinely in all their courses but that their teachers often do not—a fact that can push professors toward mental flab, lack of imagination, and boredom. The students are uniformly bright, generally conscientious, and frequently as talented in mathematics and the sciences as in the humanities. Most do not go on to major in these disciplines, but those that do provide support through friendship and encouragement. Inevitably, I choose the topic two years running, so that what I learn from students can enrich the second try, but not a third time because I want to be as fresh and enthused as are the students.

There are two aspects to being a professor that most appeal to me. One is that I get to do almost entirely what I choose. The other, more important aspect is that the people I work with, students, never grow old or tired or jaded, especially if they are in the Honors Program. Everyone stays in touch and I take pleasure in seeing so many of their names among graduates with honors at commencement.

RUTH CHANG Professor of Philosophy

The lives of most 18 to 22-year-olds afford little occasion for systematic reflection on the question "How should I live?" During the Fall of 2007, however, I taught an Honors Seminar whose focus and title were provided by this Socratic question. The seminar critically examined some of the leading philosophical theories about how to live. We considered the theory that each individual should look out only for his or her own interests; that everyone should act only so as to maximize happiness for the greatest number; and that a person should act only in ways that don’t involve making an exception for herself. The aims of the seminar were twofold: first of all, to introduce students to philosophical concepts and principles with ‘cash value’ that could be taken away from the class and used to help improve decision-making in their own lives; and secondly, to expose the students to a distinctively philosophical, critical approach to ideas that forms one cornerstone of learning how to think for oneself.

The class attracted a diverse array of students, from those with significant background in philosophical studies to those completely new to philosophy and philosophical thinking, and the cross-fertilization of ideas by students of all levels led to some very productive, interesting, and vigorous exchanges! It was very gratifying to see many students transformed from diffident interlocutors to skilled and articulate defenders of sophisticated philosophical views.

I have taught several honors courses over the years. The very high level of intelligence and enthusiasm of the students in the Honors Program have made these courses the most enjoyable and rewarding undergraduate teaching I have done at Rutgers.

David and Julie Stringer

The GHP (General Honors Program) has a special place in our hearts, and always will. Why? Well, the obvious reason is that it brought us together. With our diverse academic interests (me, Economics and Political Science; Julie, Molecular Biology), our paths would never have crossed had we not had the shared experiences of housing, friends and courses affiliated with the GHP. It was through the GHP, as well, that we met a cohort of people whose character, diversity, and interest in engaging the world was inspirational. We were delighted when several of them joined us in our respective graduate studies, and even more proud that they remain our close friends to this day. And it is impossible to exaggerate the impact of our privileged engagement with Rutgers’ most dedicated faculty members, an engagement that the GHP afforded us and which led to some of our most meaningful academic experiences.

Since graduating, we have continued to pursue our disparate interests. We were fortunate to attend graduate school together at Harvard, where I earned a J.D. and Julie earned a Ph.D. I practiced law for several years at Ropes & Gray, a large, Boston-based law firm, before taking on my current position as Assistant General Counsel at Progressive Insurance, where I specialize in labor and employment law and corporate ethics. Julie completed her post-doctoral fellowship last year at Massachusetts General Hospital, where she pursued work on Huntington’s Disease, a rare but devastating neurological disorder. Julie is now working in regenerative medicine as a research scientist at Athersys, Inc., a start-up biotechnology firm, working with adult stem cell technologies. But that’s just work! Perhaps our most significant news since graduation is that we are fortunate to have two children—Rachel (aged three and a half) and Emily (almost two)—who keep us busier than our careers ever could. We all live just outside Cleveland, in Shaker Heights, Ohio, where we hope one day to convince our GHP friends to extend their layovers between bi-coastal flights.

ALUMNI STATEMENTS
Dear Rutgers Honors Program alums,

I have been meaning to write this “letter” for at least two months, but I kept getting stuck. There is so much to say, so many changes — small ones and big ones, personal ones (my kids are now 15 and 10!) and institutional ones (most recently, the transformation of undergraduate education in New Brunswick) — and so many people to remember and recognize. I am still stuck, especially on that last concern, but here goes anyway.

I started working at Rutgers College in February 1988. I was hired as assistant director of the Rutgers College General Honors Program, and also as director of the Deans’ Summer College, a program for high school students. It was a new position and, having met with the director of the program, Renee Weber, a professor in the Department of Philosophy; Marie Logue, then a Rutgers College dean; and Jim Reed, then Dean of Rutgers College, it seemed that it would be a good fit for me. And so it turned out. Twenty-one years later, I am still here and still loving it — what a gift!

We just did some cleaning up of files, and two sets of files turned up that reminded me of all this personal and program history: the archived copies of the RCGHP newsletter, The Honorable Mention, written and edited entirely by students, with issues dating from May 1986 through May 1998; and RCGHP course description booklets going back to the very early days of the program (Spring 1984) and continuing through 2006-2007, when we stopped printing them and just posted everything on the website. What a lot of history is packed into all that.

And mentioning paper reminds me that everything was done with paper. All announcements to members of the Program involved writing, copying, folding, labeling, and then stuffing in RPOs. Remember RPOs (and DPOs and LPOs? Did UC students have POs?) Does anyone use them now???????? Pretty much everything we do now is done by email or on the web (if you haven’t checked out our website, we invite you to do that now sashonors.rutgers.edu).

When I started, there were 400 or so students in the RCGHP, about 100 per class. The shape of the SAS program is similar to that program — a set of academic requirements, Honors Housing, Fall and Spring Honors Picnics, trips, The Honorable Mention, advising, Scholars’ Days, going to NYC to see The Nutcracker — on and on. As Rutgers College grew, the Honors Program also grew, to about 800, and we instituted some new components: Peer Mentoring, Faculty Mentoring, Honors Ambassadors. With the transformation of undergraduate education in July 2007, we incorporated aspects of the four programs — Douglass Scholars, Livingston College Honors, Rutgers College Honors, and University College Honors — to become what you see on the website.

I am deeply grateful to Dean Reed and Dean Logue for hiring me. To say that my work here has been “satisfying” does not in any way get at the depth or quality of that satisfaction. The SAS Honors Program, and I, would love to hear from you, and to find out what you are doing now.

With all best wishes,

Muffin Lord
Administrative Director and Scholarship Administrator

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**SAVE THE DATE**

**Honors Program Alumni Reception**
May 15, 2010, 2-4 PM
Zimmerli Museum

As an alumnus of the Rutgers, Douglass, Livingston, or University College Honors Program, you are most cordially invited to an informal reception. The reception will be a celebration of the best practices and spirit of the four programs that continue to thrive in the newly created SAS Honors Program. It will also be a chance, of course, to catch up with old friends, faculty, and staff, as well as to meet current honors students. If you would like to attend, please send your email contact to honors@sas.rutgers.edu.

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