It is a particular pleasure to follow my colleague Sari Takács as I take on the Dean’s role at the SAS Honors Program. Sari, the Honors Deans, and the faculty and students have built up an exemplary, scholarly living-learning community with intellect, energy, and commitment.

The core mission of the SAS Honors Program remains the provision of unique opportunities for students to explore their academic and intellectual potential. Strong fundamentals should remain as they are. Yet the world itself continues to change, and so the Honors Program must continue to lead in connecting upcoming generations with both great traditions and the widest possible range of innovative, cross-disciplinary ideas and practices. These include engaging developments in medicine, energy, and technology, as well as creative applications of the humanities from bioethics to digital storytelling to social enterprise. Our task is not only to teach global awareness, but to provide the tools for global change-making.

Honors is an intimate, invigorating community, but it cannot thrive apart from the diversity of Rutgers at large. Moreover, a program that aims to address challenges in the world must engage those who are shaping it now. This means working even more to bring together students, faculty, and alumni. SAS Honors counts a remarkable array of professionals and leaders among its graduates. We invite our alumni to help us develop programs to serve not only high academic achievers, but leaders with professional, cultural, and humanitarian commitments. I look forward to discovering what we can all build together.

With all my best wishes,

Matt Matsuda
ERIC HSU  Class of 2013

While I believe that to take full advantage of the resources Rutgers offers you need to be proactive in seeking them out, the Honors Program has made that task much easier.

The honors section of the intermediate series for French literature allowed me to benefit from smaller classes and an enhanced learning environment. The intimacy of these classes helped me to get to know my professor, and my professor to know me.

The Honors Program has not only been supportive of my academic goals; it has also encouraged and presented opportunities outside the classroom. After founding a chapter of the humanitarian organization A Spring of Hope, I received a good deal of help from the deans of the Honors Program as well as from the wider honors community. Living in honors housing and being a part of the Honors Program gives me opportunities and advantages whose worth is hard to measure but very real.

In short, I am a fan of the environment the Honors Program has created and I am most grateful for it. Without the Honors Program, my Rutgers experience so far could never have been as rich as it has been.

MICHAEL ALTER  Class of 2012

I have finished my second year at Rutgers University and my first year in the Honors Program. Although I have spent only one year in the Honors Program, I have already taken advantage of many of the benefits that it offers students. While the program is centered on academics, I also believe that it is an excellent way to build lasting relationships.

Among the things I love most about the Honors Program are the honors courses. I had an excellent experience in my "Freedom" seminar, in which 13 students and the professor spent a semester debating the best definition of freedom. The seminar encouraged active discussion on the part of the students, allowing us to have a significant voice in directing its course. I also took the honors section of "Introduction to Philosophy" during the fall semester. This was the most challenging and intriguing course I have taken thus far at Rutgers. It encouraged me to think in a more analytical manner, and I learned a great deal. Both of these courses were incredible, and I look forward to taking more next year.

Another notable aspect of the Honors Program is the relationships students can build with their professors. After completing two courses and one colloquium, I have had the opportunity to get to know these professors better than any others at Rutgers.

All in all, I consider myself fortunate to be part of such a stellar program.

MARION CLEMENT  Class of 2012

It’s hard to exaggerate how enriching and supportive the Honors Program has been to my academic career. Its staff of deans and professors work hard every day to provide a wide range of learning opportunities, from intensive yet intimate Honors Seminars to the relaxed atmosphere of the weekly Tea with the Dean.

The fondness and concern the staff show toward their students have transformed 'The Mother Ship' (35 College Avenue) into a second home for Honors Program students, a place where a warm welcome is always in store. Deans dedicate themselves to helping the Honors Program students realize their ambitions and dreams. The monthly coffee house and other creative, extra-curricular events are a collaborative effort between staff and students. It is the closeness of the relationships that develop between students and staff of the Honors Program that transform an already excellent learning experience at Rutgers into something exceptional.

ALEXANDRA STRAGIS  Class of 2010

Thanks to the Honors Program I have been lucky enough to work as a lobbyist’s assistant in Washington, D.C., to travel to work with Goodwill Industries of Hawaii, and to study in the Dominican Republic and South Africa. In terms of my New Brunswick experience, I will remember the Honors Program as my home in an otherwise enormous university. It gave me with the confidence I needed to take big steps.

While living in Douglass Honors Housing for two years I met my closest friends; each had unique perspectives, interests and passions. They opened my eyes to theatre, language, business, and dance. With their inspiration, I became more involved in campus activities, working with deans from the Honors Program and a fellow student editor to develop the SASHP student newsletter. The weekly newsletter provides a rundown of activities and events of interest to Honors Program students, everything from Bhakti meditation and library lecture series to students attempting to break a world record.

In the course of my four years at Rutgers I took an Honors seminar almost every semester. I loved the small classes and the chance to get to know the faculty. With each seminar my academic interest jumped between Anthropology, Political Science, Sociology, Physics, and American Studies. As a graduating senior I cannot thank the Honors Program enough for the encouragement and opportunities I have received throughout my four years at Rutgers. As I look to the future I have no doubt that the School of Arts and Science Honors Program will continue to be part of my family.
The universe is not what it used to be. That is what students learn in my Honors Seminar “The Preposterous Universe.” We spend the semester reviewing recent discoveries that the universe is dominated not by the familiar matter that makes up stars, planets, and people, but by an exotic “dark matter” that pulls on everything but is utterly invisible, and an even more bizarre “dark energy” that acts as a cosmic anti-gravity.

To me, the initial appeal of teaching an Honors Seminar lay in the chance to highlight material not found in standard courses: dark matter and dark energy, of course, plus the importance of reading, writing, and critical thinking in scientific research. But the real reward comes in seeing bright young minds engage the topic. The seminar draws students from all years and majors -- people I might not meet in any other setting. Regardless of their backgrounds, they all bring an intellectual curiosity that is what really drives our study. I ask students to take charge of finding our reading material; each semester we amass enough to fill a 3-inch binder!

Some of our reading is quite technical, because I want students to encounter scientific literature directly. The students were with me all the way; one even remarked that after reading journal articles it was hard not to find popular accounts of science a little “funny.” I push the students quite hard on their writing, and they always respond well to my detailed critiques. All told, I get to watch bright young minds meet, mull over, and master some subtle but fascinating ideas about the universe. For a teacher, it doesn’t get much better than that.

With the help of both programs, she met Dr. Judy Grassle at the Institute for Marine and Coastal Sciences. After interning in Dr. Grassle’s lab during her freshman year, Shari became a global student with summer intensive courses in Australia, and was invited to return to the country the following year to work on her Mabel Smith Douglass honors thesis. With program support in fundraising and preparing project proposals, Shari pursued research on ocean acidification as related to crustaceans on the Great Barrier Reef.

Upon graduating, Shari took her knowledge straight into a position as Associate Editor of Tropical Fish Hobbyist Magazine, working in journalism and production to run features on marine life species and conservation practices from small aquariums to the seas of the world. As she works her way up in publishing, her scholarship, science, and love of the ocean are now reaching new audiences.
In July I took up the executive deanship of Sage College in Albany, New York. The decision to leave Rutgers, my academic home for almost a decade, was not an easy one, especially since it meant saying goodbye to the many students and others with whom I had the privilege of working over so many years. In saying farewell as the founding dean of the SAS Honors Program, I may not get to see its first class (the Class of 2011) graduate, but I know that each SAS Honors Program student will continue the exciting journey of intellectual discovery at and beyond Rutgers.

For me Constantine Cavafy’s poem *Ithaka* captures this journey best:

> As you set out for Ithaka
> hope your road is a long one,
> full of adventure, full of discovery.
>
> Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
> Arriving there is what you’re destined for.
> But don’t hurry the journey at all.

Better if it lasts for years,
so you’re old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you’ve gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you wouldn’t have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.

And if you find her poor, Ithaka won’t have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you’ll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.

[Translation: nauplion.net/cavafy-ithaka.html]

With my very best wishes,

Dean Sarolta A. Takács

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**FAREWELL**

**STAFF PROFILE**

**DEAN GEORGIA FOWLER**
Douglass Scholars Program

My involvement with the Douglass Scholars Program began in September of 2000. Since then I have worked with several great directors, including Professor Deirdre Kramer, Professor Louise Duus, and Dean Marc Manganaro. Above all, however, I have treasured my interactions with students. My policy has always been an “open door;” students are free to drop in to talk about whatever is on their minds, academic or otherwise. It has been an incredibly rewarding experience for me to watch students evolve from timid first-years into confident, accomplished young women.

The first class of ten Douglass Scholars entered in the Fall of 1979 and graduated in May of 1983 on full-tuition scholarships. At that time Scholars took special seminars in each semester of their freshman year and tutorials in each semester thereafter. Honors research in senior year was expected. By 1989 the number of Scholars admitted increased to forty-five, eventually reaching fifty to sixty scholars per year. We also began admitting small groups of high-achieving sophomores, developing more interdisciplinary Honors Seminars and helping make connections with required senior thesis projects.

I worked closely with the Scholars’ special housing arrangements, community-building activities, and cultural events. The small size of our seminars allowed students to get to know their professors. Honors housing proved to be a wonderful asset, giving students the opportunity to not only help each other, but to share ideas as well as build friendships. At present, housing accommodations are in the beautiful Jameson H dorms.

In 2007 the program was incorporated into the School of Arts & Sciences Honors Program. The graduating Class of 2010 was the last to graduate as Douglass Scholars, but the tradition of supporting and working with amazing young women continues.

Georgia Fowler

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[RUTGERS]

School of Arts and Sciences

HONORS PROGRAM

35 College Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
P 732.932.7964
E honors@sas.rutgers.edu
W sashonors.rutgers.edu

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN MAKE A CONTRIBUTION
THAT WILL HELP SUSTAIN THE WORK OF THE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES HONORS PROGRAM,
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