New Logo Unveiled

Steven Chung, Honors Asn. President

As the above logos show, the Honors Association has a new visual identity. The idea to create a new logo came to me towards the end of the spring semester, and, as secretary at the time, I soon began to explore design possibilities. As part of this process, the previous Executive Board agreed that the logo should signify the tradition of academic excellence that is the core mission of the Honors Association.

Hence, the new logo consists of a traditional crest encompassing three symbols associated with academic excellence: a book, a lamp and a torch – the torch is also the symbol for Bergen Community College.

Many people collaborated in the creation of the logo: with help from Vice President Michael Park and his brother Jason, the Honors Association was able to present a computerized design; head advisor Brandon Reis helped to finalize the logo, which was further edited by Laura Sly of DoubleStopDesign; Tom Deprenda, Manager of New Media Services, and Bonnie MacDougall, then Academic Vice President, also lent their support to the project.

Judith K. Winn School of Honors Opening Ceremony

Norman Shafio
Honors Asn. Newsletter Editor

The Judith K. Winn School of Honors at Bergen Community College had the pleasure of inaugurating its newly dedicated office, with the presence of faculty, students, and members of the greater community, a total of approximately one hundred attendees.

Dr. Judith K. Winn, whom the School of Honors was named after in 2011, was the fourth President of Bergen Community College, active between the years of 1995 and 2007. While in the position, she ensured that many of the school’s projects became reality, and that through these initiatives, students continue to receive a maximum benefit during their time at BCC.

The inauguration ceremony took place on May 3, 2012. It began in the West Hall Recital Hall, with speeches from Dr. Kathleen Williams, Co-Director of the Honors Program, Professor Robert Dill, Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences, Interim BCC President Dr. José Adames, and last of all Dr. Winn herself.

After the speeches, attendees helped themselves to food and refreshments, and were then led to the Honors Office for the official ribbon-cutting ceremony. Dr. Winn cut the ribbon amid applause, and praised those who had invested their time in managing to ensure that the School of Honors has an office of its own.

The newly renovated office is located in room A-336 on the main campus in Paramus. Students are welcome to go to the office to study, receive academic counseling and mentoring, and have any questions answered regarding the School of Honors.

The Founding of the Honors Association

Patrice Lenowitz
Founding member and first President of the Honors Association

My romance with the Honors program did not begin as love at first sight. From my limited perspective, I believed that Honors courses were for the exceptional student, the type of student that could sail through classes in their sleep and still receive an “A.” My experience was quite the opposite. I had to work very hard to secure my good grades. Therefore, I convinced myself that I was not a candidate for the Honors program.

One day, my English Composition professor asked to see me outside the classroom. Boy, did that set me in a panic! Did he not like my paper? Outside the classroom, he inquired about why I wasn’t taking his course in Honors. Pshaw! What a relief. I thanked my professor for the compliment, and explained to him that I worked hard enough for my grades.

After my professor diligently attempted to demystify Honors facts from fiction and explained all the wonderful benefits to being an Honors student, I still wasn’t convinced that I could handle it. So he made a simple recommendation. He suggested that I take one Honors course in the following semester, and if I found it too difficult, I would never have to take another Honors course again.

Although this made logical sense, I could only promise my professor that I would think it over. Fortunately, my ego got the better of me, and, despite my insecurities, I took his advice and registered for one course the very next semester. To my astonishment, I discovered that I could not handle it - I LOVED IT! My love affair with Honors was ardently ignited.

I soon realized that, among the many benefits of being enrolled in Honors courses, students have the opportunity to engage closely with inspiring faculty. I also discovered...
that the School of Honors provides a support structure that fosters solidarity among students and encourages them to develop leadership skills. With the support of Honors faculty and my remarkable classmates, in 2006 we founded the Honors Association, a student club dedicated to the mission of the Honors program and to meeting the needs of Honors students. I was privileged to be elected as the first Honors Association President, later receiving the Leadership Award for my efforts, and graduated with an Honors diploma in 2008.

Particularly gratifying to me this year was being afforded the opportunity to participate in the opening ceremony of the Judith K. Winn School of Honors at Bergen Community College. As a current administrator in the School of Honors, I am grateful not only for the rewards of having been an Honors student, but for the opportunity to witness, from the front row, the continued evolution of a school dedicated to Bergen's top performing students. So if by chance you are a student who holds a GPA of 3.4 or higher, and have never considered the Honors program, I will pass on to you the wise words once bestowed upon me: "Just take one Honors course - you'll be glad you did."

Beacon Conference 2012

Anthony Sganga, Honors Assn. Newsletter Editor Assistant and The Torch Editor-in-Chief

Seven students from Bergen Community College gave presentations at the 20th Annual Beacon Conference held at Westchester Community College on June 1st.

The conference, which acknowledges the achievements of community college students through presentations of papers, provides a chance for students and their colleges to showcase their academic achievements.

One such student from BCC was Ana Sicilia, who earned an Outstanding Presenter Award in the category of Allied Health and Nursing.

Sicilia explained how the conference helped to bolster confidence building and hone public speaking skills: “Being shy and over-critical of myself will never change, but this experience gave me more confidence about speaking and interacting publicly. Last, but not the least, it allowed me to collaborate with my mentor, Dr. Ceconi, who I admire a lot, and was able to get excellent feedback from her in all the stages of my research,” said Sicilia.

Honors Advisor Dr. Geoffrey Sadock added to Sicilia’s sentiment as well as putting the meaning of the Conference into perspective: “Students who participate in the Beacon Conference get to hone their scholarly and oratorical skills, to meet other superior students from community colleges throughout the mid-Atlantic and New England region, and to publish their original work if they are chosen prize-winning finalists in their panels.”

Overall, both the presenters as well as BCC faculty have much to be proud of with another excellent display of academia.

Director Highlight: Dr. Jessica Datema

Dr. Datema, Honors Co-Director and literature Professor

Dr. Jessica Datema holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and an MA in Philosophy from Binghamton University (SUNY). Her specialties are modernism and psychoanalysis.

Some recent publications include editing a book entitled Wretched Refuge Immigrants and Itinerants in the Postmodern and a book article entitled "Cloning in the Community College Classroom: Lessons from Never Let Me Go." Past publications include an article in Echoes from a Lonely Place entitled "Authorial Anxiety in the Detective Fiction of Gertrude Stein and Marcia Muller" and "Exposure After the Humanities" on teaching the humanities in crisis.

In addition to her academic work, Dr. Datema writes and publishes poetry. Her other hobbies include biking, painting, photography, film criticism, and music.

According to Dr. Datema, Honors classes offer the distinct advantage of higher levels dialogue and smaller class size.

Honors classes benefit students by encouraging them to engage in an elevated level of academic performance that prepares them for the complexities of learning and life. Students are challenged by their professors and inspired by their peers. Anyone with a 3.4 GPA or higher is qualified to take an Honors course and to reap the rewards of being part of our academic community.

Do not think an Honors course will be too difficult. If you qualify to take an Honors course, we’ve already done the vetting. You can count on getting more opportunities, encouraging attention, and feedback in an honors course to help you along the way.
Honors Student Testimonies

Learning has always been a tantamount expression in my world. I believe the human mind is an incredible, inspired gift from God and capable of amazing things. Part of the path to learning is exposure to the best course material and teachers possible, which is the BCC way. The BCC Honors Association is comprised of educators, administrators and students of like minds who both see the undeniable value of learning, and make it a committed goal – and believe in commending it! I’m in the "right place at the right time" with the Honors Association – and there’s room for you, too! Join us!

Janice Douglas, Honors Assn. Secretary - Fall '12

When I started at Bergen in the spring of 2011, I was focused, dedicated, and filled with anticipation. After discovering that there was an Honors program at BCC, I knew I had to become involved, and I registered for Honors classes. Since then, I have been given numerous opportunities, including the chance to meet and engage with students who share my drive and ambition to succeed. Since the classes are smaller, the professors are more engaged, and everyone gets to know one another within the first few weeks. Being part of the Honors program enriches the mind, body, and soul. The comraderie and fellowship fostered by the Judith K. Winn School of Honors are among its finest qualities, and I am so glad that I can say I am a part of it.

Brandon Reis, Honors Assn. A-Board Head Advisor and PTK President - Fall '12

In 2010, I graduated high school with a non-accredited diploma. Armed with only this degree, I began the application process, only to discover that I was rejected from one college and university after another. One year later, I heard about Bergen Community College's Office of Testing Services in Hackensack and took the GED test. During the same year, I graduated with a GED and enrolled in BCC on the Paramus campus. After completing several courses, I was offered the opportunity to enroll in honors courses. I accepted the challenge and soon realized that my decision had opened the path to a rewarding, intellectually fulfilling academic experience. Now, having completed several Honors classes, I have developed a much stronger sense of self-confidence and discipline – all thanks to the Judith K. Winn School of Honors.

Steven Chung, Honors Assn. President – Fall '12

The School of Honors at Bergen Community College offers me a great opportunity to enlarge my analytical thinking. In every Honors course, students and professors involve actively in critical discussions, which promote scholarly growth. I enjoy taking Honors courses because they give me the excellence for facing a challenging four-year college.

Maria Ortiz Naretto, Honors Assn. Treasurer – Fall '12

University Info: NYU

Brandon Reis, Honors Assn. A-Board Head Advisor and PTK President

New York University (NYU) is known as one of the world's most prestigious universities and America's largest private research institution. With a globally recognized name synonymous with achievement, NYU prides itself on more than 150 years of academic excellence. Located in the heart of New York City's Greenwich Village, NYU provides a rich, diverse learning experience unlike any other.

For the last several years, NYU has recognized the importance of community college for students, and has developed a close relationship with Bergen Community College. Through articulation agreements, the School of Honors now offers Bergen’s highest achieving students the opportunity to transfer to NYU, and other top-tier universities.

This fall, the Honors Association will work together with NYU to provide an enriching semester of activities designed to facilitate the transfer process.

On October 10th, the Honors Association will co-host an information session with NYU and Columbia to provide transfer information and answering questions about the application process.

On October 19th, Honors students will be transported by bus to visit the NYU campus.

Finally, on November 8th, the Honors Association will hold an NYU Transfer Essay and Financial Aid Workshop, from 3-5pm, in Room Tec-128.
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Honors Association
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Fall 2012
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  – Assistant A-Board Advisor
Anthony Sganga
  – Assistant Newsletter Editor
Erin Hazen
  – Assistant Secretary
Dan Winters
  – Assistant Treasurer

From left to right: Maria Ortiz Naretto, Dan Winters, Steven Chung, Jessica Michelle Anaya, Hyun Jin Michael Park, Brandon Reis, Janice Douglas, Anthony Sganga, Norman Shafto

Upcoming Events – Fall 2012

SEPTEMBER

12th and 13th: Meet and Greet
Time: 12:30-1:30pm; Location: TEC-128

OCTOBER

Honors Week Events – 8th – 12th

8th: Panel of Professors - Q&A Session.
Time: 12:30-1:30pm; Location: A-113.

9th: Internship and Co-op Information Session – Jennifer Reyes
Time: 12:30-1:30pm; Location: C-309

10th: Information Session with NYU and Columbia Representatives
Time: 1:30-2:30 Columbia University, 2:30-3:30 NYU; Location A-104.

11th: Lecture “Bergen off the Grid” – Dean Ricatto and Dr. Sivo
Time: 12:30-1:30pm; Location: A-113.

12th: Study Abroad Information Session – Dean Codding
Time: 12:30-1:30pm; Location: A-104

19th: Bus trip to NYU; Bus will leave BCC parking lot “B”. Time: 10am

NOVEMBER

8th: NYU Transfer Essay and Financial Aid Workshop
Time: 3:00-5:00pm; Location: TEC-128

DECEMBER

7th: Honors Association Executive Board Elections
Time: 12:30-1:30; Location: C-313

For event updates visit our website at www.bergen.edu/honors or our Facebook page at http://www.facebook.com/Bergenhonors