



THE TORCH

Get to Know the New Dean of The Honors College

Dr. John Paul Stimac was welcomed as the new Dean of The Honors College on July 1, 2010. Here are a few facts about Dean Stimac.

Roots Well ... I was born in New Jersey (across the river from Philadelphia), yet grew up traveling the world. Before moving to Illinois in the fall of 1999, I was able to live in 10 states in the United States, and travel to every other one except for one - Alabama. I completed my undergraduate degree (Environmental Science) at the University of Virginia, then moved on to Kansas (Fort Hays State University) for my Masters in Geology, and took my doctorate from the University of Oregon, also in Geology. I have lived in nearly two dozen countries and traveled in just as many others. All this made for an interesting childhood (e.g., I learned about Singapore, Australian, and West Virginian history before I learned US history) and I have found that I wouldn't change it for anything.

Interests

Books - I have eclectic tastes in books with mystery, military history and fiction, travel, and science fiction among my favorite. I enjoy good historical novels of obscure people, places, and cultures.

News - While this may be an unusual "interest", I find that I enjoy reading the news from around the country and around the world.

Movies - My favorite movies include *The Fifth Element*, *The Great Escape*, the Bourne series, *Dogma*, *Lawrence of Arabia* (and the corresponding book, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*), *Once Were Warriors*, and *Gladiator* to name a few. I have to admit that I have no favorite genre, something my wife would find funny.

Music - Again I can say that I have a varied taste in music. I enjoy just about all types, but seem to have more Grateful Dead, trance, "classic rock" like The Who and CSN&Y, jazz, and blue grass in my collection than anything else. Toss in some classical music, a little country (and western), and my playlist is complete.

Travel - What can I say about traveling - I love it. While driving long distances or flying for what seems like days, is less than fun, the destinations are where the joys live. I guess growing up traveling has instilled in me a passion for exploration of new places - whether that is Moonshine, IL for a burger, or Xiaolao in Sichuan Province, People's Republic of China, doing paleoseismology while eating spicy yak jerk. In all of my travels I have yet to find a place that doesn't have some type

of beauty- there is nothing like a thunderstorm on the High Plains of Western Kansas, watching the stars in an Omani wadi with a goat in a tree (long story), or diving on the *Diamond Knot* in the Straits of Juan de Fuca.

Cooking - While I enjoy cooking, I do so little cooking, as Lisa can verify, that I am not good at many things. However, I do enjoy playing "Chopped" with friends for you never know when you might be presented with ten foods that begin with the letter C and be asked to cook an appetizer, entrée, and dessert. I love spicy foods from all cultures - although having a food spicy just to make it spicy makes no sense to me.

Rocks/minerals - Being a geologist I guess I never outgrew my love for the outdoors and for bringing the interesting bits inside. I have a nice collection of rocks and minerals collected from around the world. For all the ones I have collected, there are more out there for me to find.



Dean Bonnie Irwin serves as President of National Honors Council

The Administration of EIU, The Honors College faculty, and our Honors staff congratulate our former leader, Dean Bonnie Irwin who became President of the National Collegiate Honors Council in October 2010. Dean Irwin was welcomed into the position by the membership of NCHC at the annual conference in Kansas City, where over 1700 faculty and students attended. The theme of the 2010 Conference was "Rhythms and Currents". Honors students from EIU's Honors College served as host/hostesses at the conference as well as giving presentations or presenting posters. Those attending along with Dean Stimac and Dr. Messer were Olivia Buttram, Allison Carbaugh, Miranda Clark, Alex Cler, John Cloud, Samantha Flowers, Charity Hickox, Jacquelyn Liesen, Hannah Tatlock, and Erin Wise.



After representing Honors students on the Commencement Committee for more than a decade, Dr. Margaret Messer is delighted to announce that our Honors graduates were granted permission to wear Honors stoles for the first time at the spring 2010 commencement ceremonies. The stoles replace the Honors cords which have been worn in previous years. The stoles were requested to distinguish our Honors students because cords are also worn by many graduates from other departments and organizations, making it difficult to identify our students graduating with certification from The Honors College.



Distinguished Honors Faculty Award 2009

Dr. Letitia Moffitt was awarded the Distinguished Honors Faculty Award in the spring of 2009. This award is given each year to the faculty member who receives the most votes from their students, after being nominated by the Honors students themselves.

Dr. Moffitt grew up in Honolulu, Hawaii (although she never learned to surf!). She received her B.A. in English from the University of California in Berkeley. She then went on to earn her M.A. in English/Creative Writing from San Francisco State University and her PhD from SUNY in Binghamton, NY.

If asked to choose her proudest accomplishment, she would say that receiving the award for Distinguished Dissertation from SUNY

was the most meaningful to her because she wrote a book and “people like it,” which is a neat feeling.

While she was originally unsure as to the right career path, she decided to try teaching out and it turned out to be the right path for her, especially because it allows her to use the skills she already has, while continuing to develop them more. She also truly enjoys working with Honors students since, regardless of the fact that her Honors classes are typically taken by Freshman who are not English majors, the students display a high maturity level, enjoy being there to learn new things, and carry on engaging discussions.

Dr. Moffitt’s teaching methods are specific for each class she teaches. She jokes that after her first year teaching Honors, she was disappointed in herself

because she felt she had not challenged the students. After increasing the work load the following year, she was thrilled to discover that the students enjoyed the challenge, which is a quality she loves and respects. According to Dr. Moffitt, “some of her favorite memories and students come out of the Honors courses. These good moments reaffirm her decision about teaching and she knows that it is what she is meant to be doing.”



Distinguished Honors Faculty Award 2010

After winning the votes of Honors Students, the 2010 Distinguished Honors Faculty Award was received by the Chair of Geology/Geography Department, Dr. Michael Cornebise.

Born and raised in Colorado, Dr. Cornebise chose to remain there to receive his B.A. from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, CO. From there, he went on to Louisiana State University to earn his M.A. Continuing on even further with his education, he received his Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee. Not only did he receive his Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee, but he was also awarded two esteemed awards while there including the Out-

standing Graduate Student Award and the Outstanding Teaching Award.

When beginning his college career, he was still somewhat undecided as to what his career path would hold. He started off his time as an undergraduate planning to be a History major, and later switched to Geography. It wasn't until he was busy working on his Ph.D. that he decided that teaching is what he wanted to do. He loves his job and cannot imagine doing anything else.

According to Dr. Cornebise, the Honors College is great and he is very supportive of the program. He has taught an Honors course every year since he has arrived at EIU. One aspect he really likes is the capped

small class sizes. When it comes to teaching Honors courses he is able to present a looser structure allowing more discussion time for the students. He is always confident that his students have done the assigned readings and that makes a large difference, opening up more time for conversation and debate.





Where are the Recent Graduates?

Sara Burton received a B.S. in Elementary Education. She is now a full time graduate student at Illinois State University and said that EIU Honors has allowed her to use her “experiences to help freshman honors students adjust and thrive at ISU.”

Rebecca Nelles (Griffith) was married at Newman Catholic Center in May 2009 and is now working as a freelance writer for Demand Studios in South Bend, Indiana, writing articles that are featured on various websites.

Samantha Herriott (Woodworth) graduated with a B.S. in Biological Sciences and a minor in Spanish. She is now attending Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis to earn her Doctorate in Physical Therapy.

Cynthia Kennedy is currently teaching 3rd grade at Nathan Hale Elementary in her hometown of Lansing, IL. She enjoyed being a member of the Honors College because it surrounded her with peers who had similar goals as she.

Bryan Rolfsen, with the help of Honors College funding, was able to complete summer research and write his undergraduate thesis “A Parasitological Survey of Pen-raised Bobwhite Quail”. He is now pursuing his master’s degree in Biological Sciences at EIU.

Jon Harter became involved with Departmental Honors after hearing about it through University Honors, which allowed him to be better prepared for graduate school by doing research at the University of Central Florida. He is currently a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.

Monica Genta was issued a degree in Secondary and Middle Level Science Education and has gone on to become a 7th grade science teacher in Mattoon.

Emily Davis received a B.A. in English, with a minor in professional writing and is now teaching English overseas in Japan. She is grateful for EIU Honors classes, which “challenged [her] to think differently and critically.”

Debra Schwenk is a High School Chemistry teacher in Ottawa, IL and thoroughly enjoyed EIU Honors, which allowed her to go to China.

Lizzy Powers received her B.A. in Theatre Arts, with concentrations in directing and performance. She is currently a production intern at the Peninsula Players Theatre in Fish Creek, Wisconsin.

Hannah Smith enjoyed the Honors College because, “It was refreshing to have class with other students who were excited about learning...” She is currently at the University Of Illinois College Of Law where she will be receiving her JD and taking the Bar Exam in 2013.

Heather Roy has moved to the east coast where she is a master’s student in Communication & Rhetorical Studies at Syracuse University in New York. This semester she is adjusting to the new change of pace, working as a TA, and enjoying being a graduate student.

Bethany Simms is currently at the University of Missouri working on her Masters of Health Science in Speech-Language Pathology, which she will complete in the spring of 2011. She very much enjoyed her time at EIU and “misses EIU and Charleston more than [she] ever expected to!”

Laila Olsson is working in St. Charles, IL, teaching 6th grade math. She said, “EIU Honors helped [her] distinguish [herself] during the interview process,” leading to the precise job position she was looking for.

Jackie Hannah is in the Physical Therapy Program at Washington University in St. Louis, after receiving her B.S. in Biology at EIU.

Angela Pham obtained a B.A. in Journalism, with an English minor, and is currently the Assistant Editor at Atlantic Publishing (a non-fiction book publisher in Ocala, FL).

Ryan Pezold is now a graduate student working on his M.A. in Social Science (Developmental Psychology) at the University of Chicago.

Leslie Godwin was very grateful to be a member of the Honors College during her undergraduate career because it gave her an edge over other applicants and is now at Southern Illinois University in the Clinical Counseling Master’s Program. She is engaged and busy planning her wedding.

Hannah Mason graduated with her B.A. in Psychology; during her time at EIU she was thankful to be a part of the Honors College for the opportunities it opened to her. She studied abroad in the summer of 2008, giving her one of the best experiences of her life.

Stephanie Niemeyer is working on her goal of one day working in an academic library by attending graduate school at the University of Kentucky, Lexington where she is studying Library and Information Science.

"Oh the Places You Will Go"

With the Honors College

Sean Slattery, a junior geology major, spent the Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 semesters studying at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. As a result of his experience, he said it gave him "an idea of what [he would] like to do with [his] life." That is, return to the area or one like it, where the land is rich and beautiful (perfect for a geologist). In Fairbanks, Sean felt that diversity did not matter and he enjoyed not worrying about issues such as being different and was able instead "to focus more on the scholarly pursuit of knowledge."

Mallory Holle found herself in Lüneburg, Germany as a result of her involvement in EIU's Honors Program. Mallory feels she benefited

from this experience in that "it made [her] aware of other cultures and ways of living, customs, and traditions." On the professional level, studying abroad taught her that "if you respect other cultures by learning a little bit of it, the people there will respect you a lot more too."

Michelle Moery studied in Harlaxton Village, England. The trip was designed to give students an opportunity to study classical English works, while visiting the location where the writer lived or drew his or her inspiration from. This experience raised her awareness of the importance of presenting yourself as you wish people to perceive you. She felt that she was an example of the United States as a whole, and did not "want to give a bad example."

Charity Hickox, a vocal music education major, spent a month over the summer in the small town of Pibbioco, Italy, taking part in an opera program. While there, she studied voice and opera with professors from universities such as Millikin University and Northwestern University, as well as Professor Tosi who teaches at the University of Urbino in Italy. She said that, "in a broader sense, experiencing a different lifestyle helped open [her] mind to the fact that there is more than one way of life that 'works' and no one way is better than any other."



Alumni Information Update Spring 2011

The Honors College and your former classmates want to hear from you! Reply by fax (217-581-7222); phone (888-440-4664); or mail (The Honors College; 600 Lincoln Avenue; Charleston, IL 61920) **OR** mkmesser@eiu.edu.

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NOTES:

If you wish to donate to The Honors College Gift Fund you may contact Dean Stimac through phone or e-mail (jpstimac@eiu.edu).