

# TCC Honors Program Newsletter

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## Points of Interest:

- **Do you expect to graduate next year?** Let the Honors Office know. The exit essay deadline for fall graduates is October 15. It's March 1 for those graduating in spring or summer.
- **Did you know the Honors Program expects to have openings for honors students to work as Honors Ambassadors?** These are work-study positions paying \$9.11 per hour. Call 918-595-7378 to inquire.

## Inside this issue:

NSF update	2
Help wanted	2
Important dates	2
GPHC conference	3
Enrollment is open	3
Scholarships	4
2014-2015 graduates	4

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## 2015 Honors Program Awards Reception

This year, a pair of English majors received the TCC Honors Program's top awards. At the Honors Program's annual awards reception, Elizabeth Donegan was named the sixth recipient of the Henry B. Comby III Prize for the outstanding graduating Honors Scholar, and Mason Powell became the eighth Scholar to receive the Kontogianes Award for his contributions to the Honors Program this year.



**Elizabeth Donegan**

Their names will be inscribed on plaques hanging in the Henry Comby Scholars Suite on Metro Campus (MC523A).

The TCC Foundation Honors Award winners, 2014-2015 graduating Honors Scholars, and TCC's presenters at the 2015 Great Plains Honors Council conference were also recognized at the reception, which took place April 15 at Metro Campus.

The Comby Prize of \$1,000 is given each year in memory TCC's first honors professor,

Dr. Hank Comby, who died unexpectedly in 2007. The \$500 Kontogianes Award is presented annually to the student chosen as the year's outstanding Scholar. It is named for the late Dr. John Kontogianes, who as TCC's Chief Academic Officer was a great supporter of the Honors Program.

The Comby Prize is endowed thanks to contributions from faculty and friends of TCC, given in memory of Dr. Comby. The Kontogianes Award is funded by a grant from the TCC Foundation, as are the annual TCC Foundation Honors Awards, worth \$250 apiece.

The Comby and Kontogianes winners are decided by the four honors coordinators during the TCC Foundation Honors Awards selection process. Students cannot apply for the Comby Prize, Kontogianes Award, or any of the TCC Foundation Honors Awards but are chosen based on nominations submitted by members of the honors faculty.



**Mason Powell**

Twenty Honors Scholars received the Foundation Honors Award, which acknowledges a student's outstanding academic performance and contribution in the classroom. The 2014-2015 TCC Foundation Honors Awards were given to Brittany Alexander, Richard Baxter, Nina Bulling, Jenna Buschmann, Emily Chareunsouk, Jay Daves, Bridget Dixon, Dallas Elleman, Rebecca Foster, Jennifer Glemboski, William Hawkins, Graciela Herrera, Kelsey Light, James North, Efua Okoruwa, Brianna Sanow, Matthew Simpson, Lily Smith, Franklin Tackett, Jr., and Aleah Wigal.

Graduating Honors Scholars received engraved pewter medallions to wear at Commencement. The Honors Scholar program has very specific requirements, including an application process. Once accepted, Scholars proceed through a curriculum of 24 credit hours in honors classes and write a graduation essay. Those who complete this program with an overall TCC grade-point average of at least 3.5 earn the designation "Honors Scholar" on their transcripts following graduation. The list of 2014-2015 graduates is on page 4.

TCC's two student presenters and one session moderator at the 2015 Great Plains Honors Council conference were also acknowledged at the reception. See the story on page 3.

## Help Wanted: Honors Ambassadors

Hearty congratulations to Honors Ambassadors Brittany Alexander, David Francis, and Jarimar Lozano, who have graduated from TCC! And many thanks to Jen Glemboski, who served as an Honors Ambassador last year but is stepping aside this fall to focus on other things.

In their absence, Northeast and Southeast Campuses have no returning Honors Am-

bassadors. Pending notification that funding is awarded again in 2015-16, the Honors Office will be advertising those positions beginning in the fall. They are part-time work-study jobs paying \$9.11 per hour for up to 20 hours per week. To qualify, you will need to have completed the FAFSA and been declared eligible for federal work-study employment. Contact the Honors

Office (918-595-7378 or [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu)) if you are interested in more information.

The Southeast Campus Ambassador will report to Southeast Campus Honors Coordinator Dr. Jane Varmecky, and the Northeast Campus position works for Northeast Honors Coordinator Jennifer Kneafsey.

## NSF Challenge Grant: Honors Scholars win Innovation Challenge

Last fall, teams of students in community colleges across the country accepted the National Science Foundation's "Community College Innovation Challenge" and began the process of submitting grant proposals. The challenge required the students to describe STEM-based innovative solutions to problems they identified in one of five "themes": Big Data, Infrastructure Security, Sustainability, Broadening Participation in STEM, and Improving STEM Education.

In March, the NSF announced the twenty teams that had advanced to semi-finalist status. Among the twenty were two teams from TCC. And both teams contained Honors Scholars.

Now, **both** TCC teams have been named among the ten winners of this prestigious grant! TCC is the only college to have two teams on the list of grant recipients. The winners will travel to Washington, D.C., this summer to take part in the NSF's "innovation boot camp" as they prepare to put their proposed solutions to the test. They will learn important research skills, meet experts in their field, and present their projects at a reception on Capitol Hill.

One of the winning proposals came from an Honors Nutrition class taught by Prof. Valerie O'Brien and spotlighted in our fall Honors Newsletter. That proposal focused on using Oklahoma's already extreme climate as a laboratory in which to test potential solutions for sustaining local food production as the climate warms. Team

members for this project were Travis Bramblett, Katie McMillan, Bridget Dixon, Andrea Haddox, and Joe Nowicki.

The other winning team focused on broadening STEM participation. The team proposed that college students design and build aquaponic gardens and then use the gardens to mentor high school and middle-school students, thus engaging them in STEM disciplines. The gardens offer sustainable food production methods and can be the focus of lessons in ecology, biology, symbiosis, engineering, sustainability, math, business, and technology. This project was undertaken under the mentorship of Professor Mary Phillips. Students on the team were Jonathan Thompson, Dallas Elleman, Brenda Romero, and Mark Harvey.

## Important dates for your calendar

The 2015 **Honors Roundup**, which is the annual meeting and pizza dinner required of all Honors Scholars, will take place on Wednesday, **Sept. 9**, in the late afternoon. All Honors Scholars will receive an email about the exact place and time.

The Honors Program will again sponsor an

**all-day "research retreat"** open to all interested students. This year's will take place on Friday, **October 9**, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Reservations will be required; watch your TCC email for an announcement and registration instructions.

The informational meeting for **Jack Kent**

**Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship** applicants will be Friday, **Sept. 11**. The meeting will be held in the East Lounge of the Metro Campus Student Union (MSU 214) from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. Scholarship applicants must have 30+ earned hours after the fall term.

## 2015 Great Plains Honors Council conference



Dr. Jane Varnecky, left, and Graciela Herrera enjoy the opening dinner at GPHC.

The 2015 conference of the Great Plains Honors Council was hosted by the University of Texas-Pan American and held on South Padre Island during the weekend of April 10-12.

Eight students represented TCC. Two of them presented their original research, one served as a session moderator, and five more Honors Scholars were able to experience an academic conference.

Graciela Herrera presented “Increasing Self-Determination and Global Under-

standing: Microcredit for Women’s Enterprises in Chacrasecas, Nicaragua,” which detailed her findings following a research trip to Nicaragua. There, she interviewed women who’d received microloans funded by JustHope, a Tulsa-based nonprofit that combats poverty by creating opportunities for economic development. Andrea Haddox’s “Honors Nutrition and the NSF: Group Grant Writing as an Honors Class Project” described a project undertaken by the students in an Honors Nutrition class. The class’s grant proposal

(“Sustainability through Rooftop Gardens in the Harsh Weather of Oklahoma”) has since won a National Science Foundation Community College Innovation Challenge grant (see page 2). William Hawkins moderated a session on aesthetics. Other Scholars attending the conference were Samira Darbandi, Roxanne Eddington, Nicolas George, Gloria Hrcir, and Mason Powell.

Faculty attending the conference were honors coordinators Susan O’Neal, Jennifer Kneafsey, and Dr. Jane Varnecky; and honors professors Valerie O’Brien and Krena White.

The students’ conference registrations and travel expenses were paid by a generous grant from the Tulsa Community College Foundation.

**Next year’s conference will take place in nearby Siloam Springs, Ark.,** and will be hosted by Oral Roberts University and John Brown University. An excursion to Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art is planned. Conference dates will be April 8-10. Honors students who are interested in presenting at the conference should contact the Honors Office during the fall semester.

## Have you enrolled for fall? Enrollment is open!

If you like honors classes (and why wouldn’t you?), be sure to help yourself to plenty of them when you’re selecting your fall classes. They are not just a treat; they’re good for you. And if you intend to complete the Honors Scholar program, you will need to take most of your general-education classes for honors credit.

There’s no upper limit on the number of honors classes you may include in your

schedule. Many students take full semesters of nothing but honors classes, especially during the first semester or two. Honors classes are not designed to be graded “harder” or to require greater amounts of homework. They are designed to be different, engaging, hands-on, and (for many students) great fun!

As you look for gen-ed classes to take, be sure to consult the TCC Catalog. (It’s on

the college’s website.) There you’ll find the full list of courses that meet those requirements. You may find surprises. For example, did you know British Literature—or Music Appreciation—can count as humanities credit? And be sure to take honors sections of the classes that are absolutely required: classes like American History and Freshman Composition are a great chance to pick up honors credits (and wonderful experiences at the same time).

### How to contact the TCC Honors Program

The Honors Program has a new e-mail address! If you have questions about the program or suggestions for us, please let us know. E-mail us at

**honors@tulsacc.edu**

The main TCC Honors Office is on Metro Campus, although honors classes and faculty honors coordinators are on every campus. See below:

**Metro Campus:** Susan O'Neal, MC 523C, 918-595-7378

**Northeast Campus:** Jennifer Kneafsey, 918-595-7490

**Southeast Campus:** Dr. Jane Varnecky, 918-595-7633

**West Campus:** Anne Phillips, 918-595-8086

**Honors Office:** 909 S. Boston Ave., MC 523C



HONORS PROGRAM

## Congratulations, 2014-15

### Honors Scholar

#### graduates!

David A. Francis

Joshua Phillips

Justin Stanley

Brittany L. Alexander

Nina Bulling

Elizabeth Donegan

Belinda Hodges

Jacob Hoover

Kelsey S Light

Mason Powell

Matthew Daniel Simpson

Lily E. Smith

Franklin Tackett, Jr.

Cristina Thomas

Richard Z. Baxter

Miles Bewley

Jenna Buschmann

Bridget Paige Dixon

Jenna Murray

Janna L. M. Rogers

Julia Westbrook

All best wishes as you leave TCC and embark on your next adventure!

Please keep in touch.

## Scholarship news

### University of Tulsa Transfer Scholarship

If you are an Honors Scholar planning to transfer to the University of Tulsa, you will need to apply for admission to TU before applying for scholarships. When you apply for transfer admission, notify TU that you are a TCC Honors Scholar. TU's admissions office will then supply you with a verification form that must be completed by the TCC Honors Office.

The Honors Scholar Transfer Scholarship is worth \$18,000 per year and is renewable. The University of Tulsa will award this scholarship to any TCC student who graduates as an Honors Scholar with an all-college cumulative GPA of at least 3.5, provided he or she has never previously attended TU, does not yet have a bachelor's degree, and is not an international student. This scholarship may NOT be used in combination with Phi Theta Kappa scholarships.

### TCC Honors Tuition Waiver

If you have requested the Honors Scholar Tuition Waiver, be sure you have enrolled in fall honors classes no later than **July 24**, in order to avoid revocation of your tuition waiver. If you are an Honors Scholar in good standing and meet the waiver's eligibility requirements, be sure you have been to the Honors Scholar group site to print out, complete, and submit the 2015-16 tuition waiver request form. Remember, return the form to the Honors Office (MC 523C, Metro Campus).

If you are an Honors Scholar in good standing and you already completed the 2015-2016 Honors Tuition Waiver Request and returned it to the Honors Office, you should see the waiver on your student account in MyTCC after scholarships are disbursed by Financial Aid.

### Jack Kent Cooke Foundation

#### Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship

Next fall, the 2015-16 application process for the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship will begin. The scholarship is designed to help students with exceptional promise and demonstrated financial need reach their full potential through higher education. The award amount can be as high as \$40,000 per year for up to three years. In 2013-2014, two TCC students won this scholarship.

Honors Program Coordinator Susan O'Neal is TCC's faculty representative for this scholarship. She'll hold an informational meeting Sept. 11 at 4 p.m. in room 214 of the Metro Campus Student Union.

#### Other Scholarships

Be sure to check the TCC Financial Aid website. Many scholarships, from a variety of sources, are available: <http://www.tulsacc.edu/student-services/financial-aid/types-financial-aid/scholarships>