

TCC Honors Program Newsletter

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Honors Scholar now Fulbright Scholar!

Don't forget:

- **Are you an Honors Scholar who's graduating in the spring or summer?** The Honors Program's exit essay deadline for spring and summer 2018 graduates is March 1.
- **If you want to present at the regional Great Plains Honors Council conference in March, let the Honors Office know right away!** Proposal deadlines are looming in January.
- Application deadline for most 2018-2019 TCC scholarships: **March 1, 2018**

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Editor: Lynn Richmond

By Toby Decker, 2012 graduate

By the time this hits the press I'll be finishing my first semester as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Barranquilla, Colombia. Fulbright is a government scholarship program, overseen by the Department of State. Fulbright recipients are sent to work in communities across the globe, serving as cultural ambassadors and resident scholars for the United States. My experience as a Fulbright scholar has been exciting and challenging, and has caused me to reflect on how my past at TCC prepared me for this journey.

If you're not sure where Barranquilla is, don't worry; I wasn't quite sure where it was until I learned I'd be moving here! Barranquilla is on the northern coast of Colombia, where the Magdalena River meets the Caribbean Sea. Unlike Cartagena or Santa Marta, Barranquilla does not attract many visitors because it's a relatively new, industrial city. Nonetheless, I've found Barranquilla to be a culturally rich and diverse place. The dialect of Spanish spoken here is called "costeño" Spanish, or "costañol." As someone who learned Spanish in Mexico, I find it pretty difficult to understand costañol, but I'm working on it as best I can!

To describe Barranquilla as hot would be something of an un-



Toby (wearing a belt) pictured with his English II students.

derstatement! The temperature stays about 85-95 degrees year-round with the humidity hovering around 80%. I didn't realize just how much a person could sweat until I came to Barranquilla! Unfortunately, air-conditioning is a luxury that the university I work at can't afford. Thus, I've learned to teach through the heat. Although it can be hard to stay upbeat while teaching in a 100-degree heat index, I am constantly impressed by the fact that students endure the heat to further their education.

I knew it would be challenging, but teaching in a different country has been a bigger adjustment than I realized. I'd taught English as a Second Language for three years in Oklahoma City Public Schools, so I was prepared for some of the curve balls that have come my way. However, I didn't expect to be so shocked by the lack of resources available to university students in Colombia. It can be downright

discouraging at times. Nevertheless, I am learning to appreciate and value public education more and more as my students demonstrate responsibility, grace, and diligence despite systemic deficiencies.

Being a TCC Honors Scholar remains one of my proudest achievements to date. As a part of the Honors program, I was challenged to be the best version of myself possible. That gave me the confidence to pursue bigger, more complex goals. It led me to the University of Tulsa, Teach for America, and ultimately, to the Fulbright program. I am so very grateful to the Honors Program for challenging me and growing me as a scholar and member of society. It has shaped me into a more curious and holistic individual for which I am eternally grateful. If you are interested in Fulbright, Colombia, education, or anything else I've mentioned here, please reach out to me! The Honors Office knows how to reach me, and I'd be glad to talk more with you!

2017 Research Retreat and Honors Roundup



The annual **Research Retreat**, sponsored by the Honors Program with financial assistance from the TCC Foundation, took place on Friday, Oct. 20, in the Thomas K. McKeon Center for Creativity on Metro Campus.

As always, the day was open to all interested students and filled with sessions designed to introduce them to types of research undertaken by a variety of disciplines—from the earliest planning stages through the presentation of final results. This year, with some panelists coming from the Oklahoma Center for the Humanities, many of the sessions borrowed this year's OCH research theme of "home and homelands."

The two OCH fellows, Dr. Elizabeth McCormick and Dr. Justin Rawlins (both from The

University of Tulsa), served on a panel of professional researchers along with TCC honors faculty Dr. Gay Phillips and Dr. Philip Smith and Tulsa Botanic Gardens executive director Dr. Todd Lasseigne. The panel was moderated by honors faculty member Dr. Robert Katz.

The day's lunch speakers came from a variety of places where Oklahomans do research, and several of them were seeking student interns. These included the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation (represented by Duane Goins), the OSU-Center for Health Sciences (Dr. Randall Davis), Oklahoma Policy Institute (Tyler Parette), Tulsa City-County Library (Rachel Thompson), and TCC itself (honors faculty member and George Kaiser Family Foundation Endowed Chair of Research Dr. Diana Spencer).

Mirroring the professional panel, another panel made up of current and former TCC students described their student research experiences. Madison Bremer, Mona East-erling, Christy Eslinger, Joseph Mason, Tyler Parette, and Nick Richardson were

members of the panel moderated by Dr. Spencer.

Other sessions were an overview of the steps in the research process, presented by Honors Coordinator Susan O'Neal, and a session on crafting research questions and conducting a review of the existing literature, led by TCC librarians Adam Brennan and Amy Lagers.

The Honors Program's other big fall event, the **Honors Roundup**, took place on Sept. 27. The Roundup is the program's annual orientation for new Scholars, refresher for continuing Scholars, and pizza dinner for everyone to get acquainted. Like other Roundups before it, this one contained announcements of opportunities, reminders of deadlines, tips for success, and an alumna as guest speaker. Destiny Hrcncir (2014 grad) spoke about her experiences as a student at the University of York, studying abroad on a Gilman Scholarship. Transfer admissions adviser Kelsey Hubble-Dowdell, from The University of Tulsa, also spoke, offering a wealth of advice for students aspiring to transfer to TU (or elsewhere).

Upcoming GPHC conference: Stillwater, March 23-25

The Great Plains Honors Council's 2018 regional conference will be hosted by Oklahoma State University on its beautiful Stillwater campus. The conference will take place on Friday-Sunday, March 23-25, 2018.

The conference theme is "Surviving the Times through Strength, Community, Diversity." The keynote speaker, Dr. Doug Miller, is a historian who focuses on Native American experiences in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He is currently working on a book examining the mid-20th century relocation program undertaken by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Thanks to a generous grant from the TCC Foundation, the Honors Program will pay

all travel expenses for honors students who submitted proposals to give oral or poster presentations at the conference. The GPHC conference will provide participants with a valuable opportunity to make academic contacts and explore new ideas with honors students and faculty from a six-state region. To learn more about the conference program and its schedule, as well as how to write a good proposal, visit the [website](http://greatplainshonors.com) greatplainshonors.com.

Students' presentations based on their own research, analysis, and other projects are always important elements of the conference. Topics of student presentations at these conferences cover every discipline. At a GPHC conference, one can

hear papers on almost anything scholarly. The Honors Program awards the privilege of paid conference expenses to honors students only, with first consideration going to Honors Scholars who have made proposals to be presenters.

Students may submit proposals for poster or oral presentations, or even full academic papers for consideration for the Boe Award. Each member institution may nominate up to two papers for Boe Award consideration. Boe winners will present their papers in oral presentations that are a conference highlight.

To express interest in the conference, contact the Honors Office ASAP. Submission deadlines are in January.

Several “firsts” this fall

University of Tulsa hosts first luncheon for TCC honors students

On Oct. 11, The University of Tulsa hosted all interested TCC honors students for a luncheon and campus tour. During their time at TU, TCC honors students met with TU academic advisers and admissions staff

to learn about scholarships and financial aid, transfer of credits, degree programs available at TU, and much more. Several TU faculty were on hand to talk with the students, and former TCC Honors Scholar

Dallas Elleman (now at TU as a Jack Kent Cooke Scholar) was the inspiring guest speaker. Those who attended enjoyed the experience, and we are hopeful this event will be repeated in the future.

Priority enrollment for Honors Scholars

Priority enrollment for Honors Scholars is one of the 17 Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program, adopted by the National Collegiate Honors Council’s board of directors in 2007. Priority enrollment recognizes the unique scheduling challenges faced by Honors Scholars, who are trying not only to meet their general-education requirements but

to do so in honors sections, which are small and may fill quickly. Many colleges and universities (including, beginning this year, TCC) allocate certain enrollment dates to students based upon their earned credit hours. This can make it hard for a freshman who needs honors classes to find a seat in one—unless Honors Scholars are permitted to enroll along with the first

enrollment group. We are pleased and proud to say that TCC has adopted priority enrollment for Honors Scholars, not only helping our students succeed in completing their honors requirements but helping our program meet this benchmark of best practices within honors education! Thanks to all who made it possible!

Reception with TCC President Leigh Goodson

TCC President Dr. Leigh Goodson recently spent an hour during the busy end of the semester talking with Honors Scholars at a reception in their honor. Late in the afternoon on Dec. 4, several Scholars responded to the invitation to drop by the Metro

Campus Fireplace Lounge for TCC’s first annual Honors Scholars President’s Reception. President Goodson asked the students about their interests, their plans for the future, and their experiences at TCC. She related to many of their concerns and

their dreams, speaking about her own time as a student in the Honors College at OSU-Stillwater and about her journey through graduate school and into her career.

National Collegiate Honors Council conference

Honors Coordinator Susan O’Neal represented TCC at the National Collegiate Honors Council’s 2017 conference, held in Atlanta in early November. The conference theme was “Just Honors,” focusing not only on justice as a concept for academic study but also on the role honors programs can play in advancing equity in education.

Like all NCHC conferences, this one offered hundreds of sessions, including a student poster session, which Prof. O’Neal enjoyed. Most of the sessions she attended focused in some way on how other institutions decide which courses are offered in the honors curriculum. She also attended sessions on “place-based pedagogy” (known in the honors community as City as Text) in preparation for faculty development workshops to be offered at TCC in the spring. And she endured some good-natured teasing for being the lone

English professor at a session called “Make Mathematics/Statistics Part of Your Honors Program.”

In “Shaping a Coherent Honors Curriculum Within the Broader University or College,” she heard how some schools use themes or great books approaches to tie courses together within their programs. A particularly helpful session was “Developing Faculty to Become Successful Honors Teachers,” led by NCHC “rock stars” Elaine Torda from Orange County Community College, John Zubizarreta from Columbia College in South Carolina, and Jack Rhodes from the Citadel, who offered great ideas to use in an orientation for new honors faculty. In the session “City as Text: Making the Familiar Unfamiliar,” honors faculty illustrated their own approaches to implementing the pedagogy. One that she felt might be a good example to share at the spring workshop

involved using the college campus itself as the place under study. She also heard sessions on course design, writing annual reports, and the impact of digital texts and devices on our brains, sight, and sleep patterns.

A regular feature of the NCHC conference is the fall meeting of the regional honors organizations, and Prof. O’Neal attended the meeting for our region, where OSU unveiled the first glimpses of what promises to be a wonderful spring conference of the Great Plains Honors Council. She also attended a meeting of honors directors from two-year colleges throughout the U.S.

Finally, two authors gave plenary talks related to the conference theme: Tom Matson, the author of Gallup’s book on strength-based leadership, and Bryan Stevenson, a lawyer, law professor, and the author of *Just Mercy*.

Congratulations, fall graduates!

Madison Bremer

Abby N. Duffy

Anna Platt



How to contact the TCC Honors Program

If you have questions about the program or suggestions for us, please let us know. Email us at honors@tulsacc.edu

The TCC Honors Office is on Metro Campus, but honors classes are on every campus.

Honors Coordinator: Susan O'Neal, 918-595-7631

Honors Specialist: Lynn Richmond, 918-595-7378

Honors Office: 909 S. Boston Ave., MC 523C, Tulsa, OK 74119

Scholarship news

The Bovaird Scholarship

If you are transferring to The University of Tulsa in the fall, ask the TCC Financial Aid Office about the Mervin Bovaird Foundation Scholarship. The Bovaird is awarded each year to four TCC students transferring to TU. This scholarship may be combined with the Honors Scholar Transfer Scholarship. Bovaird applications usually become available in April and have May deadlines. When the application is available, it is posted [here](http://www.tulsacc.edu/student-services/financial-aid/types-financial-aid/scholarships): <http://www.tulsacc.edu/student-services/financial-aid/types-financial-aid/scholarships>

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 **\$22,000 per year, 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

In February, you'll receive an email from the Honors Office when it's time to request the Honors Scholar tuition waiver for 2018-2019. Make a habit of checking your TCC-issued email account! This is how

we communicate with you.

Academic Scholars Scholarship

Do you know someone in the high school graduating class of 2018? If so, please spread the word about the Academic Scholars scholarship. Five TCC Honors Scholars from the class of 2018 will be selected to receive this eight-semester scholarship that transfers to any university in Oklahoma. See the "Honors Applications" page of our website for an application, starting in January.

Other

If you are transferring to a four-year institution in the fall, be sure to contact the school(s) you are considering to determine all deadlines. These are often in January or February! For example, the application deadline for TU's Honors Program is Feb. 1, for admission in Fall 2018.