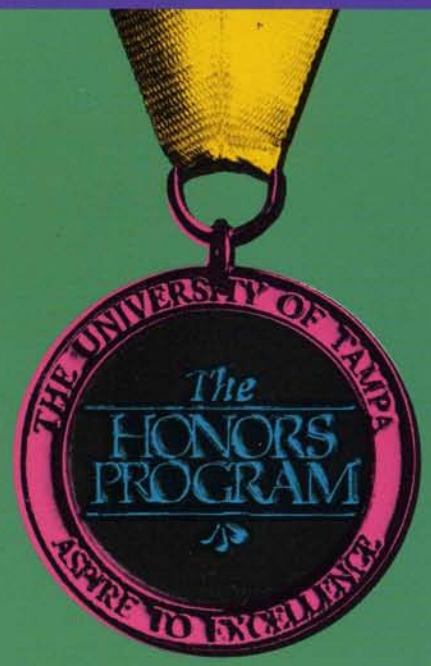
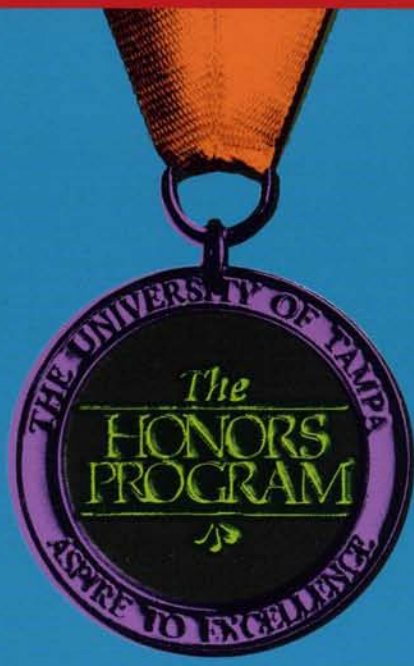
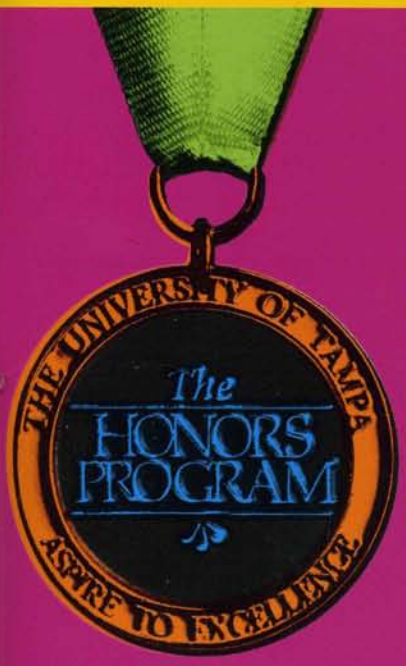
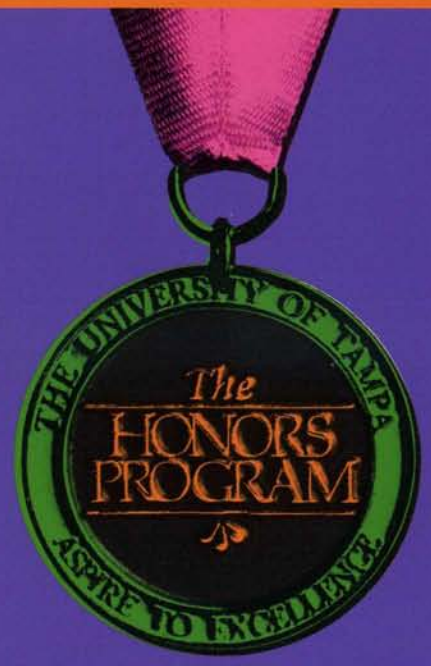
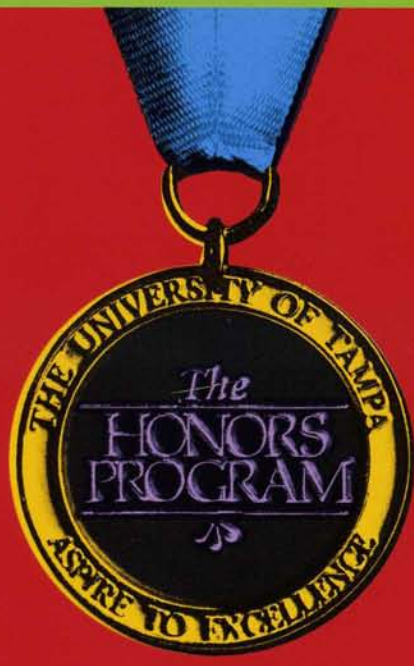
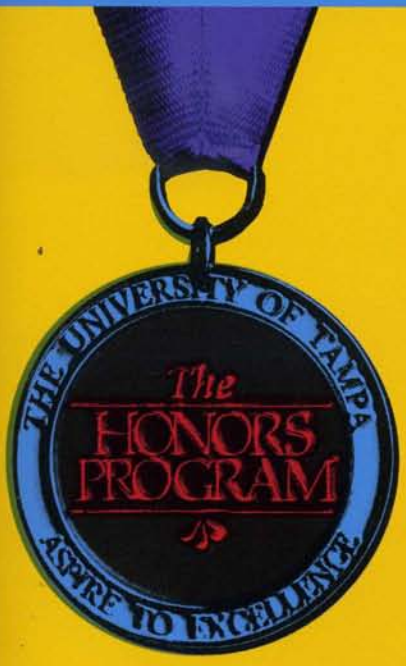
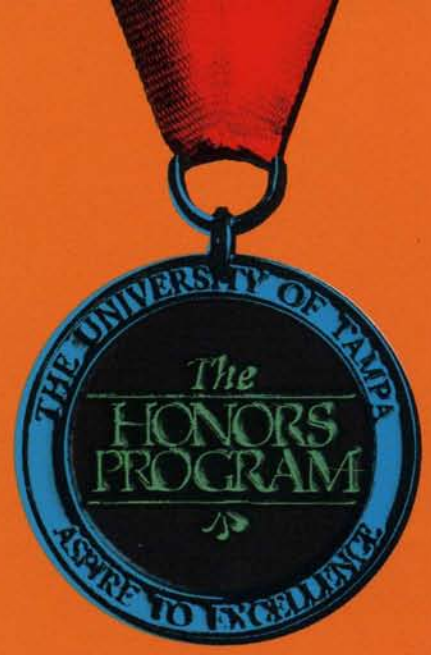
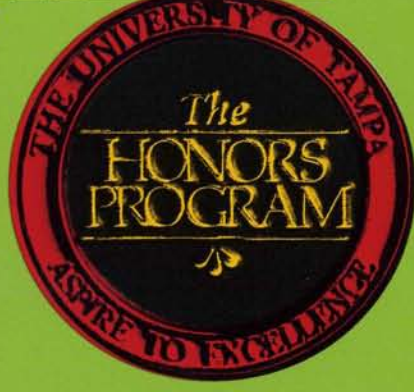
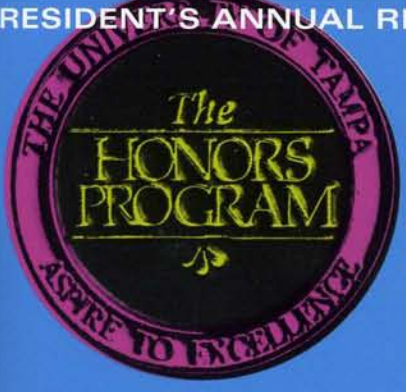


UT Journal

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT



Aspiring



"His horizons were focused fairly narrowly when he came to UT," says Dr. Richard Piper, director of the Honors Program from 1996 to 2008. "He was a good student, but one who had felt somewhat unappreciated. And I think he's really flourished in the honors program. I've seen a development of self confidence, a development of broader goals, and a more sophisticated understanding of himself and his potential."

The Honors Program has been offering opportunities to students like Connally for 26 years, and today it is a much sought after program for incoming students. Students are chosen from the incoming class by their GPAs and SAT scores, and as the University has grown more selective, so has the Honors Program. Admission requirements to the program have been raised five times since it started in 1982.

The program has evolved from humble beginnings, and it continues to provide opportunities for top UT students. This fall the University will offer 21 Honors courses, a far cry from the first four offered 26 years ago.

Bold Beginnings

Nearly three decades ago, Tim O'Connor '81 asked his English professor to teach a course with him over the summer. That professor was Dr. Frank Gillen, Dana Professor of English and the editor of the *Pinter Review*. Gillen became the first director of the Honors Program at UT in 1986.

"I was amazed at how good he was," Gillen says of O'Connor. "There were a lot of other students like that, and I felt we needed some way of bringing those students together."

Out of Gillen's experience, and others like it, the faculty at UT created an honors program. But the orga-

By Robin Roger
Writer

Charlie Connally '09 hadn't seen much beyond his hometown of Riverview, FL, when he first made the 15-mile commute to The University of Tampa. Now, having become an active member of UT's Honors Program, Connally's commute has turned into a journey of more than 4,000 miles.

Through the program, Connally has worked as a legal intern for the General Counsel of the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, D.C., and he is studying international law at Oxford University in England, where he is spending the fall semester.

Charlie Connally '09 in front of the U.S. Supreme Court Building in Washington, D.C.



Above: Dr. Gary Luter (left) incoming director of the Honors Program, with Dr. Richard Piper (right), outgoing director.

t Excellence



Dr. Frank Gillen (left) celebrates the first graduating class of Honors students with one of the earliest Honors Program graduates.

nizers wanted it to be different in some way, distinct from programs at other universities. That distinction came in the form of a theme: Challenging Mindsets.

Gillen and his colleagues designed a distinct honors program — a community in which students were encouraged to take risks, and be rewarded for that risk-taking. Because it was so different, the National Collegiate Honors Council even published UT's Honors Program handbook in its journal.

Talkin 'bout a Revolution

The classes were organized around a motif that represents life after college ... change. For instance, Gillen taught a class on revolutions in modern drama, exploring why plays with a beginning, middle and an end no longer seems relevant to us today.

"Ideally, we not only teach about revolution, but we create the class so that the students go through a revolution themselves," Gillen says. "Even more so today, we need to graduate students who can deal with change more rapidly than 25 years ago."

The other components of the theme became the roots and context of ideas, the cutting edge and conflicting perspectives: learning through the clash of ideas. The last was to teach students to see conflict not as a bad thing, but as leading to something better.

This mindset helps them handle new ideas, and see that people grow through opposition, Gillen says.

"We preach to the choir way too often," he says. "Liberals need to read conservative ideas, and conservatives need to read liberal ideas."

In those early years, before there was an Oxford semester, Gillen and his late wife, Marie, took students to London. Now a University trustee, Joe Wessel '95 went on one of those trips. He also worked for three years in the Honors Program Office.

"It was such a privilege working for and traveling with Frank," Wessel says. "He truly was the architect of the program — he did everything from gaining funding, designing courses, and recruiting and retaining students and faculty — all while teaching and remaining the leading authority on Pinter."

Attracting Top Talent

A majority of Honors students say they chose to come to UT because of the Honors Program. The unique opportunities offered in the Honors Program lure students away from Florida's state schools and some of the big Northern universities (see sidebar).

Despite these strict standards, a higher proportion of Honors students attend UT than at many other schools. UT has 970 students in the program, nearly one fifth of the students enrolled at the University. Last fall, 22 percent of the students were eligible for the University's distinguished Honors program.

Once they're in the classroom, these students set the tone for their peers.

"And the other students are aware of that and they become a little bit more serious and a little bit more purposeful in their studies because of the caliber of the good students in that room," says Dr. Gary Luter, the new director of the Honors Program.

Changing the Students

Luter lauded Piper on his ability to spot students with potential.

One example is Connally. The criminology and government and world affairs double major spent the summer filing subpoenas, reading cases and witness statements, and talking strategy with his supervisors. He has met with the district's police chief and attorney general. This fall, Connally will study the philosophy of law and international law in Oxford University.

"Charlie is one of a number of such cases where I've really

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"Challenging Mindsets"

The theme of the Honors Program has four components, explored in successive years. Courses offered each year reflect each aspect, and students may begin the progression at any point. They complete it after four years.

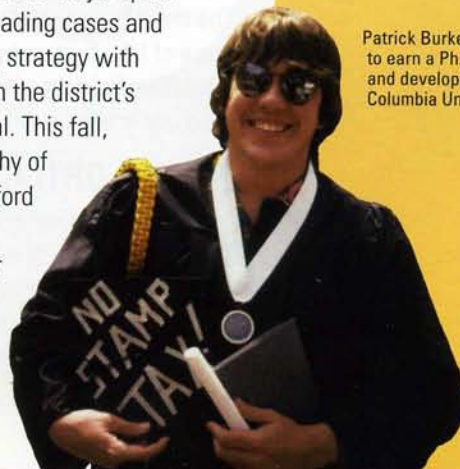
THEMES:

▲ YEAR ONE: Roots and Context of Ideas. Students learn the origins of theories and concepts.

▲ YEAR TWO: Revolution. Students look at time when there was a paradigm shift.

▲ YEAR THREE: Conflicting Perspectives: Learning through the Clash of Ideas.

▲ YEAR FOUR: The Cutting Edge: Students explore the most recent areas of study in multiple disciplines.



Patrick Burke '86 went on to earn a Ph.D. in genetics and development at Columbia University.



Recent Honors Grads Exemplify Excellence

By Dan Sullivan '06
Web Writer

On Saturday, May 10, more than 900 students were honored in The University of Tampa's 124th Commencement ceremony, including 70 students expected to graduate with Honors Program distinction. The three Honors graduates profiled here represent some of UT's best, carrying with them a tradition of educational excellence as they pursue different post-graduate goals.

NICOLE ORTEGA — PRATTVILLE, AL

As one of three summa cum laude graduates in the Class of 2008, Nicole Ortega's list of academic achievements is eye-catching even compared to those of her fellow Honors students. A double major in marine science and marine biology with a minor in

chemistry, Ortega has received numerous academic awards and honors throughout her time at UT. The list includes, most recently, the outstanding senior in biology and life sciences award from the College of Natural and Health Sciences.

In her senior year, Ortega spearheaded a research assistantship concerning the exchange of parasites between Cuban treefrogs, an invasive species to Florida, and the native amphibians. Her presentation of the research earned her an award earlier this year from the Florida Academy of Sciences in Jacksonville, FL.

"She's just exceptional all around," said Dr. Wayne Price, Dana Professor of Biology, who supported Ortega's research. "There is no doubt that she is one of the best students I've had in class and as a research assistant in my more than 30 years of experience."

Upon receiving her degrees, Ortega plans to continue her research with Price while exploring the possibility of teaching high school-level chemistry classes. She also plans to pursue a master's degree in parasitology.

ADAM KEMP — MEXICO BEACH, FL

Arriving at UT as a transfer student in his junior year, Adam Kemp quickly joined the Honors Program and also quickly made the most of what it had to offer. In his two years at UT, Kemp twice attended the Harvard Model United Nations as well as the Southern Regional Honors Conference. Both experiences, he said, greatly enhanced the value of the education he received in the classroom by putting him in touch with fellow Honors students and other high caliber individuals from all over the country.

Time spent studying abroad in Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic also provided a unique global perspective to his studies as a double major in finance and international business.

"Adam exemplifies what we want in our students at UT," said Cheri Etling, associate professor of finance. "He not only works hard to learn the concepts and skills for himself, he is also willing to work patiently with other students to help them master the information as well."

A magna cum laude graduate, Kemp was one of two student speakers at UT's commencement. A member of the Beta Gamma Sigma business honor society and recipient of an award for outstanding graduate in international business, Kemp's post-graduation plans will take him for five months to Milwaukee, WI, for training with Marshall and Ilsley Bank. He will then be assigned to the bank's Sarasota branch as a business banker. Plans to pursue an MBA and a law degree are also on the distant horizon, he said.

Above: Spring 2008 Honors graduates (from left) Adam Kemp, Steve Knauss and Nicole Ortega.

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Honors Program

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

seen positive change in a student in his or her years in the Honors Program," Piper says.

Spreading the Good News

Students like Connally can show off their research in publications in the peer-reviewed journal *Respondez*, and in their performances at conferences and state and national awards, which all enhance the reputation of the University.

Two students won awards for their writing at the Florida Collegiate Honors Council Conference last spring, where a new scholarship in Piper's name was announced. One was selected to sit on the executive board of the conference for this year, and two others presented their work.

One way the Honors Program adds to the reputation of the University is by attracting and retaining high quality faculty. Luter says one of the reasons he



Above: UT faculty, including Dr. Piper (third from left), and students tour the Oxford campus.

Right: UT students joined Dr. Mason Meers and Dr. Ray Schlueter on an Amazon boat ride.



got involved with the program was as a service to the faculty. He had such a good experience teaching inquisitive and intelligent students, he wanted the entire faculty to have the same experience.

The Honors courses allow faculty to create and teach advanced courses that may not be taught at the undergraduate level. Each course is designed around one of four variations on the theme Challenging Mindsets. For instance, Dr. Ray Schlueter and Dr. Mason Meers took 14 students on a trip of the Amazon River Basin to study tropical biology and conservation.

Recent Grads

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

STEVE KNAUSS — ALLENTOWN, PA

For Steve Knauss, the Honors Program not only enhanced the value of his studies as a sociology major at UT, but also was key in securing his post-graduate plans at one of the world's most prestigious universities.

In the fall of 2006, Knauss spent a semester in England as part of the Honors at Oxford program, earning credit toward two courses in sociology and history. The courses consisted of a regular one-on-one presentation of research to one of Oxford's professors. It was at the conclusion of his semester abroad that an Oxford professor strongly encouraged Knauss to apply to the university for graduate school.

This fall, that idea became a reality as Knauss was granted a full scholarship at Oxford in order to pursue as master's degree in sociology.

"In the Honors Program, you get out what you put into it," Knauss said. "It challenges you to push yourself in ways in which you aren't aware you can succeed. I never would have applied to Oxford without the Honors Program."

A magna cum laude graduate, Knauss' time at UT has also included a year as editor-in-chief of UT's student newspaper *The Minaret*, participation in an Honors symposium on American public discourse, and membership in the Alpha Chi and Alpha Kappa Delta honor societies. ■■■

Opportunities for the Future

As the new director, Luter is looking for ways to enhance the Honors Program experience. He would also like to highlight the international aspects of the program, such as the Oxford Semester, the Harvard Model UN, an international lecture series, and the Timothy Smith Award, which provides students with money for international travel.

He expressed interest in a named program or scholarship, or a dedicated classroom space for the program. Some residence halls have designated "Honors floors," but Luter says an Honors residence hall may help contribute to the sense of community. He would also like to see more non-traditional, adult students get involved, he said, to reflect changing student demographics. It is now a trend for honors programs to seek accreditation through the National College Honors Council.

Whether it started as part of a trend, the University of Tampa's Honors Program has proved it has staying power, and it will continue to challenge students and prepare them for an ever-changing world, and increase UT's reputation as an academic powerhouse.

"You have to have a very inquisitive and academically focused student body if you are going to have a great reputation as an institution," Luter says. "The Honors Program provides that." ■■■

Honors Program Opportunities:

- ▲ Publication in *Respondez*, an in-house, peer-reviewed scholarly journal
- ▲ A semester of study and credit at England's Oxford University
- ▲ Seminars, short courses and internships in Washington, D.C.
- ▲ Undergraduate research fellowships allow students to work on faculty projects
- ▲ The Timothy M. Smith Inspiration through Exploration Award, which provides \$2,500 to cover travel abroad
- ▲ Honors Study Abroad courses
- ▲ Nearly weekly symposia on a range of research topics
- ▲ Participation in state, regional and national Honors conferences
- ▲ Membership in the student-lead Honors Council

