

hillviews

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energized students
and engaged faculty
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toward new horizons.

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ROAD — to — RESEARCH

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A robust honors program.

Galloway says that the Honors College has the added appeal of encouraging new ideas. “We are open to what the student wants to do,” she says. This could mean open minds, open doors, or open paths. For faculty, it is a chance to try things that are new and experimental in their smaller classes. “Faculty need brilliant students,” Galloway says. “And we have brilliant undergrads.”

The largest percentage of students, 23 percent, are liberal arts majors; 19 percent are science and engineering majors; 18 percent are in fine arts and communication; 14 percent are business administration majors; 12 percent are education majors; 6 percent are studying applied arts; 6 percent are in health professions; and 1 percent are University College students.

“We have our first communication disorders student doing her thesis and the Honors College graduated its first nursing major this year,” says Diann McCabe, director of academic development.

The Honors College was established at Texas State in 1967 by Dr. Emmie Craddock (1915-98). A professor emeritus and chair of the history department, Craddock received the Piper Professor Award and the President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching. She was also the first woman to serve as mayor of San Marcos.

In the fall of 1966, a faculty meeting was held to gauge interest in establishing the honors program. Craddock was chief among those who wanted to challenge and engage the brightest students at the university. Honors programs in the U.S. really took off after World War II with the increased demand for higher education. When the nation’s elite private colleges could not accommodate that demand — or students could not afford those colleges — public colleges took the path to providing enriched opportunities

for the gifted and talented students.

Since 2004 the Honors College has been housed in Lampasas Hall, adjacent to Old Main. In addition to classrooms and offices, the college has a student kitchen and lounge, and it hosts a regular Honors Coffee Forum.

“Many Honors students find a community in honors that nurtures their creativity in special ways,” says McCabe. “Because the classes are innovative, designed by the professors who are teaching, the professor’s motivation and passion, and interaction with other students in the class provide a transformational experience. Students choose to take the class, everybody wants to be there, and it is a completely different kind of dynamic.”

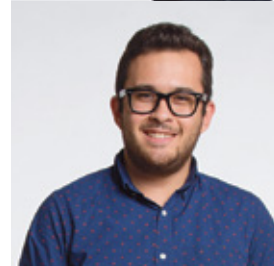
Eligibility

- Entering freshmen from the top 10 percent of their high school graduating class
or
Entering freshmen with a composite score of 27 on the ACT
or
Entering freshmen with a composite score of 1180 on the SAT (math and critical reading scores combined)
- Current or transfer students are encouraged to apply if they have an overall GPA of at least 3.25. Students transferring to Texas State University must have at least 12 semester hours of course work completed to qualify as transfer students.

Scholarships are available for current and transfer students. Deadline is March 1 each year. Several study-abroad programs are also affiliated with the Honors College. 🌐

“Faculty need brilliant students, and we have brilliant undergrads.”

Dr. Heather Galloway,
Honors College dean




Hard to describe, easy to love

By Ashley Festa


It’s hard to describe the Honors College experience at Texas State University, mostly because it’s different for every student. Some take the traditional Honors path; others minor in Honors Studies. Most begin as freshmen, while some transfer into the Honors College as sophomores or upperclassmen.


The classes are diverse and remarkable, ranging from Astronomy in Art, History, and Literature and Teaching Poetry to Children to Re-Humanizing Communication and Storytelling in Video Games. Because we can’t adequately describe the Honors College experience, we got seven graduates to tell us what it was like for them.


The Graduates:


 **Dr. Lindsay Bira**
B.S. Psychology, 2008,
Clinical research fellow,
The University of Texas Health Science Center
San Antonio


 **Walter Musgrove**
B.A. English, 2006
Dallas
Attorney and sports agent
Musgrove Law Firm

 **Tim Heller**
B.F.A. Musical Theatre, 2014
New York City, New York
Actor, singer, dancer


 **Louie Dean Valencia-García**
B.A.I.S. European Studies and B.A. Spanish,
2007
Doctoral candidate
at Fordham University
and Andrew W. Mellon Fellow,
Museum of the City of New York


 **Robert Kuykendall**
B.S. Computer Science, 2012
New York City
Engineer/programmer at Thinkful.com


 **Andrea Villalobos**
B.S. Geography, 2006
San Marcos
Planning technician
for the city of San Marcos

 **Dr. Melissa McFadden**
B.S. Physics, 2001
Fort Worth
Family practice physician


Why did you want to join the Honors College?


 **Kuykendall:**
I joined for the classes. Honors classes are the best there are. It’s hard not to sign up for all of them.


 **Heller:**
I was attracted to the smaller class sizes and unique subject matter each class offered. Also, how could you pass up the [50-cent] coffee!?

 **McFadden:**
They had a program where you could live on the same dorm floor with other Honors College students, and I liked the idea.


What was the biggest benefit you received as an Honors College student?


 **McFadden:**
It offered me a “home base” on campus outside of my dorm room. It gave structure that helped form friendships with other academically minded students. It offered classes that felt more freethinking, and the professors were very open to discussion to explore various thought paths.


 **Bira:**
Through taking the courses that replaced other basic requirements, I was able to learn concepts in an interesting and hands-on way, which helped them stick. For example, “Astronomy in Art, History, and Literature” replaced a basic science course. I was also exposed to students from backgrounds that were very different from mine, which helped me think outside the box and become more aware of other ways of life.

 **Kuykendall:**
The best benefits were the students and the space. Honors students are a very self-selected group, since many people can meet the requirements but don’t apply. Those that do are something special.


How did your experience in the Honors College contribute to your current success?


 **Musgrove:**
The challenging courses as well as the increased course load prepared me for law school. Law school was very challenging, but balancing the course load of the Honors program along with being a student-athlete helped prepare me for the rigors of law school.

 **Villalobos:**
The Honors College fostered motivation, promoted both independence and collaboration, and encouraged students to meet their potential. The skills I learned both in class and while drafting my Honors thesis prepared me for the workforce, where goals can be set and met with hard work and dedication.


 **Valencia-García:**
I’m a history doctoral student and will be finished this year [2015]. I wouldn’t have been able to do that without the Medieval Dark Ages class. My doctoral dissertation is based on my Honors thesis.


What was your favorite experience as part of the Honors College?

 **Bira:**
My favorite part of each academic year was the meeting held by the Honors College where they announced all their new course offerings. It was always much more exciting to think about taking a hands-on, unique course of 12 students instead of a required, basic course with hundreds of students.

 **Heller:**
I loved the escape from the theatre world. I’ve always loved the “theatre weird” that theatre people have, but it gave me perspective to see the “science weird,” “political weird,” and “literary weird,” among others, that everyone in the Honors College had. The “weird” in people is what comes out when they really get excited about something, and I think it is the most beautiful part of being human. The Honors College created that safe space for everyone to weird out with each other.

Favorite class?

 **Bira:**
“Teaching Poetry to Children” with Diann McCabe stands out because it shaped my educational and professional path. It helped me understand that I had strengths in teaching and helping others grow, cognitively and emotionally. The semester after the class, I used the techniques I learned to develop and implement programming for psychiatric inpatients.
Five years later, I did the same with a cancer population in graduate school. Throughout that time, in every interview, I talked about this experience and was able to set myself apart from other students. To have that one experience come full circle was meaningful and rewarding; it highlights the personal and professional potential of a single Honors course.

 **Kuykendall:**
It would have to be “Elementary Number Theory” with Max Warshauer. The class was an advanced mathematics course that non-math students could understand and get excited about. It began with the most basic concepts like: What is addition? What are its properties? Can you prove them? It was an incredibly fun class and started my time at Texas State with long nights sitting with friends, thinking deeply about very simple things. The class solidified itself as my favorite almost at the very end.


We had spent the semester learning these foundational building blocks of mathematics and built our way up to powers, modular arithmetic, Chinese remainder theorem, and other tools. And then, in possibly our very last lecture, Max went to the board and used these building blocks we had spent all semester creating, understanding, and proving, to show us how public-key cryptography worked. A foundational idea of digital security, working every time you open your laptop or use your phone, using just what we had learned in the class.


As a computer-science freshman, this couldn’t have been more mind-blowing. Encryption, a pitch-black room in my brain at the time, was suddenly perfectly clear and so simple. I’ll never forget that moment.

“I used to walk from Derrick to Lampasas humming the theme song from *Cheers* to myself: ‘Where Everybody Knows Your Name.’ Absolutely nothing can match the classes I took, the people I met and the experiences I had in the Texas State Honors College.”

Robert Kuykendall

What makes the Honors College experience different from any other?

 **Valencia-García:**
I could speak at length about how Honors has continued being a fundamental part of my life. Honors isn’t about extra work; it’s about a different type of work — working intimately with professors and doing interdisciplinary work. Honors is about classes that don’t have tests and exams; it’s more about dialogues and presentations. Classes are inspired by the professors’ own research, so they really have skin in the game.

 **Kuykendall:**
I can’t even start to imagine what my life would have been without the Honors College. It was too much a center of my entire Texas State experience. All of the greatest classes I took were in Lampasas, and all my greatest friends have some connection to Honors. I used to walk from Derrick to Lampasas humming the theme song from *Cheers* to myself: “Where Everybody Knows Your Name.” Absolutely nothing can match the classes I took, the people I met and the experiences I had in the Texas State Honors College.