

# HONORS NEWSLETTER

Queensborough Community College, 222-05 56th Avenue Bayside, NY 11364 718-631-6262  
WWW.QCC.CUNY.EDU

## The QCC Honors Conference- Seven Years Later

By Dr. Paris Svoronos, Chemistry

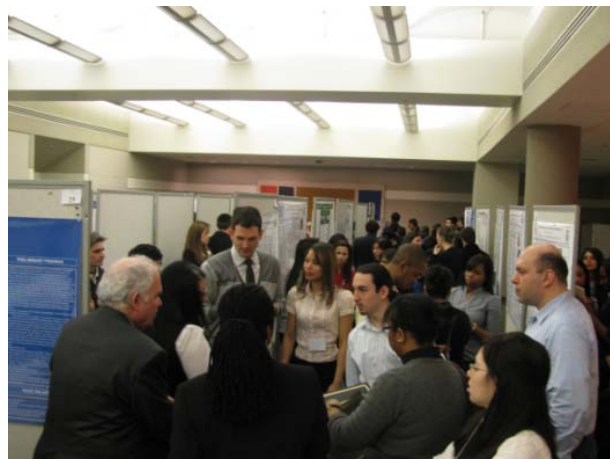
The first few Honors classes were offered for the back in the Spring of 2001 the first Honors classes were offered– a handful of them. The effort, spearheaded by a handful of colleagues, was largely unknown but had the definite support of the administration. Despite the doubts of some faculty and the reluctance of most students, the registration for classes and signing of Honors contracts kept on increasing. In 2005 the first QCC Honors Conference was held with the delivery of 79 abstracts by a half-dozen departments. Seven years later we are celebrating the 7th anniversary with more than 220 students presenting and three other CUNY colleges (Kingsborough, New York City Tech and LaGuardia) participating. It is a feast of academic success and a testament to what dedication and commitment to our kids can produce.

The success of the Honors work at Queensborough is not only defined by the annual Honors Conference. It also involves the success that our students have demonstrated by their participation at several out-of-college events. It is winning at the Metropolitan Association of College and University Biologists (MACUB) and the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS) conferences. It is participating at the various American Chemical Society (ACS) – local (URS– Undergraduate Research Symposium of the ACS–NY section), regional (MARM– Middle Atlantic Regional Meetings of the ACS) , even the National American Chemical Society Meetings.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The Honors Program	1
Academic Programs and Reflections	2
Reflections	7

*Comments and feedback on this issue of the Newsletter may be sent to [EHanssen@qcc.cuny.edu](mailto:EHanssen@qcc.cuny.edu) or [GBurdi@qcc.cuny.edu](mailto:GBurdi@qcc.cuny.edu)*



It is the success of the Business Department's students in winning the NY Federal Reserve Bank 2010 Community College competition, and the Mock Trial Team's success in being awarded Spirit of AMTA" award which is given to one of the 27 teams in the regional tournament that best exemplifies AMTA's ideals of honesty, civility and fair play at the Spring 2011 New Haven Regionals. It is the invitation of the Theater Performance students to the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington DC. And all those kids and faculty demonstrate that they are not just regular kids.

Today is another good day for our students, their mentors and our college. The trend will hopefully continue for many more years to come.

### The Honors Program Library Workshop

Students participating in the QCC Honors Program are required to take a Library Research Workshop. The Workshop enhances existing skills and offers options in developing new research methods.

The Workshop provides students with a forum to discuss their research techniques, share research strategies with other participants, learn new methods in selecting and evaluating sources, along with learning about the research support network available to them at the QCC Library.

Library Workshop components include:

- Evaluating Internet Websites
- Legal and Ethical Use of Sources
- Online Database Searching
- Primary versus Secondary Sources
- Use of CUNY+PLUS Online Catalog

A recent survey was conducted about The Honors Program Library Workshop and the Top Ten comments from the QCC Honors Student completing the workshop are:

- I did not know I could access *The New York Times* from 1851.
- Did not know about the online databases and that they were full-text...online newspapers and journals.
- I learned what a Boolean search is.
- I learned what periodicals are.
- Navigation of available resources from the CUNY library.
- That we have databases available to us and we can borrow books from other CUNY libraries.
- How to do an advanced search in GOOGLE and select a specific domain.
- The difference between HTML and PDF files.
- How important the source is that we use for our research.
- I did not know there are more resources than GOOGLE or Wikipedia.

The Student Honors Library Program workshop will not only help the Honors Student while in attendance at QCC, but will serve as a tremendous resource during the student's academic research experience.

### Teaching Honors English: A Worthwhile Experience

By Dr. Sheena Gillespie Professor Emeritus, English Department

Teaching in the Honors Program at QCC has been an adventure and a privilege. I have always thought of students as partners in learning and this is particularly true of honors sections where class sizes are smaller, and students have a unique opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences with their peers.

In the last decade our conversations about literature and life have been further enriched by their cultural diversity and excitement about the nuances of language. We are fortunate to have an administration that provides funding for this special program.

## Teaching an Honors Introductory Chemistry Class: Cherishing its Development over the Years

By Soraya Svoronos, Ph.D.    Adjunct Associate Professor    Chemistry Department

I taught the very first course in Honors Chemistry during the Spring 2011. This was a hybrid course with only two students getting Honors credit. Over the years I cherished the opportunity of teaching several such sections and seeing the development of these students, many of whom eventually graduated with an LS1 and continued with a successful post-Queensborough academic career.

Many people have stated that teaching Honors students is easy due to the fact that the students are ready to take the challenge. This is not necessarily true. The students may be initially apprehensive but grooming them with a firm hand leads to surprising results.

More than three dozen of my honors students presented at the Annual Honors Conference. In addition I have had five students conducting research with me that was presented at several American Chemical Society Conferences including two National ones in Washington DC (2009) and Boston (2010).

Doing the extra work for promising students is an experience of incredible dividends. When the student realizes that the faculty is not there to cover material and go home, then he/she is more inclined to follow the faculty commitment.

## 2010 Queensborough Fed Challenge Team Wins the November 8th New York District Fed Challenge for Community Colleges

The Fed Challenge is an annual inter collegiate competition sponsored by the Eastern Economic Association and the Federal Reserve Bank. The objective is to promote understanding of the Federal Reserve System and monetary policy. Each team prepares a 20 minute presentation acting as the FOMC, with the second half of the adjudication being a 15 minute question and answer period.

This year's competition had a record 36 teams participating, including Pace University, Rutgers Newark, Rutgers New Brunswick, Fordham University, SUNY Binghamton, SUNY Oneonta, City College of New York, and St. Johns.

The Queensborough Team received superior or exceptional ratings in each of the four adjudication categories: Knowledge of the Fed; Response to questions; Presentation; and Research and Analysis. The team met on weekends evenings preparing and rehearsing for the competition.

In light of the Fed's recent announcement of the QE2, the Team recommended additions to the



*Panpaphat Khemsuwan, Sam Mishra,  
Natalie Zorrilla, Oluwadamisi Atanda*

Fed's current policy to incent financial institutions to establish mortgage and personal credit renegotiation, and another to incent them to establish programs to help small and medium sized business.

Faculty advisors: Ed Hanssen, Steve Hammel, Linda Meltzer, Ben Murolo and Chris Mooney.

## QCC Mock Trial Team Returns from Yale with Pride

By Oluwadamisi Atanda, student

It was a brisk day on the 11th of February. The college was closed to all except a team of seventeen students and four staff members who made up the 2011 Queensborough Mock Trial Team representing the college in the 2011 New Haven Regional American Mock Trial Association Tournament (AMTA) at Yale University in Connecticut.

The college team was one of 27 teams in the tournament, including teams from Yale, Brown, Dartmouth, Princeton, Cornell, Boston College, Tufts, Yeshiva University, and Roger Williams University.

The case being tried was a strict liability/negligence per se case brought against a toy manufacturer by the parent of a two year-old child who died after ingesting beads from his older sister's make-your-own jewelry set manufactured by the toy company. Team members presented opening and closing statements, introduced evidence, conducted direct and cross examinations, and role-played as witnesses in mock trials in which panels of three volunteer lawyers presided as mock jurors and judges.

Our school was the only community college team in the regional tournament at Yale and is believed to be one of four community colleges in the national tournament in which approximately 500 colleges and universities compete by trying the same case from both the plaintiff's and defendant's side.

The team received strong support from the team's faculty advisors, Prof. Ted Rosen, Prof. Stephen Hammel, Prof. Kelly Ford, Prof. Edward Hanssen and Ms. Bonnie Cook; the QCC family. The President of the College, Dr. D. Call, and the Chairman of the Business Department Dr. J. Falik paid the team an unprecedented visit at New Haven, Connecticut.

The team's many months of practice, scrimmages, sacrificed weekends, and after school hours and



*Oluwadamisi K. Atanda, Ilia Barabadze, Andrena Barnes, Mario Del Moral, Mani Dhir, Reynaldo Diaz, Randy Farcier, Andrew Kim, Helen Kwok, Elizabeth Lara, Shrikant Sam Mishra, Safa Qureshi, Marilyn Rodriguez, Jenny Saul, Jeremy St. Clair, Jorge Vasquez, Owen Yun*

efforts weren't wasted. The Team won the "Spirit of AMTA" award which is given to one of the 27 teams in the regional tournament that best exemplifies AMTA's ideals of honesty, civility and fair play. The selection of the winner of the award is determined by ratings submitted for each team by their "opposing counsel" during the first during the first three rounds of the tournament. In winning the award, QCC's team received 29 out of a possible maximum 30 ranks.

The Queensborough Mock Trial Team has been in existence for four years. This is the second time it has earned the prestigious "Spirit of AMTA" award at a regional tournament. The team also received many compliments; one of the judges described one of the team's witnesses as one of the best he has seen in the past five years. And one of the QCC teams tied in a round with Yale! Who says that community colleges lack opportunities? QCC begs to differ! Congratulations to the young men and women who made our college proud and brought us well-deserved honor.

## Teaching a Spanish Honors Class

By Prof. E Raya

Teaching the Spanish Honors class is always an interesting and rewarding experience for me. Students are motivated and committed to working hard and do well in the class. I enjoy the close interaction between instructor and students. The students engage in the preparation and completion of their class projects, and they are excited at participating in fun cultural field trips. I believe that these activities encourage creativity on the part of the students, and can also foster teamwork when assigned as collaborative projects. To that end, students work on individual or group projects that they present at the Annual Honors Conference.

Furthermore, besides working on their class projects, students attend interesting cultural events, and write about their new experiences. In the Spanish Honors class students have had the opportunity to participate in enriching extracurricular activities, such as attending a performance of the opera Carmen at Lincoln Center and attending a theater performance at the Repertorio Español. On another occasion my students visited a special exhibition of Spanish medieval and Renaissance religious art treasures entitled "A Time of Hope" at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine. They were mesmerized by the impressive architecture of the cathedral and the richness of the art exhibit.

Back in 2005 my students had the unique opportunity of being part of the world celebration of Cervantes works by participating in a reading of his masterpiece

Don Quixote at the Cervantes Institute (the most important Hispanic Cultural Institution in New York City) organized on the occasion of the fourth Centennial of the publication of Don Quixote. Since the Spanish Honors class is a second semester class, the students read the English version, but they felt enthused about being a part of such a great event.

Last year, on a beautiful spring day, the Spanish Honors class paid a visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to see a landmark exhibition of 300 works by Pablo Picasso. An exhibition that consisted of the Museum's complete holdings of the artist's paintings, drawings, sculptures, and ceramics—never before seen in their entirety—as well as a significant number of his prints. The students enjoyed this cultural experience very much and expressed their awe and admiration for Picasso's art. On several occasions, our cultural outings have culminated with an ethnic lunch at a local Hispanic restaurant where students ordered their food in Spanish and, later, wrote an essay about this experience. They learned about the cultural aspect of food and appreciated the tastes and flavors new to them.

To sum up, the Spanish Honors class gives students the opportunity not only to learn the language in a special class setting, but it also affords them the opportunity to learn and experience new and exciting aspects of the Hispanic culture that they may not experience outside the Spanish Honors class.



## Honors French Classes

By Professor Anne-Marie Bourbon, French Coordinator

Last year several students in my two Honors classes of LF112 in the Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 terms participated in the Honors Conference held at the College on Friday, April 23. Their presentations were not only interesting but also varied. Some of them used Power Point as an enhancement, others simple illustrations or photos, and others sound tracks and music.

Elisa Uwurugo, Gabrella Ehioghiren and Erica Jeudy described their families, their likes and dislikes, and their hobbies. Coming from different countries and cultures their presentations were quite varied and very personal.

Then we were invited to enter the world of fashion with Sharon Galed, whose project was about Coco Chanel, the designer. Sharon discussed Chanel's designs and the influence she left on the fashion industry in France and in the world. Rene Murray, also interested in fashion, talked about Christian Dior, a pioneer in Post-war France. Both of these famous designers continue to influence the modern day fashion world and their design houses remain among the top ranked in the world.

Joseph Pasaoa then talked about the celebrity photographer David LaChapelle, and showed



*Gabrella EHIUGHIREN, Elisa UWURUGO, Rene MURRAY, Joseph PASAOA, Dr. Anne-Marie BOURBON, Drita KOLILIAS and Samantha COUGHLAN*

some interesting photographs by this artist. We also were able to enjoy Edith Piaf's music and learn about her life through the presentation of Drita Kolilias. Finally, Samantha Coughlan showed a very moving and well-illustrated Power Point presentation about Marie Antoinette, the Queen of France, who had a tragic death.

All students were very well prepared and proud to present their work to an audience. They were very keen to use their French, do research in the language and write a project using their newly acquired language skills. The whole experience showed many aspects of French culture and was very enriching and informative for the students and faculty who were in attendance.

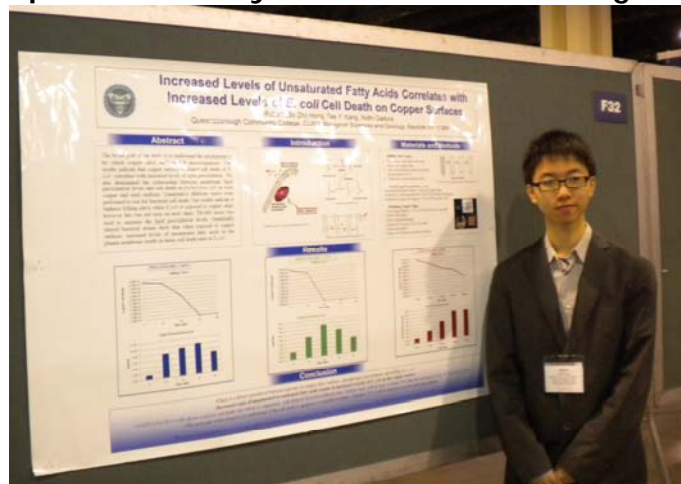
**Queensborough Community College**  
Presents the  
**Seventh Annual Honors Conference**  
*Celebrating Student Research and Academic Life*  
**Friday, May 6, 2011**  
**Noon to 4 P.M.**  
**Medical Arts Building – First Floor and Basement**

## Biotechnology Honors: A Very Important Component of any Health Sciences Degree

By Dr. Nidhi Gadura, Biology Department

As I reflect back at yet another productive year for my honors students, I feel really proud of their accomplishments. As educators, nothing gives us more pleasure than watching our students succeed. With the new AS Degree in Biotechnology, there are three key courses that are required for the major: Biotechnology, Genetics and Bioinformatics. Biotechnology was offered in the Fall 2010 as an Honors Course, 18 students have participated. In the Spring 2011, 10 students are in Honors Bioinformatics and 10 students are participating in the Genetics Honors program. All of these students will present at the in house May 6th Honors Conference. Four of these students will also make poster presentations in the upcoming Undergraduate Research Symposia at Columbia University, International conference at City University of New York as well as American Chemical Society local conference in Yonkers. "Priceless!"

Honors projects done by students provide them to go above and beyond the call of duty in the classroom and strive for more. Students constantly rise to the challenge and end up using the synergy from their peers to become highly motivated. In my opinion, this increased momentum helps them redefine their goals and pursue higher education degrees.



*Robert Hong*

Among the highlights of 2010 were a former Biotechnology honors student, Robert Hong, who won first place at a regional 43rd Annual Metropolitan Associations of College and University Biologists (MACUB) conference. Robert enjoyed learning all the latest molecular biology techniques in the Biotechnology honors course and then was eager to stay in the lab and pursue a research project which will be published soon in a peer reviewed scientific journal. Robert shared his first place with another Biotechnology Honors student, Shalini Singh, who has since graduated from QCC and is currently pursuing her education at Queens College.

### Members of the Honors Committee

Alissa Moody

Ed Hanssen

Glenn Burdi

Regina Sullivan

Mike Metavas

Jim Geasor

Aithne Bialo-Padín

Susan Sciammarella

Bjorn Berkhout

Paris Svoronos

Christina Abreu-Suzuki

Maurizio Santoro

Michele Cuomo

Meg Tarafdar

Eileen White

## The Learning Atmosphere in Honors General Chemistry I class

By Man Ying (Janet) Wong, student

The learning atmosphere in my Honors General Chemistry I class is really great. Most of the students are hard working and study as a team. This makes it a powerful impetus to push you to learn more. When the homework involves challenging questions on difficult topics, most students tend to go to tutoring to discuss and figure the solutions out. If there is something we could not understand, our professor, Dr. Paris Svoronos, would encourage us to solve the problems on the blackboard.

Although answering questions in front of the class would make us nervous, we would still solve the questions step by step with the guidance of the professor and then explain them to the rest of

## Conducting Chemistry Research - An Exciting Part of the Honors Program at Queensborough

By Rebecca Cho, student

Being involved in research at Queensborough Community College has been a rewarding experience in many ways. Not only was I able to work closely with faculty members, but I also reinforced many of the concepts learned in the classroom on a practical level. Working in the lab and learning how to use various scientific instruments as well as attending numerous conferences has been very exciting and rewarding as well.

My research experience involved working closely with my mentor, Dr. Jun Shin, and his work with determining the refractive index of various substances using a chromatography column and a laser pointer. The use of refractive index is a well known analytical technique for the purpose of identifying a specific liquid or solid compound. The refractive index of compounds is usually found via the use of an expensive refractometer and therefore has limitations in terms of accessibility. In the lab, we have succeeded in obtaining the refractive index of various compounds and solutions via a simple setup involving a chromatography column and

the class. This would give us a deep impression on the concepts and their applications.

The Honors program also requested that students go to seminars of outside speakers where the novel ideas of interesting researches were introduced. Students could ask questions and learn how to discuss a topic at a conference. Students could gain more knowledge in chemistry and improve their presentation skills. But above all the friendship developed between the classmates and the professor dominated the atmosphere throughout the semester. This was a valuable experience- no doubt!

laser pointer. This cost-effective setup has proven to give accurate results in determining the refractive index of pure liquids as well as liquid-liquid mixtures' temperature dependence. A good relationship was found between the refractive index and various types of concentration such as percent mass, percent volume, molarity and density. The laser pointer system developed in our lab does not require the use of an expensive refractometer to determine the refractive index of a substance and therefore is an excellent system that can be applied to almost any lab setting.

The most significant part of this experience however has been the fact that I was able to present my developing findings in four different conferences in 2010 and five more this coming Spring. Just being one of the 186 posters that were presented from all colleges nationwide at the National American Chemical Society Meeting in Boston last August was an unbelievable event in my academic life. I once again thank my mentor Dr. Shin for his consistent support during the last four semesters.



## Honors Chemistry: Challenging Classes, Group Tutoring, Research and More

By Engred Vanegas, student

As an undergraduate student at Queensborough Community College, I was given the marvelous opportunity of being in the chemistry 151 honors class. I must say that this was one of the most exciting experiences I have had. This class challenged me every single day throughout the semester. Although it was a hard struggle, in the end it was all worth it because the class made so many changes in me. Not only did it give me great satisfaction, but also much confidence. It made me realize that I could achieve anything that I set my mind out to do. I have met many loyal, reliable, and caring friends in this class and environment. These friends are everything from buddies to tutors. They always give you that push in order to maintain the struggle. Just as my professor Dr. Paris Svoronos said "Chemistry makes bonds" boy was he right! We have indeed all bonded and became one big family.

The Group Tutoring sessions offered are extremely helpful as well. I must admit that they are a key component in the process of learning, since we learn from our mistakes, and that is exactly what this process does. In these sessions people practice problems and

### Joining the Honors program as a Freshman

By Sharda Jagdeo, student

My first experience with the Honors program at QCC was in the General Chemistry I class and it has been phenomenal. The class size was perfect and everyone in the class understood what was being taught as there was a great deal of interactive learning. In the lab, students wrote a paper on any controversial scientific topic of our choice. In addition we attended three outside speaker seminars and had to summarize the talk as part of the requirements of the course.

Several students were asked to conduct research with a department professor. The research project I am currently working on is "The Determination of Copper Content in US pennies." My mentor is Dr. Jun Shin who has been incredibly patient and helpful. Since I started working on this research project, I have learned many new things from my professor and fellow classmates. When I began Queensborough Community College, I never thought that I would do such intense work in the

work them out on their own and the tutor conducting research as an undergraduate is simply there to guide them, see their errors and correct them. It is our job to go over the problem once more without looking at the answer to see if we have understood the process. Tutoring is also a wonderful opportunity to interact with one another as well, which makes it a more comfortable setting to learn in; a setting you can call home. I want to especially thank Dr. Svoronos for always giving me that extra push, which only keeps me more determined, motivated and constantly "hungry" just as Dr. Svoronos would say, to strive for my goals and dreams.

I am currently taking Honors General Chemistry II and I intend to even take more such classes. I also conduct research under Dr. David Sarno, on nanomaterial polymers and I am scheduled to present my findings at five conferences this spring. Dr. Sarno is an equally patient and caring mentor and I am truly lucky he has accepted me in his group.

laboratory. At the end of this spring semester, numerous students, such as myself will be presenting our research findings at several professional conferences, where we will be exposed to the scientific community. It is a scary proposition but I am excited about it. Apart from conducting research, many students from the Chemistry Honors course were asked to tutor. Tutoring has been an extraordinary experience because students who come to tutoring are comfortable with their fellow students and they learn better.

My first semester in Queensborough Community College has been great. I've been completely exposed to what I love; Science and I look forward to learning many more things from my professor and classmates. caring mentor and I am truly lucky he has accepted me in his group.

## Conducting Chemistry Research: Using the lecture Material in Hands on Experiences

By Esther Yang, student

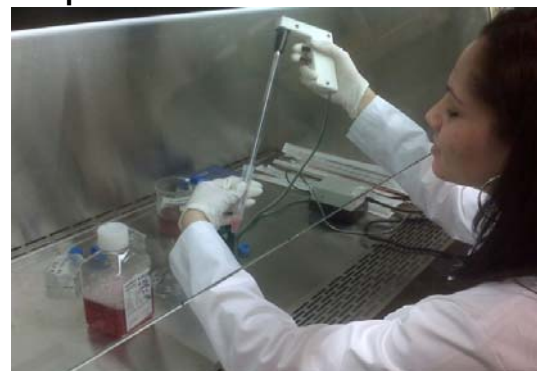
After completing honors chemistry courses, I applied the knowledge I acquired into the research that I am currently conducting under Dr. Jun Shin. Our research uses the refractive index, which is a well-known analytical technique used to identify various compounds. This method, however, is rarely adapted to the undergraduate laboratory curriculum due to the fact that a proper and efficient setup had not been developed. We have recently developed a simple, accurate, and inexpensive system for determining the refractive index of various compounds using a laser pointer and a chromatography column. The system has proved to be very accessible and accurate in measuring the refractive index of single and binary solvent systems. The laser pointer method has been further applied to determine the refractive index of organic liquids and water at various temperatures without the use of expensive equipment such as temperature control systems and refractometers. The refractive

index of water and many organic liquids such as hydrocarbons (cyclohexane, heptane, and toluene), alcohols (1-propanol, 1-butanol, ethylene glycol, 1,2-propanediol and glycerol) and mineral oil has been determined by the laser pointer system within the temperature range of  $-15^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $125^{\circ}\text{C}$  (depending on the varying boiling and melting points of the compound of interest). The results showed that there was a good trend between the temperature and the refractive index of the liquids. I have already presented my findings at five conferences and I am penciled in for four more this coming spring semester. I am grateful to my mentor Dr. Jun Shin for his patience, guidance and belief in me. Overall, the research, tutoring and honors courses provided by the chemistry department have been a rich learning experience for me that will help me further my academic, occupational and professional plans.

## Participating in a RIMS Research Project- An Honors Experience

By Vanessa Almonte, student

This summer I was offered the opportunity to participate in the RIMS research program at Queensborough Community College. I had the privilege of working under Dr. Regina Sullivan of the Biology Department in a project involving a human breast cancer cell line. The research experience taught me many valuable lessons that have improved my abilities as a student. These include how to take the initiative to research articles relevant to my project, how to interpret data and the results of each experiment, as well as how to deal with unexpected results. Sometimes these surprising results are more meaningful than the predicted outcome. Conducting research has also made me appreciate the information that I read in text books. I realized how many years of research and repeated experimental trials it takes to add one new fact into literature. The research program has also improved my confidence in speaking in front of large groups of



people after presenting my project at different meetings. One of the meetings was directed toward my peers and the other two were judged by professionals in the field. I received positive criticism at each event that provided my mentor and me with great ideas on how to improve the research project. Overall I am very grateful to have been a part of such a great program under such a great mentor and have incorporated these new skills into my academic life.

## Honors Chemistry Classes: Practice Makes Perfect

By Fathima Nazumudeen, student

The Honors Chemistry classes are very different than all other classes offered at Queensborough. The lessons are taught in depth; exams and homework are given weekly and serve as a practice to excel in that subject. Honors General Chemistry I, prepares the student intellectually and creates in him a sense of commitment and responsibility. In this class I enjoyed the challenge to my ability and the self confidence I developed. In that class, students were like a family- when one person could not get the answer the rest of the colleagues would work together helping the student to find the answer.

After completing Honors General Chemistry I and II, I decided to work with Dr. Paris

Svoronos on the microscale determination of the ionization constant of carboxylic acids using freezing point depression measurements. When conducting research the most difficult aspect is the reproducibility of the results. Experimental data are valid only if they are consistent and obtaining them involves patience against unknown challenges found in an experiment. I am excited that I will be presenting my findings at four different professional conferences this spring. It is only through my training in the Honors courses that I will be able to achieve something community college students are not usually expected to do.

## Taking Honors Courses: What this Means to Me

By Kevin Chavez, student

Coming from a public high school with a 30% graduation rate, I knew what it would be like to be a freshman coming into college not knowing what path to take or what classes to enroll in. From my personal experience I found that, generally, instructors do not give the time of day to fully explain careers or elaborate on realistic plans to be a professional.

Thankfully, I found that General Chemistry Honors was tailored to give students, like myself, an opportunity to prove how far effort and dedication will take you. The Honors course in General Chemistry I kept me on edge and infamously became my favorite course. General Chemistry I was designed with Dr. Paris Svoronos who can genuinely educate. Not only did I continue the sequence of honors courses after it but I was also given the opportunity to grow my interests in the sciences through various opportunities.

Queensborough Chemistry Research is for the During the summer of 2010 I participated in a paid internship at the Microbiology Department of

Environmental Protection (DEP) through an ATE grant that Dr. Svoronos has obtained through collaboration with York College. I have also been conducting research on the preparation of Fosamax derivatives with Dr. Luis Vargas of the Chemistry Department which I will be presenting in four different conferences this spring. Through another STEM grant that Dr. Svoronos has obtained from the National Science Foundation I had the opportunity to go to a mini-semester experience at the Brookhaven national laboratory and hope to have a three month paid internship this coming summer 2011. Finally I have started my third semester of group tutoring in the chemistry department where I have the opportunity to improve my ability to withstand questioning by patiently explaining a difficult subject.

In the future, I hope to become a professional in the health sciences as either a Physician's Assistant or a Pharmacist. These Honors courses have enabled me to strive for the best performance on my part because of the expectations that these quality instructors have for me.

## Being an Honors Student at Queensborough: A Challenging but Rewarding Experience

By MayMyat Moe, student

the chloride concentrations of water. I also prepared During my first semester at Queensborough I completed several courses, without knowing that there was an Honors program. In the Honors class the student is learning basically the same material but in more depth. The class involves the formation of a cohort of students who compete without being jealous of each other. At the same time there are more opportunities for internships, research and seminars.

I was recommended to take Honors Calculus I and went to the Honors Program Chair Dr. Paris Svoronos in order to be signed in. He also convinced me to take Honors General Chemistry I. The experience in General Chemistry I Honors was very challenging as all students had to take at least ten tests during the semester. At the same time the students were asked to work problems on the blackboard and justify their interpretation of the solution to the rest of their classmates. I proceeded to take Honors General Chemistry II and also registered for Research credits.

I have been conducting research since the Fall of 2010 under Drs. Soraya and Paris Svoronos on the measurement of antioxidants in tea beverages. It took me a long time to get my first consistent results and since that time I have been obtaining data that I am scheduled to present in at least five conferences this spring. The experience has been humble and often harsh but the constant mentorship and guidance improved my skills and patience.

The opportunity to present our own research topic at the Honors Conference as well as professional chemistry meetings is very exciting. I hope to be able to graduate soon and eventually transfer to a senior college with a scholarship. I am thankful to my mentor for introducing me to the program which is a great asset of Queensborough.

## Honors General Chemistry I: My introduction to the QCC Honors Program

By Mario Balducci, student

I was selected by recommendation of my introductory chemistry class to take Honors General Chemistry I (CH-151) taught by Dr. Paris Svoronos during the Fall 2010 semester. This course was an "unusually" positive experience that involved a lot of work both in terms of homework and exams. In the lab taught by Dr. David Sarno all students were required to write a mini research report of the relevance of science in contemporary issues. We were also required to attend seminars and summarize the work of guest speakers in the field of science, particularly chemistry. The seminars were given once a month on Friday afternoons so that all students and professors could attend.

This was particularly challenging as our general knowledge at the time was monomial. The best part of being in the honors chemistry program is that if you do well, there is an opportunity to conduct research in a project under a faculty's supervision. This has been the best part as it enables me to get my "feet wet and get hands" on experience in the field of Chemistry. I am scheduled to make five conference presentations this spring, both power point and poster. I am nervous but looking forward to it as I am closely monitored by mentor Dr. Svoronos.

## Starting in the Honors Program as a Freshman

By Andre Smithson, student

Being a part of the honors program has proven to be extremely beneficial. I was introduced to the program by Dr. Paris Svoronos in my first Honors General Chemistry I class during the Fall of 2009. This program allowed me to get involved in group tutoring which I have been conducting for the last three semesters. Through this medium, I am able to share my experiences concerning the subject matter to fellow students while encouraging them to strive for excellence. It is a joy to see students learn and enjoy that every time I go to tutoring. Tutoring has developed my leadership skills and

ability to relate information to others around me. The Honors Program has also introduced me to research which I enjoyed doing. I started my first research project while still a freshman and this has proven to be an invigorating experience. I already had poster presentations at four different conferences including the National American Chemical Society Meeting in Boston (August 2010). I am overjoyed that I was involved in the Honors Program at Queensborough Community College or else I would not have seen the benefits the honor program can offer.

## From an LS1 Student at Queensborough to a Forensics One at John Jay College:

### How the Honors Program helped me Achieve this Goal

By Maria Santos Tejada, alumnus

I graduated from Queensborough Community College in 2009. I have been exposed to the Honors program at Queensborough and in particularly chemistry courses. I am currently pursuing a B.S. in Forensic Science at John Jay College where I am participating in its undergraduate research program. I collaborate in a project analyzing mercury (Hg) flux emission from soil surfaces to the environment. Last summer 2010, I also participated in a summer internship in the Dominican Republic and worked in their National Forensic Science laboratory. In order to succeed in these endeavors I had to know how to work analytically, independently and

with confidence in a forensic lab set up. These qualities I am proud to say I acquired while a student at Queensborough where I worked under the solid mentorship of Chemistry Department's Dr. David Sarno. In particular I was guided by him to work on nanomaterials where errors are not allowed and keen adherence to experimental procedure are both mandatory. I have presented my results at five different professional conferences and I have earned the confidence to defend my findings. There is no doubt that without the leadership and care of Dr. Sarno I would have not succeeded in either my post-Queensborough studies or my summer internship.

## My Experience with the Queensborough Honors Program

By Bhawanie Persaud- an LS1 graduate (2010) and a current student at Queens College

My Honors experience at Queensborough was one of the most rewarding and intellectual experiences in my academic career. I took most of my honors chemistry and biology courses where I was exposed to a solid cohort. I developed close friendships and bonded with superb professors such as my mentor Dr. David Sarno of the

Chemistry Department. The guidance and support I received from my professors was very important for my success in graduating and continuation of my future career. I would strongly encourage any motivated student to join this highly ranked community college because it will prepare them for any competitive program.



## **A Unique Dimension of the Honors Program**

By Julet Baltonado, alumnus

Being involved in research in the field of Chemistry has opened my eyes not only to real world applications of our Chemistry class lessons, but also the importance of the research work itself.

The simple experiments we perform in the research lab are just the first step into the discovery of many chemical reactions and processes we have yet to understand. In addition to using the skills and knowledge I have gained in the classroom through the years of Chemistry classes, I also learned more advanced techniques as a research student beyond the scope of any

## **My Experience with the Honors Program at QCC: A Summer Internship at the DEP**

By Grace Song- currently a student at Queens College

My experience in the honors program at QCC has been amazing! QCC advocates the strengthening of educational knowledge through "hands on" experiences. Science is everywhere and continues to transform our world at an incredible pace. This is why Queensborough's research programs are extremely beneficial and a great way to take advantage of real world experiences.

Through the honors program, I was able to participate in a summer research internship at the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). I worked in the chemistry process laboratory, where wastewater samples are brought for testing to make sure that the water is sufficient enough

## **My Experience in Honors General Chemistry I: A Worthwhile Experience**

By Deokmi Ok, student

In my opinion, the Honors General Chemistry 151 class was a very rewarding experience. The honors class helps you improve individual skills and encourages the student to become a member of a cohort. Our instructor, Dr. Paris Svoronos, teaches students in a way that involves everyday applications so the student can appreciate the laws that govern chemistry, not just memorize formulae for the exam. He clearly establishes the main concept, and likes to have everything spelled out clearly. The small class size (20) allows the students to work on the blackboard

of my advanced classes. I was also given great opportunities to present our research findings that I obtained under the mentorship Dr. Sasan Karimi to fellow students and colleagues in conferences and the National ACS conference in Boston as well. It was very humbling to be around other student chemists who have similar goals as I, with the passion to learn and be scientists. I feel lucky to have been a part of this wonderful opportunity that helped expand my intellectual understanding of Chemistry on top of learning the basic skills I need to work in a research lab.

for the survival of aquatic life and may be discharged back into the outside waters. Through this experience, I was able to present at different conferences, two of which were even out of state. These were the 41st Middle Atlantic Regional Meeting in Wilmington DE (April 2010) and the 240th National American Chemical Society Meeting in Boston MA (August 2010). My research allowed me to make important contributions to the City while participating in a challenging and rewarding work experience. Working for the DEP was a great way to gain hands on experience for my continuing education in the sciences.

their problems and allows confidence to be established in the individual. The students enjoy the environment and clearly help each other in a constructive way. This Spring 2011 semester I am taking Honors General Chemistry II. I was selected by Dr. Svoronos to serve as a tutor and can firmly state that unless I had that training from my first class I would not have been successful. I learned how to be patient and understanding and appreciate the moment when I realize that my explanation has changed the mind of the person I tutor.

## Conducting Research at Queensborough: An Enlightening Experience

By Waddah Guneid, LS1 graduate fall 2010,  
Currently a Junior at York College

Research at the chemistry department at Queensborough has been a great experience as it has opened a new perspective on life. It showed me how to really look at a problem and understand the various, sometimes unique, ways to overcome those difficulties. I have conducted my research project with Professor Bruce Montalbano for two years– first on the determination of various lipids in milk and then on the determination of heavy metals in fish.

Research helps the interaction between the teacher and the student and gives the student a higher confidence in him/herself. The knowledge that you get from a mentor is uniquely valuable as it introduces you to the difficulties of life. I have presented my findings in seven conferences including two national ACS meetings.



When one gives his own presentation in front of students, faculty and other scientists it brings great honor to the person and the college. Now as a junior at York College I can appreciate the experience as it has changed in my life and to focus.

I owe it all to my mentors and professors for their time and effort to change my life.

## Taking Honors Chemistry Classes: The Way to Start Your Science Career

By Jonghyun (David) Kim, student

Taking my first General Chemistry class with Dr. Paris Svoronos as an Honors section has helped me in several ways. First, the size of the class, which is relatively small, allows the interactive learning between students and faculty. There is a greater chance for the professor to focus on the weakness of the individual student, which made me feel a little bit "uncomfortable" but it was all necessary and essential for me to get through. This is significant despite the fact that the material is more rigorously covered

Second, the students, who must take permission to be registered in the class, tend to be more focused and more involved which creates a great learning atmosphere since there is more Q&A taking place. Since the students ask good questions, the professor would explain the subject in much more detail which leads to better understanding.

I have since taken more honors classes both in Chemistry and Mathematics and have found the same pattern. I therefore recommend the Honors class to every person who is interested in learning and developing himself as a scientist.

## How the Honors QCC Courses in Chemistry help me at Queens College

By Mauricio Murillo – HS1 Graduate Fall 2010;

Currently a Junior at City College

During my academic years at Queensborough Community College I had the opportunity to become part of the Honors program. To me, this was a wonderful opportunity to challenge myself and work with students who had similar career paths as I do. More importantly, I had the privilege to learn under the supervision of brilliant, dedicated professors including Dr. Paris Svoronos and Dr. David Sarno. Under their guidance I built a strong foundation both in organic and inorganic chemistry. I believe the best part of being in the Honors Program is that the professors encourage you to chase your dream and are willing to help you as much as they can by providing ample amount of office hours and free tutoring.

In addition, as an Honors student I was given the chance to present at the Annual QC Honors Conference where students present their findings on research or assignments that have been given to them by their

professors. I feel that presenting in public builds our confidence and public speaking skills.

This was just the beginning as I conducted research in nanomaterials under Dr. Sarno. I presented my results at the Middle Atlantic Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society (ACS), an event that DuPont Co. sponsored in Wilmington DE, the Undergraduate Research Symposium of the ACS–New York at Adelphi University and finally at the National Meeting of the ACS in Boston MA last August 2010. In addition I was given the opportunity for a paid internship last summer at the Division of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Thanks to the Honors program I was able to graduate from Queensborough with an A.S. in Health Science and I was admitted into City College. My plan is to continue my education and someday become a useful contributor in the advancement of science.

## The Internship Brookhaven National Laboratory Opportunities at Queensborough: A Great Experience for a Successful Science Career

By Parsa Sharifi, a 2010 LS1 Graduate;

Currently a Junior at Queens College

The Honors program has been such a blessing to me during my career at Queensborough. When I first came to the college, I had a very poor GPA. However, thanks to the opportunities I was given by my mentor, Dr. Paris Svoronos, I accomplished a lot including completing several honors classes and graduating in May 2010. Through the honors courses, I gained a better understanding of chemistry and have been able to apply my knowledge in other areas of my studies. With tutoring, first on the recipient side and then on the conducting side I understood the material to a much greater depth. As a tutor, it helped in reinforcing what I learned from my courses and I was able to help my fellow peers learn the material much better.

In addition, I was nominated as an intern to the Brookhaven National Laboratory, first in the mini-semester experience in January 2009 and then as

FAST member during the summer of the same year. In addition, I conducted research in microscale determination with Dr. Svoronos. I presented the findings of both experiences at five different conferences. The most exciting was the oral presentation I had at the National American Chemical Society Meeting in Boston in August 2010. I was the only undergraduate to make an oral presentation to other professors from various colleges and universities throughout the country. As a result, I was given summer offers with industrial companies which I declined since my primary interest is to conclude my undergraduate studies at Queens College.

In conclusion, I believe that the opportunities I received from the Honors program in the Chemistry Department has changed my life and has given me hope and confidence to succeed.

## The Honors Program at QCC: Its Effect on My Current Career at Stony Brook

By Rana Said, Honors QCC Graduate LS1 2009;  
Currently a graduating senior at Stony Brook.

Being part of the honors program at QCC was a life changing experience for me. The smaller size classroom as well as the rigorous curriculum helped me develop great studying skills and a work ethic that got me far in my academic career. Through the challenges presented at this program I realized that I was a capable dedicated student willing to work hard and excel.

The honors program provided me with many unique opportunities such as a Chemistry research experience at an early stage of my college career, first with Professor Syamala Ranganathan and then with Dr. Soraya Svoronos. The lab experience helped me put theories into applications, test for data, come up with my own conclusions, gain deeper knowledge of the researched topic, as well as develop critical thinking. Although the topic was simple and involved the quantitative determination of first vitamin C in juices and then the antioxidant gallic acid in juices, I learned that consistency and obtaining

reproducible results were fundamental.

Furthermore, presenting the results of my research findings at a total of nine national conferences including two National American Chemical Society Conferences in Philadelphia and Washington DC, alongside with four-year college undergraduate and graduate students was a great opportunity to learn and share knowledge of a wide variety of scientific topics and discoveries.

I graduated from QCC with an AS degree in May 2009, and transferred to Stony Brook to pursue a BS degree in Pharmacology. I felt well prepared to pursue an extremely competitive program at a large university with further goals to apply to Medical school. Because of these research experiences I was selected for paid internships at the DEP (summer of 2009) and Stony Brook (summer of 2010). Honors program definitely helped me reach my highest potential as a student.

**THE HONORS PROGRAM** at Queensborough Community College is a comprehensive academic program that provides an enriched classroom and overall intellectual experience to students who have demonstrated high academic achievement. Honors scholars have an opportunity to expand their knowledge in areas of particular interest, to distinguish themselves among their peers, and to make an acknowledged contribution to the intellectual and cultural life of Queensborough. In this way, honors scholars develop the strong academic and leadership skills required in the pursuit of advanced degrees and challenging careers in New York City and beyond. Honors scholars take a combination of honors and non-honors classes, and may earn honors credits through honors contacts. To graduate as an honors scholar, students are required to complete successfully a minimum of 12 honors credits and have earned an overall 3.40 GPA. Transfer credits are not included. No special or extra fees or costs are required to register for honors classes.