

# HONORS NEWSLETTER

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## The Honors Program: Twelve Years after Its Inauguration

By Dr. Paris Svoronos, Chemistry

The Honors Department was first instituted in our college back in the spring of 2001 with a handful of students in hybrid courses. Four years later the first ever Queensborough Honors Conference was held with a total of about 80 participants. Last year the 8th Annual Honors Conference was held with a total participation of 243 students from 14 academic departments and a dozen participants from other CUNY colleges (Kingsborough, Bronx, New York City College of Technology) in 18 different rooms. The conference was supported by the presence of President Diane Call and Vice President Karen Steele, who made the opening remarks in a packed M-136 room. There were singing performances, oral presentations, a poster exposition, and an impressive array of robot demonstrations by the engineering students. There were rooms designated for the specific disciplines—several chemistry and biology rooms, a mathematics and computer science one, as well as an Italian and a business room. A handful of parents also attended and were proud to see their well-dressed, enthusiastic offspring confidently make their presentations in front of their professors and classmates.

Since the Honors program was first instituted in our college, students have overcome obstacles that were previously considered insurmountable. Biology students have won top awards in nationwide conferences. Chemistry students have clearly outnumbered every two- or four-year institution in professional meetings they have attended, including the American Chemical Society one since 2005. Business majors have

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excelled in competitions such as the Fed Challenge and the Mock Trial. Theater students have participated in several plays outside the college. And, the mathematics and computer science students have demonstrated their classes in state-wide competitions.

It is through this nourishing of young minds by dedicated, selfless professors that our students become the best ambassadors of our college. And, it is such priceless experiences that for our kids underline the concept that “in America nobody cares where you came from; everybody wants to see what you achieved.”

### 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.

### Conducting Honors Research with Students as an Adjunct: A Unique Experience at Queensborough

By: Professor Syamala Ranganathan

In my 30-year teaching experience, I had the opportunity to guide Honors students in chemistry research for the first and only time at QCC. It was quite impressive to see the active involvement of students and, the seriousness with which they engaged themselves in the task. It also was highly gratifying to me as a teacher. We had chosen to calculate the amount of vitamin C in the commercially sold fruit juices as well as fresh fruit. Starting with a collection of subject samples, processing, and testing gave all of us a first time

experience of the application of the chemistry we learned and taught. Furthermore, the experience of guiding the students in meticulous planning and using the sophisticated testing equipment, such as High Pressure Liquid Chromatography, bestowed me with satisfaction of imparting valuable knowledge to the budding scientists. The impact of learning in the Honors program was amply visible in the students when they enthusiastically prepared the posters and presented their work and findings to various professional American Chemical Society conferences. Indeed, it is an everlasting and memorable experience for me.

## My First Experience with Honors Contracts in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science

By Dr. Kwang Hyun Kim

When I was first approached by a student for an Honors Contract I did not know the difference between an Honors Contract and the (full) Honors Class until it was clarified to me by the Honors Program Director, Dr. Paris Svoronos.

Many of our students in the Differential Equations (MA 451) course are outstanding, and they are willing to do the extra activities required by the contract they signed with me. Unfortunately, I have agreed on only one Honors Contract, as I did not have any previous experience. The student, Victor Lozano, and I reviewed the entire course chapters to identify a topic for an Honors project. We selected the Tacoma Bridge story because of its importance in the application of linear ordinary differential equations.

After our encounter I got the feeling that Victor has the chance to look into the course materials from the instructor's viewpoint as he is preparing for his presentation.

I now believe that the Honors Contract is also very helpful to the instructor because it guides him or her to think beyond the class curriculum during the preparation of the Honors Contract. I have realized that the class lecture becomes richer than before, and I could even cover some topics beyond the course scope through the Honors project. I strongly recommend every instructor to participate in this endeavor, and I look forward to work with more students in the future.

## Mock Trial Team: Demonstration Of Portions Of A Mock Trial Case

By Professor Ted Rosen

This year, for the sixth straight year, Queensborough Community College's Mock Trial team competed in the American Mock Trial Association's national competition, in which, approximately 600 teams of students from colleges and universities throughout the country, including approximately four two year colleges, competed by trying the same case. This year we were presented with a civil wrongful death case based on a fatality which occurred during a scuba diving expedition. Students competed by serving as lawyers or as one of 10 witnesses. Team members presented opening and closing statements, introduced evidence, asserted objections to offered evidence, conducted direct

and cross-examinations, and role-played as witnesses in mock trials at which panels of three, volunteer lawyers presided as mock jurors and judges. At the QCC Honors Conference, team members will demonstrate opening and closing statements and direct and cross-examination.

The members of this year's QCC Mock Trial Team are: Shirley Aguilar, Benjamin Alagna, Julie Ann Belaustegui, Zymeena Chavis, Jia Cheong, David Quan, Chaojun Dong Ross, Chen Tao; Steven Telmaque and Frank Wu. The team's faculty advisors are: Professor Kelly Ford, Professor Leslie Francis, Professor Stephen Hammel, Professor Ted Rosen and Mrs. Bonnie Cook.

## Team Fed Challenge Team Gets Lessons in Economics from PBS Expert, Federal Reserve



Queensborough's Fed Challenge Team participated in the third annual Community College Fed Challenge Scrimmage with North Shore Community College and Gateway Community College, which hosted the event April 1 and 2 in New Haven, CT.

The goal of the scrimmage is for students to learn about and understand the complexities of the monetary process while honing their skills as presenters and team players.

Program highlights included remarks by Paul Solman, PBS economic commentator on Making Sen\$e. Mr. Solman spoke on the historical perspective of economic swings and the current economic situation.

Also attending the event was Albert Barnor, Economic Education Specialist, Federal Reserve Bank in Boston, MA.

The collegiate Fed Challenge has been held for a dozen years nationally. Queensborough was the first community college to enter the event nine years ago. Its objective is to promote understanding among college students of the Federal Reserve System.

The student presentations addressed the housing market, unemployment, inflation, and the Fed's accumulation of \$280 billion dollars in mortgage-backed securities of questionable worth.

The incentive to be part of the team—which requires many hours of preparation, including evenings and weekends— is to earn honors credits for business courses.

Queensborough's Fed Challenge team members are Girrell Banks, Cheng Tao, Ross Chaojun Dong, Hoa Khuu, Omar Carrillo, Jenna Acquaviva, Ee Shiun Hong, Lok Ting Suen, Benjamin Alagna, Christopher Orellana, and Zymeena Chavis. Faculty advisors are: Prof Ed Hanssen and Prof Ben Murolo.

## Expert Anatomy and Physiology Laboratory Workshops by QCC Honors Students

By Dr. Areti Tsiola

Two laboratory workshops were led by QCC Honors students Telisa Thompson and Maria Atanacio under the guidance of Dr. Areti Tsiola of the Department of Biological Sciences and Geology. The workshops were attended by students in the Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP) and Project Prize, which are two pre-collegiate, community outreach programs for students in grades 6–12 held on Saturdays at QCC. In the first workshop, students learned about the organs of the cardiovascular, respiratory, and digestive systems through dissections. The second workshop focused on the workings of vision, touch, and hearing in the human body.



The workshops were part of the Service Learning activities of Anatomy and Physiology II, coordinated by Dr. Sharon Ellerton. STEP faculty members include Dr. Simran Kaur, Dr. Joan Peterson, and Peter Campbell; Project Prize is directed by Sherri-Ann Simmons Terry.

**Queensborough Community College**  
Presents the  
**Eighth Annual Honors Conference**  
*Celebrating Student Research and Academic Life*  
**Friday, May 3, 2013**  
**12 Noon to 4PM**  
**Medical Arts Building – First Floor and Basement**

[www.qcc.cuny.edu](http://www.qcc.cuny.edu)



## Importance of Undergraduate Honors Research in Chemistry

By Dr. Julie Pigza, Chemistry Department

I am fortunate to be one of the mentors of research students who register for the Chemistry department's 900-level Honors courses in Independent Study. While students are exposed to lab work during their regular Chemistry classes, this alone does not adequately prepare them for a career in the sciences. Students only gain this perspective and insight by being involved in research with a mentor. At QCC, students are in a unique position to begin research in their freshmen year, which is not often the case for those in four-year institutions. The students who are mentored are involved in all aspects of the research project including developing new ideas and directions, reading literature references, and setting up and purifying reactions. Students get to learn advanced topics that they would not have been exposed to in an Organic Chemistry class. They also gain experience

with a variety of lab techniques and learn proper safety training while working with chemicals. Working one-on-one with a mentor provides students with insight into how to approach research, investigate a problem, pose questions, and develop solutions. In addition to lab work, the students also get to present their results in poster and/or PowerPoint format at both local and national conferences. These include the QCC Honors Conference, the Undergraduate Research Symposium (URS), the Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society (ACS), and the National Meeting of the ACS. All of these experiences arise from students participating in Honors research. Students develop lasting relationships with their mentors and often realize that they want to pursue a research-oriented career after all!

## Joining the Honors Task Force

By Prof. Tanya Zhelezcheva

Since I recently joined Queensborough Community College as a tenure-track Assistant Professor of English, I have been enthusiastic to learn more about all on-campus activities that help students reach their potential and fulfill their ambitions. When I joined the Honors Task Force, I was introduced to new ways of challenging and supporting students and allowing their work to become visible. All members of the Task Force are dedicated faculty who seek to support the students not just by explaining concepts and ideas but also by preparing them academic and professional future by making their research visible to the QCC community and nationally. This semester, twelve students from the Introduction to Literature classes I teach decided to sign Honors Contracts. Their projects are exciting. Students investigate challenging questions related to the literary works we study. They propose

hypotheses in response to the questions and sift carefully through the primary works in search of supporting evidence. The most interesting aspect of their project on poetry is the use of data visualization tools which allow them to read the poems in a rigorous manner and present the information visually. As students investigate their research questions and to test their hypothesis, they use four different types of data visualization tools: word tree, tag cloud, phrase net, and word cloud generator. I am excited to work with students who are up to the challenge and who are driven to develop their skills continuously with this digital humanities assignment. I look forward to working and supporting them as they develop their projects.

## Queensborough Community College Business Plan Team competed in the Regional Semi-finals for the New York State Business Plan Competition

On April 5, 2013, the Queensborough Community College Business Plan Team competed in the Regional Semi-finals for the New York State Business Plan Competition. This year was the first time Queensborough competed in the competition. The semi-finals were held at the New York Institute of Technology campus in Manhattan. QCC was represented by two teams, "Strive to Thrive" and "Right to the Point". The teams were coached by faculty advisors: Edward Hanssen, Christine Mooney and Ted Rosen. The team members were; Eric Bouldin, Ammar Burns, Yue Chen, Michael Glotsos, Benjamin Granados, Vashti Jagnarine, Tanjina Khair, Ian Lawson, Eric Wong and Hong Zhuang.



**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

### STUDENT REFLECTIONS

#### **A Summer Paid Internship at the DEP: A Hands-on Application of What I Learned in Class and Beyond**

By: Nicole Yu

At Queensborough I completed several Honors classes including Introductory Chemistry and General Chemistry I. During the summer of 2011 I was offered a paid internship at the Division of Environmental Protection (DEP) at Ward's Island via a grant for which Dr. Paris Svoronos served as the co-PI. This was an amazing opportunity, as I had a hands-on experience of what I learned in class in terms of measuring the pH and establishing the correct level of chlorine in water samples. Being in an equipped facility, which was surrounded by an assembly of trained technicians and scientists, provided me with a sense of experience in research. Each day, I worked closely with chemists who became my mentors and

were always willing to answer my questions and share their knowledge with me. Experiments were also done daily to test sewage water samples, and each day it was my responsibility to complete a task. I got the experience to learn to work with equipment and chemicals with safety always in mind. At the end of the program, I felt more educated and confident having been trained to work in a lab. In addition, I had the opportunity to present my results at three different conferences, including the Columbia Undergraduate Research Symposium and the National American Chemical Society Meeting in Philadelphia. I am currently conducting undergraduate research on an organic chemistry project under Dr. John Regan of the Chemistry Department.

#### **Conducting Research at Queensborough's Chemistry Department: An Opportunity for an Application of What I Learned in the Classroom**

By: Ju Ji Hyun Lee

During my freshman year at Queensborough I registered for Honors General Chemistry I, a course taught by Dr. Paris Svoronos, who introduced me to my current research mentor, Dr. Jun Ho Shin. His project deals with the refractive index of solutions and mixtures.

Refraction is the bending of light as it passes between media of different optical densities. As light passes through different materials, its speed is also changed, and refraction is observed. That bending angle depends on the material's refractive index, which is constant for pure substances under standard conditions. Our project focuses on measuring

the refractive index of organic solvents or their mixtures using an inexpensive laser pointer. We have succeeded in accurately measuring the exact concentrations of mixtures of solutions using this method.

This experience is part of the CH-911/912/913/914 Honors series and has given me the opportunity to present my findings at four different conferences during the spring and summer of 2012.

Furthermore, it has convinced me that I can succeed in four year colleges since I learned to be persistent in my goal of getting results that I can reproduce. The Honors program is a "must" opportunity for anybody whose goal is to graduate and transfer to a good four-year program.



## My Science Honors Experience at Queensborough

By Jeffrey Torres

As of today, I have a plenty to say about my experiences in taking Honors College courses. First, I like how my professors have assigned me additional work for which I have to approach those assignments by thinking outside the box. In addition, the intense level of the material serves as motivation for me to study it deep down, even if I have to read it multiple times. The daily homework that is assigned to me serves as a “trainer” to further aid me in understanding the material being covered during the lecture. Lastly, frequent quizzes prevent me from becoming rusty in something that I’ve learned during a lecture. However, accepting these challenges brings upon me higher levels of stress.

Despite previous experiences of taking honors and college-level courses during my high school years, I came to realize that Honors courses in college differ greatly from those that I took in high school, in terms of the amount of material and difficulty level. So far I have taken Honors classes in Calculus as well as in general Chemistry I and II, and that is during only my first two semesters. I know they will help me dramatically in my future. Overall, I’m certainly enjoying my experiences taking Honors College courses.

## Reflections of Taking Honors Classes at Queensborough

By Jiwon Seo

Throughout my time at QCC, and perhaps the preceding year, I had little control over my life. Things just fell into places whether I liked or disliked their consequences. It was the same with my classes.

I have taken and completed Honors General Chemistry and General Biology. I did not even know what was different in an Honors class, but these sections were the only ones that fit into my schedule. At the time, I was indifferent at best and disinterested at worst toward taking an Honors course. However, I realized that my classmates were a lot more motivated than the students of the regular classes, though still not that different in other ways.

In retrospect, however, I am coming to realize that something was different—very different—for Honors

classes. Same subjects, same books, and same lessons with the same people, yet I noticed different feelings.

As spirited professors in the axis, the entire class had an air of the dynamic passion toward academic and career interests not found in my normal classes. Everyone sitting in the room, regardless of his or her ability, desired to be there and wanted to get something out of the time. Simply put, it was a blessed environment in which to learn, an environment where you are not frowned at for being overly involved in the class but rather met by greater demands. I do not claim that the Honors courses at QCC are the best in the nation or even the state. I only firmly believe that the Honors classes should remain and be ready to respond, even

## Student Honors Program Reflection

By Lena Najjarian

The honors classes that I have completed at Queensborough Community College are Anatomy & Physiology (A&P) II, Introduction to Biology Research, and Independent Study and Research. Each of these classes has benefited me in many ways.

The Anatomy & Physiology II honors was a service-learning experience, and it allowed me to tutor and work with students who were currently taking A&P I. When taking a course which is divided in two parts, students tend to dissociate the two rather than seeing them as a linked subject. This may often hurt the students' cognitive abilities especially if students want to get into the medical field. However, A&P II Honors let me find the relation between these courses by reviewing and working with students on the topics they covered in class. Not only did this greatly help my interpersonal and leadership skills, it also reinforced my classroom knowledge and enhanced my studying habits.

My chemistry undergraduate research under Dr. Sasan Karimi, chair of the Chemistry Department, has helped me learn more about a topic through hands-on experience. Typically in traditional coursework, a professor is simply imparting facts about the topic. However, in research, the student is taught the topic by being involved in it. It has helped me in class because my knowledge from research allows me to better understand the discipline and have a better appreciation for it. It is learning through a discovery process that I believe has been very valuable.

All of the courses which I have taken were significant for my education. I have become more mentally stretched; in addition, the courses have given me a greater sense of accomplishment. The coursework has given me the opportunity to apply for a Physician Assistant. Taking honors classes has helped me prepare for the future by challenging my mind and enhancing my understanding in the field of science. I have immensely benefited from the wisdom, knowledge, and experience of my mentors.

## How the Honors Program has Changed My Outlook on Science

By Kaung (Zach) Myat San

My experience of taking the Honors classes granted me the opportunity to learn the most challenging lessons. By taking Honors courses, I gained more knowledge and confidence, and I was able to examine my real ability. Taking Honors classes does not require as much intelligence as it does effort. The effort is also one of the main essential components for completing one's academic goals and succeeding in a future career. After I took the Honors courses, I found myself more responsible for all of my classes' materials and more willing to be responsible.

The Honors classes gave me the confidence for pursuing the next level, and I have conducted two research projects with Dr. Paris Svoronos in Chemistry and Dr. Nidhi Gadura in Biology, with whom I earned a National award at the ABRCMS Conference. The Honors Program has changed my life because I was able to complete internships and attend conferences held in different states. I am also so sure that I have gained the skill of writing lab reports, which was always something I was afraid of doing. In addition, I teach STEP students on the weekends and have undertaken the very difficult job of changing younger students' lives.

## Presenting at the 8th Annual Honors Conference: The First Step toward a Professional Conference

By Ricky Loh

Last year, I was a multiple presenter for the Eighth Annual Honors Conference at QCC. It was quite hectic running around from room to room presenting the project upon which I toiled for the past year. Currently, it is that time again, and this is most likely my last time participating in the Honors Conference.

The Honors Conference allows a student the chance to participate in an extracurricular setting where he or she can share his or her research or report to an audience. This experience has proven to be beneficial to those students who are a bit shy or reserved in public. Also, when one spends so much time on a project, one would perhaps want to tell the "world" about it. The Honors Conference also requires students to hone skills in addition to public speaking, which they need to succeed in higher education and eventually

the workforce: the workings of a lab, proper citations for a report, writing an abstract, wading through search engines such as LexisNexis rather than looking at Wikipedia, and creating a coherent PowerPoint with charts and graphics. This experience does not cost anything except for a time commitment, and the knowledge gained is quite useful.

At the Eighth Annual QCC Honors Conference I presented for Honors General Chemistry II, and my internship experience at the Division of Environmental Protection, Biology Research, and Genetics. I subsequently presented posters at Columbia's Undergraduate Research Symposium, the ACS-NY Section Undergraduate Research Symposium, the Middle Atlantic Regional Meeting, and the National American Chemical Society Meeting.

## Taking the Honors Chemistry Class: The Consequence in My Academic Career

By Nahyun Kim

The best decision I have made since I got into this college was taking the Honors Chemistry course with Dr. Paris Svoronos. The class was never easy. I was often overwhelmed with exams that came after every one or two weeks. It also took me time to get accustomed to participating in the class. Dr. Svoronos wants students to come up to a blackboard and discuss the problems he gave as homework. At first, I was scared of making mistakes in front of him and the classmates. However, as the semester passed, I discovered that participating in the class actually helped me. The biggest change that happened to me after I finished this class is that I am now not afraid of anything else waiting for me in the future. His class gave me a confidence that I can do anything I want if I put my effort on it. Whenever I get

overwhelmed by something, I just think of my Chemistry class. It gives me a confidence that I can manage anything. Taking the Honors Chemistry class was a turning point of my college life.

Dr. Svoronos' interest in his students extends beyond the classroom; he introduced me to Dr. Kee Park with whom I conducted research on hydrogen fuel cells. This is an extraordinary application of what I learned in class. Our research findings were presented at the Columbia University Undergraduate Research Conference on Easter Sunday March 31, 2013. I am excited but not afraid. I know that I can and will be self-assured in this endeavor.

## A Reflection on the Honors Program

By Melody To

Dr. Paris Svoronos challenged me through an opportunity to begin taking Honors courses at Queensborough Community College; I did not expect to thoroughly enjoy taking part in these classes. He made it my goal to graduate with Honors by taking a total of 12 credits in Honors courses. I began by taking General Chemistry II last semester. I admit that it was a struggle for me. I was not used to the smaller class sizes and the extra work that we were required to complete. As time progressed, I started taking Honors classes in biotechnology and bioinformatics as well. I realized that these courses were truly benefiting me. I was getting hands-on experience in the lab and obtaining very valuable knowledge through my professors. Rather than taking classes simply to fulfill requirements, I loved attending because I was interested in what was being taught and eager to participate. It was also my pleasure to be surrounded by students who valued

similar ambitions and shared my love for learning.

Through the smaller class size setting, I have formed very close bonds with my peers such that we can help each other in our studies and research and are able to have intellectual discussions in correlation to class material. I feel that taking these Honors courses has better prepared me for my career goal of nursing by indirectly training me with the extra work load that is expected, and it has prepared and deepened my critical thinking skills when presented with new information that requires analysis. These priceless experiences and the significant knowledge that I have gained through the Honors program at Queensborough have been a true joy and a privilege. I am excited to take what I have learned from this program and apply it to the real life practice of my future career in nursing.

## Honors Chemistry and How It Changed My Academic Life

By Eun Jung Shin

I was just an inconspicuous student before taking Honors classes. I had nothing to mention on my resume, and I gradually lost my confidence as time went by. When I was encouraged to take an Honors class, my unconscious biases stopped me to make a prompt decision. I was afraid to do so because Honors classes, in my mind, were challenging courses with intense practice, studying with nerds, and difficult to get a good grade. However, after taking my first Honors class, General Chemistry 151 with Dr. Paris Svoronos, I realized that joining the Honors Program at QCC was the best decision in my life.

I met a lot of motivated classmates who supported me in and out of the classroom; the class discussions helped me understand the difficult concepts, and I received much more attention from professors. I have also been engaged in research under Dr. Jun Ho Shin, who exposed me to additional laboratory techniques and skills and allowed me to have a deeper knowledge of chemistry. My dream is slowly coming true with the support and encouragement from my great classmates and professors. I am taking a big step forward toward my dream.

## Serving as a Paid Intern for the DEP: An Honors Hands on Experience

By Feroz Ali

During the summer of 2011 I began an Honors Program-related internship at New York City's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that is located at Wards Island. This being my first internship, I was very nervous and had no idea what to expect. On my first day I felt a bit awkward, but everyone was so friendly and insightful. It was nothing like what I had pictured it to be. My supervisors took me in and treated me like an adult, and even though they knew I was an intern, they began teaching me as much as they could as if I were planning to be permanent in that position. I was taught how to repair and program instruments used by the DEP. I traveled all over New York City on a boat, seeing firsthand how the DEP monitors the companies'

waste waters, following standard protocols and regulations that help ensure the cleanliness of our water. Overall, the experience at the DEP was amazing. There was so much to explore that I never thought was possible, and it helped open doors for me and made me feel more comfortable about exploring other internships. Moreover, I was fortunate to make poster presentations of this opportunity and present my findings at two 2012 professional conferences—the Middle Atlantic Regional Meeting in Baltimore and the National American Chemical Society Meeting in Philadelphia. I believe that such experiences should qualify as part of QCC graduation, as they provide the necessary foundation for handling real world jobs.

## Honors General Chemistry II: Expanding my Academic Horizons

By Baljeet Kaur

I took Honors General Chemistry II during the Fall 2012 Semester. It was a great experience for me to take such a course. Even though it was not an easy experience, I was able to learn the material, which was explained to us in much more detail than the way it is usually taught in a regular class because it helped us think critically. It let me

expand my way of thinking from limited, dry concepts to complicated, involved problems. While taking CH 152, I started to work in a cohort with other ambitious students from whom I received some wise advice in improving my analytical thinking. Overall this was a great, fulfilling experience that developed me academically.

## Taking Honors General Chemistry II: The Honors to Research and Conference Presentations

By Loren Condon

During my second semester at Queensborough Community College, I was placed into Honors General Chemistry, CH-152, taught by Dr. Moni Chauhan. To say the least, the work was challenging. It was also my first class where the material was taught off a Power Point, and it took some time getting used to. As intensive as the class was, I thoroughly enjoyed the material. For the Honors conference, I completed a research project on the buffer systems in

human blood, and not only was it fascinating but also the knowledge carried over into my biology classes that I took over the next semester. This class also helped me learn skills for presenting scientific work that I used in my undergraduate research with Dr. Tirandai Hemraj Benny. Taking Honors CH-152 was a challenging but very rewarding experience and gave me the confidence to continue taking my education to the next level.



## Honors General Chemistry I: The Gateway Course for a Science Career

By Brianna Kane

The Honors General Chemistry I course was a challenging, yet very rewarding experience for me. Dr. Paris Svoronos taught the course, and his teaching methods encouraged extra study and full classroom participation. At first, I was hesitant to take on such an intense course, but the hard work led to a very successful journey that I was proud to have experienced. Dr. Svoronos is a hardworking, dedicated professor and he expects a lot of time and sacrifice from his students. In addition to classroom participation, Dr. Svoronos extends class time and assigns extra homework so that his students can grasp the material taught during class. I initially found this coursework rigorous and a bit difficult to adapt to because I lacked confidence and I had to sacrifice a great deal of leisure time in order to keep up with my studies.

Honors General Chemistry helped me to mature as a person, built my confidence and expanded my knowledge into the field of chemistry. While taking this course, I was also given the opportunity to conduct research regarding the "Determination of Gallic Acid In Teas and Other

Beverages Using High Pressure Liquid Chromatography". I conducted this research with several classmates under the supervision of Dr. Svoronos. I really enjoyed the camaraderie of my classmates and the teamwork concept while conducting research in the lab. We traveled to several professional conferences and presented our research findings. This research project really helped build my confidence and interest in the sciences.

The Honors General Chemistry course also provided me the necessary background to be accepted into the Bio Prep Research Project at Stony Brook University the following summer through the guidance of Dr. Nidhi Gadura of the Department of Biological Sciences and Geology. This was a one-month Biology research project focused on the "Characterization of Single Nucleotide Polymorphism Haplotypes Related to Cytochrome B in Various Populations". These experiences all emanated from the Honors General Chemistry course and have resulted in my pursuit and dream of a career as Physician Assistant.

## A Reflection on the Honors Program

By Krishna Melepura

My name is Krishna Melepura. This is my second semester doing research with my mentor Dr. Moni Chauhan. Our research involves the synthesis of silver metal nanoparticles. The nanoparticles were characterized via Transmission Electron Micrograph (TEM), Scanning Electron Micrograph (SEM), Electron Diffraction Spectrometer (EDX), and UV-vis spectrum. Being an undergraduate student, I had received the chance to see and use these instruments that I could only use in my graduate study labs. After I took General Chemistry II Honors class with her, I got the opportunity to work with Dr. Chauhan outside the classroom in her research lab. Working with her was a great experience, I have learned a lot. I have learned so many things during the

preparation of my presentation from my mentor. Also, this semester I am presenting at the Undergraduate Research Symposium at William Paterson University, NJ and City College, CUNY, American Chemical Society undergraduate symposium and in QCC Honors Conference. I believe that research will help me not only to achieve my goals as a student, but also achieve my goals as a professional as well. Undergraduate research will benefit me in my future endeavors and when going for higher education. Doing undergraduate research with my mentor is also giving me a sense of satisfaction and pride that is priceless. I am so happy that as an undergraduate student, I got an opportunity to explore the world of chemistry. In addition, I am looking forward to any possibility that comes my way.

## Being a Science Student at QCC: Taking Honors Opportunities in Biology, Chemistry and Mathematics

By Yueting Chen

This is the fourth semester I have been at QCC. During my first three semesters I completed Honors General Chemistry (I & II), Honors Calculus (I & II) and Honors General Biology (I). I am currently registered in Honors General Biology (II) and Honors Bioinformatics which will add up to a total of 28 such credits by the end of May. I need only 12 to graduate with an Honors certificate as long as my GPA is above 3.40. Nevertheless this will not deter me from taking more such classes in the future. Many people keep telling me that it is not necessary to take so many Honors classes, but I strongly believe that these classes will benefit me in the foreseeable future. People always fight against difficulties and

challenges in life, and taking as many Honors classes as possible is one thing I should pursue. Although more involved, I know that I can learn more because the sections are smaller and include students who share the same vision and very competent professors nurture us with passion. Because of my involvement with these types of classes I was offered to group tutor both in Chemistry and Biology. In addition I was awarded in 2012 a summer internship at the Division of Environmental Protection (DEP) where I applied what learned in the classroom, both in the quantitative determination of chlorine and coliform. Finally I know that upon transfer to other colleges, I will be more of an appealing candidate since all Honors classes will appear in my transcript.

## Application of Antioxidants in the Real World: A Hands-on Research Experience as Part of the Honors Program

By Sandy Enriquez

During my first semester at Queensborough I was given the opportunity to meet with Dr. Paris Svoronos who suggested that I work on a research project dealing with the determination of antioxidants in juice beverages which reduce cell damage caused by free radicals. Free radicals are reactive species that due to their instability seek to bond with other compounds, such as DNA, with health damaging consequences such as cancer and immunity dysfunction.

Gallic acid is the standard antioxidant used in wine industries, and therefore is used as a standard in this experiment. Its quantitative determination was tested in Arizona iced teas, Lipton green tea, Welch's and other beverages. My research findings were presented in four different conferences including the Columbia

Undergraduate Research Symposium and the National American Chemical Society meeting in Philadelphia, while I was still a freshman.

This experience was part of the Honors CH-911/912/913/914 series and gave me the opportunity to apply what I learned in concepts such as oxidation, and free radicals in real-life applications. Such honors courses in the chemistry department increased my knowledge as a student and have allowed me to build confidence when giving a presentation in other chemistry topics in front of other professors from four-year colleges. Now I know that such exposure reaffirms my hope that I will contributing to the scientific world of this country when I enter the work force.

## Queensborough's Honors Program: A Great Opportunity for Students who Plan to Have a Career in the Sciences

By Obiora Egbo

During my first semester at Queensborough Community College, I was introduced to Dr. Paris Svoronos by my CH 121 lab instructor and ever since then he became my mentor. I registered for his Honors General Chemistry I class in Spring 2012 and subsequently continued with Honors General Chemistry II. Dr. Svoronos made known to me the world of scientific research but it was not until my third semester that I became engaged with chemistry research, where it was proposed to me the theory to calculate the ionization constant of carboxylic acids by obtaining the van't Hoff factor of their solutions. I have been working on this topic for almost 4 months now and I have learned how to obtain consistency in my results which are penciled to be presented at the Columbia Undergraduate Research Symposium on March 31. Due to the

simplicity of this experiment and the use of Microscale quantities, I believe it is a technique that should be employed in chemistry classes to teach students.

In addition to these experiences I was invited to the BioPrep program during the summer of 2012 and was awarded a travel grant for the ABRCMS Conference in San Diego, CA last Fall. I was also asked and joined the Honors team that got a paid internship this summer at the DEP. This was an enlightening experience as I had the opportunity to see firsthand an application of what I learned in the classroom. I had a very busy summer, yet I was happy that I enriched my knowledge with a variety of these Honors opportunities. I believe that the Honor Program at Queensborough is a unique experience that every student should pursue.

## A Reflection on the Honors Program

By Chinara Feizullayeva

The word "research" can seem very daunting. You start to worry about your topic and how to go about your experiments. Anxiety of messing up fills your mind and you almost don't want to get through with it. But with a great mentor like, Dr. Chauhan, all your worries are set at ease and you are able to comprehend your responsibilities clearly. The experiments start making sense, and soon you don't want to leave the laboratory. Working with Dr. Chauhan has been a great learning experience. Nanoparticles

are complex and a fairly new phenomenon in the chemistry field.

Under the guidance of Dr. Chauhan, my partner and I were able to perform various experiments under different conditions in order to test the reliability of them. Getting the chance to present your research in front of others (undergraduate research symposium at William Patterson University, NJ; City College, CUNY and honors conference at QCC) is an opportunity undergraduates can only dream of. But with Dr. Chauhan it is a reality.

## ALUMNI REFLECTIONS

### My Unforgettable Experiences as an Honors Student at QCC

By Anuska Larkin

I graduated from the Honors Scholars Program at QCC in 2003. It is now almost a decade later, but it feels like just yesterday that I sat in Dr. Svoronos organic chemistry class eager to learn and to be challenged. I have so many memorable experiences that it is hard to just pick one...the most challenging and rewarding perhaps to work in undergraduate research and to be able to present my work with power point and poster presentations at the 51st ACS Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium, the 226th National ACS meeting at the Javits Center, and at the 36th MARM at Princeton University. I also competed in an ACS Chemistry Challenge against well-known 4 year colleges, and will never forget how happy and proud we all were when my team won first place. I also had the opportunity of a life time to attend the prestigious William H. Nichols Medal Centennial Dinner. These are only some of the highlights of the very rewarding experiences I was able to enjoy as an honors student at QCC. Looking back at all these wonderful memories I can honestly say that I would not be the person I am today if it weren't for QCC, the honors program and Dr. Svoronos never ending faith in me to succeed in life. I entered QCC as a very shy girl with very little confidence and mortified about speaking in public. The honors program opened many doors, helped me overcome many



*Mohammad Ahasan, Anuska Larkin  
and Jeremy Thomas*

*(Winners—American Chemical Society—Chemistry  
Challenge Competition, 2003)*

obstacles, and made me appreciate challenging situations in everyday life. I graduated summa cum laude with a B.S in Chemistry and I am now proud to say that I am a high school chemistry honors teacher who is no longer afraid to speak in public. My inspiration to be as passionate about teaching chemistry and to challenge and care about my students as much as Dr. Svoronos did for me and all his other students. My personal rewards and achievements when students tell me they plan to major in chemistry thanks to my class, when former students stop by to visit & tell me how much they miss my class or when a parent sends me an e-mail saying I've done a miracle by changing their child's

## From an Unguided High School Graduate to an American Chemical Society Scholar

By Kevin Chavez

I have tasted failure only to come back wiser and stronger. My first semester as a freshman was when I took the hardest hit. I passed only half of my classes that term as a Mechanical Engineering Technology major at QCC. However, it gave me a wake-up call that cleared the blur I had of the correlation between education and the choices I would make for the rest of my life. Although I truly wish I could have done things better, I can honestly say it has improved my focus, motivated me to increase my GPA, and involved me with both school and, most importantly, research in a laboratory. However, this wake-up call was not literally a sudden realization. It was through challenges and the perseverance presented in the Honors courses.

When I started in the Chemistry Honors Program, I lacked guidance, and it was only through the director of the Chemistry Honors Program (Dr. Paris Svoronos) that I got the chance to prove my discipline and began to hunger to make something out of my life. The Chemistry Honors Program did more than offer me this chance; it has allowed me to look forward in hopes for a brighter future. As a recipient of the benefits of the program, I was able to conduct research in the organic synthesis and characterization of bisphosphonates under Dr. Luis Vargas and research through scientific publications. I have been able to present my work at over ten conferences-ranging from Columbia University to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society to the National American Chemical Society Meeting.

This success has also pushed me to go further on in my scientific pursuit and take additional honors courses in biology and be selected to work under a project funded by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. As a result, I have conducted formal research in both the Chemistry Department and the Biology Department, something that has molded me to gain discipline. I have been able to bond with mentors through the small class size that the honors program offers. Moreover, I was able to conduct research at both a microbiology laboratory at the NYC DEP and a chemistry laboratory at Brookhaven National Laboratory. In the end, I was invited as one of six students at BNL's Chemistry Department to deliver an oral presentation, in addition to a poster presentation.

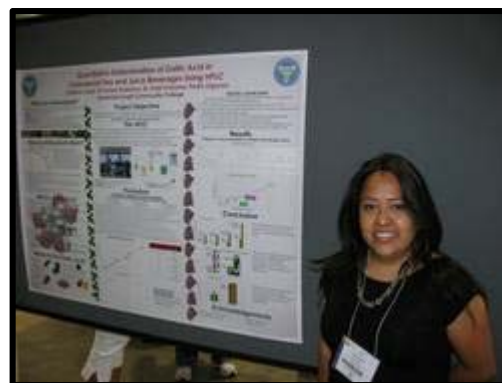
Now I am a Stony Brook University student, an American Chemical Society Scholar and a MARC Scholar. These opportunities became a tangible experience because of the foster and academic support that the Honors Program, through Dr. Svoronos, has provided me. It was only because of this program that I was able to receive this wake up call, and I know it has done the same for many others. My long term plans include going to medical School and, in fact, I plan to take the MCAT exams this May. My message to all students who have dreams is to join the Honors Program.



## From the Honors Program at QCC to Working as Physician Assistant at New York Presbyterian Hospital

By Christine Casas PA-C

I was extremely fortunate and proud to be part of three QCC Honors Program 4 years ago. I still consider it as one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences that I feel prepared me for future challenges in my academic and professional career. It gave someone who previously had no interest in science a new found love for chemistry and biology and the skills to conduct, prepare and present research at regional and national conferences. The program and Dr. Paris Svoronos taught me not to give up when a problem seemed too daunting, to face it head on so that I would never forget how I solved it and apply it so I would never get it wrong again. I carried that philosophy with me through two years of the Physician Assistant program at York College and still carry it as I begin my career at New York



Presbyterian Hospital. When asked for advice on where to start when considering a career in science or medicine I always tell them to check out QCC and their science program because without it and the Chemistry Department I would not be where I am today.

## From Queensborough to City College: How the Honors Program Helped me Graduate with a B.S. in Chemical Engineering Degree

By Tavyaba Nassar

My very first Honors experience at Queensborough was in Introductory Chemistry, CH 120/121 with Dr. Soraya Svoronos as my instructor. It was then that I made my very first oral presentation at the 4th Annual Honors Conference. I then continued with Honors General Chemistry I and II and completed Honors Research CH 901/902/903/904, thus graduating with an Honors certificate.

I conducted research under Dr. Paris Svoronos and Mr. Pedro Irigoyen on the "Microscale Determination of the Ionization Constant of a Carboxylic Acid," presenting the findings in six different conferences including two National American Chemical Society Meetings. When I first joined Queensborough I was a timid young mother whose dreams of becoming an engineer appeared too far-fetched.

The Honors experience at QCC has been an enjoyable one, through which I never thought that I would gain so much skill at a community college the way I did. Skills such as becoming familiar with the concept of research, how to write a report, and presenting at a conference, built my confidence. The Honors classes were challenging, yet I looked forward to going to class every day because I was not bored. I appreciated being challenged to reach my potential.

In my first class at City College, Intro to Chemical Engineering, the Professor placed a reaction on the board and asked who knew what happens. I was the only one who knew the answer. I did not have it memorized, but I knew what approach to take, and that is what I have walked out of Queensborough with, and that was enough to go forward. I graduated with a degree in Chemical Engineering, and I am now working while still raising two children.

## Alumna Statement

By Marjorie Morales

Coming into the Honors Program has opened many doors I would never have dreamed for myself. The program offers specialized services for students; among its advantages are the peer-led tutoring workshops from students who have done far more than survive the courses in previous semesters—they have excelled in them. Taking Honors courses has made it possible for me to interact with professors and has helped me feel more experienced. When I began taking my first course for General Chemistry I Honors, I had one such tutor who, among many things, pushed me to work out problems on the board, offered career advice, and shared what a science degree and background can do for a student's career.

But it was more than these tutoring sessions that allowed me to thrive in the Honors Program; it was my mentor and the program coordinator, Dr. Paris Svoronos, who is really responsible for uncovering the potential of students and positively molding their character. Dr. Svoronos is a distinguished professor who leads by example not by preaching; his persistence inspires student to push and exceed above their limits. As I realized the responsibility of the Honors courses, they appealed even more to me.

## Working on a Summer Internship at the DEP: A Most Valuable Hands Experience

By Mobolaji Giwa

I was recommended to work on a paid internship at the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) during the summer of 2011 as part of an Honors experience. Most of my work was done with the Marine Science Department, and I was fortunate to get an insight into a real-world science job. This internship helped with the training and formalities associated with a job, such as professional ethics, punctuality, and repeating an experiment until I obtain consistency in my findings. Our group went to different harbors and tested the waters for various microbial activities and colonies such as some normal flora, E-coli, yersinia, paramecium, and some mycobacteria. Fecal matter was tested through a membrane filter method.

In addition, the Honors instructors, such as laboratory professor, Dr. Sarno, are a brilliant class of professionals whose organization, insight, and intellect give the courses the honorable reputation that they have today. While conducting research with Dr. Vargas, I was able to present my work in numerous conferences and receive mentorship from a hardworking, warm, and wise professor who believed in me and pushed me to develop my abilities to conduct independent research.

I believe that if it were not for the Honors Program offered in Queensborough Community College, I would not be where I find myself today. It offers students a great opportunity to conduct research, an advantage unheard of in other community colleges around the nation. This exposure to research opportunities has opened many doors for me to develop my research skills in federal and nationwide institutions, such as the Microbiology Laboratory at the NYC Department of Environmental Protection and the Medical Department at Brookhaven National Laboratory. I am more than grateful for what the Honors Program has provided for me, the skills it helped me develop, and the friendships I have forged with both students and faculty.

Also, we learned how to use a computer-based pH meter and performed some tests that measure the turbidity and dissolved oxygen in water. This internship actually incorporates direct applications from biology, microbiology and chemistry. I presented my experience at three different conferences in the spring of 2012. These were Columbia University's Undergraduate Research Symposium, the 43rd Middle Atlantic Regional Meeting in Baltimore, and the National American Chemical Society Meeting in Philadelphia, in addition to the 8th QCC Annual Honors Conference. I am currently a junior at York College's Pharmaceutical Sciences Program, and I feel that I learned so much from that Honors experience at the DEP.

## From Queensborough to New York University: How the Honors Program helped me Achieve this Transition

By Mario Balducci

At first I was very disappointed that I would be starting my college career at a community college. I was very wrong. At Queensborough I was able to get involved in several experiences that developed me into a competent student at New York University.

I was first introduced to Dr. Paris Svoronos by Dr. Soraya Svoronos, his wife, who taught me introductory chemistry. I registered and went through the difficulties of his Honors General Chemistry where I was subjected to a large number of quizzes and the task of solving problems for the class on the blackboard.

In addition I requested and was granted the opportunity to participate in research also under Dr. Svoronos. My project dealt with the determination of the ionization constant of carboxylic acids using microscale techniques that were particularly sensitive. I learned how to evaluate and fix mistakes which increased my confidence and way of thinking. I presented my findings in 2011 at different conferences such as Columbia's Undergraduate

Research Symposium, the 42nd Middle Atlantic Regional Meeting at the University of Maryland and Einsteins in the City at City College. I was also asked to tutor General Chemistry II to groups which served as the first step of my eventual goal of becoming of science teacher.

In addition I was also very much involved with the Education and Biology departments, working with faculty on education grants to develop and facilitate new curricula. My efforts were acknowledged by great professors, such as Dr. Patricia Spradley and Dr. Regina Sullivan in addition to both Dr. Svoronos. All of them helped and enabled my nomination and receiving of a scholarship to my current university New York University where I am finishing my junior year. I can sincerely and affirmatively state that I would have never received this opportunity and been able to survive at NYU from the start if it were not for my foundation that was methodically built at Queensborough, courtesy of both the Education and Chemistry Departments.

## From Being an Education B.A. to a Graduating Physician Assistant Student: How the Honors Program at Queensborough Community College Helped Me Succeed in This Transition

By Kyuree Lee

I came to Queensborough Community College as a post-baccalaureate student after earning my B.A. in Education at SUNY-Geneseo with the intent to continue with a degree in the Health Sciences. I have met Dr. Paris Svoronos who served as my advisor in this endeavor. He recommended that I take several Honors classes including General Chemistry I and II, as well as Biology, Calculus and Chemistry Research. The Honors Curriculum has shaped me to be a better student and has helped me attend one of the more competitive Physician Assistant programs in New York at Pace University.

I am expected to graduate on September 9, 2013. I once thought an education from a community college would not be able to provide the high quality of background needed to excel. I happened to be very wrong about that assessment. The expectations from the Honors Programs were high and the outcomes prepared me for the workload expected from top graduate schools. By the time I left QCC, I had become a better science student because of the demands that were placed on me by the faculty. I owe my successful transition to the QCC Honors Program.

## Alumna Statement

By Asma Khetani

The Honors Program at Queensborough Community College gave me an opportunity to explore and find a suitable career path. The program is designed to push students to go beyond their limit, which in the long run helped me become more disciplined and distinguished in any area of study. While in the program, the tremendous support from the professors and my peers gave me the confidence that I felt at times lacking in me. The program also opened up the possibility of conducting organic chemistry research under the guidance of Dr. Sasan Karimi

## My First Honors Power Point Presentation: How It Changed my Life

By Deokmi Ok

When Dr. Paris Svoronos suggested that I register for Honors General Chemistry I, the first feelings that came to me were nervousness and excitement but also a sense of accomplishment and challenge. In that course I was forced to participate in class by coming to the blackboard and explaining (in English!) the solution to problems. During the next semester in Honors General Chemistry II my professor, Dr. Moni Chauhan, stated that every student should make a presentation at the Annual Honors Conference. After I heard that I got even more nervous because English is not my mother tongue and achieving this task was, I believed, beyond my abilities. While I was researching my topic, I found that there was a very strong relationship between chemistry, our

where I also attended conferences to present research findings. The bench research experience was exciting and helped me come to a realization that I would like to conduct or be in some way connected to the field of research in the future. After graduating from QCC, I attended Hunter College and attained Bachelors in Biology and Studio Arts. I am currently applying to Physician Assistant schools. The learning experience that I gained at QCC has become the root of who I am today and the credit goes all to the Honors Program and the faculty who fashioned me to never stop striving for higher studies.

body and our lives. This “discovery” excited me, and it encouraged my drive. My topic was on the blood buffer system which is regulated by Le Chatelier’s principle and allows the constant pH in the blood stream by exhaling carbon dioxide. Through my classmates’ encouragement, I managed to calm down and had my very first oral presentation, something I am still proud of. I am currently continuing my studies at York College with the goal of becoming a physician assistant but I also conductor group tutoring sessions in Organic Chemistry I and II at Queensborough. So it was only through Honor Conference that I felt the sense of accomplishment and I became a person who tries new things without fear.

## Being a Member of the Honors Program at QCC: A Reflection Ten Years Later

By Amidat Adeyemi

As a newly arrived young immigrant in the United States, I encountered similar hurdles faced by many in assimilating into the American culture and education. Attending Queensborough Community College was a choice I made because it was close to home. As is common with any big school, initially I felt like a mere number. However, all that changed when I began taking the General Chemistry classes at the college. Soon I became a part of a department of dedicated professors, staff, and students and was given the opportunity to engage in research very early on in my education through the QCC Honors Program. As an educator and a prospective medical student, I have come to understand the value of this early opportunity. I conducted research



under Dr. Paris Svoronos and presented my findings at the National ACS meeting. I was able to include these accomplishments in my application to graduate school and to discuss them in my interviews at medical schools. The skills that I learned during the Honors Program proved useful during my graduate school years at Georgia Tech, and I can truly say that it is an opportunity that I have come to value more each day.

## Conducting Nanochemistry Research at Queensborough: An Honors, Hands-on Experience

By Bhawanie Persaud

When I started my college career I did not know what my academic plans were, so I took classes in different fields for the first two semesters. One of the first science classes I took was Honors General Chemistry I with Dr. Paris Svoronos. This class was what really sparked my interest in the sciences because I could understand and explain why simple things occur in everyday life. With my newfound interest in chemistry, I continued to take other courses in chemistry and biology and was given the opportunity to transfer what I learned in the classroom into laboratory research under the mentorship of Dr. David

Sarno. With this opportunity I was able to be involved with novel research in nanotechnology. In addition, I was able to travel to both local and national chemistry conferences where I presented my research data, both orally and via a poster, and interacted with other students who shared similar interests and goals. I would like to add that it is the experiences of the past that shape our future. Therefore, I am honored to have had these life changing opportunities from QCC, and because of this I am close to getting my BS in Biotechnology at York College. Thank you, QCC.

## Starting My Studies in Chemistry at Queensborough: The Role and Importance of the Honors Program in my Academic Career

By Hoda Mirafzal

It almost seems like yesterday when I entered QCC's Honors Program and took Honors General Chemistry I with Dr. Paris Svoronos. Who would have thought that only 9 years later I would be standing in front of an auditorium full of students at Florida State University teaching back the same course I learned in S415 in 2002? And that is where my journey has led me. After graduating from Queensborough with an LS1 degree in 2003, I transferred to Cooper Union where I earned first my B.S. and then my Ph.D. with a graduate fellowship at the University of California, Merced, 6 years later.

Everything started from an honors chemistry class at QCC, which sparked a strong interest and took me through the ups and downs of choosing the right



major, graduate school, and research, and it ended with one of the most rewarding careers there is: a teacher. As a teaching professor, I now influence the academic journeys of so many other students, perhaps in the same way that QCC's Honors General Chemistry influenced my journey. After all, what goes around comes around.



## My Honors Experience at Queensborough Community College: Once an Organic Chemistry Sufferer, Now A Grateful Alum

By Lorena Gomez B.

My honors experience at QCC was an amazing learning journey. The smaller, interactive classes made all the difference between just memorizing material to pass a class and really understanding and relating class to everyday life. The dedicated professors were a key piece in my success by awakening my mind and inviting me to think beyond the norm. Professors also took extra time to provide us with other means to learn and to grow by introducing us to research projects and science conferences which nurtured our presentation and research skills. That personally has come in handy in my current professional life.

And lastly, the bonds created with our classmates and professors grew into friendships that remain strong until today. Overall, the direct and indirect benefits from the Honors Program go well beyond the classroom and definitely set you apart and above the rest. My research experience involved joining the Bridges Program with Dr. Patricia Schneider in the Biology Department. I presented my research findings in several conferences nationwide and have realized that I am as good as these four-year college students. Upon transferring to Stony Brook, I noticed that such experiences are rare among undergraduates.

## From Honors Courses at QCC to John Jay's Forensics Program

By Deandra DaCosta

In moving to the United States I had big dreams, and every time I made one step closer to one such dream I would take two steps back. Before I moved to New York I was certain that I wanted to be a forensic scientist, and I knew exactly which school I wanted to attend. When I was not accepted into my school of choice I thought I was settling when I joined Queensborough Community College. Little did I know, I was about to embark on the best years of my college experience.

While at Queensborough several opportunities came my way. First, I became involved in research with the Biology Department and in the process made the Dean's List five consecutive semesters. I was even more thrilled when I was offered the chance to become a part of the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honors Society.

Also, I presented my research findings at several American Chemical Society meetings, including the National ACS Meeting in Philadelphia in August 2012.

I really cannot summarize my experience at Queensborough in a few short lines, but I can state that with the push from dedicated professors I became a dedicated student. Being a part of PTK allowed me the privilege of having scholarship offers and eligibility from schools all across the United States. Because of my Queensborough Honors experience I became a valuable commodity to other schools. Now, I walk around John Jay's campus feeling like an equal and proud to be an Honors graduate of Queensborough Community College.