

# HONORS NEWSLETTER

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## How Conducting Research and Taking Honors Classes Have Led to Paid Summer Internship Opportunities at Prestigious Colleges and Universities

By: Paris Svoronos, Professor, Chemistry Department

The National Science Foundation awards a number of Summer REU internships to well reputed institutions that invite exceptional students to conduct supervised research over the summer. The award includes approximately \$4,500-5,000 for an 8-10 week (June-August) period that also includes free housing and, in most cases, transportation. Naturally juniors and seniors are a first choice and community college students are rarely invited. The acceptance rate is in the order of about 5-8% (10-12 awards to more than 200 applicants per institution). Successful awardees must have (in addition their good GPA) conducted some form of research with professional presentations on record. Strong recommendation letters emphasizing more than the fact that they got As and heavily edited statements are the primary reason for a successful candidate.

Our college was one of the first ever community colleges nationwide to be fortunate with its students' applications. The first one ever was bestowed in 2005 to Rosa Rosales, who spent her summer at Cornell University. Since that time students have been accepted (in addition to Cornell) at Stony Brook University, Binghamton University, Hope College, Georgetown University, Princeton University, University of South Dakota, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Rutgers University and Iowa State University. This year, and for the first time, every single student of the eight applicants has made it with several of them having earned multiple offers in various fields. These are:

1. Yueli Chen --> will be joining Boise State ID program on "Center of Materials Science and Sustainability" (currently conducts research under Dr. Paul Sideris in Chemistry)

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

2. Yi (Jane) Jiang --> will be joining Vanderbilt University – Chemical Engineering. She declined Boston University's "Fundamental Research in Chemistry Addressing Problems in Biology" (currently conducts research under Dr. Sujun Wei in Chemistry)
3. Daysi Proano --> will be joining Princeton University's Biophysics REU program (conducts research under Paris Svoronos)
4. Weijing Gu --> will be joining University of South Dakota's program in Nanochemistry.
5. Landen Kwan --> will be joining Binghamton University's Nanochemistry REU program. Has declined a Chemical Engineering program at Penn State University (has conducted research under Dr. Kee Park).
6. Francisco Caban --> will be joining Binghamton University's Nanochemistry REU Program (conducts research under Dr. Sujun Wei)
7. Hyo Jung Shin --> will be joining University of Connecticut's summer REU Program. Has declined University of Memphis' offer (conducts research under Dr. Jun Shin).
8. Silvia Salamone --> will be joining the nanochemistry REU program at the University of Connecticut. She has declined similar offers by both the University of South Dakota and University of Rochester.

This success lies in the joined effort of several faculty who have taken these students under their wings and have pushed them to the next level of a successful career. Naturally the STEM CUNY research program will enhance the future students' resume and will eventually repeat this exceptional success which promotes the image of our college and CUNY at large.

## Office of Academic Affairs - Honors Program

### **Administration Building, Room 503, 718-631-6344**

The Honors Program at Queensborough Community College is an academic program that provides an enriched classroom and an overall intellectual experience to students who have demonstrated high academic achievement. Through various activities Honors scholars have the opportunity to expand their knowledge in areas of particular interest, to distinguish themselves among their peers, and to make acknowledged contributions to the intellectual and cultural life of Queensborough Community College. Such activities include enrollment in specialized Honors sections, uniquely established independent studies and research experiences under a professor's mentorship. Through this program honors students develop the strong academic and leadership qualities and skills that carry them through to advanced degrees and challenging careers. Honors students have also presented their work at professional conferences in their academic discipline. Honors students at Queensborough have found their work enhances their applications for transfer to baccalaureate programs and for competitive scholarships.

Students who are interested in joining the Honors Program or taking Honors classes must meet the following criteria:

- Students may take Honors courses or request an Honors Contract if they have completed a minimum of 9 college credits with a minimum GPA of 3.40.
- Students who wish to take Honors classes but whose GPA is below 3.40 may do so with a recommendation from an individual faculty member or a department chair, as long as they have demonstrated a significant strength in the discipline for which honors enrollment is requested.
- Incoming students with a strong high school background may take an Honors class, with special permission from a faculty member, department chair or the director of the Honors program. Incoming students should present their credentials to the director of the Honors Program.

Honors contract students must take a special Honors Library Literacy workshop. All completed Honors courses are designated as such on the college transcript. To graduate with an Honors certificate a student must have completed a minimum overall GPA of 3.40. Honors certificate graduates are recognized at the annual commencement ceremony.

### **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.

### **Honors Contracts in Introduction to Literature, Creative Writing Fiction and Advanced Fiction Writing**

By: Dr. Jan Ramjerdi, Associate Professor, English Department

My involvement in the QCC Honors Program is one of the most stimulating and rewarding experiences of my career as a fiction writer and English professor. I have had the pleasure of participating in the program since Fall 2012, working with nineteen talented, high-achieving students in my Introduction to Literature, Creative Writing Fiction, and Advanced Fiction Writing courses. Their Honors Projects are original short stories of such excellence that seven have won awards, five have been published, and two are under publication consideration. The Honors Program has given me the opportunity to work

one-on-one with these talented young fiction writers, teaching them advanced narrative techniques; offering strategies for creating, developing, and editing stories; preparing and submitting stories for publication and award consideration, and presentation at the QCC Honors Conferences; introducing them to contemporary fiction writers; and encouraging them to pursue the academic and professional opportunities available to young fiction writers. The rewards for me are the creative stimulation of acting as a mentor to these talented writers, and contributing to their success as students and writers.

## Teaching Honors Calculus I and II

By Dr. Roza Rusinek, Professor, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science

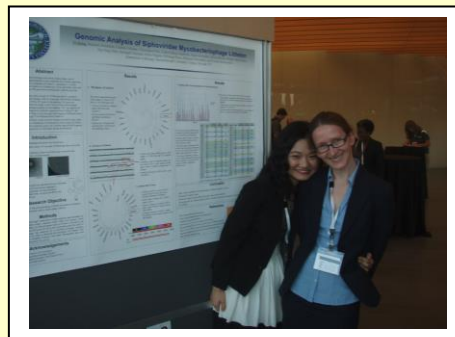
Having an Honors Program at a community college is especially significant. Pursuit of a career degree or learning a trade is very commendable and of great value. Engaging in an honors class goes further: it is the pursuit of knowledge for the sake of knowing. Being recommended to Honors Program, sends a message to the student: you can do more than the basic minimum, open your mind, widen and elevate your aspirations. My colleague, Dr. Daniel Garbin, in his current Honors Calculus I class, approaches the subject more theoretically than in a standard section. He is exposing his students to the rigor – and beauty – of a mathematical proof. Since the inception of the

Program in 2001 I had the privilege to teach Honors sections of Calculus I and Calculus II a number of times. I remember a young woman in my Honors Calculus I class who was working on a project involving Chebyshev Polynomials - not an item on a standard calculus syllabus. At first the topic was intimidating; she seemed shy to even pronounce the name, Chebyshev. By the time of that year's Honors Conference the timidity was gone; she made her presentation with ease and confidence. I would like to think that the experience had served her as a larger lesson of how insecurity can, with perseverance, turn into confidence.

## The Howard Hughes Medical Institute Association with Honors Biology II

By Dr. Urszula Golebiewska, Associate Professor, Department of Biological Sciences and Geology

I am teaching the Honors section of General Biology II (BI-202) course since the Spring 2011. One of the major components of my honors class is being a part of the Phage Hunters project run by Howard Hughes Medical Institute. My students perform bioinformatics research of Mycobacteriophage genomes, generous gifts from schools involved in the project. Teaching the honors class and mentoring the students involved in nationwide research project is the highlight of my work at QCC. Every year one of the students presents the class data at annual SEA-Phages symposium in HHMI Janelia farm. As of now every year our presentation won an award, proving that QCC students can perform equally well and compete with students from senior colleges around the country. Every year our students give a presentation during QCC honors conference practicing their skills and sharing their discoveries. It is a pleasure to watch these young,



so far my students were co-authors on two publications associated with the Phage project and co-authored two Gene Bank submissions of Mycobacteriophages EricB and Phaux (two further submissions are currently under review). I am looking forward to seeing the honors presentations this year.

## Bioinformatics: The Future of Molecular Biology

By Dr. Peter Novick-Department of Biological Sciences and Geology

In my five years of teaching at Queensborough Community College, I have been fortunate enough to have students present at all five annual conferences. To date, 60 students have completed my BI357 Honors Bioinformatics course, two thirds of which presented at the Honors Conference. This upper level course is designed to challenge students to think creatively, collect and analyze molecular data, and organize a hypothesis driven PowerPoint presentation detailing what they have learned about a gene/genes from a bacterium of their choosing.

Since 2012, this course has been run in consortium with the Department of Energy's Joint Genome Institute annotating a diverse list of bacterial genes. Students who sign up for this course are highly motivated to go above and beyond the basics conducting a research project that they can call their own. The annual Honors Conference is always very rewarding to the students and their faculty mentors, and I will continue to participate in this highly beneficial program.

## Teaching Introductory Honors Chemistry at Queensborough Community College

By Dr. Dominic O. Hull, Lecturer, Department of

As a new faculty member at Queensborough Community College, I was assigned the Introductory College Chemistry (CH-127) honors class. At first, I was bit nervous about teaching the course as I have never taught an Honors level course. Immediately, upon my interacting with the honors students all my fears fell away. These students brought a great deal of passion, work ethic and enthusiasm for chemistry with them every day to class. While covering various subjects in chemistry, the students routinely asked in depth and probative questions about the chemical concepts being address and how it relates their daily lives. I found these students to be highly motivated and dedicated to chemistry. When asked

to select topics for their honors presentations, I received a wide spectrum of topics ranging from nuclear chemistry to solar panels. Each student then formulated titles for their presentations and wrote abstracts describing the topics they will present. In the fall 2014, my honors students each gave presentations on their selected topics. I was completely impressed at the level of background research done to learn about the topics and how comfortable most students were at presenting the materials. Teaching Honors students has been and continues to be a great revelation for me. I know that they will be great ambassadors for Queensborough Community College as they pursue their career goals.

## Alpha Sigma Lambda National Honors Society

By Professor Sebastian Murolo/Associate Professor/Business

Alpha Sigma Lambda is the National Honor Society for evening Honors students. This society honors those dedicated students who, while adroitly handling their life responsibilities, achieve and maintain high scholastic standards. The criteria for students to be included in this society are maintaining a minimum GPA 3.2 overall; have completed at least 30 evening credits at Queensborough Community College (QCC); have attended QCC four a minimum of four semesters excluding summer sessions and have not been awarded an Associates or Baccalaureate degree before joining Queensborough.



## Learning to Think Critically: A Goal of the Honors Program Library Workshop

By Prof. Suzy Sciammarella / Associate Professor/ Library Department

Students often ask when they come to participate in the Honors Program Library Research Workshop, “Why do I have to be here and take this Workshop?” The response is “To help you, as the researcher, to think critically.” Thinking critically is the core skill for evaluating, selecting and using sources effectively.

Everyone uses critical thinking skills daily. When going to the Internet to purchase an item, the shopper carefully scans sites to see what would be the best bet in terms of price and quality. We find ourselves clicking page after page to view additional choices. We want to make sure we are getting the “best deal.”

Students are encouraged to apply these existing skills to academic research not just to take what comes up on the first page, but look and apply certain criteria to each source to determine if the information provided would make a good choice for their research project.

Other aspects of the Workshop cover online database searching, interlibrary loans, use of the CUNY online catalog for finding books and e-books, plus a discussion on citing sources to learn how to use them in a legal and ethical manner.

The Workshop is a beginning dialogue that hopefully will be continued throughout the researcher’s life. Learning to think critically is a lifelong learning skill.

## Teaching Honors Classes in Biotechnology and Genetics

By: Dr. Nidhi Gadura, Associate Professor, Biological Sciences and Geology

The QCC Honors Program is an excellent tool for our students to excel. It provides them with opportunities that they might not otherwise have. Students learn to work hard and understand that they can accomplish anything they set their minds to. I have had the pleasure to mentor a lot of students under the honors program at QCC in Biotechnology and Genetics classes. It adds a lot of extra work for both faculty and students during the semester, however, the rewards at the end of the semester are amazing. Students gain a sense of pride and accomplishment which might be capstone experience at QCC but only a stepping stone later in their careers.



## Teaching Honors Spanish II (LS-112)

By: Dr. Eladia Raya, Associate Professor, Foreign Languages

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 specially enjoy the close interaction between instructor and students while the students engage in the preparation and completion of their class projects. To that end, students work on an individual or group project that they usually present at the Annual Honors Conference. I believe that the class activities encourage creativity on the part of the students, and can also foster teamwork when assigned as collaborative projects.

On occasion, students participate in fun cultural field

trips that sometimes conclude with an ethnic lunch at a local Hispanic restaurant where students order food in Spanish trips that sometimes conclude with an ethnic lunch at a local Hispanic restaurant where students order food in Spanish and, later, write an essay about their experience. They learn about the cultural aspect of food and adventure in tastes and flavors new to them.

In sum, the Spanish Honors class gives students the opportunity not only of learning the language in a special class setting, but also provides them the opportunity to learn and experience exciting aspects of the Hispanic culture that they won't have experienced outside the Spanish Honors class.

## Teaching Honors Calculus I (MA 441)

By Dr. Joseph Bertorelli, Professor and Chair, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science

I taught Honors Calculus I during the Spring 2014 semester. The class was divided into five groups formed according to student majors: two business groups, a health science group, an engineering group and a natural science group. For one of the business groups the task was to manage health care premiums through statistical methods, for the other business group analyzing overbooking policies by airlines through probability, for health care, modeling the

effect of drugs through the gastrointestinal tract by simple differential equations, for the engineers, the study of drag forces on a moving sphere by drag coefficient and Reynolds number, for the natural science group, the analysis and discovery of the inner core of the earth via seismological data. Honors courses and contracts are a way for students and faculty to explore ideas that otherwise may never be examined.

## Teaching Principles of Genetics as an Honors Contract

By Dr. Sara Danzi Engoron, Assistant Professor, Department of Biological Sciences and Geology

During the Fall 2014 semester four of my students completed an Honors Contract in connection with our course, BI-356, Principles of Genetics. Each of the students participated together in a project defined by me. We used our own mitochondrial DNA to trace our ancestry. In a fully equipped molecular biology laboratory, students learned to isolate their own cheek cells, extract the DNA, use polymerase chain reaction, and perform gel electrophoresis. Upon completion of DNA

sequencing, they learned about using sequence analysis programs to analyze the DNA to create phylogenetic trees. The students enjoyed the experience and had the opportunity to present their findings to other students at the STEM Research Club final meeting. They are looking forward to the Honor's conference this semester. It was an enriching experience that the students found was worth the time committed to the project.

## Offering Honors Contracts in Chinese

By: Dr. Jenny (Maan) Lin, Associate Professor, Foreign Languages

The first time I taught LC 111 (Elementary Chinese I) classes, I realized that I had many outstanding students. Therefore, in the spring of 2006, I started to offer honors contracts to those excellent students who continued in LC 112 (Elementary Chinese II). And I have been offering honors contracts to LC112 students ever since. I find that the honors contract is a great motivator for students to learn more and to excel. It is gratifying to see how my honors students welcome the challenge to do additional coursework which they undertake with care, eagerness and diligence.

The honors contracts have enhanced my interaction with these students, helping me to understand more precisely their potential, their strengths and the challenges they face in studying Mandarin. The Honors Conference is an effective and exciting way of showcasing what these exceptional students can do with the language. All in all, I find the honors contracts to be a very positive experience for both my students and myself.



## SciFinder Workshop for Honors Students

By: Professor Christine Kim, Science Librarian

The SciFinder is a product of Chemistry Abstracts Service (CAS) and contains scholarly literature from many scientific disciplines such as chemistry, biomedical science, engineering, materials science, and agricultural science. The SciFinder workshop for Honors Students provides a brief introduction to the SciFinder database, Interlibrary Loan Service, and

plagiarism. After the workshop, students are expected to have accounts for SciFinder, Interlibrary Loan Service (Iliad) and the New York Times. Students also learn how to navigate and search in library databases such as ScienceDirect and other reliable resources. The workshop is offered every semester in the library.



## Teaching Honors General Chemistry I Lab

By: Dr. David Sarno/Associate Professor/Chemistry

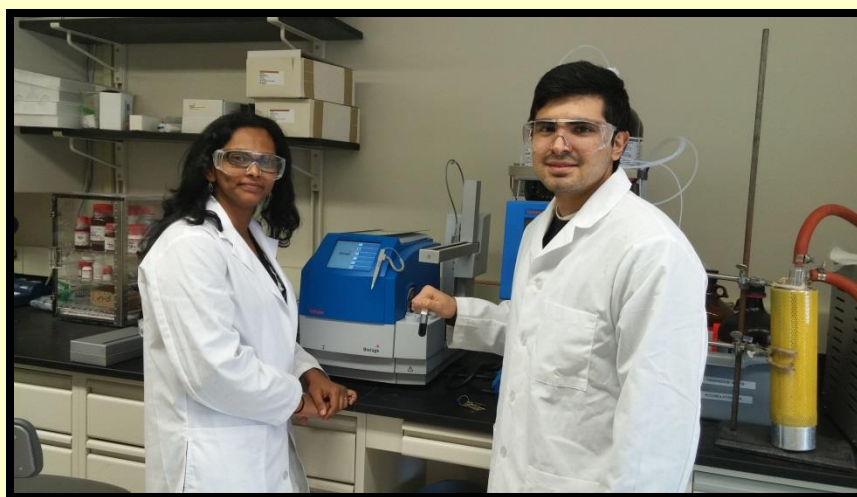
For many years now, I have been fortunate to serve as the laboratory instructor for Honors General Chemistry I, CH-151. The students come from different backgrounds, with different goals, and with different strengths and weaknesses. Mastering General Chemistry requires strong skills in mathematics, reading comprehension, and writing. Though there are always a few “born chemists” in the class, for some, the course is a serious challenge. Retention is high, however, and I believe it is

because the students form an incredibly strong cohort. It has always been a pleasure to walk past a classroom and see them working as a group, discussing strategies and solving problems. Their commitment to the course, their classmates, and themselves is impressive. They are willing to learn from their mistakes and they strive to improve in all areas. I am grateful that they have put their trust in me week after week. And I would especially like to thank them for laughing at (some of) my jokes.

## Teaching Nanochemistry as an Honors Contract

By: Dr. Tirandai Hemraj-Benny, Assistant Professor, Chemistry

I have had the opportunity to mentor several Queensborough Community College’s research students since fall 2008 in nanoscience research in the Chemistry Department. These students have not only gained experience working with advanced instrumentation but they have also developed their public speaking skills while presenting their research at several national conferences and local conferences, such as the Honors Conference. In addition, it is always amazing to see the students’ excitement when their research work is published in peer-reviewed journals. In fall 2014, I developed a nanoscience course, CH-115 Introduction to Nanoscience. It has been an extremely rewarding experience introducing nanoscience concepts and discussing the implications of nanomaterials to our students. All students are required to submit a five page paper and give a class room presentation on a nanomaterial of their choice. I was truly impressed with the non-science major students who took the class and were able to eloquently discuss their topic. Two students were given the wonderful opportunity to expand and incorporate undergraduate research in their paper. Nelson Tobar and Furqan Mahmood will give individual oral presentations at the 2015 Honors Conference. They will propose new ideas using nanomaterials to solve real problems in our society.



## Accounting Case Study Competition

By: Professor Kelly Ford/ Assistant Professor/ Business Department

This is the second year that Queensborough students have participated in an Accounting Case Study competition. The 2015 Student Case Competition “Lax Procedures at National Capital Trust” was sponsored by the Institute of Management Accountants. The students conducted research and demonstrated their ability to interpret, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and communicate a solution to a management accounting problem. The team faced competition from four-year colleges and were required to work together to create and submit a fifteen minute video presentation. It was exciting to see our students explore and analyze several possible courses of action as they worked through the case. In conclusion, the participants rose to the occasion and submitted an excellent video presentation. It is always an honor to work with dedicated students who are committed to excellence. It was truly the highlight of our semester!

The members of this year’s team were: Mahamadou Dembele, Daniel Deonarine, Minseo Kim and Lawrence Maitland.

The team’s faculty advisors are: Professor Shele Bannon and Professor Kelly Ford.



## Teaching Mathematics through Honors Contracts

By Dr. Carolyn King, Assistant Professor, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science

In 2010, I collaborated with a student from my Calculus II (MA 442) class on an honors project. She presented her work at the CUNY Pipeline Honors Conference and at the Graduate Center, Celebrate STEM event. This year I am working on a project with a student in my Statistics (MA 336) class

that has a focus on biomedicine. Fang Irene Sun is analyzing data and producing a report for a start-up pharmaceutical company, Allaking. The honors program is an excellent vehicle for student-centered learning. I learn from my students who also thrive!

## Conducting Undergraduate Research in Mathematics

By: Dr. Azita Mayeli, Assistant professor, department of Mathematics and Computer Science

Research is a strong component of a student's experience and offers undergraduate freshman and sophomore students the chance to work side-by-side with leading research professors and professionals in all areas of research. My research students learn new skills from research experience that build on the knowledge acquired in the

classroom, and providing an awareness of what takes place in a research project that is geared to lead towards a product. With choosing a research topic carefully, I feel that I can help my students to explore their higher education goals while making a valuable contribution to the college's academic standards.

## Conducting Research as Part of the Honors Program at Queensborough

By: Dr. Karimi, Professor and Chair, Chemistry Department

Since my first days at Queensborough, almost 17 years ago, I have been conducting research with QCC students whose investigation results have been both presented and in many cases published in peer reviewed journals. Most of my students have been accepted to competitive programs to a large extent because of their participation

in this endeavor. Such students learn how to work tirelessly in the lab, well above what is required of their obligations towards the one-research credit they earn every year. This experience is unquestionably a great outcome of what one sees in the development of eager students into future scientific professionals.



Chemistry Honors students during the 2015 Annual Nichols Award ceremony honoring Professor Gabor A. Somorjai of UCLA-Berkeley. Dr. Somorjai was gracious to take this photo with our students.

## Alumni Reflections

### From Being an ASAP Student to Getting Accepted to Stony Brook University

By: Yueting Chen

I still remember taking Honors courses with smaller- class size and more work. As compared to the courses I am taking at Stony Brook University with hundreds of students sitting in the same hall, I think smaller classes reduce distraction, and professors can devote more time to each individual. Even though taking Honors courses are challenging, it is a good way to get used to four-year colleges. They act as stepping stones and prepare you in estimating how

much time and effort you have to put when you study. By completing 32 Honors credits, I made myself more competitive in a very difficult and impersonal environment. Completing Honors classes helped me get accepted into internship opportunities and receive scholarships such as the Jack Kent Cooke. I believe that Queensborough student ought to be taking as many Honors classes as possible that will make them more competitive.

### My Experience with the Honors Program at QCC: How it affected My Paid Summer Internship at Binghamton

By: Aftab Siddiqui

The honors courses at QCC have been a notable experience in my academic life. One of the reasons behind this statement is their intensity and critical thinking which are above those encountered in the regular courses. Taking Honor General Chemistry I prepared me for a paid summer 2014 internship at Binghamton University through Dr. David Sarno and Dr. Paris Svoronos of the Chemistry Department. I was selected to represent Queensborough in a most

demanding program where I was working side by side graduate students. Honors courses have definitely boosted my confidence and now I feel that I can handle the junior engineering classes at City College in a much easier way than I originally thought. I would really recommend taking honors classes to any student who wants to graduate from a competitive four-year school and succeed academically.

### Taking Honors Classes at Queensborough: My first steps towards an Engineering Career at City College

By: By Na Hyun Kim

At first, I did not want to take any honors classes at Queensborough. I was afraid because I thought I was not smart enough to handle them. However, it turned out that taking the honors classes, both in General Chemistry and Calculus, was the best decision I have ever made in my life. Indeed, through Dr. Paris Svoronos' General Chemistry I class style of him requesting that the students come to the blackboard and participate, I was transformed from a passive to an active student. That first class gave me the confidence and motivation I needed and convinced me that 'yes, I can do it'. This was the turning point in my

academic life. Ever since I have been taking more honors classes and started working on a hydrogen fuel cell project, the findings of which I presented at Columbia University's Undergraduate Research Symposium in April 2013 and the MARM Meeting at Yale University in October 2013. I graduated in January 2014 and transferred to City College where I recently joined Tau Beta Pi (Engineering Honor Society) and I continue conducting research on "Traffic Simulator" with Dr. Lee. I owe so much to the Honors Program at QCC.



## How the Honors Program Secured Two Paid Summer Internships for me

By: Moses Stephen

The Honors Program at QCC offers students the opportunities to grow academically and makes education beyond the classroom possible. The first Honors Class I took at QCC was CH 151 in spring 2013 under Dr. Paris Svoronos. Dr. Svoronos arranged for a paid internship opportunity at the New York City-DEP the following summer (2013) where I had a practical experience of what I studied in the honors class. The following semester I had the opportunity to take Honors CH 152 with Dr. Moni Chauhan and independent research study under Dr. David Sarno. These classes helped me learn a lot more about chemistry. The independent study and research under the mentorship of Dr. David M. Sarno gave

me a practical experience using scientific instrumentation such as the Scanning Electron Microscope. Under the recommendation of Drs. Svoronos and Sarno I was awarded an REU research opportunity at Binghamton University during the Summer 2014. I have had the opportunity to present my research findings at several professional chemistry conferences, such as the Columbia Undergraduate Research Symposium. I am really thankful that the Honors classes helped me learn more and dream higher. It is the Honors Program that makes QCC different from any other institution.

## The Benefits of Taking Honors Classes at Queensborough

By: Jihyun Lee

The QCC Honors Program has given me many benefits in terms of helping me reach my potential both personally and academically. Not only has it provided challenges that made me more motivated but also gave me valuable life lessons. It may appear that Honors classes are designed only for the intelligent and outstanding students. Borderline good students who love to learn and are willing to be mentored often develop into truly Honors students who support their own classmates. Being able to interact with

the professor is another plus that makes the individual feel wanted. I have graduated with Honors classes in chemistry and calculus and have conducted research under Dr. Jun Shin the findings of which I have presented at several conferences with confidence and self-satisfaction. Now a junior in Engineering at City College I am a different person than when I started my US college education three years ago. I recommend this experience to every ambitious student.

## My Honors General Chemistry I Experience at QCC– The First Step towards a B.S. at Rutgers University

By: Hyun Jeung (Sally) Kim

Studying at QCC was the best education experience in my life. It has paved the way towards my B.S. at Rutgers University. All my professors had a profound knowledge, a strong passion towards teaching and did really care for their students. This great academic environment allowed me to study hard and focus on my Calculus and Chemistry

and appreciated the constant enrichment I received from my professors who always encouraged me to aim for more. I did not have such a situation at Rutgers but was able to handle its rigor thanks to the Honors program at Queensborough.

## Starting with Honors Courses at Queensborough and Getting Ready for an

### M.S. in Biology

By May Myat Moe

What do I want to become in my life? This is the question I always asked to myself. Queensborough Community College was not one of the schools I wanted to attend, but I did not have any choice. I remembered the day I came to Queensborough Community College to declare my major. I was undecided and confused about my career due to peer pressure. So I ended up declaring Business Administration. I just took all the general required classes during the freshman year. Fortunately, I was recommended to take an Honors Class by my mathematics professor which resulted in good grades. I was told to go to the Department of Chemistry where I met my professor/research mentor, Dr. Paris Svoronos who opened up the path for me to join a science major. This is where my college life started. I was recommended to take many Honors classes in order to graduate as an Honors Student. I was able to join the Honors Society Phi Theta Kappa. I had the

opportunity to conduct research with Dr. Svoronos and become a part-time tutor in the chemistry department. I gained many experiences and made many friends by joining the seminars and conferences and presenting my research findings. Honors classes provide students with the resources to make the most of their education by truly challenging themselves and exceling academically as well as personally. The level of studying, brain storming, observing and challenging in those Honors classes prepares the students for the next step after graduation from Queensborough Community College. I am currently studying at Queens College where I will hopefully receive my BS in Biology. I was able to easily join a research group in Queens College with the experience that I received from Queensborough Community College. I also intend to go for my MA in Biology at Queens College.

## How My QCC Honors Program Experience is Helping My Dream towards a

### PharmD

By Ricky Loh

My time at Queensborough was one of the pivotal points in my academic career. When I first started, I did not have much of a natural acumen for science courses due to a lack of interest in mathematics and science in high school. With encouragement from my mentors Dr. Andrew Nguyen of Biology and Dr. Paris Svoronos of Chemistry, I was geared towards Honors classes. I also found myself conducting research and presenting my findings at numerous science conventions and symposia. I went to various locations and never had to pay for transportation or registration fees. When it came down to applying to a professional school, my extracurricular activities at QCC made me a competitive applicant for every school I applied for. I found myself rejecting secondary applications and having preferences to which schools to go to interviews for.

I credit this luxury to the science research program at QCC and my mentors. I still remember being advised by my mentors that the prerequisites are just the bare minimum and I should go beyond the average and shoot higher. To my fellow QCC students, my suggestion is to take advantage of all the programs that are available. The Honors program did not cost anything but graduation with an Honors certificate is a big plus. More importantly, you meet other students who have the same aspirations as yourselves. These friendships you make tend to be meaningful and sometimes last even after graduation. I am currently a candidate for PharmD 2018 at SUNY Buffalo, a very competitive program for which the QCC Honors Program prepared me.

## Life is a challenge– From QCC Honors Program to Becoming an MD

By Sabrina Song

My original enrollment plan at Queensborough Community College was to major and graduate in Fine Arts. It was a topic that I found myself comfortable with and confident in pursuing and a major that I was often told I was talented in. However things changed dramatically after the initial year. This intervention occurred in a simple exchange of dialogue with a classmate on whether to take Honors Spanish II. My enjoyment and the challenges of this honors class brought out the vigor to pursue these classes further. I later found out realized that taking 12 credits of Honors classes will not only allow me to graduate with an Honors Certificate but also help me pursue Chemistry Honors, which I did not have any prior knowledge of. However, I managed to survive through courses in this field, even Organic Chemistry I and II, which is known as the hardest course but ironically, I

enjoyed the most. This survival throughout Chemistry Honors led me to a major change from Fine Arts to Chemistry. I also conducted research under Dr. Jun Shin the findings of which I presented at several American Chemical Society Conferences. After graduation with an A.S., I transferred to Queens College and earned my B.S. in Biochemistry and proceeded to earn my M.D.

Studying is a challenge we often face that can be both enjoyable and stressful. It should never be taken as a chore, but more of an effort to overcome adversity and achieve dreams. In retrospect I am glad that I had the courage to complete those Honors classes, which changed my life completely. They tested my limits and stretched my career to levels I never thought I would achieve.

## From QCC's Honors Program to Queens College's Honors program:

### A Smooth Transition

By Eun Jung Shin

I believe that there are several elements of success: passion, motivation, action, and support. I had passion; however, it was definitely not enough to take me to the next stage. After taking my first honors class, General Chemistry 151 with Dr. Svoronos, I knew that I could possibly get the other missing elements of success: motivation, action, and support. Dr. Svoronos encouraged students to ask many questions, so naturally two-full hour sessions of lectures were always filled with class discussion. I met a lot of motivated classmates who have different approaches and opinions. They broadened my perspective, and we helped each other a lot in and out of the class.

Challenge, competition, and motivation are precious presents from my honors experience. With all the elements, I have fortunately had various research opportunities under Dr. Jun Shin along with a summer internship at the New York City-DEP and a paid REU at Hope College. I graduated in the summer 2014 as was the first QCC students to join the Queens College Honors Program while also winning a Finch scholarship. Even after graduating from QCC, my mentors always have ears for me to listen to my concerns and help me plan my future. With their support and my actions, I am sure my dreams will become a reality.

## **My Honors Program Participation and Its Effect in My Development as a Mature Science Student at Stony Brook University**

By Sandy Enriquez

The Honors program at Queensborough Community College helped me become a more confident person and student. My General Chemistry I professor, Dr. Paris Svoronos, was always encouraging me to speak up and master the course material by going to the blackboard. This is one of his effective methods he taught many of his students including myself. I took whatever he taught me and put it into practice when I started tutoring some of the chemistry courses at QCC including Introduction to Organic Chemistry and College Chemistry I and II. The chance to become a tutor was one the most beneficial things about the Honors Program. By explaining the material to other students I was able to increase my knowledge in the subject matter and remember the material better. In addition, as I advanced in taking General Chemistry II, I was able to participate in the Honors Conference where I presented my class research project on the “Le Chatelier’s Principle” and my independent

undergraduate research project. In addition I made 14 presentations at various professional conferences, including the National ACS one in Philadelphia, the NERM Meeting at Yale University (four posters) and Columbia University (three years in a row). I also had several summer internships including the NYC-DEP (2012), Stony Brook University (2013) and Princeton University (2014). All my professors in the sciences helped me become a better student by teaching me the material and taking the time to explain it to me. My transition to Stony Brook was not seamless but certainly much easier than if I did not participate in the Honors Program. I was also glad to meet other students that shared the same interest as myself. They later helped me become more sociable and I am still friends with several of them. I hope future Honors students can also make such warm long-lasting memories.

## **How the Honors Research Experiences Helped Me Overcome My lack of Self Confidence**

By Zach Way

As a QCC Honors student I was not only capable to challenge myself by tackling more complex topics but also able to build up my confidence far beyond my expectations and participating in research both in Chemistry under Dr. Paris Svoronos and Biotechnology under Dr. Nidhi Gadura.. Honors classes taught me how to express my ideas and further apply them to observed phenomena mentally, practically and verbally. As a research Honors student I overcame my uncertainties and was capable of

presenting my findings to my peers and other professors at professional conferences. The Honors classes taught me how to manage my time and be more responsible towards my class assignments. After graduating with an Honors certificate I transferred to Queens College where I continue to apply what the Queensborough Honors experiences have taught me. Thank you caring professors of the Honors Program at QCC!



## From Queensborough's Honors Program to a Job in the Pharmaceutical Industry

By Rosa Rosales Ronquillo

The Honors Program at QCC gave me the opportunity to challenge myself and have a great, lasting interaction with my instructors, and classmates. I took Chemistry, Calculus and Biology Honors Classes and was able to create a great, close relationship with my instructors Dr. Paris Svoronos, Dr. Patricia Allere and Dr. Patricia Schneider respectively. Upon graduation I transferred to the University at Buffalo where I earned a B.S. in Biochemistry. It was then that I realized that the Honors classes made me stronger and able to compete with my four-year classmates. These students were as prepared and as hungry to succeed as I was. The Honors classes trained me to undertake the challenge, be able to deliver oral presentations, and

proved to me that I was as good as any senior classmate. The close relationship I had with my professors was very essential as I secured good reference letters. The interaction with the classmates was also important as I made lifelong friends that I bonded with during the difficult times of the exam period. I also was fortunate to be awarded two successive summer research internships at Cornell University while making many presentations through the research I conducted under Dr. Ruel Desamero of York College and the Bridges Program. The Honors classes transform the student into a mature individual that can take the challenge and achieve the American dream.

## How the Honors Program Has helped my Communication Skills in Medical School

By Rebeca Cho

As a second year medical student I can look back and be grateful for the opportunities and training provided to me by the Chemistry Department/Honors program. The Honors program has given me invaluable lessons that make me a stronger student and stronger person. I have built great communication skills by being involved in research and working with my research partner as well as my mentor, Dr. Jun Shin. I have realized that having great

oral presentation skills is vital in medical training and the Honors program has given me the preliminary experience to build upon by exposing me to various oral presentations in a multitude of settings. I will always be thankful for the Chemistry Department and the Honors program for helping me achieve my goals and make me a stronger person academically as well as humanistically.

## How the Honors Program has changed my View of Science and My Abilities

By Sharda Jagdeo

Being a part of the Honors Program at QCC has helped me and will continue helping me in my future endeavors. For one, it instilled confidence in myself. Before the honors program, I would have never thought that I would be able to work in a lab. Having worked in the chemistry lab with a few other students, I found somewhere other than my home where I truly felt comfortable. It has been almost three years, and I still remember performing experiments on that bench, I still talk about my research and experience with the new people I meet. Being able to present my work and mingle with

other scientist is another blessing. Going to the University of Maryland's MARM and Philadelphia's National American Chemical Society Meeting to present my work and learn about other students' findings was a dream in itself. The professors at QCC have helped and taught me a great deal. I really cannot imagine my life without their guidance. The QCC Honors program has impacted my life and academic career and for that I will always be grateful and continue to strive to make my parents and professors proud.

## How the Honors Program Led to Four Paid Summer REU Internship

By Weiwu Li

When I look at my two years of being a student at Queensborough Community College, there are many opportunities and people I am grateful to. The Honors Program is one of them. Like many students, I did not know of its existence at the beginning. Within one semester I was recommended by both my General Chemistry I and General Biology I professors to register for Honors General Chemistry II and Honors General Biology II due to my good performance. Meanwhile, I started conducting research under Dr. Nidhi Gadura of the Biology Department. This research experience was critical for me during my time at QCC because not only it improved my analytical and critical thinking skills but also reinforced my passion for science. Furthermore, I was able to develop connections and meet peers as I was given the opportunity to present my project posters at several scientific conferences. Through these presentations I have come to

understand that it is as important to convey scientific findings in a clear and concise way as the scientific findings themselves. Ultimately, I won second place at Sigma Xi North Eastern Regional Conference at SUNY College of Old Westbury. Recently, I transferred to Stony Brook University where I major in Marine Science and conduct research under Dr. Gordon Taylor to examine vitamin B12 producing organisms in the hypoxic and anoxic layers of the Cariaco Basin. This summer, I applied for several Summer Research Internships for Undergraduates (NSFREU), which are very competitive as only 8-12 students out of almost 200 students are usually selected. I received four acceptance letters from all programs I applied to. This would not be possible, if I did not register for the challenging Honors classes and convinced to conduct research.

## Success starts with being a student in the honor chemistry class

By Jun Ma

I am really glad that I was a student in Dr. Paris Svoronos' Honors Chemistry class. When I first came to the U.S., I was shy and afraid to speak English in front of the others. However I discovered that he cares about all his students. He gave us challenging homework problems after every lecture. In addition he was the one who encouraged me to speak in front of the class. He is particularly strict and that is the best for a student who really wants to learn and grow. I was really glad that I could always finish the homework on

time and never be late for school because of him. After leaving Queensborough I was able to get a BS degree in Chemistry at the University of Minnesota due to the solid foundation I built during the time of that Honors class. I am currently a Research Technician in Massachusetts General Hospital and I intend to pursue graduate studies. How far can I go on the road of success? I do not know yet. However, I am sure this road started with being a student in the first Honors General Chemistry I class.

## Student Reflections

### My first experience with the Honors Program

By Mathiu Perez Rodriguez

I am currently registered in Honors General Chemistry I. In my opinion this is a unique course that challenges us, students, to strive against limitations imposed, often by ourselves. During the first few weeks I have experienced the feeling of belonging to a program that requires more than plain knowledge of the material for the occasional exam. To do well a student needs to have perseverance, determination and perhaps above all the ambition to succeed

against all odds in this prestigious Queensborough program. One of the most important qualities of this course is the way students are being encouraged, even pushed sometimes, to participate in a class by even coming to the blackboard to answer their own questions. Frequent testing also solidifies mastering the course content. I look forward to taking more such courses in the future.

## How the QCC Honors Program Enhanced my Academic Performance

By Wilson Nieves

As a participant of the Honors Program at Queensborough Community College I was fortunate to get more than just an enhanced learning opportunity. By taking several Honors-credit classes I have had the ability to communicate and get more involved with the professors teaching these courses. These ones ranged from Calculus to Biology to Chemistry and slowly became easier for me because

I was around a small group of competent and dedicated students who gather in the classroom to participate, learn, and understand the new concepts of an Honors class. My experience has been exceptional. I would therefore recommend that any QCC student tries and registers for such sections although a greater effort to excel will be required.

## How my Honors Experience at QCC Led to Summer NSF-REU Internship at

### Vanderbilt University

By Landen Kwan

Being part of the Honors program at QCC was a beneficial experience. I completed Honors classes in Calculus I, Calculus II, General Chemistry I and General Chemistry II and hope to be able to graduate with an Honors certificate. Not only we had challenges, in learning extra material and widen our horizon in the subject via an enhanced syllabus, but we also got the opportunity to master the subject due to the small class set up. With the aid of the

course professors, I got the chance to participate with the Math Club where I served as the vice president. I also conducted research in the Engineering Technology Department for two semesters. I was also awarded a paid summer internship at Binghamton University for the summer 2015 and I am excited about its outcomes. I highly recommend to students who can accept new challenges to seek Honors Program opportunities.

## From Honors General Chemistry I to Conducting Research in Chemistry and Biology

By Hyo Jung Shin

Before I took Honors General Chemistry I with Dr. Paris Svoronos I never thought I would be interested in the Sciences since I had never expanded my thoughts beyond my hemisphere. I was always quiet and never accustomed to open up and share my knowledge and opinion in public. This class however changed me all together. The smaller class size allowed a greater degree of communication and interaction with the professor which allowed him to evaluate each student's strength and weakness as well as potential and ability. This situation enabled me to discover my hidden potential and quench my fear towards chemistry to the extent that I even reached the point to proudly say that I have found the beauty of this "scary" field. During his lecture,

he transferred academic knowledge as well as important life lessons. Consequently I took Honors General Chemistry II with Dr. Moni Chauhan and started conducting research under Dr. Jun Shin. In addition I conducted research in Biology under Dr. Susan McLaughlin and was offered, through Dr. Svoronos, a summer internship at the DEP. I have presented research my findings in several professional conferences, such as the MARM Meeting at Yale University (2013) and the Columbia University Undergraduate Research Symposium (2014). I do recommend to all serious and ambitious QCC students to experience this perfect opportunity that will allow them to have true growth in their academic life.

## The Mock Trial Experience

By Michael Rawls

The Mock Trial experience was a life changing experience for me. It really helped me with my career path. I am so glad that I joined, and was able to serve as President of such a prestigious club such as the Mock Trial Association.



## How being an Honors Student at QCC has changed my perspective

By Yi (Jane) Jiang

Attending honors courses has been a very valuable experience for me. I have completed five honors classes so far, including chemistry, biology, and calculus. In each case the students would conduct some research or a project in addition to the regular coursework requirement. As a result the honors sections have required extra time and energy input of me but they also changed my academic life. Thanks to the honors courses in chemistry and biology, I could start conducting research when I was still a freshman. During the 10th Annual QCC Honors Conference last May 2014 I had my very first science research presentation in an academic setting. Thanks to my professors, I have built up both the confidence and knowledge that enable me to go further in science. In particular I ought to mention the Honors workshop of General Biology I, where I participated as a student during my first semester and as an assistant during the next three semesters. The workshop provides students with an opportunity to

dig deeper into what was taught in the classroom in a totally free and open environment. The workshop is not designed to enhance grades in class, but to stimulate the students to critically think, question, and analyze. In return, because of the acquisition of a more comprehensive understanding towards biology via the workshop, many students, including me, find biology more interesting and earn good grades in exams. For the last two semesters I have been conducting research under Dr. Sujun Wei of the Chemistry Department the findings of which I am penciled to present at several professional conferences this Spring 2015 semester. Finally it is through this type of an experience that I was selected a paid NSF- REU summer internship at Vanderbilt University's Engineering Department which I chose over the internship offered by Boston University. I strongly recommend to all ambitious students to get involved with the Honors Program as it provides a demanding but rewarding experience.

## Taking Honors Classes: A great way to challenge yourself

By Yueli Chen

This is my fourth semester at Queensborough Community College. I have always been an average student throughout my academic career, and I had no confidence on my college capabilities. However, I always wanted to improve myself and succeed. As a result since I came to QCC I followed a rigorous curriculum, which will add up to a total of 32 honors credits by the end of May 2015 while maintaining a high grade point average. Taking honors classes require me to do a lot of extra work, but I believe that the work I have done definitely helped me improve myself. Through my involvement with the Honors Program, I was offered to conduct research under Dr. Paul J. Sideris of the Chemistry Department while still a freshman. Not only have I mastered

specific skills and knowledge that are relevant to professional goals via my mentor's patience, but I can also say that I have discovered my strengths. I believe that taking honors classes does not require too much intelligence, but diligence. Just as Thomas Edison stated- one becomes a genius through "one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration", which automatically makes perspiration the key factor. Through these experiences I have been selected for the 2015 Summer Research Experience for Undergraduates at the prestigious Boise State Center for Materials Characterization. Taking these honors classes provide me with opportunities I never thought of in the past.

## **An Internship at the Food and Drug Administration an Opportunity through the QCC Honors Program**

By Silvia Salamone

After graduating from high school and moving to New York City, I enrolled at Queensborough Community College for the spring 2013 semester. During my second semester at QCC my advisor introduced me to Dr. Paris Svoronos, who suggested that I take CH-151 Honors. Consequently I sought and completed Honors classes in Biology I & II, General Chemistry II, Spanish II and Biotechnology, earning a total of 27 Honors credits. During my fourth semester at QCC, Dr. Svoronos recommended me to my current mentor: I am currently honored to conduct research under the mentorship of Dr. David M. Sarno who has worked for 18 months as a post-doctoral fellow under Dr. Lana McDiarmid, the 2000 Nobel laureate. My research project is based on the

study of conducting polymers and, in particular, on the process of partial sulfonation of polyaniline nanofibers. Through Dr. Svoronos I was selected for a paid internship at the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYC-DEP) during the summer of 2014, where I helped collect and analyze water samples from industrial wastewater for bacteria and cyanide using gas diffusion separation. I was honored to present my findings at the CUNY-STEM summer research symposium at the City College of New York last August. The Honors program at Queensborough Community College has completely changed my perspective and made the possibility of success tangible.

## **From Introductory Chemistry to Nanochemistry Research through the**

By: Jean Hwang

Taking Introductory Chemistry last Fall was my very first chemistry class in the US. Through my professor, Dr. David Sarno, I was introduced into Honors General Chemistry I taught by Dr. Paris Svoronos while started conducting research on Nanochemistry. I was very happy and excited. However the honors class was different than my previous chemistry class as there is a lot of homework and a series of consecutive cumulative tests as well as heavy class participation. Furthermore, the classmates are dissimilar as several are outgoing and others, such as myself, are shy. Actually, I would study hard but the grades

did not mirror my work. It was at that time that I realized that I ought to adjust to the new environment and start being more active during the lecture. The change showed a quick turnaround and the results I was hoping for demonstrated a drastic improvement. Nowadays I only speak English in the class and on campus with my fellow Korean friends. In a few weeks I will be presenting my research results to two conferences, something I never thought I would do. However I feel confident and through my mentors I know that I will do well. I strongly recommend this invaluable experience to all ambitious Queensborough students.

## **An Internship with the FDA: An Exciting Part of My honors Experience at the FDA**

By Irene Sun

The internship at the Food and Drug Administration has been both memorable and rewarding. The scientists within the Pesticide Department are very knowledgeable, friendly and believe in hands on experience for all the interns. The scientist to intern ratio is usually 1:2 which allows the intern(s) more personalized attention when it comes to inquiries about the experimentation process and data analysis. Prior to the FDA, my laboratory experience was mostly from what I learned at Queensborough Community College courses (Chemistry, Introductory Organic Chemistry, Microbiology). After a semester at the FDA, I realized my laboratory background at QCC really helped prepare me for the bench work required to examine pesticide residues on food. Some examples include the usage of laboratory equipment (Buchner funnel, separatory funnel), extraction via different solvents (separation layers) and why sodium sulfate is so crucial prior to the

evaporation process. Once the bench work is complete, the composites (food samples) are analyzed by mass spectrometry where a computer lists all the pesticides involved. It can be daunting (and exciting!) when one finds how high the concentration level of pesticides involved within a single item of food may be present. The experimented food samples change daily; the facility is spacious and clean; advanced equipment analysis keeps abreast with the demands from US Customs; never a dull moment – all of which makes me appreciate the opportunity given to be at the FDA. Lastly, everyone within the Pesticide Department communicates and works as a team – imperative when it comes to data analysis on everyday food consumption for the American people. I strongly recommend to any competitive and far reaching student to join the QCC Honors experience as I have felt it through the FDA and the other Honors classes.

## **Taking Honors Classes at Queensborough: The First Step towards Getting Accepted to the Physician Assistant Program**

Maria Virginia Villadiego-Punto

This Spring 2015 semester will be my last semester at QCC although I officially graduated in winter 2015, as a Health Sciences major. I have completed a total of 42.5 Honors credits in Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics since I first met Dr. Paris Svoronos in 2012. The grand majority of my honors credits however are in Biology, my favorite subject. Hence, when I applied to the CUNY-Physician Assistant Program program at York and City College, the first thing that the Admissions Committee noticed in

my transcript was my Honors Biology grades which must have helped my selection for an interview while the application deadline was still ongoing. Through the Honors classes I was exposed to internships, extracurricular activities, seminars and workshops that have enhanced my interest and knowledge which so necessary for the upper courses. It is such opportunities that make the candidate more competitive upon graduation.

## Honors General Chemistry 1: A Taste of Competitiveness and the Fundamentals in Realizing Full Potential

By Brian Um

Nestled between historic Jamaica's civic municipal buildings and CUNY's York College lies Food & Drug Administration's Northeast Regional Laboratory where more than 100 analysts perform chemical analysis of the compliance-monitoring program each day. I have been very fortunate to work as an intern since Fall 2013 semester and counting. The day-to-day operations entails composting and extractions, along with analyses of the results of fresh fruits and vegetables using GC and LC Mass spectrometry. The samples are collected based on prior violation or random collections from both domestic transit, and international import. As small as bio-feeds to large samples such as salmons are analyzed for potentially hazardous pesticides and chemicals, including trophic enhancements and effects. In the extraction phases, The QuEChERS (Quick, Easy, Cheap, Effective, Rugged, and Safe) procedure which was introduced by FDA's Lahotay & Anastassiades (2003) is currently used in this endeavor. As the name implies, instead of traditional days long sample analysis can be performed less than couple of hours, both efficiently and effectively. This method entails extracting the food sample with acetonitrile, partitioning with a mixture of sodium chloride (NaCl) and magnesium sulfate ( $\text{MgSO}_4$ ), followed by a dispersive solid phase extraction (dispersive SPE)

cleanup with primary-secondary amine sample prep easy (PSA SPE) sorbent. After the extraction process, analysis of running through a library consisting of more than 150 lists of hazardous chemical and pesticides open your eyes to appreciate how one regulation of 1938 law came to affect and secure the safety of our everyday food consumption. Through this internship experience, I'm still mesmerized by application of the theoretical sciences bringing meaningful values into our everyday life settings. I highly encourage anyone who is interested in pursuing intermediate to hard core sciences to make appointments to speak with Dr. Paris Svoronos, who will be able to better guide you in your future internship opportunities in the world of science, as well as meeting your future academic and career objectives!





## How Honors Courses in the Sciences Transformed My Academic Career

By Julie Leong

Taking an honors class is a wonderful life changing experience designed to help ambitious students realize their full potential. During orientation, I was informed about the honors program but was reluctant, indifferent and never took it into consideration. Up to now, I regret not accepting the opportunity that was introduced to me. In the middle of my first semester I wanted an opportunity to prove to others as well as myself that working in the medical or science field is what I yearn for, and I'm willing to do anything to make it a reality. That is when I met Dr. Paris Svoronos for the first time. He is my honors General Chemistry I professor and my research mentor for this semester. I soon realized that the class materials were not limited to educational levels. In fact, they lean towards class participation and interaction. The many hours invested in studying for his cumulative struggle but as you pull hard enough, the tangible rope of dreams

and your ambitions will likely win. tests, that are held every two weeks, and the workload of homework problems he sends out as presents at the end of the lecture creates a stepping stone that gets you closer in embarking on your professional journey. Public speaking was never a forte that I hold ownership for. In fact, I am nearly traumatized, blank out on words, and stutter. In General Chemistry I, there are no such feelings as shyness. Participation is needed to survive. Heading to the blackboard, engaging in problem solving, and performing mistakes is what Dr. Svoronos wants to see. Each time I participate, the level of my shyness decreases. This semester I am also participating in conducting research with Dr. Svoronos on the determination of antioxidants on food beverages, which helps me gain a better understanding about chemistry than knowledge gained in a traditional classroom. Like a tug of war, taking honors is a struggle but as you pull hard enough, the tangible rope of dreams and your ambitions will likely win.

## Honors vs. Honors Classes: A great Difference

By: Derek Perry

The curriculum seemed very simple at first. All the regular classes were easy and lacked any real challenge. That's how it was for my first two semesters at Queensborough. But that changed when I began to take on honors courses. Now, the classes and workshops are far more demanding and challenge me on a whole new level. It is not just about learning the material anymore. It is about why

we learn what we learn, what purpose it serves and where we can go from there. Classes beforehand were fine and had their share of substance, but now there are reasons to learn and to excel. There are reasons to dig deeper to get a greater understanding of how things are the way they are. I would never get the same challenges as I do without honors courses. Nor would I want to go back to a regular curriculum.

## Taking Honors Classes as the First Step towards a Better post-QCC Career

By Melody To

I am currently a first year nursing student at Queensborough Community College, but I did not begin my career path knowing I wanted to be a nurse. I was a business major at this college when I first began, but due to my disinterest in accounting, management, and such, I decided to switch over to the health sciences because I liked chemistry much more. This was my doorway into the honors courses. I was doing well in regular chemistry courses such as CH120-Fundamentals of Chemistry & CH151-General Chemistry I, plus my GPA was at a good standing. Dr. Paris Svoronos took notice of my academic progress and recommended me for the Honors CH152-General Chemistry II. Once I began Honors Chemistry under Dr. Moni Chauhan, I hungered for more advanced courses. I took

Honors BI 453-Biotechnology with Dr. Nidhi Gadura which has led me to become president of the club she advises, the STEM Research Club. I registered for Honors BI 357-Bioinformatics with Dr. Peter Novick who became my research mentor for the honors internship course, BI 554 Research Laboratory Internship. I Not only did I register for honors courses, but I also requested honors contracts in regular courses such as BI 302-Anatomy & Physiology II with Dr. Andrew Nguyen under whom I also conducted research. The workload of these honors courses was challenging and sometimes overwhelming; however they have better prepared me for the nursing program at Queensborough and for my future career.

## Taking Honors Classes as a freshman

By Francisco Caban

There are several new ideas and concepts I have come to realize since I started with the Honors Program at Queensborough Community College. The first such class I took at QCC was Honors Chemistry CH-151 instructed by Professor Paris Svoronos. In this class I learned that the homework assigned must always be completed to the final bit. Not only did the homework sharpen my knowledge in the classroom, it also helped me start asking questions and become more inquisitive. This was naturally the consequence of a smaller class environment. Completing all homework has become a trend for me and I have extended it to other such

courses. Another concept I learned was how to derive the main idea out of a lesson, something taught by my lab professor in Honors Chemistry CH-151 Dr. David Sarno. By understanding the whole purpose of the experiment one is able to relate it back to the classroom as this is a hands-on experience. I am currently taking more Honors classes and will be starting a paid summer internship (NSF-REU) at Binghamton University, immediately after Memorial weekend. I strongly recommend the Honors Program to any student who has post-undergraduate dreams.

## Taking Honors STEM Classes as a Business Major

By: Yizhu Jin

When it was first suggested to me that I take classes with the honors program, I immediately thought of myself as a nerd but was not sure whether I was smart enough to join this program. However the situation ended up being completely different. The classes are smaller in size and the environment is certainly friendlier and better than that of the regular class. The professors get closer to us and despite their challenge I felt more “wanted” by the cohort group. I completed successfully Honors General

Chemistry I and II, Calculus I and II and General Biology I and II. I took and overcame the challenge that made a stronger person and a better student towards my goal of becoming a pharmacist. In addition through Honors Calculus I was elected as the Vice President of the Math Club and had the opportunity to also conduct Biology research. I encourage all students to register for Honors Classes so that they can have a better post-Queensborough career.

## My experience doing Honors in Pre-Calculus

By Claudia Duran Garcia

Before getting involved with the Honors Pre-Calculus workshops, I had a completely different idea of how to handle a mathematics course that is above the Algebra/Trigonometry level. Despite my lifelong difficulties with the subject I decided to challenge myself with it. Attending Professor Karan Puri's workshops inspired me and instilled in me the belief that Mathematics can be fun since it is based in logic. This realization helped me learn how to think critically and therefore be able to solve complex questions with simple answers made out of logical statements. It was then that I understood why Aristotle thought of "Logic" as the means which we come to know and understand everything. Besides,

Dr. Puri's Honors workshops have increased my mental agility that I now extend to other courses. Besides, I felt that the objective of the class was to find out reasons; reasons why we apply respective formulas and how they can be transposed in real life. Now, I do not feel anymore that I am forced to memorize long formulas and I do not question myself why this field is helpful in my future professional life. Starting with this course I have adopted the idea that I come to class to learn something new and I could say the same of all other honors classes I have taken. I encourage all my fellow students to become part of this challenging process because of its impact on critical thinking and broadening of knowledge.

## From an Honors Section at QCC to a Paid non-CUNY Summer Research

By: Weijing Gu

This is my second semester taking an Honors class at QCC. During the Fall 2014 semester I took and completed Honors Calculus I (MA-441) after the recommendation of my pre-Calculus (MA-440) professor. Both mathematics classes are requirements for my Business major so I did not mind them. However I was recommended for Honors General Chemistry (CH-151) by the Chair of the QCC Honors Program, Dr. Paris Svoronos. In addition one of my MA-441 classmates also recommended that I take CH-151 Honors with Dr. Svoronos.

This class is probably the most difficult class I have had so far but I enjoy it although my professor is tough but also wants the maximum out of every

single student. I underestimated the material and did not do as well in my first two tests because I thought it would be easy. I have been in the U.S. for two years and my English is not good enough which leads to my limited participation in the class. However after realizing that the professor really wants us to excel I tried to limit my degree of being shy and I currently come to the board upon his request. Honors students ought to take such classes to increase their confidence and enhance their resume while getting the opportunity to seek good reference letters. I am at the process of completing 12 Honors credits this semester but I intend to take more before graduating with an Honors certificate from Queensborough.

## The Domino Effect of Joining Honors Classes at QCC

By Maria Anaya

Being a community college student has its own advantages, the most important one being that no one has expectations, making it so much more exhilarating when you succeed. Fortunately, I have been given more opportunities than most students experience at a four-year college. During my freshman year at Queensborough I met Dr. Svoronos when curiosity hit me and I wanted someone to guide me with regards to honors classes and research. I interned at the New York City Division of Environmental protection (NYC-DEP) Marine Science Section in the summer of 2014 and presented my findings at City College's Undergraduate Research Symposium. I completed General Biology I (BI-201) Honors credit in the Fall 2014 and I am currently

working with Dr. Areti Tsimounis on an undergraduate research project for neuroscience at Queens College while taking Honors BI-202 and presenting at Columbia University's Undergraduate Research Symposium and Sigma Xi conferences. Since my first internship everything has undergone a domino effect- on the positive side!. Once you surround yourself with individuals who want you to succeed and who challenge you every day, you do not only become a better individual, but also a better student. It forces you to think outside "the box" and strive for things outside the norm. Any students who have the chance to fill their time with internships and honors classes will gain much more than college credit- a lifetime of experience, knowledge and connection networking.

## The Experience of Taking an Honors Class

By Stephen Seubarran

Learning that an enzyme is a protein is not everything we just need to master during our college life.

Knowing how to give a prepared presentation or how to conduct a research project upon what you learn is an important skill. That is what an Honors class is all about. The first Honors class I took and completed was Honors Calculus II (MA-442). It is there that I met with some STEM students who soon thereafter became my best friends. That was the first time in QCC that I had been assigned homework in every class. I got the chance to look in detail about integrals and learn some extra material which is

normally not covered in regular classes. In Honors General Chemistry II (CH-152) I had the most memorable experience- attending and presenting at the Honors Conference. It was the first time that I had to conduct a literature search on dopamine. It was there that I presented my own work in front of my classmates, professors and other attendees which improved my public speaking skill. I am particularly excited that through these Honors experiences at QCC I have been awarded a paid summer internship research experience at the University of South Dakota that starts in June 2015.

## The Transformation in an Honors Class

By: Ambreen Sajid

It has been a great experience to be a member of an Honors class, such as General Chemistry I. It requires hard work and effort. It is challenging but personally I am changing into a more responsible person. It has made me realize that learning is much more than just following text books and sitting in class until it is time to go home. In an Honors class, learning is a much more involved, hands-on experience. It is not about wanting to achieve something. It is about actually getting out there and doing it. I had to change my demeanor. I had to push harder and stretch

my limits. It has given me motivation to rely on my inner strength and work as hard as possible. It is challenging yet fun. The way professor Paris Svoronos teaches us is amazing. Not only do we learn about chemistry we get to learn how it applies to real life- and beyond simple equations. It is a well-rounded learning experience. It is an Honor to be in an Honors class. And I intend to be in more such sections.



## From Honors Pre-Calculus to Honors General Chemistry I

Name: Jiali Zhang

Taking honors courses at Queensborough Community College has allowed me to challenge myself. It has forced me to work the hardest I ever had in an effort to achieve a goal that I have set for myself. I was not sure what to expect when I first registered for Honors General Chemistry I (CH-151) but quickly realized the opportunity to excel. Taking an Honors class allows me to attend various enrichment workshops which allow more of an insight into the topic the workshop is focused on. This experience has expanded my understanding of science and has therefore improved my performance

in class. Honors courses are helping me adjust to a more independent and responsible lifestyle. My classmates and I have created a cohort that shares common goals and help each other cope with the pressure associated with the frequent tests. My honors experience will leave a profound impact on my life because it is the foundation that will shape my future. The experience is like nothing that I have ever had in my life before and gets more intriguing as time goes on. I look forward to more Honors classes in the semesters to come.

## Taking Honors Classes and Conducting Research at Queensborough

By Jeff Massena

As a Biotechnology STEM student it was a great opportunity for me to take Honors classes, as well as conduct research under a QCC mentor. I first started with Honors classes in Calculus I and General Chemistry II. While taking the former class I was asked to make a power point presentation at the Annual Honors Conference. This was a stressful experience and I was glad when it was over. In retrospect it was an experience that taught me how to manage my stress and feel comfortable when

presenting in front of people. In addition conducting chemistry research strengthened my determination when confronted with failure and increased my persistence in my goal towards achieving success. These experiences taught me never to give up irrespective of the times I failed. I strongly recommend Honors classes to every student who has a dream. Unquestionably Queensborough does have and provides the support that student needs.

## From Honors Pre-Calculus to Honors General

Name: Jiali Zhang

I have many friends who asked me about my experience with the Honors classes. They requested information about joining the program but they were worried because they felt that the classes would be more difficult than the regular sections. During the Fall 2014 I took Calculus I (MA-441) Honors and I am currently registered in Honors General Chemistry I (CH-151). Most students go to RateMyProfessors.com for advice but this was not what I did. After doing well in Pre-Calculus (MA-440), I was recommended for

Honors MA-441, where I struggled primarily because of my reluctance to participate in class discussion. Nevertheless I passed it successfully and decided to take Honors General Chemistry I under Dr. Paris Svoronos in lecture and Dr. David Sarno in lab. This class is very interactive and the students work together very well despite the fact that they come from different nationalities. I intend to continue take advantage of many such opportunities so that I can graduate with an Honors certificate.

## Research Opportunities at QCC: An Alternative Way to Join the Honors Program

By Elsa Rosario

As part of the research program RIMS under Dr. Patricia Schneider of Department of Biological Sciences, I had the opportunity to grow not only in my education and research experience but also in my personal self. As a student, I think that having the opportunity to conduct research while studying the field of preference helps us build our knowledge in many levels. The experience we acquired in the work field help us acquire a broad view of the different skills that are so necessary in order to succeed. These opportunities help us acquire those

skills. In research we receive the valuable guidance from people that have succeeded in the field that we are dreaming to be a part of. Research is a process of learning and discovering. I have learned how to put in practice everything I learned in the classroom. But more importantly I learned to be responsible for myself, to know that if I want to see results I have to put in the work and time for it. Thanks to the research experiences that I had the opportunity to find at QCC I have discovered what my future plans in a STEM field are.

## Why Honors?

By Joselin Vargas

When I first came to QCC, I knew who I wanted to be, I knew that my grades needed to be superior, but I knew very minimal of the extras. I came across Dr. Paris Svoronos around my second semester. By that time I had already completed CH-151, but I was not aware of honors courses at QCC. But, thanks to Dr. Svoronos I became aware of honors courses offered in our institution. and I was able to challenge myself with CH-152 as well BI-201/202 honors. These courses have not only challenged my academic ability but also motivated me, because I wanted even more. The chemistry/ biology Honors courses have also helped me succeed in the laboratories, which allowed me to get into a summer research program BioPREP in Stony Brook University for the summer 2014. This was my very first research experience that has opened many opportunities, but more importantly sharpens my knowledge and interest even more. The chemistry courses I took allowed me to excel in the research program I participated. I was then fortunate to present at ABRCMS, a national conference in which I won the cancer biology award for the work I did at Stony Brook. After my summer

experience I was offered to continue conducting research for the Fall 2014 semester, but it unfortunately I conflicted with time and travel management at QCC. However, I applied to another program and got accepted to York College in the Bridges to Baccalaureate sponsored by Dr. Patricia Schneider due to my academic background and courses I completed. I am currently working with the chair of the Chemistry Department at York College Dr. Ruel Z.B. Desamaro in the field of Biochemistry. These research experiences were significant to my interest in the sciences because they allowed me to strengthen my chemistry with hands-on experience. It is important to have both superior academic ability and the motivation to make the most of my college experience. So I encourage other students to take advantage of the honors courses offered here, challenge themselves, and be involved. During my time at QCC I learned to discover myself through the honors courses I took, seminars I attended as well as clubs, organizations, and research programs I participated.

## Joining the Honors Program through Honors General Chemistry I

By: Rashida R. Farokhi

My experience in Chemistry 151 has been an overwhelming feeling. I say this for various reasons. Our professor, Dr. Paris Svoronos, is known for teaching a tough, no nonsense class. However, the amount of time and effort he gives to each of his students in order for us to achieve greatness is greatly unusual. I, myself, have been struggling with difficulties, but by asking for him help, I know that I can do better. It takes commitment and patience to

succeed in this class. Stress is part of the course on a daily basis but the continuous effort to overcome the lack of knowledge and confidence is absolutely imperative. The continuous advisement and guidance gives all students a feeling of security and hope for a brighter future. I intend to register for more such classes in the future- a decision I strongly recommend to all my classmates.

**Edited By Alexandra Llanos**