USCA Honors Program Entering Class Eclipses Last Year’s Record
The entering Honors cohort for the fall 2014 semester is the largest incoming class in program history! The previous record was set one year before in the fall of 2013. This year’s class beat the previous year by one additional person. In this year’s class, thirty-nine exceptional students were welcomed into the program. The vast majority of these students, close to 95%, come from counties across South Carolina. We are proud to continue to serve the students of South Carolina. We also welcomed students from Georgia and North Carolina. USC Aiken welcomes this outstanding group of students to our campus!

I am so proud to work with all of the exceptional students in the Honors Program. What a great year we had! In 2013-2014, we had the largest entering class ever. Not to be outdone, we brought in an even larger class for 2014-2015. This past year’s entering class had 5 continuing students and 34 new freshman! As we have grown the program, which continues to be a desire of USC Aiken, we had to expand our course offerings and resources for the program. This coming year, we will offer three HONS 201 courses each semester instead of two. This will give us more interesting course offerings while also keeping class sizes low to maximize interactions between our students and their professors. We also expanded the computers in the Honors Lounge. Students loved the additional computers! We also increased the number of Honors Ambassadors from 6 students to 8 students. This internal leadership program helps by providing peer mentoring within our program. Also, Honors Ambassadors help with all recruitment events on campus. Our students continue to earn their reputation as the best and brightest on campus by garnering numerous awards that are detailed in this newsletter. Congratulations to all of these students! Finally, we celebrated the graduation of 10 Honors students this past year. We are so proud of these students! I am very excited about our upcoming academic year! As always, please contact me if I can help in any way!
Thank you!

We wish to thank the following past member of the Honors Steering Committee for her service to the Honors Program.

Dr. Charmaine Wilson, Dept. of Communications

And... Welcome to the newest member of the Honors Steering Committee

Dr. Michelle Petrie – Dept. of Sociology

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2014-2015 HONORS GRADUATES!

Andrew Boggs, Antwon Dallas, Sommer Farmer, Alexis Harvin, Micah Hurtt, Khadijah Jihad, Amanda Jones, Helen Morris, Megan Taylor, Andrew Ward
USC Aiken’s Honors Program offers academically talented, highly motivated students opportunities for enriched learning experiences both in and outside the classroom.

To this end, the USC Aiken Honors Program Director, with support and approval from the Honors Steering Committee, has created the **Honors Ambassadors program**. Honors Ambassadors represent student leadership roles within the USC Aiken Honors Program.

The Honors Ambassadors serve the Honors Program by:

- Serving as a strong advocate for the Honors Program to the university and the outside community.
- Participating in recruitment and program events throughout the year to help promote the Honors Program
- Serving as a peer-mentor to new Honors students
- Helping coordinate and plan social activities and service learning/volunteer opportunities for the Honors Program.

This past year, the Honors Ambassadors helped the program in so many ways! We are very proud of these student leaders in our program!
Honors Program Enrollment Soars to New Heights

The USC Aiken Honors Program was initially established in 1991, but went through a complete revision and expansion in 2005. In subsequent years, the program remained steady in its enrollment. Each year, roughly 40-45 students participated in the program. In 2012, USC Aiken’s Chancellor, Dr. Sandra Jordan, guided the university into a “Forward Together” visioning campaign that brought stakeholders from across the university together to strategically plan the future of USC Aiken. With this new vision, one of the general themes that came from this study was that we needed to grow the university. Our current strategic plan has a specific goal titled “Enroll, Retain, Develop, and Graduate a Diverse Student Body”. Under the leadership of Dr. Chad Leverette, with guidance from the Honors Steering Committee, the USC Aiken Honors Program took this goal to heart. Since the fall of 2012, the Honors Program has grown its total enrollment by 111%! Despite this tremendous growth, our mission has remained the same, which is to provide academically talented and highly motivated students opportunities for enriched learning experiences both in and outside the classroom in a program that utilizes USC Aiken's best teacher-scholars. The Honors Program exists to promote and cultivate critical thinking, analysis and creative expression in the academic experiences of our students.
New Honors Course Offerings

**Fall 2015**

**HONS 101 - Food, Pesticides, and Technology in Society (Dr. Andy Dyer)**

The goal of this class is to generate discussion about the intersections between the most basic of needs, food, and the ways our society has evolved in the past 100 years with regard to food. In particular, the students will be encouraged to consider the advantages and disadvantages to society of the rapid recent developments in technology and biotechnology with respect toward the activity that forms the backbone of our economy - food production. These discussions will range from biology to ethics and from the political to the cultural.

The course objectives are:

* Students will gain a better understanding of the complexities surrounding food production.
* Students will be able to link different academic disciplines to the biology of food production.
* Students will be better able to work in interdisciplinary groups to address complex questions.

The course will begin with reading "Chasing the Red Queen" which challenges the usefulness of pesticides and biotechnology in controlling crop pests at the expense of the environment. The four sections of the book will be covered in the first four weeks. Additional readings and videos will be included.

**HONS 201L - Disease, History, and Politics (Dr. Michelle Vierya)**

This course will be organized around particular diseases that have played a significant role in shaping human or American history or that demonstrate how current political viewpoints can shape the progression of epidemics/pandemics. Course meetings will feature a particular disease(s) and will include an overview of the political and social period of the time, progression and investigation of the disease, historical figures important in the identification or eradication of the disease, how the disease changed the particular population it occurred in and how these changes had a wider effect on history. Each disease will be investigated through a combination of lectures and/or documentaries or docudramas.

**HONS 201M - Interdisciplinary Perspectives of Complex Crises: Central African Republic (Prof. Natalia Bowdoin)**

This course will use the example of the Central African Republic (C.A.R.) to help understand the way different disciplines approach and analyze complex crises. The C.A.R., a former French colony in the heart of Africa, has experienced over five decades of underdevelopment and political instability since its independence in 1960. Since December 2012, the country has witnessed extreme sectarian violence, human rights abuses and massive population displacement. During the first half of the course, students will read, analyze and discuss scholarly research on the crisis from the following disciplines: political science, history, anthropology, sociology, development studies, military science, and environmental sciences. They will also look at media portrayals of the current conflict in the C.A.R.

**HONS 201N - Machiavelli’s “The Prince”: Reality and Responsibility in Political Leadership (Prof. Erin McCullough)**

Should leaders use religion as a tool in politics? Should political leaders strive to be feared or loved? In political theory, these questions constantly inspire debate and dialogue. Political theory is the study of the foundational philosophies in politics. It is studied by political scientists, philosophers, historians and theologians. Political theory defines and then redefines politics, what it means to be political and what it means to live a political life. Political theory begins with Plato, who seeks truth through philosophy and searches for the ideal political life, and continues through to contemporary political theorists who continue to refine political questions and political expectations. This honors colloquium follows in the tradition of political theory by closely examining a text and questioning our shared or diverse values and beliefs. Prior to Machiavelli, political philosophers focused on questions such as “who can be the ideal leader? Is the ideal leader a philosopher? Should the ideal leader be someone with a special relationship to the divine? Is the ideal leader someone who maximizes the potential organization of a state through their own actions?” During the Renaissance, Machiavelli injected change into the history of political ideas by questioning the actions and motivations of political leaders. In his groundbreaking text “The Prince,” Machiavelli demolishes the idealism of previous political philosophers and creates new foundations in reality. Machiavelli seeks the truth of political life and political leadership, particularly the concept of responsibility. This course will closely read Machiavelli’s text to examine his notions of political leadership and responsibility. We will ask questions such as “does Machiavelli abandon notions of morality? What is the quality of life in a modern political system? Who, ultimately, is responsible for political concerns: the people or the prince?”

**Spring 2016**

**HONS 201O - Martin Luther King Day, Ramadan, and Christmas: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of America’s Holidays (Dr. Elizabeth Georgian and Dr. Meaghan Dwyer-Ryan)**

In this class, we will explore the various holidays, rituals, and traditions that have become a part of the American cultural calendar over the last few centuries. While we will look at the origins and development of such Judeo-Christian holidays as Christmas, Easter, Chanukah, and Passover, we will also examine the increasing public presence of other religious and cultural festivals, including the Iroquois Mid-winter Ceremony, Kwanza, Diwali, Ramadan, and the Chinese New Year. Nationalistic days of remembrance and festivals developed alongside religious ones and so we will analyze these at the ethnic, regional, and national level, such as St. Patrick’s Day, Memorial Day, and Columbus Day, Thanksgiving.

**HONS 201P - Transnationalism in Modern American Literature (Dr. Matt Miller)**

As part of an emerging book project I am pursuing, I want to teach a special course devoted to my research, using a mix of cultural theory and literary study. Specifically, this course would be designed around one pair of the writers I identify as transnational American writers: a foundational figure in Vladimir Nabokov, a Russian immigrant writer; and a contemporary figure in Aleksandar Hemon, a Bosnian immigrant writer. Due to situations in their countries (i.e., the rise of Stalinism and the Bosnian War, respectively), both writers develop a relationship to America that is unique in American literature.

**HONS 201Q - Appalachian Culture Studies (Prof. Vicki Collins)**

This course will examine the unique elements of Appalachia, a sub culture in America. Requirements include reading, discussing, researching, and writing about the history, literature, music, folklore, dialect, food, education, family life, religion, geography, and industry of the Appalachian people.
Andrew C. Ward  
Outstanding Senior Student

In May of 2015, at the USC Aiken Spring Commencement Ceremony, Mr. Andrew Ward was chosen as the Outstanding Senior Student for the entire university. Andrew graduated magna cum laude from USC Aiken with a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration. Andrew is originally from York, S.C.

In addition to Andrew’s participation in the USC Aiken Honors Program, Andrew was also recognized as the Aiken Sunrise Rotary Club Student of the Month. He is also a Gamma Beta Sigma member, a mentor in the Aiken Chamber of Commerce’s Young Entrepreneur’s Academy, and a fourth year member of the award winning USC Aiken golf team.

While on the golf team, he was named a 2013-2014 Academic All-American, and was named an Elite 89 award winner for Division II golf in 2014. He was a 2014 U.S. Amateur participant, and was on the 2013 and 2014 Peach Belt Conference Champion golf team.

Academically, Andrew was named to the President’s List in fall 2011, 2012, and 2014. He was on the Dean’s List for spring 2012, 2013, 2014, and fall semester 2013.

In addition to his success in the classroom and on the golf course, Andrew served as a financial intern at Savannah River Nuclear Solutions in Payroll and Benefits Accounting. On the national Bloomberg Aptitude Test, Andrew scored in the 85th percentile demonstrating his knowledge of math, news analysis, economics, analytical reasoning, financial statements analysis, investment banking, global markets, and chart and graph analysis.

Andrew, we are very proud of you! Congratulations on an exemplary academic and athletic career here at USC Aiken!
USC Aiken Honors Student to Participate in Competitive Washington Semester Program

Administered by the South Carolina Honors College at the University of South Carolina Columbia, the South Carolina Washington Semester Internship Program (WSP) gives students in universities and colleges across the state of South Carolina the opportunity to spend a semester working and taking classes in Washington DC, gaining valuable experience while earning academic credit toward their degrees. This past year, USC Aiken’s very own, Bradford Prothman-Roberts was chosen to participate during the fall 2015 academic semester.

In D.C., Bradford will gain firsthand experience with the political process, obtaining skills that will help prepare him for a career in virtually any sphere. In the past, Washington Semester Program Fellows have attended important events, such as the inauguration ceremonies, White House arrival ceremonies for visiting head of states, joint sessions of Congress, and arguments before the Supreme Court. Students also meet interesting and influential people, establishing contacts for personal and professional networking. But it’s not all work! Students have time to tour the monuments, explore the museums, and experience the international flavor of the world's most powerful capital.

The WSP is a state-wide program available to qualified students attending 14 different universities in South Carolina. Bradford is the first USC Aiken student chosen to participate in this prestigious program. Students must be Honors students to participate, but this program is open to all majors. There are 12 placements per year; nine of these placements are with U.S. Senators or Congressmen from South Carolina. Other positions range from History majors interning at the Smithsonian to Sociology majors working with the Children’s Defense Fund.

Bradford, we are very proud of you! We can’t wait to hear about your experiences this fall!
Awards and Recognitions

USCA Honors students continue to garner the prestigious Magellan Scholar Awards.

Each was awarded Magellan funding for Spring 2015 for the projects listed below.

**David Gilbert**, Junior, Biology, USC Aiken
Mentor: Nathan Hancock, Biology/Geology, USC Aiken
Characterizing the mechanism of replicative transposition of the MITE mPing

**Khadijah Jihad**, Honors, Capstone, Senior, Biology, USC Aiken
Mentor: April DeLaurier, Biology/Geology, USC Aiken
Understanding the function of components of the PHF21A complex using the CRISPR-Cas system of targeted mutagenesis in zebrafish.

For Summer and Fall 2015:

**Erin McLaughlin**, Junior, Biology Major
Mentor: Dr. William Jackson, Department of Biology and Geology
*Inducing expression of a fusion gene in an HIV-1-dependent lentiviral vector*

**Daymond Parilla**, Junior, Biology Major
Mentor: Dr. Nathan Hancock, Department of Biology and Geology
*Identifying the sequences responsible for the high transposition rate of a MITE transposon*

Congratulations to the new USCA Magellan Scholars!
USC Aiken Discovery Day award recipients and their mentors are:

*Dose dependent effects of caffeine on cognitive performance and neuronal activation*
Helen Morris
Mentor(s) : Dr. Michelle Vieyra

*Optimizing in vitro fertilization procedures in Zebrafish*
Kayce Vanpelt
Mentor(s) : Dr. April DeLaurier

**Congratulations to Andrew Ward and Amy He!**
Andrew Ward and Amy He and were named the Sunrise Rotary USC Aiken Students of the Month for January and February 2015 respectively. Congratulations to you both!
A remarkable 46% of all of the Research Day 2015 presenters were members of the USC Aiken Honors Program! Great job everyone!

2015 Research Day Award Recipients

An Examination of Lateral Hostility Experiences of Undergraduate Student Nurses
Andrew Boggs
Mentor(s) : Dr. Thayer McGahee

Assessing the Need for a Trityl Group as a Steric Buttress to Initiate a Diels-Alder Reaction
Chitravati Choony, Lukas Earhart, Jeremy Fulmer, Trevian Loveless
Mentor(s) : Dr. Nandeo Choony

Building Constructs to Study Bone Development in the Zebrafish Model
Brianna Snelling
Mentor(s) : Dr. April DeLaurier

Making CRISPR/Cas9 Constructs to Target Genes in the Phf21a Complex Involved in Craniofacial Development in Zebrafish
Khadijah Jihad
Mentor(s) : Dr. April DeLaurier

Precise Repair of mPing Excision Sites is Facilitated by TSD Microhomology
M. Bridges, David Gilbert, Ashley E. Strother, Courtney E. Burckhalter
Mentor(s) : Dr. Nathan Hancock

Synthesizing Functional Polyester Fabrics by Incorporating Copper Nanoparticles
Olaoluwa Shorinwa
Mentor(s) : Dr. Bethany Fralick, Dr. Chad Leverette

The Dose Dependent Effects of Caffeine on Cognitive Performance and Neuronal Activation
Helen Morris
Mentor(s) : Dr. Michelle Vieyra

Why we Need an African Approach to Understanding “Development”
Luntadila Paulo
Mentor(s) : Dr. Heather Peterson
Awards for Outstanding Student Research
SC Academy of Science Annual Meeting
April 11, 2015
Furman University
Greenville, SC
SCAS/SIGMA XI
AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Molecular Biology Oral Session
2nd place
David Gilbert  University of South Carolina Aiken
(Dr. Nate Hancock)  Precise Repair of mPing Excision Sites is Facilitated by Target Site Duplication Derived Microhomology

Molecular Biology Poster Session

1st place
Madelyn Wasden  University of South Carolina Aiken
(Dr. April DeLaurier)  Optimizing in Vitro Fertilization Procedures in Zebrafish

2nd place
Khadijah Jihad  University of South Carolina Aiken
(Dr. April DeLaurier)  Using the CRISPR/Cas9 System to Understand the Function of the PHF21A Complex in Danio rerio Craniofacial Development

Palmetto Symposium Presenters, Hilton Head Gateway Campus, USC Beaufort, April 18, 2015
Ajay Krishnakumar (History Major)

2014 STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION ELECTIONS WINNERS

Diversity Initiatives Senator
Paulo Luntadila

Greek Life Senator
Jessica Gomez

School of Business Administration Senator
Spencer LaMunion
Student Life Leadership Awards Banquet Recipients

**Outstanding Greek New Member:**
Alexis Harvin – Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

**People’s Choice Award:**
Micah Hurtt

**Robert E. Alexander Leadership Hall of Fame:**
Micah Hurtt

* * *

**USC Aiken Equestrian – Lander University, Oct. 11-12, 2014**

Yasmin Bedenbaugh – placed 4th in Advanced Walk/Trot/Canter Flat Class
Samantha Paschal – placed 2nd in the Beginner Walk/Trot/Canter Flat Class

* * *

Congratulations to **David Corder** (Staff Member) on helping to put together a wonderful edition of *Broken Ink* (Literary and Visual Arts Magazine, Volume 47, 2015). *Broken Ink* showcases the best works of visual art, creative writing, music, and spoken word pieces submitted by USC Aiken students.

* * *

**Freshmen Pacesetters 2015**
Jessica Gomez, Laurel Adams, Spencer LaMunion, Greg McCray

**Student Marshalls (April Convocation)**
Hazel Kelley, Jessica Gomez

**April Convocation – Academic Banner**
Emma Foerster - Academic Banner (College of Sciences)

**USC Aiken Annual Academic Convocation Awards Ceremony**
**April 16, 2015**

Olaoluwa M. Shorinwa – Outstanding Student of Physics and Outstanding Student of Engineering
Micah J. Hurtt – Outstanding Student of Psychology
Honors students participate in a unique learning community that enjoys small classes and independent study under the direction of USC Aiken's best teacher-scholars in a program that cultivates critical thinking, analysis and creative expression.

Honors Steering Committee – AY 2015-2016

Honors Program Director
Dr. Chad L. Leverette
ChadL@usca.edu
803-641-3291

Membership:
Dr. Andrew Geyer
Dr. Windy Schweder
Dr. Thayer McGahee
Dr. Sanela Porca
Dr. Michelle Vieyra
Dr. Michelle Petrie
Dr. Michael Fowler
Dr. Tom Reid
To Keep in Mind…

All Honors students will get together for the first meeting of the year on **Wednesday, August 19 from 2 to 4:00 pm in the Business and Education Building room 140**. This meeting will provide an opportunity to meet and welcome new Honors students, get news about fall Honors events, and receive a copy of the 2015 - 2016 Honors handbook. All Honors students are required to attend.

If you are a rising senior, you should have already submitted your Capstone intent form in the spring semester. Remember that you must submit your Honors Capstone proposal by mid-semester of the semester before you graduate. You will need to complete and submit the Capstone Project Proposal Form which can be found at http://web.usca.edu/honorsprogram/honorscourses.dot. Graduating seniors will present their work at Research Day 2016.

For all Honors Students who will be here for academic year 2015-2016....Please provide us with a photo which we can use on the webpage listing Honors Students and also so that we have something to use in various publications (like this one!). You can email a photo to Dr. Leverette at ChadL@usca.edu or to Dale McCarthy at DaleM@usca.edu. Thanks!