

Pierre Laclède Honors College
University of Missouri-St. Louis
Annual Report, 2006-2007

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I. Overview. The Honors College in 2006-2007.

The dominant theme for 2006 and 2007 is that the Pierre Laclède Honors College continued on its growth trajectory while improving its academic and support programs. Take enrollment first. Winter semester enrollments dip from high points reached each Fall, but taking Winters as a measure, head count increased from 400 in Winter 2006 to 434 in Winter 2007, an increase of 8.5%. We expect Fall enrollments (Fall 2006 to Fall 2007) to show a slightly smaller increase of 7.1%. These figures compare well with other units and suggest that the Honors College continues to be an attractive aspect of undergraduate education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. We strive to keep it so, and in this respect I am happy to report the ongoing success of our First Year Experience program, involving the integration of several elements of our freshman courses. This effort is led by Birgit Noll and involves all faculty in freshman seminars but especially Kimberly Baldus and Dan Gerth. Birgit, Kim, and Dan mount the “core” seminars in Cultural Traditions I and II, which involve freshmen in a common curriculum featuring close readings of classic texts from western and non-western civilizations. The Cultural Traditions seminars serve also as “reception” seminars with acculturative functions and thus address goals laid down in the university’s First Year Experience Task Force report of 2003.

It is pleasing to report that these improved enrollment figures include our best-ever admissions year (in Fall 2006 we welcomed 185 new students) and our best-ever graduation numbers (during the AY, 85 students graduated, or 19% of the year’s average enrollment).¹ If a healthy graduation rate is the bottom line for student success, it is also good to note an underlying improvement in retention rates, reflected in low dismissal/resignation figures. Besides improved retention overall, we also continue to improve our advising and registration system. And as two recent campus-wide consultancies have noted, better retention and improved advising show quick results; College credit hour totals have grown significantly faster than head count enrollment (between AY2006 and AY2007 there was a 14.5% increase in total credit hours over summer, fall, and winter semesters²).

¹ This rate *does not include* those PLHC students who did not qualify for honors certificates but still graduated from the university.

² The raw totals are 3294 hours for AY2006 and 3769 hours for AY2007.

Such increases could not be accommodated without increases in staffing, especially given the admissions and advising loads consequent on our “full service” mission, and we welcomed several new members of academic faculty and support staff. On the academic side, Daniel Gerth (humanities), Chad Hankinson (social sciences), and just this month Gerianne Friedline (writing) have joined us, and taking the two years together our office staff is completely new, with Carla Corbett (administrative associate), Kate Spencer (admissions counselor) and John Perez (administrative aide).

It must be stressed that these six “new” people represent a *net* addition to the college’s 100% FTE work force of only two (from eight to ten), for there have been losses as well as gains. It is particularly sad to note here the early retirement (in 2005-2006) and premature death (in June 2006) of our colleague Dennis Bohnenkamp, who served the college from its foundation, including as acting dean in Summer 1997 and Associate Dean from 1998 to 2005. Beloved by generations of students and respected by faculty and staff across campus, Dennis was for many the very embodiment of the Honors College; *sui generis*, he cannot be replaced. Even so, our new Associate Dean, Nancy Gleason, is making a very near thing of it through her oversight of our advising system and her campus-wide leadership in accreditation, General Education, and the writing program (for she continues as PLHC’s Director of Writing).

It has been a successful period for the Honors College, and one of our greatest successes has been to effect smooth and productive changes in academic and support staffing. All individuals named here have made distinctive, and critical, contributions to the College’s record of achievement.

Current 100% FTE staff, with title and year of original full-time Honors College appointment.

Robert M. Bliss, Dean and Associate Professor (1997)

Nancy Gleason, Associate Dean, Director of Writing, and Teaching Professor (1999)

Kimberly Baldus, Associate Teaching Professor (2004)

Gerianne Friedline, Lecturer in Writing (appointment begins in August 2007)

Daniel Gerth, Assistant Teaching Professor (2006)

Chad Hankinson, Assistant Teaching Professor (2006)

Birgit Noll, Associate Teaching Professor (2000*)

Carla Corbett, Administrative Associate (2006)

John Perez, Administrative Aide (2006)

Kate Spencer, Admissions Counselor (2006)

* Birgit Noll’s initial UMSL appointment was 50% Honors/50% Modern Foreign Languages. Her full-time PLHC appointment began in Fall Semester 2003.

Robert Bliss, Nancy Gleason (in the chair), and Birgit Noll also serve on the Honors College Faculty Council, which is serviced by Carla Corbett. Other members of the Faculty Council, with their academic unit, are:

Associate Professor Pamela Ashmore (Anthropology)

Adjunct Instructor Carol Bourne (Biology)

Professor Joseph Carroll (English)

Professor Bernard Feldman (Physics)

Emeritus Professor Peter Fuss (Philosophy)

Associate Professor John McGrosso (Music)

Professor David Robertson (Political Science)

Professor Martin Rochester (Political Science)

Ms. Laura Fleming³ (Honors College)

³ Ms. Fleming is a Biology major and an *ex officio* member of the Council in virtue of her election as president of the Pierre Laclède Honors College Student Association.

II. Student Success

--Just wanted to check in. I have completed all of my requirements for the Juris Doctorate. Finals are over and . . . I can't believe it. Who would have ever thought that a person with my background would earn a JD? I had seen and heard stories about disadvantaged people making great accomplishments but I never thought I would be one of them. I don't think it will really sink in until after I walk across the stage on May 12th. Thank you so much for your continued support and belief in me when I didn't believe in myself.

-- Lisa Renée Jones-Hall

This note, sent to the Honors College in May 2007 by a 2000 graduate, suggests several things, not least that the college's support of its students persists after graduation. As importantly, it encapsulates the difficulty of quantifying student success. This student, however "disadvantaged" in her view, came to the Honors College as an accomplished transfer with a GPA of over 3.8. Our freshmen average in the top 10% of their high school graduating classes. So our students are well qualified. The facts that they have applied to the Honors College, accept their admissions offers, and then stick with it, suggest also that they take on academic challenges. We must therefore claim our credits modestly; our students are not only the main measures, but also the embodiments, of our successes.

The Honors College continues to attract good students. Entering freshmen average over 26 on the ACT and the upper 10% of their graduating class, both significantly above main campus averages. We have never equaled the Mission Enhancement targets set for us by the entrants of Fall 1997 (28.7 ACT + upper 9%), but our students have never since come close to the level of scholarship support enjoyed by those 1997 entrants. The contrast can be demonstrated by comparing whole student cohorts. Our 256 students in September 1997 enjoyed Honors College scholarships averaging \$1,270 each, or 33% of full-time fees. The story is much different for our incoming (Fall 2007) freshmen. Their average \$1,478 in honors scholarships will account for only 17% of their full-time fees.⁴ Against this background of declining support, students continue to (a) enter our program, (b) stick with it, and (c) actually increase their per-student semester hour average. They do so at the cost of considerable part-time work, and a distressing number work at what are, effectively, full-time jobs. Credit for our enrollment record is thus due to our students as well as to our curriculum and our student support systems.

Given this experience of balancing work with their university honors studies, Honors College students' academic record is sterling. For instance, to win a place on our semester dean's list, honors students must (in the relevant semester) complete at least 12 hours, leave no DL or Y grades, make satisfactory progress towards both their bachelors degree and their honors certificate, and achieve a 3.50 GPA. Over the three semesters (Winter 06, Fall 06, and Winter 07) over 200 students each semester have made the dean's list, or about 50% of the total enrollment.

Our students perform at these levels in every undergraduate degree program. In the Winter 2007 dean's list, for instance, forty-four baccalaureate degree programs were represented among the 207 students, including English (19), biology (18), psychology (17), and business management (15). And, it is encouraging to note, there were 12 "undeclared", indicating that our Freshman are prospering well in their First Year Experience program. As for upper-class students, Honors College students were again well represented in the Undergraduate Research Symposium, at the Jefferson City research day, and are among the notable successes in applying for graduate and professional programs, including Ms. Lana Kerker with her Fulbright in Anthropology.

⁴ These figures exclude main-campus scholarship support, but highlight the declining marginal rewards students receive for achieving, and accepting, Honors College admission.

II. Accreditation: *Responding to the Environment*

Operationally, the Honors College sets its course according to several environmental and institutional factors. Most broadly, our goals are marked out for us by the University's strategic plan, which aims at an Honors enrollment of 650 by 2011 and promises an increase in high cost provisions like undergraduate research and supervised independent study. There are other considerations, too. Chief among these is the most recent independent review of the Honors College program, the UM system's academic audit of 2003, conducted by UM faculty colleagues from Rolla, Columbia, and Kansas City. Academically, our goals are set by the UMSL General Education program (now under review but still governed by Missouri state policy), by the campus's 2003 task force on the First Year Experience, by the National Survey of Student Engagement,⁵ by the findings of our own Writing Program, and by the standards of the traditional academic disciplines which make up our core curriculum. A final, overarching, context is provided by the promises we make to our students and their desire to see those promises kept. All of these will figure in the college's response to the UM-St. Louis's Higher Learning Commission accreditation review, with its site visit due early in Winter Semester 2009.

The UM system audit praised the Honors College: for instance "for creating and maintaining a small liberal-arts college atmosphere within a large urban university;" for outlining "with admirable clarity" the content, disciplinary bases, goals and student outcomes of the curriculum; for engaging and maintaining positive student and faculty support; and for paying due attention to students' educational goals. However, concerns were expressed, too. Most seriously, auditors worried that the college had only begun to develop processes by which both faculty and students could be made effectively and operationally aware of the college's mission and goals, and with this expressed concern about maintaining common standards from seminar course to seminar course. It is fair to sum these concerns up as being addressed to issues of governance, especially academic governance, and the college was urged--with these concerns in mind--to find ways to engage all faculty, especially "visitors" (who teach over 75% of our seminar sections), and students in the ongoing discussion about curriculum, teaching, and learning. Finally, although explicitly asked *not* to address resource issues, the audit team nevertheless felt strongly impelled to state its concern at systematic underfunding of the honors program, noting that curricular pressures on other units (notably the requirement to put more full-time faculty in major-related undergraduate sections) rendered more apparent the unsuitability of the "teaching replacement" basis for the Honors College's instructional budget.

Inter alia, the audit team joined the accreditors in praise of the Writing Program, designed and implemented in 1998-1999 by Nancy Gleason, then a senior lecturer in the English department. The auditors noted that the Writing Program embodied (among other strengths) the promise of wide discussion about, agreement upon, and implementation of curricular, learning, and outcomes assessment issues. The audit panel also expressed confidence that the college's already strong commitments to collegiality and liberal learning would become assets applied to governance matters.

It is important to note that the audit team *did not address* the college's "full service mission" which includes admissions, advising, registration, and careers advice as well as instruction. Nor did it come fully to grips with the inherently interdisciplinary (and therefore inter-departmental or inter-unit) recruitment of our faculty. Had it done so, of course, its stated concerns might simply have been more urgently stated, but these issues must be borne in mind as the Honors College grows and as it approaches another cycle of review, audit, and accreditation.

Other Honors College goals have been set by the university's General Education policies (themselves required to adopt state standards of curricular design and to be congruent with state standards of student

⁵ Honors College students are treated as a separate cohort within the whole NSSE sample for the UM-St. Louis. NSSE results for 2005 are attached. Those for 2007 will be available later in the year.

achievement); by the 2003 report of the University Task Force on the First Year Experience, and by several Mission Enhancement commitments, most notably (1) increased enrollment and enhanced admissions standards, (2), undergraduate research and independent study, (3) increasing the science content of the curriculum, and (4) addressing the issue of outcomes assessment through a writing program.

a). Governance.

The issue of governance has been addressed in several ways. (1) For our full-time staff, academic and support, a system of regular (fortnightly) meetings has been instituted, as well as more regular annual reviews conducted by the dean and associate dean and sub-group meetings, most notably those involving instructors involved in the first year program. (2). The support staff, now grown to a realistic three (each with specific duties in maintaining records, planning budgets, admissions, and administrative servicing of the academic program and advising system), is developing its own consultative regime, under the associate dean's direction. (3). The associate dean also chairs regular (monthly) meetings of the college's "Faculty Council", dominated by representatives of our full-time visiting faculty and apportioned by disciplinary specialism between arts & humanities, social sciences, and the sciences; (4) the honors faculty at large has been more clearly identified as "the Honors Assembly," consisting of all faculty teaching in the current academic year plus all full-time faculty who have taught in the previous three years. The assembly meets once each semester to discuss items of general intellectual or pedagogic importance, to raise questions with the college administrators, and to nominate and elect members of the "Faculty Council".

Student engagement in governance has been improved by better liaison with the Pierre Laclède Honors College Student Association (PLHCSA, a self-governing unit of the university's Student Government Association) and by student representation on both the Faculty Council (one student) and Honors Assembly (ten students). The president of PLHCSA serves *ex officio* on the Faculty Council and on the Honors Assembly; the other student representatives are nominated/elected.

As noted (and encouraged) by the audit panel, faculty brown bag lunches have been implemented, too, in 2006-2007 with the support of the campus's Center for Teaching and Learning, with the announced theme of "small group teaching and learning". Attendance has been disappointing, although discussions have been lively and productive, and especially relevant to our First-Year Experience program.

b). Curricular Reform: Accomplishments and Planning.

Curricular planning is governed largely by existing budget structures, where most main campus contributions to the program are paid on a cost-of-replacement basis, now approaching \$3500 per seminar section.⁶ This is too small a sum to attract campus units into a medium-to-long-term planning process, especially since these units themselves are subject to new standards as to the proportion of course sections taught by full-time and tenured faculty. Even so, much progress has been made in regularizing the processes of course recruitment. Our relations with several departments⁷ are extensive, regular, cordial, and well understood, as are the financial issues and structures as between the Honors College and other deans' offices. Moreover, individual faculty are now made clearly aware of the learning goals, recommended pedagogies, and assessment mechanisms of honors seminars of various classes, whether by level or by disciplinary area. The dean and associate dean are involved in these discussions (the associate dean has a general responsibility and is particularly concerned with courses in the writing program), and Birgit Noll leads the faculty group each semester involved in teaching in the First-Year

⁶ With the exception of three "honors" faculty lines in CAS, producing in exchange 16 seminar sections per year, this is the basis of honors instructional budgeting and has been from the college's foundation. It creates serious budget burdens for the Honors College when we take into account student support (advising and admissions) time.

⁷ Notably Anthropology/Modern Foreign Languages, English, Philosophy, Psychology, and Political Science.

Experience (see below). Semester-to-semester planning crucially also involves insuring that the college meets known student demand for courses which meet graduation requirements and that the resulting course timetable is practicable for the range of majors and years involved in the program. Our credit hour record indicates our success here. Several areas need to be highlighted, however.

i. Writing Program.

As has been noted, the Writing Program (designed in 1999 by Nancy Gleason, now the director of writing and from August 2005 Associate Dean) was singled out for praise by both the 2003 audit panel and the 1999 HLC (then NCA) accreditation visit. Both saw an intimate relationship between the mission aims of the college and the writing program, and indeed Honors was designed from the first as a writing intensive program, but the audit panel went on to suggest that the writing program could also serve a strategic goal in curricular planning, in assessment, and in engaging faculty in academic governance issues. In every respect the program has met expectations.

The writing program established its identity with a range of courses through which students may (for instance) meet many of the requirements of the university's writing certificate as well as the Honors Program requirements. There are now three required writing courses (Honors 1100, 31xx, and 4100) and a range of distinctive writing options at both the 2000 (2020) and 3000 (3020) levels. Writing courses are generally offered year round, with 3100 (which also serves as our reception course for transfer students) especially valuable as a summer session option. In Fall, 2007, we will add Writing in the Sciences (Honors 3160) as a regular option for our many science and engineering majors. Besides formal instruction, the writing program conducts writing contests (which carry merit awards), independent study projects, and advice sessions (including individual consultations) for honors students and faculty. In addition, the writing program provides an element of academic assessment for many honors students' internships.

Two writing courses may be singled out for special mention, The *Bellerive* Seminar (offered as an Honors 3020 option) and the Portfolio Course (Honors 4100). *Bellerive* began as an independent honors project under Nancy Gleason's supervision, the annual production of a literary magazine (canvassing contributions, selecting, editing, layout, printing, and sales) which quickly became so successful, and so burdensome, that it was decided to offer it as a course in its own right. *Bellerive 2007* was launched in February with the help of Whitney Terrell, writer in residence at UM-Kansas City. It is a staple not only of the college's writing program but of its social calendar, and despite the rigors of the course students queue to get on *Bellerive*, several of whose veterans have embarked on careers in writing.

The Portfolio Course is a required course, initially planned as a one-hour capstone. Designed by Director Nancy Gleason, it has grown to engage several honors faculty. In it, students (in their last year) review their Honors College essay portfolios and, with faculty supervision, reflect on their progress as writers. Just as importantly, students in 4100 construct their own "portfolio" for their next, post-baccalaureate years. Whether they aim for graduate programs or seek immediate employment, seeing their negotiation with the world as a communication issue is invaluable for students (and has been enjoyable for the faculty involved). Students have found this so valuable that, starting in Fall 2007, under the supervision of Kimberly Baldus, the Portfolio Course will offer a two credit hour option intended particularly for students whose aim at graduate or professional school. Finally, the Portfolio Course serves the college as an assessment tool. This is vital to us, for writing is *the* common element in the interdisciplinary honors curriculum, and it is difficult to think of a better outcomes assessment than this.

Besides the director, Associate Dean Gleason, the writing program enjoys substantial faculty support from Kimberly Baldus, Birgit Noll, and Tom Hensley (a retired Education professor). Dan Gerth has also taught in the program, and in Fall 2007 Gerianne Friedline takes up her post as lecturer in writing with special responsibility for writing in the sciences. Besides a small and dedicated pool of adjuncts, the

program also supports two graduate teaching assistants from the English department. Close communication between director and faculty is maintain regarding students' progress, problems, course design and grading issues.

ii. *First-Year Experience*

IN 2003 the dean of the Honors College was asked by the then Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs to convene a campus-wide task force on the first-year experience. After extensive discussion, a widely representative panel proposed a seven-point program which would (a) acculturate freshman students to life at a public, urban, research university, (b) provide them with a more integrated academic experience through a modular approach, (c) and promote among them university values such as diversity, open debate based on well grounded ideas, and intellectual rigor. The chief (but not the only) vehicle for this was to be interrelated core courses offered over the course of the first year which would meet important General Education requirements. In short, the committee strongly advocated for academically substantial FYE courses. The report was submitted to the vice chancellor and deans in August 2003 and pilots began in August 2004. Since then, while main campus pilots were abandoned, the Honors College has developed an integrated first year covering all of its required fifteen hours. The 2006-2007 school year has been crucial in this development.

At the core of the Honors FYE is a six-hour "Cultural Traditions" sequence taught seminar style by three honors FTE faculty. Other faculty involved in first-year teaching (composition, Western Traditions, Non-Western Traditions, and American Traditions) are urged to plan their seminars to engage with the Cultural Traditions "core" in one or more of several ways. Thus a play might be read as literature in a core seminar but mined for social and economic information in a western traditions history seminar. Darwin's *Origin of Species* is read as a cultural-philosophical document in one seminar and as a scientific treatise in another. Contact points between courses (in terms of subject matter or disciplinary approach) are treated as intellectual and pedagogical assets rather than needless repetition. Equally, points of contrast are used to explore that diversity of approach and expression that are leading characteristics of a vigorous intellectual culture.

To judge by student persistence (drop out rate), student success (GPA), and student evaluations, the core has been a success, although much work remains to engage all faculty--and their seminars--equally in the process and to find ways in which responsibility for teaching the "core" seminars can be shared more widely. In this, the college is fortunate to have Birgit Noll (in the chair), Dan Gerth, and Kimberly Baldus as the faculty group guiding the program, with assistance from the dean and associate dean. The guiding ideas of the FYE project are not difficult to grasp, and are generally thought attractive and sensible; but to apply them across all first-year seminars and the (usually) 10-12 faculty involved in first-year teaching runs against the American grain of independent, stand-alone courses.

iii. *Special Programs.*

Since 1989, the Honors College's curriculum strategy had been, at base, a one-size-fits-all affair. It was not inflexible: individual students with particular difficulties (or particular ambitions) were regarded as "exceptions" whose special programs generally involved negotiations between the college's advising dean (the associate dean) and main campus deans' offices, the registry, and Degree Audit. As student numbers grew, so did the number of exceptions, and many of the exceptions fell into patterns. Most notably, certain degree programs have grown in terms of their global credit hour requirements and/or in the number of specific professional or board requirements associated with the degree.

In response to these pressures, and with the enthusiastic support of the faculties concerned, new programs have been devised in Honors and Nursing (AY2006) and Honors and Engineering (AY2007). In a different category, but equally welcome, the Honors Certificate can now (from AY2007) be presented as

an area of concentration for the Bachelor of Liberal Studies. We are confident that other programs of this sort will come along, and will increase the attractiveness of the Honors College and the University of Missouri-St. Louis as destinations of choice for new undergraduate students.

iv. *Science in the Honors Curriculum.*

For at least ten years, the Honors College has made special efforts to include purposeful, general-education level instruction in the sciences and mathematics, both to complement its curricular strengths in humanities, social sciences, and writing, and to indicate to all our students that scientific literacy--not least in relation to the environment--is as much a part of their lifetime's learning as, say, American politics or Greek drama. Over these years we have enjoyed excellent support (for instance from Professors Dick Schwartz and Bernard Feldman in Physics and Gail Ratcliffe in Mathematics), but we have yet to establish a full presence in our core curriculum for these disciplines.

In the past year, significant progress has been made in three areas. First, as already indicated under "special programs," above, we have with other faculties' support created special, purpose-built programs in Honors with nursing and engineering. Secondly, we have entered into planning with Dr. Chuck Granger of Biology and Dean Tom Walker of Continuing Education to provide an innovative freshman-sophomore course, including on-site field work in the deciduous woodlands adjacent to the college. This initiative, known as CHERP (for Campus Honors Environmental Research Platform) is intended mainly for non-science majors in the Honors College, but it will have important implications for our many science majors and should also enable the university to partner with the town of Normandy and the St. Louis County Park system.

A third development is already in implementation stage, and that is the addition of science writing to our writing program. For more on this, please see above, "the writing program."

c). *Budget Issues.*

That this record of accomplishment has been achieved while remaining within our operational budget is a source of satisfaction and a growing concern. In 1997, the College served 256 students with 27 seminars and on a budget of app. \$300k. It also had an inherited deficit of \$480,000. Over the next five years, the college paid off a large portion of the deficit (the remainder was retired at the end of FY2003). Since then, with the addition of Mission Enhancement funds, we have doubled our student numbers, more than doubled our credit hours, and built a model system of student support. But there has been a cost, and it is best summarized by highlighting the growing and now very large proportion of our total budget that goes to S & W. This is high, of course, for all academic institutions, but is particularly high for the Honors College where it now stands at over 91% of the total budget, and leaves this important undergraduate program--for the first time--in a situation where we have too little room for financial planning in general, but especially for special cultural or program provision, for improvements to fabric and equipment; for support of special undergraduate achievements in research, travel, or public service internships, or for systematically addressing the slow decline in instructional support from our parent faculties in the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Fine Arts and Communication. This is a structural issue that must be addressed (as the 2003 Audit noted).

Scholarship budgets cause even more concern. The scholarship budget for 1997-1998 was \$300,000. Mission Enhancement, in 1997, was to add \$375,000 to the scholarship budget. \$300,000 of that was delivered, setting the College's total scholarship budget \$600,000. To that was transferred (from Student Affairs) in 2000, \$83,000 in residential scholarship funding (supporting the college's claims to offer a residential honors experience). Since then, the main budget has been reduced (from \$600,000 to \$500,000), while both student numbers and tuition fees have doubled. It is not clear how this is congruent with the enrollment target of 650.

This situation is serious and is unlikely to be resolved through private donations. However, the College has been gearing up for the university's development campaign.

III. Fundraising and Donor Relations.

Initially supported by generous gifts to its scholarship funds from the May Company Foundation and members of the Chancellor's Council, the Honors College raised little in the way of donations between 1994 and 2004. But in the past three years, with guidance from University Advancement, notably from development officer Maura Wuellner, the College has raised nearly \$60,000 in gifts (including an alumni participation rate of over 10%). Moreover, Senator Wayne Goode and Jane Goode have moved their endowed scholarships (total fund is \$70,000, with a commitment to increase it to \$80k) to the Honors College. In addition, Honors has helped in securing scholarship endowments for other divisions (it hasn't been asked often enough; each time we have helped we have been successful). So far, most gift money has been used for scholarships. This priority will be maintained, but some attention has been paid to fabric and other issues, and our remodeled kitchen, which cost \$27,000 and was largely financed from gift money, has since January 2007 added greatly to our collegiate life.

Much needs to be done if the College is to fulfill its aims and play its proper role in the development of undergraduate education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. For instance, simply to restore the scholarship position of 1997 (calculating "real" scholarship support per student as a percentage of tuition and fees) would require additional endowments of \$1.4 million. Also desirable would be a special fund to encourage university faculty to undertake longer-term honors college projects directed towards curricular improvement, and there are other special curricular needs inherent in the college's mission statement and its mission enhancement undertakings which could certainly be speeded up or enhanced with private donations. Among our other fundraising goals (always remembering that scholarships come first) are CHERP (the science platform project), a fund for curricular-related cultural activities, and a faculty fellowship program (for both visiting faculty and UMSL campus faculty). We also aim to continue to raise funds to support undergraduate research, as with recent gifts (totaling \$17,000) given especially for the support of undergraduate research in science and into social justice issues.

IV. Summary

The Honors College has compiled an excellent record in addressing its mission, meeting its targets, enhancing students' success, and staying within budget (scholarships excepted). It has improved governance, especially with main-campus faculty and units, and its curriculum, particularly with regard to undergraduate research, writing, and the first year experience. It remains confident of its ability to grow further and to continue to serve its students with a high quality liberal education, intelligent advice, and supportive counsel. It also continues to serve the university as a platform for teaching innovation and experiment as well as for admissions work, and is working on interdisciplinary degree programs such as Environmental Studies. Its core curriculum offerings in science remain sparse (although not weak!), and thus its main curricular aim in the immediate future is--with the support of Biology and Continuing Education-- to develop a science general education track based on an innovative "platform" concept in the adjacent woodland area. As with other elements of the curriculum, the CHERP platform will serve as the basis for a lifetime of learning in and about science and continue to demonstrate that "General Education" is much more than a lower-level foundation or entry curriculum.

*--Robert M. Bliss
June, 2007*