

HONORING TIMES

The Newsletter of the Snow College Honors Program

WRITING PAPERS

How to take your paper to the next level

Writing papers is almost a rite of passage while going to college. Students write papers for every area and in every major. It is essential to know how to write a good paper, but you've been writing papers since about the 4th grade. Every year you get the same things pounded into your head. You know all the basics like spelling and grammar; you've become experts at formatting and topic sentences. You understand the basics, but how do you really impress the professors? How do you take your papers from being just good to mind-blowing?

A couple of professors weighed in on this and here's what they had to say. **Professor Rachel Keller** thinks that taking risks and asking good questions is important. She says "I especially love reading a paper written by a student who is not afraid to ask questions, to go beyond his/her comfort level to get at analysis. When a student does this, it always makes for a good read." **Professor English Brooks** also thinks that this is important in student writing. He tells us that "I think one thing that most fantastic student papers have in common is where, however polished or simple the writing is, you can see the student taking risks. I'm not talking about being sloppy, disregarding the requirements, or taking shortcuts in the process. I mean I'm impressed when I can see students challenging

themselves in their thinking, and in their style and creativity. I think this is something we can all appreciate."

Biology **Professor Paul Gardner** thinks that organization is crucial to writing a remarkable paper. He informs us that "A good magazine article always has a good lead. It's something that grabs the reader right away. That's what catches my attention... And then a student can walk the reader through the paper, not just bouncing around, but making good transitions from paragraph to paragraph."

Professor David Allred, who is teaching the Honors Thesis class this semester, finds that good writing combines mundane and surprising elements. The best papers need to be clearly structured, especially with good thesis statements, topic sentences, and use of source materials. When these are in place, the ideas in the paper can shine. In addition to these mundane (and crucial skills), great writing also shows great thinking and carefully chosen words that make language of the paper do something special.

So the next time you sit down to write a paper, keep these tips in mind to really astound your professors. They may even reward you with a better grade

FACULTY FOCUS

By Malynda Bjerregaard,
Communication Department Faculty

I can remember being around eight years old and riding my dirt bike over the barren desert of the Lake Powell region. I recall feeling the wind on my face, the ultimate freedom of the space around me, and the exhilaration of the unknown. My smile was ear to ear, and I knew the best part of it all was ride, not simply getting to where I was headed. The childlike feeling of enjoying the ride is not how I would describe what I experienced as a college student, but it most certainly is the advice I would give you for I wish I would have known it as I went through my educational experience. In particular, don't expect your ride through college to be smooth, but be sure you enjoy the ride.

No one's journey is exactly the same. Even though you are with people who are taking the same sorts of classes, at the same institution, and with similar goals, there is still quite a bit of individuality going on. Comparing your journey with someone else's is just not realistic. Each bump you go through will affect you differently than it does someone else. Just like riding a dirt bike over jumps, each landing is unique, each amount of air gained differs because no one experience is like another.

Thinking back, I realize that as a college student I expected myself to react to the journey similarly to those around me. What I found from this perspective is it created a lot of headache and loss of progress. Rather than accepting that I didn't know what I wanted to be in my career path, for example, I stuck with a major choice regardless my eventual interest level. I based this decision on the assumption that this is what those around me are doing, and thus what I should be able to do by now. After having to officially change my major

several times, I lamented over the lost time rather than focusing on the bright side of the learning process, which ended up taking me where I wanted to be. I learned the hard way that my journey might look a bit different than someone else's, and that is okay.



Enjoying the ride is advice I wish I had gotten through my head when I was at college. I was so focused on the end goal of graduating, that I forgot that the college journey would be pretty much be once in a lifetime. Rather than thinking, "I have to just get through this class," I wish I had taken the opportunity to first, choose more carefully the classes I did take, and second really enjoy the learning challenge that class brought. Life happens pretty fast, and having a few years to expand my mind proved invaluable to me. I wish I would have really smiled more and enjoyed the challenges and successes of the college experience as much as possible while I was going through it.

Although it is somewhat a cliché to compare my college experience to the feeling of riding a dirt bike out in the Lake Powell sand dunes, it does represent how I viewed my college process then and now. I am certain if students will look at their college career as a journey where bumps are expected and where the ride and enjoying that process are stressed, they will have a better experience to reflect on later in life. Life is a journey. Enjoy the ride.

THE NEXT STEP: USU

Highlighting 4-year honors programs that welcome Snow honors students

In previous editions of the newsletter we have featured 4-year universities that have honors programs for all of our graduating or transferring members to consider. Utah State University, USU, is another great option. They are located in beautiful Logan, Utah. There are many advantages in joining USU's honors program. There is funding set aside for scholarships just for honors students, and honors students get priority registration. Their honors program also offers advising specifically for honors students, and their honors classes are always capped at 25 students. There are some resources at USU only for honors student's use. They have an honors house where members can live, and they also have an honors-only computer lab

and study facilities. They even add more prints to your account.

In addition to all of these resources, they also offer opportunities for leadership and the ability to customize your education through special projects. After you have finished your education at USU, they will help you with the application to graduate, medical, law, or any other school you would like to attend next. If you would like more information regarding USU's Honors program, please visit honors.usu.edu.

Highlights of USU's Honors Program

- *Priority registration*
- *Specialized advising*
- *Small class sizes*
- *Honors housing*
- *Separate lab and study facilities*
- *Additional prints*
- *Customized education*

HONORS GEOLOGY TRIP

November 2013



GOOD READS

Looking for a good book? Well, here is a list of what some faculty members have been reading.

Professor Paul Gardner is currently reading *How Dogs Love Us: A Neuroscientist and His Adopted Dog Decode the Canine Brain* by Gregory Berns. He loves this book because he loves dogs. It goes into great detail on how dogs love their people in a way that other animals, even wolves, their close cousins wolves, are incapable of.

Professor Rachel Keller's favorite book is Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* "because it is beautiful, magical, and real... all at the same time."

Professor English Brooks reveals that *Midnight's Children* is one of [his] favorite novels, probably because Salman Rushdie's storytelling is good enough to fool us into believing that we understand a place as complex and remote as India."

Professor Eric Faatz's favorite book is *All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy. "[He] like[s] it because it

looks into the human experience, takes the characters to their very base level at prison at one point in Mexico and then they have to recover from that. [He likes] the idea of taking someone to their very basics and then recovering by thinking about what it means to be you, a human."

Professor David Allred likes *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri. She is able reveal the complexity and beauty of a particular group while simultaneously and clearly revealing the key experiences that all humans share.

Professor Greg Wright's favorite book is Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* because "as a father of a son, it is devastatingly horrific and beautiful in showing the love between father and the son."

One of **Professor Larry Smith's** favorite books is *Godel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid* by Douglas Hofstadter because it is so interdisciplinary.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Scholarships. Students who will be returning to Snow next year are invited to apply for the Honors Leadership Scholarship. Recipients will receive a \$700 scholarship and will be members of next year's Honors Leadership Team. The scholarship application will be due April 1. Applications will be available within a few days.

Honors Transfer. Students interested in joining an honors program at a four-year school can check in with Professor David Allred. He can provide advice and contacts.

Global Engagement Discussion Forums. You may have noticed free copies of the New York Times on campus. Watch your email for learning opportunities related to these newspapers.

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