



# HONOR GRAM

LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY  
HONORS PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 20, ISSUE 2



## HONOR GRAM

is a newsletter designed to inform and update Honors faculty and students and alumni, as well as those who are interested in the La Sierra University Honors Program. If you have any questions or comments concerning the newsletter, or ideas that you would like to contribute, please email us: [honors@lasierra.edu](mailto:honors@lasierra.edu)

1	<b>WHICH COMPACT?</b>
2	<b>HONORS STUDENT COUNCIL 2010-2011</b>
2	<b>HONORS WINTER TRIPS</b>
3	<b>FROM THE DIRECTOR</b>
4	<b>CATALINA BOUND</b>
5	<b>HONORS EVENTS</b>
6	<b>HONORS ART</b>
7	<b>WINTER CLASSES</b>
7	<b>GOING ONLINE? GO HERE</b>

## WHICH COMPACT?

BY JOHN R. JONES, PHD

The more valuable something is, the more it gets mimicked. Take a university degree. Here are four levels of mimicry:

1. The first level is just cute. One “graduates,” today, from kindergarten in academic regalia rented or purchased from any number of on-line purveyors—ancient accoutrements in toddler’s sizes. It’s playful and yet a wonderful affirmation of little ones, and of aspirations for more such occasions to come. The little ceremony refers. Even at this early stage it points beyond itself; it derives its meaning from other ceremonies, in other institutions, at other stages of life.

2. Like the first level, the second draws its meaning from the same reference—and with something of the same wink. But here the modality is less of play than of parody: framed diplomas from many a proprietary “university” attest their owner’s proficiency at specific narrowly-defined skills and knowledge—fully respectable trade-school achievements wrapped in the trappings of academia.

3. The third level is less innocent, for its modality is pretense. It depends entirely on seeming to be what it isn’t—an educational institution of integrity, warranted by the accepted agencies. The diploma mill does depend upon a similar complicity as do the first two examples, for those who purchase its ready-made degrees are in on the game. But in the first two, the axis of reference between the two poles operates through some sense of shared content. In this third model, it operates only through resemblance.

4. But it is the fourth level that is the most interesting and the most difficult to recognize, for

it operates through no axis at all. No duality exists between two poles—the university, its operations and degrees as the referent at one end, and some referring echo at the other. Rather, the resemblance is self-referential; all is perpetrated from within. The

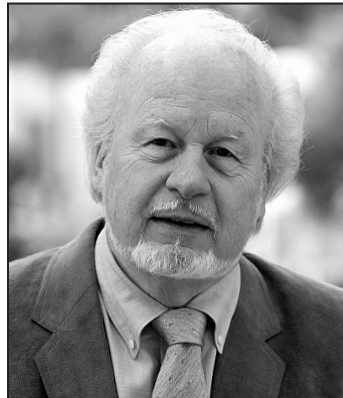
result of such an implosion is a simulacrum: again, the creation of an image or likeness—but now it is one that has reached the end stage of mimicry’s evolution.

As with the third level, its modality is pretense. But the necessary complicity is internal. Higher education researcher Geoge Kuh, discerning a widespread pattern, traces an implicit “disengagement compact” between faculty and students:

“I’ll leave you alone if you leave me alone.” That is, I won’t make you work too hard (read a lot, write a lot) so that I won’t have to grade as many papers or explain why you are not performing well. The existence of this bargain is suggested by the fact that at a relatively low level of effort, many students get decent grades—B’s and sometimes better. There seems to be a breakdown of shared responsibility for learning—on the part of faculty members who allow students to get by

with far less than maximum effort, and on the part of students who are not taking full advantage of the resources institutions provide.<sup>1</sup>

The results are telling. In their longitudinal study, Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa used the Collegiate Learning Assessment, designed to measure gains in the “higher level” abilities of critical thinking, complex reasoning, and reflective



**College graduates are already finding the coin of their academic degrees to be debased.**

# HONORS STUDENT COUNCIL 2010-2011

HAYDEN CALE, CHAIR; ALEX WISBEY, LESLIE MUTUKU, JON PAYNE, JUSTIN WARING-CRANE

Hayden Cale is the Chairman of the Student Honors Council this year. He previously served on the council during his sophomore year. He is currently a junior, Biochemistry major and Pre-Medicine student. He is involved in the Music department, playing the violin for concerts and orchestra.

Alex Wisbey is one of the senior representatives on the council, serving for a third time. He was a student representative during his freshman year and served as the chair during his junior year. He is a Business Management and History double major and he is the Men's Resident Assistant (RA) of South Hall for a second year.

Leslie Mutuku is the other senior representative. This is her second year serving on the council. She is a Global Studies major and the Assistant to the Women's RA in South Hall. She also works in the Honors Office and is the student editor of the *Honorgram* for a second year.

Jon Payne is the sophomore representative. This is his first year on the council but he has been an active participant in the events. He is a Biophysics and Chemistry major with a passion for adventure and hiking.

Justin Waring-Crane is freshman representative. She aspires to be an occupational therapist. For fun, she enjoys riding roller coasters at amusement parks and spending time with her hilarious younger brother, Graeme.

The Student Honors Council is also charged with providing input regarding the Honors Program to the faculty Honors Council and serves as liaison between Honors students and the program faculty.



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## WHICH COMPACT? *(continued from page 1)*

writing rather than in mere acquisition of information. Comparing students' scores at the end of their sophomore year (2007) with the same students' scores when they first started college (2005) they found that 45% "did not demonstrate any significant improvement in learning" over the first two years of college/university experience. Thirty-six percent "did not demonstrate any significant improvement in learning" over four years.<sup>2</sup>

The price is both systemic and personal. On the individual level, college graduates are already finding the coin of their academic degrees to be debased. Already American industry has "largely adapted by turning to graduate schools and foreign sources of labor to fill positions that require sophisticated technical expertise," leaving the more routine,

less high-paying work to U.S. college graduates.<sup>3</sup> System-wide, American institutions of higher learning are already attracting fewer of the world's finest faculty and students, as our credibility slips.

Jean Baudrillard reminds us that "to dissimulate is to pretend not to have what one has. To simulate is to feign to have what one doesn't have. One implies a presence, the other an absence."<sup>4</sup> A simulacrum simulates: it is a diminished copy of an original that no longer exists, that has been eroded away from within. The ultimate irony would be the discovery that the mimicry exhibited at levels one, two and three is in fact hollow, for their referent is no more. All becomes play, parody and pretense.

Unless, of course, we as faculty and students in La Sierra's Honors Program help stem the tide by mutually committing to our own "engagement compact" . . .

### UHNR 2011 WINTER QUARTER CLASS TRIPS

#### UHNR 115: The Arts

Sunday, 2/20 - "The Mikado" at the Fox Theater, Riverside  
Thursday, 3/10 - "Wicked" at the Orange County Performing Arts Center, Costa Mesa.

#### UHNR 324: Science and the Future

Friday, 2/25 - Weekend excursion to San Diego.  
Friday, 3/4 - NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena.

#### (Endnotes)

1 George D. Kuh: "What We Are Learning About Student Engagement," *Change* 35 (2003): 28.

2 Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa: *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* (University of Chicago Press, 2011), p.36. Their study was conducted on 2,322 students enrolled in four-year programs at 24 institutions.

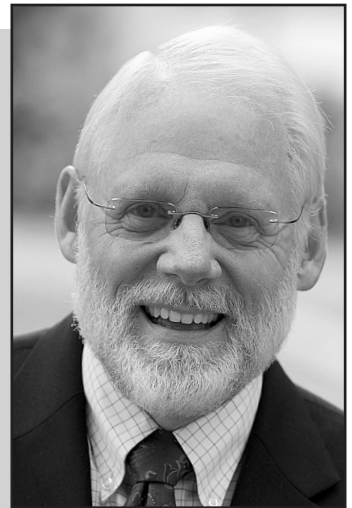
3 Arum and Roksa: op. cit., p. 143.

4 Jean Baudrillard: *Simulacra and Simulation*. Eng. Trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), p. 3.

## FROM THE DIRECTOR:

DR. DOUGLAS CLARK

# INTEGRATING FAITH AND LEARNING



Without question, one of the major tasks of a Christian university is to explore and implement the most helpful ways of integrating faith and learning. This is true of La Sierra University at large and, in this column, of the Honors Program in particular.

As Honors director, I am especially privileged each winter term to team-teach with Robert Dunn the senior capstone course for Honors students: UHNR 424 Seeking, Knowing, and Serving. Shifting from UHNR 101 Beginning to Seek in the autumn term to the senior capstone course the next quarter is always a rush. UHNR 101 engages new Honors students at the beginning of a faith-and-learning journey one term and then UHNR 424 lets me in on the culmination of the process (at least for the undergraduate experience) for those preparing to graduate in the next. While they are not the same students, of course, there is nothing like this - capturing in condensed form what we as university faculty live for, teach for, are passionate about: being part of the growth of students with whom we are blessed to study.

As part of the capstone course, Honors seniors hear from faculty from across the disciplines talk about their worldviews in the context of their own autobiographies, especially the intellectual and religious challenges facing them in their lives and in their university teaching, and how they have dealt with these big questions and continue grappling with them. The class has been privileged this term to learn from faculty about spiritual formation, science and religion, tradition and flexibility, about Adventism in the 21st century; we have been invited to the inner sanctum of reflection by teachers from the humanities and the sciences and administration, observing the deft fashion in which they model responsible and redemptive ways of thinking and believing, and how they engage students in the process as well.

What have I learned from this process and other courses like it over the years? It is clear to me that we cannot be satisfied with any of the following options:

- abdicating the endeavor, as if the big questions will somehow mercifully go away if left unattended
- keeping things simple, as if there may be too many risks involved in careful, caring, critical investigation of either faith or learning
- railroading one over the other, as if faith OR learning could stand alone in a Christian educational context (maybe where

there are no believers or where there are no thought-provoking classes, but not here!)

- treating the issue from inside a time capsule, as if yesterday's answers are ever totally adequate for today's challenges
- fostering only brief encounters or harmless interaction between faith and learning, as if keeping things compartmentalized is ever truly satisfying

THERE IS NOTHING LIKE BEING PART OF THE GROWTH OF STUDENTS WITH WHOM WE ARE BLESSED TO STUDY

One of my favorite authors on the matter of faith and learning is Arthur Holmes whose *The Idea of a Christian College* (Revised edition, Eerdmans, 1975) has long been an inspiration to me. Portions of three paragraphs from his book which I find relevant:

“In principle Christian perspectives are all-redeeming and all-transforming, and it is this which gives rise to the idea of integrating faith with learning. I say ‘in principle’

because often in practice faith and learning interact rather than integrate” (45).

“Sometimes even interaction has been repressed in favor of indoctrination, as if prepackaged answers can satisfy inquiring minds. Students need rather to gain a realistic look at life and to discover for themselves the questions that confront us. They need to work their way painfully through the maze of alternative ideas and arguments while finding out how the Christian faith speaks to such matters. They need a teacher as a catalyst and guide, one who has struggled and is struggling with similar questions and knows some of the pertinent materials and procedures. They need to be exposed to the frontiers of learning where problems are still not fully formulated and knowledge is exploding, and where by the very nature of things indoctrination is impossible” (46).

“Integration should be seen not as an achievement or a position but as an intellectual activity that goes on as long as we keep learning anything at all. Not only as an intellectual activity, however, for integrated learning will contribute to the integration of faith into every dimension of a person's life and character” (46-7).

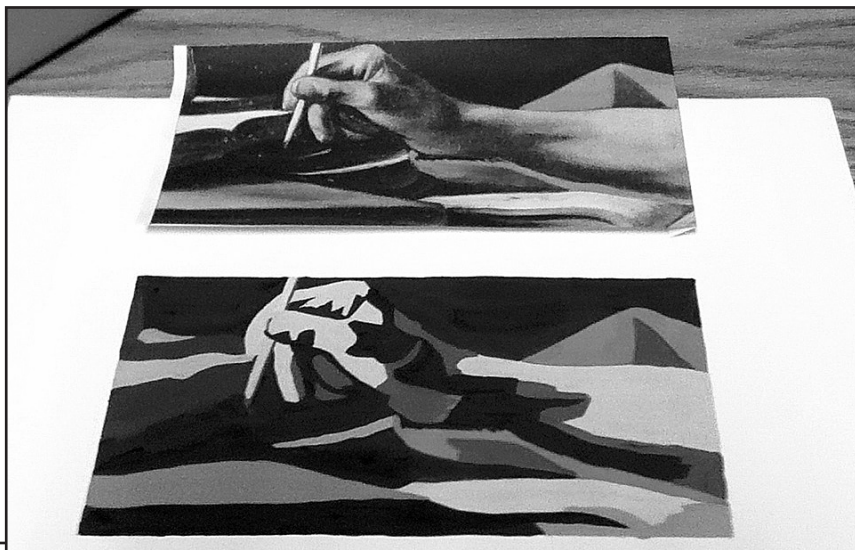
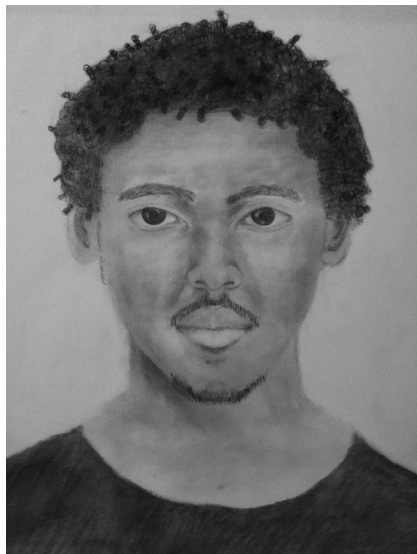
At the end of the day, then, it is not only a serious responsibility to find ways to integrate faith and learning, but a genuine pleasure. Can it be painful? Yes. Is it rewarding? Affirmative. Is it the right thing to do? Without question.



# HONORS ART



*drawings and photos  
by Rebecca Barcelo*



## Melodies of Life

A song where chords are derived from circumstances and situations~~

A song where the melody built upon the chords comes from you~~

A song where harmonies are brought in by others~~

A song full of feelings and emotions of one's journey through life....

A unique sound from and to each individual...

As sad or happy it may seem and some points...

there is always beauty from the harmonies that our friends and loved ones have given us....

The chords tell the story...

The melody shows a stand point...

The harmonies provide definition...and thus...

The harmonies give beauty and life to the plain melody~~~

The harmonies give meaning to the chords~~~

How would the Melodies of Life be...if it goes on without any harmony?

Harmonies in life are important indeed.

I really do appreciate their accompaniment.

*Poetry by Jason Anthony*

## OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY-THURSDAY

10 am – noon

1-5 pm

FRIDAY

10 am – noon

Contact Info: phone 951-785-2310

Email: [honors@lasierra.edu](mailto:honors@lasierra.edu)

Occasional meetings may cause deviations from the regular schedule

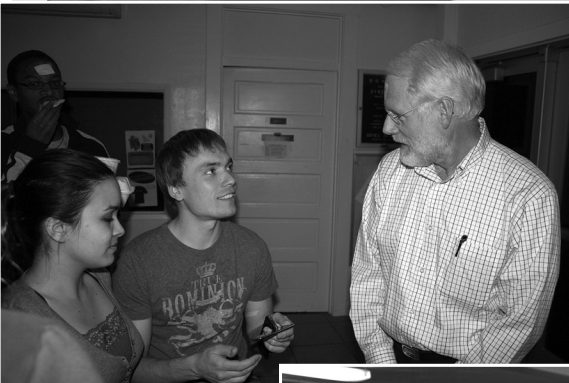




## HONORS EVENTS

On Valentine's Day, the Honors Student Council planned a dessert hour themed around love. Students played the "Who am I?" game and made Valentine's cards for their friends.

Events to look forward to the rest of the year include a trip to a museum, a lawn party, other dessert hours, procrastination parties, and the Senior Recognition Banquet in the spring.





# CATALINA BOUND

JON PAYNE

A sunny Friday afternoon is one of the most beautiful things a college student can hope for. It offers the promise that the coming weekend will be one filled with activity and excitement. La Sierra students are particularly blessed because Southern California tends to have plenty of these get-out-and-do-something weekends. This last November, for example, when my less fortunate northern collegiate brethren were wading across the quad through knee-high snow, I found myself standing at the dock for the Catalina Express dressed in shorts, shades and topsiders. Yes, my sophomore Honors cohort and I were off for a weekend of fun, family, and relaxation on the very beautiful Catalina Island. For those who don't know why Catalina is so special, think of a trip to the Mediterranean islands minus both the 12-hour plane ride and the customs official digging through the contents of your luggage like he's started getting bonuses for each compromising article of clothing he can rustle up.

There are some very special moments in a person's life: holding their first-born child, attending the wedding of said child, and, of course, scoring Super Bowl tickets. But none of these compare to that feeling one gets when they know an epic weekend is about to be experienced.

All the plans have been worked out, nobody's canceling, and all you have to do is show up and buckle up for the ride. This was one of those weekends. One of my first indications that things were abnormally awesome was when my roommate (Matt) and I got what equates to the high-roller's suite at a hotel that could have been ripped right out of *The Tell-Tale Heart*. Seriously. Crooked hallways, acute corners, the works. In fact, I'm quite sure that the entire building was leaning to the right. Best room in an edgy hotel? Check.

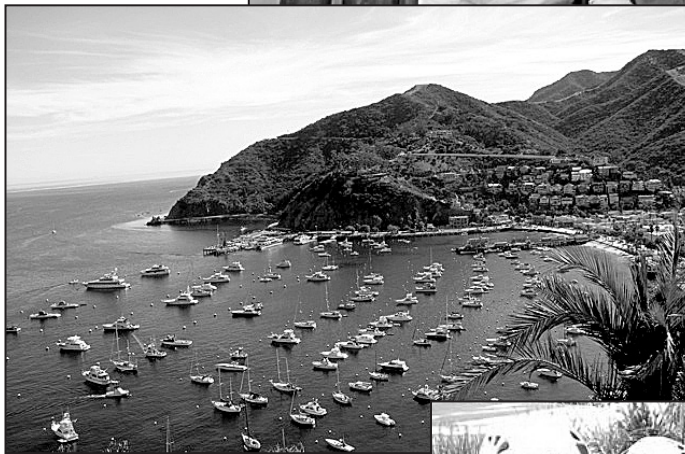
Before Matt and I can even get situated into our room, it's time to see the city life and grab some dinner. We meander our way across the city of Avalon to an Italian restaurant where the only place big enough for our group is the table that's usually reserved for the city's council meetings. While we're eating, Alyssa Fischer, our Honors office secretary and the trip's coordinator, lays out the plan for the weekend. It involves a tour up to the only airfield at Avalon, copious amounts of free time, and, drum roll please, zip lines. Avalon has several lines stretching across the peaks around the bay including one that's 1,100 feet long and, more importantly, 300 feet above the ground. Yes, we were going to be traveling 300 feet off the ground, at speeds "pushing 45 miles per hour," while connected to a steel cable by a sketchy-looking set of handles.

VIP status and potentially life-threatening experience? Double-check. Fun weekend potential? Guaranteed.



(Above) Part of the La Sierra University Honors group that experienced the sights of Catalina.

(Left) View of Avalon harbor.



(Below) Honors senior Leslie Mutuku readies herself to travel on one of several zip lines that Catalina has strung between surrounding mountain peaks.



It's amazing what happens when you live in the present. Not focusing on where you need to be or looking forward to anything in particular but simply enjoying the exact moment that you find yourself in. Two "in-the-moment days" later and I found myself sitting on the back of a hydrofoil boat, wind whipping around me as I watched the island gradually shrink in the California sun. It's often said that time flies when you're having fun. If there were an annual truest statement contest, this one would take gold every year. Even though time really did fly by that weekend, I'm still left with great memories about experiences I shared with people who I now consider to

be my family. The late nights talking and laughing, the adrenalin rush of hurling myself out over a 300-foot gorge, the antics of one particularly spirited tour guide. Even though the moments can't last forever, the memories certainly can. And I'm proud to say that I remember every detail about one of the most champion weekends of my life.

# WINTER QUARTER HONORS CLASSES

## **UHNR 115/115L: The Arts (4 units)**

An analysis of the structural elements of various visual and performing arts, and the study of the form, content and context as it relates to aesthetic response. Selected primary texts or classics of Western and Eastern literature, art, music, or other forms of aesthetic expression are examined.

## **UHNR 224: Religious Understandings (4 units)**

An exploration of religious traditions as sources of insight, personal meaning, social structure, and moral guidance. Such topics as sacred time and place, ritual, and religious understandings of community, human nature, creation, and revelation are examined in a global, historical, social, political, theological and philosophical context. Attention will be given to the context, adequacy and implications of Christian faith.

## **UHNR 324: Science and the Future (4 units)**

Examination of one or more subjects in the sciences or mathematics. Includes social and historical context; moral, political, and legal implications of scientific development; and connections with religion and philosophy.

Prerequisite: One quarter of calculus or statistics

## **UHNR 354: Honors Community Involvement (1-3 units spread out throughout entire Junior Year)**

A project that engages the student in a community as h/she seeks to transform and build that community. Culminates in a written summary of the ways that community involvement has changed the student and the community, with an analysis of each. May be repeated for additional credit up to 3 units total; 3 units is required to fulfill the graduation requirement. It is recommended that this course be taken immediately following UHNR 314/314L: Changing Communities.

## **UHNR 364: Honors Scholarship Colloquium (1 unit)**

The preparation and presentation of a proposal for the Honors Scholarship Project.

## **UHR 424: Seeking, Knowing, and Serving (4 units)**

A senior-level capstone seminar in which students explore themes throughout the University Honors Program, evaluate the development of their personal philosophies and worldviews and the future of their worldviews, and understand how these worldviews relate to the perspectives of different groups across space and time. Special emphasis is paid to the religious and global implications of these worldviews. Revision of the student's portfolio is a central component of this process, and a reflective essay on the entire portfolio is produced.

## GOING ONLINE? GO HERE!

Hey Honors students, are you looking for some new bookmarks besides Wikipedia? Here are our top 21 sites that every Honors student should have!

### **Dictionaries**

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/>  
<http://www.rae.es/rae.html>

### **Vocabulary**

<http://www.freerice.com/>

### **Rhyme**

<http://www.rhymezone.com/>  
<http://www.cronopista.com/index.php>

### **Translator**

<http://babelfish.yahoo.com/>

### **Literature**

[http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page)

### **Study Guides (MCAT, LSAT etc.)**

<http://www.studyguidezone.com/>

### **College**

<http://www.lasierra.edu/>  
<http://blog.ratemyprofessors.com/>  
<http://www.amazon.com/>  
<http://www.facebook.com/>

### **Travel**

<http://www.hostels.com/>  
<http://www.hostelworld.com/>  
<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/us>

### **Media**

<http://www.youtube.com/>  
<http://www.hulu.com/>  
<http://www.viki.com/>

### **Government and Politics**

<http://www.usa.gov/>  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>  
<http://www.cnn.com/>

*Nolan von Esch*

## HELP MAKE THE 2011 INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE HAPPEN!!

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2. The Honors Program
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or write a check today to: La Sierra University, noting "Going Global" in the memo line  
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Honors Program, La Sierra University, 4500 Riverwalk Parkway, Riverside, CA 92515.

[To strengthen the development program at LSU, 5% of all gifts will be used to defray fundraising costs.]

**THANK YOU!** *Your donations are greatly appreciated!*

**CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED.** Interested in the *Honorgram*? If you enjoy writing, taking pictures, or you simply want to be tuned into what's what and who's who in Honors, then be a part of the Honors newsletter. Teachers and students are all welcome to participate and contributions will be greatly appreciated. Also, if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please e-mail [lmutuku@gmail.com](mailto:lmutuku@gmail.com).

LESLIE MUTUKU, SENIOR GLOBAL STUDIES  
*Honorgram Editor*

DR. DOUGLAS CLARK  
*Honors Program Director*

DR. JOHN JONES  
*Professor, New Testament Studies*

REBECCA BARCELO  
*Senior, Communication*

JONATHON PAYNE  
*Sophomore, Biophysics & Chemistry*

JASON ANTHONY  
*Freshman, Music & Business*

NOLAN VON ESCH  
*Junior, Spanish*

MEMBERS OF THE STUDENT HONORS COUNCIL

LARRY BECKER  
*Layout*

**THE HONORS PROGRAM** began at La Sierra University in 1971. It strives to give special attention to undergraduates of outstanding intellectual and creative ability and aims to charge the imagination in an environment where student initiative is the guiding force. Students are given the opportunity to recognize their potential through encouragement, discussion and interaction. The overall objectives of the program are focused on the La Sierra University mission "*to Seek Truth, to Know God and Ourselves, to Serve Others*"

**La Sierra University  
Honors Program**  
4500 Riverwalk Pkwy.  
Riverside, CA 92515  
951.785.2310  
[www.lasierra.edu/honors](http://www.lasierra.edu/honors)

CONTRIBUTORS

HONORGRAM 8



4500 Riverwalk Parkway  
Riverside, CA 92515-8247  
(951) 785-2000  
[www.lasierra.edu](http://www.lasierra.edu)

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