

## Fresh Faces: Meet the Honors Program's Freshman Class



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Abdelmessih



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Megan  
Evans



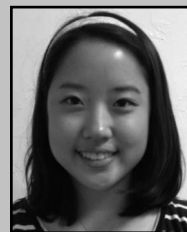
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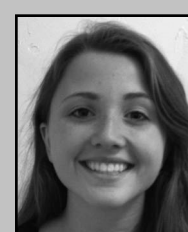
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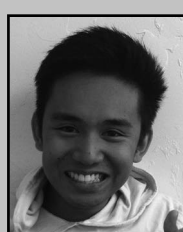
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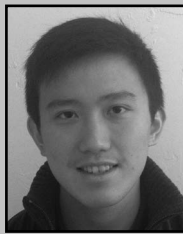
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Josephine  
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Sumarli

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**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."*

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La Sierra Honors Students Around The World



## THE HONORGRAM

is a newsletter designed to inform and update Honors faculty and students 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).

FALL QUARTER 2013  
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# Explorando en España

by Andrew Ranzinger; Spanish and Accounting double major; junior Honors student

From the moment I flew over the Iberian Peninsula on my way into Madrid on an early September morning, I knew this was going to be a special year. The sun was just coming up as we left the Atlantic behind, and by the time the plane began to descend, the dawn of my first day in Spain had bathed the entire peninsula in a soft golden glow.

I've been here two months now, and whether it has been going out for tapas (Spanish appetizers) with friends, discussing politics over a home-made Spanish dinner with my family, catching the latest Real Madrid game, taking a day trip to visit the beautiful medieval town of Segovia, stopping for fresh-baked pastries at one of the many pastelerías around town, or going for a walk in El Retiro, the beautiful central park in Madrid, I have loved every minute. I recently got back from a week-long trip to Barcelona and Cataluña where, among many other things, a friend and I rented a scooter and rode it up the Mediterranean coast. It was incredible, with vistas that looked like they had

come straight out of a film.

In all these experiences, learning and practicing Spanish has been the most rewarding thing I have done. There are challenges, especially when you first start. It can be frustrating not being able to understand someone, or not being able to say what you want to say, but it is so gratifying to see your own progress. The more you practice, the better you get, and every successful interaction, whether it is something as simple as buying a loaf of bread or as complex as defending your view on a certain issue gives you confidence for the next one. It is addicting!

Even more important, however, beyond the language, the culture, the trips, the food, and the memories, studying abroad is giving me a perspective that I wouldn't trade for the world. There are so many possibilities, so many ways of living and looking at life that I didn't even know existed, which are already shaping and enriching my journey. In the great words of St. Augustine, "The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page." Start reading.

In the meantime, excuse me. I have to catch a bus to Bilbao. ¡Hasta luego!

Hospital. I also started a program called "Heaps of Hair," asking people to donate old wigs, cleaning them up and donating them to the hospital to give to cancer patients. "

Nicqelle admitted she did not realize how much of a focus helping cancer patients had been in her life until she completed her scholarship essay.

"I hope to help people throughout my life," she said. "My parents were an example to me. Every time they had a chance to help someone, they did. My family inspires me every day."

La Sierra University was the only place Josephine Simorangkir considered for her education after Loma Linda Academy. The proximity to her home, the outstanding music department, and strong science program all were factors in her decision to attend La Sierra. She'll be majoring in neuroscience, and on the side will be a member of the La Sierra University Saxophone Quartet.

"I really like the environment here," Josephine said. "I like that the school is kind of small, because it will give me opportunities to branch out and make more friends. And the classes look manageable."

Josephine ultimately plans to attend medical school, and she's strongly interested in doing medical research, possibly earning a combined MD-PhD degree. Once a physician, she hopes to become part of Doctors Without Borders, an international medical humanitarian organization that works in more than 60 countries.

She applied for a Presidential Scholarship after receiving a brochure about the program. "I'm always pushing myself to apply for scholarships," she said. "I know how much it helps my parents. I was really shocked and grateful when Mr. Lofthouse called to tell me about winning a scholarship."

Along with her outstanding academic record, Josephine's application outlined her efforts to better her community while attending LLA.

"In my junior year I started a club called "MAD"—Making a Difference," she said. "We tried to help out other community organizations. We did a Christmas party for underprivileged kids with one organization. We also helped out at PossAbilities and their annual race." PossAbilities is a program at Loma Linda University Health that works with individuals with physical disabilities.

"The Presidential Scholar Selection Committee felt both of these young women would make outstanding choices for the scholarship," said David Lofthouse, vice president for enrollment services. "Ultimately we realized that with a little stretching, we could make awards to both of them."

According to Lofthouse, the candidates that most impress the committee are those who show personal initiative.

"It is great to see students get involved in mission projects, outreach, or community building," Lofthouse said. "But when we see a student who recognizes a problem and goes about the business of solving it without relying on an existing organization to tell them where they fit in—we are impressed."

Josephine and Nicqelle were selected this year from more than 30 applications. Academy and high school students interested in being considered for the Presidential Scholarship can get more information at [www.lasierra.edu/presidentialscholarship](http://www.lasierra.edu/presidentialscholarship).

# Annual Honors Fall Vespers

A number of social events each quarter help make the intense nature of the Honors Program a bit easier to tolerate. Informal gatherings for vespers, food, and conversation are always popular. Below are photos from one of the Fall quarter vesper events.





# Presidential Scholarship Winners Combine Academic Excellence and Community

By Larry Becker

Two La Sierra University first year Honors students have been named as the 2013 Presidential Scholarship recipients. Nicqelle Godfrey, from Loomis, California, and Josephine Simorangkir, from Loma Linda, California, received the awards based on their outstanding high school grade point average, and their demonstrated dedication to improving the world around them. The scholarship covers tuition and fees at La Sierra for one year, and is renewable for up to four years. The awards are just a small part of the \$15 million in direct institutional aid La Sierra University provides to students to enable them to benefit by the outstanding Christian Education offered at the Southern California school.

Nicqelle Godfrey grew up hearing stories about La Sierra University from her mother, Kimberly Lind Godfrey. Once Nicqelle's sister started classes at La Sierra, she started hearing more good things about the university.

"But what really sealed my desire to attend La Sierra was visiting the Archaeology department," Nicqelle said. "I believe the next frontier is archaeology. There's so much to be discovered. I would love to get involved in that."

A graduate of Pine Hills Adventist Academy in Auburn, California, Nicqelle is double majoring in history and English literature. She plans to go to law school after finishing at La Sierra.

As part of her scholarship essay, Nicqelle shared her lifelong interest in helping people suffering from cancer.



"When I was very little, a close friend was diagnosed with cancer," she recalled. "Once he lost his hair I was shocked. I remember wearing a wristband in my friend's honor.

"One day my mom asked if I had ever thought of donating my hair to help make wigs for cancer patients. I started doing that in second grade. In junior high I was able to help support the activities of the cancer center at St. Helena

# European Exposure

by Daniella Hernandez; Strategic Communication major, Pre-Law; junior Honors student

I took a deep breath as I sat in my cramped seat, preparing myself for the 18-hour flight that would take me from my home in sunny California to the elegant streets of Paris. I looked at my classmates around me and tried to gauge their emotions. Excitement on the faces of some, and exhaustion, fear, or boredom were plain to see on others.

We were an odd mix of juniors and seniors fulfilling our requirement for La Sierra University Honors program. I didn't really know any of my travel companions and I worried that I would be spending a lonely three weeks exploring Europe. Little did I know that the friends I made on this trip would be some of the funniest, most genuine, inspirational people I have ever met and would become my very good friends.

Exploring Europe was unlike anything I had ever experienced. We were not a group of tourists that simply made our rounds to all the famous destinations. We lived like locals. Our apartments were always situated in the heart of the cities we stayed, always walking distance to the local bakery where we take turns buying fresh bread every morning.

Our professor, Dr. Mallary, taught us how to be independent by showing us how to use the metro and read the maps. By the end of the trip we were zipping in and out of metro stations like true locals. While in Europe we learned to appreciate other cultures, especially the Muslim culture, which was our primary source of study.

In a few short weeks I learned more about a religion, political, social situation of an immigrant population, than I had in my whole academic career. We talked to Imams, walked through mosques, witnessed a call to prayer, and spoke to activists and researchers.



Although our studies made up a significant portion of our trip, there were other exciting aspects that colored our journey.

Perhaps a favorite among us students was the culinary adventure we experienced. Every country was a new and exciting domain filled with exotic traditional dishes that some of my braver friends were determined to try. Be it the escargot (snails) and frog legs in France, or the fish and chips in Norway. But each country graciously had plenty of native delicacies for the timid eaters - such as the Waffles in Belgium, or the croissants of France, or maybe the addicting cookie butter we discovered in the city of Brussels. We dined in local restaurants, in museum cafeterias, on ferry boats, or

train station cafes.

I believe we all learned an important lesson from the Europeans that was incorporated into every meal we had. Take time to enjoy the people you are with. Treat every meal as a special occasion. A time to talk with friends you love, to enjoy the aroma of your food, to simply allow time to tick without worry or stress. Take the time to savor each moment.

Perhaps it was the French air or the satiating bubbly water from Denmark, but I learned to stop and look around me. Amazing friends surrounded me with adventurous spirits. Countries dripping with history, culture, and beauty surrounded me. People with stories and traditions to share surrounded me. And as I settled into the airline seat once again, this time homebound, I looked around at the smiling faces of my friends around me and knew this experience would be a bond we would share for a lifetime.

# Argentina Adventures

I am currently spending a year in Argentina at Universidad Adventista del Plata taking Spanish courses with Adventist Colleges Abroad. Learning languages has never been easy for me, so the chance to experience full immersion both culturally and linguistically is very exciting. I have traveled around the world, but I have never lived outside of the Inland Empire and everyday formerly mundane situations offer new challenges.

Despite the completely new culture, I find that the town of Libertador San Martin has an eerily familiar feel to it. There is a certain other city that has a regionally important hospital, a medical school, and a giant, state of the art church. If you guess Loma Linda, the birthplace of everyone's favorite honors student, you would be correct.



by Matthew Murdoch; Honors graduate

Apart from being in Spanish, school here is little different. However as the weekends arrive, new adventures await me. Recently, I was spontaneously invited to accompany my new friends to the northern province of Corrientes on the Paraguay border. The river that forms the boundary between the two countries, the Paraná, is home to some world-class sport fishing. My initial attempts at catching the mighty Dorado or the tasty Bogas were met with failure, but as I lowered my sights I found I had a knack for catching the terror of South America, the Piranha. Whether it is wading through densely forested rivers or sipping Mate while waiting for Asada, Argentina has quickly placed itself at the top of my favorite places list.

# Reptilian Research

Ronald Nance II; History major, Pre-Medicine; senior Honors student

I let out a sigh. "Oh great. It's raining...again." Five minutes later, I was soaked to the bone. To be fair, I normally like rain. Being that California does tend to be fairly dry, rain is obviously somewhat of a novel experience for us. But when you're in the jungle, dirty, tired (after chasing small reptiles for hours on end), and hungry, being soaked was just the icing on the cake. But in the end, it was fieldwork. I figured that if it were easy, everybody would do it.

When I was offered a position on a research trip to Malaysia last year, I was ecstatic. Having worked for Dr. Grismer for two years as a research assistant in the Herpetology lab, I was getting a chance to apply my theoretical knowledge in a practical sense. Knowing that we would be very active in the field (running, climbing, swimming), there was some pretty serious physical conditioning that I needed to do. When I arrived in Kuala Lumpur (capital of Malaysia) from my brief stay in Taiwan, I was immediately put to the test. Highlights of the trip included jumping off a cliff on one island to swim to another island while in full field gear (boots, water, flashlights, collection bags, etc), climbing down a mountain and crossing a raging river at night with nothing but a small rope to keep us from floating away, and rappelling down a steep hillside using vines.

While it was very demanding work, I wouldn't trade that experience for anything in the world. Intellectually, it allowed me to apply my theoretical knowledge and see biology in a more "real-world" setting. Experiencing the different culture and food (especially in Penang, Malaysia) and learning about the diverse jungle creatures was worth every scratch, every drop of sweat, and every bit of constantly being soaked.



## Director's Cut

Trisha Famisaran

I had the opportunity to attend a Summer Institute for new Deans and Directors of Honors Programs hosted by the National Collegiate Honors Council in Lincoln, Nebraska during the most recent summer break. The workshops and presentations were enormously helpful as I explored ways to shape and strengthen the Honors Program at La Sierra University. I left the meeting feeling confident in what our Honors Program offers and the strong system of support provided by the faculty and administration.

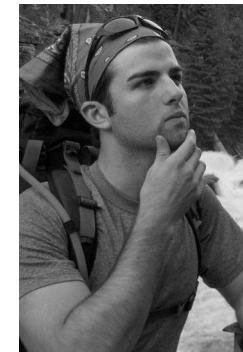
The most valuable part of the summer institute, however, were the numerous opportunities to talk one-on-one and in small groups with the other directors. Even though the group of fifty deans and directors came from different types of colleges and universities—public and private, religiously-affiliated and secular, honors programs enrolling three students and others enrolling fifteen-hundred honors students—my peers at the meeting became sounding boards to ask questions and explore issues. There was a common understanding of our administrative role and the responsibilities expected of us. We brainstormed, commiserated over challenges, and posed questions to the more experienced individuals present.

Connections nurtured within a community of people sharing a common experience can help a person avoid feeling overwhelmed. Like the new deans and directors I met at the summer institute, students need a community of peers with whom they can navigate the transition from high school to university, figure out how to balance a professional internship with regular courses, or study for graduate school entrance exams. The Honors Program provides a unique opportunity for students to really get to know each other, for upper-class students to mentor first- and second-year students, and to encourage each other when undertaking challenging projects and courses. Research shows that a good predictor of a student's grade point average is to find out the grade point average of his or her closest peers. As the director of the Honors Program, one of my primary roles is to bring students and faculty together in challenging and interesting courses. But another important function of the Honors Program is to be an academic community that nurtures each person intellectually, spiritually, and socially. This is not a function left to a director or even solely to the faculty, because, as I observe time and again, the students create feelings of camaraderie, encouragement, and, of course, a lot of fun. It is a real privilege to work among faculty and students working together in this way.

## Meet the South Hall R.A.'s

Jonathon Payne  
(Men's Resident Assistant)

Hello there! This is my third year as the men's RA in South Hall; the deans can't even give me away. Academically and hopefully-soon-to-be professionally speaking, I'm a fifth-year-senior

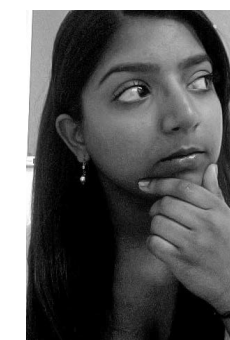


biochemistry major who is currently submitting secondary applications to MD/PhD programs across the country. Ultimately, I plan on working to find cures for pediatric cancers, specifically leukemia. Although I love biochemistry and research, I do have various non-

academic interests. In my spare time I like to read (non-Honors stuff), spend time with my friends, backpack in the San Gorgonio Wilderness, and sing with far too many choirs. My guilty pleasure would have to be the show Archer. If you haven't seen it yet, you should. It has a record for sterling humor (woefully-esoteric pun intended).

Shevanthi Johnson  
(Women's Resident Assistant)

Hi! I am a Senior Healthcare Management major, with a hope of becoming a dentist. I love



business and science, and this was the perfect way to combine both. I also enjoy baking (I like to consider myself a cupcake connoisseur), spending time with family and friends, reading (I'm a huge Harry Potter nerd), and snacking. This is my first year as an RA in

South Hall. I had so much fun living in the dorm last year, I couldn't give up the opportunity to be more involved with it! I'm looking forward to a great year with all of the South Hall residents!



# In the Eyes of a Freshie

*Timothy Royce Olarte; Biomedical Sciences major, Music minor, Pre-medicine; Freshmen Honors student*

College. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, college is “a part of the institutions of higher learning that offers courses in a specified subject or field.” Albeit the main purpose of college is to continue on with school and receive a degree, it meant more to me when I entered my senior year in high school. To be completely honest, I encountered a plethora of emotions in that school year. It began with excitement because, I mean, what senior in high school is not excited about “leaving the nest” and “finally being free?!” For the most part, this was my perception of college until the two weeks leading up to graduation. Essentially, the very thing that I was thrilled about developed into the object of my anxiety and fear. A barrage of questions such as: “Who will I eat lunch with?!” ‘Are my classes going to be difficult?!’, ‘Will I make friends?!’, and of course... ‘Is Freshmen Fifteen a real thing?!?’ filled my head. In addition, I can clearly remember being utterly baffled at how much time had passed. One moment, the main dilemma in life was choosing the right crayon, and the next, I found myself in the CSAS building registering and choosing my classes for Fall Quarter! The struggle was real.

However, amidst the nerves and the anxiety, my excitement for college returned when I moved in to South Hall a week before school for Music Boot Camp and Ignite. Within that week, I met so many incredible people, including other students and professors. It finally came to the Sunday night before the first day of school, and it was a chance for all the South Hall residents to meet each other. While we Freshmen awkwardly introduced ourselves and hoped that we would not do or say anything embarrassing (well, maybe I am just speaking for myself), all the upperclassmen were completely friendly, amiable, and just extremely personable. With all their advice, tips, and comments on college and South Hall in general, there was one main idea that they continued to reiterate: South Hall, and the Honors Program in general, is not just a collection of intelligent and motivated students living together. In the words of the awesomest, coolest, and most epic RA’s EVER... “South Hall is a family.” As I write this, it is the third week of school. Just within the past three weeks, I have made so many friends in South Hall, have bonded with quite a few people, and I can truly say that we are a family. Whether it is a question concerning the structure of proteins, or questions on how to not be awkward with the opposite gender, I know that someone in South Hall has the answer!



And to think that I was worried about not making any friends! In all honesty, other than the stress that some classes bring, it has been quite surreal. It’s only been three weeks, and I am already sure that I can count on them for anything!

I was not mislead when I was told that college is nothing like high school. The caliber of classes is completely different and contrary to popular belief, “getting by” is not going to work. This has proven to be quite true as I personify the statement that is all too familiar with upperclassmen: “Oh, there’s a freshman!” To shed light on this fact, it is appropriate to admit that I was the guy that ran on the first day of school because I was late for 8 am Calculus, and I was the guy that struggled to pay attention to Dr. Famisaran on the first day of Beginning to Seek because I was so amused by the spinning chairs. Despite a semi-rough start, I can see why people say that college can be one of the greatest periods of our lives. Already, I’ve been in hilarious adventures and have made incredible memories, and I am extremely excited for what this quarter, and ultimately what this year has in store.



## Musical Memories

*by Victoria Belliard; Music: Violin Performance major; sophomore Honors student*

This past summer I had the privilege of joining the Claremont Young Musicians Orchestra (CYMO) on a two week tour of Europe. It was a whirlwind tour that began in Munich Germany and ended in Rome, Italy. Some of the highlights were performing in the world famous Mozarteum concert hall in Salzburg, staying at a cloister in rural Tuscany, and last but not least, visiting the Dachau concentration camp. It was surreal stepping into a place where thousands of human beings were treated as animals. The purpose of the concentration camp contrasted sharply against the vision that our conductor had for the orchestra of sharing the power of music with others.

Through the music we were able to connect with the people, whether they were from Germany, Austria or Italy, on a completely different level. Although we couldn’t speak to people in their native language we spoke to them through some of their country’s greatest music. Initially, we were intimidated to play pieces, such as Verdi’s “Forza del destino”, for people who might be related to the composer but the Europeans were enthusiastic to see young people playing their music and eager to hear popular American tunes as well.

One of the most memorable moments was our last concert as we were playing outside in the little Italian town of Norcia. We started the concert just as the sun was setting and the town was coming alive. As our conductor raised his baton and led the orchestra in the opening of Dvorak’s symphony no. 8 the church bells started to ring majestically. Our conductor brought the piece to a stop and acknowledged the melody of the bells. As they finished their last peals and we started to play again, the crowd erupted in applause and shouts of “bravo!” That night as we ended our third encore of Stars and Stripes children and parents alike swayed, danced and clapped, living the music.

The entire trip was wonderful playing great music, with talented other young people, in amazing places, for appreciative people. It was such a positive experience and I am very grateful for all the places my violin has taken me and I look forward to see where it will take me next.



*Daniel Larios (left) meets with noted actor/writer/producer Carl Reiner (center) and La Sierra film professor Christoph Silber.*

## Honors Takes Hollywood

*by Daniel Larios; Flim/TV:Writing major; sophomore Honors student*

The Soho House is a converted penthouse on the southern end of the Sunset Strip, where West Hollywood meets Beverly Hills. This social club is an exclusive hangout for members of the entertainment industry; to be accepted is a validation of your place in this difficult business. So, coming off my freshmen year of college, I kept asking myself: How on earth did I get here?

Well, here's how it happened. The La Sierra Film/TV Program, in its inaugural year, managed to attract the talents of the highly respected screenwriter, Christoph Silber, to teach Comedy Writing for Television. By the end of the class Chris was impressed with both my writing and my work ethic, and invited me to assist him that summer in Los Angeles. Naturally, I accepted the invitation.

I spent the summer sitting in on Chris' meetings, making notes, organizing his work, accompanying him on writing sessions, and meeting with his many industry friends. It was an incredible opportunity to be a part of this community I long to join after graduating. I saw many artists I admired and yes, some of them are very famous. But even more incredible to me were those people I met that took an interest in me as a young writer. I received a lot of encouragement, and even some potential offers to help me get my foot further in the door. The summer proved to be as much an educational experience as a career-enhancing one.

I write now from my dorm room here in South Hall, and the view is not the same as from the fourteenth story of the Soho House. Still, the future is looking pretty bright. I have the fortune of attending a university where my instructors are truly invested in my success. I know I'll be back at the top of Hollywood again, and one day it will be by my own merit.

## Enlightened in England

*by Dr. Lisa Kohlmeier; Honors Faculty Member*



In September, I had the amazing experience of traveling to England to work on my research for my book manuscript (tentatively titled *Telling Stories with Scraps*) as well as to give a paper at Oxford University. An aspect of my research focuses on women and the physical spaces and places which shaped their ideas and the objects within these spaces which tell important stories about their lives. It is my belief that considering spaces and objects which are important to these women is essential to gaining a better understanding of their ideas, which cannot always be approached through written sources alone.

On this trip I visited the homes of a number of writers and thinkers, including Sigmund Freud and his daughter Anna Freud's home in London. There I saw Anna Freud's loom, as well as home movies of the Freud family. In the Lake District I explored the lovely gardens and rural community of artist, farmer, and children's book author Beatrix Potter, as well as the home and garden (which they worked collaboratively) of siblings and poets William and Dorothy Wordsworth. I went on to explore writer and gardener extraordinaire Vita Sackville-West's home in a sixteenth century castle in Kent which she rebuilt from a crumbling state (she established her study in the tower), and the Charleston Farmhouse in Sussex which was a home to a variety of Bloomsbury thinkers and artists such as painter Duncan Grant, economist John Maynard, Keynes, decorative artist Vanessa Bell, and her sister Virginia Woolf.

The conference I attended at Wolfson College, Oxford, was entitled "The Lives of Objects". It was the inaugural conference of the Oxford Centre for Life Writing, which merges study of areas such as history, biography, memoir, material culture, testimony (both oral and written), and anthropology to consider the possibilities of storytelling about lives and objects and the ways in which memory functions in this process. I gave a paper entitled "A Memorial to a Friendship" on a first edition of a seventeenth century book of poetry, written by poet Katherine Philips, whose predominant literary theme was that of the virtues of female friendship. This copy of her book would eventually be owned by two Victorian women and serves as a symbol of their deep and abiding friendship.

It was wonderful to be able to explore the lives of these individual and be inspired by their beautiful homes and gardens and the ideas contained in them. Related to this project, I am developing a new history course focusing on material culture and the ways objects and physical spaces provide crucial evidence for historical understanding. I am very grateful to La Sierra University for its support of my research and for the students who have also given me an opportunity to explore some of my ideas in various classes.