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# Spotlight on the Carol Farber Honors Program at Nassau Community College



Welcome to the  
inaugural issue  
of the Honors  
Program  
Newsletter!

## Honors Program

Contact us:

[HonorsProgram@ncc.edu](mailto:HonorsProgram@ncc.edu)

Prof. Richard Cohen @

[Richard.cohen@ncc.edu](mailto:Richard.cohen@ncc.edu)

Prof. Liz Hynes-Musnisky @

[Elizabeth.hynes-musnisky@ncc.edu](mailto:Elizabeth.hynes-musnisky@ncc.edu)

Ms. Rosemarie Consolo  
516-572-7194

<http://www.ncc.edu/Honors>

## A Message from the Honors Club President

The Honors Program at NCC has truly been a challenging and rewarding experience. I have gained experiences and friendships that I would consider for life. From attending the North Eastern Regional Conferences in Pittsburgh, PA to becoming the President of the Honors Club, my time at Nassau has pushed me to a greater extent of my potential. However, when I am not doing work for my classes I am writing music and touring with my band Locus Mortis. Starting this band with some of my closest friends has introduced me to some experiences I never thought I would see. From playing festivals in different states and having to spend nights in the houses of new friends we have made on the road, I would not trade this life for the world. While constantly traveling can be exhausting, it is also rewarding playing to different audiences every night as well as being welcomed to new cities along the way.

As music/performing is one of my passions, so is engineering. After graduation I plan on attending a four-year institute to study mechanical engineering.

-John Cerverizzo | 19 | Engineering Science Major

## Honors Students Give Back...

### Moesha Stewart



As the accounting and financial intern at Long Island Volunteer Center Moesha assisted with several financial statements. Her knowledge in accounting and finance lead her to various tasks including recording entries, creating budgets, reconciling statements and creating profit and loss statements. Moesha's contribution to the LIVC Prom Boutique project was creating the budget something she did without any assistance. She then created a second budget for a fundraiser with the proceeds benefitting the Prom Boutique. Her contributions to Prom Boutique was not limited to the financial aspects, as she helped collect, transport, and store the dresses for Prom Boutique. Last but not least I was tasked with the responsibility of capturing and documenting this year event. This will be done by taking photographs and organizing them creatively to tell the 2017 Prom Boutique story, so that we can show exactly what Prom Boutique is about and how much fun it is to volunteer for this worthy cause.

### Ernesto Rivas

Ernesto is amongst the best-traveled students at NCC. He's been to the Cayman Islands, the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Germany, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Haiti, France, Turkey, Greece, Belgium, Italy, Sweden, Norway, and the Vatican.

However, his most rewarding experience has been volunteering in Haiti. He volunteered through an organization called International Youth Fellowship (IYF). The program offers different areas in which volunteers can teach such as English lectures, Taekwondo, Gospel class, and Song & Dance, to name a few. His job was to teach an English to 70 students in a single room. The biggest reward for him was seeing the big smiles and hope on their faces.

Ernesto was awarded an Honors Program scholarship for his humanitarian efforts.



## Northeast Regional Honors Council



The Northeast Regional Honors Council held their yearly conference in Pittsburgh from April 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> and the Honors Program was there in full force. Prof. Cohen and six students braved the seven hour (plus) drive to join hundreds of students from dozens of universities to listen to presentations centered on the theme: “Bridging the Divide: Contemplating Differences and Forging Commonalities”.

During the conference, Thomas Maltese hosted a roundtable event where he facilitated a discussion about the use of student surveys in higher education, and how they may lead to stronger intellectual relationships between professors and students. He had the opportunity to speak with professors and students from other universities, and hear about their personal experiences and opinions regarding his ideas. Thomas graduated from Nassau Community College in May 2017 and will continue pursuing a Computer Science B.S. degree at Stony Brook University.

For the majority of the students on the trip it was their first experience at an academic conference and the experience left them excited to attend more conferences in the future.



Presenters (from the left): Marissa Flaherty, Sandra Riano, Benjamin Sarcristan-Noonan, and Maria Galatro

## The Honors Colloquium

One of the gems of the Honors Program is the yearly Honors Colloquium. Each spring several Honors students are invited to present a paper that they've completed in a setting reminiscent of an academic conference. All faculty, friends, and family in attendance marvel at the level of scholarship achieved by these talented students. This year's Colloquium included the following presentations:

### Maria Galatro

Maria's essay was written for the Post-Modern World with Dr. Andrew Schopp and was titled "The Postmodern Map-Makers: Frederic Jameson". It discussed contemporary examples of two of Jameson's ideas based on his observations and criticisms of postmodern culture. First, was a discussion of how postmodern architecture is, in Jameson's view, "the cannibalization of older architectural styles." The second discussion was based on Jameson's observation that Postmodernism marked the end of "historical awareness" and the need for "cognitive mapping" through Marxism. I challenged this idea by arguing that cognitive mapping could also be accomplished using personal or family history.

### Benjamin Sarcristan-Noonan

Benjamin's essay discussed the underlying themes of love and abandonment in "A Rose for Emily" and "The Chrysanthemums". It focused on the damage caused when the women were presented with, and ultimately denied, the love they'd sought for so long. While both women dealt with their pain differently, neither did so in a healthy manner - nor were they any better off by the ends of their stories.

### Marissa Flaherty

The focus of Marissa's paper narrows in on Victor Frankenstein's disregard toward his creation. By arguing Frankenstein's obligation as a mother and introducing nurturing figures he has as role models, Frankenstein's negligence is apparent and inexcusable. Victor Frankenstein has no grounds to abandon his creation and mistreat him; a fatal error that kills him and all others he cares for.

### Sandra Riano

Sandra's paper, "Exploring the Chicano Narrative" was particularly meaningful to her. As a Colombian-American immigrant she is passionate about researching issues of identity within the migratory experience and adopting a political consciousness as dual citizen. The Mexican-American experience is a deeply rooted, fragmented, painful and important cultural and political one, one that must be studied and considered under a research framework. Through her exploration of Gina Valdes' poetry, she was able to craft a better understanding of bi-cultural identity within the framework discussed. Most importantly she learned that, "while there are borders that divide us, where there are borders, there are also bridges that connect us." Sandra thinks that this is an important lesson everyone should consider, especially given the rhetoric that is used against immigrants, but also as a means of living a more tolerant and compassionate life where people accept the differences of those around us with love and understanding.



## Honors and Awards Night

At the conclusion of every academic year, the Honors Program hosts an Honors and Awards Night in which families, friends and faculty gather to celebrate the accomplishments of graduating Honors students. Honors students receive Certificates of Achievement and medallions. The medallions are worn at Nassau Community College's graduation ceremony.

In addition to celebrating their own achievements, Honors students select one faculty member to receive an Excellence in Teaching Award. This year's recipient was Dr. Steven Richman of the Psychology Department.

Upon receiving the award, Dr. Richman said, "I cannot imagine a more fulfilling career than teaching at Nassau Community College. The diversity of our student population makes every day both challenging and rewarding. The opportunity to teach Honors sections of both General and Educational Psychology has been among my most rewarding professional experiences. I always tell my Honors students that the greatest enrichment they will receive from taking Honors courses comes from interactions with their fellow Honors students. In an Honors course we all learn from each other. I have been privileged over the years to meet, teach, and learn from the most motivated, creative, and intelligent students. There is no greater professional reward for me than knowing that I have touched the lives of these students and having them choose me to receive this award."



2017 Honoree Dr. Steven Richman with the 2016 Awardee, Prof. Matthew Rotando



## Alumni Spotlight



### Tevin Lynch

Since graduating in the Fall'16, Tevin has been attending Queens College on a full scholarship. "The classes are challenging but my courses at Nassau really helped by giving me a solid base for the advanced biology classes that I'm taking. Overall, it has been a really great experience thus far." Tevin is currently a Biology major with a minor in Chemistry at Queens College and anticipates graduating in Fall'18.

### R.J. Cordes and Sarah Murphy

R.J. Cordes and Sarah Murphy, along with Thomas Murphy are starting their own company, IQuery, which indexes students and potential employees the way Google indexes websites. This will allow employers and recruiting companies to quickly find applicants with a vetted proficiency in specific subject matter. They have already established their first partnerships with companies in the field and are hoping that it will one day be used in schools to track student progress and help students build resumes. Their partnership was forged when they all met through the Honors Program and the idea for the software and the first few pieces of the codebase were written while in the Honors Lounge.

### Alex Hall

Alex Hall was one of the youngest NCC graduates ever when he graduated in August 2016 barely one year after beginning his studies. He has continued his studies as a Biochemistry major at Stony Brook University where he is conducting research into Adenoviruses which are emerging as potentially powerful therapeutic agents. Clinical trials are ongoing for their use as gene delivery, vaccine and oncolytic agents. One issue that is critical to the development of these gene delivery agents is biodistribution, which can change significantly depending on the serotype. While human adenovirus type 5 (hAd5) has been extensively studied the biodistribution of alternative serotypes that are being developed is poorly understood. Our aim is to provide a facile and generalizable method to track adenovirus vectors, both alternative serotypes and tropism engineered variants, in vivo. The approach depends upon a two-step chemoselective labeling method to introduce radioisotopes used in positron emission tomography. Alex is working with a highly selective method which minimizes changes in the biodistribution while providing access to a highly sensitive imaging method.

## Study Abroad

Over the summer Sandra Riano had the opportunity to study the armed conflict, peace process and peace negotiations at the Universidad de Los Andes in Bogota, Colombia. It was an incredibly humbling experience to be able to learn from and participate in peace building where she was born. She was able to witness history first hand as she was in Colombia the day the FARC, the oldest guerilla group in Colombia's history, demobilized and ceased to exist as an armed force. Later, she was able to actually go on a field visit to a demobilized zone where ex-combatants live. Sandra kept a blog of her time there to document her experiences and reflect upon peace building, [lasgringadiaries.wordpress.com](http://lasgringadiaries.wordpress.com).



## Exploring Possibilities

In December 2016, Dean Melanie Hammer and Prof. Liz Hynes-Musnisky had the chance to visit Nicaragua as part of an exploratory trip facilitated by NGO JustHope. The trip provided Dean Hammer and Prof. Hynes-Musnisky along with faculty and administrators from several universities with the opportunity to learn about communities in Nicaragua including Chacreseca and LaFlor. Dean Hammer and Prof. Hynes-Musnisky are planning to announce applied learning opportunities in partnership with JustHope so that NCC students can visit and create partnerships with communities in Nicaragua.



## Honors Scholarship Recipients

**Sidney Brickman** was awarded a scholarship for her service to Honors Club and Nassau Community College in addition to her scholarship. Sidney served as the Vice President of the Honors Club during which time she served as a judge during the 19th Annual Arts and Science Fair and helped coordinate the Long Island Cares food drive. She published “Mere Girls Among Men” in the Veritas Honors Journal whose theme dealt with gender relations, particularly how the women in “Araby,” by James Joyce, and “Hills Like White Elephants,” by Ernest Hemingway, lacked a name, diminishing their worth as individuals, yet not as characters in the storyline. She also participated in other organizations at Nassau Community College including Amnesty International as well as the New York Public Interest Research Group where we focused on several issues including registering students on campus to vote. Sidney will be attending Hunter College in the fall where she is a recipient of the Transfer Achievement Scholarship.

**Jaslin Kaur** is an Interdisciplinary Studies major at Nassau Community College interested in Women’s Studies and International Relations. She serves as President of the campus Speech & Debate Team and the Women’s Student Association. She is a 2017 Campus Compact Newman Civic Fellow, SUNY Chancellor’s Award Recipient, and NCC Women’s Faculty Association Scholarship Awardee. As an outspoken activist, she has worked with local women’s non-profits AF3IRM NYC and One Girl Inc., and at the International Young Leaders Assembly as a Youth Delegate to the United Nations. She is also the Founder/Director of the conference, “Women in Charge: A Forum on Women’s Leadership.” Currently, Jaslin is a Mentor with The Fairy Godmother to develop professional and educational goals for young women of color. She is also organizing an initiative called SAWADA: South Asian Women Against Domestic Abuse, empowering young women to end domestic violence and intimate partner abuse. This summer she will be working with the Sadie Nash Leadership Project as a Dean/Teaching Assistant to equip high school girls in NYC with leadership skills and tactics for social justice organizing. Jaslin was awarded the Honors Program scholarship for her numerous contributions to Nassau Community College and being one of only two students to earn the rank of “Distinguished Honors Student”.



# Fundraising

Prof. Cohen took to the streets of Manhattan to raise scholarship money for the students of the Honors Program. Participating in the New York City Half Marathon for the first time, he raced 13.1 miles through Central Park, midtown, and Times Square to the finish line on Wall Street in a personal best of just under 1 hour and 39 minutes. In total \$2400 was raised to support student scholarships.



The Carol Farber Honors Program

[HonorsProgram@ncc.edu](mailto:HonorsProgram@ncc.edu)

[www.ncc.edu/Honors](http://www.ncc.edu/Honors)

One Education Drive

Bradley Hall, Room 1

Garden City, New York 11530