Annual Report for the 2014-2015 Academic Year

Submitted by

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MISSION, VISION, IDENTITY OF THIEL COLLEGE

Mission of Thiel College
Thiel College, an academic institution in the Lutheran tradition, empowers individuals to reach their full potential by assuring educational excellence, stimulating global awareness, promoting ethical and responsible leadership and preparing students for careers so that lives inspired by truth and freedom may be committed to service in the world.

Vision of Thiel College
Thiel College is committed to developing and delivering innovative academic and co-curricular programs incorporating ethical and global perspectives, providing opportunities for students to discover and prepare for leadership in their chosen careers, enrolling students from the global populations, celebrating diversity within its community and cultivating thriving living/learning communities.

Identity of Thiel College
Thiel College, an independent institution related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and established in Western Pennsylvania in 1866 as a co-educational institution, educates students in the liberal arts and professional studies for service to society.

Figure 1 A collage of Thiel College.
DHI Mission
Educating in its deepest meaning is the process of shaping the human into the form of true humanity, into a knowledgeable human being of character committed to serving the greater good. The Dietrich Honors Institute endeavors to create full human beings whose breadth of knowledge, strength of character, and thoughtfulness of action make them natural leaders in the world. The DHI curriculum and co-curriculum are designed to form students in this threefold sense of informing through the acquisition of knowledge, forming through the building of character, and transforming through engagement in serving the larger world.

DHI Motto
Where ideas, character, and action form leaders for the world.

DHI Vision
At the end of its four-year developmental phase the Dietrich Honors Institute of Thiel College will include 250 Dietrich Scholars. These individuals will be strong students who possess demonstrated gifts of various sorts. Participating in the Dietrich Honors
Institute will mean being enriched by giving to and receiving from a diverse community of passionate and purpose-filled people.

Figure 5 Greenville Hall, Thiel College

DHI Core Goal Values

Informing
- General Knowledge
- Critical Thinking
- Interdisciplinary Learning

Forming
- Effective Communication
- Collegial Identity
- Ethical Leadership

Transforming
- Diversity Advocacy
- Civic Engagement
- Project Management

Figure 6 Sophomore honors class presenters in HONS 226, Composing Contextually: Enlightenment, Romanticism, Postmodernism. Pictured are Jennifer Rickens, Evalina Biarzhanina, and Sara Matczak.
THE 9 STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

Dietrich Honors Scholars graduating from Thiel College should be able to:

SLO 1: General Knowledge: Demonstrate knowledge gained from engaging big questions and using information to substantiate informed conclusions.

SLO 2: Critical Thinking: Demonstrate a transdisciplinary approach to comprehensively exploring the content and context of issues before formulating judgments.

SLO 3: Interdisciplinary Learning: Demonstrate having creatively integrated knowledge from various disciplines and having respect for different worldviews and practices.

SLO 4: Effective Communication: Demonstrate the skills to clearly, appropriately, and persuasively express ideas.

SLO 5: Collegial Identity: Demonstrate the skills to cooperate and collaborate with other students to accomplish goals.

SLO 6: Ethical Leadership: Demonstrate ownership of one’s educational process, respect for others, and knowledge of how to employ an empowering mode of leading.

SLO 7: Diversity Advocacy: Demonstrate effective interacting in a pluralistic context that advocates for diversity.

SLO 8: Civic Engagement: Demonstrate actions taken to contribute to the civic life of a community.

SLO 9: Project Management: Demonstrate the skills to execute a high-quality DHI thesis and to create a DHI portfolio that provides evidence of having mastered these DHI Student Learning Outcomes.

Figure 7 The blue and gold colors of Thiel College.
DHI CURRICULUM
The Dietrich Honors Institute curriculum offers students a set of core courses that is different from the set of core course taken by non-honors students at Thiel College. These courses have been specifically designed for students in the Dietrich Honors Institute. They include four DHI courses taken during the freshman year, two during the sophomore year, two during the junior year, the senior capstone DHI course, and one DHI elective course. For students requiring a less regimented schedule because of heavy requirements for their major(s), special accommodations and arrangements can be made. Of the DHI courses described below, the following courses have been taught after two years of operation: HONS 109, HONS 113, HONS 126, HONS 127, HONS 128, and HONS 137.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE NINE REGULAR DHI COURSES

HONS 109  BECOMING HUMAN: LOVE, POWER, JUSTICE (3 CH)
This First Year Seminar course gives students the opportunity to think together about what it means to become a human being by considering the three big questions of love, power, and justice. If love is the reunion of that which is separated, power is the quest of the free individual for understanding and action that shapes the self, and justice tends to the structuring of life in such a way that power’s questing can eventuate in love—then these three big ideas each play an essential role in the process of individuals becoming full human beings. This course also serves as an orientation to college life, to the Dietrich Honors Institute, and to participating in a seminar.

HONS 113  COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY: GRAMMAR, DIALECTIC, RHETORIC (3 CH)
The “trivium” of the classical liberal arts includes grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric, which deal respectively with language, reasoning, and persuasion. The art of grammar teaches the student to speak and write well. The student learns about dialectic or logic or reasoning by engaging in the give and take with others students and the teacher and reflecting on the process of thinking through discussion, debate, argumentation, and questioning. In rhetoric the student learns the science of communication and the art of persuasive writing and speech.

HONS 114  CREATING CULTURE: ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL, MODERN (3 CH)
Students are introduced to highlights in the history, literature, art, music, philosophy, and religion of western humanities. Greece and Rome are emphasized in the ancient period; civilization and thought of the Mediterranean area and Europe are stressed in the medieval period, culminating in the Renaissance; and the Reformation and early modern developments are underscored up until 1789 or the beginning of the French Revolution. Big ideas and major people are lifted up for each period, with connections being drawn from one period to the next.
In religious communities, writings can take on a sacred aura and serve important functions for adherents of the given faith. This is surely the case within the three major monotheistic traditions of the western world. This course uses historical-critical methods to examine the Hebrew Bible of Judaism (the Old Testament of Christians), the New Testament of Christianity, and The Qur’an of Islam. In learning the way to interpret these texts, the focus falls on their meaning for life in the contemporary world.

**HONS 126  COMPOSING CONTEXTUALLY: ENLIGHTENMENT, ROMANTICISM, POSTMODERNISM (3 CH)**
This course continues two other Honors courses, namely, HONS 113, the composition course Communicating Effectively: Grammar, Dialectic, Rhetoric, and HONS 114, the course in the history of western humanities entitled Creating Culture: Ancient, Medieval, Modern. While covering the history of western humanities from the beginning of the French Revolution in 1789 to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the course also allows students to develop further their composition skills in the context of studying these two fascinating centuries of creating culture. Highlighted will be three major cultural configurations: first, the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on reason, universality, and form; second, the backlash against the Enlightenment in Romanticism with its stress on emotion, individuality, and freedom; and third, the revolt against the Enlightenment and Romanticism trajectories of modernity in postmodernism, which accentuates relativism, pluralism, and fragmentation.

**HONS 127  EMERGING REALITY: UNIVERSE, LIFE, MIND (3 CH)**
The notion of emergence has been gaining currency in various disciplines over the past few decades. This course studies three sequential big bangs that have given rise to human experience: the big bang of matter-energy some 13.8 billion years ago, the big bang of life some 3.5 to 4 billion years ago, and the big bang of human self-consciousness rather more recently. These three moments in reality’s emergence mark the most important events, at least from the perspective of human beings, in the history of cosmic evolution. Physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, and neuroscience will give us insights into these three.

**HONS 137  EMERGING REALITY LAB (1 CH)**
This laboratory course, Emerging Reality Lab, HON 137, is a supplement to the course Emerging Reality: Universe, Life, Mind, HON 127. It serves as an introduction to the natural sciences in general and supports the basic content of the Emerging Reality course, which centers on the coming to be of the universe in the Big Bang together with the emergence of life and the emergence of mind or human self-consciousness. Four labs will be related to each of these three major moments of our evolving universe. No sophisticated level of mathematical proficiency will be assumed in the course. Those students majoring in one of the sciences are exempted from taking this lab course that accompanies Emerging Reality, HON 127.
HONS 230  UNDERSTANDING GLOBALIZATION: MARKETS, IMAGES, SUSTAINABILITY (3 CH)
The notion of globalization took on new meaning after the era of exploration and discovery in the 16th century. But the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 was an exceptional event in world history that ushered in a new era of globalization. After that event many countries made the transition to democracy and market economics. Over the past two decades markets have been increasingly shaped by the power of images to influence consumers to purchase goods. Global economic forces sometimes threaten earth processes that are needed for sustaining life. Called for today is thoughtful reflection concerning how economic prosperity can occur while at the same time honoring the sustainability of the Earth.

HONS 240  APPRECIATING CREATIVITY: ARTISTIC, SCIENTIFIC, SOCIETAL (3 CH)
Creativity is alive in nature; as creatures embedded in the natural world, human beings participate in the creative advance of the universe. This course gives students the opportunity to gain an appreciation for the multi-faceted reality of creativity. Many types of human creativity are investigated with the intent of identifying ways in which these creative forms differ from one another and yet are the same. The comparison of creativity as manifested in the world of artists, of scientists, and of societies will contribute to appreciating this fundamental human characteristic. The course will set the stage for the senior capstone course to be taken in the following year, during which each student will present their creative project.

HONS 340  CONTRIBUTING CULTURALLY: RESEARCHING, CREATING, PRESENTING (3 CH)
For this DHI Thesis course, students will engage in thesis work that will vary greatly in form depending on their particular discipline. Work begun in the Appreciating Creativity course will continue in the context of this course. The experience will culminate in the presenting of a significant research and/or creative achievement. Students will conceive, plan, and execute a high-quality project in the appropriate disciplinary or multidisciplinary context. If the student is situated in a department that already has a senior capstone expectation, he or she will work cooperatively with departmental professors to ensure that those expectations as well as those of the DHI are met.

DHI RESIDENTIAL OPTION
We are grateful to the cooperative spirit of those in the Student Life Division who made it possible for DHI students to have the option of living in the Hodge Hall residence. In each of the first two years of the DHI, three-fourths of the incoming freshmen chose to reside in Hodge. We thought that the option of being able to reside in the same residence hall with others in the DHI would facilitate the building of relationships, and that has proven to be true. As students live in close proximity to one another this allows significant community building to take place among the members of the incoming class. It
also makes attending the weekly Symposium for Excellence, which has been held in the Lobby of Hodge, convenient for the residents. Residing together helps to engrain the DHI mark and identity into many first year students and likely helps to retain them in the Institute and at Thiel.

Figure 8 Hodge Hall, the premium housing option that DHI students can choose.

DHI SCHOLARSHIPS
Another important factor for recruiting students is scholarships. All students coming into the new Dietrich Honors Institute have received a $1,000.00 scholarship. This scholarship policy provides one more factor in attracting students into the DHI program and, since the scholarship follows students remaining in the DHI, in retaining them in it as well. Key members of the administrative team are to be commended for working together to make possible this DHI scholarship.

DHI RECRUITMENT
The DHI vision calls for recruiting “diversely gifted Dietrich Scholars whose lives will be enriched by giving to and receiving from a learning community filled with passionate and purposeful people.” Identifying the gifts of prospective students continues to be a central aspect of the DHI recruiting process. The procedure identifies potential DHI Scholars through a weekly review of all students admitted to the College that week. Each Thursday we determine which newly admitted students meet the criteria for admission to the DHI. We then scrutinize the applications of those qualified students to identify their unique gifts. Invitation letters to
qualified students reference their personal gifts and attempt to point out the way their joining the DHI would enrich the Honors and College communities. A DHI brochure and a response card are included along with the letter of invitation. When we receive word that a student is accepting the invitation to be in the DHI, we send a DHI Membership Card to the student. The Membership Card gives a $25.00 credit at the Thiel Bookstore.

DHI staff members think that the recruitment process works effectively and should be continued. But we came to realize this past year just how important it is to have personal contact with the students invited into the DHI. This year access to those students was not afforded us in the same way it has been in the past and the result has been a substantial reduction in students recruited into the program. I met with precious few prospects, and with the closing down of the four Scholarship Competition Days I lost access to hundreds of very fine students, many of whom had been invited into the DHI. In the upcoming year I will work hard to reestablish a close relationship with the Admissions Office and to advocate for a higher profile of the DHI within their operations.

DHI FIELD TRIPS
Two few field trips were taken during the 2014-2015 academic year. October 18-19 found a group of 80 DHI Scholars traveling to Chicago, IL where they engaged in a full schedule of activities. They had free time on Magnificent Mile (Michigan Avenue) before having lunch at Giordano’s Pizza. They enjoyed some down time at their hotel before going to the Medieval Times Dinner and Tournament, followed by a presentation of The Art of Falling, a collaborative effort of The Second City Comedy Club and the Hubbard Street Dance Company Chicago at the Harris Theater in Millennium Park. The next day the group enjoyed the Museum of Science and Technology, which included a Disney Treasures exhibit, and The Art Institute of Chicago.

Figure 10-11: The picturesque skyline of the Chicago loop area. The happy DHI crew getting their fill of Chicago-style deep-dish pizza.
In the spring semester the trip to New York City took place on February 27-March 1st. Our hotel right on Times Square in Manhattan gave students easy access to many New York attractions. The group enjoyed a matinee performance of *Phantom of the Opera* at the Majestic Theater followed by an evening performance of *Spamalot* at Wagner College after having taken the Staten Island Ferry. Time was spent at the Ground Zero /9/11 area of Manhattan and in Grand Central Terminal. Students grew through the experience of learning how to negotiate their way around the city.


Figures 16-18 DHi Scholars enjoying themselves on the New York trip.
In 2013 Italy was the destination of choice for the DHI May Study Abroad experience. In May 2014 some DHI students enjoyed studying aspects of Greece. May of 2015 found some 14 students on a Study Trip to London (and Paris) under the leadership of Matt Morgan, Professor of Philosophy at Thiel, and Jared Johnson, Assistant Professor of English. Another six students experienced the Grand Tour of Italy on a trip led by Cindy Sutton, Professor of Sociology, with Anna Reinsel, Assistant Professor of Environmental Science and Chemistry and Greg Butcher, Professor of Neuroscience, traveling with the group as well. In addition, during the second semester, DHI Scholars Robert Carpenter studied in New Zealand and Hanna Tegel studied in Washington, D.C. Thirteen
DHI Study Abroad Scholarships were awarded to students this year. Building a strong study abroad program is a necessary part of building a strong honors program. Study abroad is one of the first topics to come up in conversations with very capable students and their parents. This year we were pleased to be able to maintain momentum in this important area.

**HONORS SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATIONS**

On April 18, 2015 Honors Program students joined with other Thiel students in presenting their creative projects in a Thiel College Symposium that was held in the Pedas Communication Center of Thiel College. The objectives of the Student Research Symposium are to give students the opportunity to gain confidence in presenting their intellectual creations publicly, to showcase the academic work of Thiel College students for those inside and outside of the College, and to enhance our identity as an institution in which students engage in serious research. A planning committee worked hard during the year to orchestrate the event. Three first-year professors served on the Committee. Del Abi Abdallah, Assistant Professor of Biology thinks “This is an opportunity for students to show what they have been working on for maybe a year. It can make the difference for them to be accepted into a strong graduate program.” Instructor of Math and Computer Science Ron Anderson agrees and adds, “The day is a strategic investment for the students who recognize the importance for their future.” Jared Hannerman, Assistant Professor of Sociology, notes that this type of experience provides students with a good start at becoming comfortable taking on a public role in their academic work.” More long-term professors, Beth Parkinson of Psychology and Curt Thompson of the Dietrich Honors Institute, also served on the Planning Committee. Parkinson is excited about the momentum she sees taking place within Thiel in this area of faculty and students working together on research. She declares, “This collaboration is becoming more and more visible, and it is manifesting itself across many disciplines.”

It is the case that the twelve new faculty members who joined the ranks of the Thiel faculty this year have injected some new life into the community. A portion of the enthusiasm for research on the part of faculty and students alike is coming from those younger
faculty members. A significant multi-year grant of more than $400,000 from Fred and Jill Haer in support of the Greenville Neuromodulation Center (GNC) Faculty-Student Research Institute should promote the cause even further. In addition, this year the first DHI Summer Research Grant was presented to Sean Oros for his project entitled “Those who Live by the Sword, Die by the Sword: The Identity and Fall of Rome.”

Three venues in the Pedas Communication Center accommodated concurrent oral presentations. At noon lunch items were available for participants to eat while going around to various poster presentations.

Following is an overview of the oral presentations that were given by students in the Honors Program.

**Molecular Resonance**
Derek Runge (HON)
Christopher Stanisky, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Chemistry

The resonance energies of two aromatic molecules (phenol and resorcinol) were determined through enthalpy of combustion. Bomb calorimetry was used to obtain experimental values for enthalpies of combustion. These values were compared to similar non-aromatic compounds to determine resonance energy. The experimental resonance energies were compared with conceptual models of resonance.

**The Effects of Autism on Caregivers**
Kristen Verina (HON)
Cynthia Sutton, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology

Autism is a disorder that interferes with a person’s ability to communicate with and relate to others. Out of one in sixty-eight people who have autism, one in forty-two of those are boys. Children and adults with autism experience many struggles with this disorder, yet so do the people who take care of them, or the caregivers. The role of a caregiver is to care for the individual needs of those with autism at any given time. Throughout my interview process, I have met with multiple caregivers who have explained how difficult and time-consuming their role is, yet also rewarding at the same time. Many people see the effects autism has on the individual, however not many people realize autism also affects the caregivers for these individuals. Overall, I have learned the difficulties and realized the strengths personally of some caregivers in my vicinity.

Figure 25 Kristen Verina
The relationship between home range and host plants in the butterfly genus Danaus
Cassie Graham
M.T. Balas, Ph.D., Professor of Biology; B. Parkinson, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology

Seed plants and the insects that feed on them have undergone rapid diversification throughout their existence, leading them to be very successful in generating biodiversity. The purpose of this study was to investigate how the utilization of host plants and the geographic home range of species of butterflies within the genus Danaus could have promoted speciation. Data on the number of host plants utilized and number of sites in which the butterflies inhabitant were collected for eight Danaus butterfly species. This data was analyzed using a Fisher’s exact test and yielded a significant positive correlation (p = 0.0179). It is concluded that species with fewer host plants also have a restricted geographical home range. This suggests that speciation within the genus Danaus is caused by a restriction in host plants.

The educational controversy: what it means to be liberally educated in the 21st century
Ashley Reynolds
James Koshan, Ph.D., Professor of History

Education in the 21st century remains a trending topic of controversy and a source of frustration for many scholars. The influence of the government and the limitations they enforce on the educational system serve as a source of questions regarding what it meant to be liberally educated in times past, and what it means today. Does liberal arts education still truly exist in modern times and with more government involvement than ever before? How much has the liberal arts changed over time and do any specific incidents in history catalyze these changes? The meaning of liberal arts has yet to be firmly agreed upon by scholars and others alike, yet it is said to be the paramount form of education in the world. Is this true? If so, what makes liberal arts education different and superior from its counterparts? With the help of a student survey, this research describes many controversial views on the influence of government on education and the morphology of the educational system and the liberal arts over time. This research also depicts the directions in which education is heading and if the liberal arts is indeed superior and whether it will remain the paramount form of education worldwide.
Flowertown: A Creative Uprooting of Bullying and Oppression in Society
Elizabeth Rice
Mary Theresa Hall, Ph.D., Professor of English

This Honors project examines the connection that exists between bullying and nature by using various disciplines—art, poetry, and psychology—in Rice’s creative short story titled Flowertown 2015. In this short story, a town has succumbed to its bully, an asphyxiating plant known as Big Ivy, whose purpose is to condemn and overpower those who are artistic, unique, and beautiful. Through struggles against himself, his country, and Big Ivy, the protagonist Mummsie takes a stand against bullying. With literary and artistic creativity and psychological insight, the hero rises against the oppressive society and confronts the bullying problems in his community.

According to the National Bullying Prevention Center, in a typical American school, more than half of all children are bullied, and over 10% of victims are bullied every day. In order to better detail the devastating effects of bullying on adolescents, this Honors project analyzes the psychology of a bully and how to rip up those deep roots. It becomes apparent that bullying is the responsibility of all persons, human or flower, and that this harassment of others delays the advancement of society. The story portrays the necessity of both psychology and creativity in effecting progressive change in human behavior that supports rather than ridicules one’s neighbor.

Psychological principles, artistic depictions, and literary expressions convey this thesis. The poems of this literary piece are written in the format of the villanelle, limerick, curtail sonnet, heroic couplets, and journal entries as parallels of the characteristics of the personae of Flowertown.

Are Millennials One with the Dao?
Kourtney Polvinale
Jenni Griffin, Ph.D., Assistant Academic Dean & Professor of Psychology, Beth Parkinson, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology

Presently, our multicultural world is becoming smaller and more conscious, and the social variations between generations have created an age of people whose life principles reflect both Eastern and Western beliefs, as well as modern and traditional values. Eastern belief systems’, specifically Daoism’s, presence in the United
States can be linked to the spiritual principles present in Ralph Waldo Emerson’s contributions to the Transcendentalist literary movement. However, just as the juxtaposition of belief systems and revolutionary period of 19th century industrialization caused reactions within American culture, the millennial generation’s culture reflects a similar apposition of Eastern and Western ideals through this modern revolutionary period. Does Daoism, specifically, have a prominent place in our Western Culture through this generation? Also, what does this juxtaposition tell us about the next generation of political leaders, parents, scientists, etc.?

The Journey for Answers: a quest to find out the story told by the 158 rocks found along the Eastern shore of Cayuga Lake in Aurora, NY.
Rebecca Campbell
Anna Reinsel, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Chemistry/Environmental Science

I picked up rocks along the Eastern Shore of Cayuga Lake in Aurora, New York as a child with my family. With the help of the research team at The Museum of the Earth in Ithaca, New York I discovered the stories the rocks with holes and the other rocks had to tell. Some of these 158 rocks that I picked up because I thought they were “cool,” turned out to be ancient fossilized sea life. Three hundred and sixty million years ago there was an inland ocean over the northeastern New York, northern Pennsylvania and western Ohio. Species long ago were decimated by a great extinction at the end of the Permian. This life is now preserved in the form of fossils that I found in the northeastern part of New York State. I have glacial erratic rocks from Canada as well as three types of coral, and other types of rock. These rocks are my part of my childhood and I never imagined I would get the opportunity to learn their journey from being sentiment in the ocean, then being covered by glaciers, and years later washing ashore on Cayuga Lake for a curious little girl to research one day.

Black Twitter: the correlation of cultural backgrounds and social media
Jaclyn Watkins
A.M. Hunchuk, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology

In the year 2015, statistics show that a mind-blowing 56% of Americans have a profile on a social-networking site. Sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and specifically, Twitter have become highly popular among citizens of all race, color, and ethnicity. It has evolved into a tool that has changed the way people communicate and perceive
each other both positively and negatively. The use of Twitter and other social media websites has led to the creation and growth of cultural subgroups, such as Black Twitter, and has provided a platform for greater unity and awareness of people of different cultural backgrounds throughout the world. This descriptive, exploratory research project sampled Thiel College students and administered a brief spontaneous questionnaire on the awareness of Black Twitter and other cultural subgroups on social media. Results indicate that although variety thrives in social media, most within the Thiel population are not familiar with the massive diversity of social networkers.

Other DHI Scholars presented papers in addition to those who were doing their honors project. Those others included the following:

Kierkegaard and longing: an investigation of his relation to Regine Olson and subsequent themes in his writing
Nathan Flory
C. Thompson, Ph.D., Professor of Religion

Søren Kierkegaard was a Danish philosopher and religious writer who lived in the first half of the 19th century. He is sometimes counted as the forefather of existentialism, as he was often filled with terror and melancholia and served as his own psychologist in many of his writings and journals. This melancholia appeared as a theme not only in Kierkegaard’s writing, but in his outer life, as well. Having first met and become infatuated with Regine Olsen in 1837, he initiated interactions as the two became friends, fell in love, and were engaged in September 1840. However, this was the height of their relation. Kierkegaard broke off the engagement in August 1841 for unknown reasons. Some speculate that Kierkegaard saw that he was unfit to be a husband due to his melancholia, and that was his reason for breaking the engagement. Regardless of the reason, the two broke, yet Regine was constantly in Kierkegaard’s mind. Much of his writing was done for her, and it could be said that he longed for her his entire life. This presentation examines the intricacies of Kierkegaard’s relationship with Regine and its effect on themes in his writing; specifically the pseudonymous work Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments.
Sir Gawain’s Setting Sun: The Decline of Celtic Gawain in the Face of Foreign Influence
Sean Oros
Jared Johnson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English

Sir Gawain, of any literary figure, has certainly had his share of both fame and obscurity. Some of the more common portrayals of the Arthurian Legends, both medieval and modern, revolve around three characters: King Arthur, Queen Guinevere, and dashing Sir Lancelot, the champion of the Round Table. However, ironically, Lancelot was never a part of the Arthurian legends until Chrétien de Troyes introduced him in the 12th century C.E. Before the French addition of Lancelot, Sir Gawain, Arthur’s kinsman, was the undisputed champion of the court. However, since the introduction of Lancelot, Gawain has decidedly fallen behind his French comrade in arms in Arthurian lore. Gawain, although an original part of the Celtic legends that Arthur came from, was used in a variety of ways if French-styled romances: at times he was a great hero, but, at other times, he was an inferior foil to Lancelot to show Lancelot’s superiority. To better understand this interplay, one must look past the French and Anglo-Norman romances for the traces of the earliest versions of the myths, based on Celtic Brittonic tradition that survived in regions such as Wales. Through exploration of Gawain’s independent role from Lancelot, as well as Lancelot’s eventual eclipsing of Gawain in Arthurian lore, one may see the influence of medieval French romances upon literature from their own day to today.

Using Bioinformatics to Annotate the Pipsqueak Genome
Cassandra M. Cook
S.J. Swerdlow, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Biology

This project was focused on bioinformatics, which utilizes computer software programs to analyze a genome, by identifying each specific gene and the resulting proteins. DNAMaster which incorporates several different gene annotation systems was used for this project. Annotation of genomes is required to double-check the various predictions of the DNAMaster program and decide if the gene and resulting protein are an accurate prediction. The main focus of the project was to annotate base pairs 19,000-29,000 of the pipsqueak mycobacteriophage genome. It was found that the program predicted the majority of the genes and resulting proteins of the pipsqueak genome correctly. Identifying each gene in the pipsqueak genome will give scientists more insight into how mycobacteriophages function and may lead to the ability to treat bacterial diseases using a phage instead of antibiotics.
Lab Characterization of the LISA Pathfinder Optical Metrology System
Keeley Criswell
Patrick Hecking, Ph.D., Professor of Physics

LISA Pathfinder (LPF), set to launch in 2015, is designed to test technologies that can be used in future space-based, gravitational-wave observatories. LPF contains an Optical Metrology System (OMS) that is used to measure the relative distance between the test masses. The OMS of the LISA Pathfinder currently has a ground model located in Hannover, Germany for testing of the system and system controls before launch. Currently, the system is being changed from analog to digital. This past summer, Keeley Criswell spent two months working to improve the ground model and make the change to a digital system.

Following is an overview of the poster presentations that were given by students in the Honors Program.

The effect of tree diversity on the biodiversity of ant species in two differing areas
Timothy Hutton
Michael Balas, Ph.D., Professor of Biology

Tree diversification in an area has an effect on the number of animal species that are found there as well. It is hypothesized that there is a direct correlation between the number of tree species to the number of ant species in the same area. This report studies the effect of tree diversity on the diversity of ant species. Two wooded areas of Thiel College were sampled for tree and ant diversity. Roadhouse Woods was selected for high biodiversity, as 8 species were found in our tree sampling. East Acres was selected for its lower number of tree species and high prevalence of Red Maples. Winkler sacks were used to collect 10 leaf litter samples in each site. The collected ant species were sorted, identified, and counted. 10 different ant species were found in Roadhouse Woods, and almost every species was in higher abundance for a total of 170 individuals. 7 of the 10 species were found in East Acres, with a total of only 35 individuals. Using the data from each site, Chi-Squared tests were performed on each ant species found. For some of the species, the null hypothesis was rejected. However, most of the species were inaccurately concluded to have no difference between sites because the low numbers observed make it impossible to find an accurate trend. Overall, our hypothesis was supported from the obviously higher biodiversity and quantity in Roadhouse Woods. To increase the accuracy, more sites could be sampled, along with an increase of samples taken.
DHI GOVERNING GROUPS

The two groups established the previous year to help with the governing of the Dietrich Honors Institute met during the 2014-2015 academic year near the end of each month, although this year scheduling difficulties were pronounced, due in part to staff turnover. Two students per class serve on the DHI Student Advisory Board, the DHI body that gives advice on the day-to-day operations of the Dietrich Honors Institute. This past year those representatives were:

- Senior class representative: Sean Oros
- Senior class representative: Sara Toombs
- Junior class representative: Cassie Graham
- Junior class representation: Kourtney Polvinale
- Sophomore class representative: Robert Carpenter
- Sophomore class representative: Arien Skiba
- Freshman class representative: Jenny Lopez
- Freshman class representation: Filippo Costanzo

Two students and four faculty members serve with the DHI staff on the DHI Honors Council. The Council has responsibility for determining policies for the DHI. It met at noon on the last Friday of the month. Serving on the Council during the 2013-2014 academic year were:

- Student representative: Kayla Doran
- Student representative: Colin Vitale
- Faculty representative: Cindy Sutton of Sociology
- Faculty Representative: Melissa Oakes of Business Administration
- Faculty Representative: Matt Morgan of Philosophy
- Faculty Representative: Anna Reinsel of Environmental Science

UPDATE ON THE DHI WITH THE FACULTY

Some questions were raised during the spring semester about the functioning of the DHI, so Thompson gave an “Update on the Dietrich Honors Institute” at the faculty meeting held on April 21, 2015. He addressed questions that had been raised, informing his colleagues about: the DHI curriculum (including information on the courses that have been taught thus far and those yet-to-be developed and taught); the rigor of the program (with a close look at two courses: Becoming Human: Love, Power, Justice and Emerging Reality: Universe, Life, Mind); the thorny question concerning the DHI Thesis and how the demands to be made on the faculty might be accommodated; the matter of recruiting professors to teach the DHI courses; the issue of DHI Assessment; and the numbers on probation of DHI students and dismissal from the DHI. It was good to initiate the faculty more fully into these concerns that are at the heart of the DHI’s functioning.
DHI PLANNING DOCUMENTS
Two planning documents will hopefully be created again this year, once we have a fully staff, to help the DHI to function smoothly next year. The DHI Communication Plan draws on the schedule and procedures developed during the 2014-15 academic year to outline the details of communications that will be required to run an effective recruitment campaign for the upcoming year. The DHI Calendar of Events places on the months August through May all of the DHI events that will be occurring, from the field trips to the meetings of the governing bodies and everything in-between. These two planning documents will help to keep us on task as we execute our duties and responsibilities of the Dietrich Honors Institute during the coming year.

DHI SYMPOSIUM FOR EXCELLENCE
Once again, a major part of the DHI program during the past year was the weekly meetings held from 8:00 to 9:30 each Thursday evening. The Symposium for Excellence was an optional event open to DHI Scholars and to FoDHIrs (Friends of DHI students). Held in the Lounge area of Hodge Hall, except for when it had to be moved to Weyer’s Lounge on account of the flooding of the Hodge Lounger, it was an opportunity for informal socializing and for talking about concerns that might arise in the course of student studies and life at Thiel College. It also proved to be a convenient time to hold planning meetings for upcoming events. Food was served at each gathering with the featured items of the evening changing from week to week. The attendance continued to average about thirty-five students. It definitely helps on the goal of building community. It also gives occasion for students from different class levels to get to know one another better. The Director and his assistant Kathy Thompson are there every week, so this provides opportunities for meaningful encounters with students in an out-of-class setting. The Symposium for Excellence will be a part of the DHI experience next year.

DHI AMBASSADORS
The Ambassadors program of the DHI was continued this year, although with the falling off of events for incoming students demanding face time with current students, the reduced need led to reduced activity. Students stepped up to help as needed, and those in the DHI working for Admissions, namely, Kourtney Polvinale, Alannah Keisling, and Samantha Deems did much on the DHI’s behalf, as did Amanda Zimmerman, Kayla O’Kresikc, Nathan Flory, Robert Carpenter, and Sean Oros. These advocates are a substantial asset to the Institute.

DHI SERVICE PROJECTS
The DHI facilitates arenas within which students are able to engage in action. The primary arena for doing that is its sponsoring of service projects. Once again during the past year the major service project was the campaign to fight malaria. The DHI worked to fight this disease from which 800,000 people die each year. The tragedy is that these deaths are taking place when the disease is completely preventable and treatable.
Thiel’s relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America allows the DHI’s efforts to be enconced within the ELCA’s campaign to raise $15 million by this year. During this year two events raised some money toward the cause. At Homecoming 2013 the DHI worked with the Advancement Division in sponsoring the second annual 5-k Run/Walk. DHI students also sold their “Malaria Sucks” t-shirts. A total of over $3,800 was raised toward fighting malaria in Africa. The fundraising for this service project had hoped to raise a total of $4,000 for the cause and we came very close to that.

**THE FIRST ANNUAL DHI BANQUET**

On April 9th the DHI Annual Banquet was held in the Lutheran Heritage Room of the Howard Miller Student Center of Thiel College. The plan since the beginning of the DHI had been to have a spring banquet, likely in April. In the past two years some of those involved in the presentations of Honors projects gathered for a meal, and those constituted mini-banquets. But the DHI had not yet held a full-fledged Banquet. It felt good to be able to do that. The dinner had the strange starting time of 7:45 p.m. to accommodate those who had band practice until 7:30. Beth Parkinson, who has directed the former Honors Program for many years, was the speaker. In addition, Curt Thompson presented a slide show and narrative entitled “Reminiscing on an Emerging Tradition: The Dietrich Honors Institute at Thiel College, 2012-2015.” A Salute was given to senior Sean Oros for being a transcender, traveler, trigger, trencher, transacter, trailer, and transformer. Sean was saluted as an ancient Roman in our midst, for his contribution to scholarship, to sociality, and to the general well-being of our community.

![Figure 34 Sean Oros](image)

**Figures 35-37** Left: Sophomore DHI Scholars Samantha McLaughlin, Victoria Hermann, Becca Adams, and Melissa Allen enjoying the Banquet prior to getting their food. Middle: Professor Nancy Katz offering an enthusiastic hello at the Banquet. Right: Sophomore Katherine Orczeck and Senior Keeley Criswell greeting the videographer.
NCHC Regional Conference

In April Thompson attended the regional meeting of the National Collegiate Honors Council. The theme of the 2015 Northeast Regional Honors Council Annual Conference was “Battlefields of Change.” It was held at the Wyndham Conference Center in Gettysburg, PA. The region has a reputation of being especially geared to Honors students of the region. That was reflected in the programming, which featured student presentations and posters just about exclusively. It would be a good conference for a number of our DHI Scholars to attend and present at, and particularly inviting is the venue of next year’s meeting in Concord, MA, just outside of Boston.

![Figures 38-39 The Wyndham Conference Center in Gettysburg and a photo of some of those gathered at a plenary session.](image)

DHI and Social Media

Since most students no longer identify e-mail as a preferred form of communicating, we continue to employ alternative communication tools to stay in touch with those in the DHI and FoDHI (Friends of DHI). During the past year the DHI made significant use of various social media. Many of the DHI Scholars use the DHI Facebook page, and this allows them to be in touch when they are home for breaks and the summer. We also used Twitter substantially as an alternative means of messaging throughout the past year.

The New DHI Space

During the 2014-2015 academic year the DHI benefited from being in its new space on the second floor of Greenville Hall. The completion of the Pedas Communication Center meant that the vacated space of the Communication department could be renovated, providing for DHI offices, a DHI Lounge, and a DHI seminar classroom. The new space worked very well; after the first year of using it, students already have many memories of DHI experiences gained in classes conducted, meetings held, conversations shared, and consultations had within the setting. The space should serve the DHI well for many years to come.
THE DHI STAFF

During the past academic year many changes took place within the DHI Staff. In December, Kateri Linn, the DHI Programs Coordinator, took a maternity leave to give birth to Donato Linn and to care for him. Her temporary departure led to the hiring of Carol Drennen on a temporary basis, and Carol functioned well in picking up many of Kateri’s responsibilities. In March we learned that Kateri Linn had accepted a management position with HPMC and would not be returning to the DHI. Kateri had been with the program since the beginning and had made countless contributions to its development. We thank her for all the she has done and wish her well in her new position. Carol Drennen agreed to continue in the position at a reduced level until the end of the school year. Since then the DHI has been without any
support staff, but plans are in place to hire a part-time Administrative Assistant. Throughout the entire school year the DHI did benefit from the presence of Kayla O’Kresik, our work-study student who competently contributed so much to the operation of the DHI.

DIGGING INTO DHI ASSESSMENT
During the 2014-2015 academic year assessing the DHI was given significant attention. A DHI Assessment Plan was created. It included reducing the DHI Student Learning Outcomes from 18 to 9 and developing rubrics for the assessing the 9 DHI Student Learning Outcomes. An initial assessment was made of some of the Student Learning Outcomes in relation to four courses: Becoming Human: Love, Power, Justice; Creating Culture: Ancient, Medieval, Modern; Interpreting Scriptures: Jewish, Christian, Islamic; and Composing Contextually: Enlightenment, Romanticism, Postmodernism. Fortunately, an effort was made to gather papers written for courses in electronic form so that they can be used in assessing the quality of student work in DHI courses. The assessment established that these courses are leading to the desired outcomes most of the students in them. However, places were identified for changes to be made to improve educational effectiveness. With a plan in place, the task will be to see that assessments and improvements to DHI teaching are properly implemented in coming years.

THE 2015 DHI RECRUITED CLASS
Recruiting of the incoming class for the 2015-2016 academic year are pretty much completed. The requirements for being invited into the DHI are for the student to have a 3.5 GPA and to meet at least one of two other criteria: 1100 SAT (combined Math and Verbal) or 24 ACT (composite), and be in the top 15% of one’s class. A student might have been very close to meeting the standards, for example, having a grade point just under a 3.5 with strong test scores and class rank; in a few instances we have encouraged such students to write a brief essay indicating why they would like to be in the DHI and how they would contribute to it. One student was admitted into the DHI by way of this process of special petition.

The statistics on the next page disclose a general profile of the students recruited into the DHI for the fall of 2015. More can be learned about these DHI students as one looks at comparable figures for incoming non-DHI students who are registered for this next year. The non-DHI average GPA is 2.92, their average SAT is 934, their average ACT is 19.9, and their average class rank is 42.5%. This group of students has a female-to-male ratio of about 50:50. For the incoming DHI students, the numbers are: average GPA is 3.81, average SAT is 1168, average ACT is 24.9, and average class rank is 12.2%, and 50:50 on the female-to-male ratio, with this last figure representing a significant change from last year’s 75:25 ratio. Our incoming class of 30 students is an 8% yield of inviting 375 students into the program as contrasted with 425 invites with a 14% yield in the previous two years. In May 2015 the record-keeping on the DHI for the 2014-2015 academic year included these statistics among others: eight students were dismissed from the program, three students withdrew from Thiel and the DHI, and three students
withdrew from the DHI but stayed at Thiel. DHI students were retained in the DHI this past year at a rate of 87.8%, and retention of incoming DHI students at Thiel College was 97.4%. In our recruiting during the past year, at no point were we keeping pace with the previous two years.

As we look ahead to the upcoming academic year, there will be 140 total students in the DHI. We hope to see that number increase substantially the next year.

**Fall 2014 Incoming Class Statistics**

**TOTAL incoming class 332**

**DHI incoming class Fall 2014: 30**
The average GPA is 3.81
The average ACT is 24.88
The average SAT is 1168.
The average class rank for those with available stats is 12.15%

**All other Reg/Dep students incoming class Fall 2014: 273**
The average GPA is 2.92,
The average ACT is 19.9,
The average score on the SAT Verbal is 463, SAT Math is 471, so 934 overall.

**Average GPA of all deposited/registered students with DHI Students added back in**
The average GPA is 3.2,
The average ACT is: 21,
The average score on the SAT Verbal 482, SAT Math 486, so 978 overall.

1 student was asked to write a statement and was accepted (included in the 30)

The third year of the Dietrich Honors Institute has come to a close. As we reflect in retrospect on what has been accomplished in the first three years of the DHI, we can conclude that we are well on our way toward our goal, with two more years to go toward fulfilling it completely. The third DHI class has been recruited and the group coming will bring much to the program. The number of students that came into the Institute the first two years was very healthy but for a number of reasons there was a precipitous drop this past year. Those shortcomings will have to be corrected this next year. Six of the nine regular courses of the DHI have been taught and two more of the nine courses will be taught this upcoming year. Multifaceted DHI programming has been instituted. A complete structure for a full-bodied Dietrich Honors Institute has been put in place, although new dimensions will be added as needed. The DHI staff situation is currently in transition and hiring the appropriate person to replace Kateri Linn will be critical. The greater Thiel community continues to become accustomed to the reality of the DHI and many are lending their support to see that it continues moving ahead. Our goal of
making the Dietrich Honors Institute a national flagship Honors program is not yet at hand; however, it looms large before us as achievable if we focus our efforts in a few strategic areas. Bill Dietrich’s gift to Thiel College is having an amazing impact on all of us at the institution. We look ahead to year three with expectations of big things happening in the DHI.

**Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program**

Although no single or definitive honors program model can or should be superimposed on all types of institutions, the National Collegiate Honors Council has identified a number of best practices that are common to successful and fully developed honors programs. We need to keep these characteristics in mind as we continue to give the appropriate form to the institution we are creating.

1. **The honors program offers carefully designed educational experiences that meet the needs and abilities of the undergraduate students it serves.** A clearly articulated set of admission criteria (e.g., GPA, SAT score, a written essay, satisfactory progress, etc.) identifies the targeted student population served by the honors program. The program clearly specifies the requirements needed for retention and satisfactory completion.
   
   The DHI measures up completely to this first characteristic. The Institute offers carefully designed educational experiences, clearly articulates its admission criteria, and specifies the requirements for being retained in and completing the program.

2. **The program has a clear mandate from the institution’s administration in the form of a mission statement or charter document that includes the objectives and responsibilities of honors and defines the place of honors in the administrative and academic structure of the institution.** The statement ensures the permanence and stability of honors by guaranteeing that adequate infrastructure resources, including an appropriate budget as well as appropriate faculty, staff, and administrative support when necessary, are allocated to honors so that the program avoids dependence on the good will and energy of particular faculty members or administrators for survival. In other words, the program is fully institutionalized (like comparable units on campus) so that it can build a lasting tradition of excellence.

   We do indeed have clarity on almost all of the elements of such an institutional mandate and those few elements yet somewhat unclear are receiving more focused formulation as the DHI continues to develop.

3. **The honors director reports to the chief academic officer of the institution.**
   
   The Director of the Dietrich Honors Institute does report directly to the Vice President of Academic Affairs or Academic Dean.
4. The honors curriculum, established in harmony with the mission statement, meets the needs of the students in the program and features special courses, seminars, colloquia, experiential learning opportunities, undergraduate research opportunities, or other independent-study options. Most of these elements are being set into place and subsequent evaluations will determine the extent to which the needs of the DHI students are being met.

5. The program requirements constitute a substantial portion of the participants' undergraduate work, typically 20% to 25% of the total course work and certainly no less than 15%.

   The basic 31 credits of the DHI constitute 25% of the 124 credits required for graduation, so we are in good shape on this basic characteristic.

6. The curriculum of the program is designed so that honors requirements can, when appropriate, also satisfy general education requirements, major or disciplinary requirements, and preprofessional or professional training requirements.

   The courses in the DHI track constitute the DHI general education requirement and these ten courses are taken instead of the regular core curriculum of the College. In rare instances where fitting the DHI courses into a student's schedule presents a problem, we are prepared to negotiate with the student and the major departments involved in order to accommodate by creating special DHI contract courses that also fulfill non-DHI major or disciplinary requirements.

7. The program provides a locus of visible and highly reputed standards and models of excellence for students and faculty across the campus.

   We are bringing this characteristic into reality and in doing so are building on a long-standing Honors Program that has fared well on this characteristic.

8. The criteria for selection of honors faculty include exceptional teaching skills, the ability to provide intellectual leadership and mentoring for able students, and support for the mission of honors education.

   Criteria for selecting honors faculty have not yet been completely formalized. The pattern developing from current practice is that the criteria for teaching in the DHI are that faculty members 1) are tenured or tenure-track, 2) have a history of receiving strong student ratings, 3) are fully supportive of the mission and vision of the DHI, and 4) are excited about being able to teach in the Institute.

9. The program is located in suitable, preferably prominent, quarters on campus that provide both access for the students and a focal point for honors activity. Those accommodations include space for honors administrative, faculty, and support staff functions as appropriate. They may include space
for an honors lounge, library, reading rooms, and computer facilities. If the honors program has a significant residential component, the honors housing and residential life functions are designed to meet the academic and social needs of honors students.

We can state that with our new DHI space in Greenville Hall we are extremely fortunate to be housed in a beautiful setting that enhances the activities of the DHI in countless ways.

10. The program has a standing committee or council of faculty members that works with the director or other administrative officer and is involved in honors curriculum, governance, policy, development, and evaluation deliberations. The composition of that group represents the colleges and/or departments served by the program and also elicits support for the program from across the campus.

The Honors Council of the DHI fulfills this characteristic. As the DHI continues to grow, we might want to consider expanding the numbers of representatives to the Council.

11. Honors students are assured a voice in the governance and direction of the honors program. This can be achieved through a student committee that conducts its business with as much autonomy as possible but works in collaboration with the administration and faculty to maintain excellence in the program. Honors students are included in governance, serving on the advisory/policy committee as well as constituting the group that governs the student association.

The Honors Student Advisory Board has eight student representatives on it and the Honors Council has two students serving on it. These boards meet once a month and are fulfilling this characteristic.

12. Honors students receive honors-related academic advising from qualified faculty and/or staff.

Currently, we are depending on faculty in particular majors to be informed about Honors so that they can provide good advising for Honors students. To the extent that this happens, they receive the assistance called for. DHI students are welcome to converse with the DHI Director about academic questions they have and many do this.

13. The program serves as a laboratory within which faculty feel welcome to experiment with new subjects, approaches, and pedagogies. When proven successful, such efforts in curriculum and pedagogical development can serve as prototypes for initiatives that can become institutionalized across the campus.

We hope there will be room for this type of experimenting and that developments in the DHI will assume features that might prove desirable for adoption in one form or another by the College.
14. The program engages in continuous assessment and evaluation and is open to the need for change in order to maintain its distinctive position of offering exceptional and enhanced educational opportunities to honors students.

Assessment and evaluation of the DHI took a major step forward during the past year. With a DHI Assessment Plan in place and the first iteration of assessment under our belts, we are poised for having in place an effective process of assessment and evaluation that leads to closing the cycle so that improvement can continually happen.

15. The program emphasizes active learning and participatory education by offering opportunities for students to participate in regional and national conferences, Honors Semesters, international programs, community service, internships, undergraduate research, and other types of experiential education.

Study abroad involvement was greatly expanded in the year just ended and we anticipate further expansion next year. Many DHI students participated in the service project related to Malaria. The DHI leadership contributed to the further development of the Thiel College Student Research Symposium. Undergraduate research continues to take place and we granted our first DHI Summer Research Award. Sponsoring summer study for DHI Scholars at Oxford University will strengthen this part of the DHI’s work even more so. Experiential learning takes place on the DHI field trips.

16. When appropriate, two-year and four-year programs have articulation agreements by which honors graduates from two-year programs who meet previously agreed-upon requirements are accepted into four-year honors programs.

At this point we have no such agreements in place.

17. The program provides priority enrollment for active honors students in recognition of scheduling difficulties caused by the need to satisfy both honors and major program(s) requirements.

Each semester all DHI Scholars are given the privilege of registering for classes the day before other students register. Besides this significant perk, we are ready and willing to offer contract Honors courses for students with scheduling complications.

The above statement of the 17 characteristics was approved by the NCHC Executive Committee on March 4, 1994; it was amended by the NCHC Board of Directors on November 23, 2007; and it was further amended by the NCHC Board of Directors on February 19, 2010.