

Dominican University  
of California

# The Angel

(an'jel: anjele, fr. L. angelus, fr. Gr. angelos: messenger)

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## NCHC Conference 2007



The National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) website describes their annual conference event as "striving toward new heights of excellence and exploring new frontiers in higher education." The 2007 conference recently took place in Denver, Colorado with a theme of *Creative Tensions, Challenging Environments*. Three of our own students attended: Senior Alma Martinez, and Juniors Rizza Alcaria and Asta Haman-Dicko. All are biology majors.

Rizza stated that, "The overarching theme that I noticed at the conference is that the honors program[s] at various universities are] designed to develop a student to a well-rounded scholar and citizen." The conference also provides a forum for

honors students nationwide to connect and create positive relationships, as well as a chance to experience being in a different part of the country while becoming familiarized with professional conferences.

Alma, Rizza and Asta presented at the conference in the Diversity forum about Dominican's service learning program enhanced by the Scholar of the World partnership. Rizza and Asta gave an overview and progress report of a tutoring program Asta piloted in northern San Rafael through the YMCA County Community Probation Program. Asta stated that her presentation included describing how her role within the program, and how the project helped her to develop into a more "well-rounded scholar".

Alma's presentation described her work with the Canal Alliance, which she describes as "a nonprofit organization dealing with at risk high school students." Alma has been working with this group tutoring and, as she states, "encourage these students to go on to higher education." Dominican University's Honors Program has expanded in the last four

years. Its goals and pedagogy fit well with the ideals of the Service Learning Program, which has required the completion of 25 hours of service (since 2005) to create a bridge between Dominican and the community.

Our Dominican scholars did not just endow information and experience to fellow attendees, they returned from the conference with refreshing ideas of what programs are developing nationwide by honors societies. One presentation that stood out for Rizza described the implementation of an honors program for the disabled student body. She felt that such a program would really meet needs that are currently unfulfilled "because a lot of the time, these students are capable of doing 'honors work' but need special attention." Asta returned with a newfound respect for the emphasis our Dominican program places on service-learning, noting "how lucky we are that Dominican gives us the opportunity to become involved in service as a way to supplement our academic curriculum." Her overall impression of the conference left her with a feeling that she would like to develop our honors program into more of a community, by, for example, hosting events on campus, or providing other ser-

vices to make our students feel supported and an active part of an honors community.

Each of the two scholars are glad to have participated, and would recommend that others become involved. Rizza stated that the highlight of the conference "was being able to interact and build a network between different honors students nationwide." She learned that there are many other important aspects of the honors program aside from being considered a "smart" student.

Asta most enjoyed the interactions between honors students from all across the county, and "getting to explore the beautiful city of Denver with my new-found friends."

Alma returned with a positive impression of the conference, describing it as "very well organized and beautiful. It was special to be there and to present."

Next year the NCHC conference is already scheduled to take place in San Antonio, Texas. Make your plans early!

- Dana Rae Gross

## Student Spotlight: Honors Program Scholar



Richard Maher

Senior Richard Maher is an exemplary Honors student who has studied English Literature and Politics, now set to graduate a semester early. Taking on an honors thesis, particularly an interdisciplinary one, is a challenging undertaking. However, Richard was able to motivate himself to achieve this integration, stating, "The nature of an honor thesis allowed me not only to meet the expectations of both departments, but also to integrally relate all aspects

of both disciplines. Additionally, composing an honor thesis compelled me to work more diligently on the project because of the early deadlines--a very motivating factor."

His thesis is titled "Drawing Attention to Social Issues in the Novels of Trollope and Dickens: How Victorian Social-Problem Novels Help Define and Critique the Phenomena with which they Take Issue." In it he cleverly combines his two subjects of study into one project by examining two Victorian

authors' approaches to social and political criticism, focusing particularly on what they considered to be corrupt and dangerous bureaucratic institutions. Specifically, Richard will analyze the works of Anthony Trollope and Charles Dickens to establish them as part of the Victorian literature subgenre known as the Victorian Social-Problem Novel. A great deal of his thesis will relate the way the novels demonstrate aspects of social and political phenomena. Richard's personal interest in

Victorian literature is due to the combination of melodrama with social and political issues.

His advice to fellow students is to ask questions, challenge professors, and stimulate class discussion. A competent and secure professor, he claims, will welcome discussion and dissent without feeling angry or threatened. He has been satisfied with the dedication and teaching abilities of professors at Dominican, finding them more than willing to address personal concerns. This willingness to help and give advice leads to camaraderie between faculty and student, breeding both

mutual respect and understanding. Richard also values the friendships he has made with a diverse group of student colleagues, especially those he has met through participation in the honors program.

He plans to continue enjoying the study of Victorian literature no matter where his academic future takes him. Currently, the future seems to be carrying Richard into Graduate school, which he is applying to with the hopes of Fall 2008 enrollment. Best of luck to you, Richard, and many congratulations for your accomplishments.

- Angela Giertych



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### By the way...

If you are interested in joining the Angel staff, please contact Dr. Jayati Ghosh. Writers are always welcome!

### HONORS SHIRTS FOR SALE



Honors t-shirts now on sale in Dr. Ghosh's office

The primary purpose of a liberal education is to make one's mind a pleasant place in which to spend one's leisure.

— Sydney J. Harris

What is important is to keep learning, to enjoy challenge, and to tolerate ambiguity. In the end there are no certain answers.

-- Martina Horner