The Kingsborough Honors Program, located in room M377, offers highly-motivated and academically capable students the opportunity to improve their reading, writing and critical thinking skills in a more challenging environment than a regular course. Honors courses ask students to work at a higher level and in a more independent manner. They also provide other benefits such as smaller classes, which allow a one-on-one relationship between student and professor. In addition, the program gives students an early registration opportunity and helps them to become involved in off-campus and study abroad academic and co-curricular experiences. The staff even helps students with scholarship applications and assists them in the transfer process to four-year colleges.

The Honors Program encourages its students to interact with other honors students. For this purpose, a lounge has been created in M-378, for quiet study and group meetings. The lounge has a television and computers which can be used to do schoolwork. Honors courses can be taken in a variety of ways. Students can enroll in all-honors sections, in which all students have a 3.2 or higher GPA. Students can also do an Honors Enrichment component project in a regular class. The most highly motivated students can undertake an Honors contract which requires the student to do an in-depth student of a topic and produce a paper or project, typical of a publication in the discipline. Top projects will be published in the Honors journal, “Distinctions.”

Students who wish to be part of the Honors Program can be entering freshmen who have passed all parts of the CUNY placement exams and have a high school GPA of 85 percent or higher. Current students must have passing scores on the reading and writing placement exams, a GPA of 3.2 or higher. Cur- rent students must have passing scores on the reading and writing placement exams, a GPA of 3.2 or higher, and a grade of B or higher in English 12 or English 24.

By Silvia Sanchez
The Kingsborough Honors Program, located in room M377, offers highly-motivated and academically capable students the opportunity to improve their reading, writing and critical thinking skills in a more challenging environment than a regular course. Honors courses ask students to work at a higher level and in a more independent manner. They also provide other benefits such as smaller classes, which allow a one-on-one relationship between student and professor. In addition, the program gives students an early registration opportunity and helps them to become involved in off-campus and study abroad academic and co-curricular experiences. The staff even helps students with scholarship applications and assists them in the transfer process to four-year colleges.

What is the Honors Program?
By Silvia Sanchez

The Resources for Educational and Employment Opportunity Program (REEO) was founded by three former community college graduates in California—Chad Edwards, Anthony Jefferson and Scott Stimpfel. They were strong students in community college but knew they still needed mentors when they got to a four year school.

The program was designed to help students prepare to be successful college transfers. Students must attain a GPA of 3.2 and above to be eligible. The REEO program offers help with resume writing, personal statement preparations, dressing for success and the improvement of interview skills. It also allows participants to bounce ideas off of each other and interact with a highly motivated group that works together over the course of a year.

REEO gives students a safe environment to grow and explore options about college transfers and jobs. Interested students can apply online at www.reeo.org and will undergo a process in which an interview is included. The applicant must understand that there is a one year commitment. Also, students who do not meet the GPA requirement can apply if they desire self-improvement.

“Students with a slightly lower average can be accepted if they are highly motivated and really want to brand themselves to be successful college transfers and applicants,” said Dr. Rachelle Goldsmith, administrator of the program.

REEO Prepares Honors Students for Future

By Silvia Sanchez

Jennifer Berkowitz’s son was her inspiration to go back to school. Berkowitz is now an Education major with a concentration on first and second grade. She is the current President of the Honors Club and active member of the Student World Assembly.

Berkowitz credits many of her successes to the Honors Club.

“The Honors Program has helped me realize my academic potential,” she said. “It’s helped me maintain my GPA and get things accomplished even with my outside life of having a son and everything else.”

During her time at Kingsborough, Berkowitz has taken many Honors courses and has completed Honors Contracts for Urban Sociology, English 24, Women Health and many others.

She has helped SWA raise funds with book sales and assisted with Homecoming. She also helped clean Prospect Park during Step Up day and has been part of campus clean ups.

Berkowitz is also a Phi Theta Kappa member and has been part of the Dean’s List twice. This past winter, she took a Psychology course.

“This course is completely unnecessary for my major but I am absolutely fascinated with psychology,” she explained. “I want to absorb as much psychological knowledge before I leave.”

Student Profile: Jennifer Berkowitz

By Silvia Sanchez

Jennifer Szulman
Editor-in-Chief

Sylvia Sanchez
Managing Editor

Dmitriy Zaritskiy
Staff Writer

Patrick Hickey Jr.
Faculty Advisor

Phi Theta Kappa 101

By Silvia Sanchez

Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) is an International Honor Society for two-year colleges, established in 1918. This organization helps members build leadership, fellowship and service skills. PTK also offers many benefits for its members, which include access to over 37 million dollars in scholarships, recommendation letters upon request and the opportunity to travel around the country for regional and national conferences. PTK members also receive a notation on their academic transcript and are listed in the Commencement booklet at graduation.

In order to acquire membership, students must have received a letter of invitation from the college president. They need to have earned 12 or more college credits and have a 3.5 GPA or higher. Students must also have passed all the remedial courses in order to be eligible. There is no deadline for this application and applicants pay a $60 fee in order to become members of this society.
Graduate Profile: Farin Kautz

By Jennifer Szulman

With skinny jeans, scruffy beard and mellow demeanor, Farin Kautz gives off the vibe of a new age hippie rather than a high achieving honors student.

A recent graduate of Kingsborough Community College, Kautz now studies at the prestigious Columbia University.

Kautz entered Kingsborough in the fall of 2010 and took three honors courses his second semester. He completely immersed himself in the Honors Program. The last week of that semester, Kautz was convinced to run for President of the Honors Program. He spent a month in Costa Rica through a Study Abroad program. His experience at Salzburg was an interesting one.

"[The trip] was only a week long but it was through an honors course and all of us went together with other CUNY schools which was cool," Kautz recalled. "They put you up in a 250-year-old palace in Austria. I grew up in like, trailer parks, so daily I'm like, 'Why am I walking around in a 250-year-old palace'?

Kautz recently finished up his first semester at Columbia University where he is studying 20th Century American History. He will travel to London this summer to look into completing his Master's Degree there. Kautz's long-term goal is to become a professor and even has dreams to come back and teach here at Kingsborough.

Kautz received a solid academic foundation through the honors courses he took at Kingsborough Community College. He graduated from Ferkau Graduate School of Psychology, which is part of the Einstein College of Medicine and part of the Yeshiva University.

"As far as Honors Contracts go, I usually do three or four individual contracts every semester. Not including winter or summer sessions," Troy stated. He explained that Honors courses are just qualitatively different. In his non-honors course, Troy gives students quizzes and assigns a comprehensive research paper. Meanwhile, Honors students don't get quizzes, but are expected to complete and present a research paper to the class.

Although Troy is a full-time professor at Kingsborough Community College, he also performs psychiatric assessments in the emergency room a few hours a week.

"I really enjoy teaching Honors classes but at the same time I can't name a class that I didn't enjoy teaching."
Honors Professor Profile: Robert Cowan

By Dmitriy Zaritskiy

Robert Cowan is an associate professor at Kingsborough Community College, with all of his degrees in comparative literature and a PhD from the CUNY Graduate Center. He primarily works on German and French 19th and 20th century intellectual history. This is Cowan's fifth year at Kingsborough, although he has taught in the CUNY system for close to 15 years. Cowan has been involved with the Honors Program since he started at Kingsborough. He is the editor of Distinctions, the Honors Program Journal and does work on the Honors Symposium.

With the different preparedness of students enrolling into Kingsborough each year, Cowan believes that the Honors Program provides a great opportunity for students who are better prepared to advance at a more challenging pace. His honors students in English 24 have been involved in volunteer work helping victims of child slavery and human trafficking. Some students volunteered at the New York Asian Women's Center, which began as a domestic violence center but has recently had an influx of human traffic victims. Students have done projects on campus events like a panel discussion on human traffic; one student interviewed her mother who was a victim of human trafficking and others present in-class projects on those topics.

"Kingsborough has a wide range of student preparedness particularly with the economic downturn, we have seen an increase of well-prepared students," said Cowan. "So the honors program provides them a place where they can be challenged and be with like-minded students."

Class Profile: Eng 32: World Literature

By Jennifer Szulman

In Professor Maureen Fadem’s English 32 course, students read a book from each continent. The goal of the class is to understand literature from around the world. Fadem also included an “intense theory component.” Rather than have the students do critical research or reviews on the books, they used theory and philosophy as their apparatus. Using articles written by Homi Bhabha, Edward Said and Audre Lorde, Fadem believed the students were able to better understand and explain literature.

“It was super fun. This was a particularly strong group of students who were really just engaged and motivated and they brought so much to the classroom and so much richness to our class discussions.”

Kingsborough Honors Program: A History

By Jennifer Szulman

The Honors Program at Kingsborough was founded by Professor Morton Wagman and Dr. Eric Willner in the early 1980s. It was intended to serve those students who were in higher academic standing than the average student. Its purpose was to be a smaller program for students with a GPA of 3.2 or higher to further challenge their abilities.

The program expanded in 2005 when Dr. Reza Fakhari came to the college to serve as Dean of Academic Affairs and asked Dr. Rachelle Goldsmith to assist with the program’s offerings and enrollment.

“Today, the program serves 400-500 students each semester,” said Goldsmith, the Honors Program Director. “Students have had the privilege of being taught and/or mentored by over 250 faculty from across the campus who enjoy enriching the educational experience of students who seek to challenge themselves academically.” Under the stewardship of Goldsmith, the last few years have brought about new changes to the program. New courses have been added to the curriculum and honors contracts and honors enrichment component courses were also introduced.

Dr. Fakhari is proud of the Honors Program and all that it has done for Kingsborough alumni.

“The Honors Program has been highly successful in empowering students to transfer to top colleges and universities with scholarships after completion of their degrees at Kingsborough,” Fakhari says in the Honors Program pamphlet.

Goldsmith has enjoyed her time as the Director of the Honors Program and hopes to further her involvement.

“As the Director of the Honors Program, it has been my privilege to work with so many wonderful students and faculty,” said Goldsmith. “I look forward to continuing the job of ensuring that the program offers participants academic excellence and enrichment both in and out of the classroom.”