Students from all areas of research received the chance to shine Tuesday, December 3rd, at Missouri Western’s Multidisciplinary Research Day, a venue where students and faculty present original research poster presentations to the public. Though only a two hour event, nearly one hundred different projects were represented in the areas of biology, chemistry, communication, computer science, criminal justice, mathematics, nursing, and psychology. Several Honors students were among the presenters, many of whom represented topics relevant to the current Global Amphibian Decline colloquium taught by Dr. Mark Mills. Students Robert Bradley, Allie Holland, and Ida Haefner presented on the effects of birth control hormones in water supplies causing male frogs to exhibit female reproductive tendencies; students Lauren Stewart and Rockwell Gray covered effects of the highly-contagious chytrid fungus, which eats away at amphibian skin from the inside out over the course of several weeks; and psychology major Jenny Stanhope reported on Albert Ellis’ Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, a set of psychoanalysis techniques used by substance abuse clinics that teaches the subject to correct irrational beliefs. Says Honors student Lauren Stewart, “[This venue] allows students to realize all the incredible research possibilities their major has to offer.”

On Tuesday, November 5, 2013, the Missouri Lambda chapter of Alpha Chi inducted 48 new members. Only the top 10% of juniors, seniors, and graduate students were invited to be a part of this prestigious organization. Faculty members selected by the inductee body for their impact on its members were asked to stand and receive the chapter’s first-annual Compass Award pins at the ceremony. In the following week, officer elections were held, and the new executive staff was announced. The 2014 officers, who officially start their positions on January 1st, include Katy Turner (President), Kassi Lewis (Vice-President), Jennifer Kieser (Secretary), and Emily Anderson (Treasurer.) Last year under the direction of departing president Caitlin McKinney, vice president Travis Hart, secretary Gage Herrington, and treasurer Stacy Temple, Missouri Western’s Alpha Chi Chapter received Star Chapter distinction for the first time since 1997. Striving for this merit again, Alpha Chi will be hosting campus activities and sending representatives to the 2014 National Conference in St. Louis, Missouri.

The Student Honors Organization (SHO), the freshman-through-senior social club for Missouri Western Honors Program students, doubled in size this fall following “InitiaSHOn” week’s 33 member induction. The club co-sponsored the Heartless Hospital Haunted Hall event with the Residence Hall Association around Halloween in Vaselakos and Leaverton. Additionally, its members attended a showing of the original 1954 Godzilla movie complete with a complimentary Japanese dinner. In the spring semester, SHO looks to hold a “Game SHO Night” for its members as well as a community-wide trivia competition and a “SHOller Coaster” end-of-year trip to Worlds of Fun. A second “InitiaSHOn” will be held next semester with regular bi-weekly member meetings on Wednesdays at 8pm.
HONORS FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DR. POET

A handbell music writer, disaster relief volunteer, theater actor, and recent winner of the largest National Science Fund grant ever awarded to a Missouri Western faculty member, Dr. Jeff Poet is no ordinary math instructor. Now in his eleventh year at Missouri Western and the only full professor in his subject, he enjoys guiding students through the unfamiliar waters of math topics “they never knew existed.” Dr. Poet, Dr. Todd Eckdahl (biology), and two collaborators from Davidson College (NC) recently received a combined grant in excess of $1,000,000 for synthetic biology research at Missouri Western set to cover most of their expenses over the next three years. He has also spent the last 2½ years offering his math skills for the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) efforts, traveling across the country to help combat tornados, hurricanes, flash floods, and forest fires. "The work is physically demanding, a big change from my ‘daytime job”, he says, “But is very personally rewarding.” In the event of a severe ice storm in St. Joseph, he may easily be one of SBDR’s key contacts for the state of Missouri. Despite this seriousness, his sense of humor shines through, a valuable trait in a father of eight. Says Dr. Poet of his role in Missouri Western’s 2010 performance of Phantom: “It was my privilege to be the Phantom’s first victim, dying on page 17 and falling out of the wardrobe on page 42.”

BRIDGING SPACES WITH NEW FACES

This year we are proud to announce three new faces to the Honors staff. Dr. Mark Mills, biology professor and Beta Beta Beta (Tri-Beta) National Biological Honor Society advisor, and Dr. Stephanie Corder, nursing professor and department chair, have joined the Honors faculty committee. They are working to evaluate retention proposals, review an Honors survival guide for students, and revise recruitment procedures in the next year, among other aims. Dr. Mills received his Ph.D. in Herpetology at the University of Georgia and can be found outdoors trapping and tagging turtles at the Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge in his “free time.” Dr. Corder, a skiing and hiking enthusiast, received her Doctorate in Nursing from the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center but not before completing her Bachelor’s at Missouri Western. Sophomore Ida Haefner has also been a prominent face in the Honors Office as its new student worker. Ida is a biology major from St. Louis, Missouri, hoping to attend Missouri Western. Sophomore Ida Haefner has also been a prominent face in the Honors Office as its new student worker. Ida is a biology major from St. Louis, Missouri, hoping to attend Missouri Western. Despite this seriousness, his sense of humor shines through, a valuable trait in a father of eight. Says Dr. Poet of his role in Missouri Western’s 2010 performance of Phantom: “It was my privilege to be the Phantom’s first victim, dying on page 17 and falling out of the wardrobe on page 42.”

GRADUATING STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED HONORS

Best wishes to the following Fall 2013 Honors graduates!

General Studies Honors:
Brittany Comminellis (Psychology)
Josh Comminellis (Theater & Cinema)
Frank Dasta (Computer Science)
Daniel DeClue (Music)
Morgan Lindgren (Bus. Mgmt.)
Jeffrey Maronde (History)
Caitlin McKinney (History)
Samuel Wold (Economics)

You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. “You can steer yourself any direction you choose.”
- Theodore Geisel

COLLOQUIUM SPOTLIGHT

John Carter, Serenity, and The Searchers might not come to mind when one thinks of taking an Honors course with a chemistry professor. Yet these and many other films were dissected and compared in Dr. Shauna Hiley’s “Space Cowboys” colloquium this fall. This popular colloquium, now in its third revival, explored the American Space Program and the overlap of themes common to both science fiction and American westerns – two genres of such similar origin that Gene Rodenberry’s “Star Trek” was originally marketed to the public as “‘Wagon Train’ to the Stars.” Students read about culturing the savage in “A Princess of Mars” and the savagery of culture in “The Call of the Wild,” before being assigned to both write and market a short story with western + scifi elements. “The class proved to be fun while at the same time thought-provoking,” says sophomore Genevieve Stoops. Gary Westfahl, author of Space and Beyond, best summarizes the course’s take-home message: “The frontier should never lose its allure. We’re all of us born freedom-seeking individuals. To survive, we yield to society, to custom, and the law. We all yearn for escape and find it where we can, in imagination if not in actuality. At heart, we’re all potential pioneers.” May the individualism, the purposed quest, and the pursuit of intelligence live on inside us forever.

CONTACT US:
(816) 271-4535
SPRATT 202