UWT enrollment for 2013-14 has been exceptionally strong, and after a highly successful recruitment cycle in Global Honors we welcomed an overenrolled cohort this Fall. In terms of academic talent, leadership potential, community spirit, and diversity, this new cohort represents some of the best that UWT has to offer. We're proud to have our new students involved as the Program continues to expand over the next two years. Take a look at the student articles in this issue to learn who’s who in Global Honors and why they’re involved.

Academic excellence is the cornerstone of all honors programs. As our juniors tackled complex introductory themes in Program Director Divya McMillin’s Re-Orienting the Global in Fall, our seniors expanded their historical, technological, and geographical horizons in Professor Orlando Baiocchi’s Global Challenges. Having enjoyed conference, study abroad and other travel experiences during Summer and Autumn (pictured left), many of them brought an added level of practical experience to in-class discussions in this course. As they work toward their capstone projects, it’s remarkable how well they personify the ways in which academic abstraction and real world concerns meet and influence one another.

Some of the biggest developments this year also concern academics. Encompassing the full 25 credit GH curriculum, our eagerly anticipated Minor in Global Engagement rolls out this year. The traditional Global Honors designation and certification in Global Leadership and Global Citizenship are also available, making the Program more accessible and more relevant to a broader range of UWT students. Full details for these pathways and how to apply can be found on our website at http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/global-honors/

With such a thriving student body, we’ve been pleased many of the highlights of Autumn were of the social sort. Starting with Convocation in September (pictured, above and below left), GH’ers have been out in force to celebrate UWT and enjoy one another’s company and conversation. In addition to our formal New Student Orientation in October, we’ve enjoyed a series of casual gatherings including those scheduled by the Program and those independently initiated by our students. Find out how community defines so much of what we do by reading about these events on page four.

Students are not, however, the only ones to avail themselves of ongoing academic opportunities. With important research agendas of their own, our faculty continue to develop their personal areas of expertise and renew UWT’s educational edge. We therefore bid a temporary adieu to Program Director Divya McMillin who will be on sabbatical until Summer 2014, and welcome Interim Director Brian Coffey who joins us in Winter. Professor Coffey brings considerable academic and administrative leadership to the Program, and we thank him in advance for his guidance as the Program evolves throughout 2014.

Calls for proposals will be announced in Winter 2014, encouraging GH students and UWT faculty to consider the benefits of the new Bamford Fellowship for Global Engagement. Designed to support student-driven undergraduate research, this fellowship will fund up to three research teams in 2014-15 and each year thereafter, each consisting of one faculty and two students. Participants will pursue year-long, use-inspired research projects that culminate in Global Honors capstones to be presented at our Annual Spring Colloquium. Full details will be revealed at the beginning of winter quarter, and information sessions will be scheduled very soon. To find out more, please contact the Global Honors office at ghonors@uw.edu or 253 692 4770.
Ruby Bridges at the NCHC: An Inspiring Experience

Each November, the GH Director and Administrator attend the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) Conference. In 2013, this was held in New Orleans, and the conference team included Senior Jody Matthews to learn from a student’s perspective. Here, she reflects on her experience.

One of the highlights of the NCHC conference this year was the keynote address by New Orleans native, Ruby Bridges.

As the first black student to be integrated into an all-white public school in the South, Ruby wasn't aware of the conflict that surrounded this monumental change. As she said in her address: “Driving up I could see the crowd, but living in New Orleans, I actually thought it was Mardi Gras! There was a large crowd of people outside of the school. They were throwing things and shouting...”

Ruby was a very little girl in the midst of a very volatile situation. The school was a hot bed of conflict and dissension. On November 14, 1960, it fell on this little girl’s shoulders to instigate change.

Ruby Bridges was one of the most memorable speakers I will ever have the opportunity to hear. Her firm but soft-spoken words resonated with the crowd, and especially with the Global Honors team. She related her story with grace and without any bitterness. She talked of very positive experiences while being taught by a teacher brought from Massachusetts specifically to teach her because no-one else in the school would. But outside of the classroom there was turmoil. Days and days of protests, with Ruby being escorted to class by U.S. Marshals (pictured top left, page one) , slipped by as the year progressed. It’s hard to imagine this happening to a child now, but it really did happen then.

What can students take away from Ruby’s remarkable story? I think there are many things but the most powerful lesson I personally took away from her address was this: no matter what kind of situation we find ourselves in, we should look for the positive, find strength in adversity, and show grace to everyone with whom we come into contact. Ruby Bridges exemplifies these traits. Every question she was asked was answered in a thoughtful, non-judgmental way. We would all do well to emulate her spirit in her quest for equality.

It Takes a Village: The Reggio Emilia Approach

As part of their plans to research and design new daycare facilities, members of the Tacoma Children’s Museum and other local leaders travelled to Reggio Emilia in Northern Italy in November 2013. With the support of the Bamford Foundation, Global Honors, and the Chancellor’s Office, Noelle Gichohi was selected to represent Global Honors and UWT. Here, Noelle shares her impressions of the Reggio Emilia approach.

I was ecstatic after learning I would join a study tour at the Loris Malaguzzi International Center in Reggio Emilia, Italy. Thirteen other community members from Tacoma embarked on this trip in November 2013. Although we all had different backgrounds (I was the only student), we all hoped to learn how we can benefit the children of Tacoma.

We arrived in Italy on Saturday, and with no time to adjust to our new environment, we started our Reggio Emilia experience on Sunday. Each day started with breakfast at our B&B, followed by a thirty minute walk to the Loris Malaguzzi International Center for a busy schedule of presentations and tours.

The Reggio Emilia philosophy, pioneered by Loris Malaguzzi in 1963, focuses on early childhood education. In this approach, the child is seen as both a protagonist in her or his education and as a citizen. The teachers, parents, and environment all play an important role in enabling students to express themselves in the “100 languages of children.”

We had the opportunity to experience these languages in the different centers and preschools that we visited. The layout of open spaces, glass walls and interactive materials made a real impression. Teachers took a lot of time documenting the learning experience of their students: their words were recorded and they were photographed in action during the day. This documentation made learning visible to the parents and community at large.

During the study tour, we were encouraged to see, wonder and think. I saw a city whose inhabitants walked or biked as part of their daily routine. I saw people sitting down and enjoying their meals, without interruptions from cell phones or other handheld devices. I saw children playing out at night in the piazzas, their laughter filling the cold dark nights with warmth. I thought about my community in Tacoma and Federal Way and wondered, what would need to be done to give all children access to high quality early childhood education? I wondered what needed to be implemented to encourage children to get active and move about instead of being glued to computers or TV screens? And I wondered what needed to be done to address access to sidewalks, parks, and recreational facilities?

By the end of the week, we were tired but inspired. We are certain that there is hope for the children in our community, if we make the conscious effort to see them as citizens not just of the future, but as citizens of the world at present.
Here in the Global Honors program, we are always encouraged to study abroad. But when I was told that my trip to Vietnam was going to completely transform me, I was a bit skeptical as to how much I would really change. To my surprise, when I came back after my one month experience, I had a completely new perspective on life, people, culture, and even the environment.

There were so many places in Vietnam that contributed to my transformation. From the warm-hearted and welcoming people of Hanoi to the majestic Ha Long Bay, I felt like I was always in for a new adventure. One of the first memories I had was on the second day of our trip at Bac Ninh, an E-waste recycling village which collected and recycled old electronics and metal to make into spoons, pots and other utensils. Seeing the conditions that these men, women and children were living in, constantly surrounded by smoke and chemicals, was a shocking but thought-provoking revelation.

However, one of the most eye-opening and transformative experiences I had was at “Friendship Village”, a care center in which the children and grandchildren of those affected by the poisonous “Agent Orange” get treatment and education. Many of them were born with serious birth defects, but we had the opportunity to play and interact with them. I’ll never forget the moment a seven year old boy randomly pulled me aside, took out his favorite soccer ball, and we simply played for what seemed like hours.

These were only two of the nearly limitless experiences I had while visiting Vietnam. There were so many memories and revelations that I could never pin point the exact moment I changed. If any of you have been skeptical about study abroad and wondering whether or not it will change you, take it from someone who’s been there; you will come back a transformed person. B.O.

Immediately after stepping off the plane and into the humid 90’ weather at five o’clock in the morning, I felt a slight pang of homesickness and knew that this month might get very challenging.

In the Vietnamese capital Hanoi, we slurped our first bowl of pho and my excitement began to grow. Touring the ancient city of Hue, biking up a mountain, and arriving as honorable guests at a local village in the highlands was exhausting. Next, we spent the night on a bumpy train and woke up in the coastal town of Nha Trang. There, we spent the afternoon relaxing on the beach and snorkeling. But it wasn’t always such a dream-like paradise vacation.

On the southernmost tip of the country and the town of Ca Mau, I had an epiphany. There, we met locals whose houses were in constant danger of falling into the ocean due to the rising tides. They are forced to rebuild their homes further inland every year and their yards are filled with garbage. I watched a family try to put up their own power line pole using only rope. This is where climate change is truly having an impact today; on a small impoverished town that has no government assistance.

We might not always see the effects of environmental change up close. That’s true for many other different phenomena and processes, even though we study them in the classroom or read about them in the news. But study abroad can compel you to confront those realities, and your understanding is transformed as a result. K.W.
Global Honors started off the school year with an impressive sense of community spirit. Right away, it was apparent this year’s new students would be a close-knit group, adding to the energy our returning Seniors had brought to the Program last year. Since five Seniors also took a class with the incoming Juniors in Autumn, this really made for greater engagement both within and outside of the classroom.

One of the first orders of business was to introduce Program Administrator Paul Carrington’s baby boy, Percy, to his new UWT friends. Students and faculty gathered for a baby shower in the Global Honors Reading Room (pictured, below right), and it was great to see so many people from across campus attend. Thank you to everyone who brought gifts and food for the happy family!

The festivities continued with our Autumn potluck, where the GH community came together to enjoy delicious food including Program Director Divya McMillin’s homemade special rice (pictured, below left)!

The last week of classes, the Student Leadership Council (SLC) also secretly planned a surprise “bon voyage” party for Professor McMillin before she leaves for sabbatical in Winter and Spring (pictured left). Her supportive presence will surely be missed, but we hope she enjoys her time away and we will see her at the Spring Colloquium in June! For now, we are proud to have Professor Brian Coffey start his tenure as Interim Director. The Seniors will have the pleasure of taking the Global Honors Research Methods course with him in winter quarter too.

Community spirit is one of the most important aspects of Global Honors. It adds inspiration, excitement, and camaraderie to a challenging program. When students are involved on campus, it gives their time at UWT a more meaningful purpose. We believe this is conducive to successful academics, and provides enjoyable social opportunities.

Why did you first apply to GH?
I first applied because I wanted to challenge myself in ways I never had before. This seemed like an amazing opportunity that I would regret if I didn’t at least apply.

What has been the best part of the Program so far?
The best part has been the deep classroom discussions we have been conducting over the quarter. Being able to participate in and hear the responses from my peers has been very intellectually stimulating.

What has been the biggest challenge to date?
The biggest challenge has been grasping the concepts and theories we study. I have no background in these topics so it has been hard to keep up. But it’s worth it!

How do you think GH will impact your UWT experience over the next 2 years?
I believe Global Honors encourages bonds within a close-knit cohort that provide me with support and friendship. The program itself offers many opportunities that I would not be aware of elsewhere, and it makes for an amazing way to network and establish connections with my peers.