





## THE HONORS PROGRAM

These six students are among the participants in the Honors Program, begun in 1963 by the College of Arts and Sciences to provide a curriculum specifically tailored for the superior student. They and others have responded enthusiastically, even gratefully, to the educational challenge which the program offers the gifted.



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The students, top, left to right, Richard Hoyle, Ralph Rosenblatt, Eric Faxon. In the bottom row, left to right, Gary Reed, Bruce Callison, Jan Kilo.

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Dr. Carlton Berenda lectures an honors colloquium, the high point of the program. The colloquia are limited to a dozen students and led by two professors from different disciplines.



Dr. Paul Ruggiers, David Ross Boyd professor of English and the director of the honors program, hopes to establish an endowment to provide scholarships in the future.



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IN A LARGE state university like OU, one will find a conglomeration of academic abilities among its legion of students, including the very, very low and the very, very high. Some who have entered the University barely managed to squeeze into the top 75 percent of their class in high school and thus are eligible for admission; others are the cream of the intellectual crop—in the top one or two percent of their class, award winners, scholarship recipients, the academic all stars. Often the plodders are thrown with the scholastic swifties to no one's benefit.

In recognizing the need to provide an opportunity for the qualified student to flex his academic muscles fully, to realize his potential unimpeded by a pace which of necessity must be





## CHALLENGE THE GIFTED

geared to the average and which many of the brighter students find stifling, boring, the College of Arts and Sciences came up with the Honors Program. In stating the purpose of the program, its prospectus contains these words: "The aim . . . is to challenge the gifted student and to enable him to attain a deeper understanding of the intellectual goals of his tradition."

To direct the program, Dean William E. Livezey named David Ross Boyd Professor Paul Ruggiers, who now divides his time between his English classes in Kaufman Hall and the Honors office in the basement of Bizzell Library. From his subterranean cubicle Dr. Ruggiers administers a farflung program embracing a score of departments and challenging the

gifted through three particular phases: general honors courses, the colloquium and the departmental honors.

**GENERAL HONORS COURSES:** The general courses begin on the freshman level and extend through the undergraduate curriculum. The classes are small, the pace is swift, the professors are the best. Entering freshmen with ACT scores of 24 or better or second-semester freshmen with an overall B average are eligible to enroll in honors courses. On completion of his work in the University College and his admission to the College of Arts and Sciences, each honors candidate is asked to make a formal application for full admission to the program. Thereafter he is required to maintain a 3.0 average in his overall work and a 3.25

average in his major field. In the College Honors aspect of the program, of which the general courses are part, a student must complete at least 15 hours of honors courses outside his major and minor. Nine of these hours must be beyond the freshman level of which three must be an honors colloquium in the junior or senior year.

**THE COLLOQUIUM:** "The colloquium is the high point of the program," says Dr. Ruggiers. Offered for the first time this year, colloquia are limited to no more than a dozen students, and each is led by two professors from different fields. This semester one colloquium on the philosophical implications of the atomic theory on Western civilization is being taught by a chemistry professor and a philosophy pro-

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## and the students dig the program

fessor. In another, professors from the classics department and the history of science department are leading a group of students in study of the tragedy of thought in the age of Pericles. The interdisciplinary team affords the student a broader, more integrated vision of knowledge and is proving to be exciting to the teachers as well as to the students. "The colloquia is conducted through the conference method," Dr. Ruggiers explains. "There are no tests. Each student is required to contribute through discussion and through papers he prepares. It's a shattering experience for some who are used to conventional classes. The student is thrown on his own. He must find his own values, reach his own affirmations. It's a marvelous experience in learning, probably the most important of his undergraduate days and most meaningful in future years." The general honors coursework and the colloquium comprise the College Honors aspect of the program. The other aspect is in Departmental

Honors which is led by an Honors Advisor in each department.

**DEPARTMENTAL HONORS:** The participating department defines the terms of its honors offerings, but the student must complete at least six hours in departmental honors courses. In his last semester he must take a comprehensive written examination prepared and administered by the department and evaluated in cooperation with the Honors Council. The department assigns the senior honors student a special project which might entail a special research project or a directed reading program. The department may require a senior thesis and oral examination.

Students who do not wish to participate in the full program but who are qualified by grade average may be admitted to honors courses through special permission. The student's final average determines the specific honors degree granted to him. A grade point of 3.25 entitles him to a bachelor's degree with honors; 3.50, with high honors, and 3.75, with highest honors.

The students, with some reservations, dig the program:

"There's a lot more discussion and competition in the honors courses. Often no consensus is reached. One must think for himself—deeply, critically and creatively—if he is to gain from the courses."

"In the honors section there is more attention to detail. We sometimes get off the track and go off in another direction, exploring and feeling around. These sidetrips can be enormously valuable."

"The good courses, the good instructors, the small classes are what attracted me. I didn't enroll simply to be able to say that I was in the Honors Program, so I could feel elite or part of the frontal lobe set."

"It's stimulating. There is less sticking to an inflexible format—no feeling that we absolutely must cover every little paragraph in the text—and I like that."

"You're up against good competition, and I respond. One tends, I believe, to function at the level of his class."

"One feels more like working under a good professor. There is a lot more work in an honors section but, paradoxically, it makes the course easier because it's so interesting. This was especially so for me in my English courses. I really became involved in them—more than I had expected as a chemistry major."

"I've been in a normal class and brought books to read. Some can get pretty boring. But in the honors courses I go all out. There are some brilliant people in these sections, and the discussions are rousing. I've had to get off my academic rear and work."

"I think there may be a tendency for us to glorify ourselves a bit too much. I don't approve of all these trappings like the Scholars and their rings (the University Scholars, in a freshman scholastic program, have special signet rings) and their permits to enroll before the commoners. I don't care for the teas for the honors students. I think there's a danger in thinking we're really something special."

"It's a mistake to go through college and not become a part of the program if you're capable. Some students shy away because they're afraid they'll B an honors section when they could slide by in a conventional section with a no-effort, no-sweat A. Well, this competition is a misconception. The honors section professor certainly doesn't grade on a curve. You're graded solely on your individual performance, and I personally feel I do better under the more competitive condition."

"The colloquium was an important experience. I got a lot from it, I'm sure—probably far more than I'm aware of at the present."

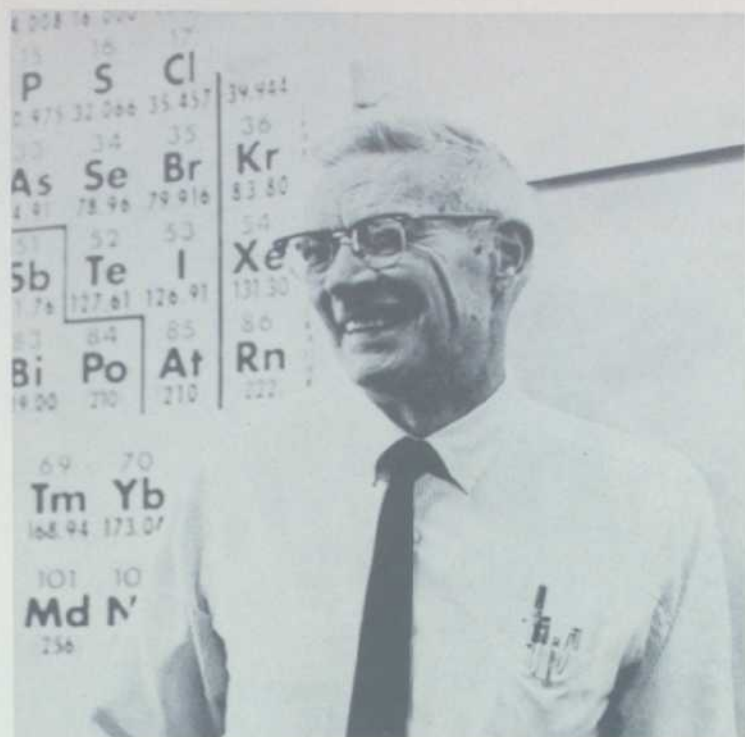
"I believe the program will induce some very talented young people to attend OU—those who probably would not have considered a college without such an opportunity."

"The dialogue between teacher and student was the most significant part to me."

Color the Honors Program successful and give it an A.



Randy Shreve, a letters major, will be among the first graduates of the program.



Intended as a grand alliance of gifted students and superior teachers, the honors program provides an opportunity for intellectual stimulation and enrichment. Four of the professors who participate in the program are Dr. Kenneth Crook (above), David Ross Boyd professor of chemistry, who with Dr. Berenda leads a colloquium on the philosophical implications of atomic theory in western history; Robert Reigle (below), assistant professor of history, who teaches a general course, and Dr. Charles Reeves (at left in left photo), professor of classics, who with Dr. Tom Smith, associate professor of the history of science, leads a colloquium on the age of Pericles.

