A Creative Approach to a New Honors College Brochure

An Honors Thesis (ID 499)

by

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With excitement, and a bit of uncertainty, my first thoughts began to emerge. I was beginning a project—an important one. Beth Tasson, a senior in Journalism, and I, a senior in Graphic Design, were summoned into Dean Wittig's office to meet also with Dr. McConkey, Director of Admissions. The topic? A new, attractive, intelligent, and memorable brochure for the Honors College. (Appendix A) For me, this would involve a new logo design, brochure design, and a unified theme for the piece that could be repeated freshly in subsequent Honors College literature.

In beginning, Beth and I composed a letter to send to Mid-Eastern Honors Programs requesting samples of their brochures to use as a basis for deciding what size, design, length, and content was most needed here at Ball State. (Appendix B) Beth and I met to review the incoming brochures and to decide upon a direction and image for which to strive. Dr. Wittig and Dr. McConkey had informed us of their need for something fresh, but sophisticated. We decided briefness and directness were also necessary qualities. As the brochure was to be sent to high school juniors and seniors, we wanted a piece that would be easily reviewed, informative, and memorable in the midst of these students' abundant mail from other colleges and universities.

As is usual with logo designs, my first examples were simply various "HC" experiments. (Appendix C) Feedback suggested that these initials favored hospital-like organizations. I then moved on to create various logotypes. (Appendix D) These consisted of the name
"Honors College" done with some peculiarity or, as designers say, "bastardization," to make the name appear unusual and unique. Of course, various overused symbols were suggested to me by well-intentioned students and professors. Because the Ball State Honors College is an actual "college," I decided to play off this idea with the logotype. I incorporated architectural details into the design, searching for some consistently repeated and noticeable part of the Burkhardt Building with which I could experiment. (Appendix D) Finding no consistency, I used various universal architectural forms: Tudor and round arches, triangles, horizontal and vertical forms, and window allusions. With unanimous approval from those involved in the Honors College and from interested others, a logotype was chosen in a structure-like box capped by a semi-circular window-like form. (Appendix E) This form could be repeated with ruled lines through brochures and other printed pieces.

I then began the task of applying the logo to the brochure. Dr. Wittig and Dr. McConkey had stressed the importance of the brochure's appearance, aside from the costs involved in a tasteful publication. The Ball State printing equipment ruled out some of the more unusual and expensive processes (embossment, foil stamping, thermography). We decided against using photographs, in full color or black and white, because of the inevitable "out-of-date" factor. An often overlooked aspect of a printed piece is the paper with which it is made. I liked the idea of producing an expensive looking piece, but knew this did not always require a large budget. I decided to try a one-color job—as simple as printing black ink on white paper.
I chose a dark blue ink on a cotton blend, textured, heavy weight peach paper. As paper is the smallest aspect of the total cost of a brochure, this decision would dramatically improve the piece's sophistication while raising the total cost very little. Also incorporated into my initial brochure designs was the phrase "A Place Within" which I felt would be intriguing to the reader and would help to explain the relationship between Ball State as a whole and the Honors College itself. (Appendix E) At this time Beth had also completed a rough draft of the body copy for the brochure.

Responding to feedback from Dr. Wittig, Dr. McConkey, and each other, Beth and I revised our ideas. (Appendixes F, G, H, I, J) I needed to raise the Honors College logo to the top of the brochure so that displays holding the brochure would not cover the name. We also decided the brochure should conform to business envelope size to conserve on mailing costs. We included a tear-off reply card to provide students with additional information and to actively involve them in the process of learning about Ball State Honors. Beth was incorporating quotes into the copy as she collected them. (Appendix K) I then approximated the layout of the text in the brochure to determine the number of pages and the layout of each page. (Appendix L) Beth wanted a quote followed by pertinent text to be the overall brochure format. Several minor alterations were made to keep this order consistently possible throughout the piece, having a quote and copy on each of the first four pages, a page of quotes from Honors College Alumni, a page of factual information on requirements, the "for more information" mailer, and a quote for the back cover. We wanted the brochure to feel open, airy, and inducive to reading.
Having finalized the copy and the layout of each sentence in the brochure, we concluded this creative project. (Appendix M) Providing Beth and myself with experience in unifying the ideas of four individuals, undergoing multiple revisions, and perceiving the creative piece as those unfamiliar to the program might, it was truly a rewarding undertaking.
Thanks for the information that is being sent to admitted students. I would still like to talk with you some more about the concept of offering admission to the Honors College in the process of granting admission to Ball State. We would then, of course, make actual enrollment as an honors student up to the desires of the individual. I think there would be some recruitment advantages, however, in giving the student the "tag" of Honors College—of course the objective is to have more of these individuals enroll at Ball State. I expect we are losing a good number of the higher achieving students who get admitted but opt to go elsewhere. In light of the content of your letter I am really suggesting a change in semantics—except that the student would be, in effect, taking himself out of the program by choice rather than waiting until orientation to decide, affirmatively, to join the Honors College.

Another thought—in terms of the publications talking about Honors would it not be a good idea to include some or all of the following:

1. A description of students in Honors College (majors, quality, etc.).

2. A profile of the faculty—either using individual examples or general descriptors of the faculty teaching in the college.

3. Accomplishments of our graduates—placement to prestigious graduate schools, careers, immediate job placement, etc.

4. Honors received (for examples, Truman Scholars, university honors received, etc.).

5. Faculty and student quotes promoting the program with pictures of individuals.

I guess what I'm saying is that a "fancier" publication with pictures, a personal touch, and a proactive promotion of the concept of honors at Ball State would be valuable. If resources are an issue I would be happy to talk with you about how we might seek additional resources and/or share some of the costs involved.

Please know that I'm not being critical—simply offering some observations as a "newcomer" with, perhaps, a fresh perspective.
March 16, 1987

Dear Director:

For our Honors thesis, we are in the process of redesigning the Ball State University Honors College brochure. The current publications do not present a cohesive image of the program. Our goal is to produce a brochure that effectively draws interest and attention to the Honors College.

It would be helpful if we could see a sample of brochures from your program. Please understand that we have no intention of imitating your material in any way. We simply need fresh ideas to help us create a lasting image of our Honors College.

Please send material to:
   Senior Project, Honors College
   Burkhardt Building, room 108
   Ball State University
   Muncie, IN 47306

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Donna Cunningham
Elizabeth Tasson

Ball State University is an equal opportunity employer
A Place Within

Honors College
Appendix G
Appendix I

Honors College
Ball State University

A Place Within
The goals of the Honors College are to provide distinctive opportunities for students who show promise of outstanding academic achievement, and to do this so well that our graduates are competitive with the best students of any college or university. The excellent instruction and individual attention of our Honors program create the benefits of a first-rate small college atmosphere within a progressive university setting. --Arno F. Wittig, Dean, Ball State Honors College

Ball State Honors is more than a program; it is a college within the larger university. This status indicates the seriousness with which Ball State University values truly unique and gifted students. Honors College provides each student many opportunities to enhance and further his or her educational pursuits.

Through Honors classes you don't just learn what things are; you learn how and why things are. They are much more in-depth than many regular university classes. --John Dalton, telecommunications, class of 1988

Ball State Honors students have the opportunity to work in small class settings with exceptional faculty. Priority registration and library privileges assist Honors students in completing a wide variety of optional and required honors classes. These classes are challenging, allow for group discussion and close personal interaction with instructors, in addition to filling general university requirements for graduation.

Honors College challenges you to grow beyond your present ideas. Experiences such as living in the Honors residence hall and studying in England helped me to break out of my mindset. I feel more open to the world and less limited in my thinking. --Lisa Maugans, Latin and medieval studies, class of 1988

Other exciting activities open to Honors College students include reserved housing with other Honors students, undergraduate fellowships and the chance to study abroad at Westminster College in Oxford, England. Students are encouraged to branch off into their own fields of interest by participating in Honors College organizations such as Student Honors Council or the Honors College publications.
"My participation in Honors College will set my credentials apart from the others when I apply to graduate schools. They'll see that I've been involved in outside projects, taken more challenging classes and completed a thesis—all on top of regular college work." --Ann Fischer, psychological sciences, class of 1988

Students graduating from the Ball State Honors College are recognized at commencement. An "Honors College Graduate" designation is printed on official university transcripts and Honors College diplomas are sent to graduates.

Ball State Honors College is more than just a line on your resume, it is a way of life. There is a place for you within Honors College.

"Honors gives you a wider background to work with. It keeps you from specializing in your major. I think that impresses employers because you have taken a step beyond your major requirements" --Cathy Schleuter, scientific analyst at Eli Lilly & Co., Indianapolis; class of 1986

"I would say that Honors College helped keep me diversified. I run into too many people who just know film—anything you could ever want to know about film—and they aren't too successful. They're too one-dimensional. The successful people have a wide background to draw upon." --Rob Goubeaux, TV editor in West Hollywood ("Our Planet Tonight," "That's Incredible." "Those Amazing Animals" and "True Confessions"); class of 1980

"In the case of the Ball State Honors College experience, if it is packaged and communicated correctly to a prospective employer, it can become an extremely valuable part of a college graduate's job search." --Dianna Smith, director of compensation and benefits at Career Consultants, Indianapolis; class of 1973

"Honors College exposed me to different ways of thinking. It has helped me conceptualize what I am doing and how that fits in with the rest of the world." --Teresa Avila, instructor of marketing at Ball State University, Muncie, IN; class of 1982

Admission to Honors College

Those students in the top 10 percent of their graduating classes with SAT scores of 1100 or ACT composites of 25 are immediately accepted into Honors College. All interested students are encouraged to apply. Evaluations are made on the basis of SAT/ACT scores, class ranking, academic background and personal references.

Graduation Requirements
If you would like more information about Ball State Honors College, please complete and return this form.

I would like more information about:

* Honors College
* Scholarships and other financial aid
* Honors housing
* Westminster program
* Honors publications
* Student Honors Council

Full name_________________________ Social Security # ______________
Address __________________________________________________________

Phone (____)_________________ Date of high school graduation

"The Honors College is designed to open our minds to the fact that life is a continual learning process. Participating in Honors is a positive, enriching experience I would recommend to all interested and qualified Ball State students." —Mary Salzmann, speech pathology and audiology, class of 1987

Arno F. Wittig, Dean
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