Hear from the JKW School of Honors Alumni and Students 2015

“JKW School of Honors has enhanced my experience at Bergen Community College more than I realized, as well as prepared me for Columbia University!” Ayah Eldosougi 2014, Columbia University, School of General Studies

“The Judith K. Winn School of Honors allowed me to take part in a challenging experience where I was motivated to work harder, and learn more. Honors classes, both in sciences and humanities, encouraged me to connect with talented peers, and inspirational faculty members, and prepared me to succeed in a four-year institution.” -- Maria De Abreu, 2014, Stevens Institute of Technology

“I most fondly remember being surrounded by the some of the brightest and most driven students I’ve ever known. Some of us were fresh out of high school and some of us had taken less direct paths, but those that were a part of Bergen Honors were motivated to get the most out of their education.

For me, the most significant part of the learning experience was the opportunity to really connect with professors personally. This was great preparation for moving on to a huge university like Michigan, where class sizes were much larger and it was easier to get lost in the crowd. Since I had a little bit of familiarity with reaching out and working closely with professors, I took the opportunities in front of me and was able to build some meaningful relationships and ultimately conduct original research. The greatest benefit has really just been realizing that your experiences are what you make of it. Some of my peers at Bergen were initially discouraged. They had their hearts set on a four-year school right off the bat, but those who made the effort to surround themselves with positive experiences and good opportunities were really able to thrive and take that approach with them down the road.” -- Riordan D’Lasnow, University of Michigan

“I want to take this moment to say thank you for encouraging me to take Honors courses--it’s simply the best leaning environment and I thank you for giving me that opportunity for learning from the best. Before I started taking Honors course, I was just like every other student saying that I can’t do Honors, it’s going to be hard and it will make my life much more difficult. You made me understand that Honors courses will empower me and make me a better person and I thank you for the opportunity.

One of the best things about taking Honors courses is simply the fact that I'm in class with mature students that know what they want in life and are also very smart. The professors are kind, very helpful and are simply the best at their respective fields and I feel very grateful to be learning from the best professors at Bergen. Thanks for your help and for pushing me to take Honors courses!”
-- Kaseem Bada, Rutgers University 2014

“Becoming an Honors student has brought me the new-found confidence to push myself to do well in school. The Honors Association is a supportive and tight group, and I've met many diverse and driven students as its president. Join, serve, and be involved!” -- Joan Connelly, Honors Association President

“The JKW school of Honors has changed my entire BCC experience. I have met so many wonderful, like-minded students and professors that have taken personal time to push me to do my best. Honors not only satisfied my thirst for classroom engagement, but has opened the door to new opportunities and friendships that have impacted my life for the long-haul. It gave me an unexpected, panoramic view of campus activities and student-life.” -- Isra Eldosougi, Honors Association President

“I love the JKW School of Honors because the Honors classes provide a broader scope and in-depth critical analysis of the course material, and they challenge us to be more responsible and disciplined, too.” -- Maureen Matengo, Honors Association Officer

“The School of Honors is a great place to secure a lasting education. One networks with experienced faculty and committed peers.” -- Vincent Maresca, Honors Association, Treasurer

“Not only has Honors provided me with a strong foundation in education, but has also contributed to a new group of friends and leadership experiences that have molded me into the motivated student I am today. And I am saving $60,000-80,000 on my Bachelor’s degree at the same time. I’ll use the money for graduate school!”
-- Allison Jamauca, Honors Association Officer
“Learning has always been a tantamount expression in my world. I believe the human mind is an incredible, inspired gift from God and capable of amazing things. Part of the path to learning is exposure to the best course material and teachers possible, which is the BCC way. The BCC Honors Program is comprised of educators, administrators and students of like minds who both see the undeniable value of learning, and make it a committed goal - and believe in commending it! I’m in the "right place at the right time" with the Honors program- and there’s room for you, too! Join us!” -- Janice Douglas, Honors Association Secretary, 2010

“Every A counts, but an Honors A counts more. That’s why the JKW School of Honors and Honors classes are awesome.” -- Woo Je Kim, Honors Association Officer

“The School of Honors at Bergen Community College has offered me a great opportunity to enhance my analytical thinking. In every Honors course, students and professors actively engage in critical discussions, which is a great challenge. I truly enjoyed taking Honors courses.” -- Maria Ortiz Naretto, Rutgers University

“When I was offered the opportunity to enroll in Honors courses, I accepted the challenge and soon realized that my decision had opened the path to a rewarding, intellectually fulfilling academic experience. It took me to New York University and Columbia University, and to my current position of a hospital administrator -- all thanks to the Judith K. Winn School of Honors.”
-- Steven Chung, New York University

“My fondest memory of the Honors department is the great sense of community, the collective reach for excellence and the camaraderie of the students while I served as Secretary of the Executive Board for nearly six months. We had a great group of officers and advisors who were sincerely interested in putting Honors’ best foot forward as well as engaging other students to do the same.

Most memorable and continually employable skill was Dr. …’s vigilance about care in citation and documentation of the student work as well as the works of others. I can still call to mind her notes in the margin of a couple of my papers, or her one-on-one review with me at her desk, reminding me to be vigilant about such matters and ensuring that my expressions were fully generated by my own talent and experience. It caused me to be more diligent to “toe the line” and not to become passive or succumb to the casual nature of many in our society in their expressions. My present school, New York University, takes on that same vigilance about written work and the expression of ideas, which reinforces my Honors professor’s care on this issue. Her openness and willingness to consider the controversial -- as some of our papers and presentations -- demonstrates a mind that has not become hardened or overwrought as some professors fall prey to. I’ve seen her at work with other students on special projects such as personal statements for college and/or scholarship essays. Her drive to draw out and present the best in each student is tangible and substantial.

My lasting benefits of being a part of Honors for the few classes I was able to enjoy was that in this program, the bar is set higher but not unrealistically so. Also, it is the mutual expectations of the instructors and students working in concert without the consideration of becoming passive, slacking or failing. There was more of a vested interested in the students by these instructors for our performance and outcomes, and I am yet grateful for that disposition. I hope many other Bergen students will avail themselves of such instructors and coursework. It is so worth it!”
-- Janice Douglas, Class of 2014

“When I started at Bergen in the spring of 2011, I was focused, dedicated, and filled with anticipation. After discovering that there was an Honors program at BCC, I knew I had to become involved, and I registered for Honors classes. Since then, I have been given numerous opportunities, including the chance to meet and engage with students who share my drive and ambition to succeed. Since the classes are smaller, the professors are more engaged, and everyone gets to know one another within the first few weeks. Being part of the Honors program enriches the mind, body, and soul. The camaraderie and fellowship fostered by the Judith K. Winn School of Honors are among its finest qualities, and I am so glad that I can say I am a part of it.”
-- Brandon Reis, William Paterson University Department of Business

“I especially loved taking Honors courses! As an older student, I am very fortunate to have graduated with an Honors Degree from Bergen Community College. The students were interested in learning, and the faculty loved teaching students who wanted to learn. Those two things combined made the Honors classes very special. I made many friends in Honors classes and PTK who went on to excellent four-year institutions; three of them went to Columbia University, and one was the Valedictorian at my graduation! I still keep in touch with some of these students and am proud of their accomplishments. As for me, due to my husband’s poor health, I am unable to continue my education on a full-time basis, but I am currently pursuing my Bachelor of Science, Major in Integrated Leadership Students at Central Michigan University ranked #1 by U.S. News surveys for the best online Bachelor’s programs. Bergen Community College more than prepared me for anything I choose to do, and I will always treasure my time spent here.” -- Catherine Krostek, Honors Association President