Phi Theta Kappa is the international honor society for two-year college students. Since its founding in 1918, Phi Theta Kappa has recognized the academic achievements of students in associate-degree programs. The society has grown from eight charter chapters in Missouri to more than 1,280 chapters located in all 50 of the United States, Canada, Germany, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the British Virgin Islands, United Arab Emirates, and U.S. territories. Approximately 135,000 of the most outstanding two-year college students are inducted into membership in Phi Theta Kappa each year. Phi Theta Kappa offers students opportunities for engaging in scholarly activities, earning academic scholarships, providing service to the community, developing and practicing leadership skills, and enjoying fellowship with other scholars.

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society
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OUR HONORS PROGRAM: HONORS IN ACTION
Phi Theta Kappa’s Honors Program, Honors in Action, is designed to engage honors students in actions that foster student success and help fulfill our mission.

HONORS IN ACTION PROCESS
Honors in Action guides members through a process that involves fostering a stimulating environment for intellectual growth and challenge. The process specifically involves:

• investigating a real-world, complex, interdisciplinary topic called the Honors Study Topic and the themes related to it;
• considering solutions to challenges discovered through investigation of the Honors Study Topic;
• selecting a solution on which to act through developing an informed, effective plan for service or advocacy designed for lasting impact and the betterment of society;
• seeking resources and opportunities for leadership education and training that specifically help teams successfully complete the Honors in Action project;
• taking on leadership roles to advance the planned action; and
• reflecting on the process to measure learning, growth and results and to identify opportunities that remain to continue the process.

(Further detail about the process can be found on page 4.)

HONORS IN ACTION GOALS AND OUTCOMES
Participation in Honors in Action contributes to personal, academic and career development and affords students the leadership and service-learning opportunities to have an impact on their campuses and in their communities. Exemplary Honors in Action projects will include the following goals and outcomes:

1. create awareness of the importance of seeking out multiple perspectives to augment understanding of a real-world, complex, interdisciplinary topic and improve decision making;
2. demonstrate analytical and critical thinking skills to draw research conclusions;
3. initiate real-world problem-solving by developing an in-depth, action-oriented solution to make a difference for a challenge related to the Honors Study Topic;
4. plan and set goals for each step of the process that lead to informed action;
5. foster leadership skills through intentional and purposeful leadership development efforts;
6. develop capacities to lead, manage and motivate self and others to overcome obstacles, perform in complicated environments, and accomplish goals;
7. collaborate and create effective teams to enhance impact; and
8. cultivate reflective skills and aptitudes to assess progress, adjust to circumstances, and measure results quantitatively and qualitatively.

Achievement of these goals and outcomes builds the analytic and collaborative problem-solving and leadership skills necessary and valued in advanced academic pursuits, work places and communities.

HONORS IN ACTION CONTENT AND RESOURCES
Phi Theta Kappa’s Honors Program Council selects an Honors Study Topic biennially that is a timely, interdisciplinary, contemporary topic of interest related to the global human experience. This Honors Program Guide details the 2014/2015 topic, Frontiers and the Spirit of Exploration. Investigating the themes of this topic fosters students’ intellectual curiosity, empathy and exploration in ways that encourage lifelong learning and develop skills that cultivate student success.

HONORS PROGRAM GUIDE
Each component of this guide reveals Frontiers and the Spirit of Exploration in both familiar and unexpected ways through nine themes. The guide provides the foundation for your Honors in Action project. Here is how to use the guide as you begin the Honors in Action process:

Explore the entire guide to choose the theme that best fits your interests and resources or the collective interests and resources of your team.

For each theme related to Frontiers and the Spirit of Exploration, the guide provides

• a broad, overarching question that is the starting point for investigation;
• an introduction to the intellectual foundation for the theme;
• a short, starter list of recommended reading about the theme and overarching question; and
• a condensed description of the Honors in Action process and development of a sample Honors in Action project resulting from the investigation of the theme.

As you continue the Honors in Action process, you may use one of the examples from this guide and begin with the study question provided in the example, OR you may develop your own study question and Honors in Action project based on investigation of your chosen theme. Remember, even the example project will still require extensive research to make it a successful Honors in Action project that is customized to create an impact in your community.
Use this Guide to Initiate HONORS IN ACTION

**TIP** Help others understand the value of getting involved in your project by explaining the marketable skills to be gained from participation in any or all parts of the process and the rewards of making a difference. The complete Honors in Action process is detailed on pages 4-6.

**TIP** Encourage lifelong learning by selecting a book related to your selected theme and organizing a book club discussion about it.

**TIP** Expand your exploration of Frontiers and the Spirit of Exploration themes by including a movie that relates to one or more themes. (An annotated list of suggested films is available online.)

**EXPLORE THE GUIDE**
- Themes
- Introductions
- Explore More! Resources
- Condensed, Sample HiA Processes

**CUSTOMIZE YOUR HONORS IN ACTION APPROACH**
- Set objectives for your academic investigation of Frontiers and the Spirit of Exploration.
- Select a theme for further investigation.
- Conduct a general investigation using Explore More! Resources or other academic sources related to your theme.
- Develop a specific Research Question for deeper investigation of Frontiers and the Spirit of Exploration that will provide possible answers to the overarching question for your theme.
<table>
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<th>STEP 1</th>
<th>STEP 5</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>READ THE HONORS PROGRAM GUIDE AND CHOOSE ONE OF ITS NINE THEMES.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Keep reflective journals, minutes or notes at each step, describing the process used to select your theme. Develop objectives related to your investigation of the Honors Study Topic.</td>
<td><strong>ANALYZE RESEARCH AND DEVELOP CONCLUSIONS.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Develop objectives or goals resulting from these research conclusions — what can the chapter do to address a specific need at the college or in the community?</td>
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<th>STEP 2</th>
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<td><strong>DEVELOP RESEARCH PLAN AND OBJECTIVES.</strong>&lt;br&gt;a. what process will be used for meeting your objectives?&lt;br&gt;b. how will your research team work to collect, share and analyze resources?&lt;br&gt;c. what leadership roles will individual chapter members and the chapter as a group fulfill in meeting these objectives?&lt;br&gt;<strong>Tip:</strong> Use the Chapter Leaders’ Guide to Success as a resource during project planning.</td>
<td><strong>DEVELOP A PLAN OF ACTION AND OBJECTIVES.</strong>&lt;br&gt;a. action component that addresses a need or needs at the college or in the community;&lt;br&gt;b. leadership actions and roles chapter members will undertake and the specific leadership development training in which the chapter and its Honors in Action project team will participate to successfully develop the project;&lt;br&gt;c. college, community and other groups with which the chapter will collaborate; and&lt;br&gt;d. reflection and assessment of all parts of the Honors in Action process.</td>
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<th>STEP 3</th>
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<td><strong>EXPLORE SEVERAL SOURCES ABOUT THE HONORS STUDY TOPIC THEME TO NARROW YOUR FOCUS.</strong></td>
<td><strong>CARRY OUT THE PLAN.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Evaluate regularly as you go and make adjustments as needed. Assess the results and consider future possibilities.</td>
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<th>STEP 4</th>
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<td><strong>INVESTIGATE SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTION/FOCUS OF THEME.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Use at least 8-10 good-quality academic resources: e.g., academic or professional journal articles, books by academic/professional experts, and formal interviews with experts that highlight various ideas, perspectives and ways to approach the theme. Pay attention to the overarching question listed for your theme. That will let you know whether, as you work through the Honors in Action process, your investigation fits the theme you have selected.</td>
<td><strong>WRITE THE RESULTS.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Use your journal and judging rubrics for the Hallmark Awards (reflection) and submit the entry to Phi Theta Kappa Headquarters. <a href="https://ptk.org/benefits/awards/hallmark">ptk.org/benefits/awards/hallmark</a></td>
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HONORS PROGRAM GUIDE

HONORS IN ACTION
HUMAN EXPRESSION BODY ART EXHIBIT

OVERVIEW
In contemporary society, body art and modification have gained mainstream popularity. Though such adornment has occurred throughout history, the practice still holds a negative social judgment. This project will demonstrate to our community, through the use of a body modification art fair, that human expression through body art is indeed an art form through which individuals demonstrate their creativity.

PREPARATION
SELECTION OF THEME
After reviewing the Honors Program Guide and discussing the themes, the chapter decided that they wanted to do research on human body modification. Given that the members already have tattoos, and the theme of body modification is something they are familiar with and interested in, the chapter decided on Theme 3: Body art and modification. This topic has the exploration of creativity and individualism opened the doors to human expression.

DEVELOP RESEARCH QUESTIONS:
What are the frontiers associated with tattooing and body piercing?
What is the extent to which individuals have demonstrated the spirit of exploration through the act of body modification?
What emotions and motivations do you think are involved in the process of modifying the body?

ACADEMIC RESEARCH:
Team members researched the emotional drive and desire that compels some humans to express their inner feelings through such physical modifications. They explored the ways in which artists have used tattoos and body piercing to express their identities and individuality.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS:
We found that tattoos and body piercing have become a popular form of self-expression, especially among young people. This project aims to explore the cultural and social implications of body modification, focusing on the artistic and personal aspects of these forms of self-expression.

IDENTIFICATION OF ACTION:
Based on our research about the frontiers of human expression in body alteration, our team developed an action plan in which the following steps were taken:

Step 1: Choose Theme
- Flower and Leaf Art for the Body

Step 2: Research Plan and Objectives
- Explore General Sources About the Honors Study Topic

Step 3: Explore General Sources About the Honors Study Topic
- Theme 3: Quests of Human Expression
- About the Honors Study
- Theme 3: QUESTS of HUMAN EXPRESSION

Step 4: Identify Focus and Investigate It
- Explore General Sources About the Honors Study Topic
- Theme 3: Quests of Human Expression
- About the Honors Study

Step 5: Develop Conclusions
- Explore General Sources About the Honors Study Topic
- Theme 3: Quests of Human Expression
- About the Honors Study

Step 6: Develop Action Plan and Objectives
- Explore General Sources About the Honors Study Topic
- Theme 3: Quests of Human Expression
- About the Honors Study

Step 7: Carry Out Plan
- Explore General Sources About the Honors Study Topic
- Theme 3: Quests of Human Expression
- About the Honors Study

Step 8: Write Results
- Explore General Sources About the Honors Study Topic
- Theme 3: Quests of Human Expression
- About the Honors Study

Conclusion:
- Explore General Sources About the Honors Study Topic
- Theme 3: Quests of Human Expression
- About the Honors Study

HONORS PROGRAM GUIDE
15
An exemplary Honors in Action project should include the following elements:

**ACADEMIC RIGOR OF RESEARCH**
10 POINTS (X2)
- The chapter used eight or more academic publications and/or expert sources that are wide-ranging and include different points of view on the chapter’s selected theme from the 2014/2015 Honors Program Guide.
- The chapter’s research activities clearly allowed participants to develop critical thinking skills.
- The in-depth research provided substantial material for the chapter to carefully weigh and consider in determining a project to implement that would clearly address a finding from their research into the 2014/2015 Honors Study Topic.

**RESOURCEFULNESS**
10 POINTS
- The project was ambitious and required substantial research and inspired resourcefulness to implement the project effectively.

**THE EXERCISE OF LEADERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**
10 POINTS (X2)
- Without question, the chapter members and other project stakeholders were provided substantive opportunities to exercise and advance their leadership skills.
- There is strong evidence of effective planning and teamwork.
- The project included clear evidence of effective, intentional and thoughtful educational and training activities and opportunities that improved the exercise of leadership in multiple areas required specifically for the success of the project.

**PERSISTENCE**
10 POINTS
- Without question, the members demonstrated a strong commitment to overcome obstacles or challenges to achieve their project’s objectives.
- Chapter members responded to any challenges with flexibility and creativity to keep their project on track.

**ACTION/SERVICE/ADVOCACY**
10 POINTS (X2)
- Project objectives clearly emphasized the importance of taking action or serving based on researching the 2014/2015 Honors Study Topic.
- Solid evidence is given that participants heightened their awareness of self and community in relation to global issues.
- There is strong evidence that participants increased their appreciation for the value of informed action and service as a lifelong endeavor.
- The project clearly shows how the action developed from research conclusions.

**COOPERATIVE EFFORT/OUTREACH**
10 POINTS
- The chapter’s project reached a wide variety of audiences, including ALL of the following: the college, community and others in OR beyond the region.
- There is clear and compelling evidence that communication among the participating individuals and/or organizations was effective and efficient and that they shared common objectives.

**IMPACT**
10 POINTS (X2)
- The project made a substantial contribution to improving an issue. Without question, the project had significant short-term impact and clear potential for long-term impact.
- The project’s outcomes were exceptional and both quantitative and qualitative.
- The chapter assessed in an intentional and reflective way what they learned and how they grew as scholars and servant-leaders.
- The chapter clearly stated what opportunities remain to have a further impact on this issue.

A chapter can earn up to 115 points for its Honors in Action Hallmark Award entry. The points for academic rigor, the exercise of leadership and leadership development, action and impact are multiplied by 2. The final 5 points are based on spelling and grammar. To earn 5 points, spelling and grammar must be faultless.

Check out the latest version of the Honors in Action Award questions and rubrics at ptk.org/sites/default/files/docs/awards/hallmarks/categories/honors-in-action-project-award.pdf
ACADEMIC INVESTIGATION

- How and why did you choose a particular Theme related to Frontiers and the Spirit of Exploration?
- Who engaged in the research?
- What was your research question?
- What are the different disciplines involved in the Theme and study question(s)?
- What are the varied perspectives and points of view to explore?
- What are the details of your research plan (number and type of sources, deadlines for reporting, etc.)?
- What sources did each researcher consult?
- How do you better understand what’s happening in the world related to Frontiers and the Spirit of Exploration?
- How did the discussions on the topic, themes and study questions proceed?
- What did you learn from analyzing and synthesizing the research? What are your research conclusions?
- How were the studies, research, analysis and conclusions shared?
- What are the questions remaining for further research?

ACTION

- What are the different ways you can overcome challenges related to the theme you chose?
- What specifically do you propose to do? Describe how it is related to Frontiers and the Spirit of Exploration.
- Whom will you serve? (Demographics, numbers, location, etc.)
- What organizations exist in the world that are engaged in actions similar to what you aim to do? How does their work inform yours?
- What organizations exist locally that are engaged in actions (service, advocacy) similar to what you aim to do? What can you learn from their work?
- What is the specific impact you intend to make?
- What are the details of your strategies and plans?
- How are you going to measure the impact (quantitative measures and qualitative measures)?
- What are the specific results and impact of your research, leadership development and the resulting action?
- What is necessary for the project to be sustained and grow?
- How could other chapters/organizations adapt your work for their use?

LEADERSHIP ROLES & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- Who is already working on this issue, and what can you learn from their leadership and strategies to address the issue?
- What processes did you use for setting goals, assigning roles, building a team, making decisions, staying motivated, empowering group members and recruiting people for the project?
- What lessons did you learn about servant leadership? How do you know that your leadership for the project was effective?
- What is the evidence for great teamwork, for example?
- Who are potential model leaders, mentors and coaches for you on your campus and in your community?
- With whom did you make connections, and what did you learn from them?
- Describe the details of resources you used and events you organized and designed to develop leadership skills necessary for the project to ensure greater impact.
- How did you and others overcome obstacles or challenges to your project?
- What feedback did you receive from participants about the leadership of the project, and how will you use the feedback?

COLLABORATION

- Who are the different people and audiences with whom you can collaborate at your college, in your community, in your region and beyond?
- How can you maximize the diversity and inclusivity for your project?
- What perspectives and points of view are represented in your teams? What benefits and challenges does diversity create?
- What is your public relations strategy? How will you measure its success?
- What are the communication strategies you are using to keep people informed and engaged?
- What are the details of meetings and events for planning, information gathering, presentations and debriefing and reflecting?
- What feedback did you receive from meeting and event participants about the connections they made with others? How will you use the feedback?

QR code to HiA Planning Model:
ptk.org/get-involved/honors-in-action/planning-model
PHI THETA KAPPA

FRONTIERS and the SPIRIT of EXPLORATION

By Susan Edwards, Dean of Academic Affairs and Honors Programs, Phi Theta Kappa

“Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

These words are often attributed to American author Mark Twain, who — even if he did not write them — lived them as he explored the Mississippi River and the people and places who characterized its frontiers. Explorers are dreamers whose imaginations and energy drive them to seek frontiers of ideas, human expression, Earth, space, science and society. Author George Bernard Shaw put it this way: “You see things; and you say ‘Why?’ But I dream things that never were; and I say ‘Why not?’” Acting on “why not” creates the movement from curiosity about something to exploration of an idea or a place.

Explorers thrive on the frontiers of the known and the unknown. They don’t let the seemingly impossible discourage them. Instead, they seek the rewards of seeing and experiencing things others may not. They understand the challenges, accept the risks, prepare with great care and try again when they fail.

Sir Ranulph Fiennes, who has been called the world’s greatest living explorer and along the way has lost fingers, experienced a heart attack and been in a coma, explains it this way: “Speaking for my longtime team, we simply wanted to be first.”

Frontiers and explorers come in all shapes and sizes. Nellie Bly and Elizabeth Bisland embarked on a race in 1889 to break the record for traveling around the world. Each of them was inspired by French adventure novelist Jules Verne’s fictional character Phileas Fogg, who accomplished the feat in 80 days. Felix Baumgartner broke the sound barrier by parachuting from a balloon 22.6 miles in the atmosphere and reaching speeds of up to 843.6 miles per hour.

Paul Nicklen and James Nachtwey explore and photograph frontiers; Nicklen photographs wildlife above and below the polar ice, and Nachtwey captures images of the world’s conflicts, often those not highlighted in any media. Nicklen explains, “There is always something else for humans to learn.”

At the end of the fourth century, Fa Xian embarked on a pilgrimage to find religious texts and spent 10 years exploring and documenting the frontiers of China, Nepal, India and Sri Lanka. Some explorers have earned credit, at least temporarily, for documenting frontiers and claiming to be first. Amerigo Vespucci even had two continents named after him as a result.

So what beyond curiosity and glory inspires people to accept the risks of exploring frontiers? Mountain climber Conrad Anker explains his interest in frontiers as hard work and overcoming obstacles: “That’s happiness.” Facing the risk is like “slow dancing with the fat woman of fate in the ballroom of death,” Anker tells his team. “You hope when the music stops, it’s not your number.” Anker’s colleague, Emily Harrington, explains it this way: standing on a summit creates “an energy… that’s unlike anything else on Earth.”

People who explore the frontiers of ideas and human expression can feel the same exhilaration as mountain climbers. Elizabeth Cady Stanton challenged society’s beliefs about women’s capabilities. Karl Marx questioned capitalism, and Charles Darwin expanded our knowledge about life on Earth. Marie Curie’s work led to the discovery of polonium and radium, and Florence Nightingale pioneered care that led to modern nursing. Bach, Mozart and Beethoven transformed music in the West.

Henry David Thoreau’s ideas about non-violent civil disobedience influenced Mahandas “Mahatma” Gandhi, who influenced a nation. They in turn influenced Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela, who led contemporary movements to rectify social injustice. You may not often read about J.K. Rowling in the same paragraph as King and Mandela, but Rowling tested conventional wisdom that young people don’t read anymore with her series of books about Harry Potter. Agree or disagree with them, each of them expanded the frontiers.
of our understanding of the world.

Many scientists whose names are not all well known are changing our understanding of the world as well. The Washington Post called Virginia Tech researcher and RoMeLa Director Dennis Hong the “Leonardo da Vinci of robots.” That is a fitting title, considering da Vinci is credited with creating the first robot around 1495 from a suit of armor, pulleys and cables. Scientists have built da Vinci’s robot from his sketches. It could stand, sit and maneuver its arms and was likely the result of da Vinci’s work in human anatomy.

Hong developed Darwin, a small robot constructed from metals, motors and microchips, in 2004. Darwin and today’s robots go far beyond the capabilities of da Vinci’s model. They see via the use of webcams, move with the use of joint actuators and learn by imitation. The hulk exoskeleton merges with the human body to help lift loads whose weight bypasses the human body, and they are showing promise at helping restore the ability to walk. Hong’s dream is a “Jetsons”-like frontier in which robots live with us in our homes and do the kinds of work, both inside the home and beyond, that are dangerous for human beings. Can other elements of George Jetson’s world be far behind?

Terrafugia designs and manufactures flying cars. Author Daniel Brook writes about the instant, gleaming cities of Dubai and Shenzhen where, “every month 5 million people move from the past to the future” of 21st-century urban areas. Businesses, according to digital analyst, sociologist and futurist Brian Solis, are experimenting with creating shared experiences at the point of purchase that can, for example, link people who purchased similar items as friends on social media. Frontiers of technology and science are extending the boundaries of the world we know.

The world may also be a lot stranger than we know. Isaac Newton’s work in the 17th century unifying the heavens and earth into a single theory called gravity set the stage for later scientific frontiers. His was the first force to be recognized scientifically; and researchers, including those who developed the Mars spacecraft, still use his equation. Albert Einstein extended the boundaries of Newton’s theory by pondering patterns of light as he worked in a Swiss patent office. His solitary 10-year quest led to the Theory of Relativity, which was challenged in the 1920s and 30s by Quantum Theory.

Quantum mechanics suggests parallel universes. What if there is no real distinction between the past, present and future except for the socially constructed one we know? What frontiers might we explore? Doctor Who has been teleporting for 50 years on the BBC, and the show itself has won the Peabody Award for promoting the frontiers of technology. Is it truly possible to teleport? Not yet, but string theory hypothesizes that the universe is made from tiny, vibrating pieces of energy known as “string.” It suggests a frontier in which the formulation of a law would explain everything in the universe, and things we think impossible today may not be.

Mind reading may be one of those things. Entrepreneur Tan Le is working on a mind-reading headset. It won’t let you actually hear someone else’s thoughts, but the headset reads patterns of electrical activity from the brain in a way that can speak to other technology. John Donoghue of Brown University is working on implanting sensors into brains that will allow people who have had debilitating strokes to control objects with their minds. Google glasses may change the way we communicate with one another and see the world.

What if people could live long enough to see the movement of these frontiers and others about which explorers have not yet dreamed? Advances in the frontiers of biotechnology show promise of slowing or repairing the aging process. Time magazine journalists Harry McCracken and Lev Grossman reported that Google is diversifying and launching its exploration to extend human life. McCracken and Grossman wrote, “Medicine is well on its way to becoming an information science: doctors and researchers are now able to harvest and mine massive quantities of data from patients. And Google is very, very good with large data sets.”

Advances in medicine have created the possibility that humans born in the 21st century can live to be 120 years old. Sharon Jayson reported in USA TODAY, “A long life sounds great, but living radically longer than our life expectancy today isn’t what most Americans really want.” According to a 2013 Pew study, 69 percent of adults surveyed believed 90 years is the ideal lifespan.

Ninety-four-year-old Margaret Telesca Arthur explained it this way: “I don’t want to die, but a day rarely goes by that I don’t get news of another friend passing away. That can be a lonely feeling.” What about other nations? Could the frontiers of medicine that might help people in the West live well into their 100s be utilized in places like Sierra Leone where the average life expectancy is 47 years?

The possibilities to understand and make positive changes in the world are extraordinary. Explorers live and dream in the borderlands, the meaning of the French word frontier. Virginia Woolf wrote, “All is experiment and adventure.” Frontiers await you. Cultivate the pioneer spirit and adventurer within you. Explore! Dream! Discover!
The nature of the quest is related to Epistomology, a branch of philosophy about the nature and scope of knowledge and about the cognitive and psychological phenomena that explain why we wonder about the nature and scope of knowledge in the first place. Arthur Koestler wrote, “The principle mark of genius is not perfection, but originality, the opening of new frontiers.” What sparks imagination and creativity and leads to originality? Are imagination and creativity sufficient? What else is required to open new frontiers? What propels us from being merely curious or ingenious to risking physical or mental comfort and well being to explore frontiers when the destination or reward is unknown? Whether it is the scope of knowledge and understanding that is limited or our space and movement that is limited — are we naturally motivated to reach beyond limitations?

**EXPLORE MORE!**

MacPhee takes readers along on each team’s trek through Earth’s harshest, most unforgiving terrain. He illuminates not only the natural, biological and scientific detail, but also the human and emotional motivation to explore. He helps answer the philosophical question asked of every person who undertakes a dangerous and epic exploration: why did he do it?

Niu and Sternberg explore the roots of creativity and compare and contrast the Western and Eastern meanings of the concept. Understanding different views of creativity helps explain why humans explore and create meaning from their exploration of frontiers.

Pisula looks at the phenomenon of curiosity in humans and non-human animals. The author utilizes psychology, ethology and behavioral neuroscience to help readers understand how and why we seek novelty and gather information.

Wilson takes a biological, evolutionary approach to understanding how and why humans have historically pushed into new frontiers and came to dominate the Earth. He couples biology with social behavior and focuses on group selection as a key to understanding how Earth has been conquered.

For more sources related to this theme, go to ptk.org/honors.
women who have opened new frontiers in a variety of disciplines have in common?

• How did they develop the qualities, characteristics, abilities and behaviors to the level necessary to be successful in their endeavors?

ACADEMIC RESEARCH  Team members divided the general sources for Theme 1 to read and better understand what experts describe as the reasons why we seek and explore frontiers. Then they focused their research on biographies and autobiographies of female explorers:

• Ideas and Ideologies – Betty Friedan, Rachel Carson
• Human Expression – Virginia Woolf, Maya Angelou, Twyla Tharpe
• Natural Environment – Jane Goodall, Ruth Harkness, Wangari Maathai
• Celestial Frontiers – Bessie Coleman, Sally Ride, Mae Jemison
• Temporal and Spatial Physics – Marie Curie, Phyllis S. Freirer, Renata Kallos
• Health and Medicine as Frontiers – Clara Barton, Florence Nightingale, Wafaa El-Sadr
• Political Economy – Indira Gandhi, Margaret Thatcher, Aung San Suu Kyi
• Borders and Boundaries – Sacagawea, Janet Wulsin, Ann Bancroft, Liv Arneson

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS  Each researcher contributed a list of qualities, characteristics, abilities and behaviors for the female explorer(s) researched. The team looked as well at how each explorer developed these skills to exemplary levels. Considering all the lists together, the chapter found that the following are some of the characteristics that contributed to their success and seemed to cross the eras and parts of the world where these women lived and the disciplines within which they worked. This list is not exhaustive, but helped us answer the question, "Why do we seek and explore frontiers?":

• Curiosity or inquisitiveness
• Confidence
• Passion
• Focus
• Commitment
• Resources and mentors for preparation (education, training, practice, trials, etc.)
• Strategies for coping (with risk, fear, loneliness, etc.)

DETERMINATION OF ACTION  The chapter wondered if young women in the community had opportunities to develop and enhance the qualities they found common to extraordinary women explorers. They did local research and found no programs aimed specifically at women who have opened new frontiers in a variety of disciplines have in common?

• How did they develop the qualities, characteristics, abilities and behaviors to the level necessary to be successful in their endeavors?

ACADEMIC RESEARCH  Team members divided the general sources for Theme 1 to read and better understand what experts describe as the reasons why we seek and explore frontiers. Then they focused their research on biographies and autobiographies of female explorers:

• Ideas and Ideologies – Betty Friedan, Rachel Carson
• Human Expression – Virginia Woolf, Maya Angelou, Twyla Tharpe
• Natural Environment – Jane Goodall, Ruth Harkness, Wangari Maathai
• Celestial Frontiers – Bessie Coleman, Sally Ride, Mae Jemison
• Temporal and Spatial Physics – Marie Curie, Phyllis S. Freirer, Renata Kallos
• Health and Medicine as Frontiers – Clara Barton, Florence Nightingale, Wafaa El-Sadr
• Political Economy – Indira Gandhi, Margaret Thatcher, Aung San Suu Kyi
• Borders and Boundaries – Sacagawea, Janet Wulsin, Ann Bancroft, Liv Arneson

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS  Each researcher contributed a list of qualities, characteristics, abilities and behaviors for the female explorer(s) researched. The team looked as well at how each explorer developed these skills to exemplary levels. Considering all the lists together, the chapter found that the following are some of the characteristics that contributed to their success and seemed to cross the eras and parts of the world where these women lived and the disciplines within which they worked. This list is not exhaustive, but helped us answer the question, "Why do we seek and explore frontiers?":

• Curiosity or inquisitiveness
• Confidence
• Passion
• Focus
• Commitment
• Resources and mentors for preparation (education, training, practice, trials, etc.)
• Strategies for coping (with risk, fear, loneliness, etc.)

DETERMINATION OF ACTION  The chapter wondered if young women in the community had opportunities to develop and enhance the qualities they found common to extraordinary women explorers. They did local research and found no programs aimed specifically at this audience, and they looked into the feasibility of developing and launching a program in the community designed for empowering young women to reach beyond perceived limitations — to determine, prepare for and follow their quests.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT  Team members met with psychology professors and members of the counseling and advising departments and learned about programs related to self-esteem and self-efficacy for adolescent girls. Upon making the decision to organize a one-day workshop for middle school girls, they sought training from faculty related to leading dialogues and coaching, skills crucial to successful completion of their project.

IMPLEMENTATION

LEADERSHIP ROLES

• Officers and members read and analyzed research materials.

• Research team members conducted research in the community and on programs related to empowering adolescent girls.
• Officers facilitated the discussion of the research and analysis.
• Team leaders developed an agenda for the workshop that incorporated some of the research on women explorers and exercises suggested by the psychology faculty and advisors and then presented a “dry run” of the workshop for the chapter.
• Members served as liaisons with the college and garnered the permission to use college facilities and organized the set up and logistics for the workshop.
• Members coordinated promotion and recruited attendees for the program, including collaborating with the local junior highs and the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization.
• Team members facilitated during the What’s Your Quest? Program.
• Members created an evaluation form and analyzed the responses.

COLLABORATION

• The college administration allowed the workshop to take place on campus, and faculty conducted workshops on facilitating dialogues and coaching.
• Two junior highs agreed to promote the workshop.
• Big Brothers Big Sisters recommended participants and contributed refreshments for the workshop.
• The team completed the preparations necessary to share the research and the workshop agenda at the Regional Convention.

ACTION  The chapter scheduled the event and recruited girls ages 12-14 to come to the college for a day of self-assessment, self-discovery and confidence- and esteem-building activities. We shared the characteristics of the women explorers we had studied to determine our action. Before the day concluded, each girl also created a Quest Collage, a poster board of pictures and words that portrayed her interests and goals.

REFLECTION

EVALUATION  At the conclusion of the workshop, participants completed an evaluation form to provide feedback about the day. An additional assessment instrument was provided to the participants’ parents. The chapter calculated the ratio of positive responses and comments to neutral or negative responses and comments so they could report this along with attendance statistics to the college and in their Honors in Action Hallmark Awards entry. While overwhelmingly positive, the negative responses provided information to improve the agenda and the organization of the workshop. Chapter officers also debriefed the college administration about the workshop so that logistical details were also reviewed. Finally, the team members met biweekly to reflect upon the experience and what they gained from participating in our Honors in Action project.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS  The success of the workshop and the positive feedback from the schools and organizations indicated that there is a need in the community for this kind of activity for young women, and the chapter is seeking additional student organizations and community collaborators to take the lead and continue the workshop on an annual basis going forward.
IDEAS and IDEOLOGIES as FRONTIERS

What frontiers of thought shape the world?

Any quest begins with an idea or an idea about an idea that is believed to be truth but suspected by some to be false. The idea itself is a quest for truth, but myths may be mistaken for truths. Surely, Darwin, Freud, Sun Tzu, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Marx never anticipated the dialogues their ideas — or truths — would generate. When does the thought as a frontier become a colonization of mind? Ideas are transactional for all involved: explorer and the discovered. Quoting W.B. Yeats, Salman Rushdie beckons, “In dreams begin responsibilities.’ The way we see the world affects the world we see…In dreams begin irresponsibilities, too.” (Step Across This Line, Part Two, 364-375). Rushdie’s words are also ideas to be explored, questioned and shaped by other ideas, and the result can be revolutionary.

EXPLORE MORE!


Asimov attempts an explanation and an exploration of the term “crazy ideas,” making readers pause and think about creativity and the criteria necessary for crazy ideas: “a broad education,” “intelligence,” “intuition,” “courage” and “luck.”


Halberstam examines the transformation of gender roles with Lady Gaga at the center of his pursuit, arguing that she symbolizes a new kind of feminism — one interested in “unbecoming women” — and that by transcending the traditional borders of gender identity, she shatters them.


Author of many canonical texts in this subject area, Kupperman provides a readable introduction to important works and authors of the genre: The Upanishads, The Dammapada, The Bhagavad Gita, The Bezels of Wisdom, The Tao Te Ching, The Zhuangzi, Confucius and Mensius.


The “Very Short Introduction” series, written by scholars in the topic’s field and published by Oxford University Press, gives readers a basic understanding of just about anything, whether it be Islam, Medieval Britain, Modern Japan, Particle Physics — even a short introduction to Everything and Nothing. Each text is well researched and documented.

For more sources related to this theme, go to ptk.org/honors.

HONORS IN ACTION

SAFE FOR SUCCESS

OVERVIEW

“Safe for Success” began with the chapter’s desire to explore the debate about same-sex marriage legislation and what ideas shaped beliefs and laws/rules regarding same-sex marriage. After research and discussion with college and community leaders, the chapter decided to promote the acceptance and success of LGBTQ students on campus, in the community and possibly the state and region.

PREPARATION

SELECTION OF THEME

After exploring possibilities with many of the themes in the Honors Program Guide, we selected Theme 2: Ideas and Ideologies. Issues like same-sex marriages and voting privileges were popular among students. We were initially interested in Political Economy; but, given the amount of informal discussion about same-sex marriage in particular, members wanted to propose some questions and formalize the conversation about the ideas and ideologies that have shaped beliefs and laws regarding same-sex marriage.

DEVELOP RESEARCH QUESTIONS

• What ideas or beliefs influence people’s beliefs that same-sex marriage should be legal?
• What laws or rules are in place in the state, community and campus regarding same-sex relationships?
• How many college students identify with LGBTQ communities, and how do those laws and or rules affect them? Do they enjoy the same rights as other students?

ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Members began by researching the history of LGBTQ and the context for those ideologies. We researched state and federal government documents to understand what laws were in place regarding same-sex marriage.
Other members worked with social sciences faculty to create a reliable online survey to be administered to the college’s student population to obtain some statistics about ideas regarding same-sex marriage and rights of LGBTQ students. Members also met with a world religions instructor to learn what religious beliefs were most influential in shaping ideas and effecting laws/rules involving same-sex couples. Those members also met with political science, history and sociology instructors to gather a list of recommended texts to read on the topic.

**ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS** Textual research revealed: 1) most religious texts contained some terminology regarding relations or marriages between a man and a woman, and those that were most specific were often cited as reasons not to legalize same-sex marriages; 2) historically, some cultures approved of same-sex relationships; 3) there are definite economic benefits for same-sex couples and the communities that supported them; 4) state law was not in accordance with federal law; and 5) definitions of words and their usage can change over time — that language is socially constructed.

The survey helped determine the climate on campus regarding same-sex marriage. Eighty-three percent of students believed that same-sex marriage should be legal. Ten percent believed it should not, and seven percent had no opinion. Of those who believed same-sex marriage should not be legal, the majority cited religious reasons, and a small number defined marriage as only between a man and a woman. Those who held the idea that same-sex marriage should be legal were asked approximately how long they held to that idea (had they always believed or had they changed their minds about legalization of same-sex marriage), and what might have influenced their opinions.

**DETERMINATION OF ACTION** Members supported forming a panel discussion about the topic, inviting instructors from the campus and other colleges (including those teaching psychology, sociology, history, political science and religion) along with local religious leaders to discuss the topic in an open campus/community forum. The college administration, however, felt that such a discussion would be too emotionally charged and encouraged the chapter to come up with a plan of action to help students in the LGBTQ community. We determined that the chapter should begin with voluntary faculty and staff training to assist students in the LGBTQ community by making them feel safe and ensuring a climate of trust, confidentiality and safety. We worked with Student Services to create training sessions that could count as professional development and an online manual for faculty and staff. “Safe for Success” was born.

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT** Members participated in a workshop conducted by faculty and the local religious community to gain knowledge of key texts with which to begin research. Although the project ended up heading in a different direction than the chapter anticipated, the research was still valuable for training. Members worked with library staff to find current government documents regarding same-sex marriage. Team members invited the Vice President of Student Services to conduct a workshop at which the Honors in Action team developed a proposal for the State Board of Community Colleges, suggesting implementation of statewide training for all faculty and staff.

**IMPLEMENTATION LEADERSHIP ROLES**
- Members read and analyzed textual sources and conducted personal interviews on campus and in the community.
- Team members, with help of advisors and social sciences faculty, created a survey and worked with the college’s public relations office to distribute then share on the college’s Facebook page.
- Team members met with faculty to discuss training options and scheduling preferences.
- Working with the college’s public relations office, we designed door decor and name badges to identify staff who had completed our training program.

**COLLABORATION**
- Local religious community leaders agreed to provide the chapter with information regarding religious beliefs and same-sex marriage.
- Faculty and staff participated in the “Safe for Success” training sessions, and several staff members promoted the training as a professional development option.
- College and community representatives agreed to participate in the training to share their stories.
- Local therapists specializing in LGBTQ issues and several instructors agreed to serve as consultants during the training sessions.
- Team members created a presentation for their regional convention to share their project with fellow Phi Theta Kappa members.

**ACTION** Based on research, meetings with the college’s administration, and understanding of state and federal law, the chapter decided the best course of action was to ensure ideas about LGBTQ students be addressed by professionals who could properly train faculty and staff, using the research and other resources the chapter had collected and put into the manual. Eight lunch sessions served as opportunities for training faculty and staff about the challenges LGBTQ students face, the best ways to help them succeed based on personal accounts by students, and how current state legislation regarding same-sex marriage was not in accordance with federal law.

**REFLECTION**

**EVALUATION** Though the initial project direction changed, it still provided an avenue for the discussion of ideas about same-sex marriage and other LGBTQ community issues. Faculty found training informative and felt better equipped to make LGBTQ students comfortable and successful while at the college. A few admitted to misconceptions they had about LGBTQ people. Another said the training answered some questions that he or she had been too embarrassed to ask. The students in those teachers’ classes were also asked to complete an online survey. More than 800 respondents said they felt it was important that students could easily identify supportive faculty and staff. A small portion (76 students) felt that LGBTQ students were receiving special attention. The administration was pleased with the feedback and agreed to continue to offer the training and helped the chapter propose to the state’s Board of Community Colleges that all of the state’s community colleges offer a similar training to faculty and staff as professional development. Many members were surprised to find out that some instructors did not support the training. In hindsight, they realized that they never surveyed the faculty but also realized that some frontiers are too frightening or risky for some people to explore.

**FUTURE IMPLICATIONS** The college will continue to offer training to faculty and staff. A new student organization for LGBTQ students was formed. Members feel it is one more way to make certain all students have safe avenues for college completion and professional success.
How do we express discoveries when we explore frontiers?

The art that surrounds us, the music that moves us, the adornments that define us, the epitaphs that mark our passing — human expression leads us into new frontiers that by social standards may defy convention. It is the vehicle that allows average people to undertake amazing journeys and bring life to our dreams. American artist Robert Henri explains it best: “The artist is alive in any person, whatever his kind of work may be, he becomes an inventive, searching, daring, self-expressive creature. He disturbs, upsets, enlightens, and opens ways for a better understanding.” It is human expression, the pure joy in being ourselves, that provokes creation, invokes our spirit and sheds light to the paths yet traveled. From the mythology of the Ancients to the modern primitives, hipsters and geeks, to express our explorations is to be human.

EXPLORE MORE!
Gilsdorf supports the concept of how empathy can be developed through geek wisdom. The fact that geek wisdom has entered the mainstream means more people are recognizing the positive characteristics of the culture through playing cooperative games associated with the geek subculture.

Stark discusses how the world of Live Action Role Play (LARP) has become a phenomenon and focuses on a handful of people who are involved in a dynamic subculture. She examines their use of personal expression through the characters they choose to portray in LARP.

Famed choreographer Tharp explores the characteristics of creativity and creative people and the process by which creativity can be established as a habit. She provides 32 exercises anyone can use to foster creativity as a life habit.

Vandermeer explains the history of the Steampunk movement and how Steampunk artists express their world through their art. He explores the varied types of art created by Steampunks, including visual art, film, literature, comic books, travel, clothing, jewelry and inventions.

For more sources related to this theme, go to ptk.org/honors.
thoughts and feelings through body adornment, even though a majority of the culture often sees this as a societal taboo. To what extent is body modification associated with negative taboos? In what ways is body modification the norm in some societies? Even with safety measures in place, why do so many people still see tattooing and piercing as a dangerous and destructive act? Why do others see it as a way to express individuality? Has tattooing and piercing truly entered mainstream society, and what are their antecedents? And if it has, then why do so many people feel a need to hide their artwork from others? These questions guided our academic research into a form of human expression that has endured through the ages.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS We found cultures throughout history that have embraced body alteration as a form of human expression and those that have shunned it. As a result, our team’s analysis and conclusions included the answers to the following questions: Describe the reasons an individual would choose a certain picture or design for a tattoo. What are reasons people get their ears pierced but refuse to have other parts of their body pierced? What are the ramifications associated with tattoos within professional fields? What is the beauty associated with gauging one’s ears, and is there a point when they are too big? Tattooing and body piercing have been around for thousands of years and are some of the oldest forms of art, so why do some societies consider it taboo or “tacky”? How and why have cultures embraced or shunned body art? In what ways could tattooing and body piercing be shown in a positive fashion to mainstream society?

DETERMINATION OF ACTION Based on our research about frontiers of human expression in body alteration, our team developed a human art show in which the art pieces are tastefully displayed tattoos and body piercings on individuals from the community and surrounding areas. To accompany the human expression art show, team members prepared a presentation about the roots and rich history of this form of human expression. Artists and team members discussed the ability to use the human body as a personal canvas to demonstrate expressions of life with art show patrons.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT Prior to working on the project, team members realized there were several things they did not know about hosting an art show. So members attended a workshop with an event planner. They went to a training session with the Chambers of Commerce to learn the legal requirements of hosting a public event. They worked with the college’s speech department to develop speaking techniques needed for talking to a large audience. And a sensitivity trainer conducted a workshop to help team members understand the appropriate behavior necessary when working with human subjects.

IMPLEMENTATION

LEADERSHIP ROLES
• Members contacted local tattoo artists and individuals to ask them to present their work at the show.
• Research team members worked with local venue managers to gather information about the physical items that would be needed to host a professional art show.
• Team members publicized, organized and hosted an art show.
• Members created fliers to publicize the show to campus and community organizations.
• Team members facilitated discussions during the human expression show.
• Members wrote and mailed thank-you notes to everyone who helped with the show.
• Team leaders secured permissions and technology to stream the show live to a larger audience beyond the immediate community.

COLLABORATION
• College speech instructors conducted a seminar on public speaking for team members.
• The Student Government Association donated funds for refreshments during the show.
• Local tattoo and piercing artists donated their time and energy to serve as living works of art for the show.
• A local event planner conducted a workshop to help team members better understand the logistics of organizing a successful art show.
• City and venue officials worked with the team to ensure all legal obligations were met.
• A local print shop consulted on the publicity campaign and flier and donated its services.
• Team members facilitated an online discussion during and after the live stream of the art show to people in and beyond our college and community.

ACTION The chapter hosted a local body art show where the art consisted of professional displays of tattoos and body piercings on human beings. The show demonstrated artists’ ability to capture the essence of human expressions on living canvases. The show demonstrated to a diverse audience that body alteration has its roots in history and has become part of contemporary mainstream society.

REFLECTION

EVALUATION Many individuals use their bodies as a way of expressing their thoughts and feelings. Our show helped us grow as scholars of human expression, and we were able to see how people choose to adorn themselves. We hope to break down some of the negative connotations associated with body alteration. Being able to stream the show live and facilitate a meaningful and lively discussion allowed us to share what we learned with people beyond our local community. At the conclusion of the show, participants submitted an evaluation, and our team reviewed their comments. We had a lot to learn about the legal and ethical requirements when working with humans in a setting like our show, and we grew as leaders who know the right questions to ask when working on a project. We found that not everyone appreciated body alteration as a form of human expression, but we overcame obstacles and learned from the challenges and opportunities inherent in tackling a subject that is controversial to some groups. Ninety-five percent of the people who submitted evaluations applauded our efforts and encouraged us to consider another human expression art show. Team members invited college administrators and Board of Trustees members to the show and provided an executive summary of our research findings and project outcomes to both groups.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS Will body alteration endure as a topic of interest and as a way to express interests and feelings for college students? Our team believes it will and has mentored members of the Student Government Association to organize the event next year. They supported us this year, and we plan to support their efforts, even as our chapter moves on to tackle another Honors in Action project.
What frontiers of the natural environment inspire exploration?

The natural environment is comprised of all biotic (living) and abiotic (non-living) things that occur naturally within a particular area in which human impact is kept under limited levels. It may be characterized by four attributes: features, functions, services and values. These attributes characterize ecosystems and, by extension, the natural environment. They are largely driven by an anthropomorphic perspective and do not always account for the intrinsic value of a natural environment system existing outside of human definition (I exist because I am, not because I can do something for you).

As resources become scarcer and pressure for their use increases, how will these challenges impact the frontiers of natural environments? What opportunities exist to preserve the natural environment for future generations? What are the novel ways of maximizing existing resources in use to mitigate or reduce the impact on largely undisturbed, rapidly diminishing areas of the natural environment? What frontiers are available in the natural environment to alleviate poverty, hunger and the growing expectations of global entrants into middle classes in societies that formerly did not have established ones? To what extent is it desirable and viable to restore balance between the pressure to extract and convert the natural environment into productive areas and to conserve it?

EXPLORE MORE!

Attenborough, Sir David, Narrator & Alastair Fothergill, Director (2011). Planet Earth. This 11-part DVD provides a visually beautiful global overview of the past, present and (possible) future of the planet Earth.

Dinwiddie, Robert, Philip Eales, Sue Scott & Michael Scott (2008). Ocean. Dinwiddie provides an overview of the ocean, its behavior and the varied species that inhabit it. Published by the American Museum of Natural History, his work includes images of the underwater frontiers and a discussion about the importance of the ocean to the natural environment.


Mulhall, Marjorie (2009). “Saving the Rainforests of the Sea: An Analysis of International Efforts to Conserve Coral Reefs.” Duke Environmental Law & Policy Forum. Mulhall outlines the principal threats faced by coral reefs, analyzes several main approaches the international community is employing to conserve reef ecosystems and ultimately calls for a new international treaty devoted to protecting these unique living structures.

For more sources related to this theme, go to ptk.org/honors.

HONORS IN ACTION

A (LION)FISH FRY

OVERVIEW

Invasive species in the natural environment, particularly the ocean, are both a growing challenge and a growing opportunity. Internationally, the reality of invasive species has caused many communities, particularly coastal communities and island nations, to examine the impact of these foreign entities on their local marine environments. This project examines the effect of lionfish in the waters of an island nation.

PREPARATION

SELECTION OF THEME The team decided they would select a theme that would prove to be of relevance to their unique situation and on which they agreed they could sustain their interest over the course of the project. The fact that several pertinent aspects of island life are inextricably linked to the natural environment made the selection of Theme 4 a viable as well as popular choice. The chapter was particularly interested in invasive fish species in general and in lionfish and the impact of their arrival on the exploration of their nation as a frontier destination in particular.

DEVELOP RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- What are positive and negative results of introducing invasive species into the natural environment?
- In what ways has the introduction of lionfish resulted in challenges and opportunities as they relate to frontiers and the spirit of exploration in this island community?
- To what extent do the lionfish affect indigenous fish populations?

ACADEMIC RESEARCH Team members began researching...
the natural environment as a frontier in general, then moved to invasive species in general terms and finally narrowed their investigation to the prevalence of lionfish within international and local waters. The team’s research then focused on the original habitat of the lionfish and how and why it was introduced into local waters. After narrowing their research, team members divided into smaller groups to investigate the following questions: How have lionfish travelled to remote destinations? What species of local fish in our marine environment are threatened by their presence? To what extent has the local marine ecosystem/habitat of fish changed? How have similar communities dealt with this challenge?

**ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Our team’s analysis included the development of the following visual and quantitative items:

- A map of local water where high numbers of lionfish are found.
- A bar chart of local fish that are prey of the lionfish and the numbers caught and tagged over a three-year period.
- Statistical analysis of data garnered to create the bar charts.
- A map of local water where high numbers of lionfish are found.

From their research, members found the increase in the lionfish population affected the populations of its prey in the marine environment of their island over a three-year period. The balance of the marine ecosystem has changed, which could negatively impact the island’s tourism, a major economic force. What is the extent of the destruction to the natural balance? What is the role of any local agencies working to mitigate the destruction of this marine ecosystem? How have other communities turned this type of challenge into economic opportunity?

**DETERMINATION OF ACTION**

Based on the research completed, the team determined lionfish were a threat and an economic frontier. Other societies mitigated the problem of invasive species by marketing them as new food choices. Our community could do the same and in doing so create a frontier of economic opportunity for the fishing, tourism and restaurant industries as well as a healthy food choice for local residents. The team invited an environmental group to collaborate on a marketing campaign and (lion)fish fry to promote a new delicacy. Members embarked on an early morning fishing “training/expedition” and learned the art of net fishing or spearing lionfish. They created a marketing campaign to promote the use of lionfish as a local delicacy. The team then invited students, faculty and community members to clean, prepare and cook the fish, generating greater awareness.

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

To successfully plan, develop and implement their project, members requested and participated in a workshop conducted by natural science faculty on conducting environmental research. They engaged in an active learning exercise conducted by the Fisheries Department to learn net and spear fishing. Finally, the chapter asked culinary arts faculty to conduct a workshop on best practices for scaling and cooking this new fish.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

**LEADERSHIP ROLES**

- Members organized the research team and engaged in ongoing reflection and evaluation of the research, action and leadership development components of the project.
- Team members organized the fishing team and invited the Fisheries Department to train members to catch lionfish.
- Members developed marketing tools and conducted the campaign to promote lionfish as a local delicacy and the fish fry fundraiser.
- Team members developed recipes for the fish fry and organized teams that cooked, collected funds, greeted guests and cleaned up after the event.
- Members shared the bar charts and maps created during the research phase of the project with fellow students, faculty and community members as well as with Phi Theta Kappa members at a regional conference.

**COLLABORATION**

- Science faculty shared valuable resources with team members and guided members in the development of their bar graphs and maps.
- The Conservation and Fisheries Department conducted a workshop to teach proper fishing techniques.
- National Parks Trust administrators worked with team members to locate available fishing areas and to develop the map used for researching lionfish habitats.
- The college’s Marketing Department directed a seminar on effective marketing techniques and worked with team members to create a plan and effective tools to market lionfish as a new frontier in food.

**ACTION**

Our action component for this Honors in Action project consisted of fishing and then cleaning, preparing and cooking lionfish for our fish fry. The event served as an awareness campaign about the ways invasive species can have an impact on marine frontiers, marketing lionfish as a viable dining option and the importance of ecosystem balance to our local economy.

**REFLECTION**

**EVALUATION**

Team members used an evaluation survey to seek feedback from fish fry and project participants. They sought to answer the following questions:

- What did you learn about lionfish and the impact they have on our island’s marine frontiers?
- To what extent were people willing to explore a new food option, particularly one that many had seen as a threat to the environment?
- Could lionfish be a viable addition to the local cuisine?

Members developed their skills as researchers, particularly with the use of quantitative data and the ways that data could be developed into visual elements that would enhance members’ ability to effectively share the information with community members. Team members also enhanced their soft skills by learning about marketing and developing tools that would promote the fish fry to a wide range of community members. A majority of people who tried lionfish believed it was a viable option for our local cuisine and might even become a delicacy for tourists who visit the island and contribute to the local economy.

**FUTURE IMPLICATIONS**

Members believe that promoting lionfish has opened a new frontier in the cuisine of their community. Their research can stand as an example of how to take potential challenges to the natural environment and provide positive solutions that can promote and sustain the same environment. What is left undone? Determining whether the name “lionfish” will attract people to this new delicacy is a next step. If the name does not work, finding a new name for the fish that encourages people to try it will be a creative option.
CELESTIAL FRONTIERS

What are the risks and rewards of exploring the frontiers of outer space?

From early efforts with high altitude balloons to the recent Mars rover expedition, outer space has fascinated explorers. Many technological innovations, which have had impact on space travel and everyday life here on Earth, have resulted from these ventures. The 21st century has brought new directions and debate over future plans to explore the outer frontier. Efforts are underway to discover fresh ways to observe and chart new celestial territory. Discussions are being held about the worthiness of sending humans to places both previously and never before visited. Amongst all this activity, the private sector is in the process of becoming significant participants on par with, if not more advanced than, governments. There seems as much to contemplate about why and how to explore the stars as there are stars themselves.

EXPLORE MORE!
Andrews, Bill (February 2012). “50 Years of Americans in space: since John Glenn’s orbital flight, we’ve visited the Moon, built space stations and learned about our place in the universe.” Astronomy.

Inspired by the 50th anniversary of John Glenn’s flight, Andrews provides a succinct overview and outline of American development in space exploration and technology. He includes President John F. Kennedy’s then lofty goal to land a man on the Moon by the end of the 1960s and traces the history of space exploration through the implementation of the International Space Station in the early 2000s.


deGrasse Tyson argues that space exploration is crucial to new innovation in things we use in everyday life, and, as a result, we should think big and seek the ultimate frontier of space as worthy of exploration. With the end of the Space Shuttle program, he maintains, NASA will not be in a position until at least 2020 to lead the way in space exploration. NASA matters, and we should rekindle our intellectual curiosity about and interest in exploring space.


Harris visualizes and forecasts how our society might exist beyond our planet within this century. In addition to outlining various technological needs and developments, issues concerning culture, international relations and private enterprise are also discussed.


Part of the “At Issue” series, Space Exploration provides a comprehensive overview to the current debate over the extent to which we should pursue celestial frontiers. Haugen and Lewis discuss the search for alien life, space colonization, the role of the private sector in space travel and the impact of the exploration of celestial frontiers on international leadership and relations.

For more sources related to this theme, go to ptk.org/honors.

HONORS IN ACTION
IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE

OVERVIEW
This Honors in Action project begins with exploring why the American public and, as a result, the United States government has decreased its interest in and support for space exploration. While researching the attitudinal rationale behind this decreased support, the chapter discovered that many Americans were unaware of all the technological advancements and everyday conveniences whose development are directly credited to efforts in space exploration. As a result, the team decided to create an advocacy project highlighting how technology developed initially for space exploration has influenced our everyday lives. Members hoped to increase public support within their community for continued public and private space exploration.

PREPARATION
SELECTION OF THEME
After exploring the themes in the Honors Program Guide, members expressed the most interest and enthusiasm in Theme 5: Celestial Frontiers. When contemplating the overarching question, “What are the risks and rewards of exploring the frontiers of outer space?” a discussion occurred centering on the recent closure of the Space Shuttle program. Members questioned why there was decreasing support for space exploration by the government and the perceived lack of development of space exploration efforts by the private sector.

DEVELOP RESEARCH QUESTIONS
• Of what value is the continued exploration of space to the United States and to other nations worldwide?
• What factors inform and influence public opinion and
government action concerning the exploration of space?
• To what extent does the public or private sector best serve the future of space exploration?

ACADEMIC RESEARCH The chapter created research teams to address each question. Research not only took a historical view of space exploration but also an overview of current events and discussions being held by both global governments and private organizations.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS Separate research teams for each part of our overall investigative plan discovered a common denominator underlying the answers to each of their separate questions: many technological developments that have led to the creation of common conveniences are directly attributed to our previous efforts in space exploration. The chapter also discovered that Americans are unaware of these developments and their importance to everyday life. The chapter’s research uncovered an ongoing debate over whether the public or private sector is best suited to continue development of space exploration and its resulting impacts and rewards. Finally, the chapter identified the voting records of congressional representatives and senators who served their college district in terms of supporting both public and private sector exploration of space.

DETERMINATION OF ACTION Having rallied around the claim that space exploration is important to the future of society, the chapter determined a need for increased awareness concerning the value of continuing the pursuit of space exploration. Knowing that the public was, for the most part, unaware of these benefits, the chapter decided to engage in advocacy within their own community by increasing awareness of how space exploration has dramatically increased our quality of everyday life. The chapter hoped that this increased awareness could also lead to a community dialogue about the pros and cons of the public and private sector engaging in space exploration. Team members determined this could be done in two parts: 1) development of a traveling exhibit about the ways space exploration has been important for everyday life, and 2) a letter-writing campaign to the district’s congressional representatives outlining the benefits of space exploration and support for continuing research and development of this frontier.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT Members met with reference librarians to improve their research skills and received coaching on how to critically review academic sources. The chapter called upon astronomy and engineering faculty to conduct a seminar to augment members’ knowledge of their chosen topic. Members also met with visual communication faculty who conducted a workshop to help team members more effectively present their ideas.

IMPLEMENTATION LEADERSHIP ROLES
• Members formed research teams — one team for each research question — and shared information throughout the Honors in Action process.
• Members developed the visual materials/displays for the event.
• The chapter’s public relations officer developed a committee to publicize the event and explore potential coordination with appropriate college and community organizations.
• Members identified how the national legislators who served their college district and community could be effectively contacted.

• Members coordinated information materials to be distributed to participants so they could contact their national legislators.
• Team members created an instrument to measure public reaction to the display.
• Members served as docents, facilitating interpersonal discussion for the event.

COLLABORATION The chapter worked with the following campus/community organizations:
• the college’s Office of Student Life;
• the college’s Office of Events and Programs;
• academic discipline clubs related to our theme (Engineering Club, Astronomy Club);
• college science faculty;
• local elementary, middle and high schools;
• local children’s museums;
• community organizations involved with technology or science; and
• members of the chapter’s region during a regional event.

ACTION The chapter created a traveling display entitled “It Came From Outer Space” to show how the technology involved in space exploration has directly infiltrated and improved everyday life. Using information gathered from their research, the chapter set up a “model home” with visual and textual information next to numerous, everyday inventions whose origins are from efforts in space travel. Information was conveyed visually, textually and orally by members who acted as docents for the exhibit. A list of suggested resources for further research/exploration was shared with all attendees, as well as a handout telling how attendees could contact their national legislators and express their opinions on the future of space exploration. The chapter surveyed attendees to gauge public reaction. This display was held on campus and was also offered to local elementary, middle and high schools as well as the local children’s museum and community organizations with an interest in technology and/or science.

REFLECTION EVALUATION An attendee headcount was taken at each display, and the 444 people from the college and community who came through the exhibit was a high water mark for our chapter in terms of event participation. The chapter tabulated and analyzed attendee evaluation forms. Evaluative discussions also took place with the leaders of the community organizations who sponsored the display, and summary descriptions were shared with the college administration and Board of Trustees. Our members learned to look at our world with new eyes as we investigated the ways space exploration has touched our lives. We grew as scholars and leaders as we shared our newly found knowledge with fellow students and community members. We organized an awareness campaign that reached more than 500 people, which we hope will spur community members to write their congressional representatives in support of renewed space exploration.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS Since the chapter’s efforts were focused primarily on increasing awareness of the value of space exploration in general, there was not time to explore the debate over whether the public or private sector would best serve the future of space exploration. The chapter determined that adding a public debate element would be a valuable addition to the project.
In the quest to understand the physical nature of the universe, physicists, mathematicians and other researchers have expanded and enriched the language of mathematics to more fully describe the known, hidden and mysterious dimensions of time and space. While our powers of perception allow us to understand three-dimensional space fairly well, the concept of time and the possibility of dimensions folded within our perceived dimensions transcend humans’ limited sensual (perceptual) knowledge. Through abstract algebra and other symbolic mathematics, the properties and nature of the universe are described and even provide methods to test theories. From the infinitesimally small to the inconceivably large, we continue to strive to explain and understand not only the dimensional structure of the universe, but also even possibly how to manipulate both space and time.

EXPLORE MORE!
Abbott, Edwin (1884). Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions. This is a classic tale of a two-dimensional universe disrupted by a visionary inhabitant who discovers a third dimension and begins to imagine a possible fourth dimension. Abbott’s work opens our eyes to the possibilities of space and time beyond imagination and illustrates math and physics as well as social satire to a broad audience.

Hawking, Stephen (1998). A Brief History of Time. Hawking provides the layperson an understanding of the universe, space, black holes, the Big Bang Theory and time. This introductory guide to cosmology invites the beginner to ask big questions of the universe and explore time and space as an engaging frontier.

Kaku, Michio (2008). Physics of the Impossible. Are you ready to time-travel, read your boss’ mind or just teleport to work? Kaku discusses how close these three goals of manipulating time and space are and how possible the seemingly impossible might be in our lives.

Kaku, Michio (2011). Physics of the Future: How Science Will Shape Human Destiny and Our Daily Lives by the Year 2100. Kaku explores possibilities in artificial intelligence, Internet connectivity, medicine, space exploration and more ways science will shape human destiny. Through interviews with the world’s top scientists, Kaku speculates the economic, technological and political universe humans will inhabit in 100 years.

For more sources related to this theme, go to ptk.org/honors.
universe? How do dimensions beyond space-time behave, and how are they verified? Are scientists nearing consensus, or do multiple models exist? Does a model exist that encompasses both the infinitely large and the infinitesimally small, quantum mechanics versus general relativity? To determine the answers to these questions, smaller research teams reviewed literature on models of the universe. During our research, members found that, nationally, students were not literate in math and physics in ways that could benefit their everyday lives. Was this true of students in our community? To find out, we researched local academic studies of mathematical and scientific proficiency for students of varying ages and interviewed students, parents and educators in our community about academic challenges in math and science. Are some groups more or less proficient than others? What preparation do math teachers undergo? How does the mathematical proficiency of students in our community compare to national averages? Will lack of math and science proficiency undermine our ability to explore dimensions of the universe?

**ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS** Our team analyzed our research and concluded we had work to do to help people see the possibilities related to frontiers in the latest research on physics-based and mathematical models of time, space and the universe. There are models of the universe that can tell us a great deal about dimensions of the universe that most of us don’t usually contemplate. Those models can help us make wise choices for the future of significant aspects of life. Students in our community test below national averages in their understanding of math and science. What does that mean for our future, and how can we make a positive difference by motivating students to see the possibilities inherent in studying algebra and physics? These questions guided the determination of our action.

**DETERMINATION OF ACTION** Knowing that students in our community need to work on their math and science skills to help them understand the dimensions of the universe and why those dimensions are important in their everyday lives, we decided to create a lesson plan in the form of a comic book based on effective pedagogical techniques we learned from teachers. Our comic book focused on physical and mathematical models of the universe with an emphasis on the language of mathematics as a necessary tool for meaningful understanding of the models. Using teleportation as a hook, we created super hero characters to engage students in mathematics.

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT** To successfully complete our Honors in Action project, we engaged in the following leadership development activities:

- a workshop on teaching methods for math and physics conducted jointly by college faculty and middle school teachers;
- three math and physics lectures by our college faculty to improve chapter members’ abilities to communicate mathematically and scientifically; and
- a seminar on comic book and character development delivered by a local author.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

**LEADERSHIP ROLES**

- Officers reached out to our members to create a research team.
- Members negotiated the dissemination of comic books to students at two elementary and two middle schools.
- Team members coordinated the writing and illustration of the comic book.

- A team of members developed an ancillary resource guide for teachers to accompany the comic book.
- Members managed the copying and distribution of the comic books and ancillary materials.

**COLLABORATION** To successfully complete our project, we collaborated with the following groups:

- math, physics and education faculty at our community college;
- student services personnel on campus;
- students, teachers and administrators at two local elementary schools and two local middle schools;
- faculty from our college’s art program;
- our campus administrators; and
- members of our region with whom we shared copies of our comic book and engaged in a formal dialogue about the exploration of the dimensions of the universe.

**ACTION** We created a short, engaging and interactive lesson in the form of a comic book covering multiple models of the universe and an introduction to the mathematics necessary to understand these models. Our comic book incorporated super heroes such as QuarkMan, The 11-Dimensional Woman, their dogs Infinity and Ixi (Infinity-times-Infinity) and their pet snake SuperString, all of whom lived in their “Imaginary Igloo.” Our heroes and heroines move backward, forward and sideways through time to help human beings of all ages improve their math skills so they can save the universe from a threatening mathematical breakdown. In addition to the comic books, we provided companion documents, including a history of our heroes, resources for further study of models of the universe and mathematics, and a glossary of important terms and mathematical ideas for teachers to use in their classrooms.

**REFLECTION**

**EVALUATION** To evaluate our project we 1) gained immediate feedback from students via a short survey and follow-up focus groups, 2) interviewed teachers about the effectiveness of the comic books in terms of motivating students’ interest in math and physics, and 3) made follow-up visits with the same students three months after distributing the comic books. We worked with teachers to develop math problems related to the comic book to see how effectively students had learned the lessons about the exploration of the universe’s dimensions. Our team learned lessons as well. We grew as leaders through the development workshops and seminars we attended to learn the skills necessary to complete our project. We learned a lot about creating visual interest in mathematics and physics while trying to tell an important story about the role of these disciplines in exploration of this frontier.

**FUTURE IMPLICATIONS** What other topics will motivate students to study mathematics? Are there other strategies to motivate young students? How do you motivate older students to study math and physics? We are encouraging teachers and community college faculty to consider possible extensions of lesson plans to include sub-atomic physical models and the mathematics of the infinitesimally small (quantum theory), general relativity and the infinitely large, black holes, teleportation and other more fantastical impossibilities that may become possible with the knowledge of the relevant mathematics. We are also interested in volunteering as readers in an after-school program for which we would share books such as *A Wrinkle in Time* to encourage a love of all things mathematical.
What are the physical and ethical boundaries to the frontiers of health and medicine?

Recent studies suggest that, for those born in the 21st century, living to 100 won’t be an unusual occurrence. What will be the impact of having so many people living so long? The use of performance-enhancing drugs in athletics has caused controversies and raised many questions about what should and shouldn’t be allowed. What are the limits of human performance, and by what means should they be achieved? Advancements in genetics offer parents the possibility of pre-selecting gender and other features of unborn children. How might this impact the human race? Continuous advancements in the medical field offer miraculous, life-saving treatments — often at a very steep financial cost. Who gets treatment? Who pays? Rapid advances in health and medicine are tempered by ethical debates over access, personal choice and appropriateness.

EXPLORE MORE!

Chopra, Deepak (2009). Quantum Healing: Exploring the Frontiers of Mind/Body Medicine. Chopra explores the relationship of mind, body and spirit, seeking to understand miraculous recoveries from life-threatening disease — recoveries that were not “supposed” to happen.


Welch, H. Gilbert, Lisa Schwartz & Steve Woloshin (2012). Overdiagnosed: Making People Sick in the Pursuit of Health. Welch, et al. make the case that overdiagnosis is a problem as medical professionals feel compelled to run every test and explore every possibility in evaluating patients. They address the downside to our constantly evolving advances in the diagnosis and treatment of disease.

For more sources related to this theme, go to ptk.org/honors.
• What is the impact of increased lifespan on access to health care?
• How have advances in medical technologies affected health care access?
• How are decisions made regarding health care access? What are the ethical implications of these decisions?

ACADEMIC RESEARCH We began with the frontier of lifespan — exploring the impact of advances in health and medicine on length of life. The literature revealed multiple problems resulting from increased lifespan: greater demand for access to health care and eldercare; increased costs; increased pressures on the health care industry to treat more patients; and questions of when, if ever, it is appropriate to cease heroic measures regarding the preservation of life and how those decisions should be made. Taking an interest in the latter issue, the team further researched how expanding frontiers in health and medicine have impacted the end of life. As research and development yield new treatments and technologies to preserve life, ethical questions arise as to when and how such treatments and technologies should be applied. Do patients decide for themselves? What if they are unable to do so? What about family members or medical professionals? Do terminal patients have the right to die? What roles do government and the insurance industry play? Are “death panels” an inevitable result of advancements in medicine and the costs associated with those advancements? Among the findings from this research was a discussion of the use of advance directives — legal documents that allow individuals to proactively dictate their requests regarding medical treatment in situations where they are unable to make those requests clear (e.g., in a coma or otherwise unresponsive).

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS An analysis and discussion of the research generated the following questions:
• How are decisions to take heroic, life-saving measures made for patients who cannot speak for themselves?
• How prevalent is the use of an advance directive for the communication of end-of-life decisions?
• How are advance directives put into action in the event of a life-threatening situation? Is access time a factor? Is location a factor?
• What are the potential legal implications if a health care provider fails to follow a patient’s advance directive?
• What are the ethical concerns regarding the creation and execution of an advance directive?
• How do advance directives impact health care costs, and what are the implications of this?

DETERMINATION OF ACTION Based on the research, the project team decided to implement a project that included the following:
• the development and implementation of a community awareness campaign encouraging people to complete advance directives;
• work with area health care providers to help community members take the necessary steps to complete an advance directive.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT The team created the following “to do” list for leadership development:
• meet with a communications instructor for a workshop on sending the best possible verbal and non-verbal messages, particularly while discussing sensitive topics.

IMPLEMENTATION LEADERSHIP ROLES In completing this project, the team took on the following leadership roles:
• organized a research team and developed a research strategy;
• guided a discussion and analysis of the research with members;
• planned and organized the logistics of the awareness event;
• recruited volunteers for the awareness event;
• provided volunteer training for proper ways of discussing a sensitive topic, like advance directives, with the public; and
• planned marketing and communication tools and publicized the awareness event.

COLLABORATION In implementing their project, the team collaborated with others in the following ways:
• recruited members to research, develop and execute the project;
• worked with area health care providers to promote advance directives for their patients;
• worked with local media to build community awareness;
• worked with the visual communication program at school and the local community theater to create a video on the topic;
• partnered with nursing students and faculty to implement the project; and
• shared research findings and project details with members at a regional meeting.

ACTION The team prepared a display on the topic of advance directives. Working with a local health care provider, the Visual Communication Department at school and the local community theater, they scripted and filmed a video illustrating the importance of preparing an advance directive. Working with the health care provider, the team gathered audience-appropriate literature on the topic. They identified three locations where the display could be set up and literature set out to their target audience and determined dates and times for staffing the display. The project ran for three consecutive weekends, one weekend at each location.

REFLECTION EVALUATION After the event, the team reflected on the following questions:
• What were our successes in organizing the event? What didn’t go as planned, and/or what could have been more effective?
• What were our successes in marketing the event? Did we get the turnout that we expected? Did the media get involved? What might we have done differently to achieve better results?
• How did visitors react to our display, presentation and information? What went well? What could have been better?

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS Finally, the group discussed whether this was a one-time project or whether there were future possibilities. Was there a need for continued awareness of advance directives? If so, was the chosen strategy effective? Should it be repeated? Are there other approaches that should be implemented? Is it something that the chapter should consider remaining involved with? Are there other groups/organizations that would be better positioned to continue/advance the work?
exploring political economy

What roles do politics and economics play in the discovery and exploration of new frontiers?

Political economy explores the ways in which government affects the allocation of scarce resources in society through laws and policies, as well as the ways in which economic interests affect the form of government a nation has. Political economy also involves the use of game theory, since groups competing for finite resources and power must determine which courses of action will give the most beneficial results and what the probability of those results being reached are. Alfred Marshall spoke of this discipline as “the study of people in the business of everyday life.” Understanding political economy better prepares us to recognize new frontiers and to determine how to explore them in meaningful ways. One example of this is technology and its dramatic transformation of everyday life. The Internet has opened new frontiers for economic growth and ways citizens engage in the political process. However, no matter what innovation occurs, political economists help us understand the possibilities and the perils of politics and economics in our everyday lives.

explore more!

Brooks investigates the lives of “bourgeois bohemians” — people who wed the values of capitalism enterprise with those of the counterculture. These bourgeois bohemians strive for personal utopias in ways that reflect and even shape the political economy.

Are human beings overly enamored with the systems we have created? Levin compares President Obama’s policies with Utopian ideals described in Plato’s Republic, Thomas More’s Utopia, Thomas Hobbe’s Leviathon and John Locke’s Second Treatise of Government.

Levitt and Dubner explore the impact of political economy on everyday and some extraordinary events. The frontiers of everyday life they explore elicit some surprising answers to questions they ask, such as “How is a street prostitute like a department store Santa?” and “Are people hardwired for altruism or selfishness?”

Sholette and Ressler discuss the global financial crisis in ways that question the economic system under which it has occurred and couple their text with artistic interpretations of the social consequences of making potentially poor choices in business and politics.

For more sources related to this theme, go to ptk.org/honors.

honors in action

Taxi Please! Obamacare and Frontiers of Political Economy

Overview
We often go about our lives unconcerned about the ways political economy affects us. Our Honors in Action project began with our interest in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), popularly known as ObamaCare. Though we had heard PPACA mentioned, we knew little about how it truly affected our lives. We live in a small town with a relatively low average income and instinctively knew ObamaCare must have an impact on our community. Through our academic research, we came to understand both the theoretical and practical outcomes of the act. For our community, transportation to and from medical appointments proved to be the most meaningful way we could put our research into the frontiers of political economy to work.

Preparation
Selection of Theme
During a facilitated brainstorming session, members expressed interest in researching five of the nine themes of Frontiers and the Spirit of Exploration. Members agreed they wanted to know more about ObamaCare, and they believed Theme 8: Political Economy was the best place to explore the potential social, political and economic effects of the act on everyday lives. To be sure, members invited both an economics and a political science professor to present various perspectives of PPACA to a full chapter meeting. After the professors’ presentations, members decided they had found the theme to pursue to learn more about ObamaCare as it related to frontiers of political economy and agreed to move forward with their academic research.
DEVELOP RESEARCH QUESTIONS
• Who benefits from PPACA/ObamaCare?
• To what extent has the PPACA changed the delivery of medical care?
• How have costs been shifted, if at all, among health care recipients and companies?
• In the college’s service counties, to what degree has PPACA changed access to medical care for those in lower socioeconomic classes?
• To what extent do politics and economic interest play significant roles in the development and implementation of PPACA?

ACADEMIC RESEARCH Members established five research teams to examine the frontiers of political economy as they relate to PPACA. Working in small teams afforded members opportunities to explore aspects of PPACA in depth and then return to the larger team to discuss findings and determine next steps. As the larger team determined the most meaningful sources that represented varied perspectives on the subject, team leaders facilitated a discussion among members at two monthly meetings. Team leaders invited the economics and political science professors back to a chapter meeting to discuss their findings. The professors invited a historian to provide context for the contemporary decisions being made by politicians and economists regarding national health care. These discussions helped our team critically look at various perspectives about ObamaCare and its potential impact on the local community.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS Members concluded that many of the fears they have heard expressed about national health care did not match the text of PPACA or its implementation thus far. Both proponents and opponents of the act downplay concerns expressed by the other side and at times exaggerate their positions. The U.S. Supreme Court decision in National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius (2012) upheld the constitutionality of most of the Affordable Care Act. They found that many politicians who philosophically opposed the PPACA before the 2012 elections were quietly suggesting that we should work to find a compromise and come up with a “win-win” solution for involved parties.

DETERMINATION OF ACTION While researching the impact of the PPACA in our community, members discovered that being able to take advantage of PPACA was the most pressing issue for many community members. Specifically, they cited the need for transportation to and from local doctors’ offices. They were more concerned with a solution to their medical needs that had little to do with medicine, but everything to do with political economy in their everyday lives. Working with local doctors, our implementation team developed a plan.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT To successfully complete this project, members received training in academic research from the college’s research librarian as well as three professors whose lectures helped them focus their project. Advisors conducted workshops on goal setting and facilitating group discussions. Upon determining the action component of the project, which involved driving people to medical appointments, team members engaged in a safe driving seminar and pledged to eliminate distractions, such as cell phones, while transporting patients.

IMPLEMENTATION
LEADERSHIP ROLES The desire to complete this project and stretch their abilities led members to engage in the following leadership roles:
• officers and members read and analyzed sources for the chapter as part of the research team;
• team leaders facilitated the chapter discussions about the research and analysis of political economy and its impact on ObamaCare;
• team members visited the four general practitioners who provided much of the day-to-day medical care for citizens of the community who needed transportation to their appointments;
• members served as liaisons with the college and gained permission for the chapter and its collaborators to operate the taxi service for community members;
• members coordinated the taxi service, inviting the Student Government Association and Skills-USA to participate; and
• team members organized a journaling and evaluation team to keep detailed records of each step of the Honors in Action process.

COLLABORATION
• After consultation, the college administration offered support to the taxi service and its operation from campus.
• Four medical doctors treated the patients that the chapter and collaborators taxied to and from appointments.
• Student Government Association and Skills-USA members supported the project by providing transportation.
• Chapter officers completed the preparations necessary to share their project at their Regional Convention.

ACTION Members partnered with the Student Government Association and Skills-USA to organize a medical taxi system for the community. In the process, they learned firsthand from both medical providers and patients how the PPACA was working in real life.

REFLECTION EVALUATION Members used qualitative research to evaluate the effectiveness of their project with the goal of providing rich, in-depth descriptions of the process by which they determined the chapter’s action as well as of the perspectives of the people with whom they worked on the taxi service. The chapter used the amalgamation format for qualitative reports to triangulate their journal entries, interviews with doctors, drivers and patients, and quantitative data showing the number of people reached by the action portion of the project. Members asked participants what impact ObamaCare had on their health care. A majority of taxi service patrons saw no discernible difference in care delivered but often cited the taxi service as a factor in helping them consider preventative care as an option. All four of the doctors with whom the chapter worked had chosen to pay a fine in the first year to see if the Affordable Care Act would be repealed under a possible Mitt Romney presidency. Post-election, all four have updated their technology to avoid increased penalties. They expressed concern for security of patients’ online records. Patients did not have the same concern but had rarely thought about the implications of online records. We grew as scholars and leaders by learning more about the ways political economy affects our lives and more specifically about the frontiers of the Affordable Care Act in our community. We grew as people by working with fellow students, faculty, administrators and the community members who participated in the taxi service.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS The success of the chapter’s Honors in Action project and the positive feedback from the doctors and patients with whom we worked indicated a need in the community for the volunteer taxi service. Members are currently seeking additional support for the service and are mentoring other student organizations and community collaborators to take the lead to continue and expand the service.
BORDERS and BOUNDARIES

What motivated or motivates explorers to transcend assumed frontiers?

Borders and boundaries are two distinct concepts. With the exception of borders formed by physiographic features such as a sea, mountain or desert, borders are socially constructed. Boundaries are physical with an exact geographical location. The making of a border is the product of social practices. Socially constructed borders are described in terms of symbols, signs, identifications and performance studies. Border researchers seek answers to question such as: Why does humankind create borders? Is bordering of space biologically intrinsic? What drives the motivation to demarcate property? What questions of ethics and justice arise in the creation of socio-spatial borders?

EXPLORE MORE!

Baldersheim and Rose present the experiences of 11 European nations and their territorial reforms. These case studies outline basic features of the politics of territorial choice, particularly national policies, politics and cleavages. Moreover, they review the strategies employed by nations and the outcomes of their territorial reforms.

Buchanan and Moore examine comparatively the views and principles of seven prominent ethical traditions on one of the most pressing issues of modern politics — the making and unmaking of state and national boundaries. The traditions represented are Judaism, Christianity, Islam, natural law, Confucianism, liberalism and international law.

Diener and Hagen provide a concise introduction to borders. After tracing the historical development of borders from antiquity through the emergence of the modern nation-state system, the authors outline the contours of contemporary border studies in terms of theoretical perspectives and topical coverage.

Newman’s seminal border studies article provides a useful starting point for exploring current thought and theory in the field. He offers a general summary of theoretical approaches to studying borders and captures the contingent and contradictory aspects of bordering processes and institutions in contemporary society.

For more sources related to this theme, go to ptk.org/honors.

HONORS IN ACTION
GIVE PEACE A CHANCE: GAMING NIGHT ON CAMPUS

OVERVIEW
Conflicts in Syria and Egypt caught our attention and started a dialogue among chapter members about the ways borders and boundaries are created. To what extent are they artificial? Why were they created the way they are in the 21st century? Are there solutions involving borders to the complex problems that have led to the world’s civil wars? Can a technology-based game help us better understand border disputes and lead to meaningful discussions about potential solutions?

PREPARATION

SELECTION OF THEME Chapter members showed an early interest in conflicts in the Middle East and the ways borders and boundaries might have contributed to them. As we studied the Honors Program Guide, we found the overarching question for Theme 9, “What motivated or motivates explorers to transcend assumed frontiers?” inspired us to learn more about the motivations behind political and social explorers and the borders they created or hope to transcend in the Middle East.

DEVELOP RESEARCH QUESTIONS
• How do socially constructed boundaries contribute to conflict in the world, particularly in the Middle East? How have some nations in the region transcended assumed frontiers?
• What solutions have been tried to reduce border-related conflicts in the world?
• To what extent are borders flexible and changeable in the “flat” global world of the 21st century?
ACADEMIC RESEARCH Team members began their research with general sources on the development of nations in the Middle East, historical conflicts and the underpinnings of the complex problems that have led to contemporary conflicts. The artificial construct of borders was one of the factors contributing to contemporary conflicts, and the team searched for various perspectives about solutions to the conflict. As members gathered and read sources, team leaders invited a faculty member with expertise in quantitative research to help us create a short survey about student perceptions of conflict in the Middle East and the role socially constructed boundaries have played in expanding or limiting frontiers in the region on our campus.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS Team leaders facilitated the analysis of our research. Members found strong connections between historical and contemporary conflicts in the Middle East. They also found students on campus knew little about the conflicts or the border issues related to the conflicts. Finding a way to engage students in constructive dialogues about conflicts and possible solutions became a goal for the action component of our project.

DETERMINATION OF ACTION Chapter members wondered if gaming was a way to motivate students to learn more about the borders and boundaries of the Middle East. Using research as their guide, team members looked at Games for Change resources online and decided to organize and host “Give Peace a Chance: Gaming Night on Campus.” PeaceMaker, a game developed and published in 2007, offered the opportunity for students to examine the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a way to gain a basic understanding of the ways borders contribute to conflicts among nations.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT Team members used the following training to develop the skills necessary to successfully complete the Honors in Action project:
- inviting a computer science professor, an expert on gaming, to teach team members general rules of gaming and strategies for playing and teaching PeaceMaker;
- training in event management by the college’s special events coordinator to understand all the elements that go into a successful gaming night; and
- asking a faculty member who has expertise in quantitative research methods to conduct a hands-on seminar to develop a short survey for students on campus.

IMPLEMENTATION LEADERSHIP ROLES
- Coordinating the research team’s work.
- Organizing gaming night on campus, including working with campus administrators and facilities personnel to secure space, Internet access and technology necessary for a successful event.
- Team members worked to develop and implement a project plan that included recruiting volunteers and people who planned to play PeaceMaker.
- Facilitating the gaming and the after-gaming discussions about lessons learned and possible solutions, particularly related to the exploration of borders and boundaries.

COLLABORATION
- Faculty and students involved with gaming and the gaming night on campus.
- A faculty member who trained team members in quantitative research.
- College administrators and facilities managers who helped secure space and necessary technology.
- Gaming community members who play PeaceMaker and helped team members become familiar with the process and possibilities of this particular Game for Change.
- Fellow Phi Theta Kappa members by organizing a regional gaming night to play PeaceMaker as a result of the success of the night on campus.

ACTION The “Give Peace a Chance: Gaming Night on Campus” was scheduled for students and interested community members. Gamers played for four hours and stayed for the facilitated discussion afterward that tied PeaceMaker to the chapter’s research on the ways borders and boundaries can be factors in conflicts around the world, including in the Middle East. In the aftermath of a successful on-campus project, team members decided to organize a regional gaming night as a way to share research and the campus experience with fellow Phi Theta Kappa members.

EVALUATION After gathering and analyzing answers to the questions on our initial survey to determine whether students on campus knew much about conflicts in the Middle East, we were not surprised to see they did not. PeaceMaker helped them better understand the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as evidenced by our after-gaming facilitated discussion. We didn’t have all the answers, but we were asking deeper and more complex questions about the roles borders and boundaries play in establishing frontiers and encouraging or thwarting a spirit of exploration. We grew as leaders who used a weekly review of our project plan to ensure forward movement on the project, even when we encountered obstacles such as too few extension cords on campus to allow gamers to use their own laptops to play during game nights. The solution in that case was to gather 20 power strips from members and faculty to get the number we calculated we needed to create a safe and easy atmosphere for the technology needs of 50 gamers who participated in our project. We grew as scholars who began the process wondering about the causes of the conflicts in Syria and Egypt and ended up learning a great deal about the connections between borders, boundaries and historical conflicts in the Middle East. We also learned we enjoyed the kinesthetic and visual learning involved in gaming. As a result, we searched for more educational games to augment the subjects we were studying in class. Finally, we gained soft skills such as event planning and quantitative research that we can use as we move on to universities and jobs after completing our degrees.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS The success of the campus and regional gaming nights indicated there are ways to use innovative techniques to interest students in historical and contemporary global conflicts. The Technology Club on campus showed interest in organizing regular gaming nights using Gaming for Change products. We shared a copy of the Honors Program Guide and offered to work with them to connect the Guide’s themes with possible games that will help students better understand Frontiers and the Spirit of Exploration.
1968 Our Cultural Heritage: 1800-1860
Endicott College, Beverly, Massachusetts

Marymount College of Virginia, Arlington, Virginia

1970 A Study of Twentieth-Century Drama
Bennett College, Millbrook, New York

1971 Man, A Part of Nature/Man, Apart from Nature
Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado

1972 The State of Our Nation: Toward Responsible Contributory Citizenship
American University, Washington, D.C.

1973 Voices of Human Experience, I
Endicott College, Beverly, Massachusetts

1974 Voices of Human Experience, II
Ferrum College, Ferrum, Virginia

1975 Franklin and Jefferson: Apostles in '76
University of Richmond, Richmond, Virginia

1976 William Faulkner: The Man, His Land, His Legend
University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi

1977 Music: The Listener's Art
Cumberland College, Lebanon, Tennessee

1978 Man Alive: Can He Survive?
Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado

1979 The Brilliant Future of Man: Problem Solving Time
Lees-McRae College, Banner Elk, North Carolina

1980 A Time for Truth: America's Need for Governmental Renaissance
Endicott College, Beverly, Massachusetts

1981 Man in Crisis: A Quest for Values
State University of New York, Purchase, New York

1982 The Short Story: Mirror of Humanity
University of Southern Mississippi, Long Beach, Mississippi

1983 Signed by the Masters
C.W. Post College on Long Island, Greenvale, New York

1984 America, A World-Class Citizen: Image and Reality
University of Southern Mississippi, Long Beach, Mississippi

1985 Ethics and Today's Media: An Endangered Alliance?
Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado

1986 The American Dream: Past, Present and Future
Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas

1987 The U.S. Constitution: Assuring Continuity Through Controversy
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia

1988 The Character and Climate of Leadership: Old Frontiers and New Frontiers
Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington

1989 The Americas: Distant Neighbors Building Bridges
University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

1990 Civilization at Risk: Challenge of the 90s
Adelphi University, Long Island, New York

1991 The Paradox of Freedom: A Global Dilemma
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota

1992 1492-1992: The Dynamics of Discovery
College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Massachusetts

1993 Our Complex World: Balancing Unity and Diversity
Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania

1994 Science, Humanity and Technology: Shaping a New Creation
Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Michigan

1995 Rights, Privileges and Responsibilities: An Indelicate Balance
Chapman University, Orange, California

1996 The Arts: Landscape of Our Time
Bryant College, Smithfield, Rhode Island

1997 Family: Myth, Metaphor and Reality
Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington

1998 The Pursuit of Happiness: Conflicting Visions and Values
The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia

1999 The New Millennium: The Past As Prologue
The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

2000 In the Midst of Water: Origin and Destiny of Life
The University of San Diego, San Diego, California

2001 Customs, Traditions, and Celebrations: The Human Drive for Community
Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia

2002 Dimensions and Directions of Health: Choices in the Maze
Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina

2003 Dimensions and Directions of Health: Choices in the Maze
The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

2004 Popular Culture: Shaping and Reflecting Who We Are
San Francisco State University, Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada

2005 Popular Culture: Shaping and Reflecting Who We Are
The University of Nevada Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada

2006 Gold, Gods and Glory: The Global Dynamics of Power
Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois

2007 Gold, Gods and Glory: The Global Dynamics of Power
University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware

2008 The Myth of Affluence: Choices, Challenges and Consequences
San Francisco State University, San Francisco, California

2009 The Myth of Affluence: Choices, Challenges and Consequences
University of Richmond, Richmond, Virginia

2010 The Democratization of Information: Power, Peril and Promise
Chapman University, Orange, California

2011 The Democratization of Information: Power, Peril and Promise
Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts

2012 The Paradox of Affluence: Choices, Challenges and Consequences
University of Denver, Denver, Colorado

2013 The Paradox of Affluence: Choices, Challenges and Consequences
Villanova University, Villanova, Pennsylvania

2014 Frontiers and the Spirit of Exploration
Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri
The Phi Theta Kappa Honors Program Council is responsible for making recommendations to Headquarters staff about the new Honors Study Topic and Honors in Action every two years and for assisting with the compilation of the Honors Program Guide. Made up of Phi Theta Kappa advisors, Headquarters staff and consultants, the Honors Program Council is selected for its broad knowledge of the Honors Study Topic and Phi Theta Kappa’s integrated approach to the Hallmarks as well as its balance in academic disciplines.

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ADDITIONAL HONORS IN ACTION RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE:
Resources include a detailed Honors Study Topic annotated bibliography, film list, and list of links to further web resources, Phi Theta Kappa’s Leadership Briefs and other external websites.

ptk.org/get-involved/honors-in-action/planning-model

Leadership Development Studies
leadership.ptk.org

Five Star Chapter Plan
ptk.org/fivestar

Five Star Competitive Edge
my.ptk.org

Chapter Leaders’ Guide to Success
ptk.org/resources/chapter-leaders-guide

Hallmark Awards
ptk.org/benefits/awards/hallmark/hia-excerpts

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The purpose of Phi Theta Kappa shall be to recognize and encourage scholarship among two-year college students. To achieve this purpose, Phi Theta Kappa shall provide opportunity for the development of leadership and service, for an intellectual climate for the exchange of ideas and ideals, for lively fellowship of scholars, and for stimulation of interest in continuing academic excellence.

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