

August 31, 2009



Greetings from North Carolina! Summer has ended (at least nominally) and the new academic year has begun. I'm beginning the year in a new place and a new position, as the Assistant Director of the Lloyd International Honors

College at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro.

Now in addition to being a Coog (and a Longhorn, from my earlier years), I can call myself a UNCG Spartan. It seems appropriate, especially after all those years of teaching *The Human Situation*! Our mascot here is Minerva, and those of you who were paying attention will remember that she is the Roman version of Athena. And that also feels appropriate to me, since my early years from the first grade to the eighth grade were spent in an elementary- and middle-school Honors track called the Athena Program.

Everything comes back around, and it is a small world after all. Especially in the world of Honors! Last week our Honors College here hosted a reception to celebrate the new school year, and I stood talking to one of the many UNCG professors who are strong supporters of Honors, Dr. Steve Danford. He's an astronomer whose interests include "observational astronomy including stellar evolution in star clusters and RR Lyrae variables," which sounds pretty cool, if you asked me. But, as it turns out, he's also the brother

of John Danford, who taught for many years in Houston's very own Human Situation course, and functioned (in Steve's recollection) as an all-around provocateur and gadfly. Good stuff. Many of the people that his brother taught with have now moved on from Houston's Honors College, but we realized that we both knew the inestimable Dr. Ted Estess.

Of course I miss the experience of starting off the academic year in Human Sit, of meeting all the new Coogs and colleagues, and hearing about everyone's summer exploits. But I'm excited to be here at UNCG, in an Honors College that shares an understanding of why Honors education is so important for a university and so beneficial to both students and faculty. And yet in many ways, it's fascinating to see the differences as well. Whereas Houston's Honors College is built on the shared experience of The Human Situation, UNCG's Honors College emphasizes global awareness and international experience—so much so that we require all Honors students to study abroad at some point in their academic career. Different means for the same end, I think—we all want to bring excellent students and faculty together to think, talk, and expand their intellectual and imaginative horizons. (That said, I've still insisted on beginning my year with the *Iliad*, in a freshman Honors seminar I'm teaching called "War Stories." Old habits die hard...)

Let me send my very best wishes to everyone in the Houston Honors community, and good luck with the new year and all your new adventures! Keep in touch, and if you're ever in Greensboro...

Stacey Peebles