

12-2009

Distinguished Honors Graduate Lecture

The Honors College

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CULTURAL AFFAIRS/DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES GRANT APPLICATION

I. Applicant/Organization: **The Honors College**

II. a. Responsible Organization Officer: **Stephani Nola**

b. Title: **Honors Associate**

c. Campus Address: **Colvin Hall; Stephani.Nola@umit.maine.edu; 581-3285**

III. Summary of program requiring funding- title; featured speaker; scheduled date(s):

Each spring since 2002, the Honors College at the University of Maine has endeavored to host a distinguished graduate for a several day visit. The visit typically includes in- and out-of-class conversations with Honors students as well as other students and faculty connected to our guest. The Distinguished Honors Graduate Lecture is highlighted campus-wide and in many years it was also the keynote address for the University's Student Research and Creative Achievement Week. Between 2002 and 2008, this initiative was sponsored by TIAA-CREF.

The 2010 Distinguished Honors Graduate will be Bettina Boxall '74 (Journalism), a 2009 Pulitzer Prize winner for explanatory writing. Boxall is a staff writer for the Los Angeles Times, and has worked for the paper since 1987. The Honors College is thrilled to be able to offer students the opportunity to converse directly with Bettina Boxall in April of 2010, when Boxall will be able to discuss her impressive career in Journalism with students in multiple fora. Boxall's 'beat' topics are of great interest and relevance to our community: natural resources and environmental issues.

Boxall has agreed to participate in a half hour reception before her sixty-minute public lecture, followed by a dinner with members of the Honors community. As is the case with all of our Distinguished Honors Graduate lectures, we anticipate a fairly large lecture audience composed of Honors students, alumni, faculty, and other members of the University of Maine community. In order to advertise for this exciting event, the Honors College plans to continue the practice of printing modern black-and-white 11" by 14" posters, which we also send to our sponsors and keep framed as academic art pieces in the Thomson Honors Center in Colvin Hall.

IV. Budget Proposal Form must be attached. **(Following.)**

Funding for current application is contingent upon submission of reports for any previous grant awards, including final budget and attendance figures. **(Resubmitted.)**

Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series Fund Budget Proposal Form

Applicant/Organization: The Honors College
 Responsible Officer: Stephani Nola, Honors Associate
 Event Title: Distinguished Honors Graduate Lecture
 Event Date: April 2010

Total Program Budget:	<u>\$3,350.00</u>
Amount Committed by Applicant Organization:	<u>\$1,250.00</u>
Total Amount Requested from Other Funding Sources:	<u>\$500.00</u>
Please List Sources & Amounts below:	
<u>Dept. of Communication & Journalism</u>	<u>\$500/reception</u>
<u>(NSFA: unconfirmed, depends on lecture focus)</u>	<u>?</u>
Amount Requested from CA/DLS Committee:	<u>\$1,600.00*</u>
Revenues, if any, expected (fees, ticket sales):	<u>\$0.00</u>

Budget Breakdown of Expenses and funds to be used:	CADLS	Other
Honoraria/Services (explain below) <u>standard Honors College lecture honoraria</u>	<u>\$1,000.00</u>	
Travel <u>Airfare to/from Los Angeles, CA</u> <u>The Honors College is responsible for ground transportation.</u>		<u>\$700.00</u>
Lodging/Meals <u>Meals: 3 days/4 nights @ \$39 per diem</u> <u>Lodging: \$0.00 (using our Visiting Scholar Suite)</u>		<u>\$150.00</u>
Advertising <u>Poster Design/Printing; Invitations</u>	<u>\$600.00</u>	<u>\$300.00</u>
Other (must specify below) <u>Lecture reception; Lunch with Honors students</u>		<u>\$600.00</u>
Total Expenses from CA/DLS funds:	<u>\$1,600.00*</u>	
Total Expenses from other funds:		<u>\$1,750.00</u>
(These two totals should equal the "Total Program Budget" listed above)		

*These amounts should be identical and should not exceed 50% of the total program/event budget. Please note that CA/DLS funds may not be used for receptions and do not normally fund UM employee wages. If an award is granted based on this proposal, reimbursement of expenses will not exceed the total CA/DLS request and will be limited to the types of expenditures outlined above.

30 November 2009

Dear Members of the Cultural Affairs Committee:

On behalf of the Honors College, please accept this letter and attached application materials as a request for financial support from the committee for the 2010 Distinguished Honors Graduate Lecture, an annual lecture series sponsored by the Honors College. Between 2002 and 2008, this initiative was sponsored by TIAA-CREF. A brief description of the history of the lecture series follows, as well as an introduction to our 2010 Distinguished Honors Graduate, Bettina Boxall '74.

The Honors College requests a total of \$1,600.00, which is less than fifty percent of the total budget for our spring lecture. We are currently seeking other sources of financial support to supplement possible funding from the Cultural Affairs Committee. We are working with Paul Grosswiler, Chair, Department of Communication and Journalism. Due to our speaker's connection with natural resources (as a Pulitzer Prize winning reporter on wildfires), NSFA may also contribute funding if her public lecture features significant thematic material, or class visits are arranged—this idea is still in negotiation.

A Brief History of the Distinguished Honors Graduate Lecture Series

Each spring from 2002-2008, the Honors College selected, invited, and coordinated visits of Distinguished Honors Graduates who have addressed a range of provocative subjects from medicine to gender to activism, reflecting the academic diversity of our students. The past lectures are as follows:

2001-02: James Tierney, '69, Attorney General of Maine, 1980-1990

Diversity in Maine: An Opportunity

2002-03: Carolyn Reed, '72, Director, Hollings Cancer Research Center, Medical University of South Carolina

Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Medicine and Beyond

2003-04: Charles V. Stanhope, '71, Director of Development, US Library of Congress

Making Sense of the Information Explosion:

A View from the World's Largest Library

2004-05: George Z. Singal '67, Chief United States District Judge, District of Maine

Wandering through the Garden of Eden: How do I get out of here?

2005-06: Daniel P. Christensen '77, CEO Hancock Natural Resource Group,

President Hancock Timber Resource Group

Is Change the only Constant in the world today?

2007-08: Dr. Bernard Lown '42, Recipient of the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize

On Global Activism in an Ailing World

Thus far, all of the Distinguished Honors Graduate Lectures have been well attended by students, alumni, faculty, and other members of the University of Maine community.

About Bettina Boxall '74: The 2010 Distinguished Honors Graduate

For the 2009-2010 year, the Honors College has selected Bettina Boxall '74 as the Distinguished Honors Graduate. Boxall, a graduate of the University of Maine's Journalism program, is a recipient of the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for explanatory reporting, along with her *LA Times* colleague, Julie Cart.

During her time at UMaine, Boxall was an involved member of the community, particularly as a member of the Hiking Club, and as the photo-editor for the school yearbook, *The Prism*. Her Honors thesis was a collection of photographs examining her neighborhood in Washington, DC, accompanied by an essay about her experience—now bound and displayed on the bookshelf in the Thesis Reading Room of the Honors Center. Boxall is excited to come back to campus for the first time in over twenty years!

After graduating from the University of Maine, Boxall took a job at a daily newspaper in Vermont where she was asked to report as well as photograph; she has stuck with reporting ever since. She joined the writing staff at the *LA Times* in 1987. The Pulitzer Prize was awarded to Boxall and Cart for a series of articles written about wildfires in the western United States- *titles below*.

Los Angeles Times

Bettina Boxall and Julie Cart

July 27, 2008

[BIG BURN: Out of Control](#)

July 29, 2008

[BIG BURN: Just For Show?](#)

July 29, 2008

[A Politician Get His Way](#)

July 31, 2008

[BIG BURN: In Harm's Way](#)

July 31, 2008

[BIG BURN: Small Trees, Large Threat](#)

August 2, 2008

[BIG BURN: Beige Plague](#)

August 3, 2008

[BIG BURN: On Their Own](#)

Why Support the 2010 Distinguished Honors Graduate Lecture?

1. *Alumni connections*

The most basic reason the Honors College would like to continue the Distinguished Honors Graduate Lecture Series is to highlight the remarkable work of alumni who can lead by example—connecting with our current students, and inspiring them to pursue challenging, rewarding paths after graduation. These impressive alumni can instill in current students and faculty a sense of pride in our institution. In addition to this primary obligation, however, there are plenty of reasons why the Honors College believes the initiative is of real value to the University of Maine community.

2. *Expanding campus horizons*

Since 2002, the Distinguished Honors Graduate Lecture Series has provided the opportunity for students to speak face-to-face with leaders, innovators, and pioneers in several fields. Topics are largely personal and have ranged from breaking the barriers of sexism within a field, to global activism—with one Pulitzer Prize winner and one Nobel Peace Prize winner among the seven speakers chosen so far. This interdisciplinary approach affords us the chance to attract audiences of different academic interests—in Boxall's case, her work may appeal specifically to Honors students, journalism students, those interested in her 'beat' of natural resources and environmental issues, and perhaps Women in the Curriculum.

3. *Reaching broader audiences*

Although the Distinguished Honors Graduate Lecture Series is coordinated by the Honors College, the Distinguished Graduates are not solely reflections of the needs and interests of the Honors College. Once speakers are chosen, the Honors College makes a concerted effort to promote the annual event to the public. The Honors College coordinates the design, printing, and distribution of attractive black-and-white posters, which have become trademarks of the annual event. Promotional efforts are reflected during the lecture event, when the audience is composed not only of Honors students, alumni, and faculty, but also non-Honors students, graduate students, University faculty, University staff members, and community members of the Orono/Old Town area. The Honors College is thrilled to provide a forum in which such a diverse audience can interact. This year our work with the Journalism department will increase visibility: Paul Grosswiler has suggested student coverage of the events in *The Maine Campus*.

4. *Making headlines*

Recently, Boxall has been covered in our annual publication, *MINERVA* 2009, *MAINE Alumni Magazine*- Summer 2009, and *UMaine Today*- Fall 2009. These publications are widely distributed—each to a unique audience catering to University of Maine alums, faculty, students, and the Honors Community. We are thrilled to be able to offer readers of those three articles a chance to meet Boxall and hear her talk about her path from College Avenue to the Pulitzer Prize.

Cultural Affairs Committee
and
Distinguished Lecture Series
c/o Wanda Madden-Carr
201 Alumni Hall
University of Maine

December 16, 2009

To: Stephani Nola

From: Dorothy Croall & Dan Sandweiss, Co-Chairs

On behalf of the Cultural Affairs Committee and Distinguished Lecture Series, it gives us great pleasure to inform you that your proposal, 2010 Distinguished Honors Graduate Lecture, has been awarded \$1600.00.

Please contact Wanda Madden-Carr at 1-1516 to discuss the procedures in place for the submission of financial expenses related to this award at your earliest convenience.

The following acknowledgement is required on ALL promotional material: *This event was supported in part by a grant from the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series.*

Attached is a form for your use to summarize the benefits derived from this grant. This form should be submitted within 30 days after the conclusion of the event. Timely submission of your summary will be considered as part of any future funding requests.

The Cultural Affairs Committee members congratulate you and wish you much success on this project.

cc: Barbara Ouellette

**Class of 1934 Cultural Affairs Fund
Recipient Report & Event Summary**

Event Title: *The 2007 John M. Rezendes Visiting Scholar in Ethics*

Event Date: Tuesday, April 3, 2007

Officer: Charlie Slavin, Dean

May 14, 2007

Dear Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series Committee:

Thank you for your support for the 2007 John M. Rezendes Visiting Scholar in Ethics, which was coordinated by the staff of the University of Maine Honors College and co-sponsored by the John M. Rezendes Ethics Initiative Fund at the University of Maine Foundation. This year's event was a tremendous success, and we hope that we will be able to work with your support for similar initiatives in the future. Below is our final report on the event, and enclosed are copies of the invitation, program, and flyer, which were distributed to publicize the lecture. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Charlie Slavin
Dean of the Honors College

Event Summary:

Chris Hedges was the 2007 John M. Rezendes Visiting Scholar in Ethics and author of the 2006-2007 Honors College Read, *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*. Hedges visited campus on Tuesday, April 3, 2007. Hedges began his visit by joining a class of first-year Honors students to answer their questions about his book. Later that afternoon, Hedges gave a public talk in room 100 of the Donald P. Corbett Business Building. His lecture included his arguments about American attitudes and portrayals of war, as well as anecdotes from his experiences as a war correspondent. The lecture was extremely well attended—between 400 and 500—with undergraduate Honors students composing the majority of the crowd. Hedges stayed after the lecture to sign books and to answer individual questions from attendees.

Event Budget Summary:

Item	Cost	Funding Source
Invitations	\$265.88	Rezendes Ethics Initiative
Poster design	\$80.00	Rezendes Ethics Initiative
Poster framing	\$138.98	Honors College
Room usage	\$0.00	N/A
Speaker honorarium	\$8,000.00	50% Cultural Affairs Fund 50% Rezendes Ethics Initiative
Speaker Lodging	\$120.00	Rezendes Ethics Initiative

From The Prism to the Pulitzer Prize

Former Campus Shutterbug, Bettina Boxall '74 Wins Big



Julie Cart and Bettina Boxall '74 at the gate to Columbia University just before the Pulitzer luncheon. Credit: Brian Vander Brug / LA Times

When Bettina Boxall '74 returns to campus in 2010 to present the Distinguished Honors Graduate Lecture, more than twenty years will have passed since her last visit. After photographing Orono for the school newspaper and yearbook as a journalism student, she wants to see what has changed. "I'm curious if Pat's Pizza is still around. And I remember the frog chorus behind hilltop dorms that marked spring's arrival. Is it still croaking?"

Her visit may be timed just right—to find out about the frogs, enjoy Pat's Pizza, and celebrate a recent achievement. Boxall and her colleague, Julie Cart, were awarded the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for Explanatory Reporting, based on a series of articles written about wildfires in the western United States.

What led her from *The Maine Campus* to the *LA Times*, where she has worked since 1987? "I started out as a photographer but took a job at a daily newspaper in Vermont where I had to report as well. I realized that I was a more versatile writer than photographer and thereafter stuck to reporting."

Photography, though, was the focus of Boxall's thesis; she presented a collection of images taken during school breaks, at home in Washington, DC. Her advisor, Jack Walas, helped to persuade the committee that it was an Honors-level project. She wrote about the ups and down of her process in an

accompanying (and amusing) essay, *Some Notes on the Completion of an Honors Project*. In it she shares her fail-proof college brainstorming strategy: "I sat myself down on my bed and decided that I would not arise until I came up with a topic. Since I was getting hungry and wanted to go to dinner, I finally made a decision."

How does she overcome "mental roadblocks" now? Housework. "I try to distance myself a bit and let the work marinate in the back of my brain. Ideas and language will come to mind while I'm doing chores around the house."

If Boxall were to document her current neighborhood, as she did for her thesis, there are certain aspects she would want to capture: "The ways in which it defies the stereotype of Los Angeles as an amorphous sprawl stuffed with vacuous sun-worshippers. My neighborhood is a community with an old LA flavor, full of creative people. I can walk to everything from the movies to the dry cleaners. I can go for days and even weeks without getting on a freeway."

Boxall remembers her favorite Honors reading class. "It was very small, informal and we chose the titles, rather than having them assigned. It was completely different from the typical structured undergraduate class." Like our students today, she grappled with challenging texts. Her most memorable read, for better or worse, was an attempt at *Ulysses* by James Joyce. "That was a humbling experience." (She still has a copy, and toys with the idea of tackling it again someday.)

Current thesis-writers are asked to compile a reading list of influential texts. Boxall considers what books she may have chosen: "I have fond memories of sitting in a big chair in the library's reading room as the snow piled up outside, working my way from *Don Quixote* to the mid 20th Century existentialists. Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain* and *Buddenbrooks* were among my favorite books." Though the Honors Read tradition (page 12) was not in place when she was a student, Boxall suggests Joan Didion: "*The White Album* and *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* are probing and beautifully written."

Of her job, Boxall admits editing and deadlines can be stressful. The biggest challenge? "Interviewing people who don't want to talk to me." She savors the opportunities that make her efforts worthwhile: "Cutting through spin. Going places and meeting people I never would if I weren't a journalist. Being a perpetual student." ■■■

"This (photo) was taken at the Pulitzer ceremony. Julie Cart, fellow winner, and I have just received our Pulitzer certificates from the president of Columbia University. A very happy moment in my life." (Credit: Brian Vander Brug / LA Times)



Alumni Focus—UMaine Today, Fall 2009

Journalism alumna receives Pulitzer for explanatory reporting

Photography by Jay L. Clendenin/Los Angeles Times

On fire

The 2009 Pulitzer Prize winners in explanatory reporting are UMaine alumna Bettina Boxall and Julie Cart of the Los Angeles Times for their five-part series, “Big Burn,” exploring the growth and cost of wildfires. Boxall, a Times reporter since 1987, covers natural resources and environmental issues in California and the West. She graduated from UMaine in 1974 with a bachelor’s degree in journalism.



When did you decide you wanted to become a journalist?

I was editor of my high school newspaper and majored in journalism at UMO, so I had an early interest in the field. When I graduated that seemed like a natural course to follow. But I did not grow up with a burning ambition to become a reporter.

Who were your mentors at UMaine and what advice did they give you that still resonates?

He was not a mentor in the classic sense. But my most influential teacher was geology professor Stephen Norton. I took introductory geology from him in a big lecture class. On both the exams and field trips, he demanded that his students think rather than regurgitate information. The facts were just the foundation for critical thinking. That was a valuable lesson to learn as a journalist.

Best scoop as a student reporter?

In college I was more interested in photojournalism than reporting. I worked for the yearbook rather than the student newspaper and earned enough money to buy my first car chronicling campus life with a Nikon.

In addition to “Big Burn,” what are the three most memorable stories you’ve written?

It is not so much individual stories as beats that stand out in my career. I covered criminal courts in Passaic County New Jersey for two years. The cases and court testimony offered a fascinating, at times disturbing study in human behavior. I often felt as though I was writing soap opera scripts. In the early 1990s, I covered gay rights in California, just as gay marriage and other issues were bubbling to the surface, signaling profound social shifts. More recently as a state and environmental reporter, I’ve traveled all over the West. I once spent a week rafting through the Grand Canyon — on assignment.

What did you learn about wildfires that you didn't know before your 15-month investigation?

Fighting wildfires has become such big business that one Nevada rancher described it as the new cash cow for the rural West. A fire-industrial complex has developed, funneling taxpayer money to private businesses that provide federal firefighters with an astounding array of often very expensive services. My colleague and I were also struck by the degree to which politics plays a role in firefighting. We documented a number of instances in which commanders called in costly aircraft at the behest of politicians—when the commanders knew the tankers or helicopters would not be effective.

How important is investigative journalism and do you worry about its future?

The best investigative journalism is a check — on government, on business, on power. In an age of sound bites and endless spin, it is more vital than ever for journalists to probe beneath the surface and go beyond transcription. But the demands of the Internet and the crumbling economic model for newspapers are pushing reporters in the opposite direction. I think there will always be an appetite for investigative stories, but I do worry that journalists will not be given the time and resources to pursue them.

The way we receive our news has changed greatly. What are the pros and cons of such change?

With the Internet, stories can reach a worldwide audience in an instant. The print circulation of newspapers is crashing, but if you count the web audience, our readership is exploding and our reach is arguably broader than ever. At the same time, the Internet is fracturing the advertising market into a million pieces, destroying the newspaper industry's revenue base. Without revenue, you can't pay reporters and without reporters you don't have real news. Most bloggers, indeed most radio and TV outlets, aren't doing original reporting. They are repeating and reacting to what they read in newspapers.

How did you celebrate word of the Pulitzer?

With too much cheap champagne.

Who would you want to write your biography – and why?

I'm a typical reporter. I would rather do the writing than be written about.

Words of advice for aspiring journalists?

Don't use college as a vocational school. Expose yourself as much as possible to different kinds of knowledge and experience. Don't run with the pack.

Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series Grant Report Form

Applicant Organization: Honors College
Contact Name: Stephani Nola
Campus Address: Holmes Hall
Phone: 581-3264
E-mail: Stephani Nola on FirstClass

Summary of Program for which grant funds were awarded, including a brief description, place where the program was held; and date and time:

Distinguished Honors Graduate lecture. We brought in Bettina Boxall '74 an Honors graduate who majored in Journalism. She was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Explanatory Reporting in 2009 for a series of articles examining wildfires in the Western U.S.

How many people attended the event(s)? If possible describe the different audiences that this program served (i.e. UMaine Students, general community, teachers, etc.).
There was approximately 75 people in attendance. Students, faculty and staff of UMaine, along with several members of the community.

How was the event promoted? Please attach copies of promotional material.

Invitations were mailed out to the community and UMaine employees. Posters were also distributed around campus.

Please describe any modifications to program or budget made after award:

Savings were made on printing of invites, since we combined it with another rlecture that was held a week after this lecture.

Please attach a final budget to this form.

Final Budget:

Housing (Honors Suite)

Meals \$600.00—this included a lunch that was attended by invited Honors students.

Air fare \$638.50

Video Shoot \$60.00 (Cultural Affairs Grant)

Posters \$42.60 (Cultural Affairs Grant)

Honorarium \$1,000. (Cultural Affairs Grant)