The University Honors Program (UHP) is preparing more students for success today than ever before. The program has experienced unprecedented growth of more than 200% over the past three years, from 92 students in 2010 to over 200 students today. This year, UHP’s graduating seniors had an average GPA of 3.6 with 87% graduating in four years. UHP graduates are attending Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, Carnegie Mellon University, Duke University, and many other institutions. Over 25% of current UHP students are preparing for STEM careers and will be future leaders in the advanced manufacturing economy as identified in the UNC Strategic Directions Initiative. Another 10% of UHP majors are concentrated in business and criminal justice and will contribute to regional economic needs in finance, business supply chain, entrepreneurship, defense, and security.

UHP students recently reflected upon the contribution of UHP to their many successes. Katina Harris, a UHP transfer student with a 4.0 GPA and member of the NCCU Transfer Advisory Board, talked about the value of UHP to transfer students. “Participants are exposed to opportunities they may not otherwise be presented, such as mentorships, conferences, international speakers, scholarships, internships, fellowships, and global study courses. This program presents an opportunity for transfer students to be challenged academically and excel in leadership.”

For Ashley Anderson, a sophomore UHP student and biology major, staying focused on what UHP expects from her as a student has helped her to maintain academic excellence, meet other dynamic students and faculty, and participate in campus activities that required her to have a good GPA. “Being a part of UHP helps me to maintain good grades, [as] it is a requirement to [remain in good standing] in the program,” explained Ashley.

Jelaina Shipman, a freshman majoring in criminal justice and psychology, was a student organizer for the UHP Homecoming Tailgate and leader on the UHP Quiz Bowl Team at the National Association of African American Honors Programs Conference in Orangeburg, SC. She talked about how these experiences helped her to transition as a student at North Carolina Central University. According to Jelaina, the activities “[were an] opportunity that allowed me to make friends with other [high-achieving] students and mingle with UHP [mentors].” She said the events “were enriching,” and she looks forward to participating in them again as a sophomore.

UHP enthusiastically serves the professional and academic needs of our outstanding honors students. We celebrate their success as they soar high!
By Jelaina Shipman

The University Honors Program serves to identify and prepare talented students to succeed in reaching their goals as World Changers. Tyquan Ward, a graduating senior and history major from Queens, NY, is one of those students. According to Tyquan, UHP “opened” his “perspective” to a world of possibilities.

Unlike many honors students, Tyquan joined UHP during the middle of his sophomore year. With a 4.0 GPA, he knew he was at the level of other honors students. “I’m the kind of person who likes to be distinctive and challenged—UHP provided that for me,” says Tyquan of his motivation to join UHP.

Tyquan also went with other UHP students to the Emerging Leaders Conference Workshop in Roanoke, VA and the Fusion Forum at Carnegie Mellon University. Upon meeting the Vice-Provost for Recruitment of Carnegie Mellon University at both UHP-sponsored events, Tyquan decided to pursue graduate school at Carnegie Mellon University. He was accepted into the program and will be pursuing a Master of Science Degree in Public Policy and Management with a concentration in Education Policy at Carnegie Mellon University’s Heinz College.

Tyquan attributes much of his success to a great support system, including his relationship with UHP Director, Ansel Brown. Tyquan will be joined at Carnegie Mellon University with his fellow UHP colleague and fraternity brother, Carmelo Montalvo.

UHP is dedicated to the success of future “World Changers” like Tyquan.

Rhodes Scholar Myron Rolle Shares with Honors Athletes

On April 5, 2013, Rhodes Scholar and former NFL athlete Myron Rolle shared with honors scholar athletes about maintaining academic excellence as student athletes. Rolle also spoke to NCCU honorees for the 2013 Honors Convocation for Academic Achievement. UHP Director, Ansel Brown, who chairs the Honors Convocation Planning Committee, selected Myron Rolle to speak with honors students at the convocation. Rolle, a former No. 1 high school football prospect who attended Florida State University, graduated from college in two and a half years. He postponed entering the NFL draft to accept the distinguished Rhodes Scholarship and study at Oxford University in England. Brown, who believes an NCCU honors student will one day also receive the Rhodes Scholarship, stated, “He truly models what we believe is possible for our students.”
Daniel Ball is a unique UHP student for whom we can all be proud. Daniel, in fact, had a tough beginning. He was placed in foster care at two years old. “By the time I turned five years old, I had lived in five different homes,” he said. As he entered his teen years, Daniel’s life became even more unstable. By 13, he had lived in four more foster homes and was soon separated from the only sister he had living with him. “I was lonely and miserable as I had ever been in life,” Daniel said. “I was the only minority at the school I went to for most of my middle school years, and I was subjected to daily verbal and physical abuse by other kids.” His life began to spiral out of control as he began using alcohol and drugs in his later teens. At 16, he had dropped out of school. In 2007, Daniel was found guilty on drug charges, and sentenced to three years in prison. “I was at the lowest point in my life; I was at the bottom,” he said. “Within a week of going to prison, I decided that when I was released I would be a new and much improved version of myself. I was not going to live the way I had been living anymore.” He began reading everything he could find. He took every course available while in prison.

When Daniel was released from prison in 2010, he entered Carteret Community College, where he excelled as a student and mentor of young minority males. While at Carteret Community College, Daniel was also inducted into the Phi Theta Kappa academic honor society and the Sigma Kappa Delta English honor society for his academic excellence. As part of the college’s Minority Male Mentoring program, Daniel received a community service award for starting a community outreach program that focused on educational opportunities for low income and minority residents of Carteret County. Daniel also received the Phoenix Award as the Student Support Services program student of the year and was recognized as the Outstanding Associate in Arts student for his academic achievements and service to the community.

In Fall of 2012, Daniel transferred to North Carolina Central University and is now a member of the University Honors Program. He is majoring in social work and maintains a 4.0 GPA. “Daniel Ball is the kind of success story that inspires us all, faculty and students alike” said UHP Director, Ansel Brown.

Now married with a two-year old son, Daniel continues to improve his life with a seriousness and sobriety that focuses on the present. “My ultimate goal is to use all that I have learned from living life the hard way to help someone who is suffering from some of the same turmoil I have already come through,” Daniel said. Keep up the good work, Daniel!

Mrs. Francina Dubose Joins UHP

Francina Dubose began her service as Administrative Support Associate of the University Honors Program in the Fall of 2012, where she provides a range of programmatic support and services for UHP students and constituents. Dubose has over 20 years of experience working with educational institutions, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations. Prior to her tenure at North Carolina Central University, Dubose worked as an independent grant writer for social service, mentoring, and educational programs. She also served as Executive Director for Wake Up Mentoring, an organization that serves at-risk young men residing in the Orlando area. At the University of Central Florida, Dubose served for 12 years as an Administrative Assistant and Personnel Coordinator. She has a Master of Nonprofit Management degree and a Bachelor of Science degree in Liberal Studies from the University of Central Florida.

Mrs. Dubose stated that one of her primary goals is to assist UHP in achieving the critical goal of diversifying its financial resources.
UHP Students Lead Honda Campus All-Stars

By Ashley Roberts

UHP students represented the majority of this year’s NCCU Honda Campus All-Star Challenge Team (HCASC).

On February 14, HCASC traveled to Washington DC, where they spent three days traveling in the nation’s capital as well as surrounding areas.

On February 17, the team traveled to Morgan State University in Baltimore, MD where they worked diligently and ranked second in the HCASC Pre-National Tournament.

The honors students of the Honda Campus All-Star Challenge Team were honorees at the 2013 Honors Convocation on April 5, and traveled to Los Angeles, CA to compete in the National Tournament on the same day.

UHP High Achievers

By Daniel Ball

All UHP students have high expectations for academic excellence. As evidenced by their success, they are amongst the brightest students at NCCU. Even amongst such an achieved group, there are some who go the extra mile.

These students are UHP’s High Achievers. The High Achievers are the students who have gone one step above excellence. Their hard work and dedication have earned them a perfect 4.0 GPA and a place on this list:

Daniel L. Ball
Rebekah E. Barber
Andrew P. Berinson
Janelle T. Billingsley
Jacob M. Classen
Nelson Cooper, IV
Jacqueline S. Delgado
Katina D. Harris
John B. Johnson
Tamina Kienka
Camille T. McCarter
Ekaterina Nekrasova
Jennifer N. Tracy

UHP Students pictured above are (left to right) Ashley Roberts, Lorenzo Fowler II, Jelaina Shipman, Victoria Jones
Gullah Cultural Heritage Tour 2013

On April 13-14, UHP took 43 honors students to Hilton Head, SC for the Gullah Islands Heritage Tour. Students arrived at the Comfort Inn, South Forest Beach in Hilton Head Island, SC on April 13. Upon arrival, a local Gullah native led students on a guided tour, whereby they were able to learn about Gullah history and culture that maintains a rich West African tradition. Students also visited local Gullah communities, and afterwards, were able to enjoy free time to relax and rejuvenate for exams. According to Julius Graham, “the trip was culturally enriching, and at the same time we were able to bond with other UHP students . . .” Khadijah Wiggins also had a wonderful time. What she enjoyed most was, “taking a break from school to relax on the beach, while enjoying the company of fellow UHP friends.”

UHP Forum Series

UHP Forums for students in 2012-2013 included a voting during the 2012 election. Finally, Carlton diverse range of special speakers. Victor Galloway Long, a distinguished Rhodes Scholar, spoke to UHP from the North Carolina Institute of Minority Economic Development led off the Forum Series by students about his trials and successes, providing opportunities to join UHP, Ginnae realized she acquired an abundance of benefits for self-growth, as well as accessibility. Ginnae describes some of the benefits as a UHP student, stating, “One of my favorite perks is being able to stay in Annie Day [the UHP Living and Learning Community].” As a double bass player, I have to carry a huge instrument on my back regularly. The dorm is located in the middle of campus and close to my classes so it’s really convenient. Another thing I like about the Honors Program is the leadership geared classes. I have a passion for wisdom and personal development, and the classes teach us how to be successful in environments where leadership is needed.” Ginnae highly recommends UHP to other students as a wonderful personal experience.

Freshman Feature: Donielle Koon

By Andrew Berinson

Majoring in music with a concentration in jazz studies, Donielle Ginnae Koon is a freshman in the University Honors Program. When asked what brought her to North Carolina Central University, she replied, “I believe it was fate. For years I thought I would go to UNCG, but the head of the Jazz Department there, Steve Haines, told me about NCCU. He thought I would love it at NCCU and directed me to Ira Wiggins, the director of NCCU’s jazz [Studies].” It turned out Haines observations were correct. Ginnae made auditions and was met by NCCU music faculty with the kind words, “Welcome to the family.” Ginnae was also met with a friendly welcome into her UHP family. After receiving the opportunity to join UHP, Ginnae realized she acquired an abundance of benefits for self-growth, as well as accessibility. Ginnae describes some of the benefits as a UHP student, stating, “One of
"Preparing World Changers" is the motto of the University Honors Program. Yet, what is in store for the future of our current and future members? On Friday, March 8, 2013, I interviewed Professor Ansel Brown, the Director of the University Honors Program as of Fall 2010, about his goals and plans for the University Honors Program.

He began to point out recent accomplishments such as re-establishing the living and learning community and expanding the curriculum. “In this revamped curriculum, we currently have a course for freshmen in the spring, HON 1200 Honors Global Leadership Seminar and for the juniors in the fall HON 3600 Honors Thesis Research Seminar focusing on their honors thesis project. It's really exciting, because we have never had our own course pre-fix,” Brown explained.

He continued to discuss the expansion of the UHP curriculum into a diversity of general education curriculum honors sections. “Previously, the honors sections were only in the English Department, and our goal was to diversify the curriculum and introduce different GEC honors sections. Hopefully, we will have an honors section in every department, so that students will have an honors course in their major,” he stated.

I asked Professor Brown after accomplishing so much already, if there is a larger goal or something higher for UHP to now shoot for. In response, he indicated, “[A] long term or major goal is to strengthen the professional development of the students in the honors program . . . [P]ossibly work one-on-one with students advising them on their professional goals, and to help them identify graduate schools that match their profession and academic goals,” he continued. “However, we will need an expansion of personnel to reach this next level,” explained Brown. “We can always be innovative. However, to achieve this next level more resources and personnel are needed.”

He proposed several additional ideas for expanding honors professional development, such as an Honors Symposium. This event would showcase honors students’ research, highlighting the work of students in the University Honors Program annually. Professor Brown wants the University Honors Program to be more visible to NCCU students who are achieving at a high academic level and may have a desire to participate in the program, explaining, “Another goal is to reach out to students on campus through other means, possibly working through honors convocation for example . . . ”

Professor Brown is optimistic that the new leadership of Chancellor-Elect Dr. Debra Saunders-White will be promising for high-achieving NCCU honors students. “With the new leadership transition, we anticipate that we’ll continue to see a commitment to honors education that will provide the institutional commitment necessary to greater facilitate student success through the University Honors Program,” Brown concluded.