**Business Honors House**

The Business Honors House (**BHH**) is a collaborative pilot program initiated by the College of Business, Residential Life, Greek Life at the University of Southern Mississippi starting in the Fall 2009 semester. **BHH** is a faculty-in-residence living-learning community dedicated to business honors residents seeking an enhanced business curriculum with associated extracurricular events. **BHH** houses 12 male and 12 female residents majoring in business disciplines having completed at least 30 semester hours with demonstrated academic excellence or leadership skills. The students represent a diverse group of varying socioeconomic backgrounds with 1/3 being minorities and 1/3 coming from states other than Mississippi. The majority of the students are first generation college students.

**Academic programming: BHH** residents receive three semester hours of credit for participating in activities related to the community. These include:

* Faculty-led book discussions (Freakonomics, Sway, and Extraordinary Circumstances)
* Special lectures on topics such as health care reform, patent laws, leadership, and comparing the Japanese economy of the 1990s to the present US economy
* Guest speakers from the business community ranging from a supply chain manager in China to local real estate and banking executives
* Entrepreneur’s roundtable featuring three small business leaders answering residents’ questions about start-ups , business plans, and entrepreneurial activities
* Ethics Week featuring special case studies on business ethics and a guest speaker who is a convicted felon involved in the Heathsouth fraud discussing the “slippery slope” from looking the other way one time to full financial fraud
* Service and Action Learning Projects featuring residents’ immersion into group projects that require the application of business skills to support limited scope projects for non-profits (e.g; marketing strategies for the local Habitat for Humanity thrift store) and commercial enterprises (e.g; a review of operational efficiency for a publicly-traded state firm)
* Each resident is assigned a faculty mentor and a professional mentor based on academic and career interests. Faculty mentors advise on coursework, graduate school, and may serve as thesis advisors. Professional mentors provide counsel on career opportunities and have also provided internships and scholarships for some students.
* Study abroad is also highly encouraged. In the first year, four students studied abroad for a semester in England, France, and Spain.

**Preliminary Outcomes:** After the first semester, **BHH** residents recorded an average GPA of 3.64 on an average of 17.2 semester hours completed. Accompanying this academic success was also a retention success resulting from the community. Two of the residents experienced very serious personal events that threatened their ability to continue to remain enrolled. In one instance, a resident discovered that both his mother and grandmother were diagnosed with cancer in the fall semester and felt too overwhelmed to continue his studies at times. His fellow residents rallied around him and helped him complete a very difficult semester. While his grades suffered from his normal standard of excellence, he was able to remain enrolled in school and pass all of his courses for the semester. The support of the **BHH** community was instrumental in getting him through this trying time. Another preliminary outcome is that one of the residents and his academic mentor are conducting a research project together that will result in the student’s honors thesis.

Thank you for your consideration of this honor.

Dr. Lance Nail

Dean, College of Business

The University of Southern Mississippi