'Twas the Night Before the Due Date: An Ode to HONR101

'Twas the night before the due date, and all through the dorm
Every student was frantically writing up a storm.
Their papers were half finished and procrastinated without care
In hopes that their professors would grade extra fair.

The finished over-achievers LOL-ed from their beds,
And let another Netflix episode run through their heads.
The peer review groups were huddled in lounges together
Praying that a bad grade wouldn't haunt them forever.

When out in the hall there arose such a scamper
It was Alonzo, the puppy, the happiest of campers.
He skipped down the halls and tugged on his collar
In hopes he could comfort his Campion scholars.

The RA's emerged to encourage the students
Who promised that next time they wouldn't be so imprudent,
In fact they'd finish their papers early and work hard,
So not a single exam ID caught them off guard.

"No Tobin, no Mannering, no Dutton, no Whidden,
No Horan will stop us from the A's that are hidden.
To Rothleder, Danford, Kaminski, Katz, and Dunn,
We will prove that their students are second to none!"

And as the sun rose up far across the lake,
The students went to bed, and in an hour they'd wake
To go to their 8 ams and do last minute checks
On the papers they had mastered, though very complex.

By 12:35 sharp, they were in the lecture hall,
Turning in their papers (some at a closer call).
They were finally relieved, and felt all was all right.
Until their professor reminded them, “There's reading tonight.”

By Laura Manhardt
How was the Honors Program put together?

Well, about ten years ago a group of faculty got together and started planning out the program. We wanted an emphasis on great texts in Western Civilization - not just books, but great texts: architecture, operas, art, places - and when the faculty gets together to plan the freshman seminar we still think in terms of great texts. We also wanted the seminar to be team-taught, multi-disciplinary, a collective effort by a group of faculty. It's succeeded rather well.

The other classes were designed to address key parts in our students' involvement in the world. U.S. Experience because it's important to study our own cultural inheritance; Area Studies because we're members of a broader world community. Science and Society because science is an essential aspect of modernity. And the capstone, Moral Responsibility, I mean… this is a Jesuit Education, so… *laughs* As human beings we have the responsibility to live for others, and that's what we try to get at there.

But beyond that, the basic structure has not changed.

Why do you think that is?

I think it's really well crafted. It works. Here on out we just plan to do some tweaking and really fill out the program.

What are some changes in the program that you've seen over the years?

We've now got courses in Rome, Beijing, Vietnam.... We push those very hard. Another dramatic change has been the size of the program - it's spiked! We used to have around 100 students entering each year, and now we've got around 250 entering, with about 850 in the program total. And our big move to Campion Hall three years ago.

Do you have any parting message for students graduating from the Honors program?

Yeah, could the alumni please get back to us? *laughs* We just want to know what happens! We think we're teaching you well, but it would be good to hear from you… We get so little feedback, some complaints here and there, but it's the constructive feedback that's really great. Oh, I'd love to have an alumni association. I'd love to have alumni come here, to talk with students, to have a reception or a dinner or something. But a lot of that depends upon the alumni!

[This is an excerpt. The full interview can be found on the HSA Facebook page.]