

## **The Thomas E. Harris Award for Excellence in Organizational Communication**

### *Award Rationale*

This award honors the legacy and life's work of Thomas (Tom) E. Harris, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus in the Department of Communication Studies. Prior to coming to the University of Alabama, he taught at the University of Evansville, Rutgers University-New Brunswick, and the George Washington University. Dr. Harris received his Ph.D. from Temple University, his M.A. from the University of Maryland and his B.A. from the George Washington University. He dedicated his professional career to marrying the concepts he taught in the communication classroom with practical work experiences in everyday life.

Dr. Harris' research specialized in organizational communication with an emphasis in small group communication. Over 30 years of experience consulting with organizations ranging in size from Bristol/Myers Squibb, IBM, Regions Bank, Mercedes-Benz (MBUSI), and Georgia-Pacific to small businesses allowed him to bring real-life application to the undergraduate and graduate classroom at the University of Alabama. His commitment to pragmatic application of organizational communication concepts inspired numerous undergraduate students to pursue graduate degrees in areas that applied their knowledge of communication to business or health service industries. Graduate students under Dr. Harris' tutelage furthered existing research on leadership, team communication and organizational culture and globalization. Many have followed in his footsteps by bridging academic careers with service to outside organizations as trainers and consultants.

Among his many accomplishments, Dr. Harris has written 14 books and over 50 articles and numerous book chapters on various team, leadership, communication and organizational issues. His most recent books include [\*Applied Organizational Communication: Theory and Practice in a Global Environment\*](#) (2008) and [\*Small Group and Team Communication, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.\*](#) (2010). He is a regular presenter at regional, national and international meetings and writes an occasional newspaper column on key organizational issues. Dr. Harris was chosen as the outstanding faculty presenter for the College of Continuing Studies Professional Development Programs, University of Alabama, for his work in developing and presenting management and leadership development programs. He is also listed in the *Directory of American Scholars* and *Who's Who in Social Sciences Higher Education*.

### *The Award*

Winners will be recognized at the Lambda Pi Eta awards ceremony and will have their name listed on a public plaque in the Department of Communication Studies.

### *Eligibility and Criteria*

The Thomas E. Harris Award is given to an outstanding undergraduate major in the Department of Communication Studies who has exhibited excellence in coursework,

extracurricular activities, and community involvement. Successful candidates have balanced professional work or internship experience with academic excellence. Applicants whose work and extracurricular activities reflect Dr. Harris's passions for the pragmatic application of communication strategies in organizational settings will be given earnest consideration.

Qualified candidates should --

- **Be a senior majoring in Communication Studies with an emphasis in Organizational Communication**
- Demonstrate leadership and good citizenship inside and outside of the classroom (for example, outside of the classroom, this might mean being the president of an organization or leading a team to success, working with a nonprofit to make a change in the community)
- Have at least a 3.25 GPA
- Work at least part-time (this may include a successful internship)
- Exhibit superior skills of leadership and conscientiousness

*Application Process*

**The Harris Award requires faculty recommendation for consideration**, which can be submitted in the form of a letter or completed referral form (see attached).

Eligible students should submit the following by the deadline:

- Letter of intent (letters should include information about what qualifies the applicant for the award, a description of the job/internship you were involved in and how it relates to organizational coursework you have had in the department, practical uses of communication in professional environments, and what qualifies the applicant for the award)
- Resume or vita with contact information and CWID listed
- Transcript (as evidence of GPA)
- Sealed faculty recommendation (letter and/or faculty referral form)

Interested students, with faculty endorsement, should apply by submitting application materials no later **20 February 2013, at 4:45 pm**.

Application materials can hand-delivered to the Department of Communication Studies, 203 Reese Phifer Hall, or mailed to:

Department of Communication Studies  
c/o Angela Billings, Faculty Advisory Committee  
Box 870172  
The University of Alabama  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0172

**The Thomas E. Harris Award  
For Excellence in Organizational Communication**

**Faculty Referral Form**

*This form can be used as a substitute for or addendum to a letter of recommendation.*

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ CWID \_\_\_\_\_

GPA (must be at least 3.25 to be eligible for the award) \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominating Faculty Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominating Faculty Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **Office Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions about the award applicant.

1. Is the student a graduating senior? Y/N \_\_\_\_\_

2. Is the student a Communication Studies major? Y/N \_\_\_\_\_

3. Approximately how long have you known the student and in what capacity?

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Has the student balanced an internship or work experience during their undergraduate study?  
Y/N \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

5. Explain in detail the internship and/or job that the student has held while completing their degree.

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6. Give an example of how the student has demonstrated leadership and good citizenship both inside and outside of the classroom.

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7. Why do you feel this student is deserving of this award recognition? (Please include detailed comments regarding the applicant's academic achievements, leadership, and citizenship.)

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8. Compare the applicant with his or her peers on the following items by checking one box for each category:

	Superior (Upper 5%)	Excellent (Upper 10%)	Above Average (Upper 25%)
Intellectual ability			
Leadership			
Classroom citizenship			
Community involvement			
Organizational skills			
Conscientiousness			
Maturity			