

Honors College to host national faculty institute in June at Mammoth Cave

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The [National Collegiate Honors Council](#) has selected the [Honors College](#) at WKU to host the first ever Honors Faculty Institute in Kentucky.

The institute is a week-long seminar for honors faculty and administrators from around the country to learn an innovative teaching method called “Place as Text,” said Clay Motley, Assistant Director for Academics for WKU’s Honors College. “Typically one or two are offered annually, and they are all over the world. WKU is the first university in Kentucky chosen to host one.”

The title of the seminar, set for June 7-12, is “Seeing Beneath the Surface: Kentucky Cave Country.” Dr. Motley said the setting is a natural fit for the experiential learning institute that offers structured explorations of environments and ecosystems. Participants use careful observations, reflective writings and seminar discussions to learn about a particular place. After the institute, they use those techniques in their own classes and programs on their home campuses, he said.

Dr. Motley, who attended an NCHC institute last summer in Las Vegas and Death Valley, uses this style of teaching in his English 100 class. By having groups explore and analyze sections of campus, they become much more involved in the class and learn a skill they can use in any discipline, he said, adding he will be using Place as Text in his study abroad course in England next summer.

Having the institute this close brings faculty from across the country to Kentucky and makes the experience more available to faculty at WKU, he said. Instructors will include Dr. Motley, Fred Siewers in Geography and Geology and Erika Brady in Folk Studies.

“With some of the nation’s top honors faculty and administrators coming here to learn from WKU faculty in our own backyard, this is a great achievement,” Dr. Motley said.

Dr. Motley said he would be promoting the institute at the NCHC annual conference Oct. 20-24 in Kansas City, Mo.

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