Honors Newsletter
Summer 2014
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*On the cover: The 2014 Collegiate Scholars gather inside the Pomerantz Center ahead of the annual Honors Recognition Ceremony April 13. Story on page 11.*
Warm greetings for the Summer of 2014 to our Honors program students, staff, faculty, alumni, and friends!

We’ve completed the very first academic year of the new honors curriculum. We had over 1,400 students enrolled last Fall (2013) under the new curriculum, with about 780 coming from high school, about 200 as transfer students, and about 420 as Honors students from the old Honors Program who moved into the new curriculum. We expect to see comparable numbers, if not even more, coming in next Fall (2014).

Congratulations to the 179 students who graduated last Fall and this Spring as part of that new Honors curriculum. Their completion of the new Honors curriculum shows up officially on their transcripts and diplomas by listing them as graduating with “University Honors.”

We recently recognized the accomplishments of our Honors Program graduates with our 2014 Honors Commendation Ceremony, which took place in Macbride Hall auditorium on May 16th. The auditorium was near to full of family and friends of our students. We also had in attendance associate deans Lon Moeller from the Tippie College of Business, Keri Hornbuckle from the College of Engineering, and Helena Dettmer from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, to recognize Honors students who had graduated with departmental honors in those colleges. Our faculty speaker this year was Professor Chris Cheatum from Chemistry, who will be known to many of you, and our student speaker was Nick Rolston, Physics and Math. If you know either or both of them, you won’t be surprised to hear that their remarks received a strongly positive response from the audience.

Now that we have one academic year of the new Honors curriculum completed, we’re looking to make refinements to the Honors Program. For example, should we raise the requirements to get into the program (currently a 27 ACT and a 3.80 or higher high school GPA). That would have the effect of reducing the size of our population, which is quite a bit above the average when compared to our peers, and it would also make more resources, such as Honors scholarships, available to more of the students in the program. Of course, we’d then be serving less students. So, the issue is in trying to determine the right balance between the quantity of students served with the quality of the service each program member receives. I’ll keep you posted on any major changes as we go forward.

In this Summer edition of the newsletter you’ll see (among other things): an article on Summer research, and in particular that which is done through the Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates; an article on Honors Summer orientation, which focuses especially on the role of the Honors Summer Ambassadors – Honors students who help us with informing and advising the incoming Honors students; an article on the very popular Honors Primetime, which is our pre-semester one credit hour class we offer to incoming Honors Freshmen; and finally, an article on one of our superstar faculty, Dr. Donna Parsons, who regularly teaches an Honors seminar on Harry Potter (it fills up in minutes!), and also an Honors seminar on the Beatles, both very popular with Honors students. This article will focus on the research that Dr. Parsons does annually in England over the summers.

As always, please feel free to contact me via email (artspisak@uiowa.edu) or phone (319.335.1681) with any comments, questions, or concerns you have about the Honors Program. I’m happy to have such conversations.

Art L. Spisak
Director, UI Honor Program
Every summer, hundreds of entering first-year students from Iowa, the Midwest, and all over the country flock to the University of Iowa for their first real college experience: orientation. Of the many students who participate in the 12 first-year orientation sessions held in June and July, about one in five—about 800 students—will opt in to attend Honors Orientation with the University of Iowa Honors Program.

Honors Orientation serves several purposes: to welcome new honors students into the Iowa Honors community, to outline what the Honors Program has to offer, and to encourage students to hit the ground running by registering for honors classes.

Honors Advising Director Holly Blosser Yoder organizes the orientation programs for Honors at Iowa with help from colleagues and a team of Honors Ambassadors from various colleges and majors. Honors Ambassadors are current and newly graduated honors students, selected to interact with entering honors students and to help orientation run as smoothly as possible.

I sat down with Holly to discuss this year’s Honors Orientation here at Iowa, and the team of Honors Ambassadors responsible for representing the Honors Program this summer.

EM: How would you describe the role of Honors Ambassadors at Orientation?

HOLLY: Honors Ambassadors are the face of the Honors Program. They welcome families as they arrive at Honors Orientation and provide a relatable perspective for new students in panel discussions and interest-area sessions. Honors Staff provide a skeletal overview of the program and Ambassadors put flesh on the bones to make it come alive in students’ imaginations.

EM: What are the chief responsibilities of an Honors Ambassador?

HOLLY: Honors Ambassadors welcome families and provide them with print materials as they arrive, and then answer questions about honors courses and experiences as part of an honors student panel during the large-group session. Then, in small group “interest area” sessions, when orientees divide themselves up into Business, Engineering, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Arts & Humanities groups, the Ambassadors work in pairs to lead groups in exploring options for honors classes for fall semester and beginning to think about experiential learning goals. It can be really thrilling when an incoming first-year hears about an Ambassador’s honors project or research and realizes, “I can see myself doing something like that!”

EM: How long have Honors Ambassadors been involved in Honors Orientation at Iowa? On average, how many Honors Ambassadors are there?

HOLLY: Honors Ambassadors, previously called Honors Guides, began assisting at Orientation in the current manner in 2008. On average, there are 12-14 Ambassadors involved in each Orientation session.

EM: What are the primary opportunities that Ambassadors promote?

HOLLY: Our research shows that Honors Primetime has a powerful impact on students, providing them with a network of new friends, a strong identity as members of the Honors community, confidence navigating the University of Iowa physically and academically, and of course an early intellectual challenge ahead of fall semester. We also direct students to Honors First-Year Seminars as an opportunity to sample honors education. They are only one semester hour, usually meeting just once a week, but there are many interesting topics to choose from, taught engagingly by fantastic faculty. Beyond Primetime and First-Year Seminars, new students should also take advantage of the honors general education classes and sections they can take to meet university requirements—
Honors Ambassadors from various majors have assisted with Orientation since 2008. Pictured at Orientation 2012 are (from left) Honors Director Art Spisak, Nic Pottebaum (Political Science, Economics, 2013), Brianna Knoll (Biomedical Engineering, 2013), Dagan Marx (Biochemistry, Environmental Science, 2014), and Em Levine (English, Music, 2015).
Alumni Feature
Checking in with Gina Patnaik

By Megan Skuster

As a University of Iowa graduate from 2003 double majoring in English and Spanish, Gina Patnaik was very involved with the Honors program and the University Lecture Committee while she was a student.

“At a big public university, it’s easy to get lost in the shuffle,” said Patnaik.

But this was not the case for her, as she looks back fondly on her days at Iowa and the friends and connections she made. She said she loved her time spent with the University Lecture Committee, and the opportunity to impact the conversation about world issues on campus. She also said that the Honors Program and faculty members, such as Bob Kirby and Kelly Soukup, were incredibly warm and welcoming.

“They made what was a huge university seem like a very small place,” she said.

After graduating, Patnaik pursued a Fulbright study abroad opportunity in India, where she researched the rise of the Indian novel in English, as well as interned at a publishing house in Delhi.

“I got my first taste of developing college curriculum there. I designed courses and activities on Indian women writers and on the rise (and fall and rise) of Indian feminisms,” Patnaik said.

Patnaik also attended culinary school at Le Cordon Bleu in London, before going to graduate school for English at the University of California, Berkeley. Among many other achievements, she helped create a Human Rights minor program at the school, and worked administratively in the program for several years.

Her strong interest in Human Rights issues stemmed from a very tragic event. In 2003, Gina’s cousin and peace activist Rachel Corrie was murdered while protesting in Gaza.

“Figuring out how to manage my own interest in academia and my personal commitment to peace and justice work was a process that was ten years in the making,” Patnaik said.

She continues to have a strong interest in Human Rights, and credits her professors at Iowa and UC Berkeley with helping her translate her personal interests into part of her professional life.

In August, Gina will begin working as an Assistant Professor of English at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. She will be teaching a class on Faulkner, the same topic as the English honors thesis she wrote at Iowa.
NEW STAFF MEMBER AMY BREWSTER
Connecting Honors and Engineering

By Chelsea Wing

When the University of Iowa Honors Program rolled out its new University Honors curriculum in 2013, an “engineering alternative” was implemented as part of the new program. College of Engineering and Honors Program faculty and staff collaborated to design the engineering alternative, and the collaboration continues with honors advising. Leading honors advising efforts for College of Engineering is Amy Brewster, who recently came from the University of Minnesota.

“I am thrilled to work in the College of Engineering as the Director of Global Experiences and Academic Advisor,” Brewster said. “I knew I wanted to work at the University of Iowa, and was happy to find myself with a job offer in the College of Engineering working with students to help them achieve their goals.”

Although the temperatures may be just as frigid in Iowa as in Minnesota, the University of Iowa holds a special place in Brewster's heart. After attending the school as an undergraduate, the campus feels just like home.

Here at Iowa, Brewster advises students and works to coordinate the Engineering Honors Program in collaboration with Honors at Iowa. The alternative honors curriculum allows engineering students to get the benefits of the Honors Program while retaining the practical and hands-on experience required of an engineering degree.

“For example,” Art Spisak, director of the Honors Program, said, “engineering students can count leadership positions in engineering student organizations for honors credit because these organizations incorporate a project with faculty oversight. This is not the case with most other student organizations.”

To encourage engineering students to be involved with the Honors Program, Spisak emphasizes that the new program will not delay a graduation date; rather, it is created to enrich the engineering experience and the classes that are already part of the major.

For Brewster, this new program only adds to the excitement of the job.

“I enjoy meeting with our wonderful students, helping them get the most out of their University of Iowa experience, and connecting them with resources across campus,” she explained.

For questions about the Engineering Honors program, contact Art Spisak at art-spisak@uiowa.edu or stop by Amy Brewster’s office.

Amy Brewster, Director of Global Experiences and Academic Advisor, College of Engineering
Summer Research at Iowa
Continuing the Opportunities to Learn

By Emily Szymanski

While the academic year has ended, educational opportunities are continuing for many students at the University of Iowa. To support and promote research across all disciplines, the Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates provides students with various opportunities to become involved, particularly over the summer.

For the next three months, students will be researching a variety of subjects, ranging from topics like state leaders’ and rebel organizations’ influence on civil wars, dance and technology in and outside of Africa, and multiple projects working in fields of nanotechnology.

Nate Hua, who just finished his sophomore year, will be continuing his second summer of research on the enzyme human carbonic anhydrase II. While he spent last summer developing his expertise on protein synthesis and purification, this summer he will be working on collecting and analyzing the data.

Hua noted that one of his biggest goals was to get involved with research at Iowa, and he realized that getting involved over the summer allowed him to immerse himself in his field.

“If you want to conduct meaningful research, it takes a lot of time and effort—you really have to have the time or make the time,” Hua said. “During the school year you have classes and other activities that take time away from doing research, but over the summer you are able to spend as much time in the lab as you need to in order to accomplish your research goals.”

For graduating senior Kelsey Warner, research has been a part of her college experience over several semesters and all four summers. Warner has studied the role of the human ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC) for belief and doubt processes, particularly as how it relates to moral judgments in the context of criminal behavior.

“I can’t imagine a time in my life when I’m not exploring unanswered questions,” Warner said. “I love what I study and I couldn’t live without the scientific rush that my lab brings me every day.”

Warner noted that when it comes to results in her line of work, “you never know what you will find!” She sees this as one of the coolest aspects of science because it leads to more questions that one can ask.

Although she has just graduated, Warner plans to continue conducting research.

“In general, I feel as though my lab experience has defined me as an undergraduate student,” Warner said. “I have learned how to look at things critically—not just in the lab setting—but also in the world around me.”

Warner feels that the experiences she has gained through her research have prepared her for “graduate school and beyond.”

Summer research does not have to be restricted to University of Iowa’s campus either. Several students have traveled to Switzerland to take part in research with faculty of the departments of physics and astronomy; others are working alongside faculty in various African countries. Closer to home, student researchers are conducting archaeological digs with faculty mentors in Kansas and Iowa. All the students participating in research at Iowa have an opportunity to display their work at the Summer Undergraduate Research Conference or one of the two undergraduate research festivals held in the fall and spring each year.
When Professor Donna Parsons was asked in 2003 to create an interdisciplinary course of her choice for the university, she had no idea that it would become so successful or play so prominent a part in her life. Creator and instructor of the famed “World of the Beatles” class, Parsons didn’t think that it would continue past its beginning in the fall semester of 2004 and said, “Honestly, I thought I would be teaching the one section, and then moving on to something else for the spring semester. Student demand pushed the offering of that initial section to two sections each semester.”

“World of the Beatles” continued to have an even greater impact and from this prosperous course, the perfect research topic developed. Now, Parsons travels to England every summer for 5-6 weeks. Each summer’s activities vary, although her base of operations is always London for its easy access to the British Library. Sometimes she does research in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, at the Public Records Office in Liverpool, or conducts field research. While in London, Parsons usually spends 8 to 10 hours a day in the British Library. On the weekends, she explores various museums with exhibitions related to the 1960s or popular culture.

“Exploring material culture deepens your understanding of your topic,” Parsons said. “I also spend some time tracking down venues, apartments, hotels, etc. that have a connection to the Beatles, and I’ll spend time browsing the vinyl record stores in Soho and Islington.”

But how does Parsons find her sources and know where to start looking?

“When I started doing field research in Liverpool, I consulted Ron Jones’s The Beatles’ Liverpool,” Parsons explained. “It lists the major sites (homes, schools, venues) connected to the Beatles. I also have a Liverpool A-Z which is a map of all the streets in Liverpool and the surrounding areas. A couple years ago I started tracking down the venues where the Beatles performed. I found them first by consulting Mark Lewisohn’s The Complete Beatles Chronicle. He lists every venue where the Beatles played. You get the title of the venue and the town/city.”

An important next step is to search the venues on Google to make sure they’re still there. Parsons has discovered that, many times, the building has been torn down or repurposed!

Because the methods used to uncover information depend on the specific topic, Parsons’ general research process is flexible.
DONNA PARSONS
On Researching the Beatles

“Basically, I read everything—scholarly and popular books, journals, newspapers, etc,” Parsons said. “It is important to read materials that are considered mainstream and underground. I look for information in sources such as diaries, memoirs, and letters. We have to keep in mind that all writers have an angle so that we are not influenced unduly.”

While this may seem like an arduous process that does not always lead to the anticipated discovery, Parsons is persistent. “Sometimes what you do not find can be more illuminating than what you uncover.”

When asked what the greatest thing was that she discovered after embarking on this research experience, Parsons replied that she has been delighted by the people she has met on her journeys.

“What has been most inspiring is the genuine kindness I have encountered in my conversations with Liverpool residents,” Parsons said. “They have been helpful in so many different ways – from sharing their memories of seeing the Beatles at the Cavern or in other venues, making sure I am walking in the correct direction as I search for particular sites, or even explaining why they believe the Beatles’ story is not being told properly.”

When she is not abroad gathering more research, Parsons is very involved with the University of Iowa’s Honors Program through teaching and serving as a faculty mentor. For Honors Primetime, she offers a class on popular music and she teaches an Honors Seminar every semester. As a faculty mentor, she assists students who are enrolled in the Honors Teaching Practicum, the Honors Research Practicum, and Honors Studies. Additionally, Parsons served as a member of the Fulbright campus evaluation committee for several years and currently serves as the Wellness Ambassador for the Honors Program.

In the future, Parsons plans on completing more research on the Beatles from popular teen music magazines that were prominent in the 1960s. Additionally, Parsons wants to broaden her previous research of the Beatles’ fan correspondence with government officials from Liverpool to a focus on national officials.

So what should we learn from Parsons and her experience? Follow your passions and choose a path that is truly meaningful to you.

“The Beatles have always been a part of my life, but after I started teaching this class, they have become the engine that drives everything. Life without the Beatles is inconceivable,” Parsons explained. “They and their music have shaped my identity and how I function in the world. I grew up listening to their music which gave me an optimistic outlook on life and showed me how amazing things can happen when creativity is melded to hard work...Studying their music and their story teaches you that dreams can come true, the envelope can be stretched, and you can make a positive difference in the world.”

“Studying their music and their story teaches you that dreams can come true, the envelope can be stretched, and you can make a positive difference in the world.”

When asked if she had any advice for students about the research field and process, Parsons replied, “Don’t worry about following a particular model. Dig deep and then keep digging. Your research will lead you on breath-taking journeys, and you need to be flexible enough or daring to wander off the well-trodden path into the wilderness.”
This year’s Honors Recognition Ceremony, an annual celebration for Honors scholarship and award winners as well as national scholarship and fellowship winners, was held on Sunday April 13, 2014. Despite the rain, many friends and family members of those honored gathered at the Pomerantz Center and the Blank Honors Center to recognize the achievements of first- through fourth-year students from a variety of colleges and majors.

Director of Scholar Development Kelly Thornburg organized the ceremony and reception and, with the help of Honors Program Director Art Spisak, introduced the award winners and presented them with their award letters. Also assisting in honoring the students were faculty members representing various colleges of the University of Iowa: Lon Moeller, Associate Dean Undergraduate Program, Tippie College of Business; Amy Brewster, Director, Global Experiences and Academic Advisor, College of Engineering; Susan Assouline, Director, Belin Blank Center, College of Education; and Helena Detmer, Associate Dean Undergraduate Programs & Curriculum, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.

Among the awards presented were the Dewey Stuit Awards for Excellence, awarded to Katherine Wolf and Ryan Kunkle; the Rhodes Dunlap Scholarships, awarded to several first- through third-year students; the Kay Keeshan Hamod Award for Excellence in History, awarded to Catherine Babikian; the James D. Robertson Award for Excellence in the Social Sciences, awarded to Kelly Daniels; and the Guy D. and Betty J. Williams Award for Environmental Innovation in Physics, awarded to Kenneth Heitritter.

The ceremony also recognized Fellows Project winners, ten first- and second-year students who will take part in a new fellowship established to encourage engagement within and beyond the classroom in order to further develop skills through intellectual, professional, and social opportunities.

National awards included the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, awarded to Sarah Bannon, Jeffrey Moore, and Nicholas Rolston; the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, awarded to Liam Hovey with Honorable Mention to Alexandra Bartlett; the Udall Memorial Scholarship, Honorable Mention to Jeffrey Ding; and the Fulbright U.S. Student Grant, awarded to Sophie Amado.

The Honors Program recognized thirty-one graduating seniors as Collegiate Scholars for work in and beyond the classroom, with an emphasis on the student’s knowledge, skill, and experience as well as outstanding academic performance, excellence within their chosen disciplines, and contributions made to the University community through performances, research, organizational leadership, volunteer service and intellectual or creative engagement. Students were nominated by faculty and staff and hailed from all five of the University’s undergraduate...
Recognizing Our Scholarship Winners

Continued...

colleges. The Collegiate Scholar Award is the highest honor given to students in the Honors Program, and the winners are recognized both at the Recognition Ceremony and at the Commendation Ceremony, held during spring commencement weekend.

In addition to the student scholarships and fellowships, three awards were also presented to faculty and staff members Julie Klaus, Steve Duck, and Josh Hutchison for their excellent service in Honors advising and campus support.

Between award presentations, the ceremony featured the University of Iowa’s show choir, which performed a compilation of Bruno Mars and the musical Aida, as well as remarks from student and Fellows Project winner Elaine Mou, who spoke about Honors students and their potential to live many successful lives.

A reception followed the ceremony, during which students, faculty, parents, and friends enjoyed refreshments and conversation, learning more about the Honors Program scholarship and fellowship winners, their achievements, and their plans for the future.

The full program, including scholar profiles, may be downloaded from the Honors website at http://honors.uiowa.edu/uirrecognitionceremony.

Following the annual recognition event for scholarship winners, students, family, and faculty socialize in the atrium of the Blank Honors Center.
EXPERIENCING SWEDEN
An Honorable Expedition
By Emma Husar

Any internship or study abroad experience can be turned into an honors experience by adding an independent inquiry project. It all begins with desire and enthusiasm, such as that demonstrated by honors student Kelsey Frisk.

As a major in Interdepartmental Studies with an emphasis on Global Health and an interest in Sustainability, Frisk chose to conduct research this summer on the health of the Sami people in Northern Sweden for her experiential learning project.

“The lifestyles of the Sami people have dramatically changed within the past 50-100 years from being mostly nomadic with their herds, to now colonizing and allowing their herds to migrate on their own,” Frisk said. “I will be conducting interviews in a village to assess if this lifestyle change has negatively impacted their physical or mental health.”

Conducting research in Sweden has allowed Frisk to get in touch with her family history. “The basis for my decision to study in Sweden is because of my Swedish heritage,” she said. “I grew up surrounded by old Swedish traditions, holidays, celebrations, and traditional foods, and my interest continues to flourish.”

Apart from her specific topic of inquiry, Frisk has learned much from interacting with community members in her town as well as with other international students. This has led her to a new understanding about the benefit of conducting her research abroad.

“The most beneficial aspect of my trip so far is being exposed to and understanding the different ways and methods of tackling problems and issues from many different countries,” Frisk said. “I believe having this varied background allows me to think critically from different perspectives, which I might not have been exposed to without my research project or study abroad program.”

After her return, Frisk will discuss the results of her research in a poster presentation at the Fall Undergraduate Research Festival.

As part of the Honors Program’s commitment to experiential learning, Honors Experiential Learning Director Andy Willard works with students such as Frisk to identify or develop honors projects as part of their study abroad or internship experiences. Willard looks forward to helping more students get involved outside the classroom, whether in research or internships, abroad or at home. Interested students may email andrew-willard@uiowa.edu.

Kelsey Frisk, studying abroad in Sweden, on a visit to the Baltic Sea
TREVOR A. DAVIS
2014 Briggs Award Recipient

To celebrate the excellent academic achievement of the graduating senior class, each year the Briggs Award is given to the student with the highest grade point average in the Honors Society Phi Eta Sigma. The society, which inducts members as freshmen, strives to encourage and reward academic excellence. For his hard work and dedication to his school work, Trevor A. Davis is the recipient of the 2014 Briggs Award.

Davis is a Human Physiology major and a Psychology minor on the Pre-Medicine track, and he has had many experiences outside of the classroom to help him get more involved in his field. Over the past four years at the University of Iowa, Davis has served various roles on the Medicus Executive Board, has become the president of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, has been a member of the Hawkeye Soccer Club, and has been a volunteer, mentor, and a member of the Volunteer Services Student Leader Board at the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics (UIHC). In addition to these experiences, Davis has been a member of the Honors Society Phi Eta Sigma, he has participated in research that studied ovarian cancer, and he will be involved with a research fellowship in the Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery at the UIHC this summer.

Originally from Nevada, Iowa, Davis knew since high school that he wanted to get involved with medicine. The unfortunate passing of his mother from cancer prompted his interest in the medical field, as he was able to see the many opportunities and rewarding experiences that medicine has to offer.

“During those few months I had the chance to meet numerous doctors and was moved by not only their kindness and compassion toward me, but also by the way they were utterly devoted to providing my mom with the best treatment possible while making her feel comfortable,” Davis stated. “These experiences taught me a lot about how to most effectively interact with and treat patients.”

After having battled cancer himself in 2011, Davis views this struggle as a learning experience as he now believes that he can overcome any obstacle in his way.

“Finally, after months of dedication and hard work, I began to feel even better than I ever had in my life,” Davis stated.

“My diagnosis was not going to stop me from practicing medicine. If anything, it allowed me the opportunity to learn more about myself and the willpower I possess.”

Davis will continue carrying out his passion for medicine at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore this fall where he hopes to become just as helpful and supportive as the doctors that he has encountered.
Honors Primetime
Engaging First-Year Students

By Julia Davis

As a new crop of freshmen flock to the University of Iowa throughout the summer for orientation, the Honors Program staff will be working hard to put together the sixth annual Honors Primetime.

Primetime, which started in 2009, is meant to introduce incoming first-year honors students to collegiate learning and prepare them for the upcoming semester.

“Most students aren’t studying at a college level during the summer, and it can be beneficial to get that love of learning restarted and launched into place the week before the semester starts,” Honors Advising Director Holly Blosser Yoder said.

Honors Primetime is composed of many different three-and-a-half day workshops, with topics ranging from cultural arts to politics to biological sciences, and fields in between. While some students learn about the history of the Beatles, others are busy blowing up trash cans to demonstrate the principles behind volcanoes.

Upon registering for Honors Primetime, students select areas of interest. From these selections, they are placed in sections that match their interests.

One aspect of the program that students in the past have appreciated is that it provides participants with the chance to move onto campus a week before the semester begins. This early move-in is convenient, and provides an opportunity to familiarize oneself with campus residence halls and buildings.

“Primetime provides a chance to get comfortable on campus before everyone else arrives, and related to that, you develop friendships within Honors,” Blosser Yoder said.

For the past two summers, Dr. Thomas Keegan has participated in Honors Primetime as a faculty member. Keegan will be the keynote speaker for the opening event in addition to teaching a class again this year. Keegan’s class is designed to introduce and integrate new students into the Iowa City community by having students go out and explore the city, and then write a blog about what they find. The blog is open to the public and is designed to help other incoming freshman become familiar with the city.

“The choir workshop performs during the 2013 Primetime showcase.”
of Iowa,” Keegan said. “Rather, you are students in Iowa City. And I think that that distinction is worth making from the outset.”

Marissa Turner was in Keegan’s class in 2013. She looks back on the experience as a great start to her freshman year.

“I learned a lot about Iowa City, but I think more importantly, I made connections with people who I never would have met otherwise,” Turner said. “I am still friends with a lot of the people that were in my Honors Primetime workshop.”

This opportunity for students to meet peers from many different backgrounds and majors is another benefit that comes from participating in Primetime.

“The experience gives students a good network of people who share their academic values, regardless of what field they’re in,” Blosser Yoder said. “Also, oftentimes the workshop serves the purpose of giving them friends across majors, so they’re not just relating to people who are all English majors, or all engineering majors, or all pre-med majors.”

Hannah Benton was another participant of the 2013 Primetime workshop. Benton was part of the choral workshop which, over the course of three days, put together a program of freedom songs—choral music promoting social change—and then performed them for all other Primetime classes at the end of the program. Benton says that seeing the reactions to the group’s songs was one of the highlights of her Primetime experience.

“The fact that my group had only known each other for three days, and we were able to come together and tackle some advanced choral music was crazy. It was such a cool thing to be a part of,” Benton said. “And it was really powerful to see how our performance was so well-received by everyone at the end.”

According to Keegan, one of the most important advantages that the workshop provides is allowing students to understand the role that faculty can play in their education.

“It’s important that [the students] recognize that faculty are human, and approachable, and out of that, will take classes with them, or will approach other faculty members with the same expectation, that these people are there to work with them and help foster their talents and abilities, and not simply have a ‘you write, I grade it, that’s the end of the relationship’ kind of thing,” Keegan said. “I think that Primetime serves that role to kind of foster a more robust understanding of the student-teaching dynamic in higher education.”

Professor Thomas Keegan sends students out to learn from the community around them.

The experiential aspect of the program is one of its main draws, in that students are doing hands-on projects and experiments in order to learn about their subjects. For this reason, many leave having learned skills that will serve them well during their upcoming years at the University of Iowa.

“Learning is everywhere in constant, and the University of Iowa is one way in which student’s learning is developed, but they’re part of a much larger community, and part of a much larger lifelong project called learning which takes place both within and beyond the classroom,” Keegan said. “So I love Primetime for that, and I see Primetime as an opportunity to help introduce students to that concept.”
Goldwater Recognizes Two Iowa Students
By Kelly Thornburg

Liam Hovey, a student in the University of Iowa Honors Program and the UI College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), has been awarded a 2014 Goldwater Scholarship. The Goldwater Scholarship was established by Congress in 1986 in honor of Senator Barry M. Goldwater, to challenge and support outstanding young scholar researchers who are pursuing careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The Goldwater is the premier undergraduate award of its type in these fields.

Hovey, of Stillwater, Minnesota, is a junior majoring in Chemistry and Physics with a minor in Mathematics. Hovey is currently conducting research on calcium signaling and ion channel regulation in the Shea laboratory in the Department of Biochemistry at the Carver College of Medicine.

Dr. Madeline Shea, Hovey’s research mentor, was “thrilled to hear news of Liam’s award,” but wasn’t surprised. “Liam has the ability to make significant contributions to original and independent research in the United States. The Goldwater Foundation is making a wise investment in a young scientist who possesses the passion and skill required to work at the edge of innovative and cross-disciplinary fields.”

Hovey, who will receive up to $7500 in funding for tuition, fees, books, room and board, plans to pursue a doctoral degree and perform research in structural biology and electrophysiology with an emphasis in pharmacological applications.

The Goldwater Foundation also recognized UI sophomore Alexandra Bartlett, with an honorable mention. Bartlett of Clive, Iowa, is pursuing degrees in Chemical Engineering and Finance. She is conducting research with Dr. Allan Guymon that utilizes polymers to create biocompatible scaffolds that allow the differentiation of stem cells to aid in the treatment of age related macular degeneration. She plans to continue exploring nanotechnology throughout her undergraduate career and beyond with the intention of promoting cross-disciplinary solutions to address genetic diseases.

Hovey and Bartlett worked with UI Honors Program Director of Scholar Development Kelly Thornburg, the University of Iowa’s Undergraduate Fellowships Committee and a supportive community of faculty and research mentors during the development of their application materials.

Selected on the basis of academic merit, this year’s Goldwater Scholars were chosen from a field of 1,166 mathematics, science, and engineering students nominated by colleges and universities nationwide. One hundred seventy-two of the Scholars are men, 111 are women, and virtually all intend to obtain a Ph.D. as their degree objective. Twenty-two Scholars are mathematics majors, 191 are science and related majors, 63 are majoring in engineering, and 7 are computer science majors. Many of the Scholars have dual majors in a variety of mathematics, science, engineering, and computer disciplines.
Faculty Awards

By Emily Szymanski

Sarah Vigmostad, an assistant professor in the Department of Biomedical Engineering, and Dennis Maki, a professor in the Department of Rehabilitation & Counselor Education in the College of Education, earned faculty awards from two of the University of Iowa’s honor societies this spring. Each year, the James N. Murray Award and the Marion L. Huit Faculty Award are presented to two of the most outstanding faculty members at the University of Iowa. Two of the university’s honors societies, Omicron Delta Kappa and Mortar Board, present the awards.

Ridhi Madia, representing Mortar Board Honor Society, presented the Murray award to Dr. Vigmostad at the April 24, 2014 Finkbine Dinner in the Iowa Memorial Union. Vigmostad, an Iowa alumna, received her Ph.D. in biomedical engineering in 2007, her M.S. in biomedical engineering in 2003, and her B.S. in biomedical engineering in 2001. Joining the College of Engineering in 2008, Vigmostad’s teaching innovations have had a powerful impact on how engineering is taught, as described by her nominators, who cited her use of inquiry-based learning, flipped classrooms, and technology-integrated learning environments (TILE), as well as her mentoring of graduate and undergraduate students in laboratory research. Dr. Vigmostad was nominated by David G. Wilder, professor of biomedical engineering, with letters of support from students and faculty.

Yuejia “Mandy” Teng, representing Omicron Delta Kappa, presented the Huit award to Dr. Maki at the dinner. Maki received his Ph. D. in rehabilitation counseling psychology from the University of Wisconsin, in 1979, his M. A. in rehabilitation counseling from Michigan State University in 1975, and his B.A. in psychology from Michigan State University in 1970. Over the course of an almost 35-year career as a counselor educator, he has made substantial contributions to his profession and to the lives of students, according to nominator Vilia M. Tarvydas, professor and department chair of the Department of Rehabilitation & Counselor Education. His nomination cited his priority for student-faculty relationships as well as initiatives resulting in the establishment of the Office on Graduate Teaching Excellence, the i-Fellows Program, The Iowa Center on Assistive Technology for Education and Research, and a mentoring program for African-American doctoral students in rehabilitation counseling.

Presenter Ridhi Madia served as Murray Award Chair for the Iowa chapter of Mortar Board, the premier national honor society recognizing college seniors for superior achievement in scholarship, leadership and service. She graduated from the University of Iowa May 16, 2014, earning a B.A. in Political Science and a B.A. in International Studies.

Presenter Yuejia Teng served as the Huit Chair for the Iowa chapter of Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK). Membership in ODK is granted to students who are juniors or seniors on the basis of academic achievement and demonstrated leadership. Teng is a 2014 graduate of the University of Iowa, earning a B.S. in Psychology, University Honors, With Highest Distinction, and Honors in Psychology.
In the spring semester of 1995, plans were underway for creating the first Honors Rhetoric section at the University of Iowa. The course’s title was “Prophecy and Politics,” taught by Professors Jay Holstein and former Honors Program Director David Klemm. While this course was taught in a lecture setting, graduate students met with their honors sections twice a week, and these discussions were aimed at giving the students a challenging but stimulating environment. In regards to the new format, Klemm stated, “It will feature great readings, lectures, and diverse points of view. This course will become the starting point for Honors at the University of Iowa.”

David Klemm, director of the Honors Program in 1995, envisioned Honors Rhetoric as "the starting point" for Honors at Iowa.
Welcoming the New Editor
Virginia Davis

The 2014-2015 academic year will bring a new member to the Honors Newsletter team. While the former editor of the newsletter will be spending the year studying abroad, incoming senior Virginia Davis will be taking over this position. From Orange City, Iowa, Virginia came to the University of Iowa to study English and American Studies. With her passion for literature and writing, the Honors Program is excited to welcome her to the newsletter.

Would you like to know more about the new editor? Check out the questions below that Virginia answered!

What made you decide to come to the University of Iowa?
I came to the University of Iowa for NAASE (National Academy of Arts, Science, and Engineering), a scholarship program for students who graduate from high school early. It also didn’t hurt that Iowa’s English and creative writing programs are some of the best in the nation.

What would you like to do after graduating from Iowa?
There are so many things I’d love to do that I have yet to decide what my plan for post-graduation will be. I’m interested in the publishing industry, but I’ll have to see where this next year brings me in terms of career goals.

What has been your favorite class that you’ve taken here so far? Why?
Both fiction classes I’ve taken (Fiction Writing and the Undergraduate Writers Workshop Fiction) have been awesome. I love reading the work of my classmates because no matter how many times you take a class like this, the writing is always going to be different.

What is your favorite book? Author? Literary period?
The Westing Game has been my favorite book since childhood. John Green books also never fail to keep me entertained. I’m not sure I have a favorite literary period, though. I’ll read anything if it’s got an exciting or interesting enough plot.

In addition to the Honors Program, what other organizations have you been involved in?
This past year, I did intramural tennis (there were only three in the tournament bracket, though, so it was a bit short-lived). I’ve also volunteered at the Ronald McDonald House in the past. And this spring and upcoming academic year, I am the executive editor for Iconic, a new digital lifestyle magazine at Iowa (our first issue will be coming out shortly—check it out!).

What has been your biggest challenge in college and how did you conquer it?
Homesickness was a huge challenge for me, especially since I’m not able to visit home very often. It helped to be able to email and talk with my mom frequently, but I also found that having things to do (like being involved in Honors) helped relieve some of that stress.

How do you balance school, work and extracurricular activities?
I budget my time down to the minute and try my best not to procrastinate. Once I’ve got something written in my planner (a paper to finish, for example), I make sure that I finish it on the day I’ve written it in—no cheating. It also helps that I have a relatively flexible work schedule, so if I’ve got a busy week, I can almost always count on my co-workers to pick up some hours.

What has been your favorite honors activity or memory so far?
Last year I volunteered at the Children’s Hospital with a group from Honors. We met some great kids, and I spent most of the time running after a kid riding a tricycle through the halls of the hospital.

What summer plans do you have?
None! I suspect I’ll be doing a little of everything this summer. I’ll be back in my hometown probably doing a lot of gardening, reading, and napping. I’m looking forward to a break, though I’m sure by the second week, I’ll be ready to take a road trip to get out of the house.
Aly Olson Wins Miss Iowa

Honors is proud of Aly Olson, the newly-crowned Miss Iowa. Olson, whose first name is Alysa, completed her third year at Iowa as an honors student and vocal performance major before winning the Miss Iowa title in June. She will spend the 2014-2015 school year away to tour as Miss Iowa.

In addition to serving as an Honors Student Staff member, Olson sang in two a cappella groups, the UI choirs and operas, and worked at the University of Iowa Foundation through the Student Philanthropy Group.

Olson’s work for Honors included programming for the Honors and Honors Research Living Learning Communities in Daum House and Centerstone. As an Honors student, Olson participated in Primetime, contracted a course, and spent many hours in the Blank Honors Center (BHC). Last summer, as part of her University Honors curriculum, she interned with a performing arts summer intensive in North Carolina.

Olson’s platform for her work as Miss Iowa will be Celebrating Diversity: Getting the Whole Story. She hopes to promote tolerance and equality through advocating for quality education for all children.

Miss Iowa Aly Olson is well-known at Honors
WRITER BIOGRAPHIES

Virginia Davis is a senior majoring in English and American Studies from Orange City, Iowa. She is an Honors student staff member, a writing fellow, and the executive editor of Iconic, a new digital lifestyle magazine on campus. She plans to go into the publishing industry following graduation.

Currently a sophomore at the University of Iowa, Emma Husar is majoring in English. She has been writing for the Honors Newsletter all year and hopes to do so in the future. She would like to give a shout out to Emily Szymanski, and thank her for her diligence and dedication to not only the Honors Newsletter, but to her love and passion for writing and editing, it has been a pleasure to work with her. This summer, Emma is working as an Honors Ambassador for Honors Iowa Orientation, and traveling to Europe and Israel. In her spare time, Emily likes to read, knit, and play with her kitten child, Orpheus.

Arianna Chronis is a Pre-Law junior from the Chicago suburbs who is majoring in English with a certificate in Medieval Studies and a minor in Sociology. She is Executive Advisor to the Marketing Chair of the Dance Club and Membership Chair of the Swing Dance Club.

Emily Levine is from Washington D.C., and is a rising senior majoring in Violin Performance and English, with a Latin minor. Emily plans on writing her English Thesis in Fall 2014, and then continue on to graduate school for Music History and Archival Sciences. This summer, Emily is working as an Honors Ambassador for Honors Iowa Orientation, and traveling to Europe and Israel. In her spare time, Emily likes to read, knit, and play with her kitten child, Orpheus.

Cade Scott is a junior English major from Montgomery, Texas with aspirations to one day publish a book.

Chelsea Wing is an English major entering her junior year at the University of Iowa. She is a member of the Creative Writing Track at Iowa and was published last year in Iowa’s “Ink Lit Mag.” Wing hails from rainy Seattle, Washington, where she has yet to encounter a sparkly vampire.

Emily Szymanski is an English major and French minor who will be spending the upcoming school year in Montpellier, France. She was the 2013-2014 editor of the newsletter and Co-President of the Swing Dance Club. She looks forward to pursuing a career as a copyeditor after graduation.

Julia Davis is currently a sophomore at Iowa majoring in Journalism and Sustainability. She wrote for the Daily Iowan during the past year. In her free time, she loves exploring downtown Iowa City and going to random readings and open mics.

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