

Dear Prospective Student,

I can't imagine how difficult it has been for you to juggle finishing up high school with looking ahead to college during this pandemic, but I think it's fantastic that you're considering the University of Iowa! The university offers so many amazing experiences, but the Honors Program is a smaller, more close-knit community with its own opportunities.

My name is Amy Zine, and I'm a sophomore, so it wasn't that long ago that I was in your shoes. I'm from Aurora, Illinois, an outer suburb of Chicago, and I'm majoring in biology with a minor in psychology. I decided to go to the University of Iowa early on, but it wasn't until talking with honors staff and students that I decided to commit to the honors program as well. As a second year, I haven't regretted my decision to join this community for a second!

I knew I made the right decision when I arrived on campus a week early for my Primetime workshop. Primetime is an honors only opportunity for freshman that allows you to move to campus early, take a short and fun class for 1 semester hour of honors credit, and meet other honors freshmen. My workshop was on map-making, a field I had no previous experience in, with Professor Bond. I never would have thought to pick the subject for myself, but I had a blast learning a new skill and about a new profession in a small and relaxed setting. By the end of the week, I had dug through decades of university archival photos, visited the special collections section of the library, walked all over campus photographing and geotagging buildings and sites, and met a group of people who are my best friends to this day. Of all the opportunities available through the Honors Program, I highly recommend participating in Primetime for the chance to explore a new field and get accustomed to campus.

As a freshman, chances are you'll be taking a lot of gen-ed classes in large lecture halls with hundreds of other students, which can make it difficult to connect with professors on a personal level. The honors first year seminars for freshman offer students a chance to get to know a professor in a classroom setting instead of in a lecture hall. These classes are mandatory and worth 1 semester hour of honors credit, and there are so many options to choose from. I'm a science major, so I decided to take one on travel writing because I knew I wouldn't have many English-type classes in my future. The class met once a week in a small classroom where we could all sit in a circle and have conversations and make connections. The class was in no way

designed to layer on extra work, it was made for self-exploration and reflection on our own experiences.

There are so many experiences through the honors college that I'm looking forward to like studying abroad and undergraduate research, but I'm so grateful for everything I was able to do during my first year. Being in the honors college has given me the opportunity to take charge of my education and create a path for myself that addresses my goals while allowing me to surround myself with students and staff that are as dedicated to learning as I am. I have loved every minute of my experience in the University of Iowa Honors Program, and I highly recommend joining our community.

Sincerely,

Amy Zine