

Dear Prospective Student,

Hi there! My name's Klaudia. If you're reading this, I'm sure you've come to this letter for some feeling of college-visit-normalcy in this weird time we are living in. I'm sorry you won't be able to experience a normal campus visit this spring. However, even though you can't come visit the University of Iowa in person right now, I'm going to do my best to tell you all about what it's like to be an Honors student on our campus!

But first, a little about me: I'm currently a junior majoring in Neuroscience and minoring in Global Health Studies with the goal of one day becoming a doctor. My family lives in Des Moines right now, but we've also lived in South Dakota and Colorado. I came to the University of Iowa because it's close to home and well known for its pre-med program and the Carver College of Medicine. For me, coming to the University of Iowa was a no-brainer. However, my decision to join the Honors Program was a little more difficult; I had some concerns coming to college, as you may too. I was worried that being an Honors student would be too difficult in combination with a rigorous pre-med program. I was concerned that my grades would suffer. I wasn't sure if I would make friends or mesh well with the honors community. On top of all of my Honors-related worries, I was also worried (terrified) that I would have to learn how football works. Thankfully, all of my worries (except that last one) were put to rest.

Honors at Iowa, unlike honors programs and AP classes that you may have taken in high school, is NOT designed to make college classes more difficult! As our honors advisor Holly Blosser-Yoder always says, college classes are already hard – there is no need for a harder version! In my opinion, Honors classes actually make learning easier. Honors classes often share the same syllabus as a standard version of the course, give the same exams, and are graded on the same curve – the biggest difference between Honors courses and standard courses is not the material, but the way in which it is taught! Honors students often enjoy smaller class sizes, classes taught by professors instead of graduate teaching assistants, and a discussion-based class structure. Working with students who are like-minded and happy to participate, as well as having a closer relationship with professional staff, creates an environment that facilitates learning and makes the Honors experience at Iowa unique.

A part of the Honors Program I love is the Primetime experience that is only offered to incoming Honors freshmen. This three-day workshop is held the week before classes begin and all the other freshmen move onto campus. You fill out an online survey of your interests and get matched to a workshop; I happened to get one about GPS and mapping systems, but other workshops included making trash volcanos and creating a giant bird wing! The things that all workshops have in common are a passionate professor, relaxed atmosphere, and a great opportunity to get to know other brand-new Honors students. I made friends during Primetime that I still get coffee with today!

Choosing to be an Honors student has been one of the best decisions I've made at the University of Iowa. The things I've learned, people I've met, and ways in which I've grown are invaluable to me. I know this is a stressful time (as if the college decision process wasn't already stressful enough), and I want to help you and make sure you have all of your questions answered. If you need anything or want any advice, feel free to contact me or any of the other ambassadors. We would all be more than happy to (virtually) meet you!

Klaudia Golebiewski