

Dear student,

My name is Minela Ikanovic and I am a sophomore studying Ethics & Public Policy and Philosophy here at the University of Iowa. I am originally from Waterloo, Iowa which is just a short drive north from Iowa City, making it easy to keep in touch with my family back home. I grew up always getting excited about school and enjoying (almost) every minute of it, so I knew that I wanted to make my college experience feel the same way; exciting, fresh, and adventurous. I chose Iowa because I experienced all three of those feelings when I met other prospective students, the amazing faculty, but most importantly the Honors ambassador students who taught me all about the Honors program.

As a second year Honors student I am lucky enough to have experienced all the different opportunities the Honors program at Iowa offers. The first program the Honors program at Iowa has is for incoming freshman students, and it was by far my favorite Honors experience. Committed Iowa students are able to move in two-three days early for Honors Primetime. Honors Primetime not only allows students to explore Iowa City, get to know the campus, and find your classes before all other students move in, but you are able to take any class of your choice for the three days you are there. For my Primetime, I learned all about the culture of Brazil, the rich history the country has, and of course, how to dance the salsa. At the end of Primetime, all Honors students present what they learned to the rest of the 100+ Primetime students – I got to get up on stage in front of complete strangers and teach them how to dance! It was the coolest experience and it allowed me to create lasting memories with some of my new and forever friends.

Another experience I had was living in Daum Hall, the freshman Honors dorm. Living in Daum was like living in any other hall, but we all had Honors in common which brought us all closer together. We would meet up for study sessions, have movie nights with our entire floors, play trivia against other floors, learn about all the different majors people were studying, and understand that school was important to everyone there, but so was having fun and making our college experience the best it possibly could be.

Most importantly, the Honors program allowed me to grow as a student and push myself to find what I was genuinely passionate about. Last semester, I was able to conduct research with the U.S State Department on political science issues. This opportunity would not have been possible if I wouldn't have met Professor Brian Lai, the head of the Political Science Department at Iowa. He was my professor for two Honors courses and he introduced me to the idea of research, thus getting me involved with something as big as the State Department. This opportunity has opened up many doors for further research, internship opportunities, and finding my career path.

The University of Iowa has a lot to offer, especially through the Honors at Iowa program. Many of the opportunities I have experienced has been through people I have met through Honors, and I could not have been more grateful for those experiences and what they have taught me. I hope you enjoy your college search and find the right fit for you just like how I found mine at the University of Iowa.

Bleed black and gold,  
Minela Ikanovic