

Dear Prospective Iowa Students,

Picking where you want to spend the next four years of your life can be quite intimidating but I can assure you that the Honors Program is a spectacular addition while attending the University of Iowa.

My name is Ian Smith and I am a second-year student in the Honors Program here at Iowa. I am from Indianola, Iowa which is located slightly south of Des Moines. Most recently I have decided to major in Chemistry while pursuing a Pre-Medicine track. While most Honors Ambassadors joined the program during high-school, I actually joined during my freshman year at Iowa. Although I joined a bit later, I had amazing experiences with the program in just a few semesters.

I have heard from many of my fellow peers that Honors Primetime and their Honors First-Year Seminars were some of their favorite memories during their freshman year at Iowa. Honors Primetime allows for students to move in the week before classes start and participate in special hands-on learning while also receiving 1 semester hour of Honors Coursework Credit. This early move-in allows for Honors Students to make special connections with fellow students and faculty. Personally, I had a tough first night when I arrived at college because I didn't know anyone and I was away from my family for the first time. Honors Primetime is a fantastic way to create friendships with like-minded students and to get a headstart in college.

The Honors First-Year Seminars are also an amazing opportunity for Honors Students. These seminars are small classes that allow for intimate learning with the professor and other students while being low stress and entertaining. One of my friends had her favorite class where she learned about dinosaurs just for fun!

One of my favorite experiences with the Honors Program was living at Daum and meeting life-long friends. Daum is exclusively for freshmen in the Honors Program. Living there allowed for me to form study groups with fellow students who had the same interests as me. These students are also some of the most diverse I have ever been around. My town had few people of color so it was a terrific learning experience with people from different cultures, religions, backgrounds, and languages.

Another experience stems from Honors Credit with classes. A student can earn the credits by either creating an Honors Contract with a professor in any class or joining a class specific for an Honors section. One of my Honors sections was with Principles of Chemistry and I loved it. Additionally, I took an Honors exclusive class over politics in films where we watched movies like *Gladiator*, All four of *The Hunger Games*, *The Dark*

Knight Rises, *Tailor of Panama*, and *Lincoln* in which we analyzed republics. These classes allowed for me to get to know my professor better since these sections involved around 20 students instead of hundreds. It also gave me the ability to make connections with other students and excel in my classes easier. Furthermore, Honors exclusive sections greatly helped my presentation skills since I did fun projects such as one over nuclear energy and another over the sequencing of fly genes.

Looking towards the future, I plan on getting involved in research through the Honors Program. This will allow for me to gain experiential credit that is required to graduate from Iowa with Honors. Experiential credit is hands-on learning that is different from Honors Credits because it is associated outside of classwork and on your own. Other ways can include study abroad, internships, teaching assistantships, service learning, and more!

My time at Iowa and in the Honors Program has been life changing. It may not seem that way when you haven't experienced it yourself, but being involved with the Honors Program is truly remarkable. There are endless learning opportunities that push you to do your best along with supportive peers and faculty. I am incredibly proud to be in the Honors Program. Go Hawks!

Sincerely, Ian Smith

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