

Honors

SPRING 2018
UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Newsletter



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On the Cover:

In honor of our upcoming 60th anniversary celebration, this undated circa 1989 photo pictures a group of Collegiate Scholars assembled outside Shambaugh House. Known as Honors at Iowa Scholars since 2015, this highest recognition for outstanding graduating honors students is awarded each spring. We briefly profile the 2018 scholars in this issue.

Word from the Director

Art L. Spisak

Greetings to our Honors Program students, faculty, alumni, and friends as we reflect on spring 2018 and look to the coming academic year.

THE HONORS PROGRAM'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY

A good part of the content of this issue of the newsletter is related to our upcoming 60th Anniversary Celebration. From my experience as part of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) and also as an NCHC program reviewer, I can tell you that sixty years is quite old for an honors program. There are only a few that have been around longer. As a result of our long-established presence, we now have around 13,000 honors alumni. We're pleased to have sent that many high-ability persons into the world, and we're certain they have made improvements. You'll see below a brief overview of the history of the Honors Program—many changes over the years, but always with the primary focus on the students.

We owe the existence of the Honors Program at the University of Iowa to Samuel Rhodes Dunlap, its founder in 1958 and its long-time director—from 1958 until he retired from the university in 1981. In this issue you'll get to learn something about this highly-accomplished yet modest and unassuming person who not only founded and directed the Honors Program, but who is still supporting honors students today through a very generous legacy he left to the program—namely, an endowment gift we have used over the years to award hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships to honors students. Indeed, I'm certain that some of you reading this newsletter were recipients of an Honors Program Rhodes Dunlap scholarship.

HONORS PROFILES

Also in this issue you'll see three profiles. These will give you a view into three of the four major working parts of the Honors Program today (honors staff is the fourth piece, although not profiled in this newsletter issue). First, we have our supporters in the community, such as David Hamod, an Honors Program alumnus and member of the Honors Program Advisory Board, who years ago created an honors scholarship in commemoration of his mother. Mr. Hamod is the current President and CEO of the National US-Arab Chamber of Commerce, a pivotal position in today's world.

Next is a profile of one of our Honors Program faculty, Dr. Rebecca Blair, Rhetoric Department. Dr. Blair has special expertise that connects perfectly with one of the objectives of the Honors Program mission statement, to facilitate self-discovery and self-authorship. Our honors faculty can have a powerful influence on our students, as readers who have had the college experience can attest. I myself changed my major and career trajectory (from engineering to classics) because of an inspirational faculty member. Dr. Blair helps our students to make that same type of connection—to their strengths and the development of personal goals.

Finally, with the third profile we feature Valerie Drake, one of our most accomplished and involved honors students. Her interests, you'll see, are unusual: although from a rural background, she's studied Korean, spent time in South Korea, and is also headed to Moscow this summer to study the Russian language and culture for two months at an intensive level. Is she then a language major? Only half right: she's an international studies and Russian major, who after graduation plans to attend law school, which she sees as the culmination



Dr. Art L. Spisak

of everything she's been studying. Valerie typifies (although in a very unique way) the wonderfully rich complexity of our honors students.

These profiles give you a three-quarter view of life here at the University of Iowa Honors Program. We will profile one of our Honors staff in an upcoming issue.

As always, please feel free to contact me via email (art-spisak@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, PhD
Director, UI Honors Program
Immediate Past President, National Collegiate Honors Council

Schwarzman Scholarship Recipient

Rachel Zuckerman

University of Iowa graduate Rachel Zuckerman has been selected as a 2019 Schwarzman Scholar. As part of the program, Zuckerman will pursue a master's degree at Tsinghua University in Beijing, one of China's most prestigious universities.

Each of the 142 Schwarzman Scholars chosen from a pool of over 4000 applicants demonstrates exemplary leadership qualities and the potential to understand and bridge cultural and political differences. They will live in Beijing for a year of study and cultural immersion, attending lectures, traveling, and developing a better understanding of China.

The Schwarzman Scholars Program was inspired by the Rhodes Scholarship, which was founded in 1902 to promote international understanding and peace, and is designed to prepare young leaders for the challenges of the 21st century and beyond.

Zuckerman, 22, graduated in May 2017 with highest distinction and University Honors, earning degrees in political science and journalism, as well as a certificate in cultural competence. As an undergraduate, she conducted research on parental leave policies at Big Ten institutions and turned her departmental honors thesis into an opportunity to advocate for more generous paid leave for university professional staff.

"Rachel is a true teacher and leader, working constantly to ensure that every person she is responsible for has an equal chance of success," said Kajsa Dalrymple, associate professor, UI School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Fueled by her commitment to increasing citizen participation among women, minorities, and young people, Zuckerman represented over 24,000 of her peers as Student Body President and led the UI Student Government to make progress on issues including diversity and inclusion, food and housing security, mental health, and civic engagement.

"Rachel's leadership is informed by relationships with the individuals who will be most affected by a shift (or lack of one) in policy as well as the actors who will be responsible for enforcement," said Kelly Thornburg, Director of Scholar Development, UI Honors. "From elected state officials and organizational advocates to our sororities and fraternities to the janitorial staff in our student union, Rachel made a special mark, creating clearer channels for communication and cultivating real opportunities for shared investment."

After her year at Tsinghua University, Zuckerman intends to return to the US and her home state of Michigan to help strengthen the emerging relationship between Detroit and China.

"I am thrilled that Rachel has earned this well-deserved honor, and am proud of her significant achievements here at the UI that have led to this recognition," said UI President Bruce Harreld. "Rachel is already an accomplished young scholar, leader, and advocate, and she is ready for this extraordinary challenge. Having worked with Rachel directly at the UI, I saw firsthand how effectively she puts her passion for improving people's lives to work for those in need. Through her Schwarzman experience, I have no doubt that Rachel will continue to improve people's lives across the globe and strengthen international ties."



Photo submitted by Rachel Zuckerman

"I am beyond humbled to have been given this once in a lifetime opportunity," Zuckerman said. "It would not have been possible without the supportive and encouraging community of faculty, staff, administrators, and students at the University of Iowa."

A Brief History of the Honors Program

Themes Throughout the Decades

By Emily Creery

One by one we arrived in the multi-purpose classroom on the fourth floor of the Blank Honors Center, curious about this new honors writing internship we had signed up for. Waiting for our instructors to start our first class, little did the seven of us know that we would be embarking on a fascinating journey through the history of the Honors Program. As we picked up our pens and dug into the past, we learned about the roles various people played and how the Honors Program has developed over the decades. The students of this honors writing course—Grace, Sunny, Alice, Ajla, Anna, Abi, and myself—have spent the semester uncovering history, and we’d like to share some of our findings with all of you.

In October of 1960, just two years after the Honors Program was established, the first Honors Newsletter was published. Although it was no more than a couple of paragraphs announcing the construction of a study room in Schaeffer Hall, this first volume would be the trailblazer for the work Honors Newsletter writers do today. As the years progressed, the newsletter became a place where student experiences were featured, inspiring others and informing readers of the possibilities available to them in the world of Honors. By conducting research, travelling internationally, and providing leadership and innovation on campus, pioneering students opened the doors to the future. These glimpses into the past revealed that the desire to dive into the resources and opportunities the university offers is nothing new to Honors at Iowa students.

From the very beginning, Honors has continually worked to improve the program. In the early 1960s, honors coursework was introduced as an option for students. Former Honors Newsletter editor John Fink remembers the excitement and hunger students had for honors-specific course sections. “I took as many as I could!” John said in a recent interview. “All of my friends were in Honors and these classes allowed passionate people to be, well, passionate.” Therefore, long before the overhaul of the Honors Program 50 years later—in which honors students are required to take at least 12 semester hours of honors courses—students were eager to be surrounded by like-minded scholars and engage in professor-led discussions.

Along with challenging coursework, community has been one of the most enduring themes of the Honors Program. In 2008, these two themes were brought together in an innovative way when the

University of Iowa introduced the Honors Primetime program. Through this initiative, incoming first-years have the opportunity to take part in a four-day experience filled with scholarship, hands-on learning, and student comradery.

In addition to this, practices that foster a sense of belonging have been frequently present across the decades. An early example appears in 1966, when an all-Honors Christmas party was advertised in the Honors Newsletter. This kind of event served as a warm welcome, bringing together students and faculty, and often contributed to the establishment of lasting relationships. In the 1980s, student leaders established Associated Iowa Honors Students (AIHS) with the goal of supporting a strong sense of community within the program. AIHS provided an organizational structure for honors students to connect with one another, while also broadening their learning outside of the classroom. Jeff Stein, who served as editor of the Honors Newsletter in 1985,

“This community will . . . encourage you to be the best version of yourself.”

remarked on the community aspect of Honors in a recent interview. To him, Honors at Iowa meant that “there are other people like you and that it’s okay to be smart, for this community will not only respect that, but encourage you to be the best version of yourself.”

One of the program’s most-loved locations was the Shambaugh House. First opened in 1982, this former home of a prominent faculty member became an Honors haven. Recognizing the importance of a centralized ‘base’ to develop a community, the University of Iowa eventually transitioned Daum into a residence hall for first-year honors students. Then in 2001, designed with student and staff input, construction on the program’s current headquarters, the Blank Honors Center, began. With facilities for classes, studying, and the honors staff all in one place, the Honors Program was well equipped to serve a growing population of honors students.

Sixty years since the start, the core values of Honors at Iowa have stayed the same: promoting opportunities beyond the classroom, encouraging academic achievement, developing a strong sense of community, and ultimately creating a place for students to grow as scholars and Hawkeyes. Taking part in the honors history writing class gave us all the opportunity to learn from the program’s past, while also looking towards its future. I hope you’ll join us in celebrating Honors at Iowa’s 60th anniversary this fall!

60 Y

Major Milestones o

By Gr



1958: Rhodes Dunlap creates Honors Program, begins term as Director

1979: Associated Iowa Honors Students (AIHS) is formed



1986: Irwin Levin becomes Director

1998: Star as

1992: Rhodes Dunlap passes away

1960: Honors Newsletter debuts

1982: Honors moves to Shambaugh

1995: Rhode leaves \$1.7 generating

1960: Honors moves to Schaeffer Hall 21

1981: Donald Marshall takes over as Director

1998: Honor LLC establ

1980: First Study-A-Thon hosted by AIHS



1991: University-wide Honors Program implemented



1983: Dr. Sandra Barkan becomes Associate Director until 1994

1992: David Klemm transitions to Director

1988: First Honors Recognition Week



beg

Years of the Honors Program

ace Barker

2006: Birth of the Honors
Advisory Committee



t of Alice Fulton
Director



2011: Art L. Spisak begins
as Director

2018: Honors
celebrates its 60th
anniversary

2001: Honors moves to
Jefferson Building while
waiting for BHC

es Dunlap
bequest,
24 new

2006: Bob Kirby initiates
first Research in the Capitol

2014: New logo and
branding of "Make Your
Connection"

s Mens & Women's
olished in Daum



2015: First Honors Advisory
Board meeting

2013: Students become
able to earn University
Honors at graduation

2005: John Nelson begins
as Director

2001-2003:
Construction of the
Blank Honors Center



Shambaugh



BHC



2000: Dr. Bob Kirby
ins as Honors Associate
Director

Conversation Center

Tearing Down the Language Barrier

By Abi Paravasthuramesh

Having grown up in both India and Iowa, Akshaya Warriar was surprised by the culture shock she experienced when moving back to the United States as a teenager, especially since she had lived in Bettendorf, Iowa, for about ten years previously. “I honestly didn’t expect it to be as hard as it was,” reflected Warriar, who graduated this spring. When she started college, she realized that many international students were experiencing a similar state of bewilderment and distress in adjusting to their new context.

Remembering her own adjustment, she gained a new appreciation for their strength. “I couldn’t help but feel that they were incredibly brave to take a leap and move to a new country without any family or friends to support them through the experience.” This personal experience along with the ability to interact with international students motivated Warriar to cofound a project in 2014 that would help the University of Iowa’s international students to feel welcome and supported.

“One friend, Mingfeng Huang, deserves the credit for being the first to envision a Conversation Center,” said Warriar. Galvanized by a shared vision, a group of five friends—Jane Nyugen, Abigail Miller, Johnathan Chang, Huang and Warriar—began meeting at Java House on Sunday mornings to talk through ideas. Thus the University of Iowa’s Conversation Center was conceived. Modeled after the University of Iowa Speaking and Writing Centers, the Conversation Center allows students to make one-on-one conversation appointments with students who are fluent in English.

The students who staff the center have been trained through a course offered by the Rhetoric Department, RHET 2090: Conversation Practicum, taught by the center’s director—Dr. Ben Hassman—a lecturer in the Department of Rhetoric. “I found that the space where students learn is not necessarily a formalized classroom space, but rather an informal conversation space, in which they have an opportunity to connect with classmates,” said Dr. Hassman.

Students in the practicum participate in intercultural communication, learn second language acquisition and how to avoid common mistakes, and engage with experts from organizations including English as a Second Language (ESL) and International Scholar Student Services (ISSS). After three weeks of covering this content, practicum students spend the middle ten weeks immersed in informal conversation, meeting up with the conversation-seekers who are interested in utilizing the resources of the center. In addition to this, practicum students complete online reflections and meet with team leaders as well as

Dr. Hassman. At the end of the course, they come together to give final presentations. As a cross-cultural experience with some of the same challenges and benefits of study abroad, the Conversation Practicum is cross-listed with Honors, so it automatically counts towards the Honors experiential learning requirement.

For both practicum students and conversation-seekers, the Conversation Center provides students with an opportunity to form connections with other people on campus and to discover and develop their own viewpoints, which naturally emerge through conversations with others. “In terms of individual conversations, sometimes it is just a regular ‘get-to-know-you,’ but a lot of times, when people come back and build a deep two-way rapport with their partner, they tend to delve into uncomfortable topics of politics, ethics, family relations, ideal education, interventionism abroad, etc. Students often necessarily don’t have views about these or have other opportunities to explore this,” noted Dr. Hassman.

“I think the most significant opportunity that I gained was the ability to interact with a variety of people on campus—students, professors, and even community members—to talk about a diversity issue on campus and how to best address this issue,” Warriar remarked. “I’ve enjoyed every single minute. I am incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to pursue my passions while being a part of establishing the Conversation Center.”



Two students partaking in the Conversation Center.

University of Iowa students who wish to get involved with the Conversation Center can enroll in RHET 2090: Conversation Practicum, a three-semester hour service learning course.

Remembering Rhodes Dunlap

A Look at the Founder of the Honors Program

By Sunny Bock

Many ambitious and dedicated students come to the University of Iowa to push themselves academically and find a sense of community and belonging with their like-minded peers, and thanks to the University of Iowa Honors Program, they have been able to do so. However, many students do not know much about the man whose devotion to education made the Honors Program possible: Rhodes Dunlap.

Rhodes Dunlap, founder of the University of Iowa Honors Program, was born in Texas on March 11, 1911. He attended San Jacinto High School in Houston, then went on to graduate from Rice Institute with a Bachelor of Arts in 1931. Since he valued the gift of education and was a highly motivated and ambitious individual, he went on to earn a Master of Arts a year later. In 1938, Rhodes Dunlap joined the UI's faculty as an English instructor in hopes of inspiring his young students and helping them achieve their academic goals.

Robert Bovenschulte took an Introduction to Literature course under the instruction of Professor Dunlap. Bovenschulte remembered Dunlap as being "soft-spoken, respectful, generous, kind, committed to his students, and committed to the value of a university education. In who he was as a person, he powerfully influenced the person I became," said Bovenschulte who graduated in 1965 with an English major. "I was indeed fortunate to have known and learned from Professor Dunlap during my wonderful four years at the University of Iowa."

A year after joining the UI faculty and fulfilling an urge to further his own education, Dunlap went on to earn a PhD from Oxford in 1939. He also served as naval officer during WWII and reached the rank of Lieutenant Commander. By 1953, Dunlap was an associate professor in the English department. He had a special literary interest and knowledge of the Renaissance, and wrote several articles on Renaissance literature. In addition to English, Dunlap also enjoyed gardening and playing the piano.

In 1958, Dunlap founded the Honors Program in hopes of establishing the university as a national leader in education and research. Dunlap wanted to focus on more competitive education, as did many universities across America in the late 1950s and the early 1960s.

Initially, the program was only offered to students of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, and was limited to honors in the major. Starting with English, Dunlap worked to get many departments involved in honors.

Developing the Honors Program from its infancy, Dunlap was able to work with many students personally by advising, teaching, and encouraging them in their educational pursuits. John Fink was editor of the Honors Newsletter 1965-67. Fink recalls Dunlap reviewing his work, and "in the kindest, most gentle way, he would offer suggestions for making it a little better." Fink summarized, "He had a quiet, twinkling kind of presence—very, very supportive."

Dewey Stuit, former dean of the College of Liberal Arts, described Dunlap as "an example of a person who puts students first." Rhodes Dunlap always made an effort to get to know his students, and he regularly heartened students to take on academic challenges.

In 1981, Rhodes Dunlap retired and the Samuel Rhodes Dunlap Scholarship was established in his name. The Rhodes Dunlap Scholarship has provided over \$1.7 million to UI honors students and continues to support hardworking individuals in the Honors Program. Evan Kramer, a recipient of the Rhodes Dunlap Scholarship and a philosophy major, described his appreciation for Dunlap's generosity: "For me, the Rhodes Dunlap Scholarship has served to ease the financial burden of university tuition. In doing so, it allows me to focus on my studies, where my focus belongs." Spencer Van Dorn, also a scholarship recipient and a Biomedical Engineering major, echoed this sentiment: "The Rhodes Dunlap Scholarship has helped me focus in on my studies, research projects, and clubs, instead of having to worry about funding my education through odd jobs that wouldn't help me reach my career goals."

On December 16, 1992, Rhodes Dunlap passed away, having devoted himself to the University and his students in the Honors Program. The University of Iowa and the Honors Program will be forever touched by the legacy of Dunlap's dedication to education and his passion for students.

"He had a quiet, twinkling kind of presence."

Profile: David Hamod

The Commitment of an Honors Alumnus

By Anna Magaña

David Hamod is the current President and CEO of the National US-Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC). A former University of Iowa honors student and current member of the Honors Program Advisory Board, he has received recognition for his life's work with the UI "Distinguished Young Alumnus" award in 2000, and an Honors Program "Outstanding Alumnus" designation in 2010. For over 40 years, Hamod has continued to devote his time and energy to supporting Honors at Iowa.



David Hamod

Long before coming to the University of Iowa, where he would graduate with Honors in political science in 1981, Hamod had an interest in the rest of the world. He spent his childhood collecting stamps and reading encyclopedias about the far-away places the stamps came from. His parents helped shape that interest. "Both of my parents (Dr. Sam Hamod and Dr. Kay Keeshan Hamod) were professors at the University of Iowa, and their experience helped to broaden my international horizons as well," Hamod said. "My mother conducted research at Oxford University when I was in ninth and tenth grade, and those two years in the UK were very formative for me." His parents' influence and support were big factors in his future as a student; in fact, he eventually dedicated the Kay Keeshan Hamod Scholarship to his mother.

After graduating from Iowa City High School, he made his way to the university. During his time here, he got involved with many opportunities that would contribute to his later success, such as

becoming what was then called an "Honors Proctor." Considered an early version of current honors student staff, a proctor was responsible for guiding other honors students as well as overseeing events and activities at the Honors House. Hamod expressed his enthusiasm about the work at the time, noting that "the pay was modest, but the hours were flexible, and the job presented me with an opportunity to meet some of the best and brightest minds that the university had to offer." For Hamod, being part of the Honors Program presented itself as an opportunity to interact with his peers in the best way.

The Associated Iowa Honors Students (AIHS) was one way that Hamod extended his participation in university life. He notes, "In those days, the UI Honors Program was all about studying and scholarship. So, my colleagues and I created AIHS to 'round out' the experience and create more of a community." Another opportunity Hamod was involved in that would impact his future was study abroad—he received support from the Rotary Club to pursue study abroad opportunities in both Cairo and Jerusalem. "As an American of Lebanese, Irish, and Norwegian descent, I wanted to experience these peoples and cities firsthand with a view to bringing peace to the Middle East," Hamod said, making note of the fact that these experiences helped fully realize the interest in international relations that had been present since his childhood.

Upon his graduation in 1981, he entered the graduate program in International Relations and Economics from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), earning a Master's degree. After completing his formal education, he embarked on an extensive career that would lead him to work for organizations such as the Brookings Institution, International Business Machines (IBM) Corporation, and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), to name a few. Over time, he founded Intercom International Consultants, a firm that has advised more than 30 business groups. He also went on to serve as an advisor to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and work as the U.S. Representative of the American Business Council of the Gulf Countries (ABCGC) for more than 15 years. He has served as a consultant or held leadership positions in many other organizations, and he has testified regularly before the U.S. Congress.

Throughout all of this, he has maintained strong ties with the University of Iowa and the Honors Program. "Iowa City is my hometown, and one never forgets one's hometown. In the same spirit, I will always be grateful to the UI for introducing me to two very important things: Jean Swift, my wife of 26 years, and a solid Liberal Arts education."

Profile: Rebecca Blair

Meet an Honors Faculty Member

By Anna Magaña

A major theme of the Honors Program’s mission statement, self-discovery, was also the topic of a first-year Honors seminar originated by Dr. Rebecca Blair in 2017, and it also characterizes her own approach to education. Dr. Blair first joined the university in 2012, and currently teaches in the Department of Rhetoric, a department which, as a whole, received the Honors Teaching Award in 2017. Dr. Blair has taught various courses in the humanities, ranging from Early American Literacy to Views of Human Nature and Iowa History. Her Honors first-year seminar, the Plural I: Self Discovery and Cultural Identity, explored popular culture—the culture of ordinary people—as both a text and a context for our lives.

Dr. Blair is passionate about encouraging her students to further their education both in and out of the classroom, believing that students will advance if they take the initiative to reach out to faculty and peers to maximize the opportunities around them. She further noted that, “these kinds of activities are even more effective when students become knowledgeable about their strengths and key competencies.” Dr. Blair cited the university’s Be Better program as a helpful tool to provide “just this kind of dispositional assessment for students.” Dr. Blair also employs this attitude in her own classroom. “In conference conversations with students across each semester, I ask questions to help students understand their strengths and pursue experiences across campus to develop those strengths.” She continuously promotes the idea that a well-rounded student has more chances to succeed.

One of the ways students access opportunities is by engaging with the Honors Program. When asked if she felt that Honors makes a difference in a student’s education, Dr. Blair showed her enthusiasm. “Absolutely! Engagement in the Honors Program offers students an opportunity to experience learning in more intense and integrative ways.” She further stated that, “Honors programs in general intend to prompt a rich kind of learning through courses that challenge foundational assumptions about the world and open up diverse perspectives, experiential learning that moves students into distinct contexts in which they can inquire deeply into questions and issues about which they are curious, and engagement with complex contexts that require creative responses.” She observed, however, that it is important for students to not stretch themselves too thin. Being aware of their entire “self” and how that self can best work with different ideas and priorities is something she emphasizes and wants honors students to keep in mind.

In terms of her experience as a faculty member, Dr. Blair firmly believes in the idea of a “reciprocal relationship between teachers and students.”

Students have the ability to reflect contemporary trends that are relevant in a classroom setting as well as illustrate how they best learn on the receiving end. “Not only have I been amazed by the depth and breadth of synthetic thinking and fresh ideas that students generate, but also, I have discovered how to calibrate the learning environment in the classroom to their needs by listening to and observing students.”



Dr. Rebecca Blair

The idea that she can learn from her students also ties into how Dr. Blair presents herself in the classroom. She wants her students to feel comfortable exploring new ideas in a shared space. Reaching new conclusions and thinking outside the box takes mutual trust in the classroom. To achieve this trust, an instructor must do more than just “profess.” Dr. Blair consciously chooses to invite students to question. “Teaching involves stepping back to encourage active, engaged learning that students undertake on their own rather than telling students what I discern they need to know.”

Dr. Blair is an educator who has touched the lives of many students, and her colleagues also recognize her dedication. Dr. Steve Duck, the current Chair of the Department of Rhetoric, commented, “Her students strongly testify to her interest and passion and to her commitment to student learning.” With her recognition of every student’s potential comes her willingness to change her ideas and promote a transformative education for those around her. Dr. Blair’s approach to teaching exemplifies what the mission statement of Honors at Iowa affirms, the aim to “nurture a deeper understanding of one’s discipline and one’s self.”

Profile: Valerie Drake

What's Next for this World Adventurer?

By Ajla Dizadarević

It seems like senior Valerie Drake was always destined to become a Hawkeye. “My parents are die-hard Hawkeye fans,” Drake says animatedly. “Black and gold were their wedding colors.” The international studies and Russian major first began taking courses at the University of Iowa as a sophomore in high school. Drake enrolled in Korean language classes, eventually deciding to minor in the language after five years of study. Drake traveled to South Korea just this past summer, where she spent four weeks taking classes at Ewha Woman’s University. Many moments from Drake’s trip stood out to her, including exploring ancient Korean traditions through playing instruments like the janggu and gayageum.



Photos provided by Valerie Drake

Drake’s study abroad experience in South Korea helped her realize that she isn’t much of a city person. “Coming from a rural environment, it seemed like there wasn’t a lot of space in Seoul. There were buildings upon buildings, a huge contrast to our campus here.”

Drake’s preference for small-town life, however, hasn’t stopped her from wanting to visit other big cities to do big things. Drake plans to study in Moscow this summer as part of the PRUE program, a new study abroad initiative she helped bring to fruition. The Plekhanov Russian University of Economics Summer Intensive Russian Program is between the University of Iowa and Plekhanov University. Students like Drake will study Russian language and culture for two months at an intensive level during the summer, allowing them to finish their Russian degree in three-and-a-half years as opposed to four. Under the supervision of Professor Irina Kostina, Drake serves as a student researcher in the PRUE program, where she writes and analyzes surveys and other assessments. Drake has also written for the Russian program newsletter.

Along with studying abroad and being instrumental in the functioning of the PRUE program, Drake involves herself in other ways on campus. Drake has served as an honors peer advisor, an undergraduate teaching assistant, a senator in student government, and an honors outreach ambassador during the academic year and summer orientations.

Outside of school, Drake practices archery and endurance running. She also enjoys spending time with her horse, Radar, who got his name “because he can locate food anywhere.”

After graduating from the university, Drake plans to attend graduate school and study law. “Law is a culmination of everything I’ve been studying. I’m interested in the policy aspect of global health and international relations, which is why the tracks with my international studies major are global health/human rights and East Asian studies,” Drake says, emphasizing that being in the Honors Program has allowed her to pursue two tracks instead of just one. Drake’s main project now is her honors thesis, which focuses on FDA legislation regarding antibiotic use in agriculture and public health policy strategies utilized in other countries.

As her undergraduate studies come to an end and she reflects on her past four years at Iowa, Drake has some advice for current honors students. “Make your connection by not being afraid to ask questions. Talk to honors staff and faculty and get to know them. The program is whatever you make of it, so take time to get involved with honors events and meet students focused on success and self-discovery.” It is without a doubt that Valerie Drake has made her connection here at the University of Iowa.

Honors students complete a guided reflection process as part of an honors study abroad experience. To learn more about honors credit for study abroad, contact Honors Experiential Learning Director Andy Willard at andrew-willard@uiowa.edu.

Farewell from the Editor

A Reflection on Growing Up, Graduating, and More

By Claire Jacobson

I've wondered for a long time what I would say in this farewell piece. True to form, I've spent more time muttering bits of it aloud to myself while riding the Pentacrest Cambus back to my apartment than I have actually sitting in front of my laptop and typing. (I'm fairly sure the Cambus drivers think I've lost my mind, and I'm also not entirely sure they're wrong.) The best lessons we learn in college are those we learn for ourselves, so I don't really think I can say much to help you or pass on much wisdom to ease your way. But since you're paying attention for the moment, I'll share a story:

I am currently mid-identity crisis as I draft a professional bio for a translation that will be published this summer (and every time I look at that sentence I pinch myself because it's so surreal). As I looked at the bios of other writers and translators in this journal for examples, I ended up staring dumbly at the computer screen, regretting all of my life choices because I don't yet have a PhD or a National Endowment for the Arts grant on my CV. The only relevant information I can share barely stretches to two sentences summing up my entire professional life. Two sentences of Claire Jacobson.

As I tumble face-first into adulthood, I'm realizing that no one in my field cares if I was a research assistant or a writing tutor while I was in college—actually, no one particularly cares that I went to college at all, let alone what my major was, what awards I did or did not receive, or where I worked. They only care if I'm good at what I do.

As I write this bio, I'm building from the ground up, scrambling to find my place in a field that is much bigger than my little college town, treading water while I fumble for something as basic as a title to call myself in this wide, wide ocean of a world.

But then I look back at where I came from. When I started at Iowa, I had six major changes ahead of me (linguistics, communication sciences & disorders, international relations, French, computer science, and then French again) and if you'd told me I would start translating Arabic fiction before the end of college or become vice president of a student organization I would have laughed in your face. I liked to write, but I had never done anything worth writing about, and was so painfully shy that I would never have dreamed of spending a year teaching English, because that would mean talking to people.

The gap between the girl I was then and the woman I have become is immense, and I could not have bridged it without support



Photo by Claire Jacobson

from friends and family, advisors and professors in my corner, the audacity to attempt things I probably shouldn't, a couple of worldview-shaking stints abroad, and a whole lot of time. I don't need to look at the people around me to figure out who I'm supposed to be, just behind me to see who I've been working to become all along and the progress I've made on the way.

I used to have vast, abstract dreams of "changing the world," but I think what I really wanted was to be the kind of person that people remember. Today, I don't particularly care if the world knows my name, so long as my own corner of it is better off when I leave than when I arrived.

I am only getting started in literally the most invisible of careers, but I am not afraid of being small in this wide world filled with giants. I am only honored to have walked among them while I was here, learning from their experience, enjoying my time in their shadows, and achieving what heights I could.

Now, it's on me to validate the faith they've had in me and the time they've invested in my journey by not being satisfied with how much I've learned or far I've come today. Who will I be and what heights might I reach tomorrow?

Honors at Iowa Scholars

Our Highest Award for Graduating Seniors



The 2018 Honors at Iowa Scholars were recognized at both the Honors Recognition Ceremony and also at the Honors Commendation Ceremony. Pictured here on the Old Capitol steps, l-r: Grant Gullion, Chloe Sekhran, Valerie Drake, Lance Heady, Kara Hoving, Jacob Isbell, Megan Helms, Benjamin I. Ross, Alora Kraus, and Claire Jacobson.

Every year, the University of Iowa's Honors Program bestows its highest recognition upon a group of graduating students by naming them Honors at Iowa Scholars. This award commends honors students for their experience, knowledge, and skills while emphasizing their achievements within their chosen disciplines and their exemplary academic performance. Awardees were also chosen based on their contributions made to the university community through a variety of activities such as research, volunteer service, organizational leadership, performance, and creative or intellectual engagement. The following students were recognized at a special ceremony to celebrate their impressive accomplishments and their work both in and outside of the classroom. Congratulations to our 2018 Honors at Iowa Scholars!

TIPPIE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Chloe Sekhran
Marketing, Dance
Saint Paul, MN

In addition to focusing on her two majors, Chloe worked for the Honors Program as a Student Administrative Assistant, which she says has been the best on-campus job she could have asked for. Outside of the classroom, Chloe is a member of Alpha Chi Omega, where she served as Chapter President. Chloe will be working for Alpha Chi Omega's Headquarters as a Chapter Consultant, and will travel to universities around the country to work with collegiate members of Alpha Chi Omega. Her further plan is to pursue a career as a buyer for an apparel retailer and to keep up with dance through regional projects, and by teaching dance and yoga.

Our Highest Award for Graduating Seniors Cont.

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Megan Helms
Biomedical Engineering
Downs, IL

In her time at Iowa, Megan pursued her passion for merging healthcare and engineering through the national Engineering Grand Challenges Scholars program and her extensive work in the Drack Ophthalmology research lab. She also enjoyed working with young students as tutor for TRiO, mentor for Women in Science and Engineering, and ambassador for the Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates. Her desire to bridge gaps in healthcare-related professions has led her to volunteer for the Mobile Medical Clinic in Iowa City, and has most recently taken her to Mexico in collaboration with the College of Public Health to study food disparities in local communities. Megan will begin medical school next fall at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she plans to continue being involved in biomedical research and volunteering in the community.

Alyssa Mendenhall
Biomedical Engineering
Asbury, IA

When she was not working in her lab studying possible mechanically based therapies for arthrofibrosis, Alyssa enjoyed gardening with the University of Iowa Student Garden. During her four years, she made many improvements and repairs to the garden, and is currently partnering with the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering in order to create an automatic watering system to improve the garden's crop output. She plans on entering industry, and hopes to make a difference in the quality of patients' lives through the creation of medical devices.

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

Valerie Drake
International Studies, Russian
Solon, IA

Valerie recently completed her honors thesis in international studies on the topic of global public health policy strategies regarding antibiotic resistance in agriculture. In addition to her majors and pre-law program, Valerie Drake minored in Korean studies. Last summer, Valerie attended Ewha Woman's University in South Korea.

In June, Valerie will travel to Russia to take part in a summer intensive Russian language program at Plekhanov University. Upon her return, Valerie will continue her work as a researcher for the Russian Department with Professor Kostina and apply to graduate school, where she intends to focus on domestic and global public health issues pertaining to policy formation, and eventually continue on to law school. She has served as an Honors Outreach Ambassador, an undergraduate teaching assistant, a senator in UISG, and a student researcher for the Russian department.

Sean Finn
Ethics and Public Policy, Economics
Webster, NY

During his time at the University of Iowa, Sean founded the UI Trans Alliance student group, served as president of Delta Lambda Phi, was a senator in the University of Iowa Student Government, and served on the Board of Directors of the National Collegiate Honors Council. He is searching for a job related to policy, advocacy, and/or research, hopefully in a nonprofit setting, and plans on returning to school for a graduate degree in 1-3 years.

Grant Gullion
Human Physiology
Ottumwa, IA

Grant's involvements in admissions and residence life have been a major component of his undergraduate experience. Grant has enjoyed working with prospective students and their families to help them in the process of choosing schools. Additionally, he believes the interpersonal skills and cultural competencies he obtained during his years as a resident assistant will be critical in his career as a dentist. Grant will be attending dental school at the University of Iowa College of Dentistry beginning in August.

Lance Heady
Biochemistry, Neurobiology
Quincy, IL

Lance will be pursuing a PhD in neuroscience from UT Southwestern with hopes of continuing his pursuit of understanding how cells in the brain die. While there, Lance also wants to continue growing mentoring skills to help guide students, a strong interest of his. He will also continue training in the art of ballroom dancing and hopes to one day be a national amateur champion

Our Highest Award for Graduating Seniors Cont.

Kara Hoving
Environmental Sciences
Mountain Lakes, NJ

In addition to her major, Kara earned a minor in biology and a certificate in sustainability. Throughout her undergraduate career she has served as co-president of the UI Environmental Coalition, written about environmental justice and women as a Climate Narrative Project Fellow, coached elementary school students through Girls on the Run, and volunteered for several habitat conservation and sustainability organizations while studying abroad in Tasmania. Kara will be spending the next year in Egypt as a Presidential Intern at the American University in Cairo's Research Institute for a Sustainable Environment.

Jacob Isbell
Physics, Astronomy
Garrison, IA

Jacob is a karate-chopping, keyboard-wielding, Tom Petty doppelgänger. While studying astronomy and physics, he worked with Dr. Hai Fu to find galaxies in the process of merging together, acting as a cosmic archaeologist to discover how galaxies form. Last year, he studied abroad in Sweden where he learned to appreciate the sun. Jacob has helped develop the Gravbox and has spread his love for astronomy at public outreach events. Beginning this fall, Jacob will be attending the Max Planck Institute for Astronomy in Heidelberg, Germany, to begin a PhD program in astronomy. He will be studying the regions near the black holes at the centers of galaxies.

Claire Jacobson
French, Arabic
Iowa City, IA

If Claire's college experiences could be summed up in a single word, it would be "language." A French and Arabic major, she studied abroad in Morocco, taking up translation as a way to practice Arabic, leading to an ICRU fellowship at the International Writing Program. Back in English, she wrote for the Honors Newsletter for two years before taking over as editor in 2016, worked as a Writing Fellow, and tutored in the writing center. Claire plans to attend graduate school for Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies, continue translating Arabic fiction, and eventually work with refugees in Europe and around the Mediterranean.

Anya Kim
Neurobiology, Spanish
Indianola, IA

Anya was born in North Carolina, spent most of her life growing up in Michigan, but moved to Iowa in high school and liked it so much that she stayed for college. She does research on the neurobiology of stroke and works with different organizations on campus to help improve how researchers communicate their work to the public. She also enjoys cooking, ultimate frisbee, making neurobiology comic books for kids, modular origami, and dogs. Anya will likely attend medical school next year, and she's currently deciding between Washington University in St. Louis and Stanford University. However, she is also a semi-finalist for a Fulbright Research Grant to Spain, and if she ends up receiving that she would definitely defer for a year to do research on Lou Gehrig's disease at the University of Barcelona.

Alora Kraus
Biochemistry
Iowa City, IA

Alora has worked with Michael Schultz, Craig Just, and Eric Taylor in research labs in radiology, civil and environmental engineering, and biochemistry, respectively. Earning a certificate in writing as well as her biochemistry degree, Alora was involved with the Writing Fellows program through the UI Writing Center, where she helped peers improve their writing skills in classes of all disciplines. During the 2016-2017 academic year, Alora studied abroad in Glasgow, Scotland, where she cultivated a love for culture and travel. Her next step will be applying to the Peace Corps for a position in the health sector. Upon her return, she would like to enroll in a graduate program for public health.

Alexandra Lemoine
English, Journalism and Mass Communication
Crystal Lake, IL

Alex was involved with the Honors Program as an Ambassador and, later, as a Peer Mentor during her years at Iowa. Her experiences through coursework at the university and subsequent honors experiential learning led to positions as a Writing Fellow and Writing Center tutor, a summer internship in Italy, and several volunteer endeavors throughout the Iowa City public school system and community. Alex is currently working towards a Master's degree in education and is employed at an alternative school for special needs students just outside of Chicago.

Our Highest Award for Graduating Seniors Cont.

Maria Mertzenich
Psychology
Decorah, IA

During her time at Iowa, Maria enjoyed working as an Honors student staff member in the BHC; conducting research under the supervision of Michelle Voss in the Health, Brain, and Cognition Lab; and volunteering on the orthopedic wing of Mercy Hospital. In addition to her major, Maria graduated with a minor in human relations. Maria plans to attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison to earn a master's degree in occupational therapy.

Astrid Linn Montuclard
Asian Languages and Literature
Tahiti, French Polynesia

While majoring in Chinese and pre-medicine at the University of Iowa, Astrid happily pursued several of her interests: running for the University Track team, doing public health and psychology research, volunteering in medical settings, popularizing mindfulness practice, studying in China for a year, and serving as a Student Government Senator. Astrid valued the Honors Program for nurturing her desire to grow herself above and beyond what she imagined before coming to Iowa. Over the upcoming year, Astrid will be serving as a lab manager in a UC Davis-UC Berkeley public health research team studying the impact of warning labels on college students' sugary drinks consumption. She will also complete her certification as a Mindfulness Teacher for the Duke University Center for Koru Mindfulness. After her gap year, Astrid plans to pursue a terminal degree in the field of health.

Benjamin Ross
Music, Music Education
Rockford, IL

Ben recently completed an honors thesis studying the works of British composer Gerald Finzi, active for the first half of the 20th century. His favorite opportunities while at Iowa were studying abroad in Vienna, Austria, and the UK, serving as president of an LGBT+ inclusive fraternity, and working many different jobs for the Honors Program. In May, Ben began working as a production assistant with the Ravinia Festival. He further plans to explore a variety of different opportunities. He hopes to find a job as a high school choral director and keep an active performing career in classical voice in choirs, operas, and other ensembles.

Jacob Simpson
Economics
Clinton, IA

As President of the University of Iowa Student Government, Jacob collaborated with campus partners to improve financial aid, student employment, and off-campus student support. Formerly, while serving as Co-President of the University of Iowa Gardeners, he successfully pushed for the adoption of a garden and outdoor classroom on Main Campus in the UI Campus Master Plan. A man of many interests, in addition to his major, Jacob graduated with minors in music, English, and philosophy. Jacob will pursue opportunities in local community development for two or three years before applying to law school.

Caroline Wadman
Psychology
Omaha, NE

While studying psychology on the pre-med track and earning a certificate in public health, Caroline was a research assistant in the University's Emergency Department where she studied ATV-related deaths and injuries. She volunteered in an after-school program where she helped educate elementary students on how to be healthy. Currently, she is an Emergency Department volunteer. A student athlete, she was a member of the University of Iowa Spirit Squad for the past four years. Caroline will be pursuing a Masters of Public Health in the Social and Behavioral Sciences Department at Yale University.

Jennifer Wu
Biology
Iowa City, IA

Having graduated in December, Jen is currently doing cardiology and palliative care research, working as a standardized patient, volunteering in palliative care, and studying for the MCAT. She was an honors ambassador and appreciated the Honors Program for opening many of these experiences and opportunities up for her. As an ambassador, she shared her knowledge of the benefits of honors with her peers.



60 *Years*

Submit stories of your honors experiences today.

In celebration of the Honors Program's 60th anniversary, we are taking stories about your experience in the community. Your story could be in the next issue!

Contact Holly Blosser Yoder at holly-yoder@uiowa.edu.



Meet the Writers

Honors Students at Your Service



Wenqi Ding

Wenqi is a third-year student studying journalism and mass communication with a social science analytics certificate. Originally from Chengdu, Sichuan, China, Wenqi enjoys reading and traveling, and she is grateful for the great opportunities that the University of Iowa offers students to help them achieve their goals.



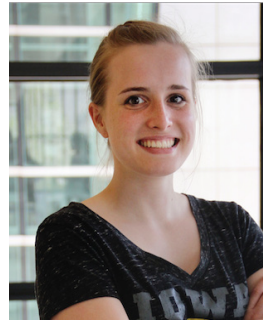
Abi Paravasthuresh

Abi is a rising sophomore from Bettendorf, IA. She is pursuing a degree in biomedical sciences and she loves the campus environment, the people, and the opportunities at the University of Iowa. In her free time, she enjoys playing tennis, pickleball, and ping-pong. She is looking forward to visiting her family in India this summer.



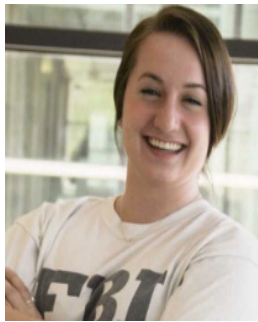
Sunny Bock

Sunny is a rising sophomore studying cinema and English and creative writing, with a minor in Native American and Indigenous studies. She enjoys going for walks and petting strangers' dogs as they pass by. She is from Cedar Falls, IA, and this summer she will be working as a Hawkeye Guide for orientation.



Grace Barker

Grace is a rising sophomore from West Des Moines, IA. She is studying English and creative writing, as well a journalism and mass communication, and she enjoys reading in her hammock. Grace loves the celebration of creativity at the University of Iowa, and she is very excited to be interning at her local library this summer.



Emily Creery

Originally from Hawkeye, IA, Emily will be a junior this fall. She is pursuing a degree in journalism and mass communication, along with a certificate in human rights. She loves watching movies, finds joy in learning people's stories, and aspires to be Oprah Winfrey.



Anna Magaña

Anna, a rising sophomore from Sioux City, IA, is studying English and creative writing with a minor in informatics. She enjoys going to readings at Prairie lights and loves Iowa City's literary history—and Yotopia, of course. For writing inspiration, Anna looks to author Sandra Cisneros.

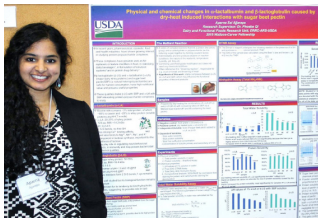
Ajla Dizdarević

Ajla will be starting her second year at Iowa this fall, studying English and creative writing. She is from Waterloo, IA, and she loves to read, write, and play video games. Ajla is inspired by the writers Meša Selimović and Miroslav Jančić, and she looks forward to taking an honors poetry seminar during the fall semester.





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