

HONORS PROGRAM ORIENTATION GUIDE

FALL 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

02 LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR
Shaun Vecera

03 PRIME TIME TO PROGRESS
Josie Boyle & Alex Lumish

04 CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS
University Honors

07 PENCIL IT IN!
Kate Anderson, Riley Dunn, Isabelle Friedman

09 NO PLACE LIKE HOME
Ashley Perez & Raezel Valencia

10 HONORS BY THE MAJOR
Infographic

09 IOWA CITY STATE OF MIND
Josephine Geiger-Lee

11 UNCONVENTIONAL
Nadia Shaaban

13 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
An Honors How-To

14 HONORED TO BE AN ATHLETE
Colin Votzmeyer

16 MEET THE HONORS STAFF

CONNECT WITH THE
HONORS PROGRAM!



University of Iowa
Honors Program



@uiowahonors



honorsatiowa.
wordpress.com

Hannah Cargo, Colin Votzmeyer
Publications Co-Editors

Josephine Geiger-Lee
Editorial Support Specialist

Tara Joiner
Design Editor

Holly Blosser Yoder
Staff Advisor

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Incoming Honors Students, Welcome to the University of Iowa and to the honors program community! If you're reading this guide, congratulations on having made it through orientation. You're one (giant) step closer to joining us on campus and starting your college journey.

This Orientation Guide is intended as both a welcome and a starting point for your honors experience. Inside, you'll find articles about our curriculum, which has both coursework requirements and experiential learning requirements. You'll also read about transitioning to the university, Honors Primetime, living or not living in honors housing, an introduction to the honors program staff, and more. Remember, though, that there are many other experiences that you can have through honors. Some will be academic, like your honors Rhetoric section or your first-year seminar; some will involve outside activities, such as undergraduate research; and some will be fun, like visiting the Iowa City Farmer's Market with a group of other honors students. (For the record, it's perfectly acceptable to have those fun events on your schedule. It's important to keep some balance in life as a buffer to the more challenging times.)

If you attended an Admissions event, you might have heard that honors is not meant to be harder or to involve more work. Honors is here for enrichment, so that you get

more out of your Iowa experience than if you weren't in the honors program. I like to highlight two ways that honors provides that enrichment. The first is community. The tagline for the program is Make Your Connection, and community is an important part of that connection. But, the Honors Program is large (over 2000 students), so the honors community takes many forms, which I've already hinted at. You might experience the honors community in classroom spaces, such as your first-year seminar or Rhetoric section. Or, you might experience the honors community with an honors event or with a study group.

The second way honors enriches your time at Iowa is with exploration and reflection. It's easy to take a transactional view of college and "tick off the boxes," doing only what you need to get a grade or a degree. You do need to do certain things to get a grade or earn a degree, but your time at Iowa should be more. The honors program helps with that through encouraging exploration—learning new things and trying new activities, as can happen with experiential learning—and with transformation—where you learn to reflect on and question yourself so that you're open to personal growth, which you'll see in many honors courses.

The honors program staff and I look forward to seeing you on campus in August. When you're moved in, make sure to visit our

spaces on the third and fourth floors of the Blank Honors Center (BHC). Our staff offices are located on the fourth floor, so please stop by to say hello! Our space also includes convenient study areas that are quiet, comfortable, and close to the heart of campus. (And very close if you're in any of the nearby residence halls, including Catlett, where honors housing is located on the top two floors.)

I hope that your move to campus goes smoothly. Please feel free to email me (shaun-vecera@uiowa.edu) with questions you might have about the program. But also email if you'd like to hear about my research, undergraduate research more broadly, being a first-generation college student, or my favorite tree on campus.

You can also direct any questions you have to honors-program@uiowa.edu, or visit our website (honors.uiowa.edu) for more information.

Sincerely,
Shaun Vecera



shaun-vecera@uiowa.edu
Director, University of Iowa
Honors Program
Professor, Department of
Psychological & Brain Sciences

PRIME TIME TO PROGRESS

Honors Primetime and Introduction to Honors Launch Students in University Honors

Josie Boyle & Alex Lumish

No matter if you are coming to the university with a friend group or if you know absolutely no one, Honors Primetime and Intro to Honors can be a way to immerse yourself within the culture of the school, find people of similar interests, and engage with each other and the university's fantastic events offerings.

Primetime is the honors program's signature pre-semester experience featuring faculty-taught workshops that are both fun and academic. While the pre-semester workshops have been a feature of the honors first-year student experience since 2009, Shaun Vecera, director of the honors program and a Primetime workshop instructor, believes the online curriculum offered in Introduction to Honors is an integral part of the program today.

Introduction to Honors instructs students in reflection, a key component of honors education and a powerful tool for effective studying.

"We've built in content that explains what reflection is," Vecera explains. "It's not just saying, 'I went here, and I did this,' but instead tell me what happened. But then tell me what happened to you as an individual after that."

In addition to reflective content, the curriculum prompts students to attend events across campus, whether honors-sponsored or otherwise. This encourages them

to try new things and, by adding a reflection component, allows them to dig into their new experiences.

While Intro to Honors is essential for every new honors student, the optional pre-semester experience has proven beneficial to many honors students over the years.

"One of the things that I consistently hear from students is that they found their first set of friends or people they're still friends with two

Park because I'm not from the area," Juhl said. "Being able to explore early on made Iowa City feel more like home."

Some of the workshops offered in 2024 include Paris and the Olympics, Psychology of Food, Developing the Entrepreneurial Mindset, Children and Families in Health Care, and Cities: Ancient and Modern. The broad range of topics allows students the freedom to

"Being able to explore early on made Iowa City feel more like home."

or three years later," Vecera noted.

Vecera taught the Primetime course Go Outside and Play, which included hikes and other outdoor challenges.

"In the last class I taught, we tried fire building," Vecera said. "I thought it was interesting that nobody could get a fire and for some, lighting the match was a bit of a challenge. That was fun but also sort of part of the point. There are still things to learn."

Honors student and first-year biology major Kara Juhl was in Vecera's group. She credits the workshop with introducing her to one of her best friends and making the transition to college smoother.

"My favorite part was going to Kent

become involved in a course related to their intended field of study or to engage in something entirely new.

Nathan Casey, a first-year student majoring in industrial engineering, took the course Doing Civilization-Scale Science: How Large Space Missions Happen. The students proposed hypothetical budgets to do a large-scale space mission.

Casey believes such unique Primetime courses offer lasting benefits beyond making connections with other honors students.

"[Primetime] allows you to still take part in something you're interested in, but in an academic field other than your major," said Casey.

HONORS REQUIREMENTS

12 S.H. HONORS COURSWORK*

During First Four Semesters In Honors Program

Honors Primetime 1 s.h. (optional)

Intro to Honors 1 s.h. (asynchronous and online)

Honors First-Year Seminar 1 s.h.

General Education Courses (Rhetoric, Classic Cult Cinema, Principles of Chemistry) or Honors Electives (Honors Publications: From Pitch to Print, Poetics Taylor's Version)

12 S.H. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING*

During Year Two

Study Smarter: Meaning, Motivation, and Experiential Learning 2 s.h.

Before Graduation, from a Menu of Options

Mentored Research/Creative Projects

Study Abroad

Internships

Writing Fellows

Teaching Assistant/Learning Assistant

Service Learning

Experiential Coursework

Leadership

Honors in the Major (departmental requirements)

*Classes and experiences listed are examples. Meet with an honors peer mentor to plan your unique path.

SCENES FROM HONORS PRIMETIME 2023





PENCIL IT IN!

How Honors Students Connect Beyond the Classroom

Kate Anderson, Riley Dunn, Isabelle Friedman

Throughout the year, the University of Iowa (UI) Honors Program hosts a variety of exciting events, ranging from late-night study sessions to dances, that allow honors students to find engaging experiences and meet like-minded, high-achieving students just like you.

If you're curious about the who, what, when, and where of such events, Iris Peimann is the person to ask. Peimann is the honors program's student engagement intern as well as a full-time student earning a master's in higher education and student affairs. Together with Student Engagement

Coordinator Madison Schulte, she plans social events, coordinates community building activities, and gets the word out on both of them.

The honors program has put on extracurricular events such as outings to concerts at the Voxman Music Building, trips to the farmer's market, bingo, trivia nights, late-night study sessions, and more—all to build community and enrich the experiences of UI honors students.

One of Peimann's favorite events was an honors trip to see the musical *Something Rotten!*—an idea a student initially presented to Peimann.

"The musical was hilarious,"

Peimann said. "It was a really good time but also fun and meaningful to me because it was a student's idea."

Another favorite event of Peimann's was PIE and Pie, which was a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) event. During this event, students engaged with Dr. Sherry Watt's Privileged Identity Exploration (PIE) model to learn how to better engage with people who were different from them. At this event, they also had slices of pie.

"That one was really fun because it was very interactive," Peimann said. "I got to learn a lot about students and share about my life with students, so that event was also very meaningful to me."

Maria Volkman is a second-year honors student majoring in enterprise leadership with a minor in art. She has attended multiple honors events, but one event that stuck out more than the others was a trip to a screening of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

She attended the screening through a class called Classic Cult Cinema, while other honors students attended the event by purchasing a ticket or claiming one of the extra tickets that the class offered to all honors students.

Volkman was nervous at first about attending the event as she didn't know many students in her class at the time, but the simple fact she had peers around her was reassuring, and friendship followed.

"We became friends because we had an experience to bond over and



Photo illustration by Tim Schoon, Office of Strategic Communications

“Honors students are very academic-focused, but the honors program is full of really great people who are motivated to do things.”

to bond us,” Volkman said, noting the benefits of connecting with students in a non-academic setting. “Honors students are very academic-focused, but the honors program is full of really great people who are motivated to do things.”

As for on-campus activities, Volkman enjoyed the honors dance in 2023. She was excited to dress up and have fun with friends in a way that she hadn’t done since high school.

She found that the dance also provided a venue to connect better with honors classmates. “I saw a lot of people there who I have seen in some of my other classes,” Volkman said.

Even if Volkman doesn’t make it to an event, she’s grateful that they’re available, easy to access on campus, and shared via the Honorable Messenger emails and notifications on the ICON honors portal.

First-year honors student Rachel Sorensen said she often finds out about various activities through her honors peer mentor.

In her first semester, the English and creative writing major attended many events, including Honors Primetime, study nights, and a movie during finals week.

“I thought it was a good way to relax, even while feeling super stressed,” Sorensen said.

Sorensen and her friends were

treated to a showing of the 2023 film *Knives Out* at the movie event. Sorensen noted that this movie, as well as other such events, strength-

ened her sense of community within the honors program.

No matter how you like to relax and have fun, you can easily find an honors activity that you will enjoy. Students and staff are here to help develop a community in the honors program, and honors activities are a great way to get involved and find your community.

Talk with your honors peers, check the announcements on the honors program ICON, and read the weekly Honorable Messenger to keep up with all the activities the University of Iowa Honors Program has to offer!



Photo illustration by Justin Torner, Office of Strategic Communications

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

How Honors Students Engage With Their Community In And Out Of Residence Life

Ashley Perez & Raezel Valencia

It is a daunting experience coming to university and leaving familiar places and faces behind. But being in the University of Iowa Honors Program allows students to form a close-knit community within a huge school and one way to find that community is by living in honors housing.

Starting in fall semester 2024, Catlett Residence Hall will host 200 honors students on two of its 12 floors with dedicated student study spaces on each floor for collaboration or projects. These rooms are snatched up quickly, however, through a process of random electronic drawings held throughout April and May for those who have filled out housing contracts.

But why should you live in honors housing? Honors Associate Director Dr. Emily Hill is a former honors student herself.

For Hill, it's important to have spaces for students of a variety of majors who want to embrace their education and succeed at the University of Iowa (UI). Honors housing allows those driven students to foster that competitive spirit as well as create a supportive community.

"It's the first opportunity for some students to find like-minded individuals who are motivated or really passionate about a particular subject," she said.

While honors housing is a popular choice, many honors students find their home-away-from-home

elsewhere. From floor game nights to fraternity and sorority life, these students are able to find a community that is right for them wherever they live on campus.

Hallie McMillan is a second-year student majoring in nursing. Her first year she lived in Catlett, though not on an honors floor. Located near the center of campus, Catlett houses students involved in sports teams, ROTC, fraternities and sororities, a variety of different clubs, and so much more—all in addition to its honors students.

"Living in the dorms helped me find that community just by my dorm floor being really close," McMillan said, noting her roommates would hold movie and game nights, drawing everyone closer together.

The friendly setting of residence life gives students the chance to meet many different types of people and find common ground. As McMillan observed, "[Living in a residence hall] always gave you someone to hang out with."

Housing—whether honors or not—isn't the only place to find a community as an honors student, however. Another way to make connections is by participating in the many honors events held around campus.

Madison Schulte, an alumna of the UI with a MA in higher education and student affairs, works as student engagement coordinator alongside intern Iris Peimann to plan events

aiming to kickstart the process of making those relationships. Both hold community to great importance as part of the college experience.

Peimann says she feels embedded in the college culture when she walks through hallways and is able to spot and chat with people she has met through the honors program.

"That feels very fulfilling to me when I see an honors student and I can be like 'Oh my gosh, I know your name. How are you doing?'" Peimann said.

The UI has thousands of students, and the events Schulte and Peimann host serve to make a big university feel smaller by connecting those with similar interests in honors.

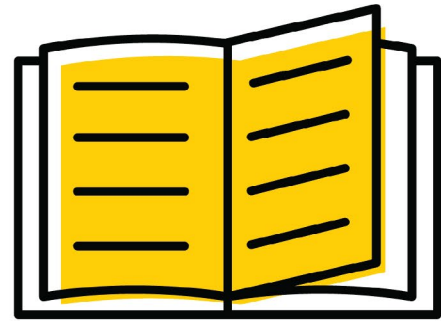
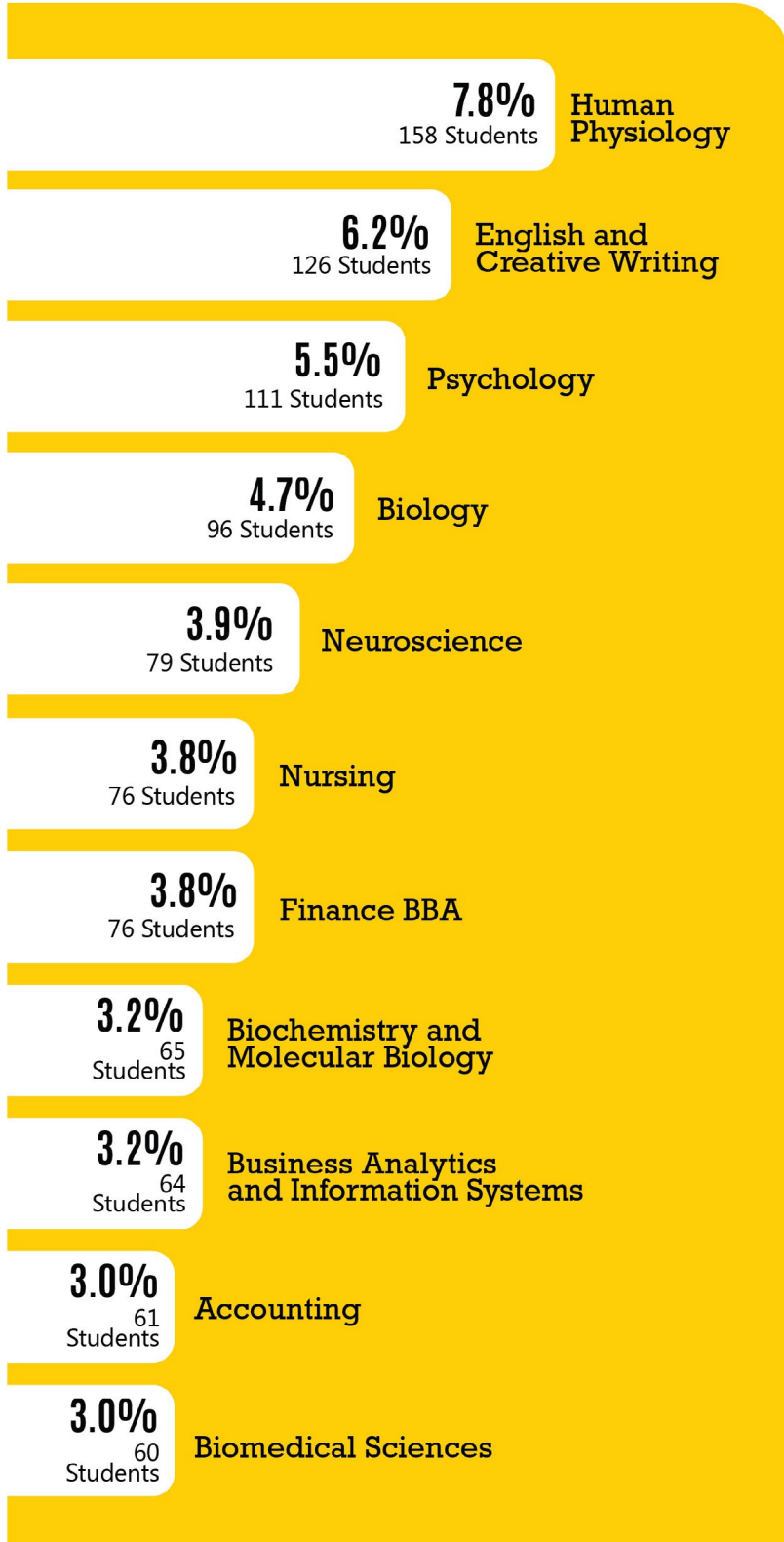
Trivia night is a particular favorite among honors students. Students even reached out to Schulte and Peimann afterward about hosting another one and helping to devise new questions.

Schulte and Peimann love it when students share their ideas.

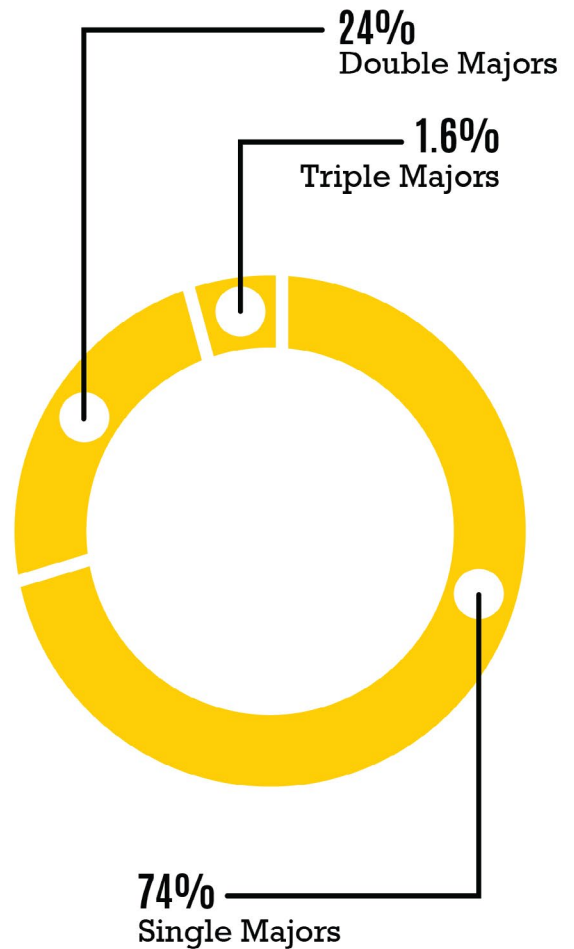
"If students want something they haven't found yet, we can be the people who create that," Schulte said. "Last semester, I had a student who really wanted to be a part of a book club, and they hadn't found one anywhere. So they came here, and we made a book club."

No matter where you are at the university—west side or east, on campus or off—the UI Honors Program is open to you and is ready to help you thrive.

HONORS STUDENT MAJORS BY THE NUMBERS



2,025 Students in the Honors Program



IOWA CITY STATE OF MIND

How Out-of-State Students Find Community in Honors

Josephine Geiger-Lee

Honors students at the University of Iowa (UI) come from all over. Or, more accurately, they come from nine countries and 37 states within America. This leads to students traveling hundreds, even

thousands, of miles away from their families and their communities.

While out-of-state students could feel adrift those first few weeks, the honors program endeavors to provide a sense of community right

away.

Noelle Franzone, a third-year honors student majoring in English and creative writing and linguistics, makes the three-hour drive to Madison, WI, whenever she wants to return to her childhood home. When she arrived at the UI, she recognized only one other person from her high school.

Franzone moved in early to experience Honors Primetime, although she cites the other activities provided by honors to be pivotal to her making friends.

“[The honors program] had a scavenger hunt, which I did with my roommate,” Franzone recalls. “We got just so hopelessly lost. But we met another girl on our way, and we started talking. And now, both have ended up being my roommates for three years now.”

As she continues her academic journey, Franzone finds herself more involved with the honors program. Now, she serves as a teaching assistant to Cult Cinema, a class taught by Dr. Emily Hill, and an honors writing fellow, a program led by both the honors and the rhetoric departments.

For new out-of-state students, Franzone gives what she describes as “classic parent” advice.

“Leave your [dorm] door open,” Franzone says. “Go knock on people’s doors. Wander around your dorm. Try to take even more advantage of what’s offered to you.”



Photo illustration by Justin Torner, Office of Strategic Communications

Celeste Miller, a fourth-year French and linguistics major from Porter Ranch, CA, agrees incoming freshmen should do as many activities as possible. She enjoyed Honors Primetime and would encourage out-of-state freshmen to pursue that opportunity.

Miller lived in an honors community on campus as well. She says the honors community there helped improve the connections she made in other classes and across campus.

is not a direct flight, and she ends up taking two 3-hour flights to reach Iowa City.

Another student frequenting the Cedar Rapids airport is Elisa Burba, a third-year honors student studying English and history with a minor with gender, women's, and sexuality studies. She comes from Marietta, GA. If she chose to drive, it would be a 13 hour drive.

"Move-in day was exciting," Burba says. "However, when my family had

Union and food crawls in downtown Iowa City.

"I felt that Honors Primetime really shaped my original understanding of community within the Honors Program," Burba says. "I met many peers in the class who I ended up connecting with again."

While out-of-state freshmen might be intimidated by the prospect of traveling over state lines, the honors program aims to ensure that each student has the ability to make Iowa



Franzone, Miller, and Burba came to Iowa from Wisconsin, California, and Georgia, respectively. Honors students come from nine countries and 37 states.

"I'm actually still living with my freshman year roommate," Miller says. "And another girl we met that lived on our floor, or the floor above, we're rooming with now!"

With her new friends, Miller found herself not feeling homesick. Her home in Porter Ranch is more than a 30-hour car ride, although she tends to fly instead. Even then, there

a final lunch, I definitely broke down a little and finally realized how tough the transition was going to be."

Burba believes freshman year orientation would have been harder if she hadn't chosen to take an Honors Primetime course. In that course, she met new friends with whom she ended up doing other activities such as bingo at the Iowa Memorial

feel like home. Freshmen can join an Honors Primetime, participate in program-sponsored activities, or even live in an honors community within a residence hall.

"It might take a minute, but you will find your people," Burba says. "You will never feel as accepted and loved and supported as when you do."

UNCONVENTIONAL

How Honors Students Broaden Horizons Through Unique Experiences

Nadia Shaaban

Each year, hundreds of dedicated University of Iowa (UI) honors students study abroad, intern, research, and engage in hands-on projects to learn by doing and gain experiential learning credits. From

excavating at an archaeological site to teaching viola lessons, students are finding that nearly any activity that they are passionate about can count.

Experiential learning gives

students the opportunity to explore new ventures and enhance their academic experience by engaging in a long-term educational experience. Though many students fulfill this requirement through “the big three”—research, internships or study abroad—there is no shortage of students finding more unconventional experiences.

Some students, such as anthropology student Anna Ottavi, take on unconventional projects after their original plans shift. Ottavi initially came to the UI on the pre-law track and planned on interning at a law firm to fulfill her experiential learning after seeing that path advertised heavily by the university.

However, as time went on, she found herself switching between several different majors before settling on anthropology midway through her second year.

A professor informed Ottavi of an opportunity to participate in a summer excavation with Iowa Lakeside Labs. Ottavi said taking on this experience “was a no-brainer.”

“It was an incredible opportunity for my major, and I knew it would count for experiential learning as well,” Ottavi said.

Honors peer mentor and biomedical sciences major Quinn Eldridge has always had a passion for the viola and decided to become a camp counselor at his childhood musical summer camp, Chamber Works Musical Institute. There,



Photo illustration by Justin Torner, Office of Strategic Communications



A UI team maps a potential archaeological dig site. Photo by Tim Schoon

Eldridge spent two weeks teaching the viola to the next generation of campers and giving back to a place that gave him so much growing up.

Volunteering at Chamber Works eventually led to other musical experiences for Eldridge, including performing in an immersive opera, *The Flood*, at the Stanley Museum of Art. He described it as “the most unique musical experience, or experience at all, of my life.”

Eldridge knew he wanted to give back to Chamber Works regardless of whether the experience counted for credit, but experiential learning gave him the opportunity to “turn a hobby into something that serves the greater good.”

Experiential learning that is unconventional may also give students a chance to explore a particular aspect of their anticipated profession.

Ottavi cited her excavation as helping her develop a sense of confidence in her field of study.

“We had an intro day, but from there on out, we were digging our own units, recording our own notes, and bagging our own artifacts,” Ottavi said. “There was definitely a lot more independence there than [at an internship], and I got the feeling of ‘yeah, I am an archeologist, and this is what that’s like.’”

The greatest gain Eldridge saw from his experience teaching viola was the opportunity to indulge in something he loved to do and add much-needed balance to his life as a pre-medical student. Although teaching viola might seem unrelated to practicing medicine, Eldridge explained that he found the experience greatly beneficial to his anticipated career as a medical doctor.

“Being able to educate others on a subject and being able to communicate exactly what you’re asking of people to know or do is really important for [any field] along with perseverance and trust in myself, whether it be to teach music or get through my STEM course load,” he said.

Both Ottavi and Eldridge would like to see more students engage with unconventional experiences and for honors students to explore more broadly when contemplating experiential learning.

“People don’t know that these things would count as experiential learning,” said Eldridge who, as a peer mentor, often talks with students about their experiential learning plans.

Ottavi explains that seeing more diverse experiential learning options would have made the requirement less daunting for her.

“Had I known my freshman year that something like an archeology dig was an option, that would have thrilled me and given me much more peace of mind,” she said. “There’s so many honors students who have these very interesting and personal experiences, and students would really benefit from seeing just how many things are out there.”

It’s important for honors students to recognize that they don’t have to fall into the crowd of studying abroad or finding an internship to absorb all of experiential learning’s advantages. Look for something unique that you enjoy, talk with an honors peer mentor or advisor to find out if the experience you are passionate about will qualify, and lean into every curve and challenge that experiential learning has to offer!

Read student reflections about their experiential learning on the honors program blog, [Note to Self](#).

WHAT'S EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING?

Experiential learning is “learning by doing” and gives students an opportunity to apply classroom learning to out-of-classroom situations. These practices and experiences range from personal development to professional development to exploring your academic passions. Students choose experiential learning opportunities that will cultivate knowledge and skills that interest them.

For most honors experiential learning, students will undertake a reflection process to better understand and articulate their experience and how it connected to their broader interests and goals.

HONORS REFLECTION PROCESS

Steps to turn your experiences into credit for University Honors

Step 1: Find an opportunity!

- Internship or Job
- Study Abroad
- Study Abroad with an Internship
- Service or Volunteering
- Leadership Position
- Research or Creative Project*
- Teaching Assistant (TA) or Learning Assistant (LA)
- Honors Writing Fellow
- Resident Assistant

Step 2: Fill out the pre-questionnaire reflection.

Step 3: Complete your experience! Experiences can last from one semester to as many as you want.

Step 4: Fill out the post-questionnaire reflection.

Step 5: Complete your narrative reflection.

Your reflections will be reviewed, and credit will be recorded on your University Honors degree audit and in ICON.

*Most research that earns semester hour (s.h.) credit, e.g. HONR:3994 for 1-4 s.h., counts automatically and does not require the honors reflection process.



Have questions? Email honors-explearning@uiowa.edu!

HONORED TO BE AN ATHLETE

How Honors Benefits Iowa Student-Athletes

Colin Votzmeyer

The University of Iowa Honors Program does not only serve the general student population—it offers career exploration, academic support, and more to UI student-athletes. Student-athletes must satisfy the same requirements as other honors students, but the program provides them with countless opportunities to push themselves in academics and prepare for the workforce after their careers in sports.

Liz Tovar is the senior associate athletics director of Student-Athlete Academic Services, a center that collaborates with other programs on campus to ensure student-athletes are offered the necessary academic opportunities to develop themselves and their careers. The honors program is one of such collaborations.

Thirty student-athletes are already in honors, but Tovar said more qualify but are not taking advantage of it: “It’s about our student-athletes really understanding what the benefits are of being in the honors program.” While honors students need a 3.33 grade-point average (GPA) at graduation to earn University Honors, more than half of UI student-athletes have over a 3.0 GPA. In the fall 2023 semester, all student-athletes averaged a 3.17

GPA. Many would qualify on the basis of academics, but honors is not primarily about GPA, but about enriching the student experience.

Tovar believes student-athletes can take advantage of the honors program by doing hands-on applications of their studies to the real world. “I think the benefits are the experiential learning opportunities and the research opportunities,” she said, “then also working with professors in getting letters of recommendation from people who they’ve come into close contact with as a result of their experiences in the honors program.”

In addition to hosting honors tabling events and informational sessions at the Gerdin Athletic Learning Center—a space on campus for student-athletes to use academic resources—Tovar said targeting student-athletes who could benefit from honors is a good way to get more student-athletes involved. “Other student-athletes who have gone through the honors program and are talking about their experiences really hits home for our student-athletes,” she said. A recent example is Marissa Mueller (BS21), a student-athlete in track and field who was active in research and became the recipient of the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship.

Balancing collegiate athletics with the honors workload may look like a big time commitment, but Tovar said the student-athletes have leeway in making their schedules. “[We’re] letting them know that, if you’re in season this particular semester, you may not need to take as heavy of a load,” she said. “There’s great flexibility in terms of scheduling courses and the number of courses that you have to take in order to earn honors, [which] I think needs to be re-emphasized.” Student-athletes can spread the required 12 semester hours of coursework out so they can have a lighter workload when in season and do more of the work in the offseason.

When applying for honors, biomedical sciences student Jenny Cape (BS23) was concerned with the time commitment on top of her demands with the Iowa women’s soccer team. Looking back as a fourth year student, she appreciates the program’s flexibility to help her balance both. Student-athletes have to be able to time-manage, and honors helped her do so by contracting a course—doing a more in-depth extra project for a regular class to get honors credit. “If I couldn’t necessarily make my honors hours that I needed, the department was very flexible in letting me turn normal

classes into honors classes by doing an extra project," she said.

The honors program provided Cape with opportunities in experiential learning that she would not have known about had she not taken the chance in joining the program. One of such opportunities was the Writing and Community

addition, tutoring and research she was already pursuing also counted as experiential learning credit for University Honors. "That was just really helpful because it didn't make honors another thing I had to do on top of everything else," Cape said.

Cape emphasized the reflection skills honors students develop in

honors program] really encourages and promotes reflection and self-discovery," Cape said. "I think that's also similar with grad schools, and they want you to really reflect on why you want to do what you want to do and what it means to you."

Kieran Monaghan, a third-year human physiology major and member of the honors program, is a student manager for the Iowa football team. The honors community has supported him most in helping him manage the time requirements of his role with the team.

"I think it's honestly more about the community of people you're around and how they can support you through your academic stuff," Monaghan said. "We spend an absurd amount of hours during the week working, so as much alleviation you can get from your academic stuff helps a lot."

Monaghan is at every team meal to help out, every practice to set up drills and move equipment, and every game to ballboy. He works long hours, so the honors sections for his classes allow him to connect with honors classmates via group chats and get the support he needs when he is crunched on time.

"Those are the people that are going to help you with your assignments and work collaboratively to figure out what you've got to study for the test," Monaghan said. "Honestly, when that happens, that makes my job with football easier. I'm not worried about school as much because I have the resources that will help me out."

The University of Iowa goes beyond just stellar Big Ten athletics—it supports and encourages its student-athletes in the classroom too. Talk to your advisor, explore the UI Honors Program, and see the benefits honors offers you in the game and beyond.



Photo illustration by Justin Torner, Office of Strategic Communications

Outreach class, in which she taught creative writing workshops to kids in Iowa City schools. "That was a really cool class just because it tied experience actually into the class," she said. "Instead of just learning about something, we actually were able to apply what we learned." In

doing the post-experience questionnaires and narratives after their experiential learning opportunities. The reflections helped her on her medical school applications, on which she answered questions she had already thought about in the reflection process. "I think [the

MEET THE HONORS STAFF



Shaun Vecera

Honors Program Director

Shaun Vecera earned his Ph.D at Carnegie Mellon University in 1995.. He has been a professor in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences at the University of Iowa since 1998 and became director of the University Honors Program in 2021. Professor Vecera studies visual attention and cognition and is the author of more than 90 journal articles, book chapters, and other publications. Current research in his lab is exploring the role of learning and experience on attentional control.

Professor Vecera is very committed to undergraduate education and student success. In addition to his role in the Honors Program, he is leading the development of a campus-wide learning framework for undergraduate students. From 2016-2021, he held the Herman J. and Eileen S. Schmidt Chair for leadership in undergraduate education, and he received the 2017-18 President and Provost Teaching Award for Teaching Excellence. He has also been recognized with the Honors Program Teaching Award in 2019 and the inaugural Award for Outstanding First-Generation Student Advocacy in 2019. He serves on several university committees that support undergraduate student success. Professor Vecera teaches classes of all sizes, including an honors first-year seminar titled How Psychology Can Save the Planet.



Emily Hill

Associate Director

As the Associate Director, Dr. Hill works on enhancing and supporting educational experiences for honors students through curriculum, experiential learning, academic advisement, and community development. Her research addresses twice-exceptional college students (gifted college students living with mental health issues) and how universities can better support these individuals through staff, faculty, advisement, and programming.

Dr. Hill's door (real or virtual) is always open for students to visit with her about academics, experiential learning, and life in general. In her free time, she likes to practice yoga, read fiction, collect vinyl and play it too loud, and travel.



Mark Archibald

Records, Enrollment & Analytics Specialist

Mark oversees honors student records, tracks student progress through program requirements, and works with campus partners to identify and incorporate opportunities into the honors options student have for courses and experiential learning. His professional interest areas include the strategic design of enriching student engagement opportunities, compelling and dynamic learner-centered environments, and student-centered policy making.

Mark is a prodigal son to Iowa City, back-yard gardener, and Rubik's cube enthusiast. You might see Mark around town at the Hawkeye Tennis and Rec Center, running along the river, or visiting the farmer's market.



Holly Blosser Yoder

Advising Director

As honors advising director, Holly supervises the honors peer mentors and the students who write and edit Honors Publications. Holly also serves as the go-to person for questions about honors classes and experiential opportunities such as research, study abroad, service, and the range of other academic possibilities that interest honors students.



Veronica Sanchez

Administration and Communications Coordinator

Veronica graduated from the University of Iowa with a BA in Communications Studies. She is currently in Iowa's Strategic Communication Master's Program. As the Administration and Communications Coordinator for the Honors Program, Veronica will oversee all of the daily operations of the program. This includes managing student admin staff, planning major program events, and providing program information to students, parents, and various stakeholders. She is always willing to guide students to resources that help them complete their goals.

In her free time Veronica loves being active, talking about pop culture, and listening to music or podcasts. She also loves animals (specifically dogs). If you see her around, show her a picture of your pet! It would make her day.



Madison Schulte

Student Engagement Coordinator

Madison graduated from the University of Iowa with an M.A. in Higher Education and Student Affairs.

In her free time, Madison enjoys playing board games, going hiking, camping, and consuming arguably too many athletic events. She is a big fan of Iowa athletics, the USWNT, and the WNBA. She also volunteers for Special Olympics and has aspirations of being a coach someday.

Madison has a passion for supporting students and values genuine connections. She welcomes students to visit her office to discuss any aspect of their experience – academics, experiential learning, student organizations, the latest show they watched, hobbies etc.



Candice Wuehle

Scholarship Coordinator

As Scholarship Coordinator, Dr. Wuehle helps honors students navigate the many scholarship opportunities available through the University of Iowa Honors Program. Dr. Wuehle enjoys mentoring students on the scholarship application process from start to finish. This includes identifying opportunities, crafting the application essay, and developing a standout resume. As a creative writer and graduate of the University of Iowa, she is excited to help Honors students begin to learn the skill of developing support for their intellectual pursuits. In her free time, she likes to go to the movies at FilmScene, practice yoga, and attend readings of fiction and poetry at Prairie Lights. Ask her about her Holland Lop rabbit, Miles, or her research on occult poetics.



Iris Peimann

Student Engagement Intern

While pursuing her MA in higher education and student affairs, Iris worked as the Student Engagement Intern for Honors at Iowa, fostering a sense of community and belonging within the program by helping students connect with each other and with the local community. Outside of work and classes, you can find Iris somewhere outside, whether camping and hiking or enjoying a coffee on a bench on the Ped-Mall. She also enjoys reading, baking, and playing French horn in the University Band. In the fall, Iris plans to begin a doctoral program in counselling psychology in the College of Education.

MEET THE TEAM



Hannah Cargo

Hannah is a third-year student from the Dallas–Forth Worth area in Texas. She’s majoring in creative writing and environmental planning. Hannah hopes to make the world a better place (and maybe have some fun while doing it).



Colin Votzmeyer

Colin Votzmeyer is a third-year honors student from Mt. Prospect, Illinois, studying journalism and mass communication. He intends on attending a law school in the Midwest upon graduation and pursuing a career in criminal defense law.



Josephine Geiger-Lee

Josephine Geiger-Lee is majoring in English and creative writing as well as journalism and mass communication, and is pursuing a certificate in event management. She is in her third year at the University of Iowa.



Isabelle Friedman

Isabelle Friedman is a second-year student from Polk City, Iowa, studying English and creative writing with a minor in criminology, law, and justice. She is attending law school upon graduation with hopes to pursue a career in family law.



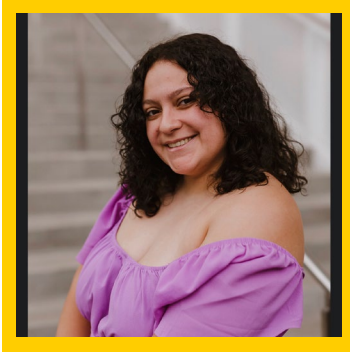
Riley Dunn

Riley Dunn is a first-year student from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania majoring in English and creative writing on the publishing track, as well as journalism and mass communication. In her free time, she loves reading, writing, swimming, and traveling to new and exciting places.



Josie Boyle

Josie Boyle is a first-year student from Peosta, Iowa, studying English on the publishing track and communications studies. Upon graduation, she will attend graduate school with hopes to become an editor and post-secondary educator.



Ashley Perez

Ashley Perez is a second-year student studying nursing. She is from Orland Park, Illinois and hopes to move back to Chicago post-graduation to be a pediatric nurse. She is an active member and officer of Alpha Delta Pi sorority.



Nadia Shaaban

Nadia Shaaban is a first-year honors student from South Barrington, Illinois, studying English and creative writing. She hopes to attend graduate school and pursue a career in either children's writing or screenwriting for television.



Raezel Valencia

Raezel Valencia is a third-year student from Eldersburg, Maryland, studying English and creative writing. She came to the University of Iowa in the hopes of polishing her writing and publishing skills.



Kenna Wolbers

Kenna Wolbers is a first-year student from Dubuque, Iowa, studying film and creative writing. She enjoys drawing, playing the drums, and volunteering with the Iowa Youth Writers Project.



Alex Lumish

Alexandra (Alex) Lumish is a first-year student from the Bay Area, California. She is majoring in English and creative writing. Alex hopes to develop her nonfiction and journalistic writing skills to become a more well-rounded writer.



Kate Andersen

Kate Andersen is a second-year student from Eldridge, Iowa. She is studying English, with a goal of pursuing a degree in English secondary education and becoming a high school teacher after graduation.

**HAVE A GREAT YEAR,
HONORS 2024 COHORT!**



**QUESTIONS? CONTACT US AT
honors-program@uiowa.edu**